

〔論説〕

The U.S.-Japan Alliance in the Post-Cold War Era

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Articles

This paper will discuss the U.S.-Japan alliance following the end of the Cold War. With the U.S.-Japan alliance first being a consequence of the Cold War, and then serving as the framework for Japanese foreign policy during the Cold War era, the central question this paper will discuss is how the U.S.-Japan alliance has been able to successfully adapt to the post-Cold War era.

Events and changes at domestic, regional and global levels have conflicted and interacted with each other, influencing Japanese foreign policy in general, and strengthening the U.S.-Japan alliance specifically. So, how has the alliance been strengthened? This paper will argue that two areas can be identified, namely; the ability of the LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) to remain the key player in determining the course of Japan's international relations, and the Japanese government's pursuit of a more active role in the international community. The influence of the LDP in domestic politics has dictated that the dominant theme of Japan's foreign policy in the economic, political, and security dimensions beginning in the Cold War era and continuing throughout the post-Cold War and contemporary post-Cold War eras has been its relationship with the United States. And the government's policy of seeking a more active role in the post-Cold War international community has demanded that Japan begin to seek political influence more in line with its economic power.

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Introduction

The collapse of the Soviet system in 1989-91 ended the Cold War, and in the process ended the ideologically inspired strategic rationale of the U.S.-Japan alliance. With the U.S.-Japan alliance first being a consequence of the Cold War, and then serving as the framework for Japanese foreign policy during the Cold War era, the central question this paper will discuss is how the U.S.-Japan alliance has been able to successfully adapt to the post-Cold War era. The period following the end of the Cold War will be further divided into the post-Cold War and the contemporary post-Cold War eras. The post-Cold War era is defined in this paper as the period between the end of the Cold War in 1991 and the September 11 attacks on the United States in 2001. The contemporary post-Cold War period is defined as the period following September 11 to the present day.

This focal issue of this paper will be the state of the U.S.-Japan alliance following the end of the Cold War. Before proceeding with the post- and contemporary post-Cold War eras, I will begin by first introducing the origins of the alliance and the influence it had on Japanese domestic and foreign policy in the post-World War II era at the beginning of the Cold War. Second, I will discuss the effects upon the alliance of events and changes in the post-Cold War and contemporary post-Cold War eras. The method will be to concentrate on Japan's relationship with the United States in the political, economic, and security dimensions of the bilateral relationship. By illustrating the events and changes at domestic, regional and global levels I will show how these events and changes have conflicted and interacted with each other, influencing Japanese foreign

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policy in general, and strengthening the U.S.-Japan alliance specifically.

The Cold War Era

In August 1945 Japan accepted the terms of the Potsdam Declaration and surrendered to the Allied powers, ending the Pacific War. The country was subsequently governed by a U.S.-led Allied occupation. The United States was the dominant force in the Occupation, and initiated a policy of demilitarisation and democratisation.

By 1948, however, the United States had introduced the reverse course marking a shift in U.S. policy from 'reform to rehabilitation of Japan as a Cold War ally' (Dower, 1996, 158). Demilitarisation and democratisation had taken second place to anti-communism as international politics in the post-World War II era were increasingly defined by the Cold War, a tense ideological relationship between the U.S.-led capitalist Western camp and the USSR-led communist Eastern camp.

In the Cold War's first decade the United States pursued a policy of containing the threat of communism with a series of regional treaties and alliances. In September 1951, Japan and the Allied powers, with the notable exceptions of communist Soviet Union and China, signed the San Francisco Peace Treaty. A proviso for the peace treaty was the signing of a separate bilateral United States-Japan Mutual Security Agreement. With this, Japan re-entered the global arena firmly in the Western camp and as 'the key U.S. ally in Asia' (Dower, 1996, 156).

'In the immediate post war years, Japan as a vanquished nation was at the mercy of the United States for its domestic political reform, economic reconstruction, and international political rehabilitation' (Akaha, 2000: 177). On the whole, however, the Japanese population welcomed these changes. After the withdrawal of occupation authorities in 1952, and free to establish its own course, Japan, under Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru, pursued a policy of 'economism at home and a low posture abroad' (Kelly, 2002: 11).

U.S.-Japan relations throughout the decades following

World War II were generally amicable and evolved through several phases, but at the heart of the relationship was the U.S.-Japan alliance and at the core of the alliance was the security treaty. The revision of the treaty with the signing of the U.S.-Japan Mutual Cooperation and Security Treaty in 1960 among mass protests, proved to be a low point in U.S.-Japan relations. Japan's basic stance on diplomacy throughout the Cold War era was to maintain the bilateral relationship with the U.S., emphasising the United States-Japan security treaties, and peaceful diplomacy.

The LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) and the SDPJ (Social Democratic Party of Japan)¹ dominated Japanese politics during the Cold War with the two parties conflicting over almost all major political policies, and engaging in bitter ideological clashes. Foreign policy in general, and the U.S.-Japan security treaty in particular, was a constant source of antagonism. The SDPJ was never able to mount a serious challenge to the LDP, which became the dominant political party in the Cold War era, and as such the key player in determining the course of Japan's international relations. Whereas the SDPJ, the perennial opposition, opposed the U.S.-Japan security treaty, the LDP pursued a foreign policy in line with U.S. interests, particularly vis-?-vis the Communist powers, 'in order to improve Japan's relations with East Asia, Europe and global institutions' (Hook, Gilson, Hughes, Dobson, 2001, 85).

The Post-Cold War Era

When the Cold War was at its height in 1959, then Soviet First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev likened international relations to a cabbage; peeling off one leaf after another, he said, eventually you reach the core, and that core is Soviet-U.S. relations.

(Kimura, 1998: 27).

The ideological, political and economic confrontation between the U.S. and the Soviet Union lasted for almost five decades. With the collapse of the Soviet system in 1989-91, the Cold War ended, and a new world order emerged with the United States as the sole Superpower. This volatile period in the international arena in 1989-91 'coincided with a time of reflection in Japan on the

1 Known as the Japan Socialist Party (JSP) before 1991

nation's course since the end of World War II' (Kishimoto, 1997: 8), and with the beginning of a dramatic change in Japanese domestic politics.

When the Cold War ended, so did the single-party dominance of the LDP. In 1993, two years after the end of the Cold War, and after 38 years as the sole governing party, the LDP were ousted from power, and replaced by a seven-party coalition formed from the opposition. In 1994, the leader of the new government, Morihiro Hosokawa, was forced to resign and was replaced by another short-lived coalition government led by Tsutomu Hata which in turn was replaced with a coalition of the LDP, SDPJ and Sakigake. This three-party, Socialist-led, coalition government itself did not last long as ideological divisions between the parties and divisions within the SDPJ soon revealed themselves. In 1995, the SDPJ disbanded and in 1996, after a gap of two and a half years, the LDP regained the prime ministership under party president, Ryutaro Hashimoto.

While short-lived, the LDP-SDPJ-Sakigake coalition government had a profound impact In terms of the U.S.-Japan alliance, and Japanese foreign policy in the post-Cold War era. The coalition was led by SDPJ Chairman, Murayama Tomiichi who, 'soon after his elevation, acted to drop several of his party's long-standing and cherished policies. Including, among others, opposition to the SDF (Self Defense Forces) and opposition to the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty' (Stockwin, 1997: 76). 'With the acceptance of the two founding principles of the LDP's security policy, the brake the SDPJ had applied with varying degrees of pressure during the Cold War period finally had been eased, if not fully released. This radical change of policy served to erode the anti-militarist element in Japanese foreign policy making' (Hook et al, 138).

The central issue for Japanese foreign policy makers in the decade after the end of the Cold War was how to make international contributions responding to the emergence of new global and regional political, economic and security circumstances while maintaining the alliance with the United States as the framework for its foreign policy mandate. The question posed to the U.S.-Japan alliance was, should it continue, and if so, in what form?

The 1950-53 Korean War started the era of rapid Japanese economic growth, and by 1968 Japan had become the third largest economy in the world. Not until the Tokyo stock market crash of 1990, did this remarkable period of growth end. The Japanese economy had thrived under the framework of the Cold War to become the second largest economy in the world by 1990, behind the United States. The post-Cold War economic structures of the 1990s, symbolised by the globalisation of the world economy, brought much change to Japan's economy with the slowdown eventually turning into a recession. While security issues were later to dominate bilateral relations in the contemporary post-Cold War era, the latter period of the Cold War, and the early period of the Cold War were dominated by the economy with the U.S. taking advantage of Japan's inability to make political use of its economic power to shape the agenda of bilateral economic negotiations for its own ends (Hook et al: 110).

In the security dimension, the end of the Cold War profoundly changed the global and regional environment. With communism no longer a threat to Japan and the Asian region, the U.S.-Japan alliance was forced into finding a new meaning through a shift from its previous ideological focus. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) 'the most durable and intimate manifestation of the system of permanent alliances' (Heisbourg, 2003: 87) underwent a similar streamlining when the Cold War ended.

Within the emerging structures of the global and regional post-Cold War orders the nature of Japan's international cooperation, and its uncertain place in the international community came under intense scrutiny, highlighted with the outbreak of the Persian Gulf War of 1990-1. Tokyo's belated and seemingly reluctant contribution of 'U.S.\$13 billion in funding for the allied campaign received virtually no international recognition' (Watanabe, 2001: 6) and was roundly dismissed as mere chequebook diplomacy. It was here that the country's pacifist constitution, which renounces the use of force as a means of settling international disputes, suddenly became a liability rather than a source of pride. Faced with the urgent issue of contributing to the maintenance and promotion of peace

Japan pursued a more active role in United Nations' (UN) conflict-prevention and peacekeeping operations.

Previously the deployment of forces overseas had been prohibited, but with the June 1992 enactment of the Law on Cooperation in UN Peacekeeping Operations, the SDF was now able to participate in UN peacekeeping activities. In November 1995 the Japanese government announced a new National Defense Program outline in response to the post-Cold War environment where it reiterated Japan's basic policy of supporting continuing U.S.-Japanese security ties. And In 1996 the two countries reaffirmed their commitment to the bilateral security treaty with the Joint Declaration on Security leading to the new set of U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines.

Events and changes in the domestic, regional and international landscape in the aftermath of the Cold War have conflicted and interacted with each other, influencing Japanese foreign policy and transforming the U.S.-Japan alliance. It is within the post-Cold War global security setup of the United States that Japan gradually emerged as an active ally of the U.S. playing a more active security role with a greater military role for the SDF, with the security treaty remaining at the heart of the U.S.-Japan alliance.

The overall conservative, pro bilateral orientation of the LDP has meant that throughout the Cold War and post-Cold War periods, the great constant of the Japanese government's foreign policy stance had been support for bilateral alignment with the U.S. This has remained the fundamental basis and framework for Japan's political, economic and security relations with the world bar none.

(Hook et al: 53).

The Contemporary Post-Cold War Era

With Japan's dire economic situation of the 1990s carrying over into the early part of the 21st century, it is the security dimension of the U.S.-Japan alliance that has come to dominate U.S.-Japan relations in the contemporary post-Cold War era, with the economy largely taking second place. Having spent decades limiting its international role, Japan, keeping the U.S.-Japan alliance as the centrepiece of the nation's

diplomacy while utilising the framework of the United Nations, has become more assertive in promoting peace and stability in the international community with the eventual aim of a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

The terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001 once again radically altered the international security situation. In the days and years after the attack, the Bush administration (2001-) has worked to build an international coalition against terrorism that has to a large extent served to 'loosen the network of permanent defence alliances set up after the second world war between the U.S. and its European and Asia-Pacific allies' (Heisbourg, 2003: 87) exemplified by the clash of ideas between Washington and European governments such as France and Germany. The U.S.-Japan alliance, however, has deepened and expanded in scope under the contemporary post-Cold War framework, and appears to be evolving from the defence of Japan and the immediate area around Japan to a more global posture. Japan's willingness to behave more like a "normal country" is evidenced in Prime Minister Koizumi's full support and Japan's full cooperation with the U.S. as evidenced by the dispatch of SDF to Iraq.

'Since 1945, Japan has carefully avoided putting its relations with the United States and with Asia in "either-or contexts", claiming that both are essential to its national interests' (Miyashita, 2001:1). While it is clear that the emergence of new security threats has resulted in the loosening of global alliances as the Cold War system erodes, the U.S.-Japan alliance remains crucial in dealing with the numerous security and economic problems in the Asian region. Historically complicated issues on the agenda include the normalisation of diplomatic ties with North Korea and negotiations for a peace treaty between Japan and Russia. In addition, Washington's planned realignment of U.S. forces in Japan will have a significant bearing on Japan's security policy. This restructuring of U.S. forces, especially given the current problems with the U.S.-South Korean alliance, will form the basis for the SDF to assume more responsibility for the defence of Japan and the Asian region. This will inevitably lead to knock on effects, with Asian nations that suffered the brunt of

Japanese militarism during World War II fearing it could be a first step toward loosening constitutional constraints on Japan's armed forces. Asian countries, with the probable exception of North Korea, see the current level of American presence in the region as deterrence against Japan's expansion (Sato, 1999: 1). While the wider global security structure has been significantly altered following the end of the Cold War, the U.S.-Japan alliance will continue to be the framework for peace and diplomacy in the East Asian region

In contrast to the Clinton administration (1993-2000) where the U.S.-Japan alliance was dominated by trade friction, bilateral relations in the contemporary post-Cold War era have improved immensely to the point where 'Japan and the United States share a common belief that relations between the two countries are at their best ever' (Hishinuma, 2004: 4). Due in large part to the close personal bonds Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro and President George Bush have developed, political ties between Japan and the United States are more positive today than they have been for many years, and there are signs that in the contemporary post-Cold War era, the relationship will be placed on a more equal footing 'inevitably resembling more of an alliance of equals' (Fukuyama, 2004: 10).

Conclusion

This paper has addressed the central issues relating to Japan's international relations with the United States in the economic, political and security dimensions of the U.S.-Japan alliance following the end of the Cold War. I have initially, if only briefly, introduced the framework of the alliance in the context of the beginning of the U.S.-Soviet confrontation in the immediate post-World War II era so as to make sense of the need for the alliance to reinvent itself following the demise of the perceived threat of communism in the aftermath of the Cold War. The dominant relationship of Japan's foreign policy, economic, political, and security relations in the post-Cold War and contemporary post-Cold War eras has continued to be its relationship with the United States. Economic issues threatened to weaken the alliance in the early post-Cold War era with trade friction dominating the relationship in the early to mid-1990s. The SDPJ's acceptance of the security treaty and the

SDF paved the way for Japan to pursue an active role in UN peacekeeping. In this it was encouraged by the U.S. The contemporary post-Cold War era once more posed the question of the necessity of the alliance, and it is in the security dimension of the relationship that bilateral ties have deepened and expanded in scope with the Japanese government reaffirming its fundamental foreign policy stance of support for bilateral alignment with the United States.

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