

The U.S. - Japan Security Alliance and Okinawan Military Base

AIKOM/ Independent Study

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The coming twenty-first century will probably not be a bright prospect for the U.S.-Japan alliance. The growing economic friction between the two countries has led to a pessimistic view towards the continuation of intimate relations in the future. This pessimism comes from all directions, including the long time supporters of the U.S.-Japan relationship. George Peckard, the dean of the school of Advanced International Studies at John Hopkins and a former aide to Ambassador Reishauer in Tokyo in the early 1960s, concluded that "if one examines closely the existing governmental agencies for managing the United States-Japan relationship, the situation appears nearly hopeless."¹

On the other hand, in spite of the rising doubt of the continuation of the alliance for the next millenium, the greatest effort has been devoted to preserve the continuous relations in the security setup. Both administrations have obviously moved forward by setting the security framework for the next century. Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and

¹ John W. Dower, *Japan in War and Peace* (New York: New Press, 1993), p.303.

President Bill Clinton issued the Japan-U.S. Joint Declaration on Security: Alliance for the Twenty-first Century in April last year, which stresses the importance of the bilateral security framework to the Asia Pacific region.

It is worth noting, however, that the redefinition or reaffirmation of the security alliance was not as easy as the original definition of the bilateral security setup in San Francisco, 1948. The changing regional structure caused by the termination of the cold war and the forceful demands by the Okinawans for a reduction in the American presence in this area, proved to be major obstacles to taking a further step towards an effective security partnership. Note that the former and the latter problems are intertwined

The unpredictable ending of the Cold War has rendered the anxiety of the overt military threat posed by the Soviet Union and at the same time left the international arena in a vacuum for a certain period without any new paradigm emerging. An interesting scenario of the post-cold war drama was that instead of one single power left to exist as an easy logic of two power struggle, the end of the war has surprisingly prompted several actors to surface. As Tanaka pointed out “ the present system incorporates changes going beyond the post-cold war shift from bipolar confrontation to multi-polarity.”²

In addition to multi-polarity, the absence of the potential overt military war threat has also made security-politic issues less popular. On the other hand, the economic-politic issue has become the top priority in current international relations. Those situations together raise the question

² See Akihiko Tanaka, “A Model for Japanese Security in the Twenty-first Century”, in *Japan Review of International Affairs* (journal), Fall 1996, p. 277.

any other time since World War II".³ However, if it is not as difficult as it was when the Ikeda-Robertson talks failed to produce a long term defense plan, it is still not easy to provide a clear definition of security as a concept prevailing in Japan. The difficulty is not only due to security being an abstract concept and therefore difficult to define, but also the clarification of such a term touches the public sensitivity. That is why, quite different from that in the United States where securities studies were established during the Cold War with a narrow concept of security at their core, in Japan security constitutes a broad concept.⁴

Security is not therefore considered merely as "protection of the territory of a state by military means in the face of invasion by an enemy", but broader than that, but also encompasses other elements, such as economy. Then this will lead to the discussion of so called comprehensive security.

Comprehensive Security

A possible factor that indirectly prompted the need to integrate the country's national security policy into an overall framework is the failure of omnidirectional diplomacy that Japan applied to cope with the oil crisis in 1973.⁵ The 1978 Treaty Peace and Friendship with China, the Soviet

³ *Ibid*, p. 276

⁴ *Ibid*, p.283

⁵ Omnidirectional diplomacy means to diversify the country's foreign policy and tried to improve relations with as many countries as possible. At that time Japan adopted a pro Arab stance and joined West European countries in taking a more accomodating line on Arab demands, see Reinhard Drifte, *Japan's Foreign Policy* (London: Routledge, 1990),

invasion of Afghanistan and the U.S. hostage crisis in Iran had led to a demand that Japan confirm her allegiance to the West.

The changes in the international environment led the Ohira Cabinet to abandon the short-lived post-oil-shocked policy of omnidirectional diplomacy and realize the need to formulate a new policy which would enable Japan to secure its external environment through a combination of military and non military means.

The report which came afterwards compiled by a study group instituted by Prime Minister Ohira Masayoshi stated that national defense should be an integral part of Japan's security in the broadest sense, which was the natal of the comprehensive security concept.

As Shinkichi Eto and Yoshinobu Yamamoto clarified further: "Granted that the objects the state must defend are its land, people, and property, nonetheless, the goal of national security should not simply be to prepare for military invasion by another country. Insofar as they relate to security, goals in a wider range of areas, such as the economy, should be given a high degree importance as national goals. Comprehensive security means policy (action) principles that achieve these goals by keeping military elements to a minimum and making maximum use of nonmilitary means."⁶

The concept of comprehensive security is notably ambiguous in a sense that it could be understood that it would divert the attention of the necessity of increased military contributions or it also could be suspected as a smoke screen to increased military efforts. The later interpretation

of the necessity of a military alliance between U.S. and Japan.

Moreover, the domestic rejection of the U.S. military presence has recently reached its peak, triggered by the tragic rape of a school girl by three American servicemen in Okinawa, a year before the security framework was redefined. This accident gave the Okinawan movement greater momentum allowing the Okinawan people to express their submerged inconvenience caused by the existing American military base on their land.

The story has not ended yet. However, that is not the focus of this research. By choosing Okinawa Military Base for the title I would not like to examine the current dilemma of the central government nor to try to propose a solution in lightening the “excessive” burden of the Okinawans, like many articles or Okinawan-related talk discussed recently. The focus of this research is the security setup as the main justification in maintaining the military base, despite the growing public protest.

It is therefore important to inform the public how security is defined by the government, as security itself is an abstract concept and it becomes harder to understand when people perceive there is no obvious threat. The question is how important is the military base in Okinawa as a part of the security framework in the post-cold war era?

In order to answer that question, two following assumptions are used to help construct a systematic analysis. Firstly, there have been changes in Japan’s security policy in the post-cold war era. Secondly, as a result, the significance of the military base in Okinawa has also changed in accordance with those changes of security policies. In other words, there is a positive correlation between the changes in security policy and the

significance of the Okinawan military base. If these two assumptions are accepted, it is therefore necessary to trace back the security policies that Japan adopted at the time of the establishment of the military base in Okinawa until the present day and examine the changing role of the military base.

Given the fact that the changing international situation can be the determinant of a country's security policy, for the purpose of my analysis, I would divide my analysis into three periods according to changes in the international situation which I consider influential to the changes in Japan's security policy. The first period is during the war up to the early post-war period, when Japan had been totally dictated to by the Allied Forces including the determination of its security policy. The next is during the Cold War, when Japan eventually followed the U.S. guidelines. The third is the post Cold War period, when the international situation had undergone extreme changes.

However, before we attempt to analyze the security policy that Japan had adopted and to what extent it related to the function of the base in each period, it is necessary for us to define the concept of security. As too many definitions may be misleading and each of which may cause different perceptions, we should have one single idea of what the meaning of security is. Also an examination of the unique status of Japan after World War II is considered important to understand why such a policy had been adopted.

The meaning of security

“Discussion of security issues in Japan is probably easier now than

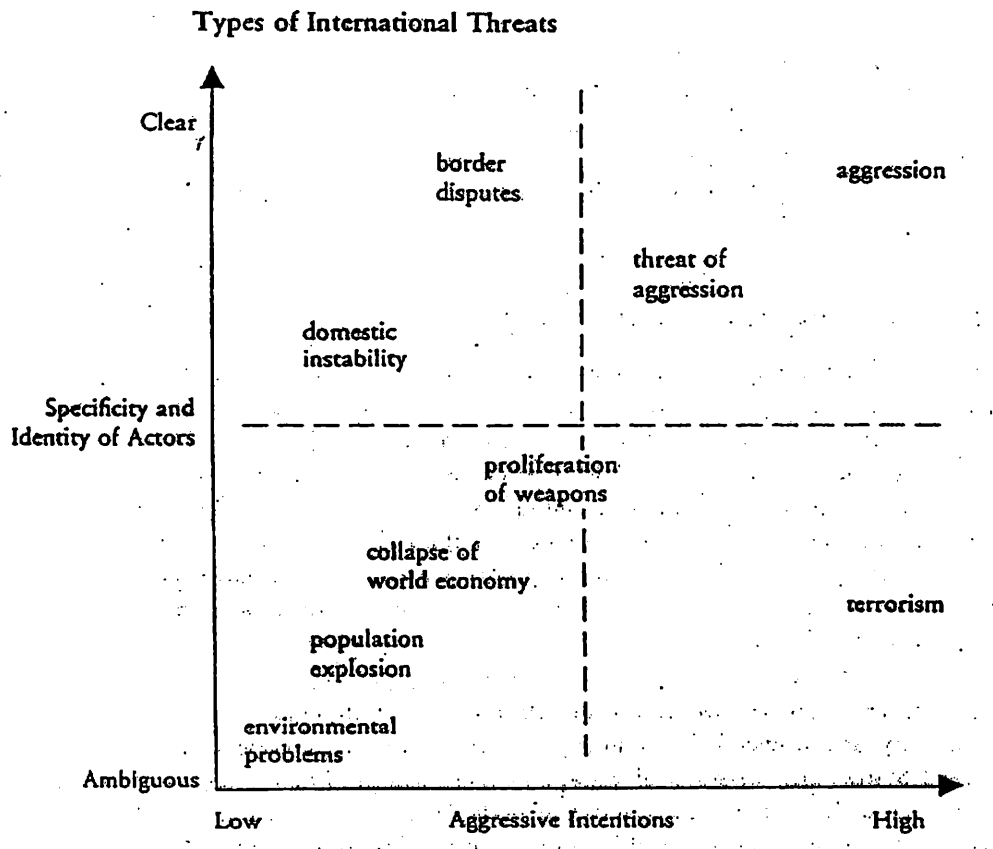
based on the prejudice that the concept might be used to hide the reverse intention to increase the military efforts.

Although the emphasis of comprehensive security is the use of “soft-power” or the ability to achieve desired outcomes in international affairs through attraction rather than coercion⁷, the significance of military means nevertheless becomes important when security is needed to deal with certain threats.

It is obvious that when dealing with threats such as invasion, aggression, and terrorism, no other means are as effective in protecting security as the military. In addition to this, when threats caused by natural disasters arise, military means can be used for rescuing and recovering and are therefore multi-functional.

Below a diagram created by Tanaka may be useful to see various threats and differentiate which threats must be dealt with by military means.

⁷ Although originally this concept is used to refer to American democracy as a means to convince others to follow, or get them to agree to, norms and institutions that produce the desired behaviour, I think I can borrow this concept to refer to the denial of using military means. See Joseph s. Nye, Jr., and William A. Owens, “America’s Information Edge”, *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 1996, p. 20-21.



Source: Akihiko Tanaka, "Japan's Security Policy in the 1990s" in Yoichi Funabashi (ed.), *Japan's International Agenda* (Tokyo, 1990), p.36⁸

The unique status of Japan

It goes without saying that Japan's status in the international affairs is peculiar. Words like "abnormal", "unique", "special", "moratorium" are

⁸ Tanaka put threats into 4 categories according to the degree to which the actors are identified and the extent to which their aggression is intentional. The first category is classical threats which implies a specific and clearly identifiable actors with clear aggressive intentions, such as invasion and military intimidation. The second one includes border disputes, ethnic conflicts, civil wars, and similar situations, where the actors are clear enough but their aggressive intent is difficult to determine. The third category includes threats like terrorism, in which aggressive intent is obvious but the actor is unidentifiable. The last category includes threats which are caused by nature and collective human activity, such as earthquakes and environmental problems",

attached to Japan as a state, reflecting the incongruity between its economic power and political weakness because of its exceptional historical experience and constitutional restraints. This terminology implicitly warns anyone who attempts to examine contemporary phenomenon to admit this particular circumstance before going further to the stage of analysis. It is moreover becoming significant that the unique status of Japan is related to its security issues, because what makes Japan a unique state in this context is basically dealt with when determining how security is to be maintained.

As Scalapino pointed out, 'Total defeat in World War II, to be sure, resulted in a hiatus and, even now, contributes to certain unique conditions⁹.' Defeat in the Pacific War made it impossible for the Japanese government to negotiate with the United States from a position of equality. Yet the security treaty, signed by Prime Minister Yoshida at San Francisco, has made Japan's position as a dependent American client state and granted the United States the right to maintain, indefinitely, military bases in the Japanese homeland and adjacent areas.

Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru was undeniably a key figure in shaping the postwar conception of Japanese national purpose. The important role as the architect of postwar Japanese state he played confirms the premise of elite theory concerning decision making in foreign policy which says "the conceptualization and execution of foreign policy is essentially an elitist operation, the task of the power holder, and the specialist¹⁰."

⁹ See Robert Scalapino, "Perspectives on Modern Japanese Foreign Policy" in , p.392

¹⁰ Ibid., p.393

Yoshida had consistently expressed his support of Japanese disarmament. In November 1949 he addressed the Diet in no less than uncompromising terms: "It is my belief that the very absence of armaments is a guarantee of the security and happiness of our people, and will gain for us the confidence of the world, and will enable us as a peaceful nation to take pride before the world in our national polity."¹¹

Yoshida's objection to the Dulles's urge¹² to the Japanese rearmament led to minimal concessions, namely, consent to U.S. bases on Japanese soil and a very limited rearmament, sufficient to gain Dulles's agreement to a peace treaty and to a post-Occupation guarantee of Japanese security¹³.

The tenets behind what may be called the Yoshida Doctrine comprise of the following:

1. The priority of Japan's economic rehabilitation as the prime national goal which insisted political-economic cooperation with the U.S.
2. The commitment of light armament and avoidance of involvement in international political-strategic issues.]
3. The promise to provide bases for U.S. Army, Navy and Air Force in order to gain a long term guarantee for Japan's security.

As a result of the implementation of such tenets, Japan has

¹¹ See Kenneth B. Pyle, "Japan and the Twenty-first Century", (handout provided in the AIKOM courses, book title and publisher unknown), p.459

¹² In June 1950, on the eve of Korean War, John Foster Dulles, special emissary of the secretary of state, came to Japan to urge Japanese rearmament. On this and subsequent occasions, Dulles sought to undo the Mac Arthur constitution by establishing a large Japanese military force.

¹³ See Kenneth B. Pyle, "Japan and the Twenty-first Century" in , *op. cit.*, p.454

achieved an impressive level of progress in economic development on the one hand, but has become a politically passive country by shunning initiatives and involvement in political-strategic issues on the other hand. After nearly five decades, the Yoshida doctrine is still firmly embedded in Japan's foreign policy despite hard opposition from realists who want Japan to take more initiative in world politics. A distinguished Japanese politician, Ichiro Ozawa, in his book forcefully stated "We must overcome our misunderstanding of the Yoshida Doctrine and set forth a new strategy without delay".¹⁴

The problem is however, not just a matter of changing the interpretation of the Yoshida Doctrine, but the great obstacle of establishing an active role in world politics in the light of constitutional constraints. To transform Japan into a 'normal' state demands a revision of the constitution that is arduous. In January 1981, Yonosuke Nagai, Japan's leading political strategic thinker wrote: "Despite the questionable nature of its origins, the new constitution has weathered 35 years, has been assimilated to Japanese traditions and culture, and, in a word, has been Japanized. In my judgement, the Japanese people will refuse ever again to become a state in a traditional sense but will choose to exist as a kind of moratorium state".¹⁵ Nagai believes that despite the intense debate in the media, the Yoshida Doctrine will endure because of the strong consensus and coalition of forces that support it.

¹⁴ See Ichiro Ozawa, *Blueprint for a New Japan: The Rethinking of a Nation* (London: Kodansha International, 1994), p.99.

¹⁵ See Pyle, *op.cit.*, p.470.

During the war up to the early post war period

As the Japanese had shown no willingness to bow to unconditional surrender, an actual invasion had been decided as the determinant for the Allied forces' victory. A grand strategy was established which recommended a basis for the overall attack to mainland Japan. As Watanabe noted that 'the United States had recourse to a strategy of 'island hopping', by which the front line could gradually be pushed forward closer to the ultimate goal—the Japanese mainland.¹⁶

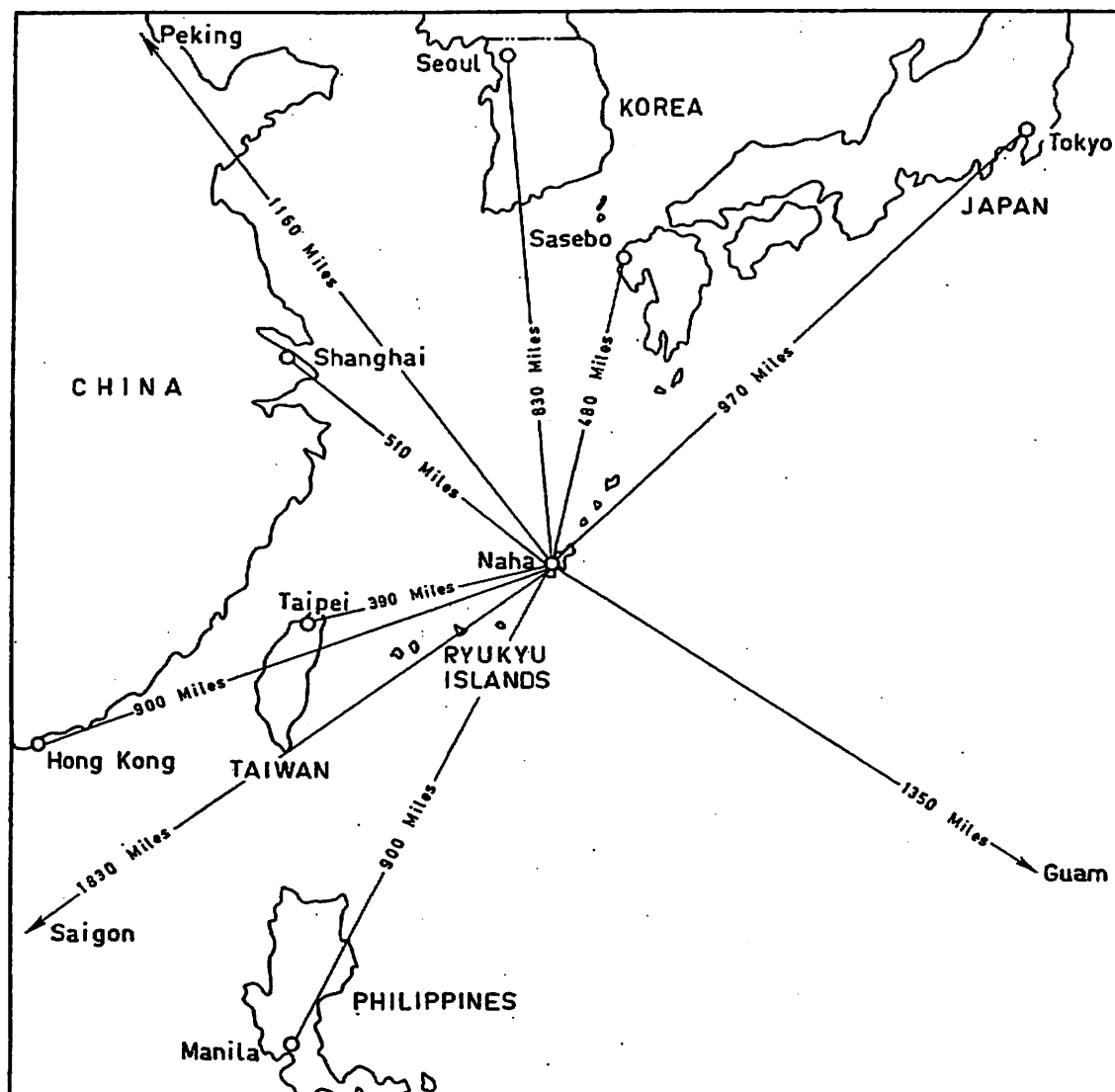
When the American commanders decided that they needed a basis for an actual invasion of Japan they chose the island of Okinawa because it was close enough to the mainland and large enough to become the warehouse of the assault. Moreover, it also contained sizable flat areas for big air bases to pound the enemy defenses before and during the invasion. The islands of Formosa were the other choice as the staging area for the assault upon Japan, but it was farther away from Japan than Okinawa¹⁷, the principal and central island of Japanese Ryukyu archipelago which is situated only 970 miles from mainland Japan (see the map on the next page).

Under the code name, Operation Iceberg, marine and army forces landed on Okinawa on April 1, 1945, under cover of heavy naval gunfire and air attack. The operation was under the overall command of Adm. R.L. Spruance, Commander Fifth Fleet, and the troops were under the command

¹⁶ See Akio Watanabe, *The Okinawa Problem: A Chapter in Japan-U.S. Relations* (Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1970), p.18

¹⁷ See Gerald Astor, *Operation Iceberg: The Invasion and Conquest of Okinawa in World War II* (New York: Donald I. Fine, Inc., 1995), p.3.

of Lt. Gen. Simon Buckner¹⁸. Eventually more than 170,000 US servicemen took part in the island's capture¹⁹.



Geopolitical position of Okinawa

Source: Akio Watanabe, *The Okinawa Problem: A Chapter in Japan-U.S. Relations* (Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1970), p. 5

A bloody and bitter fight was inevitable. Defended by the Japanese

¹⁸ (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), p.137

¹⁹ *The Oxford Companion to the Second World War*, p. 836

32nd Army under the command of Lt. Gen. Mitsura Ushijima with roughly 100,000 troops aided by a labor battalion conscripted from the local people, a conquest of Okinawa was far more than an easy task for the Allied forces. On June 22, the day Ushijima committed suicide, Okinawa was defeated and around 7400 of the Japanese garrison survived to become prisoners-of-war. However, the Allies also paid a heavy price for Okinawa. Thirty-six warships and landing craft were sunk and 368 damaged; more than 4,900 seamen were killed and 4,824 wounded²⁰.

As a part of the strategy to make Japan surrender, Okinawa was used as a vital air base for any U.S. invasion of mainland Japan. The Americans constructed base-facilities for B-29 operations on the island of Okinawa and another base for Very Long Range fighter escorts on Iejima, a tiny island nearby Okinawa.

Watanabe cited a very interesting notion about the subsequent development of American attitudes towards the island after they captured Okinawa. He argued that there was a strengthening opinion among the military planners that the United States should take outright possession of the outlying Japanese islands (including the Ryukyus) together with her former mandated territories in the Pacific as part of far-flung network of 'strategic strong points' of the United States. The great loss of life which occurred in seizing the islands, the large amount of money spent on developing base facilities and the belief that the inhabitants desired to live under the American flag were advanced as justification of this action.²¹

That attitude was reflected after Japan admitted her surrender after

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ As quoted from Akio Watanabe, *op.cit.*, p.19

U.S. atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 and had no choice but to obey the Allied guidelines. Although the status of Okinawa after the war remained unclear, Okinawa was placed under the sole control of the United States, whereas the rest of Japan was, at least in a formal sense, under Allied control. While the occupation policy was conducted through the Japanese government on the mainland, Okinawa was controlled directly and exclusively by the American military government.

The U.S. interest in Okinawa had led to a possessive attitude and tendency to separate Okinawa from Japan. As a total of \$66 million funds allocated for military construction on Okinawa was legislated by the U.S. Congress on October 27²², the U.S. had preferably treated Okinawa as her primary concern and isolated it from Japan. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the recent gap between Japan and Okinawa was for some extent, contributed to by the past attitude of the U.S. towards Okinawa. Watanabe addressed that 'for purposes of psychological warfare, the Americans treated the Okinawans as people of different stock and culture from the Japanese, who had economically and politically exploited them.' Although he recognized that there is no evidence that the U.S. made a systematic effort of differentiation between Okinawans and the Japanese, isolation was undoubtedly a part of the U.S. policy towards Okinawa after the war.

²² As Martin stressed that the legislation did not allocate the funds for 'Japan', but specifically for Okinawa where the bases were built. See Richard Gordon Martin, *The Okinawa Factor in U.S. - Japanese Post-War Relations* (Ph. D. dissertation of the University of Georgia, 1982), p.78

The significance of Okinawa was made clear by MacArthur when he announced that the Ryukyu Islands were to play a key role in the maintenance of a new U.S. defensive perimeter on 1 March 1949:

Our defense dispositions against Asiatic aggression used to be based on the West Coast of the American continent. Now the Pacific is looked upon as an Anglo-Saxon lake and our line of defense runs through the chain of islands fringing the coast of Asia. It starts from the Philippines and continues through the Ryukyu Archipelago, which includes its main bastion Okinawa...²³

The increasing importance of Okinawa was considerably prompted by unprecedented regional changes, which had a significant effect in determining U.S. foreign policy in Asia. The proclamation of a new People's Republic of China by Mao Tse Tung on 1 October 1949 led to the Chinese Communist take-over by the spring of 1950 and the eruption of military hostilities in Korea. This altered the U.S. policy-makers perception of Japan from 'that of a defeated wartime adversary to a potential cold war ally'²⁴.

During the Cold War period

The U.S. -Japan Peace Treaty signed at San Francisco in September 1951 gave the U.S. the right to exercise all and any powers of administration, legislation and jurisdiction over the territory and inhabitants of Japanese islands (including Ryukyus), including their

²³ See Neal A. Marcot, *The Japanese Foreign Policymaking Process: A Case Study – Okinawa Reversion* (Ph. D. dissertation of Georgetown University: University Microfilms International, 1981), p.82.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.83

territorial waters²⁵, whilst the Japanese side had only received the rights referred to as 'residual sovereignty'²⁶.

As mentioned early in this essay, Yoshida had taken the most determining decision, which was probably the most rational choice at that time, to relay Japan's security on the U.S. military protection and give a minimum concession to the use of bases in Japanese land. Since many limitations existed, namely, the Treaty which forbade Japan from using force, or threat of force, in its dealing with other states²⁷; Article 9 of the Constitution which denied Japan the authority to maintain any military forces and refused to acknowledge the use of force in dealing with other nations; and the fact that Japan was a conquered, occupied nation; imposed to Japan that she did not have much choice but to depend on others, namely the United States, for protection.

The Treaty also implicitly eliminated the possibility that Japan would make any alliances with other powers without the notice from the

²⁵ As implicitly written in article 3 of the Treaty, see Akio Watanabe, *op.cit.*, p.17,

²⁶ The phrased "residual sovereignty" was introduced by Chief U.S. delegate John Foster Dulles. He conceded that "residual sovereignty" pledged the U.S. to return the islands to Tokyo's control at a later unforeseen date, and until that the U.S. would retain exclusive sovereignty rights, whereas Japanese Foreign Minister Takeo Miki at a 1967 Upper House Budget Committee meeting explained Japan's interpretation of the term as follows: (1) If the U.S. desired to switch sovereignty control of the islands to a country other than Japan, it must receive the concurrence of Japan so long as the islands were not placed under U.N. trusteeship; (2) in exercising administrative authority over Ryukyus it is incumbent upon the U.S. to consult with Japan so Tokyo's wishes regarding the island can be properly noted; (3) should the U.S. relinquish administrative control of the Ryukyus, Japan's sovereignty would be actualized. As quoted from Neal A. Marcot, *op.cit.*, p. 85.

²⁷ See Richard Gordon Martin, *op.cit.*, p.90

U.S., as Article III stated:

During the exercise of the right referred to in Article I, Japan will not grant, without the prior consent of the United States of America, any bases or any rights, power, or authority whatsoever, in or relating to bases or the right of garrison or of maneuver, or transit of ground, air, or naval forces to any third Power.

The Security Treaty had significantly altered the importance of Okinawa from the “submerged Okinawa” to “emergent Okinawa”²⁸ which also manifested the function of the bases for both sides, Japan and the U.S. For Japan, since it did not have the strength to defend itself militarily, the bases were the actual guarantee of security from the U.S. although Japan was “willing to sacrifice the aspirations of the one million Japanese people on Okinawa in the interest of defense policy”²⁹.

For the U.S., the bases functioned not merely as watchdogs to insure Japan enforced the constitution and the democratic principles but also as a guard against re-militarism. The bases also formed a significant part of the U.S. security framework in the Far East, namely ‘to establish appropriate psychological programs designated to further orient the Japanese towards the free world and away from Communism’³⁰.

It was not until 1947 with the inauguration of the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan that the U.S. finally accepted the need to actively

²⁸ Martin uses these terms to refer to the different status of Okinawa between pre and post Treaty. The term “submerged” is used to mean the pre-Treaty era when Okinawa was on the same level with Japan, whereas the term “emergent” refers to the increasing importance and the unique status of Okinawa which still under the U.S. administration and jurisdiction whilst Japan had gained her sovereignty and independence from occupation forces. See Richard Gordon Martin, *Ibid.*, p.77-89

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 89

³⁰ John Welfield, *An Empire in Eclipse* (London: The Athlone Press, 1988), p.88

confront the Soviet Union. George Kennan, Chief of the Policy and Planning Department of the Department of State, declared that the basis of U.S. foreign policy should involve 'long term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansionist tendencies'³¹.

Along with the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, containment policy³² was activated through the creation of military alliances in Western Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and the Far East. In this context, the maintenance of the bases was regarded as to secure Japan as the continuous U.S. ally in halting Soviet expansion into Asia and counterbalancing the emergent power of China. As Welfield pointed out:

With the break down of the American-Soviet relationship, Okinawa emerged as the military linchpin of containment in the Asian-Pacific area... The huge Okinawan bases played an important role in United States contingency planning for possible operations against the Soviet Union in Siberia, the Sea of Japan and the Sea of Okhotsk. They were vital for the implementation of United States policies towards China, the Korean peninsula and the newly independent states of South-East Asia.³³(emphasis mine)

The period of the 1950s recorded the intensity of the Cold War and the apparent solidity of the Sino-Soviet alliance that had pushed Japan towards a more intimate relationship with the U.S. This partnership was preserved, if not strengthened, in the expectation that it would maintain the

³¹ See Graham Evans and Jeffrey Newnham, *The Dictionary of World Politics* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), p. 53.

³² It is supposedly the guiding principle of the post-war U.S. foreign policy. Following the perception that China had been 'lost' in 1949 after the Maoist forces victory, the decision to assist France in Vietnam was taken at the same time as the decision to intervene in Korea.

³³ John Welfield, *op. cit.*, p. 222

equilibrium in the Pacific Basin and, therefore, preserve peace. However, despite the assuring alliance with the U.S., it was in this period that Japan had normalized its relations with the Soviet Union, paving the way for Japan's entry into the United Nations and facilitating a limited expansion of bilateral trade.

On 19 January 1960 a new Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the U.S. to replace the agreement negotiated by Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru and John Foster Dulles in 1951 was signed. Kishi's government claimed that the 1960 treaty differed significantly from the 1951 agreement in establishing a framework for a more balanced and equitable relationship with the United States. 'The new treaty was, almost in every respect, just as unequal as the old', like the old treaty, 'it did not require direct Japanese military participation in U.S. Far Eastern strategy'³⁴.

Certainly, the new treaty, like the old, was essentially a base lending agreement that granted the U.S. land, sea and air force facilities on Japanese territory, which as before, could be used to 'contribute' to the defense of Japan as well as in pursuit of America's wider Far Eastern strategy.³⁵ A slight difference was that the new treaty provided 'various provisions for Japanese-American consultations, apparently giving the government a degree of control over American dispositions, weapons and the use of bases in Japan which was not enjoyed under the 1951 arrangement'³⁶.

³⁴ John Welfield, *ibid.*, p. 141

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

However, to what extent the government could impose the control over American dispositions was another question. A good example of this was provided by the American decision to use the Okinawan bases for B-52 bombers participating in the Vietnam war. As soon as it was notified by the U.S. government about moving the bombers to Okinawa, the Japanese government requested that the Okinawan bases should not be used for bombing raids on Vietnam, but when this request was made, the bombers had already started for Vietnam on a bombing mission³⁷.

During the Vietnam War the strategic position of Okinawa, again, had instigated the use of the bases in supporting military operations in the war. Triggered by President Johnson's decision to bomb military targets in North Vietnam in February 1965, the bases had increasingly shown their real function. The usefulness of Okinawa in American military efforts in Vietnam was so great that Admiral U.S. Grant Sharp, Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Forces, Pacific, stated that 'Okinawa is indispensable to our present posture in the Pacific and without the bases there the United States war effort in Vietnam would have been infinitely more difficult and costly³⁸.

Okinawa was useful to the American military efforts in Vietnam in many ways. As a fuelling station for Guam-based B-52 strategic bomber, Okinawa was vital for the air raids in Vietnam. Also, since the 2nd Logistical Command, with its headquarters in Okinawa, the supplying function of Okinawa towards United States Forces in Vietnam was notable. Some 310.000 tons of goods of the estimated monthly consumption of 400.000 tons of good by the U.S. forces in Vietnam at that time were

³⁷ Akio Watanabe, *op. cit.*, p.60

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.65

loaded and unloaded at Naha Military Airport and White Beach, two major harbor facilities for the U.S. in Okinawa.³⁹

Okinawa was absolutely important as a support base; supply, maintenance, and logistics operations from Okinawa were vital to U.S. military operations, nuclear and conventional. The introducing of nuclear weapon by the U.S. had created many fears and tension instead of the feeling of security amongst Japanese public. However, the U.S. justification used in doing so was not only to deter the Soviet Union and China with their nuclear capability so that balancing the power relations in the region, but also dissuade Japan to have a nuclear potential. Martin addressed that “while Japan had the technology to develop a nuclear capability which might provide a stabilizing influence in the Far East and serve as a deterrent, this capability would be dangerous, both inherently and because it would provide a greater precedent for further proliferation than if Japan did not have a nuclear potential”⁴⁰.

Okinawa Reversion

Since the negotiation on the 1960 Security Treaty the U.S. had provided the possibility of the Okinawa reversion to Japan, as the issue could potentially arise in the future. The issue of reversion began to arise in accordance with the rise of the Japanese economy that in turn prompted Japan’s growing strength and pride. Japan was no longer content to be the junior partner, and she wanted the U.S. to recognize and acknowledge the status change.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.64

⁴⁰ Richard Gordon Martin, *op. cit.*, p.103

Given the fact that internal politics in Japan made the reversion of Okinawa a main issue, and, moreover, the mass repulsion had worsened to a level that caused apprehension is shown by the protest on a scale never before seen in Japan. The protest took place in the years from 1967 to 1969, 'the U.S. not only recognized the new realities, she also perceived that the Okinawa factor would disrupt and embitter the U.S.- Japanese friendship unless there was a change in the base conditions'⁴¹.

The U.S. was not actually averse to returning Okinawa to Japan as long as the bases retained their privileged status. On the other hand, Japan nevertheless wanted to retain American military protection and recognized the importance to the U.S. of the Okinawa bases in providing this protection. The same area of interest resulted in 'a general understanding that the return of Okinawa will be feasible when Japan is able to assure effective American use of its bases there to fulfill its security commitments'⁴². Based on this general understanding the Ryuku Islands were returned to the Japanese administration on May 15, 1972.

Nixon shock in 1972 and oil shock in 1974 had shown Japan's vulnerability in the changing international situations. The lesson that Japan could learn was that security means not merely involving military means as the only element but also other elements such as economy. This was part of the reasons in implementing the comprehensive security policy which lead Japan to the post-cold war era,

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.124

⁴² As Secretary Rusk advised President Johnson in response to the Prime Minister Sato expectation, Roger Buckley, *op. cit.*, p. 120

Post Cold War period

The termination of the Cold War has rapidly brought significant changes in world affairs. Power-configuration has altered accompanying the decline of Russia and left a space for new powers to emerge. In accordance with the economic boom in the region which is predicted to be the beginning of the Asian Era, some new powers such as China, South Korea, India and other new emerging countries tend to shape a new power configuration in the region.

China has been increasingly turning itself and is most likely to take the position where Russia used to be. China's combination of rapid growth, international ambition, and a history of discontent with what it perceives as humiliation at the hands of great powers has made it become the new threat to the stability of the region. As Mastanduno pointed out "China's per capita GDP has almost quadrupled since 1978; it continues to develop and modernize its military capability; and it seems increasingly willing to threaten the use of force to achieve its foreign policy objectives, particularly with regard to Taiwan and the South China Sea"⁴³.

Japan occupies a complicated position in the post-cold war era. It can be included among the major powers, being a key player in the international community as measured by its economic power. But on the other hand Japan has removed itself from the political arena shunning nearly all initiatives and involvements in international political strategic issues. In this limb condition, Japan's implementation of comprehensive

⁴³ Michael Mastanduno, "Preserving The Unipolar Moment", in *International Security* 21: 4, p.65

security policy has matched with the U.S. post-war strategy in Asia.

The U.S strategy towards the post-Cold War change has basically been directed towards the maintenance of the status quo of Japan, and to try to integrate the undecided states of Russia and China into a U.S.-centered international order. Maintaining the status quo of Japan is so important that in February 1995 the Department of Defense committed the U.S. to the continued forward deployment of some 100,000 troops in Japan and South Korea until the year 2015.

Why the bases in Okinawa should be maintained? There are some possible considerations provided. Firstly, the bases are the important factor in the U.S.-Japan security alliance framework. For the U.S., in order to exercise its influence in Asia and make effective use of its presence, the U.S. military needs Asian bases. With regards to that need, Japan is the only country in Asia which matches the qualifications as it can provide the U.S. 'an appropriate position for maintaining bases, a sufficient degree of wealth to cover their high cost, a highly skilled supply of local labor, and enough technological expertise to repair ships and other equipments'⁴⁴.

The maintenance of the bases which are the key element of the U.S. military power presence in the Asia Pacific region relies basically on for two main purposes. One is to promote stability by alleviating causes of conflicts, and the other is to thwart aggression by preventing hypothetical enemies from resorting to military force. While the U.S. has shut down its bases in the Philippines, the situation on the Korean Peninsula remains opaque, China has made a show of missile rattling across the Taiwan Strait,

⁴⁴ Toshiyuki Shikata, "Behind the Redefinition of the Japan-U.S Security Setup", in *Japan Review of International Affairs*, *op. cit.*, p. 311

and the countries around the South China Sea are squabbling over possession of the Spratly Islands. These situations would predictably worsened without the U.S. military presence which has the stabilisator function in the region.

Furthermore, the bases has also a vital function to safeguard the sea lanes, which need to be kept open if America is to have access to overseaa markets. The purpose of safeguarding the sea lanes can not be done solely through the use of economic and political power but it needs a military presence.

Apart from that, as far as Japan's interest is concerned, the bases not only make Japan more secure but also enable it to respond to emergencies around the region and defend the Japan sealanes.

Conclusion

The geopolitical strategic location of Okinawa was a dominant factor in incorporating this island into the U.S.-Japan security framework. Okinawa provides the U.S a proximity to the region in order to make an effective use of its presence in the region. The Okinawan bases as a symbol of the U.S. physical presence in the region has grown to be the key point of the U.S. strategy in the Asia-Pacific before and during the Cold War.

In spite of the termination of the Cold War, the U.S.-Japan security alliance continues to have significant functions in Asia-Pacific security. It works to stem sources of regional conflict such as the tension in the Korean Peninsula. In addition to this it also functions as a stabilizer of

major power relations. The emergence of China's approaching superpower status would have an effect on the power configuration in the region. The emergent China is perceived as a threat to some countries which is also a threat to the regional stability. The alliance works to counterbalance the China factor and in turn preserve regional stability.

For Japan, the alliance is a mechanism similar to the constitution in terms of the fact that it stops Japan from stepping forward as a major military power. It will help Japan to enforce good relations with other countries, especially Asian countries. It helps Japan to make the maximum use of her soft power in the international arena.

The military presence in Japan as an essential part of the security setup still needs to be preserved in order to cope with various threats to Japan's security. Although Japan has no direct threat today, as the existence of threat can be perceived in several ways, the nuclear capability of China and North Korea and the submerged regional disputes can be considered potential threats to Japanese security. If these potential threats turn to actual threats, military capability is crucially necessary for defense. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait has been a good example of unprecedented threat that was late to be detected and anticipated. It is an alarm that military defense is nevertheless crucial for a country's security. In addition to this, terrorism and natural disasters can be also considered as potential threats for which military capability would be useful.

It is therefore noteworthy that the military is an indispensable factor in security affairs. Under the U.S-Japan alliance framework, as far as the security matter is concerned, the Okinawan base would still be meaningful for both sides. However, as the discussion about security so far

only involved two parts, the U.S. and Japan at the nation state level of analysis, the problem concerning the native people of Okinawa was not discussed in this essay. There are about a million people's aspirations there that should be listened to. In 1992, in connection with the twentieth anniversary of the reversion of Okinawa to Japanese rule, public opinion polls revealed that 85 per cent of the people of Okinawa wanted the Americans to go home⁴⁵. Although the presence of the bases in Okinawa has been providing a guarantee of security for Japan, the effect is not merely positive to the local people.

The Cold War is obviously over, but the disclosure of the bases in Okinawa is nevertheless impossible considering the limb status of Japan in the security matter. To 'normalize' Japan's status which would provide the possibility of rearmament on the one hand would require a great effort to change the constitution and in turn would be likely to raise the prejudice of Asian countries and the past trauma of the Japanese public. All these problems combined make the Okinawan problem a great dilemma for two major powers in the world whose commitment to democracy and human rights values is undeniable. It is truly expected that the preservation of the security in the region does not mean that it should sacrifice the liberty of the Okinawan people. The international community is waiting for a wise solution.

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⁴⁵ Chalmers Johnson, "The Okinawa Rape Incident and the End of the Cold War in East Asia", *Quadrant* March 1996 #324, vol. XL #3

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