

EMERGING CHINA AND THE JAPAN-U.S. ALLIANCE

BY

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by

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ABSTRACT

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Emerging China is undoubtedly one of the biggest future security concerns for both Japan and the United States.¹ The friction between China and Japan has recently grown, especially over territorial issues such as Senkaku Island.² The United States also has disagreement with China over several issues such as human rights, Taiwan, Tibet, North Korea, and economic matters including currency and trade. The bilateral relationship between Japan and the United States will be instrumental for both countries to cope with China in the future.

However, there is also friction within the Japan-U.S. alliance, and there are concerns within both countries. U.S. military bases in Okinawa have become a highly controversial issue in Japan, and Japanese criticism of the alliance has grown in recent years.³ In the United States, some opine that the United States should strengthen its bilateral economic relationship with China, signifying a diminution of the Japan-U.S. alliance.⁴

This paper analyzes these and other considerations surrounding the Japan-U.S. alliance and proposes recommendations to make the alliance more appropriate for the future.

EMERGING CHINA AND THE JAPAN-U.S. ALLIANCE

Introduction

Uncertainty and a lack of transparency still exist in the Asia-Pacific region, with Emerging China viewed as one of the biggest concerns. China is increasingly influential not only economically, but militarily as well.⁵ China has one of the world's largest economies and is a leading military power; within a few decades it could be the world's leader in both categories. It also could be the largest importer of natural resources and the biggest polluter.⁶ Moreover, while China for decades has had political influence over Asian concerns such as North Korea, it now also has significant political clout on other continents and in international venues such as the United Nations. For both Japan and the United States, China could be a challenger, competitor, or threat both regionally and internationally.

Conversely, Japan's national power is shrinking relatively to China's significant progress.⁷ Japan achieved phenomenal economical growth after the Second World War, and by 1980 had the second-largest economy in the world. Although Japan has a strict defense policy with significant restrictions on the use of military power to achieve its national interest, Japan's economic power translated into strong diplomatic power. In addition to its economic power, Japan has progressively built up its defense capability which enhances the credibility of the Japan-U.S. alliance. Consequently, towards the end of the 20th Century Japan could legitimately be perceived as Asia's strongest overall power.

However, as its economic power weakened, Japan's diplomatic and military power receded as well. Furthermore, the credibility of the Japan-U.S. alliance has also

shrunk in recent years, because the realignment of the U.S. military bases in Japan has become a contentious political issue and a new political party dominates Japanese politics.⁸ The changed political landscape includes several new strategic concepts such as: “Equal Japan-U.S. Alliance;” “Establishment of the East Asia Union;” and “The Regular Triangle Theory of the Relationship between Japan, the United States, and China.” All of these concepts have negative implications for the Japan-U.S. alliance.⁹

For a decade, the United States has been heavily committed in Iraq and Afghanistan, and since 2008 has struggled to recover from economic recession. Some predict that in the future the United States will remain the single most powerful country but will be less dominant. As its economic and military capability shrinks relatively, the U.S. will be forced to choose between a difficult set of tradeoffs among domestic and foreign policy priorities.¹⁰ This means that the United States commitment in East Asia might decrease over the next few decades, which would further unbalance regional power. China also holds over \$1 trillion of the United States debt. These holdings continue to grow and further complicate the U.S.-China relationship.¹¹ Additionally, some advocate that the United States should formulate a strong strategic relationship with China, a so-called the “Group of Two (G-2),” to dominate global affairs.¹²

These factors might seriously contribute to decreased credibility of the Japan-U.S. alliance, which could result in East Asian instability and also might affect global security. Consequently, it is important to consider the future posture of the Japan-U.S. alliance, which has long been a pillar for Asian security. This paper analyzes the alliance and proposes a future posture that includes the fundamental structure, future military

cooperation between the two countries, and an expanded multi-national cooperative framework to cope with China.

Historical Background of the Japan-U.S. Alliance

After World War II, the U.S. directed that the Japanese military be abolished. Then-Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida struggled to reestablish Japan's national functions as a sovereign country, and national security without a military was his main concern.¹³ The surrounding security environment was problematic, as the Cold War emerged between the ideological camps of Western liberalism and Eastern communism. The alliance between the Soviet Union and China and the 1950 start of the Korean War had profound security implications for both Japan and the United States and provided the impetus for the Japan-U.S. alliance. The alliance was mutually beneficial: Japan needed the U.S. military presence in Japan to secure its nation, while the United States needed its own military presence in Japan to cope with communist threats. The alliance retained this posture until the end of the Cold War, and few in either country doubted its necessity.

However, after end of the Cold War, debate began to occur in Japan about the alliance, which also increasingly became a political and diplomatic issue between two countries. Most people in Japan questioned the need to maintain the alliance with the end of the Cold War and demise of the Soviet threat. Japan and the United States had to discuss the fundamental necessity of the alliance to include redefining its role. Since the end of the Cold War, many regional conflicts in the world have occurred and the North Korean threat has likewise increased. Consequently, both countries decided that the alliance was necessary not only to defend Japan but also to maintain East Asian

stability (especially to cope with the North Korean threat) and also to contribute to global security. This post-Cold War redefinition was the alliance's first crisis since its establishment.

The second crisis is occurring now and began when the Japanese political situation changed in 2009. The Democratic Party of Japan became the ruling party, displacing the Liberal Democratic Party which had run Japan for the 60 years since the end of the World War. The new administration has taken advantage of its opportunity to review all policies which the Liberal Democratic Party had established since World War II, and the Japan-U.S. alliance is no exception. The U.S. Marine Corp's presence in Okinawa has long been an especially controversial issue and politically is highly charged. Former Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama had declared that the U.S. Marine Corp's Futenma Air Base should be removed from Okinawa and relocated elsewhere. Unable to find a suitable and non-controversial alternative, Prime Minister Hatoyama could not achieve his promise. Eventually, acknowledging that the U.S. presence in Okinawa was vital for Japan's security, he had no choice other than to resign. This issue remains an intractable problem between the government of Japan, the United States, and the local government of Okinawa, and is getting increasingly harder to resolve.

Recent Japanese poll data regarding the Japan-U.S. relationship shows a decade-long downward trend in public opinion. Although around 50% of the Japanese population felt that the Japan-U.S. relationship was good in 2001, this percentage dropped to only 30% in 2010. Furthermore, 40% felt that the relationship was not good, which is the first time since 2000 that negative assessments had a plurality.¹⁴

Particularly in a democracy such as Japan, such widespread negative public opinion suggests that fundamental problems exist with the alliance. In a sense, although the alliance may have always had some degree of political turbulence, both countries have successfully addressed external and cosmetic issues. However, the fundamental structural issues have been largely overlooked.

The Fundamental Problems of the Japan-U.S. Alliance

Some Japanese politicians say that inequality is the biggest and fundamental problem of the alliance.¹⁵ This inequality is multidimensional and is arguably traced to the alliance's origins. The first inequality concerns the responsibility for collective defense. The United States has a responsibility to defend Japan if the latter is attacked; however, Japan does not have a reciprocal obligation to defend the United States. This inequality would presumably be more of a U.S. grievance, though a few Japanese intellectuals have recently commented on the matter.¹⁶ The second inequality relates to the U.S. military bases in Japanese territory. Even though some sixty years have passed since WW II ended, there are still many U.S. military bases in Japan which result in grievances felt mainly by Japanese.

Together, the two inequalities are the mirrors-images of the two benefits that caused the alliance to be formed in the first place. Japan provided the United States with U.S. military bases in Japanese territory, while the United States provided Japan with security. While the respective costs and benefits of the alliance were not identical, the alliance could be viewed as equal since both parties freely contributed and benefited. However, the alliance's posture should be reconsidered in order to suit the future security environment more appropriately.

Another fundamental problem of the alliance concerns the U.S. military bases in Japan. There are over thirteen U.S. military bases and facilities in Japan, and the biggest issue concerns the 70% that are located in Okinawa.¹⁷ Okinawa is a particularly complicated and sensitive region for political, military, and historical reasons, and any missteps could cause the Prime Minister of Japan to step down.

From the 15th Century until the Japanese invasion in the 17th Century, Okinawa had been an independent country known as the Ryukyu-Kingdom. In World War II, Okinawa's people fought against U.S. forces to defend Japan. Over 200,000 people, mostly civilians, were killed in the battle of Okinawa. After the war, Okinawa was ruled by the United States. The people of Okinawa generally preferred reunification with Japan, although the United States governance had given them many benefits such as reconstruction and infrastructure development. Although Okinawa was returned back to Japan in 1972, U.S. military units are still stationed in Okinawa. While the U.S. military bases have given economical benefits to the island, the population has struggled with a myriad of base-related problems including crimes committed by U.S. service members.

The situation is complicated by other factors. After the United States returned Okinawa to Japan in 1972, many communists went to Okinawa to create an ideological movement. Many became school teachers in Okinawa, and the children they educated now have a bearing on the basing issue.¹⁸ Another issue is that the U.S. bases on Okinawa support military contingency operations on the Korea Peninsula, in the Taiwan Strait, and deployment to South East Asia and the Middle East.¹⁹ It would be difficult for the U.S. military to find alternative bases that both have a strategically suitable location and are acceptable to a host nation government and the local citizens.

Implications of Emerging China for the Japan-U.S. Alliance

In the 2010 *Quadrennial Defense Review* (QDR), the United States welcomes a strong and successful China which responsibly fulfills its global role in the international community. On the other hand, the QDR warns that China is developing and fielding large numbers of advanced ballistic and cruise missiles, new attack submarines, long-range air defense systems, electronic warfare and computer network attack capabilities, advanced fighter aircraft, and a counter-space system as part of a so-called “Anti-Access Capability,”²⁰ The QDR indicates that, even though the United States sees China as a strategic partner as long as China is developed without causing friction with U.S. interests, the United States should be prepared for China’s military capability in case of confrontation between two countries.

There are many points of contention between two countries such as human rights problems, Taiwan, the Tibet issue, and economic problems. These friction points at least in part originate from the differences between the democratic and communist political systems which make it difficult for either country to compromise. Needless to say, the American strategy for China is different from that regarding the Soviet Union during the Cold War era. Since the United States is heavily depending upon China economically and China has a huge amount of the United States debt,²¹ the United States cannot attempt anything like its containment strategy for the Soviet Union. Furthermore, China has growing political power in the international community. Many international issues are becoming very difficult to solve without the approval and cooperation of China; these include the Korean peninsula problem, Iran’s nuclear program, and Africa’s development and stability. Therefore, the United States should

attempt to engage and shape China in order to support U.S. interests; at the same time, it is very important for the United States to prepare for potential future confrontation with China if necessary.

Japan has a similar situation as does the U.S. in its own relationship with China. Since China currently is Japan's largest trading partner, Japan's economy heavily depends upon China.²² However, there are several complex issues between the two countries including history, territorial disputes, and Japan's concern over China's rapid military growth.²³ Interpretation of WW II history in particular is one of the most difficult obstacles between the two countries, and the issue is resurrected every summer as the August 15th anniversary of Japan's surrender approaches. China takes special note as to whether or not Japanese cabinet ministers visit the Yasukuni shrine, where Class A war criminals are interred. Yasukuni shrine visits frequently escalate into political issues between the two countries and symbolize the different Japanese and Chinese interpretations of WW II history.

The Council on Security and Defense Capabilities in the New Era, established in February 2010 by Japan's Prime Minister to provide recommendations for a new defense strategy, issued its final report to the Prime Minister in August. The report points out that the main problem regarding China is transparency regarding its military capability and intentions. Even though China has improved its transparency by releasing bi-annual white papers entitled *China's National Defense* since 1998, it has not yet achieved the transparency levels expected of a major power.²⁴ For example, its version of a detailed defense spending breakdown includes only the total amount and general purposes of three funding categories: personnel, training and maintenance, and

equipment. Additionally, China's intention for enhancing its military capability is unclear, and this inadequate transparency increases Japan's distrust and fear of China. Moreover, in recent years China has been increasing its maritime activities in waters near Japan. A Chinese nuclear-powered submarine navigated in Japanese territorial waters in November 2004, breaching international law. In addition, Chinese naval vessels have been observed conducting what appeared to be exercises or information gathering activities.²⁵ Japan, like the United States, needs to balance its China policy between shaping and engaging a responsible China on the one hand, while preparing for the possibility of a confrontational China.

Generally, it is indispensable to share common interests in order to create or maintain an alliance. Since the United States and Japan conceivably share a common assessment regarding goals, policies, and strategies regarding China, this could be a *raison d'être* that gives the alliance renewed purpose.

Japan's Defense Policy Options

Since WW II, Japan's defense policy has gradually normalized in order to defend Japan's vital interests and contribute to international society, Japan's policies and posture increasingly approximate those of other independent and sovereign nations, although the Japanese Constitution, regarded as a "Peace Constitution," has never been revised since its creation.²⁶ Article 9 of Japan's Constitution forever renounces war as a sovereign right of the nation, rejects the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes, and prohibits Japan from possessing land, sea, and air forces.

However, successive interpretations of the Constitution have incrementally supported new defense policies intended to improve security. It is worth noting that virtually every new Japanese defense policy has come after external pressure was applied, particularly from the United States. Often, these occurred in the wake of some significant incident which caused serious concern about Japan's security.

The Self Defense Force's (SDF) very existence under the Peace Constitution comes from such a constitutional interpretation that, notwithstanding Article 9, Japan still possesses the right of self defense as an independent nation and can maintain self-defense forces at minimal levels to do so.²⁷ Despite its name, the SDF is equipped with fighter aircraft, warships, and tanks, and its budget is the fifth-largest in the world. The SDF was originally established in 1950 as the National Police Reserve, was authorized by General MacArthur, and has been subsequently enhanced by various strategic circumstances affecting Japan.

The Cold War prompted Japan to strengthen its conventional military capability, and North Korea's missile threats more recently have caused Japan to acquire a ballistic missile defense capability. Japan has also incorporated new defense policy laws regarding the use of the SDF, such as the "International Peace Cooperation Law" (1992); the "Law Concerning Measures to Ensure the Peace and Security of Japan" (1999) which applies to situations in areas surrounding Japan; the "Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law" (2001); and the "Law Concerning Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq" (2003). Such constitutional interpretations and legal actions since end of the Cold War have permitted Japan to adjust its policies to meet the international environment. The new defense policies have

successfully allowed Japan to conduct some military operations abroad, far from Japanese territory.

However, there are still serious remaining restrictions on Japan's conduct of military operations, especially multinational combat operations with United States military forces. The exercise of the right of collective self-defense would seem to be the most applicable legal framework for multinational operations, which is the right to use force to stop an armed attack on a foreign country with which the state has close relations, even if the state itself is not under direct attack. The exercise of the right of collective self-defense is partially incorporated in the Japan-U.S. alliance, although there is no obligation for Japan to defend the United States in case of attack on the latter. Although international law would permit Japan to exercise the right as a sovereign state, the Japanese Government believes that the exercise of the right of collective self-defense exceeds the limit on self-defense authorized under Article 9 of the Constitution and is not permissible.²⁸ This interpretation has serious negative impact on the alliance's credibility regarding genuine collective self-defense, but also in limiting Japan's contributions to overseas missions.

There has been some positive movement in Japanese politics to remedy this problem in recent years. The Council on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security was commissioned by the Prime Minister in May 2007 to analyze four specific scenarios: 1) Protection of U.S. naval vessels on the high seas; 2) Interception of ballistic missiles that could head for the United States; 3) Use of weapons in international peace operations; and 4) Logistic support for the operations of other countries participating in the same United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UN PKO).

The report was submitted to Prime Minister Fukuda in 2008. However, shortly after its submission, this initiative to change the defense legal framework was stopped when The Democratic Party of Japan obtained a majority in the House of Representatives and gained control of the government. Recently, some external events have caused the new government to reconsider whether the country's defense policy should be enhanced. Japanese domestic political debate was stirred by the arrest of a Chinese fishing boat captain by the Japanese Coast Guard. Additionally, the November 2010 North Korean shelling of a South Korean island which killed four people, including civilians, has prompted the Japanese government to review its defense policies. These incidents have favorably affected discussion of the new National Defense Guideline Program (NDGP). These positive influences to improve Japan's defense policy could continue, since a new generation of Japanese politicians and leaders have emerged, and many have supportive ideas regarding military capability. The result could be a momentum that changes the traditional fundamental structure of the Japan-U.S. alliance.

There are other influences regarding Japan's defense policy that are related to the U.S. military presence in Japan, especially the bases in Okinawa. After the new Japanese government assumed power in 2009, the new Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama tried to produce a new policy regarding the Japan-U.S. alliance, called the "Equal Japan-U.S. Alliance Relationship." The basic idea of this proposal is that Japan should change the policy regarding the Japan-U.S. alliance which was established in 1960, and that U.S. military bases in Japan should be removed from Japan.²⁹ A related proposal from Ichiro Ozawa, one of the most influential members of the ruling party, insists that all U.S. forces other than the Navy's Seventh Fleet should be removed from

the territory of Japan. Such proposals might be related to generational changes in Japan and accelerated by Okinawa's anti-U.S. military movement. Anti-American sentiments could combine with other pro-autonomy views that Japan deserves a "normal" status with "normal" and independent capabilities such as aircraft carriers, ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, atomic submarines, bombers, and even nuclear weapons (all of which Japan shuns but are possessed by its American ally). Anti-American and pro-autonomy sentiments could both affect the fundamental structure of the Japan-U.S. alliance, but in different ways from the influences discussed earlier that would seek to redress alliance inequality.

In a sense, Japan has three major policy options regarding the Japan-U.S. alliance. The first option would be essentially to maintain the status quo with Japan providing the United States with military bases and the United States providing Japan a security umbrella composed of U.S. capabilities. The second would be to transform the alliance into a more equal one in terms of benefits and contributions. The third option would be essentially to jettison the alliance in favor of an independent policy with a strengthened military capability if necessary.

United States Alliance-Related Policy Options

The United States has several options to deal with the Japan-U.S. alliance in order to cope with China and achieve its other national interests.

The first option would be to strengthen the alliance as a hedge against the potential future threat of China. This approach would be based on the idea that Japan and the United States will still be the world's two largest economies with democratic systems and shared values; therefore, the Japan-U.S. alliance will continue to shape

Asia's future as it has its past.³⁰ This option would require Japan to strengthen its national security institutions and proceed with the ongoing debate on the Constitution in order to increase Japan's role in the alliance and international affairs. The United States military presence in Japan would be improved or maintained at present levels.

Even though this option might be seen as the most expected, it has two problems. The first concerns whether it is realistic to expect drastic changes in Japan's defense policy. Past experience shows that it is difficult to achieve other than modest and incremental alterations. In actuality, "strengthening the Japan-U.S. alliance" may sound good in principle but is unlikely to translate into actual change. The second reservation concerns the unlikely prospects for improving or maintaining the U.S. military presence in Japan. As previously discussed, U.S. basing currently is one of the most contentious political issues in Japan. Additionally, since the force posture realignment of the U.S. military in Japan is already underway to reduce burdens on local communities, it would be politically difficult to reverse expectations and physically improbable to replicate or exceed current capabilities in any new Japanese locations.

The second option would be to de-emphasize the Japan-U.S. alliance and instead strengthen the U.S.-Korea alliance in order to cope with China. Since South Korea has been making great progress economically and politically in recent years, it would be very natural for the United States to shift its center of gravity from Japan to South Korea in order to enhance its national interests. There are some recent developments that would seem to support adopting this option. Since South Korean President Lee Myung-Bak assumed office with strong and generally pro-American leadership, the relationship between South Korea and the United States has

significantly improved, economically and diplomatically. The two countries have reached several important agreements such as the Future Vision of the Korea-U.S. Agreement (2009) and a Free Trade Agreement (2010), while Japan has been struggling to solve the issue of U.S. bases in Okinawa. In addition, rising tensions between South Korea and North Korea have rekindled Korean awareness of the importance of their alliance with the U.S. and resulted in closer military relationships through bilateral exercises.

Since South Korea shares some common interests regarding China with the United States, this option may have some appeal. Also, if the United States can use additional military bases and facilities in South Korea, the United States could reduce its basing dependence on Japan. However, South Korea has closer relations with China than does Japan, and some recent polls show that more South Koreans have a more positive impression of China than they do of America. Also, in Korea U.S. military basing is at least as contentious an issue as it is in Japan. Another problem with alternative bases in South Korea might be their proximity to China, which would require U.S. military forces would have to routinely operate too close to China.

The third option would be to reduce the emphasis on the Japan-U.S. alliance and instead strengthen the U.S.-Australia alliance in order to cope with China. This option would be enhanced to shape China rather than serve as a hedge against China. Because strengthening the Australia-U.S. alliance need not have direct and potentially negative implications for China as might expansion of the alliances with Japan or Korea, China might view this option as less provocative than the others. Australia does not have contentious issues with China such as territorial disputes or historical conflict, as do Japan and Korea; in fact, the relationship between Australia and China is generally

close. If the United States aims to establish a constructive strategic relationship with China, this option might be effective. One problem with this option is that Australia's location is too distant from the Asian mainland to be a desirable alternative location for U.S. military bases.

Although each option has its attractive aspects, it is important to remember that for the United States its military presence in Japan is indispensable geographically, and to the extent that a future hedge against China is needed, the Korea and Australia options fall short. The United States needs to establish its strategy for the Japan-U.S. alliance, remaining attentive to its value in shaping China into a nation that shares similar interests with the United States. However, the long-range strategic perspective is complicated by the military basing problem, particularly the costs for any regional military repositioning. Consequently, grand strategy matters are in part dominated by budgetary considerations and interest in operational efficiency.

Future Posture of the Japan-U.S. Alliance

In order to be an effective hedge against China, the Japan-U.S. alliance can adopt three future adjustments. First, the alliance's traditional posture, which has struck a balance between the U.S. defense of Japan and Japan's provision of military bases to the United States, should be changed to new structure primarily to ensure a hedge for China. Currently, Japan provides the United States with military bases, and the United States is prepared to defend Japan with its own military capability, but without a practical operational and legal framework. The alliance's new structure would include a shift from a stationary alliance to an operationally-based alliance which would achieve more equity, thus solving the fundamental problem of this alliance. To support this new

structure, Japan's defense policy transformation (particularly including broader ability to conduct military operations) would be indispensable. To facilitate Japan's defense policy transformation, the United States can take advantage of Japan's current preferences for independent capability and sovereign rights, as well as Japan's understandable security concerns regarding China. The United States should reduce its own burdens in this alliance, which would provide additional incentive for Japan to advance its defense policy. This structural change would also reduce U.S. military expenditures in the region and ameliorate a major friction point by reducing the U.S. bases and facilities in Japan.

Secondly, the alliance should adapt an new structure that supports the changes inherent in the first recommendation. For the U.S., this would entail shifting bases and facilities from Japan to alternative locations such as such as Guam, South Korea, or Australia. Only fundamental capabilities to ensure smooth deployment in contingencies would remain in Japan. The United States should strengthen its expeditionary capability to support deployments to Japan and elsewhere in the region.

Japan must also undertake significant reform in this new alliance structure, particularly with the removal of U.S. military capability upon which Japan has depended for its security. The first step is for Japan to make progress on the legal framework of its defense policy, to permit the possession of "offensive" military systems and combat operations in areas other than Japan, as well as to provide the United States with collective defense. Although it has been difficult to make drastic changes in Japan's defense policy, this radically new alliance structure would take advantage of Japan's favorable domestic circumstances and create the security needs to transform its defense policy and create an updated and realistic interpretation of the Peace

Constitution. Japan should also acquire “offensive” military capabilities such as aircraft carriers, bomber aircraft, and ballistic and cruise missiles. With these reforms of Japan’s defense policy and capability, close military cooperation between the U.S. and Japan would be possible not only regionally but also internationally, which for all practical purposes is not currently possible. Additionally, this enhancement of the military alliance between the two countries would have a supplemental effect on the strategy for China. It would support efforts to shape China, since reducing the U.S. presence in Japan would be interpreted by China as a positive strategic message.

The third recommendation is to create a collective defense framework in the Pacific Rim region by using the Japan-U.S. alliance as a cornerstone, in order to pursue the two different strategic objectives of shaping China and hedging against China. For both Japan and the U.S., the first priority should be to shape China so that it recognizes and pursues common interests; simultaneously, both countries should prepare for threats from China in case shaping fails. The purpose of a Pacific Rim collective defense framework would be to support the shaping of China, not its containment. Its members would include Japan, the United States, South Korea, Australia, and other countries in the Pacific Rim, as well as China.

A collective defense framework would support the first strategic priority of shaping China. Needless to say, it would be very difficult to create this framework, since a other bilateral and multilateral regional frameworks already exist. However, It may be possible to combine existing frameworks, and there have already been some initiatives, such as the Six-Party Talks, that may support efforts to create such a regional security framework.

These three recommendations can change the alliance's current static posture to a much more active one, and could simultaneously address several other issues as the alliance is restructured to cope with China.

Conclusion

Since its establishment in 1960, the Japan-U.S. alliance has performed a significant role not only in ensuring Japan's security, but also in contributing to the broader security of East Asia and global security as well.³¹ Even though many have high expectations that this alliance can function as a future hedge against an emerging China, the alliance's posture and structure should be revised to adjust to the changed security circumstances facing both countries. Needless to say, Japan has the greater responsibility to change the alliance structure, and it would be very difficult to change the legal framework of Japan's defense policy under its Peace Constitution. However, unless Japan accomplishes this, it will not have U.S. trust as a real partner. Additionally, after fifty years it is time for the United States to reconsider its own expectations of the alliance as well as its regional strategy. It should facilitate Japan's military reforms while modifying its own presence in Japan. This would both enhance the alliance's credibility and reduce the burdens on local communities in Japan, particularly in Okinawa.

Furthermore, it is very important for both countries to realize that the best strategy regarding China is to shape China as a nation which shares common interests with Japan and the United States. Creating a collective defense framework in the Pacific Rim would be an effective way to achieve this objective. Such a framework should be done gradually, and a first step might be to collaborate on non-traditional military operations such as disaster relief in regional countries.

Finally, both countries should remember that millions of Japanese and Americans devoted their lives to their nations in the Second World War seventy years ago. Japan and the United States are both blessed with prosperity, and the alliance traces its existence to the efforts of previous generations. Both nations have great responsibility to maintain the alliance not only for their own peace and prosperity, but also for international well-being.

Endnotes

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