

1e

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BRIEFING PAPER

US-Japan Security Relations: Their Place
in US Strategic Thinking

Over the years the strategic functions of the US-Japan alliance have undergone considerable change, but for more than two decades Japan has been our most important Pacific ally.

The Essentials of the Security Relationship

The US-Japan security relationship is currently based upon the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security and consists of the following elements:

1. The Treaty commits the US and Japan to recognize an armed attack against either "in the territories under the administration of Japan" as dangerous to their peace and safety, and obliges both to act to meet the common danger in accordance with their "respective constitutional provisions and processes." Thus, the US is committed to extend a strategic guarantee to Japan. Prohibited by their own constitution from dispatching armed forces overseas, Japan could not assume a reciprocal obligation to come to our aid in the event US territories are attacked. They have accorded us access to valuable bases and facilities for purposes not only of contributing to the defense of Japan but for the maintenance of peace and security in the Far East. This remains the essential quid pro quo.

2. US forces have been deployed at facilities and installations in Japan throughout the post-war period. Their numbers have been progressively reduced, however, and currently some 55,000 remain in Japan. Our base system has been consolidated; it still includes major air bases at Misawa, Yokota and Kadena; naval facilities at Yokosuka and Sasebo; Marine bases and training areas in Honshu and Okinawa; assorted army logistic facilities, mainly in Okinawa; and several important intelligence and communications installations.

3. While the Japanese accept the continuing presence of US forces on their soil, they have insisted on the right

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
GDS

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12958 (as amended) SEC 3.3
State Dept Guidelines

By hjk NARA, Date 1/11/11



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

-2-

of prior consultation--and by implication a veto power--over certain actions of the US as a protection of their sovereignty. The objects of prior consultation, principally the introduction of nuclear weapons and the movement of troops into combat from bases in Japan, are to the Japanese matters of extreme political sensitivity. These arrangements impose some limits on our military flexibility, but neither we nor the Japanese have ever formally invoked the prior consultation arrangement. Heretofore the Japanese government has not challenged formally our interpretation that the arrangement does not apply to the transit of naval vessels into Japanese ports, though it is under pressure to do so at the present time. The GOJ has refrained from attempting to pin down with precision and in advance the meaning of limitations on our use of bases in support of combat operations. In connection with the reversion of Okinawa, Prime Minister Sato acknowledged Japan's stake in the security of the Republic of Korea and the Republic of China; he implied that should we seek Japanese consent to utilize bases there in support of our commitments to South Korea and Taiwan, the response would be prompt and forthcoming.

4. When the original Security Treaty was signed in 1952, the Japanese possessed no armed forces. In the interim they have created self-defense forces of modest size and have developed an impressive capacity to mobilize industrial resources for military purposes in an emergency. The Japanese have assumed the major burden of responsibility for their own conventional self defense; they maintain a non-nuclear policy (no construction, no possession, no introduction of nuclear weapons into Japan), and they continue to forswear overseas security responsibilities including the provision of military assistance.

The Purposes of the Alliance: The Impact of Changing Strategic Perspectives

Initially the alliance was conceived as an integral element of our global containment policy. It was designed to insure Japan's membership in what was then known as the Free World, to assure the security of Japan from communist penetration and Soviet attack, to sustain our privileged access to Japanese territory and resources, to facilitate the forward deployment of US forces in the West Pacific, and to encourage Japan's industrial power to once again

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



CONFIDENTIAL

-3-

become an important force in the area, conducive to peace and stability. The Japanese recognized its value as a means of sealing the friendship of the US, obtaining preferred access to the US market, gaining security without the need for rapid rearmament, regaining their sovereignty, and enhancing future prospects for recovering territory still occupied by the United States.

In the 1950's and early 1960's in the absence of any perceptible direct military threats to Japan proper, the US-Japan security arrangement came to be appreciated principally as a means of honoring US defense commitments to other Asian allies. More recently, adjustments in US and Japanese policies toward former adversaries, the emergence of the Sino-Soviet dispute as the principal focal point of tension in the Far East, the termination of our direct combat involvement in Indochina, and a diminished likelihood of great-power involvement in conflict over the Korean peninsula have highlighted other values of the security treaty relationship. In the context of our current Asian policy, the Security Treaty and supporting arrangements serve the following purposes:

1. Support US efforts to promote a stable equilibrium among the Major Powers in East Asia. We have a basic strategic interest in averting fundamental shifts in Japanese policy away from close cooperation with the United States. A neutral Japan would be an uncertain and destabilizing element in the East Asian equation. A Japanese entente with either China or the USSR would have profound and unfavorable consequences for the global balance. It is to our advantage to sustain greater intimacy in our bilateral relations with the Japanese than they have with the USSR and PRC. Preservation of the Treaty and the deployment of US forces in Northeast Asia is perceived by Chinese leaders as a means of limiting Soviet maneuverability in the short run and as a hedge against an irredentist rearmed Japan in the longer term. Dissolution of our security ties with Japan would lead to unfavorable shifts in the global political-military balance with the USSR. For the Japanese, existing security arrangements--beyond the value they retain as a source of deterrence--alleviate concerns about diplomatic isolation and provide a source of confidence and bargaining strength in their dealings with the major communist powers.

CONFIDENTIAL



CONFIDENTIAL

-4-

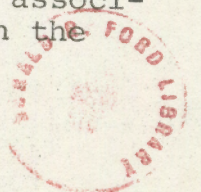
2. Facilitate the local deployment of forces in the Northwest Pacific. The requirements for maintaining US forces in Northeast Asia may be less demanding than in the past due to important changes in relations among the Major Powers, and the growth in allied capabilities. But the scope and rate of expansion in Soviet and Chinese military capabilities is a source of disquiet, as are uncertainties regarding future internal political arrangements in China, future relations between North and South Korea, and the impact of India's nuclear test on the strategic calculations of a number of East Asian countries, not least Japan. Consequently, there is a convincing rationale for maintaining for the time being a visible forward US military presence as a hedge against uncertainties and an earnest of our resolve to remain a Pacific power.

During a period of declining US defense resources in East Asia, greater importance attaches to the flexibility of those forces which remain, and flexibility is a prime attribute of most components of our presence in Japan, e.g., the Seventh Fleet, tactical air units, a mobile Marine division.

3. Provide us with leverage over Japan's future military strategy and forces. The Treaty precludes the need for Japan's development of substantially greater military power and is an important factor in Japanese calculations regarding the nuclear option. In the absence of any direct military threat to Japan, a rapid acceleration in its defense buildup is neither feasible--in view of Japanese domestic political constraints and conflicting economic priorities--nor desirable given historic memories among East Asian countries of Japanese militarism. A gradual but steady qualitative improvement in Japanese defensive capabilities--particularly air and naval defenses--serves US interests and we have offered low-key encouragement of such improvements for several years.

Constitutional, political, and psychological constraints will continue to limit Japan's military role to the direct defense of the home islands. Even within those limits, moreover, the absence of any public consensus on security issues inhibits the Japanese government from actively seeking to obtain support for a larger defense effort or one more closely integrated with US defense capabilities in the region. For our part we will continue to search for ways of associating Japan's defense power with our own strategy in the

CONFIDENTIAL



CONFIDENTIAL

-5-

region. This follows from our need to utilize declining defense resources more efficiently, the political importance of demonstrating greater reciprocity in our security relationship, and the strategic imperative of maintaining sources of influence on Japan's future foreign policy orientation. Methods of advancing this objective include:

- deepening consultative arrangements with the Japanese, to include some joint planning;
- promoting complementarity in our strategic concepts and weapon systems;
- considering possible sharing of responsibilities for some missions currently performed by the US, e.g., ASW and AEW in areas around Japan;
- sustaining Japan's dependence on the US for the provision of high technology military items, e.g., aircraft, telecommunications equipment, etc.

4. Develop a broader web of relations which link Japan to the United States. The Treaty emphasizes cooperation as well as security. It symbolizes the importance we attach to our political relations with Japan; our willingness to sustain it helps elicit Japanese support on other issues of joint concern. Increasingly the most salient issues for our relationship relates to the need for more effective guidelines for managing pressing global problems in the fields of trade, energy, food, and monetary reform. Responsibility for dealing with these issues falls most heavily upon the advanced industrial democracies in Western Europe, Japan, and North America. Over time therefore the alliance with Japan may become one element of a wider triregional political association.

Department of State
November 1974

CONFIDENTIAL

