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NATO and Japan as Multifaceted Partners

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Japan and NATO are now partners on the international security scene, but they used to live in different worlds with little interaction between the two. The Cold War, as seen from Washington and Moscow, was undoubtedly a global conflict. Yet, in many respects, it was still regional in nature: United States allies in Europe and Asia faced different sets of threats and challenges which, more often than not, evolved separately. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that relations between Japan and NATO did not develop during the Cold War, though both were US allies, sharing fundamental values and facing the Soviet Union as a common threat. Indeed, during the Cold War period NATO as an alliance had no substantial relationships with non-members, nor did it see the need for partnerships. This was largely because there was no reason for it to seek external help in achieving its core mission of defending the Allies.

It was only after the end of the Cold War, with the disappearance of the common threat, that Japan and NATO somewhat ironically began to make some attempt at developing their relations. As a result, the Japan-NATO Security Seminars and High-level Consultations started in the early 1990s.[2] It is noteworthy that these fora for dialogue predated the establishment of the Alliance's first formal partnership framework, the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme, launched in 1994. Former NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer called Japan 'the most senior contact country'[3] and it is, indeed, one of the non-member countries which have had the longest relationship with the Alliance.

The relationship has not developed in a linear manner. Until the 9/11 terrorist attacks against the US in 2001, NATO and Japan lacked a common

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[2] For early developments of Japan-NATO relations, see Masashi Nishihara, 'Can Japan Be a Global Partner for NATO?' in Ronald Asmus (ed.), *NATO and Global Partners: Views from the Outside*, Riga Papers, Washington, D.C., German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2006. For more recent developments, see Randall Schriver and Tiffany Ma, *The Next Steps in Japan-NATO Cooperation*, Arlington, Project 2049 Institute, November 2010; Michito Tsuruoka, 'NATO and Japan: A View from Tokyo', *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 156, No. 6, December 2011.

[3] 'Opening Statement', by Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the meeting of the Council with H.E. Mr Taro Aso, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 4 May 2006.

agenda. Relations remained largely in the world of diplomatic niceties. To put it simply, neither side had much in common with the other, and their respective priorities were far from similar. Europe spent much of the 1990s trying to reunify the continent, working hard to reintegrate the countries of the former communist bloc into the Western fold, most notably into NATO and the European Union. NATO accepted the first group of new members – the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland – in 1999. Meanwhile, Japan's security and defence policy horizon remained regional. The country then began expanding its engagements in international security – initially by participating in United Nations missions, like the one in Cambodia in the early 1990s. Yet, European and Japanese interests and activities did not overlap substantially until the early to mid-2000s.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks against the United States radically altered the security environment for NATO and Japan. Both recognised that international security threats and challenges had become truly global in nature. NATO's and Japan's interests and activities now overlapped more as a result, and this provided firmer ground on which cooperation could be built. Afghanistan is a case in point: this is where NATO and Japanese interests coincided; and, while Japan has not sent troops to Afghanistan, this is where concrete cooperation between the two started. The financial assistance by Japan to a number of small projects proposed through various Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and the Japanese contribution to NATO-led trust fund projects are notable examples in this regard. In addition to the refuelling operation in the Indian Ocean by Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF), Japan also contributed (albeit indirectly) to NATO operations in Afghanistan by playing a leading role in disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), as well as in the disbandment of illegal armed groups (DIAG). Cooperation in Afghanistan no doubt drove the development of the relationship; certainly, without Afghanistan, any progress in relations would have been much slower or even non-existent.

Nevertheless, the NATO-Japan relationship is not just about practical cooperation in Afghanistan. It is, indeed, multifaceted. This paper will examine five major facets of that cooperation, under the following headings: political partnership; operational partnership; another venue for cooperating with the US; a tool to enhance interoperability and develop multilateral approaches to emerging security challenges; and defence equipment and industrial partnership. The concluding section of the paper will then focus on priorities still to be addressed.

In a more general perspective, it should be borne in mind that one of the current policy debates within NATO is about how to maintain the level of cooperation with non-NATO ISAF troop-contributing countries once combat operations in Afghanistan finish in 2014. One of the major purposes of this paper is thus to shed light on NATO's partnerships generally, and to explain why they have always been about much more than just cooperation in Afghanistan. While the focus of the discussions below is on NATO-Japan relations, much of this reasoning can be applied to the Alliance's interaction with other countries sharing the same fundamental values and strategic interests – particularly those like Australia and New Zealand.

Political Partnership

NATO is not intended to be a globally independent political actor and, unlike the European Union, it is not striving to forge a common foreign and security policy of its own. Nevertheless, whether it likes it or not, NATO inevitably carries a substantial political weight on the international scene, as the world's most successful and powerful military alliance.[4] In addition, since the mid-1990s, NATO has been conducting a number of missions and operations in Europe and beyond. While the success of operations in Afghanistan is debatable, the mere fact that NATO has managed to conduct such a large-scale operation in as remote a place as Afghanistan impresses many outsiders, and demonstrates the Alliance's military capability and political commitment. The Alliance includes not only the United States, the world's strongest military power; two other permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, France and the United Kingdom, are also part of NATO. In addition, the Alliance is often the only international actor capable of conducting high-intensity military operations at the request of the international community, most notably the UN Security Council, as was the case in the Libyan campaign in 2011.

It is, therefore, not surprising that many countries seek political dialogue with NATO. It has identified itself as a political-military alliance since its inception. From the outside, NATO could be seen as an effective channel for dialogue with the Allies, not least the Europeans, on security and defence matters, bearing in mind their considerable expertise in these fields. This is precisely why Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe spoke at length about North Korea and other security problems of the Asia-Pacific region, in his address to the North Atlantic Council during his first visit to NATO as Japanese Prime

[4] See Michito Tsuruoka, 'NATO, Asia and its Partners', *NATO Review* (March 2010), reprinted in *NATO Review Lisbon Summit Special Issue*, November 2010.

Minister, in January 2007.[5]

One of Japan's main objectives in conducting political dialogue with NATO has been to share perceptions on East Asia's security environment, which Tokyo often feels is not adequately understood by Europeans. In addition to China's military build-up and other related issues, North Korea has always been high on the agenda. This is the reason for which Japan appreciates NATO's statements and press releases condemning North Korea's missile launches and nuclear tests – most recently, following the third nuclear test, in February 2013.[6] The role of NATO – and that of the individual Allies – in shaping international public opinion remains significant.

Following his return to power in December 2012, Prime Minister Abe has shown his sustained commitment in strengthening relations with NATO, as confirmed in January 2013 when he sent his special envoy, Katsuyuki Kawai, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Lower House of the Diet, to NATO. Kawai met with Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen to deliver the Prime Minister's letter. While the content of that letter was not released to the public, it is widely reported that Abe expressed his concern for Asia's security environment – more specifically with regard to North Korea and China, and also to Japan's disagreements with China concerning the Senkaku islands. He appealed to NATO countries to understand and share the concerns of Japan, as a partner country sharing the same values.[7] Japan does not actually expect NATO to play a direct military role in the Asia-Pacific region, but it does expect Allies to share perceptions and approaches. Indeed, the idea of a Joint Political Declaration between NATO and Japan can also be seen in this context. It can be used as a foundation on which to build political partnership.

One of the crucial factors that makes NATO distinctive, as a political partner, is the fact that it is an Alliance based on values.[8] This explains why some countries, most notably China, which do not share similar values, remain sceptical about – or are often critical of – NATO's growing involvement in issues and conflicts beyond the Euro-Atlantic region.[9] To what extent NATO should emphasise the notion of values in its partnerships with others is an awkward question, since the Alliance needs to maintain relations with countries for operational reasons, regardless of whether its values are shared. Within NATO itself, there is precious little consensus on the importance of values in determining the level of cooperation to be enjoyed with non-members.

Political partnerships serve NATO's interests in two ways. First, they can be used as a basis for enhancing the legitimacy of NATO's actions and operations. While the most visible source of international legitimacy for military operation anywhere in the world is to be found in resolutions of the UN Security Council, their adoption per se does nothing to convince people on the ground. Understandably, NATO wants to win the 'hearts and minds' of local people; it wants to show the international community that its efforts not only rest on a UN mandate, but are shared by other countries with the same local culture or religion – or at least supported by countries outside the Euro-Atlantic region. That is the reason why the role of Muslim countries like Jordan, the United Arab Emirates and Malaysia as troop-contributors to ISAF is often highlighted, to show that the ISAF mission is supported by others too. This affords a greater level of legitimacy to NATO operations.

Japan's usefulness as a political partner for NATO can be understood in this context. Japan has the world's third largest economy, it is one of the principal donors of development assistance, and lies outside the Euro-Atlantic region; it is also a country known for its non-military approach to settling international conflicts. Thus, Japan's support of NATO operations, in Afghanistan or elsewhere, confers greater legitimacy on them.

Second, given that security threats and challenges are becoming ever more global and that the security of NATO Allies is now more dependent on what happens in distant places, NATO's continued relevance will depend on its ability to engage in the areas where potential security threats and challenges might emerge. Developing political partnerships in the Middle East, Asia and Africa should prove useful in this respect, particularly in terms of early-warning. Another related issue is NATO's stance on the US 'rebalancing' to the Asia-Pacific region, which will be discussed later.

Operational Partnership

Operational partnerships are arguably the most concre-

[5] See 'Japan and NATO: Toward Further Cooperation', statement by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to the North Atlantic Council, NATO HQ, Brussels, 12 January 2007.

[6] 'North Atlantic Council Strongly Condemns North Korean Nuclear Test (Revised)', Press Release (2013) 018, NATO, 12 February 2013.

[7] *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, 17 January 2013.

[8] For an argument that emphasises the importance of values in NATO's partnerships, see Rebecca Moore, 'Lisbon and the Evolution of NATO's New Partnership Policy', *Perceptions*, Vol. 17, No. 1, Spring 2012.

[9] Typical Chinese scepticism can be found in Xinghui Zhang, 'NATO Needs to Think Twice about Its Future', *NATO Review*, October-November 2008.

te and straightforward kind of partnerships that exist between NATO and its partners. The invaluable role played by the partners in Afghanistan is now a familiar subject. According to figures released by NATO in February 2013, there are still approximately 100,330 troops in Afghanistan under ISAF command: these have been contributed by 50 different countries, including the 28 NATO Allies, 11 PfP countries and 11 other countries such as Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates, Tonga and Mongolia.[10] Of the total 100,000 or so troops, those coming from non-NATO nations (4,355) account for about 4%. The proportion would be even higher were we to exclude the US forces' share (68,000). Out of about 32,330 non-US troops, contributions made by non-NATO countries account for a little less than 15%. While these figures vary daily, what is relevant is the scale of the contribution made by non-NATO countries to ISAF, a scale far greater here than in previous NATO operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. In virtue of the increased operational relevance of partners, the term 'operational partners' has now become part of NATO's vocabulary.[11] The crucial role played by partners, such as Sweden and Qatar, in the Libyan campaign in 2011 (Operation Unified Protector) underscored the operational and military value of these partnerships. Simply stated, this means that NATO is no longer able to achieve its missions alone and is increasingly dependent on others.[12] This is actually one of the most fundamental (if unintended) consequences that NATO must face, as a result of its increased operational commitments.

While this paper tries to shed more light on various aspects of NATO's partnerships, other than operational cooperation, most of the development in partnership activity over the past decade has undeniably centred on troop contributions to ISAF by non-NATO countries. In other words, without cooperation in Afghanistan, the partnerships would not have developed so much, or at least not as fast. It is not only the figures that matter. As discussed above, operational partners contribute troops, but they also confer legitimacy at the same time. The greater the number of countries participating in NATO-led operations, the better it is for NATO in terms of enhancing international legitimacy. In short, the value of operational cooperation goes beyond its military function.

Troop contribution to NATO-led operations should not be seen as a one-way street. To begin with, participation by non-NATO nations in NATO-led operations is not, in principle, intended as a contribution to NATO itself, but rather as a way of supporting international efforts for which NATO happens to be taking the lead. In other words, the aim of operational partners is not to lessen NATO's burden – though it can be said that troop contribution by non-NATO countries has, in fact, resulted in just that. For instance, countries sending troops to Afghanistan (or contributing in other ways) believe that stabilising the country and preventing it from again becoming a terrorist haven is beneficial to their own security. From the troop contributors' perspective, NATO can be seen as a 'tried and tested framework for our partners to play their role on the global stage', as was succinctly stated by Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen in his speech in Australia in June 2012.[13] In Afghanistan, it is practically impossible to operate without cooperating with NATO.

Japan does not have troops in Afghanistan, yet the country enjoys a privileged position within NATO's partnerships on Afghanistan. Japan, for instance, has often been the only non-troop-contributing nation to be invited to several NATO meetings on Afghanistan, including Summit level ones (Bucharest in April 2008, Lisbon in November 2010 and Chicago in May 2012). While the official explanation for this special treatment is not fully clear, it is assumed to reflect the major role played by Japan in the reconstruction effort for Afghanistan, in terms of DDR, DIAG, as well as support for the police force.

In addition, one needs to recognise that operational cooperation covers civilian activity too. The case in point is an aid scheme that Japan established with NATO in Afghanistan in March 2007,[14] whereby Japanese development assistance is directed towards small-scale humanitarian and reconstruction projects, run in cooperation with various PRTs operating around the country under ISAF. This is not direct financial assistance to the PRTs, since the Japanese funds are channelled directly to local NGOs and other local executing bodies. NATO's office of the Senior Civilian Representative (SCR) acts as a cle-

[10] For the latest figures, see 'International Security Assistance Force: Key Facts and Figures (Placemat)', NATO, 19 February 2013.

[11] Introduced first by *NATO 2020: Assured Security; Dynamic Engagement, Analysis and Recommendations of the Group of Experts on a New Strategic Concept for NATO*, Brussels, 17 May 2010. The 2010 Strategic Concept also uses the same term (para. 30).

[12] See, for example, Jamie Shea, 'NATO at Sixty—and Beyond', in Gülner Aybet and Rebecca Moore (eds.), NATO *in Search of a Vision*, Washington, D.C., Georgetown University Press, 2010, pp. 28-29.

[13] 'NATO and Australia: Partners in Security', speech by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the National Press Club, Canberra, Australia, 13 June 2012.

[14] 'NATO and Japan Finalize Framework for Cooperation in Afghanistan', NATO News, 8 March 2007. For more background on this scheme and early achievements, see 'Factsheet: NATO/Japan Cooperation in Afghanistan', Media Operations Centre (MOC), NATO HQ, December 2007.

aring house for the collection of project proposals from the PRTs. Since not all the PRTs have enough expertise or budget to undertake humanitarian projects, Japan's scheme coincides very well with NATO's needs and, in December 2007, Tokyo appointed a liaison officer to the NATO SCR office in Kabul.

As an extension of this scheme, in mid-2009 the Japanese Foreign Ministry deployed a few civilian development experts to work with the Lithuanian-led PRT in Ghor Province. As well as assisting PRT activities, this scheme enabled Japan to extend its geographical reach of development assistance in Afghanistan. Without ISAF, it would have been impossible, not least in the light of the security situation, to formulate and implement projects in areas where the Japanese authorities do not have access, let alone a permanent presence. ISAF's extensive PRT network covers much of the country and has helped Japan in this regard. This constitutes a good example of synergy and complementarity between NATO and Japan. Furthermore, Japan has also made financial contributions to two of NATO's Trust Fund projects, including one on munitions safety and stockpile management, and the NATO-ANA (Afghan National Army) Trust Fund.

Another Venue for Cooperation with the US

Cooperation with the US has, at times, resulted in deliberate or unintended cooperation with NATO. In the case of Afghanistan, countries such as Australia and New Zealand deployed their troops under the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), as a demonstration of solidarity with the US. As a result of ISAF's nationwide expansion, Australian and New Zealand forces inevitably worked alongside it, even if they did not initially intend to cooperate with NATO. Some scholars point out that, from the Australian perspective, NATO can be viewed as a 'temporary complement' to its alliance with the US.[15]

This should not be taken as the downside of NATO's partnerships. On the contrary, they are more likely to develop if US presence is involved. Indeed, the US has always been the member of the Alliance which has shown greatest motivation to develop NATO's partnerships, including with those outside the Euro-Atlantic region.

Japan's overtures to NATO in 2006-07 were part of Tokyo's effort to broaden its diplomatic horizon beyond the US. Foreign Minister Taro Aso's vision of an 'Arc of Freedom and Prosperity' placed NATO for the first time on the horizon of Japan's foreign policy strategy.[16] This also reflected the prevailing perception of NATO in Japan. The Alliance is, in fact, often seen as a 'European' organisation in Japan: it is the European Affairs Bureau at the Japanese Foreign Ministry which deals with NATO, while the Japanese academics who focus their research on the Alliance are mainly experts on Europe rather than on the US.

Recently, there has been growing recognition in Japan that the relationship with NATO is essentially the 'European front' of the Japan-US alliance, which has become global in scope. Furthermore, when it comes to sending the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) abroad, cooperation with the US is often a key factor in the decisions to do so. While the SDF troops were in the end not deployed to Afghanistan because of domestic political considerations, in the mid- to late 2000s successive governments in Tokyo seriously considered various options for sending them. Such policy debates revolved almost entirely around bilateral cooperation with the US. Had the decision materialised, the independent and dependent variables would thus have been US-Japan cooperation and NATO-Japan cooperation respectively. Both the prospect of sending the SDF to Afghanistan and Japan's reconstruction assistance to the country have often been seen as essential to maintaining good relations with the US.

In the meantime, Japan-NATO cooperation has been placed on the agenda in Japan-US bilateral discussions. The May 2007 ministerial joint statement from the Security Consultative Committee (2+2) noted 'achieving broader Japan-NATO cooperation' as one of the common strategic objectives of the Alliance.[17] There still appears to be no consensus in Japan on how the relationship with NATO should be approached and understood – in other words, more as part of the country's relations with Europe, or with the US. What should not be overlooked, however, is that Japan-NATO cooperation could develop via Washington, even in the absence of any real Japanese willingness to cooperate more with Europe. This makes NATO

[15] Stephan Frühling and Benjamin Schreer, 'The "Natural Ally"? The "Natural Partner"? Australia and the Atlantic Alliance', in Håkan Edström, Janne Haaland Matlary and Magnus Peterson (eds.), *NATO: The Power of Partnerships*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2011, pp. 42, 53.

[16] 'Arc of Freedom and Prosperity: Japan's Expanding Diplomatic Horizons', speech by Foreign Minister Taro Aso at the Japan Institute of International Affairs, Tokyo, 30 November 2006; 'On the "Arc of Freedom and Prosperity"', speech by Foreign Minister Taro Aso at the Japan Forum on International Relations, Tokyo, 12 March 2007.

[17] 'Alliance Transformation: Advancing United States-Japan Security and Defense Cooperation', Joint Statement of the Security Consultative Committee (2+2) by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Minister for Foreign Affairs Taro Aso, Minister of Defense Fumio Kyuma, Washington, D.C., 1 May 2007.

different from the EU, when it comes to Japan's political and security relations with the two organisations.
For many European NATO Allies, one of today's most pressing strategic concerns is how to respond to the US rebalance towards the Asia-Pacific region. This has stimulated heated debate, not only in NATO but also in the European Union. There, the idea of concluding a US-EU free trade agreement and the need for transatlantic dialogue and cooperation on the Asia-Pacific are currently major topics of discussion.[18] For NATO, the most fundamental challenge in the light of the US' new focus is how to remain relevant for US national security and strategy. There seems to be a consensus among American experts that, if NATO's area of interest and activity remains limited to Europe, the Alliance runs the risk of losing its relevance.[19] Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, in his farewell address in Europe, argued that 'Europe's economic and security future is – much more like the United States – increasingly tied to Asia […]. The bottom line is that Europe should not fear our rebalance to Asia; Europe should join it.'[20] Although the exact meaning of joining the US rebalance is unclear, it may be that Europe needs a rebalance of its own.[21] US allies in the Asia-Pacific region, like Japan, would welcome more cooperation between the US and Europe in the region so as, at least, to avoid fall-out from any transatlantic disagreements on Asia.

A Tool to Enhance Interoperability and Develop Multilateral Approaches to Emerging Security Challenges

Arguably, NATO's most unique characteristic remains the unparalleled level of military interoperability amongst Allies, supported by the Alliance's multilateral defence and force planning process and standardisation efforts, dating back to its inception more than sixty years ago. The existence of an enormous number of standardisation agreements, called STANAGs, bears witness to this.[22] While much attention, both inside and outside the Alliance, has been paid to NATO's operations, most notably the one in Afghanistan over the past decade, NATO's work in terms of interoperability and standardisation has not flagged. On the contrary, one could argue that, in virtue of the already high level of interoperability and standardisation, NATO has managed to conduct large and complex operations involving a large number of different countries. Without this, NATO's task in Afghanistan and elsewhere would have been much harder.

In thinking about what NATO can offer to its partners, the Alliance's huge store of expertise in terms of interoperability and multilateral planning is of particular importance. And it is here that the partners – Japan included – perceive NATO's greatest comparative advantage in terms of its contribution to security. Given that the Asia-Pacific region is still in an early phase when it comes to multilateral security and defence cooperation, there are many things that the countries of the region (like Japan) can learn from NATO: most notably, how to enhance interoperability between different countries, and how to conduct multilateral planning and operations.

To be sure, those issues are as a general rule highly technical in nature. And Tokyo is not yet fully cognisant of what NATO is doing in the areas that interest Japan. However, one can reasonably imagine a number of potential issues in which Japan might be interested. Japan's involvement in the Conference of National Armaments Directors (CNAD) Ammunition Safety Group (CASG, AC/326) is a good example. How to connect what NATO is doing with what Japan's Ministry of Defense and the SDF are interested in: this remains a challenge to be tackled so as to materialise more technical cooperation. Japan's attentiveness to the development of international standards, including NATO's, is likely to increase as a result of the government's decision to relax its policy on arms exports in December 2011, as discussed in the next section.

As for emerging challenges like cyber security, international terrorism, energy security and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), the reason why Japan (like other partners) seeks dialogue and cooperation with NATO is that these concerns can be addressed only through multilateral cooperation; and a multilateral approach to security and defence is what NATO embodies. Therefore, while acknowledging that NATO may not be the principal player to address those issues (in many cases, national governments or the European Union play a bigger role), NATO still appears to be an attractive forum to explore how to address such challenges. What NATO and Japan can do together in cyber security, for instance, remains to be seen. But one should always remember that NATO's value as a partner stems from its multilateral nature.

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[18] See, for example, Patryk Pawlak (ed.), *Look East, Act East: Transatlantic Agendas in the Asia Pacific*, Paris European Union Institute for Security Studies, December 2012.

[19] James Goldgeier, *The Future of NATO*, Council Special Report, No. 51, New York, Council on Foreign Relations, February 2010, p. 4.

[20] 'Remarks by Secretary Panetta at King's College London', London, 18 January 2013.

[21] Michito Tsuruoka, 'Defining Europe's Strategic Interests in Asia', *Studia Diplomatica: The Brussels Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 64, No. 3, 2011.

[22] An introductory explanation on the role of STANAGs in NATO can be found in Brian Collins, *NATO: A Guide to the Issues, Santa Barbara*, ABC-CLIO, 2011, pp. 37-38.

Defence Equipment and Industrial Partnership

On the international military scene, equipment and industrial cooperation often constitute one of the main pillars in defence relations between states. Japan, however, has long been absent from this scene, except as an arms importer. The Three Principles on Arms Export, introduced initially in 1967 and expanded in 1976, have long prevented Japanese companies not only from exporting arms, but also from joining international ventures in research and development (R&D). As a result, Japanese defence companies have been confined to the domestic market and relatively insulated from international competition. Owing to a decline in the defence budget and the consequent weakening of the domestic defence industry, the government realised the need to change the structure of the defence industrial base. Many companies withdrew from the production of costly and unprofitable defence equipment, and Tokyo has now set out to fulfil two main aims: the first is to maintain the domestic defence industry in times of austerity, and the second is to decrease the cost per unit of equipment that the MOD procures. The National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG), adopted in December 2010 as Japan's basic defence policy document, tasked the government to 'study' how to respond to the increasing international trends for international R&D and joint production to deal with the rising costs of defence equipment.[23]

It was in this context that the government decided to relax the Three Principles in December 2011, by issuing a 'Statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary: On Guidelines for Overseas Transfer of Defence Equipment'.[24] Despite the Three Principles rule, Japan has actually been engaged in joint R&D with the US since well before the December 2011 decision – notably in the field of ballistic missile defence. The most important aspect of the new decision was thus, in reality, the fact that it paved the way for future cooperation with European countries and companies. The Statement said: 'it has become necessary for Japan, while further strengthening the partnership with the US, to enter into partnership with other countries cooperating with Japan in the security area'.[25] While the definition of 'countries cooperating with Japan in the security area' is not entirely certain, it is widely assumed to include all NATO countries.

Some European NATO Allies responded quickly to the new policy in Japan. The United Kingdom became the first to start concrete discussions with Japan on possible defence equipment cooperation. It was, indeed, one of the main topics to be discussed with Japan, when British Prime Minister David Cameron visited Tokyo in April 2012. The Prime Minister was accompanied by executives from six defence companies, including BAE Systems and Rolls Royce, demonstrating his desire to 'win a share of the [Japanese defence] market'.[26] Cameron and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda agreed to pursue defence equipment cooperation at their summit meeting in Tokyo, and directed the relevant authorities to 'identify a range of appropriate defence equipment for joint development and production'. They went even further, by committing Japan and the UK 'to seek to launch at least one programme of such defence equipment as soon as possible'.[27] Other European countries, notably France and Italy, are following suit.

Given that cooperating with European countries in the defence equipment area is a new business, and that Japan is still in the process of devising the right mechanism through which it can handle this, it will take some time. Japan prefers to start with small projects. In addition, there will be a need to manage expectations so that people do not rush to the conclusion that industrial cooperation in the defence arena has now become one of the major pillars in Japan-Europe security and defence relations.

That said, however, Japan's interest in equipment cooperation with new partners is genuine and the new 'overarching framework',[28] which Japan and the UK are now trying to establish, will likely become a model to be used with other countries. It is now thought that Japan will adopt concrete, bilateral projects separately with each country, resulting in a series of individual bilateral projects. However, in working with European NATO Allies, Japan cannot ignore NATO standards and, inevitably, it will be more engaged in – and exposed to – a range of NATO standards. Assuming that equipment co-

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[23] 'National Defense Program Guidelines for FY2011 and Beyond' (provisional translation), approved by the Security Council and the Cabinet, Tokyo, 17 December 2010, pp. 18-19.

[24] 'Statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary on Guidelines for Overseas Transfer of Defense Equipment etc.' (provisional translation), Prime Minister's Office of Japan, Tokyo, 27 December 2011.

[26] Ibid., para. 4.

[26] 'David Cameron Seeks Slice of Japanese Defence Contracts on Tokyo Trip', *The Guardian*, 10 April 2012.

[27] 'Joint Statement by the Prime Ministers of the UK and Japan: A Leading Strategic Partnership for Global Prosperity and Security', Tokyo, 10 April 2012. See also, Philip Shetler-Jones, 'UK-Japan Defense Cooperation: Britain Pivots and Japan Branches Out', *Asia Pacific Bulletin*, East-West Center, No. 164, 10 May 2012.

[28] 'Memorandum Between the United Kingdom Ministry of Defence and the Japan Ministry of Defense Relating to Defence Cooperation', Tokyo, 4 June 2012.

operation with European countries goes ahead in the coming years, it is likely that Japan will end up participating not just in bilateral joint projects, but in multilateral ones too, perhaps including the US. This will help deepen the country's level of connectedness and enhance interoperability with NATO as a result.

Remaining Homework

Compared with ten years ago, since the mid-2000s the development of NATO's partnerships with countries outside the Euro-Atlantic region – including Japan – has been remarkable in almost all respects. However, perhaps because this is still a new phenomenon, much remains to be accomplished for the relationships to continue developing in the years to come.

First, both NATO and Japan (and other partners for that matter) need to have a clearer picture of what they want to achieve through the partnership. To start with, one needs to remember that two partners cooperate because they both believe it is in their interest to do so. As NATO stated as early as November 2006 at the Riga Summit, one of the purposes of partnerships is to 'strengthen NATO's ability' to work with partners.[29] Secretary General Rasmussen, more recently, has argued that partnerships are 'part of our core business'.[30] NATO nevertheless continues in many cases to describe partnerships as 'demand-driven', meaning that it is simply responding to demands from partners.[31] Assuming that NATO genuinely believes the strengthening of its partnership policy to be in its own interest as a way of helping it achieve its objectives, and that this is indeed part of the Alliance's core business, it is simply absurd to let it evolve on a demand-driven basis rather than take the initiative. NATO would be well-advised to think more strategically about what it wants to achieve by developing partnerships, not least in the light of the shifting balance of global power centres.

A new partnership document adopted by NATO Foreign Ministers at their April 2011 meeting in Berlin specified a set of 'strategic objectives' for partnerships. These include the following formulation: 'Enhance awareness on security developments including through early warning, with a view to preventing crises' as well as more traditional objectives, such as preparing interested eligible nations for NATO membership.[32] While the partnership reform process was a significant new step for NATO, it is still criticised as bureaucratic and as focused too much on management.[33] On the other hand, partners also need to come forward with more specific ideas on what they want to do with NATO. While this paper has discussed the five facets of Japan's relationship with NATO, it by no means indicates that Japan has thought strategically about how to make use of its relationship with NATO in its own interest.

Th second point to address is the need for NATO to devise a new way of working with others as equal partners. Since the end of the Cold War, particularly in the context of the PfP, NATO has developed and accumulated much expertise in 'teaching' non-members; there is no doubt that this has been highly successful. As was argued above, it is also true that partners, including Japan, still have a lot to learn from NATO – not least in terms of interoperability and standardisation. However, Japan's needs and those of other advanced countries like Australia are significantly different from those of countries which still want to join the Alliance, or those which benefit from assistance in capacity-building from developed countries. What NATO calls 'partnership tools' – a set of exercises, seminars and other things that NATO offers to its partners – therefore need to be adjusted to better reflect the varying needs of the partners. How to move beyond the teaching mode is something that NATO now needs to think about. This suggests that the advanced partners also need to examine what they can do with NATO in terms of capacity-building of other less-advanced partners. The NATO-Japan relationship is still in an early phase: both parties need to continue exploring how best they can make this partnership effective and beneficial. There are enormous potentials to be seized.

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[29] 'Riga Summit Declaration', Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council, Riga, November 29, 2006, para. 12.

[30] 'NATO—Delivering Security in the 21st Century', speech by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Chatham House, London, 4 July 2012.

[31] NATO officials have often used this term. Most recently, it was used in a declaration adopted by the Chicago NATO Summit in May 2012. See 'The Chicago Declaration', para. 24.

[32] 'Active Engagement in Cooperative Security: A More Efficient and Flexible Partnership Policy', Meeting of NATO Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Berlin, 14-15 April 2011, para. 4.

[33] Heidi Reisinger, 'Rearranging Family Life and a Large Circle of Friends: Reforming NATO's Partnership Programmes', *Research Paper 72*, Rome, NATO Defense College, January 2012, pp. 4-5.