

# Japan–Europe Security Cooperation: How to “Use” NATO and the EU\*

Michito Tsuruoka\*\*

## Abstract

There is growing room for security cooperation between Japan and Europe as both actors expand their respective international political and security roles. This means that greater benefit can be gained from such cooperation. This article will examine how Japan can “use” the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU) as a means to advance its policy objectives around the world. It will be argued that NATO can be seen as (1) a political partner, (2) an operational partner, (3) another means for cooperation with the U.S., and (4) a multilateral school. In a similar manner, the EU can be seen as (1) a political and foreign policy partner, (2) an operational partner, and (3) as a “non-American” partner. Regarding these aspects, this article will argue that cooperation with NATO and the EU from a Japanese point of view is of great value. Nevertheless, the meaning of Japan–Europe security cooperation has long been overlooked.

## Introduction: Looking at Japan–Europe security cooperation

Not many Japanese experts on foreign and security policy pay regular attention to security cooperation with Europe. This is hardly surprising taking into account the centrality of the Japan–United States (US) Security Treaty and Japan’s geographical location in Asia. However, there is precedent where Japan and Europe engaged in serious dialogue on security issues of mutual concern. Under the Yasuhiro Nakasone administration, Tokyo expressed its concerns about the potential ramifications for Japan and Asia of the negotiations regarding the intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) between the US and the Soviet Union in the 1980s. The main focus of the negotiations was on the European theater and Japan feared that a disarmament agreement applicable only to Europe would be reached at the expense of Japan’s security interests. At the G7 Summit held in Williamsburg, the United States, in May 1983, Nakasone tried hard to make Japan’s case and succeeded in inserting a phrase that stated that the security of member countries was “indivisible,” recognizing that the security of Europe and Japan were linked.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, when the EU tried to lift its arms embargo on China between 2004 and 2005, Japan, along with the US and other countries in the region, presented vehement opposition. While this controversy caused negative perceptions of the EU in Japan, it in the

---

\* This article is an English translation from the original Japanese version with the same title published in *Boei Kenkyusho Kiyō*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (October 2010). Some parts of the article are updated reflecting the developments after the publication of the original version. Also, some references to Japanese literatures have been deleted.

\*\* Senior Research Fellow, Regional Studies Department, National Institute for Defense Studies.

<sup>1</sup> For more on the course of events leading up to and following this G7 Summit, see Seki Tomoda, *Nyūmon, Gendai Nihon Gaiko: Nicchu Kokko Seijoka Igo* [Introduction to Contemporary Japanese Diplomacy: After the Normalization of Japan–Sino Relations], Chūko-Shinsho, 1988; Makoto Iokibe, Motoshige Ito, and Katsuyuki Yakushiji, *Okamoto Yukio: Gembashugi wo Tsuranuita Gaikokan* [Yukio Okamoto: A Diplomat Who Stayed on the Frontline], Asahi Shimbun, 2008.

end helped raise Japan's awareness of the EU as an international actor and launched the Japan–EU strategic dialogue on the East Asian security environment.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, it is still undeniable that the idea of Japan–Europe security dialogue and cooperation has yet to be established as one of the pillars of Japan's foreign and security policy. Meanwhile, within the context of Japan–Europe relations, interest has long concentrated around economic and trade issues, rather than political and security-related issues. The development of post-WWII Japan–Europe relations, and Japan–EU relations in particular, has thus often been described as a “history of trade disputes.”<sup>3</sup>

Against this backdrop, there are two major reasons that Japan–Europe security cooperation needs to be reconsidered from the policy and research perspectives. First, both the possibility and necessity for strengthening Japan–Europe security cooperation is growing. Changes on the European side include the reality that both NATO and the EU have expanded their commitments beyond Europe, most prominently evidenced by their engagement in Afghanistan. The EU has developed the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), which is now called Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) under the Lisbon Treaty. Europe's security interests, in short, can no longer be defended solely within Europe. At the same time, Japan has expanded its involvement in international peace operations, including through the use of the Self-Defense Forces (SDF). This has resulted in a substantial overlap of interests and areas of activity between Japan and Europe regarding foreign and security policy. For instance, in Iraq and in the Indian Ocean, the SDF and European forces cooperated closely together. One concrete example is the antipiracy operations started in 2009 in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia. Whenever SDF troops are dispatched overseas, it is likely that they will meet European forces on the ground and conduct activities in parallel.

At the same time, as exemplified by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit to NATO in January 2007 and Prime Minister Taro Aso's speech in Berlin in May 2009, there have even been calls for enhancing Japan–Europe security cooperation at the political level in recent years. This overture to Europe is of strategic significance and can be positioned in the context of expanding Japan's diplomatic horizons. Aso's “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity”<sup>4</sup> initiative, announced in November 2006, highlighted the importance of cooperation with NATO and EU under the premise that they are powerful partners in promoting freedom and prosperity. As long as Japan seeks to develop value-based diplomacy, developing relations with Europe — a grouping of advanced democratic states that share similar values as Japan — in addition to maintaining vital relations with the US

---

<sup>2</sup> For more on this problem within the context of Japan–EU relations, see, for instance Toshiro Ikemura, “Nichio Gaiko ni Mirai wa Aru ka? [Is there a Future for Japan–Europe Diplomacy?],” *Kan*, No. 21, April 2005; Noriyuki Wakisaka, “EU no Taichu Buki Kinyu Kaijo: Beiochu no Konran o Do Kaihi Suru ka? [EU's Lifting of the Arms Embargo on China: Is US–EU–China conflict avoidable?],” *Asahi Soken Report AIR21*, No. 180, May 2005. Arguably the most detailed analysis regarding the EU's side of the story can be found in May-Britt U. Stumbaum, *The European Union and China: Decision-Making in EU Foreign and Security Policy towards the People's Republic of China*, Nomos, 2009, chap. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Toshiro Tanaka, “Nichi–EU: Atarashii Partnership no Tanjo [Japan–EU: Birth of a New Partnership],” in Terumasa Nakanishi, Toshiro Tanaka, Yasuro Nakai, and Yuzuru Kaneko, *Naze Europe to Te o Musubu no ka — Nichio: Shinjidai no Sentaku* [Why Join Hnads with Europe: A New Era of Japan–EU Choices], Mita Publishing, 1996, p. 29.

<sup>4</sup> “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity: Japan's Expanding Diplomatic Horizons,” Address by Taro Aso, Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Japan Institute of International Affairs, Tokyo, November 30, 2006.

is a rational strategy for Japan.<sup>5</sup> The fact of the matter is that, besides the US, Australia, India, the Republic of Korea, many of the world’s major powers that possess the will and capacity to fulfill their responsibility in terms of international relations and security, and that also share the same values as Japan, reside in Europe.

Despite the fact that the concept of the “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity” is no longer used as a guiding principle of Japan’s foreign relations, it does not seem that the government led by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), which took power in September 2009, has completely denied the premises of the concept. Along with the idea of strengthening relations with India, the idea of enhancing cooperation with Europe is still maintained. Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama (2009–2010) frequently made reference to Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, one of the fathers of the idea of European integration, as the source of his own political philosophy of “fraternity.”<sup>6</sup> This may not be a direct call for Japan–Europe security cooperation, but it is safe to say that this was the first time ever that a Japanese political leader so avidly mentioned the European experience of reconciliation and regional integration and the need for the Japanese to learn from it when considering an East Asian Community.

A more immediate reason why it is now time to examine Japan–Europe security cooperation is that the Japan–EU Joint Action Plan adopted in December 2001 has reached its 10-year period, and Japan and the EU are exploring a new framework for Japan–EU cooperation. As a preliminary step, a Japan–EU Summit held in April 2010 agreed to establish a joint High-Level Group for the purpose of identifying options for setting up a new framework for the relationship.<sup>7</sup> After deliberations by the High-Level Group and last minute political negotiations, it was decided at a 2011 Summit to “start the parallel negotiations” for an FTA and what is often called a framework agreement “covering political, global and other sectoral cooperation in a comprehensive manner.”<sup>8</sup>

Second, Japan–Europe security cooperation remains under-researched both in Japan and in Europe. This can be explained by the fact that there have not been many noticeable concrete results from Japan–Europe security cooperation, in addition to the presence of this (negative) awareness. For that reason, while cooperation has been taking place whenever necessary, such as in the case of Iraq where Japanese troops successfully cooperated with their UK and Dutch counterparts, it has rarely been located in the broader context of Japan’s foreign and security policy. However, it is now imperative to build an intellectual foundation on which to develop Japan–Europe security cooperation as a means to pursue Japan’s security interests.

In light of this background, this article will examine cooperation with NATO and the EU from a Japanese perspective. Put simply, this article will examine how Japan can “use” NATO and the EU in pursuing its various policy objectives and expanding national interests. “Using” partners may not be the most sophisticated or diplomatic way of phrasing this dynamic, but just as with human

---

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Masayuki Takahashi (oral narrative), *Gaiko no Senryaku to Kokorozashi: Zengaimujimujikan Yachi Shotaro wa Kataru* [Diplomatic Strategy and Will: Former Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Shotaro Yachi], Sankei Shinbun, 2009; Taro Aso, *Jiyu to Hanei no Ko* [Arc of Freedom and Prosperity], Gentosha, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> For example, Yukio Hatoyama, “Watashi no Seiji Tetsugaku [My Political Philosophy],” *Voice*, September 2009; “Japan’s New Commitment to Asia: Toward the Realization of an East Asian Community,” Address by Yukio Hatoyama, Prime Minister of Japan, Singapore, November 15, 2009.

<sup>7</sup> “19th Japan–EU Summit Joint Press Statement,” Tokyo, April 28, 2010, para. 4.

<sup>8</sup> “20th Japan–EU Summit Joint Press Statement,” Brussels, May 28, 2011.

relations, true partnerships in international relations cannot be achieved unless the relationship is deemed as mutually beneficial. Such relationships are beneficial precisely because states “mutually use the other,” thus laying the foundation for the partnership. In terms of relations with Europe, it is vital that Japan regards the relationship as a means to pursue its own policy objectives rather than as an end in itself. In the past, Japan–Europe relations have tended to be like “cooperation for the sake of cooperation.” This needs to change and this article seeks to be of help in this regard.

The first section will examine the value of NATO as a security partner for Japan from the following four perspectives: 1) a political partner; 2) an operational partner; 3) as a means of cooperation with the US; and 4) a multilateral school. The second section will use a similar method to examine the significance of security cooperation with the EU, viewing it from the following three perspectives: 1) a political partner; 2) an operational partner; and 3) as a “non-American” partner.

There are two things to be mentioned before going into substantial discussions below. First, from the perspective of “mutually using the other,” it would be necessary to examine the value of Japan as a partner for Europe. However, it goes beyond the scope of this article, which is focused on the Japanese side of the story. That said, it needs to be mentioned that it is necessary for Japan to be prepared and willing to be used by Europe as long as Japan wants to use Europe and that letting Europeans understand the value of Japan as a partner is in Japan’s interest.

Second, this article focuses on cooperation with NATO and the EU; however, that by no means implies that security cooperation with individual countries such as the UK, France, and Germany is insignificant. For a long time, the majority of dialogue and cooperation between Japan and Europe in the areas of foreign policy, security, and defense have been conducted under bilateral frameworks with major European countries. As a result, the accumulation of knowledge and experience in Japan with regard to cooperation with NATO and the EU remain shallow compared to bilateral relations with individual countries. Against this backdrop, this article will focus on NATO and the EU.

## **1. NATO’s transformation and the development of Japan–NATO cooperation: How to use NATO<sup>9</sup>**

### **(1) NATO as a political partner**

From a Japanese perspective, NATO can be seen, first, as a political partner, meaning a partner with which to have political dialogue. When visiting NATO and addressing the North Atlantic Council (NAC), both Foreign Minister Taro Aso (May 2006) and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (January 2007) spent a great deal of time talking about the security environment in Asia, including the abduction and other issues of North Korea as well as China’s military buildup.<sup>10</sup> Abe directly requested the understanding and support of NATO members concerning Japan’s stance on the North Korean abduction and other issues. This illustrates the fact that, for Japan, dialogue with NATO is a new venue to acquire understanding and support from Europe for its position on problems related to politics and security in Asia.

---

<sup>9</sup> See also Michito Tsuruoka, “Asia, NATO and Its Partners: Complicated Relationships?” *NATO Review*, March 2010; Michito Tsuruoka, “NATO and Japan: A View from Tokyo,” *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 156, No. 6, December 2011.

<sup>10</sup> “Japan and NATO in a New Security Environment,” Speech to the North Atlantic Council by Taro Aso, Foreign Minister of Japan, NATO HQ, May 4, 2006; “Japan and NATO: Toward Further Collaboration,” Speech to the North Atlantic Council by Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, NATO HQ, January 12, 2007.

With regard to political and security dialogue between Japan and Europe, in addition to traditional bilateral frameworks between Japan and major European countries like the UK, France and Germany, there is now a channel between Japan and the EU (to be discussed later). Dialogue with NATO provides a new venue for discussion. In addition to Prime Minister and ministerial-level visits to NATO (meetings with the NATO Secretary General and the NAC) and dialogue with the NATO Secretary General during his visits to Japan, at the officials' level there is the annual Japan–NATO High-Level Consultation. Moreover, in addition to dialogue with NATO officials—the International Staff and the International Military Staff—ad hoc meetings are held from time to time between Japanese officials and representatives of the member states' delegations to NATO in the context of the Political Committees (PC), Policy Cooperation Groups (PCG), and other frameworks depending on the topics to be discussed, such as the security situation in East Asia, Central Asia, and missile defense. In recent years, the NAC and the Secretary General have issued statements condemning North Korea's nuclear and missile tests, which Japan appreciates a lot, showing one aspect of NATO's value as a political partner.<sup>11</sup> NATO is a forum suitable for Japan to discuss Asian security and other security-related issues mainly because many security experts, both civilian and military, are assembled and deal with various security problems on a daily basis.

Japan is not alone in seeing NATO as a political partner. NATO is often described as the strongest and the most successful military alliance in history and encompassing all major powers from North America and Europe. Thus, NATO inevitably carries a unique weight in international security and world politics. That weight may even be heavier than NATO itself is aware.<sup>12</sup> In fact, demand from non-members to conduct political dialogue with NATO has been increasing. At the same time, countries that do not necessarily have positive perceptions of NATO or that do not share fundamental values with the Alliance often see the strengthening of relations between NATO and non-members with concern and suspicion. For instance, Russia and China often react with vigilance when Japan and NATO cooperate. This partly comes from their genuine concerns over the strengthening of concrete military cooperation between Japan and NATO, but it also has to do with their recognition of NATO's political weight. Moreover, these countries view Japan–EU and Japan–NATO cooperation differently. Put simply, they react more negatively to the latter than the former. This fact demonstrates that NATO carries a distinctive profile as a political actor that differs from that of the EU.

Nevertheless, it goes without saying that NATO is a military alliance based on collective defense. NATO is not supposed to be aiming to expand its political and diplomatic influence as a political actor in international relations. This is how NATO differs from the EU, which has been trying to construct a common foreign, security, and defense policy. At the same time, however, NATO is not an alliance that concerns military affairs alone. NATO has long labeled itself a political-military alliance, and even its founding North Atlantic Treaty emphasizes political and economic cooperation among the Allies (Parties).<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> “Statement on North Korea by the North Atlantic Council,” NATO HQ, Brussels, July 5, 2006; “North Atlantic Council Statement on North Korea Nuclear Test,” NATO HQ, Brussels, October 9, 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Tsuruoka, “NATO, Asia and Its Partners.”

<sup>13</sup> The preamble and Article 2 refer to the promotion of well-being and economic collaboration among the Allies. For more on the multifaceted nature of NATO, see, for example, Stanley Sloan, *NATO, the European Union, and the Atlantic Community: The Transatlantic Bargain Reconsidered*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.

## (2) NATO as an operational partner

NATO today can be characterized as an “alliance in action.” In addition to large-scale operations in Kosovo (KFOR) and Afghanistan (ISAF), NATO is currently conducting an antiterrorism operation in the Mediterranean (OAE), antipiracy measures off the coast of Somalia, and a training mission in Iraq (NTM-I). Furthermore, from March to October 2011, NATO conducted an operation over Libya. Many non-NATO countries, as well as NATO Allies, are contributing troops to those operations and missions. In the case of ISAF, for instance, in addition to all of the 28 NATO countries, a total of around 20 non-members are participating as Non-NATO Troop Contributing Nations (NNTCNs). The presence of non-member contributors has grown considerably in the context of ISAF over the past several years.<sup>14</sup> In the past, Australia and New Zealand had contributed troops to NATO-led operations in the former Yugoslavia, such as in Bosnia in the 1990s. However, the current level of non-members’ involvement in NATO-led operations is truly a new phenomenon. One reason behind this is the expansion of NATO’s operational commitments beyond the capacity of its members. In other words, it is impossible for the Alliance to conduct all the operations alone as a self-sufficient entity. At the same time, as most former communist countries in Europe have already become members of the Alliance, the weight of the countries outside the Euro–Atlantic region that used to be referred to as contact countries — Japan, Australia, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, etc. — is increasing instead. From NATO’s point of view, cooperation with new partners is in essence an “import of support”<sup>15</sup> and NATO naturally welcomes countries with the will and capabilities to contribute to the operations that it leads.

On the other hand, operational cooperation with NATO is often an effective means for non-members in terms of enhancing their efforts in international peace and security, not least in the context of international peace operations. Most of these operations today are conducted multilaterally. What is more, looking at global trends in international peace operations, it is clear that the weight of United Nations-led peacekeeping operations (PKO) has been relatively decreasing in recent years. In its place is a growing presence of peace operations led by regional organizations such as NATO, the EU, and the African Union (AU).<sup>16</sup> While the activities of the AU are limited to intra-regional operations on the African continent, NATO and EU operations (other than territorial defense mission by NATO) are basically assumed to take place outside of their member states.<sup>17</sup>

As a result of the expanding operational engagements of NATO and the EU outside of Europe, other countries including Japan often find themselves in a situation where they need to cooperate with NATO and the EU whether they like it or not. When the ISAF operation in Afghanistan was

---

<sup>14</sup> For more on contributions by non-members to NATO-led operations, see, for example, “Contributions of Non-NATO Members to NATO Operations,” Report by Sverre Myrli (Rapporteur), Sub-Committee on Future Security and Defence Capabilities, Defence and Security Committee, NATO Parliamentary Assembly, November 15, 2008 (159 DSCFC 08 E rev.1). For the latest figures on troop contributions by individual countries, see “ISAF Placemat: Contributing Nations and Troop Numbers,” NATO, October 20, 2011.

<sup>15</sup> Karl Heinz-Kamp, “Global Partnership: A New Conflict Within NATO?” *Analysis and Arguments*, No. 29, Konrad Adenauer Foundation, May 2006, p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> For more on this trend, see, for example, Center on International Cooperation, *Annual Review of Global Peace Operations 2009*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009.

<sup>17</sup> If there is one exception for NATO or EU member countries, it is Cyprus. As a country that has yet to achieve peace due to a conflict between Greek and Turkish residents, Cyprus is a currently a recipient of United Nations PKO. With regard to NATO, it is assumed that NATO troops will be deployed to NATO member nations during territorial defense operations, but these differ in nature from peace operations.

launched at the end of 2001, it was commanded on a half-year rotation by countries with the will and capacity to command. However, due to cost and complexities related to the establishment and maintenance of the headquarters, NATO took over command in August 2003.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, ISAF later expanded its area of responsibility and came to cover the whole country. As a result, those who were deploying troops in Afghanistan had no choice but to cooperate with NATO as long as they wanted to continue their engagement. Seen from a different angle, it can also be said that countries can use NATO as a framework through which to participate in international efforts. Without such a framework, small to medium-sized countries may not be able to make contributions.

Nevertheless, there are various ways to pursue operational cooperation with NATO. Potential contributors could complete official procedures, including concluding a participation agreement with NATO, become a troop-contributing country, and then deploy troops under the ISAF command, or they could cooperate locally via individual arrangements made with other countries already active in the area (without having official relations with NATO).<sup>19</sup> Theoretically, at least, it is even possible for those countries to conduct a completely independent operation on its own in Afghanistan. However, regardless of how self-contained the activities are, the necessity to coordinate on issues such as the division of roles with ISAF will of course come up, and it is practically impossible to assume that the countries that endeavor to send troops to Afghanistan could conduct its own activities without relying on the capabilities and various infrastructure of ISAF at all, including in extremis support and security information. Furthermore, even assuming it is feasible, it will not be the most efficient way to use the limited amount of resources available. In sum, it is not only in NATO’s interest, but also non-NATO troop contributors’ interest to cooperate with each other. Former NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer succinctly pointed out that, “NATO is a framework that they [non-members] can use to make their own efforts more effective.”<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, if a country completes official procedures with NATO and takes position as an official ISAF troop contributing nation, they can participate in various levels of ISAF meetings, receive more information, and get more involved in policy-shaping.

For a number of constitutional, legal and domestic political reasons, it is very difficult for the SDF to operate under the command of NATO.<sup>21</sup> Short of coming under NATO’s command, however, various options are conceivable for the SDF to work with NATO in the areas where it operates. At the same time, operational cooperation with NATO does not need to be limited to the military domain alone. In Afghanistan, since 2007 Japan has provided humanitarian and reconstruction assistance in cooperation with PRTs, and since 2009 has dispatched development experts (civilian assistance teams) to the Lithuania-led PRT in Chaghcharan, Ghor province.<sup>22</sup> Assistance from Japan

---

<sup>18</sup> Diego Ruiz Palmer, “The Road to Kabul,” *NATO Review*, Summer 2003.

<sup>19</sup> There are cases where countries that do not officially participate in ISAF make bilateral arrangements with countries that lead PRTs to dispatch personnel to PRTs active under ISAF in Afghanistan. In such cases, however, the country is not acknowledged as an official troop-contributing nation to ISAF. Japan’s dispatch of civilian personnel to the Lithuania-led PRT, which is to be discussed later, falls under this category.

<sup>20</sup> “Meeting the Security Challenges of Globalisation,” Speech by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, Tokyo, December 13, 2007.

<sup>21</sup> For an example that emphasizes this point and expresses reserved views on the prospect of Japan–NATO cooperation, see Masashi Nishihara, “Can Japan be a Global Partner for NATO?” in Ronald Asmus, ed., *NATO and Global Partners: Views from the Outside*, Riga Papers, German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2006.

<sup>22</sup> “Dispatch of Japan’s Civilian Assistance Team to the Chaghcharan PRT in Afghanistan,” Press Release, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 17, 2009.

was of great value for Lithuania, a country which does not have much funding and experience in development assistance. From a Japanese point of view, the importance of this scheme comes from the fact that it enables Japan to expand the geographical reach of its development assistance beyond those areas where an Embassy or the Japanese aid agency (JICA) are already present. Without the cooperation of the Lithuania-led PRT, it is easy to imagine that Japan would not have been able to operate in a remote province like Ghor. Moreover, Japan and NATO concluded a security agreement in June 2010, which allows Japan and NATO to share classified information with each other.<sup>23</sup> This is expected to be a foundation for deeper dialogue and practical cooperation between Japan and NATO.<sup>24</sup>

### **(3) NATO as another venue of cooperation with the United States**

The comparative advantage that cooperation with NATO offers Japan, as opposed to bilateral cooperation with major European countries and with the EU, is the fact that the US, Japan's only formal ally, is part of NATO. For all NATO Allies excluding the US, what NATO means is essentially an alliance with the US. When NATO was founded within the context of the Cold War, it was primarily seen as a means to secure US commitment to defend Western Europe. Moreover, for former communist nations that joined NATO after the end of the Cold War, the NATO membership was synonymous with receiving a commitment from the US for collective defense, exemplified by Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. For those reasons, NATO is usually conceived in the context of policy toward the US in many countries.

In Japan, as can be seen by the fact that the European Affairs Bureau (European Policy Division in it) covers NATO in the Foreign Ministry, there is a tendency to treat NATO in the context of Europe.<sup>25</sup> In fact, the large majority of NATO Allies, 26 out of 28, are European countries and the main task of the Alliance was to defend Western Europe especially during the Cold War. While acknowledging the leading role of the United States, NATO is a multilateral alliance operating under consensus rule, and the US cannot always dictate Alliance decisions. The division in NATO on the Iraq War in 2003 demonstrated the limits of the US power within the alliance.

Nevertheless, considering the value of cooperation with NATO in the context of Japan's foreign and security policy, what should not be overlooked or underestimated is the fact that the US is part of NATO. In particular, when it comes to sending the SDF abroad, for better or for worse, considerations to relations with the US occupies a major place in terms of domestic politics. It was illustrative in this regard that when Japan decided to dispatch the SDF to Iraq in late 2003, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi mentioned the necessity to enhance the Japan-US Alliance at the forefront of his explanation to the public on the government's decision.<sup>26</sup> Refueling operations

---

<sup>23</sup> "Signing of the Agreement between the Government of Japan and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization on the Security of Information and Material," Press Release, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tokyo, June 25, 2010.

<sup>24</sup> The security agreement is not only used for operational cooperation, but also for political dialogue involving classified information. Moreover, some seminars and training programs by NATO are classified, meaning that a security agreement is a precondition for participation.

<sup>25</sup> In the academic community as well, those who work on NATO are predominantly experts on Europe (including this author).

<sup>26</sup> For example, see "Press Conference by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi (The Basic Plan regarding the measures based on the Law Concerning the Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq)," December 9, 2003.

in the Indian Ocean from 2001 that Japan began in response to the September 11 terrorist attacks can be even more clearly placed in the context of cooperation with the US. As long as what can be called the “US factor” plays a major role in Japan’s policy-making in security and defense, the fact that Japan–NATO cooperation can take place in the context of Japan–US cooperation and vice versa will increase potential for Japan–NATO cooperation, especially in terms of operational cooperation involving the SDF. The Japan–US Security Consultative Committee (2+2 meeting) in May 2007 listed “achieving broader Japan–NATO cooperation” as one of their Common Strategic Objectives.<sup>27</sup>

On the NATO side, the US has always been the leading proponent of the idea of strengthening the Alliance’s relations with Japan in the context of NATO’s partnership policy. NATO has developed various formal partnership frameworks including the PfP for non-member European states, the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) for the countries around the Mediterranean, and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative for Gulf states. Beyond those established frameworks, NATO has recently developed relations with Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and other countries in the Asia-Pacific region under the banner ‘partners across the globe.’ Not coincidentally, most of these countries are already allies of the US.<sup>28</sup>

All of these countries except Japan, but including Singapore, have participated in ISAF as troop contributors. While sharing the objective of stabilizing and reconstructing Afghanistan, much of the reasoning for these countries to participate in ISAF stems from considerations to relations with the US. For example, while New Zealand, which leads a PRT in Bamyán, is now an ISAF troop contributor, when the country first decided to send troops to Afghanistan, it was under the umbrella of the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom. New Zealand became part of ISAF only as a by-product of ISAF’s expansion of its areas in 2006. It is safe to say that the participation of the Republic of Korea in ISAF under the Lee Myung-bak administration is also aimed at cooperation with the US. In all of these cases, cooperation with NATO was born as a by-product of cooperation with the US. Nevertheless, what these cases also demonstrate is the potential for non-NATO countries to use NATO as a tool to facilitate cooperation with the US.

#### **(4) NATO as a multilateral school**

When considering using NATO as a partner, the fourth perspective is NATO as a place to interact, experience, and learn about the reality of multilateral security and defense cooperation. Conducting missions and operations for stabilization and reconstruction is a new business for NATO, which only started in the mid-1990s, first through its involvement in the conflicts in the Balkans. Nevertheless, the reason why NATO has been able to quickly prove its capabilities and effectiveness as a crisis manager is its rich accumulation of expertise and experience in multilateral planning and interoperability including its unique integrated command and control structure. In recent years,

---

<sup>27</sup> “Alliance Transformation: Advancing United States–Japan Security and Defense Cooperation,” Joint Statement of the Security Consultative Committee by Secretary of States Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Minister for Foreign Affairs Taro Aso and Minister of Defense Fumio Kyuma, Washington, D.C., May 1, 2007.

<sup>28</sup> Michito Tsuruoka, “NATO’s Evolving Relationships with Asia-Pacific: Cooperation in Afghanistan and Beyond,” paper presented at the Annual Convention of the International Studies Association (ISA), New York, February 15–18, 2009.

while ISAF and other missions and operations tend to gather the attention of the press and the public, NATO's unparalleled 60 years of experience spans across a broad range of areas, including multilateral operational planning, defense planning, standardization, training, procurement, R&D, and maintenance cooperation. Recently, research and training are also being carried out in support of the transformation of armed forces of the Allies, where the Allied Command Transformation (ACT) in Norfolk, Virginia plays an important role. While the US is always involved in those activities and more than often takes the lead, the fact that everything is conducted multilaterally is what makes NATO unique.

In contrast, the Asia-Pacific region where Japan is situated is only at a very initial phase of developing multilateral security and defense frameworks. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) conducted the first ever actual exercise in the field of disaster relief, called Voluntary Demonstration of Response (VDR), in the Philippines in May 2009, in which Japan's SDF participated.<sup>29</sup> However, excluding Cobra Gold and other US-led multilateral exercises, there is little experience in multilateral planning and operations in the Asia-Pacific region. In light of these circumstances, it would be valuable for Japan to learn NATO's experience in terms of how multilateral planning and operations can be carried out and how interoperability can be enhanced among different national armed forces.

NATO in the past two decades has been trying to expand what can be called the "NATO standard" to new members and other countries through the PfP framework and other channels. NATO, as a result, has developed a wide range of programs including exercises and seminars called "partnership tools."<sup>30</sup> A part of these programs have become available to Japan, and Japan has participated in some seminars and dispatched observers to exercises. Given that the partnership tools have been developed primarily as a means to help the countries aspiring to join the Alliance prepare for membership, not all programs are relevant to Japan. For instance, programs on the civilian control of armed forces and transparency and accountability of defense budget may not be something that interests Japan. However, in addition to various aspects of operations, there are a number of other programs from which Japan could learn how multilateral undertakings are carried out.

In addition to such technical perspectives, there is greater meaning for Japan in learning about the reality of multilateral alliances. Regardless of whatever desires the Japanese side has, it is practically impossible for Japan to stand on an equal footing with the US in security and defense as long as it operates in the bilateral context. There is a tendency for people to become fixated on an asymmetrical structure, or recognition, where there is the US as a normal country that can do anything on the one end, and Japan as an abnormal country that cannot do anything because of so many restrictions on the other. However, NATO is an alliance between the US, which is a special country in terms of budget and capability, and many normal countries, which, in addition to budget and capability, also face a various degree of political, legal, and other restrictions in terms of what their troops are allowed to do. It is undeniable that the degree of restrictions on the SDF's activities

---

<sup>29</sup> "Participation of the Ministry of Defense and Japan Self-Defense Forces in the ARF disaster relief exercise," Ministry of Defense, March 27, 2009.

<sup>30</sup> For more on NATO's activities in this regard, see "The Euro-Atlantic Partnership: Refocusing and Renewal," June 23, 2004. See also Susan Pond, "Understanding the PfP Took Kit," *NATO Review*, Spring 2004; Robert Weaver, "Continuing to Build Security Through Partnership," *NATO Review*, Spring 2004.

is much greater than that of many European countries. Some aspects of Japan’s restrictions include debates on the right of collective self-defense that are almost theological, where the government argues that the country possesses this right as a sovereign nation but is not allowed to exercise it in light of the Constitution. Nevertheless, dividing countries into two groups, one being a group of countries without any restrictions and another being that of countries with various restrictions, it is clear that the latter group constitutes a majority in the world and Japan is part of it. In the context of ISAF, the issue of “caveats,” or national restrictions that dictate what countries are not allowed to do, has been featured and caused problems for ISAF commanders. For the sake of operational efficiency, national caveats are seen as a hurdle and therefore reducing them has always been seen as a priority.<sup>31</sup> However, the bottom line accepted by almost all in the Alliance has always been that contributions of “caveated” troops are better than no contribution at all. For political, legal and other reasons, some countries need to put caveats on their forces and the Alliance cannot ignore this reality. NATO, after all, is an alliance among many “normal” countries. In this context, Allies look for the areas where they can do something before talking about what they cannot do. Japan needs to understand this reality more, through which the country can assess its role — on what it can do and what it cannot do — from a more balanced perspective and put the Japan–US alliance in a broader context. An evolution of perceptions in this direction seems to have started in the context of Japan’s participation in the coalition efforts in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. Japan sent liaison officers to the “coalition of the willing village” at the United States Central Command (CENTCOM), where they found how multilateral operation was carried out among the US and many other “normal countries.”<sup>32</sup> NATO can be seen as a more institutionalized venue where those multilateral planning and operations are carried out on a daily basis.

## **2. The development of security and defense policy in the EU and potential for Japan–EU security cooperation: How to use the EU**

### **(1) The EU as a political and foreign policy partner**

When considering the value of the EU in Japan’s foreign and security policy, the first aspect that should be considered, just as with NATO, is its value as a political and foreign policy partner. Starting in the 1990s, the EU began expanding its role in foreign, security and finally defense policy with the successive establishments of CFSP and CSDP. Under the latter framework, the EU has conducted military as well as civilian operations since the early 2000s.<sup>33</sup> The EU, unlike NATO, is an international actor that aims to build a common foreign, security and defense policy.

There are numerous reasons that make the EU an important global actor. But first and most, the EU’s power comes from its size in terms of economy and population. In particular, because it maintains such heavy weight economically, the behavior of the EU influences the overall direction of international economy, trade and climate change. At the same time, also as a result of its

---

<sup>31</sup> For more information on the problem of caveats in ISAF, see, for instance, Sally McNamara, “NATO Allies in Europe Must Do More in Afghanistan,” *Backgrounder*, No. 2347, Heritage Foundation, December 2009, pp. 5–7.

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, Asahi Shimbun, “Jieitai 50 Nen [50 years of the Self-Defense Forces]” Shuzaihan, *Jieitai: Shirarezaru henyo* [The Self-Defense Forces: Unknown Transformation], Asahi Shimbun, 2005, p. 58.

<sup>33</sup> For a comprehensive review, see the following: Giovanni Grevi, Damien Helly and Daniel Keohane, eds., *European Security and Defence Policy: The First Ten Years (1999–2009)*, European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2009; Jolyon Howorth, *Security and Defence Policy in the European Union*, Palgrave, 2007.

weight, when something bad happens in the European economy, like the sovereign debt crisis, it causes wider international concerns. The EU's foreign, security, and defense policy is based on its economic power. In addition, the sheer number of EU member states also serves as its power base. The EU, an entity representing 27 sovereign states, inevitably possesses a large amount of weight in the international community where number often matters. The issue of over-representation of the EU is often raised and criticized in various international arenas. However, as long as it is a reality, Japan and other countries have to live with it. Furthermore, the fact that the EU includes the UK and France, two permanent members of the UN Security Council, matters for Japan in thinking about the EU as a political partner. It is still true that the EU more than often fails to speak with one voice and act together. The EU's efforts to forge a common foreign, security, and defense policy is still at an early stage. Nevertheless, its needs to be recognized that the simple fact that the EU represents 27 advanced countries including two UNSC permanent members makes it a potentially formidable partner.

The expansion of Japan's own international political and security role in the past decade or two has also enhanced the need to cooperate more with Europe. Amidst this process, areas where Japan and the EU have interest and carry out activities have begun to greatly overlap. One result of this is the advent of the idea of "using the power of the EU in order to help Japan achieve its global goals."<sup>34</sup> Moreover, a report released in November 2002 by an external relations task force established by Prime Minister Koizumi stated that, "In the new world order, Japanese foreign policy will require strong partners case by case. The EU can reasonably be expected to be a partner in several of these cases."<sup>35</sup> The Japan–EU Joint Action Plan adopted in December 2001 declared that the two have a "particular ambition" to strengthen political and security cooperation.<sup>36</sup>

In the meantime, in reality, political and security dialogue between Japan and the EU has developed in the mid 2000s as a response to one particular issue that needed to be discussed seriously and urgently: the issue of the EU's move to lift its arms embargo on China. The embargo was one of the sanctions implemented by the then European Community (EC) in response to the June 1989 Tiananmen Square incident and remained in place thereafter. However, in the context of building a strategic partnership between the EU and China and, in particular, the rapid growth in trade between the two, the EU began a move to lift the arms embargo in 2004. Japan, the US, and some other countries in the region strongly opposed the EU's move and voiced serious concern. In the end, owing partially to the influence of the March 2005 anti-secession law enacted by China, the EU failed to build a consensus among member countries on lifting the embargo and the embargo remains in place until this day. Nevertheless, the existence of such a serious problem actually served to deepen dialogue between Japan and the EU, and strategic dialogue on the security environment of East Asia was launched in 2005.<sup>37</sup> Whatever the catalyst, the fact that political and security dialogue

---

<sup>34</sup> Kenichiro Sasae, Toshiro Tanaka, and Tetsuya Jitsu, "EU no Kokoromi Kara Nihon ga Manabu Koto (Zadankai) [What Japan can Learn from the EU's Experience (roundtable)]," *Gaiko Forum*, July 2002, p. 35. The quote is from Sasae (then Director-General for Economic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

<sup>35</sup> Task Force on Foreign Relations for the Prime Minister, "Basic Strategies for Japan's Foreign Policy in the 21st Century: New Era, New Vision, New Diplomacy," November 28, 2002, p. 20.

<sup>36</sup> "Shaping Our Common Future: An Action Plan for EU–Japan Cooperation," European Union–Japan Summit, Brussels, December 8, 2001.

<sup>37</sup> "14th Japan–EU Summit Joint Press Statement," Luxembourg, May 2, 2005, para. 3.

between Japan and the EU has become more active and that Japan, in particular, has recognized that the EU is an actor that directly impacts its own interests including in Asia, will clear the path for more substantial dialogue between the two on foreign policy and security issues. As long as Japan viewed the EU (or Europe in general) as an actor that does not matter in Asia, no serious dialogue would have been possible.

Japan’s approach to the issue of the EU’s move to lift the arms embargo on China was that of damage limitation. It seems that Japan simply wanted to prevent the EU from causing any harm in Asia. However, as the EU’s weight has expanded as an international actor and its behavior now directly impacts the interests of Japan, it will be necessary to go beyond this posture and consider how to actively use the EU presence for the benefit of Japan.<sup>38</sup> Such issues as the rise of China, the direction of Russia, maritime security — particularly the issue of sea lane security between Europe and Asia — and nonproliferation would constitute potential areas where the EU can be a positive partner for Japan in pursuing its own objectives.

## **(2) The EU as an operational partner**

Beginning with Operation Concordia in Macedonia in March 2003, the EU has conducted a number of missions under the ESDP (CSDP) framework. These include military missions such as Operation Artemis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but there are also an increasing number of civilian missions in the fields of police and rule of law, such as the police assistance mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL Afghanistan).<sup>39</sup> When the ESDP was first launched at the end of the 1990s as a new tool for the EU’s security and defense role, the military aspects of the new policy were given special emphasis, but later, in the course of its actual development, it has come to carry out more civilian missions than military. This owes to various different reasons, but it is a fact that the EU has a comparative advantage in terms of resources, expertise and experience in the civilian sector. The development of police forces and judicial institutions is a vital factor in establishing a stable democratic government during post-conflict nation building.

Furthermore, just as with NATO, non-member countries participate in EU missions as well. As the scale of individual operations is smaller compared to NATO, the level of participation by non-members also remains modest; however, in the case of the EUPOL in Afghanistan, for instance, Canada plays a major role, while the participation of the US and Turkey in the rule of law assistance mission in Kosovo (EULEX Kosovo) is noteworthy. While Japan has yet to participate in any ESDP missions, it is not necessarily a result of legal restrictions as far as civilian missions are concerned. This can rather be considered a problem of political will, as well as the priorities and awareness of the police and judicial authorities. While the possibility of Japan’s participation in the EUPOL Afghanistan has often been discussed in and outside the government, it has never become a government decision. Nevertheless, just as examined in regards to NATO in the previous section, if the EU is already playing a leading role in the theater where Japan wants to make its contribution for its own interest, it will be in Japan’s interest to cooperate with the EU — whether formally

---

<sup>38</sup> Michito Tsuruoka, “Linking Japan and the Transatlantic Community in the Age of Asia’s Rise,” *Policy Brief*, German Marshall Fund of the United States, September 2009, pp. 3–5.

<sup>39</sup> For a concise review of all ESDP missions to date, see Grevi, Helly and Keohane, eds., *European Security Defence Policy*.

participating in the EU mission or closely working together short of formal participation.<sup>40</sup> Given the expanding operational commitment of the EU and that of Japan, there will be more such cases in the years to come. In preparing for such occasions, Japan now needs to thoroughly examine in advance with regard to what type of activity is possible based on what legal grounds and what arrangements would be necessary between Japan and the EU. Against this backdrop, the fact that Japan expressed its interest in dispatching civilian personnel to CSDP civilian missions for the first time at the April 2010 Japan–EU Summit is noticeable as a new development in this arena.<sup>41</sup>

On the other hand, given the issue of the right of collective self-defense, it is difficult to envision the SDF troops participating in EU-led military missions under the command of the EU. However, just as with the NATO case examined in the previous section, it is important to remember that there are still various possibilities without the SDF serving under the direct command of the EU. Cooperation between the SDF and the EU mission (EU NAVFOR Atalanta) for counter-piracy has already been taking place in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia. As for Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) vessels, their main mission is to escort commercial ships in convoys, which can be seen largely as an independent national operation. However, air patrolling by JMSDF P-3C patrol aircraft is firmly embedded in international efforts and close cooperation with the EU mission can be observed. The Japanese and EU (Spanish, German, and Portuguese) patrol aircraft are all based in Djibouti and they are closely coordinating patrol area and time, and sharing information. What is actually taking place is very close to a joint operation. Japan and the EU “commended” the “fruitful interaction” between their respective units in carrying out counter-piracy operations on the occasion of the annual summit meeting in April 2010 under the heading of “joint efforts.”<sup>42</sup> Counter-piracy cooperation deserves special attention as the first case of substantial military cooperation between Japan and the EU. It is believed that potential for Japan–EU cooperation related to addressing the problem of piracy in the region will grow further in the future, such as with assistance for the establishment of a training center in Djibouti and other capacity-building programs.

Nevertheless, there still is no official framework with regard to cooperation between the SDF and EU troops, and at present the relationship goes no further than ad-hoc coordination and cooperation on the ground. What Japan needs to consider now is whether the current form of the relationship —lacking any formal framework— would be sustainable and desirable, or making the relationship more institutionalized would be needed in terms of achieving the most from cooperation.<sup>43</sup> Cost and benefit of having a formal framework with the EU will need to be

---

<sup>40</sup> On the possibility of Japan’s cooperation with EU missions, see also Megumi Yoshii, “Kokusai Heiwa Kyoryoku Bunya ni Okeru Nichi—EU Kyoryoku: EU Hikameikoku ni yoru ESDP Mission Yoin Haken no Igi [Japan–EU Cooperation in International Peace Cooperation: The Significance of Dispatching Personnel to ESDP Missions by non-EU Member States],” *Gaimusho Chosa Geppo*, No. 4, 2009, pp. 80–87.

<sup>41</sup> “19th Japan–EU Summit Joint Press Statement,” para. 9. However, it does not name any specific mission.

<sup>42</sup> “19th Japan–EU Summit Joint Press Statement,” para. 10. At the previous year’s Japan–EU Summit in 2009, the joint statement stated that, “...[Both] sides would take appropriate steps to contribute to ensuring the safe passage of vessels in need through the Gulf of Aden, the EU through its deployment of NAVFOR Atalanta and Japan through the dispatch of escort ships of Maritime Self-Defense Forces,” thus making no indication of Japan–EU cooperation (“18th Japan–EU Summit Joint Press Statement,” para. 24).

<sup>43</sup> For legal frameworks and procedures for non-EU countries to participate in CSDP missions, see Csaba Tőro, ‘External State Partners in ESDP Missions: Third Country Participation in EU Crisis Management,’ *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Vol. 15, No. 3, August 2010.

examined as well as the idea of concluding a security agreement on classified information. These considerations are not limited to military cooperation and relevant to civilian missions as well. In particular, it is of great interest to Japan how it can participate in policy-shaping in the EU if it were to participate in an EU mission, and what level of intelligence sharing it could engage in. At any rate, Japan must assess its relationship with the EU within its overall external policy, and then work to consider the optimal configuration and position for operational cooperation with the EU within that context.

### **(3) The EU as a “non-American” partner**

The EU has various faces as an international actor and it has been characterized different ways. The concept of “civilian power” is one very popular way to describe the nature of the EU in international relations. For the purpose of this article here, the notion of the EU as “not-America,”<sup>44</sup> coined by Timothy Garton Ash, seems particularly relevant. Identity formation in human society — not only within the context of international relations — takes place through a process of comparison with others. For the EU (Europe), the object against which the EU constructs its international identity has always been the US. The differences found vis-à-vis the US more than often becomes Europe’s identity. In other words, as far as the EU’s international role is concerned, it is of less value unless different from the US.

The previous section pointed out that one aspect of NATO’s value as a partner comes from the fact that it includes the US and NATO can be used as another venue of Japan–US cooperation. The EU obviously does not include the US and the value of the EU as a partner may not look impressive if seen only from the viewpoint of Japan–US relations, let alone the EU as a ‘non-American’ actor. However, taking the current situation of Japan and the various global problems that affect Japanese interests into consideration, the reality is that not all problems can be resolved through bilateral cooperation with the US alone and the US may not be the most effective partner in addressing all problems.

There are actually many cases where Japan and Europe share ideas and approaches more than between Japan and the US or Europe and the US. For instance, Japan and many European countries share an approach to crisis management and conflict resolution that emphasizes various civilian elements. Japan needs to seek cooperation with the EU in areas including security where the EU has a relative advantage as a partner.<sup>45</sup> In geographical terms, Central and Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean, and Africa are the areas where the EU has strong influence in terms of not only economy, but also politics, culture, and other fields.<sup>46</sup> Also, the Japanese approach is in many ways more akin to that of Europe than the US, in dealing with Russia and other former Soviet countries including Central Asia.

One concrete, albeit small, example of ‘non-American’ Japan–EU cooperation is a joint project

---

<sup>44</sup> Timothy Garton Ash, *Free World: Why a Crisis of the West Reveals the Opportunity of Our Time*, Allen Lane, 2004, chap. 2.

<sup>45</sup> For more discussions based on the similarities of Japan and the EU in their approach to global problems, see Takako Ueta and Éric Remacle, eds., *Japan and Enlarged Europe: Partners in Global Governance*, P.I.E.-Peter Lang, 2005.

<sup>46</sup> This is referred to as the “Eurosphere” in Mark Leonard, *Why Europe Will Run the 21st Century*, Fourth Estate, 2005, pp. 53–55.

to enhance Tajikistan's border management capacity.<sup>47</sup> Japan and the EU jointly hosted seminars in Tajikistan in 2008 and again in 2010. Particularly given the fact that Tajikistan is bordering Afghanistan, the country's border management capacity is of strategic importance. However, it would have been difficult for Japan to hold these seminars together with the US due to domestic sensitivities in Tajikistan and because of relations with Russia. Against that backdrop, the "non-American" EU was recognized as the optimal partner. This is merely an example of small-scale cooperation, but the important point is that, depending on the circumstances, there are instances where cooperation with the EU is more effective than cooperation with the US in realizing Japan's specific policy objectives. If this is the case, while paradoxical, the comparative advantage for using the EU (Europe) as a partner is that it is not the US, and, precisely because the EU's approaches and actions differ from the US, it has the potential to become a valuable partner. Put differently, if the area and content of activities carried out by the US and the EU in the fields of foreign policy and security were identical, there would be no particular reason for Japan to choose cooperation with the EU.

It needs to be emphasized that the idea of using the EU as a 'non-America' partner is by no means anti-American. Cooperation with the EU and cooperation with the US are complementary, not contradictory at all. Nevertheless, if the EU (Europe) goes beyond just being "not-American," and becomes "anti-American," it would be difficult for Japan to cooperate with it, particularly in security and defense. Germany and France in the run-up to the Iraq War are the cases in point. As long as the relationship between the EU and the US remains favorable in overall terms, it will have a positive impact on cooperation between Japan and the EU. Arguably the biggest reason why the UK is often seen as Japan's closest European partner comes from the fact that the UK is the closest US ally in Europe. Future direction of EU foreign and security policy remains to be seen, it is nevertheless at least likely that, in addition to the US, Japan will increasingly need to consider using the EU in order to secure a reliable partner in the world.

## **Conclusions**

This article has demonstrated the existence of various values in cooperating with NATO and the EU as partners in advancing Japan's foreign and security policy objectives. Other than the US, Australia, South Korea, and India, many of the countries that share fundamental values and capabilities with Japan are in fact located in Europe. In that regard, it is only natural to regard Europe as a partner, and it is NATO and the EU that are the frameworks that tie these European countries together.

As mentioned earlier, it is necessary to again acknowledge that various forms of Japan–Europe security cooperation are in fact already taking place. Whenever Japan dispatches its SDF overseas to engage in peacekeeping and reconstruction assistance missions, whether under the United Nations or in a coalition of the willing setting, it almost always sees European troops side-by-side in the same theater pursuing same goals. As for Japan's refueling operations in the Indian Ocean from 2001 to 2010, the majority of the countries on the receiving end (in terms of the number of countries) were European, and in Iraq, Japan closely cooperated with the UK and the Netherlands (and Australia as well). Furthermore, as mentioned in the previous section, actual cooperation on the ground with the

---

<sup>47</sup> "18th Japan–EU Summit Joint Press Statement," para 23; "19th Japan–EU Summit Joint Press Statement," para. 8.

EU forces is deepening in counter-piracy operations being conducted off of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden. In other words, the reality has already gone one step beyond the debate.

In the final analysis, what is fundamental in terms of developing cooperation with Europe is to systematically incorporate the choice of Japan–Europe cooperation into Japan’s broader picture of external relations and to have a coherent strategy of using NATO and the EU as a means of advancing Japan’s policy objectives.