

U.S.-Japan Security Relations in the post-Cold War: Redefinition or Entanglement*

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本稿は冷戦の終結後の最初10年の日米関係における主要な変化と発展を検証する。具体的には、1) 米軍の東アジアからの削減あるいは撤退の可能性への日本側における懸念、他方で、米国が関与する可能性がある地域紛争、例えば、朝鮮半島と台湾海峡、に巻き込まれること（エンタングルメント）への日本側の懸念、2) 米日安全保障関係の強化における「再定義」か「再確認」の問題、そして3) 米国と日本の相互協力および安全保障条約の2つの主要な役割、すなわち、日本の防衛と東アジアの安定の維持、の三大側面を考察する。

This paper examines the major changes and developments in the U.S.-Japan security relations during the first decade after the end of the Cold War in terms of the following major aspects: 1) Japan's concern about the reduction of U.S. troops or military withdrawal of the U.S. from East Asia, and the subsequent reverse concern about possible Japanese "entanglement" in regional conflicts in which the U.S. is involved, in such major areas as the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Strait; 2) the question of "re-definition" or "re-affirmation" regarding the strengthening of U.S.-Japan security arrangements; and 3) the inter-relationship between the two major roles of the U.S.-Japan Mutual Cooperation and Security Treaty: the defense of Japan and the maintenance of stability in East Asia.

During the first decade of the post-Cold War era, the U.S.-Japan alliance completed a series of coordination efforts in order to adjust to a new security environment.¹ Since the principal threat to the alliance, the Soviet Union, had ceased to exist, the U.S. and Japanese governments had sought to re-examine the roles of their security arrangements by strengthening and expanding defense cooperation in major areas, including regional contingency planning as well as intelligence sharing. It appears that the alliance still serves the respective interests of the two governments. From Washington's point of view, it is essential to retain its forward base structure for the maintenance of regional security in East Asia and also to preserve bilateral security arrangements with its major ally, the second largest economic great power, Japan. From Tokyo's point of view, it is vital to maintain the alliance with the world's sole remaining superpower for national and regional security, both of which are based on its nuclear umbrella (the U.S. providing nuclear deterrence). Together, the United States and Japan continue to share a broad strategic objective, namely the maintenance of stability in East Asia. Hence, the two governments had taken three major initiatives to coordinate and strengthen the

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¹ The author has been conducting a larger project on U.S.-Japan security relations consisting of: 1) The evolution of U.S.-Japan security arrangements during the Cold War era, 1945-1991; 2) Coordination of the alliance system during the post-Cold War era, 1992-2000; and 3) Changes of the alliance system in the post-9/11 era, 2001- to the present.

alliance system, namely the Nye Initiative of February 1995, the Japanese National Defense Program Outline (NDPO) of November 1995, and the U.S.-Japan Joint Declaration on Security of April 1996. The U.S.-Japan alliance during the 1990s, however, was also challenged by a number of complex problems of tension and mistrust, including:

- Washington's concern about Japan's intentions and commitment to the re-strengthening of the alliance, and Tokyo's unease about the U.S.'s insufficient attention to major areas of political-security importance to Japan in East Asia, including the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Strait
- The rapid increase of severe domestic political pressure in Japan over U.S. bases in Okinawa Prefecture after the rape of an Okinawan girl by three U.S. servicemen in September 1995
- The growth of China as a military and economic power (the "China Threat" debate), the March 1995 Taiwan Strait Crisis (the U.S. sending two destroyers to deter China's testing of missiles over the Taiwan Strait), and President Bill Clinton's trip to China in June 1998, which caused criticisms of "Japan passing" (namely passing Japan by on the way to China) from the Japanese public and concerns among Japanese officials about Washington entering into a long-term tilt toward Beijing
- North Korea's nuclear development, including the 1993-1994 nuclear crisis and the August 1998 launch of a Taepodong three-stage ballistic missile over Japan, which elicited different responses from the U.S. and Japanese governments, namely Japan being firm and the U.S. being more reserved

From a historical perspective, as former adversaries, the U.S.-Japan relations had the "victor-loser" and "conqueror-conquered" structural and psychological asymmetry in its origins. Hence, the U.S.-Japan security arrangements still play a vital role as the "cork in the bottle" in order to restrain the emergence of an independent Japanese defense policy. Of equal importance are the long-lasting fears among Asian neighbors about Japan's future military-security role in the region. Finally, the Constitutional restriction by Article 9 also remains as a key devise that functions as a brake to Japanese substantial rearmament.²

However, there has been a growing tendency within Japanese policy-making circles to pursue a more independent path for Japan's foreign and defense policy, as the U.S. intention and commitment in East Asia became questionable during the early and mid-1990s. On the one hand, the Japanese government had been concerned whether the U.S. would reduce its military presence in East Asia, which might ultimately lead to its withdrawal from the region. On the other hand, Japanese officials were aware of the possible danger of involvement in U.S. military operations in East Asian regional conflicts.

Do the recent differences and disagreements between Washington and Tokyo indicate the rise of tension between the two sides in the long-term? Will the causes of these tensions bring about a fundamental restructuring of the bilateral security arrangements, such as reducing the number of U.S. troops from bases in Japan and encouraging a more expanded overseas role for Japanese Self-Defense Forces? Or,

² Article 9 of the 1947 Constitution of Japan renounces "war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes" and the maintenance of "war potential." It is the basis of the Japanese government's public position that Japan cannot exercise the right of collective defense.

could these tensions still be resolved within the existing framework of alliance management with more effective coordination and communication?

This paper examines the major changes and developments in the U.S.-Japan security relations during the first decade after the end of the Cold War in terms of the following major aspects: 1) Japan's concern about the reduction of U.S. troops or military withdrawal of the U.S. from East Asia, and the subsequent reverse concern about possible Japanese "entanglement" in regional conflicts in which the U.S. is involved, in such major areas as the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Strait; 2) the question of "re-definition" or "re-affirmation" regarding the strengthening of U.S.-Japan security arrangements; and 3) the inter-relationship between the two major roles of the U.S.-Japan Mutual Cooperation and Security Treaty: the defense of Japan and the maintenance of stability in East Asia.

U.S. Strategic Realignment in East Asia in the post-Cold War era

Since the 1940s, the United States has been taking a forward-base strategy in East Asia. According to Article 6 of the 1960 U.S.-Japan Mutual Cooperation and Security Treaty, U.S. forces in Japan have access to bases and facilities for the defense of Japan and the maintenance of peace and security in East Asia. Under the treaty arrangements, the United States is "committed to consult with Japan prior to the introduction of nuclear weapons, including intermediate and long-range missiles, and prior to launching from the bases military combat operations not directly related to the defense of Japan except for combat operations in immediate response to an attack against the UN forces in Korea."³ The so-called prior consultation arrangements thus allowed the U.S. free use of its bases in Japan in the case of Korean contingencies. During the Cold War, this asymmetrical strategic relationship with U.S. forces was an effective security arrangement for Japan. Tokyo could retain Washington's defense commitment without taking substantial responsibilities for regional security that might undermine its political and economic relations with its neighbors in East Asia. In the post-Vietnam era, there was a growing concern among Asian states about a possible U.S. withdrawal from East Asia. However, Japan gradually moved toward more explicit security cooperation with the United States in order to ensure the U.S. continuing presence in the region. During the 1980s, the Japanese defense budget increased by an average of 6 percent per year. U.S. and Japanese forces promoted joint training and exercises under a division of roles between U.S. forces as the "spear" and Japanese Self-Defense Forces as the "shield."⁴

The fluidity in the security environment since the end of the Cold War influenced East Asian regional security as well as Japan's domestic political situation in terms of security policy. The collapse of bipolarity in international security created new opportunities for the "Asianization" of Japan: the re-examination of Japanese identity as a part of Asia.⁵ A significant turning point for the Japanese government was the outbreak of the 1990-1991 Persian Gulf Crisis and

³ Extracts of "U.S. Policy Toward Japan" (Approved June 11, 1960), p.1, attached to Blouin to General Twining, The Joint Chief of Staff, "U.S. Policy Toward Japan" August 18, 1960, 0000036536, Reversion Issues, 1959-1972, Edward Freimuth Collection, Okinawa Prefectural Archives.

⁴ Michael J. Green, "The Search for An Active Security Partnership: Lessons from the 1980s," in Akira Iriye and Robert A. Wampler (eds.), *Partnership: The United States and Japan, 1951-2001*. (Tokyo, New York, London: Kodansha International, 2001), pp.142-144.

⁵ Yoichi Funabashi, "The Asianization of Asia," *Foreign Affairs*, (November/December 1993), pp.75-85.

the subsequent Gulf War which raised Japanese awareness of the reality of the nature of the security environment in the post-Cold War era. Japanese officials took a painful lesson from the ineffectiveness of Japanese security policy after Japan's financial contribution (of \$13billion) failed to receive any credit from the international community. Nor could the Japanese government send any forces, even for non-combat operations, to the Persian Gulf region because those operations had not been defined as responses to a direct threat to Japan. A U.S. official criticized Japanese responses for being "too little, too late."⁶ The Gulf operations demonstrated that the United States and the world still measured security in terms of the traditional means of military force. Hence, after the so-called Gulf War "trauma," the Japanese government more actively sought to share responsibility for the maintenance of peace and stability in the international community. Accordingly, the passage of the 1992 Peace Keeping Operations (PKO) bill legalized limited participation of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (SDF) in UN peacekeeping operations.⁷

From the autumn of 1993 to the spring of 1994, the newly empowered and internationalized SDF revealed its ineffectiveness when a new crisis took place on the Korean Peninsula. The United States prepared for economic embargo, blockade, and even possible war with North Korea regarding its stubbornness over a suspected nuclear weapons development program. When Washington approached Tokyo about joining this attempt, the Japanese government was unable to participate in any significant planning, because the new peacekeeping mission for the SDF did not apply to cases where hostilities were imminent. In the end, the North Korean nuclear crisis was resolved without conflict. However, from it the Pentagon, the Defense Agency, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs all took home a lesson for future bilateral security arrangements: the necessity for Japan to be more fully integrated into U.S.-Japan regional security policy in East Asia.

Within the context of Japanese domestic politics, the 38-year-long rule of the Liberal Democratic Party ended in August 1993 when Ichiro Ozawa took an initiative to form a coalition government under Prime Minister Morohiro Hosokawa. Ozawa advocated the significance of Japan becoming a "normal state" by exercising the right of collective security and actively enhancing its international contributions through UN Peacekeeping Operations.⁸ In February 1994, Prime Minister Hosokawa established an advisory group to review Japanese defense policy for the post-Cold War international security environment. The outcome of the review, the so-called Higuchi Commission Report of September 1994, emphasized the promotion of multilateral defense cooperation in regional and global security through multilateral institutions, especially the United Nations, as the new top priority in Japanese defense policy within a newly-emerging world order.⁹ After the collapse of the short-lived coalition government and the return of the LDP to power, the Socialist Party (later re-named to the Social Democratic Party), the largest party opposed to the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's security policy during the Cold

⁶ Hidetoshi Sotooka, Masaru Honda and Toshiaki Miura, *Japan-U.S. Alliance Half Century: Security Treaty and Secret Agreement* (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, 2002), pp.412-416.

⁷ Shellia Smith, "The Evolution of Military Cooperation in the U.S.-Japan Alliance," in Michael J. Green and Patrick M. Cronin (eds.), *The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Past, Present and Future*. (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1999), p.85.

⁸ Makoto Iokibe, Motoshige Ito, Katsuyuki Yakushiji (eds.) *Testimony of the 1990s: Ozawa Ichiro Government Takeover Theory*. (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, 2006), pp.184-196.

⁹ Sotooka, Honda and Miura, *Japan-U.S. Alliance Half Century: Security Treaty and Secret Agreement*, pp.491-494.

War, reversed its position under the leadership of Tomiichi Murayama (who became prime minister in June 1994). Murayama declared that the SDF was constitutional and that he would support the U.S.-Japan Mutual Cooperation and Security Treaty. Thus, the LDP-Socialist rivalry, which characterized the basic pattern of debate on Japan's defense and security policy during the Cold War, lost its political dynamism.

From Washington's point of view, however, the Higuchi Report raised a question of Japanese commitment to the U.S.-Japan alliance because it listed the improvement of the functions of U.S.-Japan security relations as the second priority of Japanese defense policy. Thus, U.S. policymakers, historians, policy analysts, economists, and international relations theorists who were engaged in the policy and the scholarly debates regarding U.S. security relations with Japan produced a report entitled "Re-defining the U.S.-Japan Alliance" in November 1994.¹⁰ The report presented a more active agenda to strengthen U.S.-Japan security cooperation (rather than re-interpreting or revising the Security Treaty). It also expressed skepticism about the effectiveness of managing international security through multilateral institutions and warned that the motives and resources of Japanese policy planning were drifting away from the U.S.-Japan alliance. Finally, the report raised a significant point of further discussions and assessments for the two governments – whether the on-going review would be either "re-affirmation" or "re-definition" of the U.S.-Japan alliance.

When a Harvard professor of International Relations, Joseph S. Nye Jr., was appointed Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs by Secretary of Defense William Perry in November 1994, he was determined to produce a new strategic outline for U.S. policy toward East Asia.¹¹ Nye and Perry basically sought to stop the unilateral reduction of U.S. overseas forces, especially from the Asia-Pacific region, initiated by the George H.W. Bush administration, which raised concerns among Asian states about a possible U.S. withdrawal from the region. The Nye Initiative, officially known as "The United States Security Strategy for the East Asia Pacific Region," was published in February 1995.¹² Nye described "security like oxygen: you tend not to notice until you lose it."¹³ The forward presence of U.S. troops provided the "oxygen" for the stability in East Asia that enabled economic development. The document reaffirmed U.S. commitment to maintain a stable forward presence in East Asia, at a level of around 100,000 troops, for the foreseeable future. It also declared that the security alliance with Japan would remain the "linchpin" of U.S. security policy in Asia and that the U.S. must never allow trade friction to undermine its alliance with Japan.

Importantly, however, there were two perspectives within the U.S. government regarding the promotion of the Nye Initiative. First, there was a group of officials who focused on "re-affirmation" of U.S.-Japan security arrangements to adjust to the post-Cold War world. Second, specialists of international security and Japan policy intended to materialize a "re-definition" of the alliance system so that it could play a much more active joint role in the new security environment in East

¹⁰ Ibid., pp.495-498.

¹¹ Yoichi Funabashi, *Alliance Adrift*. (New York: Council of Foreign Relations Press, 1999), pp.248-276.

¹² U.S. Department of Defense, *United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region*, February 27, 1995.

¹³ Joseph S. Nye Jr., "East Asia: The Case of Deep Engagement," *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 1995), pp. 90-102.

Asia. Regarding the role of Japan, U.S. officials who wanted to put more pressure on Japan to increase its military role in regional security argued that re-definition would be insufficient. On the other hand, outside observers of Japanese defense policy, especially in other Asian states, considered that re-definition would go too far because it would stimulate the rapid development of Japanese military role in East Asia.

In Nye's view, the new initiative was principally about a Washington-Tokyo joint "re-definition" of the U.S.-Japan alliance in relation to the rapid growth of China's military and economic power as well as to North Korea's nuclear development.¹⁴ The stronger U.S.-Japan security relations would provide credibility for a U.S. forward military deployment in East Asia as well as the U.S. pursuit of engagement policy with China. Japan's closer security ties with the U.S. would more effectively prevent the re-emergence of the historical Sino-Japanese rivalry in the region than Japan's pursuit of an independent defense policy. Finally, the revitalized U.S.-Japan alliance would deter Beijing's attempt to drive a wedge between Washington and Tokyo.

Nye saw three major steps toward this re-definition: his initiative; Japan's revision of the 1978 National Defense Program Outline (NDPO); and the joint declaration on security for the twentieth century by a U.S. President and a Japanese Prime Minister, resulting in the revision of the U.S.-Japan Joint Guidelines for Defense Cooperation.¹⁵ The Nye Initiative was planned at the assistant secretary level in the Washington bureaucracy. Assistant Secretary of Defense Nye was assisted by Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asia-Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell and Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Defense Andrew Bennett. They also consulted with Japan experts, such as a senior analyst at the National Intelligence Council (NIC), Ezra Vogel, and a Japan analyst in the Institute for Defense Analysis, Michael J. Green. This group of policy planners coordinated with the State Department, most notably the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Winston Lord. Because of the Defense Department's major role in burden-sharing in the forward deployment of U.S. troops in East Asia, especially Japan, the State Department, the White House, and the National Security Council did not oppose the Nye Initiative. The Clinton Administration mainly focused on U.S.-Japan trade relations, which consequently enabled a bureaucratic initiative in the security field at assistant secretary level. Clinton himself won his first presidential election by his campaign for the re-activation of the U.S. domestic economic situation and was re-elected by his continuing emphasis on U.S. economy as well as international trade. Thus, although the April 1996 U.S.-Japan Joint Declaration on Security introduced three pillars of U.S.-Japan cooperation (security, economy, and trade), the Clinton White House itself was still primarily focusing on U.S. economic relations with Japan.

Regarding the growing necessity to cover regional contingencies, the Japanese response toward the Nye Initiative was the revision of the Japanese National Defense Program Outline (NDPO) (which had already been under way since 1993). The new NDPO, also the first Japanese official response to the changing security environment in the post-Cold War world, was approved by the Murayama cabinet on November 28, 1995. The new NDPO shifted the focus of Japan's basic defense concept from defense against "small-scale limited invasion" to response to

¹⁴ Funabashi, *Alliance Drift*, pp.254-256.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.264-273.

the new regional security developments.¹⁶ First, while the “possibility of a regional armed conflict has become remote, complicated and diverse regional conflicts are taking place in the Asia-Pacific and new trends of dangers, such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are on the increase.” Second, “in the area surrounding Japan, the possibility of a situation which would seriously affect the security of Japan cannot be excluded.” The new NDPO explained the three major roles of Japan’s defense capabilities:

- National defense
- Response to large-scale disasters and other situations in the areas surrounding Japan “which would have an important influence on national peace and stability”
- Contribution to the creation of a more stable security environment, such as participation in international peacekeeping activities, promotion of security dialogue and exchange among defense authorities, and cooperation in the areas of arms control and disarmament

Under the new NDPO, the role of the Self-Defense Forces was expanded beyond the defense of Japanese territory in two major areas:

- “[V]arious situations including a situation in the areas surrounding Japan,” which require the building up of the SDF in order to cope with such contingencies as large-scale disasters, terrorist activities, and flows of refugees, as well as the SDF’s support for the U.S. military operations in Japan’s surrounding area for the security of Japan
- “[T]he establishment of a more stable security environment,” through the SDF’s participation by non-military means in UN Peacekeeping Operations

The new NDPO defined four main functions for the U.S.-Japan security arrangements to secure and maintain:

- Japan’s security
- Peace and stability in the surrounding region of Japan
- A more stable security environment
- Peace and stability of the international community

Overall, the new outline sought to clarify an interaction between the U.S.-Japan alliance’s role: to defend Japan and to maintain East Asian regional security. It remained unclear, however, what kind of role Japan could play for the maintenance of regional security because of the constitutional restrictions, which still remain unaltered today.¹⁷

¹⁶ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “National Defense Program Outline in and after FY 1996,” November 28, 1995 <<http://www.fas.org/news/japan/ndpo.htm>>

¹⁷ Thomas U. Berger, “Alliance Politics and Japan’s Postwar Culture of Antimilitarism,” in Michael J. Green and Patrick M. Cronin (eds.), *The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Past, Present and Future*. (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1999), pp.199-201. In 1999, the Japanese National Diet established a research commission on constitutional issues. Opinion polls in 1998, for example, indicated that a majority of Japanese citizens favored the revision of the Constitution of Japan. However, only a minority supported the elimination of Article 9.

On April 17, 1996, the U.S.-Japan Joint Declaration on Security signed by President Bill Clinton and Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto “reaffirmed” the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security as “the cornerstone for achieving common security objectives, and for maintaining a stable and prosperous environment for the Asia-Pacific region” for the twenty-first century.¹⁸ In particular, the two governments agreed to “undertake efforts to advance cooperation” in five major areas:

- Continue close consultation on defense policies and military postures, including the U.S. force structure in Japan, as well as the exchange of information and views on the international situation, in particular the Asia-Pacific region
- Initiate a revision of the 1978 Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation in order to deal with situations that may emerge in the areas surrounding Japan and that may have an important influence on the peace and security of Japan
- Promote a bilateral cooperative relationship through the April 1996 signing of the Agreement Concerning Reciprocal Provision of Logistic Support, Supplies, and Services
- Enhance mutual exchange in the areas of technology and equipment
- Cooperate in the ongoing study on ballistic missile defense and prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery

In short, the U.S. and Japan shared a regional outlook on the Asia-Pacific region. In the short-term, the two governments would continue to focus on the remaining tensions on the Korean Peninsula which constituted a source of instability and uncertainty in the region. In the long-term, U.S.-Japan security arrangements would play an essential role in continuously ensuring U.S. “engagement” in the Asia-Pacific region.¹⁹ The joint declaration also highlighted cooperation in regional multilateral security forums as a significant objective for the United States and Japan in the next century. In theory, peacekeeping is a legitimate and significant area for an independent Japanese contribution to the international community. In practice, however, Japanese officials during the mid-1990s still remained sensitive to the possibility of Washington constraining and even controlling Japan’s peacekeeping role within the alliance system. For the same reason, the SDF had also been reluctant to include peacekeeping as a major area of cooperation in U.S.-Japan security arrangements. Finally, the two governments agreed to review the 1978 Guidelines for Defense Cooperation between the United States and Japan along the same lines as the 1996 Joint Declarations on Security. After several years of bilateral negotiations and political debate, the Japanese government approved the new guidelines in September 1997, and the National Diet approved legislation to implement them in June 1999.

¹⁸ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “U.S.-Japan Joint Declaration on Security: Alliance for the 21st Century,” April 17, 1996 <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/security.html>>

The U.S.-Japan Joint Declaration on Security and the Defense Guidelines review had originally been planned for the fall of 1995, however President Clinton had postponed his visit to Japan November 1995 to April 1996 because of budgetary problems in the winter.

¹⁹ The joint declaration, however, did not explicitly refer to the rapid growth of China’s military and economic power.

Of particular importance, throughout the process of reviewing and approving of the new Defense Guidelines, there remained the dilemma of “entrapment or abandonment” for the Japanese government.²⁰ The new guidelines clarified functional areas of cooperation in the event of a regional crisis that had a direct effect on Japanese security, including logistical support for U.S. forces, sea-lane patrol, intelligence sharing, non-combat evacuation operations, and other missions that would not put Japanese forces into forward combat roles in third countries. Thus, the new guidelines potentially provided the U.S. and Japan greater flexibility to respond to crises. However, a greater flexibility also implied a greater integration of planning and decision-making in defense policy, which the Japanese government had resisted during and since the Cold War. In short, joint defense-planning, which is not necessarily the same as a treaty, only provides a blueprint for the implementation of bilateral operations, if civilian Japanese officials make a decision to participate in them. However, even this extent of integration appeared to be threatening to Japan’s traditional fear for “entrapment” in U.S. military involvement in regional conflicts. On the other hand, the Japanese government was also eager to increase burden-sharing in the U.S.-Japan alliance in order to prevent a U.S. withdrawal from East Asia, especially the U.S.’s “abandonment” of the bilateral security arrangements. Conceptually, the remaining structural problems in U.S.-Japan joint military operations could be overcome by changes in the Constitution of Japan by either recognizing the exercise of the right of collective defense or abolishing its Article 9 as a whole. In reality, however, despite a growing political momentum for the re-examination of the Constitution among conservative politicians and their supporters, these changes are unlikely to take place in the short-term. The majority of the Japanese public still desires a constitutional restriction on the roles of the SDF, and Japan’s Asian neighbors are also concerned about any important changes in the legal constraints on the Japanese military role.

U.S. Bases in Japan: The September 1995 Okinawan Crisis

After the end of the World War II, the Ryukyu Islands (Okinawa) remained under the administrative control of the U.S. military authority (High Commissioner of the Ryukyus from 1945 to 1972). The successive U.S. administrations also recognized that Japan retained “residential sovereignty” over the islands and were “publicly committed to return them at a time and under conditions as yet specified.”²¹ During the Vietnam War, U.S. bases in Okinawa had been used extensively for U.S. military operations, including the launching of B-52s, and therefore anti-war sentiment spread widely among the Japanese public. In the November 1969 joint communiqué, President Richard Nixon and Prime Minister Eisaku Sato agreed to the reversion of the administrative rights of Okinawa from the U.S. to Japan. On the one hand, the Japanese government continuously sought to achieve the so-called “homeland level,” namely the withdrawal of all nuclear weapons from Okinawa in accordance with the three non-nuclear principles of 1967 (Japan would not possess or produce nuclear weapons; and it would not allow the entry of nuclear weapons into Japanese territories). On the other hand, the U.S.

²⁰ Michael J. Green, “The Search for An Active Security Partnership: Lessons from the 1980s,” in Akira Iriye and Robert A. Wampler (eds.), *Partnership: The United States and Japan, 1951-2001*. (Tokyo, New York, London: Kodansha International, 2001), pp.152-153.

²¹ “Japan: Okinawa Reversion,” p.1, attached to Memo from Sneider to Bundy and Brown, “Trip Report: Okinawa Reversion on the Front Burner” December 24, 1968, Sneider, Richard L., Box 834, Name Files NSC Files, Nixon Presidential Material Staff, National Archives.

government was determined to obtain Japan's assurance for the "maximum conventional free use" of its bases on Okinawa in cases of regional contingencies, including major areas as the Korean Peninsula, the Taiwan Strait, and Indochina (for the continuation of conventional military operations for the Vietnam War).²² Nixon and Sato also made a "secret pact" regarding the re-entry and transit of nuclear weapons in cases of great emergencies.²³

Particularly significant, declassified U.S. governmental documents show the evolution of the confidential understandings among U.S. officials regarding the inter-relationship between the free-use of U.S. bases in Okinawa for conventional combat operations and the re-entry and transit of nuclear weapons. For example, the May 1969 'National Security Study Memorandum 5' (hereafter referred to as NSSM 5) paper suggested that: "by prior agreement the United States could bring in nuclear weapons when, in the opinion of the U.S., an emergency existed, such as major hostilities in Korea or a Chinese Communist attack on Taiwan": or "the U.S. and Japan could agree to consult when in the opinion of either, an emergency existed; if they agreed there was an emergency, then the U.S. could bring in nuclear weapons to Okinawa."²⁴ On the right of transportation of nuclear weapons through Japanese territories, this declassified document revealed an understanding which was then confidential within the U.S. government that: "Japan now acquiesces in transit by naval vessels armed with nuclear weapons."²⁵ Despite the Japanese government's public assurances that no nuclear weapons would be allowed in Okinawa after reversion, the NSSM5 paper already made it clear that "this right [to introduce nuclear weapons onboard warships] would extent automatically to Okinawa" following reversion.²⁶ This evidence confirms that for U.S. officials, re-entry and transit rights of nuclear weapons were the common understanding even before the beginning of U.S.-Japan negotiations for Okinawa Reversion. The U.S. government sought to utilize both the joint communiqué in public and confidential agreement in private to preserve the effectiveness of U.S. base functions as well as nuclear deterrent capabilities. Therefore, despite the wide-spread public sentiment in Japan for non-nuclear reversion, Okinawa remained as the "keystone" in the U.S. strategic thinking in East Asia for the rest of the Cold War.²⁷

When three U.S. servicemen abducted and raped an Okinawan girl in September 1995, tremendous protests erupted throughout Japan. Officials in Washington and Tokyo, as well as governments in Asia, monitored the Okinawan situation with deep concern.²⁸ The U.S. government regarded the approximately

²² National Security Decision Memorandum 13 (NSDM13): Policy Toward Japan, May 28, 1969, p.2, National Security Study Memorandums, Box 365, Subject-Files, National Security Council Files, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Archives.

²³ Kei Wakaizumi. *I would like to believe that there was no other policy option.* (Tokyo: Bungeisyunju, 1994).

²⁴ National Security Study Memorandum 5 (NSSM 5): Japan, April 28, 1969, pp.24-25, Attachment to Memo, Jeanne W. Davis, National Security Council, to Office of the Vice President, "U.S.-Japanese Relationship: Summary," April 29, 1969, Records of National Security Council, RG 273, National Archives.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.25.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Okinawa's role in U.S. strategy toward East Asia, see, for example, Chalmers Johnson, *Okinawa: Cold War Island.* (Cardiff, California: Japan Policy Research Institute, 1999).

²⁸ Those three criminals were Marine Pfc Rodrico Harp, Marine, Pfc Kendrick Leder, and Seaman Marcus Gill.

forty-seven thousand U.S. troops based in Japan as the touchstone for stability in the U.S.-Japan alliance and East Asia as a whole. However, as the Japanese public grew increasingly uneasy with the overwhelming U.S. military presence in Okinawa, the base issue became the central cause of friction and mistrust in the U.S.-Japan bilateral relations. There was also tension between Tokyo and Okinawa. Former Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Winston Lord explains: "The Okinawans felt that they were carrying the brunt of the inconveniences of the American presence and that Tokyo politicians, as they weren't on the island, thought that they could let the Okinawans worry about it. On the mainland of Japan, these politicians were not disposed to carry the full burden."²⁹ Thus, there were a number of negotiations between Prime Minister Hashimoto and Okinawan authorities, especially Governor Ohta regarding "the division of labor and the economic help provided to Okinawa to compensate Okinawans for the burdens they were carrying."³⁰

In order to unify, realign, or reduce U.S. bases on the islands, and also to diminish any inconveniences, such as noise-pollution, environmental destruction, accidents, and crimes, the U.S. and Japanese governments established the Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO). In particular, the SACO sought to discuss a more flexible interpretation and application of the Status Agreement for U.S. forces in Japan.³¹ The U.S. government agreed in April 1996 to return the Marine Corps air station at Futenma, one of the most controversial bases in Okinawa because of its enormous presence in the center of Futenma City.³² Moreover, when former Okinawan Governor Masahide Ota refused in March 1997 to extend leases on U.S. bases that were to expire, the Japanese National Diet passed by an 80 percent majority a special legislation overriding the Okinawa Prefectural Government decision.³³ In the end, although there was a growing expectation within the Japanese public that the number and size of U.S. bases would gradually be reduced, it did not create a much broader and grass-rooted opposition to U.S. bases in Japan. In the short-term, for example, because of growing security problems caused by North Korea and China (which this paper discusses later), the Japanese government still

²⁹ Winston Lord, Oral History Interview, p.418, The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collections (FAOHC), The Association of Diplomatic Studies and Training, Special Collections Division, Lauinger Library, Georgetown University, Washington D.C.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Its official full name is: Agreement under Article VI of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States of America, Regarding Facilities and Areas and the Status of United States Armed Forces in Japan. See the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan,

<<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/agree0009.html>>

The Status of Forces Agreement states: "When U.S. servicemen and their families commit crimes, they shall be detained by U.S. authorities until Japanese law enforcement agencies file complaints with prosecutors' office based on clear suspicion." This enables U.S. authorities to refuse Japanese investigators' requests to handover suspects related to the military.

³² Although the Special Action Committee on Facilities and Areas in Okinawa [SACO] had materialized smaller base reductions and reallocations, Futenma is still used by a number of U.S. Marine Corps helicopters.

³³ In November 1998, Ota was defeated in a prefectural election by the LDP candidate, Keiichi Inamine. Sheila A. Smith, "A Place Apart: Okinawa and Japan's Postwar Peace" in Akira Iriye and Robert A. Wampler, *Partnership: The United States and Japan, 1951-2001*. (Tokyo, New York, London: Kodansha International, 2001), pp.188-197.

saw the value in the continuation of a forward U.S. military presence in Japan. In the long-term, however, changes in the strategic environment in East Asia, such as re-unification on the Korean Peninsula or a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan Strait situation are likely to influence the size and function of U.S. forces in Japan.

On the other hand, there has been the evolution of a more alarming perception which regards the 1995 Okinawan Crisis as an embodiment of U.S.'s over-extension in the international security arena that subsequently caused fragmentation in its relations with allies. For example, Chalmers Johnson utilizes the concept, "blowback," to explain and analyze the depth of complexity in U.S. security policy toward East Asia. He defines "blowback" as "the unintended consequences of [American] policies that were kept secret from the American people."³⁴ During the Cold War, the U.S.'s two major military operations against Asian communism, the Korean War and the Vietnam War, could not have been conducted without the massive use of U.S. forces on Okinawa. In the post-Cold War Asia, Okinawa still remains a military frontline for the Pentagon's forward-deployed strategy, and is extensively used to project American hegemonic power throughout Asia. In particular, aspects of the American military presence on and control of Okinawa includes:

- As a prefecture of Japan, Okinawa has only 0.6 percent of Japan's total land-area, however, about 75 percent of facilities used by U.S. forces stationed in Japan are concentrated in the islands.
- U.S. military controls 20 percent of the principal agricultural land in the central and southern parts of the main island of Okinawa. The U.S. also controls 29 areas of the surrounding seas and 15 air spaces over the Okinawan Islands (which enable U.S. forces to operate for regional contingencies in the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Strait).
- Okinawa contains 39 bases, including Kadena Air Force Base, which is the largest airfield in East Asia.³⁵

If the U.S. and Japanese governments continue to delay or fail to reduce an overwhelming burden of the U.S. military presence on Okinawan citizens, it could bring about further fragmentation in U.S.-Japan relations. Overall, the most fundamental shortfall of the February 1995 Nye Initiative was that it overlooked the significance of reassessing the political, social, and economic environment surrounding U.S. bases in Japan, because the United States could not physically exist in East Asia as an Asia-Pacific power without its forward base structure in the lands of its Asian allies, including Japan.

Relations with China and the March 1995 Taiwan Strait Crisis

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the long-term question of China's future role in East Asia, together with North Korea's nuclear development, has enhanced the significance of the U.S.-Japan alliance. The U.S. and Japanese governments share common objectives in their relations with China, such as respect for human rights and the establishment of consistent rule of law, the promotion of China's integration into the global economy by granting its membership in

³⁴ Chalmers Johnson. *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire*. [With a New Introduction on Blowback on the post-9/11 World] (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2004), p.7. "Blowback" is originally a CIA term used to explain the 1953 operation to overthrow the government of Mohammed Mossadegh in Iran.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.36-37.

international organizations, peaceful settlement in Beijing-Taipei relations over the Taiwan Strait, and reassurance for the renouncement of the use of force to resolve territorial disputes with Asian neighbors. Importantly, however, there has never been a sense of equilibrium between Washington and Tokyo regarding their attitude toward Beijing.

During the first two decades of the Cold War, the U.S. and Japanese governments pursued the policy of containment and isolation of the People's Republic of China (Beijing), while supporting the Republic of China (Taipei) as the official representative of Chinese people at UN.³⁶ In the so-called Taiwan clause in the 1969 Sato-Nixon-Sato joint communiqué, the two governments expressed their common security interest in the stability of the Taiwan Strait areas. Sato stated that the maintenance of peace and security in the Taiwan area was "a most important factor" for the security of Japan.³⁷ In private, Japanese officials gave private assurance to their U.S. counterparts regarding "the necessity for military combat operations from bases in Okinawa and Japan if Taiwan was attacked."³⁸ In response, Beijing strongly criticized an "increased U.S.-Japanese military collusion and a Japanese military role in Asia" as well as "looser ground of US use of its bases in Japan" as an increased threat to its security.³⁹ After the U.S. rapprochement with China, symbolized by the so-called "Nixon shock" of July 1971 (Kissinger's secret trip to Beijing and Nixon's announcement of his presidential trip to China in 1972), Japan normalized its diplomatic relations with China in September 1972. Because of the deepening Sino-Soviet split from the late 1950s to the late 1960s, Chinese leaders privately agreed to the continuing existence of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, which served both to counter-balance the Soviet military threat along Sino-Soviet border areas and to contain the danger of a revival of Japanese militarism. Therefore, the Washington-Beijing-Tokyo strategic triangle against Moscow became the central geopolitical framework of East Asian security for the final two decades of the Cold War.⁴⁰

In the mid-1990s, however, the mechanism of the U.S.-China-Japan triangular relations began to change because of the rapid growth of Chinese military and economic power. Japanese relations with China became complicated as a new generation of more nationalistic political leaders replaced the elder generation both in Tokyo and Beijing who favored diplomatic normalization of the 1970s. In July 1995, China tested nuclear-capable missiles before joining the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.⁴¹ The Japanese Foreign Ministry unsuccessfully sought to preserve Japanese foreign assistance to China against the pressures from anti-communists on

³⁶ Japan maintained informal economic relations with the mainland through the so-called L-T trade during the 1960s. LT stood for the two signatories, Liao Chengzhi and Takasaki Tatsunosuke, to a 1962 trade agreement despite the absence of official diplomatic relations.

³⁷ *The New York Times*, November 21, 1969.

³⁸ Memorandum by Sneider, "Current Status of Negotiations," August 30, 1969, p.4, attached to Haig to Kissinger, "Letter from Dick Sneider – Okinawa Reversion Negotiations," September 3, 1969, Sneider, Richard L., Box 834, Name Files NSC Files, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NA

³⁹ Intelligence Note, "Communist China: Strong Negative Reaction to the Sato Visit," December 3, 1969, Box 2245, Pol 7 Japan, Central Foreign Policy File, 1967-69, Records of State Department, RG 59, National Archives.

⁴⁰ The U.S.-Chinese-Japanese diplomatic relations also helped to restore and stabilize U.S.-China relations after the 1989 Tiananmen Square Incident, when Japan played a mediating role between the U.S. and China.

the right and anti-nuclear activists on the left. China's March 1996 missile tests in the Taiwan Strait areas further deepened suspicion of Chinese aspirations among Japan's political leaders.⁴² After the U.S. and Japan issued the April 1996 Joint Declaration on Security and announced a review of the Defense Guidelines, the Chinese government condemned the revival of Japanese militarism and U.S.-Japanese joint efforts to "contain" China.⁴³ Beijing also feared that the re-strengthening of U.S.-Japan alliance would be a major obstacle in its attempt toward re-unification with Taiwan.

In 1997, Japanese relations with China took a turn for the worse because the two governments confronted each other over the sovereignty of the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyutai Islands. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the normalization of relations, the Foreign Ministries of their respective governments attempted to stabilize diplomatic relations, declaring 1997 the "year of China" for Japanese diplomacy. However, the momentum of celebration did not last beyond the November 1998 summit between President Jiang Zemin and Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi. During the summit meetings, the Chinese side demanded a formal Japanese expression of "apology" (*owabi*) and "remorse" (*hansei*) for the Japanese aggression during Sino-Japanese war (1931-1945). The Chinese also insisted on apologies from the Japanese government in all future bilateral sessions. Nevertheless, the Chinese received only an expression of remorse. In the end, Japan's policy toward China shifted from the promotion of economic interdependence to the pursuit of a more realistic security approach to deal with the growth of Chinese military power.⁴⁴ Former U.S. Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Winston Lord, reassesses, "The Japanese still knew that they had to and wanted to deal with China, but they began to see that China is going to be a real rival in the region."⁴⁵

In the mid-1990s, U.S. relations with China also entered an era of instability and uncertainty. In January 1993, Bill Clinton came into office after attacking the George H.W. Bush administration for coddling the "butchers of Beijing." For the two four-year terms, the Clinton administration sought to accomplish its own political and diplomatic stability agenda on U.S. policy toward China. Initially, Clinton's China policy was dominated by the demand for an improvement of China's human rights record, which was insisted on as a pre-condition for according

⁴¹ The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) bans all nuclear explosions in all environments, for military or civilian purposes as follows:

- Each State Party undertakes not to carry out any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion, and to prohibit and prevent any such nuclear explosion at any place under its jurisdiction or control.
- Each State Party undertakes, furthermore, to refrain from causing, encouraging, or in any way participating in the carrying out of any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion.

On September 24, 1996, the Treaty was opened for signature and signed by 71 states in New York. The CTBT has now been signed by 176 states and ratified by 135. Not only China but also the United States has not ratified the CTBT.

⁴² Some missiles even landed within 100 kilometers of Okinawa.

⁴³ Patrick E. Tyler. *A Great Wall: Six Presidents and China, an Investigative History*. (New York: Public Affairs, 1999), pp.21-36.

⁴⁴ Robert A. Manning, "Northeast Asian Future Shock and the U.S.-Japan Alliance," in Michael J. Green and Patrick M. Cronnin (eds.). *The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Past, Present and Future*. (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1999), p.56.

⁴⁵ Lord, Oral History Interview, p.423, FAOHC.

Most-Favored-Nation (MFN) treatment to China. In June 1995, the administration allowed Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui to visit Cornell University, which deepened Beijing's displeasure with Washington's policy toward Taiwan. The Clinton administration, however, did not respond to the Chinese launching of nuclear-capable missiles in the July of the same year, which caused Chinese miscalculation of U.S. intention and commitment toward Taiwan in the following year. On March 5, 1996, China announced that it would test ballistic missiles. On March 7, China began to launch those missiles close to Taiwan in order to warn and discourage Taiwanese politicians in their legislative and presidential elections from pushing in the direction of independence. In response, President Clinton ordered two U.S. aircraft carriers from the Pacific Fleet (including the U.S.S. Independence, which home-ported in Yokosuka, Japan) to be dispatched to the Taiwan Strait areas in order to signal U.S. concerns about the Chinese tests. The U.S. even declared its intention to use force for the defense of Taiwan. It appeared that Beijing did not expect such a firm reaction from Washington. Former Defense Secretary William Perry asserts: "the fact that they were surprised means that they were misreading how seriously we took this [Chinese missile testing]." ⁴⁶ The U.S. intelligence community assessed that Chinese missile exercises were not a sign of attack or invasion of Taiwan. ⁴⁷ After a month of tension and uncertainty, the crisis passed, and U.S. Navy carriers steamed out of the Taiwan Strait areas. In his memoirs, Clinton recalls: "finding the right balance between economic pragmatism and aggressive nationalism was a constant challenge for China's leaders, especially during election season in Taiwan. But I thought China had gone too far with the missiles test." ⁴⁸ Thereafter, the U.S. government continued to pursue the policy of "one China, but not now" and encouraged Beijing and Taipei to resolve their differences peacefully.

In 1997 and 1998, the Clinton administration thus attempted to re-direct the U.S. domestic political debate regarding "China Threat" by introducing a broader objective of engaging China into the international community and establishing a "strategic partnership" with Beijing instead of a policy of "containment." ⁴⁹ In October 1997, Chinese President Jiang Zemin visited Washington D.C., received a warm welcome, and affirmed the evolution of common ground between the two governments, namely the responsibility to create a world of peace, stability, and prosperity into the new century. In June 1998, supported by the U.S. business community, President Clinton took a trip to China and held summit meetings with Jiang Zemin. However, the notion of "strategic partnership" exaggerated the newly emerging common interests in Sino-American relations and played down the remaining issues of disagreement between the two governments. In Japanese domestic politics, moreover, there was a controversy over Japan "passing," namely the tilt by the Clinton administration toward China, bypassing Japan. Finally, the administration's China policy of engagement was further undermined by such problems as the Cox report on Chinese nuclear espionage in May 1999 and the accidental bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade during the Kosovo campaign in May of the same year. ⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Funabashi, *Alliance Drift*, pp.370-371.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Bill Clinton. *My Life*. (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), p.703.

⁴⁹ Manning, "Northeast Asian Future Shock and the U.S.-Japan Alliance," pp.59-60.

⁵⁰ The Cox Report is named after the Chairman of a congressional committee, Christopher Cox. The United States House of Representatives Select Committee on U.S. National

The U.S.-Japan alliance coordination has not always been smooth because each side has found difficulty in finding its appropriate stance in relations with China. Of particular importance, the U.S. and Japanese governments still struggled to reassure Beijing about the non-threatening nature of the revised Defense Guidelines. For example, the U.S. government gave private assurances, which Lord describes: "We briefed the Chinese just before the announcements in Japan. ...We made clear that our defense treaty was not directed at China and that we wanted constructive relations with China."⁵¹ Nevertheless, Beijing still made an unsuccessful demand that Washington and Tokyo make a public statement that Taiwan would lay outside the areas to which the guidelines applied. The Chinese government also expressed concern that the April 1996 Joint Declaration on Security was designed to encourage Japan to play a larger role in East Asian regional security. The U.S. and Japanese governments coordinated their responses to China's criticism and explained that the guidelines were the outlines of mission, not the agreement for specific scenarios. According to Lord, "we neither confirmed nor denied that the defense guidelines covered this [Taiwan]. In effect, we said that this relates to situations, not geographic entities."⁵² In fact, the United States has no official defense commitment to Taiwan, and therefore Washington has no political authority to integrate Tokyo into its formal policy planning for the defense of the island. However, Beijing saw little value in yielding to such an explanation, criticizing it as evidence that the U.S.-Japan alliance was a threat to China's Taiwan policy, subsequently complicating Washington-Tokyo diplomatic coordination with Beijing. In the end, it was the May 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis that subsequently made "a stronger defense statement and greater movement on the defense guidelines" for the U.S. and Japanese governments.⁵³

The above-explained incidents do not necessarily indicate that U.S. and Japanese interests regarding China policy were seriously in conflict during the 1990s. Nor do they suggest that the U.S.-Japan alliance should have been fundamentally restructured to improve relations with China. A substantial reduction in U.S. forces in East Asia would induce Chinese geopolitical aspirations in the region. Expanding Japanese offensive military operations or demanding collective defense could provoke Chinese attempts to collude with other concerned Asian states against Japan. Tokyo should measure more carefully the effectiveness of its independent diplomatic proposals that could lead to joint Sino-American opposition. Japanese diplomatic relations with China could be more effective, if the United States and South Korea (and other states with common interests) were supportive of it. Washington should consider carefully the possible outcomes of discouraging Japanese diplomatic initiatives which would be consistent with U.S. attempts to integrate China into the international community. Although fundamental U.S. and Japanese interests in China are largely similar, a U.S. attempt to restrain Japanese objectives could lead to a difference in strategies in the long-term.

Security and Military/Commercial Concerns with the People's Republic of China, May 25, 1999 <<http://www.house.gov/coxreport/pref/preface.html>>

Regarding the Belgrade incident, see BBC News, "NATO Hits Chinese Embassy," May 8, 1999 <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/338424.stm>>

⁵¹ Lord, Oral History Interview, pp.423-424, FAOHC.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p.420.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.421.

Tensions in the Korean Peninsula: North Korea's Nuclear Development

Since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. and Japanese governments have shared objectives regarding the Korean Peninsula, including the promotion of stability, reduction of the North Korean military threat, de-nuclearization, and gradual transformation of the North Korean regime and subsequent reconciliation with South Korea. During the first two decades of the Cold War, the maintenance of stability in the Korean Peninsula was one of the major security issues in East Asia for Washington and Tokyo. In the November 1969 Nixon-Sato joint communiqué, the two governments expressed common security interests in the Korean Peninsula. In particular, Sato stated that the security of the Republic of Korea was "essential" to Japan's own security.⁵⁴ In the unilateral statement, Sato confirmed further that if the U.S. should need its bases in Japan to meet an armed attack on Korea or Taiwan, the Japanese government "would decide its position positively and promptly."⁵⁵

During the final two decades of the Cold War, however, Japanese security relations with the peninsula were not always inter-related to the functions of the U.S.-Japan alliance. Although U.S. bases in Japan had a significant role for the defense of South Korea, Tokyo sought to moderate its position as stated in the 1969 Nixon-Sato communiqué, declining any active role or interests in the security of the Korean Peninsula. During the 1970s, the Japanese government even denied that there was a North Korean threat to Japan. South Korean government became deeply suspicious of the Japanese attitude speculating that Japan was pursuing separate relations with North Korea to delay or even to hinder re-unification of the peninsula. Finally, Japanese moves toward North Korea, such as the 1990 summit between a senior LDP leader Shin Kanemaru and North Korean leader Kim Il Sung, reinforced South Korean suspicions of Japanese intentions.⁵⁶

Since the early 1990s, however, Japan had greatly increased its realization of the North Korean military threat. For example, Tokyo took very seriously North Korea's May 1993 test launching of the Rodong missile. After the 1993-1994 nuclear crises, therefore, Japanese officials re-examined the prospect of Japan's entrapment in a conflict on the Korean Peninsula.⁵⁷ In consequence, the nuclear crisis brought about trilateral diplomatic coordination among Washington, Tokyo, and Seoul.⁵⁸ In 1995, moreover, Japan expressed its willingness to play a role in multilateral security on the peninsula and joined the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), which was established in order to provide light water reactors (LWR) to North Korea (within the framework of the October 1994 U.S.-North Korea Agreement). During the same period, however, Japan's relations with North Korea took a turn for the worse because of the revelations about North Korean abductions of Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s. After the August 1998 Taepodong missile launch, the Japanese government perceived North Korea as a major threat to peace and stability for Japan and East Asia. Thus, Tokyo agreed to joint research regarding regional contingency planning as well as intelligence

⁵⁴ *The New York Times*, November 21, 1969.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Sotooka, Honda and Miura, *Japan-U.S. Alliance Half Century: Security Treaty and Secret Agreement*, pp.455-456.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.483-485.

⁵⁸ Funabashi, *Alliance Adrift*, pp.280-294.

sharing with the United States based on the immediate threat caused by North Korean missiles.

U.S. and South Korean relations with North Korea were extraordinarily tense during the 1993-1994 nuclear crises. At an NSC (National Security Council) meeting, for example, President Clinton was close to deciding to direct a major build-up of U.S. forces. As Former Secretary of Defense William Perry later recalled, Northeast Asia “came as dangerously close to war as it had ever [been] since the Korean War.”⁵⁹ Then the message of a possible breakthrough came from former President Jimmy Carter who was visiting North Korea and holding talks for a negotiated settlement with Kim Il Sung. Accordingly, in October 1994, the U.S. and North Korea signed a key non-nuclear proliferation framework agreement in order to freeze all nuclear-related activities in North Korea.⁶⁰ According to former Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian-Pacific Affairs, Winston Lord, “Essentially what we did was to reach an admittedly imperfect agreement aimed at closing off the North Korean nuclear capability over time. This was in exchange for economic help to North Korea to replace the energy they wouldn’t have, with the ability to call off all bets if the North Koreans started violating the nuclear agreement.”⁶¹ The U.S. government thus expected that North Koreans would “freeze their nuclear program and ultimately dismantle it.”⁶² In the Four-Party Talks, which included the United States, North and South Korea, and China, the Clinton administration sought to keep encouraging direct talks between the mutually suspicious North and South Korea regarding the future of the Korean Peninsula while inducing China to put pressure on the North Koreans for a negotiated settlement.⁶³ The U.S. general strategy was “to integrate North Korea into regional and world system, so that they would be less paranoid and disruptive.”⁶⁴

In February 1998, newly elected South Korean President Kim Dae Jung reversed decades of the confrontational policy of “containment” toward North Korea by introducing the so-called “Sunshine Policy,” which entailed a broader political, economic and diplomatic process of “engagement” with North Korea.⁶⁵ Accordingly, the United States and Japan also began to reassess their respective roles. From the U.S. and South Korean perspectives, it appeared that Tokyo’s continuing hard-line attitude toward Pyongyang was in friction with U.S. and South Korean engagement policy with North Korea. Hence, Washington and Seoul pressed Tokyo to provide food aid to Pyongyang in order to maintain its commitment to KEDO, and to promote normalization with North Korea. After the Keizo Obuchi cabinet unilaterally suspended its participation in the LWR funding talks as a result of the August 1998 Taepodong launch, Japan’s commitment toward KEDO became a

⁵⁹ Ibid., p.281.

⁶⁰ Johnson, *Blowback*, pp.122-128.

⁶¹ Lord, Oral History Interview, p.427, FAOHC.

⁶² Ibid., p.431.

⁶³ Ibid., p.438. U.S. officials considered that by cooperating on the Korean Peninsula issue, the U.S. and Chinese governments could demonstrate to their respective domestic audiences as well as the world that they “could work together” on some regional, global, and strategic interests. The U.S. also kept the Japanese and Russian governments informed of the four-party talks, however, they preferred a six-party approach.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.435.

⁶⁵ Eundak Kwon and Jae-Cheon Lim, “Crossing the river that divides the Korean Peninsula: an evaluation of the Sunshine Policy,” *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* Volume 6 (2006), pp.129-156.

major concern for the U.S. and South Korea. On the other hand, Tokyo became annoyed by Washington's and Seoul's insufficient attention to the North Korean missile threat.⁶⁶

Differing priorities between the U.S., Japanese, and South Korean over missile tests, proliferation, and engagement with North Korea threatened to undermine their joint diplomatic effort toward the peninsula. In October 1998, therefore, South Korean President Kim took diplomatic initiatives to improve relations with Japan by holding a summit meeting with Prime Minister Obuchi. The Kim-Obuchi summit resulted in a joint declaration, "A New Japan–Republic of Korea Partnership towards the Twenty-first Century."⁶⁷ The declaration resolved long-term fishery disputes, introduced a formula in which Japan expressed "apology" [owabi] and "remorse" [hansei] for its aggressions during the colonial era, and proposed closer security consultations in the future. The improvement of Japan-South Korea relations created better opportunities for trilateral security coordination with the United States. Secretary of Defense Perry initiated a review of U.S. policy toward the Korean Peninsula and arranged regular trilateral consultations with senior officials from Japan and South Korea. In June 1999, Perry took a trip to Pyongyang and presented a comprehensive U.S. diplomatic proposal that reflected the integrated U.S.-Japan-South Korea trilateral approach in future dealings with North Korea.

Overall, the United States, Japan, and South Korea still shared broad objectives regarding the Korean Peninsula during the 1990s; however, they differed in priorities among those objectives. Japan was more concerned about missiles (which flew over the Sea of Japan and the Japanese mainland) than the United States and South Korea. Tokyo also regarded the resolution of the abduction issues as a pre-condition for economic aid to North Korea. The United States put the highest priority on North Korea's potential to resume its nuclear weapons programs. South Korea pursued a policy of engagement that might move beyond the domestic political restraints at work in Washington and Tokyo. Hence, policy coordination between the U.S. and Japan remained crucial but difficult. Moreover, despite the beginning of the trilateral consultation process, any formal U.S.-Japan-South Korea defense arrangements would provoke the Chinese government. The historic North-South summit of June 2000 brought about a new fluidity and complexity to U.S.-Japan coordination on Korea policy. Tokyo did not greet the summit as enthusiastically as Seoul did. The Japanese public remained deeply skeptical of the North Korean intentions because of the complex issues related to missiles, abductions, and nuclear weapons. The North-South process of engagement and reconciliation provided political opportunities for the reduction of threat on the Korean Peninsula. However, it also posed new challenges for the U.S.-Japan alliance planning and diplomatic coordination toward the development of a common long-term strategy.

Conclusions

The coordination of U.S.-Japan security arrangements in the first decades of the post Cold War era was launched by the Nye Initiative, reinforced by the NDPO, and completed by the April 1996 joint communiqué. The whole negotiating process

⁶⁶ Johnson, *Blowback*, p.132.

⁶⁷ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "A New Japan–Republic of Korea Partnership towards the Twenty-first Century," October 8, 1998 <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/korea/joint9810.html>>

demonstrated that the U.S. and Japan continued to share fundamental strategic objectives in East Asia. The overall direction was moving toward the strengthening of the alliance in which Japan would take more responsibilities for its defense policy as well as regional security in East Asia, while joint planning and coordination between the two governments in cases of regional contingencies were still evolving.

Continuing U.S. deterrent capabilities, guaranteed by the confidential understanding between the U.S. and Japanese governments regarding the maximum use of U.S. bases for conventional combat operations as well as the re-entry and transit rights of U.S. nuclear weapons into Japan in great emergencies, remained the central force of U.S. military presence in East Asia. Regarding possible regional contingencies, the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Strait were the two major areas of security interests for the U.S.-Japan alliance. On Korea, in accordance with the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, Washington and Tokyo were clear and precise about the functions of emergency operations. On Taiwan, however, the two governments remained ambiguous about their respective operational roles as neither of them held official diplomatic relations with the Republic of China. Moreover, Beijing kept claiming that the Taiwan issue remained China's domestic issue, which allowed no foreign intervention.

The changes and developments in the U.S.-Japan alliance system included both short-term and long-term aspects. In the short-term, the evolution of realism in Japanese security thinking provided opportunities to strengthen the alliance and integrate security cooperation. In the long-term, however, if the U.S. government did not sufficiently consult with the Japanese government regarding East Asian regional security, it could increase misunderstanding and mistrust in the alliance. Tokyo would become concerned about the danger of "entanglement" with U.S. involvement in East Asian regional conflicts. Or, Japan might become anxious for U.S. withdrawal from East Asia, which might result in U.S. abandonment of the bilateral security arrangements. Conceptually, the U.S. and Japanese governments could re-structure the alliance system by jointly examining possible scenarios of regional crises. For example, the U.S. government could increase pressure on the Japanese government to make active commitments toward a more explicit role in the defense of Taiwan as well as a combat operation role in the Korean Peninsula. In reality, however, the post-war pacifism and the culture of anti-militarism within the Japanese public still remain powerful as a political brake to restrain Japan's overseas military operations.

Those structural changes, moreover, could be highly problematic in East Asia. A more explicit Japanese commitment to assist the United States in the defense of Taiwan would provoke the Chinese government. A Japanese governmental acceptance of a combat operational role on the Korean Peninsula would damage Seoul-Pyongyang diplomatic dialogue as well as Tokyo-Seoul political relations. Reducing U.S. forces in Japan might undermine the effectiveness of U.S. conventional operations from Japan. There would also be concerns among Asian states regarding the U.S. intentions to continue committing itself in East Asia. Finally, enhancing a more symmetrical military role for Japan in the U.S.-Japan alliance would not necessarily create equilibrium in bilateral relations or stability in East Asia.

Asian neighbors still see a larger Japanese security role with suspicion. Because of the history of wartime aggression in the Asia-Pacific region, an increased Japanese security role would be too large and threatening for Asian states. For the United States, on the contrary, Japan's continuing reluctance to take more substantial responsibility for its national security as well as for East Asian regional

security would appear to be too small and irritating for U.S.-Japan burden-sharing. The indication in the Nye Initiative of the continuing presence of 100,000 troops in East Asia could be regarded as a sign of the lack of confidence in Japanese defense contributions on the U.S. side as well as the lack of sufficient mutual trust and understanding between the U.S. and its allies in Asia, including Japan.

Finally, the U.S.-Japan security arrangements require more effective consultation. It is the U.S. government that has not conducted sufficient and regular high-level coordination with its Japanese counterpart. During the Clinton presidency, Japanese defense and security policy was handled at the level of deputy assistant secretaries in Washington. On the other hand, within the Japanese government, prime ministers, foreign ministers, and vice ministers were in charge of managing U.S. defense and security policies.⁶⁸ In the long-term, however, this operational asymmetry would not be sustainable in the security arrangements. The U.S.-Japan alliance thus requires an indication of a consistent strategic direction clearly set at senior official levels which are based on continuing coordination between the two governments.⁶⁹

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⁶⁸ It does not mean, however, that the two governments had fully realized the importance of regular defense planning and intelligence sharing. In fact, during Clinton's two terms, there were seven prime ministers in Japan. In contrast, despite initial differences, Clinton developed much more cordial political relationship with the Chinese President Jiang Zemin who ruled China during the 1990s.

⁶⁹ The U.S.-Japan alliance would go through a substantial re-strengthening process after the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States. However, that will be a new subject for other research and writing.

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