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*The Changing Japan-US Alliance System:
The Return of Futenma Marine Air Station and
the New Japan-US Defense Guidelines*

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Introduction The Appearance of the New Guidelines

The US and Japanese government adopted a new set of Guidelines for US-Japan Defense Cooperation (hereafter referred to as the "New Guidelines") on September 23, 1997 at the bilateral Security Consultative Committee (SCC) meeting in New York. These New Guidelines were a revision of the original Guidelines for US-Japan Defense Cooperation agreed upon by the two governments in November 1978, and in keeping with the US-Japan Joint Declaration on Security issued in April 1996, the New Guidelines represented an expansion of the scope of US-Japan cooperation. Whereas the old Guidelines focused on a bilateral military cooperation in case of a crisis or conflict within Japanese territory, the New Guidelines would now focus on a crisis in the "areas surrounding" Japan. Moreover, the New Guidelines presented clear and specific examples of the kinds of actions that might be taken by Japan in case of a crisis. The Government of Japan presented legislation to the regular

session of the Japanese Diet that would allow it to implement the terms of cooperation with the US outlined in the New Guidelines. However, because this legislation cannot be deliberated given the current legislative calendar, it is expected that the Government will present the legislative package again in the extraordinary session of the Diet expected later this year.

The aim of this paper is to examine the process by which the New Guidelines were adopted, and to examine how this is related to the Okinawa base issue. Finally, the question of what kind of change is occurring in the US-Japan alliance system will be examined.

The Security Consultative Committee (SCC) is the forum used by the US and Japanese governments "for consultation as necessary pertaining to the implementation of the Treaty" as stipulated in Article 4 of the US-Japan Security Treaty. The SCC was established at the time that the revised bilateral security treaty was agreed upon by the US and Japan. At first, this Committee was comprised of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Director-General of the Defense Agency, on the Japanese side, and the US Ambassador to Japan, and the Commander in Chief of the Pacific (CINCPAC) on the US side. But since December 26, 1990, the SCC included higher ranking US participants, including the US Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense. Working level consultations had been held regularly and frequently between the US and Japanese governments, and in light of the fact that these four Cabinet level representatives only gathered to discuss US-Japan security issues in September 1996, it is fair to say that the US-Japan dialogue on security matters has proceeded largely under the direction of bureaucrats.

It is not clear when the expression "the review of the US-Japan Defense Cooperation Guidelines" first emerged. But it was used in April 1996 at the summit meeting between Japan's Prime Minister Hashimoto and US President Clinton in their joint declaration¹. Paragraph 5 of that US-Japan Joint Declaration on Security provided for "bilateral cooperation on security matters between the US and Japan," and the two governments recognized that "close bilateral defense cooperation is a central element of the US-Japan alliance." Moreover, the Declaration stated that that they would "continue to consult closely on defense policies and military postures, including the US force structure in Japan, which will best meet their requirements." In addition, in order to "build upon the close working relationship already established between the United States and Japan," the two leaders agreed to proceed with a review of the 1978 Guidelines on US-Japan Defense Cooperation. This is the first time that the "Guidelines Review" appeared in public statements. The Joint Declaration continued to note that these New Guidelines would "promote bilateral policy coordination, including studies on bilateral cooperation in dealing with situations that may emerge in the areas surrounding Japan and which will have an important influence on the peace and security of Japan." The logic underlying this statement was to link a "crisis in the areas surrounding Japan" to a "crisis in Japan." The standard for judging what would "have an important influence on the peace and security of Japan" was vague. Most likely, this would be left up to the Government of Japan.

In the 1978 Guidelines, the means of US-Japan defense cooperation in the case of a "crisis in Japan" - where force was used against Japan -

was outlined. But this type of clarity was avoided in the current studies regarding a "crisis in the areas surrounding Japan." Rather, the Joint Declaration revealed that the effort to develop New Guidelines by the US and Japanese governments would begin to examine means of cooperating in case of a regional crisis.

In addition, the recent effort to revise the Guidelines included reference to enhanced "policy coordination" between the US and Japanese governments. This introduced to the US-Japan security dialogue the notion that the entire Japanese government would be engaged in the process of cooperation with the United States rather than just the two bureaucracies responsible for security policy in Japan, the Defense Agency and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Kobe earthquake had produced greater interest in Japan in establishing a system of crisis management, and this also informed the Guidelines review process. The Japanese government wanted to develop the capacity to take a more active role in cooperating with the United States in the case of a regional crisis.

Why the Return of Futenma Air Station?

The US-Japan Joint Declaration on Security was originally scheduled for release at the US-Japan summit meeting scheduled in conjunction with the Osaka APEC conference held in November 1995. However, because of domestic politics in the United States, President Clinton's visit to Japan was canceled at the last minute. As a result, the Joint Declaration was postponed. The draft of the Joint Declaration was

reported by the Japanese press after the APEC meeting, and the following references were made to the effort to improve US-Japan defense cooperation.

The two leaders were to emphasize the need for continued US-Japan security dialogue, and with regard to the review of security cooperation procedures being undertaken by the two governments, the Prime Minister and the President were to commit themselves to the following:

- In addition to Japan's continuing support for the US military presence in Japan, the Japanese Prime Minister was to emphasize that the "close defense cooperation" between the US and Japan was central to Japan's security and to the stability of the region.

- Moreover, the Prime Minister was to affirm that while Japan would pursue various contributions to its own security based on cooperation with the United States, Japan had no intention of becoming a military power.

- In response, the US President would affirm its commitment to its global strategy of forward military deployments, including its military presence in the East Asian region where it had vital interests. He would express the US plan to continue to maintain military forces at the level of approximately 100,000 personnel and to maintain its commitments to its allies in the region. In addition, the US President was to state that US forces in Japan would be maintained at the level of 47,000.

This draft was also to announce that the two governments had decided to continue their efforts to coordinate security policies. This effort was designed to increase the effectiveness of US and Japanese security planning, and would be based on the US East Asia Strategy

Report and the soon-to-be announced National Defense Program Outline (referred to in Japan as the "Taiko").

In other words, there was no direct reference in this draft of the US-Japan Joint Declaration to the idea of "revising the US-Japan Guidelines." But it is likely that the references to reviewing the security cooperation procedures within the alliance and to achieving close defense cooperation between the two countries were, in substance, referring to the review of the Guidelines. This does not address the question, however, of why the November draft did not include the idea of revising the Guidelines. Or, to put it another way, why was this reference to a review of the Guidelines included in the Joint Declaration that was finally issued in April 1996? What occurred within the US-Japan dialogue over these four months that produced this new initiative?

According to Funabashi Yoichi's account of the alliance dialogue in *Domei Horyu*,² a number of events shaped the negotiations between the US and Japan over the task of redefining the alliance during this time. Most obvious among them were the rape by US servicemen in Okinawa that prompted the "Okinawa base problem," the interim report issued by the US-Japan Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO) that was charged with overseeing policy attention to base consolidation in Okinawa, the crisis in the Taiwan Straits, and the growing pressure from within both the US and Japanese governments for the issuance of a US-Japan joint statement on the future of the alliance.

Funabashi states that Prime Minister Hashimoto officially made the request of President Clinton for the return of Futenma Marine Air Station, a major and problematic US base in Okinawa, during their

summit meeting in Santa Monica in February 1996. Prime Minister Hashimoto wanted the Futenma return as part of his effort to produce a "visible reduction and consolidation" of the US bases in Okinawa in response to the local protest movement. Funabashi argues that Hashimoto saw this not simply as an issue of US base use, but as an issue that could fundamentally affect the future sustainability of the US-Japan alliance.

As a result, on April 12, 1996, Prime Minister Hashimoto and US Ambassador to Japan, Walter Mondale, stood side-by-side to announce the US-Japan agreement to return Futenma. For Hashimoto, the task of getting the US government to understand the importance of Futenma's return was undoubtedly as urgent as the efforts to "redefine" the US-Japan alliance. This agreement was seen by both governments as a major breakthrough towards a final solution to the Okinawa "base problem." For Prime Minister Hashimoto, the US acceptance of his request for Futenma's return meant that Japan also needed to give the US some of what it wanted. Perhaps the Prime Minister felt he had played his hand in the negotiations with the US over security cooperation in the attempt to address the Okinawa base problem. If so, then what was the US *quid pro quo*?

Five days after the announcement of the US-Japan agreement to return Futenma Air Station, the US and Japan issued their Joint Declaration on Security on April 17. This time, there was clear reference to the "revision of the US-Japan Defense Guidelines." In other words, immediately after Japan gained the US agreement to return this base in Okinawa, the US received Japan's promise for active cooperation

with US forces in the case of a regional crisis. While this explanation seems persuasive and plausible, it would be a mistake to think that the Futenma return was traded in return for Japanese concessions on a new set of bilateral defense Guidelines. At this point in time, there is no evidence that this was the bargain made. However, the evolution of the US-Japan conversation on the return of Futenma and the conversation on the revision of the bilateral Guidelines were not unrelated.

The Return of Futenma and the New Guidelines

In the four months between the preparation of the draft of a US-Japan security declaration in November 1995, and its announcement as a US-Japan agreement in the spring of 1996, the strategic importance of the US forces stationed in Okinawa had been enhanced by the Taiwan crisis. This was also a time when the US and Japanese governments felt it urgent that the foundation of the bilateral alliance in the post-cold war era be secured and the crisis over the US bases in Okinawa resolved.

In February 1996, at the summit meeting between Prime Minister Hashimoto and President Clinton in Santa Monica, the Prime Minister's personal desire to achieve the return of Futenma Air Station marked the beginning of serious policy attention to the various issues associated with its return. A number of questions were raised by the possibility of Futenma's return. For example, what conditions would the US Marine Corps place on the base's return? How would the two governments accommodate the Marines? Where would the Marine units stationed on Futenma be relocated? In this sense, the Prime Minister's request

meant that the central task for the policy makers in the US Department of Defense was to convince the US Marines to give up Futenma in an effort to solve the Okinawa base problem. Department of Defense Secretary William Perry met with former Deputy Assistant Secretary Richard Armitage in October of the previous year, and was apparently convinced that a "symbolic base return" was needed in response to the demands of the Okinawan people. As a result, the Secretary became convinced that a policy review on the possibility for Futenma's return should be undertaken'. In this sense, after the Santa Monica summit, the Pentagon (Department of Defense) had the President's approval to respond to Prime Minister Hashimoto's request for Futenma's return, and it was this that provided the means by which the civilians within the Pentagon could attempt to convince the US Marines to consider giving up one of their key bases.

Under these circumstances, the relationship between the US-Japan conversation over the return of Futenma Marine Air Station and the New Guidelines becomes somewhat clearer. Of course, even if there was a direct trade-off, there was no need for a major statement of agreement between the President and the Prime Minister. Rather, the relationship between these two issues should be seen as part of the larger process of agreement between security policy makers in the US and Japanese governments on the "redefinition" of the US-Japan alliance. The fact that policy makers in both countries shared a common understanding on how to respond to the Okinawa base issue reveals the extent to which this task of strengthening (redefining) the US-Japan alliance was valued at the working level of both governments.

Nonetheless, there was work to be done yet in this attempt to strengthen the US-Japan alliance. Security relations between the US and Japan were not fully under the control of the bureaucrats in the respective governments. A number of important factors had yet to be clarified, such as the role of political leaders, the legal basis for implementing the New Guidelines, the response of the military in both countries, and the public reaction to this new policy initiative. When Hashimoto Ryutaro became Prime Minister, and assumed the task of attempting to cope with the growing crisis in Okinawa over the US bases in the wake of the 1995 rape, the US-Japan alliance dialogue began to receive greater political attention by Japan's political leaders. Prime Minister Hashimoto felt that a solution to the "Okinawa problem" was a domestic political priority, and as such, he took an active role in moving the dialogue on "redefining" the US-Japan alliance forward. He lent political support to what had been primarily a bureaucratic effort when he issued the Joint Declaration and in his attention to the completion of the New Guidelines. However, despite his efforts to make the passage of new emergency legislation in Japan necessary for the implementation of the New Guidelines a priority, his Cabinet was beset with problems over financial reform, and he was forced to resign.

In December 1996, the Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO) issued its final report on the Okinawa bases, and in this report, the idea of building a sea-based heliport off the coast of Camp Schwab in the northern part of the main island of Okinawa was put forward. This was the solution to where to relocate the Marine units currently stationed on Futenma, but the SACO recommendation encountered

difficulty when it became clear that local residents in Nago City, where this facility was to be built, were divided over the issue of building a new base. In December 1997, a local referendum held in Nago produced a majority opposed to the construction of a new base there, and in February 1998, the Governor of Okinawa, Ota Masahide, announced that he would reject the Japanese government's proposal to construct the proposed heliport.

According to the materials made public by the US government on the heliport⁴, this new heliport would only have a maximum capacity of 80 aircraft compared with Futenma's ability to handle up to 300 aircraft. Also, the new facility would have a shorter runway (1500 meters) compared with Futenma's (2700 meters), making it primarily a facility for helicopters rather than fixed-wing aircraft.

In official statements on the new base, the US military and the Japanese government viewed this new facility somewhat differently. Whereas the US military referred to this new base as a sea-based facility, the Japanese officials simply referred to it as a sea heliport and intentionally emphasized that its small scale. It is particularly clear from the US materials that the US government was less interested in the issue of the scale of the base than it was in the operational functions that would be performed there. It is not clear why the US government concluded that it could accept this as a replacement for Futenma, particularly considering the fact that in times of crisis Futenma could handle up to five times the number of aircraft based there during peacetime. The new heliport had a limited capacity, and therefore, represented a significant reduction in capability for the US military during a crisis.

It is worth considering the New Guidelines, and the idea that the Japanese government would provide "support for US military activities" in case of a crisis. As examples of how this might be achieved, the New Guidelines included reference to the US military's use of SDF bases and civilian ports and airfields in Japan in case of a crisis. If the Japanese government could guarantee that the US military could use these facilities (through the passage of domestic legislation in Japan), then it is likely that the Department of Defense used this to convince the US Marine Corps to agree to relocating their forces to a smaller air facility. Because the Futenma return was ostensibly initiated by Prime Minister Hashimoto, he and his government were then obliged to act precipitously to prepare the necessary domestic legislation that would give the Japanese government the ability to implement the new Guidelines. This is the connection between the return of Futenma Air Station and the effort to agree upon a new set of US-Japan defense cooperation guidelines.

It was precisely because the request for Futenma's return came from Prime Minister Hashimoto that the Hashimoto Cabinet was under such pressure to come up with legislation that would make implementation of the New Guidelines possible. However, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) was not as enthusiastic as Prime Minister Hashimoto about the new emergency powers legislation. As the economic recession and the financial crisis in Japan grew, the strength of the Hashimoto Cabinet weakened. Not only were Hashimoto's efforts to solve the "Okinawa problem" affected, but the LDP dropped the issue of emergency powers legislation from its agenda. Prime Minister Obuchi, who succeeded

Hashimoto, publicly announced that his Cabinet would be dedicated to economic reform, and there was little indication that any energy would be given to either the "Okinawa problem" or to the new Guidelines-related legislation. With the new political leadership in Tokyo, it was obvious that if no political resources were to be spent on Okinawa, then there was little interest in tackling the question of the problematic new defense legislation.

The economic problems confronting the new Obuchi Cabinet do not fully explain this lack of interest in tackling the issues of the Okinawa bases and the New Guidelines. Within the LDP, there has traditionally been a rather passive attitude with respect to US-Japan defense cooperation. The United States government, when feeling critical of Japan, typically resorts to the "free rider" argument, and over the postwar years, Japan's conservative governments have responded to US demands in the security field in a rather minimal fashion. The underlying effort visible in the Joint Declaration on Security issued at the Clinton-Hashimoto summit to transform this relationship from one of "free riding" into a "global partnership" in the security realm ultimately failed to change this attitude of resistance within the Japanese political leadership.

The frustration within the US government over the declining enthusiasm within the Hashimoto and Obuchi Cabinets for making progress on the relocation of the US Marines at Futenma to a Sea-Based Facility and the new legislation required to implement the New Guidelines is high. Moreover, there are signs that efforts to address the base problem in Okinawa, initially guided by the civilians within the Pentagon (former Secretary of Defense Perry and Deputy Assistant Secretary

Campbell), are now more directly influenced by the interests of the US Marines.

Nonetheless, this is not a full explanation of the dynamics that led to the agreement to return Futenma. If national security planning is seen as an attempt to prepare for a worst case scenario, there is little doubt that the US military was concerned about the political trends that were revealed as the Diet debated the terms and the means of implementing the New Guidelines. In particular, the views of those who relied on the use of Futenma Air Station, the US Marine Corps, needs to be given greater attention.

The US Marines and Futenma Air Station

From the Marines' perspective, the return of Futenma Air Station raised a number of larger issues. For example, the Marine Corps had for some time felt strongly about the need to modernize its existing air facilities in Japan. If the Government of Japan was offering to build a new, highly capable facility that would meet the needs of the US Marines, then this option would be more attractive than the idea of re-vamping existing facilities on Futenma under the Facilities Improvement Program (FIP). It did not matter to the Marine Corps how this facility would be built - on landfill, on a sea-based platform, or on land. What would be most important would be that the new facility be equipped with state of the art capability.

Of course, these various proposals for considering where to locate and build the new heliport had different merits. The Marine Corps

preference was most likely the landfill option, since it had much to recommend it in terms of the distance it would provide between the Marine flight path and the local community. For this same reason, the sea-base facility would also have been attractive, but an airfield based on land would provide greater stability. Therefore, the sea-based option and the land option were probably rated about the same by the Marines. Clearly, these preferences were influenced by the public sensitivity to the issue within Okinawa, and therefore, the weight of local reaction probably made the second-best option, the sea-based facility, more attractive in the end.

Also, the Marines also needed to consider the issue of future plans to introduce a next generation attack helicopter, the MV-22, to Okinawa. This new aircraft was due to be deployed to all Marine units between the year 2001 and 2014. The eruption of a protest movement against the bases in Okinawa made this plan politically problematic, and there were growing concerns that it would not be possible to introduce the MV-22 to Okinawa. If Marine policy makers watched the situation in Okinawa in the wake of the 1995 rape, then they had to reach the conclusion that political problems with the bases there were a fact of life. In considering the relocation of Futenma based units, therefore, both governments understood that they needed to minimize the impact of the Marines on local residents if they were reduce the energy of the opposition movement. The Defense Facilities Administration Agency, in fact, attempted to persuade local residents in Nago City by offering fiscal incentives. Only then could the Marines prepare the way for the possibility of deploying the MV-22 on Okinawa.

Moreover, the political risks associated with the continued use of

Futenma Air station cannot be ignored. Located in the midst of Ginowan City, Futenma poses a problem for the US and Japanese governments. If an accident were to occur, the impact on public opinion would be immense. Depending on the seriousness of the accident, all US bases in Okinawa, indeed all US bases in Japan, could become the focus of protest, and calls for a withdrawal of the US military in Japan would increase. For different political reasons, neither the US and Japanese governments nor the Okinawa Prefectural Government can afford to allow Futenma to remain where it is. Herein lies the answer perhaps to the question of why the Marine Corps agreed to return Futenma and accept a smaller substitute facility. At this time, it is not possible to offer conclusive evidence on this point, but it is likely that the above factors played a key role in the thinking of the Marine Corps. If the Marines were to agree to give up an indispensable facility that sustained their forward deployment on Okinawa, then they would need solid assurances of a suitable replacement. Of course, this decision was undoubtedly also affected by longer run political calculations on the part of the Marine Corps about their future. In an atmosphere of support for US forces reductions and budget cuts within the United States, the Marine Corps probably saw the offer of a new facility, funded and supported by the Japanese government, as an attractive offer.

The greatest attraction to returning Futenma Air Station to civilian use, and to building a new facility, is without a doubt the fiscal incentives offered to the United States Marines by the Japanese government. Not only is the Japanese government offering to pay the full cost of constructing this new facility, but there are those within the US

military that are convinced that the Japanese Government should assume some or most of the costs of maintaining the facility.

Even though the US and Japanese governments have argued that relocation of Futenma needs to be done within Okinawa prefecture, there is no reason why a sea-based facility is the only option. Given that the Japanese government and Okinawa prefectural government have reached an impasse on the sea-based facility option, the US Marines may very well be waiting for an opportunity for their first choice, the landfill option, to reemerge in the policy discussions. At that time, it is possible that a comprehensive consolidation of the US Marine bases on Okinawa could be pursued, and an air facility could be built at Camp Schwab. If such a comprehensive consolidation plan emerges, it could include some sort of linkage with a reduction in size of the current port project planned for the coastline of Urasoe City off of Camp Kinser, and this would be welcomed by the Urasoe residents. We should expect to see some debate over both a possible landfill project around Camp Schwab and the port project in Urasoe as deliberations over the base issue in Okinawa continue.

The US Military and "Omoiyari Yosan"

It goes without saying that the greatest attraction for the US government in the discussions over the return of Futenma Marine Air Station and the construction of a new facility is that the Japanese government will assume the fiscal burden for the entire process. In discussions thus far, it is clear that the sea-based facility would be built by the Japanese

government. Moreover, if possible, the US military is arguing that the maintenance costs of such a facility should also be born by the Japanese government.

In the GAO Report issued on the Sea-Based Facility⁵, the figure presented for the construction of the base was between 2.4 to 4.9 billion dollars. The impact of this cost on Japan's defense budget (the 1998 annual budget was 35.8 billion) would be tremendous. The GAO Report also noted that there were some within the military who were arguing that the Japanese government should assume some or all of the maintenance costs of such a facility. The maintenance costs of Futenma are approximately 2.8 million annually, but the new sea-based facility is estimated to required expenditures of 200 million over the course of its forty year lifetime. This is seventy-one times as much as Futenma costs. The question of who would be responsible for the maintenance costs of this facility would be subject to negotiation, of course, but the fact remains that the construction costs would clearly be the responsibility of the Japanese government. In other words, it is the Japanese taxpayers who would pay for the new base.

If the sea-based facility is built in Okinawa as planned, it will be the first time in the history of the US-Japan alliance that the Japanese government has built a brand new base for the US military. Since the end of the war and US occupation, the Japanese government has provided the US military with existing facilities, and this is a significant departure from the way in which the US military bases have been handled in the past. In this sense, the terms of Japan's provision of this new base needs to be carefully reviewed, and perhaps a new framework for

considering the way in which the US and Japan consider the provision of facilities within Japan to the US military should be devised.

If, however, a new sea-based facility is not built, then the Marines will have to reconsider their forward deployment in Okinawa. Of course, their judgment will undoubtedly be affected by whether or not they can continue to have stable use of the dangerous Futenma Air Station. If uncertainty over the use of Futenma increases, then the greatest asset of the Marine Corps - their ability to combine ground and air forces in their operations - will be cut in half by the lack of an alternative heliport option. For the Marines, this will mean that the attractiveness of Okinawa as a base for their units will also be halved, and they will then be forced to reexamine Okinawa as a base for forward deployment. It is precisely because it maintains their operational functions that the Marines have clung to the notion of building a sea-based facility (or even a land-based or landfill option). Which comes first - the acceptance by the people of Okinawa of a sea-based facility or the reassessment by the Marines of their forward deployment strategy - will be a test of wills. During this stand-off, a variety of measures have been adopted by the Japanese government in an effort to fulfill its responsibility to provide the US with bases to soften the attitudes of the Okinawan people. But it is clear that there are very few options available to the current Obuchi Cabinet. With little incentive to actively pursue greater security cooperation with the US, and in the midst of an increasingly severe fiscal situation, the Japanese government today may have few resources available for addressing the Okinawa base problem.

Japan's Provision of Bases to the US

What sort of Japanese contribution to security cooperation was judged most valuable by the US, and considered most feasible for the Japanese government? In order to examine the recent negotiations between the US and Japanese governments on the post cold war alliance, a look back over the history of the US-Japan alliance is needed. The "product of compromise" produced by this lengthy process of negotiation between the US and Japanese governments deserves some attention. Under the original security treaty (ratified in September 1951 and effective the following April), the Japanese government wanted the US to maintain military forces within and around its territory for the purpose of Japan's defense. In return, the US promised to maintain some of its forces within and around Japan for the purposes of peace and security. In Article 1 of that treaty, the right of the US to maintain bases (base rights) in Japan was recognized, and the purpose of those US military forces was stipulated as: the maintenance of international peace and stability in the Far East, the suppression of civil disorder or strife within Japan, and the protection of Japan against external aggression.

In other words, the old security treaty was in effect an exchange of base rights between Japan, which wanted US forces to remain, and this constituted in effect the US assumption of the role of providing for Japan's security. However, there was no reference in the treaty to a commitment by the United States to defend Japan. Article 2, which stipulated the conditions governing US deployments, was the basis for a Status of Forces Agreement between the two governments, and in

Article 24 of the SOFA, there was reference to the US role in the defense of Japan only in the form of regulations governing the US and Japanese joint defense responsibility. This SOFA agreement was concluded in February 25, after the original security treaty had been ratified, and it went into effect at the same time as the treaty.

In giving the US base rights in Japan, this treaty did not function to limit the US bases (in terms of their location, number and/or scale), but rather it took the form of legitimizing the presence of US military throughout Japan. Since US forces were already spread throughout Japan, the treaty simply acknowledged the status quo. US base rights meant that the Japanese government had the obligation to provide the US with bases, and it was not the case that these bases would be provided after the treaty went into effect. Rather, the US military bases existing at the end of the US Occupation of Japan were recognized under the original security treaty, and this became the basis upon which the notion of base rights was considered within the alliance.

According to recent research, the reason that the Japanese government (in effect, then Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru) accepted the old security treaty, which was obviously to the advantage of the United States, was that giving the US base rights would give Japan what it wanted - a peace treaty that would return Japan's independence and a means of resisting US demands for Japanese rearmament. By giving the US unconditional access to bases on Japanese territory in the treaty, the Japanese government achieved what it needed at the time. Today, if we evaluate in hindsight the balance sheet in this episode of negotiations, there are both pro and con arguments about this compromise. Of course,

at the time, there was criticism of Yoshida Shigeru's decision to conclude this treaty from both progressives and conservatives, who wanted a comprehensive peace treaty.

The revised US-Japan security treaty concluded in January 1960 explicitly included the trade-off made by the US and Japan in Articles 5 and 6. Along with this new approach, the treaty was not simply a US-Japan security treaty, but was expanded to incorporate a broader notion of the US-Japan alliance under the title of "The US-Japan Treaty on Mutual Cooperation and Security." The US government interprets this to mean that not only is cooperation between the us and Japan to be mutual, but so too is the security cooperation. In contrast, the Japanese government's interpretation is that mutual cooperation - not mutual security - was the aim of the revised treaty. This difference in interpretation of the title, and therefore the purpose of the 1960 treaty, reveals the gaps in the perceptions of the two governments.

The revision of the treaty in 1960 was aimed at stabilizing US-Japan relations over the long term. In practical terms, based on the premises of continued conservative rule in Japan and continued efforts to strengthen Japan's defense capability, this was an effort to create a more equal treaty. In Article 5, US-Japan joint operations in the defense of Japan are stipulated. In Article 6, US base rights in Japan are recognized, and the dual purpose of the US forces in Japan is to provide for Japan's security and to maintain peace and stability in the Far East.

The result of compromise in this case was that in return for the assumption by the US of joint responsibility for Japan's defense requested by Japan, the US got a clear statement of what it wanted. Not only

would US forces in Japan be used for Japan's defense, but also for a crisis or contingency in the region. In return for a clear commitment to a joint effort to provide for Japan's defense, the Japanese government continued to bear responsibility under the revised treaty that it had accepted in the old treaty, the responsibility for providing bases to the US that would be used not only in the event of an attack against Japan but also a contingency in the areas surrounding Japan.

When this revised treaty was extended to include Okinawa after it was reverted to Japanese sovereignty in 1972, the US military bases that had been built under the US military administration were transformed into bases that would be provided by the Japanese government to the US military. This "costume change" continues to be the basis under which the bases in Okinawa are managed today.

Future Prospects Nullifying the Commitment to Prior Consultation

When the US-Japan security treaty was revised in 1960, there was an effort by the Japanese government at the time to ensure that some sort of equality was incorporated into the new arrangement with the US. Then Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke exchanged a formal diplomatic notes with the US Ambassador referring to the need for "prior consultation" with the Japanese government with regard to the use of US military forces stationed on Japanese territory. The United States, under this arrangement, was to consult with the Japanese government prior to the use of its forces in Japan. This system of "prior consultation" was to go into effect in cases where a "major change of deployment" of US

forces in Japan was undertaken, where "major change of weaponry" was made (in other words, the introduction of nuclear weapons), and where "combat operations were conducted from Japan" that were not for the purpose of Japan's defense. The obligation imposed on the United States to consult with the Japanese government in cases where it would use US forces in Japan was widely interpreted as the introduction of a greater equality in the relationship.

To date, this system of "prior consultation" has not been implemented. The question is whether or not circumstances which would require "prior consultation" will emerge in the future. Research by Sakamoto Yoshikazu of Osaka University reveals that the US and Japanese governments have an understanding that a crisis on the Korean peninsula, and the use of US forces stationed in Japan, would not require "prior consultation." With regard to the introduction by the US of nuclear weapons onto Japanese territory, he also argues that the Japanese government has already allowed the passage and docking of US naval vessels equipped with nuclear weapons. Furthermore, in a secret memorandum exchanged by Prime Minister Sato and President Nixon in 1972 during negotiations over the reversion of Okinawa to Japan, the Japanese government confirmed that it would allow the re-introduction of nuclear weapons into Okinawa in case of a crisis or war. It is probable that in the case of an armed conflict on the Korean peninsula, therefore, this secret agreement between the two governments would mean that ships carrying nuclear weapons would pass through Japanese ports, and in such a contingency, the "prior consultation" notes that accompany the current treaty would not be put into effect. In other words, the US government

- without consulting the government that offers it bases - would be able to have free use of the forces and facilities currently in Japan.

Despite this, the Kishi Cabinet that worked to revise the treaty in 1960, and subsequent LDP Cabinets, have maintained that this system of "prior consultation" is politically necessary. In order to gain the approval of the Japanese people for the use of US forces stationed in Japan not only for Japan's defense but also for the case of a crisis or war in the region, it was necessary for the LDP governments to argue for the need for "equality" in the US-Japan security relationship. The memory of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings, and the desire to not be again pulled into a war, remains vivid among the Japanese people, and this undoubtedly has informed the Japanese government's demand for the US to engage in "prior consultation" over the use of its military in Japan.

The New Guidelines announced in September 1997 introduced new elements to the process of US-Japan security cooperation. The old Guidelines adopted in 1978 included in their preface references to the system of "prior consultation," to the Japanese Constitution, and the three non-nuclear principles. In contrast, the New Guidelines referred to the US-Japan security treaty, the Constitution, Japan's commitment to "exclusive self-defense," and the three non-nuclear principles. The "prior consultation" system was conspicuously absent, and the US-Japan alliance and Japan's military doctrine of "exclusive self-defense" was added. The reference to the US-Japan security treaty is natural, given that both sets of guidelines are designed within the framework of the treaty. But the elimination of reference to the system of "prior consultation" and

the addition of the doctrine of "exclusive self-defense" have some significance, and should be given further study.

In reading the publicly announced text of the New Guidelines, it is clear that the contingency envisioned in their preparation was a conflict on the Korean peninsula. It is easy to imagine that in the process of US-Japan negotiations over these new guidelines, policy makers within both governments may have seen the commitment to "prior consultation" as simply a political legacy of the early years of the alliance, and sought to erase it from the new policy initiative. The logic that may have emerged was that a crisis or conflict in the areas surrounding Japan would invariably affect Japan's own defense, and therefore, no prior consultation would be required. However, this sidesteps the question of how the public and the legislature in Japan see the relationship between a conflict on the Korean peninsula and Japan's own security. The system of "prior consultation" was designed to guarantee that equality was the basis of US-Japan security cooperation, and erasing this idea of consultation from the planning of future security cooperation was perhaps done too hastily.

Why is it that the New Guidelines nullifies this system of "prior consultation"? The answer may lie in the security debates that have taken place in Japan since 1960. From the fall of 1995, however, when Okinawans began to call for the removal of US military bases from their island, there was a broad tendency among the Japanese public to see this as simply an "Okinawan problem" rather than as Japan's problem. The question that needs to be addressed is how to consider Japan's security policy - a policy that has, in the past, placed an excessive burden on

Okinawa prefecture - in the future. Also, how can the Japanese government guarantee the safety of those Japanese that live in Okinawa (the individual school girl that was raped in September 1995 is a symbolic example)? It is troubling that these two questions have not been fully addressed in Japan.

¹The US-Japan Joint Declaration on Security: Allilance for the 21st Century, Joint Declaration released in Tokyo during the State Visit by President Clinton to Japan, April 17, 1996.

²Funabashi Yoichi, Doumei Horyu (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1997), p. 484.

³Funabashi, pp. 24-25.

⁴Department of Defense, "Sea-Based Facility: Functional Analysis and Concept of Operations, MCAS Futenma Relocation," FACD, Vol. 1, Executive Report (September 3, 1997), p. 4.

⁵United States General Accounting Office, "Overseas Presence: Issues Involved in Reducing the Impact of the US Military Presence on Okinawa," (GAO/NSIAD-98-66), pp. 37-40.