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An Alliance Renewed?

Future-proofing U.S.-Japan Security Relations

EDITED BY

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Sailors stand for the U.S. and Japanese national anthems at *Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka* (CFAY) change of command ceremony, July 9, 2019.

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Introduction

An alliance renewed? Future-proofing the U.S.-Japan security relations

Christopher Lamont and Jeffrey Ordaniel

On September 8, 1951, the Security Treaty between the United States and Japan was signed, marking the beginning of an alliance relationship that would serve as the cornerstone of regional peace, security, and prosperity in the decades that followed. Forged in the aftermath of the Second World War, at a time when a new post-war international order was being crafted around the United Nations, and an emergent superpower rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union was taking shape, the alliance has endured both economic shocks and geopolitical change. The alliance's resilience is partly due to its ability to adapt to the changing strategic environment enabled by the willingness of both sides to reconcile, compromise, and prioritize the welfare and security of their peoples. In 1960, the relationship evolved significantly. The Security Treaty was replaced by the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, granting the United States a permanent presence in Japanese territories in exchange for defending Japan in the event of an armed attack.¹

When the Cold War ended, the alliance did not fall into obscurity. Instead, it continued to adapt. Alliance managers found negotiating expectations and future responsibilities prudent given new realities. This culminated in the release of the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation in 1997. The Guidelines created a "solid basis for more effective and credible U.S.-Japan cooperation under normal circumstances, in case of an armed attack against Japan, and in situations in areas surrounding Japan."² Soon after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (SDF) were dispatched in support of combat operations overseas for the first time, initially to the Indian Ocean to assist U.S. operations in Afghanistan, but later also to Iraq to help in reconstruction. The SDF continued to carve out a broader international role by engaging in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations in South and Southeast Asia.³ Regional countries welcomed Japan's *de facto* armed forces to their shores, alongside those of the United States, as they coped with natural disasters such as the Boxing Day tsunami in 2004 that impacted countries like Indonesia, Thailand, Myanmar, India, and Sri Lanka, and Typhoon Haiyan in 2013 that killed over 6,000 in the Philippines.

Meanwhile, as North Korea pressed on with its nuclear and missile development programs in violation of multiple UN Security Council Resolutions, and as the region grows weary of the security implications of China's rise, including effort to operationalize illegal claims in many of the region's maritime commons, the U.S.-Japan alliance remained responsive. In 2015, Japanese policymakers reinterpreted their constitution and allowed the SDF to exercise the right to collective self-defense, for instance, by defending U.S. vessels subjected to an armed attack. Japan's embrace of collective self-defense, already enshrined in the UN Charter, resulted in the revision of the 1997 Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation, making the alliance even more relevant to the rapidly changing security environment.⁴

"Forged in the aftermath of the Second World War, at a time when a new post-war international order was being crafted around the United Nations, and an emergent superpower rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union was taking shape, the alliance has endured both economic shocks and geopolitical change."

In 2022, the alliance is, in many ways, at a crossroads. The United States, under the Trump and Biden administrations, is no longer an anchor of trade liberalization, and both administrations have sought to recalibrate U.S. relationships with close allies in the context of growing challenges to the rules-based order that defined the last three decades. While the alliance has endured, there are challenges, some of which are domestic, that will continue to test the security relationship. For instance, the planned relocation of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, which to many Okinawans does not address the overwhelming presence of the U.S. military in Okinawa, the issue of burden sharing in the alliance, the defense of Taiwan, and the demand for Tokyo to dramatically increase defense budget to over 1% of GDP to better cope with the increasingly unfavorable regional balance of power will persist and have to be managed. It is vital that next-generation Japanese and Americans are involved in these economic and security discourses and are mutually invested in the growth of their countries' partnerships.

It is within this context of change, with the challenges confronting the U.S.-Japan alliance in flux, that our contributors shed light on some of those critical questions that will undoubtedly define not just the future of U.S.-Japan relations but the trajectory of international order in the coming years. This collection of papers includes contributions from

¹ Emma Chanlett-Avery, Caitlin Campbell, and Joshua A. Williams, *The U.S.-Japan Alliance* (Washington, D.C: Congressional Research Service, July 13, 2019).

² "The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation," Japan Ministry of Defense, accessed October 30, 2022, https://warp.da.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/11591426/www.mod.go.jp/e/d_act/us/anpo/pdf/19970923.pdf.

³ Weston Konishi, "Is disaster relief revolutionising Japan's security affairs?" *East Asia Forum*, July 6, 2016, <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2016/07/06/is-disaster-relief-revolutionising-japans-security-affairs/>

⁴ "The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, April 27, 2015, accessed October 30, 2022, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000078188.pdf>.

emerging voices in academia, government, and the armed forces. It is a timely intervention that takes into account strategic competition between Washington and Beijing, the impact of Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine on international order, and heightened tensions over Taiwan.

This collection of papers begins with contributions that explore how the alliance will continue to evolve in the face of emergent challenges. Indeed, the first paper by Jada Fraser places an emphasis on rethinking how the United States can more effectively harness its alliance relationships in East Asia to advance shared interests and counter emerging threats. Fraser identifies the "advantages of organizing the U.S.-Japan-ROK trilateral as a form of flexible multilateralism based on overlapping frameworks of cooperation rather than a formally binding agreement."

The second contribution to this volume, by Cassie Rodriguez, examines how U.S. relationships in East Asia are shifting from a more traditional network of 'hub-and-spokes' security arrangements to a 'minilateralist' approach that favors informal alignments of countries that are more targeted and issue-specific. For Rodriguez, the U.S.-Japan alliance could become a model for minilateralism and a driver for the establishment of robust, yet flexible small groupings of states working closely together on shared challenges. An example of this is the Quad.

The next two papers offer insights from international relations theory. Yu Inagaki draws on Kosaka Masataka's power, interests, and norms framework to offer recommendations for both the United States and Japan to bring both countries into closer alignment. Meanwhile, Shusuke Ioku presents quantitative data analyses of territorial aggression and formal modeling of gray zone conflicts to argue that the key to deterring gray zone coercion is helping sustain the presence of Southeast Asian claimants through capacity building related to reinforcement of presence, constant naval and air patrols, and other measures that would allow them to withstand low-level aggression without backing down. Ioku recommends that Japan and the United States channel limited recourses accordingly and not be content with symbolic joint exercises and rhetorical support for rules-based resolution of disputes.

The next four papers delve deeper into issue-specific areas and contingencies that present challenges and opportunities for the U.S.-Japan alliance going forward. First, Ayae Yoshimoto provides Japan's perspective on heightened tensions over Taiwan. Offering recommendations that aim to bolster Taiwan's own position and image in the international community alongside more practical observations relating to a Taiwan contingency, Yoshimoto underlines the critical importance of Taiwan for Japan's national security. Next, Rena Sasaki provides a more granular analysis of the legislative, regulatory, and political constraints that a more limited Taiwan contingency scenario would pose for Tokyo. Both Yoshimoto and Sasaki underline how Taiwan contingencies demonstrate the urgent need for Tokyo and Washington to bolster crisis response mechanisms.

Shinichi Hirao then turns to examine how NATO standards can enhance the U.S.-Japan alliance. Benchmarking against NATO's core tasks of Deterrence and Defense, Crisis Management, and Cooperative Security, as outlined in the 2022 Strategic Concept, Hirao draws lessons for the U.S.-Japan security relationship. Hirao also concludes by offering specific recommendations to Tokyo for defense procurement. The final paper of this collection, by Brittany Bradley-Marcial, explores the question of bringing Japan into the Five Eyes community, analyzing both the rationale and the obstacles to membership, as well as potential paths forward that could bring Japan into a closer intelligence sharing relationship with the Five Eyes.

In sum, each contribution to this volume contains new insights into the U.S.-Japan alliance from the next generation of scholars, decision-makers, or military leaders. To be sure, this collection of papers attests to one of the critical factors that explains the longevity of the U.S.-Japan alliance: the alliance's continuous ability to remake itself in the face of new and emerging challenges.

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1

The cornerstone and the linchpin: Reconstituting U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security cooperation

Jada Fraser

Abstract

This paper focuses on the ‘why,’ ‘how,’ and ‘what’ of trilateral security cooperation by answering three interrelated questions. First, are there significant enough external and internal conditions to compel U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security cooperation? Second, what factors contributed to prior success in sustaining U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security cooperation? Third, in what areas can U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security cooperation be most effective? By examining the external pressures and internal changes that will continue to push Japan and South Korea closer together than in the recent past, this paper argues ‘why’ trilateral security cooperation is feasible. To understand ‘how’ trilateral security cooperation can be successfully sustained, this paper identifies the advantages of organizing the U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral as a form of flexible multilateralism based on overlapping frameworks of cooperation rather than a formally binding agreement. To promote trilateral security cooperation in a way that recognizes both obstacles and opportunities, this paper recommends a pathway toward reconstituting U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral cooperation based on this principle of flexible multilateralism. Finally, this paper focuses on the ‘what’ of trilateral security cooperation by recommending two areas of focus that appeal to the shared national security interests of the United States, Japan, and South Korea: 1) trilateral contingency planning for a Taiwan conflict and 2) commitment to a principle of ‘collective economic defense’ to buttress against future instances of economic coercion.

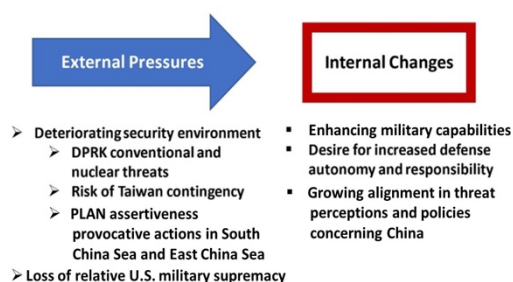
As U.S. military predominance faces its greatest challenge in Asia, cooperation with and amongst its most important allies in the region is more critical than ever. An outmoded U.S. hub-and-spoke alliance system can be supplemented to meet today's challenges by 'minilateralizing' security alliances.¹ The fast-growing trend in minilateral security pacts throughout the region exemplifies the advantage of this kind of arrangement in tackling the region's most pressing challenges. Excellent examples of minilateral security arrangements and activities include the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), Australia – United Kingdom – United States (AUKUS) Partnership, Japan-Australia Reciprocal Access Agreement, Japan-India Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement, India's invitation to Australia to the Malabar Exercise, and South Korea's first-time participation in a multilateral naval exercise led by India that included Japan and the United States. While the United States, Japan, and South Korea are each individually capitalizing on the force multiplication offered by minilateralizing their security partnerships, the absence of purposeful U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security cooperation remains a dangerous obstacle to maintaining peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

This paper focuses on the 'why,' 'how,' and 'what' of trilateral security cooperation by answering three interrelated questions. First, are there significant enough external and internal conditions to compel U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security cooperation? Second, what factors contributed to prior success in sustaining U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security cooperation? Third, in what areas can U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security cooperation be most effective? By examining the external pressures and internal changes that will continue to push Japan and South Korea closer together than in the recent past, this paper argues 'why' trilateral security cooperation is feasible. To understand 'how' trilateral security cooperation can be successfully sustained, this paper identifies the advantages of organizing the U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral as a form of flexible multilateralism based on overlapping frameworks of cooperation rather than a formally binding agreement. To promote trilateral security cooperation in a way that recognizes both obstacles and opportunities, this paper recommends a pathway toward reconstituting U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral cooperation based on this principle of flexible multilateralism. This pathway centers on empowering ambassadorial leadership to advocate for and organize U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security cooperation at the embassy level. Finally, this paper focuses on the 'what' of trilateral security cooperation by recommending two areas of focus that appeal to the shared national security interests of the United States, Japan, and South Korea: 1) trilateral contingency planning for a Taiwan conflict and 2) commitment to a principle of 'collective economic defense' to buttress against future instances of economic coercion. Interviews with Ambassador David Shear and General Vincent Brooks inform this paper's recommendations and

reflect how U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security cooperation falls at the intersection of diplomacy and defense.² While recognizing the salience of historical grievances in the South Korea-Japan relationship, this paper highlights the recent resolution of obstacles that hamstrung prior attempts to strengthen the U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral. This paper argues that progress in resolving these issues, coupled with converging threat perceptions and growing alignment in some policy areas, creates a widening political window of opportunity to improve trilateral security cooperation. Trilateral security cooperation is in the strategic interests of all three countries; shifting roles and missions within the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-ROK bilateral alliances urge it, and an evolved security environment demands it. The U.S.-Japan Alliance, regarded as the 'cornerstone' of peace and prosperity in Asia, can no longer be viewed in isolation from the 'linchpin' – the U.S.-ROK Alliance.

The why: external pressures and internal changes

Two external pressures and three internal changes will continue to push Japan and South Korea closer together, making trilateral security cooperation with the United States more viable than in the recent past. These external pressures—a deteriorating security environment and the loss of U.S. military supremacy—negate each country's ability to rely solely on their bilateral alliance with the United States as a primary security provider, thus driving internal changes in Japan and South Korea. Additionally, these external pressures impart greater impetus to re-thinking how potential conflict scenarios might necessitate new operational arrangements, particularly pertaining to a Taiwan contingency. Japan and South Korea are each enhancing their military capabilities. Both countries desire increased defense autonomy and responsibility. Importantly, Seoul and Tokyo's threat perceptions of and policies concerning China are beginning to converge. While the loss of U.S. military supremacy in the Indo-Pacific poses a risk to safeguarding the international rules-based order, these internal changes in Japan and South Korea show both countries are ready to fill the gap.



External pressures

1. A deteriorating security environment

North Korea's ever-growing military capabilities, conventional and nuclear, could conceivably threaten the

¹ For an extended discussion of minilateralism see Rodriguez' contribution to this volume.

² Ambassador David Shear spent 34 years as an American diplomat. He served in Washington, Sapporo, Beijing, Tokyo, Kuala Lumpur and Hanoi. Ambassador Shear spent ten years of his career working on U.S.-Japan relations at the American Consulate in Sapporo, the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, and in the State Department's Office of Japanese Affairs. He was Chief of Political-Military Affairs at U.S. Embassy Tokyo from 1994-97 under Ambassador Walter Mondale and Political Minister from 2001-2005 under Ambassador Howard Baker. Shear was Deputy Director of the

Office of Korean Affairs 1999- 2001 and traveled to Pyongyang with Secretary Albright in late-2000. Shear was the U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam from 2011-14 and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs 2014-2017. General Vincent K. Brooks is a career Army officer who recently retired from active duty as the four-star general in command of all US Forces in Korea, where he concurrently commanded United Nations Command as well as the Republic of Korea-US Combined Forces Command comprising over 650,000 Koreans and Americans under arms.

U.S. mainland, let alone Japan and South Korea. January 2022 saw an unprecedented display of North Korean weapons testing. A total of nine missile launches set a new record and prompted the U.S. Special Representative for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to call an emergency trilateral meeting with his South Korean and Japanese counterparts.³ As anxiety over the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence percolates in South Korea and Japan, calls to strengthen defense capabilities grow louder.⁴ The threat North Korea poses is but one of many with which South Korea and Japan must both contend. People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) and Coast Guard

emboldening PRC aggression in the Pacific.⁷ Yet, at their core, these diverging views all fundamentally acknowledge the decline in U.S. military primacy, the reality that ultimately triggered this debate.

Even before the Russian aggression against Ukraine prompted speculation on whether U.S. capabilities would be further split between theaters, numerous sources were already questioning the U.S. military's ability to fight and win in a conflict against the PLA.⁸ China is a serious peer competitor, and regardless of whether one places stock in the predictive power of table-top exercises, the fact remains that the United States can no longer provide the

"The combined strength of the United States and its allies is considered America's greatest advantage."

assertiveness and provocative actions in the South China Sea and the East China Sea are of equal concern to both countries. Moreover, many observers argue that the risk of war over the Taiwan Strait is at an all-time high.⁵ Both countries' leaders have joined President Biden in joint statements emphasizing the importance of preserving peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, representing a significant shift from prior U.S.-Japan and U.S.-ROK joint statements.⁶ The possibility of a military conflict involving Taiwan drastically alters the Indo-Pacific's strategic environment in ways that directly implicate the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-ROK alliances.

II. The loss of U.S. military supremacy

The United States can no longer rely on its post-Cold War military supremacy to keep competition with revisionist powers 'cold,' as shown by Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine. The recent fracturing of the relative consensus within the Asia security policy sphere on whether or how the U.S. government should prioritize the Indo-Pacific crystallized this fact. While experts such as Ashley Townshend, Oriana Mastro, and Elbridge Colby called for U.S. restraint in Ukraine lest vital resources and attention shift away from meeting the China "pacing challenge," others, like Michael Green and Gabe Schienmann, pointed to allied concerns in the region and the prospect of U.S. ambivalence in the European theater

same level of security guarantees to its allies that it could fifteen years ago. Declining U.S. military supremacy necessitates increased defense cooperation. Indeed, observers often call attention to the expectation that the United States would not be fighting alone in a military conflict in the Indo-Pacific. The combined strength of the United States and its allies is considered America's greatest advantage.

Perceptions of declining U.S. military power prompted many countries to seek new security partnerships and strengthen existing ones. It similarly motivated U.S. calls for greater defense burden-sharing from its partners.⁹ This increased U.S. reliance on allied support produces a need for resource and force pooling beyond what a single bilateral alliance in isolation can provide. Japan and South Korea host the largest and second-largest contingent of U.S. overseas forces, respectively. The siloing of U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ) and U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) in contingency planning is inefficient, non-strategic, and leaves a dangerous amount of space for operational ambiguity that Pyongyang or Beijing could easily exploit. Indeed, General Vincent Brooks, retired Commander of UN Command (UNC)/Combined Forces Command (CFC)/U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) from 2016-2019, called attention to the lack of mechanisms to facilitate South Korea-Japan coordination in a crisis and pointed out how reliance on clunky

³ "'Marked acceleration' in North Korea missile testing, say UN experts," *The Guardian*, February 6, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/06/marked-acceleration-in-north-korea-missile-testing-say-un-experts>; Office of the Spokesperson, "Special Representative for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Kim's Trilateral Call with Republic of Korea (ROK) Special Representative Noh and Japan Director General Funakoshi," U.S. Department of State, January 17, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/special-representative-for-the-democratic-peoples-republic-of-korea-dprk-kims-trilateral-call-with-republic-of-korea-rok-special-representative-noh-and-japan-director-general-funakoshi/>.

⁴ Toby Dalton, Karl Friedhoff, and Lami Kim, "Thinking Nuclear: South Korean Attitudes on Nuclear Weapons," Chicago Council for Global Affairs, February 21, 2022, <https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/research/public-opinion-survey/thinking-nuclear-south-korean-attitudes-nuclear-weapons>.

⁵ Michael Mazza, "Shoot it Straight on Taiwan," *War on the Rocks*, August 3, 2021, <https://warontherocks.com/2021/08/shoot-it-straight-on-taiwan/>; David Lague and Maryanne Murray, "T-DAY: The Battle for Taiwan," *Reuters*, November 5, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/taiwan-china-wargames/>; Yun Sun, "Is war over Taiwan imminent?" *Stimson Center*, April 14, 2021, <https://www.stimson.org/2021/is-war-over-taiwan-imminent/>.

⁶ Briefing Room, "U.S.-ROK Leaders' Joint Statement," The White House, May 5, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/05/21/u-s-rok-leaders-joint-statement/>; Briefing Room, "Readout of President Biden's Meeting with Prime Minister Kishida of Japan," The White House, January 21, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/01/21/readout-of-president-bidens-meeting-with-prime-minister-kishida-of-japan/>.

⁷ Ashley Townshend, "U.S. Indo-Pacific Power Depends on Restraint in Ukraine," *Foreign Policy*, February 9, 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/02/09/us-indo-pacific-russia-ukraine-geopolitics/>; Elbridge Colby and Oriana Mastro, "Ukraine Is a Distraction from Taiwan," Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, February 14, 2022, <https://fsi.stanford.edu/news/ukraine-distraction-taiwan>; Michael J. Green and Gabe Schienmann, "Even an 'Asia First' Strategy Needs to Deter Russia in Ukraine," *Foreign Policy*, February 17, 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/02/17/putin-russia-ukraine-china-indo-pacific-strategy/>.

⁸ Edward Geist, "Defeat Is Possible," RAND Corporation, June 17, 2021, <https://www.rand.org/blog/2021/06/defeat-is-possible.html>. LtCol Daniel Davis, "The US must avoid war with China over Taiwan at all costs," *The Guardian*, October 5, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/oct/05/the-us-must-avoid-war-with-china-over-taiwan-at-all-costs>.

⁹ Toby Dalton, Karl Friedhoff, and Lami Kim, "Thinking Nuclear: South Korean Attitudes on Nuclear Weapons," "Japan's discussions on base strike capabilities to step up in 2022."

government-to-government communication and negotiation in prior instances of cooperation created inefficiencies and lag time.¹⁰ Accordingly, effective U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security cooperation will require overcoming these barriers to more seamless coordination.

Internal changes

I. Enhancing military capabilities

U.S. allies in the Indo-Pacific are much more militarily capable today and, thus, better able to contribute to their own national self-defense and collective security than what was possible in the immediate post-WWII era. Alongside efforts to minilateralize security relationships, Japan and South Korea are intensely focusing on enhancing their national defense capabilities to meet current security challenges. South Korea spends more than any other U.S. ally on the military.¹¹ The governing Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in Japan campaigned on increasing the national defense budget to two percent during the October 2021 Lower House election, which would be a historic spending level for that country.¹² The LDP's "Proposal for [the] formulation of a new National Security Strategy and other strategic documents" envisions massive changes to the country's defense and security architecture, including replacing the National Defense Program Guidelines with a National Defense Strategy, the formulation of a Defense Acquisition Program to replace the Medium Term Defense Program, and the acquisition of counterstrike capabilities.¹³ Both countries are taking unprecedented steps to bolster their indigenous national defense capabilities. Japan and South Korea explicitly understand that they will increasingly be relied upon to respond to regional security threats.

To this end, the South Korean navy is building its surface fleet and increasing the capability of its submarines to provide more offensive firepower and conduct wider regional engagements.¹⁴ As expressed by a South Korean defense researcher, this development is "based on the belief that the country's security challenge will not be limited to existing threats from the North in the longer term."¹⁵ Moreover, Washington's decision to lift all of South Korea's missile restrictions fits with the broader U.S. strategy of increasing security cooperation with allies amidst competition with China. While not explicitly aimed at China, these new South Korean capabilities could give

China additional pause when considering potentially destabilizing actions, as yet another nearby U.S. ally will possess sophisticated and capable weapons systems.¹⁶ Japan, too, is taking several steps to bolster its indigenous defense capabilities. There has been sustained movement toward Japan acquiring greater land-based strike capability, and the country recently purchased JASSMs from Lockheed Martin.¹⁷ The government has been building cyber capabilities to protect against potential PRC or Russian attacks, and Japan has played a leading role in multilateral cyber defense drills.¹⁸ Japan's Defense Minister, Kishi Nobuo, announced in early 2022 that the JASDF is fielding a new Space Operations Unit as fears of PRC "killer satellites" prompt greater investment in protecting vital space assets.¹⁹

"The South Korean navy is building its surface fleet and increasing the capability of its submarines to provide more offensive firepower and conduct wider regional engagements... this development is based on the belief that the country's security challenge will not be limited to existing threats from the North in the longer term."

Allied enhancement of military capabilities essentially acts as a force multiplier, strengthening the deterrent power of bilateral alliances with the United States and increasing American power projection. Yet just as important, each U.S. ally's additional security arrangement with another partner country essentially operates as a force multiplier squared. In other words, deterrence exponentially increases as increasingly capable U.S. allies minilateralize their security partnerships.²⁰ Thus, the relative absence of U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security cooperation renders obsolete what would otherwise be the region's most potent force multiplier squared.

II. The desire for increased defense autonomy and responsibility

Growing allied military capabilities and an allied desire for increased defense autonomy and responsibility represent two sides of the same coin. Japan and South Korea's emphasis on enhancing capabilities and more proactive security networking shows a desire to play a leading regional role and take on more responsibility within their alliance with the United States.

Although unsuccessful, former South Korean President Moon Jae-in placed a political stake in securing

¹⁰ Vincent Brooks, interview by author, Zoom recording, Washington, DC, February 1, 2022.

¹¹ Emma Chanlett-Avery and Caitlin Campbell, "U.S.-South Korea Alliance: Issues for Congress," Congressional Research Service, March 14, 2022, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11388>.

¹² Jesse Johnson, "Japan's LDP vows sharp defense budget hike, but public focus elsewhere," *The Japan Times*, October 18, 2021, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2021/10/18/national/politics-diplomacy/ldp-defense-budget-hike/>.

¹³ Liberal Democratic Party, "Proposal for formulation of a new National Security Strategy and other strategic documents," April 26, 2022.

¹⁴ Tim Fish, "South Korea's Navy Growing to Counter More Regional Threats Beyond North Korea," *USNI News*, December 1, 2021, <https://news.usni.org/2021/12/01/south-koreas-navy-growing-to-counter-more-regional-threats-beyond-north-korea>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Andrew Jeong, "South Korea can Now Build Missiles Able to Reach Beijing, with U.S. Blessing; Washington had Imposed Limits on Seoul's

Weapons Program for Four Decades," *Wall Street Journal*, Jun 11, 2021, <https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/south-korea-can-now-build-missiles-able-to-reach/docview/2539869398/se-2?accountid=11752>.

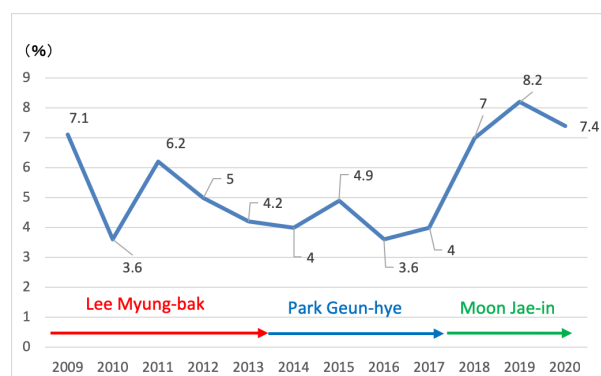
¹⁷ Mike Yeo, "Japan confirms details of F-15J upgrade program worth \$5.6 billion," *DefenseNews*, February 17, 2022, <https://www.defensenews.com/smr/singapore-airshow/2022/02/17/japan-confirms-details-of-f-15j-upgrade-program-worth-56-billion/>.

¹⁸ Yukio Tajima, "Japan to lead first cyber defense drill with ASEAN, US and Europe," *Nikkei Asian Review*, August 9, 2020, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Technology/Japan-to-lead-first-cyber-defense-drill-with-ASEAN-US-and-Europe>.

¹⁹ Gabriel Dominguez, "As space race escalates, Japan bolsters defense capabilities in new domains," *The Japan Times*, January 6, 2022, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/01/06/national/japan-space-defense/>.

²⁰ Jada Fraser, "AUKUS: More than meets the eye," *The Interpreter*, May 17, 2022, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/aukus-more-meets-eye>.

Operational Control (OPCON) by the end of his term.²¹ He also oversaw a dramatic year-on-year percent increase in national defense spending.²²



*https://www.spf.org/iina/en/articles/ito_02.html.

Beyond these shifts towards increased responsibility in the bilateral alliance, South Korea has sought greater defense autonomy by looking beyond the peninsula. The New Southern Policy's (NSP) 'peace pillar' prioritized broadening and strengthening South Korea's security relationships with South and Southeast Asian countries. While often criticized as the weakest pillar of the NSP, there is substantive room for expanding the initiatives already started under the peace pillar by increasing security cooperation alongside the United States and Japan.

The U.S.-Japan Alliance continues to recalibrate roles and missions as the traditional 'spear and shield' conception of the security relationship slowly shifts closer to a positioning more closely resembling a 'long spear and short spear.' As Japan takes on a larger security role in its bilateral alliance with the United States, it is also networking its security partnerships across the region. Japan's 2021 *Diplomatic Bluebook* directly links its increasingly severe security environment to its efforts in "combining bilateral and multilateral security cooperation at multifaceted and multilayered levels."²³

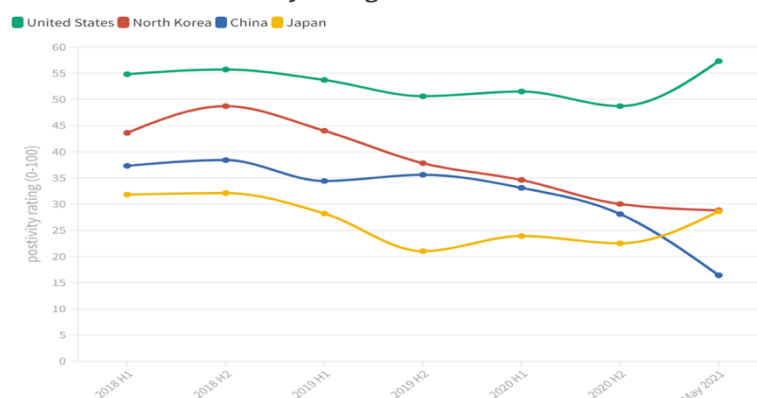
The United States should continue to welcome these efforts on the parts of Japan and South Korea and play a supportive role wherever possible. Indeed, President Biden has commended Prime Minister Kishida for his efforts to increase defense spending, strengthen defense capabilities, bolster security relationships with third partners, and welcomed Japan's forthcoming revised National Security Strategy.²⁴ There are important areas of overlap in U.S., South Korean, and Japanese efforts to broaden and strengthen security cooperation with other regional partners that would benefit from trilateral coordination. U.S. efforts to link and bolster these overlapping efforts will empower Japanese and South

Korean aims to increase their regional role and defense autonomy. Moreover, regional partners benefit more from the pooled resources and experience that the U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral, as opposed to an individual member country alone, would bring to security cooperation.

III. Converging threat perceptions and growing policy alignment concerning China in the United States, South Korea, and Japan

Converging threat perceptions on the security challenges presented by China and growing alignment on the China policies of the United States, Japan, and South Korea creates new opportunities for trilateral security cooperation. This section highlights converging threat perceptions of China across the South Korean and Japanese public. A review of recent policy developments in both countries points to growing alignment in efforts to mitigate coercive PRC actions, both economically and militarily. Linking these currently siloed lines of effort makes strategic sense, given the three countries' policy similarities and the benefits of more effectively utilizing pooled resources and eliminating redundancies through trilateral security cooperation.

South Korean Favorability Ratings



Source: [Hankook Research & Sisaln](#)

Public opinion of China in South Korea has significantly declined over the past few years, owing to a mix of economic coercion involving the 2017 THAAD dispute, perceived Chinese cultural imperialism, and China's wolf warrior diplomacy during the Covid-19 pandemic. A survey by Genron NPO and the East Asia Institute in September 2021 showed 73.3 percent of Koreans have negative views toward China, up from last year's 59.4 percent.²⁵ According to a poll conducted by Hankook Research in late 2021, the South Korean public felt the least favorable toward China (~16.0)– even North Korea (~29.0) and Japan (~29.0) were viewed more positively. The same poll in late 2019 showed that Japan was the least favorably

²¹ "Opcon timing dashes Moon's hope for transfer," *Korea JoongAng Daily*, January 24, 2021, <https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/2021/01/24/national/defense/Opcon-Moon-Jaein-allies/20210124171600489.html>.

²² Kohtarō Ito, "What to Make of South Korea's Growing Defense Spending," Sasakawa Peace Foundation, March 12, 2020, https://www.spf.org/iina/en/articles/ito_02.html.

²³ "Efforts for Peace and Stability of Japan and the International Community," in *Diplomatic Bluebook 2021*, Japanese Ministry of Defense, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/2021/pdf/pdfs/4-2.pdf>.

²⁴ "Readout of President Biden's Meeting with Prime Minister Kishida of Japan," The White House, January 21, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/01/21/readout-of-president-bidens-meeting-with-prime-minister-kishida-of-japan/>.

²⁵ Park Chan-Kyong, "South Korea presidential hopeful blames Moon's 'pro-Beijing' policies for fueling bad blood between neighbors," *South China Morning Post*, December 29, 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3161383/south-korea-presidential-hopeful-blames-moons-pro-beijing>.

viewed country among South Koreans, with 21.0 favorability, while China rated 35.6.²⁶

“It is striking to note that shared threat perceptions of North Korea—the initial driver behind U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security cooperation—are now overshadowed by threat perceptions of China in all three countries.”

Moreover, complicating South Korea’s economic dependence on China, polling shows the South Korean public has little faith in the bilateral economic relationship. In a Chicago Council on Global Affairs survey, 60 percent of South Koreans said China is more of an economic threat. In comparison, 37 percent saw China as more of an economic partner. The same survey overwhelmingly categorized China as a security threat to South Korea (83%), while only 12 percent listed China as a security partner.²⁷ According to another poll in 2021, 61.8 percent of South Koreans felt that China posed a military threat, a 17.5 percent increase over the 44.3 percent found the previous year. China was the next largest threat to South Korea after North Korea in this poll.²⁸

Regarding South Korean views on U.S.-China strategic competition, a survey conducted by Korea JoongAng Daily and the Asia Research Institute at Seoul National University in early 2022 reveals the discrepancy between public opinion and the previous Moon Jae-in administration’s policy of “strategic ambiguity.” Asked which country they supported in the growing U.S.-China rivalry, 68 percent chose the United States. Only 4 percent chose China. Moreover, in preference to China, the United States was overwhelmingly considered South Korea’s ideal partner for cooperation on military issues in the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait (79%).²⁹

Public opinion in Japan on China closely mirrors U.S. public opinion polling. A poll by Genron NPO in October 2021 found that over 90 percent of the Japanese public holds either “unfavorable” or “somewhat unfavorable” views toward China.³⁰ Polling by Pew Research Center in 2021 shows only 10 percent of Japanese respondents had favorable views of China. Moreover, a poll conducted by Nikkei at the end of 2020 found that 86 percent of respondents said China posed a threat to Japan—more than the 82 percent who viewed North Korea as a threat.³¹ The Center for Strategic and International Studies surveyed thought leaders in Japan to map perspectives on

China policy. When asked, “What is the best approach for your country to take towards China on national security?”

Eighty percent of respondents chose the answer, “Prioritize cooperation with the U.S. and other allies or partners to balance China, even at the risk of harming your country’s relations with China.”³² It is striking to note that shared

threat perceptions of North Korea—the initial driver behind U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security cooperation—are now overshadowed by threat perceptions of China in all three countries.

The Kishida administration has displayed adept tactical balancing of U.S.-China strategic competition. The Prime Minister replaced former Secretary-General of the LDP, Nikai Toshihiro, a Diet member known for his pro-China orientation and extensive networks in China inherited from former Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei.³³ Yet Kishida also replaced former Foreign Minister Motegi Toshimitsu with Hayashi Yoshimasa, a more dovish China-leaning Diet member who previously served as the head of the Japan-China Friendship Parliamentarians’ Union.³⁴ A thorn in China’s side, former Prime Minister Abe Shinzo effectively served as Japan’s de facto ambassador to Taiwan while his statements on the importance of defending Taiwan grew ever more unequivocal.³⁵ Yet, to shore up stability in the China-Japan bilateral relationship, especially in the military domain, Tokyo and Beijing recently agreed to launch a military hotline in 2022.³⁶ In another balancing effort, while Japan followed the U.S. lead in refusing to send high-level officials to the Beijing Winter Olympics, the government refused to call it a diplomatic boycott.³⁷ Finally, Prime Minister Kishida created new cabinet-level positions within the *Kantei*. These new ministerial positions, a human rights advisor to the prime minister and an economic security minister, have primarily been viewed by observers as targeting China.³⁸

Similar to the steps taken by the Japanese government, the South Korean government is launching a center dedicated to economic security that will be housed under its foreign ministry. Recently, due to imported urea shortages, economic security gained more traction in South Korea. Domestic coal shortages caused China to implement export restrictions on this vital product to South Korea, creating mass disruptions in South Korea’s trucking industry. While the South Korean government has yet to

²⁶ Thomas Chan and Seong Hyeon Choi, “Anti-China Sentiment and South Korea’s Presidential Race,” *The Diplomat*, September 20, 2021, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/09/anti-china-sentiment-and-south-koreas-presidential-race/>.

²⁷ “4 in 5 S. Koreans cite China as security threat: poll,” *Yonhap*, April 7, 2021, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20210407007300315>.

²⁸ Yaushi Kudo, “What signs are there that the relationship between Japan and South Korea will improve? Public sentiment less acrimonious, but still chilly,” Genron NPO, November 30, 2021, https://www.genron-npo.net/en/opinion_polls/archives/5589.html.

²⁹ Laura Zhou, “South Koreans side overwhelmingly with US over China, especially on Covid-19 cooperation, poll suggests,” *South China Morning Post*, January 21, 2022, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3164276/south-koreans-side-overwhelmingly-us-over-china-especially>.

³⁰ “Public opinion of Japan drastically falls among Chinese people in the previous year,” Genron NPO, October 28, 2021, <https://www.genron-npo.net/en/pp/archives/5584.html>.

³¹ Tim Kelly and Ju-min Park, “Analysis: With an eye on China, Japan’s ruling party makes unprecedented defence spending pledge,” October 31, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/with-an-eye-china-japans-ruling-party-makes-unprecedented-defence-spending-2021-10-13/>.

³² “Mapping the future of U.S. China Policy,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2020, <https://chinastrategy.csis.org/>.

³³ Julian Ryall, “Is Toshihiro Nikai, the ‘most pro-China’ politician in Japan’s ruling LDP, losing his shine?,” *South China Morning Post*, February 18, 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3122087/toshihiro-nikai-most-pro-china-politician-japans-ruling-ldp>.

³⁴ Yoshihisa Komori, “US is Wary of China’s Political Ops Through ‘Friendship’ Group with Japanese Lawmakers,” *Japan Forward*, December 3, 2021, <https://japan-forward.com/u-s-is-wary-of-chinas-political-ops-through-friendship-group-with-japanese-lawmakers/>.

³⁵ Monika Chansoria, “Shinzo Abe Goes Hardline on Taiwan Support and Japan Should Pay Attention,” *Japan Forward*, January 12, 2022, <https://japan-forward.com/shinzo-abe-goes-hardline-on-taiwan-support-and-japan-should-pay-attention/>.

³⁶ “Japan to launch military hotline with China in 2022,” *ABC News*, December 28, 2021, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-12-28/japan-agrees-to-launch-military-hotline-with-china/100729176>.

³⁷ Daniel Leussink and Kantaro Komiyama, “Japan will not send government delegation to Beijing Olympics,” *Reuters*, December 24, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sports/japan-put-off-sending-officials-beijing-olympics-nhk-says-2021-12-23/>.

³⁸ Jesse Johnson and Satoshi Sugiyama, “Kishida’s picks for top diplomat and rights adviser hint at striking balance on China,” *The Japan Times*, November 10, 2021, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2021/11/10/national/politics-diplomacy/kishida-nakatani-hayashi-diplomacy-china/>.

announce explicit reduction goals for urea imports from China, a recent noteworthy deal tied approximately a third of South Korea's yearly urea consumption to imports from Indonesia over the next three years.³⁹ As both Japan and South Korea have been on the receiving end of PRC economic coercion, the South Korean deal should be viewed in line with both countries' broader strategic interests in pursuing economic diversification and reducing reliance on China, especially for critical imports.⁴⁰

Indeed, South Korea's need for economic diversification away from China was the strongest motivation behind former President Moon's New Southern Policy.⁴¹ Beyond economic diversification, South Korea has also expanded its security relationships with various partners in the Indo-Pacific. The NSP's peace pillar heavily emphasized the importance of protecting freedom of navigation, and Seoul has partnered with several ASEAN countries to participate in maritime capacity building, training, and joint exercises towards this end.⁴² South Korea has also made recent moves to deepen and strengthen its security relationship with Australia, upgrading the bilateral relationship to a "comprehensive strategic partnership" and signing both a massive defense deal and rare earths deal.⁴³

Greater alignment in Tokyo's and Washington's China policy has undoubtedly become apparent over the past few years and significantly accelerated in the past year alone. Yet, it deserves noting how Japan places buffers around China-targeting actions and seeks to differentiate itself from the often more antagonistic U.S. stance. Recognizing these tactical balancing tendencies of the Japanese government is important. Discussions in the United States that compare the differences in Japan's and South Korea's foreign policies towards China are often too quick to exalt Japan for its tough stance while condemning South Korea's acquiescence to PRC pressure. These discussions tend to point out South Korea's reliance on China's economy as an insurmountable obstacle to the South Korean government enacting tougher policies. Such zero-sum perspectives work against efforts to strengthen trilateral security cooperation as they reinforce the idea that U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral cooperation is a non-starter. Instead, the ability Japan has so far shown to deftly thread the needle on its own China policies should be recognized and used as an example of how South Korea could emulate a similar strategy. Indeed, as shown above, South Korea is already moving in that direction as recent policy developments seek to diversify its economic reliance away from China and broaden and deepen its security relationships with multiple partners.

Public opinion on China in all three countries has converged. Washington and Tokyo's China policies are strikingly similar, while Seoul's policies are slowly beginning to shift in a comparable direction. This

convergence is reflected most recently by the joint statement from the U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral foreign minister's meeting. The statement directly condemns

"unilateral actions that seek to alter the status quo and increase tensions in the region..., highlight[s] in particular the importance of compliance with international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, [and] emphasize[s] the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait."

By "noting their shared concern about activities that undermine the rules-based international order," an implicit reference to PRC actions, this statement significantly stands out as the most unequivocal position the South Korean government has taken so far on China and certainly includes the strongest language used in any trilateral statement.⁴⁴ Time will tell if the new Yoon Suk Yeol administration in South Korea commits action to words in charting a new path for South Korea's foreign policy towards its neighbor. As threat perceptions and policies continue to converge, U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security cooperation can align the three countries' ways, ends, and means towards meeting shared security challenges presented by China and North Korea.

Obstacles to U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security cooperation: resolved and remaining

One of the strongest guarantors of stability in the region has historically been the U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral.⁴⁵ Yet current Japan-South Korea bilateral relations are in a state of decline, and trilateral security cooperation remains tenuous. Numerous historical issues have frustrated increased Japan-South Korea cooperation. A series of South Korean district court orders to liquidate Japanese assets for reparations payments to former forced laborers is one of the more recent complicating factors preventing progress in bilateral relations.⁴⁶ These court orders followed in the wake of the South Korean Supreme Court's monumental 2018 ruling that a large Japanese conglomerate should compensate former forced laborers, rejecting the company's claim that issues of forced labor reparations were settled in the 1965 Normalization Treaty between Japan and South Korea.⁴⁷ The issue of Japan's atonement to former "comfort women," a euphemism for the Japanese Imperial Army's system of sexual slavery, is another long-standing and deeply emotional fissure in the relationship. The South Korean and Japanese governments have antithetical views on both the "legality" and "sincerity" of prior resolutions to both grievances, and neither side—especially under former President Moon and former Prime Minister Abe—appeared willing to come to the table.

³⁹ "S. Korea secures stable urea supply from Indonesia for next 3 years," *The Korea Herald*, December 7, 2021, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20211207000690>.

⁴⁰ Su-lin Tan, "South Korea's rare earths, defence deals with Australia 'not aimed at China', analysts say," *South China Morning Post*, December 14, 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3159700/south-korea-rare-earths-defence-deals-australia-not-aimed-china>

⁴¹ Kathryn Botto, "South Korea Beyond Northeast Asia: How Seoul Is Deepening Ties With India and ASEAN," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, October 19, 2021, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/10/19/south-korea-beyond-northeast-asia-how-seoul-is-deepening-ties-with-india-and-asean-pub-85572>.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Jada Fraser, "The Australian factor in South Korea's security strategy," *Australian Strategic Policy Institute*, April 29, 2022,

<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/the-australian-factor-in-south-korea-security-strategy/>.

⁴⁴ "Full text of a joint statement by S. Korean, U.S., Japanese foreign ministers," *Yonhap*, February 13, 2022 <https://m-en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20220213002200325?section=national/diplomacy>.

⁴⁵ Randall Schriver, [Transcript] "The Importance of U.S.-Japan-Korea Trilateral Defense Cooperation," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, August 28, 2019, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/importance-us-japan-korea-trilateral-defense-cooperation>.

⁴⁶ "South Korean court orders sale of seized Mitsubishi Heavy assets," *The Japan Times*, May 2, 2022, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/05/02/national/crime-legal/mitsubishi-seized-assets/>.

⁴⁷ Kim Tong-Hyung, "Court orders Japan company to pay 4 Koreans for forced labor," *AP News*, October 30, 2018, <https://apnews.com/article/474886c44d2c498e94e90c0a8abc5f6d>.

While historical grievances remain the overarching obstacle that no stopgap measure can hope to resolve, many second-order concerns have been resolved and deserve highlighting. A perennial issue that plagued the Trump administration was resolved with President Biden's successful negotiation of a Special Measures Agreement (SMA) on Host Nation Status (HNS) with Japan and the conclusion of a separate SMA with South Korea. The settlement of these agreements removed a thorn in the side of all three countries.⁴⁸ Moreover, lingering regional doubts about the credibility of U.S. alliance commitment during the Trump administration have been largely assuaged as public polling on confidence in the United States and President Biden rebounds to previous levels.⁴⁹ Another unfortunate feature of the Trump administration, the formerly vacant ambassadorships in Japan and South Korea are now filled.⁵⁰ Even amidst the communication and technology revolution, the importance of ambassadors in informing and implementing U.S. strategy in Asia cannot be overstated.⁵¹ Appointing ambassadors to important Indo-Pacific allies sends a meaningful signal of U.S. commitment to the region, both from a military and diplomatic standpoint.

On the Japanese side, compared to former Prime Minister Abe Shinzo's reputation by many as an ideologue, Prime Minister Kishida's reputation as neither distinctly anti-China nor revisionist primes him to navigate the political hurdles of strengthening trilateral security cooperation with the United States and South Korea.⁵² As the new South Korean President, Yoon Suk Yeol committed to centering South Korean foreign policy on the U.S.-ROK Alliance, including its relations with China and security cooperation with Japan. This is in stark contrast to former President Moon's aversion to any moves that could potentially antagonize China and disinterest in improving cooperation with Japan. Among many encouraging signs for bilateral relations, for the first time in almost three years, the South Korean, Japanese, and U.S. heads of state met for a leader-level trilateral meeting on the sidelines of the June 2022 NATO summit. The new Yoon administration might help to steer South Korean foreign policy in a direction that creates more opportunities for U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security cooperation. Yet, it is too soon to say how far he can go and whether Japan will reciprocate.

But there are promising signs. The Biden administration emphasizes the U.S.-Japan-ROK trilateral relationship as a strategic priority, and the Indo-Pacific Strategy aims to expand trilateral cooperation to

encompass a broader security environment.⁵³ Recent joint statements at the leader and ministerial levels reinforce this priority through consistent political messaging on the need for trilateral security cooperation to extend beyond the Korean peninsula.⁵⁴ Both the U.S. Ambassador to Japan, Rahm Emanuel, and the U.S. Ambassador to South Korea, Philip Goldberg, have reiterated the importance of improving trilateral cooperation with the United States.⁵⁵

The how: The U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral and flexible multilateralism

The Biden administration should take advantage of Yoon's election and recent positive signs in the South Korea-Japan relationship to explore further opportunities for trilateral security cooperation. As a baseline, previous examples of successful U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security cooperation demonstrate that trilateral cooperation is feasible, even during downturns in bilateral relations. It should be noted that during the height of trilateral security cooperation within the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG), the Japan-South Korea bilateral relationship had sunk to a low that much resembles present frosty relations. TCOG, the precursor to the U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral, focused on coordinating the three countries' North Korea policy and provided an essential layer of political insulation that kept trilateral cooperation from evaporating in the face of bilateral tensions between Japan and South Korea.

For example, in 2001, bilateral relations plummeted after Japan refused to revise or stop the distribution of controversial textbooks accused of revisionist interpretations of Japan's role in the Pacific War. As a result, South Korea cut military ties and postponed economic liberalization with Japan. Tensions escalated further when then Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro visited the controversial Yasukuni shrine that August. The TCOG meetings in September and November of that year were just about the only opportunities Japanese and South Korean diplomats had to interact.⁵⁶ During this and other bilateral fallout between South Korea and Japan, officials would meet under the guise of trilateral TCOG meetings,

"Flexible multilateralism allows for a greater degree of fluidity than the constraining effects of formally binding agreements."

⁴⁸ "Reinvesting in U.S.-Japan-Republic of Korea Strategic Relations: A Practical Trilateral Agenda," National Committee on American Foreign Policy, January 2021, https://www.ncafp.org/2016/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/NCAFP_Trilateral_Final-Draft_2021.pdf.

⁴⁹ Richard Wike, et. al., "America's Image Abroad Rebounds With Transition From Trump to Biden," Pew Research Center, June 10, 2021, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2021/06/10/americas-image-abroad-rebounds-with-transition-from-trump-to-biden/>.

⁵⁰ Mike DeBonis, "Senate confirms Rahm Emanuel as ambassador to Japan, plus dozens more Biden nominees," *The Washington Post*, December 18, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/rahm-emanuel-japan-ambassador/2021/12/18/aabe873e-6000-11ec-bda6-25c1f558dd09_story.html; "Biden taps Goldberg as new U.S. ambassador to S. Korea," *Yonhap*, February 12, 2022, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20220212000025>.

⁵¹ David Shear, interview by author, Washington, DC, February 7, 2022.

⁵² Corey Wallace, "Kishida's opportunity to shake up Japanese defence policy," *East Asia Forum*, November 11, 2021, <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2021/11/11/kishidas-opportunity-to-shake-up-japanese-defence-policy/>.

⁵³ "Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States," The White House, February 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>.

⁵⁴ "Readout of President Biden's Meeting with Prime Minister Kishida of Japan," The White House, January 21, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/01/21/readout-of-president-bidens-meeting-with-prime-minister-kishida-of-japan/>; "Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III and South Korean Defense Minister Suh Wook Hold a Press Conference Following the 53rd U.S.-Republic of Korea Security Consultative Meeting in Seoul," U.S. Department of Defense, December 2, 2021, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/2859519/secretary-of-defense-lloyd-j-austin-iii-and-south-korean-defense-minister-suh-w/>; "Joint Statement on the U.S.-Japan-Republic of Korea Trilateral Ministerial Meeting," U.S. Department of State, February 12, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-on-the-u-s-japan-republic-of-korea-trilateral-ministerial-meeting/>.

⁵⁵ Alastair Gale, "Japan and South Korea Seek Diplomatic Reset With Change of Leadership in Seoul," *Wall Street Journal*, April 26, 2022, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/japan-and-south-korea-seek-diplomatic-reset-with-change-of-leadership-in-seoul-11650966395>; "Complete, verifiable denuclearization of N. Korea difficult but must achieve goal: Goldberg," *Yonhap*, April 8, 2022, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20220408000116>.

⁵⁶ James L. Schoff, "The Evolution of the TCOG as a Diplomatic Tool," The Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, November 2004, pg. 16, <http://www.ifpa.org/pdf/updateTCOG.pdf>.

insulated from domestic political backlash, to discuss topics often unrelated to North Korea policy.

TCOG was an early example of what is now being termed “flexible multilateralism.”⁵⁷ Flexible multilateralism allows for a greater degree of fluidity than the constraining effects of formally binding agreements. Multiple overlapping frameworks enable actors to cooperate when interests align without fearing being trapped in a formal and binding structure. Organizing U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security cooperation around this principle of flexible multilateralism presents an ideal way to work around the political ups and downs in Japan-South Korea relations while taking advantage of areas of convergence in national security interests.

The Quad, another prime example of flexible multilateralism, shows how actors with often diverging interests can maintain cooperation in areas where goals align. The Quad members do not and indeed are not expected to agree on every single issue—the obvious example being India’s reluctance to criticize Russia over the invasion of Ukraine.⁵⁸ Conflicting views on issues outside the distinct remit of the Quad do not fundamentally jeopardize cooperation. As argued elsewhere, the ability of Japan and South Korea to maintain some level of security cooperation despite disengagement and disputes in the political, economic, and diplomatic arenas shows the “long-term feasibility of gradual efforts to carve out [space for trilateral security cooperation] without inducing political backlash. If Japan and South Korea, [alongside the United States], approach other common [security] interests similarly, further low-profile attempts at sustained coordination might not be unrealistic.”⁵⁹

The United States, Japan, and South Korea are all minilateralizing their security cooperation with partners across the region. Yet, security cooperation within the U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral remains limited and sporadic, and mainly pertains to information sharing on North Korean weapons testing. Recent news that the three countries are restarting trilateral ballistic missile defense tracking exercises is a promising development but does not account for the broader bifurcation in the U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral, which creates holes in the security environment that North Korea or China can easily exploit—and indeed is already taking place.⁶⁰ Beyond shoring up these gray areas in the strategic environment, there are significant opportunities for the United States, Japan, and South Korea to pursue overlapping national security interests through trilateral coordination. By organizing the U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral around this principle of flexible

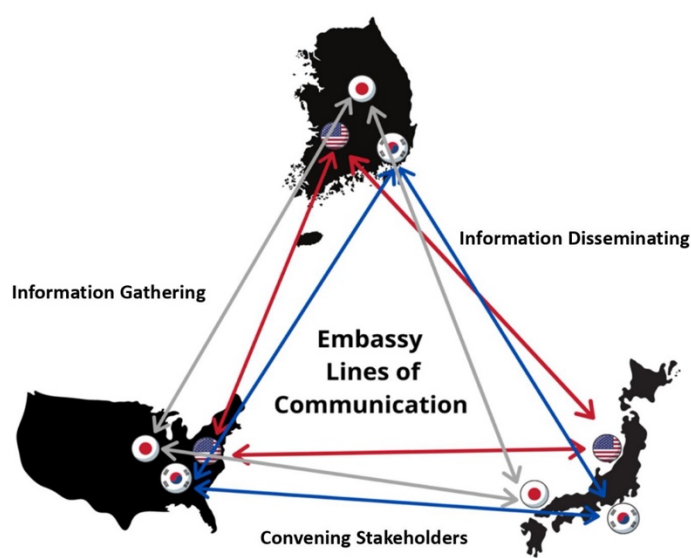
multilateralism, the three countries will be better equipped to respond to a rapidly changing security environment and proactively cooperate where interests align without being beholden to formal mandates. Most importantly, similar to TCOG’s role in facilitating trilateral coordination amidst downturns in Japan-South Korea relations, providing the trilateral with a layer of political insulation will ensure cooperation remains viable.⁶¹

A pathway for success in reconstituting U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security cooperation

To achieve cooperation between the United States, Japan, and South Korea that is both sustainable and effective in meeting current challenges, the author recommends a pathway for reconstituting trilateral security cooperation based on the principle of flexible multilateralism.

Empower ambassadorial leadership in advocating for and organizing U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security cooperation

U.S. ambassadors to South Korea and Japan, empowered by President Biden, should advocate for enhanced trilateral security cooperation to their respective host governments. U.S. embassies in South Korea and Japan should share information regarding the appetite for trilateral security cooperation within their host governments and back to Washington. In addition, the ambassadors should initiate the coordination of information sharing between U.S. embassies in Japan and South Korea with their counterpart Japanese and South Korean embassies. These ‘Embassy Lines of Communication’ would initially serve as an information gathering and sharing function and later be utilized as a



⁵⁷ The concept of “flexible multilateralism” is attributed to Tanvi Madan of the Brookings Institution. “Naval drills in the Indian Ocean give bite to the anti-China “Quad,” *The Economist*, November 17th, 2020, <https://www.economist.com/international/2020/11/17/naval-drills-in-the-indian-ocean-give-bite-to-the-anti-china-quad>

⁵⁸ “India’s Ties With Russia Distinct, That’s Okay: US Amid Ukraine Invasion,” *NDTV*, February 26, 2022, <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/india-russia-relations-distinct-from-washingtons-equation-with-moscow-thats-okay-us-2790475>.

⁵⁹ Andrew Park and Elliot Silverberg, “Mutual Suspicion, Mutual Threats: Getting Japan and South Korea to Work Together,” *War on the Rocks*, April 6, 2021, <https://warontherocks.com/2021/04/mutual-suspicion-mutual-threats-getting-japan-and-south-korea-to-work-together/>.

⁶⁰ Ryo Nemoto, “Japan, South Korea, U.S. to resume joint defense drills,” *Nikkei Asia Review*, June 12, 2022, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Indo-Pacific/Japan-South-Korea-U.S.-to-resume-joint-defense-drills>; Shashank Mattoo, “Tensions continue to plague Japan – Korea ties,” *Observer Research Foundation*, October 20, 2020, <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/tensions-continue-to-plague-japan-korea-ties/>.

⁶¹ “ROK-U.S. Strategic Forum 2021,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 15, 2021, https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/event/211208_Strategic_Forum_booklet.pdf?tEhUUExoqkN1ZUj_SQzX6_VZ8_jj93c.

convening mechanism. In meetings organized by the embassy, relevant stakeholders would discuss and decide on the most pragmatic and promising areas for trilateral security cooperation. These meetings would occur at both a high level with ambassadors and lower working group levels that the embassy coordinates.

According to Ambassador David Shear, a career diplomat with experience working at the Embassy in Tokyo and who served as Deputy Director of the Office of Korean Affairs,

"Ambassadors [and embassy staff, as opposed to presidents or ministers], are on the ground, and they know more about what's going on in the country and engage with more people there than anybody else. They're not just there to implement policy; they are there to make and discover opportunities to advance our interests."⁶²

Not only are ambassadors and embassy staff the best equipped to gather information and coordinate information sharing, but they are also in the most advantageous positions to advocate for and develop creative solutions to strengthen trilateral security cooperation. Again, Ambassador Shear maintains:

"It is way easier to conduct interagency coordination in an embassy than it is in Washington. So as an ambassador, you find an opportunity to figure out what you want to do, then bring everybody together and get them all to agree. And then everybody sends back a message to Washington [or their respective host government] saying, 'Here's what we want to do.' And everyone agrees. Washington goes, 'Okay.' It doesn't give the agencies in Washington the opportunity to bog down the process."⁶³

To link this diplomatic initiative with its security purpose, regular meetings should include representatives from INDOPACOM, USFJ, USFK, and their South Korean and Japanese civilian and military counterparts. Including this military perspective ensures the necessary strategic, operational, and tactical needs inform tangible and pragmatic areas for potential trilateral security cooperation. Moreover, this coordination accurately reflects how trilateral security cooperation inherently falls at the intersection of defense and diplomacy.

As any watcher of Japan-South Korea relations knows, political windows of opportunity for improving relations are hard to come by, nor are they always acted upon. Relying on leader-level advocacy to reset relations and strengthen trilateral security cooperation risks stalling early due to domestic political backlash or PRC/North Korean retaliation. Moreover, given competing domestic priorities, politicians in either country may be unwilling to expend the immense political capital needed to initiate discussions on trilateral security cooperation at the leader

level. Instead, the United States, Japan, and South Korea are better served by empowering their ambassadors to advocate for and support trilateral security cooperation at the embassy level. Ambassadorial activities tend to generate less political attention than presidential summits or 2+2 meetings and thus would provide a crucial layer of insulation for the U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral. The most successful examples of trilateral cooperation, and indeed the cooperative efforts that are currently taking place, are developed behind closed doors, shielded from domestic and international political pressure.⁶⁴ Similar to TCOG's role in facilitating trilateral coordination amidst downturns in Japan-South Korea relations, providing the trilateral with a layer of political insulation through an embassy-led process will ensure cooperation remains viable.⁶⁵

In both the GSOMIA experience (an intelligence-sharing agreement between Japan and South Korea that President Moon threatened to scrap in August 2019) and the TCOG experience, Japanese and South Korean officials underscored the importance of a leading U.S. role in sustaining and elevating trilateral security cooperation.⁶⁶ Therefore, the success of U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security cooperation relies largely on sustained U.S. attention and investment. Ambassador Shear raised another salient point on the importance of U.S. leadership in strengthening trilateral security cooperation when he stated the following about Japanese and South Korean officials,

"Knowing that they're going to have to conduct a meeting with the Americans stimulates thinking on the Japanese and South Korean sides, which is important. They know that they're going to have to devise ways of saying positive things about the region and trilateral cooperation. They're forced to come up with ideas."⁶⁷

Ultimately, the weakness of 'outsider' recommendations for improving U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security cooperation is the lack of real-time and on-the-ground information gained through access to decision-makers and decision-informers. To counter this deficiency, the author envisions these embassy-led meetings serving as fertile ground for the generation of ideas. Inevitably, proposals for areas of trilateral security cooperation will come up in those conversations that an author writing on this subject would not necessarily be able to come up with. While acknowledging this proximity gap, this author suggests two potential areas for trilateral security cooperation.

⁶² David Shear, interview by author, Washington, DC, February 7, 2022.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ David Shear, interview by author, Washington, DC, February 7, 2022; Vincent Brooks, interview by author, Zoom recording, Washington, DC, February 1, 2022.

⁶⁵ "ROK-U.S. Strategic Forum 2021," Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 15, 2021, https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/event/211208_Strategic_Forum_booklet.pdf?tEghUUEoxqkN1ZUjSQzX6_VZ8_jj93c.

⁶⁶ Andrew Park and Elliot Silverberg, "Mutual Suspicion, Mutual Threats: Getting Japan and South Korea to Work Together," *War on the Rocks*, April 6, 2021, <https://warontherocks.com/2021/04/mutual-suspicion-mutual-threats-getting-japan-and-south-korea-to-work-together/>; Schoff, "The Evolution of the TCOG," 16; Randall Schriver, "The Importance of U.S.-Japan-Korea Trilateral Defense Cooperation," speech, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, August 28, 2019, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/importance-us-japan-korea-trilateral-defense-cooperation>.

⁶⁷ David Shear, interview by author, Washington, DC, February 7, 2022.

The what: Two potential areas for U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security cooperation

Conduct trilateral contingency planning for a Taiwan conflict

The analyses on Taiwan contingency planning thus far primarily look at how U.S., Japanese, and Australian forces might respond to a Taiwan contingency, with little-to-no attention paid to a possible South Korean role in such a scenario. The implications of a PRC invasion of

Taiwan on the security situation on the Peninsula emphasize South Korea's relevance to such a scenario. Yet this acknowledgment has thus far not translated into a recognition that South Korea's inclusion in planning discussions is imperative. Former South Korean President Moon Jae-in's policy of "strategic ambiguity" vis-à-vis U.S.-China competition, coupled with the current single-mission force posture on the peninsula, has precluded the country from being a serious part of the conversations in DC, Tokyo, and Canberra.⁶⁸ Yet, the absence of South Korea from the conversation is to the detriment of operational planning for a Taiwan contingency and South Korea's own national security.

It is generally assumed that in a U.S.-led coalition response to a PRC invasion of Taiwan, the USFJ, with support from the Japanese Special Defense Forces (JSDF), would be the first entity to respond to an invasion of Taiwan. Recent developments, including the creation of joint U.S.-Japan operational plans for a Taiwan contingency and joint stockpiling of munitions in strategic locations, reinforce this assumption.⁶⁹ Yet, deficiencies in relatively untested USFJ command and control systems and inadequate force readiness amidst the Covid-19 pandemic may fall into stark relief in a highly contested and rapidly evolving conflict scenario.⁷⁰ According to the 2021 Lowy Institute Asia Power Index, South Korean forces outrank Japanese forces in these two critical areas. South Korea ranks second in "training, readiness and sustainment," only 3.3 points away from a perfect score of 100. Japan ranks eighth with a score of 78.6.⁷¹ In a scenario where stabilization efforts in a Taiwan contingency are prolonged, USFK and/or Korean forces may need to be operationalized.

General Paul LaCamera, Commander UNC/CFC/USFK, holds a perspective on USFK's role that matters significantly in considering the impact of a Taiwan

conflict on South Korean national security. During his Senate confirmation hearing, General LaCamera stated his intent to pursue a greater role for USFK beyond the peninsula to meet regional challenges; "If confirmed, I will advocate for inclusion of USFK forces and capabilities in USINDOPACOM contingency and operational plans supporting U.S. interests and objectives in the region."⁷²

Moreover, regarding the potential CFC role in a Taiwan contingency, General Brooks allowed that, although unlikely, the U.S.-ROK binational decision-making mechanism, known as the Security Consultative Meeting (SCM), could choose to exercise combined command.⁷³ Given General LaCamera's view of the role of USFK in supporting the United States in regional challenges and the possibility that the South Korean and U.S. governments may choose to utilize CFC to respond to a Taiwan contingency, there is sufficient reason to believe that South Korean forces may be relied upon, however limited in fashion, to provide military support in the event of an invasion of Taiwan. Yet regardless of whether it's a scenario in which South Korea provides logistics and other rear support for USFJ directly, participates in an international coalition in some fashion, or is more heavily relied upon for the defense of the DMZ while USFK provides support in a Taiwan contingency, trilateral coordination on planning for a Taiwan contingency is necessary in the face of these realities.

The lack of trilateral coordination on contingency planning for a conflict over Taiwan creates a dangerous strategic hole in the Indo-Pacific security environment. Such trilateral cooperation should ensure that, at the minimum, South Korea and Japan are kept informed on U.S. planning for potential scenarios in which forces stationed in either country might be relied upon. The United States, Japan, and Australia are already cooperating on contingency planning. As argued elsewhere, South Korea needs to wake up to how a Taiwan conflict would drastically impact its vital national interests.⁷⁴ Such risks should impel South Korea's participation in conversations on contingency planning with the United States and Japan. Yet, rather than the high media attention given to U.S.-Japan operational planning, such U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral activities related to a Taiwan contingency should remain behind closed doors in recognition of the complicated

⁶⁸ The United States has engaged in strategic and operational planning for a Taiwan contingency with both Japan and Australia. Alex Wilson and Hana Kusumoto, "US and Japan draft joint operation plan in case of 'Taiwan emergency,' report says," *Stars and Stripes*, December 27, 2021, [https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2021/04/02/2003754939](https://www.stripes.com/theaters/asia_pacific/2021-12-27/taiwan-china-conflict-contingency-plan-us-japan-4097102.html#:~:text=Asia%2DPacific,-US%20and%20Japan%20draft%20joint%20operation%20plan%20in,Taiwan%20emergency%2C%20report%20says&text=TOKYO%20E2%80%93%20The%20United%20States%20and,a%20leading%20Japanese%20news%20agency,%20US,Australia%20discuss,Taiwan%20defense,Taipei Times, April 2, 2021, <a href=).

⁶⁹ Alex Wilson and Hana Kusumoto, "US and Japan draft joint operation plan in case of 'Taiwan emergency,'" Ken Moriyasu, "U.S. and Japan to jointly stockpile munitions, including near Taiwan," *Nikkei Asian Review*, January 16, 2022, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/U.S.-and-Japan-to-jointly-stockpile-munitions-including-near-Taiwan>.

⁷⁰ Wallace C. Gregson and Jeffrey W. Hornung, "The United States Considers Reinforcing its 'Pacific Sanctuary,'" *War on the Rocks*, April 12, 2021, <https://warontherocks.com/2021/04/the-united-states-considers-its-pacific-sanctuary/>; "U.S. Forces Japan Increases to Health Protection Bravo," U.S. Forces Japan, January 5, 2022, <https://www.usfj.mil/Media/Press-Releases/Article-View/Article/2889890/us-forces-japan-increases-to-health-protection-bravo/>.

⁷¹ Lowy Institute Asia Power Index: 2021 Edition, Lowy Institute, 2021, <https://power.lowyinstitute.org/data/military-capability/armed-forces/training-readiness-and-sustainment/>.

⁷² Byun Duk-kun, "USFK nominee calls joint U.S.-S. Korea field exercises extremely important," *Yonhap*, May 19, 2021, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20210519000200325>.

⁷³ Vincent Brooks, interview by author, Zoom recording, Washington, DC, February 1, 2022.

⁷⁴ Sungmin Cho, "South Korea's Taiwan Conundrum," *War on the Rocks*, December 31, 2021, <https://warontherocks.com/2021/12/south-koreas-taiwan-conundrum/>.

position South Korea occupies vis-a-vis potential PRC retaliation.

Japan and the United States should coordinate to promote imports of said products.⁷⁸

'As important guarantors of peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the U.S.-ROK Alliance must better align their ways, ends, and means to meet present and future security challenges.'

From the U.S. and Japanese perspectives, figuring South Korea into contingency planning will allow for a more comprehensive and clearer picture of the allied operating environment in the event of a Taiwan contingency. Were South Korea to remain an unknown variable, crucial decision-making time would be lost while trying to figure out how the Korean peninsula factors into an ongoing conflict over Taiwan. A conflict situation would only increase the risk of possible military incidence in an already tight operating environment. Therefore, the United States, South Korea, and Japan must have the same operational picture to accurately track threats and communicate. Without prior trilateral consultation and planning for a Taiwan contingency, the clarity and level of detail contained in any common operational picture at the tactical level would be compromised.⁷⁵ Trilateral coordination on contingency planning ensures that allied ambiguity will not be the decisive factor in the defense of Taiwan.

Commit to a principle of collective economic defense in the event of PRC economic coercion

The United States, Japan, and South Korea are no strangers to PRC economic coercion. Indeed, fear of economic retaliation has been a significant barrier preventing greater South Korean security cooperation with the United States and Japan. The South Korean government has substantial reason to doubt that the United States would help buffer economic losses, given U.S. ambivalence during the 2017 THAAD crisis. Yet, there are successful examples where the United States has partnered with Japan, among other partners and allies, to help decrease dependence on China's economy and supplement economic losses from the PRC's coercive actions. For example, the United States, Japan, and Australia are collaborating in efforts to reduce dependence on China for rare earth imports.⁷⁶ As another example, after China placed hefty tariffs on Taiwanese pineapples, the United States and Japan, among other countries, significantly increased their imports of pineapples from Taiwan to help offset the country's economic losses.⁷⁷ The United States, Japan, and South Korea should seek to underpin each other's efforts at economic diversification, especially since this is a common strategic interest of the three countries. One potential area of cooperation could be for South Korea to join the United States, Australia, and Japan in building new rare earth supply chains. In addition, the three countries should commit to a principle of "collective economic defense" in the event of PRC economic coercion. Like the Taiwan pineapple example, if China were to place restrictive tariffs on beauty products from South Korea (\$2.46B of South Korea-China trade in 2019), for example,

Conclusion

As U.S. military superiority in the Indo-Pacific declines in relative terms and the security environment grows increasingly severe, Japan and South Korea are improving their military capabilities, maneuvering towards increased defense autonomy and security responsibility, and are increasingly aligned on their threat perceptions and policies concerning China. These intra-alliance shifts in capabilities and an evolved security environment make U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security cooperation a more unified strategic imperative than ever before. And growing alignment in threat perceptions and policies makes it more plausible. As important guarantors of peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the U.S.-ROK Alliance must better align their ways, ends, and means to meet present and future security challenges. The application of such cooperation increases deterrence and resilience vis-a-vis PRC pressure for the region as a whole. Disregarding the growing trend in Asia of minilateralized security arrangements by underutilizing the U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral creates a dangerous hole in Japan and South Korea's security environment. Yet, it must be understood that any progress in reconstituting the U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral will be incremental and slow, given present Japan-South Korea relations. Creating a floor under the bilateral relationship through embassy-led coordination ensures progress remains progress—dips in the political sphere will not spill over into the security domain and erase prior success in strengthening trilateral security cooperation. Focusing trilateral security cooperation on planning for a Taiwan contingency and committing to collective economic defense appeals to the shared national security interests of all three countries and will contribute to safeguarding peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

⁷⁵ Kathryn Botto, "Overcoming Obstacles to Trilateral U.S.-ROK-Japan Interoperability," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 18, 2020, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/03/18/overcoming-obstacles-to-trilateral-u-s-rok-japan-interoperability-pub-81236>.

⁷⁶ Ryosuke Hanafusa, "Japan to pour investment into non-China rare-earth projects," *Nikkei Asian Review*, February 15, 2020, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Japan-to-pour-investment-into-non-China-rare-earth-projects>.

⁷⁷ Eric Chang, "US, Japan, and Canada support Taiwan pineapples amid China ban," *Taiwan News*, March 3, 2021, <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4141000>.

⁷⁸ "China/South Korea," The Observatory of Economic Complexity, <https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-country/chn/partner/kor#:~:text=In%20November%202021%20the%20to%20apparatus%20of%20a%20kind....>

2

The evolution of U.S.-led alliance systems: *A minilateralist approach in the Indo-Pacific*

Cassie Rodriguez

Abstract

The United States established a system of alliances in Europe and East Asia to combat emerging threats and lay the foundations of a sustained American presence. These two systems of alliances are often characterized as the sole choices available to policymakers: the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Europe is a prime example of a multilateral alliance, while the U.S.-led network of bilateral alliances in East Asia epitomizes a “hub-and-spokes” model. Yet, as the security environment in Asia continues to deteriorate, the United States has been trying a new approach – ‘minilateralism.’ While not necessarily downplaying its traditional network of bilateral alliances, Washington has been forming exclusive informal alignments that adopt a targeted/issue-based ‘minilateralist’ approach. This paper considers three possible explanations: the legacy of security bilateralism, shifting geopolitical calculations, and specific foreign policy initiatives of past and current administrations. It concludes with recommendations for the United States to maximize benefits from its minilateralist approach in the Indo-Pacific.

Introduction

Following the end of World War II, the United States established a system of alliances in Europe and East Asia to combat emerging threats and lay the foundations of a sustained American presence. These two systems of alliances are often characterized as the sole choices available to policymakers: the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Europe is a prime example of a multilateral alliance, while the U.S.-led network of bilateral alliances in East Asia epitomizes a “hub-and-spokes” model.

While China has arguably been seeking to make itself the ‘hub’ of the region,¹ the United States has embraced a different strategy, namely, pursuing a ‘minilateralist’ approach to East Asia instead of leaning into its network of existing bilateral alliances. What explains the U.S. shift toward minilateralism in East Asia? This paper offers three possible explanations. The first is structural: how much of the United States’ behavior can be explained by the existing regional architecture? The second explanation is geopolitical: how has the balance of power impacted strategic priorities and, consequently, U.S. alliance preferences? The third explanation focuses on specific administrations: how much of U.S. behavior can be explained by the specific policies of past and current administrations? This paper also considers how the United States should seek to maximize its minilateralist approach in the region.

Defining minilateralism

Although minilateralism has co-existed with bilateralism and multilateralism since 1945,² it has gained wider attention as multilateralism struggles to remain relevant. Multilateral fora tend to be plagued by competing national interests, slow decision-making processes, and an inability to address ever-evolving threats, not to mention the emerging wave of anti-globalist sentiment around the world. The failures of multilateralism, as Moises Naim wrote in 2009, “represent not only the perpetual lack of international consensus but also a flawed obsession with multilateralism as the panacea for all the world’s ills.”³

Minilateralism, with its ability to utilize “the smallest group necessary to achieve a particular goal and turn from formal treaties to non-binding accords and other soft-law mechanisms”⁴ is rapidly becoming the international community’s tool of choice to facilitate cooperation on functional issues in a timely manner. The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), and the Blue Dot Network (BDN) are just three recent examples of minilateral initiatives in the security, economic, and development spheres.

Table 1 illustrates the differences between bilateral, minilateral, and multilateral groupings. Both bilaterals and minilaterals are exclusive groupings, while multilaterals are the most inclusive. It should be noted that

a core feature of minilateralism is its ability to accommodate additional participants, hence the ‘flexible’ designation. Both bilateral and multilateral groupings are formal alliances, while minilateral groupings tend to be informal alignments, lacking formal treaties or otherwise binding structures. Similarly, bilateral and multilateral groupings are highly institutionalized structures that exist as permanent features of international society, while minilateralism prioritizes a functional approach on a more temporary basis. Lastly, from a U.S. perspective, bilateral alliances have traditionally allowed the United States to exert the most influence over their partners, multilateralism the least, and minilateralism a moderate amount. This characterization is particularly relevant when it comes to the Indo-Pacific’s existing regional security architecture and the perception of the United States in the region.

Bilateral	Minilateral	Multilateral
Exclusive	Exclusive (<i>flexible</i>)	Inclusive
Formal alliance	Informal alignment	Formal alliance
Highly institutionalized (<i>longer-term</i>)	Targeted/Issue-based approach (<i>temporary</i>)	Highly institutionalized (<i>longer-term</i>)
Maximum influence	Moderate influence	Limited influence

Table 1: Differences between bilateral, minilateral, and multilateral groupings.

Towards minilateralism: structure

Security bilateralism has been the defining regional security architecture in Asia for over half a century. The hub-and-spokes model incentivizes deep bilateral ties with Washington (the hub) but not amongst its other Pacific partners (the spokes). The lack of coordination and intentional asymmetry among the spokes allowed the United States to exert considerable control over its allies.

Sowing strategic mistrust with this network of bilateral alliances was successful for the United States. Bilateral alliances allowed the United States to definitively shape the trajectories of partners in the region, but it is a structure that poses a significant challenge when coordinating regional responses and sustaining cooperation in an ever-changing security environment. The flip side of the asymmetric alliance dynamic is that minor powers, given their willingness to trade autonomy in return for security, will try to indefinitely “free ride on the unipolar whenever possible, while insisting on alliance norms that retain their voice in alliance decision making.”⁵

Each bilateral security alliance focuses only on local threats and lacks the ability to unite against or conceptualize an overarching regional threat. Given that each spoke’s threat perception differs, and adversaries are prioritized differently, there is no mechanism to facilitate coordination in the event of a regional contingency.

The relationship between Japan and South Korea is the clearest example of this structural tension. The difficult history between Japan and South Korea has long impeded the development of positive ties between the two U.S. allies. Though largely confined to the diplomatic

¹ Jaehyon Lee, “China Is Recreating the American ‘Hub-and-Spoke’ System in Asia,” *The Diplomat*, September 11, 2015. <https://thediplomat.com/2015/09/china-is-recreating-the-american-hub-and-spoke-system-in-asia/>.

² Bhubhindar Singh and Sara Teo, *Minilateralism in the Indo-Pacific*, (New York: Routledge, 2020), 2-3.

³ Moises Naim, “Minilateralism,” *Foreign Policy*, June 21, 2009, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/06/21/minilateralism/>.

⁴ Aarshi Tirkey, “Minilateralism: Weighing the Prospects for Cooperation and Governance,” ORF Issue Brief No. 489, September 2021, Observer Research Foundation.

⁵ Stephen M. Walt, “Alliances in a Unipolar World,” *World Politics* 61, no. 1 (2009): 86–120. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40060222>.

relationship between the two countries, their inability to reconcile has allowed their souring relationship to permeate both security and economic spheres—two areas where cooperation is increasingly critical. One notable example: the United States had to exert significant pressure on South Korea to reverse its decision to withdraw from GSOMIA, a critical intelligence-sharing pact between the United States, Japan, and South Korea.⁶ Seoul's initial decision to withdraw from the pact left Japanese analysts questioning South Korea's reliability as a security partner.⁷

Japan and South Korea's inability to cooperate complicates trilateral relations and the prospects for promoting greater interoperability between the three nations. An inability to promote interoperability, which depends on cooperation at the human, procedural, and technical levels,⁸ leaves the United States vulnerable in the event of a contingency in the region. While bilateral military-to-military relations between the United States and South Korea and the United States and Japan are robust and strong, interoperability between all three states remains weak. An inability to coordinate presents significant strategic challenges in a deteriorating security environment.

For many observers, the region's baked-in bilateralism precludes any chance of forming an Asian NATO or other similar regional security architecture. According to one Defense official, the United States is instead shifting towards a "series of overlapping relationships" to "deliberately evolve from [the] hub-and-spokes model."⁹ In other words, the United States seeks to pursue a minilateralist approach in the region through informal and formal groupings to bolster the existing patchwork of bilateral, trilateral, and multilateral groupings in the region.

Towards minilateralism: geopolitics

Asia is the new geopolitical center of gravity where emerging multipolarity and a rising China have begun to shift the balance of power in the region. As China grows economically and militarily, it will seek to undermine U.S. presence in Asia.. Limiting the U.S.' ability to project power and influence will be a core aim. Perceptions of power in the region are already shifting. Though today, China is seen as holding slightly more political power and influence than the United States, the region believes that ten years from now, China will be considerably more politically powerful and influential relative to the United States.¹⁰ Post-COVID, a survey by the ASEAN Studies Centre found that nearly 50% of the region sees China as the most influential

strategic power compared to 30% for the United States. Among those who selected China, 89% expressed anxiety about its growing regional political and strategic influence.¹¹

China will seek to secure regional hegemony via economic domination and interdependence. Expansive projects such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), its participation in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) are examples of China's attempt to make Beijing indispensable to the region.

The Belt and Road Initiative, in particular, stands out as one of China's most consequential initiatives. Conceptualized as an economic venture meant to spur infrastructure, trade, and investment linkages between China and other countries¹², it functions as the centerpiece of China's 'neighborhood diplomacy' strategy. The successful implementation of the BRI in Southeast Asia has several implications. The most critical is the development of a robust "Sino-centric network of economic, political, cultural, and security relations."¹³

The development of this Sino-centric network further chips away at the influence of the United States in the region. The financial incentives, attractive to many, leave participating states vulnerable to weaponized interdependence in the future. Fostering these ties also allows Beijing to localize its diplomacy. It will be able to exert more influence over the local politics of Southeast

"... the United States seeks to pursue a minilateralist approach in the region through informal and formal groupings to bolster the existing patchwork of bilateral, trilateral, and multilateral groupings in the region."

Asian countries. In this way, the BRI functions less as an ambitious economic venture and more as an expansive political project that can "buy political goodwill along the way"¹⁴ and augment Beijing's coercive power.

Thus, economic interdependence is at the heart of today's emerging security shift in Asia. During the Cold War, in which the United States and the Soviet Union effectively competed without being economically dependent on each other, trade was nearly non-existent between the two great powers, and reliance on raw materials or technology was curtailed. Today, much of the

⁶ Reiji Yoshida and Satoshi Sugiyama, "GSOMIA Survives as South Korea Reverses Decision to Exit Intel Pact with Japan," *The Japan Times*, April 30, 2021, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/11/22/national/politics-diplomacy/japan-south-korea-gsomia-talks/>.

⁷ 日本放送協会, "どうなる'最悪'の日韓関係—解決の糸口はあるのか—," NHK クローズアップ現代+, April 30, 2021, <https://www.nhk.or.jp/gendai/articles/4319/index.html>.

⁸ Kathryn Botto, "Overcoming Obstacles to Trilateral U.S.-ROK-Japan Interoperability" in *Korea Net Assessment 2020: Politicized Security and Unchanging Strategic Realities*, ed. Chung Min Lee and Kathryn Botto, (DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2020) 67-79, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/03/18/overcoming-obstacles-to-trilateral-u.s.-rok-japan-interoperability-pub-81236>

⁹ Jack Detsch, "Biden Looks to Contain China-but Where's the Asian NATO?" *Foreign Policy*, March 29, 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/03/26/biden-china-asian-nato/>.

¹⁰ Michael Green et al, *Powers, Norms, and Institutions: The Future of the Indo-Pacific from a Southeast Asia Perspective*, (DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2020). <https://csis-website->

prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/20624_Green_PowersNormsandInstitutions_WEB%20FINAL%20UPDATED.pdf

¹¹ Sharon Seah, et al., *The State of Southeast Asia: 2021* (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2021)

¹² Jonathan Stromseth, *The Testing Ground: China's Rising Influence in Southeast Asia and Regional Responses*, (DC: Brookings, November 2019), https://www.brookings.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2019/11/FP_20191119_china_se_asia_stromseth.pdf

¹³ William A. Callahan, "China's 'Asia Dream': The Belt Road Initiative and the New Regional Order," *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics* 1, no. 3 (September 2016): 226-43. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2057891116647806>.

¹⁴ Angela Stanzel, Nadège Rolland, Jabin Jacob, Melanie Hart, *Grand Designs: Does China have a 'Grand Strategy'?* (London: European Council on Foreign Relations, 2017) https://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/grands_designs_does_china_have_a_grand_strategy#1

region is dependent on China. During the Cold War, bilateralism guaranteed a stable security environment and access to the free market, ultimately strengthening U.S. partners and advancing Washington's geopolitical objective of containing the Soviet Union.¹⁵ But as Ashley Tellis notes, "a free trade system that promotes high growth among states poses no dangers so long as all the participants in that system are either allies or neutrals who pose no security threats to one another."¹⁶ Consequently, the United States' next geopolitical rival is one it helped create.

Therefore, another possible explanation for the U.S. minilateralist approach is geopolitical. Whereas a system of bilateral alliances allowed the United States to exert maximum control over potentially unstable allies and shaped their trajectory, the nature of the China challenge has shifted Washington's strategic objectives: the United States is primarily focused on preserving multipolarity in the region to balance against an increasingly aggressive China. The United States can no longer be the sole security guarantor. Indeed, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, speaking of the U.S.-Japan Alliance, noted that "security, freedom, [and] democracy isn't free. It does come with costs and costs that we have to bear together in a fair and equitable way."¹⁷

Towards minilateralism: presidential administrations¹⁸

Pivot to Asia

Under the Obama administration, American grand strategy was reoriented towards cooperative engagement to prepare the world for a United States that, while remaining the most influential power, no longer has sole dominance on the world stage.¹⁹ The bedrock of Obama's grand strategy was formulated with the idea that to preserve the existing U.S.-led international order,

focused on unipolar maneuvering and more concerned with a diffusion of responsibility among capable allies.

Despite formally declaring an effort to rebalance to Asia, transformation efforts in the region via engagement were not received well. The administration's vision for world order as "a sort of concert diplomacy," a system in which "great powers work together to enforce international norms,"²¹ chafed hard against the more traditional balance of power politics in Asia—one where the major powers view their relationships as inherently competitive despite occasional cooperative endeavors. In a region dominated by power politics, this emphasis on multilateral engagement and shared values ultimately translated to little more than a "guarantee that the administration would react to events in Asia far more than it shaped them."²² As a result, the administration never reached a bottom line for what a clear strategic approach consisted of, and it left the region's two most powerful nations, Japan and China, seeking a place at the center.

As Victor Cha writes, "...what Americans saw as a principled strategy (namely, balancing both competition and cooperation), Beijing associated with a 'new model of great power relations' that assigned Beijing a sphere of influence and military advantage in Asia in return for Chinese support of Washington's key global issues."²³ It was clear to American allies in the region that the inability to lay a foundation for relations with Beijing was rapidly creating a setting in which unstable competing spheres of influence were seemingly sanctioned. Japan, in particular, urged the United States not to embrace Xi's model of great power relations, which delegated Japan and other major U.S. partners to second-tier status against the great powers of China, Russia, and the United States.²⁴

Thus, it is not difficult to see how the pivot to Asia was, on some level, fundamentally hard to interpret. Asian allies feared the United States was unable to commit fully, and European allies feared a pivot to Asia might signal a

"...rebalance was about making the U.S. role in the region less focused on unipolar maneuvering and more concerned with a diffusion of responsibility among capable allies."

collective burden sharing, cooperation, and the diffusion of responsibilities of global leadership among partners and allies would be increasingly critical. The U.S. vision for this rebalance focused on "strengthen[ing] cooperation among partners in the region...to build a network of like-minded states that sustains and strengthens a rules-based regional order and addresses regional and global challenges."²⁰ The rebalance was about making the U.S. role in the region less

diminished U.S. role in maintaining European security. The rhetoric of American primacy was touted freely while strategic maneuvering suggested that the United States was more interested in selective engagement and increased burden sharing through cooperative means—fears that the United States was simply becoming opportunistic and short-sighted instead of committed to the spread and protection of democratic principles became common.

¹⁵ Ashley Tellis, "Power Shift: How the West Can Adapt and Thrive in an Asian Century," *Asia Paper Series*, (January 2010), Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. https://carnegieendowment.org/files/GMF7417_Power_Shift_Asia_Paper_for_web_Final.pdf.

¹⁶ Ashley Tellis, "Power Shift: How the West Can Adapt and Thrive in an Asian Century," *Asia Paper Series*, (January 2010), Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

¹⁷ Secretary Antony J. Blinken, "Secretary Antony J. Blinken With Yuki Morikawa of TV Asahi," interview by Yuri Morikawa, *TV Asahi*, March 17, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-with-yuki-morikawa-of-tv-asahi/>

¹⁸ The "Pivot to Asia" and "America First" sections are loosely adapted from a previous project: Casimira Rodriguez, "Unfettered Japan: Tracing the Role of the United States and China in the Development of Japanese Security Policies" (Senior Thesis, Princeton University, 2019)

¹⁹ George Löfflmann, "The Pivot between Containment, Engagement, and Restraint: President Obama's Conflicted Grand Strategy in Asia," *Asian Security*, vol. 12, no. 2, (2016), 92–110.

²⁰ National Archives and Records Administration, "FACT SHEET: Advancing the Rebalance to Asia and the Pacific," (November 15, 2016) obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/11/16/fact-sheet-advancing-rebalance-asia-and-pacific.

²¹ Henry Kissinger, "Obama's Foreign Policy Challenge," *The Washington Post*, April 22, 2009, www.henryakissinger.com/articles/obamas-foreign-policy-challenge/.

²² Michael Green, *By More Than Providence: Grand Strategy and American Power in the Asia Pacific Since 1783*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019).

²³ Victor Cha, "The Unfinished Legacy of Obama's Pivot to Asia," *Foreign Policy*, September 6, 2016, foreignpolicy.com/2016/09/06/the-unfinished-legacy-of-obamas-pivot-to-asia/.

²⁴ Michael Green, *By More Than Providence: Grand Strategy and American Power in the Asia Pacific Since 1783*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019).

Taken together, the pivot to Asia was one of mixed results and irresolute conviction, more rhetoric than substance, and deeply under-resourced. It also illustrated the difficulty the United States has faced when seeking to promote multilateral cooperation in a region fundamentally opposed to it. A combination of history, geopolitics, and the lack of a definitive regional security architecture makes it particularly inhospitable to regional cooperation.

America First

In November 2017, President Trump announced what he called the “Indo-Pacific Dream,” a “vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) — a place where sovereign and independent nations, with diverse cultures and many different dreams, can all prosper side-by-side, and thrive in freedom and in peace.”²⁵ Many viewed this as the next iteration of Obama’s pivot to Asia, but the tail end of Trump’s speech revealed where they differed: “At the core of this partnership, we seek robust trade relationships rooted in the principles of fairness and reciprocity.”²⁶ In other words, a post-pivot strategy for Trump was seeing the “America First” policy superseded in the Asia Pacific region as well. The idea that partnerships in this region should be rooted in “principles of reciprocity” signaled that American political leadership was more concerned with its own economic security than the economic security or security threats of any other nation in the region. This is less of a regional strategy and more of a nationalistic attitude or goal; the only thing an “America First” policy accomplished, in some sense, is setting the United States on a track towards “a generation of anti-Americanism.”²⁷

It was not until a year after this strategic vision was announced that it began to take on more concrete objectives. Basing the objectives on the aforementioned modifiers, ‘free’ and ‘open,’ the strategy sought to ensure that nations in the region were free from coercion and also internally, taking more strides to become more transparent and capable of fending off internal corruption.²⁸ The ‘open’ half of the strategy referred to keeping open sea lines of communication and open airways, in addition to open trade, investment, and infrastructure.²⁹ These objectives chafed hard against the reality of tariffs, rejection of multilateral trade agreements, and a notable absence from ASEAN-led summits. All of which suggested that maintaining freedom of navigation and access to natural resources were solely for U.S. benefit rather than for partners in the region.

The Trump administration’s two courses of action were at odds with one another. While efforts to maintain strong bilateral ties with partners in the region, notably Japan and India, were consistent with the U.S. approach in Asia during previous administrations, the president’s penchant for viewing foreign policy as transactional left observers with an unclear idea of what the U.S. role in the region would be. A preference for bilateral relationships (particularly in trade) complicated efforts to coordinate a

regional strategy, while the administration’s rhetoric often antagonized multilateral organizations and initiatives.

Lastly, while the Trump administration successfully redefined U.S. relationship with China as one of strategic competition, the use of FOIP to counter China rather than as a regional framework for increasing cooperation among allies and partners in the region alienated many. The narrow focus on the strategy, coupled with an America First rhetoric, “limit[ed] opportunities for America to shape a wider regional agenda and incentivize collective action on issues ranging from climate change to global health and education.”³⁰

Building Back Better

At the time the Biden administration had only just surpassed its one-year mark, the administration had hit the ground running in Asia. Early maneuvering revealed its top priorities: alliance restoration and strategic competition with China. The emphasis on alliance management hearkens back to an Obama-era emphasis on global engagement. The administration’s emerging China strategy suggests that, while Trump’s execution was flawed, his basic instinct was not. In essence, the Biden administration has maintained the previous administration’s designation of China as a competitor though instead of shunning alliances, it is seeking to reinvigorate them and assert the United States as an active leader in the region.

The administration’s first overseas trip took place in Asia. Early, high-profile ‘two-plus-two’ meetings in Japan and South Korea further revealed Biden’s commitment to working with allies in Asia and set the tempo for a more active American presence. The fact that these two high-level meetings preceded the U.S. meeting with China in Anchorage points to the administration’s preference for highly orchestrated, coordinated strategy — the timing and context of these meetings were deliberate and carefully planned. The United States was meant to showcase to the international community early on that it was ready to put its allies and partners at the forefront of its strategy in Asia. It continues to prioritize high-level engagement, exemplified by former Japanese Prime Minister Suga’s visit to the White House, subsequent travel to Tokyo by Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Kritenbrink, a follow-up ‘two-plus-two’ between Secretary Blinken and Secretary Austin with their Japanese counterparts, and a virtual Biden-Kishida summit in January. The administration has kept momentum by sending a U.S. delegation to Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands in April 2022, and in early May, hosted U.S.-ASEAN Summit in Washington ahead of the POTUS trip to Tokyo and Seoul for the Quad Summit and other high-level engagements.

The recent release of the Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) has been the Biden Administration’s first articulation of a comprehensive vision for the Indo-Pacific and the formalization of a minilateralist approach to the region. Advancing five core objectives, a free and open Indo-

²⁵ The White House, “Remarks by President Trump at APEC CEO Summit,” November 2017, www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-apec-ceo-summit-da-nang-vietnam/.

²⁶ The White House, “Remarks by President Trump at APEC CEO Summit,” November 2017, www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-apec-ceo-summit-da-nang-vietnam/.

²⁷ G. John Ikenberry, “The Plot Against American Foreign Policy: Can the Liberal Order Survive,” *Foreign Affairs* vol. 96, no. 3 (May/June 2017): 2-9. *HeinOnline*, <https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/fora96&i=448>.

²⁸ U.S. Department of State, “Briefing on The Indo-Pacific Strategy,” April 2, 2018, <https://2017-2021.state.gov/briefing-on-the-indo-pacific-strategy/index.html>

²⁹ U.S. Department of State, “Briefing on The Indo-Pacific Strategy,” April 2, 2018, <https://2017-2021.state.gov/briefing-on-the-indo-pacific-strategy/index.html>

³⁰ Lindsay Ford, *The Trump Administration and the ‘Free and Open Indo-Pacific’*, (DC: Brookings, May 2020) https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/fp_20200505_free_open_indo_pacific.pdf

Pacific; building connections within and beyond the region; driving regional prosperity; bolstering Indo-Pacific security; and building regional resilience to transnational threats, the United States will seek to “modernize our long-standing alliances, strengthen emerging partnerships, and invest in regional organizations” and employ a “latticework of strong and mutually reinforcing coalitions.”³¹

Perhaps the most telling aspect of the Biden administration’s new strategy has been the reinvigoration of the Quad and its inclusion in the IPS³². Though the Trump administration can be credited with reviving the core group in 2017, much uncertainty remained around its purpose—it lacked official working groups and coordinated mainly at the bilateral and trilateral levels.³³ The Biden Administration’s successful Quad summits have been a triumph of minilateralism, with 58.5% of ASEAN agreeing that strengthening QUAD, including through practical cooperation, will be constructive for the region³⁴. The first-ever in-person Quad Leaders’ Summit was notable for its affirmative agenda and concrete vision for the region. The meeting resulted in several working groups for issues such as pandemic-related health security, climate change, and emerging technologies that ultimately signal the group’s desire to make itself indispensable to the region. The group has also stated its commitment to ASEAN centrality and expanding engagement with the Southeast Asian bloc—suggesting the minilateral grouping’s ability to augment existing multilateral institutions rather than exclude them.

The Biden administration’s more explicit minilateralist approach is perhaps the result of a sober analysis of the two previous administrations’ efforts. While Obama leaned more heavily into cooperative engagement and multilateralism, much of the region failed to get on board. In contrast, while Trump’s harder stance towards China was received well by key partners, a seeming preference for unilateral or bilateral engagement (and a rejection of multilateralism) left the region doubting Washington’s commitment. The current administration seems to be blending the two approaches: embracing

“Minilateralism provides a promising avenue to circumvent existing asymmetry in the alliance structure in Asia, allowing the United States or regional partners to take the lead on various issues.”

strategic competition with China but with a renewed interest in utilizing the network of allies and partners in the region. While these arrangements cannot coordinate at the level of a functioning alliance, they can “ease policy consultation and coordination, build familiarity and habits and could, if necessary, harden quickly into a true, multilateral defensive coalition.”³⁵

Recommendations

Now that the United States has formally codified a minilateralist approach through the IPS, it is important to consider how to ensure successful implementation. ‘Modernizing’ alliances in the Indo-Pacific undoubtedly conjures images of the United States seeking to squeeze more defense spending out of key partners like Japan. However, truly modernizing these crucial partnerships will require the United States to double down on efforts to encourage regional partners to take on leadership roles. The U.S.-Japan Alliance should serve as a model for the region and should be one of the main tools to implement the strategy. Rather than U.S.-led working groups or coalitions, the United States should encourage its partners, particularly Japan, to lead on global issues to not only raise their leadership profile in the international community and generate domestic momentum for more robust alliances, but to signal to Beijing that U.S. partners are also strong, independent leaders. There is a key semantic point here that cannot be understated: the United States should not appear to be publicly ‘giving its blessing’ for partners like Japan to take the lead on certain issues but should privately support partners interested in taking on a greater role in the region and publicly acknowledge their efforts. The distinction is important for two reasons. Firstly, to evolve beyond the hub-and-spokes model of asymmetrical alliances, the perceived power imbalance should be eliminated. Secondly, Beijing is more likely to be deterred by a growing coalition of independent, active leaders rather than an explicitly U.S.-led group. Wedge strategies are less effective when regional partners are independent stakeholders and not lapdogs.

The United States should capitalize on its partners’ appetites for a greater regional role. Japan under the Abe administration stands out as an important example of the merits of this approach. The Abe administration combined an enhanced bilateralism with the United States with enhanced regionalism by doubling down on ties with the United States while seeking exclusive security partnerships with Australia and India. Abe’s proposed “security diamond” was even the foundation of the Quad between the United States, Japan, Australia, and India. The Abe administration’s approach fulfilled both his ambition for Japan to exert a more ‘autonomous influence’ over the regional security order that was also in line with the U.S. strategic interests. Minilateralism provides a promising avenue to circumvent existing asymmetry in the alliance structure in Asia, allowing the United States or regional partners to take the lead on various issues.

The United States must also avoid any action that may perpetuate the image of regional partners as ‘junior partners.’ One notable example would be Japan’s historic coordination with the United States on Russia’s unprovoked invasion of Ukraine under Prime Minister Kishida. While the United States and Japan appear to be in complete lockstep, initial reports of the devastating

³¹ The White House. “Indo-Pacific Strategy,” February 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>

³² The IPS makes explicit reference to the Quad 13 times compared to just two mentions of the more traditional security partnership, AUKUS. This suggests that the Biden Administration is seeking to underplay more traditional, hard power security alliances.

³³ Benjamin Rimland and Patrick Gerard Buchan, *Defining the Diamond: The Past, Present, and Future of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue*, (DC: Center

for Strategic and International Studies, March 16, 2020) <https://www.csis.org/analysis/defining-diamond-past-present-and-future-quadrilateral-security-dialogue>.

³⁴ Sharon Seah et al., *The State of Southeast Asia: 2022* (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2022)

³⁵ Aaron L. Friedberg, “Competing with China”, *Survival*, 60, no. 3, (June 1, 2018): 7-64, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2018.1470755>

sanctions on Russia referred only to “the West” or specific G7 nations imposing these costs. Japan’s initial absence³⁶ and subsequent inclusion seemed to imply their secondary status or minimal contribution when it was the opposite. The United States must remain sensitive to its key partners, prioritizing open communication channels and coordinating messaging efforts to ensure that regional partners are properly included and acknowledged. Taken together, alliance managers will need to reevaluate partnerships on a granular level, ensuring that the United States and partners are completely aligned.

“...in a region that seeks to circumvent the security versus economic question, a successful U.S. approach will focus on delivering investment, education, security cooperation, and people-to-people exchange together with key partners in a flexible, results-oriented way.”

The following recommendations are geared towards the most pressing battlegrounds in the region: Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands. The overarching theme of each recommendation is strategic information sharing, fast-tracking concrete deliverables, and increasing high-level engagements. This approach will involve shifting gears—the U.S. approach should focus on inclusivity and remain targeted to avoid overpromising and under-delivering. Lengthy implementation, inadequate resourcing, and prolific China-generated misinformation remain key challenges undercutting these recommendations. The most crucial piece—an action plan for augmenting U.S. economic presence (and diplomatic presence in the PICs)—has yet to be concretely defined. While IPEF pledges an economic framework that “will help our economies to harness rapid technological transformation, including in the digital economy, and adapt to the coming energy and climate transition,”³⁷ the mechanisms to achieve this pledge are ill-defined. The U.S.-Japan Competitiveness and Resilience Partnership (CoRE) and the U.S.-Japan Economic Policy Consultative Committee are promising bilateral initiatives that are intended to build off the IPEF, but the substance remains undefined, and the timing slow—enhanced bilateral economic cooperation without efforts to expand market access is a poor substitute for a regional strategy that is supposed to counter the ever-growing economic web of China.

Recommendations for the United States

1. Encourage Japan, ASEAN’s most trusted partner³⁸, to take a stronger public lead on infrastructure investment in Southeast Asia by leveraging Tokyo’s positive relationship with ASEAN to offer alternatives to China-led projects.
 - a. Solicit Japan’s feedback on bolstering U.S. engagement in the region and greater support for Tokyo’s efforts.

- b. Focus on concrete deliverables from existing initiatives like Blue Dot Network (BDN).
2. Redouble efforts to support Japan-ROK ties by leveraging South Korean President Yoon’s expressed desire to draw closer to Washington and Tokyo.
 - a. Focus on high-level trilateral engagement to strategically align priorities.
 - b. Capitalize on Yoon’s public support for the Quad and find opportunities for collaboration.
3. Continue to underplay the hard power element of the Quad and focus on strategic messaging.
 - a. Underscore that the Quad works *alongside* existing international and regional mechanisms for positive regional optics.
4. Develop an economic plan that includes increased regional market access, digital trade, and resiliency of supply chains.
 - a. Focus efforts on highlighting the importance of U.S. economic presence in the Indo-Pacific for the American audience.
5. Continue efforts to reestablish U.S. presence in the Pacific Islands.
 - a. Strengthen partnerships with governments receptive to U.S. support.
 - b. Prioritize regional needs with help from Japan, Australia, and New Zealand.
6. Expand the network: connect Europe and the Indo-Pacific.
 - a. Promote expanding ties between Europe and Indo-Pacific.
 - b. Publicly laud expanding ties between key partners and Europe (e.g., Japan and UK Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA)).

Conclusion

This paper offered explanations for the U.S. shift toward minilateralism in the Indo-Pacific and provided recommendations to maximize this approach. The first explanation concerns the legacy of security bilateralism in the region and structural incentives, minilateralism’s informal nature and issue-based approach mitigate strategic mistrust between spokes by allowing selective cooperation. The second explanation is geopolitical, the shifting balance of power in Asia and the ‘rise of the rest’ have changed U.S. alliance preferences. Instead of leaning into its network of bilateral relationships (or even creating new spokes), it seeks to disperse the costs of maintaining regional stability more equally as it sinks into relative decline. Lastly, the specific foreign policy initiatives of past and current administrations shed light on the U.S. shift toward looser minilateral groupings. The Biden administration’s revitalization of the Quad and launch of the IPS framework represents a commitment to

³⁶ Taro Kono (@konotaromp). “Japan?” Twitter, February 26 2022, <https://twitter.com/konotaromp/status/1497730822668836866?s=21&t=H52Jfcv6uvy0VDm4SFVJsA>

³⁷ The White House. “Indo-Pacific Strategy,” February 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>

³⁸ Sharon Seah et al., *The State of Southeast Asia: 2022* (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2022)

maintaining a competitive stance towards China while also taking a regional approach blending perhaps the best instincts of the previous two administrations.

Minilateralism is uniquely suited to the Indo-Pacific region, where the security environment is defined by power balancing and economic growth rather than multilateral alliance and arms-control regimes.³⁹ In other words, in a region that seeks to circumvent the security versus economic question, a successful U.S. approach will focus on delivering investment, education, security

cooperation, and people-to-people exchange together with key partners in a flexible, results-oriented way. The U.S.-Japan Alliance can serve as an excellent model of an ideal relationship with allies and partners and as an important tool to successfully drive and lead a variety of minilateralist endeavors. Ultimately, efforts will mostly come down to political will and adequate resourcing – without those, the United States has little chance of successfully executing any strategy in Asia.

³⁹ Paul Dibb, “Towards a New Balance of Power in Asia”, *The Adelphi Papers*, 35, no. 295, (1995): 10-16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/05679329508449301>

3

Japan-U.S. alliance in harmony? Perspectives from power, interests, and values

Yu Inagaki

Abstract

This paper analyzes the policies of Japan and the United States from three perspectives: power, economic interests, and values. The paper explores where their policy preferences converge and where they differ. Unsurprisingly, Japan and the United States have contrasting interests, but if their strategies are too different, it could allow China or Russia an opportunity to decouple them. Regarding power, Japan and the United States share threat perceptions of China and have cooperated to strengthen the alliance. Though there are challenges to be resolved, especially for Japan to play a more active role, they are basically on the same page. In terms of economic interests, they have different priorities; while the current U.S. economic policy is affected by the Trump administration's America First approach and economic security, Japan has tried to maintain a liberal economic order. As for the values, the two countries also take different approaches. The United States tends to project values such as democracy and human rights more into diplomacy. However, Japan is reluctant to emphasize those values. Overall, Japan needs to evaluate how sustainable its passive stance on values is in the face of intensifying U.S.-China competition. The United States, on the other hand, needs to evaluate how effective its economic strategy and values-based diplomacy will be in sustaining the liberal international order.

Introduction

The Japan-U.S. alliance is expected to play an important role as a security cornerstone for the Indo-Pacific region. On the one hand, China's rise has destabilized the security environment in the Indo-Pacific. On the other hand, it has become difficult for the United States alone to compete with China. In this context, the Biden administration emphasized the importance of the Japan-U.S. alliance, which is at the forefront of the U.S.-China competition. As an advanced democracy, Japan is considered close to the United States because both share the same perception of China and value the maintenance of the Liberal International Order (LIO). In fact, Japan has pursued an active foreign policy to promote a rules-based order, especially since the second Abe administration declared "Japan is back."¹ Biden has also declared that "America is back," appealing for a revival of American internationalism, which the Trump administration damaged.²

While shared perceptions seem self-evident given the strong Japan-U.S. relationship, Japan's position does not necessarily align with that of the United States. To be sure, Japan has also shown a preference to maintain its relationship with China amid U.S.-China competition.³ This is not surprising since the United States and Japan have different national statuses and identities; one is a major Western power, and the other is a middle Asian power. Therefore, it is worth asking to what extent Japan and the United States share the same view of international order and strategy for peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific and to what extent they contribute to this goal.

To answer these questions, this paper analyzes the policies of both Japan and the United States from three perspectives: power, economic interests, and values. The paper explores where their policy preferences converge and where they differ. Masataka Kosaka explained that international relations are made up of three systems: power, interests, and values, all of which are essential in considering what kind of order Japan and the United States want to build in the region.⁴ Unsurprisingly, Japan and the United States have contrasting interests, but if their strategies are too different, it could allow China or Russia an opportunity to decouple them.

In terms of power, Japan and the United States share threat perceptions of China and have cooperated to strengthen the alliance relationship. Since it is difficult for the United States to cope with China alone, the alliance tries to shift from an asymmetrical relationship to a more 'normal' one. This means that more than ever, Japan and the United States must cooperate closely under a common strategic viewpoint to decide the respective roles each should play.

As for economic interests, U.S. economic policy is shaped by forces other than liberalism; one example is the America First policy, and the other is economic security. In the face of the Trump administration's pivot away from trade multilateralism, Japan sought to maintain aliberal economic order by maintaining the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and promoting other multilateral frameworks.⁵ The United States has yet to disavow its America First policy under the Biden administration, and its economic strategy is still unclear.⁶ If this continues, the United States will not be able to exert sufficient influence on economic order in the region.

When it comes to values and the U.S. framing of competition with China as an ideological conflict, the United States, especially under the Biden administration, has emphasized democracy and human rights. The United States and the EU actively impose sanctions in response to human rights violations in China and other countries. On the other hand, Japan, through its promotion of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Initiative (FOIP), which focuses more on economic prosperity and stability in the region, is reluctant to impose sanctions on other countries for human rights violations.⁷

"... United States takes a more values-oriented strategy, while Japan tries to maintain a more multilateral order."

While both countries are committed to the Indo-Pacific Strategy, they have different policy priorities and strategies; the United States takes a more values-oriented strategy, while Japan tries to maintain a more multilateral order. Based on an analysis of power, interest, and values, this contribution proposes policy recommendations. These recommendations will emphasize that Japan should incorporate the values aspect into its strategy, while the United States should more clearly articulate and implement its strategy of maintaining multilateral order. However, before turning to these recommendations, examining how power, interests, and values are manifested in the U.S. and Japanese priorities and strategies is necessary.

Power

History of role and function in the Japan-U.S. alliance

Power is an essential concept in international relations, and various definitions exist.⁸ This paper defines power in terms of the military capability to achieve security goals. From the U.S. perspective, military power is a means to establish a balance of power or maintain U.S. hegemony. Alliances are the most effective means of enhancing this power.

¹ Shinzo Abe, "Japan is Back," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA), February 22, 2013, https://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/pm/abe/us_20130222en.html.

² The White House, "Remarks by President Biden on America's Place in the World," February 4, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/02/04/remarks-by-president-biden-on-americas-place-in-the-world/>.

³ For example, Ryo Sahashi, "Japan's strategy amid US-China confrontation," *China International Strategy Review* 2 (2020): 232-245, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42533-020-00061-9>; Yuichi Hosoya, "FOIP 2.0: The Evolution of Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy," *Asia-Pacific Review* 26, no. 1 (2019): 18-28, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13439006.2019.1622868>.

⁴ Masataka Kosaka, *Kokusai Seiji* [International Politics] (Tokyo: Chuokoron Shinsha, 2017).

⁵ Terada Takashi, "How and Why Japan Has Saved the TPP: From Trump Tower to Davos," *The Asan Forum*, February 19, 2018, <https://theasanforum.org/how-and-why-japan-has-saved-the-tpp-from-trump-tower-to-davos/#26>.

⁶ Van Jackson, "America's Asia Strategy Has Reached a Dead End," *Foreign Policy*, January 9, 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/01/09/us-southeast-asia-china-biden-economic-strategy-geopolitics/>.

⁷ Ryan Ashley and Elliot Silverberg, "Japan's Human Rights Diplomacy: A Convergence of Geopolitical and Geoeconomic Interests," *Asia Policy* 17, no. 2 (2022): 125-154, doi:10.1353/asp.2022.0031.

⁸ There are several types of power, such as hard power and soft power. The way power is exercised can also be divided into several roles, such as deterrence and coercion. Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *The Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011); Antulio J. Echevarria, "Deterrence and coercion," in *Military Strategy: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

As for alliances, which are a traditional means of balancing, there is also a debate in international relations theory on their definition and functions. This debate ranges from classical definitions of alliances as a means of balancing against (potential) adversaries to liberal and constructivist accounts that focus on the institutional aspects of alliances.⁹ The role and function of the Japan-U.S. alliance have also changed in response to the evolving security environment.

After World War II, the United States initially adopted a policy of thoroughly demilitarizing Japan and ensuring its security through a collective security framework within the United Nations (UN). With the outbreak of the Cold War, the United States shifted its policy to bring Japan into its camp by setting out a security treaty. This is how the Japan-U.S. alliance was born in 1951 (modified in 1960). However, this alliance had a unique feature unseen in other alliances. While the United States provided security guarantees to Japan, which renounced military forces under Article 9 of the Constitution, Tokyo was not obligated to reciprocate. Instead, Japan provided bases of high strategic value to the United States, and Washington could use those bases not only for the defense of Japan but also for regional security.¹⁰ This asymmetric alliance and dependence on the United States for security enabled Japan to focus on economic growth. This arrangement is what is referred to as the so-called Yoshida Doctrine.

Though this asymmetrical alliance continued beyond the Cold War, the *raison d'être* of the alliance, which had functioned as a deterrent against the Soviet Union, naturally came into question. In the midst of this, the Gulf War broke out. While many countries dispatched troops, Japan could only provide economic assistance to Kuwait. The fact that Japan's economic aid was not appreciated came as a shock. Through this experience, Tokyo realized that 'Checkbook Diplomacy' was insufficient to establish a presence in international society. After the war, Japan quickly enacted the International Peace Cooperation Act and began to actively dispatch the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) around the world for Peacekeeping Operations (PKO).

Parallel to these developments in Japan, the Japan-U.S. alliance began to emphasize its role in contributing to the peace and stability of the international community. With the end of the Cold War and the advent of American unipolarity, the alliance became not just a security device but a contributor to the peace of international society.¹¹ This aspect was also promoted after 9/11. In the 2003 Iraq War, while some other U.S. allies, such as France and Germany, expressed their opposition to

this war, Japan dispatched the SDF to provide humanitarian assistance, supporting the war on terror.

U.S.-China competition and a return to the classical alliance?

As mentioned above, after the Cold War, the alliance's focus had been on the peace and stability of international society rather than traditional national security, as the aspect of state-to-state rivalry was no longer at the forefront.¹² However, in the 21st century, this situation changed with the resurgence of great power competition. In this security environment, the role of the Japan-U.S. alliance was also under pressure to change. U.S.-China competition includes a wide range of issues, including security, economy, technology, and values, but there is no doubt that it is essentially a clash between a rising power and a declining hegemonic power.

However, it is only relatively recently that the United States has begun to recognize China as a competitor that threatens the existing LIO. Since the Nixon-Kissinger era, there was a belief in the United States that China could be transformed into a democratic state and incorporated into LIO through engagement. This perception persisted until the second half of the Obama administration, when the rebalancing policy was launched. Then, under the Trump administration, the term "great power competition" came into use, and the competition intensified.¹³ This harsh perception of China is one of the few areas where bipartisan agreement exists.

When the Biden administration came into office, some in Japan worried that the United States would emphasize engagement with China again. However, contrary to such concerns, the Biden administration has taken a tough stance on China, and in this respect, there has been continuity with the Trump administration. As Kurt Campbell and Rush Doshi point out, the idea is that restoring a balance of power comes first as a priority, and engagement with China comes afterward.¹⁴ Restoring this power balance and deterring China from using force against Taiwan or the Senkaku (Diaoyu) Islands are precisely the challenges that the United States and Japan face. This competition between the United States and China is sometimes referred to as the "New Cold War," but what makes it different from the Cold War is that China is an economic superpower and has also gained a military advantage over the United States in the region.¹⁵ In addition to that, American decline is also an important factor. The fact that the United States alone cannot compete with China means that the Japan-U.S. alliance is the cornerstone of security in the Indo-Pacific.¹⁶

⁹ For a realist definition, see for example Glenn H. Snyder, "Alliance Theory: A Neorealist First Cut," *Journal of International Affairs* 44, no. 1 (1990): 104, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24357226>. For a discussion of liberalism and constructivism, see for example, Celeste A. Wallander, "Institutional Assets and Adaptability: NATO after the Cold War," *International Organization* 54, no.4 (2000): 705-36, <https://doi.org/10.1162/002081800551343>; Frank Schimmelfennig, "NATO enlargement: A constructivist explanation," *Security Studies* 8, no. 2-3 (1998): 198-234, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09636419808429378>.

¹⁰ MOFA, "Treaty of mutual cooperation and security between Japan and the United States of America," <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/q&a/ref/1.html>.

¹¹ MOFA, "Japan-U.S. joint declaration on security - Alliance for the 21st century -," April 17, 1996, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/security.html>.

¹² Indeed, the threat of North Korea and China had already begun to be recognized since that time, but it was not a threat serious enough to threaten the existing order like the Soviet Union during the Cold War or China today.

¹³ The White House, "National Security Strategy of the United States of America," December 2017: 27, <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>.

¹⁴ Kurt M. Campbell and Rush Doshi, "How America Can Shore Up Asian Order: A Strategy for Restoring Balance and Legitimacy," *Foreign Affairs*, January 12, 2021, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-01-12/how-america-can-shore-up-asian-order>.

¹⁵ Tara Copp, "'It Failed Miserably': After Wargaming Loss, Joint Chiefs Are Overhauling How the US Military Will Fight," *Defense One*, July 26, 2021, <https://www.defenseone.com/policy/2021/07/it-failed-miserably-after-wargaming-loss-joint-chiefs-are-overhauling-how-us-military-will-fight/184050/>; Koji Sonoda, "INTERVIEW/ Philip Davidson: China's advances show 'erosion' in U.S.-Japan deterrence," *The Asahi Shimbun*, October 14, 2021, <https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14457793>.

¹⁶ The White House, "U.S.- Japan Joint Leaders' Statement: 'U.S. - JAPAN GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR A NEW ERA'," April 16, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/04/16/u-s-japan-joint-leaders-statement-u-s-japan-global-partnership-for-a-new-era/>.

The role that Japan is expected to play in the current security environment is qualitatively different from peacekeeping operations (PKO) that Tokyo has focused on since the end of the Cold War. The era of American unipolarity is over, and with the rise of China, Japan is expected to play a more active role, contributing to enhancing deterrence. This means a move away from asymmetrical alliances. In this context, Japan has tried to ensure its security through internal balancing by strengthening its own military power and external balancing by deepening relations with other countries.

"... Japan is expected to play a more active role, contributing to enhancing deterrence."

Japan has strengthened its security, especially under the second Abe administration. Through the formulation of the National Security Strategy (NSS) in 2013, the creation of the National Security Council (NSC) in 2014, and the legislation for peace and security in 2015, Japan has prepared the institutional and legal aspects of security policy, including the partial acceptance of the exercise of the right of collective self-defense. In addition, Japan has worked on improving its capabilities. For example, it established the Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade in 2018, an amphibious operations force for the defense and recapture of remote islands, and has also promoted deploying a missile defense force in the Nansei Islands to counter China's A2/AD strategy.¹⁷ Moreover, Japan also focuses on cyber and electronic capability based on the idea of a Multi-Domain Defense Force. A Space Operation Squadron was established within the Air Self-Defense Force in 2020.

In addition to enhancing its own defense capabilities and strengthening the Japan-US alliance, Japan has also promoted security cooperation with other countries. Under the FOIP, Japan has strengthened ties with Quad members, Australia and India, and European countries such as the United Kingdom and France, which have become more involved in the Indo-Pacific in recent years. For example, in 2021, British and French aircraft carriers called at Japan's ports and conducted joint military exercises.¹⁸ Japan also signed a Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) with Australia in 2022 to further strengthen ties.¹⁹ These moves, however, do not mean that Japan is distancing itself from the United States or replacing the Japan-U.S. Alliance. Rather, these multilateral movements complement the alliance.²⁰ After WWII, a so-called hub-and-spoke alliance system centered on the United States developed in East Asia, but the current move aims to form a multilateral security network by linking these spokes.²¹ This is a structure in which allies support the United States, which can no longer compete with China

on its own and whose stance on international engagement has been called into question.

Challenges for the alliance

Despite these efforts, Japan's security policy has challenges and barriers to shifting toward a "normal alliance." One is resource constraints. Although the defense budget has increased year by year, it is still low as a percentage of GDP (roughly 1%). With this constraint, it is important to clarify the strategic objectives and prioritize relevant capabilities. In addition, Japan alone cannot ensure

deterrence, so it is necessary to consider what roles Japan and the United States should each play. For example, strike capabilities have now become the center of discussion in Japan, but it is not necessarily clear what strategic objectives such discussions are based on. It is meaningless unless the discussion is about what strategic goals Japan and the United States share and what kind of strike capabilities Japan should have in that context. Some experts in the United States also point out that Japan should prioritize strengthening its resilience in areas such as missile defense rather than strike capabilities.²²

These problems are not just budget constraints, but also a lack of strategic mindset. Strategy is the determination of how to distribute limited resources to achieve a security goal. However, the discussion of strike capabilities, for example, emerged suddenly after the cancellation of the Aegis Ashore deployment. If thinking strategically, Japan should consider resource allocation devoted to missile defense and strike capabilities, respectively, to achieve the strategic goal of deterring China from using force. This highlights Japan's inability to think strategically about security policies.

Another challenge is the legislative framework. Though Japan has enacted the Legislation for Peace and Security and authorized the partial exercise of the right of collective self-defense, it is unclear how this will be implemented in practice. One of the most critical issues in the alliance is the Taiwan contingency, and some people in Taiwan and the United States expect Japan to intervene in a Taiwan contingency.²³ However, it is unclear what role Japan will play and how it will cooperate with the United States.²⁴

In any case, Japan and the United States need to coordinate their strategic perspectives more closely than ever before. This will be an important step toward a normal alliance. Overall, Japan and the United States share the perception of the Chinese threat; Japan has gradually developed its military capabilities, and the United States

¹⁷ Daizo Teramoto and Kaigo Narisawa, "Missile battery in Okinawa to give Miyako Strait full protection," *The Asahi Shimbun*, September 2, 2021, <https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14431815>.

¹⁸ Yasuyuki Sasaki, "U.K. aircraft carrier makes its first Japan port call at Yokosuka," *The Asahi Shimbun*, September 6, 2021, <https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14434466>.

¹⁹ MOFA, Japan-Australia Reciprocal Access Agreement, January 6, 2022, https://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/ocn/au/page4e_001195.html.

²⁰ Michito Tsuruoka, "Challenges and opportunities in the Japan-US Alliance: From Abe/Trump to Suga/Biden," in Alica Kizekova, ed., *The Indo Pacific in the post-Trump era: expectations and challenges* (Prague: Institute of International Relations, 2021): 115, <https://www.iir.cz/en/the-indo-pacific-in-the-post-trump-era-expectations-and-challenges-4>.

²¹ Zack Cooper, "Building a Pacific Order: binding the liberal spokes," in Michael Heazle and Andrew O'Neil, *China's Rise and Australia-Japan-US Relations: Primacy and Leadership in East Asia* (Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2018): 91-115.

²² Daniel Sneider, "The Hidden GAP In American And Japanese Views On Defense," *The Oriental Economist*, January 17, 2022, <https://toyokeizai.net/articles/-/503647>.

²³ See discussions in Sasaki and Yoshimoto, this volume.

²⁴ As for Japan's role and legal issues in a Taiwan contingency, see Jeffrey W. Hornung, "Taiwan and six potential new year's resolutions for the U.S.-Japanese alliance," *War on the rocks*, January 5, 2022, <https://warontherocks.com/2022/01/taiwan-and-six-potential-new-years-resolutions-for-the-u-s-japanese-alliance/>; Adam P. Liff, "The U.S.-Japan Alliance and Taiwan," *Asia Policy* 17, no. 3 (2022): 125-160.

has made its commitment to the Indo-Pacific clear. However, there are challenges in sharing more specific strategies and building capabilities based on these strategies.

Interests

One of the most important elements of LIO is a liberal economic system based on free trade promoted by the United States. Japan has benefited greatly from this, starting with the Bretton Woods system after World War II. As mentioned above, Japan has achieved significant economic growth under the Yoshida Doctrine, emphasizing economic growth while relying on the United States for its security. In other words, for Japan, the United States is not only a security partner but also a protector of the economic order.

However, contemporary U.S. economic policy is also influenced by factors other than liberalism: namely “America First” and economic security. The Trump administration's policy of America First came as a shock to allies and partners, including Japan. Trump withdrew from the TPP as soon as he took office and had since rejected multilateral frameworks. In addition, a trade war broke out as Trump imposed massive tariffs on Chinese exports, claiming that the United States was at a great disadvantage when trading with China, to which Beijing responded in kind. Trump's harsh stance on trade negotiations extended not only towards China but also to Japan and the EU.

As the United States retreated from the liberal economic order, Japan has worked to maintain it. Though Japan perceives China as a threat to its security, China is an important economic partner (China is Japan's largest trading partner).²⁵ Japan's FOIP, which initially had elements of containing China as evidenced by Abe's security diamonds concept, has gradually become more inclusive and does not exclude the possibility of engagement with China.²⁶ This means that Japan is willing to engage with China as long as it abides by the existing rules, and Abe, for example, showed his willingness to cooperate with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).²⁷

As for the TPP, in cooperation with other members, Japan succeeded in maintaining the agreement under the name of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), creating a situation where the United States could return, though this is unlikely. The UK, China, Taiwan, and South Korea are currently interested in joining the CPTPP. With the United States out of the picture, Japan is in an important position for future negotiations. Additionally, in the absence of the United States, Japan has tried to maintain other multilateral frameworks, including the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and the

trade agreement with the EU.²⁸ At the same time, it continues to negotiate with the United States on a bilateral basis, concluding trade agreements, including digital trade.²⁹

Since the beginning of the Biden administration, Japan and European countries hoped that the traditional U.S. involvement in the international order would return. In fact, Biden gave the impression that the United States would break away from Trump's America-first policy and return to American internationalism when he proclaimed that America is back.³⁰ In economics, however, his administration has failed to meet those expectations and shows continuity with the Trump administration. One of the pillars of the Biden administration's foreign policy is the so-called “Foreign Policy for the Middle Class,” the logic being that every foreign policy is based on whether it serves the interests of the American middle class. Based on this logic, the Biden administration, which emphasizes the interests of workers, is reluctant to re-liberalize the American market.

Along with this America First policy, the United States has increasingly approached the issue from an economic security perspective. The Biden administration has been increasingly wary of China's state-led economic policy, such as the dangers of its 5G network and the theft of advanced technologies. In this area, it is not effective for a single country to push policies, and cooperation with many countries is necessary to pressure China. Economic security is also an important point between the United States and Japan, which, for example, try to establish a framework for export controls on advanced technologies. These aspects of economic security can also be seen in a short overview of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework

“... while progress is being made in promoting economic cooperation between the United States and Japan, they take different approaches to building regional economic order.”

(IPEF), which focuses on technology, the digital economy, and supply chains. Though economic security is a critical aspect, and Japan also tries to adapt to such U.S. policy by, for example, enacting an Economic Security Bill, it is difficult to balance economic security and free trade.³¹ The Biden administration wants to promote the IPEF as an economic strategy rather than return to the CPTPP, but trade liberalization is not included here. Without trade liberalization, it is difficult to get allies and partners to follow this framework.³² Thus, while progress is being made in promoting economic cooperation between the United States and Japan, they take different approaches to building regional economic order.

²⁵ Trade Statistics of Japan, “Top 10 trading partners,” <https://www.customs.go.jp/toukei/suii/html/data/y3.pdf>.

²⁶ Hosoya describes this change from FOIP 1.0 to FOIP 2.0. Hosoya, “FOIP 2.0: The Evolution of Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy.”

²⁷ Naoya Yoshino, “Abe takes a shine to China's Belt and Road plan,” *Nikkei Asia*, June 8, 2017, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/Abe-takes-a-shine-to-China-s-Belt-and-Road-plan>.

²⁸ Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), “White Paper on International Economy and Trade 2018,” updated on March 22, 2019, 544-546. <https://www.meti.go.jp/english/report/data/wp2018/pdf/3-1-1.pdf>.

²⁹ MOFA, “Trade Agreement between Japan and the United States of America concerning Digital Trade,” January 1, 2020, https://www.mofa.go.jp/na/na2/page24e_000261.html.

³⁰ The White House, “Remarks by President Biden on America's Place in the World,” February 4, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/02/04/remarks-by-president-biden-on-americas-place-in-the-world/>.

³¹ Kazuaki Nagata, “New bill looks to beef up Japan's economic security, but firms are wary,” *The Japan Times*, February 14, 2022, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/02/14/business/economic-security-law-business-worries/>.

³² Gary Clyde Hufbauer and Megan Hogan, “Security not economics is likely to drive US trade engagement in Asia,” East Asia Forum, January 9, 2022, <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2022/01/09/security-not-economics-is-likely-to-drive-us-trade-engagement-in-asia/>.

Values

Values are defined as fundamental beliefs and ideas that govern the behavior of actors. In contrast to the realist position that the issue of values should not be brought into international politics, liberalism and constructivism have argued that sharing values leads to stability in international society.³³ Because one of the most contentious aspects of the U.S.-China competition has been the issue of values such as democracy and human rights, it is difficult to ignore the element of values in international politics. Hedley Bull argues that states recognize rules based on common values in forming international society.³⁴ In fact, the Japan-U.S. alliance is described as a security arrangement and a relationship based on shared values.³⁵ Therefore, it is critical to compare Japanese and U.S. approaches to values in considering future regional order stability.

"...the Japan-U.S. alliance is described as a security arrangement and a relationship based on shared values."

Democracy vs. Authoritarianism

While preventing China from using force is purely a security objective, these areas of competition can be framed as systemic: liberal democracy and authoritarianism. Under the Trump administration, competition between these great powers was viewed from an ideological perspective, and the Chinese Communist Party's ruling system itself was seen as a problem.³⁶ Matt Pottinger, the then-Deputy National Security Advisor, delivered a speech in Chinese saying that China should care about the calls for democracy in the country.³⁷ However, as Trump himself was said to have worked well with leaders of authoritarian regimes such as Xi Jinping and Putin, the issue of values under the Trump administration was no more than the rhetoric of hardline policy toward China.

Under the Biden administration, on the other hand, there was a greater emphasis on values, as symbolized by the holding of the Summit for Democracy. In his first press conference as president, Biden described the competition as "a battle between the utility of democracies in the 21st century and autocracies."³⁸ At the policy level, the United States has tried to form groups of

like-minded countries that share values centered on democracy to strengthen, for example, supply chains and cyber security. At the Summit for Democracy, the United States and several countries launched the Export Controls and Human Rights Initiative to prevent the misuse of advanced technology for human rights abuses by authoritarian states.³⁹ The delivery of vaccines to each country by the Quad is another example of an initiative based on shared values.⁴⁰

In addition, the United States and European countries also take an especially firm stance on human rights issues. They have imposed sanctions over issues such as the Uighurs in Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and the military coup in Myanmar. For example, the United States has framed the oppression of minorities in Xinjiang as genocide and enacted the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, banning imports of products from the region unless they are proven not to have been produced by forced labor.⁴¹ The United States has also imposed sanctions on Myanmar, where a military coup broke out last year, mainly on Burmese military officials. As will be discussed later, such a response by the United States and other Western countries to human rights issues differs from that of Japan.

Values vs. strategic interests

Though value is a pillar of U.S. foreign policy, there is significant debate over value-oriented diplomacy. For example, some Realists argue that the confrontation with China should focus purely on power and deterrence.⁴² Elbridge Colby argues that the United States should protect Taiwan not because Taiwan is a democracy but because it is critical to U.S. economic interests.⁴³ There is also the idea that if democracy is used as a criterion for coalition building, it will be difficult to cooperate with non-democratic but strategically important countries, such as Vietnam, which are not comfortable being forced to choose between two camps. The Summit for Democracy was criticized for its vague criteria for inviting countries, both in terms of strategy and democracy.⁴⁴

On the other hand, those who argue for the importance of values see democracy as an advantage for the United States.⁴⁵ As mentioned, there are movements to promote rule-making and regulation among democratic countries that share the same values in terms of supply chains or cyberspace. In these areas, a framework with

³³ A typical example is democratic peace theory. Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

³⁴ Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977): 13.

³⁵ MOFA, "Japan-U.S. joint declaration on security - alliance for the 21st century -."

³⁶ U.S. Embassy in Chile, "Secretary Michael R. Pompeo Remarks 'Communist China and the Free World's Future,'" July 23, 2020, <https://cl.usembassy.gov/secretary-michael-r-pompeo-remarks-communist-china-and-the-free-worlds-future/>.

³⁷ The White House, "Remarks by Deputy National Security Advisor Matt Pottinger to the Miller Center at the University of Virginia," May 4, 2020, <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-deputy-national-security-advisor-matt-pottinger-miller-center-university-virginia/>.

³⁸ The White House, "Remarks by President Biden in Press Conference," March 25, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/03/25/remarks-by-president-biden-in-press-conference/>.

³⁹ The White House, "Fact Sheet: Export Controls and Human Rights Initiative Launched at the Summit for Democracy," December 10, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/12/10/fact-sheet-export-controls-and-human-rights-initiative-launched-at-the-summit-for-democracy/>.

⁴⁰ The White House, "Fact Sheet: Quad Leaders' Summit," September 24, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/24/fact-sheet-quad-leaders-summit/>.

⁴¹ U.S. Department of State, "The Signing of the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act," December 23, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/the-signing-of-the-uyghur-forced-labor-prevention-act/>.

⁴² For example, Elbridge Colby and Robert D. Kaplan, "The Ideology Delusion: America's Competition with China Is Not About Doctrine," *Foreign Affairs*, September 4, 2020, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-09-04/ideology-delusion>.

⁴³ Elbridge Colby, "The United States Should Defend Taiwan," *National Review*, December 2, 2021, <https://www.nationalreview.com/magazine/2021/12/20/the-united-states-should-defend-taiwan/>.

⁴⁴ For example, Stephen M. Walt, "Biden's Democracy Summit Could Backfire," *Foreign Policy*, December 8, 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/12/08/bidens-democracy-summit-could-backfire/>.

⁴⁵ For example, Zack Cooper and Laura Rosenberger, "Democratic Values Are a Competitive Advantage," *Foreign Affairs*, December 22, 2020, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-12-22/democratic-values-are-competitive-advantage>.

countries that share the same values is effective at preventing the theft of information and technology and eliminating products produced by forced labor. At the same time, even those who believe that values should be emphasized do not exclude cooperation with non-democratic countries because the competition spans many areas, including military, trade, technology, and information, and requires functional cooperation with different countries in each area.⁴⁶ They also argue that the U.S.-China competition has an aspect of values, and ignoring it would mean losing sight of the essence of this rivalry.⁴⁷ Overall, even those who recognize the importance of values do not necessarily advocate for the expansion of the LIO, as the United States attempted to do after the Cold War, but merely seek a safer world for democracies.⁴⁸

There is a wide range of opinions on the balance between strategy and value, but there will undoubtedly continue to be an intense exchange over values between the United States and China.

Japan and values-based diplomacy

On the other hand, Japan has taken a different approach to values than the United States and other Western countries. As mentioned above, the U.S.-Japan alliance has emphasized shared values to affirm the significance of the alliance. However, this principle represents the strength of the alliance, rather than a concrete approach to human rights issues.

The fact that Japan's approach differs from the West does not mean that Japanese diplomacy is not values-oriented. Since the first Abe administration, Japan has tried to develop values-based diplomacy. In 2006, the Arc of Freedom and Prosperity was set as the guiding principle for Japan's foreign policy under the initiative of then Foreign Minister Aso, and there was a push to develop value-based diplomacy. This value-based diplomacy centered on promoting the shared values of democracy, freedom, human rights, the rule of law, the market economy, and support for the emerging democracies on the periphery of the Eurasian continent.⁴⁹ In 2012, Abe also presented the idea of the Security Diamond, a coalition of democracies, Australia, India, and the United States, which are now members of the Quad, as one axis of the coalition against

China.⁵⁰ However, at that time, Japan's effort to counterbalance China was alarming to Australia and other countries in Southeast Asia as it was too aggressive for them.

Though the first Abe administration lasted only one year, the aspect of values-based diplomacy was carried over to "diplomacy that takes a panoramic perspective of the world map" and FOIP throughout Abe's second term.⁵¹ Such an aggressive foreign policy would lead to Japan being expected to play the role of guardian of LIO as the international society became increasingly unstable, with distrust of the U.S. commitment and the rise of populism in Europe.⁵²

However, the main focus of Japanese FOIP is to maintain a prosperous and stable region, and democracy and human rights are not necessary in its scope. Japan's FOIP was based on three pillars: "promotion and establishment of the rule of law, freedom of navigation, free trade," "pursuit of economic prosperity," and "commitment to peace and stability."⁵³ In other words, Japan's FOIP cannot be equated with the LIO.⁵⁴ While the word free in the Japanese FOIP emphasizes prosperity, such as free trade and freedom of navigation, the LIO is based on the values of liberalism. For that reason, Japan hesitates to see the current competition as systemic competition, and it does not want to force other Asian countries to choose between democracy and authoritarianism.⁵⁵

"...Japan hesitates to see the current competition as systemic competition, and it does not want to force other Asian countries to choose between democracy and authoritarianism."

This stance is evident in its handling of human rights issues. While some Western countries have taken a tough stance on human rights, Japan has taken a relatively passive stance. For example, when Russia's invasion of Crimea in 2014, the G7 imposed sanctions against Russia, but Japan was reluctant to do so, because it did not want to worsen relations with Russia.⁵⁶ In a more recent case, although Japan has expressed concern about the situation in Myanmar, it has avoided joining in joint statements with other countries criticizing Myanmar.⁵⁷

⁴⁶ Hal Brands and Charles Edel, "A Grand Strategy of Democratic Solidarity," *Washington Quarterly* 44, no.1 (2021): 33, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2021.1893003>.

⁴⁷ Ibid: 41-42.

⁴⁸ Jennifer Lind and William C. Wohlforth The Future of the Liberal Order Is Conservative: A Strategy to Save the System," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2019, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2019-02-12/future-liberal-order-conservative>; Rebrcca Lissner and Mira Rapp-Hooper, *An Open World: How America Can Win The Contest For Twenty-First-Century Order* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020): 101.

⁴⁹ MOFA, "Speech by Mr. Taro Aso, Minister for Foreign Affairs on the Occasion of the Japan Institute of International Affairs Seminar 'Arc of Freedom and Prosperity: Japan's Expanding Diplomatic Horizons,'" November 30, 2006, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/fm/aso/speech0611.html>.

⁵⁰ Shinzo Abe, "Asia's Democratic Security Diamond," Project Syndicate, December 27, 2012, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/onpoint/a-strategic-alliance-for-japan-and-india-by-shinzo-abe?barrier=accesspaylog>.

⁵¹ MOFA, "Japan's Foreign Policy that Takes a Panoramic Perspective of the World Map," in *Diplomatic Blue Book 2014*, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/2014/html/index.html>.

⁵² Jeffrey W. Hornung, "The Fate of the World Order Rests on Tokyo's Shoulders," *Foreign Policy*, October 30, 2018, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/10/30/the-fate-of-the-world-order-rests-on-tokyos-shoulders/>.

⁵³ MOFA, "Free and Open Indo-Pacific," <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000430632.pdf>.

⁵⁴ Nobuhiko Tamaki, "Japan's quest for a rules-based international order: the Japan-US alliance and the decline of US liberal hegemony," *Contemporary Politics*, 26, no. 4 (2020): 398, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13569775.2020.1777041?needAccess=true>.

⁵⁵ "Jiyu de hirakareta indotaiheiyo tanjyo hiwa [The birth story of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific]," NHK, June 30, 2021, <https://www.nhk.or.jp/politics/articles/feature/62725.html>.

⁵⁶ Maria Shagina, "How to Make Sense of Japan's Delicate Balance Between Russia and Ukraine," *Atlantic Council*, May 17, 2018, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/how-to-make-sense-of-japan-s-delicate-balance-between-russia-and-ukraine/>.

⁵⁷ For example, on May 3, 2021, World Press Freedom Day, Australia, EU, South Korea, the US, and other diplomatic missions in Myanmar issued a statement demanding freedom of expression, but Japan did not participate. In October, eight months after the coup, a joint statement was issued by the US, EU, and other countries supporting the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair, but again Japan did not participate. U.S. Embassy in Burma, "Statement from Diplomatic Missions to Myanmar on World Press Freedom Day," May 3, 2021, <https://mm.usembassy.gov/statement-from->

The reason for such attitudes is Japan's strong economic relationship with Myanmar through Official Development Assistance (ODA) and other means. In addition, not a small number of government officials who suspect human rights diplomacy and imposing sanctions argue that sanctions do not actually improve human rights issues.⁵⁸ This attitude is based on the logic of consequence, which emphasizes the benefits of actions. According to this logic, imposing sanctions is inappropriate because it rarely leads to resolving human rights issues and only worsens relations with the countries. On the other hand, however, there is also a logic of appropriateness in the realm of norms. In this logic, compliance with the norm itself is considered legitimate and important.⁵⁹ In fact, in recent years, Europe and Australia have become wary of China not just because of the perception that Beijing is a security threat but also because of China's repressive policies. As such norms are being fostered in the Indo-Pacific, Japan could face risks due to its passive stance, such as the reputational cost.

Given that situation, there are growing calls from the Diet and political parties for more focus on human rights diplomacy. For example, the Japanese House of Representatives adopted a bipartisan resolution expressing concern about human rights issues in China, though that resolution did not condemn China by name.⁶⁰ In addition, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has established a project team to study the state of Japan's human rights diplomacy, which recommends that Japan not only engage in dialogue and cooperation on human rights issues but also more clearly communicate its stance on human rights protection. Specifically, policies that should be pursued include strengthening support for corporate human rights due diligence and actively utilizing the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Act so that Japan can impose sanctions for human rights issues.⁶¹ Despite these pressures, it is unclear to what extent Japan will be able to establish a legal foundation for human rights diplomacy.

"... while the United States needs to balance geostrategic interests and values, Japan must consider how to approach the issue of values in the first place."

Japan and the United States both share common values as liberal democracies, but when it comes to projecting those values into diplomacy, the differences become apparent. What impact will this have on the alliance? It is difficult to imagine that such differences will adversely affect U.S.-Japan security cooperation in

detering China's use of force. Worse still, it could become an obstacle for a more significant issue; what regional order do they want to build in the region? Order building is a process of forming a coalition of like-minded countries who share the same values. Thus, while the United States needs to balance geostrategic interests and values, Japan must consider how to approach the issue of values in the first place.

Policy implications

Security

In an increasingly severe security environment, Japan must play a more significant role, so the alliance needs to become more symmetrical. For this purpose, Japan first needs to increase its defense budget. The government and LDP have said that it aims for a defense budget of 2 percent of GDP, which needs to be put into practice.⁶² At the same time, Japan should consider strategically using that budget. To counter China, deterrence by denial has been thought to be effective, and this strategy requires both strike capabilities and missile defense.⁶³ Because both capabilities are required, the cost-effective approach should be considered.

Second, although there has been much discussion in Japan about the capabilities and legal systems, there is still much uncertainty about how these will actually be implemented. Japan needs to discuss with the United States what actions it could take and on what legal basis in Taiwan contingency. Without such discussion, there could be discrepancies between the U.S. operations timeline and the Japanese decision-making timeline.⁶⁴

As for the United States, it likewise faces a resource constraint. The United States is trying to shift its resources toward Asia, but there is concern that the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian war will prevent that shift. However, as the 2022 National Defense Strategy describes, the United States still regards China as its priority and should maintain this stance in the future.⁶⁵

Interests

The United States and Japan have identified economic prosperity as one of their priorities within their Indo-Pacific strategies. However, challenges remain, especially on the part of the United States.

Japan has sought to maintain the liberal economic order even during the Trump administration, and maintaining the CPTPP can be considered a major achievement. Should China and Taiwan apply for membership, Japan would be in the critical position of deciding whether or not to accept them. Regardless of what other countries think, Japan's selection criteria should be based on whether or not China and Taiwan can abide by the rules.

diplomatic-missions-to-myanmar-on-world-press-freedom-day / ; U.S. Department of State, "Joint Statement of Support for the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar," October 15, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-of-support-for-the-special-envoy-of-the-asean-chair-on-myanmar/>.

⁵⁸ Jinken gaiko wa ko wo sosuru ka [Does human rights diplomacy work?], *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, April 8, 2021, <https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGKKZO70780680X00C21A4TCS000/>.

⁵⁹ Regarding logic of appropriateness, James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, "The Institutional Dynamics of International Political Orders," *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (1998): 943–69, <https://doi.org/10.1162/002081898550699>.

⁶⁰ Kiyoshi Takenaka, "Japan parliament adopts resolution on human rights in China," *Reuters*, February 1, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/japan-parliament-adopts-resolution-human-rights-china-2022-02-01/>.

⁶¹ Policy Research Council, Liberal Democratic Party of Japan, "Gaiko bukai waga kuni no zinken gaiko no arikata kento project team dai ichiji Teigen," [First Recommendations of the Project Team for the Study of Japan's Human Rights Diplomacy, Foreign Affairs Subcommittee] May 27, 2021, https://jimin.jp-east-2.storage.googleapis.com/pdf/news/policy/201677_1.pdf.

⁶² "Japan's ruling party to propose more defense spending, eyes 2% of GDP," *Kyodo News*, April 21, 2022, <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2022/04/ee8ec81fd3ab-japans-ruling-party-to-propose-more-defense-spending-eyes-2-of-gdp.html>.

⁶³ Elbridge A. Colby, *The Strategy of Denial: American Defense in an Age of Great Power Conflict* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021).

⁶⁴ See Yoshimoto and Sasaki in this volume.

⁶⁵ U.S. Department of Defense, "Fact Sheet: 2022 National Defense Strategy," March 28, 2022, <https://media.defense.gov/2022/Mar/28/2002964702/-1/-1/1/NDS-FACT-SHEET.PDF>.

The United States, on the other hand, will meet challenges in interests among power and values. While it focuses on strengthening its economic security in the areas of supply chains and advanced technology, its strategy in terms of a purely liberal economy is unclear. The most effective thing for the United States is to return to the CPTPP. However, this is unlikely to be achieved, at least in the near future. An alternative would be to incorporate a market-opening component into the IPEF to demonstrate U.S. commitment. At the moment, Biden's diplomacy for the middle class looks like America First in a different form. However, data shows that the majority of Americans support free trade.⁶⁶ Whether the United States can commit to the order in the Indo-Pacific will depend on the economic area. Failure to do so would hamper the U.S. participation in building a regional economic order.

Values

Compared to power and interests, values are more complicated to deal with. This is because values are always subject to tensions with geopolitical interests. However, this issue cannot be avoided when considering the future order. Japan and the United States should separate the discussion of political systems and human rights and should not make democracy a requirement for members of the order but emphasize the latter's protection.

If democracy remains a condition for cooperation, this will make a compromise with China difficult. At the same time, it will force strategically important countries to choose between the United States and China. In the U.S.-China competition, the presence of middle powers that hedge rather than choose one side is important for a future order.⁶⁷ There is nothing wrong with emphasizing the importance of democracy within the alliance context, but U.S. strategy should be flexible enough to allow for sustained cooperation with non-democratic countries.

Alternatively, human rights should be upheld regardless of any political system, and even non-democratic countries cannot deny it, at least in principle. To show solidarity with Western countries, Japan should establish a legal system and take a stance regarding human rights. In the war in Ukraine, many countries united in their opposition to Russian aggression and sanctions to demonstrate their determination to protect the existing order. Japan should take the lead in showing its support for human rights in Asia. At the same time, human rights issues should be treated as a universal problem rather than as part of a strategy against China. In this sense, human rights issues in Myanmar and North Korea, for example, should also be included in the scope of this discussion. If the United States and Japan raise their voices on human rights issues, they may be criticized for it. Yet, this should not be a reason to stay silent on international human rights issues. Rather, it is an opportunity to look at our own domestic human rights issues, such as gender and immigration, and take a more holistic view of human rights.

Conclusion

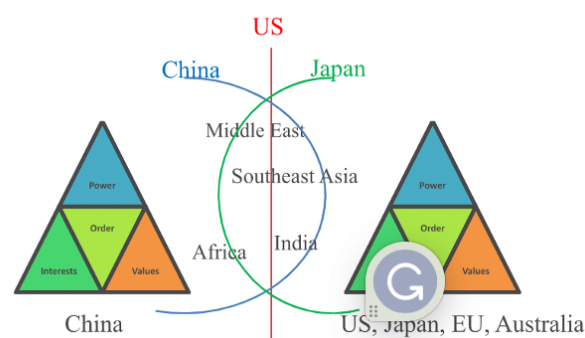
This paper has compared the strategies and policies of the United States and Japan in the three areas. The results are shown in Figure 1. Regarding power, Japan and the United States share threat perceptions of China and have cooperated to strengthen the alliance. Though there are challenges to be resolved, especially for Japan to play a more active role, they are basically on the same page. In terms of economic interests, they have different priorities; while the current U.S. economic policy is affected by the Trump administration's America First approach and economic security, Japan has tried to maintain a liberal economic order. As for the values, the two countries also take different approaches. The United States tends to project values such as democracy and human rights more into diplomacy. However, Japan is reluctant to emphasize those values. To be fair, the U.S. often ignores values and goes for unilateralism, as in the case of the Iraq war, which is a double standard. In the case of Japan, however, there is little discussion even about why it is necessary to emphasize values in the international order and diplomacy in the first place.

Figure 1

	Japan	The United States
Power	Deterring China	Deterring China
Interests	Free trade	America first, economic security
Values	Passive	Active

Given these results, it also becomes clear that there are differences between the United States and Japan in their thinking and approaches to international order (figure 2). The United States currently try to adopt a sort of Cold War strategy. In other words, it views the world in terms of a bilateral competition between a democratic camp centering on the U.S. and an authoritarian camp centering on China, and its main goal is to contain China's influence. However, whereas during the Cold War the U.S. sometimes cooperated with nondemocratic countries in favor of strategic interests over value, it is now more concerned with value itself, which is a characteristic of the U.S. foreign policy after the end of Cold War, and struggles to strike a balance between the two.⁶⁸ Japan shares values with the

Figure 2



⁶⁶ Dina Smeltz et al., "2021 Chicago Council Survey," The Chicago Council on Foreign Affairs, October 7, 2021, <https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/research/public-opinion-survey/2021-chicago-council-survey>.

⁶⁷ Michael J. Mazarr, "How to Save the Postwar Order: The United States Should Rethink Its Defense of the System," *Foreign Affairs*, May 6, 2022,

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2022-05-06/how-save-postwar-order>.

⁶⁸ Börzel and Zürn point to the different nature of the LIO during the Cold War (LIOI) and that since the end of the Cold War (LIOII), defining the latter as characterized by the expansion of liberal values around the world. Although the U.S. no longer aims to spread democracy today, it still

United States and seeks to support the U.S.-centered order. However, while the United States tries to divide the world, Japan aims to maintain a multilateral order that ensures engagement with as many countries as possible. Additionally, China has taken a similar approach to Japan in that it tries to engage with countries without regard to other countries' political systems and values.

It is not simple to interpret this difference between Japan and the United States. It could be said that they supplement each other for their shortcomings. Or, when considered in terms of order building, this difference may be an obstacle. In any case, both Japan and the United States need to consider whether their strategies are sustainable and effective. Japan needs to evaluate how sustainable its passive stance on values is in the face of intensifying U.S.-China competition. The United States, on the other hand, needs to evaluate how effective its economic strategy and values-based diplomacy will be in sustaining the liberal international order. Based on these analyses, the policy implications are as follows.

emphasizes the importance of value. Tanja A. Börzel and Michael Zürn, "Contestations of the Liberal International Order: From Liberal

Multilateralism to Postnational Liberalism," *International Organization* 75, no. 2 (2021): 282–305, doi:10.1017/S0020818320000570.

4

Extended ‘gray zone’ deterrence in the South China Sea

Shusuke Ioku

Abstract

Strong military commitments by stronger allies to defend weaker partners is just one necessary component of extended deterrence to limited (gray zone) aggression. Another essential part is the weaker partners’ presence in disputed domains. In the context of the South China Sea, given the vast capability gap between China and Southeast Asian claimants, bolstering the latter’s control of and presence in disputed domains through material assistance focused on offshore patrolling assets and ISR capabilities (such as drones and space-based monitoring systems) is critical to preserving the status quo. This study employed a quantitative data analysis of territorial conquests and a formal analysis of gray zone conflict to support the claim.

Introduction

The increasing military presence, and stronger expression of commitment by external states, are the most notable developments in the South China Sea dispute. In November 2021, the United States and Japan conducted their first-ever anti-submarine warfare drill in the area.¹ Before the maneuver, the two navies made a port call at Subic Bay in the Philippines to conduct a joint exercise with their Filipino counterparts.² Just in the past two years, the two allies not only strengthened their existing network of joint exercises with regional partners such as India and Australia but also extended it to other partners, including France,³ Germany,⁴ Britain, Canada, New Zealand, and the Netherlands.⁵ In 2021, India reinforced its military presence in the region via bilateral joint drills with Vietnam,⁶ the Philippines,⁷ and Singapore.⁸ U.S. Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs) in the South China Sea have remained frequent since they reached a record high of nine operations in 2018. This trend reflects external countries' growing interests in preserving the stability and freedom of the seas in maritime Asia threatened by what they perceive as Chinese maritime and territorial aggression.

While an increased military commitment from non-claimants should be welcomed, this commitment may not translate into an effective deterrent to Chinese coercion. This is because of Beijing's so-called 'gray zone' tactics—utilizing low-level violence to seize territories and take effective control of maritime zones little by little, thereby minimizing the risk of escalation to high-end conflict.⁹ A unique aspect of Beijing's gray zone tactics in the South China Sea is its use of maritime militia and coast guard as front-line forces. As Martinson (2021) documented in detail, China skillfully combines its three maritime forces—maritime militia, the China Coast Guard (CCG), and the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN)—to alter the status quo. The militia and the CCG harass and intimidate other claimants while the PLAN vessels stand by in case of escalation. The combined use of military and paramilitary forces allows Beijing to continue its aggression "through actions below the threshold of open belligerence"¹⁰ free from military escalation.

As later demonstrated in this paper through empirical evidence, the key to deterring low-level territorial aggression is sustaining the presence of other claimants through troop deployment, constant naval and air patrols, and other measures. This study's data analysis

suggests that garrisoning territories already under the control of Southeast Asian states significantly increases the risk of escalation of such limited aggression, thereby inducing an aggressor into desisting from challenging.

However, sustaining a presence in remote land features facing Beijing's massive paramilitary and military forces poses high costs and risks to regional claimants. External states should focus their efforts more on providing material assistance to weaker Southeast Asian claimants for the latter to maintain a robust presence and withstand sustained gray zone challenges from China. For that purpose, augmenting their assets and capabilities for daily offshore patrolling and maritime domain awareness is particularly crucial. External states should provide large offshore patrol vessels and advanced ISR systems, including unmanned aerial vehicles, radars, and space-based technologies for maritime domain awareness. The objective is to lower weaker claimants' operational costs in maintaining presence on remote features and their adjacent

"... sustaining a presence in remote land features facing Beijing's massive paramilitary and military forces poses high costs and risks to regional claimants."

waters, which could, in turn, deter Chinese encroachments and assertive behavior. To support this argument, this paper employed quantitative data analyses of territorial aggression and formal modeling of gray zone conflict.

Do alliances and military exercises deter in gray zone?

Extended deterrence via alliance formation has been one of the most debated topics in empirical political science research. Some scholars find evidence that defensive alliances, by increasing the credibility of military intervention, generally reduce the probability that potential aggressors attack protégés.¹¹ Other studies, in contrast, emphasize that alliances instead tend to provoke military conflict by emboldening protégés and exacerbating security dilemmas.¹² Besides formal alliances, joint military exercises (JMEs) seem to have similarly mixed effects on deterrence; some studies find that JMEs protect allies from

¹ "IPD21 Force Conducted Bilateral Anti-Submarine Warfare Exercise with The U.S. Navy." *Self Defense Fleet, Japan Maritime Self Defense Force*. Nov. 16, 2021. <https://www.mod.go.jp/msdf/st/english/news/11/1116.html>.

² "U.S. and Japanese Ships Hold Anti-Submarine Warfare Drills in the South China Sea." *USNI News*. Nov. 16, 2021. <https://news.usni.org/2021/11/16/u-s-and-japanese-fleets-hold-anti-submarine-warfare-drills-in-the-south-china-sea>.

³ "Japan Launches First Joint Military Drill With US, France." *France 24*. Nov. 5, 2021. <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20210511-japan-launches-first-joint-military-drill-with-us-france>.

⁴ "U.S. Begins Exercise Off Japan with Canadian, German and Australian Navies." *USNI News*. Nov. 23, 2021. <https://news.usni.org/2021/11/23/u-s-begins-exercise-off-japan-with-canadian-german-and-australian-navies>.

⁵ "US, UK Aircraft Carriers Lead Show of Naval Might around South China Sea." *Radio Free Asia*. Oct. 7, 2021. <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/usa-uk-southchinasea-10072021172517.html>.

⁶ "Navies Of India, Vietnam Undertake Bilateral Maritime Exercise in South China Sea." *India Today*. Aug. 18, 2021. <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/india-vietnam-naval-exercise-south-china-sea-1842437-2021-08-18>.

⁷ "India Conducts Maritime Exercise with Philippine Navy." *The Indian Express*. Aug. 24, 2021. <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-conducts-maritime-exercise-with-philippine-navy-7467671/>.

⁸ "India, Singapore Hold Drill in South China Sea." *The Tribune*. Sep. 4, 2021. <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/india-singapore-hold-drill-in-south-china-sea-306767>.

⁹ Lin, Bonny, Cristina L. Garafola, Bruce McClintock, Jonah Blank, Jeffrey W. Hornung, Karen Schwindt, Jennifer D. P. Moroney, Paul Orner, Dennis Borrmann, Sarah W. Denton, and Jason Chambers, *A New Framework for Understanding and Countering China's Gray Zone Tactics*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2022.

¹⁰ https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RBA594-1.html.

¹¹ Martinson, Ryan D. "Getting Synergized? PLAN-CCG Cooperation in the Maritime Gray Zone". *Asian Security* 18, No. 2 (2022): 159–71. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14799855.2021.2007077>.

¹² Leeds, Brett Ashley. "Do Alliances Deter Aggression? The Influence of Military Alliances on the Initiation of Militarized Interstate Disputes." *American Journal of Political Science* 47, no. 3 (2003): 427–39. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-5907.00031>; Wright, Thorin M., and Toby J. Rider. "Disputed Territory, Defensive Alliances and Conflict Initiation." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 31, no. 2 (2014): 119–44. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0738894213503440>.

¹³ Kenwick, Michael R., John A. Vasquez, and Matthew A. Powers. "Do Alliances Really Deter?" *The Journal of Politics* 77, no. 4 (2015): 943–54. <https://doi.org/10.1086/681958>.

being attacked,¹³ while others stress their provocative effect.¹⁴

One of the primary reasons for these seemingly contradictory empirical results is the difference in the intensity of conflict at the focus of each study—whether they look at the effect of alliances and JMEs on military conflict or lower-level disputes. Studies focusing on deterrence of military attack and war generally show a restraining effect, whereas those focusing on limited provocations such as counter exercises and skirmishes suggest no deterrence or provocation effect. This makes sense considering the nature of military signaling via alliances and JMEs—they usually aim at conveying defenders’ resolve to intervene if the intensity of dispute between the protégé and aggressor reaches armed conflict. Hence, alliances and JMEs are unlikely to deter limited violence, including gray-zone aggression.

China’s gray zone aggression in the South China Sea exploits the space between peaceful action and armed attack. Chinese military and paramilitary operators engage in coercive maneuvers that remain below the threshold of an armed attack, thereby avoiding any military response from other claimants and their partners.

Existing alliance literature does not address extended deterrence to limited aggression observed in the South China Sea. If alliance formation and JMEs cannot effectively deter gray zone aggression, what types of deterrence policy could work instead? The following section examines empirical trends of territorial conquests using large-N data of territorial conquest to answer this question. The result shows that local military deployment, which raises the escalation risk of limited aggression, can be critical to gray zone deterrence.

Garrisoning deters limited aggression: empirical evidence

This section offers empirical evidence that (i) Defender’s signaling of military commitment via alliance formation and JMEs cannot protect the protégé from limited territorial aggression targeting small territories (such as remote islands and reefs) and that (ii) local military deployment to targeted territories, combined with the defender’s credible military commitment, is critical to deterring such limited aggression. Defenders’ signaling is insufficient to deter limited aggression

This research used Dan Altman’s dataset of territorial conquest.¹⁵ The dataset includes all interstate territorial conquest attempts with information about whether or not each targeted territory is an entire or partial territory of a state and whether or not each conquest attempt resulted in war. Figure 1 shows that, as expected, conquest attempts over an entire territory are twice more likely to lead to war than those that attempt to take over only parts of the territory (66% to 33%).

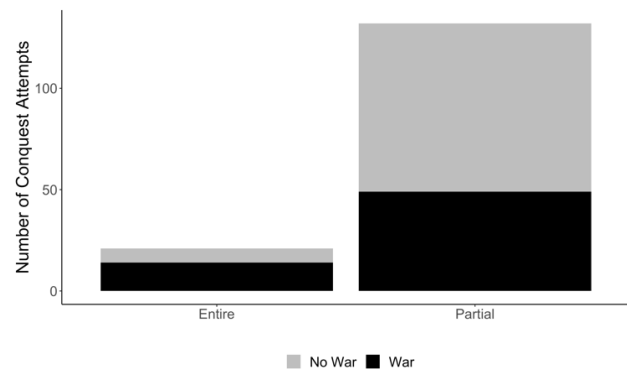


Figure 1: Conquest Attempts Targeting an Entire Territory Are More Likely to Cause War

Conquest attempts to entire territories increase the likelihood of military intervention from allies and partners. This bolsters the argument that the defender’s credible military commitment deters large-scale territorial invasion. To support this claim, this paper used another dataset developed by McManus and Nieman (2019), which quantifies the degree of major power military commitment to their protégés each year via alliance formation, JMEs, and several other means.¹⁶ The dataset by McManus and Nieman was merged with that of Altman to reveal the likelihood of territorial conquest attempts targeting entire and partial territories. Figure 2 presents the distribution of conquest attempts with respect to the strength of military signals by the primary defender of the targeted state. It shows that conquest attempts targeting entire territories cease once the defender’s commitment reaches a threshold (around 1.3).

More surprisingly, however, the defender’s credible military commitment has failed to deter lower-level aggression targeting a partial territory; such limited aggression occurs no matter how high the defender’s military signaling level is. This could be explained by the much lower risk of escalation caused by the partial territorial conquest attempts (Figure 1). This finding suggests that a defender’s credible military commitment cannot deter limited aggression.

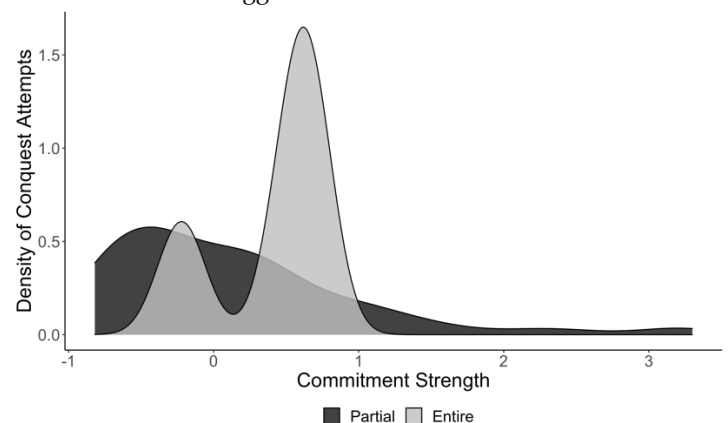


Figure 2: Strong Military Commitment Signaling Cannot Deter Partial Aggression

¹³ McManus, Roseanne W., and Mark David Nieman. “Identifying the Level of Major Power Support Signaled for Protégés: A Latent Measure Approach.” *Journal of Peace Research* 56, no. 3 (2019): 364–78. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343318808842>; Kuo, Raymond, and Brian Dylan Blankenship. “Deterrence and Restraint: Do Joint Military Exercises Escalate Conflict?” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 66, no. 1 (2022): 3–31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00220027211023147>.

¹⁴ Bernhardt, Jordan, and Lauren Sukin. “Joint Military Exercises and Crisis Dynamics on the Korean Peninsula.” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 65, no. 5 (2021): 855–88. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002720972180>.

¹⁵ Altman, Dan. “The Evolution of Territorial Conquest after 1945 and the Limits of the Territorial Integrity Norm.” *International Organization* 74, no. 3 (2020): 490–522. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0020818320000119>.

¹⁶ McManus, Roseanne W., and Mark David Nieman. “Identifying the Level of Major Power Support Signaled for Protégés: A Latent Measure Approach.” *Journal of Peace Research* 56, no. 3 (2019): 364–78. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343318808842>. They computed the level of military support using a Bayesian latent measurement model, which allows them to quantify latent variables such as military support level based on seven observed signals of military support, including alliance formation, JMEs, and arms transfer.

Claimants' troop deployment and sustained presence enhance gray zone deterrence

What can be done to deter limited territorial aggression that evades extended deterrence? The data suggest that the answer lies in claimants' military deployment. If partial territorial conquest attempts are harder to deter because they are less likely to cause an escalation, taking measures that raise escalation risk, such as troop deployment, is expected to bolster deterrence. Altman's dataset contains information about whether or not each targeted territory is garrisoned by military forces, enabling us to examine how presence affects escalation and the frequency of aggression. As Figure 3 shows, aggression to a partial territory is ten times more likely to escalate to war (44% to 0.4%) when it is garrisoned. To see the relationship between military deployment and the level of defender's military signaling, Figure 4 plots the aggression frequency to garrisoned versus ungarrisoned partial territories. The result shows that, while ungarrisoned partial territories are invaded even under a strong defender's commitment, garrisoned partial territories are much less often invaded, especially when protected by a credible defense commitment. This shows that troop deployment to potentially targeted territories could significantly reduce limited territorial aggression.

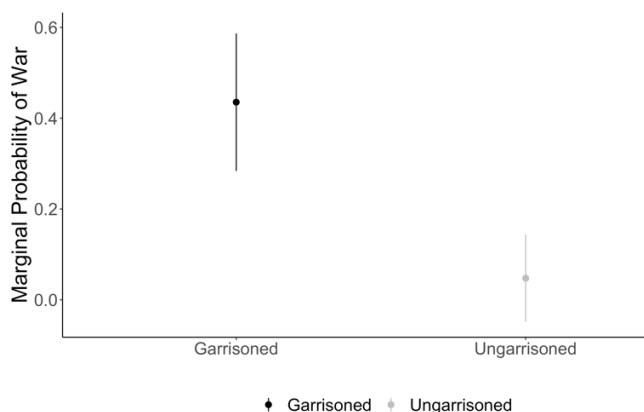


Figure 3: Conquest Attempts Targeting Garrisoned Territories Are More Likely to Cause War¹⁷

¹⁷ The graph shows the marginal probability of war for conquest attempts targeting garrisoned territory versus ungarrisoned territory, based on a logistic regression controlling for binary population status and the mean level of military support from McManus and Nieman (2019). The code and datasets used for the statistical analysis are available upon request.

¹⁸ "The Long Patrol Staredown at Thitu Island Enters Its Sixteenth Month." *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*. Feb. 6, 2019.

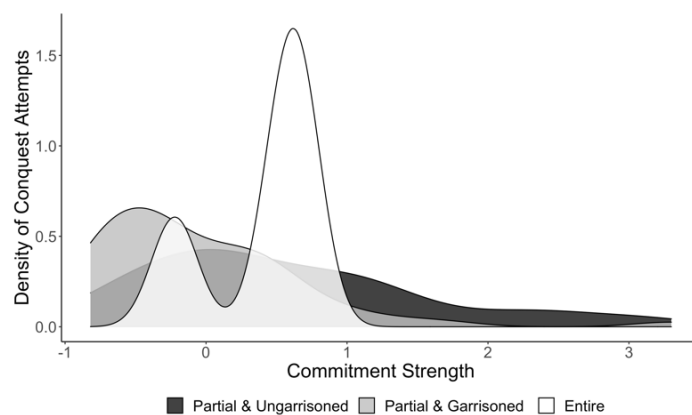


Figure 4: Troop Deployment Deters Limited Territorial Aggression

The descriptive analyses of large-N data of territorial aggression offer evidence that (i) defender's military signaling via alliance and joint drills often fails to deter limited aggression characterized by a much lower risk of escalation and (ii) presence on targeted territories, in combination with credible defense commitment, significantly raises the escalation risk, thereby, deterring limited aggression.

Illustrative case: the Thitu dispute

Developments in the Sino-Philippine dispute over Thitu (*Pag-asa*) in the Spratly Islands illustrate the empirical findings explained in the previous section. China began to send maritime militia boats near Thitu in early December 2018, when the Philippines, a U.S. treaty-ally, started runway repair and harbor construction.¹⁸

As the above empirical results suggest, foreign military signaling alone failed to contain Chinese coercive behavior around Thitu. As Figure 5 shows, U.S. military presence near Thitu was held constant; FONOPs close to the Spratlys were conducted six times that year, and five joint naval exercises were close to the disputed feature. Yet, as the figure shows, Beijing constantly sent militia boats around Thitu during the construction. Thus, American military signals failed to restrain Chinese aggression, at least on the available data.

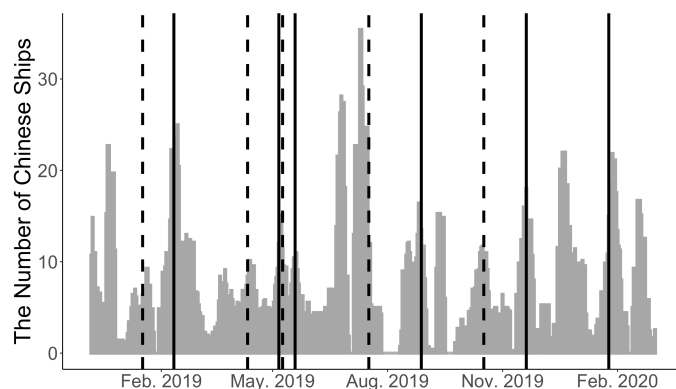


Figure 5: The Number of Chinese Militia Vessels and American Naval Presence Near Thitu¹⁹

<https://amti.csis.org/the-long-patrol-staredown-at-thitu-island-enters-its-sixteenth-month/>.

¹⁹ The number of ships is seven-day average. The solid (dashed) lines indicate the dates U.S. FONOPs (U.S. military exercises) are conducted in or near the Spratlys. I obtained the Chinese ship data at "The Long Patrol." *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*. The dates of FONOPs and exercises are collected by the author, based on cross-referencing between press

Manila's construction activities, on the other hand, seemingly have stabilized the dispute to a certain extent. Despite being delayed by Chinese presence and coercion, Manila almost completed its harbor construction project by February 13, 2020.²⁰ The new construction enhanced Manila's capabilities to patrol and defend Thitu.²¹ If the above empirical findings are accurate, then the capability buildup on Thitu should have strengthened the Philippines' deterrence against Chinese incursion. Since AMTI's Chinese ship tracking data were unavailable after February 2020, this paper relied on Filipino media reports to analyze dispute intensity before and after the construction activities.²² The result in Figure 6 shows that Thitu-related reports significantly decreased following the completion of the project at the beginning of 2020, and the trend lasted for about a year until the start of 2021. While related reports increased again in 2021, the number of Chinese militia vessels observed near the island was reportedly less than 50,²³ a lower number compared to that observed before Manila completed the construction. Based on AMTI data, there were often more than 60 to 80 ships in a day during the construction.

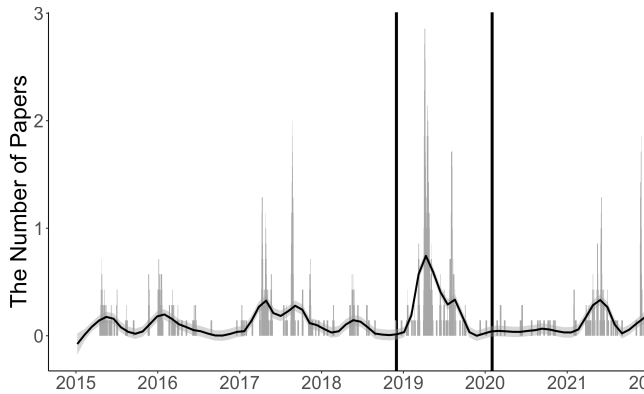


Figure 6: The Number of Philippine Media Reports on the Thitu Dispute²⁴

Formalizing gray-zone deterrence

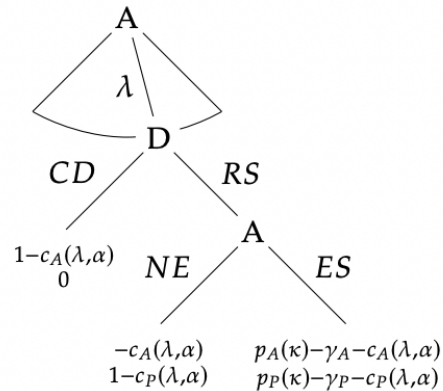


Figure 7: The Gray Zone Competition Game

Model setup

This section formalizes the empirical insights presented in the previous section with a game-theoretic model to clarify its logic and ensure logical coherence. The model implies that, even when the aggressor is not resolved to fight a war with the protégé and its defender, it is not deterred from engaging in limited aggression unless the protégé is sufficiently tolerant of the costs and risks of gray zone competition; the aggressor can coerce the protégé into concession solely with low-level aggression evading military response. This mechanism explains the empirical trend described in the previous section that strong defense commitment cannot solely deter limited territorial aggression when the aggressor can attempt it without taking the risk of escalation to war.

There are numerous examples of applied game-theoretic analysis in conflict studies in political science.²⁵ It stipulates all assumptions in a form called 'game,' which defines 'players,' their 'strategies (the plan of action),' the 'sequence' in which they choose their actions, 'outcomes' or the possible ways the game ends, and their 'payoffs' in each outcome.

Once the game is defined, one can derive the game's 'equilibrium,' or a set of strategies by the players, in which no one can increase their payoffs by unilaterally deviating to any other strategy. Put differently, the equilibrium is the set of mutually optimized behavior. It induces likely outcomes of the game—equilibrium changes when relevant parameter values change. So, by shifting parameter values and seeing how that alters players' actions, causal relationships between variables of interest (such as the level of alliance credibility and claimants' capabilities) and their political consequences (such as the likelihood of war and deterrence success) can be inferred.

releases by the United States Indo-Pacific Command and major media sources.

²⁰ This observation can be made based on satellite imagery published by the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (AMTI).

²¹ "The Long Patrol." *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*.

²² I gathered all 500 news articles from nine major news sources in the Philippines (Philippines News Agency, Manila Bulletin, Manila Standard, The Manila Times, The Philippine Star, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Inquirer, BusinessWorld, and BusinessMirror) containing the term "Pag-asa Island" using Factiva news search

(<https://www.dowjones.com/professional/factiva/>) and applied text classification, a machine learning method to detect the topic of documents, to extract only those criticizing Chinese territorial incursion and those regarding Manila's countermeasures to it.

²³ "Philippines Tells China To 'Back Off' After South China Sea Standoff." *Reuters*. Nov. 18, 2021.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/philippines-condemns-chinese-coast-guards-action-south-china-sea-2021-11-18/>.

²⁴ The bar shows the seven-day moving average of the number of news articles related to territorial dispute in Thitu since 2015 along with its LOESS curve (smoothed curve) with .95 confidence interval. The left (right) vertical line represents the date Philippine harbor construction in Thitu was reportedly started (completed).

²⁵ The examples include Fearon, James D. "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes." *The American Political Science Review* 88, no. 3 (1994): 577–92. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2944796>; Fearon, James D. "Rationalist Explanations for War." *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (1995): 379–414. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706903>; and Powell, Robert. *In the Shadow of Power*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999. A general introduction to the literature is available in Powell, Robert. "The Modeling Enterprise and Security Studies." *International Security* 24, no. 2 (1999): 97–106. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2539252>.

Consider a game with two players (states)—Aggressor (A) and Protégé (P)—as depicted in Figure 7. Suppose they are disputing a territory valued as 1. Before the game starts, P 's Defender (not a player of the game) declares its military commitment to intervene in the war between A and P , $\kappa > 0$, and the level of material assistance to P , $\alpha > 0$. After the pair (κ, α) is given, A moves first by choosing the level of limited (gray zone) aggression, $\lambda > 0$.

Limited (gray zone) conflict. Observing aggression, P then selects whether to resist by sending its forces (RS) or concede the territory (CD). When P concedes, A seizes the territory by paying the costs of aggression, $c_A(\lambda, \alpha)$. The magnitude of the costs is a function of λ (i.e., the level of limited aggression) and α (i.e., the amount of material assistance to P) because more extensive scale incursion requires more resources and more significant aid to P strengthens its territorial defense, thereby raising the risk of skirmishes. When P resists, gray zone conflict takes place where both countries pay the costs of daily patrols and possible standoffs, $c_A(\lambda, \alpha) > 0$ for A and $c_P(\lambda, \alpha) > 0$ for P , respectively. As $c_A(\lambda, \alpha)$, $c_P(\lambda, \alpha)$ is also increasing in λ , but decreasing in α because material assistance to P should lower the costs it must incur in patrolling and surveillance operations and possible skirmishes.

Military conflict. During the limited conflict, A chooses whether to escalate to war (ES) or continue the low-intensity competition (NE). If war takes place, A wins with probability $p_A(\kappa)$ and P wins with probability $p_P(\kappa)$. The probabilities are functions of κ (i.e., the level of military commitment to defend P) because more credible commitment increases the expectation of military intervention in favor of P during the war. Note here that $0 < p_A(\kappa), p_P(\kappa) < 1$. I assume, for simplicity, there is no stalemate. Hence, $p_P(\kappa) = 1 - p_A(\kappa)$.²⁶ Since warfighting accompanies humanitarian and economic losses, both states incur the costs of war, $\gamma_A > 0$ for A and $\gamma_P > 0$ for P , respectively, in addition to the costs of the preceding limited conflict. Suppose A instead chose not to escalate. In that case, the game ends in a protracted low-intensity conflict where A only pays the costs of incursion, $c_A(\lambda, \alpha)$, and P maintains the territory paying the costs of gray zone conflict, $c_P(\lambda, \alpha)$.

Equilibrium

The key is finding out when and how P succeeds in deterring A from resorting to limited, gray zone aggression. To derive the condition for gray zone deterrence, it is necessary to derive the game's equilibrium,²⁷ first, by examining A 's decision of whether or not to wage war. Intuitively, A escalates if and only if the probability of its military victory is sufficiently high. Namely, A escalates if and only if $p_A(\kappa) - \gamma_A - c_A(\lambda, \alpha) > c_A(\lambda, \alpha) \Rightarrow p_A(\kappa) > \gamma_A$ (i.e., A is sufficiently strong) while if $p_A(\kappa) - \gamma_A - c_A(\lambda, \alpha) \leq -c_A(\lambda, \alpha) \Rightarrow p_A(\kappa) \leq \gamma_A$, A backs down to avoid war.

In turn, P 's decision of whether to resist or concede depends on A 's choice to escalate or not. If $p_A(\kappa) > \gamma_A$, A escalates, hence P resists if and only if $p_P(\kappa) - \gamma_P - c_P(\lambda, \alpha) \geq 0 \Rightarrow p_P(\kappa) \geq \gamma_P + c_P(\lambda, \alpha)$, namely, P , with the protection by Defender, is sufficiently strong. If $p_A(\kappa) < \gamma_A$

on the contrary, A backs down, hence P resists if and only if $1 - c_P(\lambda, \alpha) \geq 0 \Rightarrow c_P(\lambda, \alpha) \leq 1$, namely, the costs of gray zone conflict to P is sufficiently small. Thus, even if A is deterred from escalating to war, P is deterred from resisting A 's limited aggression if it is excessively costly.

When choosing the level of limited aggression, λ , at the first node A faces a trade-off: by choosing a large λ , it can raise P 's costs of gray zone conflict, $c_P(\lambda, \alpha)$, thereby possibly coercing P to concede without fighting a war but doing so simultaneously increases the costs to A itself, $c_A(\lambda, \alpha)$. Thus, A chooses between (i) the minimum λ necessary to induce P to concede, or (ii) $\lambda = 0$ (i.e., no aggression) and goes to war or avoids escalation.²⁸ Now, let λ^* be the minimum λ such that D concedes and identifies properties it must satisfy. First, consider the case where $p_A(\kappa) > \gamma_A$ (i.e., A escalates if resisted). Since P concedes if and only if $p_P(\kappa) < \gamma_P + c_P(\lambda, \alpha)$, λ^* must solve

$$c_P(\lambda^*, \alpha) \geq p_P(\kappa) - \gamma_P \quad (1)$$

Yet, such λ^* could be too costly for A . A receives $1 - c_A(\lambda^*, \alpha)$ by the minimum aggression. Instead, A receives $p_A(\kappa) - \gamma_A$ by not conducting aggression and going to war. Then, aggression is profitable if and only if $1 - c_A(\lambda^*, \alpha) > p_A(\kappa) - \gamma_A$, namely,

$$c_A(\lambda^*, \alpha) \leq 1 - p_A(\kappa) + \gamma_A \quad (2)$$

Thus, A can implement aggression if and only if there exists λ^* that simultaneously satisfies both (1) and (2). Next, consider the case where $p_A(\kappa) \leq \gamma_A$ (i.e., A avoids escalation if resisted). Since P resists if and only if $c_P(\lambda, \alpha) < 1$, λ^* must solve

$$c_P(\lambda^*, \alpha) \geq 1 \quad (3)$$

Here, A receives $1 - c_A(\lambda^*, \alpha)$ by aggression, while receives 0 by not escalating without any aggression. Thus, aggression becomes feasible for A if and only if

$$c_A(\lambda^*, \alpha) \leq 1 \quad (4)$$

Thus, it is only when there exists λ^* that simultaneously satisfies both (3) and (4) that A can implement aggression. Based on the above analysis, the (unique) equilibrium of the game is summarized as follows:

- A always chooses $\lambda = \lambda^*$ whenever λ^* is feasible, otherwise chooses $\lambda = 0$
- A escalates if and only if $p_A(\kappa) > \gamma_A$, otherwise not escalates
- P resists if and only if λ^* is infeasible and $p_A(\kappa) < 1 - c_P - \gamma_P$, otherwise concedes

Implications

Consistent with empirical evidence of territorial conquest attempts, the equilibrium implies that Defender's strong military commitment, (i.e., a high κ), is a necessary but not sufficient condition to deter gray zone aggression. Strong and credible defense commitment bolsters Protégé's

²⁶ The "no-stalemate" assumption is quite common in this type of conflict model and is innocuous. If you are uncomfortable with it, just interpret the probabilities of winning, p_A, p_P , as parameters representing the countries' relative military power and the war payoffs reflect them.

²⁷ Technically, I solve for the subgame perfect Nash equilibrium which requires the countries take optimal action at every "history" (i.e., the set of past action choices).

²⁸ No other choice of ϵ can be optimal for A : any smaller ϵ than the minimum required only imposes worthless costs without making D concede, and any greater ϵ than the minimum value is simply unnecessary.

capability to fight war thereby deterring Aggressor from escalating when Protégé resists limited aggression. Thus, defense commitment does have a deterrent effect, yet it is activated only if Protégé is willing to resist Aggressor's limited aggression. In other words, the Aggressor succeeds when the minimum necessary level of gray zone aggression to coerce Protégé to concede, λ^* , is met.

The other necessary condition for gray zone deterrence relates to Protégé's resistance. If the maximum level of gray zone aggression feasible to Aggressor is not sufficient to contain Protégé's resistance (i.e., there does not exist λ such that satisfies both (3) and (4)), low-level aggression fails. Put another way, Protégé needs to be highly tolerant of the costs and risks imposed by gray zone conflict to sustain its military presence in disputed domains. If Protégé fails to make efforts to defend its territory (such as through troop deployment), Aggressor will discount the risk of limited aggression and hence more likely to attempt conquest, consistent with empirical evidence.

Defender's material assistance, α , is, therefore, a critical component of gray zone deterrence, mainly when there is significant power asymmetry between Aggressor and Protégé. When Aggressor has superior capabilities vis-à-vis Protégé, the costs of engaging in gray zone conflict to the latter, $c_P(\lambda, \alpha)$, should be greater than those to the former, $c_A(\lambda, \alpha)$. In such a case, Aggressors can quickly implement the minimum necessary level of limited aggression that effectively coerces Protégé into concession. To improve such a situation, Defender should provide greater material assistance to Protégé (i.e., higher α) so that it could curb the costs to Protégé while raising those to Aggressor (note that $c_P(\lambda, \alpha)$ is decreasing and $c_A(\lambda, \alpha)$ is increasing in α).

It is important to underscore that the purpose of more significant material assistance proposed here is not to offset Aggressor's power superiority nor eliminate it from disputed territories by force. Indeed, no amount of material assistance can possibly reverse the existing capability gap between China, the aggressor, and other regional claimants. Material assistance, however, improves gray zone deterrence just by raising Protégé's capacity to sustain its constant presence in disputed areas resisting Aggressor's limited aggression.

Recommendations

Based on the empirical and theoretical analyses, this paper found that a constant presence in targeted domains is necessary to deter limited aggression. Hence, given the severe fiscal constraints on regional claimants' maritime operations discussed below, material assistance focusing on sustaining their presence in disputed areas already under their control becomes critical to gray zone deterrence. This section focuses on assistance to the

Philippines, given its security relationship with Japan and the United States.

Assets for sovereign patrolling

The Philippine Navy (PN) already has outposts in several disputed areas, including Thitu and Second Thomas Shoal. Sustaining such troop deployment requires routine resupply operations.²⁹ Manila's military presence in the disputed territories also depends on the control over maritime areas surrounding the islands and reefs, which needs to be maintained and bolstered by daily sovereign patrolling. The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has made efforts to augment its presence in the Spratlys with the help of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) to defend the country's vast maritime zones.³⁰ The National Task Force for the West Philippine Sea (NTF WPS) coordinates Filipino presence in the South China Sea and broad strategy in dealing with Chinese coercive maneuvers.³¹ The AFP has made efforts to "maximize the utilization of these newly acquired assets."³²

The country's sea-patrolling operation, however, faces severe budgetary constraints. Figure 8 plots the amount of annual budget for patrolling and monitoring

“Defender's material assistance is a critical component of gray zone deterrence, mainly when there is significant power asymmetry between Aggressor and Protégé.”

operations allocated to the PCG and annual policy targets (the proportion of maritime area to be patrolled and the length of coast to be monitored) the agency must satisfy. The line plot shows that the requirements of sea patrolling and coastal monitoring both increased since 2018 on the back of the increased Chinese aggression in the Spratlys: the target percentage of maritime areas, 70% in 2018, has been raised to 88% in 2021 and the target coastal length, 218,557 km in 2018, has been extended to 496,292 km in 2021. On the contrary, as the bar plot shows, the PCG's annual budget has been consistently reduced for the last four years: the funding for sea-based operations, the black bar, has been reduced from US\$79 million in 2018 to US\$48 million; and the budget for offshore operations, the gray bar, has only slightly increased since 2018 whereas the targeted coastal length to be monitored has been doubled. Concerned about the PCG's decreased fiscal resources despite its increased role, Filipino senators have called for a budget revision.³³

²⁹ “Philippines Set to Resume Resupply Mission to the South China Sea.” *Reuters*. Nov. 21, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/philippines-set-resume-resupply-mission-south-china-sea-2021-11-21/>; “Palace: West PH Sea resupply mission successful after Chinese water cannon attack.” *ABS-CBN News*. Nov. 25, 2021. <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/11/23/21/ph-ayungin-shoal-resupply-mission-successful-after-chinese-attack>; “Milestone: PH Navy ship docks on Pag-asa Island for 1st time.” *Inquirer*. May. 19, 2020. <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/187781/milestone-ph-navy-ship-docks-on-pag-asa-island-for-1st-time>.

³⁰ “AFP Boosting WPS Presence with Help of Other Gov't Agencies.” *Philippine News Agency*. Apr. 22, 2021. <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1137662>.

³¹ The policy target data were obtained from annual Budgetary documents published by the PCG

(<https://coastguard.gov.ph/index.php/transparency>).

³² “Use All Assets in Defending PH Interests, Sobejana Tells Troops.”

Philippine News Agency. May. 26, 2021. <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1141485>.

³³ “Pangilinan Wants Bigger 2022 Budget for PCG To Ramp Up West PH Sea Patrols.” *Inquirer*. Jul. 20, 2021. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1462082/pangilinan-wants-bigger-2022-budget-for-pcg-to-ramp-up-west-ph-sea-patrols>; “Lacson proposes to cut over P9-B in ‘questionable’ appropriations under 2022 budget.” *Inquirer*. Dec. 1, 2021. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1522205/lacson-proposes-to-cut-over-p9-b-in-questionable-appropriations-under-2022-budget>.

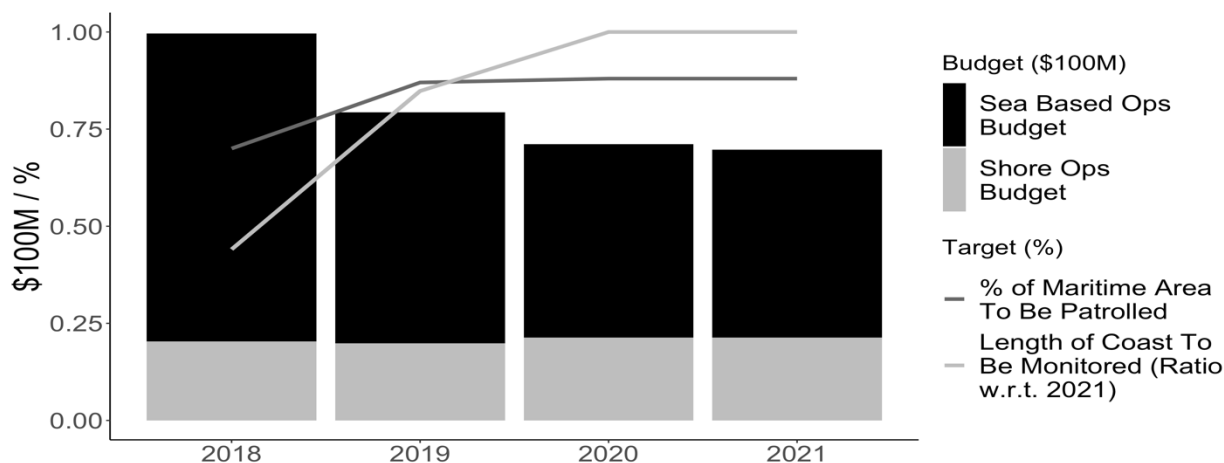


Figure 8: The PCG's Budget Shrinks While Its Policy Targets Expand³⁴

Given the gap between the PCG's operational costs and its allocated budget, material assistance from foreign partners is critical to prevent a possible decrease in Manila's constant presence in disputed territories, which likely exacerbates Chinese gray zone aggression and the likelihood of territorial invasion. In 2021, Japan transferred to the PCG two multi-role response vessels (MRRV). These vessels were the largest among the agency's existing patrol ships and were equipped with communication systems, a helideck, and a hangar for helicopter operations.³⁵ France also signed a similar project with the Philippine government to transfer five new patrol vessels to the PCG.³⁶ Tokyo, Washington, and other external countries should expand these types of asset provision projects to the PCG, focusing on offshore patrol vessels that can enhance Filipino presence in the South China Sea.

ISR capabilities

In addition to vessels and aircraft, the United States and Japan have provided assets for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities which play an indispensable role in bolstering sovereign control over the vast maritime areas under strict budgetary constraints. In 2020, the United States provided the PN with eight Insitu ScanEagle unmanned aerial systems via the Maritime Security Initiative of the U.S. government. The drones are operated by the 300th Air Intelligence and Security Wing in Palawan. As PN Vice Admiral Bocordo emphasized, they have provided the "less costly and less risky" option to expand the country's maritime domain awareness.³⁷ Moreover, Washington turned over four other

ScanEagle unmanned systems to the PN in 2021.³⁸ Tokyo is also deepening its defense cooperation with Manila to strengthen the latter's ISR capabilities. In 2020, Japan approved transferring four early warning and radar control systems to the Philippines.³⁹ Further cooperation related to defense equipment and technology transfer is expected between the two governments after their first two-plus-two ministerial meeting held in April 2022.⁴⁰

Another crucial target of capacity-building assistance to regional claimants is space-based systems for maritime domain awareness, such as Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite (VIIRS) and Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR). Automatic Identification System (AIS), an existing technology for maritime monitoring relying on signals sent by transceivers carried on vessels, has often been inadequate to fully capture maritime activities in disputed waters because many ships, including Chinese militia boats, illegally deactivate their transceivers. Furthermore, small-sized vessels are not required to carry them per the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREG). Imaging-based systems using satellites thus serve as a powerful alternative in providing a clearer picture of Beijing's gray zone aggression. VIIRS detects bright light sources at sea, allowing maritime agencies to see 'dark vessels' regardless of the weather.⁴¹ SAR sees metallic objects on the sea surface, enabling governments to estimate the number of vessels at a given time and location.⁴² Such real-time monitoring could significantly lower the costs of maritime surveillance operations by allowing the PN and PCG to selectively project their patrolling resources to areas of particular intensity while obtaining a precise picture of the broader maritime zones under Philippine jurisdiction. Given the growing interest of the U.S. military in "deterrence by

³⁴ The policy targets and budget data were obtained from the PCG's annual budgetary documents available at: <https://coastguard.gov.ph/index.php/transparency>.

³⁵ "Japan's MHI Launches 2nd MRRV for the Philippine Coast Guard." *Naval News*. Nov. 18, 2021. <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2021/11/japans-mhi-launches-2nd-mrrv-for-the-philippine-coast-guard/>.

³⁶ "Philippines, France Sign Contract for Coast Guards 82 Meter Offshore Patrol Vessel and 24 Meter Patrol Vessel Acquisition." *Philippine Coast Guard News*. Dec. 18, 2021. <https://coastguard.gov.ph/index.php/related-links/147-news/news-2017/1760-philippines-france-sign-contract-for-coast-guard-s-82-meter-offshore-patrol-vessel-and-24-meter-patrol-vessel-acquisition>.

³⁷ "PH Navy Gets 'Eye In the Sky' from the US: 8 Drones Worth P710M." *Inquirer*. Nov. 25, 2020. <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/192372/ph-navy-gets-eye-in-the-sky-from-us-8-drones-worth-p710m>.

³⁸ "U.S. Military Delivers Advanced Unmanned Aerial System to Philippine Air Force." *US Indo Pacific Command*. Oct. 14, 2021.

<https://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/2811142/us-military-delivers-advanced-unmanned-aerial-system-to-philippine-air-force/>.

³⁹ Strangio, Sebastian. "Japan, Philippines Agree to Boost Security Cooperation." *The Diplomat*. Apr. 8, 2022. <https://thediplomat.com/2022/04/japan-philippines-agree-to-boost-security-cooperation/>.

⁴⁰ "Japan, Philippines Agree to Strengthen Security Cooperation in First 2-Plus-2 Meeting." *The Inquirer*. Apr. 10, 2022. <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/203537/japan-philippines-agree-to-strengthen-security-cooperation-in-first-2-plus-2-meeting>.

⁴¹ "Our Technology." *Global Fishing Watch*. <https://globalfishingwatch.org/our-technology/>.

⁴² Craig, Geoffrey. "SAR Shines Light On 'Dark' Chinese Ports." *Ursa Space Systems*. Dec. 10, 2021. <https://ursaspace.com/blog/sar-shines-light-on-dark-chinese-ports/>.

detection” in the South China Sea⁴³ and the willingness of Manila to bolster its MDA with space technologies,⁴⁴ U.S. assistance to the Philippines should focus on related capacity-building initiatives.

No other countries besides the United States and Japan have assisted the Philippines with ISR capabilities. The new capabilities reduce the operational burden on the PN and the PCG in maintaining presence in the South China Sea.⁴⁵ Other interested parties with advanced military technologies should initiate similar asset-provision projects focusing on unmanned systems and other ISR assets.

In summary, this paper offered empirical and formal evidence to support the argument that, to deter Chinese gray zone coercion in the South China Sea, weaker claimants should be provided with greater capacity to sustain presence and withstand low-level aggression. Given the limited financial capacity of regional claimants, material assistance by external powers is essential to maintain their presence in maritime zones and offshore territories disputed by China. The United States, Japan, and other like-minded states concerned with the region's stability should prioritize capacity-building assistance focusing on offshore patrolling assets and ISR capabilities, including unmanned systems, radars, and space-based monitoring technologies. Such assistance would assuage operational burdens on the claimants' effort to sustain their presence in disputed domains and withstand the pressure of Chinese incursion and intimidation, thereby deterring further gray zone aggression.

“No other countries besides the United States and Japan have assisted the Philippines with ISR capabilities. The new capabilities reduced the operational burden on the PN and the PCG in maintaining presence in the South China Sea. Other interested parties with advanced military technologies should initiate similar asset-provision projects focusing on unmanned systems and other ISR assets.”

⁴³ Katz, Justin. “Berger Calls For ‘Deterrence by Detection’ In Light of Russia-Ukraine Tensions.” *Breaking Defense*. Feb 8, 2022. <https://breakingdefense.com/2022/02/berger-calls-for-deterrence-by-detection-in-light-of-russia-ukraine-tensions/#:~:text=Berger%20has%20previously%20floated%20that,US%20can%20deter%20unwanted%20activities.>

⁴⁴ “Ph to Boost Maritime Security Through Space Enabled Technologies.” *Philippine Space Agency*. Jan 21, 2022. <https://philsa.gov.ph/news/ph-to-boost-maritime-security-through-space-enabled-technologies/>.

⁴⁵ “PH Navy Gets ‘Eye In the Sky’ from US: 8 Drones Worth P710M.” *Inquirer*. Nov. 25, 2020. <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/192372/ph-navy-gets-eye-in-the-sky-from-us-8-drones-worth-p710m>.

5

Enhancing Taiwan's resistance: Military and diplomatic roles of the U.S.- Japan security alliance

Ayae Yoshimoto

Abstract

This contribution provides recommendations on the scope for coordination on the part of the U.S.-Japan alliance to raise the costs for Beijing of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan. As the threat posed by China's attempt to unilaterally change the status quo becomes more serious, the Taiwan issue has once again become a focal point of international attention. China's rise is a common challenge for Japan and the United States, and stability in the Taiwan Strait is their common interest. After considering various Taiwan contingency scenarios, preventing a worst-case scenario will require a greater willingness and ability of the Taiwanese people to resist and prompt U.S. intervention. To strengthen prospects for these two, this paper discusses how the United States and Japan should militarily and diplomatically work together.

Disclaimer

This paper was completed in Summer 2022 for Pacific Forum's U.S.-Japan Next Generation Leaders Initiative. The views and opinions in this paper are the author's own. They do not reflect those of any organization with which the author is or was affiliated, including the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Pacific Forum.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2014, and most recently in 2022, demonstrated a willingness on the part of Moscow to change the status quo by force. Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine has fueled a sense of crisis in Taiwan. Indeed, the phrase "Ukraine today, Taiwan tomorrow" is often heard. Of course, Ukraine and Taiwan are different in many ways that defy a simplistic comparison.¹ However, despite these differences, both Russia and China share a common aim to challenge the post-Second World War U.S.-led international order. Seen in this context, this contribution starts from the assumption that a change in the status quo in the Taiwan Strait would jeopardize Japan's survival and challenge the credibility of the U.S. commitment to its alliances.

This paper begins with an analysis of how the Taiwan issue has risen in prominence for the United States, the European Union, and Japan, particularly since 2021. Then China's policy toward Taiwan will be examined. This will be followed by an examination of Taiwan contingency scenarios. This paper will then assume a worst-case scenario of a rapid and intense invasion attempt of the main island of Taiwan on the part of Beijing for its analysis of the role that the U.S.-Japan security alliance would play under such circumstances. This paper ultimately argues that while Japan and the United States can deploy military and diplomatic tools to enhance Taiwan's capacity to resist an invasion, the effectiveness of Japan-U.S. military cooperation will prove critical for Taiwan's defense.

The United States, the European Union, Japan, and the Taiwan issue

According to former Indo-Pacific Commander Philip Davidson, during statements to the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee hearing in March 2021, China may invade Taiwan within the next six years. With the rhetoric of invasion growing more ominous, 2021 witnessed numerous pledges and statements of support for Taiwan from broad sections of the international community.² In joint statements at the U.S.-Japan Summit, the Taiwan Strait was included for the first time since Japan had cut off diplomatic relations with the Republic of China.³ The importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait was also mentioned for the first time in the joint statement of the G7 meeting held in June.⁴ In September of the same year, the European Parliament adopted its first Taiwan-related recommendations, the EU adopted its new strategic review document on China, and announced its own Indo-Pacific strategy.⁵ In these documents, the tone of mentions of China, including human rights violations, is tougher than in the past. There is a positive attitude toward further deepening relations with Taiwan.

It was in 2018, during the latter half of the Trump administration, that the U.S. began placing greater emphasis on Taiwan. Then, in 2021 Japan, Australia, and European countries began to follow Washington's lead. As this study focuses on military contingencies, the analysis will primarily focus on the U.S. and Japan; however, because of the growing importance of Taiwan within the wider international community, it is important to understand how the U.S. and Japan's partners calibrate their responses to a military contingency, it is useful also to highlight how Taiwan has also grown in importance in European Union external affairs. This shift on the part of the EU was further amplified by the visit of a delegation from the EU Parliament to Taiwan in November 2021.⁶ To be sure, it is extraordinary that the EU has addressed issues related to China, Taiwan, and the Indo-Pacific so intensively in such a short period.⁷ This growing engagement on the Taiwan issue highlights the hardening of the EU's perception of China and its intention to actively build relations with Taiwan as a partner.

"...stability in the Taiwan Strait is important ... for the stability of the international community."

2021 was also an important year with regard to Japan's commitment to Taiwan. The perception that a Taiwan contingency is a Japan contingency has become widespread, not only among experts but also among the Japanese public.⁸ Has there ever been a time when Taiwan has been in the headlines in Japan almost every day? Since Japan broke diplomatic relations with the Republic of China and established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China in 1972, it has limited its relations with Taiwan to economic ties and people-to-people exchanges. Japan remained silent on the Taiwan issue, but it finally broke the long silence in 2021. The changes in Japan's commitment to Taiwan can be seen starting from the Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee (2+2) in March 2021, where the importance of "peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait" was clearly stated in the joint statement for the first time. Furthermore, the same was included for the first time in the joint statement of the U.S.-Japan summit in April. Furthermore, in the 2021 *Defense White Paper*, it was stated for the first time that "stability in the Taiwan Strait is important not only for the security of our country but also for the stability of the

¹ Kharis Templeman, "Taiwan Is Not Ukraine: Stop Linking Their Fates Together," *War on the Rocks*, January 28, 2022, <https://warontherocks.com/2022/01/taiwan-is-not-ukraine-stop-linking-their-fates-together/>.

² Yoshiyuki Ogasawara 小笠原欣幸, "Taiwan wo meguru 21 nen taisei no keisei" 台湾をめぐる「21 年体制」の形成 [The Formation of the "21-Year Framework" for Taiwan], no. 11 NPI commentary, https://www.npi.or.jp/research/data/20211224_ogasawara.pdf.

³ US, The White House, "U.S.-Japan Joint Leaders' Statement: 'U.S.-JAPAN GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR A NEW ERA,'" April 16, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/04/16/u-s-japan-joint-leaders-statement-u-s-japan-global-partnership-for-a-new-era/>.

⁴ US, The White House, "CARBIS BAY G7 SUMMIT COMMUNIQUE," June 13, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/06/13/carbis-bay-g7-summit-communique/>.

⁵ European Commission, "The EU strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific," September 16, 2021,

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/jointcommunication_indo_pacific_en.pdf.

⁶ Sarah Wu and Yimou Lee, "Taiwan welcomes first official European Parliament delegation," Reuters, November 3, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/business/cop/taiwan-welcomes-first-official-european-parliament-delegation-2021-11-03/>.

⁷ Atsuko Higashino 東野篤子, "EU・中国・台湾関係の新展開 [New Progress in EU-China-Taiwan Relations], *The Japan Institute of International Affairs*, October 7th, 2021, <https://www.jiia.or.jp/research-report/europe-fy2021-02.html>.

⁸ A public opinion poll conducted by the Nikkei Shimbun on Japan's mention of stability in the Taiwan Strait at the Japan-U.S. summit showed 74% in favor. This figure does not necessarily represent the public's consent to the dispatch of the SDF or the use of force in the event of a Taiwan contingency. Nevertheless, interest in the Taiwan Strait issue is growing among the Japanese people.

international community” in the section on U.S.-China relations.⁹

In addition to the first explicit mention of the Taiwan Strait in a series of official Japanese government documents and statements on security issues, Japanese politicians have begun to call for Japan to play a more active role in the Taiwan contingency.¹⁰ These statements were widely reported in the Japanese and foreign media, as no Japanese politician had previously made such proactive statements on Taiwan's defense. It should be noted, however, that despite bold statements by some politicians that Japan should join the United States in defending Taiwan, it is misguided to make premature claims that the Self-Defense Forces will rush to Taiwan's defense in the event of an actual emergency. There has been no shift in the Japanese government's conventional policy toward Taiwan.¹¹ Also, although there is now widespread recognition that a Taiwan contingency is a Japanese contingency, there is still a lack of specific policies and legislation to enable the SDF to respond to a Taiwan contingency immediately. Nevertheless, this change in how Japan refers to the Taiwan issue is noteworthy.

These changes in Japan can be seen as a response to four developments that have alarmed Tokyo. First, China's attempts to unilaterally change the status quo in the East China Sea and the South China Sea are now more aggressive. For example, intrusions by Chinese ships in Japanese territorial waters around the Senkaku Islands exceeded 157 consecutive days in July, the highest number ever recorded. Second, China enacted the Coast Guard Law in February 2021, which authorizes all necessary measures, including the use of weapons, when a foreign organization or individual infringes on China's jurisdictional waters. The Coast Guard Law is inconsistent with international law and threatens the region's rule-based order.¹² Third, as the confrontation between the U.S. and China has intensified, the geopolitical importance of Taiwan has increased, and the U.S. expects greater involvement on the part of Japan in the Taiwan Strait issue. Demonstrating the strength of the Japan-U.S. alliance will be a deterrent to China. Fourth, as China increases its pressure on Taiwan, the likelihood of a Taiwan contingency has increased accordingly. Having witnessed China's aggressive intervention in Hong Kong, it is unlikely that a pro-China government will emerge in Taiwan in the foreseeable future. Therefore, China is increasing its military pressure on Taiwan as peaceful reunification of Taiwan has turned out to be very difficult. Thus, as China has become more aggressive and the possibility of a Taiwan contingency has become more realistic, Japan can no longer treat this situation as something that does not affect it. With its proximity to Taiwan and its large number of U.S. military bases, there is no guarantee that Japan will not be drawn into a Taiwan contingency.

In sum, 2021 was the year when the Taiwan Strait became an issue where the United States and Japan's threat perceptions closely aligned. The U.S.-Japan relationship's alignment seeks to defend the international order in the region. Also, 2021 witnessed a closer alignment between the European Union on the one hand, and Japan and the United States on the other regarding perceptions of China.

Finally, it can be argued that due to China's rapid military modernization, the balance of military power in the Western Pacific may shift in China's favor. To be sure, the relative power of the U.S. military is declining. With limited resources, it will be challenging for the United States to maintain order in the region alone. The Japan-U.S. alliance needs to deepen coordination and cooperation further to thwart China's attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force in the Taiwan Strait.

“The Japan-U.S. alliance needs to deepen coordination and cooperation further to thwart China's attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force in the Taiwan Strait.”

Taiwan and China

For the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the unification of Taiwan is a core interest. China has long had the intention to unify Taiwan, but China could not do so. However, with its rapid economic development and expanding economic influence, China has been working diligently to modernize its armed forces over the past several decades. In recent years its capabilities have caught up with its will. In addition, Xi Jinping is more interested in Taiwan's unification than previous leaders. Since assuming the presidency, Xi has concentrated power in his own hands. He has placed the government and military under the Communist Party, eliminated term limits, and put his name in the Constitution. This has been the case since Mao Zedong, and although Xi Jinping has almost deified himself, he lacks the identifiable accomplishments of previous Communist Party leaders. To justify his leadership or concentration of power, Xi is said to have grand ambitions to unify Taiwan and make the achievements he deserves. Also, Taiwan's unification is indispensable to achieving the Chinese dream that has been frequently mentioned since the era of Xi Jinping.

Nevertheless, at the same time, the risk of a Taiwan invasion is very high for Xi Jinping. China is waiting for the U.S. military influence to weaken, which would lead the Japan-U.S.-Taiwan security cooperation to weaken, while China is gaining overwhelming military power. Although there is no indication of a Chinese military invasion of Taiwan at the moment, the modernization of the Chinese military over the past few decades clearly shows an intention to invade Taiwan. However, a landing operation across the Taiwan Strait

⁹ Japan, Ministry of Defense, “Defense of Japan 2021,” July 2021, https://www.mod.go.jp/en/publ/w_paper/wp2021/DOJ2021_Digest_EN.pdf.

¹⁰ For example, the former Deputy Defense Minister Nakayama stated Japan needs to “wake up” to China's pressure on Taiwan and protect Taiwan as a democratic country. David Brunnstorm, “Japan minister says necessary to ‘wake up’ to protect Taiwan,” Reuters, July 1, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/japan-minister-says-necessary-wake-up-protect-taiwan-2021-06-28/>.

¹¹ In particular, the media widely spread Taro Aso's statement that a Taiwan contingency should be handled as an “existential threat,” which

would allow the exercise scenarios of collective self-defense extended, and Japan and the U.S. must defend Taiwan was together. (Chief Cabinet Secretary Kato later softly corrected his statement.) – “Japan deputy PM comment on defending Taiwan if invaded angers China,” Reuters, July 6, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/japans-aso-peaceful-solution-desirable-any-taiwan-contingency-2021-07-06/>.

¹² Japan, Ministry of Defense, “The Coast Guard Law of the People's Republic of China,” https://www.mod.go.jp/en/d_act/sec_env/ch_ocn/index.html.

would be one of the most difficult military operations. A large-scale amphibious invasion is one of the most complex and challenging military operations, requiring air and sea superiority, rapid accumulation and maintenance of supplies on the coast, and uninterrupted support. This has forced Xi Jinping to be highly cautious.

Prospects of a Taiwan invasion contingency

There is much debate about when or if China will invade Taiwan. It is possible that China could launch such an operation when it perceives itself as being at its strongest or at the moment when China's national power has peaked. Under such circumstances, an impatient Xi Jinping could bring forward an invasion in the face of a closing window of opportunity. On the other hand, Putin's invasion of Ukraine demonstrates that authoritarian leaders behave in irrational ways to analysts in liberal democracies. Thus, it is difficult to assess prospects for an invasion with a high degree of certainty.

What is known is that China is committed to the unification of Taiwan. In the event Beijing initiates an invasion of Taiwan, Beijing will find itself unable to accept defeat. For China, failure to unify Taiwan would perhaps fatally undermine the legitimacy of the CCP. Given these circumstances, it is critical for the United States, Japan, and Taiwan that China is successfully deterred from initiating an invasion in the first place.

“... it is critical for the United States, Japan, and Taiwan that China is successfully deterred from initiating an invasion...”

The importance of Taiwan to the United States and Japan

What interests do the United States and Japan have in maintaining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait? First, whether the United States would intervene in a Chinese invasion of Taiwan is a test of U.S. commitment to its allies when they were attacked. The United States and Taiwan are non-traditional allies, as defined by U.S. law, the Taiwan Relations Act. This law allows the United States to provide arms to Taiwan but does not obligate Washington to defend Taiwan, unlike the Japan-U.S. alliance. In addition, the United States has traditionally maintained an ambiguous strategy of not making clear statements regarding military intervention in Taiwan. Although the Trump administration began to adopt a pro-Taiwan policy around 2018, the pro-Taiwan line is now bipartisan, and the U.S.-Taiwan relationship has strengthened considerably over the past few years. The ambiguous policy of the United States has not changed, nonetheless. Biden twice stated that the United States would defend Taiwan in an emergency. However, both statements were corrected by the White House Secretary immediately after they were made, and therefore, they do not constitute a change in U.S. policy toward Taiwan.

Also, in traditional security alliances, parties agree to intervene in the event of an attack, but this is only a

promise between the parties. Thus, there is no guarantee that the United States would intervene if China invaded Taiwan. However, a failure to come to the assistance of Taiwan would make Japan and other U.S. allies feel insecure, and this fear could be exploited by China and Russia. Non-intervention on the part of the United States would significantly impact the existing international order. If the United States fails to intervene in a Taiwan contingency, U.S. credibility would be severely shaken for three reasons.

First, Taiwan is the world's semiconductor factory. Taiwan's semiconductors have the world's most advanced technology and are used worldwide. Semiconductors are also essential for military technology. According to a White House report on the supply chain, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), Taiwan's largest semiconductor foundry (contract manufacturing), accounts for 53% of the contract foundry share.¹³ Also, TSMC supplied 92% of the world's advanced semiconductors in 2021.¹⁴ Together with other Taiwanese firms, Taiwanese firms account for 63% of the market share.¹⁵ In addition, Taiwan alone has 73% of the world's foundry business.¹⁶ The fall of Taiwan's semiconductor factories to Chinese hands would be painful not only for Japan and the United States but also for Europe.

Second, Taiwan occupies a geopolitically important position for Japan and the United States because Taiwan is one of the islands that make up the first island chain of islands that form a natural barrier between the East Asian landmass and the Pacific. If China gains possession of Taiwan, it would threaten Japan and the U.S. military bases in Okinawa. Furthermore, China's control of the first island chain would allow it to consolidate control over the South China Sea and expand into the second island chain. China has territorial and maritime disputes with the Philippines, Vietnam, and other ASEAN countries in the South China Sea. As in the East China Sea and the Taiwan Strait, its attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by military force have become increasingly prominent in recent years. The first island chain is also a lifeline for Japan's trade. By allowing China to control it, Japan would lose its economic leverage over China, which would not be a favorable situation for Tokyo.

Third, Japan has no official diplomatic relations with Taiwan and no defense alliance with Taiwan. However, its geographic proximity to Taiwan and the existence of a large number of U.S. military bases in Okinawa inevitably involve Tokyo. This is why it is frequently repeated that a Taiwan contingency is a Japan contingency, and the likelihood of Japan being involved in an actual Taiwan contingency is very high.

Possible Taiwan contingency scenarios

Table Top Exercises (TTX) on a Taiwan contingency have been conducted in recent years at various research institutes, and governmental institutions in Japan and the United States. In those TTXs, various Taiwan contingency scenarios have emerged.^{17,18} This section will

¹³ US, The White House, “Building Resilient Supply Chains, Revitalizing American Manufacturing, and Fostering Broad-Based Growth,” June 2021. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/100-day-supply-chain-review-report.pdf>

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Jun Kitamura 北村淳, “Taiwan yuji! Nihon ha sansen ka hisen ka?” 台湾有事！日本は参戦か避戦か？ [Taiwan contingency! Will Japan join the war or avoid it?], Japan Military Review 軍事研究 no. 3 (2022): 28-42.

¹⁸ David Lague & Maryanne Murray, “T-Day: The Battle for Taiwan,” *Reuters*, November 5th, 2021.

not examine the possible scenarios for a Taiwan contingency but will briefly discuss four commonly anticipated scenarios in these TTXs. The first scenario that will be explored is China's invasion of Taiwan's remote islands. This will be followed by scenarios involving the use of force against Taiwan's main island.

The first is an invasion of Taiwan's remote islands, such as Matsu and Kinmen. However, while an invasion of the islands is a traditional Taiwan contingency scenario, it seems unlikely that China will do so soon. China's goal is to bring the Taiwanese government to the negotiating table and push Taiwan's unification in its favor. However, it is not certain that the blockade or occupation of these islands will bring the government of Taiwan to the negotiating table. Thus, an invasion of these islands would not make sense for China if it could not break Taiwan's will to resist and draw the Taiwanese government into negotiations for unification. In addition, such an invasion by China will likely increase anti-unification sentiments among the Taiwanese. If the Taiwanese people become more united, it will be even more difficult for China to "peacefully unify" Taiwan.

It is unclear whether the United States will intervene on behalf of these remote islands. However, even a limited invasion would undoubtedly provoke a backlash from the international community, especially in Europe and the United States, making the Chinese unification of Taiwan more difficult. In addition, considering that the People's Liberation Army is more powerful than the U.S. military in the Western Pacific, it is unlikely that a stronger China would come to Taiwan only to take the remote islands.

The scenario that seems more probable than an invasion of the islands is the use of military force against the main island of Taiwan. There are various possible patterns for using military force, including a trade blockade, a total blockade, or a full-scale invasion. China's aim in a trade blockade or a total blockade would be to avoid sabotage on the main island as much as possible and to draw the Taiwanese government into negotiations, as China wants to govern Taiwan as a part of China after the unification. However, a trade blockade or a full blockade is likely to be a protracted battle before it can break Taiwan's will to resist, during which time U.S. intervention is possible and armed conflict may be inevitable. There is also a possibility that the trade blockade or full blockade could escalate into all-out fighting. If this were to happen, the possibility of direct U.S. military intervention would be even higher, which is not likely to be what China would want.

Therefore, it is assumed that China will settle the issue with a short but intense war. It would be in China's best interest to settle the issue by quickly breaking Taiwan's ability and will to resist through air and missile strikes before the U.S. intervenes. In this quick battle scenario, China would first penetrate Taiwan's defenses and destroy critical infrastructure through airstrikes and missile strikes. This would weaken Taiwan's defenses, incapacitate Taiwan's military leadership, and crush the will of the Taiwanese people. According to the scenarios, they would land in Taiwan and take control of the island. When this operation is carried out, missile attacks will also be

launched against U.S. military bases in Japan and Guam to buy time for the U.S. military to intervene.

This is the worst-case scenario envisioned by the United States, Japan, and Taiwan. Because of the severity of this scenario, this paper assumes a worst-case situation as the paper's Taiwan contingency and then discusses what the United States and Japan can do to prevent it.

Considering whether there would be U.S. intervention in the event of an invasion of a remote island or a blockade of trade is beyond the scope of this paper because of the many factors involved. However, assuming the worst-case scenario above, it is highly likely that U.S. bases would be targeted, and Japan would inevitably be involved in a conflict if that were to happen. Therefore, as parties to the Taiwan contingency, the United States and Japan need to cooperate with Taiwan to deter China.

From these TTXs, it is expected that China will likely want to settle the issue in a short-term battle before U.S. intervention occurs. If that is the case, then Taiwan's high will and ability to resist (at least enough to hold out until U.S. intervention) and the U.S. ability to intervene quickly may make the cost of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan high.

The U.S.-Japan alliance and potential military support for Taiwan

As mentioned above, based on an examination of Taiwan contingency scenarios, it is assumed that increasing Taiwan's will and ability to resist and creating an environment in which the United States can quickly intervene will increase the cost of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan and perhaps ultimately deter an invasion. Therefore, this paper explains how the U.S.-Japan alliance can enhance its coordination.

There are two major aspects in which the United States and Japan can cooperate to increase Taiwan's capacity to resist in terms of both military and diplomatic tools. On the military front, the United States will take the lead in arms sales, intelligence sharing, and joint training and exercises. On the diplomatic and political front, Japan and the United States will cooperate to enhance Taiwan's relevance in the international community. Finally, well-designed coordination with Japan is essential for the United States to be able to intervene quickly in the event of a Taiwan contingency. The key will be how quickly and to what extent Japan can work with the United States.

Since Japan and the United States do not have formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan, and Japan and Taiwan do not have laws such as the Taiwan Relations Act, there may not be much room for U.S.-Japan-U.S.-Taiwan military cooperation. However, there are three ways the three parties can cooperate in the event of a Taiwan contingency.

The first is the continued sale of arms from the United States to Taiwan. The gap in military capability between Taiwan and China is now so apparent that it would be unwise for Taiwan to try to fill the gap by conventional means. Instead, Taiwan should focus on acquiring asymmetric forces to prepare for a Chinese invasion. That asymmetric force includes coastal defense missiles, drones, sea mines, fast-attack ships, and unmanned aerial systems (UAS).^{19,20} The United States has

<https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/taiwan-china-wargames/>.

¹⁹ US, Office of the Secretary of Defense, "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China: 2021,"

<https://media.defense.gov/2021/Nov/03/2002885874/-1/-1/0/2021-CMPR-FINAL.PDF>.

²⁰ US, Office of the Secretary of Defense, "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China: 2021,"

increased its arms sales to Taiwan in recent years and should continue to do so. The use of U.S.-made weapons would be helpful in the event of a contingency situation in which Taiwanese and U.S. forces fight together. U.S. forces can use spare parts from Taiwanese forces, and Taiwanese maintenance crews can help U.S. forces replace or repair parts. The vice versa is also true. The same can be done between Taiwan and Japan, as more than 90% of Japanese military supplies are made in the United States.

The second is information sharing. As is the case between the United States and Taiwan, there is currently no military relationship between Japan and Taiwan.²¹ The United States should step in between Japan and Taiwan to improve this area and strengthen cooperation by ensuring they communicate regularly. Information sharing should be done so that there are as few unknowns as possible in an emergency.

The third is joint exercises and drills between Japan, Taiwan, and the United States. The third is joint exercises and drills between Japan, Taiwan, and the United States. The U.S. military has been training Taiwanese forces even now that there are no diplomatic relations between the two countries. It may be difficult for Japan and Taiwan to conduct drills and exercises independently, but it would be good if military exercises and joint exercises could be conducted with the United States, with a Taiwan contingency in mind.²² For decades, the U.S. and Japanese militaries have trained and exercised together and have similar doctrines and operational concepts.²³ The occasional inclusion of Taiwan in that U.S.-Japan military coordination would facilitate trilateral coordination in the event of a trilateral contingency, which would increase the cost of a Chinese invasion.

Taiwan's relevance to the international community

On the diplomatic front, Japan and the United States can deter China from invading Taiwan by enhancing Taiwan's relevance in the international community. Taiwan is a liberal democracy with similar values to Japan, the United States and Europe. Taiwan's soft power as a democracy is significant.²⁴ Taiwan has played a constructive role as a member of the international community. For example, in 2020, when the world was suffering from the COVID-19 pandemic, Taiwan, which experienced early success in infection containment, provided necessary assistance to countries lacking medical supplies. However, contrary to its commitment to contribute to the international community, Taiwan's opportunities to play an active role in the international community are limited due to the small number of countries having formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan and pressure from China, which refuses to allow Taiwan to

engage in the international organizations. Therefore, the United States and Japan should seek opportunities to integrate Taiwan into the international community.

The year 2021 saw progress in this regard, with the G7 meeting explicitly mentioning the Taiwan Strait and the United States inviting Taiwan to participate in the Democracy Summit. Also, in February 2022, while the world's attention was focused on Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the United States sent a delegation to Taiwan to show that the United States was committed to deterring China. Such statements demonstrating broad international resolve while not walking back the One China policy are important. The United States and Japan should act to facilitate more such statements.

After the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the argument that the United States would abandon Taiwan in the event of an emergency was used by China to sway Taiwan's public opinion.²⁵ To counter these efforts, the United States needs to send a message that Taiwan remains an important partner for the United States.

“... by enhancing Taiwan's soft power, China should recognize that any invasion of Taiwan could galvanize a costly backlash from the international community.”

Moreover, by enhancing Taiwan's soft power, China should recognize that any invasion of Taiwan could galvanize a costly backlash from the international community. In the event of an invasion, Taiwan can mobilize support based on its involvement in international relations during peacetime. We saw an example of this during the invasion of Ukraine. The support and backing of the international community will indeed support Taiwan's will and ability to resist. Taiwan's lack of formal diplomatic relations with most major countries could negatively impact it, but Taiwan should increase its engagement in international relations to the extent it can, and the United States and Japan should continue to assist it.

In this way, military and diplomatic means must be used to show the international community the value of protecting Taiwan. The United States and Japan should take the lead in this central role. The year 2021 seemed to have set the stage for this trend, but with the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, perhaps Western interest in the Taiwan Strait will not be as focused on Taiwan as last year. However, this is the time when Japan and the United States need to cooperate and show that Taiwan is not less relevant.

The U.S.-Japan military coordination and the Taiwan contingency

The effectiveness of military coordination between the United States and Japan will determine the

<https://media.defense.gov/2021/Nov/03/2002885874/-1/-1/0/2021-CMPR-FINAL.PDF>.

²¹ Yoichi Kato, “How should Taiwan, Japan, and the United States cooperate better on defense of Taiwan?” *Brookings Institution*, March 09, 2022, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/10/27/how-should-taiwan-japan-and-the-united-states-cooperate-better-on-defense-of-taiwan/>.

²² Robert D. Eldridge, “Chugoku no Taiwan shinko sono ishi wo tate” 中国の台湾侵攻その意志を断て [Break China's will to invade Taiwan], *Seiron 正論* no. 9 (2021): 64-71.

²³ Jeffrey W. Hornung, *Japan's Potential Contributions in an East China Sea Contingency*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2020,

https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA314-1.html. Also available in print form.

²⁴ Yoshiyuki Ogasawara 小笠原欣幸, “Taiwan yuji ha jubun ni yokushi dekiru” 「台湾有事」は十分に抑止できる [A Taiwan contingency can be sufficiently deterred], *Voice* (531): 88-97.

²⁵ Tsuyoshi Nojima 野嶋剛, “Ukuraina zhosei ga Taiwan ni rendo suru koredake no riyu” ウクライナ情勢が台湾に連動するこれだけの理由 [Why the situation in Ukraine is so linked to Taiwan], *Yahoo! News*, March 2, 2022, <https://news.yahoo.co.jp/byline/nojimatsuyoshi/20220301-00284148>.

course of the Taiwan contingency. This is because U.S. military bases in Japan provide the necessary forces for the United States to confront the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in the vicinity of Taiwan. Japanese permission is required for the U.S. military to use forces located at U.S. bases in Japan. In addition, under certain circumstances, U.S. forces may need to use civilian airfields and facilities in Japan. This would require consultation with and permission from local authorities. Whether or not the U.S. military and the Japanese government can work together quickly under such an urgent situation will significantly impact the course of the Taiwan contingency. If the U.S. military were to deploy to Taiwan, logistical support by the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) would be essential, but whether Japan could provide logistical support for U.S. forces would require a Cabinet decision. Tokyo will determine the scope of the SDF's operations on a case-by-case basis, depending on the war situation surrounding Japan at the time. There has never been a case in which Japan has deployed the SDF through this decision-making process, and it is not clear how the Japanese government would implement this decision-making process.²⁶ Japan needs to be prepared for a Taiwan contingency and have a legislative framework in place that will allow Tokyo to quickly decide on base use permits for U.S. military bases in Japan and the logistical support or deployment of the SDF. These quick decisions by Japan will greatly influence the U.S. deployment to the Taiwan contingency. Signaling Japan's willingness to support the United States in a contingency would serve as a deterrent to China.

Japan and the United States also need to communicate regularly to make these decision-making processes easier for Japan. Discussions on Japan-U.S. cooperation and coordination in a contingency are essential. Furthermore, it is also necessary to document those cooperation and coordination through revisions of the Japan-U.S. Defense Guidelines and other measures. Japan should also prepare for contingencies through actual drills and exercises. The more realistic U.S. intervention with Japan's support becomes the higher the cost of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan would be.

Coordination with public opinion is also important. In a poll conducted by Japan's *Nikkei* newspaper in 2021, 74 percent of respondents agreed with the mention of stability in the Taiwan Strait at the Japan-US Summit.²⁷ This does not necessarily mean that 74 percent also favor the deployment of the Self-Defense Forces in a Taiwan contingency. Nonetheless, this level of public interest in the Taiwan contingency is essential for Japan to respond. It is crucial to instill in both countries that the defense of Taiwan is in the national interest of both Japan and the United States. Doing so will make it easier to gain a public understanding of the involvement of the United States and Japan in defense of Taiwan in the event of a contingency. It is vital to create public opinion in peacetime so that the United States and Japan can intervene or support Taiwan in a Taiwan contingency. Attempts to deepen each nation's understanding of the threat of an invasion and the value of Taiwan should continue to be drawn. In particular, when Japan attempts to intervene in a Taiwan contingency, China will likely impose economic sanctions to prevent Japanese intervention. It is also very likely that the same economic

sanctions will be imposed on the United States, but Japan is more dependent on the Chinese economy. In addition, public opinion's prior knowledge of the Taiwan contingency will help counter China's disinformation warfare in the event of a contingency. Once a contingency begins, China will try to confuse public opinion in Japan and the United States to move them in its favor.²⁸

Conclusion

This paper analyzed Taiwan contingency scenarios and described the scope for Japan and the United States to work together to prevent and ultimately respond to a worst-case scenario. To raise the cost of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan and deter it, it is necessary to increase Taiwan's capacity and willingness to resist and establish a framework for rapid U.S. military intervention backed by Japanese support.

Taiwan is geographically close to Japan, and there are also U.S. military bases in various parts of Japan. In the event of a Taiwan contingency, China will likely try to attack and destroy U.S. military bases in Japan to prevent or delay U.S. military intervention. If this were to happen, Japan and the United States would inevitably become involved in a Taiwan contingency. Japan and the United States are also parties to a Taiwan contingency. As China's economic and military influence is rapidly expanding, China's capabilities are catching up with its will. Tensions in the Taiwan Strait are growing every day. However, Taiwan cannot confront the current China alone. Therefore, Japan and the United States must do all they can to prevent China from invading Taiwan.

Nevertheless, as already mentioned, there are many constraints on Japan-U.S. intervention in a Taiwan contingency. There are no official diplomatic relations between Taiwan and Japan, and the United States, and there is no framework for military cooperation between Japan and Taiwan. Japan's role is also constrained by its Constitution. Japan and the United States should deepen cooperation with Taiwan to the extent possible under the current circumstances, while Japan should promptly initiate measures to remove the restrictions. It is also acknowledged that strengthening cooperation between Japan and the United States and between Japan and Taiwan could provoke China and further escalate tensions. While diplomatic or military support for Taiwan acts as a deterrent to China, the common interests of the United States and Japan are to protect the status quo in the Taiwan Strait and to manage tensions with China. With this in mind at all times, the United States and Japan should handle their relationship with Taiwan.

Finally, this paper did not assume that China would use nuclear threats against Taiwan, Japan, or the United States. In the invasion of Ukraine, NATO and the United States were deterred by Russian nuclear weapons. It is not impossible that China might not also hint at the use of nuclear weapons to deter other countries from intervening in the Taiwan contingency. There is much room for future discussion on dealing with China's nuclear threats and what to do if Japan and the United States are deterred from direct intervention by China's nuclear weapons.

²⁶ For more on these constraints see Sasaki this volume.

²⁷ "Nikkei Poll," *Nikkei Shimbun*, April 26, 2021,

<https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXZQOUA231410T20C21A4000000/?>.

²⁸ See Sasaki's contribution to this volume.

6

Why defending Taiwan is crucial for the future of the U.S.-Japan alliance?

Rena Sasaki

Abstract

A potential Taiwan crisis is a salient issue for both the United States and Japan. Despite its importance, there has not been enough discussion about the impact of a Taiwan Strait crisis on the U.S.-Japan alliance and how it would affect Japan. Japan's role in the U.S.-Japan alliance is described in the *2015 U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines*. The challenges to Japan include recognizing a situation that can legally permit the deployment of the Japan Self Defense Forces (JSDF) in a timely manner and for all stakeholders, including the private sector, to take action accordingly. While the JSDF is assumed to be able to operate following these guidelines, other stakeholders such as the Japan Coast Guard (JCG), airport and port operators, the defense industry, and energy providers may have limited response capabilities. This paper argues that the U.S. Department of Defense and Japan's Ministry of Defense (MoD) should develop detailed bilateral planning in advance, including what to do if a Taiwan contingency arises. Moreover, the Japanese government should take the lead in supporting private operators in the event of a Taiwan Strait crisis.

Introduction

A potential Taiwan crisis is a salient issue for both the United States and Japan. However, despite its importance, there has not been enough discussion about the impact of the Taiwan Strait crisis on the U.S.-Japan alliance and how it would affect Japan.

Japan's role in the U.S.-Japan alliance is described in the 2015 *U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines*. In this respect, Japan's challenge is that of situation recognition to provide a legal basis for the deployment of the Japan Self Defense Forces (JSDF) in a timely manner and for all relevant stakeholders not limited to the JSDF to accordingly take action. However, while the JSDF is assumed to be able to operate following these guidelines, other stakeholders such as the Japan Coast Guard (JCG), airport and port operators, the defense industry, and energy providers may have limited response capabilities.

For timely recognition of situations, this paper argues that it is important for the U.S. Department of Defense and Japan's Ministry of Defense (MoD) to share awareness at the top levels and then develop detailed bilateral planning in advance, including what to do if such a situation arises. On improvement of the readiness of stakeholders, this paper argues that it would be difficult from a cost standpoint for private operators to plan for a Taiwan Strait crisis on their own. The Japanese government, through the MoD, should take the lead in supporting private operators to cooperate with the government in the event of a Taiwan Strait crisis.

Implications of a Taiwan crisis for the U.S.-Japan alliance

Although Beijing has repeatedly insisted on the peaceful reunification of Taiwan,¹ China has escalated its military activities near the island, flying record numbers of jets and bombers and conducting military exercises.² Such an increase in China's aggressive behavior causes a greater risk of accidents and miscalculations, escalating into conflict.³

Conflict scenarios

In the event of a Taiwan conflict, there are two scenarios, one involving a direct attack on Japan alongside U.S. military personnel and assets, and one in which Japan and the U.S. military presence in Japan are not directly attacked. In the event of a conflict, China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) would likely target Taiwan and Japanese and U.S. military bases in the southwest region of Japan. However, it is important to consider another significant yet often overlooked scenario. This is a scenario in which China, fearing retaliation by the United States and Japan, does not attack Japanese and U.S. military bases.

In the context of the Russo-Ukrainian War, Russia has thus far not attacked NATO member states despite NATO's explicit support for Ukraine. Such a scenario would complicate Japan's decision-making process. The assumption is that China explicitly states that it will not attack Japanese and U.S. military bases. A report by the *Japan Forum for Strategic Studies* on Taiwanese contingency simulations points out the dilemmas of justifying Japan's involvement in the Taiwan Strait Crisis in this context.

"In fact, we set up a situation in which the Japanese government would hesitate in making a decision, i.e., a situation in which the situation in the Taiwan Strait is extremely tense, or a situation in which China and Taiwan are in a state of armed conflict, but the impact has not spread to Japan's territory. As expected, the debate on the recognition of the situation became heated and we could not reach a decision within the time limit."⁴

"The U.S.-Japan alliance is a bilateral security arrangement, but it serves and functions as the central security architecture in the Asia Pacific..."

In other words, a difficult political dilemma would arise for Tokyo if Japan is not directly attacked. There is a possibility that Japan would not be able to fully conduct operations based on the U.S.-Japan alliance. This challenge would be compounded by opposition from public opinion. The Japanese business community is also opposed to military deployments that harm economic relations with China. Business interests might insist that Japan should not take military action if Japan is not directly attacked. In such a case, Japan's credibility as a partner in the eyes of the United States would be harmed, and the strategic environment surrounding Japan would become more challenging.

The U.S.-Japan alliance is a bilateral security arrangement, but it serves and functions as the central security architecture in the Asia Pacific, especially when counteracting China's aggressive behavior. An armed attack against Japanese territories will undoubtedly result in a joint response from the United States and Japan due to the design of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty (Article 5).⁵ However, what will be tested is a collective response to a situation involving Taiwan without a direct attack against Japanese territories or U.S. military bases in Japan.

Therefore, this paper analyzes the extreme tension in the Taiwan Strait and the possibility of China and Taiwan being in a state of armed conflict. Since Japan's territory is not affected, the conflict can be referred to as a *Limited Taiwan Crisis*. Despite Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russia did not attack NATO members. As such, it is not just wishful thinking but a realistic scenario that China would not attack Japan or the United States if it

¹ "Full Text: Resolution of the CPC Central Committee on the Major Achievements and Historical Experience of the Party over the Past Century," The State Council of the People's Republic of China, accessed 23 October 2022, https://english.www.gov.cn/policies/latestreleases/202111/16/content_WS6193a935c6d0df57f98e50b0.html.

² Comfort Ero and Richard Atwood. "10 Conflicts to Watch in 2022." *Foreign Policy*, December 29, 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/12/29/ukraine-ethiopia-iran-nuclear-afghanistan-myanmar-10-conflicts-2022/>.

³ Bonny Lin and David Sacks. "How to Prevent an Accidental War Over Taiwan." *Foreign Affairs*, November 12, 2021,

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/taiwan/2021-10-12/how-prevent-accidental-war-over-taiwan>.

⁴ Japan Forum for Strategic Studies "Taiwan Contingency Study Group," *Summary of the Results of the First Policy Simulation In-Depth Review: The Taiwan Strait Crisis: How Should Japan Deter and Respond?* (Tokyo: Japan Forum for Strategic Studies, August 2021), 9-10, http://www.jfss.gr.jp/public/images/file/2021-12-03/16385000144426.pdf?fbclid=IwAR25qSDfBnZXPEF9Z3yv-qPrpS0vd7H_bTkm_D13o8YnOUONwAXqLVSwxU.

⁵ "Japan-U.S. Security Treaty," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, accessed December 23, 2021, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/q&a/ref/1.html>.

invades Taiwan. Any planning for the *Limited Taiwan Crisis* requires careful assessment of the existing legal frameworks and guidelines for Japan's possible military involvement in Taiwan and operational challenges. This paper identifies limitations, restrictions, and other challenges for a viable U.S.-Japan response to the *Limited Taiwan Crisis* and proposes policies to overcome such obstacles.

Taiwan contingency and Japan's legal and regulatory constraints

The laws relevant to a Taiwan contingency include domestic legislation that stipulates permissible actions of the JSDF and also guidelines that set out specific actions for the U.S.-Japan alliance. This section discusses the 2015 *Peace and Security legislation, Self Defense Forces Act*, and the 2015 *U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines*.

2015 *Peace and Security legislation*

The JSDF's actions are based on a legal principle that does not permit actions other than those listed in the law.⁶ It is designed as a "contingency management system" that classifies responses to situations affecting the peace and security of Japan.⁷ According to the 2015 *Peace and Security legislation*, five categories of situations could impact Japan's peace and security:

- armed attack situations
- survival-threatening situations
- situations in which an armed attack is anticipated
- important influence situations
- emergency response situations⁸

An "armed attack situations" occur when "the situations in which an armed attack against Japan from outside occurs or in which it is considered that there is an imminent and clear danger of an armed attack" in Article 2, Item 2 of the *Armed Attack Situation Response Law*.⁹ "Survival-threatening Situations" happen when "the situation in which an armed attack against a foreign country that is in a close relationship with Japan occurs, which in turn poses a clear risk of threatening Japan's survival and of overturning people's rights to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness fundamentally" in Article 2, Item 4 of the *Armed Attack Situation Response Law*.¹⁰ "Anticipated armed attack situations" are when "the situations in which an armed attack is not yet made but the tension increased and an armed attack is anticipated" in Article 2, Item 3 of the *Armed Attack Situation Response Law*.¹¹ "Important influence situations" appear when "the situations that will have an important influence on Japan's peace and security, including situations that, if left without a response, could lead to a direct armed attack on Japan" in

Article 1 of the *Act on the Prevention of Significant Impacts*.¹² "Emergency response situations" arise when "the situation where actions that may kill or injure many people by using methods equivalent to those used in an armed attack, or a situation where it is recognized that the relevant actions represent a clear and present threat that necessitate an emergency response by the state" in Article 22 of the *Armed Attack Situation Response Law*.¹³

The government is expected to objectively and rationally determine how to recognize a situation based on the latest available information. Although challenging, the *Limited Taiwan Crisis* could be recognized within the framework of existing categories of situations. For instance, if U.S. ships or aircraft near Taiwan were attacked, it might be classified as a "survival-threatening situation." If U.S. forces were working to protect the sea lanes, it might be classified as an "important influence situation."

According to Prime Minister Abe's response to the plenary session of the House of Representatives on May 26, 2015, even if the U.S. forces in Japan are not attacked, an attack on a U.S. warship or aircraft around Taiwan could be recognized as a "survival-threatening situation." This recognition will give the JSDF the legal basis for its intervention to assist and coordinate with the United States to defend Taiwan.¹⁴

Thus, in the *Limited Taiwan Crisis*, there are three possible cases: "important influence situations," "survival-threatening situations," and a situation that is not recognized as any of the five. However, recognizing the situation depends on how the U.S. military deals with the *Limited Taiwan Crisis*. Although the Japanese government has never recognized "important influence situations" or "survival-threatening situations," the most likely case is to recognize the *Limited Taiwan Crisis* as "important influence situations" since the Japanese government can claim that it is a response that does not involve the use of force. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the Japanese government can use force "to the extent deemed reasonably necessary" in response to "survival-threatening situations."¹⁵

Self Defense Forces Law

Although the *Self Defense Forces Law* is comprehensive legislation that stipulates the actions taken by the JSDF both within and beyond the territory of Japan, this paper focuses on explaining the two legal bases for the JSDF deployment for the protection of the facilities and assets of JSDF and U.S. forces. The first basis is the protective operation. Article 81, paragraph 2 of the *Self Defense Forces Law* states, "the Prime Minister may order the mobilization of troops, etc. to guard the following facilities, installations, and areas in Japan" if "there is a risk of

⁶ Susumu Nakamura, "The Japanese Response to a Taiwan Crisis — How to Prepare and Respond," *International Information Network Analysis* | SPF, June 15, 2021, accessed October 23, 2022, https://www.spf.org/iina/en/articles/nakamura_01.html.

⁷ Nakamura, "The Japanese Response to a Taiwan Crisis."

⁸ Nakamura, "The Japanese Response to a Taiwan Crisis."

⁹ Japan Ministry of Defense, *Defense of Japan 2021*, (Tokyo: Nikkei Printing, Inc., 2021), 243.

¹⁰ Japan Ministry of Defense, *Defense of Japan 2021*, 243.

¹¹ Japan Ministry of Defense, *Defense of Japan 2021*, 243.

¹² Japan Ministry of Defense, *Defense of Japan 2021*, 243.

¹³ Japan Ministry of Defense, *Defense of Japan 2021*, 235.

¹⁴ "189th Diet, the Plenary Session of House of Representatives, No. 28.," House of Representatives, May 26, 2015, https://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb_kaigirokua.nsf/html/kaigiroku_a/000118920150526028.htm.

On May 26, 2015, Prime Minister Abe's response to the plenary session of

House of Representatives, "for example, an armed attack occurs in Japan's neighborhood against another country that has a close relationship with Japan, such as the United States. At that time, it is not yet recognized that an armed attack against Japan has occurred, but the attacking country possesses a considerable number of ballistic missiles that are within range of Japan, and its words and actions indicate that an armed attack against Japan is imminent. If we wait for the outbreak of an armed attack on Japan and do not immediately stop an armed attack on the naval vessels of the United States, which is an ally capable of protecting Japan from ballistic missile attacks by other countries and counterattacking them, there is a clear danger that the first strike by a ballistic missile will cause irreparable damage. This is a case in point."

¹⁵ "Act on Securing the Peace and Independence of Japan and the Safety of the Nation and Its Citizens in Armed Attacks and Existential Crisis Situations," e-Gov Japan, accessed May 7, 2022, <https://elaws.e-gov.go.jp/document?lawid=415AC0000000079>.

destruction" of these facilities.¹⁶ The facilities, installations, and areas covered by the protective operation are "(i) Facilities of JSDF, (ii) Facilities and areas under Article 6 of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, and facilities and areas under Article 2, paragraph (1) of the Agreement on the Status of United States Armed Forces in Japan."¹⁷ Other important facilities will first be guarded by the police, and if the police are unable to protect them, the JSDF will be deployed to protect them by "security operation." Hence, the second basis is the security operation. Article 78, Paragraph 1 of the *Self Defense Forces Law* stipulates that the Prime Minister may order the deployment of the JSDF "in cases of indirect aggression or other emergencies where it is deemed impossible to maintain public order with general police forces."¹⁸ In both operational bases, the JSDF is authorized to use weapons, and the *Self Defense Force Law* Article 78-2 states that security operations require the approval by the National Diet "within 20 days from the date of the order to mobilize."¹⁹

2015 U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines

The Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation, first arranged in 1978 and then updated in 1997 and 2015, provide policy guidance to direct alliance cooperation.²⁰ The guidelines outline how the U.S. military and the JSDF interact in peacetime and war for defense cooperation.²¹ Chapter 4 of the guidelines, "IV. Seamlessly Ensuring Japan's Peace and Security," outlines five specific ways in which the United States and Japan should cooperate:

- A. Cooperative Measures from Peacetime,
- B. Responses to Emerging Threats to Japan's Peace and Security,
- C. Actions in Response to an Armed Attack against Japan,
- D. Actions in Response to an Armed Attack against a Country other than Japan
- E. Cooperation in Response to a Large-scale Disaster in Japan.²²

The 2015 U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines corresponded to the 2015 *Peace and Security* legislation, which, if recognized as "important influence situations," would align with B. Responses to Emerging Threats to Japan's Peace and Security. If recognized as "survival-threatening situations," the guideline and legislation would fall under D. Actions in Response to an Armed Attack against a Country other than Japan.

Challenges for Japan in fulfilling U.S.-Japan alliance obligations

This chapter examines three issues in the *Limited Taiwan Crisis* scenario: whether Japan can recognize the situation under the 2015 *Peace and Security* legislation, whether Japan can take actions in line with the 2015 U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines, and whether the 2015 Guidelines are comprehensive in their description of U.S.-Japan actions.

1) Situation recognition

The problems to be solved in recognizing the situation are conceptual gaps between situations; time to recognize a situation based on the events that occur; opposition from the civil and business community to recognize it as a more serious situation. Japan's "contingency management system" is the essential legal framework necessary for balancing the two national security demands of Japan: to make its defense operations as responsive as possible along with a changing security environment; and to ensure the prevention of preemptive use of the JSDF.²³ However, there is a gap between "important influence situations," "armed attack situations," and "survival-threatening situations," which would hinder the seamless recognition of such situations.²⁴ In some cases, political disputes may arise over the approval of the Diet, which may significantly delay the approval process in the Diet and prevent timely implementation.²⁵ Due to the sophistication of China's weapons, the war situation will likely change rapidly, and surveillance platforms could be attacked, making it more difficult to recognize the situation in a timely manner. The time-consuming decision-making process for situation recognition should be avoided.

"The pacifist public opinion and economic interdependence with China would be the factors that prevent Japan from pursuing a consistent policy with the United States."

If the Diet were to debate a more serious recognition of the situation, it could face strong opposition from the civil and business community. Since WWII, Japanese society has held deep-rooted pacifist beliefs, and many Japanese people do not feel a sense of urgency about the Taiwan Strait crisis. The bilateral trade between Japan and China in 2020 reached a record high, with the latter's share of the former's total trade at 23.9%.²⁶ According to the "Survey of Japanese Companies Operating Overseas" conducted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the number of Japanese business operations in China is 33,341, and the number of Japanese residents in China is 111,769.²⁷ If a Taiwan Strait crisis occurs, there is a risk that maritime routes will be blocked or attacked. In addition, if conflict

¹⁶ "Self-Defense Forces Law," e-Gov Japan, accessed February 3, 2022, <https://elaws.e-gov.go.jp/document?lawid=329AC0000000165>.

¹⁷ e-Gov Japan, "Self-Defense Forces Law."

¹⁸ e-Gov Japan, "Self-Defense Forces Law."

¹⁹ e-Gov Japan, "Self-Defense Forces Law."

²⁰ "The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation," Japan Ministry of Defense, accessed February 3, 2022, https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/anpo/allguideline/index.html?fbclid=IwAR2CAqFZy2Nw16IKYIsCmhd7K4uYr_Er4G55q1z9h9hLCIRt_7L64j1AOXk.

²¹ Japan Ministry of Defense, "The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation."

²² "The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, April 27, 2015, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000078188.pdf>.

²³ Masahiro Kurosaki, "The Dynamics of Japan's 'Armed Attack Initiation' Doctrine and Anticipatory Self-Defense." *Lawfare*. Last modified September

1, 2020, Accessed January 4, 2022,

<https://www.lawfareblog.com/dynamics-japans-armed-attack-initiation-doctrine-and-anticipatory-self-defense>.

²⁴ Japan Forum for Strategic Studies, *Summary of the Results of the First Policy Simulation In-Depth Review*, 10.

²⁵ Ken Jimbo, "Challenges to a Seamless Security Regime: Escalation from 'Gray Zone' Situations" in *Reality Check of Security Policy -The New Security Law and Guidelines and the Situation on the Korean Peninsula and the Middle East*, (Tokyo: The Japan Institute of International Affairs, March, 2017), 31-38.

²⁶ Etsu Hou and Shiori Mori, "Japan-China trade in 2020; Japan's share of trade with China to reach record high," JETRO, Accessed January 4, 2022, <https://www.jetro.go.jp/biz/areareports/2021/114272012ce2ba22.html>.

²⁷ "Annual Report of Statistics on Japanese Nationals Overseas," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, accessed May 19, 2022, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/toko/tokei/hojin/index.html>.

escalates, China's major special economic and development zones where Japanese companies operate will likely be affected. There is also the risk of sudden confiscation of assets of Japanese companies by the Chinese government. Fearing such economic damage, the business community may oppose the recognition of a serious situation to prevent further escalation. Thus, pacifist public opinion and economic interdependence with China would be the factors that prevent Japan from pursuing a consistent policy with the United States.

2) Implementation

This section examines whether the JSDF and other stakeholders on the Japanese side can act following the guidelines. A *limited Taiwan Crisis* analyzed here falls under B. Responses to Emerging Threats to Japan's Peace and Security and D. Actions in Response to an Armed Attack against a Country other than Japan in the 2015 U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines.

B. Responses to Emerging Threats to Japan's Peace and Security

According to the guidelines, under B. Responses to Emerging Threats to Japan's Peace and Security the United States and Japanese governments take measures based on their own decisions, including, but not limited to:

- (1) Noncombatant Evacuation Operations;
- (2) Maritime Security;
- (3) Measures to Deal with Refugees;
- (4) Search and Rescue;
- (5) Protection of Facilities and Areas;
- (6) Logistics Support;
- (7) Use of Facilities.²⁸ (See Annex 1)

The following sections explore each of these measures.

(1) Noncombatant Evacuation Operations (NEO)

When Japanese and U.S. non-combatants need to be evacuated from a third country, the two governments will coordinate in planning and evacuating Japanese or U.S. non-combatants.²⁹ The two governments may consider extending evacuation support to third-country noncombatants.³⁰ As of December 31, 2021, according to the Ministry of the Interior National Immigration Agency of the Republic of China (Taiwan), 752,900 foreigners, including 15,316 Japanese and 11,267 Americans, were living in Taiwan.³¹ Susumu Nakamura points out that if Taiwan's territory becomes a battlefield, the evacuation of Taiwanese citizens would be necessary, but because they cannot evacuate via land routes, the scale of Taiwan's NEO will be unprecedented.³² Nakamura also points out a difference in capability between the U.S. military, which has a track record of large-scale NEOs in the past, and the

JSDF. In addition to these issues, the transport capacity of JSDF aircraft alone is insufficient to transport nearly 30,000 Japanese and U.S. non-combatants. Although transport aircraft, such as the Kawasaki C-2, can transport about 100 people³³ and transport ships, such as the Osumi-class Tank Landing Ship, can transport about 1,000 people³⁴, there is a limit to transporting 30,000 people in a short time. In such a case, depending on the urgency and the intensity of the situation, civilian aircraft and ships may be used, but at this point, there seems to be no discussion about concrete operational planning for such an evacuation in Japan.

2) Maritime security

The JSDF and the U.S. military will cooperate in minesweeping, including securing maritime traffic routes, escort activities for the protection of commercial and naval vessels, and interdiction of shipping activities supporting adversaries in armed attacks.³⁵

Minesweeping, escort activities for the protection of commercial and naval vessels and the interdiction of shipping activities could be implemented in the *Limited Taiwan Crisis* scenario.

(3) Measures to deal with refugees

If a situation develops such that a flow of refugees into Japan becomes likely or begins, the two governments need to cooperate to keep Japan's peace and security while dealing with refugees.³⁶ The primary responsibility for dealing with refugees lies with Japan.³⁷

In the event of an emergency in the Korean peninsula, refugees from North Korea are often discussed, but how Japan should respond to refugees from Taiwan has not been discussed much. Japan has never accepted refugees on a large scale. The number of Indochinese refugees accepted for resettlement from 1978 until the end of 2005 was only 11,319.³⁸ There has been no public discussion on where to accommodate refugees from Taiwan or how to deal with armed refugees.

(4) Search and rescue

The JSDF and the U.S. military will cooperate and support search and rescue operations, including combat search and rescue.³⁹ Combat search and rescue activities are activities that JSDF has been conducting since peacetime so that these activities can be carried out without any problems. Nevertheless, Japan's search and rescue operations have been carried out by the JSDF and the JCG. When it is deemed necessary to request the dispatch of the Self-Defense Forces for search and rescue at sea, the JCG or the Rescue Coordination Headquarters shall participate in the consultation.⁴⁰ However, it is highly dangerous to rescue and search in a combat zone with lightly equipped Coast Guard vessels. Since JSDF and U.S. forces cooperate

²⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation," 7-9.

²⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation," 8.

³⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation," 8.

³¹ "Statistics of Foreigners in Taiwan with Valid Residence Permits (in Taiwan) (by Nationality and Occupation)," Ministry of the Interior National Immigration Agency of the Republic of China (Taiwan), December 2021, accessed January 4, 2022, <https://www.immigration.gov.tw/5385/7344/7350/%E5%A4%96%E5%83%91%E5%B1%85%E7%95%99/?alias=settledown>.

³² Nakamura, "The Joint Japan-U.S. Response to a Taiwan Contingency."

³³ "Kawasaki C-2 Medium-Range Transport Aircraft," Military-Today.Com, Accessed February 1, 2022, http://www.military-today.com/aircraft/kawasaki_c2.htm#:~:text=It%20can%20carry%20around%20120,including%20two%20pilots%20and%20loadmaster.

³⁴ "LST Osumi Class," GlobalSecurity.org, Accessed February 1, 2022, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/japan/osumi.htm#:~:text=With%20a%20loading%20capacity%20of,defense%20of%20the%20outer%20islands>.

³⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation," 15-17.

³⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation," 8.

³⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation," 8.

³⁸ "Domestic Reception of Refugees," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, November 9, 2020, accessed February 4, 2022, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/nanmin/main3.html>

³⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation," 15-17.

⁴⁰ e-Gov Japan, "Self-Defense Forces Law."

in search and rescue operations, it is believed that operations can be conducted even in the *Limited Taiwan Crisis*, but there is room to consider roles performed by actors other than the JSDF, such as the JCG.

(5) Protection of facilities and areas

The JSDF and the U.S. military are responsible for protecting their facilities and areas in cooperation with relevant authorities.⁴¹ Japan will protect facilities and areas in Japan in close cooperation and coordination with the U.S. forces.⁴²

As for the JSDF, “important influence situations” can be handled with the authority of protective operation, and “emergency response situations” can be handled with the authority of security operation. It should be noted that the JSDF can be mobilized for protection and security without recognizing the situation. Therefore, it is possible to protect critical infrastructures without situation recognition as long as there is a domestic legal basis for these actions. In Japan, the National Center of Incident Readiness and Strategy for Cybersecurity (NISC) of the Cabinet Office handles cyber-attacks on critical infrastructure. Under the umbrella of the Cabinet Secretariat, mainly the National Police Agency, the Ministry of Defense, and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism are working together to deal with physical attacks on critical infrastructure. NISC and the Cabinet Secretariat have designated critical infrastructures, but they are not identical in terms of coverage. For example, the list for physical attacks designates gunpowder magazines and toxic storage facilities, while that for cyber-attack does not designate such facilities.⁴³

The Cabinet Secretariat defines critical infrastructures as “facilities related to people’s lives, such as power plants, water purification facilities, and storage facilities for hazardous materials.”⁴⁴ NISC has identified 14 critical infrastructure sectors: information and communications, finance, aviation, airports, railroads, electric power, gas, government, administrative services, healthcare, water supply, logistics, chemicals, credit, and petroleum.⁴⁵

In the event of the Taiwan Strait crisis, not only cyber-attacks but also physical attacks on critical infrastructures by foreign agents must be monitored and prevented. The JSDF can defend critical infrastructures without needing to recognize a situation, and NPA monitors critical infrastructures even under normal circumstances. However, it does not mean that the JSDF can be deployed to protect critical infrastructures under normal circumstances. To deploy the JSDF, there needs to be concrete evidence that constitutes a domestic legal basis. Likely, the JSDF will not be able to cope with a case where

foreign agents physically attack critical infrastructures without warning.

It is assumed that the NISC will be in charge of cyber-attacks and the NPA and the JSDF will be in charge of physical attacks, but a mixture of cyber and physical attacks may occur. The government agencies that respond to cyber and physical attacks against critical infrastructures are different, so there is a risk that they cannot operate in an integrated manner.

(6) Logistics Support

When operations require supplementing their respective logistics resources, the JSDF and the U.S. Military will provide flexible and timely mutual logistic support. The two governments will use the authorities and assets of central and local government agencies and, as appropriate, private sector assets.⁴⁶

The 2015 *U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines* do not specifically state what logistics support represents, but the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) between Japan and the United States does state what logistics support refers to.⁴⁷ Of the 16 items listed in the ACSA, this paper argues that particularly important ones in the *Limited Taiwan Crisis* are “Petroleum, oils, and lubricants,” “Repair and maintenance,” “Airport and seaport services,” and “ammunition,” in terms of whether they are mission-critical. (See Annex 3)

Petroleum, oils, and lubricants

The 505th Quartermaster Battalion⁴⁸ receives and distributes over 56 million gallons of fuel annually.⁴⁹ Thus it is clear that there is enough fuel stored on the main island of Okinawa. The JSDF established new units in the southwest region to strengthen its defense architecture in the southwestern region.⁵⁰ Along with JSDF’s shift to the southwest, the storage capacity of fuel west of Okinawa Island is also increasing. However, that storage capacity may not be intended for use by the U.S. military. Naha is about 400 miles from Taipei in a straight line, so fuel storage on islands closer to Taiwan (Miyako and Ishigaki) would be more efficient.

There is also a substantial private oil stockpile on the main island of Okinawa. As of December 2013, there were 2.69 million kl of oil stockpiled at the Okinawa Oil Terminal (OCC) and 0.92 million kl at the Okinawa Terminal (OTC), for a total of 3.61 million kl.⁵¹ This is equivalent to more than a year’s worth of oil expected to be consumed by Okinawa Prefecture. Two facilities provide fuel supply in Okinawa: an oil refinery in Naha, Nishihara Town, and an oil depot in Heianza, Uruma City, which serve as shipping bases, and fuels are transported and supplied to the main islands and remote islands by land

⁴¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation,” 9.

⁴² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation,” 9.

⁴³ “Glossary of Terms,” Cabinet Secretariat Portal Site for Civil Protection, Accessed February 1, 2022, <https://www.kokuminhogo.go.jp/words.html#11>.

⁴⁴ “Points to Keep in Mind to Ensure the Safety of Facilities Related to Daily Life, etc.,” Cabinet Secretariat Portal Site for Civil Protection, last modified April 2015, accessed February 1, 2022, https://www.kokuminhogo.go.jp/pdf/270421shisetsu_ryuiten.pdf.

⁴⁵ “Critical Infrastructure Group,” Cabinet Cyber Security Center (NISC), accessed May 19, 2022, <https://www.nisc.go.jp/policy/group/infra/index.html>.

⁴⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation,” 15-17.

⁴⁷ “Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the United States of America Concerning Reciprocal Provision of Logistic

Support, Supplies and Services between the Self-Defense Forces of Japan and the Armed Forces of the United States of America,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, April 2017, accessed February 1, 2022, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/000190901.pdf>.

⁴⁸ The 505th Quartermaster Battalion is responsible for handling strategic bulk fuel in support of DoD operations while maintaining the U.S. Pacific Command’s war reserve petroleum goals.

⁴⁹ Howard Reed, “Fuel Operations at Its Best in the Pacific,” US Army, November 1, 2012, accessed February 1, 2022, https://www.army.mil/article/90486/fuel_operations_at_its_best_in_the_pacific.

⁵⁰ Japan Ministry of Defense, *Defense of Japan* 2021, 265.

⁵¹ “Current Status of Oil Reserves,” Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, December 2013, accessed February 1, 2022, https://www.enecho.meti.go.jp/statistics/petroleum_and_lpgas/pl001/pdf/2014/140217oil.pdf.

and sea.⁵² The oil from the two refineries on the main island of Okinawa is transported to the oil depots on Ishigaki and Miyako islands and then further transported to the nearby remote islands.⁵³ The problem is that the private sector operates these refineries and oil depots, and the infrastructure is not well protected. In the event that these infrastructures are targeted, it is necessary to quickly protect the infrastructures of Okinawa's main island, Ishigaki Island, and Miyako Island, even though it is assumed that Japan will not be attacked in a *Limited Taiwan Crisis*.

Repair and maintenance

If U.S. military activities in Taiwan and the southwest region rapidly increase in the case of contingency, the repair and maintenance of U.S. military equipment would also substantially increase. However, the number of companies currently involved in the maintenance and servicing of U.S. military equipment is unexpectedly small.⁵⁴ To do business with the U.S. military, businesses must obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number and NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) Code and register with SAM.gov, the U.S. federal government's vendor registration website.⁵⁵ The contract process must be conducted in English and work with the voluminous procurement laws called Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS). This cumbersome English-language process poses a high barrier to entry for Japanese companies. Currently, support from the MoD and the Acquisition, Technology & Logistics Agency is thin, and although there are companies interested in the market, they are not doing so well. When the demand for maintenance and upkeep by the U.S. military suddenly increases, it would be difficult for Japanese companies to suddenly take on the repair and upkeep from the standpoint of their capabilities and regulations.

Airport and seaport services

Of the 20 airports in the southwestern islands of Okinawa and Kagoshima prefectures, 18 have runways of less than 2000 meters, making it impossible for fighter jets, patrol aircraft, and early warning aircraft to take off and land.⁵⁶ Shimojishima Airport (Miyakojima City) has a runway of 3,000 meters, which the JSDF can use based on a written agreement between the Ryukyu and Japanese governments in 1971. The only airport on the main island that can be used is Naha Airport (Naha City).⁵⁷ Even with the addition of the U.S. Kadena Air Base, where emergency landings are possible in case of malfunction, the use of the aircraft is limited to the main island of Okinawa.⁵⁸ Thus,

out of the southwest region outside of Okinawa Island, there is only one airfield where fighter planes can land and seven airfields where only transport and patrol planes can land. In the southwest, there are few ports with water depths of more than 6 to 7 meters where large destroyers and transport ships can dock. In the Sakishima Islands, a chain of about 20 inhabited islands west of Okinawa, the only available ports are Hirara Port on Miyako Island and Ishigaki Port on Ishigaki Island. Without access to transport ships, it is impossible to evacuate residents quickly via sea routes. In an existential crisis, airports and seaports are supposed to be available for use by the JSDF, but the number of airports that can be used is limited.

Ammunition

A budget of 16.9 billion Japanese yen has been appropriated to construct facilities for the deployment of the Southwest Security Force and other units.⁵⁹ This is for constructing a vehicle maintenance yard on Ishigaki Island, a warehouse at the Miyakojima Garrison, and an explosives depot on Amami Oshima, all related to the deployment of the JSDF to strengthen the initial response posture for island defense.⁶⁰ Japan maintains a domestic production and technology base for ammunition and explosives, including licensed domestic production. However, it may not be able to respond to a sudden increase in demand due to the business operation, which prioritizes business efficiency based on the demand in peacetime.⁶¹

(7) Use of facilities

Since the governments of Japan and the United States have strengthened the joint use of facilities and areas to expand the interoperability of JSDF and U.S. forces and to improve their flexibility and resilience, and since the two governments have cooperated in ensuring the security of facilities and areas even in peacetime, it is assumed that the joint use of facilities can be implemented without problems.

D. Actions in Response to an Armed Attack against a Country other than Japan

According to the guidelines, under D. Actions in Response to an Armed Attack against a Country other than Japan, the U.S. and Japanese governments take measures, including: (1) Asset Protection; (2) Search and Rescue; (3) Maritime Operations; (4) Operations to Counter Ballistic Missile Attacks; and (5) Logistics Support under D. Actions in Response to an Armed Attack against a Country other than Japan (see Annex 2).⁶² Of these, the issues of (2) Search and Rescue and (5) Logistics Support are considered roughly equivalent to those described in B and are therefore omitted.

(1) Asset Protection

⁵² Takushi Ozawa, "Considering Infrastructure Development in the Era of 10 Million Tourists," November 19, 2014, 45, http://www.dc.ogb.go.jp/Kyoku/kengyo/pdf/H261119_1000infra_shinpojiumu_1.pdf.

⁵³ "Okinawa Regional Petroleum Logistics," Okinawa Disaster Prevention Liaison Association, June 2013, accessed February 1, 2022, <http://www.ogb.go.jp/-/media/Files/OGB/Keisan/move/sekiyu/data4.pdf?la=ja-JP&hash=B5571127493A6CE3B7E4EF8E1CD2DCFD223FE7F1>.

⁵⁴ According to the System for Award Management (SAM.gov), an official website of the United States government, only a few companies, such as Sumitomo Heavy Industries Engineering, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, and HOSEI Corporation for naval ships, and NIPPI and Subaru for military aircraft, are involved in the maintenance and servicing of US military equipment.

⁵⁵ "Steps to Initiate a Transaction with a U.S. Naval Base," US Navy, January 2015, accessed February 1, 2022,

https://www.ready.navy.mil/content/dam/navfac/NAVFAC%20Pacific/NAVFAC%20Far%20East/PDFs/Contractors_Information/BEFORE%20S TARTING%20THE%20BUSINESS%20WITH%20NAVY%20JAN%2015.pdf.

⁵⁶ Kazuyo Tanaka, "Not Enough Airports for Defense of the Nansei Islands - 90% of Them Are Inaccessible to Fighters - Shimoji Island Is Not Approved by the Prefecture," *Sankei News*, August 22, 2020, <https://www.sankei.com/article/20200822-TNMSGAVNQ5MRFMKNUTXJ4MM5KY/>.

⁵⁷ Tanaka, "Not Enough Airports for Defense of the Nansei Islands."

⁵⁸ Tanaka, "Not Enough Airports for Defense of the Nansei Islands."

⁵⁹ "Defense Programs and Budget of Japan," Japan Ministry of Defense, August 2021, 19, https://www.mod.go.jp/j/yosan/yosan_gaiyo/2022/yosan_20210831.pdf.

⁶⁰ Japan Ministry of Defense, "Defense Programs and Budget of Japan," 19.

⁶¹ Japan Ministry of Defense, "Defense Programs and Budget of Japan," 19.

⁶² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation," 15-17.

The JSDF and the U.S. military will cooperate to protect assets engaged in operations such as NEO or Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD).⁶³ Activities related to NEO include evacuating U.S. and Japanese citizens from Taiwan, and aircraft and ships are used for this operation. Since the term “engaged in operations” is used in the *2015 U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines*,⁶⁴ asset protection is required until the aircraft arrives again at the U.S. military base or elsewhere after the evacuation. In the *Limited Taiwan Crisis*, the base should be protected primarily from combat aircraft, cruise missiles, ballistic missiles, and hypersonic weapons. Short-range missiles, long-range missiles, fighters flying defensive counterair (DCA), passive defenses such as camouflage, concealment, and deception (CCD), dispersal on and across bases, and hardening are the means to protect assets from such trans-air threats.⁶⁵ In a tense situation, it would be difficult to use the assets protecting JSDF bases in Okinawa Prefecture to protect U.S. bases. Therefore, it is necessary to decide in advance how many and how to transport those assets and the personnel to operate them from which JSDF bases. Asset protection during the transfer of non-combatants from Taiwan to Japan could include effective air defense actions using fighter jets, early warning radar, and early warning aircraft, as well as protection of the transport ship by escort vessels. Communication with Taiwan is essential if the JSDF is to enter Taiwan's airspace, territorial waters, and Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ). If the operations are planned jointly in advance, and U.S. forces are informed of the assets that can be protected with JSDF's capabilities, the mission can be carried out without problems.

(3) Maritime operations

The JSDF and the U.S. military will cooperate in minesweeping, including securing maritime traffic routes, escort activities for the protection of ships and naval vessels, and interdiction of shipping activities that support adversaries involved in armed attacks.⁶⁶ Minesweeping, escort activities for the protection of commercial and naval vessels, and the interdiction of shipping activities that have been conducted since peacetime, could be implemented in the *Limited Taiwan Crisis*.

(4) Operations to counter ballistic missile attacks

The JSDF and the U.S. Military will cooperate in intercepting ballistic missiles, and the two governments will exchange information to ensure early detection of ballistic missile launches.⁶⁷ Operations to deal with ballistic missile attacks are conducted in peacetime; in the *Limited Taiwan Crisis*, information may be confused because multiple missiles could be launched. However, whether information on the Japan Aerospace Defense Ground Environment (JADGE) system is shared with the U.S. military is not publicly available. Discussions are needed on how the information will be exchanged.

3) Important issues not covered by the *2015 U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines*

Sections B and D of the guidelines do not include counterintelligence or countermeasures against cyber-attacks. In the *Limited Taiwan Crisis*, the JSDF and Japanese public institutions and companies could be targets of cyber-attacks. IISS concludes that Japan is “also an ally of the Five Eyes states, but less capable in the security dimensions of cyberspace, despite its formidable economic power.”⁶⁸ Therefore, Japan's inability to deal with cyber-attacks could harm joint U.S.-Japan operations, and the United States and Japan could consider jointly dealing with cyber-attacks. There is also a possibility that foreign agents in Japan may monitor the activities of Japan and the United States. However, the guidelines do not state how Japan and the United States will cooperate in counterintelligence. However, even during the Ukraine crisis, the deployment of equipment from both sides has been posted on social media. Japan and the United States need to cooperate in monitoring this kind of information.

Policy recommendations

Based on Japan's challenges in the analysis, this contribution proposes several policies to make the U.S.-Japan alliance more effective. These recommendations include timely recognition of situations, steady implementation of the Guidelines for the U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation, greater cooperation with Coast Guard, Airport/Port Operators, Energy Providers, and Defense Manufacturers, and expanding the Guidelines.

Timely recognition of situations

The debate may be confusing regarding the actual recognition of the situation. Since the use of force, which is prohibited under the Constitution and international law, will be carried out, it is not a decision that can be made in a short time. In particular, detecting the signs of an armed attack at a very early stage and recognizing the situation as a predicted armed attack situation may seem to be a solution for the smooth operation of the JSDF. However, there is a risk that the international community will view this as Japan unilaterally claiming that the other country is planning an armed attack. In light of the Diet's response to the recognition of the situation, the movement of the United States is the key to the recognition. Even if Japanese and U.S. military bases were not attacked, Japan's recognition of the situation would be greatly affected by whether there was an attack on U.S. ships near Taiwan and the U.S. military's response. This paper contends that it is important for the Pentagon and the MoD to have a detailed contingency plan in advance after sharing the understanding at the top level.

Depending on the level of dependence of the supply chain on China, the business community will have different opinions on the recognition of the situation. Japan is currently working to strengthen its supply chain from the perspective of economic security. The pacifist public opinion in Japan will likely oppose the recognition of the situation. This is due to the Japanese public's aversion to war and the distance between the MoD and the public. The MoD and academia must explain the impact of a Taiwan

⁶³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation,” 15-17.

⁶⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation,” 15-17.

⁶⁵ Alan Vick et al., *Air Base Defense: Rethinking Army and Air Force Roles and Functions* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2020), 51.

⁶⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation,” 15-17.

⁶⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation,” 15-17.

⁶⁸ “Cyber Capabilities and National Power: A Net Assessment,” IISS, June 28, 2021, accessed February 4, 2022, <https://www.iiss.org/blogs/research-paper/2021/06/cyber-capabilities-national-power>.

Strait crisis on Japan so that the public can be better informed.

Steady implementation in line with the guidelines

Since the JSDF has been cooperating with the U.S. military in peacetime operations, it should be able to operate adequately in the *Limited Taiwan Crisis*. However, this paper argues that there is room for improvement in the activities of actors other than the JSDF. Particularly in the Limited Taiwan Crisis, the burden on the JCG, airport and port operators in the southwest region, energy providers, and manufacturers who maintain, and upgrade equipment will also increase. However, it will be difficult for private sector operators to prepare for a Taiwan Strait crisis on their own from a cost perspective. The Japanese government must take the lead in supporting the private sectors so that they can operate in the event of a Taiwan Strait crisis.

1) Coast Guard

Japan needs to enhance the capability and equipment of the JCG, strengthen cooperation between the JCG and the JMSDF, and conduct joint exercises in preparation for joint operations in an existential crisis. JCG's patrol vessels are not as well equipped as other countries. The U.S. Coast Guard's large coast guard cutters are equipped with a 70-caliber 57mm single rapid-fire gun, similar to that of the Navy's littoral combat ships, as their ship's gun. They are equipped with Mk.137 six-round decoy launchers for electronic attacks, plus Mk.53-round launchers for the new active decoy NULKA.⁶⁹ Also, since JCG patrol ships do not possess anti-aircraft radar or underwater sensors, their search capability is considered inferior to that of U.S. patrol ships.⁷⁰ In addition, a data link11 allows real-time sharing of tactical pictures between JMSDF ships and U.S. Navy and Coast Guard patrol vessels.⁷¹ However, JCG patrol vessels cannot share information with the JMSDF and U.S. forces because they are equipped with a separate command, control, communications, and intelligence systems.⁷² The JMSDF and the JCG have been conducting joint drills once a year since 1999, but only two ships from the Coast Guard and two from the JMSDF have participated in the joint drills.⁷³ The exercises are designed to simulate the approach of Chinese naval vessels to the Senkaku Islands, disaster response, and search and rescue, but they are not directly based on the Taiwan crisis.

2) Airport and port operators

In an existential crisis, airports and seaports are supposed to be available for use by the JSDF, but the number of them that can be used is limited. The MoD needs to consider extending the runway and building a port where large ships can dock. Specifically, it is necessary to develop a port west of Naha with a water depth of 6 to 7 meters or more where large destroyers (Hyuga) and transport ships (Osumi) can dock. Since it will take more than two to three years to expand the port, it will be necessary for the MoD to consider the renovation of ports now. However, in a Taiwan crisis, the U.S. military may use the airports and ports operated by the JSDF and private

sectors in Okinawa. The MoD must communicate with the private sector in Okinawa about the possibility of U.S. military use during peacetime.

Of the 20 airports on the Nansei Islands in Okinawa and Kagoshima prefectures in Japan, 18 have runways of less than 2,000 meters and do not allow fighter, patrol, or early warning aircraft to take off and land, but the F-35B can be deployed because it can perform short takeoff/vertical landing. As for other aircraft, a land-based catapult for takeoff and an arresting gear system for landing would enable takeoff and landing on a short runway. Procurement of such equipment by the MoD should be considered to increase the readiness of airports in the southwest region for JSDF operations.

3) Energy providers

The supply chain for oil reserves on remote islands is expected to be vulnerable in the event of a contingency, but energy-related facilities are privately operated and may be inadequately secured. There may be ways to deal with this problem, such as granting subsidies to purchase systems that can provide adequate security during peacetime or having the JSDF provide security.

4) Japanese defense manufacturers

Few companies in Japan's defense industry can participate in the business of maintaining and upgrading U.S. military equipment. Since Japan has the infrastructure to manufacture and repair equipment for the JSDF, it is expected that they can provide a high maintenance capability to the U.S. forces. However, the bidding and contracting procedures for maintenance contracts with the U.S. military are incredibly complicated. The entire process is conducted in English, causing a heavy burden and a high barrier to entry. The MoD needs to establish a system to reduce the burden on the private sector in bidding and contracting with the U.S. military while at the same time negotiating at a high level with the DoD and U.S. prime manufacturers to establish a system that will make it easier for Japanese companies to enter the market. A survey will determine how well Japan's ammunition and explosives manufacturers can withstand the sudden demand and whether they need to change their industrial posture. Some manufacturers in other countries have concentrated their ammunition and explosives manufacturing capacity in subsidiaries of prime manufacturers, but the industrial structure of ammunition and explosives in Japan is very different from that of other countries. In addition, Japan should promote the development and equipment of high-power laser weapons that do not use ammunition and explosives and break away from a system that relies solely on ammunition and explosives.

Expansion of the 2015 U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines

The 2015 U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines do not include aspects of counterintelligence, counter-cyber-attacks, evacuation of island residents, or measures to deal with refugees from any adjacent states or territories in East Asia, including Taiwan. The United States and Japan need to discuss this point so that the guidelines can serve as a

⁶⁹ "Legend Class National Security Cutter," Naval Technology, accessed May 19, 2022, <https://www.naval-technology.com/projects/legendclassnsc/>.

⁷⁰ "Delivery Ceremony for Helicopter-mounted Patrol Vessel Shunko," Japan Coast Guard, November 21, 2022, accessed May 19, 2022, https://www.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/10kanku/event/pdf/20191128%20syunnko_uhikiwatashi.pdf.

⁷¹ Fumio Ohta, "Japan Coast Guard and Maritime Self-Defense Force Should Ensure Common Use". Japan Institute for National Fundamentals (JINF). March 26, 2019, <https://jinfp.jp/feedback/archives/24462>.

⁷² Ohta, "Japan Coast Guard and Maritime Self-Defense Force Should Ensure Common Use."

⁷³ "Japan Coast Guard and Maritime Self-Defense Force Hold Training Drill in Izu Oshima", *Kyodo News*, December 23, 2021, <https://nordot.app/846674212434477056>.

more effective and fundamental basis for the U.S.-Japan coordinated response.

Conclusion

A Taiwan Strait crisis will be a crisis for Japan's national security and the U.S.-Japan alliance. With the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the sense of urgency should be rapidly growing in the minds of U.S. and Japanese policymakers. The United States and Japan should continue to work closely together to signal that peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait is a vital national security interest for both countries. The Joint Statement of the Security Consultative Committee ("2+2") in January 2022 stressed "the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait" and "the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues."⁷⁴ However, the willingness to commit themselves to the Taiwan Strait Crisis is insufficient to respond to the crisis. This paper analyzed major operational challenges in the context of the *Limited Taiwan Strait Crisis*, a situation where the armed conflict in Taiwan does not involve a direct attack against Japanese territories or the U.S. military installments based in Japan.

"A Taiwan Strait crisis will be a crisis for Japan's national security and the U.S.-Japan alliance."

The Japanese government faces two major issues in a *Limited Taiwan Crisis*. The first one is the recognition of the situation for the JSDF. Among different existing definitions of situations, "important influence situations" or "survival-threatening situations" would be the two major situations that can justify the deployment or active involvement of the JSDF in the *Limited Taiwan Crisis*. The political hurdle is relatively high because the Japanese government has never done so. To avoid slow and inefficient decision-making, the Japanese government, especially the MoD, must coordinate well with the U.S. counterpart to prepare the bilateral contingency planning in advance, including the likely categories of recognition of the situation.

Furthermore, the MoD needs to immediately initiate public communication to raise awareness about the impact of the Taiwan Strait Crisis on Japan's national security environment. The second issue is the steady and effective implementation of the 2015 *US-Japan Defense Guidelines*. The *Limited Taiwan Crisis* may require the U.S.-Japan collective responses based on B. Responses to Emerging Threats to Japan's Peace and Security and D. Actions in Response to an Armed Attack against a Country other than Japan and Japan of Chapter IV of the 2015 *U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines*. To implement all types of operations stipulated in the guidelines, the MoD needs to strengthen the operational cooperation with the JCG and secure support and cooperation from private port/airport operators, energy providers, and defense manufacturers for essential logistic support.

Finally, if Japan and the United States fail to effectively prevent China from invading and occupying Taiwan, the effectiveness of the U.S.-Japan alliance as the central regional security architecture could be significantly weakened. It would also send a wrong message to regional

players attempting to change the status quo by the use of force is possible in the Asia Pacific region. Even if the alliance is not weakened, the rules-based regional order, including the liberal democracy and market-oriented economy, could suffer a major setback. There is little time left for the United States and the Japanese government. As Japan's MoD is the primarily responsible ministry, it should accelerate the bilateral planning and readiness to deter China's military ambition in Taiwan Strait.

⁷⁴ "Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee (Japan-U.S. '2+2')," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, accessed May 19, 2022, https://www.mofa.go.jp/na/st/page4e_001197.html.

7

Applying NATO's practices to the Japan-U.S. alliance

Shinichi Hirao

Abstract

The Japan-U.S. alliance has been the foundation of Japan's defense. Considering the implications of China's rise, Russia's resurgence, and the persistent challenge of nuclear-armed North Korea, the Japan-U.S. alliance should adapt, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) could serve as a model. First, NATO has successfully adapted to new circumstances since the end of the Cold War. Second, NATO members and Japan share common values such as democracy, respect for human rights, and the rule of law. And third, the United States is the foundation of both alliances, which makes sharing best practices feasible. This paper explores NATO's five practices described in the 2010 and 2022 *Strategic Concepts* and identifies where the Japan-U.S. alliance is in these practices. The paper then analyzes the applicability of NATO's practices to the Japan-U.S. alliance and concludes with policy recommendations for the government of Japan.

Disclaimer

This paper was completed in the Summer of 2022 for Pacific Forum's U.S.-Japan Next Generation Leaders Initiative. The views and opinions expressed here are the author's own. They do not reflect those of any organization with which the author is or was affiliated, including the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force and Pacific Forum.

Introduction

Since the end of World War II, Japan has been a U.S. ally in East Asia. Japan's treaty alliance with the United States and the peace clause in its Constitution have precluded the country from being directly involved in any postwar armed conflict as a belligerent. However, as the security environment changes, Japan's defense posture has evolved. Since 2015, this includes the right to exercise collective self-defense.¹ Over time, the Japanese Self-Defense Force (SDF) has expanded its operations, including activities with the United States and other friendly countries.

Considering the implications of the rise of China, the resurgence of Russia, and the persistent challenge of nuclear-armed North Korea, Japan must answer a policy question – how should the Japan-U.S. alliance adapt to the rapidly changing regional security environment? To answer this question, this paper uses the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as a model of the Japan-U.S. alliance's future. This paper focuses on NATO for three reasons. First, NATO has successfully adapted to new circumstances since the end of the Cold War.² Second, NATO and Japan share common values such as democracy, respect for human rights, and the rule of law. Hence, lessons from NATO could apply to the Japan-U.S. alliance. Third, the United States is the very foundation for both alliances, making sharing of best practices feasible.

This paper proceeds in the following order: first, it elucidates the background of the research question and describes NATO's five practices identified in its *Strategic Concepts*, which set out the alliance's core principles and objectives. This is important because although some analysts want the NATO-like alliance system in Northeast Asia, they often do not understand what really NATO-like is.³ Breaking down NATO into functional practices would be a first step to apprehend this alliance. Then, it will explore the state of each of these practices in the context of the Japan-U.S. alliance. The following section then analyzes the applicability of NATO's practices to the Japan-U.S. alliance. This paper concludes with policy recommendations for the government of Japan.

NATO's five practices and current posture of the Japan-U.S. alliance

NATO's practices

NATO was established in 1949 based on the North Atlantic Treaty and currently consists of 30 member states.⁴ NATO was a key to the U.S. Cold War strategy and

contributed to the defeat of Communism. Despite the end of the Cold War, NATO was not dissolved and instead adapted to the new geopolitical and security environment.

Since NATO was established, *Strategic Concepts* have been its capstone documents. They describe NATO's objectives and characteristics in changed and changing security environments.⁵ The latest version of the document, the 2022 *Strategic Concept*, differs from the previous 2010 version in its tone, mainly because of the different strategic environment at the time it was released. Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and invasion of Ukraine in 2022 impacted the latest version. For instance, the 2022 version described Russia as a threat to NATO, while the 2010 version was more optimistic, stressing NATO members' desire to "see a true strategic partnership between NATO and Russia."⁶ Likewise, NATO has taken notice of China's dramatic military expansion since 2010. For the first time, the 2022 version mentions China as a challenger to NATO's interests. The Indo-Pacific was also characterized as a region that directly affects the Euro-Atlantic area, which suggests more room for cooperation between NATO and the Japan-U.S. alliance.

The 2022 *Strategic Concept* outlines NATO's core tasks in its preface. They are Deterrence and Defense, Crisis Management, and Cooperative Security.⁷ This paper uses the 2010 *Strategic Concept* as well to complement the latest version. Referring to the 2010 version, the three core tasks in 2022 are divided into five practices in this paper, namely Collective Defense, Nuclear Sharing, Crisis Management, Cooperative Security, and Open Door Policy. The following table shows their relationship, and the following discussion focuses on these five core tasks and practices of NATO.

Table 1: NATO's Practices in Strategic Concepts

2010 Strategic Concept	2022 Strategic Concept	Names of Practices in This Paper
Collective Defense	Deterrence and Defense	Collective Defense
Nuclear Sharing		Nuclear Sharing
Crisis Management	Crisis Management	Crisis Management
Cooperative Security	Cooperative Security	Cooperative Security
Open Door Policy		Open Door Policy
Continuous Reform		N/A

(Source: 2010 *Strategic Concept*; 2022 *Strategic Concept*)

Practice 1: Collective defense

NATO's practice

Based on North Atlantic Treaty's Article V, NATO regards an attack against a member state as one against NATO as a whole.⁸ This is called collective defense. This principle ensured that if the Soviet Union had invaded Western Europe, this would have invited U.S. military intervention. However, there were concerns about the U.S. commitment to come to the defense of NATO allies. During

¹ Sheila Smith, *Japan Rearmed* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2019), 150-162.

² "A Short History of NATO," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, last modified June 3, 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/declassified_139339.htm

³ Brad Roberts, *The Case for U.S. Nuclear Weapons in the 21st Century* (California: Stanford University Press, 2016), 206.

⁴ "What is NATO?" North Atlantic Treaty Organization, accessed October 22, 2022, <https://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/index.html>

⁵ "Strategic Concepts," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, last modified July 18, 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_56626.htm

⁶ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *Strategic Concept* (Lisbon, 2010), 29, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_publications/20120214_strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf, and North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *NATO 2022 Strategic Concept* (Madrid, 2022), 4, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/290622-strategic-concept.pdf.

⁷ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *NATO 2022 Strategic Concept*, 1-3.

⁸ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "What is NATO?"

the Cold War, especially after the late 1950s, when the U.S. homeland became exposed to Soviet intercontinental ballistic missiles, some in Europe questioned whether the United States was willing to protect European NATO member states at the expense of U.S. cities.⁹ Washington took various steps to reassure European allies of its commitment to collective defense. This reassurance included increased troop deployments to Europe to serve as a tripwire for retaliation.¹⁰ In the end, the Soviet Union never attacked any NATO member. In fact, it was not a Soviet invasion, but rather it was the 9/11 terrorist attack which became the first event to trigger Article V in NATO's history.¹¹

Where is the Japan-U.S. alliance?

Unlike the North Atlantic Treaty, the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty does not include collective defense. It commits the United States to Japan's defense but does not oblige Japan to use forces to defend the United States. The treaty only says that Japan provides the United States with facilities and areas in return for U.S. commitment.¹² On the one hand, as Yukio Satoh described, this treaty has made U.S. presence in the Western Pacific possible and has contributed to U.S. strategic objectives.¹³ On the other hand, as former U.S. President Donald Trump insisted, this appears unequal. Japan is not bound to assist the United States even in cases where the U.S. homeland is subjected to military attack.¹⁴

This relationship is sometimes referred to as asymmetric.¹⁵ There is a complex background behind this relationship. The asymmetry of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty was necessitated by Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, which states that Japan "renounces war" and

enhance its military capability and operations and willingness to revisit legal concepts.¹⁷ For example, after the 9/11 attack, Japan sent the SDF to the Indian Ocean and Iraq to provide logistical and humanitarian support to U.S.-led coalition forces.¹⁸ In 2014, Prime Minister Abe reinterpreted the Constitution for Japan to exercise the right of collective self-defense.¹⁹

There are now three criteria to exercise this: 1) when Japan itself is under attack or when a foreign country that has a close relationship with Japan comes under attack; 2) when the use of forces is the only way to address this attack; and 3) when the use of forces is limited to a minimum necessary extent.²⁰ The following year, the new *Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation* allowed Japan to cooperate with U.S. forces to address armed attacks in the United States or other countries, such as South Korea.²¹ This new Guideline also established the Alliance Coordination Mechanism, which enables the two allies to work seamlessly from peacetime to wartime, addressing threats in the gray zone.²² Japan has used this new mechanism in response to North Korean nuclear tests.²³ Former Prime Minister Abe's other national security efforts include establishing the National Security Council, creating the first National Security Strategy, and enacting a law to protect national security secrets.²⁴

Following these changes in Japanese defense policy, the SDF completed several missions to protect U.S. forces. For instance, SDF vessels convoyed U.S. naval ships four times when conducting intelligence and monitoring operations to deal with ballistic missile threats in 2020.²⁵ These developments demonstrate that Japan has been taking numerous steps to supplement the treaty and expand its military roles in the alliance.

"... the Japan-U.S. security relationship has been gradually evolving with Tokyo's greater efforts to enhance its military capability and operations and willingness to revisit legal concepts."

"the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes." Because of the Constitution, Japan believed it could not exercise the right of collective self-defense, even if legal under international law.¹⁶

Nevertheless, the Japan-U.S. security relationship has been gradually evolving with Tokyo's greater efforts to

Practice 2: Nuclear sharing

NATO's practice

The second practice stems from NATO's goal of a world free of nuclear weapons and its status as a nuclear alliance. NATO considers nuclear weapons essential for security. The 2010 *Strategic Concept* states that "[a]s long as nuclear

weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance".²⁶ The 2022 *Strategic Concept* also states that NATO's security is ultimately guaranteed by strategic nuclear weapons possessed by the United States, the United Kingdom, and France.²⁷ Yet NATO's collective nuclear deterrence is based on the nuclear sharing framework.²⁸ The most fundamental purpose of nuclear sharing is to show solidarity and make

⁹ Roberts, *The Case for U.S. Nuclear Weapons in the 21st Century*, 177-180.

¹⁰ Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (2008 edition) (New Heaven and London: Yale University Press, 1966), 47.

¹¹ "Collective defense and Article 5." North Atlantic Treaty Organization, last modified Sep. 20, 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_110496.htm

¹² Yukio Satoh, "U.S. Extended Deterrence and Japan's Security," *Livermore Papers on Global Security* No. 2 (Oct. 2017): 36-36, <https://cgsr.llnl.gov/content/assets/docs/satoh-report-final.pdf>

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Diana Stancy Correl, "How Trump's attacks on the US-Japan security alliance could affect readiness," *Military Times*, July 31, 2019, <https://www.militarytimes.com/2019/07/30/why-did-trump-attack-the-us-japan-security-alliance/>

¹⁵ Emma Chanlett-Avery, Caitlin Campbell, and Joshua A. Williams, *The U.S.-Japan Alliance* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, July 13, 2019), 7, <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/RL33740.pdf>

¹⁶ Akihiro Sado, *自衛隊史－防衛政策の70年* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 2015), 270-271.

¹⁷ Chanlett-Avery, Campbell, and Williams, *The U.S.-Japan Alliance*, 6-7.

¹⁸ Smith, *Japan Rearmed*, 69-78.

¹⁹ Ibid., 150-162.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Satoh, "U.S. Extended Deterrence and Japan's Security," 48.

²² For more on the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense cooperation see Sasaki's contribution to this volume.

²³ Tomohiko Satake, "Japan: The Political Cost of Deterrence," in *Alliances, Nuclear Weapons and Escalation*, ed. Stephan Fruhling and Andrew O'Neil (Australian National University Press, 2021), 89-91.

²⁴ Brad Blosserman, *Peak Japan. The End of Great Ambitions* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2019), 186-187.

²⁵ Ministry of Defense of Japan, *令和3年版日本の防衛*, (Tokyo: Nikkei Insatsu, 2021), 261.

²⁶ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *Strategic Concept*, 14.

²⁷ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *NATO 2022 Strategic Concept*, 7-8

²⁸ Roberts, *The Case for U.S. Nuclear Weapons in the 21st Century*, 180-183.

deterrence more credible than any other means.²⁹ This mechanism originated in the North Atlantic Council in 1957 in response to Sputnik Shock, which demonstrated that the Soviet Union could endanger American homeland with intercontinental ballistic missiles and thus undermined U.S. security commitment to Europe. Although the United States later developed strategic nuclear weapons that could devastate Moscow and did not need non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe to counter the Warsaw Pact, NATO maintained nuclear sharing because it had been a symbol of American commitment.³⁰ According to Brad Roberts, while the United States has deployed non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe, they remain in U.S. possession, thus complying with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).³¹ As of 2019, Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Turkey host U.S.

and that Japan will make efforts to increase the effectiveness of U.S. extended deterrence by conventional means. It also insists that Japan advocates for a nuclear-free world through disarmament and non-proliferation. The Japan-U.S. alliance, like NATO, appears to have two goals—nuclear deterrence and disarmament. However, Japan does not explicitly welcome nuclear weapons. Because of the use of nuclear weapons against Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Summer 1945, the Japanese public holds a strong anti-nuclear sentiment, and the Japanese government officially prioritized its non-nuclear policy over the Japan-U.S. alliance.³⁸ This anti-nuclear sentiment culminated in the Three Non-Nuclear Policy in the 1970s: no possession, no production, and no permission to introduce nuclear weapons. According to Yukio Satoh, due to this policy, especially the third principle, the United States did not

“...given public sentiments, financial constraints, and potential diplomatic repercussions, Japan is unlikely to develop nuclear weapons in the foreseeable future.”

nuclear weapons, which number fewer than 200 in total.³² In wartime, aircraft capable of carrying both conventional and nuclear weapons, or dual-capable aircraft, ensure that NATO member states hosting U.S. nuclear weapons can participate in nuclear operations. The 2022 *Strategic Concept* states, “[n]ational contributions of dual-capable aircraft to NATO’s nuclear deterrence mission remain central.”³³ Of note, use of these non-strategic nuclear weapons is only possible when there is an agreement between the United States and a host country, a mechanism called the dual-key system.³⁴

Member states without U.S. nuclear weapons can also make meaningful contributions. They would provide conventional air support to NATO’s operations.³⁵ These roles are called Support of Nuclear Operations With Conventional Air Tactics (SNOWCAT), and non-nuclear nations participate in annual SNOWCAT exercises.³⁶ Additionally, even these non-nuclear countries join the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG), which determines NATO’s overall nuclear policy. As the NPG makes all the decisions by consensus, it is guaranteed that non-nuclear member states also influence NATO’s nuclear decision-making.³⁷

Where is the Japan-U.S. alliance?

The Japan-U.S. alliance does not have a nuclear sharing arrangement, although it considers U.S. nuclear weapons important. Japan’s 2018 *National Defense Program Guideline* says that U.S. extended deterrence and nuclear weapons are indispensable in countering nuclear threats,

deploy nuclear weapons to Japan except when the United States still administered Okinawa.³⁹ But in reality, a secret agreement allowed U.S. naval vessels holding nuclear weapons to enter Japanese waters.⁴⁰

However, as Japan’s security environment deteriorates, the Japan-U.S. alliance has been developing U.S. extended nuclear deterrence. One of the most salient is the establishment of the Extended Deterrence Dialogue (EDD) in 2010. The dialogue institutionalized nuclear discussions between leaderships and aimed to strengthen regional deterrence strategy. Of note, while the Obama administration started this mechanism, the Japan-U.S. alliance has had strong cooperation on missile defense even before.⁴¹ The EDD plays an entirely different role from NATO’s NPG. For one, EDD is convened by bureaucrats, while ministers organize NPG. Nevertheless, given that Japan and the United States hold regular Defense Ministerial meetings, the Japan-U.S. alliance could have an equivalent consultation system relatively easily.

Some expressed concerns that Japan may possess its own nuclear weapons in the future.⁴² After all, Japan has the capabilities to produce nuclear weapons, and some argue that such is indispensable to protect Japan’s very existence.⁴³ Indeed, Japan’s plutonium stockpile is estimated to be enough to produce 5,000 Nagasaki-sized atomic bombs.⁴⁴ However, given public sentiments, financial constraints, and potential diplomatic repercussions, Japan is unlikely to develop nuclear weapons in the foreseeable future.⁴⁵

²⁹ Alexander Marrelaer, “Nuclear Sharing and NATO as a ‘Nuclear Alliance,’” in *Alliances, Nuclear Weapons and Escalation*, ed. Stephan Frühling and Andrew O’Neil (Australian National University Press, 2021), 123-127.

³⁰ Yoko Iwama, 核の一九六八年体制と西ドイツ, (Tokyo: Yuhikaku, 2021), 338-342.

³¹ Roberts, *The Case for U.S. Nuclear Weapons in the 21st Century*, 180-181.

³² “Nuclear Disarmament NATO,” Nuclear Threat Initiative, last modified July 15, 2015. <https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/nato-nuclear-disarmament/>

³³ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *NATO 2022 Strategic Concept*, 8.

³⁴ Marrelaer, “Nuclear Sharing and NATO as a ‘Nuclear Alliance,’” 128-129.

³⁵ Roberts, *The Case for U.S. Nuclear Weapons in the 21st Century*, 180-183.

³⁶ Hans Kristensen, “NATO Nuclear Exercise Underway With Czech and Polish Participation,” *Federation of American Scientists*, Oct. 17, 2017. <https://fas.org/blogs/security/2017/10/steadfast-noon-exercise/>

³⁷ “Nuclear Planning Group (NPG),” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, last modified May 9, 2022.

https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50069.htm

³⁸ Satoh, “U.S. Extended Deterrence and Japan’s Security,” 39-41.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Roberts, *The Case for U.S. Nuclear Weapons in the 21st Century*, 197.

⁴¹ Roberts, *The Case for U.S. Nuclear Weapons in the 21st Century*, 200-204.

⁴² Satoh, “U.S. Extended Deterrence and Japan’s Security,” 44-46.

⁴³ Sayuri Romei, “Japan’s Shift in the Nuclear Debate: A Changing Identity?” *Center for International Security and Cooperation*, (no date), 9-16, https://fsi-live.s3.us-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/social_science_seminar_-_japans_shift_in_the_nuclear_debate_s_romei.pdf

⁴⁴ Masakatsu Ota, 日米<核>同盟—原爆、核の傘、フクシマ, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 2014), 144-148.

⁴⁵ Satoh, “U.S. Extended Deterrence and Japan’s Security,” 44-46.

Practice 3: Crisis management

NATO's practice

After the Cold War, Crisis management constituted a significant portion of NATO's tasks.⁴⁶ NATO classifies crisis management into three categories: Article V collective defense, non-Article V crisis response operations, and natural, technological, or humanitarian disasters. The first category, Article V collective defense, is already discussed in the preceding section. The second category, non-Article V crisis response operations, includes conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and humanitarian assistance, essentially covering all periods of a crisis.⁴⁷ NATO first engaged in this type of operation in 1995 to help the United Nations with the war in Yugoslavia. Since then, crisis response operations have been conducted globally, such as in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Sudan.⁴⁸ Yet, NATO has not been very active in these military and political operations recently, especially after the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014. This event compelled NATO to focus on regional defense instead of its global role, including crisis management.⁴⁹

The last category, responding to disasters, is also salient. Since 1998, NATO has hosted the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre. NATO uses this system to effectively distribute aid to disaster-hit areas.⁵⁰ The Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Unit is also another significant organization in NATO. The unit consists of civilian and military personnel and can be dispatched to disaster zones when requested.⁵¹ With these mechanisms, NATO assisted its member and non-member states during disasters, such as flooding in Ukraine and the United States, earthquakes in Pakistan and Turkey, fire in Yugoslavia and Portugal, and most recently, the global coronavirus pandemic.⁵²

Where is the Japan-U.S. alliance?

Crisis management in the Japan-U.S. alliance has evolved recently and plays a comparable role to NATO's. The SDF has participated in several disaster relief operations, with the most significant one during the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011. In the aftermath of Japan's deadliest disaster, over a hundred thousand SDF personnel were deployed for rescue and relief operations. The U.S. forces played a significant role. The United States established the Joint Support Force and deployed more than fifteen thousand troops to help Japan.⁵³ Yet, this joint operation did not always go well. When the earthquake happened, Japan and the United States did not have official mechanisms to coordinate relief efforts in peacetime.⁵⁴ Respective agencies in Japan and the United States

individually started to coordinate and work together without a whole-of-government approach.

Nonetheless, as the crisis continued, both countries realized the necessity of a coordination mechanism. The Japanese side established an ad hoc mechanism called the Hosono Process, which incorporated ministries under political leadership.⁵⁵ This lesson resulted in the Alliance Coordination Mechanism (ACM) in the reviewed *Guidelines for the Japan-U.S. Security Cooperation* in 2015.⁵⁶ The ACM ensures seamless coordination from peacetime through crises between the two countries, making it possible for Japan and the United States to jointly address disasters.⁵⁷

“... the bilateral alliance had been a public good because it stabilizes the Indo-Pacific region and keeps Japan safe.”

Additionally, as for non-Article V responses of NATO, the Japan-U.S. alliance plays a similar role. The Japan-U.S. Security Treaty's Article VI states that the purposes of U.S. forces in Japan are to secure Japan's safety and to maintain international peace and safety in the Far East.⁵⁸ Indeed, a former SDF general said that the bilateral alliance had been a public good because it stabilizes the Indo-Pacific region and keeps Japan safe.⁵⁹ Moreover, the Japan-U.S. alliance creates foundations for Japan's international engagement. For example, Japan has been deploying the SDF to the Middle East for intelligence operations since 2020, sending liaison officers to the U.S. Central Command in Bahrain.⁶⁰

In sum, the Japan-U.S. alliance now officially possesses coordination mechanisms that work from peacetime and can be applied to crises, including disaster relief. Moreover, the Japan-U.S. alliance already covers NATO's non-Article V operations regarding responsibility.

Practice 4: Cooperative security

NATO's practice

NATO believes cooperation with international partners promotes international stability and defends its values.⁶¹ NATO has partnerships with numerous countries in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, including Georgia and Ukraine, and international organizations, such as the European Union and the United Nations.⁶² The list of partners included Russia in the 2010 *Strategic Concept* but not in the 2022 version.⁶³

NATO established various partnership schemes after the Cold War, starting with the Partnership for Peace in 1994, which allowed Euro-Atlantic nations to work with

⁴⁶ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *NATO Handbook*, (Brussels: Public Diplomacy Division, 2006), 43-50, <https://www.nato.int/docu/handbook/2006/hb-en-2006.pdf>

⁴⁷ “Crisis Management,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, last modified July 7, 2022.

https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49192.htm#:~:text=Crisis%20management%20is%20one%20of%20NATO's%20core%20tasks%20for%20which,to%20conduct%20crisis%20management%20operations

⁴⁸ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *NATO Handbook*, 43-50.

⁴⁹ Antoine Got, “Global NATO: What Future for the Alliance's Out-of-area Efforts?” *Geneva Centre for Security Policy Issue 18* (December 2021): 3 <https://dam.gcsp.ch/files/doc/ssa-18-december-2021>

⁵⁰ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Crisis Management.”

⁵¹ “Disaster Relief. A CCOE Fact Sheet,” Civil-Military Cooperation Centre of Excellence, accessed Oct. 22, 2022, <https://www.cimic-coe.org/resources/fact-sheets/fact-sheet-disaster-relief.pdf>

⁵² North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Crisis Management,” and North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *NATO Handbook*, 43-50.

⁵³ Ministry of Defense of Japan, 令和3年版日本の防衛, 279.

⁵⁴ Of note, the two nations did have a mechanism to deal with armed attack to Japan, which was provided in the Guidelines for the Japan-U.S. Security Cooperation in 1997.

⁵⁵ Koichi Isobe, トモダチ作戦の最前線—福島原発事故に見る日米同盟連携の教訓 (Tokyo: Sairyusha, 2019), 97-99.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 172-173.

⁵⁷ Ministry of Defense of Japan, 令和3年版日本の防衛, 266-268.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 262.

⁵⁹ Kunio Oda, “世界史上最も成功した日米同盟を襲う危機”, *JB Press*, Jan. 27, 2020. <https://jbpress.ismedia.jp/articles/-/59088>

⁶⁰ Ministry of Defense of Japan, 令和3年版日本の防衛, 280.

⁶¹ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *Strategic Concept*, 26-32.

⁶² “Partners,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, last modified March 27, 2022. <https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/51288.htm>

⁶³ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *NATO 2022 Strategic Concept*.

NATO in many fields, such as defense-related work and civil-military relations.⁶⁴ The Mediterranean Dialogue, started in 1994, is a security forum between NATO and Mediterranean nations, including Israel and Egypt. Bilateral and multilateral meetings occur between NATO and these countries annually under this partnership.⁶⁵ The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, founded in 2004, ensures cooperation between NATO and Middle East countries. The initiative deepens security relations to deal with common concerns in this region.⁶⁶

As the security focus shifts to the Indo-Pacific, NATO has deepened cooperation with partners from this region. For example, Australia, Japan, South Korea, and New Zealand participated in NATO-led discussions related to the rise of China and joined the Madrid Summit in 2022.⁶⁷ The 2022 *Strategic Concept* also mentions the importance of the Indo-Pacific for the Euro-Atlantic region.⁶⁸

Where is the Japan-U.S. alliance?

Japan has regional and global security partners. The Japan-U.S. alliance values partnerships, even when these relations are not necessarily institutionalized like NATO's. In the Japan-U.S. alliance context, cooperation with partner nations creates a favorable security environment and promotes the alliance's values. The alliance has made a significant effort in this field. For example, Japan shares the concept of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" with Australia, India, European countries, Canada, and New Zealand, in addition to the United States.⁶⁹ The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or the Quad, established by Japan, the United States, India, and Australia, though not a formal alliance, has been a platform to discuss security issues and enhance confidence-building in the region. Today, the four countries host multilateral military exercises and arguably share similar concerns over Chinese assertiveness. The Quad has also promoted cooperation in non-security fields, such as dealing with coronavirus.⁷⁰

Meanwhile, South Korea has been an important U.S. ally in Northeast Asia. Tokyo, Washington, and Seoul share common interests in regional peace and stability, including managing North Korea's missiles and nuclear developments.⁷¹ Indeed, the three countries have conducted joint exercises in the face of North Korean threats.⁷² Nevertheless, Japan's colonization of the Korean Peninsula in the early 20th century continues to influence Korean foreign policy. Seoul's hostility toward Japan complicates security cooperation. For instance, *Defense of Japan* mentions several issues that make defense cooperation with South Korea difficult. Among them,

salient ones are the December 2018 incident when a Korean navy ship directed its fire control radar toward a Japanese plane and the August 2019 decision by the Moon administration to terminate the Japan-Korean intelligence-sharing arrangement.⁷³

Practice 5: Open door policy

NATO's practice

The 2010 *Strategic Concept* endorsed NATO's expansion as having enhanced its members' security. Moreover, it aspires to eventually incorporate all European nations. NATO was founded by 12 countries but has expanded significantly since. After the Cold War, NATO welcomed former Warsaw pact republics.⁷⁴ At the Bucharest Summit in 2008, NATO members agreed that Ukraine and Georgia would join NATO in the future, although no timeline was provided.⁷⁵ While the two countries have not become official members yet, Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 highlighted the value of NATO membership. Before Russia's invasion, U.S. President Biden firmly rejected Russian demands that Ukraine should not be admitted to NATO. Analysts argued that conceding to Moscow's demand would violate NATO's fundamental rule and worsen the security of Ukraine and Georgia.⁷⁶ After the invasion, even Finland and Sweden applied for membership.

Where is the Japan-U.S. alliance?

Since the Japan-U.S. alliance is bilateral, an open-door policy is not an option. In the East Asian region, the United States has bilateral treaty alliances with Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines. U.S. security commitment to Thailand is based on the now-defunct Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO).⁷⁷

Matrix and available options

The table below summarizes the preceding discussion. It shows what practices the Japan-U.S. alliance has, or has not, already implemented. From this table, Collective Defense and Nuclear Sharing are considered options for the Japan-U.S. alliance to incorporate among NATO's practices. The Japan-U.S. alliance has already had two other concepts, at least to some extent, and Open Door Policy is just not applicable.

⁶⁴ "Partnerships for Peace programme," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, last modified March 23, 2020. [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50349.htm#:~:text=The%20Partnership%20for%20Peace%20\(PIP\),their%20own%20priorities%20for%20cooperation](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50349.htm#:~:text=The%20Partnership%20for%20Peace%20(PIP),their%20own%20priorities%20for%20cooperation)

⁶⁵ "Mediterranean Dialogue," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, last modified June 23, 2022.

⁶⁶ https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52927.htm

⁶⁷ "Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI)," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, last modified Sep. 1, 2022.

⁶⁸ https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52956.htm

⁶⁹ "Relations with partners across the globe," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, last modified Aug. 25, 2021.

⁷⁰ https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49188.htm#:~:text=NATO%20has%20nine%20%E2%80%9Cpartners%20across,Mongolia%2C%20New%20Zealand%20and%20Pakistan, and "Madrid Summit Declaration," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, last modified July 22, 2022.

⁷¹ https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_196951.htm

⁷² North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *NATO 2022 Strategic Concept*, 11.

⁷³ Ministry of Defense of Japan, 令和3年版日本の防衛, 306-311.

⁷⁴ Sheila Smith, "The Quad in the Indo-Pacific: What to Know," last modified May 27, 2021. <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/quad-indo-pacific-what-know>

⁷⁵ Ministry of Defense of Japan, 令和3年版日本の防衛, 324-326.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ "Member countries," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, last modified Oct. 4, 2022. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_52044.htm

⁷⁹ "Bucharest Summit Declaration," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, last modified July 5, 2022.

⁸⁰ https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm

⁸¹ Eric S. Edelman and David J. Kramer, "Keep NATO's Door Open to Ukraine. Washington Shouldn't Grant Putin the Sphere of Influence He Wants," *Foreign Affairs*, Jan. 31, 2022.

⁸² <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2022-01-31/keep-natos-door-open-ukraine>

⁸³ For more on US alliance arrangements in East Asia see Fraser and Rodriguez's contribution to this volume.

Table 2: Comparison of NATO and the Japan-U.S. Alliance is better off focusing on logistical support for U.S.

2020 Strategic Concept	NATO's Practices	Where the Japan-U.S. Alliance Stands
Deterrence and Defense	Collective Defense	No Legal Framework
	Nuclear Sharing	None
Crisis Management	Crisis Management	Equivalent Efforts and Mechanisms
Cooperative Security	Cooperative Security	Equivalent Efforts
	Open Door Policy	N/A (not to establish Asian NATO)

(Source: Author)

Applying NATO's practices

This contribution examines the applicability of NATO's practices to the Japan-U.S. alliance. While NATO is a multilateral alliance, the Japan-U.S. alliance is bilateral, which makes it difficult to simply apply policies from one to the other. Thus, the following discussion explores available options for the Japan-U.S. alliance using NATO's best practices as a starting point.

Collective defense: What could it look like in the Japan-U.S. Alliance?

If the Japan-U.S. alliance applies NATO-like Collective Defense, they would need to amend their security treaty and incorporate NATO's Article V-like clause. The Japan-U.S. Security Treaty requires the United States to defend Japan but not vice versa. With the new security treaty, Japan would have to defend the United States if it came under attack. This could mean dispatching troops to fight alongside the U.S. military. This option would make the relationship symmetric and thus enhance the coherence of the alliance. It would also be able to satisfy some Americans who consider the alliance unfair.

This policy option would not be applicable to the Japan-U.S. alliance for at least two reasons. First, there is simply not enough incentive. When former President Trump publicly described the Japan-U.S. alliance as unfair, then-Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga dismissed the comments saying that the United States would not be willing to change the security treaty.⁷⁸ Suga also insisted that the security treaty is well-balanced and not unfair.⁷⁹ A Collective Defense clause that requires Japan to defend the United States if the U.S. territory is attacked would be politically difficult to achieve, especially when Japan considers its contribution comparable to that of the United States. As already noted, Japan provides bases and financial contributions (host nation support) in exchange for U.S. protection. Moreover, the United States benefits from using its bases in Japan to project power and exert influence in Asia.⁸⁰ In addition, the Abe era reinterpretation of the Constitution already allows Japan to exercise collective self-defense, albeit in limited circumstances.

Second, the U.S. military, with presence around the world, is much stronger than the SDF, and the latter is practically unable to conduct operations globally. The SDF

is better off focusing on logistical support for U.S. operations around Japan, which is possible under the current law. The United States' forward deployment strategy allows more than one hundred thousand troops to be deployed in East Asia, mainly in Japan and South Korea.⁸¹ While the U.S. Navy has global power projection capability, the SDF is not capable of deploying forces to the North American continent or other ones to assist the United States. The SDF, without an expeditionary capability, should be focused on defending Japan. It also lacks the political capital and financial resources to consider global power projection. In this sense, Japan investing in its own defense is better than pursuing a NATO-like Collective Defense mechanism. Japan more capable of its defense eases U.S. burden in the Indo-Pacific.⁸²

capability, the SDF is not capable of deploying forces to the North American continent or other ones to assist the United States. The SDF, without an expeditionary capability, should be focused on defending Japan. It also lacks the political capital and financial resources to consider global power projection. In this sense, Japan investing in its own defense is better than pursuing a NATO-like Collective Defense mechanism. Japan more capable of its defense eases U.S. burden in the Indo-Pacific.⁸²

Nuclear Sharing: What could it look like in the Japan-U.S. alliance?

Due to nuclear allergy among the Japanese public and likely political repercussions, it would be almost impossible for the Japan-U.S. alliance to apply NATO-type nuclear sharing, which is to deploy non-strategic nuclear weapons to U.S. bases in Japan and Tokyo possessing dual-capable aircraft. Some military analysis suggest that it could be possible for Japan to own dual-capable aircraft and fetches U.S. nuclear weapons located in Guam if needed,⁸³ but this paper does not consider this model feasible either, since it would require U.S. nuclear weapons to be forward deployed to vulnerable Guam and Japan to use nuclear weapons. Given these difficulties, the author suggests that Japan simply possesses dual-capable aircraft as a hedging strategy, with potential of limited nuclear sharing in the future, but not with nuclear weapons on the agenda at this phase. In other words, although this option is referred to as 'potential nuclear sharing' in the following discussion, all Japan has to do is acquire dual-capable aircraft.

It is important to emphasize the ultimate goal of this option is to make the U.S. commitment to Japan's defense more credible in the face of threats from China and North Korea. Since dual-capable aircraft are considered NATO's essential means of nuclear sharing, introducing them to Japan would become a symbol of making the bilateral alliance equivalent to NATO. This also could complicate a potential adversaries' calculations because it would be difficult to predict how Japan's potential nuclear sharing with the United States could evolve in response to heightened military threats against Japan.

This potential nuclear sharing option might be relatively feasible. First, because no nuclear weapons would be introduced into Japan, this option would not violate the NPT and Japan's Three Non-Nuclear Policy.

⁷⁸ Linda Sieg and Daniel Leussink, "Trump renews criticism of Japan-US alliance before G20 summit," *Reuters*, June 27, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-g20-summit-trump-japan-idUSKCN1TS057>

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Lindsay Maizland and Nathanael Cheng, "The U.S.-Japan Security Alliance," last modified Nov. 4, 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounders/us-japan-security-alliance>

⁸² Mina Pollmann, "Learning to Embrace an Unequal Alliance," *Tokyo Review*, June 7, 2019, <https://www.tokyo-review.net/2019/06/us-japan-embrace-unequal-alliance/>

⁸³ Masakatsu Ota, Nobukatsu Kanehara, Nobushige Takamizawa, and Koichiro Bansho, 核兵器について、本音で話そう (Tokyo: Shinchosha, 2022), 227-228.

After all, dual-capable aircraft themselves do not guarantee Japan's nuclear use.

Second, technically speaking, Japan can possess dual-capable aircraft. The United States has conducted tests to develop F-35As into dual-capable aircraft.⁸⁴ Indeed, Germany, one of the nuclear sharing members of NATO, has decided to purchase F-35A fighters as replacements for current dual-capable aircraft.⁸⁵ Japan currently owns 20 F-35As and will continue buying more from the United States.⁸⁶ Hence, to acquire dual-capable aircraft, Japan just need to replace existing or future F-35As with dual-capable variants.

This potential nuclear sharing could enhance the alliance's deterrent value. It would demonstrate the collective resolve of Tokyo and Washington amidst the increasingly complex security environment. The mechanism would also introduce an element of strategic ambiguity in which a NATO-like nuclear sharing between Japan and the United States could become a reality if threats against Japan worsen. Also, since dual-capable F-35As received modification only to their cockpits and weapon bays and do not appear very different from the normal F-35As,⁸⁷ potential adversaries would not easily know which F-35As in Japan are dual-capable. This could lead them to choose not to attack Japan or destroy all the F-35As with massive collateral damage, which would likely require much more resolve to initiate a war.

Table 3: Outcome Matrix

	Applicable?	Implementation
Collective Defense	No	Amendment of the Security Treaty
Nuclear Sharing	Yes	Introducing Dual-capable F35As

(Source: Author)

Table 3 summarizes the discussion. As such, it recommends that Japan adopt potential nuclear sharing to reinforce the alliance's deterrent effect.

Conclusion

This paper explored the five practices of NATO and their applicability to the Japan-U.S. alliance. It found that although the Japan-U.S. alliance has put equivalent efforts into Crisis Management and Cooperative Security, the other two practices, namely Collective Defense and Nuclear Sharing, should be thoroughly examined by alliance managers to identify workable mechanisms.

Policy recommendations

Japan's acquisition of dual-capable F-35As would be a strong deterrent against potential adversaries and send a message that Japan and the United States are coherent like NATO. Unlike NATO-type nuclear sharing, Japan and the United States do not need to have nuclear weapons ready. This option aims to deter threats and prevent conflicts before they escalate by introducing a NATO-like deterrent mechanism. This would complicate enemy calculations as

Tokyo could pursue full-fledged nuclear sharing with Washington if military pressures against Japan are dangerously heightened.

There are two potential approaches in implementing this policy. At a minimum, Japan could announce that it will possess dual-capable F-35As and deploy them to SDF bases without specifying a timeline. It might produce the same deterrent with less expenditure as long as regular F-35As are indistinguishable from dual-capable ones. To not incentivize potential adversaries to attack Japan before dual-capable aircraft are operationalized, Tokyo needs to add dual-capable aircraft into the next Midterm Defense Program and begin discussion about Foreign Military Sales with the United States to obtain dual-capable F-35As as soon as possible. The second and more ambitious approach is for Japan to acquire dual-capable F-35As immediately and publicly begin discussions with the United States about nuclear sharing.

Japan's acquisition of dual-capable aircraft would dramatically alter the character of any potential attack against Japan. Referring to the Cold War terminology, this could add a new "threshold" to Japan's defense architecture—the potential for and capability of taking conflicts into nuclear dimension.⁸⁸

Ways forward

This paper discussed NATO's practices and their applicability to the Japan-U.S. alliance. However, there are other policies that NATO does not have, but the Japan-U.S. alliance could implement. Given the differences between the two alliances, such as memberships, governing organizations, and geographic regions of focus, research on NATO is insufficient. The Japan-U.S. alliance should learn lessons from other alliances as well, such as the U.S.-South Korea alliance. Conversely, there may be positive lessons that the Japan-U.S. alliance can share with other U.S. alliance systems.

⁸⁴ Mahshie Abraham, "F-35 Completes Final Test for Nuclear-Capable B61 Series Weapons," *Air & Space Forces Magazine*, Oct. 5, 2021, <https://www.airandspaceforces.com/f-35-completes-final-test-for-nuclear-capable-b61-series-weapons/>

⁸⁵ David Donald, "Germany to Buy F-35 Fighters for Nuclear Sharing Role," *AIN online*, March 15, 2022, <https://www.ainonline.com/aviation-news/defense/2022-03-15/germany-buy-f-35-fighters-nuclear-sharing-role>

⁸⁶ Shu Hatakeyama, "Japan's defense ministry to request doubled budget for F-35 fighter jet acquisition," *The Mainichi*, Aug. 13, 2021, <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20210813/p2a/00m/0na/008000c>

⁸⁷ Mahshie, "F-35 Completes Final Test for Nuclear-Capable B61 Series Weapons."

⁸⁸ Schelling, *Arms and Influence (2008 Edition)*, 153-157.

8

Expanding the eyes: Japan and the Five Eyes alliance

Brittany Bardsley-Marcial

Abstract

This contribution argues that Japan can offer the Five Eyes the use of its electronic surveillance capabilities, its vast intelligence infrastructure network, and its analysis and perspective on Asian politics. The Five Eyes would, in turn, be able to shore up capabilities that Japan is lacking, such as foreign intelligence and military defense. Despite Tokyo's attempts at improvement, there remain significant issues with Japan's complex and limited intelligence system, and its security clearance system. Moreover, clashes among the Five Eyes members (with or without Japan's admittance) can potentially hinder trust and intelligence-sharing. With these unresolved issues, expectations from both Japan and the Five Eyes may be too high to consider outright admittance at this time.

Introduction

The United States and Japan have been allies in trade and security for over seventy years. This partnership has benefited both countries in several different ways. The United States - Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security (1960) allows the United States to put military bases on Japanese soil. In return, the United States is obligated to defend Japan against armed attacks. Japan and the United States also have many bilateral economic agreements between them. They include agreements on dealing with the elimination or reduction of tariffs on goods.¹ This close association has produced a desire by both countries to maintain these benefits. However, these boons are threatened by other countries – among them China and North Korea.

Both the United States and Japan are concerned about the growth of China's expansionist aims. For example, Japan has territorial disputes with China over the Senkaku Islands, uninhabited and barren islands in the East China Sea. Meanwhile, the United States is concerned about China's interest in overtaking the United States in trade. As for North Korea, there have long been tensions concerning its stability, and desire to be seen as a significant power in the region. North Korea has not responded well to sanctions and resolutions that intend to restrict the use of their missiles and nuclear weapons and has repeatedly responded with ballistic missile tests in the open waters of the Sea of Japan. Japan considers the tests to be a threat to peace in the region. The rise of cyberspace capabilities in both countries has been a concern for Japan and the United States.

“Intelligence-gathering on both China and North Korea is an important tool for both Japan and the United States.”

Intelligence-gathering on both China and North Korea is an important tool for both Japan and the United States. With regards to the United States, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence has 18 organizations devoted to intelligence-gathering within their military, the domestic sphere, and abroad. Japan has five intelligence agencies to deal with internal and external threats. The Public Security Intelligence Agency deals with internal security threats to Japan. The Defense Intelligence Headquarters (DIH) handles the collection of regional naval and signals intelligence (communications systems, radar, etc.) and human intelligence (information collected and provided by human contact), and also monitors oversea military signals. The National Police Agency deals with cybercrime, organized crime, and other national-security concerns. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs helps to manage the research of international issues affecting Japan, along with the collection and analysis of diplomatic information. Finally, the Cabinet Intelligence and Research Office (CIRO) was created to centralize all intelligence activity and analyze external threats to Japan. Its Cabinet Satellite Intelligence Center (CSIC) is also responsible for imagery intelligence.²

The United States and Japan have worked together in the past on intelligence-gathering agreements and coalitions. Regardless, growing concerns encouraged Abe Shinzo, who served his second term as Prime Minister

of Japan between 2012 and 2020 to push hard for more bilateral and multilateral security agreements between Japan and the United States.³ This push is partly because Japan's intelligence community may not gather enough information to counter its neighbors' actions. One possible solution to Japan's need for more information is to go to one group with, presumably, a lot more intelligence information: the Five Eyes.

The Five Eyes are an intelligence-sharing coalition between Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. It started with secret meetings between the United States and the U.K. before the former entered World War II. With the end of the war and the rise of the Cold War, a multilateral agreement (the UKUSA Agreement) was signed between the two countries concerning signals intelligence and intelligence-sharing about the Soviet Union and its Eastern Bloc allies. This agreement was later expanded to include Canada and Australia in 1948, and New Zealand in 1956. By the end of the Cold War, intelligence-gathering had gone beyond military and diplomatic communications and now encompassed monitoring private and commercial communications through telecom, the internet, and digital networks. Interactions among the five nations over decades have produced incredible trust in each other. Intelligence gathered is often only open to those in the group, including raw and unprocessed intelligence. That trust is also helped by the liberal values they share, alongside being similar Anglophone political cultures, and a vow to not spy on each other. As of this date, the Five Eyes have added no additional members. The Five Eyes framework is used in

other sectors, such as trade, technology, and the military. However, the focus of this paper is on its intelligence-sharing capabilities.

The Edward Snowden leaks revealed that the Five Eyes were sharing limited intelligence with other countries, including Japan concerning information about North Korea.⁴ Furthermore, Noah Barkin reported that the Five Eyes had shared classified information on China's foreign activities with allies, though they did not invite nations outside the Five Eyes to their meetings. A statement did note that the groups would use “global partnerships” and hasten the sharing of foreign interference activities intelligence with others.⁵

In 2020, Kyodo News reported that the alliance met with Japan and South Korea and agreed to a framework for cooperation in intelligence gathering beyond the current analysis of North Korean ballistic missiles and illegal ship-to-ship cargo transfers. The Five Eyes were also reported to be more interested in exchanging intelligence concerning China's military. They had already held multiple meetings with Japan (among other allied countries) concerning Chinese cyberattacks (The Mainichi Shimbun also reported this information in 2019, with the meetings starting in 2018). The United States was especially interested in expanding the framework to include Japan. The Australian Secret Intelligence Service often helps in training Japanese intelligence specialists.⁶ An Information Security Agreement was signed between Japan and Australia in 2012, and a trilateral agreement

¹ "United States Relations With Japan - United States Department of State," 2020

² Fishlock, 2019, p.3

³ Maguire & Gioe, 2021

⁴ Citowicki, 2021

⁵ Barkin, 2018

⁶ Lopez Aranguren, 2016, p. 40

concerning the deepening of covert security operations was signed between the two countries along with the United States in 2016.⁷ Japan enjoys a good relationship with the other members of the coalition as well. As of late, Japan has increasingly engaged in naval and military exercises alongside the Five Eyes countries.⁸ Since 2018, Japan has participated in the Schriever Wargame, a space-training event managed by the Five Eyes, alongside France and Germany.⁹

Despite this growing relationship, however, Japan cannot regularly access the highly-classified information given only to actual members of the Five Eyes. Any intelligence the Five Eyes gives Japan is done on a case-by-case basis. This has led many to propose that Japan becomes its sixth member.

Case for Japan's inclusion into the Five Eyes

There are many arguments for why bringing Japan into the full confidence of the Five Eyes would benefit both sides. This is largely due to threats from China and North Korea, giving the intelligence-sharing community (particularly the United States) an intelligence anchor in Northeast Asia.¹⁰ Japan's inclusion would also signal to China that the Five Eyes nations have assumed a stronger commitment to challenging its activities.¹² Japan's cultural similarities to North Korea and China would make any intelligence it can gather and analyze an asset to the Five Eyes.¹³ Japan also enjoys what Joseph Nye would call "network power". Network power refers to Tokyo's high favorability among Asia nations (except the Republic of Korea), allowing Japan to make stronger informal connections and networks to these countries than the United States, China, and Russia.¹⁴

The Five Eyes would benefit from Japan's electronic surveillance capabilities, and intelligence gathered concerning the East China Sea. The Five Eyes would have access to *Radiopress*, a wire service that constantly monitors publicly available radio and satellite broadcasts from China and North Korea on behalf of CIRO. *Radiopress* has decades of information from these broadcasts and has a large group of linguists fluent in both Chinese and Korean to translate messages.¹⁵ In November 2015, a proposition was made to double the intelligence-gathering *Joho Shushu Eisei* satellite fleet over ten years. This fleet would be better able to help with reconnaissance related to North Korea's and China's aerospace ambitions.¹⁶ As of 2021, Japan manages seven reconnaissance intelligence-gathering satellites, and it is expected that this satellite fleet will help out the Five Eyes in intelligence-gathering since they are heavily reliant on United States satellites.⁹ This fleet is supported by one of the largest intelligence-gathering infrastructure networks in the world, created by Japan over a series of decades.¹³ The analytical capabilities of the Japanese intelligence community are a vital commodity, and multiple countries have approached Japan for its insight into Asia.¹⁷

Japan would benefit by having even more access to intelligence from the Five Eyes countries than it currently has, and faster.¹⁸ In particular, it would have access to a better knowledge of missile defense, anti-submarine warfare, and space-based imaging.¹⁹ It would also allow Japan greater access to foreign intelligence, lessening its dependency on collecting foreign intelligence.²⁰ It would also be a natural progression of the intelligence-sharing already occurring between Japan and the Five Eyes nations. Plus, it would also fortify relations between the United States and Japan. On a minor note, Japan's admittance would also shake off accusations that the Five Eyes trust each other not due to shared values, but common language and ancestry.¹⁸

"The analytical capabilities of the Japanese intelligence community are a vital commodity..."

There are many proponents of Japan joining the Five Eyes. Former UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke positively about the prospect of Japan joining the Five Eyes in 2020, seeing Japan's inclusion as an opportunity to build on an already-positive relationship with the UK. Richard Armitage, a former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, felt that the Five Eyes needed to become more diverse (types of government, economy, language, etc.) to meet the intellectual demands of a changing world. Japan has expertise in these issues (including economic security) and Japan's inclusion would therefore benefit the Five Eyes.²¹ Rory Medcalf, the director of the National Security College at the Australian National University, saw Japan's inclusion as a "force multiplier".²² Japan's current-ruling Liberal Democracy Party published a report in December 2020, "Towards Establishing an Economic Security Strategy", stating that Japan should join the Five Eyes, seeing that with the rise of China's maritime ambitions, some form of deal between the alliance and Japan was inevitable.²³ Shingo Yamagami, Japan's Ambassador to Australia, told The Sydney Morning Herald that he was optimistic that his country would join the Five Eyes.²⁴ Taro Kono, Japan's Defense Minister under Prime Minister Abe, has also expressed support and interest.²⁵ The Center for Strategic & International Studies also recommended the inclusion of Japan in a 2018 report to help fortify its current alliance with the United States.¹⁹

Obstacles to Japan's inclusion in the Five Eyes

However, there are complications to Japan joining the Five Eyes that must be addressed. The largest obstacle to Japan joining the Five Eyes is the state of its current intelligence-gathering and assessment capabilities, which are limited, and complex in bureaucracy. It may or may not be up to the standards of the Five Eyes. Its existing intelligence community operates as five self-contained entities, with limited interaction or coordination between them, and limited applicability toward foreign intelligence. The Public Security Intelligence Agency deals only with

⁷ Mark, 2021

⁸ Fishlock, 2019, p.4

⁹ Kotani, 2022

¹⁰ Citowicki, 2021

¹¹ "Five Eyes' intel alliance ties up with Japan over N. Korea", 2020

¹² Mark, 2021

¹³ Weedon, 2020

¹⁴ Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2020

¹⁵ Moriyasu, 2021

¹⁶ Lopez Aranguren, 2016, p. 38-39

¹⁷ Moriyasu, 2021

¹⁸ Newsham, 2020

¹⁹ Armitage & Nye, 2018, p.9

²⁰ Fishlock, 2019, p.4

²¹ Armitage and Cooper, 2021

²² Citowicki, 2021

²³ Kotani, 2022

²⁴ Mark, 2021

²⁵ Weedon, 2020

internal threats. The Defense Intelligence Headquarters' human intelligence collection is limited by Japan's Constitution (the government cannot engage in domestic signals intelligence operations) and is not allowed to collect non-military signals in Japan, nor data information in cyberspace.²³ The National Police Agency has the widest network but is limited to operations concerning police investigations and the application of the law (it cannot constantly gather cyber and signals intelligence). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the most experience of all of Japan's intelligence agencies, can collect lots of data, and can interpret said data using its Intelligence and Analysis Service (IAS). However, it cannot collect intelligence abroad, and the diplomatic information it collects is not always useful to the Japanese government unless its IAS is used. The Cabinet Intelligence and Research Office have not been able to properly centralize Japan's intelligence, due to a shortage of personnel, insufficient budget allocation, and its legal inability to conduct foreign intelligence operations outside of Japan.²⁶ The DIH and CRO are the agencies most likely to collect useful foreign intelligence, and even they are limited in scope and capacity. There have also been tensions and rivalries between the intelligence agencies, as well as an overlap of responsibilities and poor information-sharing between them.²⁷ Japan also has little technical and institutional expertise in counter-terrorism.²⁸ There is little public support for creating an agency focused exclusively on gathering human intelligence. This is due to the public perception that the establishment of such an agency harkens back to Japan's militaristic past.^{29 30}

An especially sore point is that Japan has no dedicated foreign intelligence agency, so its foreign intelligence capabilities are limited. Japan also does not have a dedicated agency devoted to collecting and analyzing digital intelligence, and Michito Tsuruoka believes that such an agency would be necessary for greater collaboration.³¹ These shortcomings of Japan's intelligence agencies are currently mitigated by the United States intelligence, which supplies Japan with necessary information through its 1960 Mutual Cooperation and Security treaty.

Attempts have been made in the past to reform and simplify the complex intelligence system and fill in the holes. In December 2015, Japan created a new counter-terrorism intelligence unit, which included experts on foreign countries from various Japanese intelligence agencies, and has some officers in overseas posts.²⁸ According to the *Mainichi Shimbun*, in 2019, a request from the Five Eyes to shore up countermeasures against Chinese cyberattacks (along with warnings of possible backdoors from Chinese telecom products) led to Japan deciding to no longer purchase Chinese telecommunications products for government use, and put in tough safety measures for cloud data storage and exchange service providers used by government services.³² Japan has also requested companies offering key infrastructure services to increase their cybersecurity.³³

One of Japan's biggest moves to better strengthen its hold on information came in 2013, when Japan formed the National Security Council, to better coordinate national security and military concerns, and provide a point of diplomatic contact with foreign nations. The Specially Designated Secrets Act was passed in the same year to impose harsher punishments for leaking secret information (defense, terrorism, diplomacy, etc.). Both are controversial due to a perceived lack of independent oversight.³⁴ In 2015, Japan passed legislation to reinterpret part of Japan's Constitution that expressly forbade Japan from maintaining any force with war potential. This reinterpretation now allows Japan's troops to serve abroad in combat roles. This has also proven controversial.³⁵ Even with all of this, according to Newsham (2020), Japan still does not have a unified security clearance system to ensure only certain people have access to certain classified information, and the process of classifying information is still largely lax.³⁶ In a 2020 online video chat from the Center for Strategic & International Studies, Armitage acknowledged the absence of this clearance system in the Japanese Diet (Japan's legislature). Armitage noted that to enter the Five Eyes, the coalition had to be confident that intelligence passed onto members of the Diet would not go to press.³⁷

Japan also does not have comprehensive anti-espionage legislation.³⁸ Japan's legal restrictions also still prevent adequate intelligence-gathering.³⁹

If we were to ask if Japan's current intelligence and analysis capabilities were enough for the Five Eyes, the answer would be no. According to Akita Hiroyuki (a commentator for *Nikkei Asia Review*, a news magazine focused on developments in Asia), Japan would need to improve its ability to protect domestic intelligence security and prove it can give the Five Eyes valuable intelligence analysis. Armitage International felt likewise, and also believed that Japan must start developing and improving procedures to protect shared intelligence and to encourage trust from the other Five Eyes nations.⁴⁰ If it cannot do so and gets into the Five Eyes anyway, disappointment and distrust among them could follow.⁴¹

Even if Japan gains entry into the Five Eyes, Japan will still need to create, grow, and strengthen its foreign intelligence collection and analysis capabilities.⁴² Thomas Maguire and David Gioe argued that these improvements to intelligence and secret-keeping were still not enough to allow membership, even with Japan's considerable talents in satellite and artificial intelligence. The differences in signals intelligence structure, organizational cultures, language, and legal authority would still be an enormous barrier to entry into the group, not to mention the amount of sudden unprecedented transparency Japan's intelligence community would have to show to the alliance.⁴³ Japan's intelligence community is very insular, cautious, and conservative in assessing intelligence. It would be uncomfortable for them to suddenly have to show more than they would like to.⁴⁴ It would be a difficult adjustment for both sides.

²⁶ Lopez Aranguren, 2016, p. 32-36

²⁷ Lopez Aranguren, 2016, p. 34, 36

²⁸ Lopez Aranguren, 2016, p. 39

²⁹ Fishlock, 2019, p.3-4

³⁰ Kotani, 2022

³¹ Tsuruoka, 2020

³² "Five Eyes' intel alliance ties up with Japan over N. Korea", 2020

³³ "Five Eyes' intel alliance ties up with Japan over N. Korea", 2020

³⁴ Fishlock, 2019, p.6, 8

³⁵ Weedon, 2020

³⁶ Panda & Panda, 2020

³⁷ Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2020

³⁸ Tsuruoka, 2020

³⁹ Kotani, 2022

⁴⁰ Armitage and Cooper, 2021

⁴¹ Citowicki, 2021

⁴² Fishlock, 2019, p.4

⁴³ Maguire & Gioe, 2021

⁴⁴ Newsham, 2020

There are potential problems with the coalition itself. Tsuruoka notes that no one outside of the Five Eyes knows the intelligence the alliance possesses. Hence, no one knows the quantity or quality of intelligence Japan would have to give to the group in exchange for an entry into the Five Eyes.⁴⁵ It is also unclear how much access to information Japan would be granted upon entry into the Five Eyes, so it may not enjoy unlimited access right from the start. Bruce Klingner, a former CIA officer, pointed out that the Five Eyes nations had restrictions on what information was shared, which might be limited by countries involved, restricted to countries with similar capabilities in the types of intelligence shared, and country proximity.⁴⁶ There is the fear that adding *any* additional member to the Five Eyes would simply make it easier for adversaries to compromise intelligence shared among the group. Japan must reassure the other members that it can resist intelligence compromise. The Five Eyes would also have to reveal requirements, capabilities, and weaknesses to Japan upon its inclusion. Since the group has never allowed other members in, hesitancy would be a barrier to full trust between the alliance and Japan.⁴⁷ Trust is paramount to the Five Eyes to freely share intelligence. In 2015, former National Security Agency Director Michael Hayden felt that this interconnected trust made it near impossible for prospective members to join.⁴⁷ However, the Five Eyes are not without weaknesses. There are already concerns about New Zealand, one of the members, no longer being able to prevent compromise, and being reluctant to expand the Five Eyes' power against China.⁴⁸ There have also been security issues among the Five Eyes nation themselves, and undue influence from more hostile nations.⁴⁹ These issues might make the group as a whole less likely to expand its membership.⁵⁰

Conclusions and recommendations

In addition to the obstacles to expanding the Five Eyes, which despite the prospective benefits of Japan's inclusions, have remained significant enough to keep Tokyo out of this trusted intelligence-sharing community, there are also practical questions surrounding just what kind of process expanding the Five Eyes would entail, given its lack of a recent history of enlargement. For example, would it be better to ease Japan into membership? This could be done through a multi-staged accession process with benchmarks. Alternatively, would membership simply be offered? The consensus is that an augmented form of cooperation is preferable to full membership. Philip Citowicki believes in easing Japan into membership through a Five Eyes Plus One format. This would allow Japan the opportunity to slowly gain the Five Eyes' trust, reduce the chance of intelligence leaks, and raise Japan's intelligence-gathering and analysis quality to the point that it could eventually become a sixth member.⁵¹ Maguire & Gioe concurs with Citowicki, arguing that there is a huge difference between Japan strengthening current diplomatic and cooperative ties with the Five Eyes nations, and joining the Five Eyes outright.⁵² People in both Japan and within the Five Eyes nations needed to have an understanding of how Japan's inclusion in the group would change both parties. Instead, a more realistic aim for Japan should be a similar Five Eyes Plus format that Citowicki

championed, along with more access to signals intelligence to Japan regarding China and North Korea.

It makes sense for some to argue for Japan to become the Five Eyes' sixth member, especially proponents from the United States and Japan. The United States would benefit from having a strong security facilitator in Japan within the Indo-Pacific region. It would improve upon the current United States- Japan relationship. It could potentially encourage improvement in Japan's intelligence process and secret-keeping. It would also serve to ward off potential threats from China and North Korea. But proponents also need to know that there are many dangers – both known and unknown dangers – that must be acknowledged. Japan's entry into the Five Eyes may not produce the benefits both sides hope for and may prove to produce consequences neither side is ready for. This does not mean that greater collaboration is impossible, as even opponents of the inclusion felt that a stronger bond between the two groups was beneficial. But it must be done with care, and with a clear understanding of expectations.

⁴⁵Tsuruoka, 2020

⁴⁶Moriyasu, 2021

⁴⁷Maguire & Gioe, 2021

⁴⁸Dziedzic, 2021

⁴⁹Newsham, 2020

⁵⁰Panda, 2020

⁵¹Citowicki, 2021

⁵²Maguire & Gioe, 2021

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