

## The US-Japan Security Treaty: Still a Grand Bargain after 50 Years?

George Packard (ジョージ・パッカード)

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Today, we celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the coming into force of the United States - Japan Security Treaty that took effect in January 1960. And I do mean **celebrate**: it is the longest lasting treaty between two sovereign nations since the beginning of the nation-state system in 1648. Not a single word of that treaty has been changed for half a century, even though since 1970 either side could have called for its abrogation by giving one year's advance notice of its intent to do so. The treaty commits the U.S. to come to the defense of Japan if Japan comes under attack from any country, and commits Japan to provide bases and ports for the U.S. to station its forces in Japan. Its purpose was to maintain peace and security in East Asia and it has achieved that purpose. It continues to serve the interests of both nations. Indeed, if it had not served both sides, it would not have survived.

The treaty was correctly seen by both sides as a “grand bargain.” It enabled Japan to recover its independence, gain security from the most powerful nation in the world at low cost, avoid re-militarizing, stay out of the nuclear weapons race, and win access to the American market as it rebuilt its devastated economy after its defeat in World War Two. It gave Japan time to nurture the seeds of parliamentary democracy that the U.S. planted during the Occupation, and to serve as a role model for other nations of the region. It enabled the U.S. to project power into the Western Pacific; its troops and bases in Japan could not only help defend Japan but also lend credibility to its commitments to defend South Korea and Taiwan, and to contain the Soviet Union and Communist China.

As you know, the revised treaty of 1960 got off to a rocky start: thousands of students, labor unionists, intellectuals and other left wing elements demonstrated in the streets against its ratification in May and June 1960. President Eisenhower's visit to Tokyo, scheduled for June 19, had to be cancelled at the last moment. There was the tragic death of Kamba Michiko, a female student near the gates of the Diet. Prime Minister Kishi was forced to resign. Some in America thought that Japan was in danger of a Communist takeover.

In retrospect, however, the anti-treaty movement led to an improvement in the relationship between the two allies: President Kennedy took Japan far more seriously than his predecessor and sent Edwin O. Reischauer as his Ambassador to Tokyo. Reischauer, who had been born in Tokyo to missionary parents, set out to repair what he called the "broken dialogue" with Japan. Using his deep knowledge of Japanese history and culture, he reached out to students, intellectuals and others to form new networks of communication. He asserted civilian control over the U.S. military, and cautioned his fellow Americans in Japan to get over their "occupation mentality." He began the process of returning Okinawa to Japanese sovereignty. Because he emphasized the importance of Japan as an ally and partner, he was followed by many prominent American leaders, including Senator Mike Mansfield, House Speaker Tom Foley, former Vice President Walter Mondale, and Senator Howard Baker. No other country has received such an array of American leaders.

The treaty has endured despite dramatic changes in world politics: the Vietnam War, collapse of the Soviet Union, the spread of nuclear weapons to North Korea and the dramatic rise of China. It has also survived fierce trade disputes between the two allies from 1971-1995, and it remains strong in spite of the deep cultural and historical differences between the two nations.

But I would suggest to you that we cannot simply assume that it will survive into the indefinite future. I say this for the following reasons:

- The original treaty that entered into force in 1952, predecessor to the current treaty, was negotiated between a victor nation and a vanquished, occupied nation, not between two sovereign states.

- Japan, which had never in its history accepted foreign troops on its soil, today (65 years after the end of the war) has had to accept the indefinite stationing of close to 100,000 American troops, civilian employees and dependents at some 85 facilities in a nation that is smaller than the state of California. Some 75 per cent of the U.S. forces are based on the small island of Okinawa, in the Ryukyu Island chain.
- The continued presence of such a large U.S. military footprint brings with it environmental damage, crime, accidents, noise in crowded cities, and red light districts.
- The American presence is governed by a “Status of Forces Agreement” (SOFA) which has never been ratified by the Japanese Diet (parliament) and which increasingly strikes thoughtful Japanese as an extension of the extraterritorial arrangements that characterized Western imperialism in Asia in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.
- In order to soften the criticism of its mercantilist trade policies in 1978, Japan agree to provide “host nation support” that helps pay for the Japanese workers employed at US military bases. That cost has run between \$3 - 4 billion per year. It called in Japanese the “*omoiyari yosan*” or “sympathy budget,” a term which should embarrass both sides. That budget paid in 2008 for 76 bartenders, 48 vending machine personnel, 47 golf course maintenance personnel, 25 club managers, 20 commercial artists, 9 leisure boat operators, 6 theater directors, 5 cake decorators, 4 bowling alley clerks, 3 tour guides, and 1 animal caretaker.
- It is only natural that a new generation of younger Japanese who did not live through the Cold War will increasingly question why they should put up with foreign troops and bases on their soil 65 years after the end of World War Two. The US has reduced its military footprint in South Korea, Germany and the Philippines, and it should not be surprising that the new generation of Japanese is growing restive in this situation.

- It is only natural, too, that the people of Okinawa who currently bear the brunt of the U.S. military presence, should be eager to reduce the oversized burden they have borne for so many years.

The U.S., of course, has its own problems with the treaty:

- It is not reciprocal. Japan is not obliged to come to the aid of the US if the US comes under attack outside of Japan, while the US is obligated to come to the defense of Japan if Japan is attacked.
- Japan, while admitting that it has the right to engage in “collective self-defense” as provided in the U.N. Charter, has declared that it cannot exercise that right because of Article IX of its Constitution, which renounces “war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force in settling international disputes.” As you know, repeated efforts by the US to persuade Japan to change this interpretation have all failed.

Japan has, in a gingerly and painstaking process, moved to meet American concerns that it was enjoying a “free ride.” It has taken steps to make its military equipment interoperable with that of the U.S. Forces in the country, and has engaged in joint planning and training exercises. It currently has the seventh largest defense budget in the world. It sent 600 troops to Iraq from 2003-2006 to engage in non-combat operations, and from 2001 to early this year, stationed naval vessels in the Indian Ocean to supply fuel to coalition forces fighting in Afghanistan. It has agreed to share its technology with the US in the field of anti-missile defense programs. It regularly engages in UN peacekeeping operations. Japan is second only to the US in supporting the work of the United Nations.

A critical turning point came last August when, after almost 53 years of uninterrupted rule by the Liberal Democratic Party, Japanese voters overwhelmingly threw out the LDP in Lower House elections gave a strong majority to the opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ). The new Prime Minister, Hatoyama Yukio, who took office in September 2009, has a record of seeking closer relations with other

nations in East Asia, and wishing to reduce the presence of the US military in Japan. On his watch, Japan ended its refueling mission in the Indian Ocean.

In October 2009, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates came to Tokyo and demanded that the Hatoyama Cabinet should carry out a decision reached in 2006 between the Bush Administration and an earlier LDP administration regarding the relocation of the US Marine Air Base in Futenma to a new location in Okinawa. This was a mistake. Hatoyama's Cabinet was unprepared to act on this demand; his party and coalition consists of a broad spectrum of views on the issue. Many Okinawans feel they have been treated as second-class citizens by both the Japanese and American Governments; they resent having their small island treated as a "dumping ground" for US bases that are not welcome on the main islands (the NIMBY syndrome).

The US should have given Hatoyama more time to sort out those views. Even more important, the US should have celebrated the rise in Japan of a two-party system – sure evidence that the roots of democracy that we helped to establish are robust. Public opinion in Okinawa generally favors moving the Futenma base out of Okinawa altogether. Prime Minister Hatoyama, in turn, should have been more decisive in proposing a solution to the Futenma base issue that could maintain the deterrent power of the treaty while taking into consideration the feeling of the Okinawan people in line with his campaign pledges. While his cabinet may have been short-lived, the issues he raised will not easily go away.

We all know that public opinion counts in Japan, and the future of the alliance will depend on the degree to which Japanese voters accept the military bases. This means that the two governments need to hold new and broad-ranging talks on grand strategy, and on roles and missions for US Forces. The US Government must convince the Japanese Government of the necessity for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Expeditionary Force as part of its deterrent strategy, and if accepted by the Japanese Government, Japan must be prepared to explain their decisions to the Japanese public.

Whatever decision is reached, we need to remain aware that the North Korean Government is going through a delicate and perhaps unstable period of lead-

ership change, and we must be careful not to send any signal of weakness in the alliance that could tempt Pyongyang to test our will.

The more important point is that Futenma should not be the primary determinant of the US-Japan relationship. Far more is at stake. We are the two strongest democracies and economies in East Asia. Peace and security in the region can only be maintained by our joint leadership.

We are the only two nations of East and West who have successfully overcome huge cultural and historical barriers to forge a genuine partnership of friendship and shared values. The treaty rests on the strong bonds of friendship that have been forged for the last fifty years.

One point of concern is that the new generation of young Japanese may be changing their views of America. *The Washington Post* reported on April 11, 2010 that undergraduate enrollment of Japanese students in US universities has fallen an astounding 52 percent since 2000. Graduate enrollment has fallen by 27 percent. This is happening at a time when enrollment from China is up 164 percent, and from India, up 190 percent. We can speculate about why this is happening. Clearly it should focus our attention on the future of the alliance. It would be tragic indeed if support for the alliance in Japan were to wither away in a cloud of benign neglect.

Another concern is that top leaders of our two countries are so consumed by other crises that they do not carve out time to sit down together and form a relationship of trust and understanding. It was unfortunate that President Obama and Prime Minister Hatoyama were not able to reach a strong comfort level in their personal relationship. Let us hope that both Washington and Tokyo now realize the importance of clear communication and personal friendship at the summit.

A third concern is how both nations deal with China. It has become popular in the media of both nations to suggest that any move by Japan to engage China equals a move away from the US and vice versa. This is not and should not be a zero sum game. I would argue that both Japan and the US need to do everything in their power to seek better relations with China, and that this will be a “win-win” situation.

We should not fear that China will play us off against each other. Our bonds of friendship are too strong for that to happen.

As we look at the future of the alliance — the next fifty years — we must work together and in the Six-Party Talks to curb North Korean nuclear ambitions, and to bring about the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula.

Together we can strengthen environmental protection, human rights, anti-piracy measures. Together we can secure sea-lanes of communication, and combat terrorism. Together we can work to improve the health and welfare of the developing nations. Together we can strengthen the effectiveness of the United Nations.

I have urged elsewhere that Japan should consider changing its stance on the question of exercising the right of collective self-defense (*shudan boei ken*). I believe that Japan should be prepared to commit its armed forces to engage in joint operations with those of the US whenever its own national interests are at stake. Recognition of that right would give Japan more leverage in the alliance. Japan would, of course, retain the right to act based solely on its own interests and, like Germany and France who refused to join in the Iraq invasion of 2003, it could make up its own mind about the wisdom of joining with the US. But I believe that if top leaders in Pyongyang, for instance, knew that Japanese forces might be fighting alongside American forces in any outbreak of hostilities, this would cause them to think twice before taking any hostile actions.

I would urge that a new “Wise Person’s Commission” be set up — similar to those that have played an important role in past years — to examine the relationship in all its aspect and make recommendations to both governments. The Commission should of course include military leaders, but it should appointed by and report to, elected leaders in both countries.

I believe that it is healthy periodically to examine the basis for the entire alliance, taking a new look at the rationale for troops and bases, their roles and missions, and how Japan can contribute to our joint goals without violating its peace constitution. Just as *bonsai* masters regularly pull up their beautiful plants to trim their



roots and shape their forms, so too should we shape the operation of the treaty to meet current realities. The Commission should explore ways to create a permanent security organization along the lines of NATO for all of Northeast Asia. Within this new framework wise decisions can be reached on locating US troops and bases within Japan. I might add that a number of thoughtful Americans starting with Ambassador Reischauer and more recently Ambassador Tom Foley and Senator Daniel Inoue have argued that US and Japanese Self-Defense Forces should eventually come to share more bases in Japan, and I believe that the Commission should examine this possibility.

The Commission should be charged with devising new ways in which younger Americans and Japanese can communicate with each other. This is why the US-Japan Foundation has, for the past 11 years, brought young leaders in the 28-42 age range together from both countries (including members of the Japan Self Defense Forces and the US military) to create new networks of friendship and understanding. We cannot simply assume that our finest young leaders will form friendships across the Pacific; we need to work at it.

The Commission should look into expanding educational, cultural and scientific exchanges. It should explore new ways to reach out to younger Chinese leaders insuring that there will be networks of communication between future leaders of all three countries.

I also believe that President Obama, during his November visit to Japan, should go to Hiroshima and use the symbolism of that place to declare his vision of a nuclear-free world. Then Prime Minister Kan should visit Pearl Harbor, and declare that his nation will work to create a world in which such an attack will never again occur. Neither leader need offer the hint of an apology, and both should praise the brave men, living and dead, who fought on both sides during World War Two. I believe these symbolic gestures would go far to healing the remaining scars that are still painful to both nations, and would solidify the alliance for decades to come.

In conclusion, I believe that public opinion in both nations continues to be strongly in support of the alliance. Trust in Japan has never been higher in America

than it is today. The bonds of friendship and the values we share are unshakeable. Given this favorable situation, our leaders must get to work and solve the current base problems with good will and determination. There is no reason why the treaty should not last until all the real estate problems have been peacefully resolved.