New Directions in Japan's Security:
Non-U.S. Centric Evolution,
Introduction to a Special Issue[1]

The Puzzle

Ever since Japan regained its independence in 1952 the United States has been
overwhelmingly dominant in the country's security.   Even after the two countries
concluded a more equal bilateral security treaty in 1960 US dominance of Japan's security
policy continued.   Japan can be said to have pursued "one-country pacifism" during the
Cold War,[2] but the US was always the exception to this generalization. Japan hosted US
military bases and the SDF held joint exercises with the US military, even while largely
shunning contacts with other militaries. Japan essentially refused even to discuss security
issues with its neighbors as part of a policy of regional security isolationism. Special
exceptions were made for the US in otherwise sweeping security policies, such as Tokyo's
three non-export of weapons principles, to allow for Japanese military exports to the US,

[2] See C.O.E. Oraru: Seisaku kenkyū purojekuto, *Kuriyama Takakazu (Moto Chūbei Taishi), Oraru
Hisutori: Tenkanki no Nichibei Kankei* (Tokyo: Seisaku kenkyū daigakuin daigaku, 2005), p. 11. More
generally see Daizaburō Yui, *Mikan no Senryo kaikaku* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1989), p. 285.

and only the US. Tokyo made an exception to its three non-export of weapons principles

to allow military exports to the US. At the same time even Japan's territorial defense was

deeply dependent on the US.   Japan's first National Defense Program Outline (NDPO)

of 1976 set the modest goal of being able to hold of a large-scale invasion until US

reinforcements arrived, thereby codifying Japan's dependence on the US.[3]

Yet, since the end of the Cold War, and especially since the turn of the century

Japan has begun diversifying its security ties.   It has initiated security dialogues with its

Asian neighbors, starting with Russia (originally with the Soviet Union in late 1990),[4]

and assumed a leadership role in promoting regional multilateral security cooperation as

at least a supplement to the US alliance.   Tokyo has also begun building bilateral security

partnerships with a range of countries and actors, from Australia and India to the European

Union. With the European Union and Nordic countries cooperation in the Indian Ocean

and post-conflict peace-building on land that includes the use of militaries and aid

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[3] Takao Sebata, *Japan's Defense Policy and Bureaucratic Politics, 1976-2007*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2010), pp. 107-139.

[4] Christopher W. Hughes, "Japan's subregional security and defence linkages with ASEAN, South Korea and China in the 1990s," *The Pacific Review* 9, no. 2 (1996): 229-250; Paul Midford, "Japan's Leadership Role in East Asian security multilateralism: the Nakayama proposal and the logic of reassurance," *The Pacific Review* 13, no. 3 (2000): 377; and Yukio Satoh, "Reflections on the Nakayama Proposal," in Hadi Soesastro & Clara Joewono, eds., *The Inclusive Regionalist: A Festschrift dedicated to Jusuf Wanandi* (Jakarta: Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 2007): 99.

agencies working together at the nexus of security and development assistance.[5]   In 2011

Japan lifted its ban on military hardware co-development, production, and export with

non-US partners. The US, once the special exception, was no longer special. While the

domestic debate on reclaiming the right to collective self-defense has long been defined

in terms of coming to the aid of the US in case it comes under attack, the recent the debate

notably shifted toward defending any country Japan has "significant ties" with, thus

moving this debate away from a US focus (see the Wakefield article).[6]

In short, in a diverse range of areas we can see Japan broadening its security

strategy beyond its traditional unidirectional focus on security ties with the US, and

toward new multidirectional security partnerships with some partners and actors, and

looser forms of security cooperation with other actors. This is not to say that Japan is

loosening its alliance ties with the US, much less that it should be doing so; indeed, US

and Japanese government officials regularly proclaim a strengthening alliance, an

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[5] See European Japan Advanced Research Network (EJARN) and the Konrad Adenuer Stiftung (KAS), *A Proposal for a Way Forward on EU-Japan Cooperation at the Nexus of Security and Development* (Tokyo: Konrad Adenuer Stiftung, Tokyo, 2012); and Paul Midford, "By Land and By Sea: The Potential of EU-Japan Security Cooperation," *Japan Forum* 24, no. 3 (2012), pp. 303-310.

[6] For a comprehensive overview of the enabling security legislation that allows Japan to exercise the right of collective self-defense in some limited cases, see Daisuke Akimoto, "Exercising the Right to Collective Self-Defense? An Analysis of 'Japan's Peace and Security Legislation,'" *ZJapanR* 41 (2016), pp. 137-163.

assessment shared many outside analysts.[7] Nonetheless, the sum of these changes in

diverse areas suggests a coherent pattern or policy of diversifying security partners and

thereby reducing the centrality of the US in Japan's security.   To be sure, the US remains

Japan's central security partner, and there is no assumption made here that this is about

to change. Nonetheless, US centrality is now significantly less overwhelming than it was

30 years ago. Japan has gone from having essentially no other security partner, to have a

growing list of partners with whom it is progressively deepening ties.

Core research question. The core research question of this special issue is thus

why, as the US was Japan's only security partner during the Cold War, has Japan started

building security relationships with other states since the end of the Cold War, even while

maintaining or even strengthening its alliance with the US? Put another way, why has the

US become less central in Japan's security policies even while the US-Japan alliance has

remained as strong, or stronger, than ever?

Defining Centering and Decentering. Centering is defined here as focusing on

one partner to the exclusion of other partners. Decentering is defined as a process of

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[7] See for example, Christopher W. Hughes, *Japan's Foreign and Security Policy Under the 'Abe Doctrine:" New Dynamism or New Dead End?* (New York: Palgrave, 2015), pp. 61-70; and Andrew L. Oros, *Japan's Security Renaissance: New Policies and Politics for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), pp. 123-125.

moving away from a state of centering by building relationships with other partners. It is

important to note at the outset that decentering is not a synonym for weakening, although

decentering and weakening can go hand in hand. The original partnership can be

maintained or even strengthened even while new partnerships with third parties are built,

especially if those partnerships are with other states enjoying a close relationship with the

partner. Nonetheless, at some point, if decentering proceeds far enough there may begin

to be trade-offs made at the expensive of the previously exclusively central security

relationship. This can take the form of scarce budgetary, equipment, and human resources

that are redirected to new partners. Attention may also be "distracted" away from the

formerly central partner and toward the new partners. Diversifying is a synonym for

decentering that is also used by some articles in this special issue.

Coding the Dependent Variable. Thus, the state's security policy is centered upon

another when that other is its only military ally or security partner and has a special role

in its security policy that no other state has. Decentering involves building security

partnerships with third states and actors, and reducing the specialness of the original

security partner in the state's security policy. The opposite of decentering is be recentering,

which is defined as reducing ties with third states and actors, restoring the special position

of the original security partner.[8]

A security or strategic partnership is a form of alignment aimed at promoting security cooperation, and perhaps cooperation in additional targeted fields as well. Strategic partnerships do not include a formal alliance commitment to defend the partner's territory if it comes under attack.[9] In this sense, it can be seen as an updated version of the pre-1914 concept of an entente.[10] A security partnership can focus on broader forms of security cooperation in non-traditional security, defending global commons, especially maritime and airspace, through for example counter-piracy operations (see X's article). Other examples include post-conflict reconstruction, humanitarian and disaster relief operations, and fighting pandemics.[11]

In the context of Japanese security policy, decentering means reducing the centrality of the US in Japan's security policy, and is characterized by building security

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[8] There is little theoretical literature on centering, decentering, or recentering. Perhaps the closest work is Glenn H. Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007). See the discussion below.

[9] See Vidya Nadkami, *Strategic Partnerships in Asia: Balancing Without Alliances* (London: Routledge, 2010); Sean Kay, "What Is a Strategic Partnership?" *Problems of Post-Communism* 47, no.3 (2016), pp. 15-24; and H. D. P. Envall, "Asian Strategic Partnerships: New Practices and Regional Security Governance," *Asian Politics & Policy* 8, no. 1 (2016), pp. 87-105; and the Y article in this special issue.

[10] Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, pp. 11-12; 346-350.

[11] Paul Midford and Jeffrey W. Hornung, "A Role for Japan in the Fight Against Ebola," *The Wall Street Journal* (global edition), November 4, 2014, p. 17.

and strategic partnership[12]and cooperation with other actors and reducing the "specialness"

of the US in Japanese security policy. Its opposite, recentering, can be defined as Japan

reducing security ties with nations and actor other than the US and moving its policy and

resource focus back toward the US. It is important to distinguish clearly decentering and

re-centering from alliance tightening or loosening the alliance, which respectively involve

increasing decreasing promised support to one's ally, including the certainty of that

support. In short, alliance centrality and tightness are two distinct variables that need to

be distinguished. Indeed, the key puzzle this special issue seeks to explain is why, since

the end of the Cold War, Japan has decentered away from the US even while tightening

its alliance with Washington.

More concretely, establishing cooperation with other states and actors besides

the United States includes establishing security and defense consultations and dialogues

involving diplomats, defense bureaucrats and uniformed military personnel, capacity

building and joint exercises between the SDF and militaries other than the US, including

non-combat search and rescue and Humanitarian and Disaster Relief (HaDR) operations,

actual joint operations, including non-combat operations, the conclusion of Acquisition

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[12] Japan's 2013 National Security Strategy document highlights the country's strategic partnership with Australia. See Cabinet Office, National Security Strategy (Provisional Translation), December 17, 2013, p. 24.

and Cross-Servicing Agreements (ACSA), Status of Forces Agreements (SOFA), and

other agreements facilitating concrete cooperation and joint operations. Even para-

military and police cooperation with non-US partners in the form of dialogues, seminars,

capacity building, joint training exercises and operations, are another aspect of de-

centering.

Joint military exercises are an important indicator of decentering of security

ties. During the Cold War the SDF was essentially isolated from all other militaries

except for the US military. The US Navy sponsored RIMPAC multilateral naval

exercise is a striking example. Since it began participating in 1981, Japan had always

been paired with participating US navy units; it avoided interaction with non-US navy

units.. If a third country was assigned to the US-Japan team, the team would be split

into two groups so that Japanese military personnel did not work with military

personnel from a third country. For Japan, RIMPAC was a bilateral excerise in close

proximity to a multilateral one.   However, in 1994 Japan ended its policy of separating

the participating MSDF contingent from that of countries other the US, allowing

cooperation with non-US navies for the first time.[13] Japan's decision to begin

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[13].   *Yomiuri Shimbun*, June 1, 1994. For a discussion of this development see L. William Heinrich Jr.,
"Seeking An Honored Place: The Japanese Self-Defense Forces and the Use of Armed Force Abroad"
(Ph.D. diss., Department of Political Science, Columbia University: 1997), p. 81.

participating in UN Peacekeeping, beginning with the deployment of the GSDF to

Cambodia from September 1992 was another milestone that ended SDF isolation from

interaction with foreign militaries. Over the course of the 1990s SDF interaction with

foreign militaries increased through the beginning of Confidence Building Measures,

such as exchanges of naval visits. From the early 2000s bilateral military excerises

began with Australia, and later. Initially these have been non-combat in nature, but

Japan's recent (now permanent) participation in the multilateral Malabar naval exercises

sponsored by India[14] have increasingly involved combat related exercises. Another

milestone was reached in October 2016, when a Royal Airforce combat squadron

arrived from the United Kingdom for the first ever postwar combat exercise held on

Japanese soil with a non-US military.[15] This led the Asahi Shimbun to claim "Japan is

moving toward forming a "quasi alliance" with Britain to complement Tokyo's security

ties with Washington."[16] The exercise with the UK was quickly followed several

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[14] Sourabh Gupta, "Abe and Modi attempt to bridge the Indo-Pacific," *East Asia Forum*, January 5, 2016, as accessed January 10, 2016, at

http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2016/01/05/abeandmodiattempttobridgetheindopacific/
[15] Alastair Wanklyn, ASDF, Royal Air Force to conduct first-ever joint drills in Japan amid strengthening security ties," *Japan Times*, October 16, 2016.
[16] "Japan moves to solidify security relations with British forces," *Asahi Shimbun*, November 3, 2016, as accessed November 7, 2016, at http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201611030061.html

months later by the arrival in Japan of a French naval vessel for joint exercises with

Japanese, British, and US military personnel in Japanese territory and beyond.[17]

Trade in dual use technology, weapons, and joint development of weapons an

important dimension of security policy where we can see decentering in terms loss of

specialness." "Loss of specialness" in policy means concretely that laws and policies are

changed in ways that no longer favor the US to the exclusion of all other countries. The

leading example of this is the modification of the Three Principles on the Export of

Weapons in 2011 (discussed in T' article), and the debate on reinterpretation of the

constitution to allow for the right to exercise collective self-defense (discussed in the

Wakefield's article). Briefly considering the former, although the 1976 version of the 3

Principles on the Export of Weapons essentially banned all weapons exports, this ban was

modified in 1983 to allow for weapons exports and joint weapons development with the

US,[18] paving the way for joint development of Japan's F-2 combat aircraft (based on the

F-16) in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Already in the mid-1990s, the Higuchi Report, a

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[17] AFP-Jiji, "French warship arrives for joint drills with Japan as North Korean tensions rise, *Japan Times*, April 29, 2017, p. 2.

[18] For the text and official interpretation of the three principles, see Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Japan's Policies on the Control of Arms Exports," as accessed March 13, 2016 at http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/un/disarmament/policy/ For an analysis on the three principles on the export of weapons see Marie Söderberg, *Japan's Military Export Policy* (Stockholm: University of Stockholm, 1986); and Masamitsu Morimoto, *Buki Yushutsu Sangensoku* (Tokyo, Shinzansha, 2011).

defense advisory panel set up to come up with ideas for Japan's second National Defense

Policy Outline (NDPO), which was issued in 1996, called for modifying the Three Arms

Export Principles to permit joint research and development of weapons "with other

countries" besides the US. Even this very modest step created angst among US policy

experts that this would contribute to a loosening of alliance ties.[19]

When the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) administration of Noda Yoshihiko

decided to modify this policy in late 2011, it was explicit in stating that even while it

would continue to seek to strengthen the US-Japan alliance, the US was losing its

"specialness:" "In order to secure Japan's peace and security as well as international

security against the backdrop of the changes in the international community, it has

become necessary for Japan to, while further strengthening the partnership with the US,

enter into partnership with other countries cooperating with Japan in security area."[20]

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[19] See Patrick M. Cronin and Michael J. Green, *Redefining the US-Japan Alliance: Tokyo's National Defense Program,* McNair Paper 3 1 (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1994), p. 14. Green notes elsewhere that what this book calls decentering was already beginning just as the Cold War was ending. He notes that British Aerospace sold the SDF fixed-wing aircraft for search and rescue, and that this was the first purchase of fixed-wing aircraft from a non-US and non-Japanese manufacturer in the history of the SDF. Michael Green, *Arming Japan: Defense Production, Alliance Politics, and the Postwar Search for Autonomy* (New York: Columbia UP, 1995), p. 148.

[20] Prime Minister of Japan and his cabinet, "Statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary on Guidelines for Overseas Transfer of Defense Equipment, etc.," as accessed on April 6, 2016, at http://japan.kantei.go.jp/others/201112/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2012/01/31/20111227DANWA_e.pdf, p. 2. In April 2014 the Abe administration announced a further modification of the three principles, although it

Within months of the announcement of this change Noda had already inked a military co-development agreement with the UK.[21]

A final form of decentering discussed in this special issue involves adopting security policies that are independent of, and occasionally even in opposition to, US policies. A leading example of this form of decentering analyzed in this special issue is Japan's departure from passively following US policy toward regional security multilateralism beginning in 1991 and forging its own policy. At times this independence has involved opposing US policy, or at least getting in front of US policy. This is not to say that this policy independence has not often also involved wide areas of cooperation and policy coordination, but as demonstrated by Q's article, Japan now formulates its policy toward regional security multilateralism far more independently of the US than it did before 1991. Then Japanese prime minister Koizumi Junichirō pursuit of an independent foreign policy of pursuing opening and normalization with North Korea in 2002 is another example of pursuing an independent foreign and even security policy.[22]

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was little more than a refinement and streamlining of the Noda policy. See Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "The Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology," as accessed March 16, 2016 at http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press22e_000010.html

[21] *Japan Times*, 11 April, 2012.

[22] See Yoneyuki Sugita, "Japan's Attempt to build an Independent Policy toward North Korea," paper presented at "Non-American Directions in Japan's Security Workshop," sponsored by Osaka University, January 16-17, 2017.

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between the two variables of alliance tightness and centeredness. The upper left side of the matrix provides the case of an independent foreign policy or *Jishu Gaikō*, and lists cases where Japan has pursued decentering along with (modest) loosening of the Japan-US alliance. Arguably the leading example is the Hatoyama administration's pursuit of modest loosening of the US-Japan alliance while at the same time pursuing decentering in the form of proposing an East Asian Community that, at least initially, did not include the US. The lower left square of the matrix covers cases where decentering from the US is coupled with alliance tightening, and can be categorized as hedging against possible US abandonment and/or attempting to more tightly bind with the US via American allies. Examples here include the Nakayama Proposal of 1991 to establish a regional multilateral security forum against US wishes, the 2011-2014 arms export liberalization, the 2014 reinterpretation of the Constitution to allow for the right of Collective Self-Defense, and Japan's promotion of a security relationship with the Philippines and Vietnam since 2011 (see the article by Bjørn Grønning).

Figure 1. About Here

One the lower right side of Figure 1 we have alliance tightening and recentering,

which marks a turn back toward the Cold War norm of a Japan entirely centered on the US for its security, hence this case is labeled a return to the 1980s, or perhaps a return to the original Yoshida Doctrine. Finally, the upper right square depicts a so far hypothetical scenario whereby Japan reduces, if not ends, security relationships with its post-war partners, including Australia, India, EU, NATO, regional multilateral security actors, etc., and redirects resources and attention to the US while simultaneously loosening the US alliance. Hence, this scenario would bring Japan back to its grand strategy of the 1960s when it pursued security isolationism except vis a vis the US, and even toward the US Japan maintained a loose alliance that was more concerned with avoiding entrapment than abandonment from the Korean War through the Taiwan Straits Crises and until the end of the Vietnam War.

Possible Motivations and Hypotheses on De-centering

Why has Japan decentered away from the US since the end of the Cold War? This section identifies several plausible underlying causes and hypotheses. Underlying causes can be grouped into several categories: international structural changes, changing bilateral alliance dynamics, domestic level causes, including changing elite strategic culture, changes in domestic political structure, including electoral reform, party structure and inter-party competition. A final set of possible underlying causes stems from public

attitudes regarding the utility of military force, views of the Self-Defense Forces (SDF), and nationalist attitudes.

International structural causes focus on the balance of power (distribution of capabilities) across states, especially perceived shifts in polarity from bipolarity during the Cold War, brief and uncertain multipolarity in the early 1990s, followed by more than a decade of unipolarity. Since 2008, perceptions of declining unipolarity have been accompanied by perceptions of emerging bipolarity between the US and China, or more generally the growth of multipolarity. While Kenneth Waltz argues that the two superpowers in a bipolar system do not depend upon allies, William Wohlforth maintains that the unipole has even less need to depend on allies.[23]

Thus, Japan under unipolarity might have felt an increased risk of US abandonment due to a perception that the alliance was characterized by extreme asymmetrical dependence of Japan on the US, rather than something closer to a relationship of interdependence, thus encouraging Japan to hedge US defense commitments. On the other hand, the rise of China and perceived relative decline of the US since 2008, by encouraging Japan to hedge against perceived uncertainty of US

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[23] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading Mass.: Addison Wesley, 1979); and William Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," *International Security* 24, no. 1 (Summer 1999), pp. 5-41.

defense commitments and even continued regional military dominance, could also encourage Japan to build security cooperation with other actors.[24]

In terms of bilateral alliance dynamics, changes in the institutions and norms of the US-Japan alliance itself could encourage Japan decenter from the US by pursuing security partnerships with other actors, starting with US allies and US-friendly actors. Beyond the US-Japan alliance, positive experiences with involvement in UN peacekeeping since 1992 might encourage Japan to engage in greater security cooperation with other countries contributing troops to UN peacekeeping missions.

At the domestic level, changes in elite strategic culture and elite perceptions, driven perhaps by generational change as those born after World War II have assumed leadership positions, or memories and perceptions of Japan's 1991 Gulf War debacle, and even by recognition of the very multinational nature of the coalition to ejected Iraqi forces from Kuwait, could be drivers of Japan's decentering from the US. Changes in the domestic political structure are another possible cause, most of all the growing power of the Kantei (the Prime Minister's Office) and the Defense Ministry (promoted from being

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[24] On 2010 as making the effective beginning of Japanese counter balancing against China, see Bjorn Gronning, "Japan's Shifting Military Priorities: Counterbalancing China's Rise," *Asian Security* 10, no. 1, pp. 1-21. For a more general discussion of the impact of China's rise on Japanese foreign policy see Sheila A. Smith, *Intimate Rivals: Japanese Domestic Politics and a Rising China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

merely the Defense Agency in 2007). Some argue that the 1994 reform of Japan's Lower

House electoral system has incentivized politicians and the cabinets they form to care

more about security issues,[25] a causal mechanism that could conceivably also encourage

decentering from the US and toward other security partners. Finally, changing domestic

norms and Japan's security identity[26] might impact Japan's decision to seek new security

partners and to reduce the centrality and specialness of the US in Japan's security strategy.

Finally, changing attitudes among the Japanese public are also a cause source of

decentering. Relevant attitudes might include the fading of antimilitarist attitudes,[27]

changing attitudes toward the utility of military force,[28] changing views of the SDF,[29]

changing views of the United States,[30] the alliance, and the possible growth of nationalist

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[25] Amy Catalinac, *Electoral Reform and National Security in Japan: From Pork to Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

[26] For the pioneering works in this field see Andrew Oros, *Normalizing Japan: Politics, Identity, and the Evolution of Security Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009); and Peter J. Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security: Police and Military in Postwar Japan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 1996.

[27] Thomas U. Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism: National Security in Germany and Japan* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); and Paul Midford, *Rethinking Japanese Public Opinion and Security: From Pacifism to Realism?* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

[28] Midford, *Rethinking Japanese Public Opinion and Security*, chpt. 3.

[29] Regarding changing attitudes toward the GSDF see Robert D. Eldridge and Paul Midford, eds., *The Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force: Search for Legitimacy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

[30] Midford, *Rethinking Japanese Public Opinion and Security*, chpt. 3.

attitudes.[31]

Hypotheses. Based on these hypothesized causal variables we can deduce several

hypotheses explaining Japan's decentering from an almost complete focus on the US in

its security policy and toward cultivating other security partnerships. These hypotheses

are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Indeed, the articles in this special issue

demonstrate that often two or more of these motivations are driving Japan to decenter

from the US.

Strategic Independence/Normal Nation. At one extreme of the spectrum is the

hypothesis that Japan is preparing to become strategically independent, leaving its

alliance with the US, or at least greatly reducing its dependence on the US,[32] becoming

a so-called "normal nation" or normal great power.[33] A related hypothesis is that Japan

seeks to become more independent from the US is part of a larger strategy to increase

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[31] Regarding nationalist trends in Japan see Christian G. Winkler, "Right Rising? Ideology and the 2012 House of Representatives Election," in Robert Pekkanen, Steven R. Reed, and Ethan Scheiner, eds., *Japan Decides 2012* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 201-212; and more generally Paul Midford, "Foreign Policy as an Election Issue," in Pekkanen, Reed, and Scheiner, eds., *Japan Decides 2012* pp. 179-194

[32] For an analysis of Japanese strategic thinkers who see Japan as a zakkoku or client state of the US, see Gavan McCormick, *Client state : Japan in the American embrace*(New York, NY: Verso, 2007).

[33] Regarding the term normal nation see Ichiro Ozawa, *Blueprint for a New Japan: The Rethinking of a Nation* (Tokyo: Kodansha International,1994); and Yoshihide Soeya, David A. Welch and Masayaki Tadokoro, eds., *Japan as a 'Normal Country'?: A Nation in Search of Its Place in the World*(Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011).

Tokyo's foreign policy independence (or *Jishu Gaikō* in Japanese). This follows the

exhortation of noted the noted Japanese Cold War era realist Nagai Yōnusuke that Japan

must pursue a grand strategy of "maximizing allies" to "conserve freedom for a wide

choice of action" and avoiding isolation and the predicament of having no choice."[34]

     Hedging. Another distinct hypothesis is that Japan is hedging its hitherto extreme

dependence upon the US for its security. Whether this is the result of a fear of

abandonment because the US, as the global military hegemon does not depend on Japan

and hence can be seen as a potentially unreliable ally, or because on the other hand the

US is seen as a declining hegemon and military power, are two mutually exclusive

possibilities that could be motivating a hedging strategy. Alternatively, Japan might hedge

its alliance commitments because of fear of entrapment in US wars not in Japan's

interest.[35] Japan may also desire to hedge the scope of the alliance, specifically in non-

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[34] Yōnosuke Nagai, "Constraints and options in Japanese foreign policy," (translated by Ruselle Meade) *Japan Forum* 24 (4) (2012), pp. 413-449, at p. 431. For the original, see Nagai, "Nihon gaikō ni okeru kōsoku to sentaku', *Chūō Kōron* 81, no. 3 (March 1966), pp. 46–85.

[35] Snyder suggests that when a state fears entrapment by an ally it may attempt to loosen alliance commitments. *Alliance Politics*, p. 315. Although hedging is not the same as loosening, establishing new security relationships could be seen as a way to subtly reduce dependence on an ally, or at least expand options for doing so in the future. Cronin and Green suggested in the mid 1990s that for Tokyo regional "multilateralism is a hedge against waning U.S. commitments to the alliance." *Redefining the US-Japan Alliance*, pp. 2, 9. For a more recent work on Japanese hedging strategies, see Eric Heginbotham and Richard J. Samuels, "Japan' Dual Hedge," *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 5 (September-October 2002), pp. 110-121. These two authors explicitly claim: "Many senior Japanese politicians and bureaucrats also see

traditional security areas where the US may lack capacity, interest, or even resolve, and

where other partners may have as much or more to offer (see the Y and X articles).[36]

Dating Around/Partner Diversification. Japan is diversifying its security partners in

response to actual or perceived pressure from the US to do so. The US might see a Japan

that has security relationships and experience with its other allies as a more valuable ally

in its own right, or Japan might believe this is the US view. For example, this might

facilitate Japan's military interoperability with allied militaries, and with shared standards

for allied militaries promoted by the US. Alternatively, the US might encourage this

development to prevent abandonment by Japan, or to use allies to apply group normative

pressure on Tokyo to accede to US demands.[37]

Collective Binding. Finally, building on Joseph Grieco's collective binding

hypothesis,[38] and a bilateral binding hypothesis derived from Glenn Snyder's alliance

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strengthening regional ties as a strategic measure to enhance Japan's position vis-at-vis the United States."
(p. 119).

[36] For the example of security cooperation in post-conflict reconstruction at the nexus of security and development see Marie Soderberg, "Japan´s Cooperation with the EU in the Nexus of Development and Security," paper prepared for the "Non-American Directions in Japan's Security Workshop," sponsored by Osaka University, January 16-17, 2017.

[37] Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, pp.350-364.

[38] Joseph M. Grieco, "Understanding the Problem of International Cooperation: The Limits of Neoliberal Institutionalism and the Future of Realist Theory," in David A. Baldwin, ed., *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 301-338.

security dilemma theory,[39] one can hypothesize that Japan develops security relations with US allies and US-friendly multilateral security institutions as a way to ensure continued US commitment to the defense of Japan and regional security more generally. The idea is that Japan might be able to call on other allies to exert enhanced group normative pressure on Washington to honor its defense commitments to Japan.[40]

On the other hand, Japan might use multilateral ties with other US allies as a buffer against bilateral conflicts with Washington. In the mid-1980s Japanese defense intellectual Nishihara Masashi proposed a multilateral forum of US allies in East Asia to cooperate in helping to bear the cost of continued forward deployment of US military forces in East Asia, thereby taking the issue outside of a strictly bilateral context where it often became linked to trade and other economic conflicts (see the article in this special issue about Japan's break with the US over regional security multilateralism in 1991).[41] Japan might thus be decentering from the bilateral alliance in order to (re)center on the US regional, and even global, alliance systems. In the context of the well-known hub-and-spokes metaphor for the regional bilateral alliance system linking the US with its Asian allies, Japan in effect may be working to build a multilateral "rim" linking the

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[39] Snyder, *Alliance Politics*.

[40] On the influence of norms and the halo effect, see Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, pp. 350-364.

[41] Nishihara, *Senraku kenkyū no shikaku* (Tokyo: Ningen no kagakushya, 1988), pp. 274-5.

spokes.

Motivations for decentering from the bilateral alliance and toward the US

regional alliance network might go beyond reducing the fear of abandonment to include

helping the US to shore up security cooperation with other allies, supplementing the US

role. The Philippines offers a recent example: the election of President Rodrigo Duterte

in 2016 led to a significant deterioration in relations that threatened security cooperation.

Japan, by building a good relationship with Duterte has been able to act as an intermediary

between Washington and Manila, ensuring that worsened relations do not overly damage

security cooperation. Japan has positioned itself to play a similar role between the US and

the military government in erstwhile ally Thailand.[42]

Structure of this Special Issue

The rest of this special issue consists of seven articles. First, T analyzes Japan's

lifting of its arms export ban through its new Three Principles on the Transfer of Defense

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[42] AFP-Jiji, "Philippines' Duterte says 'not a fan" of US, plots own course, *Japan Times*, September 10, 2016; Reiji Yoshida, "Tokyo rushes to analyze Duterte's remarks on Philippines' 'separation' from US," *Japan Times*, October 21, 2016; Jiji, "Duterte pays visit to MSDF destroyer in Subic Bay," *Japan Times*, June 5, 2017; AP, "Thai navy eyes China as it seeks approval to buy first submarines in 65 years," *Japan Times*, July 2, 2016; and Ian Storey, *Trends in Southeast Asia, Thailand's Post-Coup Relations with China and America: More Beijing, Less Washington* (Singapore: Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, 2015).

Equipment and Technology, which has opened up new strategic opportunities for Tokyo policy-makers to reinforce existing, and build new, security partnerships. Next Q examines Japan's decision to end its regional security isolationism and its passive dependence on the US for regional security by breaking with US opposition to regional security multilateralism, a decision that led Tokyo to propose creating a regional security forum through the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference (PMC), and to establish bilateral security dialogues with several neighboring states and ASEAN. Then R analyzes how Japan's policy toward regional security multilateralism has changed after the early 1990s, and especially how it has changed since the early 2000s as the regional power balance has undergone radical change.

X considers the role of the counter-piracy mission off the coast of Somalia in catalyzing rapid growth in bilateral security cooperation between Japan and the European Union. In two separate articles Y and S then examine Japan's new security partnerships with Australia and India. Z analyzes Japan's new security burgeoning security cooperation with the Philippines and Vietnam in the South China Sea.

Conclusions

T finds Japan's decision to remove the most onerous constraints on weapons export and co-development are driven by a long-run desire to maintain and develop an

indigenous defense industrial base, and to hedge both inside and outside of the US alliance.

However, this goal has been pursued through co-development with US allies and partners.

At the same time the main thrust of Japan's policy arms transfer policy, at least in the

short run, has been to further tighten force interoperability with the US military, a thrust

that encompasses both cooperation with US allies as well as with the US itself. Both goals

are currently limited by a lack of experience and capability necessary for international co-

development and weapons export. Overall, T's findings give greatest support to the

collective binding hypothesis, and secondarily to the hedging hypothesis for explaining

Japan's decentering from exclusive cooperation only with the US.

Q's article finds that by 1991 Japan had outgrown its previous centering on the

US as its sole security partner coupled with a strategy of regional security isolation.

Japan's growth into the second largest economic power created serious friction with its

sole security partner and simultaneously undermined its reliance on self-containment

within the US alliance to reassure other East Asian states that Japan would not remilitarize.

Japan responded by abandoning the US policy of opposing regional security

multilateralism and proposed a regional multilateral security forum, that while initially

opposed by the US, was in fact intended to support continued US forward deployment in

East Asia and reassure East Asian nations that Japan's growing role in regional and global

security would not pose a threat. Q's findings regarding Japan's decentering from the US alliance in regional security are thus most consistent with the collective binding hypothesis, but also to a lesser degree with the hedging and normal nation hypotheses.

R finds that since the early 2000s Japan's policy toward regional security multilateralism has shifted from decentering from the US by building new security partnerships and cooperation through the ARF, and toward recentering on the regional US alliance system. During this period Tokyo came to view regional institutions primarily as a means for promoting greater US and allied collaboration for coping with China's perceived challenges to the territorial and normative status-quo in the region, rather than as a means to diversify its security strategy beyond the US and its allies.

X concludes that Japan's ongoing eight-year-plus deployment of its military to participate in multilateral counter-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia has involved many, if not all, of the components of decentering processes. As one of the most active participants in these counter-piracy operations Japan has been able to deepen its understanding of governments and military forces other than those of the United States in various multilateral security dialogue and coordination fora, joint capacity building, and joint training exercises. While it is not argued that this will in any way weaken the US-Japan alliance, it demonstrates that Japan and the SDF can be a security partner for

EU and European NATO countries. This potentially gives Japan more options regarding whether or not to support specific US security policy decisions, and to participate in security missions that do not involve the US.

Y's article concludes that despite Japan's decentering from the US alliance by building an ostensibly independent security partnership with Australia, Tokyo is nonetheless still very much tied up the regional hub and spokes structure of the US system of bilateral alliances, most notably the US-Japan and US-Australia alliances. By finding that Japan is essentially decentering from the US in order to recenter on the regional US alliance system, and is attempting to build the "rim" of the hub and spokes system, Y's conclusions are most consistent with the collective binding hypothesis, and only secondarily with the hedging hypothesis. In her article S finds that Japan's decentering from an exclusive focus on the US and toward building a strategic partnership with India is in fact based on a desire to promote India as a counter balance to China, a goal that is entirely consistent with parallel US policy. Thus, S's findings regarding Japan's promotion of a strategic partnership with India give the greatest support to the collective binding hypothesis.

Z's article finds that Japan's building of security cooperation with the Philippines and Vietnam is driven by adverse changes in the regional balance of power,

and have been pursued in close cooperation with the US. Thus, Z's findings are most

consistent with the hedging hypothesis, specifically hedging against US relative decline,

and also the collective binding hypothesis, specifically the desire to more closely bind the

Philippines and Vietnam into regional hub and spoke system of US regional alliances and,

in the case of Vietnam, growing security partnerships.

All of the articles in this special issue demonstrate that Japan has decentered or

diversified its security policy away from exclusive reliance on the US since the end of the

Cold War. This has provided Japan with new options it did not have during the Cold War:

new options to support the US regional hub-and-spokes alliance network, and US allies

globally, and even new opportunities to support the US directly. So far this has been far

and away the main result of Japan's decentering. Nonetheless, this special issue also

demonstrates that decentering has given Japan new options to pursue a more independent

security policy. While Japan has so far not chosen to exercise these options, the fact that

they exist at all is an important change. With US global leadership currently in a period

of great uncertainty, it is not inconceivable, should this uncertainty continue, that Japan

will begin exercising these options to pursue a more independent security strategy.