CHAPTER 6

Japan-Australia Defence Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region [1]

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Introduction

Japan-Australia defence cooperation and exchanges have been growing steadily since the two countries announced the landmark Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation in March 2007. This is demonstrated visibly by the holding of frequent bilateral summit meetings, foreign and defence ministerial consultations, or "two-plus-two" meetings, as well as the conclusion and ratification of an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) and an Information Security Agreement (ISA). Joint exercises and training have intensified, not just bilaterally but also in trilateral settings with the two countries' common ally, the United States. In September 2012, Japan and Australia held the fourth Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultation unveiling a new key document called "Common Vision and Objectives" (Vision Statement). By endorsing this document, Japan and Australia agreed to carve out new fields of cooperation while continuing to pursue and strengthen their cooperation in the existing areas in a more effective manner.

Against this backdrop, this paper argues that the new Vision Statement underscores the current status of Japan-Australia defence cooperation which is entering a new and significant phase. In this context, deeper cooperation in the contemporary Asia-Pacific security environment is considered by both Canberra and Tokyo as an increasingly important area of cooperation for the bilateral partnership. The defence politics and wider security policies of the two countries converge on their common recognition that the global centre of gravity is shifting to the Asia-Pacific. Bearing this in mind, Japan and Australia appears to agree that the question of how the two countries can

[1] This paper covers events up to September 7, 2013.

cooperate strategically in the region has become increasingly a pivotal theme. In addition, the paper also highlights that the defence organisations of the two countries play increasingly active roles in strengthening Japan-Australia cooperation in terms of shaping the future of the Asia-Pacific regional security.

This chapter consists of three sections. Section One points out that Japan and Australia are on the verge of accomplishing most of the action items pursued in conjunction with the 2007 Joint Declaration. That this is the case was one of the factors generating the momentum and proper conditions for releasing the Vision Statement in September 2012. In this light, a major significance of the Vision Statement lies in its role of showing the next stage of the bilateral defence relationship after the implementation of the cooperation agendas set by the 2007 Joint Declaration. Section Two is "region-centric" in orientation—analysing the heightened relevance of Asia-Pacific security as an increasingly central theme for Japan-Australia bilateral cooperation. In recent years, the defence policies of the two countries have begun to attach ever more importance to their mutual collaboration and engagement in regional security politics. Even in the context of bilateral defence cooperation, the two countries pursue vital common objectives; multilateral frameworks, such as the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM)-Plus; capacity-building support; and the trilateral collaborations with the United States animate their bilateral security interaction. Section Three evaluates the two countries' perceptions of and approaches towards the rise of China. Within the Australian policy community, there is a debate that revolves around what can be called the "China gap" theory, namely, an argument that there is significant divergence between Japan and Australia in both policy and perception vis-à-vis China. This section, while acknowledging that the China gap theory has some truth to it and is worth some policy attention, argues that there is also significant convergence in Canberra's and Tokyo's respective China policies. The section concludes that the nature of the Japan-Australia defence cooperation cannot be fully understood without taking into account this convergence of views.

Although this chapter mostly focuses on Japan-Australia defence cooperation

in the policy areas directly related to the Asia-Pacific regional security, that should not detract from the fact that the two countries also cooperate on a range of other areas. One of these is cooperation on a wide range of global security issues. The two countries collaborate on maintaining the peacekeeping operation (PKO) in South Sudan. They work together to develop norms relating to outer space and cyber space—widely believed to be increasingly important components emerging on the horizon of the bilateral security cooperation. Moreover, defence equipment and technology cooperation—one of the items of cooperation that was noted in the Vision Statement but is beyond this chapter's scope of analysis—is reportedly being studied between the Japanese and Australian governments. In particular, media reports in Australia indicate that country has high expectations towards potential submarine development and production cooperation with Japan, although the two governments have yet to announce any specific progress. The main purpose of this chapter is concentrate on shedding light on how Japan and Australia are working together in dealing with and shaping the future of the increasingly important Asia-Pacific region.

Institutionalisation of the Japan-Australia Cooperation

The Japanese and Australian governments highly value their bilateral defence cooperation. When Minister for Defence Stephen Smith visited Japan in September 2012, he delivered a speech at the National Institute for Defence Studies (NIDS), describing Japan as "Australia's closest friend and [Australia's] strongest supporter in Asia" and giving high praise for the deepening bilateral relationship.[2] Likewise, the growing weight that Japan attaches to the Japan-Australia defence relationship is demonstrated in the *Defence of Japan* annual white paper. Since its 2010 version, Australia has been placed at the top of the list of those partner countries with which Japan strives to strengthen its bilateral relations. Japan's proposal to establish in FY2014 a "Japan-Australia Defence Cooperation Office" (tentative title) at the International Policy Division of the Bureau of Defence Policy within the Japanese Ministry of

[2] Stephen Smith, Speech at National Institute for Defence Studies, Tokyo, September 2012.

Defence—something which would be unprecedented in the history of Japan's bilateral relationship with any country (with the obvious exception of the US ally)—is another testament to the importance Japan attaches to the Japan-Australia defence relationship.[3]

One of the reasons why the two governments value the bilateral defence cooperation lies in their track record in practical cooperation. Since the end of the Cold War, Japanese and Australian defence authorities have carried out practical cooperation in the area of international peace cooperation, including the PKO in Cambodia in 1992, the PKO in Timor-Leste in 2000, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean earthquake in December 2004, and cooperation for humanitarian reconstruction assistance in Iraq during 2005-2006. A more recent example of the HA/DR cooperation followed the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011. Australia ultimately sent to Japan all three of its operational C-17 transport aircraft and transported search and rescue units, humanitarian assistance supplies, a remotely controllable water pump, and even units from the Fifteenth Brigade of the Japan Ground SDF (JGSDF). Australia's HA/DR operation was the second most substantial disaster relief activity carried out by foreign forces in the aftermath of that disaster (only second to that of the US forces).[4] Another ongoing collaborative activity is the joint cooperation for the PKO in South Sudan. In August 2012, the Japanese and Australian governments announced that personnel from the Australian Defence Force (ADF) would be assigned to the local assistance coordination centre set up by the Self-Defence Forces (SDF) in that African state. Since then, two ADF personnel have been working at the SDF office, collecting information on local assistance needs, among other activities.[5] In light of such a strong record

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[3] International Policy Division, Bureau of Defence Policy, Ministry of Defence of Japan, *FY2013 Policy Evaluation Report* (*Interim Program Evaluation*), 2013 <http://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/hyouka/seisaku/results/25/pdf/chukan_01_honbun.pdf>.

[4] The National Institute for Defence Studies (NIDS), *East Asian Strategic Review 2012* (Prime Station, 2013), pp. 92-93.

[5] Ministry of Defence of Japan, "Japan-Australia Joint Press Release on the Bilateral Cooperation between their Personnel Deployed to the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS)," August 2012 <http://www.mod.go.jp/j/press/news/2012/08/31a_1.html>.

of bilateral cooperation, it is not too much to state that the Japan-Australia bilateral relationship is an "action shop" unlike many other collaborative frameworks which are often only "talk shops."

A second important reason why the Japanese and Australian governments value their defence cooperation is that there has been steady institutionalisation of the bilateral security relationship. Since the release of the Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation (Joint Declaration) in March 2007, the two countries have worked to institutionalise their bilateral cooperation in the following three ways: (1) creating a framework based on policy dialogue and unit-to-unit trainings and exchanges; (2) developing legal foundations; and (3) forming non-partisan support for the Japan-Australia relationship.

The institutionalisation of the framework through policy dialogue and unit-to-unit trainings and exchange is particularly significant. The two countries have begun to hold quite frequently summit meetings (at least 24 times in 2007-2012, including telephone talks) and ministerial meetings (10 defence ministers' meetings and 29 foreign ministers' meetings in 2007-2013).[6] Furthermore, along with the foreign and defence authorities' meeting and defence authorities' meeting which have been held frequently since the 1990s, the Japan-Australia Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations (two-plus-two) have been held on four occasions to date.

Japan and Australia have also been working to institutionalise the Japan-US-Australia trilateral framework involving their common ally, the United States. The foreign vice minister-level strategic dialogue was commenced in 2002, and this was upgraded to the foreign minister-level Trilateral Strategic Dialogue (TSD) in 2006. Moreover, trilateral defence ministers' meetings have been held on three occasions (2007, 2012, and 2013), and have morphed into an annual session which is held as a "sidetalk" at the Shangri-La dialogue in Singapore. In addition to the ministerial-level framework, the three countries

[6] Statistics compiled by the author from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence websites.

have convened the Security and Defence Cooperation Forum (SDCF) at the foreign and defence Director General-level on five occasions since the first meeting was held in April 2011.[7]

Cooperation for unit-to-unit trainings and exchange is undertaken under the Japan-Australia bilateral setting as well as the Japan-US-Australia trilateral framework. In recent years, unit-to-unit trainings and exchanges among the three countries have quickly become more substantive. When it comes to the navy-to-navy contacts, the Japan-US-Australia trilateral joint training and exercise (called *Pacific Bond* since 2012) has been conducted seven times since 2007. Under this drill, exercises are carried out continuously, including anti-submarine warfare exercises, anti-surface warfare exercises, tactical manoeuvre exercises, and communication exercises.[8] Starting with the first Japan-US-Australia air combat trilateral exercise held in Red Flag, Alaska in 2011, trilateral air defence exercises have been conducted in Guam (the *Cope North Guam* exercises) in 2012 and 2013.[9] With regard to unit-to-unit trainings and exchange between ground forces, in 2012, the Chief of the Australian Army was invited to the Senior Level Seminar (SLS) conventionally held between Japan and the United States, and views were exchanged on practical cooperation, such as disaster relief, and on the regional situation. Furthermore, a decision was made to hold subsequent SLS among the three countries of Japan, the United States, and Australia.[10] In May 2013, the first exercise

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7 US Department of State, "Australian, Japanese and US Officials Meet for Security and Defence Cooperation Forum," Media Note, February 2013 <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/02/204574.htm>.

8 Maritime Staff Office, "Nichibeigo Kyodo Kunren eno Sanka nitsuite [Participation in Japan-US-Australia Joint Exercise]," Notice, June 2013 <http://www.mod.go.jp/msdf/formal/info/news/201306/062001.pdf>.

9 Air Self-Defence Force, "Beikugun Enshu eno Sanka oyobi Beikoku niokeru Nichigo Kyodo Kunren no Jisshi nitsuite [Holding of US Air Force Drill and Japan-Australia Joint Exercise in the US]," Notice, June 2011 <http://www.mod.go.jp/asdf/pr_report/houdou/H23/0622.html>; "Guamu niokeru Nichibeigo Kyodo Kunren no Jisshi nitsuite [Holding of Japan-US-Australia Joint Exercise in Guam]," Notice, January 2012 <http://www.mod.go.jp/asdf/pr_report/houdou/H23/0120.html>; and "Guamu niokeru Nichibeigo Kyodo Kunren no Jisshi nitsuite [Holding of Japan-US-Australia Joint Exercise in Guam]," Notice, January 2013 <http://www.mod.go.jp/asdf/news/houdou/H24/0108.html>.

10 Ministry of Defence of Japan, *Japan Defence Focus*, No. 32, September 2012 <http://www.mod.go.jp/e/jdf/no32/activities.html>.

among the GSDF, Australian Army, and the US Army (*Southern Jackaroo*) was carried out in Australia.[11] A unique example of cooperation has been the Pacific Global Air Mobility Seminar (PGAMS) (2007 and 2008). PGAMS conducted briefings and discussions on the air transport of the respective three countries as well as demonstrations using various military aircraft. In 2007, a seminar as well as an aircraft (C-17, C-130, and CH-47) demonstration were held. In 2008, a seminar and a demonstration involving the loading of the GSDF CH-47 into the US Air Force's C-17 were carried out.[12]

With regard to Japan-Australia bilateral exercises, the two countries, making use of the Japan-US-Australia trilateral exercise and other opportunities, have held the Japan-Australia Trident exercise (2009, 2010, and 2012). This included high-level anti-submarine warfare exercises between the Maritime Self-Defence Force (MSDF) and Royal Australian Navy (RAN). More specifically, in 2009, an anti-submarine warfare exercise involving the participation of the P-3C surveillance aircraft from both countries as well as other units were carried out at the Atsugi Base. In 2010, naval vessels of the two countries held an exercise in the sea areas surrounding Japan, with the purpose of "cooperating within the coalition of the willing in the sea." In 2012, an anti-submarine warfare exercise, maritime interdiction exercise, and other activities involving submarines, P-3Cs, and naval vessels were performed.[13] Between the Air Self-Defence Force (ASDF) and the Australian Air Force (RAAF), a bilateral fighter combat exercise was conducted at Red

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[11] Australian Army, "Exercise Southern Jackaroo Concludes," News and Media, May 2013, <http://www.army.gov.au/Our-work/News-and-media/News-and-media-May-2013/EX-Southern-Jackaroo-concludes>.

[12] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Taiheiyo Chokyori Kokuyuso Semina no Kaisai nitsuite [Holding of Pacific Global Air Mobility Seminar]," Press Release, May 2007 <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/press/release/h19/5/1173455_804.html>; and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Holding of Pacific Global Air Mobility Seminar," Press Release, February 2008 <http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/event/2008/2/1178041_928.html>.

[13] Australian Department of Defence, Exercise Nichi-Gou Trident 2009, Image Gallery, September 2009 <http://www.defence.gov.au/media/download/2009/sep/20090921b/index.htm>; Australian Department of Defence, "Minister for Defence Visits HMAS Newcastle in Japan," Media Release, May 2010 <http://www.defence.gov.au/minister/90tpl.cfm?CurrentId=10324>; and Australian Department of Defence "Navy Frigate Arrives in Japan for Maritime Exercise," Defence News, June 2012, <http://www.defence.gov.au/defencenews/stories/2012/jun/0601.htm>.

Flag, Alaska (2011).

The unit-to-unit trainings and exchange described above may be divided primarily into two types. The first consists of exercises which contribute to international missions, including HA/DR and PKO, in which Japan and Australia bilaterally as well as Japan, the United States, and Australia trilaterally have accumulated a significant track record. SLS and PGAMS fall under this category. The second category is comprised of exercises, such as anti-submarine warfare exercises and combat exercises between aircraft, which are of a different nature from international security missions. It should be reiterated that these exercises do not mean that Japan and Australia are engaging in any formal alliance relations that automatically commits them to each other's national defence. Rather, the significance of these exercises may be conceived in terms of their contributions to: (1) enhancing overall interoperability; (2) signalling to both domestic and international audiences the political solidarity that exists between Japan and Australia; and (3) demonstrating Japanese and Australian resolve to support the United States' regional presence and roles.

The second element of institutionalisation is the conclusion of the key treaties for facilitating the defence cooperation. To date, Japan and Australia have signed and entered into force two such accords. The first of the two was the so-called ACSA. The March 2007 Joint Declaration states strengthening cooperation through "joint exercises and training to further increase effectiveness of cooperation, including in the area of humanitarian relief operations" and "peace operations." In this context, the Action Plan unveiled in September 2007 in order to implement the Joint Declaration notes "studies on practical cooperation including logistics cooperation" were designated as part of Australian-Japanese bilateral cooperation in international peace cooperation activities. In this context, in May 2008, defence ministers at the Japan-Australia Defence Ministerial Meeting proposed and agreed to establish a Working Group to accelerate studies on logistics cooperation between Japan and Australia. In March 2010, then-Minister for Foreign Affairs Katsuya

Okada and then-Minister for Defence John Faulkner signed the Japan-Australia ACSA.[14] Afterwards, some time was required to pass the related revisions of the Self-Defence Forces Act through the Japanese Diet, but in January 2013, the diplomatic authorities of the two countries exchanged notes and the treaty entered into force.[15]

The Japan-Australia ACSA is the first such agreement Japan has concluded with a nation other than its long-time postwar ally, the United States. The Japan-Australia ACSA and the Japan-US ACSA differ in terms of both expected situations in which the treaty can be applied as well as the list of the goods and services that can be mutually provided under the ACSA. According to Article One, Paragraph One of the Japan-Australia ACSA, the agreement applies to joint exercises and training, United Nations (UN) PKO, humanitarian international relief operations, transportation of Japanese nationals or others in case of exigencies, and routine activities including communication. Conversely, the Japan-US ACSA (concluded 1996, revised in 1999 and 2004) applies not only to joint exercises and training, routine activities, UN PKO, and humanitarian international relief operations, but also to operations in response to situations in areas surrounding Japan and military contingencies against Japan. In addition, the US-Japan ACSA leaves room for applications in a broad array of Japanese–American cooperation. These are not restricted to the transportation of Japanese nationals under the banner of promoting the efforts of the international community, or disaster relief as is the case with the Australia-Japan ACSA. Hence, by comparing the Japan-Australia ACSA and the Japan-US ACSA, it can be concluded that the former is not designed for direct cooperation on the national defence of the two

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[14] Yusuke Ishihara, "Nichigo Anzenhosho Kyoryoku no Gendankai [The Present Stage of Japan-Australia Security Cooperation]," NIDS Commentary, No. 12, June 2010 <http://www.nids.go.jp/publication/commentary/pdf/commentary012.pdf>; and Ministry of Defence of Japan, "Ishiba Boeidaijin no Dai 7 kai Ajia Anzenhosho Kaigi no Shusseki nitsuite (Gaiyo) [Attendance of Minister of Defence Ishiba at the 7th IISS Shangri-La Dialogue (Overview)]," Press Resources, June 2008 <http://www.mod.go.jp/j/press/youjin/2008/05/31c.html>.

[15] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Entry into Force of the Japan-Australia Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA)," Press Release, January 2013 <http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/announce/2013/1/0131_01.html>.

countries, but aims to strengthen bilateral cooperation in PKO, HA/DR, and other areas of international security operations. A comparison of the supplies and services provided under the two ACSAs also shows that whereas Article Five of the Japan-US ACSA provides that ammunition may be provided by Japan to the US in armed attack situations or situations in which armed attack is anticipated, the provision of ammunition is not included in the application situations covered by the Japan-Australia ACSA.

The second of the two legal foundations underwriting Japan-Australia security ties is the Japan-Australia Information Security Agreement (ISA). The Joint Declaration of March 2007 provided that Japan and Australia would cooperate on the "exchange of strategic assessments and related information." In 2008, in the Joint Statement of the second Japan-Australia "two-plus-two" meeting, the two countries stated that they would swiftly commence "discussions…on a possible legal framework between the Governments of Australia and Japan on their cooperation to promote information sharing."[16] The agreement was signed by then-Minister for Foreign Affairs Koichiro Gemba and then-Minister for Foreign Affairs Bob Carr in May 2012, and entered into force in March 2013.[17] The agreement stipulates the protection and sharing of classified information provided, and is expected to promote the close exchange of Australian and Japanese views and sharing of information on strategy assessments that would contribute to effective bilateral cooperation.

The third element associated with the institutionalization of the Japan-Australia relationship is the establishment of political foundations. When the Joint Declaration was released in March 2007, scholars underlined the "individual factor," emphasizing the roles played by the two leaders, then-Prime Minister John Howard and then-Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, both of

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[16] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Japan-Australia Joint Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations Joint Statement 2008," December 2008 <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/australia/2plus2joint08.html>.

[17] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Entry into Force of the Japan-Australia Information Security Agreement (ISA)," Press Release, March 2013 <http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press6e_000011.html>.

whom underscored the strengthening of the Japan-Australia relationship. However, despite the several changes of prime ministers and administrations that both countries have undergone since 2007, the bilateral relationship has steadily developed. One year within the change in government in Australia (from Coalition to Labor) in November 2007, Japan and Australia announced a new Joint Statement and reaffirmed the continuation of the institutionalisation process of defence and security cooperation. Furthermore, during the summit meeting immediately following the inauguration of the government led by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) in September 2009, then-Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama expressed his new government's continuing commitment to the development of the Japan-Australia relationship. Reflecting upon this in a commentary published in December 2012, the current Prime Minister Abe, who inaugurated his second term in that month, gave credit to the DPJ for continuing to strengthen the Japan-Australia relationship that was started by the first Abe Cabinet.[18] The fact that the process of strengthening the bilateral ties continued after March 2007 is inherent; it has been blessed with bipartisan political support in both Japan and Australia.

The advancement of the institutionalisation of Australian-Japanese defence cooperation had three implications for the bilateral relationship. One is a practical implication; more specifically, foundations for effectively carrying out the terms of bilateral security cooperation were stipulated. It was expected that by having ACSA and ISA in place, the two countries would be able to enjoy smoother defence cooperation. The second is a political implication, in that the steady advancement of institutionalisation contributed to promoting the two countries' firm relationship domestically and internationally. The third implication is the emergence of "natural challenges after success."[19] In other words, as a result of the advancement of the institutionalisation of the Japan-Australia security relationship, the two countries completed many of the agenda items set since the Joint Declaration of March 2007. Consequently,

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[18] Shinzo Abe, "Asia's Democratic Security Diamond," Project Syndicate, December 2012 <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/a-strategic-alliance-for-japan-and-india-by-shinzo-abe>.

[19] NIDS, *East Asian Strategic Review 2012*, p. 97.

there gradually arose a need to consider what kind of a cooperative relationship the two countries could develop going forward.

Shifting Centre of Gravity towards the Asia-Pacific Region

What kind of defence cooperation are the two countries now envisioning? During the past year or two, a number of documents have been presented which offer insight into this question. One is the "Common Vision and Objectives" (Vision Statement) unveiled after the 4th Japan-Australia Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations (2+2) in September 2012.[20] The Vision Statement identifies Japan and Australia as "natural strategic partners," and elaborates on the vision for the bilateral relationship and specific action items to achieve that end. One of the Statement's central themes is the question of how the two countries can cooperate in shaping the future of the Asia-Pacific region, acknowledging its increasing importance.

Indeed, in recent years, the two countries have begun to further underscore the importance of this region. Australia has crafted a number of policy documents in the last two years or so which set out Australia's policy to strengthen engagement in the Asia-Pacific and broader "Indo-Pacific" environs. *Australia in the Asian Century White Paper* released in October 2012 advanced the Gillard Government's view that the importance of Asia for Australia will increase at a "staggering" scale and pace in an economic context.[21] According to this White Paper, by 2025 to 2030, Asia will account for half of total global output, and its middle class will become the largest consumer market in the world. Moreover, the White Paper forecasted that by 2025 China would rank in first, (United States second,) India third, Japan fourth, and Indonesia tenth in the list of the top ten largest economies in the world in terms of purchasing power parity. Against this backdrop, the document stresses Australia's need to pursue "deeper and broader" engagement in Asia. The White Paper named Japan,

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[20] Ministry of Defence of Japan, "Australia and Japan—Cooperating for Peace and Stability Common Vision and Objectives," September 2012 <http://www.mod.go.jp/j/press/youjin/2012/09/14_js_e.html>.

[21] Australian Government, *Australia in the Asian Century White Paper*, September 2012.

China, Indonesia, India, and South Korea as key countries with which Australia should cultivate relations, and indicated that a "Country Strategy" would need to be developed for each country. Australia's intention to strengthen its engagement in the region as presented in the White Paper was reaffirmed by the Gillard Government's *National Security Strategy* unveiled in January 2013.[22] This document identified priority items in Australia's quest to strengthen its national security approach: cyber security; strengthening partnerships among the Australian national government and its state and local governments and pursuing "enhanced engagement" in the increasingly important Asia-Pacific region. The Strategy notes that while the situation in the Asia-Pacific region is "relatively benign," the intensification of competition and risk of conflict exist in the region. In this context, Australian policy-planners designate the importance of Australia strengthening the bilateral relationships with countries in the Asia-Pacific and of supporting the strengthening of multilateralism in order to avoid and manage these existing uncertainties.

In the context of Australian national defence, the "engagement" policy presented in the above two documents is further expounded by the *2013 Defence White Pape*r released in May of that year. This White Paper underscored the need to strengthen "international defence engagement" in the "Indo-Pacific" region.[23] In this context it attaches a special priority to strengthen bilateral relationships—the latter includes forging closer security ties with countries such as China, India, South Korea, and Japan. The White Paper also asserted that the advancement of multilateral cooperation has the effect of promoting principles which are useful for preventing increases in tension or risk of conflict due to changes in power relativities in the region ("habits of cooperation," "mutual dialogue," "confidence building," and "rules-based order"). It notes the importance of ASEAN's role to a degree not seen in previous such documents. Australia, it notes, is determined to support multilateral cooperation in the region in the form of "building on" the

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[22] Australian Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, *National Security Strategy*, January 2013.
[23] Australian Department of Defence, *2013 Defence White Paper*, May 2013.

institutional successes of ASEAN.

Japan shares those policy views with Australia that attach increasing importance to the Asia-Pacific region. Japan has not, as of the time of writing, prepared documents comparable to the Australian government's *Australia in the Asian Century White Paper* or *National Security Strategy*. However, if one examines the series of Diplomatic Bluebooks that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan publishes annually, it is clear that like Australia Japan recognizes the increasing importance of the Asia-Pacific region.[24]

In response to the Asia-Pacific's rise as a region of global significance, Japan's defence policies have likewise assigned greater priority to this part of the world. The most recent version of the "National Defence Program Guidelines (NDPG)" at the time of writing this paper—the 2010 NDPG—attaches further importance to the region compared to the previous NDPG (2004 NDPG). Looking back, the 2004 NDPG adopted a so-called "two-by-three framework" of pursuing the two goals of Japan's defence and improved international security environment, through a combination of the three approaches of Japan's own efforts, alliance cooperation, and cooperation with the international community.[25] By contrast, the 2010 NDPG clearly gives prominence to the Asia-Pacific as a priority region and describes what the SDF's specific roles are within the threefold framework of Japan's indigenous defence efforts, improving regional security as well as enhancing the international security environment. Furthermore, under the concept of "multi-layered security cooperation," the 2010 NDPG underscores the importance of not only greater international security cooperation but also intensified regional cooperation in the Asia-Pacific.[26] In this context, it underlines the importance of bilateral and trilateral cooperation with countries such as Australia, South Korea, and

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[24] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Diplomatic Bluebook 2012*, April 2012 <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/2012/index.html>.
[25] Government of Japan, "National Defence Program Guideline, FY2005-," December 2004 <http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/policy/2004/1210taikou_e.html>.
[26] Government of Japan, "National Defence Program Guidelines for FY 2011 and Beyond," December 2010 <http://www.mod.go.jp/e/d_act/d_policy/pdf/guidelinesFY2011.pdf>.

India, as well as of the cooperation with ASEAN and multilateral security organisations with wider geographic purviews. In addition, the review process of the NDPG now being undertaken under the second Abe administration continues to recognize the importance of Japan proactively participating in a variety of cooperative measures in the region. The importance of the multilateral architecture of the region and of ASEAN in this context was also among the elements highlighted in the policy speech given by Minister of Defence Onodera at the 2013 Shangri-La Dialogue 2013.[27]

Hence, Japan and Australia have a shared understanding on the increasing importance of the Asia-Pacific region. Accordingly, it is believed that an ever more important question is what kind of cooperation the two countries are jointly pursuing in shaping the future of the region. In fact, this emerging trend of the two countries' increasingly convergent emphasis on the Asia-Pacific is the very element that is reflected in the 2012 Vision Statement.

Indeed, the Asia-Pacific region is by no means a new area of cooperation for either Australia or Japan. Both countries have already cooperated closely with each other in this area of the world. Over the past two decades, such collaborations have been pursued through a variety of frameworks, including the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). Although, as implied by its name, APEC is a grouping of "economies" that deals primarily with trade and investment cooperation, its members also had an eye on security implications. These include cultivating China's participation in the international system and continued US engagement in the Asia-Pacific region.[28] Furthermore, in building multilateral mechanisms in the Asia-Pacific region, Japanese diplomacy has consistently attached importance to the participation of Australia, a US ally. Japan urged Australia's participation when Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad proposed the East

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[27] Itsunori Onodera, Shangri-La Dialogue 2013 Speech by Minister of Defence Onodera, June 2012 <http://www.mod.go.jp/j/press/youjin/2013/06/05b-en.pdf>.

[28] Takashi Terada, "APEC to Nihon: 'Hashiwatashi' Senryaku no Saikochiku nimukete [APEC and Japan: Towards the Rebuilding of the 'Bridge-Building' Strategy]," *Kokusai Mondai* (*International Affairs*), No. 585, October 2009, p. 26.

Asia Economic Group (EAEG) and other bodies in the 1990s as well as when the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) was launched.[29] This kind of Japanese support for Australia continued into the 2000s—the primary example being Japanese endorsement of Australian member in the East Asia Summit (EAS) when that grouping was launched in 2005. Japan had already been arguing for Australia's participation in an East Asian community building since Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's policy speech in Singapore in 2002. It was ultimately decided that EAS would be launched with 16 members—the 13 members of ASEAN Plus Three and three additional countries, including Australia (along with India and New Zealand). An initial bottleneck was the EAS membership criteria of accession into the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC). The Howard government initially problematized potential inconsistency between the obligations under the US-Australia defence alliance and the content of TAC. On this point, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs contributed to ameliorating Australia's concerns by providing to Australia the findings of Japan's review of the relationship between TAC and the Japan-US Security Treaty—that previous alliance obligations and practices would not contradict the legal contents of the TAC. This, in turn, helped Australia ultimately decided to sign TAC shortly before the first EAS summit which convened in Kuala Lumpur.

As noted above, Japan and Australia have long cooperated in various aspects of engagement vis-à-vis the Asia-Pacific. Going forward, the emerging trend is that the defence organisations of both countries play increasingly prominent roles in Japan-Australia joint approaches towards the region. One of the reasons why is that multilateral arrangements and exercises led by defence authorities and militaries are beginning to be developed visibly. This is true for the ASEAN Defence Ministerial Meeting- Plus (known as "ADMM-Plus"), which was set up in 2010. ADMM-Plus held its second ministers' meeting in August 2013 and has established itself as the first defence ministers-led multilateral mechanism in the Asia-Pacific region. Operating under the general

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[29] Kenichi Ito and Akihiko Tanaka (eds), *Higashi Ajia Kyodotai to Nihon no Shinro* [The East Asian Community and Japan's Path] (NHK Shuppan, 2005), pp. 41-42.

ADMM-Plus framework, five Experts' Working Groups (EWGs) coordinate various aspects of cooperation. Already in June 2013, a joint exercise of the HA/DR and military medicine EWGs was conducted in Brunei with the participation of more than 3,000 personnel. Furthermore, a maritime security and counter-terrorism exercise is expected to be held by the end of 2013.[30] It can be assessed that the ADMM-Plus promotes contact and cooperation between regional defence authorities through practical cooperation and ministers' meetings, and has the role of building trust and strengthening habits of cooperation. In addition, ARF has carried out HA/DR exercises in alternate years since commencing a DR exercise in 2009.

Capacity-building is also being examined as a new area of Japan-Australia cooperation in the Asia-Pacific. The Vision Statement specifies that Japan and Australia would cooperate on capacity-building assistance focusing on Southeast Asia and the South Pacific. A civilian official from the Australian Department of Defence was dispatched to the Japanese Ministry of Defence's Capacity Building Assistance Office under the International Policy Division of the Bureau of Defence Policy since July 2013 and expected to contribute to strengthening cooperation in this area.[31] While the specific details of the capacity building assistance cooperation have not yet been announced, given the premise that Japan's capacity-building assistance program is focused on non-traditional security cooperation, it may contribute to hightening the resilience of ASEAN and South Pacific countries by raising their capacities for dealing with disasters and other events. The program also encourages the overall enhancement of regional cooperation, including ADMM-Plus, by increasing the capacities of ASEAN countries for participating in international security operations. Furthermore, the program may have a political significance because it signals domestically and internationally the intention of Japan and

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[30] Ministry of Defence of Japan, "ADMM Purasu HADR/MM Jitsudoenshu eno Boeisho/Jieitai no Sanka nitsuite [Participation in ADMM-Plus HADR/MM Exercise by the Ministry of Defence and Self-Defence Forces]," Notice, May 2013 <http://www.mod.go.jp/j/press/news/2013/05/17a.html>.

[31] Ministry of Defence of Japan, "Oosutoraria Kokubosho Shokuin no Boeisho eno Ukeire nitsuite [Acceptance of Australian Department of Defence Personnel at the Ministry of Defence of Japan]," Notice, June 2013 <http://www.mod.go.jp/j/press/news/2013/06/28a.html>.

Australia to cooperate closely on the future of Southeast Asia and the South Pacific.

The most important item on the agenda of Japan-Australia cooperation in the Asia-Pacific is the further strengthening of the trilateral defence collaboration with the United States. The Vision Statement demarcates the future direction of such trilateral defence cooperation, including the boosting of coordination among the defence authorities of Japan, the United States, and Australia and supporting the capacity building of countries in the area of maritime security. Additionally, the 2012 Joint Statement of the Japan-US-Australia Trilateral Defence Ministers' Meeting sets out that the three sides will establish "an action plan that promotes a strong, dynamic and flexible trilateral defence relationship over the remainder of this decade to enhance the security and prosperity of the region." During the 2013 Defence Ministers' Meeting, the ministers specified strategic goals that the three countries would pursue in the region. With regard to specific measures, they agreed to conduct a joint study on capacity-building assistance.

Efforts aimed at strengthening the trilateral defence cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region are comprised of mainly two components. One of them, again is capacity-building assistance. This chapter has already described how Japan and Australia have been exploring cooperation in this area. According to the Vision Statement and the Joint Statement of the Japan-US-Australia Defence Ministers' Meeting, the two countries have also been exploring trilateral capacity-building assistance as well. Another component is the expansion of synergies within the US bilateral alliance network. The Vision Statement sets forth that Australia would participate as an observer in the joint exercises of the Japan-US alliance, and similarly, Japan in the joint exercises of the US-Australia alliance. A number of these exercises have already taken place. In the Japan-US joint bilateral command post exercise (*Yama Sakura* or "YS") held in January 2012, members of the Australian Army participated as observers. In the 2011 and 2013 US-Australia *Talisman Sabre* exercise, Japanese SDF officers participated as observers. Since 2012, the Australian Air Force has

participated in the *Cope North Guam* exercise between the ASDF and US Air Force. In the Senior Level Seminar between the top-level officers of the GSDF, US Army, and US Marine Corps, the Australian Army participated as an observer in 2012, and a decision has been made to hold trilateral seminars under this framework on a regular basis. Moreover, the US-Australia alliance has long had an "embed" policy in which the members and equipment of the Australian forces join the US forces' organization. Pursuant to this policy, it is very well possible that the Australian forces would, as part of the US forces, take part in Japan-US joint exercises during their "embedding."[32] In fact, this form of exercise has already taken place. In the Japan-US joint bilateral command post exercise conducted by Japan's North Eastern Army (an aerial command of the GSDF with an area of responsibility over the North Eastern part of Japan) at the end of last year, a member of the Australian forces who was embedded as Depty Commanding General in the US Pacific Army took an important role.[33]

One of the factors underlying the advancement of the Japan-US-Australia trilateral cooperation in the Asia-Pacific is a shared objective to assist US rebalancing towards the Asia-Pacific. The "Defence Strategic Guidance" unveiled by the Obama administration in January 2012 states that the US defence policy "will of necessity rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region." Although there is insufficient space here to provide a detailed analysis of the development of this policy, it can be surmised that the awareness of the issues which underpin this policy consists of at least four elements. First, within the context of the world's developing economies, the order of priority of the economically robust Asia-Pacific has increased "naturally." Second, as the United States moves to bring closure to the era of large-scale ground wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, it has an inherent need to develop a post-war national

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[32] A recent example is the embed of the Royal Australian Navy frigate HMAS Sydney with the US Navy's 7th Fleet in Yokosuka. "HMAS Sydney Joins USN Carrier Strike Group," News, US Navy, 7 May 2013 <https://www.navy.gov.au/news/hmas-sydney-joins-usn-carrier-strike-group>.

[33] Public Relations Office of the Ground Staff Office, "Heisei 24 Nendo Nichibei Kyodo Homentai Shikisho Enshu (Nihon) no Gaiyo nitsuite [Overview of the FY2012 Japan-US Joint Bilateral Command Post Exercise (Japan)]," Press Release, January 2012 <http://www.mod.go.jp/gsdf/news/press/2012/20121126.html>.

security strategy. Third, in the context of the ongoing crisis surrounding the United States' federal budget and its national defence budget, it is necessary to further clarify the order of priority. Fourth, current U.S. "rebalancing" strategy refutes doubts that have been raised, including some within Japanese and Australian policy discussions, over the American ability to sustain a robust strategic presence in the Asia-Pacific.[34] Japan and Australia deem it is vital for the United States to continue remaining engaged in the Asia-Pacific region. From this perspective, Japan and Australia have expressly welcomed the US rebalancing strategy.

The Obama Administration's rebalance towards the Asia-Pacific is arguably in close synthesis with the Japan-US-Australia cooperation in the following three aspects. First, and as noted above, Japan, the United States, and Australia agree on the overall policy to strengthen US engagement in the Asia-Pacific. This constitutes the background in which the trilateral defence cooperation has been explored as an effective means for strengthening the three countries' security cooperation in the region. Second, the Japan-US-Australia cooperation fulfils a "burden-sharing" function. Due to its severe domestic financial situation, the United States expects that regional allies will expand their defence roles and responsibilities in their own neighbourhood. In this sense, it is clear that the United States finds value in bilateral and trilateral cooperation with Japan and Australia, both countries which have the will and capabilities to play a concrete role through capacity-building assistance and through other means. Japan and Australia have affirmed in their Vision Statement that they will pursue a joint policy of continuing to support the regional engagement of the United States that confronts an array of challenges. Third, the rebalancing strategy represents a strong and explicit basis of support for strengthening the presence of US forces through such activities as exercises and HA/DR rather than merely through traditional initiatives such as the establishment of additional forward deployed forces or the building of new bases. In this sense,

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[34] For a more detailed analysis on the US rebalancing strategy, see: Tomohiko Satake and Yusuke Ishihara, "America's Rebalance to Asia and its Implications for Japan-US-Australia Security Cooperation," *Asia-Pacific Review*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (November 2012), pp. 6-25.

the rebalancing, which focuses on the increasing activities of the US armed forces in the region, is in a close synthesis with Japan-US-Australia relations, which also emphasises the importance of joint activities such as the trainings and capacity-buildings as a key area of trilateral cooperation.

The China Gap Theory

In discussing Japan-Australia cooperation on the issues of the Asia-Pacific regional security, the following question is posed frequently: is there not a gap between the Japanese and Australian understanding and policies vis-à-vis the rise of China? Shortly after the release of the March 2007 Joint Declaration, a number of experts began pointing to an alleged perception gap between Japan and Australia over intensifying Chinese power. In recent years, with the ongoing intermittent bouts of tensions between Japan and China in the East China Sea and more general strains in Sino-Japanese relations, the "China gap" has once again surfaced as a point of contention.[35]

One of the most well-known discussions on this topic is the alarm bell rung by Professor Hugh White at the Australian National University.[36] White argues that Australia must push the "pause button" on deepening the Japan-Australia relationship. His argument is predicated on the following two assumptions. (1) A momentum towards a Japan-Australia alliance: The Japan-Australia relationship is moving towards an alliance, and what Japan expects of Australia is to form a united front in the strategic competition with China. (2) Japan-Australia China gaps: Australia and Japan have different positions on China, and risks of Australia's entanglement in the Japan-China relations would run contrary to Australia's politico-strategic interests. Counterarguments have already been presented on the first assumption, i.e., forming an alliance was

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[35] Nick Bisley, "The Japan-Australia Security Declaration and the Changing Regional Security Setting: Wheels, Webs and Beyond?," *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 62, No. 1, p. 47; Benjamin Schreer, "Feeling Edgy: Japan's New Defence White Paper," *The Strategist*, July 2013 <http://www.aspistrategist.org.au/feeling-edgy-japans-new-defence-white-paper/>.

[36] Hugh White, "An Australia-Japan alliance?," Centre of Gravity Series, 2012 <http://ips.cap.anu.edu.au/publications/australian-japan-alliance>.

currently not the objective of the Japan-Australia relationship. However, the second assumption—the question of whether there is Japan-Australia divergence on China—has not necessarily been a subject of wide discussions, especially within the Japanese scholarly and policy community.

In some parts, Japan and Australia have maintained seemingly contrasting relationships with China. The Australia-China relationship, on the one hand, has witnessed remarkable strides in recent years. Then-Prime Minister Julia Gillard, who visited China in April 2013, agreed with Premier Li Keqiang to elevate the Australia-China relationship to a "strategic partnership." The two leaders also agreed to hold political-level consultations regularly and to institutionalise them, including the annual leaders' meeting and the foreign and strategic dialogue led by their foreign ministers. Furthermore, the two sides are working to establish an Australia-China national defence engagement action plan, which would give direction to the exchanges and cooperation between Australian and Chinese defence authorities.[37] Efforts to solidify the links between Australian and Chinese defence authorities have already made steady progress. Their militaries and civilian senior officials have established routine strategic dialogues. Defence ministers' meetings have been regularised since June 2012. With regard to exchanges between their military forces, Australian and Chinese navies have conducted a live-fire exercise and search-and-rescue exercise off the Shandong Peninsula in September 2010, as well as a search-and-rescue exercise and other exercises off the coast of Shanghai in May 2012. Additionally, the Australian Defence Force and People's Liberation Army have conducted an HA/DR exercise in Sichuan Province in November and December 2011. A China-Australia-New Zealand trilateral HA/DR military policy transpired in October 2012.[38] Many analysts within the Australian security community believe that through strengthening such bilateral ties with the PRC, Australia can institutionalise opportunities to better access the thinking and motivations of Chinese officials as well as build up trust between

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[37] Julia Gillard, Transcript of Joint Press Conference, April 2013 <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/121064/20130621-0000/www.pm.gov.au/press-office/transcript-joint-press-conference-43.html>.

[38] NIDS, *East Asian Strategic Review 2013*, pp. 86-87.

China and Australia over the longer-term.

Conversely, Japan and China have not been able to pull out of the state of diplomatic and strategic paralysis. Diplomacy between Japanese and Chinese leaders remains at a standstill. The second Abe Cabinet was inaugurated following Japan's general its election in December 2012 while, in China, a new regime led by President Xi Jinping was inaugurated in March 2013 following the change in leadership. The importance of holding a meeting between the leaders is self-evident. Furthermore, amid the continuing tensions in the East China Sea, there are growing calls for a turnaround to realize a more positive Japan-China relationship. While continuing to reaffirm Japan's firm resolve to defend its own sovereign interests, Prime Minister Abe has also consistently reiterated that "Japan's door for dialogue is always open." Nevertheless, only a five-minute "standing conversation" has been realized to date between Prime Minister Abe and President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the St. Petersburg G20 Summit in September 2013.

A Sino-Japanese leaders' summit would have many issues to address. From 2008 onward, Chinese government vessels had been intruding into Japan's territorial waters, and the Chinese navy had been stepping up its activities in Japan's surrounding sea areas. However, after the purchase of the Senkaku Islands by the Japanese government in September 2012 China's activities in the East China Sea have been noticeably intensifying. Chinese government vessels' intermittent intrusions into Japan's territorial waters still continue, and this has been coupled with extremely dangerous actions, including Chinese military aircraft incursion into Japan's territorial airspace (December 2012) and a Chinese naval vessel's decision to direct its fire-control radar upon a Japanese vessel and a helicopter (January 2013).[39]

In the midst of such heightening tensions, Japan pursues a twofold policy. The first focuses on Japan's own efforts for dealing with the situation and for

[39] Ministry of Defence of Japan, Extra Press Conference by the Defence Minister, Press Resources, February 2013 <http://www.mod.go.jp/e/pressconf/2013/02/130205a.html>.

deterring and avoiding escalation risks. Taking into account the activities of the Chinese navy and other factors, the National Defence Program Guidelines, approved by the Cabinet in December 2010, set directions for dealing with and deterring situations borne out of the "grey-zone," the zone lying between peace and outright arms invasion against Japan. Accordingly, Japan has proposed to increase ASDF presence in the southwest islands of Japan with two squadrons, to establish a GSDF coast observation unit to fill an existing presence gap in the island chains of the Southwest Japan, and to increase the number of Japanese submarines deployed in the area. During the review process of the National Defence Program Guidelines currently being undertaken under the second Abe administration, great importance has been attached to Japan's response to and deterrence of these "grey-zone" situations. According to Japanese media reports, measures considered by the government include strengthening the amphibious landing capabilities of the GSDF and enhancing Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities, including the purchase of unmanned aircrafts.[40] In addition, efforts are being pursued to establish a framework for avoiding unintended consequences by strengthening the Japan-China communication mechanisms. Although no marked progress has been announced since a director general-level meeting was held between Japanese and Chinese defence authorities in March 2013, Japan has not abandoned this policy.[41]

Second, in the context of China's activities near the Senkaku Islands and in the Western Pacific more widely, Japan has been reaffirming its priority of strengthening Japan-US cooperation. Performing amphibious landing exercises with the US Marine Corps in the Northern Mariana Islands from August to September 2012 and in the West Coast in mainland United States in June 2013, Japan has enhanced the capabilities of the SDF. Both domestically and internationally, moreover, Japan has called attention to the solidarity of the Japan-US alliance and the US commitment to the defence of Japan.

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[40] Ministry of Defence of Japan, "Defence Posture Review Interim Report," (Ministry of Defence, July 2013).

[41] Ministry of Defence of Japan, Press Conference by the Defence Minister, Press Resources, June 2013 <http://www.mod.go.jp/e/pressconf/2013/06/130614.html>.

Additionally, Japan and the United States have worked to expand the presence of the alliance in the areas around Guam. This move too is thought to contain "a type of message" directed at China, which has been moving into areas between the first island chain (from Japanese archipelago through Taiwan to the Philippines) and second island chain (from Ogasawara through Saipan to Guam).[42] Since a Chinese fishing vessel collided into a patrol vessel of the Japan Coast Guard off the coast of the Senkaku Islands in September 2010, the Obama Administration has increasingly affirmed the US commitment to the defence of the Senkaku Islands. Then-US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in January 2013 and US Secretary of Defence Chuck Hagel in April 2013 have also warned that the United States is opposed to any unilateral change in the status quo by force, and the US has kept a strong check on China.[43]

In light of the visible differences, one may conclude that Japanese and Australian policies towards China are an antithesis of each other—on the one hand, Japan is bolstering its response to and deterrence of China's activities due to the tension in the East China Sea and other reasons, while on the other hand, Australia, free of such situations, is strengthening its engagement with China. It cannot be denied that this assessment represents and captures one facet of reality. The fact that Australian scholars express concerns regarding this diversion itself deserves close attentions by Japanese scholars and policymakers.

However, any argument that only points out the Japan-Australia gaps about China is unbalanced and out of touch with the fact that in many significant ways the two countries' views and policies vis-à-vis China are clearly compatible. After all, Japan's national interests relative to China are not only

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42 Tomohiko Satake, "US Rebalancing toward the Asia-Pacific and Japan-US Dynamic Defence Cooperation," Briefing Memo, No. 169, October 2012 <http://www.nids.go.jp/english/publication/briefing/pdf/2012/briefing_e169.pdf>.

43 "U.S. Warns China to Steer Clear of Senkakus," *The Japan Times*, 20 January 2013 <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/01/20/national/u-s-warns-china-to-steer-clear-of-senkakus/>; and Department of Defence, Press Conference with Secretary Hagel and Defence Minister Onodera from the Pentagon, 29 April 2013, <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=5230>.

related to the defence of its own sovereign territories. Wider interests which Japan shares with Australia include the freedom of navigation in the maritime and air domains. For example, Japan's position on maritime disputes in the South China Sea, like Australia's, is not to support the position of any sides on their territorial claims. Yet both Japan and Australia see their national interests influenced by the fate of the dispute for the following two reasons. First, it goes without saying that the stability of the South China Sea and the favourable relations between China and ASEAN nations are issues of key interest to both Japan and Australia, precisely because both of these maritime states rely on continued access to vital sea lanes of communication that cross Southeast Asia for their continued economic livelihoods. Hence, the peaceful settlement of the issues is above all in the national interest of Japan and this is no less true for Australia.[44] The second reason is that the issue of the South China Sea is important as a test case to see whether relevant countries, including China, comply with international rules. From this perspective, Japan and Australia both adhere to two obvious policies. The first relates to holding discussions on maritime security, including the South China Sea issue, at multilateral forums of the Asia-Pacific. Based on this viewpoint, Japan (along with Australia) has been communicating proactively at forums, such as the East Asia Summit and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Japan has proposed the establishment of an East Asia maritime forum for holding discussions among parties, such as government officials and scholars from the East Asia Summit member nations. This forum has already been realized in the form of the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum.[45] The other policy relates to cooperation with regional security partners, the most important bilateral component of which remains the Japan-US alliance. Even on the basis of these multilateral efforts functioning, Japan considers that the United States' regional engagement and presence play an essential role, and from this standpoint, supports, assists, and

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[44] For an example of Japan's position, see the statements made by Minister for Foreign Affairs Kishida in: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "The 20th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Ministerial Meeting," July 2013 <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/page6e_000104.html>.

[45] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "ASEAN Kaiyo Foramu (AMF) Kakudai Kaigo eno Sanka ni tsuite [Attendance at the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF)]," Press Release, October 2012 <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/press/release/24/10/1003_04.html>.

cooperates on the US role in not only Northeast Asia but also in the broader Asia-Pacific region where the rise of China is rapidly changing and in some ways challenging the existing regional order. This perspective largely mirrors that entertained by Australian policy-makers.

If one therefore conceives Japan's understanding and policy towards China in such wider contexts, one will discover that there is key China convergence between Japan and Australia. For example, the *Defence White Paper 2013* of Australia makes clear that "Australia has interests in the peaceful resolution of territorial and maritime disputes including in the South China Sea in accordance with international law, the prevention of aggression within Southeast Asia, and freedom of navigation and maritime security in the region's sea lanes." In this regard, Japan's positions are closely aligned with those of Australia's.[46] Furthermore, in dealing with these potential risks, the White Paper sets out that Australia will enhance its cooperation with regional countries, including Singapore and Malaysia with which it has the Five Power Defence Arrangements, as well as multilateral mechanisms, and will support the presence of the United States which underpins the "strategic stability" of the region—very much along the lines of the position taken by Japan. Accordingly, while Japan and Australia certainly differ in terms of how Japan may be managing its tense relations with China in the East China Sea, Japan and Australia do share an overarching understanding in the sense that they both: (1) desire peaceful resolutions of the currently tense relations between China and its neighbouring countries short of conflict; and (2) expect China's compliance with international rules and norms. Both Canberra and Tokyo view strategic cooperation with a regionally engaged United States and the promotion of multilateral security dialogues and trust-building as instrumental for realizing these two objectives.

One could never fully understand the on-going Japan-Australia defence and security cooperation without taking fully into account not just the divergences

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46 *Defence White Paper 2013*, p. 25.

but also the key compatibilities outlined above between Japanese and Australian policies vis-à-vis China. The reason is precisely that the Japan-Australia defence cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region—the subject of this chapter—is clearly in synergy with the two countries' China policies. In fact, the regional agendas, on which Japan and Australia are strengthening cooperation, such as joint engagements with multilateral bodies, capacity building assistance vis-à-vis ASEAN, and wider trilateral collaborations with the US rebalancing, are all closely alligned with two countries' respective policies towards China. It is precisely because evolving Japan-Australia defence cooperation contributes to their China policies that the Vision Statement of September 2012 states that both Japan and Australia "… support of China's responsible and constructive participation in the international rules-based order and role in promoting regional prosperity and stability."

Conclusion

This chapter, by drawing on such materials as the Vision Statement and the Joint Statement of the Japan-US-Australia defence ministers' meeting, has argued that Japan-Australia defence cooperation is evolving especially in ways that facilitate the security of the Asia-Pacific region. Since the Joint Declaration was released in March 2007, Japan-Australia defence cooperation has accumulated a strong track record in HA/DR and PKO cooperation. It has also promoted the institutionalisation of cooperative bilateral security ties by: (1) creating a framework of policy dialogue and unit-to-unit trainings and exchange; (2) establishing ACSA, ISA and other formal bilateral security arrangements; and (3) strengthening domestic political support in Japan and Australia for security collaboration with the other country. The institutionalisation of this bilateral relationship is significant both for developing the foundations to sustain Japan-Australia cooperation more effectively and as a tool to highlight the ongoing close relationship between the two countries. At the same time, it brought about what can be termed "natural challenges after success," i.e., the completion of the initial cooperation agenda generating new imperatives for ensuring the next stage for the Japan-Australia security dyad.

The Vision Statement of September 2012 played the role of describing a new phase of Japan-Australia defence cooperation. In recent years, both countries share the view that the strategic importance of the Asia-Pacific region is increasing, and from that perspective, the question of what kind of cooperation the two countries can carry out in the context of the regional security going forward has emerged as an important question. Of course, the two countries already have a long track record in carrying out security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. However, a trend which is increasingly underwriting the momentum of bilateral cooperation is the increasing role of defence organisations of the two countries shaping its policy missions and parameters. Specific examples include: the expanded role of defence authorities in multilateral security cooperation, led by ADMM-Plus' cooperation and the bilateral capacity building assistance cooperation for Southeast Asian and South-Pacific nations; and the pursuit of trilateral defence cooperation with the United States as the latter country seeks to rebalance its policy focus more towards the Asia-Pacific.

Within Australia's expert community, there are some who point to the divergence between Japanese and Australian policies vis-à-vis the rise of China. Certainly, Japan-China relations and Australia-China relations can appear to vary from time to time. However, the two countries also both commonly desire Beijing to comply with international rules and norms. Both Japan and Australia pursue to develop multilateral security mechanisms in the Asia-Pacific and both support the politico-strategic engagement of the United States in the region. All of those suggest that there does exist key congruence in China policy between Japan and Australia.

In conclusion, Japan-Australia defence cooperation is perpetuated on a common understanding with regard to the Asia-Pacific region that can be termed the "Japan-Australia security consensus," comprising of the following four elements (1) The two countries aspire towards rule-based order which respects existing international rules and norms. (2) They have certain expectations towards multilateral security mechanisms to play an increasingly

meaningful role in underwriting regional stability. (3) Both countries continue to support US strategic engagement in the region. (4) Moreover, both Japan and Australia have a common understanding that China's rise is one of the major reasons for assigning priority to the aforementioned three policy objectives.

In one sense it is understandable if one continues pointing to the divergence between Japanese and Australian over the "China gap." It would be premature and misguided, however, if one only looked at existing and potential divergence between Japan and Australia. In fact, the significant convergences that exist between the two countries' China policies even suggest that the China factor arguably plays a driving role in the development of Japan-Australia defence cooperation. Going forward, the challenge facing both Japanese and Australian policy-makers as well as observers is to take a balanced account of both China convergences and divergences between the two countries and keep an eye on potential implications of these two factors upon the bilateral relations.