
International Relations of Northeast Asia

The U.S.-Japan relationship since the end of World War II has been intimate and complex. The formal structure supporting the relationship has been the US-Japan security alliance, however, the bilateral relationship encompasses not only the military alliance but also close and complex economic and political ties. Since the US is a military and political superpower with both military and economic advantages over Japan, the asymmetry between the two nations caused the abnormal status of the US-Japan relations, and as a result, it is recognized as a one-sided relation. The world changed a lot since the late 20th century. During the Cold War era, the former Soviet Union had been the main threat to Japan's security. After the collapse of the USSR, instead, other potential danger spots in Southeast Asia, events on the Korean peninsula, and even China, Japan's largest neighboring country. A series of provocation by North Korea and increasingly aggressive maritime operations by China since 2010 appeared to have set the relationship back on course.

Also, changing policies due to unstable leadership eg. The electing of Trump also slowed some bilateral security initiatives. This paper will introduce and discuss the 1) goals, 2) means, 3) policy contents and priorities, 4) implementation and evaluation, and 5) implications of the US's policies and strategies toward Japan. In my opinion, both the United States and Japan face constraints on their ability to enhance the alliance and they will need new strategies in finding a new guiding rationale in shaping the environment for China's rise. History On August 6 and August 9, 1945, the United States dropped nuclear weapons on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The two bombings, which killed at least 129,000 people, remain the only use of nuclear weapons for warfare in history. After the surrender of Japan shortly after the atomic bomb, WWII was finally over, which was followed by the American occupation of Japan and the marginalization of the military. The US-Japan relationship today is basically formed at that time when the United States established a significant presence in Japan to slow the expansion of Soviet influence in the Pacific after World War II. The United States was also concerned with the growth of the economy of Japan because there was a risk after World War II that an unhappy and poor Japanese population would turn to communism and by doing so ensure that the Soviet Union would control the Pacific. By the late 1960s, Japan had risen from the ashes of World War II to achieve an astoundingly rapid and complete economic recovery.

After World War II ended, the Japanese Empire dissolved and became a democratic state with leading of the US. Japan was banned to have military forces and types and numbers of weapons were also limited. Nowadays Japan is still one of the most important allies of the United

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States in Asia and the 3,000 cherry blossom trees in Washington DC is the symbol of friendship between the two countries. Goals The United States has struggled for a century to define and redefine its strategic relationship with China and Japan. From the beginning of the twentieth century until the latter part of the Cold War in the 1970s, the United States never simultaneously had good relations with China and Japan. As the 21st century begins, the US again faces strategic choices in Asia. Now China is the “rising” power, therefore the U.S.-Japan alliance remains as strong as ever, indeed perhaps even stronger. Russia cannot be counted out, but it is now a weakened regional player, despite its continuing arms sales to North Korea and China. And since the Trump administration seems to be more economically oriented, opening markets in Japan will still be an important goal for the US.

Means For eight years, President Obama's foreign policy doctrine has been rooted in a belief of multilateralism, while President Trump has promoted the “America First” agenda and shifted his focus to bilateralism. Economically, Trump's protectionist policies, such as the border tax and U.S. withdrawal from the TPP, may have significant implications for major powers including Japan. Politically, US's traditional allies in Asia including Japan and South Korea are still playing important roles in the region's security and stability. On the other hand, the several missile tests launched by North Korea became an opportunity for the US to export its weapons to Japan and Korea, eg. The THAAD system.

Policies and Priorities Since the rising of China, most countries in the Asia-Pacific region followed the option of trying to integrate China into existing and new regional and global institutions such as the RCEP, ASEAN plus. The US under Trump administration has been explicitly rebalancing its international posture toward Asia and China. The US-Japan alliance is becoming less important than before, given the fact that this bilateral relation depends heavily on the Sino-US relations and the instability of the Korean peninsula. Until the end of the Cold War, China valued the U.S.-Japan security alliance's role as a counter to Soviet influence in East Asia. It also appreciated the alliance's role in capping Japanese military options and ambitions. Even after the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, China was concerned that U.S.-Japan trade tensions and American troop pull-downs from Asia might impair the U.S.-Japan security alliance and open long-closed security debates and options within Japan. On the other hand, Japan was also greatly concerned about America's alliance fidelity during President Bill Clinton's first administration because of the lack of a U.S. strategic focus and, especially, the emphasis on trade-deficit reduction. From 1995, the Japanese were gradually reassured with the Nye Initiative and the U.S.-Japan defense guidelines review. However, since the United States and Japan acted to strengthen their alliance, China has warned that Japan's expanded role could be the first step toward Japanese remilitarization, and it has expressed concerns about an increasingly independent Japan.[1] However, there is currently no prospect of China and the US becoming strategic allies, but in contrast, Japan is a key American security and political ally in Asia, and in addition, Japan contributes about \$5 billion annually to

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underwrite the cost of maintaining U.S. forces there.

On the other hand, unlike China, Japan shares core democratic values and institutions with the United States. As a result, it is still important for the US to maintain the US-Japan alliance while facing the challenge of a rising China. Implementation and evaluation Implications Trump's bilateral approach to foreign relations might lead to decreasing influence of the US in Asia. Though after withdrawing from the TPP, the renewed CPTPP negotiations went on promptly, the ASEAN-China leading RCEP, and the One Belt One Road Initiative launched by China seemed to declare a new era of globalization, without the participation. And all the dramas between Donald Trump and Kim Jung Un also led to a concern of a less stable security environment in Asia. On the other hand, the instability of the Korean peninsula might also lead to the normalization or even re-militarization of Japan, which the US and the rest of the world won't happy to see. Given the fact that China has made clear that it now prefers a "hollowed out" U.S.-Japan security alliance and has pressured Japan on the guidelines but has gone relatively easy on the the United States. Japan, as the weaker alliance partner, has sidestepped China's pressure tactics. But this unpleasant experience has enhanced the strong Japanese trend toward a more hard-nosed and wary approach to China. The Japanese have concluded that China is now the most important and unpredictable geopolitical variable in Asia's future. American policymakers and others need to consider the policy implications of new trends in China-Japan relations for the United States. In the near future, the present security relationship will continue with no doubt, perhaps with Japan taking a more active role in its own defense, but not militarization.

As China starts to take on a larger and larger role in regional and global affairs, the United States will also have to modify its relations with China, Japan, and Asia. I will make the following suggestions for the future of the US-Japan relations:

- 1. The United States cannot afford to become isolationist. It must balance the reduction of U.S. forces in Japan and Asia with an increased diplomatic and economic presence.
- 2. While the United States should continue to support Japan's development of a peacekeeping role for Japanese troops, it should make it clear that a "remilitarized" Japan is not in the best interests of either Japan or Asia.
- 3. To continue to play an effective role in Asia, the US government must gain a deeper understanding of Asian politics, economics, and culture. In order to maintain the respect of its allies, it will be necessary to move toward an equal political relationship.

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