

The origin of trilateralism? The US–Japan–Australia security relations in the 1990s

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1 Introduction

This paper analyzes US–Japan–Australia security relations in the 1990s. Since the establishment of the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue (TSD) in 2005, there have been a growing number of studies which focus on the TSD or bilateral security relations between Japan and Australia (Terada, 2006; Williams and Newman, 2006; Tow *et al.*, 2007; The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2008). The announcement of the Joint Security Declaration between Japan and Australia in 2006 also received wide attention from researchers interested in the security policies of each country or Asia-Pacific security in general (Bisley, 2006; Sato, 2008; Cook and Shearer, 2009). These studies focus mainly on the current development of US–Japan–Australia or Japan–Australia security relations in various dimensions, such as peacekeeping, non-proliferation, disaster relief, and other forms of multilateral cooperation. In particular, many studies emphasize that Japanese and Australian contributions to

the US-led 'global war on terror' significantly upgraded their respective alliance relations, leading to the creation of the TSD (Jain and Bruni, 2006; Wolton, 2006). In comparison, few studies *exclusively* focus on security relations between the three countries in the 1990s.

However, this paper argues that, in order to understand the emergence of 'trilateralism' between the United States, Japan, and Australia, one should closely examine their security relations during the 1990s. In fact, although the TSD itself was institutionalized in 2005, its foundation was already established during the 1990s. This paper makes the case that the United States, Japan, and Australia converged their security interests during the 1990s, especially with the 'redefinition' of the US–Japan and the US–Australia alliances. This alliance redefinition occurred in 1996 through two statements – the 'US–Japan Joint Security Declaration' and the 'Sydney Statement'. In this process, both alliances gradually underwent a systematic change in nature and role from a traditional bilateral defense arrangement to one that focussed on addressing regional and global security problems. Although traditional defense roles were still relevant in the post-Cold War period, Tokyo and Canberra came to play a more explicit role in responding to both regional and global contingencies such as terrorism, regional conflicts, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) – *contingencies which did not necessarily affect national defense directly*. Consequently, both countries began to stretch their alliance roles with the United States from a narrow 'national defense' position to a new, broader 'international security' orientation. Furthermore, as both Tokyo and Canberra enhanced their respective alliance relations with the United States, they also expanded their 'spokes to spokes' relations, which established the foundation for the trilateral security dialogue after 11 September 2001 (hereafter referred to as '9/11').

The following sections explain how the US–Japan–Australia security relations became upgraded during the 1990s. First, the article will explain how both Tokyo and Canberra moved to 'reaffirm' and 'redefine' alliance relations with the United States, following a brief overview of each alliance immediately after the cessation of the Cold War. Second, the article will demonstrate how this expansion of alliance roles accelerated the transformation of regional allies' fundamental defense postures from focussing on 'national defense' to 'international security'. Then the article will briefly explain how Japan and Australia expanded their

bilateral security talks in the mid-1990s. This article concludes that such a policy transformation foreshadowed the emergence of ‘trilateralism’ between the United States, Japan, and Australia after 9/11.

2 The redefinition of alliances

2.1 Background

After losing a common enemy at the end of the Cold War, both the US–Japan and the US–Australia alliances became temporarily ‘adrift’. In the case of the US–Japan alliance, two regional crises that took place immediately after the Cold War – the 1990–91 Gulf Crisis and the 1993–94 North Korean nuclear crisis – cast grave doubt on the credibility of the alliance. Both cases revealed that Japan lacked effective measures to promptly respond to US requests for support of US military actions overseas (Teshima, 1993; Shinoda, 2007). As a result, American and Japanese policy elites shared a fundamental lack of political and military confidence in the ability of their alliance to respond to post-Cold-War-type regional contingencies. Second, intensified US–Japan trade conflicts imposed further strains on US–Japan relations. While the US ‘revisionist’ group incited ‘Japan bashing’ in the United States by emphasizing the ‘peculiarity’ of the Japanese economic or social system (Fallows, 1989; Prestowitz, 1989; Wolferen, 1989), some Japanese intellectuals argued that Japan had become sufficiently strong that it should be more independent from the United States (Morita and Ishihara, 1989). Finally, the US–Japan alliance faced a serious crisis due to an incident in which three US soldiers raped a 12-year-old girl in the northern part of Okinawa in September 1995. The incident provoked a massive anti-American backlash, which resulted in many Okinawans pressuring for a US military withdrawal from Okinawa. After this episode, public opposition within Japan to the US alliance increased substantially, whereas support for the alliance decreased to the lowest level since 1973 (Tanaka, 1997, p. 342).

Although not as problematic as the US–Japan alliance, security relations between the United States and Australia ‘came under intense, often skeptical, public scrutiny’ in the early 1990s (Trood, 1997, p. 132). In particular, some observers argued that security ties between Washington and Canberra suffered due to the Keating Government’s

special emphasis on regional engagement and multilateral, rather than bilateral, security diplomacy (Baker, 1995a,b; Bell, 1997). Evidence supporting this view points out that, in the early 1990s, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) was more involved with ASEAN defense forces than with the United States in terms of joint exercises (with 38% of its joint exercises being with ASEAN forces and 29% with US forces) (Ball and Kerr, 1996, p. 64). Others argued that Australia's conclusion of a bilateral defense agreement with Indonesia in 1995 reflected Canberra's declining interest in security relations with the United States (Bell, 1997, p. 224). There were further indications that suggested security ties between Washington and Canberra were weakening during the Keating era. In 1993, for instance, both US Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Defense Secretary Les Aspin failed to attend the Australian–US ministerial (AUSMIN) talks. Some viewed their absence from the conference as evidence of 'the tenuous nature of the Australian-US alliance in the Clinton post-Cold War era' (cited in Reid and Siracusa, 1994, p. 142). In addition, Australia's relations with the United States were complicated by trade problems. Although successive Australian Labor governments had steadfastly refused to link their differences with America over trade issues to the security relationship, it was evident that these differences may have eroded some community support for US–Australia alliance relations (Trood, 1997, p. 137). In short, as with the case of the US–Japan alliance, the US–Australia alliance was arguably 'adrift' in the first half of the 1990s.

This did not mean, however, that policymakers in either Tokyo or Canberra dismissed the importance of their respective US security ties. Rather, central decision-makers in both allies sought to maintain credible alliance relations with the United States, at a time when the United States was facing drastic changes in both military strategy and the Asia-Pacific security environment. In April 1990, the US Department of Defense (DOD) announced the East Asia Strategy Initiative (EASI), which projected the downsizing of US military personnel deployed to East Asia over the next 10 years. Based on EASI rationales that underscored a reduced need for US power projection into East Asia with the end of the Cold War, the US DOD withdrew more than 26,000 personnel from Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines during the period of 1991–92 (US DOD, 1992). According to former officials from the Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), many Japanese policy analysts felt

a 'strong sense of crisis' at the reduction in US forces, as they thought that this could lead to a new 'isolationist' US foreign policy posture.¹ Likewise, a former high-ranking defense official from Australia explained that Australian policymakers were apprehensive that Washington's phased plan for military reduction would confirm their fears of a long-term decline in US strategic presence in the Western Pacific.²

Meanwhile, the Asia-Pacific security environment became increasingly uncertain during the first half of the 1990s. The North Korean nuclear crisis of the early 1990s was temporarily resolved when former US President Jimmy Carter visited North Korea, following which a 'framework agreement' was concluded between Washington and Pyongyang in 1994. Nonetheless, there was a growing recognition that the decline of American military presence and the rise of regional powers including China would provoke an arms race and eventually create a strategic environment that was 'ripe for rivalry' in the region (Friedberg, 1994). Some observers predicted that a strong China would make Asia 'stable but unhappy', since a strong China would inevitably become the regional, and even global, hegemonic power in the future (Betts, 1994, p. 61). In addition to these, several regional characteristics – the absence of an effective multilateral security framework, the divergence of national political and economic systems, and the lack of a common regional culture, history, or shared values – further endorsed a pessimistic view toward the future of the Asia-Pacific security environment (Buzan and Gerald, 1994).

It was from this context that both Japanese and Australian policymakers began to seek to enhance alliance relations with the United States. Since both the US–Japan and US–Australia security relationships became 'adrift' after the Cold War, these countries needed to reaffirm their alliance relations with the United States in order to keep the United States engaged in the region and to maintain a stable regional security environment in the post-Cold War period (Keating, 1996; Kuriyama, 1997). As the following sections demonstrate, although it was the United States that took the initiative for redefining the alliance,

1 Interview with Masaki Orita, the then head of the North American Affairs Bureau, 13 June 2008. According to Orita, such a concern was widely shared by MOFA members.

2 Interview with Hugh White, the then Deputy Secretary for Strategy in the Department of Defence, 16 September 2008.

junior allies such as Japan and Australia also actively committed to the redefinition process of their alliance relations. In this process, both alliances expanded their objectives so that they could respond to a new security environment at both regional and global levels of alliance cooperation.

2.2 *The US–Japan joint security declaration*

The process of alliance redefinition began in 1993, after the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) lost the majority in the lower house for the first time since it came to power in 1955 and the new Coalition Cabinet formed by eight non-LDP parties came to power. The new Prime Minister, Morihiro Hosokawa, directed the Japan Defense Agency (JDA) to rethink Japan's security policy after the Cold War. Based on this mandate, an Advisory Group on Defense Issues (*Boei Mondai Kondan Kai*) – composed of nine distinguished security experts – was created in February 1994. After some 20 meetings, the Group eventually submitted a report, titled *The Modality of the Security and Defense Capability of Japan: The Outlook for the 21st Century* (the so-called Higuchi Report), to the Government in August 1994. Although the report was criticized by some US officials for paying less attention to the US alliance, it clearly insisted that 'enhancement of the functions of the Japan-U.S. security relationship' was one of three major policy objectives that Japan should pursue. Of particular interest was the report's argument that security cooperation between Japan and the United States was the most 'essential factor' not only for Japanese defense, but also for the greater security environment of the Asia-Pacific region (Cronin and Green, 1994, p. 34). This is not only because of a 'continuing need to ensure that U.S. commitment of this region is maintained', but also

the range of fields in which Japan and the United States can cooperate for the security of Asia is expected to widen. In other words, the Japan-U.S. relationship of cooperation in the area of security must be considered not only from the bilateral viewpoint, at the same time, also from the broader perspective of security in the entire Asia-Pacific region. (Ibid., p. 42)

The report also stressed that 'the ties between Japan and the United States, which have a common goal concerning the formation of a new

international order, are expected to become even more important' (ibid., p. 59). In other words, the report clearly recognized the US–Japan alliance as one of a set of tools that could increase not only bilateral defense capabilities, but also the international security environment of the post-Cold War era.

Meanwhile, American policy elites also began to prepare for the enhancement of alliance relations with Japan, applying similar perspectives to those found in the Higuchi Report. Joseph Nye, a well-known scholar in international relations at Harvard, took the initiative in calling for revitalizing of the US–Japan alliance in his capacity as the Assistant Secretary of Defense in the Clinton Administration. After entering the DOD, Nye took the initiative toward the redefinition of the alliance with Japan, with other Japan specialists such as Patrick M. Cronin and Michael J. Green, who worked for think tanks outside the government at that time. Under Nye's initiative, Cronin and Green issued a strategic paper, entitled *Redefining the U.S.–Japan Alliance*. The paper stressed the importance of the alliance for the United States. It was instrumental in helping the United States maintain a forward force presence and preserve the balance of power in Asia. It could also compel Japan to play a more active role in partnership with the United States in addressing new threats to the security of the region, such as increased bilateral coordination on nonproliferation, peacekeeping operations (PKOs), and sea lane defense (ibid., 1994, p. 16). Like Japanese policymakers, American policymakers also aimed to reinvigorate alliance relations with Japan from a broader perspective than the Cold War politics of deterrence, i.e. enhancing regional and global stability.

Against this background, both Japanese and American officials began to discuss the reinvigoration of the alliance more regularly. It is ironic that this process of 'reinvigoration' officially started when the Japanese Prime Minister was Tomiichi Murayama – the leader of the Social Democratic Party of Japan, which had consistently opposed the US–Japan Security Treaty during the Cold War. Both Murayama and President Clinton authorized this initiative when they met in Washington in January 1995. Soon after, the US DOD published the East-Asia Strategic Report (EASR) in February 1995. Although the previous EASI was targeted to a domestic audience and Congress and called for the reduction of the US military presence in the region, the EASR (the so-called Nye Report) aimed at reassuring Asian countries, which were

concerned about a decreased US military commitment in the region, by insisting that the United States was not pulling back any further (Nye, 1995; US DOD, 1995; p. 101). The report announced that the United States would maintain the symbolically important 100,000 troops (including 47,000 in Japan) as a forward-deployed force in the East-Asia region. With direct respect to the US–Japan alliance, the report reconfirmed that ‘[t]here is no more important bilateral relationship than the one we have with Japan’ and ‘[o]ur security alliance with Japan is the linchpin of United States security policy in Asia’. Furthermore, the report stressed that Japan’s greater roles and responsibilities were to contribute to regional and global stability within the framework of alliance relations with the United States.

It was, of course, hardly surprising that Japanese policymakers welcomed a continuing US strategic commitment in the region (Funabashi, 1999, p. 253). As Mataka Kamiya observed, the EASR ‘almost entirely’ eradicated Japanese policymakers’ anxiety about the US military commitment in the region (Kamiya, 2001, p. 36). In response to the EASR, Japanese defense officials told their US counterparts that Japan would maintain strong alliance relations with the United States, since the alliance contributed not only to Japanese defense, but also to regional and global security as an international ‘public good’ (Akiyama, 2002, p. 25). Japan’s new National Defense Program Outline (NDPO) released in November 1995, which replaced the previous NDPO produced in 1976, also emphasized the importance of the US–Japan alliance much more than its predecessor. It stressed that the alliance was not only ‘indispensable for Japanese security’, but also would ‘continue to play a key role in achieving peace and stability in the surrounding region of Japan and establishing a more stable environment’ (Japan Defense Agency, 1996, p. 279). In September of this year, Japan and the United States signed a new special agreement for the provision of host-nation support at the 2 + 2 meeting of foreign and defense ministers, convened in New York. Indeed, it was the first time that both Japanese and American foreign and defense ministers gathered in the same place since the Security Treaty was concluded in 1951.

The alliance was comprehensively reaffirmed and reconstituted at the meeting between Clinton and the new Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto on 17 April 1996. At the meeting, both leaders announced the *Japan–US Joint Declaration on Security, Alliance for the 21st Century* (hereafter the ‘Joint Declaration’). The Joint Declaration

‘reaffirmed’ that the US–Japan security relationship, based on the US–Japan Security Treaty, remained ‘the cornerstone for achieving common security objectives, and for maintaining a stable and prosperous environment for the Asia-Pacific region’ (MOFA, 1996). Also, the Declaration revealed that both Japan and the United States would further enhance their defense cooperation through upgraded intelligence exchanges and through close consultations on defense issues. To build closer defense relations, both parties agreed to initiate a review of the 1978 Guidelines for Japan–US Defense Cooperation. More importantly, the Declaration ‘redefined’ the alliance by updating the US–Japan relationship to be one that would enhance international security on both regional and global levels. At the regional level, they spelled out that ‘the two governments will jointly and individually strive to achieve a more peaceful and stable security environment in the Asia-Pacific region’. On the global level, they agreed to jointly support the United Nations, coordinate policies and cooperate on issues such as arms control, disarmament, and regional conflicts such as that occurring in the Middle East. By so doing, the Joint Declaration endorsed an expanded scope for the US–Japan alliance, covering regional and global security environments.

Since Washington and Tokyo announced the Joint Declaration just after the 1995–96 Taiwan Strait Crisis, the Chinese government worried that both the US–Japan Joint Declaration and the renewed guidelines were directed against China (Midford, 2004). In response, both American and Japanese officials gave a number of in-depth US–Japan briefings on China in order to explain that the alliance enhancement did not target a particular state (Funabashi, 1999, p. 428). Yet one could hardly argue that the ‘China factor’ did not motivate the US–Japan alliance enhancement at all. As Yoshihide Soeya points out, the ‘reaffirmed’ US–Japan alliance had an ‘implicit purpose’ of maintaining a stable balance of power in the region (Soeya 1998, p. 216). Indeed, the Japanese government did not explicitly exclude the Taiwan Strait crisis from the potential cases of the application of the new US–Japan defense guidelines. Nonetheless, it did not mean that Washington and Tokyo began a new ‘containment strategy’ toward China by strengthening their security ties and expanding the Japanese security role. As discussed already, the renewed US–Japan defense cooperation was primarily based on the idea that the alliance could be utilized for so-called ‘stabilizing activities’ such as regional crisis-management and peacekeeping, some of

which would potentially benefit even *non*-US allies including China. Furthermore, it was China's interest that the United States would maintain the firm alliance as the 'cap in the bottle' of Japanese military, preventing Tokyo from becoming an aggressive power in the region (Midford, 2004). Thus, although the reason was unclear, Beijing did not further attempt to condemn the US–Japan alliance enhancement and avoided that issue for fear it would deteriorate the overall Sino–Japanese relationship (Tanaka, 2007, p. 200).

It should be noted that announcing the Joint Declaration did not mean that either ally legally expanded the scope of the US–Japan Security Treaty, which exclusively covers 'the security of Japan and the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East'. Notwithstanding the expansion of alliance roles, the Security Treaty itself was left untouched. Nor did it mean that Japan suddenly changed its alliance policy by introducing a new rationale to the alliance. In fact, since the end of the Cold War, both the United States and Japan had often declared that their security relations were not only for bilateral defense, but also for regional and global stability.³ Nonetheless, the Declaration was significant in its own right because it officially endorsed the changing nature of the alliance in the post-Cold War era and assigned greater responsibilities on Japanese security policy. As the next section discusses, reviewing defense guidelines announced by the Joint Declaration enabled Japan to cooperate with the United States in the area even beyond Japanese territory for the maintenance of regional stability.

2.3 The Sydney Statement

Although the Sydney Statement was announced during the Howard years, the movement for the alliance redefinition had already begun during the Keating era. The Keating Government's 1993 *Strategic Review* argued that Australia welcomed the 'United States' assurances of a continued, effective military commitment to the Asia-Pacific region' (Australia Department of Defence, 1993, p. 8). The *Review* further stressed the importance of Australia assuming a greater 'burden-sharing'

3 See, for instance, 'The Tokyo Declaration on the US–Japan Global Partnership', 20 January 1992, available at http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1584/is_n3_v3/ai_11862282/.

role by arguing that: 'We need to ensure awareness in the United States not only that we can provide for our own defense, but that we also contribute in important ways at both a regional and global level to collective security efforts' (*ibid.*, p. 35). According to an Australian former defense official, it was under the Keating Government, not the Howard Government, that defense officials gained ministerial approval to make a draft of the Sydney Statement.⁴ As was the case in Japan, therefore, the reaffirmation and the redefinition of the alliance had already become imperative before the Conservative government came to power in early 1996.

Yet it was not until John Howard came to power that the American alliance was officially enhanced. During the election campaign, Howard and the shadow Foreign Minister Alexander Downer clearly underscored the importance of the alliance, arguing that the Keating Government created an imbalance between Australia's relations with Asia and its security ties with the United States that advantaged the former at the latter's expense (Tow, 2008, p. 32). From this perspective, Howard and Downer promised to 'reinvigorate' the alliance with the United States. Soon after its election, the Howard Government supported the American decision to send the aircraft carrier battle groups to the Taiwan Strait in response to the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) stepping up military exercises in the East China Sea to influence the impending Taiwanese presidential election. Except for Japan, only Australia from the Asia-Pacific region publicly supported the American military dispatch to the Taiwan Strait. In early June 1996, the Howard Government offered American troops greater access to Australian training areas. It was reported that Australian defense officials welcomed the US plan for the increased use of the Delaware training range in northern Australia for joint air combat exercises, given the growing hostility to the presence of US troops in Okinawa in Japan (Lague and Clark, 1996).

All of these moves initiated by the Howard Government were consistent with the Clinton Administration's regional engagement policy, which called for the reinforcement of US alliances in the Asia-Pacific. Although the main target of the EASR was obviously Japan, it also stressed that the US–Australia alliance 'makes a major contribution to regional stability' and 'we will continue to nourish the relationship as we

4 Interview with Ron Huiskens, then Director-General of Alliance Policy at Department of Defence, 13 August 2008.

approach the next century' (US DOD, 1995). When the annual AUSMIN talks were held in Canberra in July 1996, the American side sent the most senior delegation ever to visit Australia, including Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Defense Secretary William Perry and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John Shalikashvili (Brown, 1996b, p. 339). In the meeting, both the Australian and American sides agreed to extend the lease for the Pine Gap Joint Defence Facility to at least 2008. Furthermore, both parties agreed to pursue closer military training, including the staging of a major US–Australian exercise called 'Tandem Thrust' in early 1997. The American participants praised the results of their AUSMIN discussions, insisting that they elevated US–Australian security ties 'to a par with Japan and South Korea' (Brown 1996a, p. 112).

After the meeting, both parties announced a Joint Statement entitled *Sydney Statement, Joint Security Declaration, Australia–US: A Strategic Partnership for the Twenty-first Century* (hereafter 'the Sydney Statement'). According to former defense officials of Australia, it was the Australian side, rather than the American side, that generated the initial draft of the Sydney Statement.⁵ Like the US–Japan Joint Declaration, the Sydney Statement consisted primarily of two parts [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT, 1996)]. The statement first, 'reaffirmed' alliance relations and defense commitments between the two countries, by stipulating that 'the relationship will remain central to the security of both countries, because it reflects fundamental shared interests and objectives'. Then, the statement confirmed that both countries would work together to promote their 'common security interests', such as promoting democracy, economic development and prosperity, and strategic stability; forestalling the resort to force in international disputes; preventing the proliferation of WMD; and encouraging cooperation to enhance the security of the region as a whole. The statement also stressed that both countries would cooperate for regional and global order through alliance relations, by 'improving the international community's ability to respond effectively to outbreaks of conflict in various regions and to playing an appropriate role ourselves'. In this way, the Sydney Statement foreshadowed a more explicit Australian role

5 Interview with Hugh White, 16 September 2008.

in joining the United States in further regional and even global contingencies (Huisken, 2001, pp. 8–9).

During the Joint Press Conference after the AUSMIN talks, Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer emphasized that the Sydney Statement added a ‘new value’ to the US–Australia alliance relationship (US Department of State, 1996). According to Downer, ‘a stronger Australia-U.S. relationship not only brought great benefits to both our countries but also to the region as a whole’. He further asserted that Australia was prepared to assume greater responsibilities within the framework of alliance relations by stressing that both the United States and Australia share a common approach to global issues such as arms control, non-proliferation, and conflict-prevention mechanisms. In response, the US Defense Secretary Perry explicitly noted that the United States intended ‘to remain fully engaged and forward-deployed as an Asia Pacific power’. Perry also insisted that Australia and the United States became ‘partners in peace, promoting stability and democracy in the Asia Pacific region, and, indeed, around the world’. Consequently, the Howard Government was successfully able to ‘rein-vigorate’ alliance relations with the United States as represented by the Sydney Statement. According to Hugh White, the then Deputy Secretary for Strategy in the Department of Defence, the Sydney Statement represented ‘the end of the period of uncertainty over the alliance’ and ‘the beginning of kind of new understanding and new stability’.⁶

In this way, both the US–Japan and the US–Australia alliances, which were perceived as ‘adrift’ in the early 1990s, were successfully ‘reaffirmed’ and ‘redefined’ within five to seven years. Although these two alliances were redefined by different statements, the logic underpinning these two proclamations was essentially the same – the United States and its two key regional security partners could better contribute to activities such as crisis-management, peacekeeping, and non-proliferation beyond the old parameters of bilateral defense cooperation by utilizing their alliance relationships. This in turn suggested that unless Australia and Japan could more actively participate in regional security issues, their respective alliances with Washington could not become effective ‘stabilizing mechanisms’ of the regional order. Consequently, the ‘redefinition’ of the US–Japan and the US–Australia alliances not only

6 Ibid.

expanded the roles of these alliances, but also encouraged Japan and Australia to assume greater responsibilities in terms of the management of regional security issues.

3 Expanded roles of Japan and Australia

3.1 Japan

The new characteristic of the US–Japan alliance was most explicitly reflected in the revised defense guidelines, which were completed in September 1997. Unlike the previous guidelines, which exclusively focussed upon a direct attack on Japan or a conflict that involved Japan only, the revised version put significant emphasis on US–Japan cooperation outside Japanese territory. The revised guidelines, as well as the new NDPO, explicitly stipulated that both countries were to cooperate in ‘situations in areas surrounding Japan that will have an important influence on Japan’s peace and security’ (*shuhen jitai*). They allowed the SDF to provide ‘rear area’ support (e.g. the use of diverse facilities) to US forces on Japanese territory or on ‘the high seas and [in] international airspace around Japan which are distinguished from areas where combat operations are being conducted’ (MOFA, 1997a). In *shuhen jitai*, the SDF was also permitted to participate in several categories of overseas operations, such as providing refugee assistance, search and rescue operations, non-combatant evacuation operations, and activities for ensuring the effectiveness of economic sanctions (such as ship inspections) in close cooperation with the United States.

Such cooperation was primarily targeted at the crisis on the Korean Peninsula, which had a strong impact on Japanese national defense as well as on regional security. It should be noted, however, that some members of MOFA and JDA who were charged with reviewing guidelines supported the view that the concept of *shuhen jitai* could be applied to global contingencies as well. According to this line of argument, both Japan and the United States could cooperate in conflicts situated outside the Far Eastern region, as long as that conflict would ‘have an important influence on Japan’s peace and security’.⁷ In the end, the idea was rejected by other MOFA officials and politicians, who thought that ‘global cooperation’ based on the *shuhen jitai* had no legal basis and it

7 Interview with Hitoshi Tanaka, 5 June 2008, and Masahiro Akiyama, 23 June 2008.

should therefore be limited in scope to the 'Far Eastern' region (Iokibe *et al.*, 2007, p. 226). Nonetheless, it could be plausibly argued that the discussion of *shuhen jitai* helped to realize the US–Japan 'global cooperation' after 9/11. Although the *shuhen jitai* itself was not applied to the Afghanistan War in 2001, developing the scheme of the SDF's activities in the case of regional contingencies such as *shuhen jitain*, as well as other elements established by the new guidelines such as the concept of 'rear-area' and the rule of the use of weapons by the SDF, enabled the Japanese government to pass the Anti-Terrorism Law in an unprecedentedly smooth manner (Shinoda, 2007, p. 18).

Although the Japanese media mainly focussed on US–Japan cooperation in *shuhen jitai*, another policy stipulated by the revised guidelines was equally important in redefining the alliance. In addition to standard defense requirements such as maintaining self-defense capabilities on the basis of the NDPO (Japan) or nuclear deterrence capabilities (the United States), the revised guidelines emphasized that the two countries should enhance 'various types of security cooperation', such as 'transportation, medical services, information sharing, and education and training' when either or both governments were participating in UN PKOs or international humanitarian relief operations (MOFA, 1997a). The new guidelines ensured that such bilateral cooperation, categorized as 'cooperation under normal circumstances', would contribute to 'the creation of a more stable international security environment'. In this context, it was noteworthy that both governments concluded the Agreement Concerning Reciprocal Provision of Logistic Support, Supplies, and Services (ACSA) two days before the Joint Declaration was announced. By concluding the ACSA, Japanese SDF and US troops were able to reciprocally provide logistic support, supplies and services (e.g. food, water, accommodation, fuel, and communication channels) during bilateral exercises and training, UN PKOs, and international humanitarian operations *even in areas that had no direct relation to Japan's own national defense*.⁸

8 In 1998, the United States and Japan agreed to update the ACSA so that they could apply it to 'operations in response to situations in areas surrounding Japan', in addition to previous joint training, PKO, and humanitarian operations. In 2004, moreover, Japan and the United States agreed to use the ACSA in 'operations conducted to further the efforts of the international community to contribute to international peace and security, to cope with large scale disasters, or for other purposes', as well as 'in coping with armed attack against Japan'.

The increasing demand for the maintenance of international security by the Joint Declaration also affected Japan's defense policy. Japan's new NDPO, for example, demonstrated Japan's will for a greater security role beyond the *sensyu boei* (defensive defense) doctrine. While maintaining the old NDPO's 'Basic Defense Force Concept', which aimed to enable Japan with a 'minimum necessary defense capability' to counter limited-scale aggression, the new NDPO also mandated that Japan should assume greater responsibility in terms of regional and global security issues, commonly known as *kokusai koken* ('international contributions'). To do so, the NDPO stipulated that 'Japan's defense structure must be capable of carrying out necessary functions in each area of logistic support, such as transportation, search and rescue, supply, maintenance and medical and sanitary affairs, so that responses to various situations can be effectively conducted' (Japan Defense Agency, 1996, p. 282). With respect to the specific role of Japanese defense capabilities, it noted that a 'contribution to create a more stable security environment', such as a participation in international peace cooperation activities and international disaster relief activities, was an important role of Japanese defense (ibid., p. 280). Thus, the revised guidelines, along with the 1996 NDPO, greatly contributed to the transformation of Japan's post-Cold War defense concept from a narrow 'national defense' against direct attack on Japan under the *sensyu boei* doctrine, to a broader 'international security' concept, including both *shuhen jitai* and *kokusai koken* activities (Sato, 2000; Watanabe, 2001).

3.2 Australia

Unlike the US–Japan alliance, the United States and Australia did not develop a joint military program like the US–Japan defense guidelines. Nonetheless, US–Australia security relations in the late 1990s worked in ways similar to the US–Japan alliance in that they focussed upon regional security issues beyond Australia's territory. Perhaps the best example of such alliance cooperation was the 1999 East Timor crisis. For a long time, successive Australian governments had been prepared to support (or at least accept) Jakarta's annexation of East Timor to maintain a good relationship with Indonesia (Chalk, 2000, p. 37). Yet the Howard Government took a strong initiative to assist the self-determination of East Timor through negotiations with the Indonesian

Government and a military intervention into the crisis. During this crisis, Australia contributed just over half of the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) component, which included 22 nations and consisted of about 10,000 personnel at its peak, with three infantry battalion groups, headquarters and support units, and maritime and air assets (Schwartz, 2001, p. 10). As a result, Australia took the 'primary responsibilities and primary risks' in leading the INTERFET intervention against militia groups backed by the Indonesian military (Ryan, 2000; Cotton 2001).

The Howard Government clearly regarded the East Timor crisis as an *alliance* issue, as well as Australia's own security problem. In an interview conducted immediately after the East Timor incident, Howard reportedly intimated to a journalist that Australia should engage with peacekeeping activities as a 'deputy' of the United States as a global policeman (Brenchley, 1999). According to the report, Howard said that, in the East Timor crisis, 'we have displayed our responsibility, shouldered the burden we should have' and furthermore, Australia 'has a particular responsibility to do things above and beyond in this part of the world' (ibid., p. 23). Although the statement – subsequently labeled as the 'Howard Doctrine' – received much criticism both domestically and internationally, it was in fact completely consistent with the new alliance philosophy demonstrated by the Sydney Statement – that both Canberra and Washington would use their alliance relations not only for the bilateral defense of their own immediate security interests, but also for guaranteeing security in the region.

The alliance played a vital role during the East Timor crisis. Initially, the Clinton Administration disappointed many Australians by refusing to commit 'boots on the ground' or US combat troops in support of Australian military efforts to resolve the crisis. Yet Washington ultimately decided to provide diplomatic, intelligence, and logistic support to the operation in order to show its strong alliance commitment to Australia. Because of the US presence, Australia was able to ask for US support in certain critical areas, such as strategic and tactical intelligence, naval presence and protection of sea lines of communication, and communications and strategic lift (Dickens, 2002, p. 31; Hubbard, 2005, p. 110). During the planning phase of the crisis, moreover, Canberra and Washington held lengthy strategic discussions. Most importantly, the United States maintained an offshore naval presence during the crisis

which deterred any potential Indonesian military attack on INTERFET, by implying that ‘any attempt to oppose INTERFET would meet an overwhelming response’ (White, 2008, p. 83). Accordingly, the United States played an indirect but vital role in establishing the prerequisite political and military conditions for a successful INTERFET mission.

In retrospect, therefore, the collaboration between Canberra and Washington in the management of the East Timor crisis was a perfect example of how the US–Australia alliance contributed to regional stability in the Asia-Pacific. Even though neither party was attacked nor in danger of an attack by an external threat, both parties joined an internationally sanctioned ‘coalition of the willing’ in order to stabilize a regional conflict and protect humanitarian norms in the region. It should also be noted that each government provided different types of contributions in military and non-military areas – as Coral Bell observes, a diplomatic/military ‘division of labour’ between Washington and Canberra clearly existed (Bell, 2000, p. 171). In short, the US–Australia collaboration over East Timor evolved into an exemplar of alliance cooperation in an era in which US alliances were increasingly utilized for purposes beyond the traditional narrow deterrence or damage-limitation type of activities.

The ADF’s experience in East Timor also accelerated a transformation of Australia’s defense posture from focussing on ‘national defense’ to broader ‘international security’. Since the 1970s, Australian Labor governments had maintained the ‘Defence of Australia’ (DOA) doctrine, which primarily focussed on the defense of the homeland and its immediate neighborhood (Dibb, 1986). Since it came to power in 1996, however, the Howard Government began to review the DOA, insisting that the old strategic posture had been too narrowly focussed on responding to low-level contingencies at its shoreline. The Howard Government’s strategic paper stressed that Australia’s defense posture ‘must include the means to influence strategic affairs in our region’ – e.g. maintaining stability in Southeast Asia, assisting neighbors to strengthen their security, and preventing the proliferation of WMD – in collaborating with regional friends and allies (Australia Department of Defence, 1997, pp. 31–32). The East Timor crisis facilitated such a movement, not only demonstrating the limitations of the ADF’s offshore force projection capabilities, but also revealing its long-term need to develop more capability to support low-end operations with appropriate sealift/airlift and logistic support (Chalk, 2000, pp. 44–45). This is why the

subsequent 2000 Defence White Paper accepted the need for the ADF to become involved in maintaining the stability of its 'immediate neighborhood' and assigned considerable priority to the preparedness and mobility of Australian ground forces in order to effectively respond to low-level operations such as evacuations, disaster relief, and PKOs (Australia Department of Defence, 2000, p. 50).

Some critics claimed that the Coalition's new defense policy was nothing more than a 'neo-forward defense' posture, which made Australia join military operations with its 'great and powerful friend' even beyond Australia's territory as it did during the Korean War and the Vietnam War in the Cold War era (Roberts, 1997, p. 115; Firth, 2005, p. 161). Yet it should be noted that Australia's forward defense doctrine, which primarily aimed to protect Australia's national security from an expansion of communism, was essentially different from that which the Howard Government pursued. Although sending troops to Southeast Asia or the Korean Peninsula during the Cold War period was more or less related to Australia's national defense, the post-Cold War type of activities have not been directly related to threats to Australia's territory. Rather, what the Howard Government pursued was the tailoring of the ADF's capabilities in ways that would facilitate Australia's ability to help manage regional (and later global) uncertainties in order to strengthen the security environment of the region. It is in this context that the conservative government accelerated the transformation of Australia's defense concept from 'continental defense' to 'forward engagement' – which was different from the 'forward defense' concept previously underwritten by its Labor government predecessors (Trood, 1998). Like Japan, therefore, Australia also expanded its defense concept from 'national defense' to a more externally oriented 'international security' as the alliance was 'redefined' in the mid-1990s. This trend became further accelerated after Australia's contributions to wars both in Afghanistan and in Iraq (Australia Department of Defence, 2003).

4 The 'spokes' grow closer

As both Tokyo and Canberra reshaped their alliance relations with the United States and expanded their regional security roles, these two allies also enhanced their bilateral security ties during the mid-1990s. Japan and Australia had already launched security dialogue in the early 1990s

(Ball, 2006). Both countries' defense forces also collaborated in peacekeeping mission under the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) from 1992 to 1993. However, it was not until the mid-1990s when their security dialogue became formally institutionalized. In February 1996, Japan and Australia held the first annual political–military and military–military talks at the high official level. During these talks, it was reportedly agreed that Japan would send military officers to Australia for regular peacekeeping training as a part of new security arrangements (Skelton, 1996). These talks followed the previous year's Joint Statement between Japanese Prime Minister Murayama and Australian Prime Minister Keating. In this statement, titled 'Joint Declaration on the Australia–Japan Partnership', both governments reaffirmed the importance of their close relationship and pledged to build an enduring and steadfast partnership (MOFA, 1995). In August 1997, moreover, Japanese Prime Minister Hashimoto, who visited Australia following his visit to the United States, agreed with Australian Prime Minister Howard that both countries would have, in principle, annual meetings of the two Prime Ministers. They also agreed to further develop defense and security dialogues between two countries, as well as to increase exchanges between the SDF and the ADF in areas of mutual interest (MOFA, 1997b). In this way, Japan–Australia security cooperation was upgraded during the mid-1990s.

It should be noted that many activities carried out in furthering Japan–Australia cooperation overlapped with those of the US–Japan Joint Declaration and the US–Australia Sydney Statement. The 'Joint Declaration on the Australia–Japan Partnership', for instance, pledged to 'continue to contribute actively, both individually and in partnership, in such areas as the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the activities of the United Nations in international peace and security including its peacekeeping role, social and economic development and human rights' (MOFA, 1995). Similarly, the 'Partnership Agenda' – which was officially announced three months after the Hashimoto–Howard meeting in 1997 – included a wide range of activities on both regional and global levels. These included counter-terrorism, arms control and non-proliferation, the promotion of democracy and human rights, and PKOs (DFAT, 1997).

It is also noteworthy that, during bilateral discussions, the two governments frequently stressed the importance of the American commitment in the region through bilateral alliances 'as being of fundamental

importance to the peace and prosperity of the region' (MOFA, 1995). When he visited Tokyo in June 1996, Downer said:

Both Australia and Japan are close and important allies of the US whose forward strategic presence contributes to its unique and central role in Asia-Pacific security. But there are responsibilities that countries like Australia and Japan need to bear. . . . Australia values highly the contribution Japan makes to regional stability through supporting the strategic engagement of the United States in the Western Pacific. (Downer, 1996)

The above mentioned 'Partnership Agenda' also recognized that both Japan and Australia needed to work together in order to 'sustain the United States' important regional role' (DFAT, 1997). Such a role of Japan and Australia has been frequently emphasized in both countries' statements regarding their bilateral security talks until today (See, for example, Smith 2010).

As such, the enhanced bilateral dialogue between these two allies was closely related to their respective security relations with the United States. As demonstrated above, security cooperation between Japan and Australia was primarily aimed at jointly improving the international security environment, rather than being directed at a particular country. It was also recognized that joint cooperation would indirectly support the US military presence in the region, by increasing regional allies' responsibilities in terms of international order-building. Considering such a strategic interdependence between the United States, Japan, and Australia, it was quite natural that their respective dyad relations evolved into 'trilateralism' afterward. In fact, at least in Australia, the idea of a trilateral exchange between the United States, Japan, and Australia had already 'obtained a foothold of sorts in Australia's strategic policy agenda' by the mid-1990s (White, 2007, p. 105). As their security interests converged in the post-Cold War era, therefore, the idea of trilateralism became increasingly realistic between these countries.

5 Conclusion

As discussed above, there were critical similarities in Japanese and Australian security relations with the United States during the 1990s. First, this paper has shown that, although both the US–Japan and the

US–Australia alliances were temporally ‘adrift’ immediately after the Cold War, Tokyo and Canberra were concerned about the US military commitment to their security and to the region as a whole. This was particularly the case with the increasing uncertainties of the regional strategic outlook, following the gradual reduction of US troops in the early 1990s. Such concerns generated the incentive of both Japanese and Australian policymakers to enhance alliance relations with the United States in the mid-1990s, although relatively progressive governments were still in power in both countries. Second, and more importantly, in the process of alliance revitalization, both Japan and Australia reaffirmed that the alliance was important not only for alliance security but also for regional security as a whole. ‘Redefining’ their respective US alliances imposed greater risks and costs for both Japan and Australia in terms of alliance burden-sharing. This was demonstrated by the revised US–Japan Defense Guidelines for Japan accepting the notion of Japan serving as a ‘launching pad’ for military operations on the Korean peninsula and other regional flashpoints as well as accepting a global peace-keeping role. It was also underscored in the Australian case by the unfolding of the East Timor crisis.

Third, the increasing US expectations of greater junior allied security roles through the ‘redefinition’ of their respective alliances with the United States enhanced the transformation of the defense policy of both Japan and Australia from ‘national defense’ to ‘international security’. Both the new NDPO and revised defense guidelines with the United States explicitly reflected the transformation of the Japanese defense concept from traditional *sensyu boei* to broader international operations, such as *shuhen jitai* and *kokusai koken* activities. Likewise, Australia’s defense policy also changed from strategic emphasis on ‘continental defence’ or DOA to one emphasizing more ‘forward engagement’, particularly after the East Timor crisis in 1999. At first glance there was no obvious link between these two countries’ changing defense concepts. In reality, however, these transformations were closely related to each other in that both allies changed their defense policies so as to respond to newly defined security roles in the process of ‘alliance redefinition’ with the United States after the Cold War.

The fundamental shift in the nature of both US–Japan and the US–Australia alliances during the 1990s also accelerated the Japan–Australia bilateral security dialogue. Expanding their focus from narrow bilateral

defense to broader international security missions suggests that these Asia-Pacific alliances are no longer exclusivist-oriented arrangements as they once were during the Cold War era, i.e. the 'good' they have produced for both members of the two dyads has been largely theirs alone. In the post-Cold War broader international security arena, other 'third parties' (predominantly but not exclusively other US allies) are sharing in the gains from a public good produced by these bilateral alliances becoming increasingly 'order-building' in their orientation (Tow and Acharya, 2007, p.43). Since coping with these new international security problems requires horizontal as well as vertical cooperation with the United States, it was quite natural that Japan and Australia – which shared similar interests and values – enhanced their 'spokes to spokes' relations to collaborate in responding to international security issues. Doing so was perfectly consistent with the basic philosophy of both the US–Japan Joint Declaration and the Sydney Statement, both of which endorsed a greater security burden-sharing on the part of regional allies in the region.

This never suggests that the United States is the only bond between Japan and Australia. In fact, both allies have developed their bilateral relations through various types of cooperation like PKOs, some of which are often independent from the US influence. Nonetheless, development in US–Japan–Australia relations during the 1990s has many implications for today's 'trilateralism' between these countries. For the United States, on the one hand, a minilateral framework such as the TSD has encouraged its regional allies to assume a greater security burden on both regional and global levels. It has been beneficial to the United States – which has become increasingly constrained in the resources it can bring to bear in the Asia-Pacific – that allies such as Japan and Australia have been able to make greater efforts for security and stability in the world, such as contributing to peacekeeping missions and disaster relief. From a 'junior allied' perspective, on the other hand, minilateralism has been used to maintain US security engagement in the region and to maintain alliance affinity, while reducing the US security burden in the region and thereby supporting the US-led regional order. One can see such a strategic interdependence in the US–Japan–Australia security relations from their relations in the 1990s, although the TSD itself was formally established after 9/11. In retrospect, therefore, security relations between the United States, Japan, and Australia during the 1990s

foreshadowed the emergence of ‘trilateralism’ between these countries after 9/11.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author alone and do not necessarily reflect the official viewpoint of NIDS.

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