

The Rise of China and Strengthening of Security Cooperation Between Japan, the United States, and Australia: With a Focus on the 2000s*

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Abstract

This paper will analyze why and how US-Japan-Australia security cooperation developed in the 2000s, mainly from the allied perspective (Japan and Australia). Existing literature notes that the United States aimed to form an alliance opposing China from the start of the 2000s by strengthening relationships with its allies. In contrast, Japan and Australia's perception of China was different to that of the United States. This especially applied to Australia, geographically distant from China, which prioritized strengthening its relations with China through diplomacy and trade over direct antagonism. Regardless of this, both Japan and Australia worked to strengthen security cooperation between Japan, the United States, and Australia based on a strategy of "supplementing" the United States' regional and global role by furthering cooperation between its allies in peacekeeping operations and non-traditional areas of security. The strengthening of security cooperation between Japan, the United States, and Australia during the 2000s developed in order to maintain and enhance the United States' presence based on the "hub and spokes" alliance system, rather than to directly oppose China.

Introduction

After the Cold War, a bilateral alliance system centered around the United States (the so-called "hub and spokes" system) continued in the Asia Pacific Region. At the same time, there was increased cooperation between allied countries, including the United States. A typical example of this is the security cooperation between Japan, the United States, and Australia. Both Japan and Australia had strengthened bilateral defense exchanges immediately following the end of the Cold War. This cooperation rapidly grew when Trilateral Strategic Dialogue (TSD) between the three countries was established at the start of the 2000s. The first ministerial-level TSD took place in March 2006; in March the following year the Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation was announced, and in June the two countries started the 2+2 Foreign and Defense Ministerial Consultations. After this, cooperation between Japan, the United States, and Australia continued to grow, and in recent years has extended to traditional security areas such as

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antisubmarine warfare and amphibious operations in addition to peacekeeping operations (PKO) and non-traditional security areas.¹

Existing literature points out that in the context of the changing American alliance system after the Cold War, the United States shifted its strategy to deal with China as China's influence rapidly increased in the region. For example, Nina Silove argues that in the first half of the 2000s the George W. Bush administration strengthened and modernized the capacity of its regional allies, including Japan and Australia, to prevent the hegemonic rise of China in the region by forming a "federated network" through stronger relationships between its allies.² According to Silove, strengthening security cooperation between the United States' allies and partner countries from the 2000s onwards, including the security cooperation between Japan, the United States, and Australia, was nothing less than a deliberate construction created through the United States' "external balancing" vis-à-vis China, rather than something that developed naturally.³

However, Silove's study is unclear as to why allied countries such as Japan and Australia accepted this strategic concept of the United States. As is discussed below, at the start of the 2000s, there were considerable differences in Japan, the United States, and Australia's perceptions of, and their relations with, China. Notably, due to Australia's geopolitical distance from China and the economic importance of its relationship with China, it kept a certain distance from the United States' competitive attitude towards China. There were even those among Japanese and American policy makers who expressed concerns about Australia's attitude towards China. Why, then, despite differences in their perception and policies vis-à-vis China, did Japan and Australia strengthen their bilateral, and, including the United States, trilateral security cooperation?

In relation to this point, Yusuke Ishihara notes the importance of the role that the United States has come to play in the relationship between Japan and Australia.⁴ According to Ishihara, in the context of Australia aiming to develop its relationship with Japan in particular, there was a "longstanding insight [on the Australian side] concerning the importance of the United States' role in the Asia Pacific, and the role of the Japan-America alliance in this context." He writes that even after 2007, when the Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation was announced, the increased bilateral relationship between Japan and Australia has developed with their relationships with the United States as the base.⁵ Although this is an incredibly important point, the main thrust of Ishihara's analysis fundamentally concerns the Japan-Australia bilateral relationship, and is not entirely clear on what logic led their relationships with the United States to reinforce bilateral or US-Japan-Australia trilateral security cooperation.

Thus, the aim of this paper is to clarify the circumstances in which US-Japan-Australia

¹ Andrew Shearer, *Australia-Japan-U.S. Maritime Cooperation: Creating Federated Capabilities for the Asia Pacific* (Washington DC: Center for Strategy and International Studies, 2015).

² Nina Silove, "The Pivot before the Pivot: U.S. Strategy to Preserve the Power Balance in Asia", *International Security*, Vol. 40, No. 4, pp. 45-88.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁴ Yusuke Ishihara, "Reisengo Nichigo Kankei no Hatten to Chugoku 'Chyaina Gyappu' to 'Chyaina Consensusu' no Aida de [The Development of Japan-Australia Relations after the Cold War and China: Between the 'China Gap' and 'China Consensus']", Yoshihide Soeya (ed.), *Chitsujo Hendo to Nihon Gaiko: Kakudai to Shushuku* [The Changing Order and Japanese Diplomacy: 70 years of Expansion and Contraction] (Tokyo: Keio University Press, 2016), p. 220.

⁵ *Ibid.*

security cooperation developed in the 2000s, based on the points made by Ishihara above, mainly in the context of Japanese and Australian relations with the United States. The first chapter below will show how Japan and Australia's perceptions of China differed to those of the United States from the second half of the 1990s to the beginning of the 2000s. In order to maintain American engagement with the region, however, they voluntarily and actively participated in establishing the TSD.

Next, Chapter 2 will examine the process that deepened practical relationships in the field of non-traditional security, triggered by the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, with a focus on Japan, the United States, and Australia; it will clarify the existence of strategies common to both Japan and Australia that were behind this process, "supplementing" the United States' regional and global role. Chapter 3 will discuss the idea that although Japan, the United States, and Australia were strengthening and institutionalizing security cooperation in the context of the rise of China, the main focus was not China—the target was actually to maintain and strengthen the United States' presence in the region. In addition, although the main cause of the increased security cooperation between Japan, the United States, and Australia in the 2000s was the rise of China, this paper will conclude with the suggestion that it developed in the context of maintaining and strengthening the United States' presence based on the "hub and spokes" system, rather than with a direct focus on China.

1. The Rise of China and the Beginning of the TSD

(1) Background

After the Cold War, especially from the mid-1990s onwards, Japan, the United States, and Australia each strengthened their bilateral security relationships. In Australia, there were politicians and professionals who proposed the possibility of trilateral security cooperation. In fact, it is said that the idea of trilateral cooperation between Japan, the United States, and Australia had "obtained a foothold of sorts in Australia's strategic policy agenda" by the mid-1990s.⁶ However, the Japanese side was wary that Japan and Australia would create "Unnecessary doubts over whether it was creating a new relationship of military cooperation centered on its alliance with the United States" among Japan's neighbors.⁷ Through the '90s, policy makers on the American side stressed the tradition of bilateral alliances, and did not show great interest in security cooperation with Japan and Australia.⁸

It was the establishment of the new Bush administration in the United States in January 2001 that changed the status quo. The Bush administration's foreign policies, especially the core of its Asia policy, involved an emphasis on "power" focused on military strength, and maintaining an American-led order backed by that power while sharing the burden with its regional democratic allies. The Bush administration considered China, rapidly gaining power in Asia, as a competitor rather than a strategic partner, and called for the unity of its democratic allies in the region,

⁶ Hugh White, "Trilateralism and Australia: Australia and the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue with America and Japan", in William T. Tow, Mark J. Thomson, Yoshinobu Yamamoto and Satu P. Limaye (eds.), *Asia-Pacific Security: US, Australia and Japan and the New Security Triangle* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 105.

⁷ Yukio Sato, "Toi Kuni' kara 'paatonaa' e [From a 'Far Away Country' to a 'Partner']", *Gaiko Forum* [Foreign Affairs Forum], August 1997, p. 43

⁸ White, "Trilateralism and Australia", p. 104.

including Japan and Australia, to oppose China's challenge⁹. According to Robert D. Blackwill, who served as a diplomatic advisor to President Bush, the construction of a "more interrelated system of alliances" would make it possible to curb the actions of a "hostile hegemonic power" in the region, and to "more evenly distribute the strategic burden in Asia."¹⁰

To the United States, Japan was its most important partner in accomplishing this regional strategy. As is well known, a US bipartisan report in 2000 welcomed Japan to expand its role in security, and become a more equal American allied partner. The report (the so-called "Armitage-Nye Report") was written by a researcher and a professional who later became a senior official in the Bush administration. The report also advocated revitalizing the United States-Japan alliance based on the model of the United States-Great Britain alliance¹¹. Quite simply, the United States anticipated the rise of China in the future, and wished to maintain and strengthen the American-led regional order in a more effective manner by committing to maintaining its leadership role in the region while, at the same time, encouraging an expansion of its allies' capabilities, including Japan.

Meanwhile, Japan was gradually strengthening its guard against China, which had rapidly increased its defense expenditure from the 1990s onwards. From around the middle of this decade, Chinese armed forces increased their activity in the seas around Japan, deploying "research vessels" in the area around the Senkaku Islands and warships in Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone in the East China Sea, among other actions. Based on this, in 1995 there was a Japanese expert who predicted that the Chinese navy would "advance into the Sea of Japan in the not-too-distant future."¹² The Defense of Japan (annual white paper) had also included information about the increase in China's military spending, modernization of its armed forces, and increased maritime activity each year since 1996.¹³ Defense of Japan 2001 included an account saying that "Careful consideration should be given as to whether" the aim of China's modernization of its military strength "is exceeding what is required for China's defense; it is necessary to pay attention to this tendency in the future."¹⁴ The feelings of the Japanese people towards China also considerably worsened compared to those of the Cold War period due to China's repeated nuclear tests, the Taiwan Strait Crisis, the Chinese attitude towards historical issues, and other factors.¹⁵

However, whereas China's defense expenditure rapidly increased, Japan's defense spending remained almost the same. It is known from this that Japan did not think that the Chinese threat was all that urgent at the time. Rather, from 1994 Japan and China began holding defense exchanges and security dialogues, and in November 2000 they maintained a good relationship in terms of

⁹ Governor George W. Bush, "A Distinctly American Internationalism," Ronald Regan Presidential Library, Simi Valley, California, November 19, 1999, cited in Green 2017, p. 484.

¹⁰ Robert D. Blackwill, "An Action Agenda to Strengthen America's Alliances in the Asia-Pacific Region", in Blackwill and Paul Dibb (eds.), *America's Asian Alliances* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), p. 125.

¹¹ The United States and Japan: Advancing Toward a Mature Partnership, INSS Special Report, October 11, 2000, pp. 3-4. <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a403599.pdf>.

¹² Hiramatsu, *Gunji Taikokukasuru Chugoku no kyoi* [The Thread of China as it Becomes a Great Military Power], (Tokyo: Jiji Press, 1995) p. 164.

¹³ Ministry of Defense, *Boei Hakusyo* [Defense of Japan].

¹⁴ Ministry of Defense, *Boei Hakusyo* (2001) p. 60.

¹⁵ Cabinet Office Public Relations Office, *Seron Chosa Zu 10 Chugoku ni Taisuru Shinkinkan* [Public Opinion Poll Figure 10 Feeling of Friendliness Towards China], <https://survey.gov-online.go.jp/h25/h25-gaiko/zh/z10.html> (Accessed 29 May 2018).

security as well as economics, including increasing defense exchanges between them and agreeing to quickly realizing mutual visits of military vessels. Even with the gradually increasing theory of a “Chinese threat” from the second half of the 1990s, centered in the United States, many Japanese experts were skeptical of such a theory.¹⁶ There were even former senior officials of the Japan Defense Agency who objected to the Bush administration’s hard line vis-à-vis China.¹⁷

There is no doubt that the rise of China posed a long-term strategic problem to the United States and its allies. However, based on official announcements, contemporary Chinese defense spending was barely one tenth that of the United States, and as long as Japan maintained a close allied relationship with the United States, it was possible to respond to China’s maritime expansion. Above all, at the time the main military threat to Japan was not China but North Korea, which was proceeding with missile and nuclear development. Consequently, in the first half of the 2000s, when the Bush administration presented a plan to Japan that prioritized deterring China, involving the transformation of the United States military, Japanese policy makers could not hide their confusion.¹⁸

The Australian perception of China differed even more greatly to that of the United States, and also to that of Japan. At the time, Australia did not see the rise of China as even a potential threat to its own safety. For example, the Defence White Paper published in 2000 did not refer to the modernization of China’s military strength or its activities. Although the white paper identified irregular warfare and non-traditional security threats, it estimated that the possibility of China being a direct threat to Australia in the near future was very low.¹⁹ In fact, the white paper presented a policy of deepening and developing dialogues with China in relation to strategic issues, from the perspective that China, which was rapidly increasing its influence on regional security, would become an increasingly important strategic interlocutor to Australia.²⁰

Notably, Prime Minister John Howard, a conservative who stressed economic relations with China, proactively developed diplomacy with China to improve the relationship between the two countries, which had worsened since the 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis. As a result, Jiang Zemin visited Australia for the first time as President of China in September 1999, and agreed not only to strengthen economic ties, but also to hold annual meetings between both countries’ leaders and foreign ministers. In the same year, eight Australian cabinet ministers, including the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Defence, visited China, and senior government officials from both countries strengthened dialogues concerning diplomacy and security. Economically, trade with China grew rapidly through the ’90s in both imports and exports, and in the first half of the

¹⁶ For example, see Satoshi Amako (ed.), *Chugoku wa Kyoji ka* [Is China a Threat?] (Tokyo: Keiso Shobo, 1997). For the differences in Japan, the United States, and Australia’s perception of China (as a threat) in the ’90s, detail is available in Hideo Sato, “Japan’s China Perceptions and its Policies in the Alliance with the United States”, September 1998, available at file:///Users/sataketomohiko/Library/Mobile%20Documents/com~apple~CloudDocs/Sato_final_PM.pdf.

¹⁷ For example, Masahiro Akiyama, *Nichibeiji no Senryakutaiwa ga Hajimatta: Anpo Saitengi no Butai-ura* [Japanese-American Strategic Dialogues have Started: Behind the Scenes of Redefining Security] (Tokyo: Akishobo, 2002), p. 298.

¹⁸ Hiroyuki Akita, *Anryu: Beichunichi Gaiko San-kokushi* [Undercurrents: Diplomacy of The Three Kingdoms of the United States, China, and Japan] (Tokyo: Nikkei Inc., 2008), p. 53.

¹⁹ Department of Defence, *Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force* (2000 Defence White Paper) (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2000), pp. 23-24.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

2000s China became Australia's number three trading partner after the United States and Japan.²¹ In this context, Howard saw Australia's role as one that would stimulate "calm and constructive dialogue" between the United States and China, rather than support the hard-line American attitude towards China²².

Of course, this did not mean that Australian policy makers were indifferent to the rise of China. For example, the abovementioned Defence White Paper includes detailed references to the rise of China and the changes in the relationship of power between China and the United States that this would bring about, including pointing out the possibility of a worsening security environment in the Asia Pacific in the next 20 years due to the course of the relationships between the major nations, especially Chinese-American and Chinese-Japanese relations.²³ The pressing issue for Australia was that there was increasing probability of conflict between China and the United States, such as the Taiwan Strait Crisis, and due to this Australia may have no choice but to involve itself in disputes through its alliance with the United States.²⁴ In fact, Richard Armitage, the United States Deputy Secretary of State, stated in 2001 that he wished Australia to support the United States should a Taiwan Strait Crisis occur.²⁵ China was not a direct threat to Australia, but at the same time it raised "strategic challenges."²⁶

The important thing here was to maintain the status quo in which "no other country or group of countries will be able to challenge the United States' overall capacity to shape the global environment,"²⁷ rather than Australia itself directly opposing China. In so doing, Australia maintained its close relationship with the United States, while making it possible to strengthen its relationship with China at the same time. In this sense, Australia's relationship with Japan, which faced China geographically and was also where the largest American military presence in the region was located, was also extremely important. In particular, Japan expanding its role in the region would provide a counterbalance to China, as well as leading to maintaining and strengthening America's presence in the region by strengthening the American-Japanese alliance.²⁸ Post-Cold War Australia's basic policy towards Japan, which encouraged Japan's role in security, became all the more strategically important as the rise of China became a reality.

(2) The Establishment of Japan-United States-Australia Strategic Dialogues

Strengthening security cooperation between Japan, the United States, and Australia was proposed by Australia based on the aforementioned strategic requirements. In the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) held in July 2001, the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Alexander Downer proposed strategic dialogues between Japan, the United States, and Australia at vice-ministerial level to his

²¹ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Advancing National Interest* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia 2003), p. 142

²² Shannon Tow, *Independent Ally: Australia in an Age of Power Transition* (Melbourne: Melbourne U. Press, 2017) (Kindle Edition), No.5954-5956.

²³ Department of Defence, *Defence 2000*, p. 18.

²⁴ Stuart Harris, "China-US relations: A difficult balancing act for Australia?", *Global Change, Peace & Security*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (2005), p. 237.

²⁵ Hamish McDonald, "Downer flags China shift", *The Age*, August 18, 2004.

²⁶ Tow, *Independent Ally*, No. 5717.

²⁷ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Advancing National Interest*, p. 21.

²⁸ White, "Trilateralism and Australia", p. 104.

fellow foreign ministers.²⁹ It is said that it was Australian Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Ashton Calvert who first suggested working-level trilateral security dialogues. Calvert had experience staying in Japan as an ambassador in the '90s, and was acquainted with Ambassador Ryozo Kato, who had served as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the U.S. in September 2001. Kato had a close relationship with Armitage and Australian Ambassador to the United States Michael Thawley, and it is said that these personal connections greatly contributed to the establishment of the TSD.³⁰

Kato had felt that Australia had strategic value to Japan in more than the field of economics since he had served as First Secretary in the Embassy of Japan in Australia from 1975 to '78. In 1981 Kato, who had become the Director of the National Security Affairs Division in the North American Affairs Bureau, felt the need for Japan to bring out Australia's role in international society, which was as yet untried, including its role from the perspective of sea lane defense, a contemporary issue.³¹ On the other hand, Kato recognized the limits of security cooperation between just Japan and Australia that resulted from the geographical distance between the two, the difference in their relationships with China, both countries' capabilities, and other factors. To Kato, the aim of Japanese-Australian security cooperation was above all for the two countries to "supplement" the American presence in the region, based on the Japan-United States alliance, and trilateral security cooperation was significant in stimulating this cooperation.³²

With the rise of China in the background, this proposal from an allied country agreed with the United States' plan of encouraging collaboration between its allies. As a result, the first unofficial TSD meetings at vice-ministerial level took place as a sideline of discussions between American and Australian ministers in July 2002. According to Michael Green, who was the Director of Asian Affairs in the National Security Council (NSC) under the Bush administration, the first trilateral meeting discussed regional architecture rather than the problem of China. Australia in particular was concerned that the United States had shown little interests in regional architecture since President Bush was inaugurated, and together with Japan it requested that the United States regularly participate in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and ARF. Of course, China's presence was there in the background, but military problems were not really discussed.³³ The vice-ministerial TSDs were held every year until 2005, and discussed a wide range of issues in the region, including North Korea's nuclear missile development, the issue of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and cooperation in counterterrorism.³⁴ Although the rise of China was the main factor, the TSD was established as a body for relaxed consultations in which Japan, the United States, and Australia discussed general security issues in the region.

²⁹ Alexander Downer, "Bias ignores years of hard work on foreign policy", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 July, 2008.

³⁰ John Hemmings, *Quasi-Alliances, Managing the Rise of China, and Domestic Politics: The US-Japan-Australia Trilateral*, thesis submitted to the Department of International Relations of the London School of Economics and Political Science for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. London (January 2017), pp. 134-135.

³¹ Interview with Ryozo Kato, 6 April 2018.

³² Ibid.

³³ Interview with Michael Green, 22 February 2017.

³⁴ James L. Schoff, "The Evolution of US-Japan-Australia Security Cooperation", in Yuki Tatsumi (eds.), *US-Japan-Australia Security Cooperation: Prospects and Challenges* (Washington DC: Stimson Institute, 2015). P. 40.

2. From Exchange to Cooperation

(1) The 9/11 Terrorist Attacks

When the terrorist attacks occurred on September 11, 2001, Japan and Australia actively supported the “Global War on Terrorism.” There is already a great deal of literature with detailed accounts of the support given to the United States by both Japan and Australia, so it will not be discussed at length in this paper.³⁵ The important point is that both Japanese and Australian policy makers became much more strongly cognizant of the necessity of supporting the United States’ leadership and its role in the region in the wake of 9/11. For example, when Prime Minister Koizumi announced support for the United States in the Iraq War, his final decision was made with expectations of maintaining the relationship of mutual trust between the leaders of the US-Japan alliance, and that a strong alliance between Japan and the United States based on this relationship of mutual trust would bring about the power to deter North Korea.³⁶ To Japan, a decline in American prestige caused by failures in the Iraq War would lead to even more provocative action from North Korea. To avoid this situation, Japan thought it important to prevent the United States’ commitment to isolationism and secure its presence in the region by proactively supporting American action.³⁷

Similarly, when it came to participation in the Iraq War, Howard repeatedly emphasized the importance of supporting the United States in addition to the threat of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).³⁸ Here, the importance of the alliance with the United States meant self-defense for Australia as well as “maintain[ing] the involvement of the United States in our own region” through the alliance.³⁹ Although it was true that no direct threat (equivalent to that of North Korea to Japan) to Australia existed, preventing the United States’ growing isolationism and maintaining its presence in the region was indispensable to Australia when it came to maintaining a favorable security environment, including its relationship with China. To this end, Australia had to demonstrate to the American people that “they did not have to undertake a very difficult task alone” by supporting the United States.⁴⁰ It was for this reason that Howard made the decision to participate in the Iraq war, overcoming the opposition who were against sending troops and even the majority public opinion. Like Japan, Australia understood American participation in the region

³⁵ For information about the Japanese side, see e.g. Tomohito Shinoda, *Nichibei Domei to iu Riarizumu* [The Realism of the Japan-United States Alliance] (Tokyo: Chikura Publishing Company, 2007) and Tomohiko Satake, “*Nichibei Domei no ‘Guroobaruka’ to Sono Yukue* [The Globalization of the Japanese-American Alliance and its Course]”, Yoshihide Soeya (ed.), *Chitsujo Hendo to Nihon Gaiko: Kakudai to Shushuku no 70 Nen* [The Changing Order and Japanese Diplomacy: 70 years of Expansion and Contraction]” (Tokyo: Keio University Press, 2016); on the Australian side, see e.g. Robert Garran, *True Believer: John Howard, George Bush & the American Alliance* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2004) and Greg Sheridan, *The Partnership: The Inside Story of the US-Australian Alliance under Howard and Bush* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2005).

³⁶ *Asahi Shimbun*, referencing an interview with former Chief Cabinet Secretary Fukuda on 20 March 2013.

³⁷ Makoto Iokibe, Motoshige Ito, and Katsuyuki Yakushiji (eds.), *90 Nendai no Shogen Okamoto Yukio: Genbashugi wo Tsuranuita Gaikokan* [Testimony from the '90s Yukio Okamoto: The Diplomat Who Used a Hands-on Approach] (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun Publications, 2008), p. 298. Okamoto was a Special Advisor to the Cabinet at the time.

³⁸ Hugh White, “Security, Defence, and Terrorism”, in James Cotton and John Ravenhill (eds.), *Trading on Alliance Security: Australia in World Affairs 2001-2005* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 180.

³⁹ “Transcript of the Prime Minister, the Hon. John Howard MP, Address to the Nation”, 20 March 2003.

⁴⁰ Sheridan, *The Partnership*, p. 65.

and supporting the United States on a global level to be inextricably linked.⁴¹

In light of these circumstances, Japan and Australia had a common goal of maintaining the United States' presence in the region, and it can be said that increasing cooperation in the fields of counterterrorism and non-proliferation, especially after 9/11, was the natural course. For example, the "Australia-Japan Creative Partnership" announced in May 2002 after talks between the Japanese and Australian Prime Ministers and the related action plan included agreement to high-level consultations on counter-terrorism, based on Japan and Australia's respective contributions to the fight against terrorism.⁴² In August 2002, former Director-General of the Defense Agency Nakatani visited Australia for the first time in four years in this role; in dialogue with Minister for Defence Robert Hill, he agreed to implement an action plan aimed at strengthening security cooperation between the two countries, starting with counterterrorism, and to begin discussions between those ranked as heads of foreign and defense bureaus.⁴³ Moreover, in July 2003 the leaders of both countries signed the "Australia-Japan Joint Statement on Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism," setting out to strengthen cooperation in supporting the improvement of the counterterrorism capabilities of countries in Southeast Asia in particular, and formulating a concrete action plan.⁴⁴ In September the same year, the first Memorandum of Defense Exchange was agreed. Furthermore, the United States announced the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) in May 2003; both Japan and Australia proactively contributed to its activities, with Australia hosting PSI marine training in September 2003 and Japan doing so in October the following year.

At the same time, the occurrence of the 9/11 terrorist attacks prompted both Japan and Australia to strengthen cooperation in areas other than counterterrorism. One example is the cooperation between both countries in the East Timor PKO. When conflict broke out in 1999, triggered by an East Timor separatist independence movement, Australia organized the International Force East Timor (INTERFET), playing a leading role in calming the conflict. When they intervened, it was reported that Prime Minister Howard proposed that Australia would take responsibility for stabilizing the region as the "deputy sheriff" of the United States, the police of the world.⁴⁵ Although Howard later denied using the words "deputy sheriff," it can be said that they clearly captured Australia's role. In fact, while the United States played a key role in information gathering and logistical support, it did not supply any infantry to INTERFET because it was involved in conflict in Europe. There is also research with examples of the success of allied "division of labor"

⁴¹ Paul Kelly, "The Australian-American Alliance: Towards a Revitalization", in Jeffrey D. McCausland, Douglas T. Stuart, William T. Tow, and Michael Wesley, (eds.), *The Other Special Relationship: The United States and Australia at the Start of the 21st Century* (Canberra: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), p. 59.

⁴² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Nichigo Shuno Kaidan Kyodo Puresu Suteetomento "Nichigo no Zozoteki Paatonaashippu" (Kayaku)* [Joint Press Statement by Prime Minister John Howard and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi "Australia-Japan Creative Partnership"], 1 May 2002, http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/kaidan/s_koi/asi_pac02/australia_st.html.

⁴³ Desmond Ball "Nichigo Anzen Hoshō Kankei no Yukue [The Course of the Japan-Australia Security Relationship]", Michael Seigel and Joseph Camilleri (eds.), *Takokukanshugi to Domei no Hazama: Kiro ni Tatsu Nippon to Oosutoraria* [Caught Between Multilateralism and Alliance: Japan and Australia at a Crossroads] (Tokyo: Kokusai Shoin, 2006), p. 38.

⁴⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Kokusai Terorizumu to no Tatakai ni Kansuru Kyoryoku ni tsuite no Nichigo Kyodo Seimei (Kayaku)* [Australia-Japan Joint Statement on Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism], 16 July 2003, http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/australia/ja_terro_s.html.

⁴⁵ Fred Brenchley, "The Howard Defence Doctrine", *The Bulletin*, Vol. 28, September 1999, p. 22.

for crisis management in the region based on American-Australian cooperation.⁴⁶

Australia also requested Japanese support, including deployment of its Self-Defense Forces (SDF) to East Timor, from the start. In response to this, Japan provided financial and humanitarian assistance, but refrained from deploying the SDF due to the five basic principles of PKO. Nonetheless, after the conflict was resolved, and as Japan had increasing pressure from the United States to contribute personnel after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the possibility of SDF deployment resurfaced. According to media coverage by the *Asahi Shimbun*, the reason the SDF Ground Staff Office was especially proactive in the East Timor deployment was due to the judgement that, “Since it would be difficult to support the United States with ‘boots on the ground’ in Afghanistan and the surrounding areas, there is no choice but to supplement, even indirectly, the American military’s endeavors for international security, which are developing on a global scale.”⁴⁷ As a result, in March 2002 the Japanese government deployed an SDF engineering unit of 690 people, the largest ever for a PKO, to East Timor. Like Australia, Japan understood contributing to East Timor PKO as part of supporting the United States.

It has been acknowledged that at the time Australia was “isolated” in Asia due to this issue, and struggling as to ways to involve countries in the region, including Japan.⁴⁸ In these circumstances, Australia valued the decision to deploy the SDF, and expressed strong gratitude. Australia’s foreign and trade policy white paper published in 2003 noted the rapid Japanese response since 9/11, as well as stating that Japanese-Australian contributions to East Timor PKO were evidence that “we can work together to enhance our mutual security and that of the region.”⁴⁹ To both Japan and Australia, this cooperation was more than the independent contributions of countries in the region to maintain the regional order; it was also built upon Japan and Australia’s common strategic aims of collaborating to supplement the role of the United States, which had been fully committed to the global war against terrorism since 9/11, and of maintaining the United States’ presence in the region, based on a stable alliance system.

(2) Cooperation in Supporting Reconstruction in Iraq

Cooperation in supporting Iraqi reconstruction strengthened the relationship between the SDF and the Australian military even more. In February 2005, Prime Minister Howard held a press conference in Canberra and announced a plan to send reinforcements of 450 Australian military personnel to “ensure the safety of the SDF” in southern Iraq, where the Ground Self-Defense Forces (GSDF) were stationed. Before the election that took place in October the previous year, Howard had refused to send reinforcements to Iraq, and he was censured by the opposition, including the Labor Party. Public opinion polls indicated that this was a decision made amid opposition to sending reinforcements to Iraq from the majority of people.⁵⁰ The SDF had liaison officers stay at

⁴⁶ Coral Bell, “East Timor, Canberra and Washington: A Case Study in Crisis Management”, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 54, No. 2, pp. 171-176.

⁴⁷ *Asahi Shimbun* “SDF 50 Years” reporting crew *Jieitai Shirarezaru Henyo* [The Self-Defense Force The Unknown Transformation](Tokyo: The Asahi Shimbun, 2005) p. 41.

⁴⁸ Duncan Campbell, “Invisible friends are no comfort / Diplomacy at the Crossroads”, *The Australian*, 15 September 1999.

⁴⁹ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Advancing National Interest*, p. 78.

⁵⁰ Michelle Hespe, “Polls show new Australian opposition to protecting Japanese in Iraq”, *Kyodo News*, 15 March 2005.

Camp Smitty, where the British and Australian troops were stationed, and gather information and coordinate joint training. The Australian military offered a range of support to the activities of the SDF, including ensuring their safety, which were appreciated by the Japanese.⁵¹

Howard later made it clear that his decision to send Australian troops meant providing a strategic aspect to the Japan-Australia relationship, which had conventionally centered on economics.⁵² Notably, there were internal sensitive constitutional issues relating to deploying the SDF to Iraq, and due to this Australia was concerned about a “very serious blow” striking the efforts of the allied forces should the SDF pull out, following the Dutch troops, due to safety issues.⁵³ Australia recognized the Japanese contribution to boots on the ground in Iraq as a litmus test indicating the country’s greater commitment to other issues, such as Islamic fundamentalism and the spread of WMD.⁵⁴ Supporting the SDF activities in Iraq allowed the success of the American-led “war on terror,” as well as meeting Australia’s strategic aim of expanding Japan’s role in security on a regional and global level.

Through this cooperation in Iraq, the Japanese perception of Australia greatly improved. Some Australian experts have voiced the opinion that without the deployment, it was “highly unlikely” that the 2007 Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation would have been signed.⁵⁵ In an interview for the Australian media before Howard’s visit to Japan in April 2005, Prime Minister Koizumi announced a gesture of apology for the conduct of the Japanese army during WWII, as well as his intent to consider the possibility of a bilateral free trade agreement (FTA), for which Australia was strongly pushing at that time; he also later agreed to the establishment of an FTA research group.⁵⁶ Takashi Terada analyzes that when it came to Koizumi’s decision to consider an FTA with Australia, the national agreement to which would be difficult to obtain, “Koizumi’s wish to take gains from Australian trade more seriously was reflected as an expression of gratitude to Australia, which had sent in troops to Iraq for the security of the SDF.”⁵⁷

The practical cooperation between Japan, the United States, and Australia also moved forwards in the field of disaster relief. When the Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami took place on December 26, 2004, Japan sent three Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) ships as well as two Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) transportation aircraft and the GSDF Seventh Division (230 people) to Aceh Province in Indonesia, together with 800-900 SDF troops, and 500 million dollars of financial aid. Around the same time, Australia also sent four C130 transport aircraft and

⁵¹ For example, see Iraq Reconstruction and Support Group “Iraku Fukko Shien Katsudo Hokoku [Iraq Reconstruction and Support Group Activity Report]”, 21 February 2006, <https://www.asahicom.jp/news/esi/ichikijiatasi/iraq-nippo-list/20180416/370/060221.pdf>, p. 15.

⁵² John Howard, *Lazarus Rising: A Personal and Political Autobiography* (Sydney: HarperCollins Publishers, 2010), p. 458.

⁵³ Steve Lewis and Patrick Walters, “PM doubles troops to Iraq - 450 more Aussie soldiers to protect 850 Japanese engineers”, *The Australian*, 23 February 2005.

⁵⁴ Tom Allard, “Decision hinged on the result of two elections”, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 February 2005.

⁵⁵ Malcolm Cook and Andrew Shearer, “Gooingu Guroobaru: Takokukan Kyoryoku no tame no Nichigo Ryokoku no Aratana Ajenda [Going global: A new Australia-Japan agenda for multilateral cooperation]”, Lowy Institute, April 2009, p. 12.

⁵⁶ “Japan PM Koizumi open to WWII apology”, *Australian Associated Press Financial News Wire*, 19 April 2005.

⁵⁷ Takashi Terada, “Nichigo Anzen Hoshō Paatonaashippu no Shinten: Beichu no Yakuwari to Kokusai Kozo Henka [The Development of the Japan-Australia Security Partnership: The Role of the United States and China and Changes in International Structures]”, Shotaro Yachi (ed.), *Ronshu: Nihon no Gaiko to Sogoteki Anzen Hoshō* [Essay Collection: Japanese Diplomacy and Comprehensive Security] (Tokyo: Wedge, 2013), p. 282.

a ship from its naval fleet for rescue purposes; it also announced it would give an unprecedentedly large 765 million dollars in aid. Japan and Australia, together with India, played central roles alongside the United States in the international support system, participating in an integrated task force formed by the United States Asia-Pacific Command and the United States Marine Corps to aid disaster victims. Deputy Secretary of State Armitage praised these actions, saying to Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Yukio Takeuchi that they had strongly promoted closer cooperation with Australia.⁵⁸

In this way, field-level cooperation between the SDF and the Australian military had moved to a regional and global level since the 9/11 terrorist attacks. By chance, the Japan-United States-Australia strategic dialogues that had been established before 9/11 came to provide a framework to coordinate trilateral cooperation after 9/11. Of course, security cooperation between Japan, the United States, and Australia may have moved forward even without 9/11, but these terrorist attacks were a challenge to the international order led by the United States, and it seems clear that this challenge accelerated the cooperation between these three countries. In particular, the Japanese-Australian cooperation in stabilizing East Timor and supporting the reconstruction of Iraq directly indicated an aim of maintaining and strengthening the United States' presence in the region based on stable allied relationships, by "supplementing" the United States' regional and global role through the cooperation of its allies. As a result, Japanese-Australian defense exchanges evolved into more practical cooperation, including cooperation in the field.

3. Institutionalizing Security Cooperation

(1) The Establishment of TSD Ministerial-Level Discussions and the Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation

In a trilateral meeting of the foreign ministers of Japan, the United States, and Australia in May 2005, it was decided to elevate the TSD to ministerial-level discussions. The direct catalyst for this was the change in the American Deputy Secretary of State in February 2005. In contrast to Armitage, who had pushed for trilateral security cooperation, it is said that while the newly appointed Robert Zoellick saw China as a "responsible stakeholder" and emphasized American-Chinese relations, he did not show so much interest in the TSD. American and Australian government officials felt a growing sense of crisis in these circumstances, and ensured ministerial-level TSD by appealing to both American Secretary of State Rice and the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Downer, trying to maintain the momentum of trilateral cooperation.⁵⁹ As a result, in March 2006 the first ministerial-level TSD discussions were held in Sydney. In a joint statement after the meeting, it was publicly announced that the three countries would enhance their sharing of information and strategic assessments relating to international and regional security issues to strengthen cooperation between Japan, the United States, and Australia.⁶⁰

Furthermore, in addition to the TSD process centered on foreign affairs departments, a framework for cooperation centered on national defense divisions was also strengthened. In

⁵⁸ Shinoda, *Nichibei Domei to iu Riarizumu*, p. 234.

⁵⁹ Hemmings, *Quasi-Alliances, Managing the Rise of China, and Domestic Politics*, pp. 146-147.

⁶⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Nichibeigo Senryaku Daiwa Kyodo Suteetomento (Kayaku) [Trilateral Strategic Dialogue Joint Statement Australia-Japan-United States]*, 18 March 2006, https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/kaidan/g_aso/australia_06/jua_smt.html.

2006 the United States Department of Defense proposed cooperation between national defense departments through a framework separate from the TSD, and as a result the relevant parties agreed to establish the U.S.-Japan-Australia Security and Defense Cooperation Forum (SDCF) in February the following year, with the first forum held in Tokyo in April. Uniformed personnel and officials from the three countries' national defense departments and state (foreign affairs) departments participated in the SDCF; its initial agenda included disaster relief, missile defense, counter-piracy operations, previous training in bilateral exercises and non-proliferation, interoperability, and information sharing.⁶¹ In June the same year, the first meeting between the three countries' ministers for defense was held in Singapore.

In this way, as trilateral cooperation between Japan, the United States, and Australia developed, the security relationship between Japan and Australia, the "weakest link," also became stronger. Notably, the opportunities for Japanese and Australian cabinet ministers and policy makers to meet regularly through the framework of the TSD played a major role in making security cooperation between the two countries more substantive.⁶² Consequently, in March 2007, Prime Minister Abe and Australian Prime Minister Howard adopted the Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation. As Teruhiko Fukushima points out, "Rather than setting out a new kind of collaboration, [the declaration was] an agreement characterized by confirming security cooperation to date, and wishing to confirm the intent to enhance cooperation between the two countries in the future."⁶³ It was, in fact, akin to a "skeleton" for enhancing cooperation, and did not contain practical details.

However, this "skeleton" would later be "fleshed out" through more practical cooperation. In June 2007, the Australian Minister for Defence Nelson visited Japan, the first visit in approximately four years by an Australian Minister of Defence. Nelson met with Defense Minister Kyuma in Tokyo, and subsequently the first 2+2 was held. Moreover, in September the same year, the Action Plan to implement the Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation was issued, presenting a concrete road map to put the declaration into effect. This roadmap not only listed bilateral defense cooperation, it also included a wide range of points for cooperation, such as United Nations reforms, law enforcement, national border security, counterterrorism, disarmament and non-proliferation, PKO, and disaster relief.⁶⁴

It is said that at first the Australian side assumed that the Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation would be an agreement similar to the security framework agreement signed in November that year with Indonesia (the Lombok Treaty), but the Japanese side was concerned that a formal agreement would become the subject of parliamentary debate, and so it

⁶¹ Schoff, "The Evolution of US-Japan-Australia Security Cooperation", pp. 42-43.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Teruhiko Fukushima, "Nihon Gaiko ni okeru Tai Oosutoraria Kankei no Imi: Sengo Nichigo Kankei no Hatten Kankei [The Meaning of the Relationship with Australia in Japanese Diplomacy: The Development Course of the Post-war Japanese-Australian Relationship]", Kanazawa Institute of Technology, Institute for International Studies (ed.), *Nihon Gaiko to Kokusai Kankei* [Japanese Diplomacy and International Relationships], (Tokyo: Naigai Publishing, 2009) p. 209.

⁶⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Anzen Hoshō Kyōryoku ni Kansuru Nichigo Kyōdo Sengen wo Jisshisuru tame no Kodokeikaku no Shuyōna Yoso (Kayaku)* [Major elements of the Action Plan to implement the Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation], September 2007, http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/australia/0709_kk.html.

took the form of a joint declaration.⁶⁵ An alternate perspective is that the Japanese and Australian negotiators expected the announcement of the joint declaration to be a stepping stone towards the signing of a future formal security treaty.⁶⁶ In any case, at the very least there was no consensus with regard to concluding a formal security agreement together with a treaty with the Japanese side within the Australian government of the time. In particular, it has been said that there were very few parties that supported a treaty with fixed mutual defense obligations against attack from a third country.⁶⁷ Furthermore, although it is held that the Abe administration was initially eager for a formal agreement, when the joint declaration was announced the administration's approval rating had dropped due to verbal gaffes from cabinet ministers and scandals, and there was growing criticism in the absence of WMD in Iraq; to expect to sign a security treaty with Australia, which involved political risk, was not realistic for the Japanese side.

(2) The Rise of China?

As discussed in the previous section, close cooperation on a practical level between Japan, the United States, and Australia after 9/11, as well as the rise of China, lay behind the advancing institutionalization of Japan-American-Australian security cooperation from the mid-2000s. Although the Chinese-American relationship temporarily improved post-9/11, an antagonistic mood between the two countries was once again growing in relation to reforms to the renminbi, human rights issues, and the problem of nuclear development in North Korea and Iran. The February 2006 American Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) expressed an extremely harsh view of China, saying "Of the major and emerging powers, China has the greatest potential to compete militarily with the United States." The QDR also made it clear that the United States was to strengthen integrated operations and information cooperation with its partners in deepening bilateral and multilateral participation and in dealing with common security issues, naming Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, and India.⁶⁸

Going into the 2000s, Japan also increased ASDF scrambles in response to Chinese warplanes, and raised its guard against Chinese military activity due to repeated intrusions into Japanese territorial waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone by the Chinese navy, and other actions. The new National Defense Program Guidelines published in 2004 made reference to China's progressing modernization of nuclear and missile forces and marine and air power, and the expanding scope of its marine activities; it also considered a "response to an invasion of the islands" to be the first role of national defense capabilities.⁶⁹ In September 2005, an incident occurred in which a Chinese naval ship aimed a 100 mm gun at an MSDF P-3C patrol plane near

⁶⁵ Fukushima, "Nihon Gaiko ni okeru Tai Oosutoraria Kankei no Imi: Sengo Nichigo Kankei no Hatten Kankei", p. 209.

⁶⁶ Greg Sheridan, "Security treaty rejected by Tokyo", *The Australian*, March 12, 2007.

⁶⁷ Interview with Murray McLean, former Ambassador to Japan, 11 October 2017.

⁶⁸ United States Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, February 6, 2006, p. 88.

⁶⁹ Prime Minister's Office of Japan, *Heisei 17 Nen Iko ni Kakaru Boei Keikaku no Taiko ni tsuite* [Outline of Defense Plans from 2005], 10 December 2004, <https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/kakugikettei/2004/1210taikou.html> (accessed 31 May 2018).

gas fields in the East China Sea.⁷⁰ Moreover, the political relationship between Japan and China had cooled due to, for example, Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to Yasukuni Shrine, and in this context the Japanese people's perception of China became all the more hostile. According to a public opinion poll conducted in November 2005, 72% of respondents replied that they "cannot trust China," and 76% answered that they "feel a threat" from China.⁷¹

At the same time, Australia was also gradually raising its guard against the rise of China. A Defence Update, a report from the Department of Defence published in 2003, took the view that while the Chinese-American relationship was more stable than before, there was a continuing possibility of mutual misperceptions regarding both countries' strategic competition and the issue of Taiwan.⁷² The 2005 version of this report made reference to the point that the pace and scale of China's defense modernization was giving rise to the possibility of misperceptions, and called for increased transparency concerning China's military and for the development of capabilities according to legitimate security needs.⁷³ A further report, published two years later, noted the possibility that enhancing the new capabilities of the Chinese military would lead not just to misperceptions but could damage stability in the region, referencing the antisatellite weapons that China had tested in January 2007.⁷⁴

However, even at this stage, it can be said that there was still a huge gap between Tokyo and Canberra in terms of their perceptions of China as a threat.⁷⁵ Notably, as a result of the strengthening of Australia's relationship with China under the Howard administration, Australian exports to China from 1996 to 2006 averaged 18% per year, and increased by a total of 626%.⁷⁶ In 2007 China became Australia's largest trading partner other than Japan. On the security side, in October 2004 the first joint marine training exercise between the Australian military and the People's Liberation Army took place; although these were limited, they developed a relationship between the militaries.⁷⁷ In August 2004 Minister for Foreign Affairs Downer visited China and provoked controversy when he stated the point of view that military movements against countries or regions other than the United States or Australia would not automatically invoke the ANZUS Treaty, in response to a question about Australia's obligation to defend Taiwan via the Australia-

⁷⁰ Richard J. Samuels (translation supervisor Takashi Shiraishi), *Nihon Boei no Daisenryaku: Fukoku Kyohei kara Gorudirokkusu Consensusu made* [Securing Japan: Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia] (Tokyo: Nikkei Publishing Inc., 2009), p. 238.

⁷¹ Yasuhiro Matsuda, "Dai 6 Sho Anzen Hoshō Kankei no Tenkai [Chapter 6 The Development of a Security Relationship]", Ryoko Iechika, Yasuhiro Matsuda, and Zuiso Dan (eds.), (*Kaitaiban*) *Kiro ni Tatsu Nitchu Kankei: Kako to no Taiwa, Mirai e no Mosaku* [The Japan-China Relationship at a Crossroads: Dialogues with the Past, Exploring the Future (Revised Edition)] (Tokyo: Koyo Shobo Publisher, 2012), p. 145.

⁷² Australian Department of Defence, *Defence Update 2003* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2003), p. 8.

⁷³ Australian Department of Defence, *Defence Update 2005* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2005), pp. 6-7.

⁷⁴ Australian Department of Defence, *Defence Update 2007* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2007), p. 20.

⁷⁵ For information about perceptions of China in Australian public opinion during this period, see e.g. Ivan Cook, *The Lowy Institute Poll: Australians Speak Public Opinion and Foreign Policy* (Canberra: Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2005), p. 1.

⁷⁶ Allan Gyngell, *Fear of Abandonment: Australia in the World since 1942* (Melbourne: La Trobe University Press, 2017) (Kindle Edition), No.6166-6168.

⁷⁷ Stuart Harris, "China-US relations: A difficult balancing act for Australia?", *Global Change, Peace & Security*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 2005, p. 235.

United States alliance.⁷⁸ Moreover, in February 2005 the United States and Japan requested that the EU continue the restrictions on arms exports to China; Australia did not participate in this pressuring. It is said that Japanese and American policy makers were extremely concerned over the Australian attitude towards China. One viewpoint holds that the United States raised the TSD to foreign-ministerial level to “pull” Australia to their side.⁷⁹

In this way, although Australia’s attitude towards China differed from those of the United States and Japan, Australia’s response to stepping up the TSD included the goal of maintaining the United States’ presence in the region, as already touched upon, and the expectation of expanding Japan’s role in the region (in a way that would not irritate China) through the TSD framework. Australia’s policy makers in particular were unsatisfied with the slow speed of the development of security cooperation between Japan and Australia due to a lack of bureaucracy and leadership in Japan since the ’90s.⁸⁰ It can be said that the TSD and SDCF provided a suitable place for the United States and Australia to encourage Japan to deepen its commitment to regional defense and security issues. It is thought that the Australian side in particular wished for Japan to take on responsibility for part of these activities as, in addition to the war on terror at the time, it was sending a succession of forces overseas for PKO in East Timor and other locations.⁸¹

In fact, according to James Schoff, who attended the SDCF as staff of the American Department of Defense, China was mentioned during the forum but most of the time this was “only in the context of framing the strategic environment: directly when officials noted North Korea’s growing missile and nuclear threats or complained about China’s lack of military transparency.”⁸² The TSD also formed working groups on a professional level under the officials’ discussions; the fields covered were humanitarian aid and disaster relief, counter terrorism, information sharing, non-proliferation, and issues and areas relating to the general regional order of the Pacific islands and Southeast Asia. Rather than directly opposing the Chinese military threat, it can be said that the issues raised here were brought up from the perspective of how to stabilize the existing regional order by maintaining an American presence and expanding the Japanese role.

This explains why the strategic dialogue between Japan, the United States, Australia, and India that was suggested around the same time suffered from setbacks while the US-Japan-Australia trilateral dialogues advanced. The quadrilateral security dialogue was proposed by US policy makers and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, and an informal meeting was held between representatives of the four countries in May 2005. However, following this China made objections to the three countries through official routes, and the momentum for quadrilateral cooperation was diminished. At a joint press conference with the Chinese foreign minister in February 2008, Minister for Foreign Affairs Steven Smith of the Kevin Rudd administration (which followed the Howard administration) stated that Australia had no intention of participating in quadrilateral strategic dialogues.⁸³ It is said that Yasuo Fukuda, who succeeded Abe as prime minister, expressed

⁷⁸ Hamish McDonald and Mark Forbes, “Downer flags China shift”, *The Age*, August 18, 2004.

⁷⁹ White, “Trilateralism and Australia”, p. 109.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

⁸¹ “Yakuwari Kawaru Nichibei Domei Sekai no Chitsujo Iji/Kochiku Shifuto wo [The Changing Role of the Japan-United States Alliance: A Shift in Maintaining and Building a World Order]”, *Asahi Shimbun*, 21 March 2007.

⁸² Schoff, “The Evolution of US-Japan-Australia Security Cooperation”, pp. 42-43.

⁸³ Indrani Bagchi, “Australia to pull out of ‘quad’ that excludes China”, *The Times of India*, February 6, 2008.

barely any interest in quadrilateral security cooperation.⁸⁴ At any rate, in the 2000s there was no consensus in Japan, let alone in Australia, regarding formalizing cooperation with India, a country not allied with the United States, to the extent of risking irritating China.

Conclusion

As can be seen above, security cooperation between Japan and Australia, and Japan, the United States, and Australia grew stronger in the 2000s. This occurred to a large extent as an extension of Japan and Australia's relationship with the United States. The fundamental issue concerning Japanese-Australian cooperation was how to maintain and strengthen the United States' presence in the region, keeping in mind the rise of China and the threat of North Korea. Australia in particular sought to maintain the United States' strategic predominance in a form that would not damage its relationship with China, even as it was vigilant of China's rise. To do so, Australia worked hard to strengthen its bilateral alliance with the United States, expand Japan's role in security, and to strengthen US-Japan-Australia security cooperation, which would encourage both of these outcomes. Although China was the main "factor" in stimulating stronger security cooperation between Japan, the United States, and Australia, it was not the direct "target" of this cooperation.

In this sense, it can be said that both Japan and Australia in the 2000s held quite different strategic perceptions to the United States' strategic goal of forming a "federated network" and "external balancing" vis-à-vis China by strengthening its relationships with its allies (and between its allies). At the very least, as long as the United States maintained its strategic predominance in the region, formalizing allied relationships and strengthening US-Japan-Australia-India cooperation, which could irritate China, were not an urgent issue to either country. From Australia's perspective in particular, which placed importance on its relationship with China, a policy of external balancing with China, including potentially entering into an allied relationship with Japan, caused a dual risk—not only risking irritating China but also in the sense of increasing the risk of becoming caught up in the conflict between Japan and China. Rather than an explicit external balancing with China, the optimum solution for both Japan and Australia lay in maintaining and strengthening the United States' presence in the region based on the hub and spokes system. This was achievable through collaboration between Australia and Japan to supplement the United States' local and global role. From this perspective, one can see subtle differences between the United States (in conflict with China over regional hegemony) and its "junior partners," Japan and Australia, in terms of their standpoints vis-à-vis the rise of China.

⁸⁴ Terada, "Nichigo Anzen Hosho Paatonaashippu no Shinten: Beichu no Yakuwari to Kokusai Kozo Henka", p. 229.

