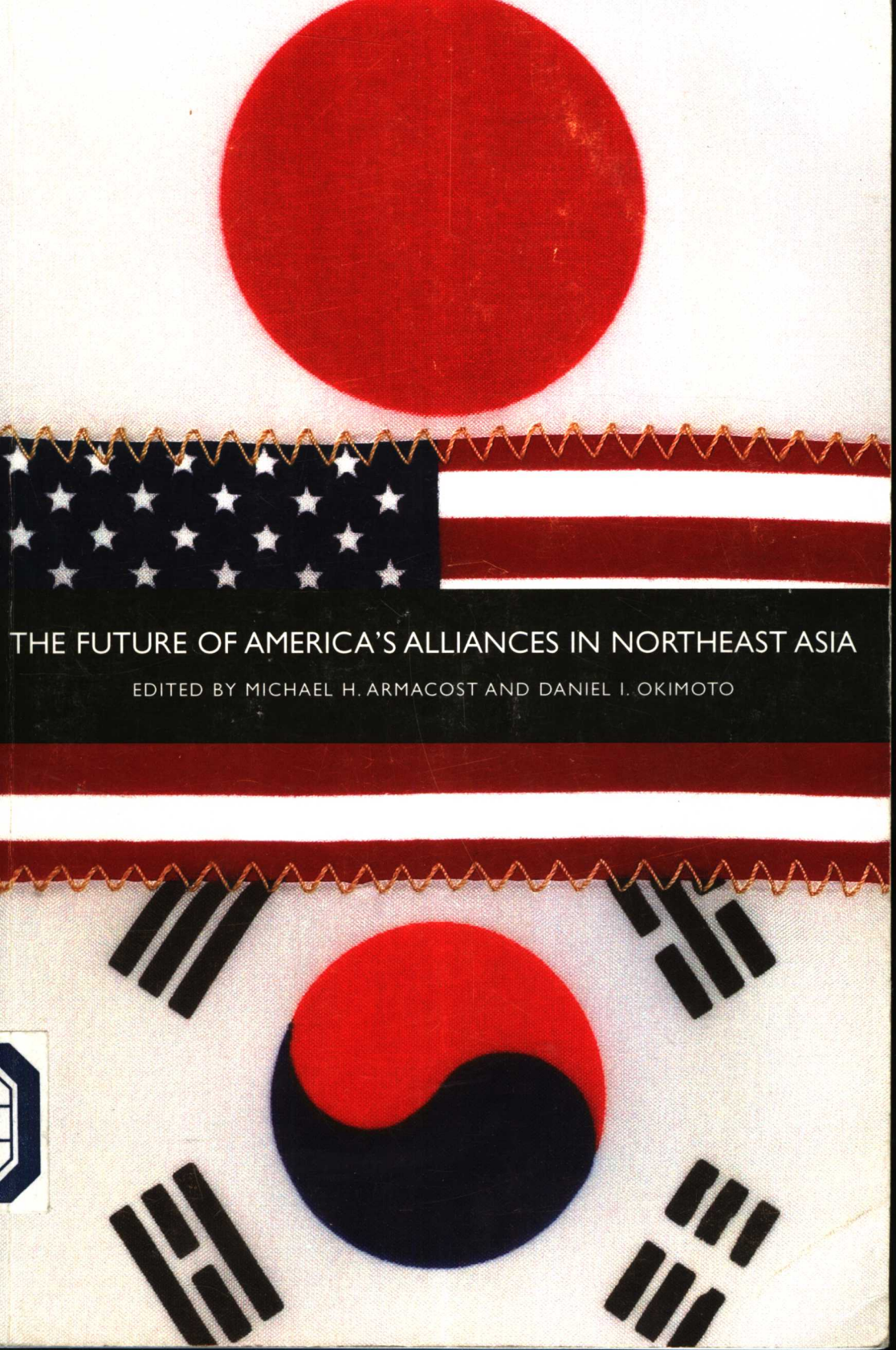

THE FUTURE OF AMERICA'S ALLIANCES IN NORTHEAST ASIA

EDITED BY MICHAEL H. ARMACOST AND DANIEL I. OKIMOTO

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ASIA-PACIFIC RESEARCH CENTER

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PREFACE

Daniel I. Okimoto

When the Berlin Wall fell, symbolizing the end of the Cold War, the global balance of power shifted from a tense military standoff between the world's two superpowers—the Soviet Union and the United States—to one of American dominance. The end of the Cold War, which had gripped the world for nearly a half-century, transformed the parameters and dynamics of international security. For the United States, the disappearance of the communist threat meant that the nature, goal, and missions of America's far-flung network of alliances needed to be reassessed within the context of new threats posed by the post–Cold War security environment. The cohesion supplied by the Soviet threat dissipated and alliance solidarity inevitably weakened. The United States came to rely, increasingly, on ad hoc "coalitions of the willing," going outside the framework of alliance networks to deal with pressing security contingencies. In addition, the revolution in military technology and the proliferation of advanced weapon systems prompted defense planners to review the effectiveness of US bases and force deployments overseas.

Just as the fall of the Berlin Wall symbolized the end of one historic era, the events of September 11, 2001, signaled the start of a new era for the United States and its allies: namely, a high state of mobilization to prosecute the war on global terrorism. A small but dedicated group of terrorists had demonstrated that subnational organizations could inflict serious damage on the financial center and the capital of the world's mightiest power. Long protected by the enormous stretch of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, the United States, no longer feeling safe from direct attack, scrambled to redefine its national security strategy. Out of this reassessment came a new post–9/11 doctrine, one explicitly asserting America's right to take preemptive action. Here again, the ever-shifting parameters and dynamics of international security raised questions about the missions and role of America's alliances in the global war against terrorism.

In Asia, several developments since 1993 have raised questions about the operational readiness and political sustainability of America's defense alliances with Japan and South Korea, the twin pillars of the security architecture in Asia. Specifically, the prospect of nuclear proliferation on the Korean peninsula and North Korea's development of Nodong and Taipodong missiles gave rise to two serious crises. The first, in 1993–94, was temporarily resolved through the signing of the Framework Agreement. The second occurred in 2002, after the Framework Agreement broke down. The outbreak of yet another security crisis in East Asia—that between China and Taiwan—also raised troubling questions about the operational complexities and political fallout associated with

the mobilization of American forces on US bases in Asia, in order to conduct combat missions against China in the Taiwan Strait.

Major changes have also taken place in the domestic political systems of South Korea and Japan since 1993. South Korea has passed through a remarkable transition from military rule to participatory democracy, marked by the emergence of a robust civil society. The political party of conservative military generals like Park Chung-hee—the Grand National Party, which had occupied the Blue House for decades—gave way to the opposition, the Millennium Party, headed by the human rights activist and political dissident Kim Dae-jung.

Between the first and second nuclear crises in Korea, President Kim reoriented South Korean foreign policy from one based on military deterrence of the North Korean threat to a more conciliatory approach based on diplomatic-socioeconomic engagement, known as the Sunshine policy. The huge and growing gap in capacity and output between the economies of South and North Korea—acutely evident in North Korea's dysfunctional system of self-reliance, or *juche*—boosted the confidence of South Koreans and diminished their perception of the security threat posed by the North. Many South Koreans came to view North Korea, their once-feared enemy, as a crippled and cornered outcast state, more deserving of sympathy and pity than fear and foreboding.

Moreover, South Korea's demographic composition underwent a decisive generational shift, as the younger generation born after the Korean War (1950–53) came to constitute the majority of the population. This generational transition has given rise to a gathering sense of nationalism, reflected in a deep-seated desire for national autonomy and greater freedom from foreign dependence and external interference in domestic affairs. The conjunction of these structural developments—the emergence of an active civil society, the end of domination by military leaders and by the old conservative ruling party, the rise of liberal opposition forces, North Korea's economic implosion, the yawning gap between the economies of South and North Korea, the political implications of generational turnover, and the perceived waning of the security threat posed by North Korea—have rendered the bilateral management of the US-ROK alliance significantly more complicated and difficult than was the case as recently as the first nuclear crisis in 1993–94.

Significant changes have also taken place in Japan's political system, but in ways that have facilitated US-Japan defense cooperation (in contrast to South Korea, where domestic political changes have generated rifts in the bilateral alliance). In 1993, the conservative ruling party, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which had controlled majorities in both branches of the National Diet for nearly four decades, fell from power when a dissenting faction split, formed a new party, and entered into a coalition with the Japan Socialist Party (JSP). Although the LDP returned to power in 1994, it was forced to govern in a coalition with other political parties, including, initially, the JSP. Once the JSP joined the majority coalition, and especially after a Socialist became prime minister, the JSP abandoned its long-standing policy of "unarmed neutrality,"

eliminating the ideology of pacifism as an alternative policy platform from Japan's security discourse. The policy dialogue in Japan has shifted toward pragmatic realism. As a result, Japan has ratified several key pieces of legislation, including one for international peacekeeping, paving the way for Japan to contribute actively to the war on terrorism, the campaign in Afghanistan, and the noncombat support for the war in Iraq. It would have been hard to imagine these actions prior to 1993, as evidenced by Japan's reluctance to contribute anything but hard cash during Desert Storm.

Yet, the overwhelming concentration of US bases in Okinawa continues to be a source of underlying tensions. Local resentment over the presence of US troops finds expression in political protests triggered by certain dramatic events, such as a military plane crash, fatal traffic accident, or an outrageous crime committed by American soldiers. For example, the rape of a Japanese schoolgirl ignited a firestorm of protest in 1996, leading to the announcement of plans to close down certain base facilities (such as Futenma), relocate others to different parts of Japan or Okinawa, and redeploy troops there. To date, progress in implementing the plan has been slow.

Taking note of the powerful impact and far-reaching implications of the historic developments alluded to above—specifically, the end of the Cold War, the first nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula, the rise of China, and the China-Taiwan conflict, Professor Michel Oksenberg took the initiative to organize and direct a multiyear study at the Asia-Pacific Research Center (APARC) at Stanford University. The project focused on the history, current status, and future viability of the US-Japan and US-Korea alliances as viewed from the perspective of the major actors in the region—the United States, Japan, South Korea, China, and Southeast Asia. A distinguished group of scholars and policy analysts were invited to write papers. The Smith Richardson Foundation provided generous funding to cover the costs of field research, short-term visits, two major conferences, and publications. All of the individual papers were published in APARC's Occasional Papers Series, and the collected papers were to be edited by Dr. Oksenberg and published as a single volume. Dr. Oksenberg, the organizer and intellectual driving force behind the project, had started to write the conclusion, integrating central themes, summing up major findings, and setting forth policy recommendations about ways to adapt the alliances to recent changes. Dr. Oksenberg's unexpected and untimely passing, however, meant that this key chapter was never completed.

Several years later, when Dr. Michael Armacost rejoined the core faculty at APARC, he was asked to review the manuscript and consider writing a new conclusion. After reading the papers carefully, Dr. Armacost concluded that the pace of events had overtaken the manuscript. Between Dr. Oksenberg's passing and Dr. Armacost's arrival, several seminal events had occurred—the terrorist attack on September 11, the new doctrine of preemption, the wars

in Afghanistan and Iraq, democratic change in South Korea, major shifts in Chinese foreign policy, and the second nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula. These historic events had once again altered the nature of America's military alliances with Japan and South Korea. Dr. Armacost recommended that a fresh set of papers be written.

Under his leadership, and with the financial support of Walter H. Shorenstein and the Shorenstein Forum at APARC, the Center APARC convened a follow-up conference in January 2004. A different but equally distinguished group of scholars and policy analysts wrote papers and participated in the conference proceedings. This updated manuscript is the result.

APARC is grateful to Dr. Michael Armacost for taking the initiative to bring the alliance project to completion. Special thanks also go to the Smith Richardson Foundation, especially to Dr. Marin Strmecki, for their patience and the generosity of their support. We wish to thank the staff of APARC for their role in organizing and executing all the logistics related to the America's Asian Alliances conference, held at Stanford in January 2004—specifically to Shiho Harada Barbir, Claire McCrae, and Debbie Warren. We owe a special debt of gratitude to Neeley Main, who proved herself to be, once again, a superb conference organizer. In completing the burdensome task of editing the manuscript in record time, and with professional competence, Victoria Tomkinson and Megan Hendershott also deserve an explicit word of thanks. And to our beloved colleague, the late Dr. Michel Oksenberg, APARC dedicates this book with appreciation, respect, and a profound sense of loss.

INTRODUCTION

The Future of America's Alliances in Northeast Asia

Michael H. Armacost

There are obvious similarities between America's alliances with Japan and Korea. The United States provides a security guarantee to both, and maintains forward based forces in each country. Tokyo and Seoul have sized and shaped the composition and deployment of their military forces with US support in mind. Local ambivalence about the presence of foreign troops has long been a staple of politics in both countries.

The two alliances are strategically connected. The United States would have difficulty supporting its commitments to South Korea without access to bases in Japan. Japan would find it more difficult politically to sustain support for United States bases if it were America's only ally in the region. Both deterrence and "compellence" vis-à-vis North Korea are facilitated by trilateral cooperation among the United States, Japan, and South Korea. Washington has been the midwife of regular trilateral security consultations.

Yet there are also profound differences between these two American defense partnerships.

- As a global, maritime, trading nation, Japan shares broad strategic interests with the United States that extend well beyond its home islands. US forces in Japan—mainly naval, air force, and marine amphibious units—are available for missions outside Japan (e.g., protecting sea lanes or responding to regional contingencies).
- The scope of the US alliance with the ROK is narrower; its focus has been essentially on North Korea. The United States retains an infantry division north of Seoul to perform a "tripwire" deterrent function. And as a peninsular power, South Korea has fluctuated between "continental" and "maritime" orientations toward grand strategy.
- China (PRC) is perceived by many Japanese as a potential rival; by South Koreans it is regarded as a source of leverage with Washington among some, and as a strategic alternative to the United States among others.
- South Korea is a "normal" nation without constitutional or political prohibitions on the nature of its forces or their use. Japan has long considered itself a "civilian power," with significant legal and institutional constraints on its defense policy.

- At a time when the US-Japan alliance is expanding in scale and redefining its missions, the future of the US alliance with South Korea is beset by uncertainties.

US-Japanese security relations currently thrive. That could not have been said a decade ago. Washington and Tokyo got a wake-up call in the early post–Cold War era that prompted both governments to reconsider the fundamentals of the alliance. Fortunately, they took decisive action to reaffirm its enduring importance and to redefine its rationale and supporting arrangements. Kurt Campbell played an important role within the Clinton administration in promoting these adjustments, and his essay in this volume offers an assessment of the US security posture today.

The US-ROK alliance has yielded mutual benefits for more than half a century. Recurring, and occasionally acute, frictions were a familiar feature of the relationship in the past, but a shared sense of danger from North Korea facilitated the timely accommodation of differing perspectives and diverging interests, when they arose. Today, conflicting perceptions in Washington and Seoul of Kim Jong-il's North Korean regime and how to deal with it raise more basic questions about the future of the US-ROK alliance.

A mid-1990s crisis in US-Japan relations was treated as an opportunity to reshape and update the alliance in the face of changing circumstances. It remains to be seen whether current US-ROK difficulties can be overcome in a similarly salutary fashion.

The Post–Cold War Challenge to US-Japan Security Cooperation

The US-Japanese defense partnership was sorely tested in the 1990s. The disintegration of the Soviet Union undermined the principal motivation and rationale for US-Japan security cooperation. Requested by Washington to share the risks as well as the costs of the Gulf War, Japan punted. Neither its legal framework nor the existing political consensus allowed a prompt, forthcoming response—for which Tokyo paid a steep political price, despite its ultimately generous financial support. The Clinton administration, which had campaigned in 1992 on the slogan "It's the economy, stupid," took off the gloves in bilateral US-Japan trade negotiations, and the resulting tensions threatened to spill over into the field of security cooperation. When Japan spurned economic sanctions as a means of responding to North Korean nuclear activities in 1994, Washington was reminded of the alliance's limited efficacy for dealing with operational contingencies, even in Japan's own backyard. And a brutal rape case involving American marines in Okinawa triggered such an explosive reaction in Japan that many wondered whether public support for the alliance could be sustained.

Fortunately, neither Washington nor Tokyo was prepared to let matters drift. The Pentagon's 1995 East Asia Strategy Report—incorporating the policy premises of what became known as the "Nye Initiative"—articulated a firm

defense of the alliance. US force levels in the Pacific were frozen at existing levels—roughly 100,000. A timely accommodation was struck in bilateral trade negotiations over auto parts.

More importantly, Pentagon and Japan Defense Agency (JDA) officials purposefully tackled the immediate issues complicating bilateral defense cooperation. The United States promised to interpret the criminal jurisdiction provisions of the Status of Forces Agreement more flexibly, and agreed to create a new committee—the Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO)—to review ways of reconfiguring the US base presence on the island. Japan in turn pledged to negotiate revised Guidelines for US-Japan Defense Cooperation.

Fortuitously, a planned visit by President Clinton to Japan, originally scheduled for late 1995, was aborted by a budget crisis in Washington. Before the visit was rescheduled, the PRC, responding to President Lee Teng-hui's 1995 visit to the United States and his subsequent bid for re-election, undertook provocative military exercises off the coast of Taiwan. This offered Japanese and Americans alike a timely reminder of the alliance's value as an insurance policy whose premiums were relatively modest. Prospects for security cooperation turned up, and have followed a generally smoother path ever since.[1]

Toward a More "Normal" Alliance

During the Cold War, when "over the horizon" security problems loomed, Tokyo generally expected Washington to handle such challenges; Tokyo extended compensation in the form of increased financial support for US troops stationed in Japan. In the post–Cold War world, however, Japan discovered that it could not sit out conflicts which pitted "outliers" like Saddam Hussein against the international community without risking severe international criticism and diminished self-respect.

This realization prompted Tokyo to undertake adjustments in its strategic division of labor with the United States. Since 1993, Japan has gradually embraced a more balanced pattern of "responsibility sharing" in the field of international security. Peacekeeping operations legislation, passed by the Diet in 1993, was a first step down this road. Revisions in the bilateral US-Japan Guidelines for Defense Cooperation to allow rear-area support for US forces in Japan constituted a second. The assumption after 9/11 of "out of area" responsibilities as an offshore, noncombat provider of logistics and other services in support of the UN-authorized campaign against the Taliban in Afghanistan was a third. And Japan's decision to send combat personnel to Iraq to participate in efforts by the US-led "coalition of the willing" to foster economic reconstruction and political development is the most recent manifestation of Japan's more proactive contribution to international security.

As Self-Defense Force (SDF) involvement in distant peacekeeping and counterterrorist operations has become more frequent and routine, Japan has

begun to procure defense equipment which is gradually extending its capacity to project power over greater distances. Aegis destroyers, Standard missiles, aerial refueling tanker aircraft, and a helicopter carrier all fall into this category. None gives Japan "invasion potential"; all promise to augment its defensive strength and improve its ability to perform missions farther from its home islands.

Anxieties about North Korea's nuclear ambitions and missile tests have prompted Japan to expand collaboration with the United States on ballistic missile defenses. These concerns also encouraged Tokyo to align its diplomacy toward North Korea more closely with Washington's. In addition, Japan has joined other maritime nations in supporting the US Proliferation Security Initiative, and it is currently participating in joint naval exercises aimed at impeding the transfer of nuclear-related materials and other contraband goods by "rogue nations."

Domestic constraints on Japanese defense activities are being gradually modified. A long-standing policy proscribing overseas security responsibilities has been modified to permit noncombat peacekeeping, disaster relief, and counterterrorism missions. Tokyo's recent dispatch of military personnel to Iraq, moreover, places its troops in a country where it is difficult to differentiate between combat and noncombat zones, where the UN's role is both modest and somewhat ambiguous, and where Japan's support is being provided to a US-led occupation regime. The realities of joint US-Japan ballistic missile defenses are impelling Tokyo to reconsider a long-standing ban on arms exports. Political inhibitions against exercising Japan's inherent right of collective self-defense are gradually fading. And Prime Minister Koizumi and opposition leaders are now actively promoting amendment of Japan's postwar constitution, including Article 9, though disagreements persist on the content of proposed revisions.

Adjustments such as these[2] have allowed Japan to extend its military missions, enhance its defense capabilities, and gradually modify institutional and political constraints on its defense policy. They also contribute to a more balanced US-Japan alliance that is acquiring broader geographic scope.

To be sure, some extremely important features of Japan's defense policy have not changed. Its nonnuclear principles remain firmly in place. Limits imposed by Article 9 of the constitution have been loosened, but not abolished. Leading politicians have expressed their intent to revise the constitution, but that will be a lengthy, painstaking process. The government has long affirmed its possession of an inherent right of collective self-defense, but remains reluctant to exercise it. Tokyo is in the process of rearranging its defense spending priorities in the light of new security concerns, yet the level of its defense expenditures, as a percentage of GDP, has changed little.

These residual limitations on its defense efforts notwithstanding, the aggregate changes in Japan's defense efforts and its expanding security role within the alliance have been quite remarkable. How can one explain them? The realization that Japan lives in a tough neighborhood, and confronts genuine security challenges—most immediately from North Korea—is the

most significant contributing factor. The bitter aftertaste left by the Gulf War experience is another. A third is Japan's readiness to tackle a more ambitious international role in the fields of peacekeeping and counterterrorism: missions which have a certain resonance with its public and promise political rewards in its dealings with foreign friends. A fourth is the realization that the emerging generation of Japanese, for whom becoming a more "normal" nation seems an appropriate ambition, is more comfortable shouldering a broader array of "shared responsibilities" within the US-Japan alliance. Older voters, too, appear to welcome a more active global role, so long as it is compatible with the spirit of prudential limits that Japan has cultivated during the past half-century.

The Bush administration has made steadfast efforts to enhance the cohesion of the alliance. From the outset, key administration officials pointed to the US-UK "special relationship" as an apt model for the long-term evolution of its defense partnership with Japan. They have consistently and subtly encouraged a more expansive Japanese understanding of its international security responsibilities. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage suggested that the Japanese "show the flag" in the Afghanistan campaign, and put "boots on the ground" in Iraq. But he and others have voided heavy-handed public pressure campaigns.

For his part, President Bush has cultivated close personal ties with Prime Minister Koizumi, praised his forthrightness in tackling tough foreign policy challenges, and taken his diplomatic counsel seriously. At the same time, the administration has managed bilateral economic issues deftly, playing down disputes and foreswearing gratuitous public advice on macroeconomic questions. It has sought, in short, to foster a constructive, comfortable relationship with Japan in which defense cooperation could flourish.

It remains to be seen whether the current direction and pace of change in the alliance can be sustained. Some items on the future agenda seem clear. For Japan, these include identifying conditions in which to exercise the right of collective self defense; amending current laws to recognize that international operations are central rather than peripheral missions; adjusting budgets and force structures to downgrade past priorities (e.g., countering an invasion of the home islands, the likelihood of which is extremely remote) and finance new requirements (e.g., creating the infrastructure and operational arrangements needed for ballistic missile defense); and further revising the rules of engagement for Japanese troops participating in international peacekeeping ventures. For America, they include refining US force and base structure in Japan in the light of current global security realities, coordinating approaches to regional challenges in Korea and the Taiwan Strait, and bolstering a new division of labor in the struggle against counterterrorism, which capitalizes on Japan's substantial capabilities in the field of "state-building."

While US-Japanese defense cooperation has been expanding impressively, one cannot blithely assume that the current trajectory is fixed and unalterable. The present path could be disrupted by large-scale Japanese casualties in Iraq or Al Qaeda terrorist attacks in Japan, crises with unexpected twists in the

Korean peninsula or Taiwan Strait, insensitive conduct by the United States, or the emergence of more assertive nationalism in Japan.

Even without such developments, it would be imprudent to expect or press Japan to become "the UK of the Orient" within the coming decade. Japan's nonnuclear norms have deep roots. So does its reluctance to participate in peacemaking, as opposed to peacekeeping, ventures. In these respects particularly, Japanese policy reflexes are decidedly different than those of the British. The concerns of Japan's neighbors about Tokyo's expanding security responsibilities, moreover, while currently muted, have not disappeared. And Japan remains a conservative society in which policies tend to change through the almost imperceptible accumulation of nuance, rather than through crisp debates and bold decisions.

Still, Tokyo is on a course, as Ralph A. Cossa suggests in this volume, which may permit it to assume within the foreseeable future the kind of international security role that Germany has embraced over the past decade. Americans should welcome that eventuality. Without articulating that specific aim, the other papers in this section—written by Ambassador Takakazu Kuriyama, Ambassador Rust M. Deming, Ralph A. Cossa, General Noburu Yamaguchi, and Professor Hiroshi Nakanishi —suggest ways to foster a more balanced and more effective alliance enjoying wider domestic support in both countries.

The US-ROK Alliance

Current prospects for the US-ROK alliance are less clear and less encouraging. It is marked by diverging perceptions of the principal threat, difficulties in aligning our respective policies toward North Korea, disagreements over supporting arrangements, (e.g., troop deployments, command relationships, and the Status of Forces Agreement), and a significant erosion of public support for the alliance among elites in both countries.

These developments are as surprising as they are troubling. The US-ROK alliance, which celebrated its fiftieth anniversary last year, is widely and appropriately considered a great historical success. It not only helped safeguard ROK independence for half a century; the secure environment, which it helped to create, facilitated South Korea's remarkable economic growth and its impressive transition to a robust, pluralistic democracy. By fostering peace on the Korean peninsula, the alliance has become a central feature of Northeast Asia's security architecture.

But for several years—and especially since early 2001—the alliance has been adrift, a hostage to diverging perspectives.

- American officials have branded the DPRK a rogue state; South Korean authorities view it as a potential partner in peninsular peacemaking.
- Arresting nuclear proliferation has become a top Washington priority, and Pyongyang is recognized as perhaps the most dangerous proliferator. Seoul,