

Chapter 6

Australia: The Challenges of the Japan-Australia Quasi-Alliance

Japan-Australia defense cooperation is entering a new evolution. In retrospect the first phase of transformation, which began with the March 2007 Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation, aimed for the institutionalization of cooperative relationships centered on nontraditional security areas, exemplified by disaster relief and peacekeeping operations. The emerging trend of bilateral defense relations, which can be termed as a second evolution, is unfolding as the scope of Japan-Australia cooperation is beginning to expand beyond nontraditional security areas to include initiatives such as capacity building assistance on maritime security in Southeast Asia, and seeking ways for defense equipment cooperation particularly related to new submarines for the Royal Australian Navy. In the meantime, there are a number of issues that must be addressed by both Japan and Australia for this second evolution to come to fruition. While Japan and Australia do have some common ground in both perception and policy vis-à-vis China, there are still points of divergence between the two countries in terms of dealing with China's challenges. Japan and Australia have taken an increasingly aligned stance on the risks to regional peace and security posed by China's rise, including both countries expressing "deep concern" over China's land reclamation operations in the South China Sea in recent years. This does not mean, however, that the perception of issues in regard to China by both Japan and Australia are in perfect synthesis; it may also be said the "China Gap" remains an impeding factor in the development of relations between the nations. Thus, continued caution must simultaneously be paid to the points of divergent perception of issues related to China, not just the alignment of positions regarding its rise, as this will be a critical litmus test affecting concrete future development of defense cooperation with Australia, which is often called a quasi-ally in Tokyo.

1. The Turnbull Government and Defence White Paper

(1) Change of Prime Ministers and China Policy

As a result of the party leadership election of the ruling Liberal Party held in September 2015, the cabinet of then Prime Minister Tony Abbott, suffering constantly from low approval rates, was replaced by a new government led by Malcolm Turnbull as prime minister. Since then, much attention, both in and outside of Australia, was paid to development of the new government's policy

toward China. The previous Abbott government publicly criticized China for attempts at unilateral changes to the status quo particularly in maritime affairs, and moreover in this context stood aligned with the United States as an ally and with Japan as a partner country. The question of whether the new government would revise the track of the Abbott government's China policy, or follow its basic direction ignited vigorous debate.

In retrospect, former prime minister Abbott's thinking around China was closely related to the idea of giving weight to the sense of solidarity with countries sharing values, beginning with alliance partner the United States. Former prime minister Abbott used the concept of the "Anglo-sphere" to explain his perspective on national defense, in his book *Battlelines*, which was published when he was an opposition party leader, and during numerous political addresses.¹⁾ Prime Minister Abbott emphasized the large role played by the Anglo-sphere, composed of countries such as the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, in creating and maintaining the modern international order. While Anglo-sphere can be translated in Japanese as "English-speaking sphere," Prime Minister Abbott asserts the key defining factor is the sharing of values including freedom and democracy, not simply a shared linguistic or cultural unity. From this perspective, Prime Minister Abbott has emphasized cooperation with alliance partners including the United States, the leader of the Anglo-sphere, and strategic coordination with Japan, an ally of the United States, and as a result brought Australia in greater alignment with both nations, and has signaled publicly his position critical of China for creating various risks, including "coercive attempts to unilaterally alter the status quo."

This stance was apparent as soon as the Abbott government was formed in September 2013, with no changes apparent even entering 2015.

As international concerns rose over China's rapidly developing land reclamation activity and construction of artificial structures in the South China Sea, Minister for Defence Kevin Andrews and Secretary of Defence Dennis

Richardson in May 2015 publicly expressed the position calling for immediate suspension of these activities. Moreover, Minister for Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop in July 2015 made clear the position opposing unilateral establishment of an air defense identification zone in the South China Sea.²⁾ Vice Admiral David Johnston, Chief of Joint Operations, stated that Australian Defence Force (ADF) would continue to implement their normal activities in the South China Sea, and in addition to conducting periodic AP-3C flight operations out of RMAF Butterworth, joint exercise Bersama Shield, based on a hypothetical scenario of the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) countries defending Malaysia and Singapore. Australia dispatched the submarine HMAS *Rankin*, *Anzac*-class frigate HMAS *Perth*, two AP-3C planes, and other forces to participate in the joint exercise.³⁾

The new Turnbull government is thus signaling its posture of continuing broadly the policies of the previous Abbott government, which had come out clearly with a position critical of any attempt by China to unilaterally alter the status quo. During an appearance on a television program immediately following his inauguration, new Prime Minister Turnbull emphasized the importance of taking necessary measures to ensure China's rise does not disrupt the harmony and stability of the region. In this context, Prime Minister Turnbull criticized China's actions in the South China Sea as "unproductive" and warned China's activities would only lead to the United States strengthening its engagement in the region, an undesirable outcome for China itself. The joint statement issued following the 2015 Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN) held on October 13 in Boston expressed "strong concerns" specifically regarding China's land reclamation activities in the South China Sea and, further, specifically included language that called upon China's national leadership to "fulfil the commitment" made by China's president that "China has no intention of militarization" of reclaimed land and various structures being constructed in the South China Sea.⁴⁾ The AUSMIN joint statement criticizes China by name, and uses language that urges action, specifying the national leadership, which may be considered highly irregular. Further, when the US Navy destroyer *Lassen* conducted "freedom of navigation operations" within twelve nautical miles of where land is being reclaimed by China in the South China Sea in October, the Turnbull government through the Minister of Defence underscored its position of continuing to cooperate closely with the United States to protect "freedom of navigation and freedom of overflight."⁵⁾

The first months following the establishment of the new Turnbull government thus have not provided any reason to think there were any significant changes from the position of the Abbott government, at least in the area of policy toward China. However, it is too early to consolidate the assessment on the Turnbull government's China policy. It remains possible to see a particular direction of Prime Minister Turnbull gradually emerge. For example, Prime Minister Turnbull, writing a review of Australian National University Professor Hugh White's famous paper "Power Shift," indicates his perspective that changes in the power balance between the United States and China will inevitably and naturally be reflected in the relationship between the two nations, as well as in their positions on regional security. Such discourse was not observed in former prime minister Abbott's statements and thus it is important to pay particular attention to what effects this way of thinking may have on Australia's security strategy going forward.⁶⁾

(2) Review Process of Defence White Paper: ADF's Mission, Structure, Budget

The second point of consideration surrounding the security strategy of the Turnbull government is what will happen to the new edition of the Defence White Paper, which is being drafted at the time of this writing. The former Abbott government publicly stated its intention to draft a new defense white paper when it was formed in September 2013, which has been inherited by the Turnbull government. Australia's defense white paper is the most important public document that comprehensively lays out the basic thinking of the government, including national interests and goals, and the mission, force structure, posture, and budget of the ADF, and as such is considered an indispensable source for analysis in any consideration of defense policy. The Turnbull government inherited the latest white paper, which the Abbott government spent about two years developing, when it was in the final stages before publication. Thus, much attention is being paid to what impact the change in government may have on the content of the white paper.

The Abbott government has signaled its basic thinking in regard to the white paper through speeches by cabinet ministers and high-ranking officials, as well as budget measures, and it presents a break from the past in its conceptual thinking, especially in regard to Australia's strategic interests and its thinking on the ways that Australian military force structure is to be determined. Australia's strategic

interests have been defined by “concentric circles” based on geographic distance from the Australian homeland since the 2000 Defence White Paper published by the conservative coalition government of John Howard (1996–2007), which is organized broadly as: (1) Defence of Australia; (2) stability of the Immediate Neighborhood; (3) security of the Asia-Pacific, centered on Southeast Asia, and/or the Indo-Pacific; and (4) global security.⁷⁾ Based on “concentric-circles” of national and security interests the idea on force structure was formulated. The logic is that operations necessitated by (1) were considered as the key “force structure determinant” as the top priority; emphasizing build-out of military power necessary for (2) as the second priority factor for consideration; and using the capabilities developed from these two perspectives to execute its missions in regard to (3) and (4). The doctrine of “self-reliance” in (1), direct Defence of Australia, has continued to be the most important factor in determining the force structure of the Australian defense force since the first white paper was published in 1976, specifically the central concept of fighting limited conflicts in “air-sea gap/approaches” located to the north of Australia.⁸⁾

The issue of whether or not to rethink long-held concepts of strategic interests and the mission of Australian military forces was a key point of contention in the development process of the new white paper. Chief of Defence Force David Hurley raised the issue of what it means to review these concepts, especially as related to the mission of Australian forces in consideration of changes in global power and the importance of ensuring maritime safety, in a speech delivered at Canberra University in March 2014, which suggests that work to review the basic conceptual thinking involving the mission of Australian forces was already happening quite early on in the white paper process.⁹⁾

Further, Minister of Defence Andrews, addressing India’s Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses in September 2015, stated Australia could no longer “rely on historical notions of basing our defence planning on the defence of the Australian continent and the immediate air and sea environment in Australia’s north” and emphasized the importance of Australia playing a bigger role in supporting “regional security” and “rules-based global order.”¹⁰⁾ Further, he stated that Australia’s force structure will consider three key tasks: “defending Australia and its national interests,” “playing an active role in contributing to regional security and stability,” and “contributing to coalition operations across the world where our interests are engaged.”¹¹⁾ The addition and clear status of regional stability and

global operations as force structure determinants represent a revolutionary change, and can be thought of as signaling a shift in the relative importance of the “self-reliant” defense of Australia, which has been a central tenet of defense policy for the past thirty years. On the other hand, these ideas were developed under the Abbott government, and the content of the white paper to be published under the Turnbull government is subject of attention, particularly in regard to Australian force structure determinants. If Asia-Pacific or Indo-Pacific regional security is in some ways positioned as a force structure determinant, then the hypothetical context and envisioned operations for Australia forces become of great interest.

These kinds of conceptual changes related to force structure determinants and what concrete impacts these changes could have on Australian military force structure remain unknown variables. In retrospect, it is possible there may have been a gap between the logic actually used to determine force structure and the guiding principles in regard to force structure determinants as used in defense white papers of the past. For example, according to Professor Hugh White, who, as deputy secretary in the Department of Defence at the time, played a key role in the development of the 2000 Defence White Paper, the decision to purchase the fifth-generation fighter plane was made in consideration of the need for Australian forces to effectively join in combined operations against a large country, such as China, in Asia-Pacific region.¹²⁾ The 2000 Defence White Paper was premised on the positioning of the direct defense of Australia and the stability of the Immediate Neighborhood as two force structure determinants, however, if true, White’s explanation cited previously leaves questions of how this decision was consistent with the declaratory policy. Moreover, Michael Pezzullo, who at the time as deputy secretary for strategy led the white paper team, is reported to have stated that the purchase of twelve new submarines, the showpiece of the 2009 Defence White Paper, was “over-hedging” with China in mind.¹³⁾ It is highly likely that Pezzullo made such remarks. If that is the case, questions must be raised about the logical consistency of the submarine procurement decision based on the force structure determinants of the 2009 Defence White Paper, which are virtually the same as the force structure determinants of the 2000 Defence White Paper. If, as explained above, Asia-Pacific regional stability and the rise of China were in essence being used as force structure determinants for Australian forces since the 2000 White Paper, then even if the Turnbull government’s white paper changes the conceptual underpinnings of force structure determinants, the precedent of re-

adjusting the language to suit the situation cannot be denied.

To determine the actual significance of changes in the conceptual framework, including force structure determinants, in addition to just an analysis of concepts, it is necessary to consider: (1) comparing the White Paper and the costed procurement plan, which is scheduled to be published simultaneously, to see the detailed plans for how the force structure is actually envisioned; and (2) the degree to which necessary funds are appropriated. In regard to (1) and (2) above, if the conceptual framework related to force structure determinants and the actual policy are in alignment, there is no need to take an overly cynical view that the above changes to the conceptual framework were simply changes in language.

In this context, the question of budget is a point of debate particularly amongst experts. The previous Abbott government set a clear target for defense budget size at the level of 2 percent of GDP by about 2024, however, whether this policy will be continued under the Turnbull government remains to be seen. Whether the Abbott government's policies will be adopted or be changed is an important issue in the rethinking of the defense white paper. In the outcome document of the January 2016 meeting of the heads of states of the United States and Australia, the Turnbull government for the first time publicly pledged a defense budget of 2 percent of GDP but gave no specific indication of when that target would be achieved, and thus the government's policies on the defense budget remain unclear. Rather, the important facts confirmed by this outcome document are that the United States has high expectations in regard to Australia's defense budget increase, and the public pledge of a defense budget of 2 percent of GDP once again brings into sharp relief the challenges associated with Australia's role as an alliance partner.

2. Continuing Engagement in the Indo-Pacific

(1) US-Australia Alliance

The Force Posture Initiative was announced in November 2011, and since the start of rotational US Marine Corps deployments in Darwin in April of the following year, the US-Australia alliance has pushed ahead building cooperative relationships in the context of engagement in the Indo-Pacific region. With the signing of the Force Posture Agreement between the United States and Australia in July 2014, resolution was reached on a range of legal issues including an understanding of

how to divide the costs of infrastructure and facilities necessitated by further expansion of US military deployments and to complement the existing status of forces agreement. During the US-Australia defense ministerial meeting held in October 2015, a new “Australian Department of Defence-US Department of Defense Statement on Defense Cooperation in the 21st Century” was signed, confirming the plan to strengthen integrated capabilities to support regional peace and security through the Force Posture Initiative, and improve interoperability with the US armed forces.¹⁴⁾ The year 2015 continued on the path set forth by the existing Force Posture Initiative, a year marked by progress at the working level.

Marine Rotational Force-Darwin (MRF-D), a detachment of approximately 1,100 personnel, conducted operations during the dry season from April to October 2015, continuing to use Robertson Barracks and RAAF Base Darwin as primary operating bases. In addition to participating in various exercises with Australian forces, MRF-D also participated in US-Australia-Japan Exercise Southern Jackaroo in July 2015 and Exercise Kowari, a trilateral survival training exercise with participation of land forces from Australia, China, and the United States, using Australia as a platform for engagement of other countries in the region.¹⁵⁾ These combined training activities involving countries in the region, not just between the United States and Australia, can be said to be a sign of concrete progress by the US-Australia alliance in working together in strengthening their engagement in the region. Australia is making progress in efforts to build amphibious capabilities, taking delivery of a 27,000-ton *Canberra*-class Landing Helicopter Dock (LHD) in 2016, following launch of the first LHD in November 2014, as well as restructuring of the Army 1st, 2nd, and 7th Brigades to function as Multi-role Combat Brigades capable of rapid amphibious deployment for peace operations in the region, as provided in Plan Beersheba. The increase in training with US Marines in Darwin is likely meant to support Australia in building out new capabilities like these. In June 2015, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) received parliamentary authorization for the budget required to expand harbor facilities in Darwin necessitated by the launch of the large-size LHD. The Parliamentary Budget Office however said this could be evaluated as meaning infrastructure development for the expansion of US Marine operations in Australia.¹⁶⁾

At the same time, the consideration of new areas of cooperation, such as expanded naval and air force operations and increased access, continues to progress.¹⁷⁾ According to the “Australian Department of Defence-US Department

of Defense Statement on Defense Cooperation in the 21st Century,” published at the conclusion of the meeting of the defense chiefs of the Australia and the United States held in October 2015, in an environment in which occurs “territorial disputes and competition for resources,” and “challenges to rules-based global order,” the two nations plan to make “special efforts to leverage the Australia-United States Force Posture initiatives” and it is thought that specific plans to strengthen Australia-United States defense cooperation are being considered especially in the “Asia-Pacific and Indo-Pacific areas.”¹⁸⁾ Further, AUSMIN 2015, held concurrently, published the “*determination* to pursue strengthening of naval cooperation in all respects” clearly demonstrating the intent to strengthen cooperation with the United States naval forces and a deeper commitment than expressed in the language of AUSMIN 2014, which stated that both sides “*discussed the potential* for additional bilateral naval cooperation and *welcomed* the...port visits planned for 2015” (emphasis added).¹⁹⁾ In February 2015, US Navy Chief of Naval Operations Jonathan Greenert revealed that long-term options including basing in each region of Australia were under consideration.

No new specific measures have been announced related to increasing US Air Force (USAF) access or further cooperation between the US and Australian air forces but regular exercises involving USAF strategic bombers have been held for many years, as part of the “Strategic Bomber Training Program” agreement previously concluded by the United States and Australian governments in 2005.²⁰⁾ A USAF B-52 bomber and a refueling tanker were deployed in December 2014, and two USAF B-52 bombers deployed to Australia during joint Australia-United States Exercise Talisman Sabre held in June 2015, conducting training exercises including bombing runs and low-level runway approaches in the northern part of Australia, including at the Delamere Air Weapons Range.²¹⁾

Thus 2015 saw some degree of progress at the working-level of the US-Australia alliance in the context of strengthening engagement in the Indo-Pacific region, however, it was also a year where problems began to emerge, including the two

noted below. The first challenge is the destabilization of conditions in the Middle East. A key assumption underlying efforts by the United States and Australia to strengthen their engagement in the Indo-Pacific region is to put a stop to ground operations in the Middle East. The United States and Australia cooperation in the Middle East, however, has continued to grow in response to the growing threat from Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL). The Australian Air Force was engaged in humanitarian air drop operations in Iraq since August 2014 but in September of the same year began Operation OKRA, which included aerial bombing in Iraq, involving six FA-18s, one KC-30A, and one E-7A, contributing to the international alliance efforts.²²⁾ In addition, the area of aerial bombing was expanded to include Syria and approximately 400 ADF air operations personnel have been operating out of Al Minhad Air Base in the United Arab Emirates since September 2015.²³⁾ Further, approximately 300 Australian Army personnel integrated with about 110 New Zealand Army forces to form a combined task group, Task Group Taji, operating near Baghdad, Iraq, and in May 2015 was supporting training of Iraqi army personnel and capacity building.²⁴⁾ The fact that US-Australia defense cooperation has expanded in the Middle East does not necessarily mean that cooperative involvement by the two countries in the Indo-Pacific has slowed significantly. At the same time, the expansion of operations against ISIL signals that the risk of stagnation of Indo-Pacific engagement by the two countries, a risk that has been identified since the beginning of the debate over the United States' rebalancing toward Asia-Pacific, is clearly not a thing of the past.

The second challenge facing the US-Australia alliance as it aims to strengthen engagement in the Indo-Pacific revolves around the China factor for the two nations. As seen in the previously discussed 2015 AUSMIN joint statement, the US-Australia cooperation vis-à-vis China has continued to deepen, as demonstrated by unified strategic messaging regarding Chinese activities in the South China Sea. On the other hand, it never means that the two nations stand completely aligned in regard to China. In May 2015, David Shear, US assistant secretary of defense, testified before a public Senate hearing in the context of policy toward China that increasing access of USAF B-1 bombers in Australia was under consideration. When reported in the media, Prime Minister Abbott emphasized that the US-Australia alliance was not aimed at any third nation, showing consideration toward China.²⁵⁾

The expansion of operations in Australia of USAF bombers has long been

discussed by the two nations, even during the Labor Party government of Julia Gillard (2010–13).²⁶⁾ Concerns regarding China's response were voiced within the cabinet, however, and the Gillard government did not make any decision. In that sense, an important point of attention would be whether there has been any concrete cooperation in this area since the start of the conservative coalition government. The Abbott government's statements regarding increased access for USAF B-1 bombers suggest that consideration toward China will continue to be an important factor in the formulation of Force Posture Initiatives.

(2) Unstable Relationship with Indonesia

Successive governments have emphasized the bilateral relationship between Australia and Indonesia as the single most important bilateral relationship Australia has in the Indo-Pacific region. Moreover, under the Turnbull government, Indonesia was the second country, after New Zealand, visited by the prime minister, underlining the continued importance placed on the relationship.

In recent years, however, the bilateral relationship continued to be in an unstable situation, not developing according to plan on the Australian side. The relationship had worsened since the leaks by Edward Snowden, a former employee of a US intelligence agency in October 2013 to the point of suspension of cooperation such as military exchanges and information-sharing. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono then proposed a six-step roadmap to resumption of military exchanges, etc., through reaching agreements on rules of conduct based on mutual understanding of both nations in regard to intelligence activities.²⁷⁾ In August 2014, after both governments completed the required work, Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa and Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop signed a memorandum of understanding on a code of conduct. In the document, both countries agreed that intelligence activities shall not harm the interests of either nation and to engage in regular high-level contact and dialogue between the respective heads of intelligence agencies and related institutions. Natalegawa expressed this would lead to normalization of military exchanges and intelligence cooperation, and there was general expectation on both sides that the bilateral relationship had returned to the path of growth after being shaken by the problems caused by the Snowden disclosures.²⁸⁾

Just as the conditions for putting the bilateral relationship back on track were coming into place, however, the Indonesian government issued death sentences

for two Australian nationals, creating new political tensions in the bilateral relations. The government of President Joko Widodo, which began in 2014, indicated its intention to execute two Australians for crimes related to sale of narcotics. The Australian government repeatedly called for the executions to be canceled, but they were carried out in April 2015. In response, Australia's ambassador to Indonesia was recalled to Canberra, and the Abbott government stated the relationship with Indonesia could not go on "as if nothing had happened," indicating another sign of political setback in the bilateral relationship.

These political problems, however, did not have a lasting impact on the bilateral relationship. Both countries quickly by the latter half of 2015 made efforts to normalize the bilateral relationship, including in the area of security, and broadly speaking succeeded. Foreign Minister Bishop visited Indonesia in July of the same year, stating this issue had not caused "lasting damage" to the bilateral relationship and expressed hope that the bilateral relationship would get back on track.²⁹⁾ Moreover, new Prime Minister Turnbull visited Indonesia in November, and the political atmosphere between the two nations improved appreciably, including Prime Minister Turnbull's building a close relationship with President Jokowi. Further, in December, the third annual Australia-Indonesia Foreign and Defence Ministers 2+2 Dialogue and the Meeting of the Indonesia-Australia Ministerial Council on Law and Security were held on the same day, confirming the bilateral relationship had normalized, overcoming the execution controversy.

One reason for the early normalization of the relationship between the two countries was the increasing urgency of the need for cooperation to counter terrorism. Both countries have increasing security concerns over the influx of foreign terrorist fighters to ISIL and the problem of domestic sympathizers of ISIL and radical beliefs, and are cooperating in such areas as information-sharing between relevant agencies and improvement of capabilities of Indonesia governmental agencies. In December 2015, both countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Combating International Terrorism declaring their intent to further deepening efforts to counter terrorism, including expanding cooperation between law enforcement agencies, and in the areas of sharing of intelligence, training, and education.

Cooperation between Japan, the United States, Australia, and India

Cooperation between Japan, the United States, Australia, and India in the area of peace and security has become visibly active in recent years. The fact that these four countries closely cooperate may not necessarily be any news given that the four parties already partnered with each other on the past occasions including when they formed the core group responsible for driving cooperation and coordination during the initial phase of international HA/DR activity in response to the December 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami (Boxing Day Tsunami). Moreover, specific concrete initiatives to strengthen quadrilateral cooperation have been pursued in the past, including the May 2007 ARF Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM), where participants from Japan, the United States, Australia, and India held a separate meeting on the sidelines, and in September of the same year, when maritime forces from Japan, Australia, and Singapore joined Exercise Malabar 2007-II conducted by the United States and India in the Indian Ocean.³⁰⁾ The first Abe government pursued policies promoting coordinated activity between the democratic countries in the Indo-Pacific, under the flag of value-based diplomacy. Initiatives like these were criticized as attempts to contain China, and opinions that pursuing quadrilateral cooperation was rash if India and the three other countries did not first strengthen relationships substantially. These initiatives were temporarily put on the back burner.

The current movement to strengthen quadrilateral cooperation between Japan, the United States, Australia, and India is not necessarily just revival of the direct quadrilateral cooperation but a complex move to find ways to strengthen the relations among those four democracies by building a set of bilateral or trilateral ties. Specific examples include the marked improvement in relationships between defense organizations of Australia and India following the agreement on the Framework for Security Cooperation signed in November 2014 by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Abbott, and especially the agreement to conduct the first joint Australia-India maritime exercises in the Indian Ocean in September 2015, including antisubmarine and ship-boarding exercises, henceforth to be held biennially.³¹⁾ And, in parallel, the deputy ministers of Japan, Australia, and India met in New Delhi in June 2015, and the foreign ministers of Japan, the United States, and India met in New York in October of the same year. Further, combined Japan-US-India exercises were held in the same month, with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force participating in Exercise Malabar for the first time in eight years. This movement suggests the strengthening of cooperation and engagement with India, which is pursuing its own Act East policy, is emerging as an important agenda shared by Japan, the United States, and Australia.

Do recent movements like these mean various factors that previously constrained development of the Japan-US-Australia-India relationship are a thing of the past? In all likelihood, it is still premature to draw that conclusion just yet. Even if the issues that previously constrained quadrilateral cooperation are avoided, the criticism that such cooperation constituted encirclement of China in

2007 could not be said to be a thing of the past. Moreover, the existence of a Japan-Australia-India dialogue that leaves out the United States, implies the possibility that India has yet to resolve its feelings of unease over the presence of the United States. In fact, Australian Foreign Minister Bishop has emphasized in media interviews, “In terms of a quadrilateral, I think that’s premature...In fact, Japan and Australia share a similar outlook in that the United States is both our most important strategic ally,” touching upon the difference in Australia’s and India’s posture toward the United States.³²⁾ In any case, these issues must be examined and validated, and the degree of impact the movement toward strengthening quadrilateral alignment of the Japan, United States, Australia, and India has on regional peace and security requires keeping an eye on future developments.

3. Australia as a “Quasi-Alliance Partner”

(1) The Japan-Australia “Quasi-Alliance”

In April 2014, Prime Minister Abbott and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe issued a joint statement following the bilateral summit in Tokyo to declare a vision of building a “New Special Relationship” between Japan and Australia. “New Special Relationship” draws a historical analogy with Winston Churchill’s oft-quoted “special relationship” between the United States and Britain, and is an expression symbolizing the emphasis both leaders placed upon strengthening cooperation between Japan and Australia. Prime Minister Abe visited Australia in July of the same year, and speaking before the Parliament of Australia, emphasized the importance of cooperation between the two nations in maintaining rules-based order in the region from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean, and expressed expectations of even further development of Japan-Australia cooperation in the area of security.³³⁾ In a teleconference between the leaders of Japan and Australia on September 18, 2015, newly inaugurated Prime Minister Turnbull and Prime Minister Abe expressed their shared intention to push forward the “Special Strategic Partnership” confirming that the Japan-Australia relationship would continue to grow under the new government.

To summarize the strategic direction that the Japan-Australia defense cooperation aims to take under the New Special Relationship, it is the search for cooperation that goes beyond nontraditional security areas. Japan’s Defense White Papers in previous years used the expression of focusing on “nontraditional

security” cooperation to characterize the relationship between Japan and Australia, represented by disaster relief efforts and international peacekeeping operations (PKO). The four areas under consideration as new cooperative initiatives between Japan and Australia under the New Special Relationship are meaningful in that they go beyond nontraditional security. The areas under consideration for cooperation, as well the issues thereof, will both be analyzed below.

The first area is cooperation in defense equipment and technology. Leaders of Japan and Australia signed an agreement to transfer defense equipment in July 2014, and in October of that year, the defense ministers of both nations agreed to consider the possibility of cooperation related to Australia’s Future Submarine Plan. The government of Australia plans to deploy a maximum of twelve conventionally powered submarines equipped with US-made AN/BYG-1 weapons control systems and carrying Mk48CBASS torpedoes, with the capability to conduct sustained operations in a wide maritime area covering Southeast Asia including the South China Sea, and parts of the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean at a level consistent with the *Collins*-class submarines.³⁴⁾ Australia is carrying out the Competitive Evaluation Process of selecting overseas partners. The Japanese government decided to participate in this process following discussions at the National Security Council in May 2015. Also participating are German shipbuilder TKMS, which has a long history of involvement in Australian defense-related projects, and France’s DCNS, with a track record of building nuclear-powered submarines. The three competitors submitted plans for three options: (1) construction in Australia, (2) construction outside of Australia, and (3) a hybrid option of both, by November 30, 2015, with the selection results to be announced in the following year.³⁵⁾

The consideration of Japan-Australia cooperation in this area holds much strategic significance. For Australia, a close ally of the United States, in seeking an active role in the maintenance of rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region, maintaining submarine force capability is of important significance for regional security. If Japan-Australia cooperation were to develop concretely, as in procurement of a highly strategic nature such as submarines, the result would likely be a further deepening of the strategic relationship between the two countries. For Japan, which had just decided three new principles related to transfer of defense equipment in April 2014, there are expectations this will be a precious opportunity for the defense industry to demonstrate results and gain

experience in overseas projects.

The deeper meaning of cooperation in submarines is that it holds the promise of strategic possibilities beyond the area of equipment and technological cooperation. Japanese Minister of Defense Gen Nakatani visited Australia in November 2015 and emphasized the possibility of contributing greatly to ensuring freedom of navigation in the Asia-Pacific region by going beyond the simple transfer of defense equipment but tying this to operational cooperation between submarines of Japan-Australia and Japan-United States-Australia.³⁶⁾ With submarine-related equipment and technology cooperation as the starting point, new possibilities are emerging for Japan-Australia defense cooperation to play an unprecedented role in regional security in Asia-Pacific.

Government of Australia remarks regarding the Future Submarine Plan have evolved over time. In February 2015, Chief of the Defence Force Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin in reference to the Future Submarine, stated that there was “no need to build in Australia” from the perspectives of both the economy and national defense.³⁷⁾ Since this time, however, similar statements from senior Australian government officials have stopped, and as previously noted, the Competitive Evaluation Process is proceeding under a comprehensive consideration of not only capability, budget, or “strategic considerations” but also not eliminating the option of building in Australia, and the involvement of Australian domestic industry in the plan.

Over time, the conservative coalition government has made it specifically clear that the involvement of Australia’s shipbuilding industry in this project will be treated as a matter of importance. There are two interrelated domestic political dynamics at work behind this. First is the issue of employment. Australia’s shipbuilding industry is concentrated in the state of South Australia and is facing a “Valley of Death”—the risk of a long term empty of significant construction activities if there were an extended period without large-scale shipbuilding

activity. Local industries in South Australia and ministers of parliament from the state, including Christopher Pyne MP of the ruling Liberal Party, are expressing the importance of taking economic and labor factors into account. Against this backdrop, in Australia, ship building industry and domestic employment are extremely sensitive issues for politics. When Minister of Defence David Johnston stated in November 2014 before parliament that the domestic shipbuilding industry “couldn’t be trusted to build a canoe,” Prime Minister Abbott was pressured to the point he effectively had to dismiss the defense minister.

Another factor was declining levels of support for the ruling party government, and subsequent political confusion. Australia will hold a federal election to elect parliament in 2016, and the movement to replace Prime Minister Abbott, whose support ratings were weak, continued to gain momentum. Prime Minister Abbott thus made judgment that his government had no choice but to place even greater emphasis on the issue of domestic employment in an effort to retain the support of MPs representing the state of South Australia. As previously noted, a vote of confidence in the party leadership was held in September of the same year and Abbott lost the prime ministership, and new prime minister Turnbull was inaugurated.³⁸⁾ The new Turnbull government has made vitalization of the Australian economy its primary focus, continuing the policy of treating employment as an important factor for consideration in the Competitive Evaluation Process.

Immediately following the launch of the Turnbull government, there were voices in the Japanese media and amongst pundits expressing doubts whether the new government would emphasize the relationship between Japan and Australia in the same manner as the Abbott government; however, these concerns proved generally to be unfounded. The Sixth Japan-Australia Joint Foreign and Defense Ministerial Consultations, or Two Plus Two were held in November 2015 and Prime Minister Turnbull visited Japan in the following month, confirming from an early stage the new government’s intention of continuing to focus on Australia’s relationship with Japan.

The second area of cooperation under consideration by Japan and Australia under the New Special Relationship is trilateral cooperation between Japan, the United States, and Australia in support of capacity building in the area of maritime security. Japan and Australia have previously cooperated in the form of Japan sending lecturers to the Long Reach humanitarian aid and disaster relief (HA/DR) seminars hosted by Australia in East Timor in October 2013, and Papua New

Guinea in July 2014.³⁹⁾ Further, the Australia Ministry of Defence has been dispatching civilian staff to serve as operational staff at Japan's Ministry of Defense (Capacity Building Assistance Office, International Policy Division) and participated as administrative staff for capacity building assistance projects implemented by Japan, and for the first time, a civilian staff from Japan's defense ministry was dispatched to serve as staff at Australia's Ministry of Defence in Canberra, participating in operations of Australia's capacity building assistance projects (known in Australia as the "defense cooperation program") primarily in the South Pacific from June to September 2015.

In May 2015, the defense chiefs of Japan, the United States, and Australia confirmed that trilateral cooperation to support capacity building assistance in the area of maritime security of countries in Southeast Asia was under consideration, indicating the future direction of expanded cooperation in this area.⁴⁰⁾ Japanese Minister of Defense Nakatani, speaking at a subsequent press conference, explained the plan to continue discussion at future Japan-Australia working-level talks and at the Security and Defense Cooperation Forum (SDCF), including the areas of capacity building assistance for countries neighboring the South China Sea.⁴¹⁾ The strategic meaning of support for improvement of defense capabilities of countries in Southeast Asia is obvious, coming amidst concerns over unilateral attempts to alter the status quo in the Indo-Pacific region, which includes Southeast Asia. From this perspective, experts are expounding a wide range of policy ideas; for example, the Stimson Center in Washington DC recently released a report including ambitious calls for strengthening the maritime surveillance capability of countries neighboring the South China Sea, increasing the number and capability of patrol boats, sharing of common operational statuses, and "strategic finance" to provide necessary financial support.⁴²⁾

One point of contention will likely be related to the range of capability building assistance provided by the defense authorities. For example, the ADF and the Ministry of Defence have provided patrol boats and related training to other countries for many years but the Japanese government is using Official Development Assistance, not capacity building assistance from the Ministry of Defense and the Self-Defense Forces. Simply put, even when defense authorities talk about capacity building assistance, there are differences in the nature and extent of jurisdiction, so deepening mutual understanding is of primary importance. Amidst limitations on personnel and budget, it certainly will not be

easy to find concrete cooperation projects. These resource constraints are the same on the Australian side, and it is unclear how much budget and personnel, especially in the area of capacity building assistance, will be left for Southeast Asian affairs after first addressing South Pacific, which is clearly the priority region.

The third point for consideration in Japan-Australia cooperation is the mid- and long-term implications of the Legislation for Peace and Security on Japan-Australia defense cooperation. The government of Japan in July 2014 reached cabinet decision on “development of seamless security legislation to ensure Japan’s survival and protect its people” and in April 2015 when the Japan-United States alliance agreed on new guidelines for defense cooperation, and in September of the same year two laws related to the Peace and Security Legislation were enacted. On each occasion, the foreign and defense minister of Australia released statements, “These reforms make it possible for Japan to make great contributions to international peace and stability, including the possible exercise of the right to collective self-defense, as recognized by the United Nations charter,” and such reforms were “welcome.”⁴³⁾

The Turnbull government reaction to these reforms was no different, and in the September 18, 2015, teleconference between the prime ministers of Japan and Australia, Prime Minister Turnbull expressed his “support for the peace and security legislation.”⁴⁴⁾

The establishment of Japan’s peace and security legislation does not, of course, mean there will be an immediate qualitative transformation in Japan-Australia defense cooperation. Even if the legal construct to make that possible exists, conceiving and planning concrete ways to apply those new legal tools will require policy decisions, and, as such, will require multiple deliberations at the working levels both within Japan, as well as between Japan and Australia. At a minimum, however, it can be said the two countries have previously cooperated at the operating level for humanitarian and reconstruction assistance in Iraq, for example, as well as United Nations peacekeeping operations. Thus, in the event of this type of cooperation in the future, such activities are expected to be executed quickly and effectively under the revised PKO Act and International Peace Support Act. The effect of Japan’s peace and security legislation on the Japan-Australia relationship, including a review of the Japan-Australia Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA), will be an important point of discussion going forward.

The final point of consideration in regard to Japan-Australia cooperation is

expansion of joint training. Japan, the United States, and Australia have previously conducted all types of combined training involving land, sea, air forces and joint elements, and have agreed to further expand their activities, and in this context an important consideration is how Australia and Japan forces will participate in the combined training already conducted by the Japan-United States alliance and the US-Australia alliance, respectively. Recent examples include the participation of five ADF staff as observers of the Japan-United States combined bilateral command post exercise in December 2014, with three of the five ADF members participating in the exercise for the first time as operations staff.⁴⁵⁾ And, in July 2015, fifty members of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force's Western Army Infantry Regiment participated in the US-Australia combined exercise Talisman Sabre and conducted amphibious exercises. The Ground Self-Defense Force's activities in this exercise were conducted on the premise of using Talisman Sabre as an opportunity for joint Japan-United States training in Australia. In this regard, Australia explained that the primary aim of the exercise remained the improvement of the Australia-United States alliance's "readiness" and emphasized the point that Japan's forces would only operate in conjunction with US forces.⁴⁶⁾ Moreover, the United States and Australia have already achieved a high degree of interoperability based on many years of experience cooperating closely in operations in such countries as Afghanistan and Iraq. Thus, the hurdles to participation in US-Australia alliance exercises by other countries without such experience are by no means low. This type of participation by Japan and Australia in these alliances with the United States as the axis have only just begun and can be evaluated as limited in scale and substance.

To expand opportunities for combined training in the domains of both Japan and Australia, including participation in these types of alliance exercises, will likely require a treaty to ensure smooth so-called reciprocal access in each countries respective territories, and this is an important point of consideration going forward. In the joint statement issued following the Japan-Australia summit meeting held in July 2014, it was announced that the two countries "will begin negotiations aimed at creating a treaty to improve reciprocally administrative, policy, and legal procedures to ensure smooth combined operations and training." Simplifying and accelerating various procedures will contribute to strengthening Japan-Australia defense cooperation including expansion of combined training.⁴⁷⁾ The details of these negotiations have not been made public, however, the general points of

deliberation are thought to include, for example, assumptions related to the time cost of customs, immigration, and quarantine (CIQ) checks, as well as issues related to the inspection of highly sensitive equipment, since in the event that military organizations enter another country, they of course undergo CIQ checks.

Moreover, there is the issue of whether a warranty of legality exists if Japan Self-Defense Forces personnel who do not possess an Australian medical license were to conduct medical activities in Australia, since it is important to dispatch medical officers and medics to be prepared for injuries occurring during training. Or the question of how the law would treat the case of an Australia forces vehicle that is not registered in Japan being operated on public roads in Japan. These wide-ranging legal points of contention need to be examined by separate legal departments at many different ministries and agencies, so that if consensus were to be reached for a comprehensive approach to smoothing out all issues, including the aforementioned points, such a consensus would be of great importance, symbolizing the commitment of the entirety of the Japanese government to strengthen the relationship with Australia.

The four areas above can be called new areas of cooperation that have implications far beyond the so-called nontraditional security activities such as HA/DR and PKO, in which both Japan and Australia have worked together previously. When viewed from the historical perspective, the recent direction of the Japan-Australia relationship can be evaluated as showing the relationship between the two countries is entering its “second evolution,” where the possibility emerges of expanded cooperation in traditional security cooperation areas, expanding upon the “first evolution” phase where the two countries sought to build cooperative relationships centered on nontraditional security following the March 2007 Japan-Australia joint declaration on security cooperation. Against this backdrop of Japan and Australia actively exploring new areas of defense cooperation, the two countries share an important alignment of thinking in regard to regional peace and security in the Indo-Pacific. For many years, Japan and Australia have actively supported their respective alliance partner the United States’ engagement in the Indo-Pacific, and have participated actively in a multilateral architecture centered around the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), sharing a common understanding of the issues in the context of creating regional peace and stability. Moreover, especially following the inauguration of a conservative coalition government in September 2013, both

countries have succeeded in aligning their stances in a manner surpassing anything to date in their powerful strategic messaging opposing China's "attempts to unilaterally alter the status quo."

This is also reflected in the May 2015 joint statement of the meeting of the defense ministers of Japan, Australia, and the United States expressing "serious concern over China's land reclamation" and the countries added expressions urging all countries to "refrain from provocative activities that could increase tension." Japan, Australia, and the United States are thus increasingly cognizant of the problems related to the rise of China, and moreover in the midst of various actions, such as land reclamation activities and public statements about military use of the man-made structures in the South China Sea, together with common ally the United States, under consideration is how to "impose costs on" such activities and deter further expansion, or indeed whether the three countries should ally to achieve those aims. Japan and Australia are considerably aligned in their thinking toward regional peace and security, and Japan calls Australia a "quasi-ally" and positions the country as its closest partner following the United States.

The relationship between Japan and Australia in the area of defense has thus grown steadily but there are challenges that also lie ahead. One issue is the problem of the gap between the two countries' perception of China and their respective government policies in regard to China. As stated in the previous analysis, instances when governmental policy toward China, including expressing strategic messaging, of Japan and Australia have become more prominent but at the same time that is not to say that both countries' perceptions toward China are completely aligned, and it must not be forgotten that the Australian government is conscious of that problem. Of particular note is the continuing appeal in recent years by both the Abbott and Turnbull governments to Japan and the United States of the importance of engagement vis-a-vis China. This point can be said to be illustrated in the address given by Prime Minister Abbott on the occasion of the visit of Prime Minister Abe to the Parliament of Australia in July 2014. Prime Minister Abbott emphasized "the importance of engagement with China," stating "ours is not a partnership against anyone" and "our goal is engagement, and we welcome the participation of China in the RIMPAC exercises to be held this year in expectation it will create greater trust and openness in this region."

In this context, a specific issue that arose in 2015 was the issue of membership in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). At first the Abbott government's

posture indicated it would not join AIIB but following supplemental explanations by the Chinese side, ultimately decided to join the bank from its inception and Treasurer of Australia Joe Hockey signed a memorandum of agreement in Beijing in June 2015.⁴⁸⁾ This is one of the few instances where the China policy of Australia under a conservative coalition government differed explicitly with the China policies of Japan and the United States. AIIB is an organization for economic cooperation but the National Security Committee of the Cabinet deliberated on the issue and so there is no mistaking that the Australian government believed there are security aspects to this issue, not just economic ones.

When considering the Turnbull government's posture vis-a-vis this issue, the October 2015 address given by Foreign Minister Bishop before the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC, is suggestive.⁴⁹⁾ Foreign Minister Bishop argued "global order" based on the model of "acceptance of legitimate interests of rising countries" must be "updated," and in this context of "legitimate interests" the AIIB created a specific point of contention. Australia has thus continued to assert to both Japan and the United States the importance of engagement with China, and therein lies the potentiality of problem of a "gap in engagement with China" between the countries. With these points of contention and the potential problems in mind, what is even more important now is deepening of the deliberations between Japan and Australia, and between Japan, Australia, and the United States, regarding engagement with China.

The second issue is the perspectives of experts and the general public in both countries who observe the Japan-Australia relationship in the area of defense. In retrospect, it becomes clear that, from the time the possibility of cooperation on Australia's future submarine was disclosed, debate in the media and amongst experts of both countries raised the profile of this issue. This is not at all surprising given the inherent nature of high-level strategic systems like submarines, and given the implications of Japan, Australia, and the United States cooperating in submarine operations, as noted in this chapter. At the same time, Japan-Australia cooperation in defense continues to expand in a broadly based manner, not stopping at submarines, and it is necessary to view Japan-Australia relationship from a range of perspectives that includes the areas analyzed in this chapter. Any perspective that focuses solely on the possibility of cooperation in submarines would be insufficient for viewing the Japan-Australia relationship, and if the overall evaluation of the Japan-Australia relationship were excessively influenced

by the direction of cooperation in submarines, such a perceptual trend might not necessarily be a healthy development for the Japan-Australia relationship.

(2) Multilateral Architecture and Japan-US-Australia Cooperation

This chapter put the spotlight on points being considered by Japan and Australia for cooperation focused on traditional defense under the New Special Relationship but the significance and meaning of Japan-Australia cooperation in nontraditional security areas certainly has not been lost. Indeed, if one considers engagement with ASEAN or participation in a multilateral architecture centered on ASEAN, then as seen below, Japan-Australia cooperation in nontraditional security areas, including HA/DR, becomes increasingly important. The security strategies of Japan, under its principles of “proactive contribution to peace” and “diplomacy that takes a panoramic perspective of the world map,” and Australia, by strengthening engagement in the Indo-Pacific, have in common an important plan for deeper engagement with ASEAN and with the countries of Southeast Asia. In the context of the ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus) which started in 2010, Japan and Australia, together with their respective alliance partner the United States, are pursuing Japan-Australia and Japan-US-Australia cooperation within a multilateral architecture.

Japan has been a co-chairing country of the Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Expert Working Group (HA/DR-EWG) for about three years since it was established under the auspices of ADMM Plus in April 2014, and Laos, the co-chairing country from the ASEAN side, are in a position to display leadership in pursuing working cooperation between the ten countries of ASEAN and Japan, the United States, China, South Korea, Russia, Australia, India, and New Zealand. As allies, the United States and Australia are vital partners in HA/DR as they possess both capability and a record of results, such as HA/DR operations during the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 2011, international HR/DR activities in the Philippines which suffered great damage from Super Typhoon Haiyan in November 2013, and via the ACSA, where Japan, the United States, and Australia have worked closely. The three countries have experience and capabilities and are cooperating closely at the working level in pursuit of cooperation in HA/DR-EWG.

Japan, the United States, and Australia held a working-level meeting on the sidelines of the HA/DR-EWG meeting held in Laos in December 2014, and

confirmed the three countries would cooperate closely to ensure the success of future meetings of the HA/DR-EGW. One project of the HA/DR-EGW is the authoring of standard operating procedures (SOP) that define guidelines for conduct during international HA/DR activities executed by defense authorities, a process that is being led by Japan and Laos, with Australia and the United States actively providing relevant operating knowledge. In August 2015, a table-top exercise (TTX) with the objective of validating the operations of HA/DR-EGW and the points being debated was held in Laos, and the United States and Australia sent facilitators for the group sessions during the TTX, making a concrete contribution to the successful outcome of the meeting. Moreover, in addition to these items, the HA/DR-EGW is deliberating legal aspects of military forces of foreign countries participating in international HA/DR missions, and, at the seminar, Australia proposed a model for a Status of Forces Agreement as the starting point for deliberation, providing knowledge-based support for the process of resolving the list of legal issues being addressed by HA/DR-EGW, and providing knowledge in this area.

The background behind the Japan, the United States, and Australia moving closely together in pursuit of ASEAN-centered multilateral cooperation in HA/DR is closely related to the long-range strategic meaning of two concepts. First is the concept of supporting the unity of ASEAN. The defense chiefs of the ten ASEAN countries are aiming to build the organizations and systems that will enable ASEAN to respond as one in the event of disasters in the region. In this context, the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) is pursuing plans to launch the ASEAN Militaries Ready Group (ARG) composed of staff provided by the ten ASEAN countries. The operating results produced by the HA/DR-EGW, of which Japan is co-chair, are seen as contributing to the ARG concept and in that sense can be evaluated as supporting concretely the strengthening of the unity of ASEAN in the area of defense. The second concept is an "open and inclusive Asia." ASEAN is playing a central role in the creation of multilateral frameworks like the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the East Asia Summit (EAS), not stopping with ADMM Plus, and the ASEAN-led multilateral architecture involving broad participation of Japan, the United States, Australia, China, South Korea, Russia, India, and New Zealand is inherently of an open nature. Supporting the role of ASEAN and contributing to the development of multilateral architecture have long-term significance in preserving and strengthening of an open and inclusive Asia.

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