

Moving Forward:  
The U.S.-Japan Alliance  
in 10 Years



edited by Brad Glosseman

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## Pacific Forum CSIS

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## Introduction

In the past decade, the U.S.-Japan alliance has weathered serious challenges and emerged stronger than ever. Its evolution since 2001 has surprised even hardened cynics as Japan embraced forward-leaning policies and more participation in regional and international security affairs. Despite these accomplishments, alliance managers cannot relax, however: new security challenges demand attention and responses and old alliance concerns – basic questions of deterrence, reassurance, and abandonment – continue to influence thinking in Washington and Tokyo.

It is especially important that the next generation of security analysts understand and appreciate both the old and the new in the U.S.-Japan security relationship. As part of the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Japan-U.S. Security Seminar, a dozen Young Leaders from the United States and Japan joined senior experts for two days of discussions on the state of the bilateral alliance and its future. Our YLs also had the opportunity to hear local experts. At a roundtable organized by the Asia Society, Dr. John Zysman, professor of political science at UC Berkeley and co-director of the Berkeley Roundtable on the International Economy (BRIE), discussed the economic and technological issues that continue to frame relations between the U.S. and Japan. While those concerns dominated bilateral discussions during the 1980s and '90s, they have receded since then; as the report from this year's seminar makes clear (see “U.S.-Relations: Maintaining the Momentum,” at [www.csis.org/media/isis/pubs/issuesinsights\\_v07n12.pdf](http://www.csis.org/media/isis/pubs/issuesinsights_v07n12.pdf)), hard security issues now dominate the agenda.

Zysman was followed by Kenji Kushida, who spoke to YLs last year and is a PhD candidate at Berkeley. He focused on cybersecurity and the particular challenges that it poses for the two countries. These are especially critical and vexing issues, as they cut across a range of bureaucracies and institutional interests and impact security in ways that specialists are only just beginning to understand. Worryingly, like last year, none of these issues surfaced during formal discussions at the conference. It is important to recognize their importance – and the opportunities they provide for new types of cooperation, offering chances to broaden and deepen the alliance.

During the conference, Young Leaders also had 10-on-one meetings with notable individuals. One morning, YLs grilled former Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage on the second Armitage-Nye Report (“Getting Asia Right,”) and its implications. The next day, they got a Japanese view of the bilateral relationship with Okamoto Yukio, one of Japan's most experienced U.S. hands and an advisor to several prime ministers. Finally, on the third morning, they broke bread with Dr. Joseph Nye, the former assistant secretary of defense, chairman of the Pacific Forum CSIS board, and co-author of the Armitage-Nye Reports. During the breakfast meeting with him, Dr. Nye shared his views on “soft power” and talked about the new commission on “Smart Power” that he is co-chairing with Mr. Armitage at CSIS. In all three presentations, the speakers enforced the importance of personal relationships to ensuring the smooth operation of the alliance. They underscored the role familiarity plays in facilitating communication and dealing with the inevitable differences that arise when allies try to address shared concerns.

After the conference, Young Leaders held their own roundtable to see how their views of the bilateral relationship jibed with those of more senior experts. As in the formal discussion, considerable attention was given to the credibility of the U.S. nuclear deterrent and Japanese and Americans alike explored ways to strengthen the nuclear umbrella. While North Korea dominates much of the national security discourse in Japan, there was agreement that most Japanese don't feel genuinely threatened by Pyongyang. Moreover, there is little doubt about the credibility of the U.S. commitment to defend Japan.

There is concern that Washington and Tokyo are falling out of sync in dealing with North Korea in the Six-Party Talks, but this can be remedied by renewed coordination and genuine consultation. Japan cannot feel that it is being abandoned; that does not mean that the U.S. should follow Tokyo's lead without question but the two countries do have to have trust in the other's negotiators.

Several Japanese noted that in this context as well as others – especially relations with China – the main problem is faltering confidence among Japanese about their country's role and place in the region. As a Japanese Young Leader noted, there is “soul searching and a search for national identity.” There was considerable agreement that the solution was to be found in increasing contact and interaction with other countries of the region. Japan must engage, not withdraw or assert itself in a more muscular fashion. A shrinking demographic profile provides an opportunity – or an excuse – to bring more Asians into the country.

The essays that follow explore ways to ensure that the U.S.-Japan alliance survives these many challenges. We paired participants so that each paper would be critiqued by a Young Leader from the other country. Those comments are included here.

It is heartening that none of the Young Leaders questioned the utility of the alliance or its value to their country. The key concern is how to best utilize the two countries' assets and maximize their combined influence and strength. Several Japanese Young Leaders worry about the prospect of a new values-based foreign policy. They are not sure how committed Japan is to the defense of those values, whether Japanese actions are necessarily consistent with them, and whether such a policy is unnecessarily provocative. Nonetheless, most Young Leaders also believed that Japan could do more within the alliance context – and should do so, both to be a better partner and a better international citizen.

All Young Leaders agree on pushing for cooperation in new fields – updating the “hardware and the software” of the alliance in one U.S. Young Leader's phrase. Perhaps influenced by their breakfast discussions, Young Leaders called for both governments to use “smart power” to maximize their influence. All endorsed outreach to other regional governments that shared values, interest, and concerns.

Young Leaders were confident that with attention to regional sensitivities and the careful application of its resources, Japan could assume a bigger role in the region. The alliance is a key element of the exercise of Japanese power – and a key component of the U.S. diplomatic toolbox. The next generation is beginning to tackle the next set of challenges that the U.S.-Japan alliance

faces: the following essays give hope that they will be up to the task and the security relationship will survive for some time to come.





# Alliance Diplomacy at Home and Abroad: Addressing the Main Questions in U.S.-Japan Security Relations

By Leif-Eric Easley

In 10 years, the U.S.-Japan alliance should be the kernel of a regional security architecture that maintains stability in Northeast Asia and makes significant contributions to human security on a global scale. To realize this vital purpose, the alliance must evolve from its traditional “elite-managed deterrence” to a new posture of “public-supported regional engagement.”

The success of the U.S.-Japan alliance during the Cold War derived from deterring threats to Japanese and American interests. Upgrading the alliance over the past 10 years focused on post-Cold War contingency planning and coordination. Both processes were managed by an elite group of policymakers in Tokyo and Washington who saw and realized the importance of the alliance. But the alliance must now transform itself in a process that requires broader support and involvement among the Japanese and American populations. Today’s security challenges require that the alliance do more than deter threats and prepare for contingencies. The alliance must actually transform the security environment by engaging new partners.<sup>1</sup>

I have written elsewhere on the rationale for bridging regional divides in East Asia while expanding U.S.-Japan security cooperation.<sup>2</sup> In this paper, I outline the 10 most important unanswered questions for alliance transformation. The paper foresees policy solutions falling under three headings: upgrading the hardware and software of the alliance; building broader domestic support for the alliance; and increasing outward engagement by the alliance.

## Questions for the alliance

Below is a tentative list of the 10 most important sets of questions for the U.S.-Japan security alliance. The numerical ordering is simply for organizational purposes and does not suggest any chronology or priority ranking.

1. How to maintain political momentum to implement the “2+2” agreed alliance upgrades at the operational level? These issues notably include command and control reform, increased interoperability and information sharing, and the procurement of necessary capabilities to fulfill allocated roles and missions. The level of coordination envisioned in recent agreements also calls for political and legal endorsement of new operational plans, for example, regarding the interception of threatening missiles.<sup>3</sup>
2. How to manage the domestic politics of base relocation and host nation financial support? While U.S.-Japan force posture realignment should increase the alliance’s

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<sup>1</sup> The importance of this objective is outlined in Richard L. Armitage and Joseph S. Nye, “The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Getting Asia Right through 2020,” *CSIS Report*, February 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Leif-Eric Easley, “Avoiding Cold War II: Upgrading the U.S.-Japan Alliance and Bridging Regional Divides,” *Issues and Insights*, Vol. 6, No. 6 (March 2006), pp. 63-68.

<sup>3</sup> During and since the conference, it became clear that Prime Minister Abe would push for a serious government study of collective defense issues.

ability to deal with post-Cold War contingencies while making the alliance more efficient and reducing the U.S. military footprint in populated areas, serious NIMBY (not in my backyard) politics can be expected.

3. What will a “normal” Japan look like? Japan is clearly on a trajectory of greater international security contributions, but the endpoint of this trajectory remains unclear. What will be the boundaries of U.S.-Japan operations? (UN peace and humanitarian missions? Defense of offshore islands? Coalition of the willing operations?) In transitioning from the traditional Japanese “shield” and U.S. “spear” architecture for the alliance, how much power projection capability will a normal Japan wield? Answers to these questions relate to Japan’s new assertive diplomacy, constitutional reinterpretation and revision, and the policymaking responsibilities of the new Defense Ministry.
4. How to promote Japan’s effective leadership role regionally and internationally? How to pursue United Nations reform and a permanent seat for Japan on the Security Council? What does Tokyo plan to do with this leadership role and Security Council seat?
5. How to sustain a nonproliferation coalition in Northeast Asia that incentivizes North Korea’s nuclear dismantlement and credibly exercises coercive diplomacy if necessary? If the Six-Party Talks make real progress, how to support Seoul’s agenda for Korean reconciliation and ensure that this process complements U.S.-Japan security and economic interests?
6. How to improve U.S. trust and credibility in East Asia? Specifically, how to avoid the perception that the U.S. is distracted (in the Middle East and with the war on terrorism), disengaging from the region (because of force redeployments), or playing countries in East Asia off each other (by remaining detached from regional rivalries and efforts at regional integration)?
7. How will Japan maintain its economic competitiveness and increase productivity (economic resources being necessary for defense contributions) given its projected decline in population, aging society, and significant government debt, all in the face of increasingly economically competitive neighbors?
8. How to engage China as an important and responsible international player and dissuade it from destabilizing military preparations or shows of force, while at the same time supporting the security and freedom of Taiwan’s democracy?
9. How to enlarge the sphere of U.S.-Japan cooperation? Specifically, how to strengthen trilateral mechanisms with Australia and South Korea, effectively engage ASEAN countries and regional forums such as ARF, Eastern Analytical Symposium, and APEC, and build a strategic partnership with India?
10. How to alleviate historical animosities in East Asia? Memories of wartime atrocities and colonial repression easily resurface when historical details are factually debated by

leaders, manipulated by groups with political agendas, and sensationalized by the media.<sup>4</sup> Such patterns reinforce suspicions and must be dealt with so that other nations do not respond to U.S.-Japan security efforts negatively out of distrust.

## **Possible Policy Solutions**

### *Upgrading the Hardware and Software of the Alliance*

- Increase bilateral training, mutual use of facilities, effective joint operational command, control, communications, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C3ISR) capabilities, and combined planning all the way down to U.S.-Japan field manuals where applicable.
- Make cutting-edge U.S. weapons systems available to Japan and search out more opportunities for bilateral development and production of defense equipment. Consider adjustments to regulatory laws and R&D allocations that may assist these efforts.
- Invite Japanese representatives to residence positions at PACOM and increase consultations with Japan about global realignment of U.S. forces.
- Increase jointness among Ground, Air and Maritime Self-Defense Forces and increase deployability of SDF without hollowing out home island defense (may include increasing size of active military, reorganizing troop rotations, etc.)
- Legalize collective defense interpretation for shooting down threatening missiles (whether aimed at Japan or the U.S.) and coming to the defense of fellow peacekeepers from other nations (includes revision of SDF rules of engagement). Japan may also consider a permanent SDF deployment law allowing overseas deployment without the need to pass a new law in the Diet on a case-by-case basis. Japan is already developing a National Security Council for quickly coordinating security policy while safeguarding sensitive intelligence.

### *Domestic Diplomacy for the Alliance*

- Raise Japanese public awareness of solid U.S. security guarantee and nuclear umbrella. Raise U.S. public awareness of Japan's contributions to security and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq.
- Build support for a more comprehensive U.S.-Japan partnership by exploring how a bilateral FTA may help Japan deal with its demographic shift, help the U.S. deal with its trade deficit, and help both countries advance the Doha free trade agenda.

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<sup>4</sup> See Leif-Eric Easley, "Devils in the Details: Effective Policy, not Disputed History, should be Focus of National Leaders," *JoongAng Daily* (with *International Herald Tribune*), April 9, 2007, page 7.

- Tokyo can do more to advocate the alliance domestically by consistently offering public explanations for why the alliance and U.S. bases are in Japan's national interest. Washington can increase the "good neighbor" programs of USFJ.
- Work to increase bipartisan support for the alliance by involving ranking opposition leaders and policymakers in alliance consultations.
- Broaden the scope of U.S. officials in strategic dialogue with Japan; ensure that U.S.-Japan high-level and working-level consultations do not fall behind those between Washington and Beijing.
- Reduce burden on local communities, especially in Okinawa, by expediting implementation of U.S.-Japan basing agreements. Ensure that any incident involving U.S. soldiers is quickly and unequivocally resolved under the Status of Forces Agreement and related understandings between Tokyo and Washington.
- Increase educational, professional, and cultural exchanges. Possibilities include increasing the number of Fulbright Scholars, Mansfield Fellows, and establishing an annual U.S.-Japan film festival, including amateur entries focused on Japan-U.S. relations.

#### *International Diplomacy for the Alliance*

- Expand regional cooperation on nontraditional security issues. Explore the establishment of a regional natural disasters rapid reaction force and infectious diseases task force. Pursue better container security and joint patrol of sea lines of communication. Push for multilateral crackdowns on transnational crime including terrorist financing, counterfeiting, and trafficking of persons, illegal drugs, and counterfeit goods. Increase cooperation on market-based energy solutions, proliferation-safe nuclear power, and the development and application of environmental technologies.
- Tokyo should be conscious that the official constitutional revision debate does not get ahead of historical reconciliation in the region. Japan should continue to be a positive example to other countries of how economic liberalization, political reform, and diplomatic engagement stay ahead of military modernization. Tokyo might also reiterate that the development of nuclear weapons is not in Japan's national interest.
- Increase U.S.-Japan coordination of Overseas Development Assistance, health, and humanitarian aid. Increase coordinated calls for changes in government behavior (in Burma, for example), which if met, could open the door to greater investment by Japanese and U.S. companies and joint ventures.
- Increase mil-mil contacts and exchanges in Northeast Asia. Japan could invite South Korea and the U.S. to participate in disaster relief (tsunami and major earthquake) training in Japan. Tokyo and Washington could invite China to participate in search and rescue exercises and could offer security assistance for the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.

- Japan could assume a greater leadership role on nonproliferation concerns, providing technical assistance to other countries on export controls, demonstrating model participation in Proliferation Security Initiative, advancing joint and coordinated explorations of energy sources, hosting a dialogue on codes of conduct in East Asian waters, and establishing an anti-terrorism regional coordination center in Japan. The U.S. and Japan could make partnered presentations on these issues at regional for a such as ARF and APEC and possibly at the East Asia Summit and UN bodies.

## **Conclusion**

In the coming years, the U.S.-Japan alliance will transform to meet global needs and nest itself in a network of regional security cooperation. The alliance not only needs to upgrade its own hardware and software, but also broaden public support and involvement in both countries. Most significantly, the alliance needs to take up the task of expanding the sphere of U.S.-Japan security cooperation and promote a greater sense of common destiny among the nations of East Asia. This will require reassuring other countries and making the U.S.-Japan alliance a leader in multilateral cooperation. Washington and Tokyo should look to add active subscribers to U.S.-Japan common strategic objectives and make clear what the alliance is for rather than letting others assume what it is against. The future alliance will build on shared values and interests rather than shared threats, and will attract rather than deter other countries. The transformation of the U.S.-Japan alliance should ultimately mean the transformation of East Asian security. The resulting Asia Pacific cooperation can offer unprecedented contributions to international peace and development.



## Commentary

By Ryo Sahashi

In his draft paper to the seminar's YL session, Leif-Eric Easley outlines the issues that challenge the alliance and prescribes desirable solutions for them. He states, "the alliance must evolve from its traditional 'elite managed deterrence' to a new posture of 'public supported regional engagement'." The paper then points out 10 "unanswered" questions for the alliance, and identifies "possible policy solutions."

First, I agree with his main claim that the alliance now needs to enhance bilateral ties by reaching out to the more general public. However, reading the proposals from Easley, I do not share his perspective on the nature of the problem for the alliance in this regard. His articles could be read to suggest that the problem lies in the credibility of the United States commitment to the alliance; thus he proposes that the alliance should be more militarily and politically integrated. But base relocation issue, including Okinawa, is creating doubts among the Japanese public on the necessity of burden sharing. This is because the decline of the American image, or soft power, hurts the perception of the alliance, making difficult the management of the alliance for the Japanese government. In other words, difficulty in mobilizing the general public is not merely the product of a fear of abandonment, but is also the result of the difficulty of allying with an infamous ally. I do not deny some Japanese might feel doubts about U.S. intentions regarding the defense of Japan, especially given recent developments in the Six-Party Talks and American compromises with DPRK. But it should be emphasized that, to manage the alliance in the domestic context, the declining American image should be healed, or repaired, among Japanese society, but this paper does not prescribe policy proposals on this regard. (I do not think there is a fear of entrapment at this stage, but image is important to keep a favorable atmosphere in domestic politics. And, to improve mutual trust, I want to emphasize the necessity of keeping a good image of the alliance in the domestic context.)

Furthermore, his prescriptions to strengthen bilateral ties should be better developed because some of his arguments might cause tensions between the two capitals. First, he argues, "[r]educe burden on local communities, especially in Okinawa," but the problem is how we could do so without causing more tension with the United States, which hesitates to have new dialogues on Okinawa. Second, Japan-U.S. free trade agreement negotiations could cause serious problems in both countries' domestic politics, since Japanese farmers would resist strongly while American farmers and the business lobby would be unsatisfied with the reluctance and slow speed of Japanese negotiators.

Lastly, I want the author to address more clearly two topics. His paper, in the introductory part, raises the problem of engagement with emerging powers, stating "the alliance must actually transform the security environment by engaging new partners." However, in the latter part of this draft, I see no solutions or proposals on this point, while he cites a "unanswered" question as his eighth point. Also, later he claims "Tokyo should be conscious that the official constitutional revision debate does not get ahead of historical reconciliation in the region. Japan should be a prime positive example to other countries of how economic liberalization, political reform and diplomatic engagement stay ahead of military modernization."

These points should be examined in more depth as a problem for the U.S.-Japan alliance, possibly by addressing the recent debate on the comfort women case.

In short, I wanted to hear more on the prescriptions to the problems caused by the many challenges to this vital alliance.



# Smart Power: A Challenge for the Next Decade of the U.S. – Japan Alliance

By Michele M. Fugiel

From the end of World War II until today, the most striking aspect of the United States-Japan alliance is the continuous evolution of its form and functions in response to a changing global landscape. While the historical foundation of the alliance has been rooted in military and economic security issues, which can be considered functions of hard power, soft power and human security issues also play very relevant roles in the alliance. Within the framework of global security, no longer can hard power and soft power be considered to be mutually exclusive elements. The success of the alliance in the next decade will be measured by whether the United States and Japan can develop a strategic vision for how to integrate hard and soft power into “smart power” to address current and future challenges.

## Beyond a zero-sum game

Hard power is easy to consider in terms of the “carrots” and “sticks” it uses to move one party toward a particular ideological position.<sup>1</sup> There are numerous images we can conjure of these elements of hard power when considering relations between the U.S. and Japan. Images of Japan’s invasion into Manchuria or its attack on Pearl Harbor, combined with the U.S. war in Vietnam or sanctions against North Korea are examples of how hard power has been used, by both countries to induce or coerce. Propelled by metaphorical concepts of the *shield* and *spear*, Japan’s reliance on the U.S. presence in the region for both military and economic security continue to be a large portion of the alliance’s functionality.<sup>2</sup> This is particularly true as debates continue over topics such as the United States’ offer of extended nuclear deterrence, the economic rise of China and India, and Japan’s role in providing Northeast Asian security.

However, hard power is not the only factor to ensure success of the alliance. In recent years, more emphasis has been placed on the role of soft power and its role in shaping international security. Soft power, as contrasted with hard power, rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others. It is based on being able to attract, not simply influence, others to your preferred position and relies heavily on an actor’s reputation within the international community, as well as the flow of information between actors.<sup>3</sup> Examples of soft power include efforts in public diplomacy in the United States to win the hearts and minds of people through media and international exchanges, by Japanese financial commitments to international aid organizations such as the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, and through participation in international governmental bodies such as the United Nations, World Bank, and World Health Organization.

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Soft Power: The means to success in world politics*, *Public Affairs*, 2004, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> “What Would Military Security Look Like Through A Human Security Lens,” *NATO Advanced Research Workshop*, Oxford Research Group, January 2007, Wright and Hague, p. 61.

<sup>3</sup> Nye Jr., *Soft Power*, p. 6. Joseph Nye Jr., “The Benefits of Soft Power,” *Harvard Business School Working Knowledge*, 2 August 2004, accessed 15 March 2007, < <http://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/4290.html>>.

However, soft power is not an alternative method to using hard power tactics. Soft power produces great benefits when other actors see that country as having a favorable image. One example, stemming from the limits on Japanese military capabilities, is the positive view held by many of Japan's continuing commitment to pacifism. However, one event or a series of actions can seriously harm the amount of soft power a country has to wield. The United States due to its hard power actions in the Middle East, its lack of commitment on environmental issues, and its seeming disrespect for the United Nations have contributed to its loss of soft power.

Seeing that the usage of hard power and soft power is not a zero-sum game in the realm of international security, there has been a movement toward understanding the strategic importance of combining the two. Smart power, as the integration of hard and soft power, is one way to strategically consider the implications of both hard and soft power in a given situation.<sup>4</sup> By looking at the past and current conditions affecting both the U.S. and Japan, we can imagine ways in which a strategic use of smart power could produce beneficial results for all parties. The following section identifies three ways that smart power can be cultivated to advance the interests of the U.S.-Japan alliance.

## **Possibilities for the next decade**

### *1) Cultivating a participatory civil society*

It may not seem obvious to begin at the domestic level when discussing the role of the alliance; however, even though the U.S. and Japan share similar ideologies and values, such as democracy and free trade, they differ in the way civil society is engaged. As a component of soft power, engaging an active civil society, measured by involvement in nongovernmental and nonprofit organizations, can be a useful tool to help nation-states advance their goals through agreement rather than coercion. The ability to cultivate a supportive and patriotic civil society (soft power) can support military actions against terrorism or economic sanctions against countries seeking nuclear capabilities (hard power).

As compared with the United States, Japan has historically relied on its government to provide for basic human needs. This reliance has stifled the growth of civil society and nonprofit organizations, a contrast to the situation in the U.S. where these organizations grew rapidly because of the public view that government could not be the sole provider of human security. Whether political, economic, social, or cultural, these organizations defined networks and substituted for the state in many tasks, from health care to international exchanges.<sup>5</sup> The outcome, based on people's tendency to form associations to carry out shared objectives, has created a lively and diverse civil society discourse both domestically and internationally.

This distinction becomes particularly important as Japan promotes its "values based" diplomacy. To be effective, the alliance must be clear on the values the allies share. Values are not simple edicts passed down by governments, but are often grown from discourse within civil

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<sup>4</sup> For more information on Smart Power, see CSIS Commission on Smart Power, <http://www.csis.org/smartpower/>.

<sup>5</sup> Iriye Akira, "Philanthropy and Civil Society in U.S. Foreign Relations," Philanthropy and Reconciliation: Rebuilding Postwar U.S. – Japan Relations, edited by Yamamoto Tadashi, Iriye Akira, and Iokibe Makoto, (Japanese Center for International Exchange, 2006), p. 39.

society mechanisms. Continuing debates over Japan's history, including Yasukuni shrine and comfort women, affect its relations with neighbors, as well as the functionality of the alliance. A smart power strategy might look at the effects that hard power has played in creating these debates, may consider future hard power effects if these debates are not settled, and may encourage the soft power tactic of a growth of civil society organizations to help facilitate dialogue and encourage greater international exchange, particularly with regional neighbors.

## 2) *Building Strong Regional Partnerships*

One of the main indicators of whether the U.S.-Japan alliance remains strong will be the role that Japan plays within Asia. In a region where "cold politics and hot economics" are a way of life, a strong alliance and good regional relationships are essential.<sup>6</sup> Historical issues with China and Korea have perpetuated strained relationships within Northeast Asia. The "rise" of these countries has brought up hard power questions regarding future military and economic consequences for the alliance. In fact, the U.S. weakness in Asia stems from its own historical relations, in addition to its lack of consistent focus regarding Asia and its current intense focus on Middle East, including Iraq and Iran. Recent attention has returned to Asia, but has been primarily focused on the role of China and the nuclear ambitions of North Korea.

However, the United States does not need to have a heavy hand in the region's affairs for Japan to be successful. Rather, the challenge for Japan will be in how it interacts with its neighbors. As Nye and Armitage note in their "Getting Asia Right" report, historically, Japan has taken a trans-Pacific attitude rather than one that is pan-Asian.<sup>7</sup> Japan can increase its influence within Asia and strengthen the alliance, by combining military, economic, and diplomatic resources and focusing on smart power strategies such as:

- Taking a strong leadership role in developing maritime security throughout the Pacific, specifically in heavily traveled regions such as the Strait of Malacca;
- Encouraging stronger and more wide-ranging regional relationships between Japan, the U.S., India, and Australia on issues of nuclear deterrence, economic growth, and human security;
- Promoting a stronger Japanese diplomatic presence in Southeast Asia, to protect interests and build partnerships, where China currently is filling the void.

## 3) *Encouraging Power Sharing*

The aforementioned Nye-Armitage report addresses numerous ways the alliance can strengthen its individual and shared attributes. As both the U.S. and Japan share the benefits of strong military, economic, and diplomatic powers, they should develop a strategic method of power-sharing based on the notion of smart power. The situation regarding extended deterrence gives a good example of how power sharing can be increased and smart power applied.

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<sup>6</sup> Yasuo Ohkushi, "China That Continues to Expand Militarily: A Japanese View," Defense Research Center Annual Report 2006, Japan Defense Research Center, p. 38.

<sup>7</sup> Richard L. Armitage and Joseph S. Nye, The U.S. – Japan Alliance: Getting Asia Right through 2020, CSIS, February 2007, p. 10.

The U.S. “umbrella” of extended nuclear deterrence, which includes Japan, brings up a number of unanswered questions that affect the alliance, as well as how the alliance is viewed by others. Japan’s commitment to three non-nuclear principles continues to limit its ability to manufacture, possess, or introduce nuclear weapons into the country, and has led to Japan’s reliance on the U.S. ability to defend.<sup>8</sup> However, Japan’s lack of nuclear weapons has also contributed to its reputation as a pacifist nation and created much soft power. The U.S. commitment to defend Japan has become particularly relevant as North Korea has built nuclear weapons. Partially, the solution must come from within the alliance by answering whether the U.S. will use nuclear weapons to defend Japan and whether Japan believes this commitment. The implications of these answers are great and lead to larger questions of whether other countries, such as China and North Korea, also believe the U.S. commitment.

In this case, the U.S. wields too much power on these unknowns. A smart power strategy would encourage determining what specific military steps the U.S. could take to increase Japanese confidence in extended deterrence, and how this increased confidence would translate into soft power created by diplomatic initiatives to convince others to cease their nuclear ambitions. The challenge for the alliance will be to mitigate disagreements over ideology in terms of aggression and conflict. Japan can remain a strong ally, while disagreeing with the United States’ military or political stances toward certain countries. In fact, Japan’s alliance with the U.S. might be a point from which it can voice disagreement while other countries cannot.

## **Conclusion**

The U.S.-Japan alliance has been touted “the world’s most important bilateral relationship.” The application of hard and soft power does not need to be mutually exclusive or a zero-sum game for the alliance to remain strong. This paper suggests that smart power be considered as a way to strengthen the alliance. The three examples discussed – cultivating civil society, building strong regional partnerships, and encouraging power sharing – offer ways to think about the application of smart power within the alliance. With the application of smart power, I hope that the next decade produces a fuller and more well-balanced alliance.

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<sup>8</sup> Prime Minister Eisaku Sato made this pledge - known as the Three Non-Nuclear Principles - on Feb. 5, 1968, after the deployment of a U.S. aircraft carrier from a Japanese port in response to the capture of a spy ship by North Korea. The notion was formalized by the Japanese Diet on Nov. 24, 1971.

## Commentary

By Tetsuo Kotani

Michele Fugiel correctly writes that the future of the Japan-U.S. alliance “must be understood in broader terms” and then argues that soft power will become a “greater component” of the alliance. She picks up three examples in which the use of soft power can strengthen the alliance: “cultivation civil society,” “building strong regional partnerships,” and “providing humanitarian aid.”

1. How should we create an environment for philanthropy to thrive in Japan? Is there a cultural barrier?
2. Isn't Japan a good Asian partner? I think Japan has good relations with many Asian countries, except China and the two Koreas.
3. Was the Japanese response to the abduction of the Japanese in Iraq inconsistent with Japan's commitment to universal values? They went to Iraq despite the Japanese government's ban. In fact, they believed that Japanese troops should be withdrawn while those troops were there for humanitarian relief.



# Accommodating the Rise of China: Toward a Successful U.S.-Japan Alliance in 2017

By Kristi Elaine Govella

The U.S.-Japan alliance has been the cornerstone of East Asian security for over five decades and will continue to be an important part of regional affairs for years to come. However, this alliance must be altered to account for the significant shifts in global, regional, and domestic dynamics that have occurred since its establishment in 1951. Recent years have marked crucial initial steps in this process, but much work still remains to be done. In 10 years, the U.S.-Japan alliance should be a source of stability that works more inclusively to drive collaboration on the part of all regional actors; in order to accomplish this, it must provide an atmosphere conducive to a peaceful Chinese ascension and a new conception of Japanese leadership, while mediating the tensions between these two regional powers. In this essay, I identify three interrelated issues that have been exacerbated by the rise of China: the existence of a zero-sum mentality with regard to regional leadership, the threat of a security dilemma posed by mistrust between Japan and China, and the persistence of a historical legacy that has fed nationalistic tendencies in both countries. I outline steps that the U.S. can take to ameliorate these problems and to recraft the U.S.-Japan alliance in a way that better reflects and anticipates the changing realities of East Asia.

Attitudes toward leadership in East Asia are permeated by a zero-sum mentality; according to this line of thought, either Japan *or* China can be the regional leader, and the U.S. will align itself with only one of the two countries to best pursue its interests. In reality, an exclusive alliance between the U.S. and either of these countries no longer makes sense in modern East Asia; instead, the task must be to build good relations between the U.S. and *both* countries. Consequently, the U.S. must strike a balance between supporting Japan through the U.S.-Japan alliance and facilitating China's peaceful rise. The China portion of this equation is impossible to ignore, and indeed, giving China the incentives to progress down a path of peaceful integration and benign competition is a key part of a successful strategy in Asia. However, it is also vital that the U.S. avoid giving the impression (real or perceived) that Japan is being ignored or undermined by its long-time ally. In giving increased emphasis to relations with China, there is a natural danger that Japan might feel displaced. For example, in a 2007 report from the Japan Defense Research Center, Takayama Masaji cites Chinese "wish for a dissolution" of U.S.-Japan relations as a potential threat and cites the insult of President Bill Clinton's failure to visit Japan after a 10-day visit to China in 1999. Takayama also mentions changes in American referents for China; he notes Clinton's use of the term "strategic partner" and Bush's movement from labeling the PRC a "strategic competitor" to recognizing it as a "stakeholder." It is clear that Japan is highly sensitive to changes in its relative status, and consequently, the U.S. must tread carefully as it tries to accommodate the growing power of China.

Aside from proceeding with deliberate caution, the U.S. can also counter this zero-sum mentality by solidifying its relationship with Japan under the current terms of the alliance as it simultaneously builds relations with China. Concretely, this could involve further development of mechanisms for joint planning and coordination in security situations, which would ensure

that the partnership could function quickly and effectively in the event of a contingency. Relocating U.S. military bases in Japan to better reflect future challenges is a good first step, but further development of the alliance will require defining the roles, missions, and capabilities each country should bring to a situation and then developing those abilities through bilateral training. Moreover, the U.S. should work with Japan to create a coordinated China policy so that, at the very least, Japan does not find itself caught by surprise with regard to developments in U.S.-China relationships. Strengthening of the alliance will require the initiation and maintenance of long-standing personal relationships between policymakers in both countries.

In addition to ameliorating this problem of zero-sum attitudes, the U.S.-Japan alliance will also have to avert the emergence of a security dilemma. The mistrust between China and Japan means that Beijing fears both a strengthening *and* a weakening of the U.S.-Japan alliance; while the former would grant a larger security role to Japan, the latter might result in a hawkish return to militancy by a Japan unfettered by obligations to the U.S. Japan, in turn, is wary of Chinese ambitions to undermine its relationship with the U.S. and cognizant of investment in Chinese military capabilities. Thus, while it is important that Japan take on greater security responsibility, it is important that this be done in a way that does not alarm China; even defensive roles for Japan can seem threatening in this atmosphere of suspicion. One solution is for the U.S. to draw the focus of Japanese military activity away from the region, folding the Japanese security role into a larger mission of international peacekeeping; relatedly, any participation of the Self-Defense Forces in peacekeeping missions should be not performed under the auspices of the U.S.-Japan alliance but instead within a framework of international or regional cooperation. By helping other nations in this manner, Japan can claim moral high ground and assuage fears about a return to its imperialist past, increasing its soft power and international credibility. This approach would allow Japan's military development and participation to be framed as a public good instead of as a threat to regional security, shifting attention away from contentious areas such as the Taiwan Strait.

With respect to Japanese security involvement in East Asia, the U.S. should be very cautious about the roles it asks Japan to play, continuing to maintain a forward presence and the ability to act without significant participation from Japan, if necessary. This might mean a perpetuation of the “shield and spear” division of labor. Some fear that the U.S.-Japan alliance will be dangerously weakened if Japan's role is not clarified and expanded; however, this expansion has to take place in a strategic manner. Particularly in situations where the U.S. alone could effectively accomplish a task that might be rendered controversial in Japanese hands, the U.S. should refrain from seeking Japanese participation. Maintenance of sufficient U.S. military capabilities in the region would allow the U.S. to be selective about its request for Japanese assistance, weighing potential political harm against military gain. Ideally, the U.S. presence would not only help to manage and contain future crises but also to prevent them.

This security dilemma is exacerbated by historical legacies and rising nationalism, which are themselves enough of a problem to warrant specific attention. Japan's failure to satisfactorily deal with its past actions has meant that anti-Japanese sentiment still runs strong in China; the Chinese leadership's use of nationalism to bolster its legitimacy sometimes feeds off this negativity, which prompts a similar nationalistic reaction in Japan. Building trust between the major players of East Asia will be an essential part of ensuring the future stability of the region;



the U.S.-Japan alliance can bolster this process by becoming more inclusive and by refraining from pulling Japan away from Asia.

Instead, the U.S. should encourage Japan to become active in the burgeoning multilateral dialogues that have swept the region since the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis. At various times, the U.S. has seen Japanese participation in region-specific dialogues as a threat to its influence in East Asia. However, this participation is essential to the formation of a strong and positive Japanese leadership role. China has increasingly used multilateral initiatives to exhibit its potential for leadership and an indispensable role in regional affairs on one hand, and its benign intentions and willingness to have its power constrained on the other; at times, it has used multilateral forums to directly challenge Japanese leadership. For example, at the 2001 ASEAN+3 summit, China proposed an ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement, a dramatic act that Japan could only reciprocate with a promise to consider freer trade. Japan needs to adopt a more proactive role in these affairs, in contrast to simply reacting to Chinese initiatives; the U.S. and Japan could work to develop a coordinated approach to these region-specific interactions if it would help to assuage American fears. Moreover, the U.S. and Japan should collaborate to reinvigorate APEC, particularly as the Bogor goals deadline approaches in 2010. Though these multilateral dialogues are often considered peripheral to the “real” politics of the region, they are a pragmatic and effective way of building Japanese credibility in the region and starting to fashion a constructive yet non-threatening role for a more independent Japan in the future.

In conclusion, by balancing the need to accommodate the rise of China with support for a new conception of Japanese leadership, the U.S.-Japan alliance can become a source of stability that works more inclusively to drive collaboration on the part of all regional actors. Countering a zero-sum mentality toward regional leadership will require that the U.S. solidify its links to Japan through closer collaboration as it simultaneously builds relations with China, avoiding any signal that Japan is being ignored or displaced. In addition, the U.S. can help to avoid a security dilemma by folding Japan’s security role into a larger concept of international peacekeeping, drawing the focus of military collaboration away from the region; when collaboration is required in East Asia, the U.S. should be highly selective in asking for Japanese participation and maintain a presence substantial enough to conduct operations alone if necessary. The U.S. can also help moderate underlying tensions and rising nationalism in East Asia by encouraging Japanese participation in region-specific multilateral dialogues and reinvigorating APEC. These steps will help build stronger relations between the U.S., Japan, and China. Though they do not solve the larger problems of Asia in and of themselves, they may buy East Asia the time it needs to allow confidence-building measures and turnover in political regimes to have a positive effect on regional tensions. Fortunately, it is in each actor’s interest to foster regional stability over the next 10 years; though it seeks a change in the status quo, China first and foremost desires a peaceful international environment in which to foster its economic development. The coming decade could see further and perhaps unexpected shifts in the balance of power in East Asia, but by becoming a more inclusive source of stability and security for the region, the U.S.-Japan alliance can continue to play a positive role up to and beyond 2017.



## Commentary

By Shinjiro Koizumi

Kristi's paper grasps the importance of establishing healthy Japan-U.S.-China triangular relations for stability in Asia by identifying "three interrelated issues that have been exacerbated by the rise of China: 1) the existence of a zero-sum mentality with regard to regional leadership: 2) the threat of a security dilemma posed by mistrust between Japan and China: and 3) the persistence of a historical legacy that has fed into nationalistic tendencies in both countries." As she points out, there is a competition for regional leadership between Japan and China, seen in Japan's efforts to include democratic countries, such as India, Australia, and New Zealand in the East Asia Summit in order to moderate Chinese influence. Also, Japan has not been able to fully trust Chinese intentions due to its opaque military build-up and the intrusion of Chinese submarines into Japanese waters. Moreover, the world witnessed the rise of nationalism in the form of anti-Japanese demonstrations in China and the freeze of bilateral leadership exchanges. It is true that Japan and China have these complicated problems, but I would like to introduce two points that she does not mention.

First, Govella warns that even Japanese defensive roles could threaten China and proposes that Japan's Self-Defense Forces' participation in peace-keeping operations "should not be performed under the auspices of the U.S.-Japan alliance." It might be true that expanded cooperation between the U.S. and Japan invites China's military expansion and an arms race between Japan and China, but it is also possible for China to enhance its military capability even if Japan focuses on defensive operations. Thus, Japan's self-restraint might not stop China from enhancing its military.

Second, a perpetuation of the "shield and spear" division of labor between Japan and the U.S. does not seem to be a goal that both countries have pursued. Both Japan's biggest ruling party, the Liberal Democratic Party, and the biggest opposition party, the Democratic Party of Japan, seem to have a converging understanding of the need to lift the ban on the exercise of the right of collective self-defense in order to play a greater security role under the U.S.-Japan alliance. Moreover, the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan to enhance the quality of the alliance is in progress.

Although Govella's paper does not address these two points, she did depict the issues that the U.S. and Japan need to tackle together by emphasizing China's perception of the U.S.-Japan alliance and how the U.S. strikes a balance between Japan and China in order to realize a peaceful Asia. It is critical for Japan and the U.S. to manage their relations with China, but the U.S. needs to understand that its balancing act between Japan and China could send a wrong signal "that Japan is being ignored or displaced," as she states. She reminds readers of the importance of U.S.-Japan cooperation vis-à-vis the rise of China and how the creation of a stable Japan-U.S.-China triangle requires U.S. sensitivity to Japan's fear of being sidelined.



# Requirements for the Japan-U.S. Alliance and the Rise of China

By Shinjiro Koizumi

In 2017, the U.S.-Japan alliance will remain in East Asia as an important stabilizer for regional security, and more visible and closer cooperation between Japan and the United States will be realized after the completion of the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan (expected to be done by 2014). The second Armitage-Nye Report, *“The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Getting Asia Right through 2020,”* which was released in February, clearly states that “the keystone of the United States’ position in Asia remains the U.S.-Japan alliance.” If there is a revision of the Constitution of Japan or reinterpretation of Article 9 by 2017 in order to exercise the right of collective self-defense, the Japan-U.S. alliance would become more equal, and areas of bilateral cooperation would expand. In other words, Japan’s decision to exercise the right of collective self-defense is critical to a strengthened Japan-U.S. alliance. Furthermore, Japan and the U.S. also have to develop a strategy to reconcile their strengthened alliance with the rise of China. This short paper examines two key challenges in upgrading the U.S.-Japan alliance: 1) Japan’s need to lift the ban on the use of the right of collective self-defense, and 2) addressing China’s rise.

## Japan and the Right of Collective Self-Defense

Although Japan has spent more than 50 years discussing whether to exercise the right of collective-self defense, there has been a noticeable convergence in the discussion in recent years after the steady advance of the Japan-U.S. alliance followed by the review of the defense guidelines in 1997 and the Nye Initiative, the post 9/11 world situation that has led to expanded Japan Self-Defense Force activities, and notably, the emergence of a new generation of Japanese politicians. Many politicians in both the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) began to realize the limitations imposed by the current constitutional interpretation of the right of collective-self defense (Japan possesses the right, but does not have a duty to defend the U.S. forces outside of Japanese territory) on Japan’s role as an ally, especially in the context of maritime defense cooperation to protect sea lines of communication. For example, former DPJ leader Seiji Maehara is a strong advocate of the Japan-U.S. alliance and exercising the right of collective self-defense. Although he did not succeed, he tried to reach a consensus on this issue during his tenure from September 2005 to April 2006. In the LDP, Prime Minister Abe Shinzo has frequently shown his desire to revise the current interpretation of the constitution. In his first policy speech to the Diet in September 2006, he argued that Japan should “thoroughly study individual, specific cases to identify what kind of case falls under the exercise of the right of collective self-defense which is forbidden under the Constitution, so that the Japan-U.S. alliance functions more effectively and peace is maintained.”<sup>1</sup>

As Abe said, enabling the exercise of the right of collective self-defense would raise the effectiveness of the Japan-U.S. alliance. In addition, being ready to exercise the right of collective self-defense would make Japan’s cooperation with countries in Asia like Australia and India easier, especially for maritime security cooperation. Thus, the reinterpretation of the right

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<sup>1</sup> Policy Speech by Prime Minister Abe Shinzo to the 165<sup>th</sup> session of the Diet, Sept. 29, 2006, [www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abespeech/2006/09/29speech\\_e.html](http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abespeech/2006/09/29speech_e.html)

of collective self-defense makes the U.S.-Japan alliance more effective and broadens Japan's diplomatic horizons.

Further, Japan's departure from its self-imposed restrictions will give it more confidence as an alliance partner and enable it to contribute more to and improve the quality of the alliance. Given the unequal character of the alliance as it currently stands (i.e., the U.S. has a duty to defend Japan, but Japan does not have a similar duty to the U.S.), the alliance is seen by some critics as something that the U.S. forced on Japan, not as a symbol of successful Japan-U.S. relations since Japan's defeat in World War II. Confidence is the most important basis for the alliance, and that confidence will not be further generated unless Japan assumes a greater security role commensurate with its capabilities.

The era in which the U.S. shoulders a one-sided burden for the defense of Japan is over. Globalization has repainted not only the world economy but also the security environment, and has required Japan to make its utmost efforts to solidify the Japan-U.S. alliance to cope with nontraditional threats and contribute to regional stability. Therefore, it is perfectly natural that Richard P. Lawless, then deputy under secretary of defense for Asia-Pacific affairs, said (according to LDP member Shigeru Ishiba, who met with Lawless) "it would be 'crazy' of Japan not to shoot down a missile clearly heading toward the United States."<sup>2</sup> In order to do so, Japan will face a difficult decision to change its current interpretation of the right of collective self-defense while dispelling neighbors' doubts about Japan's greater security role. As long as Japan continues to prohibit the exercise of the right of collective self-defense, it will not be able to feel confident about its security role in the region.

### **Addressing the Rise of China**

It is impossible to ignore the China factor when considering the future of the U.S.-Japan alliance. Although the reinterpretation of the right of collective-self defense is necessary for Japan to feel more confident about its role in the region, Japan must not regard that as part of an effort to contain or hedge against China with the U.S. It is often said that there are two scenarios for China's rise, one optimistic and one pessimistic. The optimistic scenario features China as a responsible stakeholder that contributes to regional prosperity by becoming more democratic and working actively with other regional powers to resolve common problems in East Asia. The pessimistic scenario presents a China that would remain nationalistic, mercantilistic, and undemocratic, and faces serious social problems that could bring chaos, and requires an extremely strong and well-coordinated U.S.-Japan leadership to maintain regional stability. On the other hand, an optimistic case does not mean that the Japan-U.S. alliance does not face challenges regarding the rise of China. On the contrary, China as a responsible stakeholder could pose other difficult questions for the alliance.

China's positive role in the region and the world can create more areas of cooperation for Japan and the U.S. If Japan and China can find a way to manage their history and the East China Sea resource development issues, Japan-China relations could become "hot politics, hot economics (the current situation is hot economics, cold politics)." The U.S. would also strengthen its political, economic, and military ties with China. If China becomes a responsible

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<sup>2</sup> *The Japan Times*, Dec. 7, 2006, [search.japantimes.co.jp/member/member.html?appURL=nn20061207a3.html](http://search.japantimes.co.jp/member/member.html?appURL=nn20061207a3.html)

stakeholder and plays a constructive role not only on the issue of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula (as it has done so far), but also for other issues such as Iran's nuclear program, stabilization of the Middle East, or a positive contribution to poverty reduction and economic growth in Africa, it would be natural for the U.S. to work more closely with China. It also seems reasonable for Japan to cooperate more with China.

However, China's rise as a responsible stakeholder would require very careful alliance management by both Japan and the U.S. Historically, closer U.S.-China relations tend to create a perception in Japan of "Japan passing," and Japan has tended to judge U.S. presidents on whether they are pro-Japan or pro-China. Hence the question is whether Japan can regard closer U.S.-China relations as a good stability in Asia. It is very difficult for Japan to welcome China's bigger role if China's rise means the advent of a new regional power balance: China as a regional leader and Japan as a country in decline. In order to prevent this, Japan needs to play a greater security role in the region by exercising the right of collective self-defense. This does not mean a hedging strategy against China. On the contrary, it gives Japan more responsibility and confidence to build stable Japan-U.S.-China relations.

Japan is always looking at how the U.S. treats China and how it is treated by the U.S. vis-à-vis China. The U.S. must be sensitive to this Japanese psychology. Japan has been proud of its status as the world's second largest economy and considers that part of its national identity, but it will lose the status sooner or later and face the painful reality that China and India are catching up at a frightening pace. Japan has a dilemma. On the one hand, it acknowledges that a China that follows a stakeholder scenario is in Japan's interest. On the other hand, it worries that the stakeholder scenario would lead the U.S. to pay less attention to Japan. Japan would continue suffering from the dilemma as long as it maintains a limited security role under the current interpretation of the right of collective self-defense.

## **Conclusion**

Facing limitations of its security role, the post-9/11 world situation, and a new generation of leaders, Japan seems to be headed for a consensus on the reinterpretation of the right of collective self-defense in order to play a greater security role. In addition, it is important to recognize the important role of the U.S.-Japan alliance in the context of a rising China. No one expects stability in Northeast Asia without the alliance. Japan and the U.S. have every reason to keep enhancing the alliance to accommodate the peaceful rise of China and address new and emerging threats. However, Japan will never become fully confident of its relations with the U.S. without assuming a greater role as an ally. Confidence is the foundation of the alliance, and a more confident Japan will reinforce the basis of the Japan-U.S. alliance and deepen mutual trust. For building a healthy U.S.-Japan-China triangle, a Japan that can exercise the right of collective self-defense is a necessary component, and it will be a public good in Asia.





## Commentary

By Kristi Elaine Govella

Koizumi's essay insightfully addresses two key challenges to strengthening this important alliance: 1) Japan's position on the issue of collective self-defense and 2) the rise of China. For Koizumi, lifting the ban on collective defense is necessary for building a "healthy U.S.-Japan-China triangle." He argues that this change in security policy would render Japan a more confident partner and increase the effectiveness of the alliance at a time when the U.S. cannot or will no longer shoulder a "one-sided burden" for Japanese defense. He also sees an increased security role as a solution to the Japanese dilemma of simultaneously accepting China as a powerful stakeholder while maintaining American attention.

Koizumi is correct in isolating these two issues as central challenges; however, there may be an inherent tension in his twin goals of strengthening the U.S.-Japan alliance and addressing the rise of China, a tension that remains unaddressed in his essay. While a larger Japanese security role makes the alliance more effective and "broadens Japan's diplomatic horizons," it is also quite possible that even a larger defensive role for Japan would result in a security dilemma with China. In an atmosphere of distrust like the one that currently pervades East Asia, the disparity between "intent" and "perception" becomes critical. Even if Japan intends to provide a collective good for the region, its actions may not be interpreted as such, implying that the path to greater security participation must be tread with great caution.

Koizumi also emphasizes an enhanced security role as a way for Japan to address its own decline. However, Japan has long cultivated a role of "leadership from behind," both by choice and due to the constraints imposed on it by its World War II legacy. While the effectiveness of this leadership style seems to be declining and may be unsustainable, it seems that many of the same constraints still exist. Mistrust of Japanese intentions and actions, particularly on the part of China and Korea, will continue to pose difficulties for the country. Even if Japan makes the domestic decision to lift the ban on the exercise of the right of collective self-defense, will it be able to utilize its capabilities without provoking suspicion or fear on the part of its neighbors? Japan may need to be more creative about fashioning a new type of leadership role for itself through soft power or building on its economic strengths, instead of pursuing security leadership alone.

This essay is an excellent treatment of the changing circumstances and attitudes affecting the U.S. and Japan; its emphasis on the need for greater Japanese security responsibility is timely and reflects the primary concern of many policymakers. However, one might take greater account of the regional and historical contexts of Japanese security participation, as these have bearing on Japan's ability to support the alliance. Building a "healthy U.S.-Japan-China" triangle is the key to future peace and prosperity, but this triangle becomes lopsided when focusing largely on the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-China legs – the Japan-China relationship is just as critical. If Japan and China can find a way to manage their historical and contemporary tensions, Asia and the world will benefit immensely; the difficulties inherent in such an endeavor should not be taken lightly.



# Toward a Power-Sharing Alliance: A Japanese Response to the “Nye Armitage Report II”

By Tetsuo Kotani

This paper envisions the Japan-U.S. alliance in 10 years as a Japanese response to the “Nye Armitage report II.”<sup>1</sup> This paper argues that Japanese leaders share the strategic vision set forth in the “Nye Armitage report II,” and envisions that, in 10 years, Japan and the United States will share power, both hard and soft, constituting the core of a “security community,” as Karl Deutsch defined, in the region, thereby providing continued regional peace and prosperity. This paper also argues, however, that there are several challenges to the future of the alliance. Lastly, it makes recommendations for the alliance to get over the challenges.

## The Shared Strategic Vision

Considering prospects for Asia through 2020, the “Nye Armitage report II” argues that regional stability depends on the “quality” of U.S.-Japan-China trilateral relations. Then it calls for a coordinated approach to China to help it become a responsible stakeholder, while promoting partnership with India, Australia, ASEAN, and multilateral frameworks, based upon shared values such as democracy, free markets, and the rule of law, thereby “getting Asia right.”

This approach is in line with Prime Minister Abe’s idea of a maritime democracy partnership and Foreign Minister Aso’s “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity.” A member of the Democratic Party of Japan, Akihisa Nagashima, also calls for a “Rimland-Maritime Coalition,” consisting of countries such as Japan, the ROK, Taiwan, and Australia, and India, for a “shape and hedge” strategy toward the region. Indian Prime Minister Singh and Australian Prime Minister Howard addressed similar ideas. In fact, Japan and Australia recently made a joint statement on security. Also, a joint naval exercise among Japan, the United States, and India is expected in April 2007.

In this sense, Japan and the U.S. share a basic strategic vision in the region. Japan and the United States envision an open and inclusive alliance based upon common values rather than an exclusive alliance against a common threat. This values-based approach can contribute to the establishment of a “security community” in the region.

In order to implement this vision, the two allies have to share hard and soft power and integrate their hard and soft power into “smart power”<sup>2</sup> based on comparative advantage. The original “Nye Armitage report” aimed at “getting the alliance right” and set forth a “U.S.-U.K.” model for “power sharing.”<sup>3</sup> Given the drastic development of the alliance after the original report was released, there is no reference to the “U.S.-U.K. model” in the second report. In fact,

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<sup>1</sup> Richard L. Armitage and Joseph S. Nye, “The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Getting Asia Right through 2020,” (February 2007.)

<sup>2</sup> CSIS has launched a “commission on smart power” that aims to create a strategic vision for how the United States can integrate soft and hard power into “smart power” to address current and future challenges.  
<[www.csis.org/smartpower/](http://www.csis.org/smartpower/)>

<sup>3</sup> INSS Special Report “The United States and Japan: Advancing Toward a Mature Partnership” (October 2000).

the second report regards the U.S.-Japan alliance as key to “getting Asia right.” That said, power sharing between Japan and the United States has a long way to go.

### **Challenges ahead**

There are several challenges to the future of the Japan-U.S. alliance. First, the values-based approach should be applied to Taiwan with some reservations. The “Nye Armitage report II” reaffirms the U.S. policy of “dual restraint,” deterring the use or threat of force by China while discouraging unilateral Taiwanese movement toward independence. Then, it calls on Japan to take the same approach. As far as the Taiwan issue is concerned, Japan and the U.S. will have to put more significance on stability through maintaining the status quo rather than emphasizing shared values. The Japan-U.S. alliance needs to provide some mechanism for “dual assurance” as well as “dual restraint” to guarantee the status quo in the Taiwan Strait.<sup>4</sup>

The second challenge is the Korean Peninsula. While they share values, the difference in priorities among Tokyo, Washington, and Seoul may prevent trilateral cooperation, which is essential for peace and stability on the Peninsula. The abductions and historical issues can also prevent trilateral cooperation. In addition, the behavior of a unified Korea will be unpredictable. It is important for Japan and the United States to “get the ROK right,” based upon long-term shared interests, rather than immediate benefits. It is particularly important to integrate the Japan-U.S. alliance with the U.S.-ROK alliance as they complement each other.

The third challenge is Iran. The United States is paying huge attention to Iran’s nuclear development, but Iran is an important source of energy for Japan. Iran is a large issue in which Japan and the United States have different interests. There is no reference to Iran in the “Nye Armitage report II,” reflecting the inadequate discussion among the study group. It is necessary for the United States and Japan to step up policy coordination with regard to the Middle East in general and Iran in particular.

The fourth challenge is cooperation in regional and global issues such as energy and maritime security and environmental conservation. Maritime security is important for seaborne shipping and nonproliferation, while traditional sovereignty issue still matters in ocean politics. It is also important for energy security since states are increasing their access to the seas in search of energy resources. Growing energy consumption poses hazards for the environment. Oceanic pollution is a maritime security issue as well. On the other hand, as the “Nye Armitage report II” points out, it is possible for major powers like Japan, the United States, China, and India to cooperate on these issues, for they have a growing shared interest. These are the issues in which Japanese soft power such as energy efficiency and the past record of contributions to navigational safety and American hard power such as naval strength can be integrated.

The last challenge is the sustainable presence of U.S. forces in the region. U.S. forces stationed in the region is the source of American hard power. However, given social changes in host communities, it is getting more difficult to maintain the U.S. presence not only in Japan but

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<sup>4</sup> This author once proposed six-party talks over the Taiwan Strait issue, including China, Taiwan, Japan, the United States, Russia and the EU. See Tetsuo Kotani, “The ‘New Taiwan Clause’: Its Implication for Stability in the Taiwan Strait,” in *Issues & Insights*, Vol. 5, No. 12, (September 2005), pp. 1-19-1-22.

throughout the region. Democracy does not necessarily guarantee a sustainable presence of U.S. forces. The Philippines kicked out U.S. forces through the democratic process. It will be critical to establish “host region support” for a sustainable U.S. regional presence.

## **Recommendations**

In order to deal with these challenges, the Japan-U.S. alliance must integrate Japanese soft power and American hard power, thereby creating a power-sharing alliance. It is particularly important to do so in Southeast Asia and the Middle East and in issues such as energy and maritime security and environmental conservation.

1. Japan and the United States should, first, become more symmetric and equal, with Japan exercising the right of collective self-defense and having offensive capabilities, while continuing to enhance missile defense cooperation, thereby increasing the credibility of their deterrent power. Japan must immediately remove its self-restraints, namely the ban on collective defense and the three arms export principles as well as strengthening intelligence management measures;
2. At the same time, Japan, as a “model member,” and the United States, as an original manager, should work to restructure the NPT regime to ensure nuclear nonproliferation while providing safe, efficient nuclear and non-nuclear energy technologies;
3. Japan and the United States should enrich their partnership with India, Australia, and other maritime democracies for counter-proliferation, counter-terrorism, disaster relief and humanitarian assistance, promoting the “1,000-ship navy” concept;
4. Japan and the United States should make a joint announcement that they will oppose any unilateral action from either side to change the status quo in the Taiwan Strait (dual-restraint and dual-assurance);
5. Japan and the United States should strengthen cooperation with the ROK in regional security affairs, especially in search and rescue missions, while encouraging the ROK to participate in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI);
6. Japan and the U.S. should step up policy coordination regarding the Middle East in general and Iran in particular. To this end, Japan needs to get involved in regional affairs, actively taking advantage of its good reputation in the region;
7. The Japan-U.S. alliance should take the lead in maritime security issues, especially in Southeast Asia, to secure seaborne shipping, fair and equitable access to energy resources, and nonproliferation. To that end, the U.S. needs to increase its soft power by joining Japanese efforts to enhance navigational safety, environmental conservation, and law enforcement measures;

8. Japan and the United States should jointly develop Guam as a strategic base. The relocation of U.S. Marines from Okinawa to Guam can be the first step to such joint development. Also, contributions from other countries, especially the ROK, should be welcomed, as a first step to “host region support.”

## Commentary

By Michele Fugiel

Tetsuo Kotani's Japanese response to the Nye Armitage Report II ably points out that ensuring regional stability in Northeast Asia will require not simply a strong U.S.-Japan alliance, but also high-quality relationships between regional neighbors and the alliance. He furthermore points out that "getting Asia right" will require greater power-sharing between the alliance by integrating each country's hard and soft power into "smart power" based on comparative advantage. Kotani looks at the challenges to sharing a strategic vision based on shared values and makes recommendations for these challenges especially in Southeast Asia and the Middle East in areas of energy, maritime security, and environmental conservation.

Kotani rightly points out that there will be challenges in an alliance based on shared values. However his examples of possible challenges are not rooted to a definition of the values that should be shared by the alliance. Will the alliance value democracy or the sovereignty of nations? If they do share this value, how will their "dual restraint" of a fully-sovereign, democratic Taiwan look to the outside world? Will they be seen as valuing democracy only in the absence of difficult issues? When values are used as a basis for policy and are not followed, what is policy based upon and does it continue to hold value?

While Kotani discusses the power-sharing capabilities of the U.S. and the U.K. and mentions that power-sharing between the U.S. and Japan still has "a way to go", he does not allude to how the U.S.-Japan alliance will be able to shadow the power sharing of the U.S.-U.K. alliance. His recommendation of immediately removing Japan's self-restraints and restructuring the NPT regime are conceivable, but this would ultimately put power sharing back on the basis of hard power capabilities. While promoting the idea of "smart power," Kotani does not discuss in depth how Japan's soft power, their comparative advantage, could be used to cover the deficit in hard power and increase power sharing within the alliance.

In relation to Kotani's comments on the Middle East, specifically Japan's reliance on Iranian energy, it is not clear how Japan and the U.S. will be able to coordinate their Middle East policy. If a shared values approach is to be applied, assuming that the promotion of democracy and nuclear deterrence ideals are to be similar, then how can Japan get involved in Middle East affairs, maintaining its energy partnership with Iran, without being seen as working against U.S. interests?

Finally, as much as regional cooperation is needed to maintain Northeast Asian security, it is unclear from Kotani's analysis how the alliance intends to move past historical issues that impede progress on shared policy. These issues will not go away, and without a full commitment to dialogue on them, it will be unlikely that a cohesive Northeast Asia will emerge. While maritime, energy, and environmental issues might provide a way forward, Kotani does not make reference to the very real obstacles the alliance must overcome to developing a shared perspective on these issues.

Overall, Kotani's analysis touches on a number of very relevant issues facing the alliance and recommends possibilities for strengthening the alliance in the next 10 years. The strategic

concepts of shared values and 'smart power' must be thoroughly defined and considered before tactical decisions can be made.



# American Behavior before China Reaches Parity, and the Future of the Alliance: Putting the Japan-U.S. Alliance into a Different Context

By Ryo Sahashi<sup>1</sup>

How should we envision the Japan-U.S. alliance a few decades from now? While it is reasonable to emphasize the fact that the two countries share political values such as democracy and human rights, which enables their leaders and people to feel closer and contributes to the alliance's endurance<sup>2</sup>, theoretically stronger endurance and coherence of the alliance could be achieved through a common threat from rising power(s). The DPRK, with its successful nuclear detonation and missile program, and China, with its rising military and economic capability, could constitute such a common threat, and it might be necessary to prepare for a conflict with them. If the DPRK or China succeed in developing long-range missiles that could reach U.S. mainland, we can expect serious discussion on Capital Hill and in the American media. We can not easily deny the view of offensive realists like John Mearsheimer. He argues that unless China fails to keep growing, the U.S. will have incentives to engage in offshore balancing to prevent it from becoming a regional hegemon. Considering that it takes time to plan and deploy a defensive capability, defense planners of both Japan and the U.S. should prepare for such a scenario, and when that scenario happens we can expect the Japan-U.S. alliance to deepen.

It is dangerous to rely on one scenario but what other scenarios should we consider? Without thinking more openly, we would have no choice but to agree on Mearsheimer's recommendation to reject a policy of engagement and contain China. China's economic rise and its provision of cheap labor to industrialized countries have helped China escape from being contained economically – for example through embargos that were employed during the first half of the Cold War. To the contrary, China has been welcomed by most business and government leaders in both developed and developing countries. Given this reality, any policy of containment vis-à-vis China would be infeasible, or at least too costly,

Given deepening bilateral ties between Washington and Beijing, I propose that strategic planners in Tokyo should prepare for different scenarios. Doing so need not give rise to traditional fears of abandonment – which Japan has historically felt each time Washington moves toward improving relations with China – and I conclude that the alliance will be weakened or collapse. I simply claim that the impact of the gradual evolution of a U.S.-Sino partnership as well as the “rise of China” should be put on the agenda of the Japan-U.S. alliance. Before China achieves military parity with the U.S., which direction would U.S. China policy go? In other words, before containment looks feasible, what other scenarios might emerge with a strong,

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<sup>1</sup> This paper does not represent opinions or ideas of his institutions. The author's opinions and critique recently appeared in Ryo Sahashi, “Primacy of America, Rise of China, and the Future of Japan,” *Ronza* (Asahi Shimbun), April 2006, “Book Review: John J. Mearsheimer *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*,” *Ronza*, May 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Moreover, not appreciating Western values of human rights and democracy, China looks strange. But the very fact that it is an emerging power means no country can ignore its entry into international society. It is uncertain what this kind of political remoteness and different political values mean and whether it will create crises in bilateral or international relations. For a critique of U.S. China policy from this angle, see James Mann, *China Fantasy: How Our Leaders Explain Away Chinese Expression*, Viking, 2007.

rising China? How could Japanese policy planners prepare for a middle-range scenario, before the long-term scenario of China catching up with the U.S.?<sup>3</sup> After predicting that U.S.-China ties will deepen, this paper will propose that Japan take steps to enhance ties with the U.S. through common actions of both engagement and hedging against China, and also recommends using the strategy of claiming “sharing values” tactically in its diplomacy.

### **U.S.-China Relations: Engagement over Caution**

First, readers should remember that the U.S. and China have been “tacit allies” since the Nixon-Kissinger diplomacy against the Soviet Union. There have been many obstacles in their bilateral relations since 1972, caused mainly by the Taiwan question. It is evident that bilateral cooperation during the 1970s and 1980s was very deep in fields of military and intelligence.<sup>4</sup>

America’s China policy since the end of the Cold war has consistently been “engagement.” Even after the Tiananmen incident, multinational corporations set up manufacturing bases on Chinese soil and the Chinese economy began rising with skyrocketing foreign direct investment. In 2001 China entered the World Trade Organization. Factories in China have played an essential part in the Asian supply-chain as the final place for assembling value-added items, which are then exported to Western markets.<sup>5</sup> The success of this macro-economic model is solid and durable, and the growth of Asian economies supports the world economy. Even though the rise of the Chinese economy increases China’s latent power, no single country can deny the attractiveness of cheap labor. China’s military grows rapidly, but its economic attractiveness softens other powers’ fears. Fear of the rise of Chinese economic and military power is not dominating U.S. domestic politics even though China bashing is a popular campaign strategy of those running for re-election in Congress and the Pentagon, especially the Navy which wants to increase its budget. Meanwhile, many experts press for engagement and integrate the necessity of hedging through strengthening U.S. diplomacy toward Southeast Asia, India, and Japan into the grand strategy of engaging China.

Even the George W. Bush administration gave up its ambiguous phrase “strategic competitor,” and has instead emphasized engagement. As a result, Sino-U.S. relations are more stable than at any other point since 1972. U.S.-China bilateral cooperation in the nuclear field resumed in 2005, and they started joint maritime rescue exercises in 2006. Significant progress was made in contentious issues such as finance, trade, and intellectual property rights when a group of Cabinet officials – despite opposition from many on Capitol Hill – went to Beijing in December 2006. Further strategic dialogue has made clear that the executive branch in Washington does harbor a strong desire for a healthier relationship with Beijing.

As long as China contributes to the stability of the world economy and the regional security order, such moves are beneficial to Japanese interests. But, I propose the concept of

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<sup>3</sup> The scenario presented is a middle-range future for Japan and it does not address present or near future scenarios for Japan’s diplomacy. In that sense, this paper is not informative but is merely theoretical.

<sup>4</sup> For examples, see James Mann, *About Face*, James Lilley, *China Hands*, and Ali, *US-China Cold War Collaboration* (2005).

<sup>5</sup> Frisbie and Overmier (2006). China’s entry to the WTO nearly doubled U.S. exports to and imports from China in three years. This growth of bilateral economic exchanges is more speedy than ever.

binding and tethering in alliance theory first to explain the dynamics of Washington-Beijing relations, and second to get implications for the formalized alliance between Tokyo-Washington. With these steps, we could describe a mid-term scenario.

### **Deepening U.S.-China Bilateral Relations: Alliance for Management?**

According to some alliance theorists<sup>6</sup>, modern history shows that a party to an alliance typically has as its purpose either the management or “tethering” of its alliance partner. In other words, unlike the capability-aggregation alliance model, which suggests that states form alliances to balance a third party’s rising power (e.g. the U.S.-Japan alliance during the Cold War and its aftermath) an alliance could be formed with potential enemies whose threat has not reached the level where balancing is necessary. There are many reasons for a dominant country to form such an alliance. For example, it would likely result in greater transparency and trust between the two countries and/or the alliance could prevent the alliance partner from forming alliances with third parties. For rising powers, it would form an alliance to satisfy its prestige and gain more opportunities to shape the international order<sup>7</sup>. The threat from an external third party also contributes to forming alliances where parties, at least one, have the secret objective of binding partner(s) through alliance formation.

Figure 1, taken from Randall Schweller’s thesis, sketches the theoretical responses of an established but relatively declining dominant power to rising powers. In a situation where the dominant power still keeps itself within the status quo, its behavior might be categorized as “Risk-averse and Limited (nature of revisionist aims),” and an engagement policy will be mixed with the policies of binding. The point is that the approach to rising powers includes not only engagement, socializing them into the international order, but also binding, or controlling potential sources of threats by allying with them.

This “alliance for management/ tethering” theory provides an alternative approach to thinking about U.S.-China relations. When one major power faces a rising power(s), its policy options are not limited to internal or external balancing but also include alliance formation, or at least a high level of cooperation, with the rising power. This theory predicts a gradual consolidation and tightening of U.S.-China relations. This motivation to deepen bilateral relations could provide us with another meaning of engagement policy. In many cases, engagement could change Chinese domestic situations through increasing economic ties and exchanges, and to make sure that maintenance of the status quo in the regional and world order is in China’s interest. In sum, we find that the logic of engagement strategy expects that China’s *intention* might change as a result of engagement and consolidating its place in international society. But when we think of the U.S. motivation to China in terms of alliance management theory, we don’t need to think about its intentions and can see bilateral relations simply in terms of *power/capability*, which helps make predictions free from vague interpretations of intentions.

This shows us that the U.S. has an incentive to deepen collaboration with China for the foreseeable future, before the U.S. finds it necessary to balance China with a containment policy. Even a hedging strategy requires that policy makers not spoil good bilateral relations by hedging

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<sup>6</sup> See Schroeder (1976) and Weitsman (2004).

<sup>7</sup> Schweller (1999).

actions; instead it proposes efforts to enhance bilateral mechanisms to lighten military opaqueness, and create a regional and international framework to lock China into international society<sup>8</sup>. Thus, I do not suggest that evolution in the Sino-U.S. relationship portends the collapse of the U.S.-Japan alliance.

This paper, however, does argue that the recently released Armitage-Nye report relies too much on the idea of shared values. It says, “For some, a condominium between the United States and China seems the logical future structure for the region. However, as long as the United States and China have different value systems, and absent a clear understanding of our respective interests both regionally and globally, it is our view that such an accommodation overestimates the potential of U.S.-China relations.”<sup>9</sup> This analysis is based on power (or fear of a rising power), not values. Japan could continue to enjoy its partnership with the U.S. because of its economic power and advanced naval strength. The fact that the countries share similar political, and economic systems might also support the foundation of the alliance. But, a dominant power has incentives to approach and bind rising powers to the international order, and such moves might dilute the alliance, leaving Japan outside the order-making process. If that scenario happens before the U.S. balances against rising powers (China) how should the alliance partner of a dominant power (Japan) behave? [see Figure 2: Future of Northeast Asia]

We must also consider two other possible scenarios. One is China’s overt use of military force against Taiwan, or if China maintains its ambitious military growth and increases operations and provocative statements and experiments. In both cases, U.S. is likely to move more quickly toward internal and/or external balancing. In other words, China’s actions could hasten the transition from the mid-term scenario to the long-term scenario with America embracing containment and balancing. The other scenario we could envision is if China fails to keep growing, or if China faces domestic turmoil and instability hinders its growth. In that case, U.S. might decide to withdraw from Asia militarily and pass its burden to its allies in the region: Japan, Australia, and Korea. Without a threat from a rising China, and after the Korean Peninsula nuclear game, the U.S. will lose the incentive to sacrifice itself and will want to pour its resources into other regions<sup>10</sup>.

### **A Japanese Alliance Strategy: Fighting External Threats and Sharing Values**

If we consider scenarios such as those explored above, how could we envision the future of the Japan-U.S. alliance? One view was exposed in a provocative op-ed by Masashi Nishihara, then-president of Japan’s National Defense Academy. He stated that if the U.S. agrees with the DPRK on a resolution of the Korean Peninsula peace process, then it conflicts with the U.S. alliance commitment to Japan. He calls it a “Trojan Horse.” If the U.S. agrees with China on the peace and security of East Asia without Japan, this is another type of “Trojan Horse” for Japan. Current bilateral cooperation between China and the U.S. does not reach that level of concern, but if they bilaterally agree on a re-making of the regional order – for example, resolution of the

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<sup>8</sup> Medeiros (2005).

<sup>9</sup> Armitage and Nye (2007), p.14. My idea here is different from that of simple “power condominium” alarmists because I don’t predict the collapse of the Japan-U.S. alliance, which could work as a balancing coalition in the long term, even though it might be diluted.

<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, we could consider the impact of Korean unification on the Northeast Asia security map.

Taiwan question – it surely threatens not only Japan’s national interest but also the Japan-U.S. partnership by passing Japan, which believes Taiwan is a common agenda item for Japan and the States . If things get worse and the credibility of the alliance in terms of nuclear and conventional extended deterrence is brought into question, Japan’s policy planners would have no choice but to rethink its military posture. Doing so would not only be costly but would also damage bilateral economic and functional cooperation with the U.S. in many fields.

Therefore, the best way for Japan to approach diplomacy vis-à-vis the U.S.-Japan Alliance would be a combination of a classical balancing coupled with a strong commitment to regional and global mechanisms.

First, we need to claim secretly there needs to be hedging against China’s military rise. Long-term concerns should not be neglected even though mid-term stability seems likely. Before they catch up, the fear of rising powers is relatively weak, but status quo powers should still hinder them from growing rapidly. The ASAT test provided one such opportunity. For that purpose, Japan should continue to support U.S. opposition to the proposed lifting of the ban on potentially dangerous military or dual-use exports to China. Also, not to be outdone by China, Japan should enhance efforts toward creating frameworks for trilateral and regional security cooperation. Japan need not discard its engagement policy toward China, but Tokyo and Washington “should base its engagement with Beijing on a close alliance”<sup>11</sup> and prevent the alliance from being diluted by closer U.S.-China relations. The key is that Japan should do what it can to ensure that it is not excluded from the making of the regional or global order<sup>12</sup>.

Considering the increasing influence of China specialists in U.S. foreign policy-making, the Japanese government should engage China experts in Washington and elsewhere in the U.S. more, orienting their focus toward Asia as a whole, rather than China.<sup>13</sup> We should not encourage U.S. planners or experts to underevaluate the significance of a rising China in the context of the alliance in order to soften the pressure on Japan. Rather, it is important for Japan’s government to propose a “strong point” strategy that appreciates the balance of power in Eurasia and the world correctly and putting Japan with China, India, Russia, EU, and the U.S., emphasizing the strategic value of partnership with Japan in the coming balance.

Second, because China does not share many aspects of political and economic systems with Western countries, Japan could emphasize to some extent its shared values with the U.S. I previously wrote about the strategy of sharing values in the era of a declining U.S. reputation. It is difficult to manage so many American demands, such as beef trade with softer inspection standards for support for the Iraq mission, and starting to consider a free trade agreement and dispatching more SDF abroad.<sup>14</sup> An approach that relies on values sounds optimistic, and prevents us from looking at possible nightmare scenarios for the alliance. To be sure, to some

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<sup>11</sup> Green (2007).

<sup>12</sup> The recent progress of Six-Party Talks probably shows that, even though a Japanese delegation sits in the multilateral setting, the U.S. and China could bilaterally make progress in order making. (I do not mean the abduction issue should be prioritized, because it might cause a gap between two capitals.)

<sup>13</sup> None of this denies the importance of protecting Japan’s interest by engagement and a stable bilateral relationship with China after rapprochement from the historical debate in 2006.

<sup>14</sup> Ryo Sahashi, “How to Enhance Domestic Support for the Japan-U.S. Alliance: Sharing Values or Fighting External Threats?,” *Issues and Insights* (Pacific Forum CSIS), Vol.6, No.6, II, pp. 35-40.

extent, as a *tactical* diplomatic tool, the Japanese government should try to align Japan's values with America's and differentiate itself from China (as long as doing so does not hinder bilateral and trilateral relations with China). Recent historical debates on comfort women and its poor management do damage to the alliance, lowering Japan's international reputation.<sup>15</sup>

This paper argues that a coalition of the like-minded will not last long because the necessity to react to a new balance of power is a far more serious factor influencing foreign policy choices. On the one hand, Japan could expect the DPRK to be in the position to threaten the alliance for a decade; but on the other hand, it should also imagine a scenario following the resolution of the DPRK nuclear issue before China catches up and causes problems. There is a need to think of future strategy in the appropriate context. Sharing values could not work independently or provide sufficient support for the bilateral alliance. To have a solid foundation, we need to rely on the power basis ideas.

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<sup>15</sup> One interesting and inspiring idea which the author heard during the conference from policy experts is to establish the independent historical panel by the Japanese government unilaterally. In addition to people-to-people exchange among young generations through funding and visa waivers, and bilateral or multilateral investigations of a common history (textbook), unilateral efforts might be necessary to show and institutionalize the Japan's sincerity to the rest of the world.

Any temptation to develop nuclear arms should be restrained because it would hurt the Japanese civil nuclear use which relies on an international framework and Japan-U.S. nuclear cooperation. Nuclear sharing, the so-called "hardware" option, might be necessary if the domestic nuclear threat perception rises, but before then, government of Japan might negotiate with the U.S. on nuclear consulting, the "software" option.

Also, negotiations between Tokyo and Washington for a free trade agreement could damage bilateral relations and domestic support, at least in Japan, for the alliance, since in Japanese politics the agricultural lobby and government bodies are still strong.

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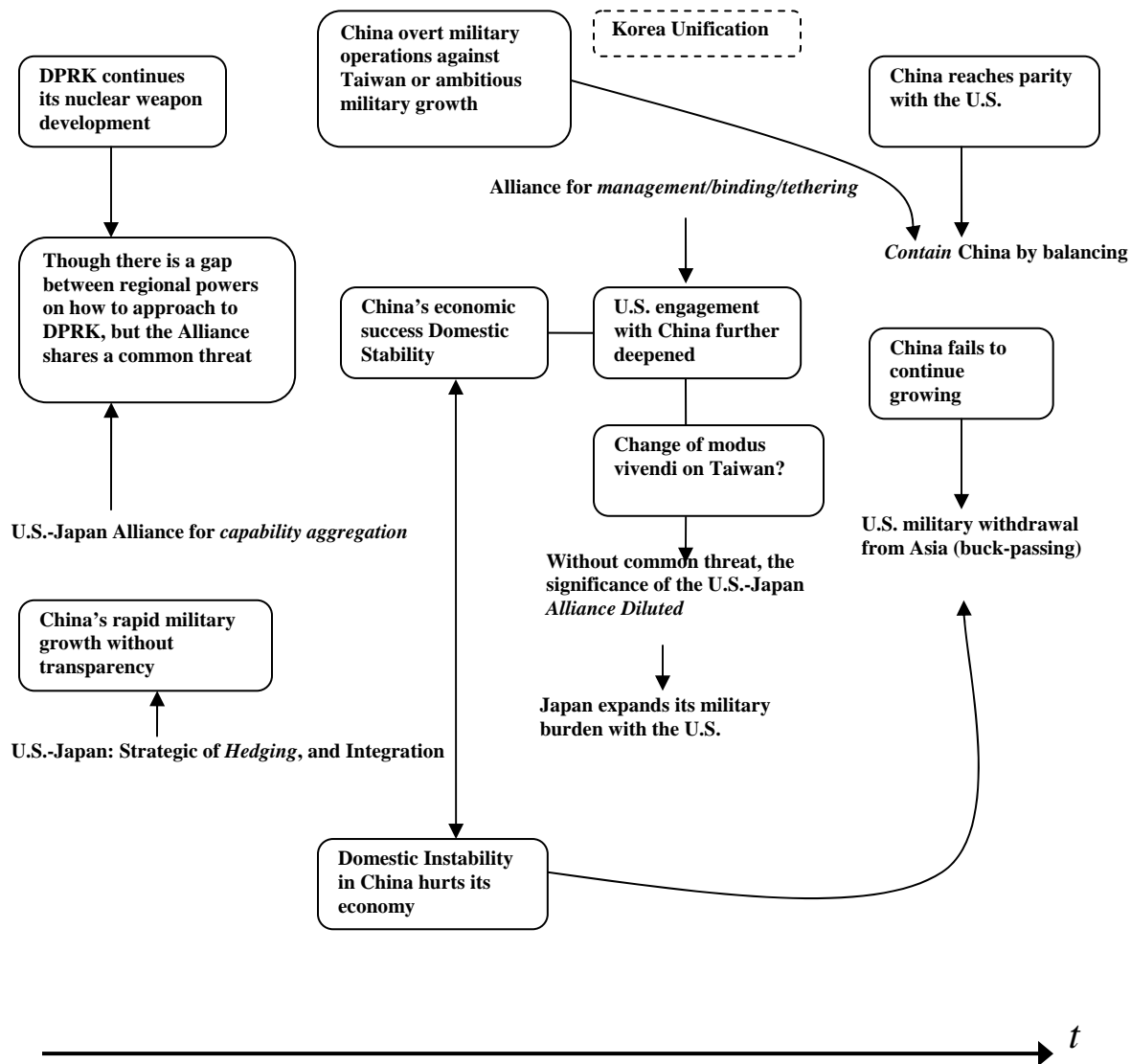
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### RISK PROPENSITY

		Risk-averse	Risk-acceptant
<b>NATURE OF REVISIONIST AIMS</b>	<b>Limited</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engagement</li> <li>2. Binding</li> <li>3. Mixed Strategy</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Containment/ balancing</li> <li>2. Engagement through strength</li> </ol>
	<b>Revolutionary</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Containment/ Balancing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Preventive War</li> </ol>

**Figure 1: Politics in response to rising, dissatisfied powers (Schweller 1999, p. 24)**





**Figure 2: Future of Northeast Asia**



## Commentary

By Leif-Eric Easley

In his article, Sahashi addresses key questions of U.S.-Japan-China strategic relations, a difficult task in such limited space. Recent analyses of Washington and Tokyo's relations with Beijing include much discussion of "hedging." But hedging is an intrinsically ambiguous concept. It is thus helpful that Sahashi addresses strategies and scenarios in the large and understudied space between engagement and containment.

While it is not responsible for strategic planners to assume engagement will work and that China's rise will be peaceful, it is also dangerous to pursue policies that invite self-fulfilling prophecies of strategic conflict with China. This paper looks to a future where Washington may decide to contain Beijing before China's power reaches parity with the U.S. But China's reaching parity with the U.S. is just one possible future, and containment of China may not be feasible or desirable.

As Sahashi points out, current U.S. policy toward China clearly leans toward engagement. The paper raises ally management theory in this context, suggesting that Washington may be upgrading relations with Beijing to increase U.S. influence over China. However, it may be more accurate to say the United States is looking to enlist allies in the effort of "socializing" China into the international system.

In so doing, the U.S. is looking to financially profit from China's rise while trying to shape China's preferences in the form of those shared by the United States and its allies. In this process, Washington pursues cooperation with China in areas of increasingly overlapping interests, and secures leverage vis-à-vis China in areas where Beijing's policies are counterproductive or potentially threatening.

As for Japan's role, it would be limiting to assume that Japan will always view China as a threat. In 10 years, Japan-China relations could be closer than U.S.-China relations. So it may not be in Japan's long-term strategic interests to encourage the U.S. to be tougher on China. Rather than focusing on how to manage China's increasing power, Japan might focus on how to make better use of its own.

Japan is poised to become increasingly relevant internationally (with the UN and NATO) and in the region, especially with Southeast Asian countries. But in order to do so, Japan needs to increase its attractive power. In the 1970s and '80s, Japan served as an economic development model; now it can be a model of democracy, human rights and economic liberalization. Japan's best strategy may be to consolidate its own gains in these areas while improving its international public relations in these areas and on thorny historical issues.

Sahashi is right, however, that Japan and the United States would be wise not to over-emphasize values. Leaders and publics should not lose sight of the shared economic and security interests on which the alliance is based and for which alliance cooperation is enduringly useful.

If there is a weakness of the paper, it is a function of successfully raising many important hypothetical scenarios. The problem is that the logic of these scenarios is not fully developed before the paper explores implications and concludes the centrality of power-based threat perception. Shared threat helps to solidify the alliance, but this does not mean that the U.S.-Japan alliance requires a North Korean or Chinese threat. It certainly does not mean that the allies should not constructively deal with threats.

The paper speculates that progress on North Korea's nuclear issue and closer U.S. coordination with China may undermine the alliance. This need not be the case. Counteracting the North Korean nuclear threat and engaging China from a position of strength are key post-Cold War roles for the U.S.-Japan alliance. Success in these areas would invite further fine-tuning of Tokyo and Washington's partnership, but would also demonstrate the alliance's effectiveness and continued importance.

## About the Authors

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