

5. Alliances for the US

When the US refers to an ally or an alliance, what does it mean by that? No regular definition is seen in America's usages of these two concepts. They are used in very ambiguous ways both by the government and the media. Countries friendly toward the US are often referred to as allies or as being in an alliances with the US, even though no alliance treaty has been concluded with these countries. In general terms, two or more countries are referred to as allies when they have concluded an alliance treaty or administrative agreement to that effect. In the case of the US, this classification includes the Japan-US Security Treaty, NATO and the Organization of American States (OAS). However, countries falling out of this classification are sometimes treated as allies. These countries include Israel, Singapore and some members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), although several of the six GCC countries do have bilateral agreements with the US. There are also countries that are not treated as allies even though they have concluded an alliance agreement with the US. These include leftist governments in South America, such as Venezuela. Venezuela belongs to the OAS, which has lost substance, and thus Venezuela is not treated as an ally. Pakistan and the US have no alliance treaty but have administrative and other agreements in place. Pakistan nevertheless is apparently not treated as an ally by the US. Among friendly nations, Egypt is treated as an ally. Outlays to Egypt and Israel account for 60% of the US military aid budget, which suggests alliance-like ties. There is also a tendency of the US to treat member countries of the "Coalition of the Willing" as allies. For example, Mongolia, which currently sends troops to Afghanistan and Iraq, is treated as an ally.

Another definition for ally is "a special relationship." This definition is used in a narrow scope, with an emphasis on how special an ally is. This is most prominent in the US-UK relationship. Throughout World War I, the UK and the US proclaimed that there were special relations between them. Other than that, there are countries that the US apparently tries to show that it treats in special ways. These countries include Fiji and Brazil. Under some circumstances Japan and South Korea are also seen to have special relations with the US. A report by an American cites the UK and Canada as the US allies with a familiar cultural atmosphere and trustworthiness, and regionally as the closest countries. Japan comes as a close country, even though it is slightly distant and culturally different. This report is an example of efforts to classify US allies from the viewpoint of intimacy. All these illustrate the vagueness of the definition of US ally. However, it is important to understand US allies in a narrow sense. US allies, as the US defines in narrow terms, are considered to be those that are listed in *Allied Contributions to the Common Defense*, an annual report by the Defense Department. The report lists 34 countries—NATO members, Japan, South Korea and Australia, (three Pacific allies) and the six member countries of the GCC. These countries are seen as US allies given the minimal requirements of alliance.

How do alliance relations benefit the US? Benefits expected by the US can be identified as follows. First, a benefit is made through an increase of allies to have them support the US's stance, to check opponent forces and to secure the safety of the US. Furthermore, by using bases located in allied countries, the US can secure its ability to project military power as well as tactical cooperation with the allies. This is the military aspect of alliance benefits.

A second benefit is economical convenience, made specifically through an increase in allies

to secure markets for trade and investment, and thereby enhance the livelihoods of the American people. The second benefit is securing the sea lanes during times of peace to ensure free trade. A third benefit is the sharing of values, a convenience the US finds in its allies. The US can maintain its ideals by allying with countries that share with the US values such as freedom and democracy. That is, a benefit is made through increasing the number of countries that have an understanding with the US. However, shared values is not necessarily an indispensable condition for an alliance, given that alliances have been concluded even without any common values to share but instead due to the existence of common enemies. Finally a benefit is made through increasing allies and putting them under US control in order to show off the imperialistic or hegemonic presence of the US. That suggests that having allies is highly important for the US to maintain its global control and hegemonic system.

What does the US expect of its narrowly-defined allies? The US wants these countries to support its foreign policy. This involves various matters, including the issues of Iraq and Afghanistan, anti-terrorism measures, measures for Russia, and US-India agreement. Secondly, the US wants its allies to share its values, such as freedom, democracy and the importance of a market economy. Thirdly, the US wants its allies at times of emergency to offer bases and troops, and to cooperate with its campaigns. Specific cases in this instance should include cooperation in over-flight issues, or which countries' airspaces should be taken by US fighters leaving the UK for Iraq and the Middle East, and provision of training bases and straits passage. Lastly, the US wants its allies to burden adequate amounts of defense costs and accept host nation support (HNS) in times of peace.

What kind of country does the US wish to conclude an alliance with? What conditions are desirable? To sum up, the UK is a model country. The US sees the UK as a country that shares values with it and is located in a significant geopolitical place. It is of course a country that the US can share confidential information with. The UK is furthermore a country that the US can trust at times of emergency as an enduring ally that consistently supports the US. Another desirable condition is for a country to have few restrictions on the use of bases among other conditions. Against this backdrop, the US wishes to secure the freedom of its actions once it enters an alliance. Use of bases in this instance includes not only use at times of peace but also the consent of the host country to provide the US with arms components. The US wants such countries that can shoulder these burdens and are eager to do so, specifically including troops, facilities and funding. Desirable countries also include those that accept accesses by the US to their own technologies, which is an important point for the US.

Some observers argue that alliances have lost the significance they had in the past and that instead the Coalition of the Willing has been enhancing its importance. Some documents issued in the US emphasize the limits of the allies, while others stress the importance of alliances, suggesting splits of views.

Looking at the numbers of participants in the US Coalition of the Willing and also of US allies in the past six wars, one observes changes of the participants in each war and changes of the existence of US allies, from the period starting with World War II through the Second Iraq War. During World War II, those that participated in the US side were all allies of the US. But after the First Iraq War, the US side participants and US allies were not totally identical. Among the

35 countries that participated in the First Iraq War, 17 were US allies. As of 1991, the US had concluded alliances with 52 countries. That means 33% of them participated in the First Iraq War. And those allies accounted for 49% of the participants in the First Iraq War. This minority rate of allies indicates the participation of non-allied countries. Those countries participated under the concept of the Coalition of the Willing. Although the US has many allies, it solicits volunteer participation in the wars it wages. That suggests that the US has a growing tendency to consider the Coalition of the Willing beneficial and that the US highly relied on the Coalition in the wars it engaged in.

From here arises the argument that the effectiveness of alliances has limits. During the Cold War era, the US used its alliances for the containment policy against the Soviet Union. When the Cold War ended and the Soviet Union collapsed, arguments began on what significance US alliances had, having drawn suggestions up to date, such as that alliances serve for regional stability and that they are international public goods.

However, we should also note the merits and demerits of the Coalition of the Willing. As a merit, the Coalition of the Willing helps the US launch its operations. Because participation is based on one's own will, the US need not take the trouble to convince every one of its allies of their participation. However, the US must also bear the uncertainty on the onset as to which countries will actually participate in the Coalition. When too many countries do participate, that could hinder the efficiency of US operations. Negative consequences would include long adjustment periods, problems of the chain of command and control of units. Therefore, the effectiveness of the Coalition of the Willing also comes into question. In the Vietnam War, as few as seven countries participated. A lesson learned by the US out of this experience was that waging war in the future would require the participation of as many friendly nations or allies as possible. This idea influenced the subsequent US tactics in the First Iraq War, the Afghan War and the Second Iraq War.

In his book "The End of Alliances" (Oxford University Press, 2007), Rajan Menon argues that the end of the Cold War has undermined the significance of alliances. Alliances come with huge costs and compensations, as well as difficulties to maintain them. For example, bases offered under an alliance could be in fact bound by too many restrictions, making them hard to use. In some cases use of bases may be declined by the host country. Even though some countries maintain alliances with the US, they end up imposing restrictions when the US tries to use their bases. Added to that is considerably long time that has to be spent to adjust policies with the allies. The US must always try to maintain relations with its allies during times of peace. Thus, alliances require huge maintenance costs. The US must also strive to sustain compatibility and bear training costs of troops. Moreover, some US allies may confront each other. In NATO, Turkey and Greece were at odds, while in the Asia-Pacific, ties between Japan and South Korea remained sour for some time, making it very difficult for the US to deal with both countries. Regardless, these are all US allies that the US must help in certain occasions as the cost it must bear to maintain alliances. Another cost of alliances is that when an ally is attacked by a third country, the US must involve itself in the fight to defend the ally. This could be called the cost of pledges to the allies. Paul Kennedy recently indicated that to maintain a free rider policy is a cost to be borne by an empire, and that as compensation to remain as an empire, a country has to

take care of free riders. This idea offers a good ground for the argument for the end of alliances. However, alliances represent certain values as well. The first of such values is that alliances clearly show who comrades are. Alliances also offer a sense of reassurance for protection at times of emergency. A third value of alliances is based on the expectations that allies will support US policies and share its values, and furthermore allies will offer markets for US-made arms and other economic activities. In this way, alliances serve as collaterals for the safety of the United States. Seen from this perspective, there cannot definitely be an end to alliances.

The US refers to its alliance with Japan as the cornerstone to preserving America's security in the Asia-Pacific region. Moreover, Michael Mansfield, who served a long career as Ambassador to Japan, indicated that no other relations are as important as those between Japan and the US. Although the US cannot deny the importance of alliances, the country also expects its allies to fulfill the agenda described above. Should Japan fail to meet these points, there should be room for improvement. Is Japan a country that proves resilient at times of emergency? Is it a trustworthy country that shows constant and durable support to the US at times of emergency? Is it also a country that imposes few restrictions on the use of bases? That is what the US expects Japan to be, but Japan may likely be maintaining fairly strong restrictions. Japan is bound to legal restrictions, as well as the Three Non-Nuclear Principles and Three Principles on Arms Exports, which could make the US wonder if it is indeed a fully trustable country. Therefore, Japan is facing a question of how to respond to US expectations. Sharing of information is also important. A well known report prepared by Richard Armitage suggests that the Japan-US alliance should follow the example of the US-UK alliance. The report also stresses the importance of the sharing of information. These can be taken as a call on Japan to become a more trustable country. There are many aspects in the significance of the realignment of US forces in and around Japan. However, the plan to scale back the Marine Corps in Okinawa does reflect a desire of the US to secure more freedom of action. Moreover, the US weighs the burdens to be shouldered by its allies. To remain as an empire, it is also important for the US to have its allies shoulder burdens. This could suggest a further increase of US expectations of the roles played by Japan's Self-Defense Forces.