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U.S.–Japan Defense Guidelines: Toward a New Accommodation of Mutual Responsibility

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June 1997

The discussion papers in this series are part of a research project, "America's Alliances with Japan and Korea in a Changing Northeast Asia, initiated in the fall of 1996 at the Asia/ Pacific Research Center. The series is intended to make available to scholars and the policy community as quickly as possible seminar presentations in the project, draft manuscripts, and other timely pieces related to the security environment of Northeast Asia and/or the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-Korea security treaties.

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Printed in the United States of America

U.S.–Japan Defense Guidelines: Toward a New Accommodation of Mutual Responsibility*

The conclusion of the Cold War has undercut presumptions about America's commitment to Asian security and the defense of Japan. The Cold War—the need to contain the Soviet Union—no longer exists as an inherent rationale and the organizing principle for an American national doctrine for overseas engagement. This is a major consequence of the end of the Cold War.

What ramifications do these developments have for the U.S.–Japan security relationship? In the past, the bilateral relationship has been limited in the Japanese interpretation primarily to the direct defense of Japan. Nevertheless, implicit agreement, long-term practice, and expectations of crisis acquiescence have provided the United States, in the form of its bases in Japan, a virtually unilateral springboard from which to operate throughout East Asia, the Pacific, and as far as the Persian Gulf.

Especially with the contraction of the American base structure in the Pacific, the health and longevity of U.S.–Japan security ties have become a stalking horse for the much larger issue of America's post–World War II "adventure" of having troops deployed six thousand miles west of California. Will the United States continue this scheme of far-flung deployment, and if so, why? The answer depends fundamentally on the outcome of discussions now under way between Washington and Tokyo—the Defense Guidelines Review—which will determine the expanded scope and breadth of the limits of legitimate bilateral security cooperation.

If America is to make any sense out of the uncertainty of the post–Cold War period, it must do so from the vantage point of regional and global leadership which is forward, engaged, and visible. For the United States, the only realistic approach to national security

**Edited from the proceedings of a seminar held December 8, 1996, at Stanford University*

strategy in East Asia and the Pacific is through the modality of the bilateral U.S.–Japan security alliance; only through this device can Washington hope to engage not only Tokyo, but Beijing.

There is much at stake in the issues of forward deployment and active engagement, which traditionally have energized U.S. defense and foreign policies in the region and supercharged American influence. Nevertheless, to date the United States has shown little inclination to engage in a meaningful domestic debate on the continued merits of this approach. The Congress is disengaged; State Department leadership has been notoriously lacking; the Defense Department has been the victim of its own success, with little depth on the bench and too many demands on a few junior officials; and, at least from some quarters, academic contributions have been either self-serving or downright destructive.

The caliber of bilateral strategic thinking and writing on the future of the security relationship reflects this American shortcoming. Time and again, Japan has demonstrated the inability to come to grips with the pressing need to articulate in a publicly plausible way the enduring rationale of the alliance, enduring for the future as well as the past and vital to bilateral security and regional stability. Rather than rise to the occasion, the American response has been disparate, fractious, and tactical.

These traits have shown most clearly as Japan and the United States attempt to come to terms with specific problematic situations, such as the difficulties surrounding the American garrison on Okinawa and other issues related to the U.S. bases, doing so without a commonly accepted strategic rationale on which to justify tough decisions which otherwise tend to cleave the alliance. The disarray on the American side is quite apparent in Tokyo, and one could argue that Japan is apt to defer difficult decisions until an American clarity of view and consensus emerge. The result is a dissatisfying impasse, just at the moment when the United States should be facing up to enduring requirements and strategic realities, and Japan should be calculating how best to support that consequential American intellectual effort.

In "Defense in an Age of Hope" (*Foreign Affairs*, November/December 1996), then-Secretary of Defense William Perry laid out his construct for future American defense policy, establishing the triple doctrine of "presenting, deterring, and defeating." That doctrine reaffirms many of the lessons of the Cold War. But Dr. Perry made another interesting point: Unlike the Cold War situation, alliances such as the one with Japan are no longer lesser cases included in some larger issue such as the containment of the Soviet Union. The bilateral relationship has itself become the major strategic issue.

The United States and Japan are trying to come to terms with the newly singular importance of the bilateral relationship, with how the future security relationship will be articulated and what will be its doctrinal foundations. Will the relationship be able to, indeed can it, stand on its own merits? Must it do so, or will China inevitably replace the Soviet Union as the organizing principle for bilateral security policies and national planning? Has Beijing already filled this tacit role?

Tokyo and Washington also are trying to establish how Japan can make a larger contribution to regional security without disrupting the very stability they intend to prolong, by avoiding the stirring of regional animosities and a trenchant distrust of Japan which still linger throughout East Asia. Because it has the farthest to go, Japan's conclusions will be emblematic of the increasing importance of allied contributions in forthcoming defense debates in the United States. To the extent that past and future allies are more forthcoming with their cooperation and contributions, the greater will be the propensity for American decision makers and the public to support continued engagement in Asia and other regions important to the United States.

The success or failure of these discussions and debates in the Japanese context will determine the psychological backdrop for future budgetary and deployment decisions made by the U.S. military. It has been said that American defense budgets in the order of $150 billion, instead of the current $250 billion, are not unlikely. That sort of decline would exacerbate current trends in both the military and political decision-making process: first, to look for technological alternatives which reduce presence as a fundamental requirement, and second, to emphasize domestic basing options in the face of additional rounds of the base closure and realignment process. Just as in the bilateral context, without the clear rationale and obvious alternative of the security relationship to fall back on, the outcome of future U.S. national military planning and the next round of domestic base closures is perilously uncertain, because American commitment to overseas engagement has not yet been revalidated as a widely accepted doctrine for American military and political policy. At the end of the day, bases in Japan have no domestic constituency.

Some of these concerns are not new. By the early 1990s, the sense of drift in the U.S.–Japan alliance was palpable. There had been a decade or more of presumptions, on both sides, that Tokyo was in the ascendancy and the United States in decline. With the end of the Cold War, Japan started to hedge, however incrementally, against the potential withdrawal of the United States, apparently because Tokyo had concluded not only that it had to do so, but also that it could afford to aspire to its own leadership role in Asia. By mid-1994, the possible consequences of that drift became fairly clear, and the two countries began to redress the malaise through a conscious effort on the part of Washington and Tokyo.

In the first step of what came to be known as the Nye Initiative (named after its architect, former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Joseph S. Nye), the United States reaffirmed the American commitment to the defense of Japan and to the stability and security of East Asia. This phase of the process culminated in the April 1996 Tokyo Summit, with its Security Declaration introducing a plausible construct for the bilateral security relationship. The next step, tabled at the summit and now well under way, was to redefine Japanese contributions to the security relationship. This was necessary both because the United States needed the help and because the alliance could not withstand the criticism sure to ensue if Japan—no longer a lesser included case of the Cold War—were to be seen as failing to pull its own weight. Moreover, it had become increasingly accepted that in the case of a conflict on the Korean peninsula (hostilities appeared to be imminent in 1994), if Americans were dying in the defense of South Korea, the lack of Japanese involvement would mean the end of the bilateral security relationship. Thus, the work over the last several years has been to restore the U.S.–Japan alliance to the point where new terms of bilateral cooperation could be constructed.

Nothing said so far should be construed as an argument to do things fundamentally differently from the past. It is simply that certain factors have changed, such as the demise of the unifying threat of the Soviet Union; an American introspection, as yet unmatched in Japan; and the requirement that Japan should assume incrementally more responsibility in an alliance which now must stand on its own merits. Basic doctrines that emerged from the Cold War appear to be durable and should still apply: The United States will still provide the nuclear umbrella and a fundamental security guarantee to Japan; field forward deployed forces; and contribute the offensive power projection capabilities of the American military. Japan's Self-Defense Forces (SDF) will still operate under Article 9 of the Japanese constitution, which forswears war as a sovereign right, and Japan will forego nuclear weapons, collective defense, power projection, and arms exports.

The Japanese formulation is, of course, very different from the American approach to war. The United States has adopted the doctrines of Clausewitz, which in essence say that war is an extension of policy by other means, without inherent limits to scope or scale. Unlike the United States, however, in effect Tokyo cannot order its military to die for its country, except in the strict defense of Japan. Nevertheless, Japan will continue to provide for its own defense in the context of self-constraints enumerated above, because that is what best fits not only Tokyo's domestic political and historical circumstances, but those of the region as well.

It was in this context of continuity propelled by change that the determination was made to embark on the Defense Guidelines Review. First conceived as a plank in the new bilateral security platform in late 1994, and embellished in concept internally and then bilaterally throughout 1995, the review was officially announced in April 1996 at the Tokyo Summit as part of the Summit Security Declaration signed by President Clinton and Prime Minister Hashimoto.

Okinawan base issues have impinged substantially on the efficacy of the Guidelines Review process. Through the point in April 1997 when Japan passed legislation defeating challenges to leases of expropriated land in Okinawa on which U.S. bases are situated, the political volatility of Okinawan base issues has supplanted the Guidelines Review and other more substantive issues. As a practical matter, the two national bureaucracies have been hard pressed to handle both Okinawan issues and the review simultaneously, so a sequential approach is playing itself out. Thus, the health and welfare of the security relationship will be measured by the outcome of the Okinawan base issues, because they must be largely resolved before defense bureaucrats, politicians, and military officers on both sides can effectively tackle the Defense Guidelines Review.

Okinawa exemplifies an inherent problem, in that both the U.S. and Japanese governments are permitting the process to push them instead of controlling the process themselves. There are potentially dramatic consequences for Tokyo. Japan depends almost completely on American commitments and security guarantees. Nevertheless, at a time of profound change in that relationship, the Japanese government has been incapable of preventing local concerns from whip-sawing the American military command and civilian policymaking apparatus.

Understanding Defense Guidelines

The graph and caption which follow (opposite) describe the terms of the Defense Guidelines Review in a single schematic, displaying the range of potential military operations on any given day, American contributions, and potential Japanese roles. The context is that of incremental enhancements to Japan's role, concentrating on rear area support for American operations, calibrated to take Japanese constraints into account while enabling much more tangible alliance cooperation.

The line labeled *Japan's Level of Effort* represents the conceptual point beyond which Japan cannot participate, given the currently accepted strictures on Japanese security policies. It is this limit which the Defense Guidelines Review aims to raise, thereby setting the new trajectory for the future of bilateral defense cooperation.

U.S. contributions—power projection, offensive warfare capabilities, and the nuclear umbrella—tend to define the Japanese contributions because the two are seen as asymmetric poles. It is the middle ground, the so-called "gray zone" between the two that now tends to define the terms of the debate for Japan. This is because the Defense Guidelines Review

Incremental rear area support is a means to increase Japan's contributions in case of a serious regional crisis. The vertical axis measures the intensity of military operations, ranging from routine to wartime. The horizontal axis represents the probability of any particular level of intensity. The curved broken line is not mathematically derived, but represents the various combinations of intensity and probability which describe the spectrum of conflict. Normal peacetime operations—low-intensity and high-probability—are at the lower right of the curve. Wartime operations—of low probability but very intense—are at the upper left. PKO, maritime interdiction, and crisis response situations fall in between.

The heavy horizontal line represents Japan's level of effort in the context of alliance responsibilities for regional security. Most observers interested in the health and viability of the bilateral security relationship presume that Japan's level of effort must increase to avoid a disastrous rift in case of a regional crisis. The less appreciated reason for increased Japanese contributions is that they would stiffen U.S. resolve to stay engaged before a crisis, as well as in its aftermath.

Japan's level of effort will be determined by a number of factors, represented by the vertical arrows pushing on the horizontal line. Upward pointing arrows represent forces urging Japan to do more. They include U.S. political expectations and operational requirements; the need to redress the imbalance between Japan's economic success and regional responsibilities; domestic calls for greater responsibilities; and the overriding strategic requirement to keep the United States engaged. The downward arrows represent such factors as historical regional animosity toward Japanese militarism; Japanese domestic pacifism and instincts for avoiding war; and Chinese objections to anything construed as a U.S.–Japan combination aimed against China.

The various aspects of security cooperation listed below the Level of Effort *line represent areas in which Japan could further help the United States respond effectively to regional security requirements. They are arranged without reference to the curve.*

The portion of the curve that is within the oval and above the Level of Effort *line represents the hypothetical situation in which fighting has broken out in the region and U.S. forces are heavily committed. The potential for heavy U.S. casualties would be great. Japanese contributions, limited to rear area support, would not include front-line operations or Japanese casualties.*

is taking the path of exploring unconventional contributions to mutual security by proposing that Japan take a much greater role in rear area support for American operations.

The best way to explain such a role is to define what it does not mean, using as an example a notional Korean scenario—a good planning case, but one which does not define the limits or purpose of the review. It does not mean, for instance, that Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) mine sweepers would clear Korean harbors of mines. It probably would mean that the JMSDF could clear Japanese ports so that American naval units could sortie. It might also mean that the Straits of Tsushima and other international waters would be kept clear by Japanese mine sweepers. The Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF) would not fly combat air patrols over South Korea, but would fly defensive missions over Japan, and perhaps over the Sea of Japan, so that American aircraft would be freed for other operations.

The primary emphasis of the Guidelines Review is not on operational contributions, however. "Gray zone" operational requirements probably will not have dramatic consequences for the structure of the SDF, and the Defense Guidelines Review should not be mistaken for a force-building exercise for the SDF (although there are some in the United States and Japan who would like to make it so). The Defense Guidelines Review is rather more concerned with the way Japanese forces and military and civilian infrastructure can support American operations.

For instance, in a war on the Korean peninsula, there would be tremendous numbers of aircraft flying across the Pacific from the United States, some carrying troops, some carrying urgently needed supplies that could not wait for ship delivery, and many combat aircraft en route to Korea. The operational preference in most cases would be for the combat aircraft to operate from South Korea, and for the cargo aircraft to proceed directly to Korean air ports of entry, but many might have to stage to and from Japan, either for lack of room at South Korean airfields or perhaps because Korean air bases had sustained damage. Japanese fields are the obvious alternative for staging and refueling, and those arrangements have to be sorted out in detail, in advance. Other aircraft would have to bed down at Japanese fields. These planning requirements apply not only to American air bases in Japan, but to Japanese military and civilian fields as well. It is these latter cases which should be the object of Defense Guidelines discussions.

Is Japan prepared to repair American ships that have been damaged by North Korean mines, or to participate in the evacuation of non-combatants from South Korea? After a crisis, or a collapse in North Korea, would Japan be prepared to deal with controlling the flow of refugees by enabling the United States to participate more effectively in that operation? Would Japan transport American forces within Japan, and perhaps to Korea? The fuller notional set of Japanese rear area support contributions is listed under the line labeled *Japan's Level of Effort*.

These contributions focus on what Japan can do to help the United States operate more effectively. This is quite a different focus from the objective espoused by some, that the review should result in Japan becoming a "normal" country by having a "normal" military freed of extensive operational and geographical constraints, and thereby being able to make more conventional contributions.

The large vertical arrows to the right of the *Level of Effort* line represent the external and internal factors constraining and motivating the Defense Guidelines Review. The downward arrows represent dampening factors which militate against progress, such as unresolved historical animosities and Chinese concerns with the prospect that improvements in the U.S.–Japan security relationship are designed to contain China. Japanese domestic considerations also are an impediment.

Across the board, Japan tends not to be ready to accept much more in the way of a security role, no matter how unconventional or direct. Motivated by a fear of foreign entanglement due to its disastrous World War II defeat, Japan has assiduously avoided explicit responsibility for the external ramifications of the Security Treaty (Article 6 of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security), which stipulates shared responsibility for regional security and stability, as well as cooperation for the defense of Japan.

Conversely, there are domestic urges for normalcy, an underlying governmental acknowledgment that Japan must do more, and American pressure pushing up on the *Level of Effort* line.

Given these various considerations, the Defense Guidelines Review process takes an unconventional approach by exploring what the range of Japan's responsibilities under Article 6 of the Security Treaty might be without destabilizing the region or going beyond Japan's domestic sensibilities. The impetus for doing this is threefold: the interest of the United States in Japan doing more because the United States thereby will be able to do less itself; strengthening the relationship and preparing for the buffeting that could occur in a serious crisis; and tying the two countries together for the long haul so that their cooperation is a widely appreciated, intrinsic advantage that is indispensable for mutual defense and East Asian and Pacific security.

This construct is vulnerable to what might occur in the graphic's oval at the upper left, which represents a situation of heavy American casualties but no direct front line Japanese involvement in the event of a Korean conflict. This is a nettlesome problem, and an inherent factor in a carefully calibrated, incremental increase in Japanese responsibility. It is in this particular instance—low-probability but high-intensity —that it is difficult to answer those who say that the only way forward is for Japan to become a "normal" country militarily.

There are certain parallels between the Korean peninsula scenario and the Persian Gulf War, in which South Korea might take the role of Kuwait. Japan would assume the part played by Saudi Arabia, which—as a result of more than a decade of planning—had built air fields in the desert that sat waiting for an influx of American forces to defend the kingdom. The Gulf War was fought, in fact, to defeat Iraqi aggression rather than a Soviet thrust toward the Saudi oil fields. Nevertheless, the previous years of planning, preparation, and building paid handsome dividends, allowing the tremendous influx of coalition forces first to defend Saudi Arabia, and then to launch the offensive against Iraq from Saudi Arabian bases. Americans saw that Saudis were shoulder-to-shoulder with them and the rest of the Gulf War coalition, not so much because of the Saudi military contribution, but because the entire Saudi Arabian infrastructure was made available to the coalition forces. If the Defense Guidelines Review is to be successful, the American public must see Japan in the same light, shoulder-to-shoulder with the United States in a crisis situation, whether or not Japanese soldiers, sailors, and airmen are also dying.

Questions and Answers

Where is the source of disagreement in Washington over whether the U.S. security presence in Northeast Asia ought to be maintained?

This is not so much a question of disagreement as one of not having joined the debate. The United States itself has not thought through whether it is going to continue its overseas military posture over the long term. As a result, as relations become more difficult in places like Okinawa, commanders and senior officials will look at different ways of deploying assets. Without a clearly defined rationale for staying forward, some find it possible to argue, for instance, for bringing the marines on Okinawa back to Hawaii. The pressure to do so will increase, both as technology and modernization tend to provide new alternatives to the constant, intimate engagement enabled by presence; and as presumed eventual reductions in Korea focus attention not only on future force deployments, but on the whole notion of the viability of forward deployments in the context of reductions.

Furthermore, differing U.S. service doctrines will tend to produce differing conclusions regarding forward presence. The navy seems to value highly the advantages of ships homeported in Japan and the world-class repair and support facilities there, and it has steadily and consistently upgraded its capabilities in Yokosuka and Sasebo. The army, wary of land war on the Asian continent, will not commit much beyond cadre support to Japan. The rank of the Commander of U.S. Army forces in Japan (USARJ) has been reduced to a Major General, and significant operational responsibilities of USARJ have shifted to Fort Lewis, Washington. Doctrinally, short of a major national commitment to a conflict in Asia akin to the Persian Gulf War, the army will not assign additional significant resources to Japan.

The air force has a large stake in three major air bases in Japan, but is drawn by the general notion of operating from U.S. bases at long range as a preferred rule. Without the immediate requirements of a Korean contingency to hold these forces in place, air force planners and budget officials probably will continue to pursue at least piecemeal reductions.

The marines are probably the most conflicted, perhaps because base frictions inherently put them under the most pressure. The Okinawan crisis of the last eighteen months probably prompted more than one senior marine to ask if there were alternatives to keeping the garrison there. Civilian pundits also are chipping away at the Marine Corps' resolve, by arguing that the Third Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF) could be withdrawn from Okinawa at little, if any, operational cost.

However, this tendency to conclude that there are viable alternatives is wrong-headed both operationally and financially, as the marines appear to have concluded, as well as politically. A coherent debate in this country would make the point—a process that will have to be exclusively American in the absence of a cogent, effective debate in Japan—about why and how, not whether, we must remain engaged, with forces on the ground, and operating from bases in Japan in order to foster security and preserve stability in East Asia and the Pacific.

Once Americans arrive at such a clear-headed decision, it must then be explained plainly and exhaustively to Japan. If American interests still overlapped with those of Japan—and there is no reason to believe that they would not—then the advantages of such an enduring arrangement would be apparent to Tokyo.

Without such an understanding first and foremost in the United States, there cannot be an effective dialogue with Japan on the complex, divisive details that are going to emerge

from such issues as bases and the Defense Guidelines Review. In order to make progress in these issues—and we cannot afford to stand still—Tokyo will have to deal with domestic objections, as well as adjust legislation, administrative practices, and security policies. This is what it will take at a minimum to make it more possible to enable explicit support for American military bases which stage military operations out of Japan that are not strictly in the defense of Japan.

Thus far, Tokyo has had real difficulty in divorcing domestic political concerns from a much larger strategic point—the counterpoint to the fear of entanglement, namely the warranted fear of abandonment by the United States. Abandonment should be the foremost of Japanese strategic concerns in light of post–Cold War developments. This is why the Defense Guidelines Review is so important, because it has the potential to play a galvanizing role in both capitals.

Is this debate just a Defense Department issue?

By rights, the State Department should be in charge of this debate, and the White House should be orchestrating the Executive Branch effort to come to grips with these issues. Instead, the Pentagon has taken the lead. This is not because the Defense Department has had a better idea—although DoD has been on the right track—but because it was the only agency to put forward an idea to deal with the changing security relationship with Japan. In a sense, DoD has been a victim of its own success, far ahead of a badly fragmented and weakly led State Department, and left to its own devices by the White House and the National Security Council.

This defect reflects a serious breakdown of the bureaucracy, which has the potential to constrain the interagency process from coming to grips with the most significant issues of why, whether, and how the United States will remain present and engaged in Japan and throughout the region for the long haul.

What are some examples of administrative changes that will be necessary in Japan?

This hypothetical example illustrates the current situation: Japan is under attack and a tank is advancing to the front. It heads down a street, the traffic signal turns red, and the tank must stop because military operations in Japan have no priority over civil regulations. This is the result of a direct and conscious effort to constrain the SDF because of the excesses of the 1930s and 1940s in Japan. This situation represents Japan's version of civil control of the military—simply not letting the SDF do much of anything. Dealing with these restrictions is a delicate matter. Not an inconsequential part of the problem for the United States is that these Japanese regulations, and more importantly the relegating of military requirements to low priority, affect U.S. forces as well.

Could Japan not declare a state of emergency?

For the defense of Japan—yes, and then many restrictions such as the one cited above would be lifted, but not necessarily for situations such as the defense of Korea or other external crises. Furthermore, the planning and prearrangements taken for granted by American commanders generally are not carried out in Japan, where civilian participation is required and the strict separation of Japanese and American command authority makes even planning for the defense of Japan inefficient.

The Defense Guidelines Review could correct at least several of these shortcomings, by planning in advance for Japanese contributions in the context of external operations and by involving a broad range of ministries which heretofore have avoided or been excluded from the planning process.

It may be that the review will go on for another year or two, but that in the final analysis the regulatory changes essential to its success will not be incorporated because of the domestic political difficulty of changing regulations without changing underlying policies. For example, it is extraordinarily difficult under present circumstances to give reasonable priority to military traffic or military training in Japan, because military requirements have been relegated purposefully to an inferior legal status. Therefore, the measure of effectiveness will be real legislative change—overarching, enabling defense forces legislation; effective, coordinated administrative changes; and the inclusion of municipalities, prefectural governments, and other ministries into the planning process. The Ministry of Transportation, for example, must consider how to accommodate on a priority basis special trains or supply convoys that might need to go from a military base to an embarkation port. In particular, this planning must be extended to situations beyond the strict defense of Japan.

Has Japan been requested to think about acting on these matters, or are they just hypothetical examples?

The ostensible deadline for the review is November or December 1997, but the final report of the Subcommittee on Defense Cooperation (SDC) will be one milestone in a rather longer process in coming to grips with these issues. In order to be effective, the review will have to operate on three different but closely coordinated levels. The first is the public and political level, which will provide transparency and generate political consensus for the process. Examples of actions at this level are the Security Declaration of April 1996; the reports of the SDC submitted in late 1996 to the defense and foreign ministers of Japan and the U.S. secretaries of defense and state; and parliamentary debates and media coverage. For example, the 1996 SDC Report outlined for Japanese domestic consumption the parameters of the review, and it had diplomatic implications as well, particularly regarding China but also Korea and the other countries in the region.

The second level—the bureaucratic policy level—considers in detail the kinds of examples and requirements cited above and reflects on the authority required to resolve them. Within the parameters laid out by the SDC and the framework of Japan's security policies, what can and can't be done? If a new capability is desirable, what can be done to make it possible?

Finally, there is the operational level, where these considerations must be turned into military plans. None of the foregoing process will make any difference unless an American military commander can count in advance on putting twenty-five F-15s at a certain air base not his own, within a set period after a crisis erupts. Until now, that has not been the case outside the fence line of American bases.

If this three-tiered process is to work, the military of both sides, who will put the guidelines into practice, must be there every step of the way, for several reasons. The first reason is that requirements, however charged politically they may be, must make sense militarily. The second reason is that by participating at each step and at every level, neither military will be able to misunderstand the scope and breadth of legitimate cooperation. In a process of such delicate internal and external sensitivity, limits are as important as progress.

Third, by becoming part of the process, the military should resist the process less, which is not necessarily an intuitive one for either side, forcing as it does the notion of interdependence and cooperation.

Does redefining this relationship really matter? If either North Korea or China tried to attack Japan and force people into "the oval," the U.S.–Japan relationship would probably break. Whether that happens depends upon what other countries want in terms of a continued American involvement with Japan, because they will anticipate the consequences of "the oval."

The point is, first, to do everything possible to mitigate that particular worst case by ensuring that Japan is prepared to participate, albeit not under "normal nation" rules. This will be, as much as anything, an American outcome, for it would determine our future strategic position in Northeast Asia. The United States should be prepared to take steps in advance to secure the best possible subsequent outcome. Hence, the need for introspective drills like this with Japan—the stalking horse for the much larger question of our future strategic posture. Otherwise, we will not be prepared to make those decisions when the time comes.

Furthermore, a war on the Korean peninsula is a high-intensity, but low-probability, scenario. The Guidelines Review, if successful, will cement U.S.–Japan security cooperation for the foreseeable future across the range of more probable and less stressful scenarios. Such success also would underscore the ability of the United States to deal proactively with China, and affect profoundly the crisis response and war fighting capabilities of U.S. forces operating from, around, through, and with Japan.

Why should Japan change its policy when Americans are saying the United States should stay there? If the United States started talking about leaving, then Japan would have to confront the issue.

Reaching the point of the United States threatening to withdraw as implied above would in itself indicate a serious rupture. It might not be possible to recover to any sense of status quo from that point, and might presage an actual departure. With that, Japan would have to fend for itself, with potentially disastrous consequences for the stability of Northeast Asia.

To be convincing, the message to the Japanese has to change to include the reprise that there are two strategic consequences to the end of the Cold War. First, the United States cannot afford, and will not sustain the desire, to provide for regional or global security alone. These trends will only increase, and therefore, as in the past, America will turn to dependable alliances to provide for its own international security. Second, without the motivating rationale such as a global Cold War struggle to force engagement, neither the bilateral security relationship with Japan nor any other can be taken for granted. The handwriting on the wall is becoming more distinct, but neither Tokyo's nor Washington's perspicacity can be presumed, with each side tending toward political weakness, introspection, and reduced defense spending.

Most Americans would be shocked to hear what the level of current operational cooperation is. Simply getting rights to land planes in times of crisis is so technical and grounded in detail that it fails to elevate the discussion to the level of broadening Japan's strategic participation and assuring obligations in the way which is necessary to carry this forward.

The situation has to be understood for what it is, not fecklessness or military inefficiency, but the overlapping of two systems with fundamentally different views of the limits of military action. Working through the details of the issues identified in the Guidelines Review will set the stage for resolving those differences where possible. To demonstrate success in these deliberations with Japan and make it clear at home that a strong security relationship with Japan is our best alternative—just as the United States is for Japan—would put us leagues ahead of where we are right now.

On the more tangible level, there is good reason to hope for significant operational and political progress. The cathartic course of the technical effort will compel Japan to consider its obligations and strategic commitments. To further underscore the review's positive aspects, the same American officials who are conducting the Defense Guidelines Review deal with Korea and China security issues, and understand the pertinent Chinese and Korean implications.

Could you give a comparative sense of the extent of cooperative contingency planning in other military alliances? Are we asking Japan for a greater degree of clarity and precision than we do our NATO allies?

The United States has negotiated wartime host nation support agreements of long standing with its other major allies. In Japan, after eight years of prevaricating, a peacetime host nation support agreement was signed at the April 1996 Tokyo Summit. This is a very limited arrangement with Japan, which permits the exchange of goods and services with accounting on a yearly basis, rather than having to authorize each case separately. Nevertheless, it was seen for good reason as a significant step ahead.

In an important sense, the Guidelines Review is akin to negotiating a wartime host nation support agreement, albeit fundamentally altered in process and outcome by Japan's restrained security and diplomatic policies.

To reiterate, however, Japan is not being asked to conduct military operations, or combat support or combat service support operations, on the front lines of a conflict. Doing so would be destabilizing and counterproductive, and it is likely that not only would Tokyo refuse, but other Asian nations would object.

Is this problem with Japan unique or is it a generic problem in restructuring American alliances in the post–Cold War era?

The security relationship with Japan is not ready for the exigencies of the future. Both the inherent economic differences between the United States and Japan and the emergence of China as a great power put pressures on this alliance that are not duplicated elsewhere. One cannot plan for every contingency. However, inherent alliance strengths and sufficient flexibility can deal with unforeseen developments; thus, getting to this point with Japan will probablybe the ultimate measure of the guidelines dialogue's effectiveness. For instance, just as planning with Saudi Arabia for a Soviet invasion enabled the liberation of Kuwait, seven

years ago Rome probably did not foresee that NATO air missions over Bosnia would operate from Italian air bases, but there was a resiliency in the arrangements in the NATO alliance that allowed for such operations once the political decision to do so was made.

The Defense Guidelines Review is addressing a current shortcoming in the U.S.-Japan security relationship which is in direct contrast to the situation in NATO, where effective planning enables a broad range of possible political decisions. At present Tokyo is limited to allowing U.S. forces to operate from bases in Japan, and for significant regional operations even that decision would depend upon agreements only implied over the decades. Far more problematical would be a Japanese political decision to support American operations actively. There is no current planning or legal framework in place to implement any but the most limited Japanese political decision.

Should not part of the strategy be to enhance the cooperative activities that go on inside Japan?

Planning for regionwide operations would have a tremendously positive impact on the ability to operate for the defense of Japan. The Korean scenario is the most difficult case, and therefore ought to be dealt with first. To do so would have direct ramifications for supporting American surveillance operations in the South China Sea—for example, whether an aircraft can land at a Japanese air base and be refueled by SDF personnel from SDF fuel supplies.

Why not first deal with the easier cases which have not been resolved?

This is the approach being taken, with the first step being the Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement (ACSA) signed at the April 1996 Summit. Basically a peacetime host nation support agreement, it would, for instance, cover an American aircraft refueling at a Japanese air base without having to get political permission to do so each time the requirement arose. Under the prospective circumstances of a successful implementation of Japanese rear area support arrangements, operations of this sort would be possible given the decision to proceed by the government of Japan.

Are your objections to the idea of pulling out of Okinawa strategic or concerned with the message that reducing our force there would convey?

Withdrawing or significantly reducing U.S. forces from Okinawa is a bad idea on both strategic and psychological/political grounds, unless such adjustments move those forces northward to bases in Japan. Typically, Okinawan demands and American and Japanese proposals for reductions involve the marines on Okinawa. Somewhere along the way, a fallacy has crept into the strategic debate that American marines are somehow hostages in Okinawa due to transportation shortfalls, that they have greatly reduced operational utility in the modern era, that the United States is not going to fight on the ground in Asia anyway, and therefore it makes no sense to keep the marines forward.

The primary motivation for such logic is that, in order to save the alliance, the burden on Okinawa must be reduced. The motivation is appropriate: the burden on Okinawa does need to be reduced. However, it should not be done so in a way that undercuts the strategic rationale of our forward deployed forces, or denigrates their inherent

utility. There is no military force more flexible than the marines, and their operational utility is truly impressive. They are rapidly deployable and self-sustaining, usually the force of first resort in a crisis and a deterrent force whether afloat or on Okinawa. Just as marines from Okinawa were first on the ground in Saudi Arabia after the invasion of Kuwait, strategically they continue to play a key deterrent and crisis response role throughout the region.

Furthermore, withdrawing marines or other U.S. forces from Okinawa would feed directly into widespread expectations of weakened American commitment and diminished staying power, which have persisted despite all the actions and rhetoric to the contrary.

Is Okinawa an absolutely essential base?

One argument circulating in American and U.S.–Japanese political/military circles is that U.S. forces on Okinawa could be withdrawn to Hawaii or as far as the U.S. west coast. These arguments consider neither the costs of such a move, the international political consequences, nor the severe blow such a decision would deal to American strategic credibility. Even if American sustainability and commitment were not such perishable commodities, the operational and financial consequences would be extraordinarily severe. Simply put, without a viable alternative to Okinawa, there is no other option if the United States is determined to remain a strategically stabilizing deterrent force forward deployed in the Pacific. The United States must either maintain a serious presence or accept the consequences, and virtual presence is not an option. Success in this regard will be in the eyes of responsible Asian leaders. So far, they are holding their collective breath, hoping that the Okinawan contretemps will blow over soon enough to preclude precipitate reductions.

As for the marines in Okinawa, they have great strategic utility: they are an especially effective deterrent—psychologically effective, ready, well trained and equipped, mobile, expeditionary, available, and precommitted. Marines in Camp Pendleton have some of these attributes, but not all of them.

The deterrent psychological aspect of forward presence is worth highlighting. Candidate Jimmy Carter's prescription for bringing home army forces from Korea in the 1976 presidential campaign was seen as a disastrous misstep for American foreign policy, and reality precluded the plan's implementation. More recent efforts to control the psychological fallout of reducing U.S. forces in Asia since the end of the Cold War have been fairly successful. However, the success is tenuous, largely because of the presumption that American forces will eventually withdraw without the overarching requirement of the Cold War to fix them in place.

If Asia's tendency is to count us out, that predilection must be understood and the notion arrested. First and foremost, mainstreet Americans must understand the important role played by the United States in the minds of Asians, and how that serves American national interests. Removing marines or U.S. Air Force units from Okinawa will lend credence to the idea, both in Asia and the United States, that Asian security and the American military presence in Japan are not as important to the United States as they once were, and that whittling away at the margins of our forward deployed force structure is acceptable.

Washington's mandate to maintain "100,000 troops forward deployed, no reductions" is controversial because it reduces the flexibility of military planners. Forcing the point over this particular issue may be one way to focus the debate on the priority of forward presence and the hidden costs of reductions. This does not mean that, after the resolution of the armed standoff on the Korean peninsula, there must be exactly 100,000 troops forward

deployed, or that if there is a technological advance increasing the capabilities and enabling the reduction of F-16s assigned to individual squadrons, that the number of F-16s in Japan should not be adjusted (which in fact has been done). However, neither is it entirely out of the question that future requirements might increase instead.

One way to resolve this dilemma would be to remove the regional bias against reductions by considering so-called "horizontal" force structure changes, such as across-the-board reductions made possible by modernization or reductions applied force-wide in every theater of operations. Japan-specific "stove pipe" vertical reductions would not be acceptable, however, because of their counterproductive dilution of U.S. credibility and alliance solidarity.

The lack of a strategic doctrine and dwindling resources for defense expenditure are generic factors in that they affect our alliances and commitments everywhere. Given that it has been seven years since the end of the Cold War, and without a coherent doctrine that would justify a continuing stream of resources, these two issues seem difficult to overcome politically.

Precisely because these issues have been so difficult to contend with here, the quality of the dialogue and conclusions reached with Tokyo are still important. For instance, the daily outcome of Okinawan base issues is a sort of barometer, because it is affecting the psyche and testing the endurance of the Americans involved. The extent to which the effort to deal with the base issues succeeds, and therefore the extent to which Japan is seen as a plausible anchor for American strategic commitments, feed back to a much larger group of participants in a more general process, who are involved and concerned with where and how to spend U.S. defense dollars and where to assign doctrinal, strategic, and diplomatic emphasis.

There have been times, and there will be again, when serious proposals for Okinawan reductions have been tabled. Their adoption or rejection will ride on the clarity of the strategic rationale for our security relationship with Japan and the comprehensibility of our military posture there.

A pessimistic analysis would be that trying to expand the U.S.–Japan alliance, intended for the defense of Japan, into a regional security alliance is not only inherently difficult, but politically out of the question in Japan. If you combine the generic constraints with the specific institutional and political problems in Japan, it is beyond fine-tuning.

The present security dialogue with Japan should not be construed as fine tuning. This is a regional alliance now, and perhaps always was despite Japan's reticence, although currently only the United States is able to act on and take credit for its clarified character. The Defense Guidelines Review has the potential to redirect the basis of Japan's political commitment to regional defense. The fact is that Japan has made great contributions to regional stability and security over the years, albeit indirectly and with exquisite discretion, by providing bases for American operations. As a matter of Japanese domestic necessity, these inchoate and understated contributions always have been a function of what Japan would let the United States do from Japanese bases, not what Japan would do for or with the United States. American access to Japanese bases had profound implications for Soviet strategic calculations, for example.

During the Cold War, a serious attack on American forces probably would have been the result of a general war, thereby ensuring Japan's participation. Nevertheless, this was

never a satisfactory arrangement, given that it has been consistently impossible for American commanders to plan with either adequate clarity or sufficient certainty.

The current dialogue is an attempt to explain to Tokyo that implicit expectations of Japanese cooperation are even less dependable then ever before, and will not suffice because the structure of the strategic environment is not the same as during the Cold War. The good news is that the Security Declaration of April 1996, and Japan's good-faith participation in the Guidelines Review process, appear to reflect a Japanese agreement to shift emphasis somewhat toward considerations of regional security. This transformation is the result of many years of effort, and it will take many more years to play out fully.

Once the situation with North Korea is resolved, what will be the mission of the alliance? Once again, there is the difficulty of trying to transform this bilateral alliance into something which is politically delicate in both countries.

It will be tougher to justify the alliance when and if the Korean peninsula situation is resolved. The propensity to depend upon a particular threat seems to be a constant factor in alliance rationale, but it will be almost impossible, and certainly far from appropriate, to thrust that role on China. However, the earlier example of the Italian air bases supporting operations in Bosnia was nothing foreseen by NATO, and the Atlantic alliance's arrangements have adapted and persevered.

What is the status of U.S.–Japan negotiations on intelligence cooperation and Japan's plans for launching a satellite for military use?

Japan has a policy of no military use of space. It does, however, maintain communication satellites, and the JSDF has access to them. There have been public discussions of Japanese plans for so-called surveillance satellites, justified on the grounds of their utility for environmental and disaster-relief applications. These plans do not appear to be well developed, but because other countries and trade competitors have said they would sell either the services or capabilities to anyone wishing to buy them, the Clinton administration decided to allow American companies to market the provision of these capabilities in Japan. Japanese industrial consortia are studying the potential for building and launching these kinds of satellites because Japan wants these technologies as well as the operational enhancements they provide.

A counterpoint to the issue of satellites is the development of the Japanese Defense Intelligence Headquarters (JDIH). For the first time, it will bring under one roof the different military services and intelligence organizations, at least on the defense side. There has been American involvement in planning for this headquarters from its inception.

About the Author

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