For further information please contact:
Dr. Charles M. Perry
Vice President & Director of Studies
Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis
Central Plaza Building
675 Massachusetts Avenue,
10th Floor
Cambridge, MA 02139
USA

Tel: 617-492-2116/Fax: 617-492-8242
cperry@ifpa.org
http://www.ifpa.org
Symposium on

New Dynamics in

Japanese Security Policy

Organized and Co-Sponsored by

Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis

The International Security Studies Program
The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy

Summary Report

July 2015
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Rationale behind Tokyo’s Proactive Pacifism</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spratly Islands</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Policy Changes and the 2015 Guidelines</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next Steps and Domestic Challenges Ahead</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Opportunities for U.S.-Japan Security Cooperation</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for Broader Regional Security Cooperation</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South China Sea Areas Claimed by China</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keynote Luncheon Speech</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agenda</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AS JAPAN CONTINUES to craft a new legal framework that will govern the country’s changing military posture, we are witnessing nothing less than a decisive turning point in Japanese security policy and, hence, a real transformation in the way other nations in the Asia-Pacific region, and even well beyond, now see Japan as a strategic actor. In just a little over a year’s time, the cabinet of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has set in place Japan’s first true national security council, released its first-ever National Security Strategy, completed a major update of Japan’s National Defense Program Guidelines and its Mid-Term Defense Plan (which defines Tokyo’s military capabilities and defense priorities until 2018), and loosened earlier constraints on arms exports and defense technology cooperation. Recently, the cabinet also revised regulations guiding how Japan’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) can be used to help foreign militaries for non-defense purposes (including for “gray area” missions like anti-terrorism and cyber security), and approved in January 2015 a record high, ¥4.98 trillion ($41.3 billion) defense budget for the next fiscal year, making it the third consecutive year of increased defense spending following a decade of cuts.

Perhaps most important of all for the U.S.-Japan alliance, however, was the decision in July 2014 to reinterpret the so-called peace clause enshrined in Article 9 of Japan’s constitution to allow Japan
to exercise the right of collective self-defense (often referred to as CSD) and to come to the aid of allies under attack. Significantly, this new interpretation represents a policy shift that promises to have a major effect on U.S. and Japanese military roles and responsibilities under their newly finalized bilateral guidelines for defense cooperation. Taken together, these adjustments and others still to come – especially if Prime Minister Abe’s hand is strengthened after elections for the upper house of Japan’s legislature (the Diet) in the summer of 2016 – may open the door to actual changes in Japan’s constitution (depending on the state of intricate coalition politics at the time) going beyond a simple reinterpretation of Article 9. All of this signals that Japan is now poised to become, in the words of the National Security Strategy, a more “proactive contributor to peace” at both the regional and global levels, and that it is ready to do so to a degree and in a manner many thought quite impossible just two or three years ago.

Before delving too deeply into how the Abe government might implement its decisions with respect to collective self-defense, participants at the March 31, 2015, IFPA-Fletcher School symposium on new dynamics in Japanese security strategy agreed that translating these new policies and initiatives into action will not be easy. This is a process that will certainly take time, and Tokyo will likely encounter resistance, both domestically and from countries in the region. In addition, how things go may also swing a bit on what Prime Minister Abe says – and reactions to it – in speeches and statements he makes regarding the seventieth anniversary of the end of World War II and the fiftieth anniversary of the normalization of relations between Japan and South Korea. All that being said, however, a fundamental change in Japan’s capacity and willingness to take strategic action is clearly in the works. Symposium discussions sought to better understand how that process is likely
to unfold in the years to come, focusing first on some of the core drivers, motivations, and constraints—both internal and external—that are shaping Japan’s evolving security strategy.
AS SUGGESTED ABOVE, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s efforts to normalize Japan’s defense forces and expand their roles and missions signal the beginning stages of a historic departure from the postwar political, military, economic, and foreign policy order that has defined the country over the last seven decades. What has brought us to this important crossroads with respect to the U.S.-Japan alliance, it was argued by more than one symposium participant, is the confluence of changes in the nature of regional security challenges in the Asia-Pacific, Japan’s policy responses, and America’s regional approach. In terms of regional security more specifically, particular note was made of recent advances in North Korea’s nuclear and ballistic missile programs, as well as the Kim Jong-un regime’s record of increasingly erratic behavior, including unprecedented provocative moves into the cyber domain with the hack on Sony Pictures studios in December 2014. Some would argue, it was acknowledged, that the Obama administration’s continued focus in the past two years on curtailing Iran’s nuclear program had given Pyongyang a freer hand than it would otherwise have to expand significantly its own atomic arsenal and missile capabilities in an apparent buildup that many officials and observers in the region fear can no longer be stopped. Satellite photographs of the North’s main nuclear facility, for example, have shown a recent doubling in size of the nuclear enrichment plant
there, which Americans suspect is not the only one, and a general consensus is emerging that North Korea most likely possesses at least a dozen nuclear weapons already and is projected to acquire an arsenal of as many as twenty nuclear bombs by the end of 2016. Aside from worries about regional stability and the North’s pre-emptive strike capability, the situation is further complicated by the potential that Pyongyang may eventually decide to sell part of its additional supply of highly enriched uranium, especially if its stockpile increases to fifty or more weapons by 2020, as a number of military strategists have predicted.

Meanwhile, participants emphasized, China has continued its rapid acquisition of new capabilities, fueled by its double-digit increases in defense spending, which is already close to four times that of Japan, leading to a military budget of over $141 billion as of March 2015, or an annual rise of 10 percent. In addition, as noted in a new report by the United States Navy, China’s coast guard fleet, currently the largest in the world, has improved and expanded the number of coast guard ships it operates by 25 percent.

in the last three years alone, with Beijing launching more naval ships per year than any other country since 2013. According to one Japanese symposium participant, the Chinese navy regularly uses such vessels to patrol the waters of the South China Sea and to put pressure on territories throughout the region, including continued incursions near the Senkaku Islands, administered by Japan. Of even greater concern is the surge of opaque land reclamation activity by the Chinese government, which is now constructing artificial islands, designed to host military installations, and is expanding a growing number of reefs, atolls, and rock formations in contested areas of the South China Sea, all part of a strategy aimed at strengthening Beijing’s maritime claims and altering the regional balance of power in its favor. Recent satellite images of Chinese activities in the disputed Fiery Cross Reefs and the Paracels, for instance, show concentrated efforts to build airstrips with runways of about three thousand meters, which will enable the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) to conduct operations with major military aircraft, deploy early-warning radars and advanced missile systems, and increase its anti-submarine warfare (ASW) coverage in the South China Sea through the use of ASW helicopter landing pads.²

Similar efforts are appearing at Subi Reef, in the Spratly Islands, and experts expect to see the construction of more port facilities to provide logistics and host coast guard and navy vessels. Although international law would not confer any legal sovereign rights on China over waters surrounding the artificial structures, Beijing’s massive dredging program is in essence gradually creating facts on the ground that will enable it to intimidate rival claimants through military force and coercion, turning the area into a permanent gray zone. Worries about the immediate and longer-term security consequences for the region are growing, and Admiral Harry B. Harris, then commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet, criticized China in March 2015 for trying to create a “great wall of sand” in the South China Sea.

² Benjamin Schreer, “China’s ‘Great Wall of Sand’: Calling a Spade a Spade,” The Strategist, April 29, 2015.
Sea and for chipping away at the foundations of the established maritime regional security order.\(^3\) To make matters worse, old enmities and territorial disputes between China and Japan have recently resurfaced as well in the East China Sea, where China unilaterally proclaimed an air defense identification zone (ADIZ) in late 2013. Moreover, a string of dangerous incidents between Tokyo and Beijing over the sovereignty of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands has elevated the risk that any missteps or a miscalculation in the ongoing dispute could swiftly

\(^3\) Schreer, “China’s ‘Great Wall of Sand.’”
veer into a larger confrontation. A number of aggressive episodes near the islands, for example, including a near-collision between Chinese and Japanese military planes in May 2014, followed by continued flybys by Chinese fighter jets, approaching within one hundred feet of Japanese surveillance planes, and separate cases in which Chinese navy frigates used fire-control radars to lock on to a Japanese destroyer and a helicopter as if in preparation to open fire, have all prompted Asian and other military experts to warn that both Beijing and Tokyo seem to be ready for “a short war.”

In recent years, Japan’s Ministry of Defense (MOD) has been unabashed in citing the growing challenges posed by China and North Korea as key factors behind the country’s move toward a more dynamic defense posture, as reflected in the latest iteration of the National Defense Program Guidelines from December 2013. Both challenges are indeed real and have helped drive Tokyo’s reform-minded defense policies, although many in Japan have come to the realization that while the threats from North Korea appear to be largely manageable for the time being, in part via the development of a more robust Japanese ballistic missile defense (BMD) capability, China’s posturing and increasingly aggressive behavior around Japan’s southwest flank pose a far more tangible problem. In this context, Beijing’s reckless actions in the East China Sea in the immediate aftermath of the Japanese government’s decision to purchase three islands in the Senkakus presented Tokyo, perhaps for the first time in the post-war era, with the possibility of a security threat to its claimed territory. The recognition, therefore, that Japan is facing a genuine challenge with regard to

---

China, along with the rapid evolution of contemporary security threats in general, have recently led to a realization that neither Japan’s defense capabilities nor the alliance arrangements set in place to enable cooperation with U.S. forces are sufficient to be truly effective.

To further illustrate this point, a U.S. official at the symposium pointed to the constraints imposed by the 1997 U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines, which until recently outlined the nature of alliance responses to scenarios involving anticipated and actual armed attacks on Japan. Those guidelines, for example, limited U.S.-Japan security cooperation to rear-area support in non-combat situations in areas surrounding Japan (SIASJ), a term that was widely interpreted to cover contingencies on the Korean Peninsula and in the Taiwan Strait, where tensions formed the biggest bilateral security concern at the time. This approach, moreover, created artificial seams between normal circumstances, anticipated armed attack, and actual armed attack, treating these situations as compartmentalized categories, or boxes, into which were placed differentiated authorities for alliance activities and responses. The notion, however, that the alliance and Japanese leadership would somehow respond in a differentiated way in each situation seems stilted now, leaving little room for agility and flexibility. In reality, the official emphasized, dangerous situations do not take shape so cleanly or in such discrete steps.

Even more importantly, the 1997 approach did not capture the full spectrum of security situations that the alliance must now address. The past two decades, for example, have seen the rise of numerous gray-zone scenarios that have confounded traditional concepts of security threats. In this sense, the previous version
of the guidelines can be described best as focusing primarily on anticipated and actual armed attack, or in other words, on the application of force against Japan by another nation-state employing military personnel and assets. By contrast, it was argued, the most prevalent form of security situation today in the region (and beyond) would likely fall into the gray-zone category, characterized by acts of intimidation, provocation, and conflict involving non-military actors rather than conventional armed forces acting under the orders of national governments. Such issues would encompass, for example, the actions of violent extremists in the Middle East, Africa, and elsewhere in the world, as well as piracy and other illegal activities in the East and South China Seas, including illicit trafficking by sea and fishing and dredging in closed or disputed areas. These and similar actions, participants stressed, fall into the seams between peacetime and armed attack, but they are increasingly defining the security concerns of countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

Given this increasingly complex environment, it is not surprising that Prime Minister Abe decided in February 2015 to issue one of his strongest appeals yet for reforming the nation’s military, following the kidnapping and brutal murders of two Japanese hostages by the Islamic State militant group, also known as ISIS, the previous month. Noting that Japan was unable to save the hostages because of restrictions on the use of its purely defensive armed forces, Abe told the Diet that revisions to Article 9 of Japan’s pacifist constitution were necessary to strengthen the country’s hand in responding to future terrorist threats, indicating as well that the document no longer reflected the realities that a democratic Japan confronts
in today’s rapidly changing world.\(^5\) With Article 9 banning the use of military force, as one senior official clarified, Japan cannot protect or rescue “Japanese nationals or non-Japanese citizens and allies working with us in foreign countries,” adding that each time the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) are asked to conduct an active mission abroad, such as providing humanitarian relief, infrastructure building, or refueling, the Diet has to introduce and pass a new law authorizing their deployment. This process was evident in Afghanistan, for example, where Japan’s logistical support for U.S.-led coalition forces during Operation Enduring Freedom, beginning in 2001, was only possible after Diet passage of a Special Measures Law on Anti-Terrorism.

Other gray-zone situations beyond the traditional military realm can likewise affect a country’s security, and have done so in the case of Japan. One need only recall the destruction wrought by recent natural disasters in East Asia and the Pacific to see that the conceptual scope of national vulnerability has expanded. In this context, according to a senior U.S. government representative, an

---

unforeseen shortcoming of the 1997 framework hit home in March 2011 when American and Japanese officials were unable to convene the Bilateral Coordination Mechanism (BCM), a coordination mechanism set up by the guidelines to help facilitate U.S.-Japanese military cooperation, precisely because the triple disasters of an earthquake, tsunami, and radiological exposure that hit Japan’s northeast that month fell outside the armed attack and SIASJ situations that alone could activate the mechanism. In fact, the official wondered, given that the two sides had never actually activated the BCM since it was established in the 1997 guidelines, “How could we be sure of its utility if a genuine contingency were to develop?”

Indeed, under the long-standing interpretation of Japan’s war-renouncing constitution, which not only precludes the country from exercising collective self-defense (or CSD), but also bans excessive integration with the defense forces of another nation, there could be no real degree of interoperability between the SDF and U.S. forces in contingency planning, exercises, or the development of mutually reinforcing operational capabilities. In practice, according to one expert, this translates to insufficient clarity on even the most basic of issues, including which facilities in Japan would be available to the enormous influx of American troops that would be necessary in the event of a major security crisis, such as hostilities on the Korean Peninsula. One U.S. official recently shared that Tokyo “doesn’t have a clue about the extent of our buildup in Japan that would occur in a Korean contingency,” with another insider adding that “up to now, we haven’t tried to pin these things down for fear of narrow, legalistic answers far below our needs.”

Indeed, under the long-standing interpretation of Japan’s war-renouncing constitution, which not only precludes the country from exercising collective self-defense (or CSD), but also bans excessive integration with the defense forces of another nation, there could be no real degree of interoperability between the SDF and U.S. forces in contingency planning, exercises, or the development of mutually reinforcing operational capabilities. In practice, according to one expert, this translates to insufficient clarity on even the most basic of issues, including which facilities in Japan would be available to the enormous influx of American troops that would be necessary in the event of a major security crisis, such as hostilities on the Korean Peninsula. One U.S. official recently shared that Tokyo “doesn’t have a clue about the extent of our buildup in Japan that would occur in a Korean contingency,” with another insider adding that “up to now, we haven’t tried to pin these things down for fear of narrow, legalistic answers far below our needs.”

In addition, as many argue, if a real crisis should arise in the region, it would be

---

well-nigh impossible to distinguish cleanly between threats targeted only at Japan and its forces and those aimed at friends and allies in the surrounding area. This is certainly true in the case of the much-touted U.S.-Japan collaboration on ballistic missile defense, for example, as it would simply be unreasonable to expect a successful effort to distinguish what missile is going where, especially under the pressures and critical time constraints of a real-world emergency. Nevertheless, as long as the traditional ban on collective self-defense remained, neither U.S. nor Japanese officials could seriously expect that the SDF would be involved operationally, so “there was no reason to openly challenge such absurdity.”  

In practical terms, however, both sides would like to avoid a repeat of the Iraq war situation, when Japan’s Ground Self-Defense Force engineers had to be protected by other allied forces (and could not come to their defense) because Japan’s rules of engagement did not allow them to use their weapons or participate fully while on deployment.

7 Ibid.
A final example of the evolution of security challenges beyond the 1997 Guidelines would center on the rise of new domains, such as space and cyber security, as well as advances in defense-related technology. What we see in the region now, for example, are anti-satellite weapons, long-range precision-guided missiles, advanced avionics, and hackers aplenty, capabilities that have upended traditional considerations of geography in relation to Japan’s security, including the notion of rear-area support. One participant noted that in addition to constantly dealing with “the tyranny of distance,” a term U.S. military officials have long used to describe the challenges posed by the daunting size of the Asia-Pacific theater and how it complicates the mounting of rapid-response military operations like humanitarian assistance missions, defense planners now also have to contend with what might be called “the tyranny of proximity,” in the sense that someone half a world away can reach out and touch a country’s computers and thus its military command-and-control systems, to say nothing of a nation’s physical and financial infrastructure.
Security Policy Changes and the 2015 Guidelines

**Taking into account** the vastly different and increasingly tense regional security situation, discussions then turned to a brief evaluation of the recent changes in Japan’s security and defense policies, which have been in large part a response to those new threats and challenges, but also a reflection of the country’s evolving self-image. These changes, it was argued, have in fact developed gradually over time and pre-date the second Abe administration, despite the tendency to associate Japan’s more confident security and defense policies with Prime Minister Abe because of his public narrative and statements made shortly after the 2012 election that the alliance was back. Indeed, the push for normalizing Japan’s military posture and attendant changes in official thinking on the issue were already emerging under the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) government, which was the first to lift restrictions on defense-related exports and to introduce the concept of a “dynamic defense.” So too, one high-level official pointed out, the recent liberalization of defense exports was “about more than making a buck,” and in many ways reflected the growing recognition that Japan needed to be part of the international business partnerships and consortia that are generating advances in defense technology. These advances, as mentioned earlier, are in turn reshaping the battle space in the Asia-Pacific region and delivering potentially decisive advantages in future contingency situations,
much as China’s new technological capabilities, for instance, have been central to Beijing’s anti-access/area denial (A2AD) strategy. Though not the first to broach the issue, the current Japanese government has nevertheless dramatically accelerated Japan’s adaptation to the evolution in security challenges, as reflected in the adoption of a national security strategy, the creation of its National Security Council, the passage of the Secrets Protection Act, and recent increases in defense spending. For a number of reasons, in one Japanese expert’s view, the Abe administration felt compelled in the last several years to anchor America in the alliance and to solidify U.S. involvement and engagement in the Asia-Pacific region as a whole. As Prime Minister Abe himself reiterated in a major speech in April 2015, the U.S.-Japan alliance is “the central pillar” in the region, and it is Tokyo’s “responsibility to fortify” it.\(^8\) Meanwhile, it should be noted, more than a few Japanese officials and strategists continue to worry about American resolve and reliability to come to Tokyo’s aid should China choose to use military force to settle territorial disputes in the East China Sea. Such reservations about Washington’s unwavering commitment were recently heightened as a result of the Obama administration’s hesitant and rather feckless series of responses to worsening security conditions in the Middle East, and in particular the president’s disappearing “red line” with respect to Syria’s use of chemical weapons. This kind of thinking, according to several participants, has led to the acknowledgment and recognition in Japan that if the country is to be able to count on the United States in the future, and if it wants to prevent being “abandoned” by Washington, whose

---

\(^8\) “Toward an Alliance of Hope,” address to a joint meeting of the U.S. Congress by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, *Japan Times*, April 30, 2015.
latest approach toward China seems to center, it is often argued in Tokyo, on “appeasement” and cooperation, then Japan would have to assume a larger role within the alliance, especially given budgetary and deployment strains on U.S. forces. In that regard, it was noted, Japan’s bold policy revisions to the constitutional interpretation of the right of collective self-defense in July 2014, along with subsequent efforts to strengthen the SDF and increase their effectiveness and proactive use, were in large part aimed at making the country a more attractive alliance partner for the United States by removing a significant obstacle to collaboration.

Similar policy adjustments are also evident in the revised U.S.-Japan Guidelines for Defense Cooperation, unveiled in late April 2015 at the start of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s week-long visit to the United States, which featured an address to the U.S. Congress and meetings with President Obama. The new guidelines, as one U.S. official explained, strongly emphasize the “global” nature of the U.S.-Japan alliance and underline the theme of achieving a “seamless, robust, flexible, and effective” bilateral response to a wide range of security issues that may have an effect on Japan. Importantly, in this regard, the joint guidelines remove any geographic constraints on the deployment of Japanese forces, allowing the SDF, with parliamentary approval, to engage in defense operations around the globe. The 2015 guidelines are also much more comprehensive, insofar as they account for and address almost every aspect of operational cooperation between the two nations’ armed forces, including gray zones and other security-related situations that until now had been lost in the seams between normal circumstances and armed attack. In that regard, the document brings space, cyber-attacks, and natural disasters within the purview of the alliance for the first time and incorporates broad lessons learned from the March 2011 series of calamities that struck Japan, addressing specifically U.S.
support for the country in the event of contingencies that may include chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear (CBRN) incidents or attacks.

Although the United States will continue to handle the bulk of forward area/combat operations in conflicts beyond the immediate defense of Japan, Tokyo should now be better equipped to support and connect more directly to U.S. activities, whether that involves the provision of logistical support, missile defenses, or intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) for American forces. In addition, the new guidelines show a significant expansion of the possible forms of bilateral cooperation during peacetime, an approach that makes for smoother and much more integrated coordination across the full spectrum of security situations; this approach also stands in stark contrast to the circumscribed activities, arranged into separate zones and according to only a few discrete security situations, that were laid out in the 1997 Guidelines. Significantly, however, the new defense agreement will allow the SDF, with parliamentary support, to respond to attacks on third countries, not just the United States, and thereby aid any American allies that are in close association with Japan, provided that those attacks directly affect Japanese security and that the country or counties in question specifically request Japanese assistance.

As part of this broader regional and global effort, moreover, the Japanese government will seek proactively to build new capacities and to institute reciprocal defense arrangements with other key allies and partners throughout the region, so as to “respond to dynamic security challenges” more effectively. Japan, several participants noted, is already pursuing stronger partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region, as evidenced by the fifth Japan-Australia 2+2 ministerial consultations held in June 2014, the March 2015 Japan-Indonesia Joint Statement on strategic cooperation, and
Tokyo’s joint maritime exercises and anti-piracy drills with the Philippine navy conducted in the South China Sea in May 2015. In addition, it was suggested, the Australian navy’s planned integration of the Aegis BMD system in the near future will further boost U.S.-Japan-Australia information sharing and cooperation in the U.S. Seventh Fleet’s area of responsibility. In other words, as one speaker summarized, for Japan to maintain and strengthen its elements of deterrence against China, the SDF must better integrate with the U.S. and Australian militaries and expand its security role in the region. This kind of defense collaboration and the emphasis on real interaction with third-country allies and other multinational forces (in coordination with U.S. activities) is a major departure from the previous guidelines and is an essential part of Prime Minister Abe’s policy of proactive pacifism.

While Tokyo will likely continue to severely limit how much military force it can use and where, the section in the new bilateral guidelines entitled “Cooperation for Regional and Global Peace and Security” suggests that Japan will certainly expand the range of its support activities for Washington during a variety of international missions, to include helping to protect U.S. ships if they are under attack, providing better coordination with American forward-deployed forces on missile defense, participating in minesweeping at sea or other maritime security operations, and enforcing a U.N. blockade or arms embargo, among other activities. As one prominent U.S. expert recently commented, “This could be a very major change in the way that the alliance functions” in the years to come. What’s more, to ensure smoother crisis planning and crisis management, the new 2015 bilateral agreement replaces the

---

BCM, which was never activated, with the more robust and flexible Alliance Coordination Mechanism, a standing committee made up of officials from the two countries’ diplomatic, defense, and military sectors that will facilitate (and more easily tap into) a wider, whole-of-government approach to crisis management, as required by gray-zone and other situations that call for more than simply military responses.

Aside from such tactical adaptation to new security challenges in the area, one senior U.S. official at the symposium argued that these and other changes in Japan’s security policies reflect Tokyo’s evolving self-image as a strategic actor with wider global responsibilities. At heart, he went on to explain, Abe’s current policy of “proactive contribution to peace” seeks to secure a more robust Japanese presence in the world, taking up new regional and international roles that befit an advanced democracy and market economy. In that regard, the prime minister’s own frenetic overseas travel schedule, which reportedly included visits to over forty-seven countries in just nineteen months, is a well-intended manifestation of this new perspective. And although the policy has rightly been interpreted as a strategic move to address and counterbalance China’s growing influence, particularly in Southeast and South Asia, it is also a reflection of Prime Minister Abe’s strong determination to bring the post-war order in Japan to closure, removing self-imposed limits, re-appropriating rights enjoyed by all other countries, and neutralizing (if not reversing) longstanding insular tendencies at home. The intended effect of these efforts is to help the country take its proper place in the world as a much more confident contributor to security and prosperity. Signs of this transition are already evident in Japan’s willingness to stand up to the Islamic State militant group, doubling down on Middle East assistance
programs in the immediate aftermath of the tragic hostage crisis. This is also reflected in the revised guidelines, which outline in concrete terms Japan’s intent to participate more fully in international security activities, such as peacekeeping and foreign humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) operations. Overall, as alluded to above, this shift is potentially tectonic in significance while possibly not so glacial in speed. The good news, participants agreed, is that Japan appears eager to move in this direction in full partnership with the United States, as a stronger ally in a closer and more balanced alliance, yet steadfast in its commitment to peace.

That said, it remains to be seen whether, and how soon, Tokyo will be able to bolster its operational capabilities sufficiently to match the potential new and expanded roles the Self-Defense Forces might be called upon to perform in the future. Although Japan has amassed an impressive inventory of defense hardware, the government’s decades-long policy of emphasizing deterrence and the development of the nation’s industrial and technology capabilities has left Japanese officials with a sweeping gap when it comes to real-world operational planning and warfighting capabilities. As a result, a number of experts have voiced their concern about Japan’s across-the-board shortfalls in defense equipment performance, logistics support, training, and interoperability, whether among the SDF services themselves or with their U.S. counterparts. Despite a trend of relatively high acquisition budgets, Japan’s procurement practices, according to informed observers, remain notoriously inefficient, often leading to wasted funding and exacerbating operational shortcomings.¹⁰ Some of the limitations in the maritime security realm, in particular, have emerged in recent months, as hundreds of Chinese vessels, many of them openly flying the Chinese flag, have been spotted in the Pacific waters near the Ogasawara and Izu island chains, in Japan’s exclusive economic zone, as part of a dramatic rise in illegal coral poaching

that many say is wreaking serious marine environmental harm in the area. Unfortunately, the Japanese police and coast guard units dispatched to the area, whose response has been criticized as “very slow” and ineffective, have so far failed to deter the brazen poaching activity, prompting some Japanese experts to suggest that Beijing may have used this situation to confirm that Japan’s coast guard “would be helpless” if a large number of Chinese fishing boats and paramilitary forces were deployed to the sea around the contested Senkaku Islands, a potential scenario that Japanese defense officials continue to worry about and grapple with today.11

There are signs, of course, that Tokyo is starting to focus on enhancing its operational capabilities, as evidenced by the Defense Ministry’s new procurement and industrial/technology base policies and in Japan’s recent National Security Strategy, which has placed a priority on boosting the coast guard’s law enforcement capabilities and on improving the maritime surveillance and amphibious capabilities of the SDF. In addition, the Maritime SDF (MSDF) recently commissioned the Izumo-class ships, Japan’s largest post-war vessel, to strengthen the country’s anti-submarine warfare capability and help it to field a more effective counter to Chinese submarine-launched ballistic missiles, a major new threat. Further, the Ground SDF (GSDF) is introducing the AAV-7 Amphibious Assault Vehicles to beef up Japan’s ability to defend the southern islands. So, too, the new defense guidelines, according to U.S. officials, will eventually allow more joint production and the expanded sharing of military technology between Tokyo and Washington, while laying the groundwork as well for closer coordination between the

---

Japan SDF (or JSDF) as a whole and U.S. Forces Japan (or USFJ). This could include, as one panelist from Japan proposed, a greater sharing of bases between the JSDF and USFJ, additional joint exercises and operations beyond Japanese territory, increased interoperability between U.S. and Japanese forces, the co-location of military headquarters, and the creation of better command structures overall, with Japan establishing a standing Joint Task Force (JTF) Headquarters and the USFJ setting up a special JTF earmarked specifically for operations related to the defense of Japan (including with regard to gray-zone contingencies). Nevertheless, as one former U.S. official cautioned recently, such initiatives may take time to bear fruit, as it is often difficult to change ingrained practices and attitudes, especially in the type of insulated environment that has long surrounded Japan’s defense community.¹²

EXPERTS AT THE symposium agreed nonetheless that prompt implementation of the 2015 Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation and the cabinet’s new interpretation of the pacifist constitution will be crucial to preparing the alliance for future challenges that it is sure to encounter. Prime Minister Abe recently indicated that it would make sense for the government to begin the difficult political task of amending Article 9 of the constitution after elections for the upper house of the Diet, scheduled for the summer of 2016. The cabinet’s policy changes have so far proceeded incrementally, as intended, and without any major legislative hurdles. In mid-May 2015, for example, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and its junior coalition partner Komeito announced that they had adopted a package of two new security bills that would, if passed by the Diet, provide the legislative changes necessary for the Self-Defense Forces to engage in collective self-defense and to expand their joint operations with foreign forces overseas, bringing Japan’s national security laws in line with the 2014 constitutional reinterpretation and the 2015 bilateral defense guidelines. The first security bill, called the International Peace Support bill, is designed to provide a permanent legal basis for deploying the SDF internationally in a logistical support role for allied operations. The revision would also simplify the process and eliminate the need for the Japanese government to enact a
special temporary law each time the SDF are to be dispatched in a support capacity abroad, such as in refueling operations like those undertaken in support of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. The second piece of legislation, the Peace and Security Legislative System Maintenance bill, aims to amend ten existing security-related laws, further loosening restrictions on the SDF’s activities, particularly in collective self-defense scenarios. Parliamentary deliberations on the security bills, which began in late May 2015, could continue well into July, with the bills expected to pass by early August 2015.

Still, many Japanese policy and security experts remain split on the urgency or even need to alter the country’s long-held post-war security posture, and there is an intense domestic debate whether the newly adopted bills would simply increase the likelihood of Japan being drawn into, and sustaining casualties as a result of, combat situations overseas, even though the SDF will still be limited in their ability to play a frontline role in conflicts beyond Japan’s shores. So, too, despite its overall support for recent cabinet decisions, the pacifist Komeito remains wary of the country’s straying too far from the core “peace clause” of Article 9 of Japan’s constitution and maintains strong reservations about many of the defense policies spearheaded by Prime Minister Abe. Meanwhile, the Abe government and its successors will likely continue to be mindful of public opinion polls, which have consistently shown that a majority of Japanese people are still opposed to policy changes that could make it easier to embroil their nation in foreign wars. A recent poll by Jiji Press, for instance, released in May 2015, showed that while the public may be open to modest expansion of the SDF’s roles and responsibilities, 64 percent of respondents hoped that the government would allow time to debate the proposed security reforms sufficiently, and that lawmakers would not be pressured
to enact them by the end of the current Diet session.\textsuperscript{13} Given the prevailing public opposition to altering the constitution in a national referendum, and taking into account the ongoing political discussion on these matters, which remains contentious, the Abe cabinet has focused instead on scrutinizing and revising major security laws, rules, and legal restrictions under the current charter in an effort to expand the scope of SDF operations.

When looking more closely at the politics of the security debate in Japan, it is useful to differentiate, as one prominent U.S. expert suggested, between the issues of constitutional revision and a simple reinterpretation of collective self-defense as a way to clarify the likely consequences of Japan’s choice to either reinterpret, as prime Minister Abe has begun to do already, or ultimately to revise the constitution to allow a full-fledged military. A key question in this context, and one that has informed Japan’s avid post-war policy debate so far, is why Japan should continue to limit its security planning and refrain from ever normalizing the country’s military. Going back to 1947 is always instructive, the expert pointed out, especially because the Diet today is having a conversation that is largely informed by the events of that year. The Japanese constitution, it should be noted in that regard, was written by American occupiers, following World War II, who were not constitutional scholars. They were given the “scary and fascinating” task to prevent the defeated nation from ever again possessing the means of war or engaging in militarist expansion. As Prime Minister Abe himself said in the Diet in March 2015, “Let’s just face it. This was a document written by amateurs in ten days.” The main objectives of the occupation forces were to demilitarize

and democratize the country, as reflected in the constitution document, tasks that included the quick and effective scuttling of the imperial army and navy and the utter removal of military decision making in the Japanese state. Post-war Japan, therefore, was deliberately not organized for war, and fixing those institutional settings so that Tokyo can at least defend itself adequately without being able to wage war is a critically important task. All of the accomplishments of the Abe cabinet are thus the culmination of decades of thinking about how to get Japan into a better position to make decisions not only on how to organize a military force, but also on how to use it for the purpose of self-defense.

Meanwhile, Japan’s opposition parties will likely try to prolong Diet deliberations on the new security legislation, leveraging the mixed and cautious public sentiments on how far Japanese officials should be able to push the interpretation of the post-war constitution. After all, historically the document itself, one expert clarified, has not been as severe a constraint on Japan’s overall strategic options as it might have been. During the 1950s, for example, the Japanese government very clearly announced that it had the option of acquiring nuclear weapons, even under Article 9, since they may one day be necessary for Japan’s defense. Reflecting the public mood in the country today, the debate in the Diet has largely focused on whether the bills’ provisions include sufficient brakes on the government’s ability to deploy the SDF abroad, especially because the constitutional reinterpretation on collective self-defense remains ambiguous. As discussions have shown so far, there is still significant discomfort with the notion of no brakes or limits on the use of force by the SDF, and the ongoing parliamentary debate stands as an early test of how well the Japanese public will be persuaded, or not, by Prime Minister Abe’s argument, as well as of how much the dominant LDP will be willing to negotiate and reach out to the political leadership of its more liberal and much more cautious Komeito partner.

Further on this last point, as several symposium participants emphasized, one of the most important and interesting roles in the process has been played by Komeito, which has tended to reflect popular sentiments about collective self-defense and was described by one speaker as “the brake on a rampant Abe and LDP Party.” Indeed, it was the Komeito Party that insisted from the very beginning on a series of restrictions, or conditions, on the exercise of collective self-defense, and most recently the party added provisions to the new legislation that Diet approval for overseas deployment must be mandatory and without exceptions. The LDP-Komeito government, however, is not a simple coalition of the two parties joining forces after an election to combine seats in order to have a majority. Rather, as one observer explained, the Komeito Party often supports LDP candidates in the election, and it directs their supporters to vote for LDP candidates in single-member districts in Japan. This is why Komeito’s roughly five million votes have the enormous power to potentially swing an election from one party to another if they were to support a different party. The
last three elections in Japan, for instance, have witnessed a massive swing from the opposition Democratic Party (DPJ) to the LDP. The important role that Komeito plays in that regard is a key reason why, after taking office, Prime Minister Abe chose to scale back his stated agenda somewhat, in response to concerns raised by the LDP’s pacifist-leaning coalition partner. Nonetheless, the reinterpretation conversation is still moving forward, as is the political debate on possibly revising the Japanese constitution at a later point. After all, Japan already adopted in 2007 its very first law in the post-war period outlining how the country could organize procedurally toward a national referendum on the constitution. Such a change will likely continue to encounter high hurdles, although interest in lowering the political threshold for revision is growing, particularly among conservatives and a new generation of younger Japanese who are not as reluctant to talk about Japan’s strategic choices as people of earlier generations have been. Looking ahead, then, perhaps as early as the summer of 2016, the scheduled upper-house elections could very well emerge as a focal point for whether or not the electoral foundation will go that one step further so that Japan can have a coalition in the upper house which, alongside the LDP’s two-thirds supermajority in the lower house, could finally begin the process of organizing a national referendum to change the constitution.
AGAINST THIS BACKDROP, symposium discussions then turned to a deeper examination of what Japan’s recent initiatives in the national security arena, such as the bilateral defense cooperation agreement, really mean for the U.S.-Japan alliance, looking as well at the likely focus and scope of wider security cooperation between Japan and the broader Asia-Pacific region. One key point is that however dramatic the changes will be on how Japan thinks about and prepares for a more active security role, the effects on the alliance and on Japan’s partnerships within the region as a whole are going to be equally dramatic. Importantly as well, security-related trends in Japan are intersecting with the U.S. approach to the region, and the new areas incorporated into the 2015 bilateral guidelines support both the Abe administration’s quest for “proactive pacifism” and Washington’s overall goals for the current rebalance strategy, or pivot, toward Asia. As successive U.S. Quadrennial Defense Reviews have underscored, America has long encouraged and sought greater support from like-minded allies as well as from an increasing number of security partners in East Asia. All of the steps, therefore, that Prime Minister Abe is currently undertaking to expand Tokyo’s contributions to regional security, as one senior official noted, are thoroughly welcomed by U.S. policy planners and alliance managers. Indeed, U.S. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter expressed a strong sense of expectation
for the broader scope of SDF roles during a House Armed Services Committee hearing in March 2015, stating that Japan's future assistance to U.S. forces in the region and the world is a very positive change. And in January 2015, the commander of the Seventh Fleet and the top U.S. Navy officer in Asia, Vice Admiral Robert Thomas, remarked that “JMSDF (Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force) operations in the South China Sea makes sense in the future.”

Despite a persistent public narrative about a relative American decline in, or withdrawal from, the region, along with worries about a lack of funding for the pivot and local concerns that conflicts in other parts of the world as well as domestic political discord have combined to divert U.S. attention from East Asia, the rebalance, as one senior U.S. official put it, is alive and real, and will remain the lodestar of President Obama’s foreign policy. The reason for that, it was pointed out, is the fact that the fundamental premise of this strategic shift has not changed, and American national security planning in the twenty-first century will increasingly intertwine with that of Asia, an established locus of economic dynamism, but also the hub of an uncertain security environment. One of the central aims of the rebalance is to embed America’s presence in the region more deeply by building multilateral political institutions and developing the regional economic architecture via initiatives such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) treaty. The TPP effort carries, it was argued, a security dimension as well, if you could consider that greater economic prosperity and regional stability are mutually reinforcing. This demonstrates again, it was emphasized, the pressing need to expand national thinking about the nature of security and to act in a whole-of-government manner.
Aside from the new guidelines for bilateral defense cooperation, which provide an update to the “software” of the alliance, U.S. and Japanese planners, according to a senior official, have also focused their efforts on repositioning and improving the “hardware” of the alliance, as part of other bilateral initiatives. More specifically, to realign U.S. force posture and military strategy in the Asia-Pacific, the Department of Defense is looking to place its best equipment in Japan first. This would include MV-22 Ospreys, P8 maritime patrol aircraft, Global Hawk unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), two TPY-2 missile defense radars, and, beginning in 2017, the Joint Strike Fighter F-35B, among other systems. In addition, Japan will soon host eight ballistic missile defense-capable destroyers, while the USS George Washington, America’s only forward-deployed nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, remains home ported at Yokosuka Naval Base, not far from Tokyo. Also in direct support of pivot and alliance objectives, some five thousand of the Marines now based in Okinawa are being transferred to Guam, with the bulk of the rest moving to less-populated areas around the new U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) air station to be built in a more remote part of the main island in the Henoko Bay area, as approved by Okinawan officials in December 2013. As a result, a key barrier to closer military cooperation between Japan and the United States – a factor that remains critical to the success of the rebalance strategy – was removed, and a strong signal sent to the region as a whole (including to potential rivals) that the United States was both willing and able to maintain a sizeable forward presence in Japan, even in the face of ongoing defense budget cuts and a general fatigue within the American public over long-term overseas deployments after more than ten years of war in the Middle East. It is worth noting as well, the official said, that Japan is contributing about $3.1 billion to the projects on Guam, an extraordinary amount for a foreign government to be paying to build military bases for U.S. armed forces stationed on U.S. territory.

Based on these developments, and to address another misleading narrative, one official cautioned that rather than moving
unilaterally in a “militarist” direction and reasserting itself in a way that might worry the regional neighborhood (as some have suggested it was), Japan is actually weaving itself more tightly into the alliance, with the aim of fostering a more stable security architecture in the Asia-Pacific region while hoping as well to reassure its neighbors as to its intentions. In fact, if one were to consider how a rising power and an established power could best interact in ways that enhance, rather than erode, their mutual security, while nonetheless breaking with previous painful lessons of history, the U.S.-Japan alliance looms as perhaps the optimal model of how to proceed. China, it was suggested, would do well to appreciate this fact rather than stir up regional anxieties over what it suggests are the destabilizing aspects of Japan’s adoption of a more active defense posture. It is precisely because Japan’s new initiatives are tightly bound to its alliance with the United States that there is in reality little that countries that suffered from Japan’s actions in World War II really need to fear.

Overall, as one speaker argued, Washington’s long-term desire to participate fully in the Asia-Pacific region’s future is also in strong concordance with Japan’s interests. Operationally, the rebalance policy’s goals of reinvigorating political investment and intensifying broader U.S. engagement across Asia rest in part on developing more robust alliance relationships with countries in the region, and the U.S. alliance with Japan remains the cornerstone of that endeavor. In a similar vein, Japan is seeking to ensure America’s enduring presence in East Asia by contributing more to the alliance and to security activities beyond its shores, in keeping with a more confident national response to evolving security challenges. Toward that end, one speaker explained, both countries are exploring a range of opportunities to improve bilateral
security cooperation by focusing on future missions and capabilities. Japan might, for example, participate fully in broad air and maritime defense in East Asia during a major conflict, such as war on the Korean Peninsula or tensions across the Taiwan Strait. Under the new and more flexible concept of collective self-defense, moreover, the SDF could not only continue to provide rear-area support, but also protect U.S. and allied assets along with civilian commerce right up to, though not at, the front lines. Decisions in this regard could carry significant implications for America’s ability to operate effectively from its bases in Japan and to undertake a variety of important defense and deterrence missions in the Pacific as a whole. If U.S. forces based in Japan were ever attacked by North Korean ballistic missiles, for example, Japan could not use its missile defense radars and interceptors to help defend them without a clear right of collective self-defense. In the event, moreover, of a crisis involving Taiwan or even the Senkaku Islands that required a response by U.S. forces based in Japan, a substantially larger commitment of forces would be required to keep operational risks at acceptable levels if Japanese forces were restricted from providing direct support as part of CSD missions. Similarly, during peacetime, the right of collective self-defense could enable Japan to engage in multilateral military exercises that would otherwise have been considered unconstitutional.

Looking at alliance cooperation beyond the East Asian region, there are plenty of ways that Japan could contribute more to U.S. global security efforts. One role that has frequently been mentioned in this context is minesweeping. Clearing mines from a war zone is considered an act of war under international law, and so the ability to exercise collective self-defense would likely make a big impact in this particular area, which is a strength of the MSDF. An even more significant mission, according to one participant, would be the provision of logistical support. Past restrictions on the “integration [of SDF units] with the use of force” had limited Japan’s ability to deliver logistical support (although one could argue that the Koizumi administration sidestepped some of these restrictions).
At the same time, support from allies is increasingly important for the United States, given the recent trend of shrinking defense budgets in the majority of NATO countries, combined with steep, sequestration-mandated spending cuts that are sure to affect the U.S. military. Such reductions could be alleviated, it was suggested, if Japan could provide logistical support for a growing number of operations, even if the exercise of CSD in this context would still not allow the SDF to engage in front-line combat. Japan might also aid Washington in distant sea lane defense during a potential conflict in the Middle East, and Tokyo’s forthcoming security legislation should give U.S. commanders full faith that they can rely on their MSDF counterparts in bilateral patrols.

As suggested earlier, the American and Japanese militaries also could gain significant benefits from improving interoperability. The advent of new technologies like improved Aegis software and the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter that create opportunities to build multinational networks of defense assets has increased the payoff for better interoperability. At the same time, the U.S. military is updating its doctrine and tactics to account for this evolution with concepts like the Navy’s “distributed lethality” and Air-Sea Battle, now folded into the broader Joint Operational Access Concept. Both the United States and Japan could benefit from working through how the alliance fits into these new operational concepts, and how the new tactics associated with them might be adjusted to incorporate partner contributions. Further bilateral defense cooperation, as already introduced in the 2015 Guidelines, could include efforts to improve resiliency through mutual support, especially in the space domain. The gradual integration of the U.S. and Japanese militaries and the incremental expansion of alliance cooperation would certainly facilitate Japan’s involvement in future U.S.-led operations in more significant ways.
That said, despite the so-called resurgence of the LDP and the true transformation that has occurred in Japanese security practices and institutions over the past decade, one U.S. expert strongly cautioned symposium participants to carefully differentiate between what is the talk of change in Japanese security and what is the reality of partnership possibilities. The Liberal Democratic Party’s landslide victories in multiple elections in 2012 and in the recent snap election in December 2014, this same speaker added, actually give a misleading impression about the real level of public support for the party, as the LDP in fact got fewer votes from voters than in the 2009 election, which brought the Democratic Party of Japan to power. Even though the LDP won an impressive number of seats in the Japanese Diet, the 2012 election result can generally be described less as an embrace of the LDP than a rejection of the DPJ and other minor opponents. The reason for this election paradox is simply a lack of voter turnout and insufficient enthusiasm among voters for the choices that were available. In addition, despite its consistent command of well over 50 percent of the seats in the lower house in the past two elections, the LDP has in fact received less than 50 percent of the vote. This is an important indicator in measuring party support, and the LDP is currently the only party that has voter support over single digits. Yet the LDP’s support is also under about 25 percent, which partially explains why Prime Minister Abe is walking cautiously in pushing for dramatic change. This is also why, given the LDP’s complex electoral relationship with its partner Komeito, many observers expect that the new legislation based on the Abe cabinet’s July 2014 decision on collective self-defense will likely be scaled back as a result of substantial compromises on export restrictions, the use of space, and the use of the Self-Defense Forces outside Japan.

As for military spending in Japan, it is useful to compare Tokyo’s current defense budget to that of its increasingly aggressive neighbor, China. Depending on how one measures the figures, China’s declared military expenditures during the past fifteen years have risen close to 700 percent, according to one expert. U.S. defense
spending, meanwhile, has more than doubled in that same period, which has seen America become embroiled in two lengthy wars in the Middle East. Japanese military budgets, on the other hand, have largely declined during that time, with the Abe government’s recent increases in defense spending in the last two years bringing it to flat. Looking toward the future, it was suggested, the prospect for a dramatic increase in Japanese defense spending given the country’s challenging demographics seems rather slim and unlikely. It is also hard to imagine that sort of transformation in Japan’s defense spending trends unless a serious military contingency were to actually take place, as opposed to merely the threat of one. Overall, one Japanese expert said, even with a modest but steady annual increase in Japan’s defense budgets, the government would still not have the resources available to cultivate the type of highly specialized capabilities, such as intelligence gathering and evaluation for example, that many of the SDF’s potential new tasks and missions may require. This, in turn, will limit what kind of new roles Japan will eventually be able to play in the region and globally, despite Tokyo’s progress over the last decade or two with respect to streamlining its defense spending practices.

The so-called politics of history is yet another issue that may hinder or slow down the process of transformation in Japan’s regional security engagement. Although, as it was pointed out, the Japanese public is generally realistic about the fact that Tokyo’s intention to play a bigger role internationally does come with some risk, changing the nation’s long-held anti-militarist security practices, developed over the course of nearly seven decades, may prove to be a formidable task for Japanese politicians. These practices, after all, have resulted in not a single Japanese military casualty in the last seventy years or so, a significant historical legacy that
many Japanese cherish and may not be willing to change. Adding to the challenge is the fact that the history between the United States and Japan is also fairly complicated and has not been fully reconciled. In fact, Prime Minister Abe himself has spoken multiple times about the need to somehow address the post-war regime, including issues like the Tokyo tribunals for Japanese war criminals and the visiting of the Yasukuni Shrine, as well as the issue of the U.S. military presence in Okinawa. How the Japanese political system manages to filter through these history issues, participants concluded, will be quite important in the years to come.

Looking forward, Japan will likely continue to face some serious fiscal challenges in terms of its broad defense spending, as mentioned earlier, complicated further by the fact that over half of the Japanese current-year budget is financed by debt. In addition, as one expert at the meeting warned, future U.S.-Japan cooperation may well take place in an environment where the Japanese population is ten million to fifteen million people smaller than it is today, facing a stark disparity between a growing U.S. economy, with a growing population, and a shrinking Japan. In such a scenario, it becomes especially important for both the United States and Japan to develop new, and enhance existing, partnerships with like-minded friends and partners in the region that have different demographic profiles and can make a range of contributions to resolve common security challenges in the Asia-Pacific.
Opportunities for Broader Regional Security Cooperation

**In this way,** building effective partnerships with the forces of nearby Southeast Asian littoral states, such as the Philippines and Vietnam, has become a priority for both Tokyo and Washington in their regional security engagement. The importance of security and defense capacity building, as one prominent Japanese scholar explained, has already been highlighted in a number of bilateral documents, most vividly in the U.S.-Japan 2+2 Joint Ministerial Statement of October 2013, which set forth a strategic vision for the alliance in the decade to come. Similarly, in April 2014, following President Obama’s visit to Tokyo, the United States and Japan released a Fact Sheet on U.S.-Japan Global and Regional Cooperation that specifically singled out capacity-building assistance in the areas of maritime safety and security for Southeast Asian nations, including the provision of patrol vessels to their coast guards and the development of port facilities, as one of the most important areas where Japan and the United States can cooperate in their regional commitments. No doubt, increased information sharing between Tokyo and Washington will aid in developing the defense capabilities of local forces, especially in the maritime security and maritime domain awareness (MDA) realms.

Symposium participants noted that there is a general sense of urgency among U.S. and Japanese policy makers on the need to enhance the capacities of, and strengthen the links among, smaller Southeast Asian countries, especially given China’s ambitious
naval modernization in the past fifteen years, which provides Beijing with a much more technologically advanced and flexible force. As the U.S. Navy concluded in a major new assessment released in April 2015, the Chinese navy is on track to dramatically increase its combat capability by 2020 through accelerated acquisition of advanced weapons, platforms, and sensors, together with the introduction of complex personnel training and improved operational proficiency. Beijing’s rapid fielding of new coast guard vessels

and the enhancement of its maritime law enforcement capabilities, in combination with its resource development and controversial land reclamation projects in disputed waters have amounted, as mentioned earlier, to what some senior U.S. officials and experts now call “tailored coercion” against countries belonging to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (or ASEAN). As Admiral Harry B. Harris, commander of U.S. Pacific Command, once remarked when he commanded the U.S. Pacific Fleet, “When one looks at China’s pattern of provocative actions towards smaller claimant states—the lack of clarity on its sweeping nine-dash line claim that is inconsistent with international law and the deep asymmetry between China’s capabilities and those of its smaller neighbors—well, it’s no surprise that the scope and pace of building manmade islands raise serious questions” about its intentions.16 China claims sovereignty over nearly 90 percent of the South China Sea, including James Shoal, a submerged feature barely sixty nautical miles from Malaysia’s coastal base-point that can under no circumstances be appropriated by a sovereign more than two hundred nautical miles removed at the very least.17

While the projected continuous rise in Chinese naval and air power is bound to further consolidate the country’s maritime superiority vis-à-vis its Southeast Asian neighbors, the shared strategic interests of Japan, the United States, and Australia are creating new opportunities for defense policy coordination among the three as a balancing force in regional dynamics. As a result, a Japanese expert noted, Tokyo’s new strategic engagement in Southeast Asia

16 Schreer, “China’s ‘Great Wall of Sand.’”
has focused on several emerging policy imperatives, or pillars. In the tactical sphere, for example, Japan has been actively involved in various U.S.-led military-to-military training and exercise programs with regional governments, including the U.S.-Philippines Balikatan series (since 2012); the U.S.-Thailand Cobra Gold joint/combined military exercises; the annual Pacific Partnership; various U.S.-Japan-Australia joint training initiatives (which in 2011 involved a special maritime exercise off the coast of Brunei in the South China Sea); ASEAN Regional Forum disaster relief training (since 2011); ASEAN Defense Minister Meeting (ADMM)-Plus HA/DR exercises (since 2013); and in July 2015 Japan’s Ground Self-Defense Force is set to participate for the first time in Talisman Sabre, a U.S.-Australian military drill that aims to improve tactical expertise in amphibious operations.

On a more strategic level, as also emphasized in its new National Security Strategy and Defense Program Guidelines, Japan has focused on using its Official Development Assistance, or ODA, resources as part of capacity building efforts in partner countries, geared especially toward ASEAN members. This approach is gradually altering the traditional commerce-driven or development-driven nature of Japanese ODA, turning it into a broader and more robust strategic vehicle to provide financing for the development and improvement of critical ASEAN security-related infrastructure components, such as airports, roads, port facilities, power generation and electricity supply stations, communications, and software development. A third emerging pillar in Tokyo’s policy, moreover, connects with the Japanese government’s recent removal of certain restrictions on arms exports and the transfer of defense equipment and technology, announced in April 2014. Here, new and much more flexible interpretations regarding the appropriate conditions for such exports and transfers will allow Japan to pursue a wider range of options to extend aid to, and to share necessary defense equipment and technologies with, Southeast Asian countries (and their militaries) that are
not now able to adequately patrol and defend their territorial waters and exclusive economic zones (EEZs).

As part of these efforts, for example, Japan is providing the Philippines with multiple patrol vessels for its coast guard, and in the coming years it will also supply Manila with maritime communication systems through its new ODA policy. Likewise, building upon the eased arms-export restrictions, Japan is gearing up to consider exporting additional patrol vessels, aircraft, and multipurpose support ships that will further beef up the maritime security capabilities of both the Philippines and other ASEAN countries that need this help, such as Malaysia and Indonesia. One expert argued that if this hardware assistance is coupled with experienced technical support and training by the Japanese coast guard and the Maritime Self-Defense Force, Japan could contribute even more effectively to its neighbors’ future maritime security capabilities. Moreover, even quite advanced countries in the region, most notably Australia, have expressed strong interest in purchasing Japanese defense technology, with the Japanese Soryu-class conventional submarine, considered one of the most advanced non-nuclear modern submarines now available, currently the front-runner to replace Canberra’s Collins-class submarine fleet. In fact, in May 2015 it was reported that Tokyo may share classified submarine data with Australia to help it better evaluate Japan’s bid, which would mark the first time the Japanese government has disclosed such sensitive technical data to a country other than the United States. In this sense, the Australian submarine bid is an important test of Prime Minister Abe’s new security policy, and it would, if successful, not only help to invigorate the country’s defense industry, but it would also provide domestic contractors with an opportunity to share in the lucrative overseas market. Japan is gearing up to export additional patrol vessels, aircraft, and multipurpose support ships to the Philippines and other ASEAN countries.
also exploring other defense deals and cooperation arrangements with France, the United Kingdom, India, and several countries in the Middle East. Moreover, in an effort to improve the quality of what it can offer potential partners, Japan is establishing a new defense technology development agency that would have responsibilities similar to those of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) in the United States.

Together with these initiatives, as one participant suggested, many of the operational standards and practices developed between the United States and Japan as part of their “seamless bilateral cooperation” approach underscored in the 2015 Guidelines can also be extended to the U.S. alliance with the Philippines and its partnership with Vietnam. With their current ability to monitor their near seas sorely lacking, the maritime environment has become ripe for accidents, miscalculation, and adventurism. Providing these two countries in particular with better maritime domain awareness and a shared operating picture, moreover, would also better equip Tokyo, Manila, and Hanoi to handle potential gray-zone scenarios in concert with Washington, and to deal more effectively with escalation management situations when core interests are at stake. To accomplish both objectives, Japan and the United States would need to upgrade existing coastal watch systems; build regional capacity for data gathering, processing, and sharing; beef up coast guard capabilities; enhance air assets for ISR missions; share real-time information about maritime traffic gathered from satellites and through the Automatic Identification System (AIS); and develop supporting infrastructure and communication systems.

It will also be important to establish closer coordination mechanisms and priority areas for trilateral cooperation among the United States, Japan, and Australia if their efforts to improve maritime capacities in Southeast Asia are to bear fruit in the future. Chief among these issues would be the need to better coordinate the complex processes of Japan’s Official Development Assistance with the U.S. Foreign Military Sales/Assistance programs and Australia’s Defense Cooperation Program (DCP) as all three
countries take steps to enhance the capabilities of ASEAN states. Many aspects of ASEAN’s critical infrastructure, such as airports, shipping ports, roads, power generation and electricity supply stations, and communications are important security-sector components, and if the financial assistance and investment promotion schemes are well coordinated among Japan, the United States, and Australia, they can become a significant force multiplier.

There are, of course, other real opportunities for cooperation within the trilateral relationship between the United States, Japan, and the Republic of Korea (ROK), particularly in the area of crisis management on the Korean Peninsula. One example of an opportunity for near-term action is further integration of ballistic missile defense (BMD) capabilities. The BMD issue is sensitive in South Korea, especially the potential deployment of a U.S. Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system, given Seoul’s concerns over China’s opposition to the deployment of improved missile defenses close to its borders, but policy decisions about data sharing and interoperability between the United States and its two key allies in Northeast Asia are in some ways much more important than THAAD deployment in and of itself. Of particular significance, in that regard, is the U.S.-Japan-ROK trilateral information sharing memorandum of understanding (MOU), signed in late December 2014, in which Japan and South Korea pledged for the first time to share military intelligence about Pyongyang’s weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs, enabling enhanced coordination among the three countries in understanding North Korean nuclear and missile threats. But while the agreement is a good first step that reflects a renewed appreciation of North Korea’s ability to threaten its neighbors, experts pointed out as well that the continued tensions surrounding Japanese-Korean relations were evident in the...
narrow scope of the document, which was not a legally binding treaty but an MOU, with the limitation that the classified data will not be shared directly, but via the United States. Contemplating Japan’s role in potential contingencies on the Peninsula remains a sensitive topic for South Korea, and, as one senior U.S. official noted, Washington continues to encourage Tokyo and Seoul to work together to address their own delicate historical issues and to step into a more vibrant partnership oriented toward the future.

In the end, panelists agreed, perhaps the only stable balance-of-power model that would emerge in the East and South China Seas in the coming years would be one governed by relations of asymmetrical denial. China will likely continue to acquire increasingly sophisticated anti-access/area denial capabilities vis-à-vis the United States, while Japan, the Philippines, and Vietnam will augment their efforts to improve their own defense capabilities and to coordinate individual capacities to collectively thwart Beijing’s attempts to change the status-quo in the region by force. Washington is expected to continue to look to its Japanese and Australian allies to play a more robust and proactive role in Southeast Asia’s maritime domain, including planning for possible contingencies in the South China Sea. And despite Chinese protests, many of Tokyo’s neighbors are likely to welcome greater Japanese defense engagement as a counterbalancing force in the region. Given the fluid character of Asia’s balance of power, the ultimate objective of various U.S.-led and Japan-facilitated regional capacity building endeavors may actually be to achieve a kind of asymmetrical equilibrium among the littoral states in East Asia.

19 Schreer, “China’s ‘Great Wall of Sand.’”
Looking ahead, as one U.S. official declared, the focus of U.S. and Japanese policy makers will remain on bilateral efforts in the Asia-Pacific region to build partner capacity. Some of these efforts will be small, targeted programs in specific mission areas such as maritime security. As the new bilateral defense guidelines are being implemented, however, the primary focus will be on working with Japan to strengthen its overall capabilities in the realm of defense capacity building, ensuring that Japan’s exports and technology transfers to its ASEAN partners, for example, are coupled with the necessary instructional and logistical support to make them truly useful to the recipients over time. This is necessary, the official added, because while it is perfectly fine to transfer defense-related or other equipment to a regional partner, without parallel investments in local logistics and personnel development, those transfers may not build capacity in a meaningful way. Japan, for its part, appears to have grasped the opportunity its new security policies provide to offer greater support to Washington, both to address Japan’s own defense needs and for enhancing regional security. Moreover, as a senior Japanese official noted, leveraging both Japan’s proactive pacifism and America’s rebalance to Asia, the two allies can work even better as a team to promote transparency, keep the lines of communication “always open,” and sharpen the tools for multilateral dialogue throughout the region, not least to decrease the prospects for future misunderstanding and unintended mishaps among Asian countries. An important tool, in that regard, is the region’s first Code for Unexpected Encounters at Sea, or CUES, approved by Asian-Pacific naval chiefs in April 2014, which provides ways for navy ships and aircraft to maneuver and communicate during unplanned encounters to prevent any unintended tensions from flaring into conflict. And as part of another promising effort, the

The Japanese government plans to work with China to launch a hotline between the two countries’ militaries.
Japanese government plans to continue to work with China to achieve an early launch of the so-called Maritime Communications Mechanism, a hotline between the two countries’ militaries that would allow them to communicate in the event of an emergency in the East China Sea.
Driven by a mix of internal and external factors, recent adjustments to Japan’s security policy, together with the new U.S.-Japan guidelines on defense cooperation, signal the emergence of a more confident and capable Japan, better able to defend its own territory and, more importantly, to partner with the United States and other likeminded countries in shoring up regional stability and responding, when necessary, to regional crises. In particular, Tokyo’s ability to manage gray-zone contingencies and to provide assistance in the event of civil emergencies that require military support (such as natural disasters or refugee crises) has been significantly enhanced. That said, the many ways in which these and related initiatives can and will contribute to international peace and stability are still not fully appreciated in the Asia-Pacific region or more globally. For this reason alone, symposium participants agreed, additional bilateral and even multilateral dialogues along the lines of the IFPA-Fletcher School symposium should be encouraged. Such exchanges will be essential in relieving whatever lingering concerns countries in the Asia-Pacific region may have regarding Japan’s intentions in boosting its defense capabilities, while at the same time illustrating more clearly the wider benefits to be derived from Japan’s decision to become a more active contributor to global security.
Keynote Luncheon Speech

Japan’s New National Security Initiatives and the Future of the Japan-US Alliance

by the Honorable Hideshi Tokuchi,
Vice Minister for International Affairs,
Japanese Ministry of Defense

Note: Views expressed or implied in this document are solely those of the author and they must not be construed as representing the views of any organizations he belongs to.

Dr. Charles Perry and all the distinguished members of the Fletcher community and Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, thank you very much for inviting me to this wonderful event. I am very much honored to be back here at the Fletcher School to discuss Japan’s national security policy in this timely and important conference.

As an alumnus of F86, I am excited today but at the same time feel nervous because the presence of Fletcher professors reminds me of the one-hour oral examination for M.A.L.D. degree. I had a very hard time back then. My dear professors, please do not grill your old student with hard questions today.
Before getting down to business, I would like to extend my sincerest condolences on the passing of my academic advisor, Distinguished Professor Alfred P. Rubin. His profound thought is exactly relevant to today’s world, which is trying hard to reinforce and advance the rules-based international order. His positivist thought never withers and today it is increasingly important when we examine a rules-based order in this complex world. We, the students, always said after his classes that his middle initial “P” stood for “positivist”. We lost the great mind. My thought goes not only to his family but also to the entire Fletcher community.

Today, I am expected to express my view on one question: how much implication the recent developments in Japan’s national security policy have for the future of the Japan-US alliance and the bilateral security cooperation. Very simply put, the implication will be enormous. I wish I could stop here, but there is a plenty of time left for me and I know that there is no such thing as free lunch. Thus, I would like to add my own personal footnotes to this simple answer for the rest of the time given to me.

My footnotes are outlined as follows: First, the basic guiding principles of the national security and defense policy of Japan. Second, agenda for bilateral security cooperation in the coming age. Third, what the review of the bilateral politico-military document called “the Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation” means to the future of the alliance. Fourth and finally, I would like to discuss this alliance in the context of the regional security architecture in the Asia-Pacific.
Now, at the outset, I would like to briefly cover the basic guiding principles of the national security and defense policy of Japan. There are two points here. One is Japan’s own strong resolve to defend its own territory no matter what. The other is the policy of proactive contribution to peace based on the principle of international cooperation. These two exactly provide the underlying precepts for not only the National Security Strategy and the National Defense Program Guidelines of December 2013 but also for other major developments in recent years such as last July’s reinterpretation of the Japanese Constitution, the review of “the Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation,” to which I will come back later, and also the new principles on the transfer of defense equipment and technology in April 2014.

The National Defense Program Guidelines document describes as Japan’s basic defense policy one set of three pillars, i.e. Japan’s own efforts, strengthening of the Japan-US alliance, and active promotion of security cooperation, out of which I would like to focus on the second one, i.e. the bilateral alliance relationship with the US.

The bilateral alliance is in the center of the three pillars of Japan’s defense policy. This central pillar is to connect Japan’s own national efforts to the third pillar, i.e. its regional and global security cooperation with wider international community, because, from my point of view, Japan is, by being aligned with the US, able to more actively and effectively work with the region and the entire world and contribute to them rather than to act alone.

Having these points in mind, I would like to move on to my second footnote, i.e. agenda for bilateral security cooperation in the coming age. Here, let me touch upon the following two points: One, the change of the security environment surrounding Japan and the US, and two, how to define new cooperative relationship between the two countries.

First, I would like to point out some features of the security environment before both of us. Simply put, the security environment is more acute, complex, and fluid than ever. We have to continue
to address traditional security agenda for the purpose of maintaining the nation-state-based international legal order. In this respect, it is critically important to keep expressing our common belief in the long established fundamental principles of international order including peaceful settlement of disputes, non-use of force as means to alter the status quo, and freedom of navigation and over-flight on and over the high seas.

At the same time, we have to address non-traditional, transnational, or post-modern agenda such as international terrorism, piracy, cyber warfare, pandemic and large-scale natural disasters, some of which are called “dark side of globalization” or “deviant globalization.” These threats do not recognize any national borders and they spread wherever deterrence is inadequate and wherever we are ill-prepared. We have problems even in outer space – space debris and anti-satellite weapons, for example. In these new domains, we need to begin with rule-setting.

In addition, we see some other serious pre-modern threats, such as attempts to deny the notion of national borders and to even revive slavery. It is not simply a cause of lawlessness and disorder, but rather denial of the modern concepts of sovereignty and human rights.

The second point is new definition of Japan-US security and defense cooperation. In developing new division of labor to cope with the aforementioned hybrid threats, we need to broaden our scope in the following six terms: Number 1, functions. Number 2, actors. Number 3, phases. Number 4, domain. Number 5, instruments, and finally Number 6, speed.

Number 1, functions. Originally, when both countries established the first Guidelines document in 1978, it focused on joint defense operations in time of an armed attack against Japan. Today, however, bilateral defense cooperation is more than military operations for the defense of Japan. It is already expanded, reflecting the global nature of the alliance, to encompass such areas as counter-terrorism, counter-piracy, peace-keeping, HA/DR, capacity building, and technology and equipment cooperation.
Number 2, actors. Security and defense cooperation cannot be conducted by the military establishments alone. It naturally involves many others including all the relevant ministries and agencies of the respective governments. Whole-of-government approach is indispensable in order to address such security agenda as international terrorism, piracy and natural disaster. At the same time, in this globalized world, networking of like-minded countries is always important, and Japan-US bilateral relationship must be appropriately placed in the multilateral networking. Similar to the reality that Japan’s own national security does not stand alone independently from that of other nations, Japan-US security relationship does not stand alone independently from a variety of other security relationships of like-minded countries in today’s world. Thus, it is natural even in the context of Japan-US bilateral cooperation to work together for promoting deeper security cooperation especially with other regional partners to advance shared objectives and goals.

Number 3, phases. We need to comprise all imaginable phases of cooperation from peacetime to gray zone and to all-out military contingencies. In this context, it is increasingly important to address cooperation in gray zone situations in order not to escalate the situation, and therefore, a key here is unity of efforts especially between the military and the law-enforcement agencies.

Number 4, domains. We need to expand our geographical horizons of cooperation far beyond Japan’s territory and to include new strategic domains such as outer space and even cyber space. The two governments share a commitment to strengthen stability and security in outer space and cyber space, and in particular the militaries of both countries are expected to contribute to whole-of-government efforts in securing safe and stable use of these domains.

Number 5, instruments, both hardware and software. In 1997, the Japanese did not have missile defense capability. They did not have legislation to deal with contingencies or the new principles on the transfer of defense equipment and technology, either. The
Americans put more emphasis on the Asia-Pacific region today than in 1997, implementing the policy of rebalancing. For instance, US force structure will be rebalanced shifting from a ratio of 50/50 for Asia and Europe to 60/40 respectively. All these changes are to be appropriately reflected in a new framework of bilateral security and defense cooperation.

Finally, Number 6, speed. Contemporary threats may develop with enormous speed. Incidents may escalate so easily. It means timely response supported by quick coordination and equally quick decision-making is critical. Thus, we need to be more time conscious than ever.

Now, my third footnote is about the implication of the current review of “the Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation” for us and for the region.

For those of you who are interested in the review of “the Guidelines,” please look closely at the two key bilateral statements on this subject with all the aforementioned points kept in mind. One is the Japan-US “2+2” Joint Statement issued on October 3, 2013, which set forth the 7 objectives of the review. The other is the Interim Report on the revision of the bilateral Guidelines, released on October 8, 2014. Although there is a large public attention on how to reflect the new interpretation of the Japanese constitution to the new Guidelines, the revision of the Guidelines is not just about the right of collective self-defense. There should be a lot more meat there, as I have pointed out.

The original role of the Japan-US Guidelines was to define bilateral military roles and missions to establish a division of labor in time of an armed attack against Japan. The Guidelines were supposed to serve as the politico-military framework for joint defense planning. It was the achievement in 1978, when the first ever Guidelines were established. This original purpose still matters because the core of the Japan-US Alliance is US commitment to the defense of Japan, as enshrined in Article 5 of the Security Treaty. Now, this purpose has been expanded to include many more ends, and it will continue to expand as I alluded to.
A second role was its contribution to the crisis management mechanism of the Japanese government. Just think about how positively the bilateral coordination mechanism established by the Guidelines of 1997 influenced the whole-of-government approach to national security in Japan. Or, recall a series of legislation to deal with contingencies at the turn of the century. This role is also relevant, or even more relevant to the current revision. The “2+2” Joint Statement on December 19, 2014 clearly states, “Recognizing the significance of ensuring consistency between the revision of the Guidelines and Japan’s legislative process ..., the Ministers have decided to deepen the discussions further to work toward finalizing the revision of the Guidelines during the first half of this year (note: 2015), taking into account the progress of Japan’s legislative process.”

There is one more role of the Guidelines. The Guidelines document or even the revision process itself works as an important instrument of strategic communications and assurance in relation with the Asia-Pacific region, Japan’s immediate neighbors in particular. The 1997 version of the Guidelines should be read as one set of policy documents together with the Joint Declaration on Security of 1996. While the Joint Declaration was the answer to the question on why the Japan-US alliance was necessary in the post-Cold War era, the 1997 version of the Guidelines was the answer to the question of how both countries should capitalize on the alliance relationship for the security of Japan and the Asia-Pacific region in the post-Cold War era. With these two answers, both Japan and the US tried to convey joint message for assurance to the entire region. Similarly, the revision of this time will mean a lot to the region and it will contribute to deepening further regional understanding of a new shape of the Japan-US Alliance based on enhanced roles of the Japanese Defense Forces in the coming age.

So much for the Guidelines revision, and fourth and finally, I would like to further discuss the bilateral alliance in the context of the Asia-Pacific regional security architecture.
Asia is an engine of global economic growth and a center stage of maritime trade. It has a huge potential, but it does not have an over-arching security mechanism to harness such a potential. We, the Asians, will continue to need US security commitment over there.

The US is, geographically, economically, politically, historically, and in many ways, a part of the Asia-Pacific region, as consistently reiterated by the US Government. The US policy of rebalancing toward the Asia-Pacific is, from this point of view, very natural. Japan welcomes the policy of rebalancing and has great security interests in supporting it.

At the same time, the future of Japan’s relations with the US depends on how to establish and maintain stable, constructive and forward-looking relations with Japan’s Asian neighbors. Rise of China and its wanton behaviors, enigmatic North Korea, assertive Russia, proliferation of WMDs, international terrorism, and cyber space instability – all these factors illustrate acute and complex nature of the today’s security environment in the region. In order to survive and prosper in this environment, we, the two countries need to more closely work together.

In building a more robust alliance, we have to keep the following four points in mind: First, shared values. Second, upholding established rules of international law. Third, improvement of regional transparency. Fourth and finally, promotion of regional dialogue.

First, shared values. The sovereign state system is important as the basis for international cooperation for peace and order, even though the natures of today’s threats and agenda are often transnational. Without cooperation among sovereign states, freedom of navigation on the high seas or even stable use of transnational domain such as cyber space cannot be guaranteed. Sharing values is the foundation of our joint effort for achieving common security in this complex world. As Professor Yuichi HOSOYA of Keio University argues, it is not machines but nations that establish international order. Therefore, shared values are keys to heart-to-heart relationship. As explicitly stated in abundant bilateral
documents, the foundation of the Japan–US relationship lies in our shared values of individual freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, none of which could be more emphasized than today in any part of the world. An alliance simply for the balance of power alone would not last.

Second, cooperation in upholding established rules of international law. If we acquiesced in an act to jeopardize the sovereignty of states or to damage the postwar rules-based international order in one hemisphere, we could not ensure the globally established norms are observed in the other hemisphere, either. Although the pace of technological innovation particularly in weapons field outstrips the pace of the development of international legal thinking, everyone knows what rules are firmly established in today’s international community, including peaceful settlement of disputes and freedom of navigation on the high seas. Thus, George F. Kennan was exactly right when he wrote in his telegram in 1946, “We must have courage and self-confidence to cling to our own methods and conceptions of human society. After all, the greatest danger that can befall us ... is that we shall allow ourselves to become like those with whom we are coping.” Although I am fully aware that he wrote this in the Cold War context in order to cope with Soviet communism, we must carefully take our path with his caveat in mind today.

Third, advancing transparency in the Asia-Pacific. Transparency in policies, strategies, budgets, and all that jazz generates predictability to help avoid misunderstanding. The US and Japan can cooperate to uphold transparency in the region and to work on the world to familiarize it, as both have already a good track record of presenting it. For example, China released its military budget for 2015 just recently, according to which it is 10.1% increase from last year’s declared figure. China’s declared military expenditure has become 41 times as large as that of 27 years ago and 3.6 times as large as that of a decade ago. The rapid increase itself is a problem, but China’s opaqueness in the details of the expenditures and in the security policy is of a more serious concern for us. We must
continue to encourage China to be more transparent so that we can build more stable regional environment.

Fourth and finally, promotion of regional dialogue. The US and Japan can cooperate in keeping lines of communication and dialogue with regional countries always open in order to avoid any misunderstanding and mishaps and also make it work as an instrument of regional crisis management. Region-wide habit of talks must continue to be cultivated. Japan is always open to dialogue with its neighbors. Steady implementation of Code for Unexpected Encounters at Sea (CUES), a great achievement of Western Pacific Naval Symposium, provides us with a useful tool. Japan truly welcomes this success. Also, the Japanese government continues to work on China to achieve early launch of the maritime communication mechanism between the two militaries. Just recently, we did a dialogue aiming for it. Japan is always open to dialogue with China. Bluntly speaking, it is important to sharpen our tools for communication.

Dialogue and communication is always important, but at the same time, in order to make dialogue and communication more effective, deterrent is also needed. That is why we need continuous defense efforts in accordance with the National Defense Program Guidelines to achieve Dynamic Joint Defense Force, truly interoperable with the US.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII. Japan’s national security and prosperity continues to depend on the rules-based international order which has been established through abundant experiences of civilized nations through these 70 years. We are lucky to be able to witness the progress of the alliance relationship in this special year.

As explicitly stated in the National Security Strategy, Japan will continue to take the course as a peace-loving nation. Year 2015 also commemorates the 150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War. Integration and reconciliation – these lessons from history may provide very important suggestions for us to think about the future of Northeast Asia and Japan’s relations with its neighbors.
Let me conclude my remarks by saying that we, the Japanese, look forward to working more closely and extensively with the United States of America for common security in accordance with our firm commitment to proactive contribution to peace.

Professors, I cannot overstate my deep appreciation of the Fletcher School’s intellectual support to us. Educational and research exchanges constitute another aspect of Japan-US security and defense cooperation, as stated in the Interim Report of the Revision of the Guidelines. I sincerely ask for your continuous support for the future of the Alliance.

Once again, to all the distinguished guests here today, thank you very, very much for this wonderful opportunity.

**Bibliography**


AGENDA

Symposium on New Dynamics in Japanese Security Policy

Organized and Co-Sponsored by:
Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis
&
The International Security Studies Program,
The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy

The Chase Center
The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy
March 31, 2015

10:00 – 10:15 am
Welcome & Introduction by Symposium Chairman
  Dr. Charles M. Perry, Vice President and Director of Studies, IFPA

10:15 am – 12:15 pm
Session I
Japan’s New National Security Structures and Abe’s “Proactive Pacifism”

This session will examine recent changes in Japan’s national security policies, organizational structures, and decision-making process, together with updates to Japan’s defense posture and the
Abe administration’s moves to reinterpret Japan’s constitution to allow for the exercise of collective self-defense. Panelists will discuss the reasons why Japan has moved in this direction, what the domestic and regional reactions have been to these initiatives, and what this all suggests about the likely scope, pace, and focus of Japan’s emergence as a “proactive contributor to peace” at the regional and global levels.

**Key sub-topics include:**
- Security challenges and policy priorities outlined in Japan’s first-ever National Security Strategy
- New defense missions and capability needs identified in the 2013 NDPG and Mid-Term Defense Program
- Main conclusions of the May 2014 Advisory Panel on collective self-defense and next steps required for implementation
- Likely range of military operations and support activities Japan could undertake under collective self-defense
- Potential constraints on “proactive pacifism”

**Panel Members:**
- The Honorable Satoshi Morimoto, former Japanese Minister of Defense and Professor, Graduate School of Tokushoku University
- Mr. Joseph M. Young, Director, Office of Japanese Affairs, U.S. Department of State
- Dr. Takashi Kawakami, Professor and President, Institute of World Studies, Graduate School of Tokushoku University
- Dr. Sheila A. Smith, Senior Fellow for Japan Studies, Council on Foreign Relations

Session I Panel (L to R): Satoshi Morimoto, Joseph Young, Takashi Kawakami, and Sheila Smith
12:30 – 2:00 pm

Luncheon

Keynote Address by The Honorable Hideshi Tokuchi, Vice Minister for International Affairs, Japanese Ministry of Defense

2:15 – 4:15 pm

Session II

New Opportunities for U.S.-Japanese and Broader Regional Security Cooperation

This session will examine more closely the effect of Japan’s national security reforms and adjustments on efforts to create a more balanced U.S.-Japanese alliance, especially with respect to new roles and responsibilities under the revised bilateral guidelines for defense cooperation. Panelists will discuss as well the ways in which Japan and the United States can collaborate more closely as they both take steps to improve trilateral cooperation with South Korea, to strengthen their ties with Australia and India, to build up the defense capabilities of Southeast Asian countries (particularly Vietnam and the Philippines), and to cooperate when and where possible with China on regional security tasks. The degree to which Tokyo and Washington can and should work together to encourage additional trilateral, mini-lateral, and wider multilateral security cooperation will also be explored.

Key sub-topics include:

- New divisions of labor under the revised U.S.-Japan Guidelines for Defense Cooperation
- U.S.-Japan-ROK, U.S.-Japan-Australia, and U.S.-Japan-India security cooperation: what’s possible and how can it best be achieved?
- Capacity-building for new partners in Southeast and South Asia: what are the priorities?
- Identifying areas for risk-reduction and security cooperation with China
New Dynamics in Japanese Security Policy

- Leveraging Japan’s “proactive pacifism” and America’s rebalance to Asia to create a more stable security architecture in the Asia-Pacific region

Panel Members:

Mr. David Helvey, Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asia, U.S. Department of Defense
Dr. Ken Jimbo, Associate Professor, Faculty of Policy Management and Center for Asia-Pacific Studies, Keio University
Dr. Andrew L. Oros, Associate Professor of Political Science and Director of International Studies, Washington College
Lieutenant General Noboru Yamaguchi, JGSDF (Ret.), former Professor of Military History and Strategy, National Defense Academy of Japan, and former Commanding General, JGSDF Research and Development Command
Mr. Ian E. Rinehart, Analyst in Asian Affairs, Congressional Research Service

4:15 – 4:30 pm
Concluding Remarks

Session II Panel (L to R): Charles Perry, David Helvey, Noboru Yamaguchi, Andrew Oros, Ken Jimbo, and Ian Rinehart
Acknowledgments

MY COLLEAGUES AT the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis (IFPA) and I are indebted to Tsutomu Himeno, Consul-General of Japan in Boston, who first suggested that we consider organizing a bilateral U.S.-Japan symposium on new developments in Japan’s security policy, and to the Government of Japan, which provided generous financial support to help facilitate the organization of such an event. We are grateful as well for the willingness of the International Security Studies Program (ISSP) at the Fletcher School to co-sponsor this symposium and for the assistance of ISSP staff, particularly Alice Enos, in making the necessary logistical arrangements to convene the meeting at Fletcher. Regarding the IFPA staff, special thanks are due to Senior Staff Member Jack Kelly, who made sure that the entire event unfolded smoothly, and to Senior Research Associate Bobby Andersen, who was the principal author of this summary report. Adelaide Ketchum edited the report, Polly Parke and Gary Van Dine provided important administrative assistance at the symposium itself, and Christian Hoffman was responsible for the graphic design and layout work both for the summary report and for symposium-related materials.

Dr. Charles M. Perry
Vice President & Director of Studies
IFPA