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Japan's Defense Cooperation with the Philippines under the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) Initiative: The Emergence of a Quasi-Alliance as a New Chapter in Japan-Philippines Relations[*]

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Abstract

The Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) initiative serves as a driving force for Japan to deepen its defense cooperation with Southeast Asian countries in the Indo-Pacific region. This article highlights the defense cooperation between Japan and the Philippines, which has not been adequately studied hitherto. Progress has been made in terms of defense-related cooperation between Tokyo and Manila in response to China's maritime expansion and its hardline foreign policy as exemplified by the South China Sea disputes. This study primarily examines defense cooperation in Japan-Philippines relations from 2016 onward and explores the nature of the relationship being established between the two countries, with particular focus on Japan's recent proactive policy toward the Philippines under the FOIP concept. The paper observes that a quasi-alliance is gradually coming into existence between Japan and the Philippines, and envisions the future trajectory of the bilateral trend, which will accelerate due in part to macro and structural factors related to the international order as a whole, such as U.S.-China rivalry and the war in Ukraine.

Introduction

Amid the ongoing U.S.-China rivalry and the Ukraine War, the Joe Biden administration in the United States has sought to strengthen alliances with its allies in the Indo-Pacific region. In addition to formal allies such as Japan, South Korea, Australia, and Thailand,[1] the United States has also been seeking to foster a stronger alliance with the Philippines. The term of the Rodrigo Duterte administration that was inaugurated in 2016 coincided with a period of discordant U.S.-Philippines relations due to harsh criticism of Washington by President Duterte himself and his adoption of a conciliatory posture toward China, which led to widespread views that Manila had

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[1] However, U.S.-Thai relations have stalled since the 2014 coup d'état by the Thai military and have not been as smooth sailing today as U.S. alliances with Japan, South Korea, Australia, and the Philippines. Benjamin Zawacki, "U.S.-Thai Relations Have an Alliance Problem," *Foreign Policy*, May 23, 2023, https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/05/12/united-states-thai-relations-alliance-china-problem/.

moved closer to Beijing.[2] However, the new Philippine administration under Ferdinand Marcos Jr., who assumed the presidency in 2022, has attempted to revitalize the U.S.-Philippines alliance, and the Biden administration is acting in concert. In May 2023, Marcos became the first Philippine president to visit the United States in 11 years. During his visit, the leaders of both the United States and the Philippines agreed to reinforce the alliance,[3] and defense officials laid out concrete guidelines for future bilateral cooperation.[4]

The United States is not the only country that has enhanced defense-related collaboration with the Philippines. Japan, a main promoter of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) initiative, has also strengthened security cooperation with and provided maritime law enforcement capacity building to the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries for many years.[5] As a consequence, defense cooperation between Japan and the Philippines has progressed in recent years.

Nevertheless, little research in Japan has addressed defense cooperation between Tokyo and Manila. Whereas previous studies on Japan's defense policy have primarily concentrated on the Japan-U.S. alliance,[6] South Korea,[7] Australia,[8] and the United Kingdom,[9] they have overlooked the Philippines. For instance, a comprehensive analysis of Japan's defense diplomacy covered a number of different countries, but it did not contain a chapter or section on the case of the Philippines.[10] In addition, although existing literature has analyzed the U.S.-Philippines alliance[11]

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[2]   The Duterte administration became increasingly vigilant against China toward the end of its term because of the heightened tension over the South China Sea issue. In response to Chinese harassment in the disputed area, the Philippine president shifted his policy from appeasement to soft balancing against China. Renato Cruz De Castro, "From Appeasement to Soft Balancing: The Duterte Administration's Shifting Policy on the South China Sea Imbroglio," *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, vol. 49, no. 1 (2022), pp. 35–61.

[3]   "Joint Statement of the Leaders of the United States and the Philippines," The White House, May 1, 2023, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/05/01/joint-statement-of-the-leaders-of-the-united-states-and-the-philippines/.

[4]   "The United States and the Republic of the Philippines Bilateral Defense Guidelines," U.S. Department of Defense, May 3, 2023, https://media.defense.gov/2023/May/03/2003214357/-1/-1/0/THE-UNITED-STATES-AND-THE-REPUBLIC-OF-THE-PHILIPPINES-BILATERAL-DEFENSE-GUIDELINES.PDF.

[5]   Ken Jimbo, "Japan's Defense and Security Cooperation in Southeast Asia: Developing Security Networks, Capacities, and Institutions," in *The Courteous Power: Japan and Southeast Asia in the Indo-Pacific Era*, ed. John D. Ciorciari and Kiyoteru Tsutsui (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2021), pp. 54–72.

[6]   An example of a recent study on the Japan-U.S. alliance is Chijiwa Yasuaki, *Sengo Nippon no Anzen Hosho: Nichibei Domei, Kempo 9-jo kara NSC made* [The Security of Postwar Japan: From the Japan-U.S. Alliance and Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution to the NSC] (Tokyo: Chuokoron Shinsha [Chuokoron-Shinsha, Inc.], 2022).

[7]   Togashi Ayumi, *Nikkan Anzen Hosho Kyoryoku no Kensho: Reisenigo no "Kyoi" wo Meguru Rikigaku* [Examination of Japanese and South Korean Security Cooperation through the Mechanism of "Threats" after the Cold War] (Tokyo: Aki Shobo [Akishobo Inc.], 2017).

[8]   Satake Tomohiko, *Nichigo no Anzen Hosho Kyoryoku: "Kyori no Sensei" wo Koete* [Japan-Australia Security Cooperation: Beyond the "Tyranny of Distance"] (Tokyo: Keiso Shobo [Keiso Shobo Publishing Co., Ltd.], 2022).

[9]   Akimoto Chiaki, *Fukkatsu! Nichiei Domei: Indotaiheiyo Jidai no Makuake* [Revival! The Anglo-Japanese Alliance: The Dawn of the Indo-Pacific Era] (Tokyo: CCC Media Hausu [CCC Media House Co., Ltd.], 2021).

[10] Watanabe Tsuneo and Nishida Ippeita, eds., *Boei Gaiko to wa Nani ka: Heiji ni Okeru Gunjiryoku no Yakuwari* [What Is Defense Diplomacy? The Role of Military Power in Peace Time] (Tokyo: Keiso Shobo [Keiso Shobo Publishing Co., Ltd.], 2021).

[11] Ito Yuko, "Reisengo no Beihi Domei: Kichi Teppai, VFA, 'Taitero Senso' to Beihi Kankei [Post Cold War U.S.-Philippine Alliance: Bases Removal, the VFA, and the War against Terrorism]," *Kokusai Seiji* [International Relations], vol. 170 (2007), pp. 168–185; Fukuda Tamotsu, "Tonan Ajia ni Okeru Beikoku Domei: Beihi Domei wo Chushin ni [U.S. Alliances in Southeast Asia: A Closer Look at the U.S.-Philippines Alliance]," in *Nichibei Kankei no Kongo no Tenkai to Nihon no Gaiko* [The Future of Japan-U.S. Relations and Japanese

and U.S. military bases in the Philippines,[12] Japan-Philippines relations have not been a central theme among them.[13]

Therefore, the present study sheds light on how Japan-Philippines relationships have evolved, with a consideration of defense cooperation mainly from 2016 onward. The year 2016 represented a critical juncture when the Permanent Court of Arbitration delivered its ruling on the South China Sea, which has been characterized as a "watershed moment" in the history of the maritime disputes.[14] The same year became a turning point for the Japanese government as epitomized by its proposal of the FOIP and the Vientiane Vision mentioned below. Prior research has investigated defense cooperation between Tokyo and Manila from the early to late 2010s, but these studies concluded within the same timeframe.[15] This paper thus surveys the evolution of Japan-Philippines ties from the late 2010s to the 2020s. At the same time, this article elucidates what kind of relationship has been established between the two countries and proposes the policy implications for Japan.

In this article, I contend that Japan, under the banner of the FOIP initiative, has assumed a pivotal role in the Indo-Pacific region by expanding its defense cooperation network with numerous governments, particularly those in Southeast Asia. The Philippines stands as a prominent example of how Tokyo's foreign strategy is yielding tangible results, with the bilateral partnership gaining traction owing to Japan's efforts to promote maritime stability in the Indo-Pacific. Chinese assertiveness in the East and South China Seas, coupled with the U.S.-China strategic rivalry, has prompted closer coordination between Tokyo and Manila on mutual defense initiatives. Beijing remains cautious about Japan's defense diplomacy in Southeast Asia, including its engagement with the Philippines, as it could potentially erode China's regional influence. Contemporary Japan-Philippines relations can be described as a quasi-alliance,[16] a phenomenon projected to tighten

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Diplomacy] (Tokyo: Nihon Kokusai Mondai Kenkyusho [The Japan Institute of International Affairs], 2011), pp. 113–122; Jimbo Ken, "Beihi Domei wo Tatenaoseru ka: Indotaiheiyo ni Okeru 'Togo Yokushi' no Mo Hitotsu no Kakushin [Can the U.S.-Philippines Alliance Be Rebuilt? Another Core of 'Integrated Deterrence' in the Indo-Pacific]," in *Kenkyu Repoto "Nichibei Domei" Kenkyukai* [Research Reports, Research Group on 'The Japan-US Alliance'], FY2021-#2 (Tokyo: Nihon Kokusai Mondai Kenkyusho [The Japan Institute of International Affairs], 2022).

[12] Oki Yuri, "Firipin [The Philippines]," in *Sekai no Kichi Mondai to Okinawa* [The Global Problem of Bases and Okinawa], ed. Kawana Shinji (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten [Akashi Shoten Co., Ltd.], 2022), pp. 187–202.

[13] A comprehensive study on Japan-Philippines relations was published around two decades ago in 2004. The work primarily examines the historical context surrounding the period before and after the Pacific War. Ikehata Setsuho and Lydia N. Yu-Jose, eds., *Kingendai Nihon/Firipin Kankeishi* [Philippines-Japan Relations] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten [Iwanami Shoten, Publishers], 2004). A study on defense cooperation between Japan and the Philippines was also published just before the publication of this paper. Kiba Saya, "Nippon-Firipin Boei Kyoryoku no Shinten Yoin: Seisaku Komyuniti to Yoron no Bunseki kara [Driving Forces of Japan-Philippines Defense Cooperation: Analysis of Policy Community and Public Opinion in the Philippines]," *Kokusai Kyoryoku Ronshu* [Journal of International Cooperation Studies], no. 31 (2023), pp. 81–95.

[14] Shoji Tomotaka, *Minamishinakai Mondai no Kozu: Chuetsu Funso kara Takokukan Tairitsu e* [Territorial Disputes in the South China Sea: Approaches of ASEAN, Vietnam, and the Philippines] (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai [The University of Nagoya Press], 2022), p. 231.

[15] Bjørn Elias Mikalsen Grønning, "Japan's Security Cooperation with the Philippines and Vietnam," *The Pacific Review*, vol. 31, no. 4 (2018), pp. 533–552; John F. Bradford, "Japanese Naval Activities in Southeast Asian Waters: Building on 50 Years of Maritime Security Capacity Building," *Asian Security*, vol. 17, no. 1 (2021), pp. 79–104.

[16] As mentioned in Section 4, the term "giji-domei" (quasi-alliance) may have appeared earlier in the Japanese lexicon for international relations. However, since "jun-domei" has become more prevalent in recent years in academic research, policymaking, and the media, this paper will use the term "jun-domei."

in response to global-scale fluctuations, such as shifts in the international order, the U.S.-China competition, and the continuous war in Ukraine.

This article is structured as follows. Section 1 offers an overview of Japan's strategic relationships with Southeast Asian countries, with a particular emphasis on defense. Section 2 identifies the key factors driving Japan's more energetic pathway in its relations with the Philippines and sketches China's response to Japan's activities in Southeast Asia. Section 3 delves into the specifics of Japan-Philippines defense cooperation, focusing primarily on developments since 2016. In Section 4, the author argues that a quasi-alliance between Japan and the Philippines has progressively taken shape and presumes that this bilateral trajectory is likely to endure amid successive crises in the post-Cold War international landscape. The concluding section explores the policy implications for Japan.

1. Japan's Defense Cooperation with Southeast Asian Countries under the FOIP Initiative: Progress in Japan-Philippines Relations

Having been an advocate of the FOIP initiative, Tokyo places the maintenance and stability of the maritime order in the Indo-Pacific region at the heart of its foreign policy. Against the backdrop of escalating U.S.-China confrontations and the Ukraine War, as well as uncertainty about future U.S. engagement in the region, Japan has exerted regional initiatives in the Indo-Pacific region. The intensifying U.S.-China rivalry is a key variable that boosts Japan's influence and status, enabling the Asian power to demonstrate its global and regional leadership in the transitional international order.[17]

Japan's leadership in the Indo-Pacific region is evident in economic areas such as trade and finance. The Japanese government led the negotiations for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement. Despite the United States' withdrawal under the Donald Trump administration in 2017, the regional multinational trade arrangement entered into force among the remaining members the following year. Tokyo has promoted geo-economic strategies across the Indo-Pacific region. For instance, Japan had encouraged India to join the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement, even though New Delhi ultimately did not do so. Moreover, Tokyo enjoys broad support from many countries in terms of regional cooperation in the areas of infrastructure, supply chains, and finance in the Indo-Pacific region. As described above, the complex external environment represented by the heightened tension between the United States and China has increased Tokyo's clout in the Indo-Pacific region.[18]

Regional defense cooperation in the Indo-Pacific is also emblematic of Japan's leadership. The Japanese government undertook defense cooperation in Southeast Asia from the early 1990s. In the past few years, under the flag of the FOIP, Japan has been engaged in defense cooperation

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[17] Hakata Kei, "Nihon: 'Jiyu de Hirakareta' no Kachi [Japan: The Value of 'Free and Open']," in *Indotaiheiyo Senryaku: Taikokukan Kyoso no Chiseigaku* [Indo-Pacific Strategies: Navigating Geopolitics at the Dawn of a New Age], ed. Brendon J. Cannon and Hakata Kei (Tokyo: Chuokoron Shinsha [Chuokoron-Shinsha, Inc.], 2022), pp. 75–108; *Beichu Kankei wo Koete: Jiyu de Hirakareta Chiiki Chitsujo Kochiku no "Kijiku Kokka Nippon" no Indotaiheiyo Senryaku* [Beyond U.S.-China Relations: The Indo-Pacific Strategy of Japan as a "Pivot State" in Building a Free and Open Regional Order] (Tokyo: Nihon Kokusai Mondai Kenkyusho [The Japan Institute of International Affairs], 2023).

[18] Katada Saori, *Nihon no Chikeigaku Senryaku: Ajia Taiheiyo no Aratana Seiji Keizai Rikigaku* [Japan's New Regional Reality: Geoeconomic Strategy in the Asia-Pacific], trans. Miura Hideyuki (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shimbun Shuppan [Nikkei Publishing Inc.], 2022), chap. 8.

with regional states implementing schemes as part of FOIP-related projects since the mid-2010s. In the milieu of the U.S.-China rivalry and the South China Sea disputes, Tokyo has bolstered defense cooperation with the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, and other Southeast Asian states bordering the South China Sea with the aim of counterbalancing Beijing.[19]

When it comes to the situation surrounding the Philippines, the country was seen as distancing itself from the United States and approaching the People's Republic of China (PRC) during the era of the Duterte administration. President Duterte was vocal in blaming the longstanding ally in the first years of his presidency. While Duterte personally disregarded the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs' official line on China that emphasized compliance with international law, he tackled tasks to improve the capabilities of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) during his tenure, which in turn augmented Manila's ability to resist Beijing with respect to the South China Sea issue.[20] Additionally, Duterte aspired to consolidate maritime security cooperation with Tokyo just after assuming the presidency. During a Japan-Philippines summit meeting held in September 2016 on the occasion of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summits, Japan agreed to provide two large-scale patrol vessels to the Philippines and transfer Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force's (JMSDF) TC-90 training aircraft to the Philippine Navy (PN). Manila also underscored its emphasis on relations with Tokyo through Duterte's visit to Japan the next month,[21] and it has sought to utilize its partnership with the Japanese government to mitigate China's tough stance in terms of the South China Sea issue.[22]

The Marcos administration is not only eager to buttress the U.S.-Philippines alliance but has also been actively collaborating with U.S. allies such as Japan, South Korea, and Australia. This move by the current Philippine government is symptomatic of the transformation of the hub-and-spokes alliance system based on bilateral relations in the Indo-Pacific region extending from the United States. Meanwhile Washington remains the linchpin of the alliance network, and diplomatic and defense ties have been simultaneously developing among U.S. allies in the Indo-Pacific region (e.g., Japan-Philippines, Japan-Australia). These intertwined dynamics in progress between the United States and its allies and those between the U.S. allies themselves (Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, Australia, and Thailand) are contributing to the emergence of a more robust network-type alliance system led by Washington.[23]

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[19] Jimbo, "Japan's Defense and Security Cooperation in Southeast Asia," pp. 54–72.

[20] Takagi Yusuke, "Firipin no Taichu Gaiko: Kosakusuru 3-tsu no Akuta to 3-tsu no Seisaku [Philippine Diplomacy toward China: Intersection of Three Actors and Three Policies]," in *"Kyokoku" Chugoku to Taijisuru Indotaiheiyo Shokoku* [Indo-Pacific Nations Facing China Aspiring to Be a "Great Country"], ed. Takenaka Harukata (Tokyo: Chikura Shobo [Chikura Publishing Company], 2022), pp. 225–243.

[21] Shoji Tomotaka, "Minamishinakai to ASEAN: Firipin to Betonamu no Taio [Comparative Analysis of Approaches toward the South China Sea: The Philippines and Vietnam]," *Ajia Kenkyu* [Asian Studies], vol. 63, no. 4 (2017), pp. 30–31.

[22] Renato Cruz De Castro, "The Duterte Administration's Foreign Policy: Unravelling the Aquino Administration's Balancing Agenda on an Emergent China," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, vol. 35, no. 3 (2016), pp. 139–159.

[23] Takagi Yusuke, "Shinkokoku Firipin no Gaiko: Taibei Kankei no Kyoka, Chiiki Gaiko no Shinka to Kokusai Shugi Gaiko no Tenkai [Diplomacy in the Philippines as an Emerging Country: Strengthening Relations with the United States, Deepening Regional Diplomacy, and Developing Internationalist Diplomacy]," *Kokusai Mondai* [International Affairs], no. 714 (2023), p. 14; Bates Gill, "The Asian Security Environment," in *International Relations of Asia*, 3rd ed., ed. David Shambaugh (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2022), pp. 385–386.

According to a public poll conducted by PUBLiCUS Asia in the Philippines in 2023, nearly 80% of Filipinos perceive China as a threat, and Japan emerged as the most trusted country, with 55% of respondents.[24]

Considering China's pugnacious deeds and words in the East and South China Seas, the PRC poses a common security threat to both Tokyo and Manila, and the shared threat perceptions toward Beijing are the catalyst for solidifying the strategic partnership between Japan and the Philippines.

2. Factors Driving Japan's Defense Cooperation with the Philippines: Shifts in International and Regional Dynamics and China's Response

This section assesses how these Japan-specific factors have influenced the recent expansion of defense cooperation with the Philippines. Through this analysis, it underscores Japan's evolving role in regional security and its strategic initiatives to navigate growing uncertainties in the Indo-Pacific region.

The first factor is the general course of global affairs, which has been accentuated by the intensifying U.S.-China rivalry and the Ukraine War. The outbreak of the war in Ukraine has further polarized the international community, reinforcing ties between China and Russia and pushing U.S. allies—such as Japan and European states—into more unified strategic alignment. The shared sense of urgency has propelled Japan, the United States, and Europe to cooperate more closely on security matters and has encouraged other U.S. allies in East Asia, including the Philippines, to align with this bloc.[25] Moscow's military aggression toward Ukraine, which began in February 2022, had a significant impact on the Philippines, amplifying its concerns about the possibility of being drawn into an armed conflict between the United States and China. This fear emanates from the Philippines' geographical proximity to Taiwan and the provisions of the U.S.-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT).[26] In the context of the growing polarization of the world into opposing blocs of Japan, the U.S., and Europe on one side, and China and Russia on the other, the positions of Japan and the Philippines in both the international and regional orders are also converging in the same direction.[27]

The second factor is Japan's leadership in the Indo-Pacific region illustrated by the FOIP initiative as an external strategy. From Japan's perspective, enhancing the national strength and resilience of countries in the region—particularly ASEAN member states that are attempting to resist Beijing's maritime expansion—serves a strategic purpose. By assisting these governments,

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[24] "Survey Reveals Shifting Filipino Views on International Relations," *PUBLiCUS Asia*, August 17, 2023, https://www.publicusasia.com/shifting-filipino-views/.

[25] Masuda Masayuki, "Taikokukan Kyoso no Dainamizumu [The Dynamics of Great Power Competition]," in *Taikokukan Kyoso no Shinjotai* [The Shifting Dynamics of Great Power Competition], ed. Masuda Masayuki (Tokyo: Intabukkusu [Interbooks Co., Ltd.], 2023), pp. 1–10.

[26] Renato Cruz De Castro, "The Philippines, the Ukraine-Russia War, and the Taiwan Strait Crisis," *Global Taiwan Institute*, October 19, 2022, https://globaltaiwan.org/2022/10/the-philippines-the-ukraine-russia-war-and-the-taiwan-strait-crisis/.

[27] There are differences in the approaches and positions adopted by Japan and the Philippines on the Taiwan issue, which is directly linked to U.S.-China rivalry. See the following for more detailed analysis on the Philippines' perception of and policy toward the Taiwan issue. "The Philippines," in Jeffrey W. Hornung, Miranda Priebe, Bryan Rooney, Patrick Hulme, Nobuhiko Tamaki, and Yu Inagaki, *Like-Minded Allies? Indo-Pacific Partners' Views on Possible Changes in the U.S. Relationship with Taiwan* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2023), chap. 5.

Japan can help curb China's naval expansion into the South China Sea.[28] The progress in Japan-Philippines relations may also be a testament to Tokyo's role as a major power in the Indo-Pacific region and the positive effect of its practical mindset toward relations with ASEAN.

The third factor, which is related to the second, is the escalation of the South China Sea issue (a dispute to which the Philippines is also a party). Japan strives to oppose China's maritime ambitions and its expanding influence across the Indo-Pacific. For Japan, a state encircled by seas, securing vital sea lanes is of paramount importance, highlighting the South China Sea's geopolitical significance. A key objective of the FOIP initiative is to offset the PRC's actions to alter the maritime order in the region. To this end, the Japanese government has pursued a policy of sharing guidelines with relevant countries, rooted in the principle of respect for international law and emphasizing universal values, as well as the 2016 arbitral tribunal ruling. Stability and peace in the Indo-Pacific maritime order is a crucial goal of the FOIP vision, which Tokyo seeks to achieve through its relations with countries in the region. Japan has prioritized offering capacity-building assistance to Southeast Asian nations to enhance their Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) capabilities and bolster their maritime law enforcement agencies. These initiatives are intended to stabilize the South China Sea by empowering these countries to more efficiently monitor and protect their maritime territories. It is evident that Japan's FOIP initiative functions as a statecraft designed to counterbalance China,[29] and Tokyo has collaborated with Manila to safeguard essential sea lanes in the East and South China Seas, which act as critical lifelines for maritime transportation.

Fourth, Japan is advancing the expansion of Japan-U.S.+α cooperation to incorporate additional countries as part of the FOIP initiative. For example, the JMSDF took part in the U.S.-Philippines Maritime Training Activity (MTA) "Sama Sama" for the first time in October 2019,[30] which attests to the major headway made in Japan-U.S.-Philippines trilateral cooperation. The joint statement between the United States and the Philippines, released during President Marcos's visit to Washington in May 2023, also alluded to Japan-U.S.-Philippines trilateral cooperation, as well as U.S.-Philippines-Australia cooperation.[31] At the Shangri-La Dialogue held in Singapore in June of the same year, the defense ministers of Japan, the United States, Australia, and the Philippines met for the first time to discuss expanding the scope of cooperation among the four countries, while reaffirming their commitment to realizing the objectives of the FOIP vision.[32] In addition, the inaugural joint exercise involving the Japan, U.S., and Philippine Coast Guards seemed deliberately scheduled to align with the meeting of the four countries' defense ministers.[33]

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28   Jimbo, "Japan's Defense and Security Cooperation in Southeast Asia," p. 56.

29   Iida Masafumi, "'Jiyu de Hirakareta Indotaiheiyo' wo Meguru Nihon no Seisaku no Tenkai [The Development of Japanese Policies regarding a 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific']," *Mondai to Kenkyu* [Issues & Studies], vol. 50, no. 1 (2021), pp. 8–9.

30   "Beihi Kyodo Kunren (MTA Sama Sama 2019) [U.S.-Philippines Joint Exercise (MTA Sama Sama 2019)]," Kaijo Jieitai [Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force], October 14, 2019, https://www.mod.go.jp/msdf/release/201910/20191014.pdf.

31   "Joint Statement of the Leaders of the United States and the Philippines."

32   "Nichibeigohi Boeisho Kaidan ni tsuite [Japan-Australia-Philippines-U.S. Defense Ministerial Meeting]," Boeisho/Jieitai [Ministry of Defense/Japan Self-Defense Forces], June 3, 2023, https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/anpo/2023/0603a_usa_aus_phl-j.html.

33   "Nichibeihi Kaijo Hoan Kikan no Renkei ni Yoru Hatsu no Godo Kunrento wo Okonaimashita: Sankikan Godo Kunren, Noryoku Kojo Shien to wo Jisshi [The First Joint Trilateral Exercises of the Coast Guard Agencies

The meeting of the defense ministers of Japan, the United States, the Philippines, Australia, and South Korea on the sidelines of the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) in Laos in November 2024 proved to be a watershed moment because it was the first such five-nation consultation.[34] This gathering, which brought together the defense ministers of Washington and its major allies in the Indo-Pacific, embodies the evolution of the U.S. alliance network in the region into a lattice-like architecture.[35] This sort of multilateral cooperation involving both Japan and the Philippines will likely continue to gather momentum.

The fifth factor is Japan's readiness to cope with indeterminacy regarding future U.S. involvement in the region. Although the Biden administration has taken an active approach toward engagement in the Indo-Pacific,[36] some countries in the region remain wary because of lingering doubts about U.S. commitment, a concern that surfaced during the previous Trump administration.[37] Isolationism driven by an inward-looking impulse prevails within the United States, a social atmosphere that will likely define the extent of the country's future engagement with other countries, including in the Indo-Pacific region.[38] Needless to say, while cooperation between Japan and the Philippines would not be able to compensate for the absence of the United States in the Indo-Pacific region, it is indispensable for Tokyo to prepare for the possibility of U.S. disengagement by strengthening ties with like-minded countries such as the Philippines. This strategic imperative is an impetus shaping Japan's policy toward the Philippines.[39]

The PRC has also been watchfully monitoring Japan-Philippines relations. An article on Japan-Philippines relations published in 2022 in the Japanese edition of the website of the *People's Daily*, the official newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party, identifies the following three strategic motivations behind Tokyo's push for cooperation with Manila: (i) expansion of the export market for Japan's defense equipment and technology, (ii) strengthening of Japan's influence in Southeast Asia, and (iii) formation of an Asia-Pacific analog of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The article underscores space as a new dimension of Japan-Philippines

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of Japan, the U.S. and the Philippines (Summary of Results) ~Joint Exercises and MCT Activities~]," Kaijo Hoancho [Japan Coast Guard], June 7, 2023, https://www.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/info/kouhou/r5/k230607/k230607.pdf.

[34] "Nichi Bei Gou Hi Kan ni yoru Boeishou Kaidan ni tsuite [Japan-Australia-Philippines-Republic of Korea-United States Defense Ministers' Meeting]," Boeisho/Jieitai [Ministry of Defense/Japan Self-Defense Forces], November 21, 2024, https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/anpo/2024/1121a_usa_aus_phl_kor-j.html.

[35] Some senior officials of the Biden administration have stated that the U.S.-centered alliance structure in the Indo-Pacific is transforming from a hub-and-spokes system into a lattice arrangement. Richard Fontaine and Kurt Campbell, "AUKUS: Securing the Indo-Pacific, A Conversation with Kurt Campbell," *Center for a New American Security*, April 3, 2024, https://www.cnas.org/publications/transcript/aukus-securing-the-indo-pacific-a-conversation-with-kurt-campbell.

[36] *Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States* (Washington D. C.: The White House, 2022).

[37] Nakayama Toshihiro, "Amerika ga Ushiromuki ni Natta Toki ni Do Suru no ka?: Domei ni Kawaru 'Puran B' wo Meguru Giron [What Should Be Done If the United States Disengages? A Discussion on a 'Plan B' to Take the Place of the Alliance]," Sasakawa Heiwa Zaidan [Sasakawa Peace Foundation], April 19, 2019, https://www.spf.org/jpus-insights/spf-america-monitor/spf-america-monitor-document-detail_23.html.

[38] Charles A. Kupchan, *Isolationism: A History of America's Efforts to Shield Itself from the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).

[39] One of the factors driving Japan's pursuit of security cooperation with Australia and India since the 2000s has been the need to adjust to a potential reduction in U.S. engagement in the Indo-Pacific. A similar logic can also be observed in Japan's relations with the Philippines. Thomas S. Wilkins, "Japan's Alliance Diversification: A Comparative Analysis of the Indian and Australian Strategic Partnerships," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, vol. 11, no. 1 (2011), pp. 115–155.

collaboration, reflecting Beijing's scrutiny of Tokyo's maneuvers in this partnership.[40] Elsewhere, the *PLA Daily*, the official newspaper of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), cited Japan's sale of warning and control radars to the Philippines in 2020 as a notable example. The piece indicated that, despite Japan consciously pursuing arms exports to other countries following the easing of its Three Principles on Arms Exports, the Japanese government has not yet achieved the desired effect.[41] Subsequent to Prime Minister Kishida Fumio's visit to the Philippines in November 2023, the *PLA Daily* published an article containing a detailed analysis of Japan's defense policy toward the Philippines. The commentary reviews the background of the two nations' growing partnership, highlighting Japan's engagement in defense cooperation with the Philippines, especially concerning the South China Sea and associated policies. Furthermore, the article claims that if a Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) were to be concluded between Japan and the Philippines, it could lay the groundwork for a military alliance among Japan, the United States, and the Philippines under the framework of the RAA. On the other hand, it also added that there are limits to cooperation between Japan and the Philippines. Concluding that their military cooperation is dangerous as it risks heightening tensions in the region, the Chinese analysis warns that the international community and neighboring countries should remain watchful and vigilant regarding these developments.[42] China's wary reaction toward Japan-Philippines relations, as described above, implies that Japan's actions have become increasingly difficult to ignore. It also suggests that Beijing is becoming more sensitive to the overall bilateral relationship between Tokyo and Manila, and especially to their defense cooperation.[43]

The ensuing section will delve deeper into the evolution of defense cooperation between Japan and the Philippines.

3. Evolution of Japan-Philippines Defense Cooperation: The FOIP Initiative and Vientiane Vision since 2016

This section inspects the trajectory of defense cooperation between Japan and the Philippines starting from 2016, when Japan launched the FOIP initiative. It begins by outlining the Vientiane Vision, a framework particularly pertinent to their bilateral relations, before exploring the various areas and aspects of collaboration in greater detail.

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[40] "Firipin to no Boei Kyoryoku o Kyokashi Tsuzukeru Nihon no Senryakuteki Ito wa? [What Is Japan's Strategic Intent in Continuing to Strengthen Defense Cooperation with the Philippines?]," 人民網日本語版 [People's Daily Online, Japanese Edition], July 4, 2022, http://j.people.com.cn/n3/2022/0704/c94474-10118677.html.

[41] 张文文 [Zhang Wenwen], "日本防卫产业动向引发高度警惕 [Developments in Japan's Defense Industry Are Raising the Alarm]," 解放军报 [PLA Daily], February 20, 2023, p. 4.

[42] 华丹 [Hua Dan], 汪泽焱 [Wang Zeyan], and 杨静 [Yang Jing], "日本妄图拉拢菲律宾搅动地区局势 [Japan Is Trying to Draw In the Philippines to Stir Up Trouble in the Region]," 解放军报 [PLA Daily], November 16, 2023, p. 11.

[43] According to news sources, the day after Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines Koshikawa Kazuhiko published a post on Twitter (now X) regarding the Japanese government's position on the South China Sea issue in March 2021, the Chinese Embassy in Manila implicitly condemned his comments, also via social media. This occurrence indicates China's wariness toward Japan's involvement in the South China Sea disputes and Japan-Philippines relations. "Firipin no Chugoku Taishikan, Minamishinakai Meguri Nihon wo An ni Hihan [China Embassy Takes Swipe at 'Fusty' Japan over South China Sea]," *Reuters*, March 25, 2021, https://www.reuters.com/article/philippines-china-southchinasea-japan-idJPKBN2BH01V.

(1) Vientiane Vision

Integral to the discussion on Japan's defense cooperation in Southeast Asia is the Vientiane Vision that was unveiled in 2016,[44] the same year as the FOIP concept. The Vientiane Vision is a set of guidelines for defense cooperation with ASEAN announced by then Minister of Defense Inada Tomomi at the 2nd ASEAN-Japan Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting in Vientiane, the capital of Laos, in November 2016. The main purpose of these guidelines was not only to continue pursuing existing initiatives in areas such as practical cooperation between Japan and ASEAN, participation in the ADMM-Plus, and capacity-building assistance, but also to synthesize new pillars. These included promoting the rule of law, bolstering maritime security cooperation, and advancing capacity-building initiatives to help ASEAN adapt to the evolving international landscape.[45]

On the occasion of the 5th ASEAN-Japan Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting held in Thailand in November 2019, then Minister of Defense Kono Taro announced the Vientiane Vision 2.0 to update the guidelines and further deepen defense cooperation with ASEAN. In particular, the inclusion of new language on respecting the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) issued in 2019 reflected Japan's eagerness to harmonize its FOIP with ASEAN's fresh vision. The Vientiane Vision 2.0 signified an inclusive approach to defense cooperation that sought to encompass the entire Indo-Pacific region, reinforcing Japan's commitment to regional stability and its role as a trusted security partner.[46]

The second Abe administration, which took office in 2012, valued maritime security and defense cooperation with the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries proposing the Vientiane Vision in 2016. The defense outlook between Japan and ASEAN had set forth a novel direction for the policies of the Ministry of Defense, the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF), and the Abe administration toward Southeast Asia. In the same year, the JMSDF destroyer JS *Ise* was deployed to the South China Sea and other waters, together with making a port call in the Philippines, to conduct various activities. These activities exemplified Japan's commitment under the Vientiane Vision to not only engage in multilateral cooperation with countries such as the United States and Australia, but also to further augment capacity-building efforts for Southeast Asian countries, including the Philippines.[47] The Japanese government's proposal of the Vientiane Vision represented a milestone, heralding a potential shift toward a new stage of defense cooperation between Japan and Southeast Asia.[48]

The Vientiane Vision provides a strategic basis for Japan to countervail China's naval expansion by integrating its FOIP policy into defense partnerships with ASEAN. This conception is congruent with Tokyo's dedication to counter Beijing's assertive behavior. The Vientiane Vision

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[44] For the background to the Japanese government's proposal of the Vientiane Vision to ASEAN in 2016, see Nishida Ippeita, "Nihon no Tai-ASEAN Boei Gaiko: Bienchan Bijon to wa Nani ka? [Japan's Defense Diplomacy toward ASEAN: What Is the Vientiane Vision?]," Sasakawa Heiwa Zaidan [Sasakawa Peace Foundation], August 24, 2018, https://www.spf.org/iina/articles/nishida-asean-economy.html.

[45] "Dai 2-Kai Nichi-ASEAN Boei Tanto Daijin Kaigo (Gaiyo) [Second ASEAN-Japan Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting (Summary)]," Boeisho/Jieitai [Ministry of Defense/Japan Self-Defense Forces], November 16, 2016, https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/exchange/dialogue/j-asean/admm_02.html.

[46] "Bienchan Bijon: Nichi-ASEAN Boei Kyoryoku Inishiateibu no Appudeto [Vientiane Vision: Japan's Defense Cooperation Initiative with ASEAN - Update]," Boeisho/Jieitai [Ministry of Defense/Japan Self-Defense Forces], n.d., https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/exchange/dialogue/j-asean/pdf/vv2_jp.pdf.

[47] Bradford, "Japanese Naval Activities in Southeast Asian Waters," pp. 94–95.

[48] Ibid, pp. 97–98.

also reflects Japan's enthusiasm to cultivate stronger maritime security ties with ASEAN by echoing the coherence between the FOIP and AOIP. Among the countries in Southeast Asia, Tokyo has forged robust defense ties with the Philippines that has been embroiled in antagonisms with the PRC over the South China Sea disputes.[49]

It is a curious coincidence that both the FOIP idea and the Vientiane Vision were put forward one after another in the same year, thereafter the arbitral tribunal's ruling on the South China Sea problem in July 2016. This timing implicates Japan's determination to achieve stability in the Indo-Pacific maritime order, particularly in the South China Sea, through more proactive efforts than before. These policies include diplomacy and defense cooperation with the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries. This progression unmistakably indicates that collaboration between Tokyo and Manila is set to advance further in the future.

(2) Summit Meetings and Ministerial-Level Meetings

Japan and the Philippines regularly conduct summit meetings and other high-level visits, complemented by vibrant ministerial-level exchanges aimed at strengthening defense cooperation.

During his second term, Prime Minister Abe Shinzo cherished summit meetings with the Philippines, holding 12 face-to-face summit meetings with then leaders of the Philippines President Benigno Aquino III[50] and President Duterte during the period between 2012, when the Japanese leader took office, and 2020, when he stepped down. Although only a single telephone conference was held between Prime Minister Abe and President Duterte in 2020, due in part to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the two leaders had discussions on primary subjects such as the situation in the South China Sea and maritime security cooperation during those summit meetings. The building of trust between Abe and the Philippine leaders during this period played a key role in facilitating the development of bilateral relations, covering the area of defense cooperation. Abe's personal diplomacy paved the way for mutual understanding, enabling Japan and the Philippines to tackle shared challenges and enrich cooperation in advancing regional security and maritime stability.[51]

During the Suga Yoshihide administration from 2020 to 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted in-person summit visits between Japan and the Philippines.[52] However, a total of two telephone summit conferences were held between the leaders during this period.[53]

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[49] Shoji Tomotaka, "Nihon no Tai-ASEAN Anzen Hosho Seisaku: Yuko Kyoryoku 50-Shunen no Fushime ni [Japan's Security Policy on ASEAN — On the 50th Anniversary of Friendship and Cooperation]," Sasakawa Heiwa Zaidan [Sasakawa Peace Foundation], June 26, 2023, https://www.spf.org/iina/articles/shoji_22.html.

[50] Prime Minister Abe met with President Aquino a total of seven times during the two years following Abe's return to office in 2012, demonstrating Japan's firm support for the Philippines with respect to the latter's problems with China over the South China Sea issue. Grønning, "Japan's Security Cooperation with the Philippines and Vietnam," pp. 536–537.

[51] For summit meetings between Japan and the Philippines, see "Firipin Kyowakoku: Kako no Yojin Orai/Kaidan [Republic of the Philippines: Past High-Level Visits/Meetings]," Gaimusho [Ministry of Foreign Affairs], April 16, 2023, https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/philippines/visit/index.html.

[52] Potential visits by Prime Minister Suga to the Philippines and India between late April and May 2021 had been under consideration; however, both visits were canceled, partly due to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. "Reiwa 3-nen 4-gatsu 21-nichi (Sui) Gogo [Afternoon of April 21 (Wednesday), 2021]," Shusho Kantei [Prime Minister's Office of Japan], April 21, 2021, https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/tyoukanpress/202104/21_p.html.

[53] "Firipin Kyowakoku: Kako no Yojin Orai/Kaidan [Republic of the Philippines: Past High-Level Visits/Meetings]."

Under the Kishida Fumio administration inaugurated in 2021, Japan-Philippines summit meetings (with both President Duterte and President Marcos) have taken place a total of eight times, including informal meetings and telephone conferences, as of the time of updating this paper (November 27, 2024).[54]

A remarkable summit meeting under the Kishida administration was President Marcos's visit to Japan in February 2023. The agenda for intensifying defense cooperation through Japan-Philippines Foreign and Defense Ministerial Meetings ("2+2") and the "Terms of Reference (TOR) between the Ministry of Defense of Japan and the Department of National Defense of the Republic of the Philippines concerning the Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Activities of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) in the Republic of the Philippines"[55] signed by the defense authorities of the two countries on the same day was addressed during the session. This head-of-state conference also raised as a subject of the establishment of additional frameworks for joint exercises involving organizations from both countries, coordination in the sector of defense equipment and technology, and Japan-U.S.-Philippines cooperation.[56] In September 2023, Prime Minister Kishida, during his visit to Indonesia to attend ASEAN-related summit meetings, met briefly with U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris and President Marcos. The three reaffirmed their commitment to boosting cooperation between Tokyo, Washington, and Manila, exchanging views on the South China Sea disputes.[57]

Prime Minister Kishida's visit to the Philippines in November 2023[58] connotes a pivotal moment in bilateral relations. This marked Kishida's first visit to the Philippines since assuming office and featured a summit meeting with President Marcos, as well as the historic first speech by a Japanese prime minister to the Philippine Congress. The joint press statement issued after the meeting with President Marcos stated that the two governments will initiate negotiations on an RAA while also touching on a range of topics that signal the strengthening of Japan-Philippines relations, including the Official Security Assistance (OSA) mentioned below; the continuation of Japan-U.S.-Philippines diplomatic and defense cooperation; and the East and South China Seas

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54 Ibid. The total number of Japan-Philippines summit meetings under the Kishida administration is nine if the telephone conference held between Prime Minister Kishida and President-elect Marcos in May 2022 prior to the latter taking office is counted. "Kishida Sori Daijin to Marukosu Firipin Jiki Daitoryo to no Denwa Kaidan [Prime Minister Kishida's Telephone Talk with President-elect Marcos of the Philippines]," Gaimusho [Ministry of Foreign Affairs], May 20, 2022, https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/page1_001178.html.

55 "Boeisho to Firipin Kokubosho to no Aida no Firipin ni Okeru Jieitai no Jindo Shien/Saigai Kyuen Katsudo ni Kansuru Torikime e no Shomei ni tsuite [Signing of Terms of Reference between the Ministry of Defense of Japan and the Department of National Defense of the Republic of the Philippines concerning the Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Activities of the Japan Self-Defense Forces in the Republic of the Philippines]," Boeisho/Jieitai [Ministry of Defense/Japan Self-Defense Forces], February 9, 2023, https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/exchange/area/2023/20230209_phl-j.html. The Terms of Reference (TOR) are an arrangement for simplifying the procedures for the JSDF to visit the Philippines for the purpose of engaging in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) activities.

56 "Nichi-Firipin Shuno Kaidan [Japan-Philippines Summit Meeting]," Gaimusho [Ministry of Foreign Affairs], February 9, 2023, https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/s_sa/sea2/ph/page1_001505.html.

57 "Kishida Sori Daijin, Marukosu Hi Daitoryo Oyobi Harisu Bei Fukudaitoryo ni Yoru Kondan [Informal Talks among Prime Minister Kishida, President Marcos and Vice President Harris]," Gaimusho [Ministry of Foreign Affairs], September 6, 2023, https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/s_sa/sea2/page1_001804.html.

58 Prime Minister Kishida's visit to the Philippines was followed by a trip to Malaysia, where the agenda centered on maritime security and defense cooperation. "Kishida Sori Daijin no Mareshia Homon (11-gatsu 4-ka/5-ka) [Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's Visit to Malaysia (November 4 and 5)]," Gaimusho [Ministry of Foreign Affairs], November 5, 2023, https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/s_sa/sea2/my/page1_001893.html.

issues. The statement also referred to Prime Minister Kishida's invitation of President Marcos to the Commemorative Summit for the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, which Japan was scheduled to host in December 2023.[59] In his speech at the Joint Session of the Philippine Senate and the House of Representatives, Prime Minister Kishida alluded to Prime Minister Fukuda Takeo's 1977 speech in Manila on Japan's policy toward Southeast Asia and remarked that 2023 will stand as the 50th anniversary of the beginning of Japan-ASEAN cooperation while showcasing the resonance between the FOIP and the AOIP. After citing security and defense cooperation as an area of cooperation in Japan-Philippines relations, he expressed that "Japan intends to further deepen strategic cooperation with the Philippines" following the strengthening of bilateral cooperation in the maritime and air domains, the OSA agreement reached between the two leaders, and the commencement of the RAA negotiations.[60]

On the sidelines of the ASEAN Summits in Laos in October 2024, Japan's new Prime Minister Ishiba Shigeru who had taken office in the same month held an unofficial talk with President Marcos. Affirming the significance of the bilateral partnership and trilateral cooperation with Washington, they also indicated a willingness to complete the procedures for the swift entry into force of the RAA which was signed between the two governments in July 2024. This marked the Japanese leader's first opportunity since taking office to communicate with his Philippine counterpart.[61]

Excluding the year 2016, defense ministerial meetings between Tokyo and Manila have been held annually since 2017, with a total of 10 opportunities to date, including telephone and web conferences and in multilateral formats (Japan-U.S.-Australia-Philippines).[62]

The first "2+2" meeting between Japan and the Philippines was held in Tokyo in April 2022. Both sides reached a concurrence on considering the conclusion of an RAA to facilitate reciprocal visits and joint exercises between the JSDF and the AFP. They also agreed to explore an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) to enable the exchange of supplies and services between the two countries' defense forces.[63] The "2+2" joint statement had China in mind as it "expressed serious concern about the situation in the East and South China Seas and strongly opposed actions that may increase tensions," while also stating that "in light of the contribution of a strong U.S. presence to regional stability, the Ministers underscored the importance of each country's respective treaty alliance with the United States and that of enhancing cooperation with regional partner countries."[64] Tokyo and Manila validated the upgrade of multifaceted cooperation

[59] "Nichi-Firipin Kyodo Puresu Sutetomento [Joint Press Statement on the Outcome of the Visit of Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio to the Philippines]," Gaimusho [Ministry of Foreign Affairs], November 3, 2023, https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/100575960.pdf.

[60] "Firipin Gikai ni Okeru Seisaku Supichi 'Jisedai ni Tsunagu Kokoro to Kokoro no Kizuna [Policy Speech by Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio at the Joint Session of the Philippine Senate and House of Representatives (Heart-to-Heart Ties for the Next Generation)]," Gaimusho [Ministry of Foreign Affairs], November 4, 2023, https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/100576086.pdf.

[61] "Nichi Firipin Syuno Tachi Banashi [Japan-Philippines Prime Minister's Informal Talks]," Gaimusho [Ministry of Foreign Affairs], October 10, 2024, https://www.mofa.go.jp/s_sa/sea2/ph/pageite_000001_00609.html.

[62] "Firipin Hai Reberu Koryu [High-Level Exchanges with the Philippines]," Boeisho/Jieitai [Ministry of Defense/Japan Self-Defense Forces], n.d., https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/exchange/area/s_e_asia/philippines.html.

[63] "Dai-1-kai Nichi-Firipin Gaimu-Boei Kakuryo Kaigo ("2+2") [First Japan-Philippines Foreign and Defense Ministerial Meeting ("2+2")]," Boeisho/Jieitai [Ministry of Defense/Japan Self-Defense Forces], April 9, 2022, https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/exchange/area/2022/20220409_phl-j_b.html.

[64] "Dai-1-kai Nichi-Firipin Gaimu-Boei Kakuryo Kaigo ("2+2") Kyodo Seimei (Kariyaku) [Joint Statement of

between Japan and the Philippines, alongside the Japan-U.S. and U.S.-Philippines alliances in countering the PRC.

(3) Defense Equipment and Technology Transfer Cooperation

Comprehensive cooperation in defense equipment and technology transfer between Tokyo and Manila began after the entry into force of the Agreement Concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology in April 2016. At the Japan-Philippines Summit Meeting in September 2016, a formal agreement was reached to transfer five TC-90 training aircraft from the JMSDF to the PN. Of these, two aircraft were delivered in March 2017, and the remaining three in March 2018. To support the operation of the TC-90s, flight training for the PN pilots was conducted at the JSDF's Tokushima Air Base from November 2016 to March 2018. In November 2018, a transfer agreement was signed between the defense authorities of Japan and the Philippines concerning the free provision of unused UH-1H utility helicopter parts from the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) to the Philippine Air Force (PAF), following discussions at the Japan-Philippines Defense Ministers' Meeting in June of the same year. The delivery of some of these parts to the Philippines commenced in March 2019 and concluded in September of the same year.[65]

The export of warning and control radars to the Philippines was groundbreaking, as it represented Japan's first overseas transfer of finished equipment in their next phase of defense collaboration.[66] This agreement was carried out as a component of plans to facilitate the overseas transfer of finished defense equipment manufactured in Japan after the formulation of the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology in 2014. When the PAF began procuring radars in 2018, Mitsubishi Electric proposed a proprietary radar with the support of the Ministry of Defense of Japan. As a result, the company signed a contract worth $100 million with the Department of National Defense of the Philippines in August 2020 for the supply of radars. This was the first-ever instance of the transfer of ready-to-deploy defense equipment from Japan to another country.[67] Japan also provided education and training in operating the radars for the PAF.[68] On November 2, 2023, the day before Prime Minister Kishida's visit to the Philippines, it was announced that the first of four warning and control radars under this contract had been transferred

the Inaugural Japan-Philippines Foreign and Defense Ministerial Meeting ("2+2") (Provisional Translation)]," Boeisho/Jieitai [Ministry of Defense/Japan Self-Defense Forces], April 9, 2022, https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/exchange/area/2022/20220409_phl-j_a.html.

[65] "Boei Sobi/Gijutsu Kyoryoku ni tsuite [Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation]," Boei Sobi-cho [Acquisition, Technology & Logistics Agency], n.d., https://www.mod.go.jp/atla/soubiseisakugijutu.html.

[66] These warning and control radars transferred to the Philippines have been credited for strengthening the country's surveillance capabilities in surrounding airspaces. They also enable the sharing of information related to China's air activities in the South China Sea with other relevant countries. Takei Tomohisa, Tokuchi Hideshi, Matsumura Goro, and Araki Junichi, "Boeisho/Jieitai ga Okonau Boei Gaiko [The Defense Diplomacy of the Ministry of Defense/Japan Self-Defense Forces]," in *Boei Gaiko to wa Nani ka* [What Is Defense Diplomacy?], ed. Watanabe and Nishida, p. 97.

[67] "Boei Sobi/Gijutsu Kyoryoku ni tsuite [Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation]," Boei Sobi-cho [Acquisition, Technology & Logistics Agency].

[68] Training on warning and control radars for Philippine Air Force personnel was conducted in Japan from October 2022 to June 2023. "Keikai Kansei Reda no Iten ni Tomonau Kyoiku Shien [Training Support Following the Transfer of Warning and Control Radars]," Boeisho/Jieitai [Ministry of Defense/Japan Self-Defense Forces], n.d., https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/exchange/area/2023/20230428_phl-j.html.

to the PAF in the previous month.[69]

The OSA,[70] the broad principles of which incorporated into the new *National Security Strategy of Japan* approved by the Cabinet in December 2022,[71] centers on Southeast Asian countries among its priorities, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs unveiling its policy of selecting the Philippines as one of the four countries (the other three being Malaysia, Bangladesh, and Fiji) as candidates for the Japanese security institution in FY2023.[72] Subsequently, during Prime Minister Kishida's visit to the Philippines in November 2023, the two governments signed and exchanged a memorandum for the OSA, and it was decided that coastal radar systems would be provided to the PN for the purpose of improving its maritime surveillance and MDA, denoting the first case of the application of the OSA.[73]

Negotiations for the delivery of five additional large-scale patrol vessels proceeded after Japan handed over two such vessels to the Philippines in 2022. Ronnie Gil Gavan, who was newly appointed as Commandant of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) in October 2023, was interviewed by reporters after the change of command ceremony and mentioned the prospect of these five vessels being provided.[74] Immediately after Prime Minister Kishida's visit to the Philippines in November 2023, the Philippine Department of Transportation revealed that the PCG would receive an additional five large-scale patrol vessels from Japan and embraced this advancement.[75] After the signing of the Exchange of Notes for the Maritime Safety Capability Improvement Project for the Philippine Coast Guard in May 2024, it was officially confirmed that Japan will provide the Philippines with the patrol vessels through yen loans.[76]

(4) Joint Exercises, Defense Exchanges, and Capacity-Building Assistance
Bilateral and multilateral joint exercises between Japan and the Philippines have become increasingly frequent, with defense exchanges also gaining momentum since the late 2010s.

Regarding Japan-Philippines naval relations directly relevant to the South China Sea issue,

[69] "Firipin e no Keikai Kansei Reda no Iten ni tsuite [The Transfer of the Air Surveillance Radar Systems to the Philippines]," Boeisho/Jieitai [Ministry of Defense/Japan Self-Defense Forces], November 2, 2023, https://www.mod.go.jp/j/press/news/2023/11/02d.html.

[70] "Seifu Anzen Hosho Noryoku Kyoka Shien (OSA: Official Security Assistance) [Official Security Assistance (OSA)]," Gaimusho [Ministry of Foreign Affairs], July 4, 2023, https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/fp/ipc/page4_005828.html.

[71] *Kokka Anzen Hosho Senryaku* [National Security Strategy of Japan] (Naikaku Kambo [Cabinet Secretariat of Japan], 2022), pp. 13, 16.

[72] "Hayashi Gaimu Daijin Kaiken Kiroku [Press Conference by Foreign Minister HAYASHI Yoshimasa]," Gaimusho [Ministry of Foreign Affairs], August 8, 2023, https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/press/kaiken/kaiken24_000199.html.

[73] "Firipin Kyowakoku ni Taisuru Engan Kanshi Reda Shisutemu Kyoyo ("Seifu Anzen Hosho Noryoku Kyoka Shien (OSA)") ni Kansuru Shokan no Shomei/Kokan [Signing and Exchange of Notes for Official Security Assistance (OSA) to the Republic of the Philippines]," Gaimusho [Ministry of Foreign Affairs], November 3, 2023, https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/press/release/press4_009835.html.

[74] "Hi ni Ogata Junshisen 5-seki Tsuika e: Chugoku Iatsu-ka, Nihon ga Kyoyo [Japan to Provide Five Additional Large-Scale Patrol Vessels to the Philippines amid Chinese Intimidation]," *47 NEWS*, October 19, 2023, https://www.47news.jp/10013920.html.

[75] "Japan to Fund 5 More Ships for PCG Use," The Department of Transportation, November 5, 2023, https://dotr.gov.ph/55-dotrnews/4908-japan-to-fund-5-more-ships-for-pcg-use.html.

[76] "Signing of the Exchange of Notes for the Maritime Safety Capability Improvement Project for the Philippine Coast Guard (Phase III)," Embassy of Japan in the Philippines, May 17, 2024, https://www.ph.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/11_000001_01483.html.

the JMSDF and the PN have conducted bilateral exercises, starting with their first joint exercise in the maritime area in May 2015.[77] It was also publicly announced for the first time that the JMSDF carried out training for anti-submarine operations in the South China Sea in September 2018.[78] This practice signaled Tokyo's intention to restrain Beijing while expressing support for Manila with respect to the South China Sea problem, a dispute to which the Philippine government is a party.[79]

From May to July 2017, the JMSDF destroyers JS *Izumo* and JS *Sazanami* were deployed to the South China Sea, the Indian Ocean, and other waters. When the destroyers made a port call at Subic in the Philippines on June 4 during this period, Philippine President Duterte boarded JS *Izumo* and the two countries' navies conducted goodwill exercises, which even featured flights by the TC-90s provided to the Philippines.[80] From August to October 2018, JMSDF vessels were sent to the South China Sea, the Indian Ocean, and other waters as part of the Indo Southeast Asia Deployment 2018 (ISEAD18) for the very first time. During ISEAD18, Duterte visited the destroyer JS *Kaga* when it docked at Subic as he had done in the previous year while joint naval exercises and other goodwill activities were being conducted.[81] JMSDF ships have continued to navigate the South China Sea and held joint exercises with the Philippines during the span of the Indo Southeast Asia Deployment (ISEAD), which was renamed the Indo-Pacific Deployment (IPD) in 2019.

As for the Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF), the first bilateral training on humanitarian

[77] "Dai-2-setsu: Kokusai Shakai no Kadai e no Torikumi [Chapter 2: Issues in the International Community]," in *Heisei 27-nen-ban Boei Hakusho* [Defense of Japan 2015], Boeisho/Jieitai [Ministry of Defense/Japan Self-Defense Forces], n.d., http://www.clearing.mod.go.jp/hakusho_data/2015/html/n3321000.html.

[78] "Taisensen Kunren no Jisshi ni tsuite [Conduct of Anti-submarine Warfare Training]," Kaijo Jieitai [Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force], September 17, 2018, https://www.mod.go.jp/msdf/release/201809/20180917-2.pdf.

[79] In July 2023, Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement in the name of the Minister for Foreign Affairs titled "Seven Years since the Issuance of the Arbitral Tribunal's Award as to the Disputes between the Republic of the Philippines and the People's Republic of China regarding the South China Sea." The statement noted that both the Philippines and China had expressed their respective positions regarding compliance with the arbitral award, while also stating: "Japan highly appreciates the Government of the Philippines for having consistently complied with the award, and shown its commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes in the South China Sea." "Minamishinakai ni Kansuru Hichu Chusai Handan Hasshutsu kara 7-nen wo Mukaete (Gaimu Daijin Danwa) [Seven Years since the Issuance of the Arbitral Tribunal's Award as to the Disputes between the Republic of the Philippines and the People's Republic of China regarding the South China Sea (Statement by Foreign Minister HAYASHI Yoshimasa)]," Gaimusho [Ministry of Foreign Affairs], July 12, 2023, https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/press/danwa/page1_001746.html. The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs disclosed concern regarding the situation surrounding the collision between the vessels of Philippine and Chinese authorities in the South China Sea in October 2023. The Japanese governmental body released a press statement, articulating, "As stated in the Japan-Philippines Joint Statement in February 2023, the Government of Japan concurs with the Philippines' long-standing objections to unlawful maritime claims, militarization, coercive activities and threat or use of force in the South China Sea," implying Tokyo's diplomatic support for the Philippines amid the latter's frictions with China. "Saikin no Minamishinakai ni Okeru Kincho no Takamari ni tsuite [Recent Surge in Tensions in the South China Sea]," Gaimusho [Ministry of Foreign Affairs], October 23, 2023, https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/press/release/press4_009817.html.

[80] "Goeikan *Izumo Sazanami* no Choki Kodo (2017-nen) [Long-term Activities of the Destroyers JS *Izumo* and JS *Sazanami* (2017)]," Kaijo Jieitai [Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force], n.d., https://www.mod.go.jp/msdf/operation/cooperate/izumo-sazanami/.

[81] "Heisei 30-nendo Indotaiheiyo Homen Haken Kunren Butai (ISEAD18) [Attendant Units for the Indo-Southeast Asia Deployment 2018 (ISEAD18)]," Kaijo Jieitai [Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force], n.d., https://www.mod.go.jp/msdf/operation/cooperate/kaga-inazuma-suzutsuki/.

assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) between the JASDF and the PAF was delivered at Clark Air Base in the Philippines in July 2021.[82] In December 2022, two F-15 fighter jets of the JASDF were dispatched to the Philippines for the first time as part of unit-to-unit exchanges, thereby activating exchanges between the two air forces.[83]

Multilateral joint exercises involving the JSDF, the AFP, and other military forces are also on the rise, and in particular, there have been numerous opportunities for the JSDF to participate in military exercises between the United States and the Philippines. The Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade that was newly established by the JGSDF in 2018 joined the U.S.-Philippines joint exercise "Kamandag" in October 2018 and operated the amphibious vehicle AAV-7 for the first time on overseas soil,[84] an example of the Japan-U.S.-Philippines exercises that have been conducted in Philippine territory and the South China Sea. With regard to capacity-building assistance, two JGSDF officers were dispatched to a medical program for the first time with the purpose of improving the medical capabilities of the AFP at a U.S.-Philippines joint exercise called "Balikatan" in May 2017.[85]

Multilateral joint exercises involving Japan, the United States, the Philippines, and others are also increasing. In May 2019, the navies of Japan, the United States, the Philippines, and India held a joint sail-through in the South China Sea and other waters.[86] In October 2022, South Korea's Marine Corps participated for the very first time in "Kamandag," which took the form of a joint exercise between Japan, the United States, South Korea, and the Philippines.[87] Concurrent with the first port call to Manila by the JMSDF destroyer JS *Izumo*, which was in transit as part of an IPD23 unit, it joined a joint exercise conducted with the U.S., Australian, and Philippine navies and the Royal Australian Air Force on August 24, 2023, in the airspace and waters surrounding Manila,[88] attesting to the fact that defense cooperation between Japan and the Philippines has developed beyond a bilateral format.

As demonstrated in this section, defense cooperation between Tokyo and Manila has grown

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[82] "Nichihi Jindo Shien/Saigai Kyuen Kyodo Kunren no Jisshi ni tsuite [Japan-Philippines Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR) Joint Exercise]," Koku Jieitai [Japan Air Self-Defense Force], July 8, 2021, https://www.mod.go.jp/asdf/news/release/2021/0708/.

[83] "Firipin Kugun to no Butaikan Koryu ni tsuite [Unit-to-Unit Exchange with the Philippine Air Force]," Koku Jieitai [Japan Air Self-Defense Force], December 8, 2022, https://www.mod.go.jp/asdf/news/release/2022/1208/.

[84] Gidget Fuentes, "Japanese Amphibious Soldiers Hit the Beach in the Philippines with U.S. Marines, 7th Fleet," *USNI News*, October 15, 2018, https://news.usni.org/2018/10/15/japanese-amphibious-soldiers-hit-beach-philippines-u-s-marines-7th-fleet. During Kamandag 18, one JGSDF member of the Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade was killed in a traffic accident, and one member of the Central Transportation Command was injured. "Kaigai Kunren ni Okeru Sharyo Jiko ni Tomonau Taiin no Shibo ni tsuite [Death of Personnel Following a Vehicle Accident during Overseas Training]," Rikujo Jieitai [Japan Ground Self-Defense Force], October 7, 2018, https://www.mod.go.jp/gsdf/news/press/2018/pdf/20181007.pdf.

[85] "Eisei 'Barikatan 2017' [Medical Program of 'Balikatan 2017']," Boeisho/Jieitai [Ministry of Defense/Japan Self-Defense Forces], n.d., https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/exchange/cap_build/2017/20170501_phl.html.

[86] "Nichibeiinhi Kyodo Junko Kunren no Jisshi ni tsuite [Regarding Japan-U.S.-India-Philippines Joint Sail-Through]," Kaijo Jieitai [Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force], May 9, 2019, https://www.mod.go.jp/msdf/release/201905/20190509.pdf.

[87] "U.S. Security Cooperation with the Philippines," U.S. Department of State, October 7, 2022, https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-the-philippines/.

[88] "Nichibeigohi Kyodo Kunren ni tsuite [Japan-US-Australia-Philippine Quadrilateral Exercise]," Kaijo Jieitai [Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force], August 25, 2023, https://www.mod.go.jp/msdf/release/202308/20230825_02.pdf.

increasingly comprehensive in scope, with this relationship currently being elevated to a whole new level.

4. The Emergence of a Quasi-Alliance between Japan and the Philippines: Prospects for the Future of Bilateral Relations

This article has targeted defense cooperation between Japan and the Philippines. Section 4 explains that a quasi-alliance is taking shape between the two countries, and this trajectory is anticipated to continue. Macro-level dynamics, consisting of the U.S.-China rivalry, the war in Ukraine, and the South China Sea dispute, will lead to deeper relations between Japan and the Philippines.

Victor D. Cha is renowned for his research on Cold War-era relations between Japan and South Korea, particularly his emphasis on the concept of "abandonment"[89] within alliance theory as a foundational element for the formation of quasi-alliances among states.[90] He claims that under circumstances in which countries A and B, who are both allied with country C, share the concern of being "abandoned" by C, a cooperative relationship can develop between A and B even if the level of threat from an adversarial third country is low. Amid concerns over a potential decline in engagement within their respective alliances with their shared ally C, A and B are likely to feel a heightened incentive to collaborate in the wake of the risk of their security environment deteriorating in C's absence. Clearly, if the fear of being "abandoned" by C and the threat posed by adversaries both escalate, the quasi-alliance between A and B will strengthen. Conversely, if the threat from adversaries and the risk of "abandonment" by C remain low, A and B will have limited motivation to cooperate. This theoretical account underpins the essence of Cha's alliance theory.[91]

Building on Cha's theoretical premise, a quasi-alliance can be understood as a de facto alliance between states with a shared ally that emerges when concerns about being "abandoned" by that ally intensify.[92] However, in light of the post-Cold War history of Japan-Australia and Japan-South Korea relations—both sharing the United States as a common ally and perceiving China and North Korea, respectively, as serious threats—it is also manifest that the anxiety of "abandonment" has not necessarily shaped these bilateral interactions.[93]

For this reason, this study defines a quasi-alliance as a "de facto alliance characterized by substantive and symbolic defense cooperation between nations that share a common ally and perceive common threats." In other words, rather than being driven by concerns of "abandonment" or "entrapment," a quasi-alliance is determined by a shared ally, mutual threat perception, and

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[89] The concern of "abandonment" refers to a state's fear that its ally may not fulfill its commitments during wartime, despite the existence of formal arrangements based on their alliance treaty. In contrast, the concept of "entrapment" refers to a nation's anxiety about being drawn into a war in which its ally is engaged, even though the party involved has no intention of becoming entangled. With regard to an explanation of these two concepts, see Tsuchiyama Jitsuo, *Anzen Hosho no Kokusai Seijigaku: Aseri to Ogori* [International Politics of Security: Anxiety and Hubris], 2nd ed. (Tokyo: Yuhikaku [Yuhikaku Publishing Co., Ltd.], 2014), pp. 295–299.

[90] The term "giji-domei" is used in the Japanese translation of Cha's work instead of "jun-domei." Yet, because recent translations in Japanese more frequently refer to "jun-domei" rather than "giji-domei," the author adopts the former in the Japanese edition of the article. Victor D. Cha, *Beinikkan Hanmoku wo Koeta Teikei* [Alignment despite Antagonism: The United States-Korea-Japan Security Triangle], trans. Kurata Hideya (Tokyo: Yuhikaku [Yuhikaku Publishing Co., Ltd.], 2003).

[91] Cha, *Beinikkan Hanmoku wo Koeta Teikei* (Alignment despite Antagonism: The United States-Korea-Japan Security Triangle), chap. 2.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Satake, *Nichigo no Anzen Hosho Kyoryoku* [Japan-Australia Security Cooperation], pp. 9–11.

close defense collaboration. Even without a formal alliance treaty, member states facing similar threats tend to prioritize defense-oriented foreign policies under the umbrella of their shared ally. The relationship between Japan and the Philippines exemplifies this type of quasi-alliance.

It has been pointed out that Japan has already created a quasi-alliance with Australia,[94] as well as with the United Kingdom,[95] and a comparable dynamic seems to be unfolding in its relationship with the Philippines.[96] The external environment in which Japan and the Philippines share a common ally (the United States) and are under pressure from the common threat of China, is a systemic factor that has prompted Tokyo and Manila to fortify their mutual partnerhip,[97] and it would not be an exaggeration to depict their bilateral relationship as one nearing a quasi-alliance.[98]

In the Philippines, high expectations exist for Japan, and the Marcos administration will persist in fostering enhanced cooperation between the two governments. During his visit to Japan in February 2023, President Marcos stated in an exclusive interview with Kyodo News that the signing of a Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) with Japan, which would allow the JSDF to partake in more joint exercises in the Philippines, "certainly deserves a good deal of thought."[99] Furthermore, during a visit by a Philippine delegation to Japan in April 2023, Philippine Senate President Juan Miguel Zubiri met with Moriyama Hiroshi, chairman of the Japan-Philippines Parliamentarians Friendship League (JPPFL), and expressed his willingness to expedite defense cooperation and conduct dialogues to contemplate a VFA or RAA as Tokyo sealed those deals with Canberra and London.[100] There are mixed feelings within the Philippines regarding an RAA with Japan,[101] for which an agreement had been reached to start negotiations during Prime Minister

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[94] Ibid.

[95] Philip Shetler-Jones, "UK-Japan Relations and the Indo-Pacific Tilt: The Cornerstone," *The RUSI Journal*, vol. 167 (2023), pp. 44–52.

[96] In Japan, there has been growing discourse in the media suggesting that Japan-Philippines relations are reaching a level that could be characterized as a quasi-alliance. See, for instance, "Nichihi, 'Jun-domei' e Ippo: Tai-chugoku de Kyodo Hocho [Japan and the Philippines Take a Step toward a 'Quasi-alliance': Partnering Up against China]," *Jiji Tsushin* [Jiji Press], November 4, 2023, https://www.jiji.com/jc/article?k=2023110300468&g=int.

[97] The Japan-Philippines Joint Statement issued in February 2023 remarked without naming any country that "the leaders expressed serious concerns about the situation in the East and South China Seas and strongly opposed the actions including force or coercion that may increase tensions," pointing to the shared recognition that both Japan and the Philippines are under threat from China in different waters. "Nichi-Firipin Kyodo Seimei [Japan-Philippines Joint Statement]," Gaimusho [Ministry of Foreign Affairs], February 9, 2023, https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/100457146.pdf.

[98] Xiang Haoyu of the China Institute of International Studies has mentioned that the Japanese government is moving toward the conclusion of an RAA with the Philippines while pointing out that Tokyo's similar agreements with the United Kingdom and Australia have the character of a "quasi-military alliance." 项昊宇 [Xiang Haoyu], "警惕日本进一步放宽武器出口 [Guarding against Japan's Further Relaxation of Arms Exports]," 环球网 [Huanqiu.com], November 13, 2023, https://opinion.huanqiu.com/article/4FKhEt2tlAQ. As can be seen, concerns about quasi-alliances between Japan and other countries are growing in China. For an example of an analysis of Japanese diplomacy related to quasi-alliances, see 吕耀东 [Lu Yaodong], "2020年日本外交：后安倍时期的承继与发展 [Japan's Diplomacy in 2020: Taking Over and Development in the Post-Abe Period]," in 日本研究报告（2021）：新冠疫情剧烈冲击下的日本 [Annual Report on Research of Japan (2021): Japan under the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic], ed. 杨伯江 [Yang Bojiang] (Beijing: 社会科学文献出版社 [Social Sciences Academic Press (China)], 2021), pp. 60–73.

[99] Maricar Cinco and Ken Sasaki, "Subic, Clark Bases not Included in Pact with U.S.: Philippine Pres.," *Kyodo News*, February 11, 2023, https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2023/02/8242fabf0841-subic-clark-bases-not-included-in-pact-with-us-philippine-pres.html.

[100] Wilnard Bacelonia, "Zubiri Urges Japanese Lawmakers to Pursue RAA, VFA with PH," *Philippine News Agency*, April 4, 2023, https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1198896.

[101] "A Quick Look at PH's Defense Cooperation Deal with Japan," *ABS-CBN*, November 5, 2023, https://news.

Kishida's visit to the Philippines. Nonetheless, opposition is unlikely to gain traction, given the increasing anticipation in the Philippines for enhanced collaboration with its strategic partner.

Japan-Philippines bilateral ties will be influenced by both mutual aspirations and global determinants, such as shifts in the international landscape and the changing dynamics of the Indo-Pacific regional order. Against the backdrop of intensifying Japan-China and U.S.-China rivalries and persistent tensions in the South China Sea, Japan is set to hasten its engagement with the Philippines. Hence, defense cooperation between the two countries is projected to advance at a steady pace, further solidifying the quasi-alliance and underscoring its increasing importance.

Conclusion

This inquiry scrutinized Japan's defense cooperation with the Philippines within the framework of the Japanese FOIP initiative, stressing that a quasi-alliance is in the process of inception between Tokyo and Manila, and that the bilateral pattern is expected to remain firm in the future.

This study holds academic significance as it offered an in-depth analysis of the recent bilateral relationship between Japan and the Philippines, a topic that has been underexplored in previous research. By specifically selecting defense cooperation between the two states, it demystified a critical facet of their partnership. Furthermore, the author provided the conceptual underpinning of a quasi-alliance, citing a theoretical framework to understand the evolving nature of Japan-Philippines relations. On the other hand, although this article has focused on the defense field, additional research should incorporate Japan-Philippines relations in diplomacy and other domains.

Japan's relations with the Philippines bear valuable implications for its defense policy, particularly in the context of regional security challenges and Tokyo's strategic posture.

As noted in the *Diplomatic Bluebook 2023*, "the security environment surrounding Japan is the most severe since the end of World War II,"[102] and the Japanese government finds itself in an increasingly tense situation. Under these severe circumstances, Japan is not only cementing the Japan-U.S. alliance by positioning strategic assets as the cornerstone of its external strategy but also forming quasi-alliances with Australia and the United Kingdom. A sturdy connection is arising between Japan, the United States, Australia, and India through the framework of the QUAD.[103] Moreover, Japan-South Korea relations have been on the mend since 2022, and the recovery of the bilateral relationship mirrors clear signs of the revitalization of Japan-South Korea and Japan-U.S.-South Korea cooperation.[104]

Notwithstanding these positive undercurrents, Japan cannot afford to adopt a passive role in its relationship with the Philippines. By taking a leading position—diligently supporting the

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abs-cbn.com/spotlight/11/05/23/a-quick-look-at-phs-defense-cooperation-deal-with-japan.

[102] *Gaiko Seisho 2023* [Diplomatic Bluebook 2023] (Gaimusho [Ministry of Foreign Affairs], 2023), p. 5.

[103] Kikuchi Tsutomu, "Quad: Indotaiheiyo no Rijonaru Akitekucha no Kakushin [Quad: Innovation of the Indo-Pacific Regional Architecture]," *Aoyama Kokusai Seikei Ronshu* [The Aoyama Journal of International Politics, Economics and Communication], no. 108 (2022), pp. 1–32.

[104] Sakata Yasuyo, "Indotaiheiyo Jidai no Nichibeikan Anzen Hosho Kyoryoku: Punompen 'Sankakoku Patonashippu' Seimei to Kongo no Kadai [Japan-U.S.-South Korea Security Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Era: The Phnom Penh 'Tripartite Partnership' Statement and Future Challenges]," in *"Taikokukan Kyoso no Jidai" no Chosen Hanto to Chitsujo no Yukue* [The Korean Peninsula and the Future of the Peninsular Order in an "Era of Great Power Competition"] (Tokyo: Nihon Kokusai Mondai Kenkyusho [The Japan Institute of International Affairs], 2023), pp. 155–166.

Philippines and fostering deeper cooperation—Japan is required to amplify the bilateral ties and achieve its broader regional security goals.[105]

The weight of Japan's quasi-alliance with the Philippines lies in its potential to operate as a model for how Japan can manage relations with nations that possess inadequate self-defense capabilities in the future. This reciprocal nexus between Tokyo and Manila imparts lessons for the Japanese government.[106] Japan's support for the AFP through the transfer of defense equipment and military training meets pressing security requirements while granting Japan crucial experience that informs future defense collaborations. The establishment of formal agreements such as an ACSA, VFA, or General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA)[107] would further institutionalize and elevate bilateral defense ties, enhancing regional stability and Japan's role as a key security partner in the Indo-Pacific. These binational arrangements would allow the JSDF to play a more prominent role in the region, facilitating patrols, logistical exchanges, and intelligence sharing. By viewing these initiatives as rare and valuable opportunities, the JSDF can gain crucial knowledge and insight in overseas operations, furthering Japan's strategic engagement in the South China Sea and the Indo-Pacific region.

Japan should therefore refine its strategy to fostering defense collaborations with other states amidst the mounting unpredictability of the international and Indo-Pacific regional orders by managing its successful defense cooperation with the Philippines.

(Toyo University)

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[105] Japan should avoid exhibiting a condescending attitude toward the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries. It is desirable for Japan to stand alongside its counterparts and carefully calibrate how to cooperate with them amid the ongoing U.S.-China rivalry. In this regard, see Kiba Saya, "Tonan Ajia ni Okeru Taibei, Taichu, Tainichi Yoron Chosa no Kadai to Nihon Gaiko e no Shisa: 'Sentaku wo Semaru' kara 'Tomo ni Sentakushi wo Kangaeru' Kankei e [Public Acknowledgment of Security Assistance from the US, the PRC, and Japan: A Comparative Study of Southeast Asia]," *Shakai Kagaku* [Social Sciences], vol. 52, no. 4 (2023), pp. 401–422.

[106] Alliances are more likely to form when there is an asymmetry in national power between two aligned members, and such an asymmetric pact tends to be more enduring than a symmetrical one. James D. Morrow, "Alliances and Asymmetry: An Alternative to the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances," *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 35, no. 4 (1991), pp. 904–933. From this theoretical perspective, it can be suggested that Japan-Philippines relations will advance in the future.

[107] In November 2024, the United States and the Philippines formally signed a GSOMIA. "Joint Press Release on the Visit of U.S. Secretary of Defense Austin to the Philippines," U.S. Department of Defense, November 19, 2024, https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3970660/joint-press-release-on-the-visit-of-us-secretary-of-defense-austin-to-the-phili/. It is thus not impossible that a GSOMIA will be concluded between Japan and the Philippines in the near future.

Mission Command in Networked Forces: Adoption of Mission Command in Recent U.S. Navy and Air Force Doctrines and Operational Concepts[*]

KIKUCHI Shigeo[**]

Abstract

In the recent years, the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Air Force formally adopted mission command in their respective doctrine. It signified departure for both services, which allegedly centralized command and control (C2) to an excessive degree. Shifting to a more decentralized C2 was in part response to the growing threat of China, and, to a lesser degree, of Russia. The militaries of both countries are widely expected to attack and disrupt C2 of U.S. forces in an event of an armed conflict with the United States, and decentralizing C2 would make the U.S. military less likely to be paralyzed under such attacks. However, there are elements in the operational concepts being developed by each of the services that require centralization of C2. Besides, some advocate that the concept of mission command be expanded to incorporate "horizontal" coordination and synchronization of actions of participating units among commanders involved, based on shared understanding and higher commander's intent.

Introduction: Centralization and Decentralization in Military Command and Control

In military operations, there is no more important function than "command and control," defined by the U.S. Department of Defense as "The exercise of authority and direction by a properly designated commander over assigned and attached forces in the accomplishment of the mission."[1] Without C2, organized action by military forces would be impossible, as "military units degenerate into mobs, and the subordination of military force to policy is replaced by random violence."[2]

Milan Vego explains that there are two approaches to C2: centralization and decentralization. In centralized C2, authority is concentrated in a single senior commander or headquarters. Subordinate units are required to strictly follow detailed instructions and plans concerning their individual actions, greatly limiting the room for subordinate commanders to exercise independent judgment.[3] On the other hand, in decentralized C2, orders are concise, there is no need to wait for instructions or to report frequently, and subordinate commanders are expected to respond to

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[1] Joint Chiefs of Staff, *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC, November 2021), s.v. "command and control."

[2] U.S. Marine Corps, *MCDP 6 Command and Control* (Washington, DC, 2018), p. 1-3.

[3] Milan Vego, *General Naval Tactics: Theory and Practice* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2020), pp. 148–149.

constantly changing situations based on a shared understanding of the mission to be achieved.[4]

According to Martin van Creveld, centralization involves senior commanders reducing uncertainty for themselves by taking decision-making authority away from subordinate commanders and making decisions that would typically be left to the latter commanders. However, this leads to "less certainty at the bottom." Conversely, decentralization allows subordinate commanders to make decisions, but this is only possible "thanks to a readiness at higher headquarters to accept more uncertainty." In other words, there is an inherent trade-off between centralization and decentralization in C2.[5]

Given this tension between centralization and decentralization in military C2, factors like technological advancements, changes in warfare conditions, and organizational culture of forces can affect the degree of centralization or decentralization. Vego notes that "[b]oth centralized and decentralized C2 have some advantages and some disadvantages," and that since "[n]either method is suitable for all situations," the method to be primarily used "depends on the mission and the situation."[6]

The decentralized C2 approach has been conceptualized as "mission command." In the 1980s, the U.S. Army's AirLand Battle (ALB) doctrine required mission command to respond to dynamically changing battlefield situations.[7] In addition, the U.S. Marine Corps, in the post-Vietnam War reforms, adopted the concept of maneuver warfare as the Marines' "warfighting philosophy" and adopted mission command as part of this approach[8] (hereafter, unless otherwise specified, references to the Department of Defense, military services, or agencies indicate those of the United States). Furthermore, in the 2000s, the counterinsurgency (COIN) operations conducted in Iraq and Afghanistan led to a renewed recognition of the importance of mission command, especially within the Army. As Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates noted, "…as in any counterinsurgency, so much of the decisive edge is provided by the initiative and the judgment of junior officers."[9]

The term "mission command" has primarily been used in relation to ground forces such as the Army and Marine Corps. This is unsurprising, given that the concept originated with *Auftragstaktik* (often translated as "mission tactics") in the Prussian and German Armies.[10] Considering this background, it is noteworthy that since the 2010s, there has been emerging interest

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4   Ibid., pp. 149–150.

5   Martin van Creveld, *Command in War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 270, 274.

6   Vego, *General Naval Tactics*, p. 159.

7   Clinton J. Ancker, III, "The Evolution of Mission Command in U.S. Army Doctrine, 1905 to the Present," *Military Review*, 93, no. 2 (March/April 2013), pp. 47, 48; and Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 100-5 Operations* (Washington, DC, 1982), pp. 7-2, 7-3.

8   Fidelion Damian, "The Road to FMFM 1: The United States Marine Corps and Maneuver Warfare Doctrine, 1979-1989" (master's thesis, Kansas State University, 2008), p. 29; Daniel Ford, *A Vision So Noble: John Boyd, the OODA Loop, and America's War on Terror* (Durham, NH: Warbird Books, 2010), pp. 36–38; Frans P.B. Osinga, *Science, Strategy and War: The Strategic Theory of John Boyd* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 48–49; John R. Boyd, *A Discourse on Winning and Losing*, ed. and comp. Grant T. Hammond (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 2018), p. 94; Michael D. Wyly, "Lecture II: Mission Tactics," in William S. Lind, *Maneuver Warfare Handbook* (Boulder, CO: Praeger, 1985), pp. 91–97; and Kevin R. Clover, "Maneuver Warfare: Where Are We Now?" *Marine Corps Gazette,* vol. 72, no. 2 (February 1988), p. 55.

9   Robert M. Gates, "Reflection on Leadership," *Parameters*, vol. 38, no. 2 (Spring 2008), p. 13.

10 Donald Vandergriff, *Adopting Mission Command: Developing Leaders for a Superior Command Culture* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2019), pp. 25–29.

within the Navy and Air Force communities in mission command, leading to its adoption within each service's doctrine.[11] In the Navy and Air Force, advances in information and communication technology directly connected aircraft, vessel, and other platforms to remote C2 nodes with target information and orders transmitted back and forth over networks. For these long-range capabilities to demonstrate effective combat power, it is necessary to synchronize the actions of platforms that belong to different units and often launch from geographically distant bases. This includes allocating and coordinating attack targets among different assets, such as between Air Force attack aircraft and Navy Aegis ships equipped with Tomahawk missiles. Another example would be a bomber departing from the Continental United States (CONUS) and flying to the Persian Gulf, receiving fuel from an aerial refueling tanker of the Air Mobility Command headquartered in Illinois and operating under the tactical control of an airborne warning and control system (AWACS) aircraft monitoring Middle Eastern airspace, and then delivering air strikes against extremist armed insurgents somewhere in the Middle East. Particularly in air operations, aircraft do not act alone and depend on support from various platforms to perform their missions.[12] This has required central coordination and driven extensive centralization of C2 around theater-level commanders, enabled by the overall networking of airpower. Given these points, it should be understood that the need for mission command in the Navy and Air Force today is driven by factors opposite to those that previously promoted centralization.

This paper aims to elucidate two points in connection with the Navy and Air Force's adoption of mission command. The first point examines why the Navy and Air Force came to adopt mission command after 2010. The second point is that even if the Navy and Air Force have adopted mission command, given Vego's observation that the C2 method should be chosen based on "the mission and the situation," it should be understood that there are still situations that necessitate overall coherence and centralization as a means to achieve it. Therefore, the second point explores what those situations entail.

To clarify these points, this paper has an analysis process as follows. Section 1 provides an overview of mission command, while Sections 2 and 3 explore the factors and backgrounds that led the Air Force and Navy, which had been progressing toward centralized C2, to emphasize mission command from the 2010s onward. This analysis focuses on the concepts of distributed operations that both services have been advancing in light of the possibility of military conflict with the major powers of China and Russia and the vulnerabilities[13] of U.S. forces in such scenarios, which the

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11   This paper uses the term "doctrine" as well as the similar term "concept" with relation to methods of warfare. However, doctrine refers to "authoritative guidance" that has already been established within the military, and which is expected to be followed for operations under normal circumstances, unless there is an exceptional situation. On the other hand, a concept provides solutions to pressing issues that existing doctrines or capabilities cannot adequately address. Concepts undergo subsequent validation processes to assess their effectiveness, including field experiments with units. The documents from various militaries referenced in this paper include those at both the concept and doctrine stages. The writing reflects these distinctions as appropriate to their stage, but they are treated as common in the sense that they both describe ways of conducting warfare. See Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JP 1 Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States, Incorporating Change 1 12 July 2017* (Washington, DC, 2017), pp. VI-3, VI-9–VI-10.

12   Frederick Coleman, "The Limited Utility of Mission Type Orders for ACE...and a Better Way to Execute Mission Command," *Mitchell Forum*, no. 49 (January 2023), p. 49.

13   For details on how the U.S. Department of Defense came to view China and Russia as security threats and began anticipating armed conflicts with them, see Kikuchi Shigeo, *Beikokubo Keikaku ni Okeru "Pacing Threat" Toshite no Chugoku* [China as the "Pacing Threat" in U.S. Defense Planning], *NIDS Commentary*, no.

Department of Defense has particularly recognized since anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) threats were first referenced in the Quadrennial Defense Review Report of February 2010 (2010 QDR). Section 4 examines how both the Air Force and the Navy, while aiming to implement mission command, also require elements that ensure overall coherence. In particular, the section points out that the integration of fires and the coordination and synchronization of operations, which each service's emerging operational concepts are premised on, could drive centralization. Furthermore, it suggests that in order to meet the need for massed fires under C2 disruptions anticipated in armed conflicts with China and Russia, mission command, which has been conceptualized with a focus on the vertical hierarchy between commanders and subordinate commanders through delegation and decentralization, may evolve to include horizontal, independent cooperation among units participating in operations. Through these considerations, this paper seeks to develop a more nuanced understanding of mission command that better aligns with 21st century military operations.

1. What is "Mission Command"?

"Mission command" is generally defined along the lines of an "approach to command and control that empowers subordinate decision making and decentralized execution appropriate to the situation."[14] The premise for requiring this type of decentralized C2 is the recognition that "war is inherently chaotic and uncertain" (Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-0, "Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces"). No matter how meticulously a plan is prepared, "no plan can account for every possibility," necessitating sudden changes during execution. In addition, in combat, subordinate commanders are often in a better position to understand the situation, respond to threats, and seize fleeting opportunities. For this reason, it is essential not to impose "perfect order" on them. In other words, they must be granted the authority to exercise "ingenuity, innovation, and decision making to achieve the commander's intent when conditions change or current orders are no longer relevant."[15]

In mission command, orders are issued as "mission orders" or "mission-type orders." These orders present the subordinate commanders with the "mission" itself, meaning the results to be achieved, without prescribing the method for achieving the mission. "How a task is to be accomplished" is considered the "province of the subordinate" (ADP 6-0),[16] and thus orders are given without dictating how subordinate commanders should execute tasks, ensuring that they have maximum freedom of action.[17]

The most important element of orders to subordinate commanders is the "commander's intent," which is a "clear and concise expression of the purpose of the operation and the desired

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191 (September 2, 2021), pp. 1–5.

[14] Department of the Army, *ADP 6-0 Mission Command: Command and Control of the Army Forces* (Washington, DC, 2019), p. 1-3.

[15] Ibid., pp. 1-3, 1-4, 1-5.

[16] Ibid., p. 1-11.

[17] Jörg Muth, *Command Culture: Officer Education in the U.S. Army and the German Armed Forces, 1901–1940, and the Consequences for World War II* (Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 2011), pp. 173–174; Robert M. Citino, *The Path to Blitzkrieg: Doctrine and Training in the German Army, 1920–39* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole, 1999), p. 13; and Antulio J. Echevarria II, *After Clausewitz: German Military Thinkers before the Great War* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000), p. 39.

military end state." The primary significance of the commander's intent lies in showing the "why" behind the mission. In other words, it clarifies the need for executing the operation, what is expected of the subordinates, why the mission must be undertaken, and the limits within which the subordinates may act. If they understand the commander's intent (typically, it is necessary to understand the intent of commanders two echelons above), subordinate commanders can make decisions appropriate to the situation on the front based on the commander's intent, even if circumstances change or if communication is disrupted and they cannot continuously seek guidance from higher command. It is believed that mission command cannot function at all without the commander's intent; therefore, it is essential that this intent is personally written by the commanders themselves, not by their staff.[18]

As is clear from the explanation thus far, mission command encourages the initiative of subordinate commanders. At the same time, it equally stresses pursuing "unity of effort," ensuring that each unit involved in an operation acts toward a common objective. The emphasis on the abovementioned commander's intent serves this function as it should "pull the various separate actions of the force together, establishing an underlying purpose and focus."[19] Mission command also requires "shared understanding" between the commander and subordinate commanders regarding the operational environment, objectives, and tasks, as this forms "the basis for unity of effort and subordinates' initiative."[20] Additionally, for this same reason, what is pursued in mission command is not merely initiative, but "*disciplined* initiative" (emphasis added) exercised by subordinate commanders "within the constraints of the commander's intent to achieve the desired end state."[21]

Thus, mission command encompasses the factors of decentralization and unity of effort. To effectively implement mission command, which simultaneously seeks decentralization and unity of effort, "mutual trust" between commanders and subordinate commanders is essential. Commanders must trust the abilities and judgment of their subordinates to delegate decision-making. Conversely, subordinate commanders can only exercise initiative when they are confident that their commander trusts them and will accept their decisions. This mutual trust can only be established if both the commanders and subordinate commanders possess "competence."[22]

There is an interrelationship among the factors discussed above. When trust and shared understanding between higher and lower echelons are established, commanders can permit their subordinate commanders discretion based on these relationships; thus, the orders issued by commanders will be closer to mission orders that concisely indicate what needs to be achieved. Conversely, if there is no trust and shared understanding, commanders may find it difficult to grant discretion to their subordinate commanders, leading to a tendency for micromanagement, where orders constrain the actions of subordinate units by even specifying methods of mission accomplishment in detail.[23] According to Vego, "[g]enerally speaking, the less the need for the subordinate commanders to exercise initiative, the greater the need for detailed orders and the less

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18 Department of the Army, *ADP 6-0*, pp. 1-5, 1-9–1-10; and U.S. Marine Corps, *MCDP 6*, p. 3-9.
19 U.S. Marine Corps, *MCDP 6*, p. 3-9.
20 Department of the Army, *ADP 6-0*, p. 1-8.
21 Ibid., pp. 1-11–1-12.
22 Ibid., p. 1-7.
23 Ibid., p. 1-6.

need for communicating the commander's intent."[24] In other words, there is a trade-off between the level of detail in orders and the discretion permitted to subordinate commanders. Furthermore, relevant to the theme of this paper, advancements in communications technology have made micromanagement more feasible.[25] In addition, it is frequently pointed out that mission command cannot function without overall organizational "cohesion." This is because the abovementioned mutual trust is formed only through repeated close interactions.[26] From this perspective, the difference in the level of cohesion is what explains a point often noted about the Marine Corps and the Army, namely that the Marine Corps, being smaller in scale and with all members regarded as "Marines," regardless of their branch of service or specialties, practices mission command more effectively than the Army, which is the largest among the U.S. military services and is composed of highly distinct communities organized along branches of service.

2. U.S. Air Force: From "Centralized Control" to "Distributed Control"

(1) "Centralized Control and Decentralized Execution" (CCDE) as a "Fundamental Organizing Principle" of Airpower

The Air Force is considered to have the most centralized C2 within the U.S. military. This is based on the idea that to operate airpower effectively and efficiently, a single commander should control the entire air force within a theater of operations.[27] This concept originated in part from what is considered "one of the greatest defeats in our history," the Battle of Kasserine Pass, that took place in central-western Tunisia in February 1943 during World War II. One reason articulated at the time for this defeat was that each air unit was placed under the control of the ground commander it supported, resulting in overall ineffective utilization of airpower.[28] The centralization of C2 over airpower was quickly incorporated into the U.S. Army Air Forces' doctrine in July 1943.[29] However, in terms of actual operations, "During the initial engagements of World War II and through the entire Vietnam conflict, command of US airpower was fragmented and controlled by competing commanders."[30] This issue of who would command which air assets, and in what manner, remained a "vexing control issue" for the U.S. Air Force.[31] The issue was settled following the Gulf War in 1991, when air operations, including all military aircraft and Tomahawk cruise missiles, were placed under the commander of the U.S. Central Command Air Forces.[32]

24 Vego, *General Naval Tactics*, p. 159.

25 Ibid., p. 149.

26 Joe Labarbera, "The Sinews of Leadership: Mission Command Requires a Culture of Cohesion," in *Mission Command: The Who, What, Where, When and Why an Anthology*, ed. Donald Vandergriff and Stephen Webber (self-pub., 2017), pp. 3–5.

27 Clint Hinote, *Centralized Control and Decentralized Execution: A Catchphrase in Crisis?* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air Force Research Institute, 2009), p. 10.

28 Ibid., pp. 7, 8; Rick Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn: The War in North Africa, 1942–1943* (New York: Owl Books, 2002), p. 390; and Leland Kinsey Cowie II, "The Ghosts of Kasserine Pass: Maximizing the Effectiveness of Airpower," *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 92 (1st quarter 2019), pp. 75–77.

29 War Department, *FM 100-20 Command and Employment of Air Power* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1944), pp. 1, 2.

30 U.S. Air Force, *AFDD 1 Air Force Basic Doctrine* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Headquarters Air Force Doctrine Center, 1997), p. 23.

31 *AFMAN 1-1, Basic Aerospace Doctrine of the United States Air Force*, quoted in Hinote, *Centralized Control*, p. 10.

32 U.S. Air Force, *AFDD 1*, p. 23.

As this background shows, the centralization of C2 over airpower has two aspects. The first is the independence of airpower from ground commanders, with airpower commanded by an Air Force officer, not the ground commander. The second aspect is "economic," where the theater-level commander optimally allocates overall airpower across the theater to respond to the fact that "the demand for airpower is high in modern warfare, and the supply is relatively low."[33] Furthermore, beyond the issue of centralizing command of air operations, this also includes the issue of micromanagement, meaning how much control a theater-level commander should exert over the actions of individual assets.

"Centralized control and decentralized execution" (CCDE) is a concise expression of the centralization of air operations as a "fundamental organizing principle" of air force doctrine.[34] CCDE's "centralized control" refers to "placing within one commander the responsibility and authority for planning, directing, and coordinating a military operation or group/category of operations."[35] According to the 2015 edition of the "Air Force Doctrine Volume 1, Air Force Basic Doctrine" (AFDD 1), airpower is a "powerful, highly desired yet limited force," and to "balance and prioritize the use," it is essential not to fragment airpower but to place control of all air power deployed in the theater under a "single Airman who maintains [a] broad, strategic perspective."[36] This approach enables timely deployment of forces to where they are needed, wherein lies "centrally controlled flexibility."[37] This is the essence of "centralized control."

Conversely, the other principle within CCDE, "decentralized execution," refers to "delegation of execution authority to subordinate commanders."[38] The 2015 edition of AFDD 1 explains that in order to ensure the "flexibility to take advantage of tactical opportunities and to effectively respond to shifting local circumstances," "on-scene decisions" should be made by "front-line decision makers" such as strike package leaders, air battle managers, and forward air controllers.[39]

Here, "single Airman" typically refers to the joint force air component commander (JFACC), who is responsible for centralized command of air operations within a joint force. In cases involving allied or coalition forces, the JFACC becomes the combined force air component commander (CFACC). The JFACC exercises C2 of air operations through the air operations center (AOC) established directly under his or her command.[40] The AOC prepares the air tasking order

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[33] Hinote, *Centralized Control*, p. 13.

[34] U.S. Air Force, *Basic Doctrine*, vol. 1 (Maxwell AFB, AL: LeMay Center, 2015), "Centralized Control and Decentralized Execution."

[35] Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JP 3-30 Joint Air Operations* (Washington, DC, 2021), p. GL-6.

[36] U.S. Air Force, *Basic Doctrine*.

[37] Jeffrey W. Donnithorne, *Four Guardians: A Principled Agent View of American Civil-Military Relations* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018), p. 117.

[38] Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JP 3-30*, p. GL-6.

[39] U.S. Air Force, *Basic Doctrine*.

[40] The AOC serves as the "senior agency" of the JFACC, and "provides command and control of Air Force air and space operations and coordinates with other components and Services." A regional AOC is typically established at the theater level, including three for the Indo-Pacific Command, one for the European and Africa Commands, one for the Central Command, and one for the Northern Command. In addition, functional AOCs are established for specific commands such as the Air Mobility Command and Air Force Global Strike Command. Furthermore, the three AOCs established within the Indo-Pacific Command are located to cover operations in the vicinity of Alaska, the U.S. Forces Korea, and the rest of the Indo-Pacific Command's area of responsibility. See U.S. Air Force, *AFDP 3-30 Command and Control* (Maxwell AFB, AL: LeMay Center, 2020), pp. 48–51; Joint Chiefs of Staff, *DOD Dictionary*, s.v. "air operations center"; and "USAF Major

(ATO), a detailed document tasking "projected sorties, capabilities, and/or forces to targets and specific missions," which it disseminates to each unit.[41] In this way, the JFACC and AOC exert comprehensive control over airpower across an entire theater through the ATO.

(2) Proposed Changes to the CCDE Principles and Mission Command

Although CCDE encompasses both centralized and decentralized aspects, the trend toward centralization has intensified with the networking of U.S. air operations. In a 2009 study, Clint Hinote noted that with ICT advances since the 1990s, "it became possible—even easy—for the JFACC, a commander at the operational level of war, to become personally involved in tactical execution, even to the point of directing the actions of individual aircraft." He also noted that this became a reality with Operation Deliberate Force in 1995, an aerial bombing campaign conducted against targets in Bosnia and Herzegovina.[42]

Centralization around the JFACC and AOC also brings vulnerabilities. This is because if there was an attack on the AOC, which is a fixed, ground-based facility, or if communication between the JFACC/AOC and individual units was disrupted, it could paralyze the entire air force under its command. In a 2014 paper, retired U.S. Air Force Lieutenant General David A. Deptula of the Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies, an affiliate of the then-Air Force Association, pointed out that the AOC, which serves as "most senior organizational element" of the theater air control system (TACS) that is in charge of "translating the combatant commander's air strategy into executable plans," is an "extremely lucrative target" for adversaries' long-range missiles.[43] Similarly, Gene Kamena of the U.S. Air Force's Air War College pointed out that the "[c]urrent Air Force's C2 processes and structures are centralized, rigid, and vulnerable," warning, "If the AOC is disrupted or destroyed, [the Air Force's] operations become hindered and desynchronized."[44]

In this context, there have been calls from within the Air Force for changes to centralization of C2 in the Air Force, based on the possibility of disruptions to U.S. military C2 in armed conflicts with China or Russia. In a 2014 co-authored paper, Michael Hostage III, commander of the Air Combat Command (ACC) noted that CCDE is "incomplete when applied to modern contested and denied operations."[45] Hostage explained that CCDE's "insufficiency" had not been evidenced in past military operations, including those in Iraq and Afghanistan, because there had been no interference with the U.S. military's C2, communications, datalinks, and navigation systems, which underpin CCDE. However, he pointed out that "in antiaccess/area-denial (A2/AD) environments, the resilience of our networks, datalinks, and communications will almost certainly be contested."[46] Thus, Hostage proposed replacing CCDE with "centralized command, distributed

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Commands and Air National Guard," *Air & Space Forces Magazine*, vol. 106, no. 7 (June/July 2023), pp. 77, 83, 84.

[41] Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JP 3-30*, p. GL-6.

[42] Hinote, *Centralized Control*, p. 11.

[43] David A. Deptula, "A New Era for Command and Control of Aerospace Operations," *Air & Space Power Journal*, vol. 28, no. 4 (July/August 2014), p. 7.

[44] Gene Kamena, "Before Mission Command," *Wild Blue Yonder,* April 20, 2023, https://www.airuniversity. af.edu/Wild-Blue-Yonder/Articles/Article-Display/Article/3368347/before-mission-command/.

[45] The terms "contested and denied" or simply "contested" refer to situations in which U.S. forces are subject to attacks from adversary nations, thereby constraining their operations. These terms are often used as substitutes for the phrase "A2/AD environment."

[46] Gilmary Michael Hostage III and Larry R. Broadwell Jr., "Resilient Command and Control: The Need for

control, and decentralized execution" (CC-DC-DE).[47] CC-DC-DE is characterized by its inclusion of "distributed control," which enables "subordinate commanders, organizations, operations centers, and battle management command and control (BMC2) platforms" to control air operations in the event of communications disruption between the JFACC/AOC and subordinate units.[48]

Hostage's thinking was first reflected in Air Force doctrine documents in 2020. In March 2020, the Air Force issued AFDN 1-20: "USAF Role in Joint All-Domain Operations" as an Air Force response to the Joint All Domain Operations (JADO), sponsored by the Joint Staff. This document stated that there will be no "guarantee [of] continual reachback [Note: Accessing information residing in higher headquarters or in CONUS by lower-echelon, frontline units] in a contested environment," and that in the future, "JADO [will] require greater decentralized execution, a higher degree of delegated authority, and less dependence on central planning and direction of missions."[49] Additionally, AFDN 1-20 explained the need for mission command, in which commanders clearly convey their intent so that subordinate commanders are empowered to act on that intent without further guidance.[50]

Table. Centralized command, distributed control, and decentralized execution (CC-DC-DE) principles defined in the 2021 edition of AFDP 1: "The Air Force"

Centralized command	Centralized command gives the commander (usually the JFACC) the <u>responsibility</u> and <u>authority</u> for planning, directing and coordinating a military operation using the C2 philosophy of mission command. It empowers the air component commander to respond to changes in the environment and enables priority and balance while still allowing subordinate echelons to exercise initiative. It preserves flexibility and versatility at the <u>operational level</u>.
Distributed control	Distributed control enables commanders (usually the JFACC) to <u>delegate planning and coordination activities to dispersed locations or subordinate echelons</u> in order to achieve an effective span of control. It allows subordinate commanders to respond to changes in the operational environment and take advantage of fleeting opportunities based on the clearly communicated commander's intent. Commanders should empower subordinates at the lowest capable level through <u>mission-type orders (MTOs)</u>, and with command by negation.
Decentralized execution	Decentralized execution is the delegation of authority to achieve effective span of control and foster disciplined initiative at the <u>tactical level</u>. It allows subordinates to exploit fleeting opportunities in dynamic situations. To achieve decentralized execution, the JFACC and subordinate echelons use <u>MTOs</u> with clearly communicated <u>commander's intent</u> to empower <u>front-line decision makers</u> (e.g., strike package leaders, air battle managers, forward air controllers) to make effective on-scene decisions.

(Source) U.S. Air Force, *AFDP 1 The Air Force* (Maxwell AFB, AL: LeMay Center, 2021), pp. 13, 14.

Distributed Control," *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 74 (3rd Quarterly, 2014), p. 38.
47 Ibid.
48 Hostage and others identify E-2 airborne early warning aircraft, E-3 AWACS aircraft, and E-8 JSTARS as BMC2 platforms that assume control activities. Ibid., pp. 38, 39.
49 U.S. Air Force, *AFDN 1-20 USAF Role in Joint All-Domain Operations* (Maxwell AFB, AL: LeMay Center, 2020), p. 5.
50 Ibid., p. 6.

Furthermore, in April 2021 during the revision of the capstone doctrine AFDP 1: "The Air Force,"[51] the U.S. Air Force "formally [established] mission command as the philosophy for the command & control of airpower"[52] and adopted the CC-DC-DE framework to embody it (see the table for more on CC-DC-DE). For this reason, the 2021 revision is considered "the most sweeping change of Air Force basic doctrine in the service's history."[53] Notably, AFDP 1 positioned mission command as the first "philosophy for the C2 of airpower" and positioned CC-DC-DE, which was proposed by Hostage in 2014, as an embodiment of mission command.[54]

The primary feature of CC-DC-DE is the replacement of "centralized control" with "distributed control." Here, mission command is realized by delegating the "planning and coordination activities" previously handled by the AOC at the theater level to "dispersed locations or subordinate echelons." In this delegation, the JFACC and AOC issue mission-type orders to "distributed locations or subordinate echelons,"[55] allowing "subordinate commanders to respond to changes in the operational environment and take advantage of fleeting opportunities" based on the commander's intent expressed in the orders.[56] To mitigate the vulnerability of the AOC, there is also an approach being explored to physically distribute its functions.[57] However, the purpose of distributed control is to ensure that Air Force units can continue overall operations even if communication between the AOC and subordinate units is disrupted. In the Air Force, distributed control is regarded as a way to concretize the decentralization aspect of mission command by delegating control of air operations from the AOC to C2 nodes below it.[58]

Also in relation to "distributed control" as an embodiment of mission command, under CC-DC-DE, orders are issued as mission-type orders when appropriate. Traditionally, the ATO created by the AOC has been a detailed document that tasks "projected sorties, capabilities, and/or forces to targets and specific missions." However, as noted by Kamena above, the ATO "lacks an emphasis on the Commander's Intent" and "is not a Mission-Type Order because it does not provide sufficient guidance if or when the situation changes."[59] To repeat Vego's point mentioned

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[51] A "capstone doctrine" is a core doctrinal document that outlines the fundamental principles of each service's operations, and branch-specific doctrinal documents are developed from it. Examples of capstone doctrines include the Air Force's former Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 1 and current Air Force Doctrine Publication (AFDP) 1, the Navy's Navy Doctrine Publication (NDP) 1, the Marine Corps' Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MDCP) 1, and the Army's Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0.

[52] CQ Brown (@GenCQBrownJr), "The New Air Force Doctrine Publication (AFDP) -1 Formally Establishes Mission Command as the Philosophy for the Command & Control of Airpower," Twitter, April 22, 2021, https://twitter.com/gencqbrownjr/status/1385264895348903941.

[53] Air University Public Affairs, "Air Force Rewrites Basic Doctrine, Focuses on Mission Command, Airpower Evolution," April 22, 2021, https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2581921/air-force-rewrites-basic-doctrine-focuses-on-mission-command-airpower-evolution/.

[54] U.S. Air Force, *AFDP 1 Air Force* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Curtis E. LeMay Center, 2021), p. 13.

[55] Air University, "Visualizing ACE," YouTube video, 5:16, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LKGeCpd0OjM&t=72s.

[56] U.S. Air Force, *AFDP 1*, p. 13.

[57] Shaun Waterman, "Using 5G to Create a 'Disaggregated and Distributed' AOC," April 7, 2021, *Air & Space Forces Magazine*, https://www.airandspaceforces.com/using-5g-to-create-a-disaggregated-and-distributed-aoc/.

[58] For the view that the AOC presents the commander's intent in the form of mission orders, which in turn allows subordinate C2 nodes to create specific orders and oversee air operations as an embodiment of mission command, see, Trent R. Carpenter, "Command and Control of Joint Air Operations through Mission Command," *Air & Space Power Journal*, vol. 30, no. 2 (Summer 2016), p. 56.

[59] Kamena, "Before Mission Command."

earlier, "the less need for the subordinate commanders to exercise initiative, the greater the need for detailed orders and the less need for communicating the commander's intent." Conversely, when on-site decision-making is required, it becomes necessary to provide higher-level guidelines or explain the "why," forming the basis for judgments in light of evolving on-the-ground situations. Thus, the emphasis on mission-type orders in CC-DC-DE indicates orientation toward mission command.

(3) Mission Command in Agile Combat Employment (ACE)

The Air Force's adoption of mission command is also driven by its goal of pursuing distributed operations under agile combat employment (ACE). Following the consolidation of U.S. military bases after the Cold War, the Air Force's overseas bases became increasingly concentrated in fewer, large bases known as "main operating bases" (MOBs). As these MOBs have increasingly fallen within the range of adversaries' long-range strike capabilities, ACE was introduced as a measure to mitigate the associated risks.[60]

According to the Air Force Doctrine Note (AFDN) 1-21: "Agile Combat Employment" (2022), ACE is defined as "[a] scheme of maneuver executed within threat timelines to increase survivability while generating combat power." Whereas traditional Air Force operations were conducted from MOBs, ACE involves dividing airpower into small groups, deploying them to "austere locations" without large facilities, and conducting operations from there, as well as rapidly changing bases of operations as needed.[61] It is expected that ACE "complicates the enemy's targeting process" and "increase[s] survivability" of U.S. forces through this dispersion and mobility of airpower.[62]

One element enabling ACE that is highlighted by AFDN 1-21 is mission command, which "empower[s] subordinates at the lowest capable level to make decisions and take decisive action at their level." AFDN 1-21 also links mission command to the possibility of armed conflict with Russia or China in its statement that mission command "provides the flexibility and agility required to seize opportunities despite enemy denial or degradation of communications" during expected "future peer conflicts."[63]

The connection between ACE, a distributed operations concept, and the introduction of mission command in the Air Force is further supported by the fact that ACE originated as an initiative of the Pacific Air Forces (PACAF). Since 2013, PACAF has conducted the "Rapid Raptor" program, which swiftly deploys a package of four F-22 fighters, along with a single C-17 transport aircraft carrying maintenance personnel, fuel, equipment, and materials needed for the fighters' operations, from Air Force bases in Hawaii or Alaska to bases in the Western Pacific. The goal is to have these aircraft ready to launch from the new location within 24 hours of deployment.[64] The

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60 U.S. Air Force, *AFDN 1-21 Agile Combat Employment* (Maxwell AFB: LeMay Center, 2022), p. 1.

61 Greg Hadley, "Brown: Air Force May Never 'Slap the Table,' Finish Iterating ACE," September 27, 2022, Air and Space Forces Association, https://www.airandspaceforces.com/brown-air-force-may-never-slap-the-table-on-ace/.

62 U.S. Air Force, *AFDN 1-21*, pp. 2, 3.

63 Ibid., pp. 5, 7.

64 Amy McCullough, "Don't Call It a Comeback," *Air Force Magazine*, vol. 98, no. 7 (July 2015), p. 25; and Marc V. Schanz, "Rapid Raptor Package," September 26, 2013, Air and Space Forces Association, https://www.airandspaceforces.com/box092613rapid/.

Rapid Raptor training was designed to both enable the flexible use of the limited number of F-22s and to respond to China's long-range strike capabilities.[65] In 2017, this initiative evolved into ACE, focusing on In 2017, this initiative evolved into ACE, focused on addressing questions such as "How do we operationally maneuver that? How do we work the command and control for that? How do we...still tie [distributed operation of aircraft] into the bigger picture?"[66] With General Charles Q. Brown, Jr.,[67] who endeavored for the adoption of ACE across the Air Force while serving as PACAF commander, assuming the office of chief of staff of the Air Force in August 2020, ACE was established as an official initiative throughout the Air Force.[68]

PACAF, which had been promoting Rapid Raptor, disclosed in a 2014 strategic document that it had adopted CC-DC-DE ahead of the rest of the Air Force.[69] In addition, Steven L. Basham, PACAF Director of Strategy, Plans, and Programs, described in a 2015 paper that CC-DC-DE "embodies the spirit of an idea of mission command" by enabling the completion of missions through the provision of "appropriate levels of guidance, authority, and trust" to "all war fighters." He explained that implementing distributed control within CC-DC-DE requires mission command, unity of effort based on commander's intent, and an agile, flexible theater air control system.[70] Furthermore, in a February 2020 interview, then-PACAF Commander General Brown also cited the introduction of decentralized C2 as a change brought by ACE within PACAF.[71] These developments indicate that ACE was introduced premised on mission command.

The examination in this section reveals that the Air Force came to adopt mission command in recognition of the risks posed by centralized C2 in potential armed conflicts with China or Russia, and in order to ensure operational continuity even if C2 and communications are disrupted. Furthermore, it is evident that this shift was driven by the Air Force's pursuit of distributed operations through ACE, based on the premise of potential armed conflict with the aforementioned great powers.

3. U.S. Navy: Distributed Maritime Operations (DMO) and Mission Command

(1) Centralization of C2 in the Navy

The U.S. Navy inherited many traditions from the British Navy, and is often characterized by a strong

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[65] David A. Williamson, "Pacific Air Forces' Power Projection: Sustaining Peace, Prosperity, and Freedom," *Air & Space Power Journal*, vol. 29, no. 1 (January/February 2015), pp. 58–59.

[66] Amy Hudson, "ACE in the Hole," March 30, 2017, Air and Space Forces Association, https://www.airandspaceforces.com/article/ace-in-the-hole/; and Amy Hudson, "Rapid Raptor 2.0," March 7, 2017, Air and Space Forces Association, https://www.airandspaceforces.com/rapid-raptor-2-0/.

[67] "What's on the Mind of Gen. C.Q. Brown," *Air Force Magazine*, vol. 103, no. 4 (April 2020), p. 9; and Jennifer Hlad and Amy McCullough, "ACE-ing the Test: WestPac Exercise Stresses Agile Combat Employment," *Air Force Magazine*, vol. 103, no. 5 (May 2020), p. 40.

[68] The Department of the Air Force Posture Statement, Fiscal Year 2022, submitted to Congress the year after General Charles Q. Brown assumed the role of Air Force Chief of Staff, identified ACE as a "new approach." However, the 2021 posture statement, submitted in 2020 by Brown's predecessor, General David L. Goldfein, included no mention of ACE.

[69] Pacific Air Forces, *Pacific Air Forces: Command Strategy* (Hickam AFB, HI, 2014), p. 10; and Headquarters Pacific Air Forces Public Affairs, "PACAF Modifies Command Strategy," October 10, 2023, PACAF, https://www.pacaf.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/591127/pacaf-modifies-command-strategy/.

[70] Steven L. Basham and Nelson D. Rouleau, "A Rebalance Strategy for Pacific Air Forces Flight Plan to Runways and Relationships," *Air & Space Power Journal*, vol. 29, no. 1 (January/February 2015), p. 11.

[71] "What's on the Mind of Gen. C.Q. Brown," p. 9.

sense of "independent action and initiative," where "independent command… or… independent initiative… form an important part of Navy ethos."[72] This arises from the need for individual commanders to make independent decisions in maritime combat far from higher command. This is exemplified by principles such as the "Nelson touch," where subordinate commanders are empowered to respond independently in combat while fully incorporating commander's intent, and "command by negation," where superiors refrain from intervening unless there is an issue.[73]

However, even the U.S. Navy has not been immune to centralization, in part due to advancements in communication technology.[74] During World War II, Admiral Ernest J. King, who served as commander in chief of the United States Fleet and chief of naval operations, issued a directive on January 21, 1941, while he was commander of the Atlantic Fleet, titled "Exercise of Command—Excess of Detail in Orders and Instructions." In it, he criticized the pervasive practice in the Navy of issuing orders not only on "what" to do but also on "how" it should be done. He urged a return to the "essential element of command," which is "initiative of the subordinate." King argued that in a war against the Axis powers, commanders would neither have the time nor the opportunity to involve themselves in the finer details of their subordinates' actions and that it was essential to trust subordinates to carry out their assigned missions as they saw fit.[75]

Nevertheless, it has been noted that naval operations became even more centralized during the Cold War. This development is attributed to the influence of the composite warfare commander (CWC), the C2 framework developed for operations of carrier strike groups (CSGs) developed during that period. Kit de Angelis and Jason Garfield pointed out in a 2016 paper that although CWC was designed to enable "command by negation," it became a tool for micromanagement through intrusive oversight and control from the higher in the chain of command. They brought up instances where staffs of higher headquarters were issuing detailed "rudder and engine orders" over chat.[76] In addition, Dale C. Rielage noted that since the 1990s, naval air units operating under the command of the JFACC have come under the centralization influence of the Air Force.[77] Moreover, according to Vego, "advances in information technologies, instead of resulting in much greater freedom of action for subordinate commanders, have actually become a highly effective tool…for reducing and even eliminating room for subordinates to exercise the necessary degree of initiative in carrying out their assigned missions."[78]

(2) Calls for Mission Command in the Navy
The reassessment of C2 in the Navy, which has been criticized for increased centralization, was

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[72] S. Rebecca Zimmerman, et al., *Movement and Maneuver: Culture and the Competition of Influence among the U.S. Military Services* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2019), p. 53.

[73] Graham Scarbro, "Go Straight at 'Em!': Training and Operating with Mission Command," *Proceedings*, vol. 145, no. 5 (May 2019), p. 23.

[74] Vego, *General Naval Tactics*, p. 152.

[75] Thomas B. Buell, *Master of Seapower: A Biography of Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King*, first Naval Institute Press paperback edition (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2012), pp. 521, 522; and Milan Vego, *Operational Warfare at Sea: Theory and Practice*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2017), p. 93.

[76] Kit de Angelis and Jason Garfield, "Give Commanders the Authority," *Proceedings*, vol. 142, no. 10 (October 2016), p. 19.

[77] Dale C. Rielage, "Act on Commander's Intent: The Navy Must Return to a Decentralized Command-and-Control Culture to Produce Combat Victories," *Proceedings*, vol. 143, no. 4 (April 2017), pp. 32–37.

[78] Vego, *General Naval Tactics*, p. 149.

prompted by the U.S. Navy's response to China's growing military threat that led it to pursue distributed operations through the concept of "distributed lethality" (DL), later expanded into the "distributed maritime operations" (DMO) concept. DL was introduced by Thomas Rowden, commander of the Pacific Fleet Naval Surface Forces, et al. in the January 2015 issue of *Proceedings*. Recognizing that the U.S. Navy's sea control "can no longer be assumed" due to the rising Chinese threat, Rowden proposed enhancing the anti-ship attack capabilities of the surface force ships, which had primarily been assigned to escort duties for CSGs and land-attack missions, and separating them from the CSGs and deploying them as "hunter-killer" surface action groups (SAGs) specifically for anti-ship missions. The intention was to "spread the playing field" by deploying SAGs operating independently from the CSGs to attack enemy vessels from multiple attack axes, thereby forcing adversaries to allocate their forces defensively across multiple fronts.[79]

Furthermore, the DL concept was adopted as the operational concept for the entire surface force in January 2017 with the publication of "Surface Force Strategy: Return to Sea Control"[80] and later incorporated as the Navy-wide concept DMO in December 2018 with the release of "A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority, Version 2.0."[81] According to "Navigation Plan 2022" published in July 2022 by then-Chief of Naval Operations Michael M. Gilday, the DMO concept has the following key features: (1) Distribution of "[l]ong-range precision fires across all domains and platforms with greater reach enable naval forces to strike hostile targets while increasing our own survivability," (2) "Distributing forces geographically and in all domains enables them to threaten an adversary from multiple attack axes," and (3) "Connecting sensors, weapons, and decision-makers across all domains enables naval forces to mass firepower and influence without massing forces."[82] The explanation in "Navigation Plan 2022" also indicates that the DMO concept is premised on connectivity via networks.

As discussions on DL and subsequently the DMO concept progressed, references to decentralized C2 began to appear from the Navy's leadership. In January 2016, Chief of Naval Operations John M. Richardson released "A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority, Version 1.0," in which he referred to the core concepts of mission command with explanations such as the "need for the Navy to prepare for decentralized operations, guided by commander's intent," and "The ability to achieve this end is reliant on the trust and confidence that is based on a clear understanding, among peers and between commanders and subordinates, of the risk that can be tolerated."[83] Furthermore, the aforementioned "A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority, Version 2.0" (2018) positioned the DMO concept as one that would "invigorate and continually reinforce our culture of mission command."[84]

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[79] Thomas Rowden, Peter Gumataotao, and Peter Fanta, "'Distributed Lethality'," *Proceedings*, vol. 141, no. 1 (January 2015), https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2015/january/distributed-lethality.

[80] Commander, Naval Surface Force, *Surface Force Strategy: Return to Sea Control* (n.p., 2017), https://media.defense.gov/2020/May/18/2002302052/-1/-1/1/SURFACEFORCESTRATEGY-RETURNTOSEACONTROL.PDF.

[81] John M. Richardson, *A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority, Version 2.0* (Washington, DC: OCNO, 2018), p. 8.

[82] Michael M. Gilday, *Navigation Plan 2022* (Washington, DC: OCNO, 2022), p. 8.

[83] John M. Richardson, *A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority, Version 1.0* (Washington, DC: OCNO, 2016), p. 5.

[84] Richardson, *A Design, Version 2.0*, pp. 8, 9.

Inspired by these developments, discussions on decentralized C2 have become more active among Navy personnel. De Angelis and Garfield, as previously mentioned, noted that to realize the DL concept for surface ships, "A commanding officer must be empowered to make the decisions necessary to command his or her ship with little or no guidance from higher headquarters prior to, and especially upon, the commencement of hostilities."[85] Similarly, Andrew Beeler argued in his 2017 paper titled "Distributed Lethality Requires Distributing Authority" that to realize the DL concept, where "surface ships as individual units may engage the enemy independently of the carrier strike group," "commanding officers (COs) must be empowered to fight their ships independently and break from the current leadership model in the carrier strike groups."[86]

In the Navy, decentralized C2 is also advocated as a response to a D-DIL (denied, disconnected, intermittent, low-bandwidth) environment anticipated during a potential armed conflict with China, due to enemy interference and attacks. Daniel Stefanus described operations in a D-DIL environment as a "Dark Battle," in which "[s]ubordinate warfighters need to be certain of their commander's thinking, perspective, and permission thresholds on a granular level, so they can fight properly once communications go dark." To achieve this, he pointed out the need for an "intimate relationship that differs starkly from the bureaucratic distance that currently divides staffs and units."[87] Scott Swift, then commander of the Pacific Fleet, also cited anticipated communication and network disruption in future large-scale conflicts as a rationale for the necessity of mission command in a 2018 paper.[88]

The Navy officially adopted mission command in April 2020 when it revised its capstone doctrine, "NDP 1: Naval Warfare," as part of the "Naval Service" alongside the Marine Corps and Coast Guard. While NDP 1 recognizes the merits of the use of networks in naval combat, it states, "[W]e actively foster decentralized operations while preserving unity of effort," as systems may be disrupted by enemy actions or failure of their sub-systems, and alternatively, U.S. forces may choose to intentionally limit the use of networks that inevitably emit radio waves, to avoid enemy detection.[89] Moreover, three approaches to command are raised: "command by direction," "command by planning," and "command by influence." The first two approaches, "command by direction" and "command by planning," aim to "eliminate uncertainty," while "command by influence," or mission command, seeks to "reduce the need for certainty" itself. Mission command is stated to be the "preferred approach."[90]

NDP 1 emphasizes commander's intent as a way to maintain overall coherence without continuous orders from commanders, enabling subordinate commanders to take initiative based on local conditions. This raises the central concept of mission command, with mention of "disciplined

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[85] De Angelis and Garfield, "Give Commanders the Authority," pp. 19, 20.

[86] Andrew Beeler, "Distributed Lethality Requires Distributing Authority: For This State-of-the Art Surface-Warfare Concept to Work, the U.S. Navy Must Recognize the Leadership Challenges It Poses," *Proceedings*, vol. 143, no. 1 (January 2017), pp. 55, 57.

[87] Daniel Stefanus, "Embracing the Dark Battle: Electronic Warfare, Distributed Lethality, and the Future of Naval Warfighting," *Proceedings*, vol. 143, no. 4 (April 2017), p. 30.

[88] Scott Swift, "Master the Art of Command and Control," *Proceedings*, vol. 144, no. 2 (February 2018), p. 31.

[89] David H. Berger, Michael M. Gilday, and Karl L. Schultz, *NDP 1 Naval Warfare* (Washington, DC: DON, 2020), pp. 43, 44.

[90] Ibid., p. 45.

initiative" by subordinate commanders.[91] NDP 1 lists the "DMO concept" in its glossary as the source of "disciplined initiative." This suggests a link between the adoption of mission command and the DMO concept in the Navy.[92]

As seen in this section, although the Navy has a tradition of decentralized C2, including Nelson's Touch and command by negation, recent years have seen a shift toward centralization. However, with deepening awareness that U.S. forces may need to operate under conditions of degraded C2 and communications in a potential armed conflict with China, the importance of mission command is now being recognized to support distributed operations in anticipated potential armed conflicts with China and the like.

4. "Unity of Effort" in Distributed Operations

(1) Dispersion of Forces and Concentration of Firepower

With regard to the Navy's DMO concept, as can be seen in the arguments emerging from Navy officials that distributed lethality requires distributing authority, the need for distributed operations is often discussed in connection with decentralized C2 for both the Navy and Air Force.[93]

However, it is essential to note that distributed operations often simultaneously include elements that typically require centralization. According to Rielage who was mentioned above, "most designs for disaggregated forces rely on centralized command to achieve coordinated effects," meaning that distributed operations do not necessarily lead to decentralized C2.[94] As outlined in the abovementioned "Navigation Plan 2022," the DMO concept itself is premised on connecting sensors, weapons, and decision-makers within a network. Dmitry Filipoff also points out that contrary to what the term "distributed" might suggest, the DMO concept is a "network-centric warfighting concept instead of a platform-centric concept."[95]

Underlying this is the distinctive structure of modern naval combat. In his paper on the relationship between future naval combat and mission command, Robert Rubel identifies three forms of naval combat: (1) "structured battle," (2) "melee," and (3) "sniping," and explains that any manner of fighting at sea will be a variation of one of these modes.[96] (1) "Structured battle" is premised on coordination among participating units to enable unified maneuvers, concentrated firepower, and mutual support.[97] In contrast, (2) "Melee" aims to "take advantage of an enemy's disarray and demoralization by engaging as many of his ships as possible so as to neutralize his fleet." Once a battle has turned into a melee, no further coordination among participating units is conducted.[98] (3) Sniping is a form of ambush warfare and shares with melee the characteristic of independent combat by each unit. However, unlike melee, it generally occurs in environments

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[91] Ibid., pp. 46–47.

[92] Ibid., p. 71.

[93] Beeler, "Distributed Lethality Requires Distributing Authority," p. 54.

[94] Rielage, "Act on Commander's Intent," pp. 32–37.

[95] Dmitry Filipoff, "Fighting DMO, Pt. 1: Defining Distributed Maritime Operations and the Future of Naval Warfare," February 20, 2023, https://cimsec.org/fighting-dmo-pt-1-defining-distributed-maritime-operations-and-the-future-of-naval-warfare/.

[96] Robert C. Rubel, "Mission Command in a Future Naval Combat Environment," *Naval War College Review*, vol. 71, no 2 (Spring 2018), p. 110.

[97] Ibid., p. 111.

[98] Ibid., pp. 111, 112.

where the enemy force is strong, making "structured battle" difficult. Thus, each unit operates in a dispersed manner from the outset.[99]

According to Rubel, "The battle-force network... is a prerequisite for effective missile combat," and "structured battle is the best mode to employ, with tight firing coordination among as many units as possible." Particularly in over-the-horizon anti-ship missile warfare, it becomes necessary to receive target data from distant sensors via a network and positively identify targets.[100] However, if an attack were conducted solely using the sensors installed on individual ships, it would prevent those ships from fully utilizing the range of their missiles, leading to potentially "wasting them against lower-priority targets."[101] Furthermore, in current missile combat, missiles fired from a single ship are likely to be absorbed by the defensive measures of enemy ships,[102] necessitating cooperative engagements from multiple platforms connected via a network and attacking from multiple axes. Based on this analysis, Rubel concluded that "in modern, dispersed-missile combat, the Nelsonian paradigm may not serve."[103] Similarly, Filipoff argued that the authority to fire anti-ship missiles should not be held by individual platform commanders but by higher-ranking commanders with superior situational awareness, as "there are few concepts that have as much potential to undermine massed fires than that of mission command."[104]

Another frequently cited advantage of mission command is that frontline commanders directly confronting the enemy have a better understanding of conditions on the battlefield than senior commanders in the rear. However, it is noted that this premise does not always apply to missile warfare. In his 2018 paper, Admiral Swift, then-commander of the Pacific Fleet, while generally supportive of decentralized C2, also highlighted situations where a higher commander, who has the grasp of the "holistic picture of the overall situation," may be able to "spot and exploit an enemy's weaknesses and appropriately redirect forces."[105] Rubel also pointed out, "Owing to the wide dispersal of autonomous or semiautonomous intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) assets, it could be the case that a distant maritime operations center (MOC) has better situational awareness about local conditions than a unit or group commander, assuming the opposing forces are over the horizon from each other. Of course, the opposite also could be the case."[106] Such assessments are among the reasons why centralized command is necessary in missile warfare. Moreover, this tendency is likely to apply not only to the Navy and Air Force, but also to the Army and Marine Corps, both of which aim to acquire new long-range strike capabilities.[107]

99　Ibid., p. 112.

100　Ibid., p. 114.

101　Ibid., p. 116.

102　John C. Schulte, "An Analysis of the Historical Effectiveness of Anti-Ship Cruise Missiles in Littoral Warfare" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 1994), pp. 15, 16, 17, 18, https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/27962.

103　Rubel, "Mission Command," p. 116.

104　Dmitry Filipoff, "Fighting DMO, Pt. 10: Force Development Reform for Manifesting DMO," May 15, 2023, CIMSEC, https://cimsec.org/fighting-dmo-pt-10-force-development-reform-for-manifesting-dmo/.

105　Swift, "Master the Art of Command and Control," p. 31.

106　Rubel, "Mission Command," p. 115.

107　For example, *A Concept for Stand-in Forces* released by the Marine Corps in December 2021 assumes that the Marine Corps' long-range firepower will be integrated with sensors and weapons from other services through a network. See U.S. Marine Corps, *A Concept for Stand-in Forces* (Washington, DC, 2012), p. 14.

(2) Horizontal Coordination in Mission Command

As explained in this paper, the reason the U.S. military services look to mission command is their concern about potential armed conflict with China or Russia. In such a conflict, U.S. C2 is highly likely to be attacked and disrupted, and this might cause the dysfunction of the entire U.S. forces if they adopt a centralized C2 approach, where higher command directly controls the individual actions of subordinate units. However, if one examines the operational concepts and doctrines developed by the services, it becomes clear that the importance of coordinating the actions of multiple units involved toward a common purpose has in fact increased.

Traditionally, the arrangement of multiple units' actions in terms of time, space, and purpose has been incorporated into U.S. military doctrine as "synchronization."[108] Furthermore, the Joint Staff is now promoting Joint All-Domain Operations (JADO), which aim to integrate operations across land, sea, air, space, cyberspace, and the electromagnetic spectrum. The core concept here is "convergence," meaning the "synchronization and integration of kinetic and non-kinetic capabilities to create lethal and nonlethal effects."[109] Whether referred to as "synchronization" or "convergence" (the massing of firepower in missile warfare mentioned in the previous section is one example), integrating various capabilities in actual operations requires alignment of "disparate planning timelines and resource availability."[110]

In this context, it has been noted that there is a need to expand the concept of mission command, which has traditionally focused on the vertical relationship between commanders and subordinates, emphasizing disciplined initiative from the latter. In his 2017 paper "Mission Command 2.0," Anthony C. King argued that "mission command in the twentieth century" is individualistic, centered on the "limited devolution of authority relating to immediate tactical tasks" for frontline commanders. In this approach, subordinate commanders make independent decisions based on the higher commander's intent in accordance with their respective missions and situations, hence the term "individualistic." By contrast, what is essential in "mission command in the twenty-first century" is not so much the vertical relationship between superiors and subordinates but rather "ever-closer integration and interdependence of commanders" as well as "increasing interaction and synergy between commanders" involved in operations. King referred to this as "Mission Command 2.0," based on "collectivism with commanders united around common definitions and a shared consciousness."[111]

As in twentieth-century mission command, initiative by commanders remains essential in "Mission Command 2.0." However, it is not exercised within the vertical relationship between commanders and subordinate commanders, but rather through voluntary coordination among peer commanders who do not have command authority over one another. This voluntary coordination occurs even without specific orders from higher command or without continuous connectivity with higher command, based on commander's intent and shared awareness. In other words, "Mission

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108 Robert Rose, "Preventing a Short Jump across a Wide Ditch: Fully Embracing Mission Command to Avoid a Multi-Domain Disaster," *Military Review*, vol. 100, no. 2 (March/April 2022), pp. 41, 43; and Joint Chiefs of Staff, *DOD Dictionary*, s.v. "synchronization."

109 Department of the Air Force, *AFDP 3-99/SDP 3-99, Department of the Air Force Role in Joint All-Domain Operations* (Maxwell AFB, AL: LeMay Center, 2021), pp. 4, 15.

110 Ibid., p. 15.

111 Anthony C. King, "Mission Command 2.0: From an Individualist to a Collective Model," *Parameters*, vol. 47, no. 1 (Spring 2017), pp. 8, 11, 12.

Command 2.0" emphasizes what can be called a horizontal relationship among commanders.[112]

The Air Force doctrine also includes descriptions premised on horizontal coordination. AFDP 1-1: "Mission Command" explains the significance of "disciplined initiative," which is one of mission command's principles, not only as ensuring discretion for subordinate commanders but also as achieving the "high-level of *coordination* and *synchronization* required to employ airpower" (emphasis added). The "coordination and synchronization" mentioned here are voluntary, referring to maintaining unity of action among surviving subordinate units, operational centers, and BMC2 platforms by coordinating and synchronizing with each other, even in situations where specific orders from the AOC cannot be received due to attacks on or disruption of communications with the AOC. This unity of action is based on "a shared understanding of mission objectives, desired effects, overall commander's intent, and the broader operational and strategic context."[113]

This reflects that in modern air operations, regardless of who is conducting them or where they take place, coordination and synchronization of each platform's actions are essential. Considering the abovementioned characteristic of air operations that "aircraft do not act alone," at the tactical level of C2, each platform needs to know, at the very least, when and where it needs to be. In this regard, as Kamena points out, the ATO does not serve as a mission-type order, but conversely, mission-type orders cannot replace the ATO either. Furthermore, according to Frederick Coleman, given the scarcity of airpower, "An air expeditionary wing (AEW) commander in an ACE environment will likely not have sufficient assets under his or her command to effectively package airpower." Therefore, for effective tactical-level utilization of airpower, detailed coordination across all air forces, as traditionally done by the AOC, remains necessary.[114]

While Coleman emphasizes the need for detailed coordination required in air operations, he also advocates for transitioning from an approach of "localized, proprietary, on-premises data," where many functions are centralized in a physical facility like the AOC, to a "cloud-based environment." This shift would enable "air components to *collaborate* across echelons" (emphasis added). What is crucial here, as demonstrated by Ukraine's response in its conflict with Russia, is the idea that even if communications are attacked or disrupted, if measures are taken to ensure resilience, "the likelihood of actually having zero communications in today's environment is very small." According to Coleman, even in the event of temporary disruption, operations would proceed in line with the "most current version of the plan," and once communication is restored, the plan would then be updated.[115]

Coleman's perspective is rooted in the idea that in today's armed conflicts, the risk posed by enemy attacks and disruptions to C2 and communications is significantly heightened when you put "all eggs in one basket," meaning when all planning, coordination, and synchronization functions are concentrated within the AOC. This concentration creates substantial vulnerabilities, but dispersing these functions can reduce this risk to a manageable level. Furthermore, Coleman points out that to enable the cooperation envisioned under distributed control, "building the network and software that can support it" is necessary, and that the Advanced Battle Management System

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[112] Ibid., p. 19.

[113] U.S. Air Force, *AFDP 1-1 Mission Command* (Maxwell AFB, AL: LeMay Center, 2023), p. 9.

[114] Coleman, "Limited Utility," p. 5.

[115] Ibid.

(ABMS), currently under development by the Department of the Air Force, serves this purpose.[116] It is indeed true that the Air Force is advancing ABMS, or more recently, the Department of the Air Force Battle Network, as "cloud-based C2" aimed at facilitating cooperative operations.[117]

It has also been noted that the Navy's DMO concept is premised on such voluntary coordination. Tom Clarity points out that conducting operations under the advanced ISR capabilities of China and Russia requires both dispersal of forces and the mass of firepower from dispersed ships. However, centralizing command at the operational level for such coordination would be difficult, so the DMO concept anticipates voluntary coordination among the ships. According to Clarity, while ships conducting DMO are initially dispersed, when communication temporarily becomes possible, they either receive target information or detect the enemy using their own sensors. Each ship then approaches the target, with the one closest to the target setting the attack axis and timing to initiate the attack. Following this lead, nearby ships launch subsequent attacks, while more distant vessels provide cover or defense for the attacking ships. For such an attack to succeed, voluntary coordination among the ships involved is a precondition. Clarity explains, "Establishing ad hoc combat formations will require a remarkable amount of trust and cross-platform understanding."[118]

Conclusion: Decentralization and Unity of Effort in Mission Command

In recent years, the Air Force and Navy in the U.S. military have newly adopted mission command, which had long been adopted in the doctrine of the Marine Corps and the Army. At the same time as introducing mission command, the Air Force changed its "fundamental organizing principle" from CCDE to CC-DC-DE centered on distributed control to embody mission command. This change was prompted by the recognition that in the case of a potential armed conflict with China or Russia, centralizing C2 of air operations at the theater-level AOC would increase vulnerability, making it necessary to distribute control to lower-level operations centers and BMC2 platforms. In addition, the push for distributed operations as part of ACE has further encouraged the adoption of mission command. Similarly, the Navy has recognized the importance of mission command, given the need to anticipate interference with C2 and communications in a potential armed conflict with China, as well as its advancement of distributed operations under the DMO concept.

In the Navy and as well as in the Air Force, distributed operations have been discussed with the premise of decentralized C2. However, as seen in Section 4, for long-range firepower to be effective, information sharing among sensors, weapons, and decision-makers is essential for target selection, allocation, and guidance, which favors centralization over decentralization. Furthermore, examining the operational concepts and doctrines under development now within the U.S. military, the importance of aligning the actions of multiple related units for a shared objective has grown even more prominent. Under mission command, while higher headquarters like the AOC may not control each unit's actions centrally, it remains necessary to coordinate the actions

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[116] Frederick Coleman, "Distributed Control: Getting It Right," *The Mitchell Forum*, no. 50 (January 2023), p. 3.

[117] Chris Gordon, "Operational Imperative No. 2: Operationally Focused ABMS," *Air & Space Forces Magazine*, vol. 106, no. 8 (August 2023), p. 33; and Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs, "ABMS Moves Forward on Cloud-based C2," January 9, 2023, U.S. Air Force, https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/3262645/abms-moves-forward-on-cloud-based-c2/.

[118] Tom Clarity, "Distribute DMO to Tactical Commanders," *Proceedings*, vol. 149, no. 1 (January 2023), pp. 27, 28.

of units. Traditional discussions of mission command have focused on the vertical relationship of delegation from higher commanders to subordinate commanders and the disciplined initiative expected of the latter. Discussions on mission command and distributed operations within the Air Force and the Navy include horizontal coordination, which involves voluntarily adjusting and synchronizing based on each commander's intent to achieve unity of action, and it is thus essential to broaden understanding of mission command. Furthermore, as mission command, by definition, calls for delegation and unity of efforts at the same time, the question of striking a balance to achieve overall coordination under mission command can be viewed simply as a matter focusing on either of the two sides of mission command.

Finally, I would like to address issues that were not discussed in this paper, but merit further investigation. This paper is focused on mission command as applied to combat situations. However, the U.S. military currently places high importance on "competition," where the United States competes with China and Russia to seek advantageous conditions without escalating to armed conflict. In such situations, operational objectives take on a more political nature, making coordination with other tools such as diplomacy increasingly crucial, which may push C2 of units toward centralization.[119] In addition, in discussions on civil-military relations in the United States, there is an argument that "there is no field of military action that might not be touched by political considerations," and that it is entirely possible and justified for political leaders to involve themselves in the finer details of military operations to accomplish their policies.[120] This paper could not address how such arguments relate to mission command, and will leave them to be considered going forward.

(National Institute for Defense Studies)

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[119] George J. David, "Executing RXR: A MCISRE for Intelligence Operations," *Marine Corps Gazette*, vol. 107, no. 10 (October 2023), pp. 18, 20. Vego also points out that the centralization of C2 tends to increase the more that operational objectives are political or when errors by subordinates cannot be tolerated, such as during crises that carry the risk of escalating into armed conflict with adversary nations. See Milan N. Vego, "Operational Command and Control in the Information Age," *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 35 (October 2004), p. 110.

[120] Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003), p. 8.

The Duality of the Saudi-Emirati Relations: Competition over Nation-Building Policies and the Yemeni Civil War[*]

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Abstract

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) now have a track record of working together to counter domestic and international threats stemming from the 2011 anti-government uprisings in the Middle East. This cooperation has included coordinated military interventions. Prior to the 2011 uprisings, relations between the two countries were often noticeably strained due to issues like border disputes and their differing levels of enthusiasm regarding moves to deepen integration between Gulf Cooperation Council member states. Shared security threats have been seen, however, as having led to a thaw in their bilateral relations.

Since the 2011 uprisings, the two countries have built up a relationship that is now described as an alliance. There were, however, reports in July 2021 of a deterioration in their bilateral relations, with economic factors and behind-the-scenes political rifts cited as causes. This paper examines the historical duality of competitive and cooperative dynamics in their bilateral relationship, and concludes that the following three key factors have contributed to a deterioration in the two countries' relations:

1. Efforts to curb threats stemming from the 2011 uprisings;
2. Differing stances on support for proxy forces in the Yemeni civil war, and the degree of success the two countries respectively achieved with their interventions in said war; and
3. The UAE's emergence as a political and military power, along with increasing economic competition between the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

The second and third are new factors contributing to intensification of the competitive nature of their bilateral relations and they can also be seen as having damaged Saudi Arabia's standing as a dominant regional power.

Introduction

The 2011 anti-government uprisings (the so-called "Arab Spring") led to protest movements, civil wars, and regime changes, causing structural shifts in the security environment and international relations in the Middle East. The resulting destabilization of governing systems led to the fall of the region's traditional military powers, such as Syria, Egypt, and Libya, and it was Saudi Arabia and the UAE, along with Iran and other Gulf states, that rose to fill the power vacuum.

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Saudi Arabia and the UAE both pursued two key foreign policy shifts in response to threats arising from the 2011 uprisings. The first of these shifts was the adoption of a more aggressive foreign policy that involved utilization of their military forces. Eman Ragab describes this change as "militarization."[1] Prior to the uprisings, the foreign policies of Saudi Arabia and the UAE primarily relied on diplomacy and economic measures. The "militarization" of their foreign policy has therefore had an impact on the security environment of the Middle East.

The second shift involved changes to their bilateral relations. Despite the cooperative security relationship that the two countries have today, their bilateral relations have historically been conspicuously marked by discord over border disputes dating from the years before the UAE gained independence as well as friction over deepening integration between Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states. Noura Al Mazrouei argues that despite their various points of conflict, the security threats posed by the 2011 uprisings led to a thaw in their bilateral relations,[2] where they set aside their disputes in favor of transforming the relationship into an alliance to counter internal and external threats.

Although the two countries have been perceived as allies since the 2011 uprisings, reports of deteriorating relations emerged in July 2021. It was reported that the direct cause for this was conflict over economic policy relating to production cuts by OPEC and OPEC+ (a group consisting of OPEC countries plus other countries including Russia), but tensions over intervention in the Yemeni civil war have also been cited as a contributing factor.[3] Meanwhile, some, like Abdulkhaleq Abdulla, a former advisor to an Emirati crown prince, have claimed that the relationship had not actually deteriorated in the first place.[4]

What factors define Saudi-Emirati relations, and why was the relationship considered to have deteriorated in 2021? Based on the assumption that the relationship is dualistic in nature, with both cooperative and competitive aspects, this paper presents the hypothesis that it was the intensification of political, military, and economic competition that caused the relationship to deteriorate. To support this hypothesis, Section 1 provides a historical overview of bilateral relations from the point when the UAE gained its independence in 1971, analyzing how Saudi-Emirati relations changed from the 2011 uprisings onwards. Section 2 examines how joint military intervention in Yemen, led primarily by Saudi Arabia, resulted in damaged Saudi prestige and worsened Saudi-Emirati relations.[5] Section 3 discusses the two countries' efforts to strengthen their military forces and the overlap between the two oil-producing nations' economic development policies, which brought into focus the increasingly competitive nature of their relationship.

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[1] Eman Ragab, "Beyond Money and Diplomacy: Regional Policies of Saudi Arabia and UAE after the Arab Spring," *The International Spectator*, vol. 52, no. 2 (June 2017), pp. 37–53.

[2] Noura S. Al Mazrouei, "The Revival of the UAE-Saudi Arabia Border Dispute in the 21st Century," *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, vol. 32, no. 2 (January 2017), pp. 157–172.

[3] The following article is an example of this: Charles W. Dunne, "The UAE-Saudi Arabia Rivalry Becomes a Rift," Arab Center Washington DC, July 6, 2023, https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/the-uae-saudi-arabia-rivalry-becomes-a-rift/.

[4] Abdulkhaleq Abdulla, Twitter Post, July 18, 2023, https://twitter.com/Abdulkhaleq_UAE/status/168128907048 6462465?s=20.

[5] In this paper, the author has defined the word "*ishin*" (status) as "a position or hierarchical rank within a community," and posits that countries seek to enhance their "*ishin*" relative to specific other groups. Jonathan Renshon, *Fighting for Status: Hierarchy and Conflict in World Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), p. 33.

In the conclusion, this paper highlights the three factors that contributed to the deterioration of bilateral relations:

1. Efforts to curb threats stemming from the 2011 uprisings;
2. Differing stances on support for proxy forces in the Yemeni civil war, and the degree of success the two countries respectively achieved with their interventions in said war; and
3. The UAE's emergence as a political and military power, along with increasing economic competition between the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

These factors likely diminished the momentum for enhancing bilateral relations, and caused tensions in competitive areas to become more prominent.

1. Transformation of Saudi-Emirati Relations due to the 2011 Uprisings

(1) Border Issues and the UAE's Sovereignty as a Small State, and the Iranian Threat

When discussing the bilateral relationship between Saudi Arabia and the UAE, two historically significant issues—border disputes and the sovereignty of the UAE as a small state—cannot be overlooked. With regard to border disputes, Saudi Arabia had harbored ambitions over the Buraimi oasis,[6] which straddles what is now the border between the UAE and Oman, from before the UAE's establishment, as shown by the Buraimi Crisis of 1952.[7] As has been pointed out by Murakami Takuya, the small emirates that now make up the UAE perceived the Wahhabist and expansionist House of Saud as a security threat.[8] Following the UK's "East of Suez" withdrawal, which began in 1968, the threat from Saudi Arabia, with its vastly larger territory and population, became even more immediate.

The relationship between Saudi Arabia and the UAE was initially strained due to unresolved border issues, with Saudi Arabia withholding diplomatic recognition of the UAE until the signing of the Treaty of Jeddah in 1974, which defined their shared border. The agreement led to the establishment of diplomatic relations and granted Saudi Arabia control over several areas in the southern part of the Qatar Peninsula, as well as 80% of the oil interests in the Shaybah oil field.[9] The border demarcation was largely carried out in a manner that reflected the power imbalance between the two nations, and the same power imbalance is also believed to have shaped their asymmetrical bilateral relations up until the 2011 uprisings. When Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan became UAE president in 2004, the UAE sought partial revisions to the Treaty of Jeddah,[10] indicating the UAE's perception that the treaty disproportionately favored Saudi interests. Saudi

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6   Fāṭima al-Sāyigh, *al-Imārāt al-'Arabīya al-Muttaḥi da: Min al-Qabīla ilā al-Dawla* (al-'Ayn: Dār al-Kitāb al-Jāmi'ī, 2000), p. 260.
7   An incident in 1952 where Saudi forces occupied the area of Hamasa in the Buraimi region.
8   Murakami Takuya, "Arabia Hanto Shokoku–Chuto Chiiki Chitsujo ni Okeru Taito [The Rise of Arabian Peninsula States in the Regional Order of the Middle East]," in *Chuto no Aratana Chitsujo* [The New Order of the Middle East], ed. Matsuo Masaki, Okanouchi Tadashi, and Kikkawa Takuro (Kyoto: Mineruba Shobo [Minerva Shobo], 2016), pp. 201–220.
9   Horinuki Koji, "Wangan Shokoku ni Okeru Kokkyo to Kokka no Sonritsu Kozo: UAE no Kokkyo Mondai no Tenkai wo Jirei ni [The Framework of Statehood and Borders among Gulf States: Using Developments in UAE Border Issues as a Case Study]," *Kokusai Seiji* [International Relations], no. 162 (December 2010), pp. 56–69.
10 Noura S. Al Mazrouei, *The UAE and Saudi Arabia: Border Disputes and International Relations in the Gulf* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016).

Arabia refused to renegotiate the treaty, however, and tensions escalated, with an armed clash breaking out between the UAE Navy and the Saudi Coast Guard in 2010. Thus the border issues remain unresolved and continue to be a historical point of contention in their bilateral relations.

The UAE has sought to maintain its autonomy from Saudi Arabia, a dominant regional power, as can be seen in the UAE's stance on deepening integration between GCC member states. Based on the Unified Economic Agreement, the GCC has advanced economic integration of member countries through initiatives such as the establishment of a uniform customs tariff. Progress toward deeper integration has stalled, however, with the UAE explicitly opposing the introduction of a common currency. At a GCC summit in December 2011, Saudi Arabia proposed that the GCC had reached the stage where member states should move from cooperating to forming a union.[11] Only Bahrain indicated support for this proposal. The UAE opposed it, likely due to concerns, shared by other GCC members, over the extent to which the formation of such a union would deepen regional integration compared with the current GCC framework and by extension, the extent to which it would impact their sovereignty. For smaller states like the UAE, further integration with Saudi Arabia, the overwhelmingly dominant GCC member state, would mean being subjected to even greater Saudi influence. The union proposal was effectively frozen due to the opposition to it from the UAE and other smaller states.

Although there has been discord between Saudi Arabia and the UAE over border issues and regional integration, they have also faced a common security threat in Iran. Saudi Arabia and Iran have competed for regional supremacy in addition to clashing over issues like the treatment of the Shia population in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province and the Arab population in Iran's southwestern Khuzestan Province. Despite being an oil-producing region, Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province has been politically and economically marginalized due to it being a Shia area, leading to periodic outbreaks of anti-government protest since the time of the Iranian Revolution. While the Shia population in the UAE is not a point of contention, territorial disputes between the UAE and Iran persist. Immediately before the UAE gained independence in 1971, the Imperial State of Iran (pre-revolution Iran) occupied the islands of Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs. Iranian Navy and Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps bases were later established on Abu Musa.[12] Iran continues to maintain effective control over these islands, as evidenced by the 2022 opening of an air route between Tehran and Greater Tunb.

Iran's policy of "exporting the Islamic Revolution" has also come to pose a serious threat to both Saudi Arabia and the UAE. In 1979, the year of Iran's Islamic Revolution, the six countries that would later form the GCC met in Taif, to discuss the threat posed by this policy of exporting the Islamic Revolution and to affirm their shared interest in coordinating on security countermeasures. This meeting laid the groundwork for the formation of the GCC in 1981 and the establishment in 1986 of a joint GCC military force called the Peninsula Shield Force. While the GCC later became

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[11] Murakami Takuya, "Ikinai Anzen Hosho Kyoryoku no Shinten wo Meguru GCC Kakkoku no Fukyowaon [Discord among GCC Member Countries over Progress with Regional Security Cooperation]," *Ajiken Warudo Torendo* [Ajiken World Trends], no. 224 (May 2014), p. 28.

[12] "Tasyīr Awwal Riḥla Jawwīya bayn Ṭahrān wa Maṭār Īrānī Jadīd Uqīm fī Jazīra Mutanāziʿ ʿalay-hā maʿ al-Imārāt," *al-Jazīra*, February 20, 2022, https://www.aljazeera.net/politics/2022/2/20/%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%84-%D9%85%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AF-%D9%88%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D8%B1%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A-%D8%AA%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%8A%D8%B1.

more focused on economic cooperation up until the uprising in Bahrain, which is discussed below, it was originally established with security cooperation against Iran and Iraq in mind.[13] Thus, the bilateral relationship between Saudi Arabia and the UAE, while marked by competition involving territorial disputes and disagreements over the issue of regional integration, has also involved cooperation in responding to the common threat posed by Iran.

(2) Coordinated Responses to Internal and External Threats

As discussed in the previous section, the relationship between Saudi Arabia and the UAE is asymmetrical, and discord over a wide range of issues such as border disputes and regional integration were not infrequent. Although these competitive aspects of the relationship were conspicuous, the spread of the uprisings across the Middle East in 2011 led both nations to pursue military cooperation, including coordinated armed interventions. In other words, they shelved their disputes in favor of forming an alliance to counter internal and external threats. The results of regime changes and coordinated interventions within various Middle Eastern countries had varying impacts on the countries concerned. Below, after an explanation of the two threats that prompted these coordinated interventions, there is a summary of the two major cases of cooperation between the two countries (see Table 1).

Table 1. 2011 Uprisings and Coordinated Saudi-Emirati Interventions

Location	Event	Result
	Saudi-Emirati response	
Egypt	Morsi regime established	Military regime remains in power
	Aid for post-coup Sisi regime	
Bahrain	Anti-government protests spread	Suppression of anti-government protests
	Deployment of military and police forces	
Iraq (areas under ISIS control)	Rise of ISIS	ISIS loses control over territories
	Participation in Global Coalition To Defeat ISIS/ creation of Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition	
Syria	Expansion of anti-government uprisings/outbreak of civil war	Assad regime remains in power
	Support for anti-government forces	

(Source) Compiled by author based on various materials

a. Islamism and Iran as Factors Encouraging Saudi-Emirati Cooperation

Previous studies have identified Islamism and Iran as common threats to Saudi Arabia and the UAE that were amplified by the 2011 uprisings.[14] From the perspective of Saudi Arabia, the rise of Islamist movements other than Wahhabism was a significant concern, leading to Saudi Arabia tightening restrictions on the Sunni Islamist organization, the Muslim Brotherhood.[15] For

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[13]   Matteo Legrenzi, *The GCC and the International Relations of the Gulf* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

[14]   John Calabrese, "The 'New Normal' in Saudi-UAE Relations: Tying China in," Middle East Institute, February 3, 2022, https://www.mei.edu/publications/new-normal-saudi-uae-relations-tying-china; Ebtesam Al-Ketbi,"United Arab Emirates," European Council on Foreign Relations, May 2018, https://ecfr.eu/special/battle_lines/uae.

[15]   Saudi Arabia accepted members of the Muslim Brotherhood from Egypt in the 1950s as part of Saudi opposition to the Nasser regime. The Saudi government had already started to crack down on Muslim Brotherhood

Saudi Arabia, a state with Wahhabism as its ideological grounding, the activities of the Muslim Brotherhood was perceived as being part of an influx and internal expansion of unofficial Islamist ideologies.[16] As Wahhabism is integral to the Saudi regime, the rise of Sunni Islamist movements other than Wahhabism signifies the emergence of forces that challenge the regime's legitimacy from an Islamist perspective.

The UAE's opposition to Islamism, and particularly its opposition to the Muslim Brotherhood, is partly due to its transnational nature. Historically, the UAE has not faced large-scale internal forces opposing the ruling regime, and this calmness of internal politics in the country has contributed to its stability. Matthew Hedges claims that this stability was established through economic development during the tenure of the UAE's first president, Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, and that the 2011 uprisings posed a serious threat to the UAE's authoritarian regime, which had thus far retained its position through maintaining political calmness.[17] While the protests in the UAE were smaller in scale than in other countries, in March 2011, a group of Islamists and liberals submitted a petition demanding political reforms.[18] In December that year, members of Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated organizations who had moved to the UAE and become naturalized citizens, including some who were signatories to the petition, had their UAE citizenship revoked. The government of the UAE continued to allege, from the following year onwards, that the Muslim Brotherhood was operating a military wing with the aim of establishing an "Islamic government" in the country, and in 2014 the UAE government designated the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization.[19]

As for the threat posed by Iran, in 2011, Saudi Arabia saw protests by Shia residents in the Eastern Province. Nimr Baqir al-Nimr, a prominent Saudi Shia cleric, led non-violent protests while calling for democratic elections. The Saudi government responded with moves to suppress the protests, including the arrest of al-Nimr, and by employing sectarian discourse to prevent expansion of the anti-government movement into other parts of the country.[20] In 2016, the Saudi government executed al-Nimr, triggering the widely-reported attacks on Saudi diplomatic missions in Iran and the subsequent Saudi severing of diplomatic ties with Iran.

In the UAE, a shift in internal dynamics emerged shortly before the 2011 uprisings. The so-

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members even before the 2011 Arab Spring, however, because some individuals who had been influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood began to call for political reform.

[16] Takao Kenichiro, "Saudi Arabia ni Okeru Isuramu Shugi no Kyogo—'Koshiki' Isuramu Shugi ni Yoru 'Hikoshiki' Isuramu Shugi no Fujikome [Islamist Competition in Saudi Arabia: Containment of 'Unofficial' Islamism by 'Official' Islamism]," in *"Arabu no Haru" Igo no Isuramu Shugi Undo* [Islamist Movements from the "Arab Spring" Onwards], ed. Takaoka Yutaka and Mizobuchi Masaki (Kyoto: Mineruba Shobo [Minerva Shobo], 2019), p. 159.

[17] Matthew Hedges, *Reinventing the Sheikhdom: Clan, Power and Patronage in Mohammed bin Zayed's UAE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

[18] Horinuki Koji, "UAE ni Okeru Seiji Kaikaku Undo to Taisei no Kiki Ninshiki—2011 Nen no Kenpakusho Jiken wo Jirei ni [Political Reform Movements in the UAE and the Regime's Risk Perception: Using the 2011 Petition Incident as a Case Study]," in *Arab no Haru to Arabia Hanto no Shorai* [The Arab Spring and the Future of the Arabian Peninsula], ed. Sato Kan Hiroshi (Chiba: Ajia Keizai Kenkyujo [Institute of Developing Economies], 2012), pp. 1–14.

[19] It should be noted, however, that it is generally believed that the Muslim Brotherhood did not have enough power to overthrow the regime. Ingo Forstenlechner, Emilie J. Rutledge, and Rashed Alnuaimi, "The UAE, the 'Arab Spring' and Different Types of Dissent," *Middle East Policy*, vol. 19, no. 4 (December 2012), pp. 54–67.

[20] Toby Matthiesen, "A 'Saudi Spring?': The Shi'a Protest Movement in the Eastern Province 2011-2012," *Middle East Journal*, vol. 66, no. 4 (Autumn 2012), pp. 628–659.

called "Dubai crisis" of 2009 diminished the political influence, within the UAE, of Dubai, which is home to around 600,000 Iranians and had built up relatively good relations with Iran. Tensions between the UAE and Iran were heightened further in 2012 after Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad visited the island of Abu Musa. As the above shows, despite the differing contexts, Saudi Arabia and the UAE found common ground in viewing Islamism and Iran as threats, and this consequently strengthened the cooperative aspects of their bilateral relations. While Saudi Arabia viewed Iran as the primary threat through the lenses of domestic political risks and the struggle for regional hegemony, however, the UAE was more focused on the threat posed by Islamism as a challenge to the calm stability of its political order. This divergence in their perception of whether Iran or Islamism was the greater threat could be said to have later influenced their differing approaches to the Yemeni civil war.

b. Egypt

In Egypt, the military regime of Hosni Mubarak collapsed in 2011, opening the way for the first steps toward democratization. The various youth movements that had played key roles in the anti-government protests that year did not go further than calling for the fall of the regime, however, leaving the Muslim Brotherhood under President Mohamed Morsi to take on the actual running of Egypt's government following the elections. Morsi's administration engaged in and won a power struggle with the military, the traditional holders of power in Egypt, and enacted a constitution deeply rooted in Islamic values.[21] Morsi also appears to have sought to build a new relationship with Iran, participating in a Non-Aligned Movement summit in Tehran. Such shifts in Egypt's foreign policy direction were not seen favorably by Saudi Arabia, which had developed close ties with Egypt following the public exposure of Iran's nuclear development program.

Morsi's regime worked to implement Islamic policies, but was unable to sufficiently address the economic and social problems that had been an important factor behind 2011's anti-government uprising. With the regime unable to address Egypt's mounting problems, in 2013, the youth-led group Tamarod spearheaded anti-government protests.[22] These protests gained support from secular forces, the military, and other forces opposed to the Morsi regime. After Defense Minister Abdel Fattah al-Sisi issued an ultimatum to Morsi, the military took power through what was effectively a coup d'état. Sisi then revised the constitution to strengthen the interests of the military and moved to eliminate the Muslim Brotherhood. Both Saudi Arabia and the UAE welcomed these developments and provided substantial economic aid to Egypt.[23] One could say that Saudi Arabia and the UAE were thus able to capitalize on the Egyptian coup as an opportunity to suppress the threat of Islamism through support for the Sisi regime.

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[21] Yokota Takayuki, "Ejiputo Musurimu Dohodan no 'Zasetsu'—Posuto-Isuramu Shugi kara no Ichikosatsu ['Setback' For the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt: An Investigation From the Perspective of Post-Islamism]," *Kokusai Anzenhosho* [Journal of International Security], vol. 43, no. 3 (December 2015), pp. 29–42.

[22] Yokota Takayuki, "Ejiputo—Futatsu no 'Kakumei' ga Motarashita Kyozo no Saiko [Egypt: A Reexamination of the Illusion Created by Two 'Revolutions']," in *"Arabu no Shinzo" ni Nani ga Okite Iru no ka: Gendai Chuto no Jitsuzo* [What Is Happening in the "Heart of the Arab World": The Reality of the Modern Middle East], ed. Aoyama Hiroyuki (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten [Iwanami Shoten, Publishers], 2014), pp. 1–28.

[23] The aid provided to Egypt by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Kuwait after the coup d'état amounted to 41.8 billion US$ (in 2013), which corresponds to 14.4% of Egypt's GDP for that year.

c. Bahrain

Bahrain was the only GCC member country where the 2011 uprisings became large in scale. The possibility of monarchies being overthrown due to the spread of anti-government movements within GCC countries was a significant concern for Saudi Arabia and the UAE, both of which maintain non-democratic monarchies. Although Bahrain has a Shiite majority, it is ruled by a Sunni royal family: the House of Khalifa.[24] Once the uprisings spread into Bahrain, protests led by the Shiite population broke out. Initially, protesters called for the resignation of the prime minister and the introduction of a parliamentary cabinet system, but their demands gradually become more radical, with calls for the overthrow of the regime. The Bahraini government saw the protests as a conspiracy by Iranian-backed Shiite forces and moved to repress them militarily while simultaneously seeking to resolve the situation through dialogue with the Shiite political party, Al-Wefaq. Al-Wefaq condemned the government's use of force, however, and all of the party's members resigned from parliament, preventing resolution through dialogue.

Faced with the expansion of the anti-government movement, Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the king of Bahrain, requested an intervention from the GCC. In response to this request, the GCC deployed the Peninsula Shield Force, with personnel centered on a core of 1,500 Saudi troops and 500 UAE police officers. This intervention, along with the Bahraini government's further strengthening of its crackdown, including the imposition of martial law, caused the anti-government uprising in Bahrain to die down. In 2013, the UAE provided Bahrain with financial support, announcing an economic aid package worth 2.5 billion US$ in response to Bahrain's ongoing financial difficulties. One could say that Saudi Arabia and the UAE successfully prevented the collapse of Bahrain's monarchy through efforts to suppress the anti-government uprising and provide economic assistance. Sakanashi Sachi analyzed Saudi Arabia's perception of the Iranian threat in this case, noting that they believed that, while Iran must certainly have been involved, they managed to cover up their involvement, and that only amplified the Saudi perception of Iran as an unfathomable threat.[25]

As we have seen so far, Saudi Arabia and the UAE acted in concert to respond to changes triggered by the 2011 uprisings impacting the countries of the Middle East, or, at the very least, they refrained from actions that would harm each other's policies. Despite their previous disputes over border issues and autonomy, changes in international relations in the early 2010s created strong incentives for cooperation, leading to the establishment of a kind of alliance. Since the intensity of the threats and the intensity of the incentives for cooperation are presumably proportional to each other, the weakening of threats stemming from the 2011 uprisings, due to interventions by Saudi Arabia and the UAE and other factors, could be said to have reduced their incentive to cooperate.

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[24] Shia residents in Bahrain society are generally oppressed, including being unable to take on positions in public security organizations like the police force. Justin Gengler, *Group Conflict and Political Mobilization in Bahrain and the Arab Gulf* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015).

[25] Sakanashi Sachi, "'Arabu no Haru' e no Taio ni Miru Iran Taigai Seisaku no Genjo [Iran's Current Foreign Policy as Seen in its Response to the 'Arab Spring']," in *Chuto Chiiki Chitsujo no Yukue—"Arab no Haru" to Chuto Shokoku no Taigai Seisaku* [The Future of Regional Order in the Middle East: The "Arab Spring" and the Foreign Policies of the Countries of the Middle East], ed. Tsuchiya Ichiki (Chiba: Ajia Keizai Kenkyujo [Institute of Developing Economies], 2013), p. 76.

2. Growing Competition Relating to the Yemeni Civil War

(1) Discord over Support for Proxy Forces

In the cases discussed in section 1, Saudi Arabia and the UAE conducted interventions in a coordinated manner. On the surface, this is also true of their intervention in the Yemeni civil war, where the UAE intervened as part of the Saudi-led coalition forces. Upon closer inspection, however, the Saudi-Emirati intervention in Yemen differs from their joint interventions in other countries. This section will examine the rift between Saudi Arabia and the UAE regarding their support for Yemeni proxy forces, and will also analyze the respective outcomes of their military interventions.

Aiming to eliminate the armed Zaydi group known as the Houthis, which had toppled the Yemeni government, Saudi Arabia formed a coalition that included the UAE and on March 26, 2015, began launching air strikes. The Houthis are thought to be supported by Iran, while the government of Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi, who was ousted by the Houthis, was established with backing from the GCC. Yemen being a neighbor of Saudi Arabia provided further incentive for the coalition forces to launch a full-scale offensive against the Houthis, including air strikes; land, sea, and air blockades; and troop deployments. While these efforts succeeded in retaking southern areas like Aden, a stalemate ensued on the frontlines near the former borders of what was once South Yemen (the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen) and North Yemen (the Yemen Arab Republic).

While there was cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the UAE in the fight against the Houthis, the two countries pursued different strategies when it came to supporting anti-Houthi factions within Yemen. Saudi Arabia primarily backed the Hadi regime and the political party that supported his regime, Al Islah. Saudi Arabia justified its military intervention by claiming it was based on a request for assistance from Hadi. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia's support for Al Islah had a deeper historical background. The Al Islah party was formed in 1990 through an alliance of powerful northern tribes, as well as the Muslim Brotherhood, and some of the more radical Sunni Islamists.[26] Saudi Arabia had already cultivated good relations with these various factions separately, for instance, using its ties with Sheikh Sadiq al-Ahmar, leader of the Hashid tribal confederation, to proselytize Wahhabism in northern Yemen. Saudi Arabia had also supported the Islamic Front (a predecessor of the current Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated faction in Yemen) in suppressing an uprising by the leftist National Democratic Front in North Yemen in 1978. Saudi Arabia also deployed Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated Egyptian and Sudanese citizens, whom they had allowed into Saudi Arabia, to Yemen to engage in educational activities (see footnote 14).[27] With regard to radical Sunni Islamists, Saudi Arabia sought to weaken leftist forces in post-unification Yemen through its backing of Iman University, which was headed by Abdul Majeed al-Zindani, a figure designated as an international terrorist for the support he provided to Al Qaeda. Given these

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[26]   Although Al Islah is commonly separated into tribal and Sunni Islamist factions, Jillian Schwedler, using the example of Yemen's largest Hashid tribal confederation leader, Abdullah al-Ahmar, pointed out that it is not entirely possible to divide members into two distinct tribal and Islamist groups. While I am in agreement with this observation to a certain degree, my arguments in this paper are based on the idea that, by focusing on the places of origin, power bases, and ideologies of the three founders of the party, Al Islah can largely be divided into two groups with either tribal or Sunni Islamist tendencies. Jillian Schwedler, *Faith in Moderation: Islamist Parties in Jordan and Yemen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 71.

[27]   Helen Lackner, *Yemen in Crisis: The Road to War* (London: Verso, 2019), p. 130.

historical ties and Al Islah's consistent support for the Saudi intervention in the Yemeni civil war, Saudi Arabia took the unusual step of backing the Muslim Brotherhood in Yemen, even though it regards the group as an enemy domestically as well as in countries other than Yemen.

In contrast, the UAE questioned Hadi's leadership qualities, doubting his ability to govern effectively merely by issuing directives from Riyadh. The UAE also chose to maintain its enmity toward the Muslim Brotherhood and instead supported other factions. Specifically, the UAE backed the Southern Transitional Council, a secessionist group in southern Yemen, along with local armed factions supporting the Council, and the National Resistance Forces, which consisted of supporters of Yemen's former president, Ali Abdullah Saleh. The UAE's support for the Southern Transitional Council, in particular, led to intensified friction between the Hadi regime and the Council, an outcome that conflicted with Saudi Arabia's intervention policy in Yemen.

The Southern Transitional Council is led by Aidarus Al-Zubaidi, a former governor of Aden who was dismissed by Hadi. Although Hadi and Al-Zubaidi are both from southern Yemen, they are political enemies. This enmity dates back to the infighting that broke out in 1986 within the Yemeni Socialist Party, the ruling party in South Yemen prior to unification with North Yemen. The Zumra faction, which centered on Hadi and others from the Abyan and Shabwah governorates, were defeated in the conflict and fled to North Yemen. Meanwhile, the victorious Tughma faction, which was centered on people from the Dhale and Lahij governorates, maintained their dominance until the unification of North and South Yemen. Amid the declining political influence of southern Yemen in elections following unification, Ali Salem al-Beidh, a leading figure of the Tughma faction, staged an uprising in Aden in 1994 in an attempt to achieve the secession of the south. Hadi, who was then the defense minister for unified Yemen, played a key role in suppressing the ensuing civil war, and this historical enmity has continued to be a source of conflict.[28]

Relations between the Southern Transitional Council and Al Islah are also hostile, with the abovementioned 1994 civil war being one factor behind this. Because Al Islah contributed to the suppression of the uprising and allegedly carried out attacks on Sufi sites and looting in the south under a fatwa issued by al-Zindani,[29] Al Islah poses a serious threat to political forces in the south.[30] Based on this perception, the Southern Transitional Council labeled Al Islah a terrorist organization, grouping it with Al-Qaeda and the Houthis. Reflecting the influence of the UAE, their supporter, the Council has also pursued the elimination of Al Islah-affiliated forces stationed in southern Yemen. Al-Zubaidi is thought to harbor personal animosity toward Al Islah, likely stemming from his involvement with Al-Beidh's secessionists as a soldier during the 1994 civil war.[31]

Antagonism between the Southern Transitional Council and the Hadi regime, along with Al Islah, persisted even after the November 2019 Riyadh Agreement, which called for the formation of a coalition government involving the Council and the Hadi regime. It took over a year to form

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[28] There are said to be a large number of supporters of the Southern Transitional Council in the Dhale Governorate, while there are a large number of supporters of the Hadi regime in the Abyan Governorate.

[29] Lackner, *Yemen in Crisis*, p. 136.

[30] Fatima Abo Alasrar, "A Fractious Unity: Conflict Dynamics in Yemen's South," The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, September 13, 2019, https://agsiw.org/a-fractious-unity-conflict-dynamics-in-yemens-south/.

[31] "Man Huwa 'Aydarūs al-Zubaydī?" *al-Jazīra*, May 14, 2017, https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2017/5/1 4/%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%87%D9%88-%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3-%D8 %A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%AF%D9%8A.

the coalition government, and little progress was made with the integration of military and security forces that was set forth in the agreement. According to Paragraph 3 of Annex II of the Riyadh Agreement[32] all forces of both the Hadi regime and the Southern Transitional Council, except for the First Presidential Protection Brigade, were supposed to be relocated outside the Aden governorate. As of October 2022, however, Southern Transitional Council-affiliated forces were still stationed there.[33] As can be seen from the above, while Saudi Arabia and the UAE agreed on the need to curb the expanding influence of Iran and the Houthis, they were at odds over which anti-Houthi factions to support.

(2) Saudi Intervention in the North and UAE Intervention in the South, and the Dominance of the UAE's Proxy Forces

Saudi Arabia and the UAE primarily focused their interventions in different areas of Yemen. Saudi Arabia focused on the northern regions and areas near the Saudi-Yemen border, as well as providing support on the frontlines in the Marib governorate, which was said to be the last stronghold of the Hadi regime. Saudi Arabia's primary objective was, of course, to eliminate the threat to its borders and territory by eliminating the Houthis. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia, who had just recently assumed the post of defense minister, also sought to use the intervention in Yemen as an opportunity to showcase his capabilities and establish a track record ahead of his ascension to the throne.[34] Neither the Saudi forces nor the Yemeni government forces were, however, able to achieve any significant results in the Saada governorate and other northwestern parts of Yemen, the stronghold of the Houthis, a group that has mastered guerrilla warfare tactics through training with Hezbollah. From the perspective of the crown prince's efforts to establish a track record as well, the growing humanitarian toll due to the Saudi Air Force's lack of capabilities and shifting strike targets, conversely fueled criticism of the Saudi intervention as inhumane. On top of this, in 2019, the Houthis launched their "Operation Victory from God," inflicting massive losses on the coalition forces.[35] The Houthis also carried out cross-border attacks using drones and missiles, causing damage within Saudi territory. Given that Saudi Arabia had initially estimated that the conflict with the Houthis would be resolved within six weeks when they intervened in 2015, the country ended up paying a far higher cost than anticipated without seeing results.[36]

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[32] For the provisions of the Riyadh Agreement, I referred to the following source: "Naṣṣ Ittifāq al-Riyāḍ bayn al-Ḥukūma al-Yamanīya wa al-Janūbī (Wathīqa)," *al-Anāḍūl*, November 5, 2019, https://www.aa.com.tr/ar/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9/%D9%86%D8%B5-%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%81%D8%A7%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B6-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%85%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%86%D9%88%D8%A8%D9%8A-%D9%88%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A9/1636458#.

[33] Brian Carter, "Understanding Military Units in Southern Yemen," *Critical Threats*, December 16, 2022, https://www.criticalthreats.org/wp-content/uploads/2022-12-14-FINAL-ORBAT-Text-for-PDF.pdf.

[34] Lackner, *Yemen in Crisis*, p. 54.

[35] According to Houthi media reports, the operation resulted in 500 coalition force members being killed and 2,000 being taken captive. "'Amalīya al-Shahīd Abū 'Abd Allāh Ḥaydar: Mu'ashshirāt al-Naṣr Talūḥ fī al-Ufq," *Anṣār Allāh*, October 3, 2019, https://www.ansarollah.com/archives/282747.

[36] Gregory D. Johnsen, "The End of Yemen," *Brookings*, March 25, 2021, https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-end-of-yemen/.

In contrast, UAE forces, operating primarily in southern Yemen and the western coastal regions, achieved greater success, including the recapture of Aden in July 2015 and Mocha in January 2017, in spite of the stalemate on the frontlines. This earned the UAE a reputation for performing more effectively in the conflict than Saudi Arabia.[37] The UAE was seen to have worked toward achieving its goals in Yemen, which were said to include:

1. Maintaining its status as a reliable ally of Saudi Arabia and the United States;
2. Weakening the Muslim Brotherhood; and
3. Seizing control of coastal areas and logistics networks to serve as commercial and logistics hubs.[38]

To achieve these goals, the UAE trained local armed groups such as the Shabwa Defense Forces, Hadramawt Elite Forces, and Security Belt Forces to combat the Houthis and terrorist organizations. Since the Houthis had withdrawn from the region that was formerly South Yemen within about six months from the start of the intervention in March 2015, the main focus in the southern areas shifted to establishing and maintaining security through counterterrorism operations, with less emphasis placed on fighting the Houthis. With members well-versed in the geography and tribal dynamics of the region, the local armed groups achieved significant success in defending the areas under their control, maintaining security, and carrying out counterterrorism efforts.[39] Many of these groups supported the Southern Transitional Council, however, and their involvement in expelling the government forces from Aden in 2019 could be said to have exacerbated internal conflict among the anti-Houthi factions. In addition to supporting the southern secessionist forces, the UAE also backed the National Resistance Forces and an armed Salafist group called the Southern Giants Brigades, both of which played a central role in the 2018 operation to recapture the city of Al Hudaydah. Following the UAE's military withdrawal in 2019 and the stalemate on the frontlines caused by the Stockholm Agreement, the National Resistance Forces came to control the west coast region.[40] While forming an alliance with the National Resistance Forces, the Southern Giants Brigades successfully expelled the Houthis from the Shabwah governorate in 2022. This difference in the successes among their proxy forces contributed to the diverging assessments of the interventions by Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

As we have seen, while Saudi Arabia and the UAE were aligned in their efforts to combat the Houthis, they diverged sharply in their approaches to supporting Yemeni proxy forces such as Al Islah. This divergence was rooted in Yemen's internal divisions, which contributed to ongoing infighting among the local anti-Houthi proxy factions. The disputes among these factions indirectly

[37] Zoltan Barany, *Armies of Arabia: Military Politics and Effectiveness in the Gulf* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

[38] Gregory D. Johnsen, "The UAE's Three Strategic Interests in Yemen," The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, February 24, 2022, https://agsiw.org/the-uaes-three-strategic-interests-in-yemen/.

[39] For example, in 2015 Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) took advantage of the chaos of the civil war to take over Mukalla, the capital of the Hadhramaut Governorate. They remained in control for roughly a year, but were eventually driven out by UAE forces and the Hadhramaut Elite Forces.

[40] Yoshida Tomoaki, "Junigatsu Futsuka Kakumei no Shippai to Iemen Kokumin Teikogun no Shincho—Junan na Seizon Senryakuka de no Nishi Kaigan Chiiki Shihai [The Failure of the December 2 Revolution and Expansion of the Yemeni National Resistance Forces: Control of the West Coast Region under a Flexible Survival Strategy]," *Chuto Kenkyu* [Journal of Middle Eastern Studies], no. 548 (September 2023).

benefited the Houthis, complicating Saudi Arabia's efforts to achieve its goal of eliminating the Houthis. While Saudi Arabia had also aimed to establish a track record for its crown prince through the intervention, the UAE (and its proxies) were evaluated as having been more successful, and the failure of the Saudi intervention presumably damaged the crown prince's reputation and undermined Saudi Arabia's standing.

3. Competition over Nation-Building Policies

(1) The UAE's Transformation into "Little Sparta"

As discussed in the previous section, the UAE conducted its intervention in Yemen in a manner that demonstrated a degree of autonomy, even acting against Saudi interests at times. Horinuki Koji points out that the UAE's independent foreign policy stems from its efforts to expand its diplomatic and economic presence on the global stage, and the fact that it now sees itself as a major power of sorts.[41] One factor contributing to this newfound sense of itself as a major power is the UAE's political and economic reforms. This section will look at the reforms that the UAE and Saudi Arabia have each implemented under their respective new leaders, with particular focus on comparing their efforts to bolster their military capabilities.

Since its founding in 1971, the UAE has had a relatively weak sense of national identity, with tribalism and other sources of identity proving stronger, much like in other Arab countries.[42] Of the UAE's seven emirates, the five collectively known as the "northern emirates" are weaker both politically and economically than the two other emirates: Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Many of the signatories of the petition mentioned in part (2) of section 1 were people hailing from these northern emirates.[43] In light of these circumstances, the UAE, particularly Abu Dhabi and Dubai, have placed great importance on fostering a national identity and pursuing socio-economic development in order to secure political stability. A country's military can be utilized as a means to nurture national identity, and the UAE, for example, introduced conscription in 2014, and established a "Commemoration Day" holiday to memorialize the soldiers who died during the UAE's abovementioned intervention in the Yemeni civil war. In terms of military leadership training, the UAE also founded a National Defence College in 2013, with John Ballard, formerly of the United States Marine Corps, serving as president.

In addition to fostering a national identity, since its military deployment to Lebanon with the Arab Deterrent Force in 1976,[44] the UAE has worked to strengthen its military capabilities through overseas deployments and the elite training of its Presidential Guard.[45] By deploying military personnel to participate in operations with groups like the International Security Assistance Force

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[41] Horinuki Koji, "Arabu Shuchokoku Rempo—Saikin no Seiji Henka [United Arab Emirates—Recent Political Changes]," *Chuto Isuramu Shokoku Seiji Hendo Detabesu* [Political Changes in Middle Eastern/Islamic Countries (database)], August 30, 2021, https://dbmedm06.aa-ken.jp/archives/653.

[42] Hussein Ibish, "The UAE's Evolving National Security Strategy," *Issue Papers* (The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington), April 6, 2017, p. 10.

[43] Horinuki, "UAE ni Okeru Seiji Kaikaku Undo to Taisei no Kiki Ninshiki [Political Reform Movements in the UAE and the Regime's Risk Perception]," p. 9.

[44] Shu'ba al-Mathaf wa al-Tārīkh al-'Askarī, *al-Qūwāt al-Musallaḥa li Dawla al-Imārāt: Tārīkh wa Muhāmm* (Mudīrīya al-Tawjīh al-Ma'nawī, 2007), p. 48.

[45] The Presidential Guard has enhanced its status as an elite force by recruiting a large number of foreign nationals, including the appointment of Mike Hindmarsh, a former member of the Australian military, as a commander.

in Afghanistan, the UAE has gained knowhow through collaboration with advanced Western militaries. The key figure driving this strengthening of military capabilities is Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who has effectively been managing national affairs since 2014, when the then-ruler of Abu Dhabi, Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, suffered a stroke. Zoltan Barany notes that the UAE military is now considered the most capable among the Gulf Arab states, largely due to Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan's ongoing involvement since his time as crown prince.[46] Through policies such as the above, the acquisition of a large amount of Western military equipment, and their intervention in the Yemeni civil war, the UAE's military has come to be regarded as the most advanced among Arab countries, earning the UAE the nickname "Little Sparta."[47]

While the UAE has been praised for its successful efforts to strengthen its military, Saudi Arabia has also been pursuing military reforms under the leadership of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. This has partly been driven by the crown prince's desire to establish a track record for himself as defense minister, then as deputy crown prince, and later as crown prince (after being promoted in 2017), and also by the growing necessity for Saudi Arabia to maintain combat-ready military forces in light of its intervention in the Yemeni civil war. With regard to the crown prince's desire to establish a track record for himself, the "Vision 2030" growth strategy, the implementation of which he spearheads, includes the localization of defense production as a goal, and Saudi Arabia is pursuing the domestic development of ballistic missiles and drones in partnership with China and other countries. With regard to the Saudi need for combat-ready forces, in 2018, it replaced several key military leaders, including the chairman of the general staff and the commanders of the land and air forces. While no public reason was given, these dismissals were seen as part of the wider military reform effort.[48]

Neil Patrick, who has analyzed Saudi military reforms, offers a sharply critical view of their outcomes. He argues that Saudi military reform has been driven by the crown prince's political motivation to consolidate power, and that for the Saudi military to become a truly integrated force, command authority over overall operations needs to be delegated to specific general officers.[49] He also criticized the newly introduced system in which the head of joint operations reports only to the crown prince, bypassing the chief of staff, as being problematic for the advancement of cross-service coordination.[50] In terms of practical battlefield experience prior to the outbreak of the Yemeni civil war in 2015, Saudi Arabia's military had engaged the Houthis in battle during the 6th Saada war in 2009.[51] At that time, the Saudi military failed to effectively respond to Houthi cross-border attacks, and this failure, along with the failure to learn from the lessons of that conflict, contributed to Saudi Arabia's failed intervention in Yemen. As a result, the Saudi military has been

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[46] Barany, *Armies of Arabia*, p. 264.

[47] Athol Yates, *The Evolution of the Armed Forces of the United Arab Emirates* (Warwick: Helion & Co, 2021).

[48] "Saudi King Sacks Military Chiefs in Major Shake-Up," *The Guardian*, February 27, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/feb/27/saudi-king-sacks-military-chiefs-in-major-shake-up.

[49] Neil Patrick, "Saudi Defense and Security Reform," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May 31, 2018, https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/76487.

[50] Neil Patrick, "Saudi Arabia's Elusive Defense Reform," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, November 14, 2019, https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/80354.

[51] Between 2004 and 2010, the Saleh regime conducted a total of six separate counterinsurgency operations against the Houthis. While the government forces held the upper hand initially, the two sides gradually became more evenly matched. During the Sixth Saada War, the Houthis launched cross-border attacks against Saudi Arabia, which was supporting the Saleh regime's forces.

mockingly referred to as the "Kabsa Army."[52] With regard to military leadership training, it was not until November 2022 that an aide to the minister of defense announced that the establishment of a National Defense University was imminent, nine years behind the establishment of the UAE's National Defence College.[53] Thus, while both the UAE and Saudi Arabia pursued strengthening of their military capabilities under their respective new leaders, the UAE's military has been rated more highly. This disparity in evaluation has presumably been damaging to the standing of Saudi Arabia as a leading power in the region and the prestige of the crown prince, who had set out reform initiatives like Vision 2030. Factors contributing to the difference in the outcomes of their military reforms include the timing of the rise to power of the Saudi crown prince and the UAE's Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and the political motives behind Saudi Arabia's military reforms, which were driven by the crown prince's quest to consolidate power.

(2) Overlap in Saudi and Emirati Economic Growth Strategies

Tensions between Saudi Arabia and the UAE came to the fore over economic matters during discussions about adjusting oil production level reductions at an OPEC+ meeting in July 2021. The UAE expressed dissatisfaction with cuts proposed by Saudi Arabia at the meeting, arguing that its share of the production cuts was disproportionately large.[54] Since Saudi Arabia leads OPEC, the UAE's rejection of the Saudi proposal was met with astonishment. Toyoda Kohei notes that the UAE is rushing to increase oil production driven by concerns about fossil fuels becoming stranded assets due to global decarbonization efforts.[55] David Ottaway also suggests that the UAE is prepared to challenge Saudi Arabia's leadership within OPEC, signaling a shift in the two countries' traditionally asymmetric relationship.[56]

Competition arising from the overlap in the two countries' respective growth strategies is a key factor in the economic discord between them. Since the announcement of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 strategy in 2016, the kingdom has been implementing a raft of economic policies aimed at reducing its dependence on oil. The sectors of focus in the strategy, such as finance and tourism, are the same industries that the UAE has been developing under the "Abu Dhabi Vision 2030" plan, which was announced in 2008. Thus, as both countries seek to diversify away from

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[52] "Kabsa" is a mixed rice dish topped with meat that is popular in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere. It is said that around one in five Saudi adults is obese, and Kabsa is sometimes used as a symbol of unhealthy eating habits in Saudi Arabia, as is suggested in the article below. The term "Kabsa Army" is a satirical expression used to mock the Saudi military by suggesting that they are unfit for combat due to obesity. "Swapping Kabsa for Kale: Saudis Embrace Healthy Eating," *France 24*, March 1, 2023, https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20230301-swapping-kabsa-for-kale-saudis-embrace-healthy-eating.

[53] As of the time of writing (early July 2023), Muhammad Al-Ruwaili, commander of the Armed Forces Command Staff College of Saudi Arabia, also serves as director of the country's National Defense University.

[54] Fuji Kazuhiko, "UAE no 'Hanran' de Ashinami ga Midareru OPEC Purasu—'Kyocho Gensan' Goi ni Itarazu, Genyu Kakaku ga Ohaba Geraku no Kanosei mo [Unity of OPEC Plus Disrupted by UAE 'Revolt'—No Agreement Reached on 'Coordinated Production Cuts' Potentially Results in Significant Drop in Oil Prices]," Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry, July 19, 2021, https://www.rieti.go.jp/jp/papers/contribution/fuji-kazuhiko/283.html.

[55] Toyoda Kohei, "Fukuzatsukasuru Chuto no Enerugi Senryaku—Suiso Jigyo ni Kansuru Mittsu no Shiten [The Increasing Complexity of Middle Eastern Energy Strategies—Three Perspectives on the Hydrogen Business]," *Chuto Kyoryoku Senta Nyusu* [Japan Cooperation Center for the Middle East News], March 2022, https://www.jccme.or.jp/11/pdf/2022-03/josei03.pdf.

[56] David Ottaway, "Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates Turn Rival Allies," Wilson Center, July 20, 2021, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/saudi-arabia-and-united-arab-emirates-turn-rival-allies.

oil, they could be said to be increasingly competing in overlapping fields to establish themselves as economic hubs of the Middle East. Amid this competition, Saudi Arabia has also been actively promoting policies to attract businesses to its own territory, such as making it a condition that companies bidding on government procurement contracts establish their regional headquarters in Saudi Arabia.[57] This policy of encouraging firms to shift their Middle East headquarters to Saudi Arabia from elsewhere could be said to present a challenge for the UAE, which, with its smaller population, has relied heavily on attracting foreign companies to support its economic development and diversify away from oil.

As discussed above, while moving to advance its military strengthening efforts and other domestic reforms ahead of Saudi Arabia and in doing so boosting its international presence, the UAE has also challenged the direction taken by Saudi Arabia in OPEC+, where Saudi Arabia maintains the leadership role. On the other hand, as Saudi Arabia works toward economic diversification, it is increasingly coming into competition with the UAE due to their overlapping growth strategies. This has brought back into focus the competitive aspects of their relationship, which had been simmering under the surface since the 2011 uprisings. This renewed rivalry is not, however, driven by older factors such as border disputes or differences over deeper integration between GCC member countries, but rather by new factors like the rise of the UAE and economic competition.

Conclusion

This paper has provided an overview of the bilateral relations between Saudi Arabia and the UAE, analyzing the relationship's evolution from a historical perspective. Traditionally, relations between the two countries have been characterized by a duality: on the one hand, there are competitive elements stemming from border disputes and the UAE's desire to maintain its autonomy; on the other hand, there are cooperative aspects, particularly security cooperation aimed at countering Iran. As internal and external threats intensified in the wake of the 2011 uprisings, the cooperative elements of the relationship grew stronger with both countries setting aside their disputes, to the extent that the two countries were considered allies. Through their interventions in countries that became politically destabilized as a result of the uprisings, both countries sought to contain the threats posed by Islamism and Iran. While they succeeded in quelling these threats in strategically important neighboring countries like Egypt and Bahrain, the very act of mitigating the threats could also be seen as having weakened the factors motivating them to cooperate in the first place.

Despite their alliance, new sources of conflict began to emerge within Saudi-Emirati relations. In Yemen, Saudi Arabia supported the Hadi regime and Al Islah, while the UAE backed other factions. Notably, the UAE's support for the Southern Transitional Council intensified political divisions within Yemen, leading to infighting among anti-Houthi factions and undermining Saudi Arabia's aim of eliminating the Houthis. In addition to the conflict between proxy forces, the higher regard shown to the accomplishments of the UAE military during the intervention compared to those of Saudi Arabia's forces also damaged the standing of Saudi Arabia, who led the intervention,

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[57] "Chiiki Tokatsugaisha (RHQ) Raisensu Fuyo ga 70 Sha Cho ni [Number of Regional Headquarters (RHQs) Granted Licenses Now Exceeds 70]," *Bijinesu Tanshin* [Business Briefing], Nihon Boeki Shinko Kiko [Japan External Trade Organization], November 16, 2022, https://www.jetro.go.jp/biznews/2022/11/9f1f9349fcc8ecdf.html.

and also damaged the personal prestige of the crown prince.

In addition to the intervention in Yemen, in this paper I also analyzed the competitive dynamics relating to the domestic policies of Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Both countries have pursued nation-building strategies of strengthening their military capabilities and advancing economic development. While the UAE has made notable progress in enhancing its military capabilities, earning it international acclaim, military reforms have been less successful in Saudi Arabia, where they are largely seen as a means to gain the upper hand in internal power struggles. By making advances in this way, the UAE has reduced the historical asymmetry in their relationship with Saudi Arabia, further undermining Saudi Arabia's standing as a regional power. With regard to economic development, Saudi Arabia has implemented a range of initiatives under their Vision 2030 strategy aimed at boosting non-oil revenues. This has led to economic competition with the UAE, and particularly Dubai, which has been a pioneer in economic diversification away from oil dependence. As has been discussed above, following the successful stabilization of threats in troubled neighboring countries other than Yemen, the bilateral relationship appears to have shifted from one marked more by cooperation, to one marked more by competition. The factors driving this competitive dynamic are, however, distinct from the factors that were in place prior to the 2011 uprisings; presumably now centering on issues such as how their divergent threat perceptions led them to support different proxy forces in the Yemeni civil war, and the emergence of the UAE as a political and military power.

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Reconsidering the Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States: Approaching the Issue from the Standpoints of Objectives and Efficacy[*]

CHIJIWA Yasuaki[**]

Abstract

This study focuses on the controversies surrounding the United States' use of nuclear weapons (dropping the atomic bombs) against Hiroshima and Nagasaki. By approaching this issue from the "standpoints of objectives" and "standpoints of efficacy," this paper will disentangle the complicated debates and help to deepen our understanding of the process of ending the Pacific War and the issue of nuclear use as a historical problem between postwar Japan and the United States.

Within the discourse surrounding the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States, the theory that the bombings were primarily aimed at intimidating the Soviet Union and the theory that Soviet entry into the war against Japan was a direct factor in Japan's surrender, do not necessarily need to be paired together. Nor do the theories that the use of nuclear weapons was primarily aimed at minimizing the costs of war and the theory that the use of nuclear weapons was a direct factor in Japan's surrender. In fact, based on recent research and newly declassified documents, it is possible to examine the theory that the use of nuclear weapons was primarily aimed at minimizing the costs of war from the standpoint of objectives, and the theory that Soviet entry into the war against Japan was a direct factor in Japan's surrender from the standpoint of efficacy.

On May 27, 2016, Barack Obama became the first sitting U.S. president to visit Hiroshima, marking a pivotal moment in the addressing of the issue. In light of this, it is necessary to move beyond emotional debates and conduct objective analysis of the use of nuclear weapons as an example of failed war termination policy.

Introduction

In this paper I examine debates surrounding the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States.

In 2023, memes were posted on social media linking the atomic bombing of Japan to the U.S. "*Barbie*" movie. The social media accounts for the movie sparked public outrage when they responded favorably to some of these posts, and the movie's distributor, Warner Bros., was subsequently forced to issue an apology. This highlighted once again, 78 years after the end of World War II, the ongoing sensitivity surrounding the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States.

The uniqueness of the conclusion of the Pacific War lies in the fact that it involved the first-ever use of nuclear weapons in combat. Within the span of four days, two cities were obliterated along with their residents, with hostilities ending eight days after the first atomic bombing. Even in recent years, debates concerning the meaning of the use of nuclear weapons in the process of terminating the war have continued to unfold.[1]

The debate among historians on this issue has, however, become increasingly complex. In this paper I seek to disentangle the complex debates on the topic by approaching the issue from the standpoints of objectives and efficacy (hereinafter the "Objectives Standpoint" and "Efficacy Standpoint"). In doing so, my aim is to contribute to a deeper understanding of both the processes leading to the conclusion of the Pacific War and the issue of nuclear weapon use as a historical problem impacting postwar Japan-U.S. relations.

Past research and debates on this issue give the impression that little clear distinction is made between evaluating the use of nuclear weapons from the Objectives Standpoint and the Efficacy Standpoint. The so-called "Atomic Diplomacy Theory" posits that the United States used its nuclear weapons with the intention of intimidating the Soviet Union with an eye to the postwar world. In this paper I categorize this view as one focused on the Objectives Standpoint. The Atomic Diplomacy Theory has often tended to be debated in a way that aligns, from the Efficacy Standpoint, with the argument that Soviet actions were a crucial factor leading to Japan's acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration (hereinafter the "Soviet Factor Theory").[2] Similarly the argument that the atomic bombings were conducted to end the war swiftly and thereby prevent the loss of life that would have otherwise occurred (hereinafter the "Cost Minimization Theory"), has often been presented in alignment with the theory that the use of nuclear weapons was a direct factor in Japan's surrender (hereinafter the "Nuclear Factor Theory").[3]

In contrast to the abovementioned pairing of the Atomic Diplomacy Theory with the Soviet Factor Theory, and the Cost Minimization Theory with the Nuclear Factor Theory, in this paper I bring attention to the pairing of the Cost Minimization Theory with the Objectives Standpoint and the Soviet Factor Theory with the Efficacy Standpoint. I also examine whether the Cost Minimization Theory can truly be used to justify the atomic bombings.

1. The Use of Nuclear Weapons by the United States and Japan's Reaction

Let us first take a close look at the United States' use of nuclear weapons and Japan's reaction to it.

At a press conference on January 24, 1943, held following the Casablanca Conference, President Franklin D. Roosevelt indicated that the United States viewed the militarism of Japan (which had directly attacked the United States with its surprise strike on Pearl Harbor) as a threat

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[1]   Michael D. Gordin and G. John Ikenberry, eds., *The Age of Hiroshima* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020).

[2]   Hasegawa Tsuyoshi, *Anto: Sutarin, Toruman to Nihon Kofuku* [Secret Feud: Stalin, Truman, and the Surrender of Japan] (Tokyo: Chuokoron-Shinsha, 2006). *New edition published by Misuzu Shobo in 2023.

[3]   Asada Sadao, "Genbaku Toka no Shogeki to Kofuku no Kettei [The Shock of the Atomic Bombing and the Decision to Surrender]" in *Taiheiyo Senso no Shuketsu: Ajia-Taiheiyo no Sengo Keisei* [The End of the Pacific War: Formation of Postwar Asia-Pacific], ed. Hosoya Chihiro, Iriye Akira, Goto Kenichi, and Hatano Sumio (Tokyo: Kashiwa Shobo, 1997), pp. 195–221; and Asada Sadao, "'Genbaku Gaikosetsu' Hihan: 'Shinwa' to Tabu wo Koete (1949–2009-nen) [A Critique of the 'Atomic Diplomacy Theory': Beyond the 'Myths' and Taboos (1949–2009)]," *Doshisha Hogaku* [Doshisha Law Review], vol. 60, no. 6 (January 2009), pp. 1–81.

on par with Nazism, and announced a policy of seeking the unconditional surrender of the Axis powers. Even after its own impending military defeat became evident in 1945, Japan continued to fight, and it was estimated that if an invasion of Japan's home islands was launched, U.S. battle deaths in the invasion could reach as high as 40,000.[4]

Such concerns led to the emergence of the idea within the U.S. Department of State of modifying the unconditional surrender policy and issuing an ultimatum to Japan. Discussions about this culminated in a memorandum concerning an ultimatum submitted by Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson to President Harry S. Truman on July 2, 1945, and then the initial draft of the Potsdam Declaration.[5] A clause permitting the preservation of Japan's emperor system was included in the initial draft, but both Truman and Secretary of State James F. Byrnes feared that Japan's military could become emboldened by this and demand further concessions, thereby prolonging the war. As a result, the clause was ultimately removed, and in the actual Potsdam Declaration, the possibility of preserving the emperor system was only hinted at, with no guarantees.[6]

After the success of the first U.S. nuclear test on July 16, and assurances on July 17 at the Potsdam Conference from Joseph V. Stalin, premier of the Soviet Union, about the Soviet entry into the war against Japan, the incentive for the United States to make any further concessions to Japan diminished. Despite humanitarian concerns and the risk of increasing Soviet influence in postwar East Asia, the test's success and Soviet involvement promised reduced U.S. military casualties. With the use of nuclear weapons now an option, the United States, aiming to minimize Soviet influence after the war, announced the Potsdam Declaration to the press on July 26 without seeking Stalin's signature.[7]

Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs learned of the issuance of the Potsdam Declaration through radio broadcasts on July 27. As this fact indicates, the declaration was not issued as an official diplomatic document.

Less than two weeks later, on August 6, the United States dropped an atomic bomb over Hiroshima.

Truman's announcement of the atomic bombing was communicated to the Japanese side at about 1:00 a.m. on August 7. It took two days after the nuclear attack to confirm it, however, and Japan's Supreme War Council convened a day later, on August 9.

Before this, in the early hours of August 9, the Soviet Union entered the war against Japan.

The extent to which the use of nuclear weapons by the United States was a decisive factor in

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[4] Douglas J. MacEachin, *The Final Months of the War With Japan: Signals Intelligence, U.S. Invasion Planning, and the A-Bomb Decision* (Washington, D.C.: Center for the Study of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, 1998), p. 12.

[5] "The Secretary of War (Stimson) to the President, July 2, 1945," U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)* Vol. I (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1960), pp. 888–894; Henry Lewis Stimson, "The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb," *Harper's Magazine*, February 1947, http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/japan/stimson_harpers.pdf.

[6] Barton J. Bernstein, "Kensho: Genbaku Toka Kettei made no 300-nichi" [Examination: The 300 Days Leading Up to the Decision to Drop the Atomic Bombs], *Chuokoron* no. 1318 (February 1995), p. 400; Herbert Feis, *Japan Subdued: The Atomic Bomb and the End of the War in the Pacific* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 175–176; Robert P. Newman, *Truman and the Hiroshima Cult* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1995), p. 77.

[7] Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman: Years of Decisions* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1955), pp. 402–403.

ending the Pacific War has long been a subject of debate among historians. Diplomatic historian Asada Sadao has focused his attention on records such as the *Shusen Shiroku* (historical record of the end of the war), which was compiled by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after the war. According to the *Shusen Shiroku*, Foreign Minister Togo Shigenori met with Emperor Hirohito on the "morning" of August 8.[8] During the meeting, Togo advised the emperor that "The enemy's announcement regarding the new bomb that was intercepted yesterday, the 7th, and other matters relating to this, as well as the dropping of the new bomb, should serve as an opportunity for making the decision to end the war." The emperor responded by saying "The use of this type of weapon makes the continuation of the war increasingly impossible, and missing the opportunity to end the war under favorable conditions would be unacceptable, so it is my hope that the war will be brought to an end as swiftly as possible."[9]

After meeting with Emperor Hirohito, Togo requested that Prime Minister Suzuki Kantaro convene the Supreme War Council. According to the *Shusen Shiroku*, Togo told Suzuki that the reason for convening the meeting was the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.[10] It is also mentioned in the *Shusen Shiroku* that the meeting was not held on August 8 because "a Council member was unavailable on that day," and it was therefore postponed until the 9th.[11]

According to the memoirs of Sakomizu Hisatsune, chief secretary of the Cabinet at the time, Suzuki told him on the night of the 8th that "Now that it has been confirmed that the bomb dropped on Hiroshima was an atomic bomb, I would like to express my views on ending the war at tomorrow's Cabinet meeting. Can I ask you to make the necessary preparations?"[12] Emphasizing these discussions (which took place before the Soviet entry into the war against Japan in the early hours of the 9th) as a key piece of evidence for his argument, Asada argues that it is extremely unlikely that Japan would have surrendered in August 1945 without the atomic bombings.[13]

Among the above events described in the *Shusen Shiroku*,[14] one point that stands out is that the Supreme War Council meeting in response to the atomic bombing of Hiroshima was postponed from the 8th to the 9th due to the unavailability of one of the members. Asada sharply criticizes this decision, questioning how anyone could really be "unavailable" in such a moment of great urgency.[15] In contrast, historian Hasegawa Tsuyoshi, who emphasizes the Soviet entry into the war over the atomic bombings as being the decisive factor in Japan's acceptance of the

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[8]   Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ed., *Shusen Shiroku* (ge) [Historical Record of the End of the War (vol. 2)] (Tokyo: Shimbun Gekkansha, 1952), p. 535.

[9]   Quotations based on Imperial Household Agency, *Showa Tenno Jitsuroku* (9) [The Annals of Emperor Hirohito (vol. 9)] (Tokyo: Tokyo Shoseki, 2016), pp. 748–749.

[10] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ed., *Shusen Shiroku* (ge) [Historical Record of the End of the War (vol. 2)], p. 560.

[11] Ibid., p. 536.

[12] Sakomizu Hisatsune, *Dai Nippon Teikoku Saigo no Yonkagetsu: Shusen Naikaku "Futokorogatana" no Shogen* [The Last Four Months of the Empire of Japan: Testimony of the "Confidant" of the War Cabinet] (Tokyo: Kawade Shobo Shinsha, 2015), p. 194.

[13] Asada, "Genbaku Toka no Shogeki to Kofuku no Kettei [The Shock of the Atomic Bombing and the Decision to Surrender]," pp. 199, 213–214.

[14] Information about the events concerned is likely based on Togo's testimony on May 18, 1949. "Togo Chinjutsuroku (10) [Togo Testimony Records (10)]," in *Shusen Kosaku no Kiroku* (ge) [Records of Maneuvering for Ending the War (vol. 2)], ed. Kurihara Ken and Hatano Sumio (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1986), p. 356.

[15] Asada, "Genbaku Toka no Shogeki to Kofuku no Kettei [The Shock of the Atomic Bombing and the Decision to Surrender]," p. 199; Iokibe Makoto, *Nichibei Senso to Sengo Nippon* [The Japan-U.S. War and Postwar Japan] (Osaka: Osaka Shoseki, 1989), p. 118.

Potsdam Declaration, conversely interprets this postponement as reflecting the mindset of Japan's leaders who, feeling that the situation was not yet urgent, believed it would be fine to postpone the Supreme War Council meeting if a member was unavailable.[16]

So, who among the six members of the Supreme War Council—Prime Minister Suzuki, Foreign Minister Togo, War Minister Anami Korechika, Navy Minister Yonai Mitsumasa, Chief of the Army General Staff Umezu Yoshijiro, and Chief of the Navy General Staff Toyoda Soemu—was unavailable? Neither Asada nor Hasegawa have identified who it was. I will examine this issue below, but before I do, I must point out a critical error in the *Shusen Shiroku*.

As mentioned above, the *Shusen Shiroku* records that Emperor Hirohito and Togo discussed, on the "morning" of August 8, how the atomic bombing served as an opportunity to bring the war to an end as swiftly as possible. The *Showa Tenno Jitsuroku* (the annals of Emperor Hirohito), published in 2014, states that the meeting between the emperor and Togo took place not in the morning, but at "4:40 p.m."[17] Since that still means the meeting occurred on August 8, before the Soviet entry into the war against Japan, one might assume that the exact timing of the meeting is not a matter of great consequence. The timing is in fact, however, a crucially important issue because of another extremely significant event that occurred at noon that same day.

Japan had actually been seeking to end the war through Soviet mediation, and a decision was made on July 10 to send former Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro as a special envoy to the Soviet Union. Even after receiving reports of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, Togo, Yonai, and the others were still waiting on August 7 and on the morning of August 8, for a response from the Soviet Union regarding Konoe's mission. At 3:40 p.m. on August 7, Togo wired a final urgent request to Sato Naotake, Japan's ambassador to the Soviet Union, saying, "The situation is becoming increasingly tense. We urgently seek a clear response from the Soviet side. We request your utmost efforts to promptly secure a swift reply from them."[18] On the 8th, Yonai spoke to Takagi Sokichi, who was engaged in efforts to end the war in his capacity as a Naval General Staff officer and member of the research section of the Navy War College. Yonai said, "I met with the foreign affairs minister yesterday, and it seems that we are yet to receive a telegram [from Ambassador Sato]. Since Stalin only returned from Potsdam on the 5th, and it should take two or three days for the telegram to come through, we should hear something [from the Soviet Union] today or tomorrow."[19]

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[16] Hasegawa, *Anto* [Secret Feud], p. 323.

[17] Imperial Household Agency, *Showa Tenno Jitsuroku* (9) [The Annals of Emperor Hirohito(9)], pp. 748–749. Notably, historian Suzuki Tamon had earlier speculated in a paper published in 2006 that Togo's audience with Hirohito occurred in the afternoon. Suzuki Tamon, "Showa 20-nen 8-gatsu Toka no Gozen Kaigi: Genbaku Toka to Soren Sansen no Seijiteki Eikyo no Bunseki [Imperial Conference of August 10, 1945: Analysis of the Political Impacts of the Atomic Bombing and Soviet Entry into the War]," *Nihon Seiji Kenkyu* [Japanese Political Research] vol. 3, no. 1 (January 2006), pp. 75, 87. Also, a grandson of Togo, journalist Togo Shigehiko, published a book in 1993 that included unpublished materials, in which he states, albeit drawing on an unknown source, that Togo's audience with Emperor Hirohito was at 4 p.m. on August 8. Togo Shigehiko, *Sofu Togo Shigenori no Shogai* [The Life of My Grandfather Togo Shigenori] (Tokyo: Bungei Shunju, 1993), p. 378.

[18] "Togo Daijin, Sato Zai'so' Taishi-kan Saigo Ofukuden (dai 993-go, Showa 20-nen 8-gatsu nanoka) [Final Telegraph Exchange between Minister Togo and Ambassador to the Soviet Union Sato (no. 993, August 7, 1945)]," in *Shusen Shiroku* (ge) [Historical Record of the End of the War (vol. 2)], ed. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, p. 548.

[19] Takagi Sokichi, "Yonai Kaisho Jikiwa [Direct Account from Navy Minister Yonai]" (August 8, 1945), in *Takagi*

At noon on August 8, the long-awaited telegram from Sato finally arrived,[20] stating that he had secured a meeting with the Soviet commissar of foreign affairs, Vyacheslav M. Molotov, at 5:00 p.m. on August 8, Moscow time (11:00 p.m. on August 8, Japan time). This was about 16 hours before Togo was informed of the Soviet entry into the war against Japan.

Thus, the exact timing of the meeting between Emperor Hirohito and Togo (whether it occurred before or after the arrival of Sato's telegram at noon), has a significant impact on how the record of their meeting should be interpreted.

As revealed in the *Showa Tenno Jitsuroku*, the meeting between Emperor Hirohito and Togo actually took place *after* the telegram arrived. Their meeting was, of course, surely based on the knowledge that the Sato-Molotov meeting in Moscow would take place later that night. Indeed, it would be quite natural to conclude that this information was in fact the very reason why the meeting between the emperor and Togo took place. Hasegawa questions Asada's assumption that it was self-evident that the emperor and Togo would engage in negotiations with the United States and the United Kingdom predicated on acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration.[21] Hasegawa instead argues that their intended negotiating partner at that time was none other than the Soviet Union.[22] The historian Suzuki Tamon goes a step further, suggesting that the emperor may have instructed Togo to expedite negotiations with the Soviet Union in response to Togo's report, after which Togo asked the lord keeper of the Privy Seal (Kido Koichi) and the prime minister to convene the Supreme War Council.[23]

Indeed, given that the keenly awaited Soviet reply might have arrived late that night or in the early hours of the following day, would Japan really have abandoned their Soviet mediation strategy without waiting for only one more day to hear the Soviet response?

Based the chain of events above, it is possible to point out that the Supreme War Council meeting on August 9 might not have been organized in response to the nuclear attack on Hiroshima after all.[24] Even Emperor Hirohito and Togo, who were considered to be members of the "peace faction," cannot be said with certainty to have, as of the 8th, decisively abandoned the strategy of seeking Soviet mediation and resolved to immediately communicate to the United States their acceptance of the terms of the Potsdam Declaration. Instead, they may have been prepared to continue pursuing the Soviet mediation strategy, despite the risk of ultimately having to accept extremely unfavorable terms due to the Allies' possession of nuclear weapons. Based solely on Sakomizu's testimony, it is also unclear how Suzuki's "views on ending the war," which he indicated on August 8, aligned with the strategy of seeking Soviet mediation.

If this was the case, the veracity of the account in the *Shusen Shiroku*, which attributes

Kaigun Shosho Oboegaki [Memorandums of Rear Admiral Takagi] (Tokyo: Mainichi Shimbunsha, 1979), p. 341.

[20] "Togo Daijin, Sato Zai'so' Taishi-kan Saigo Ofukuden (dai 1530-go, Showa 20-nen 8-gatsu nanoka) [Final Telegraph Exchange between Minister Togo and Ambassador to the Soviet Union Sato]" (no. 1530, August 7, 1945), in *Shusen Shiroku* (ge) [Historical Record of the End of the War (vol. 2)], ed. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, p. 548.

[21] Wilson D. Miscamble, *The Most Controversial Decision: Truman, the Atomic Bombs, and the Defeat of Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 96.

[22] Hasegawa, *Anto* [Secret Feud], p. 322.

[23] Suzuki, "Showa 20-nen 8-gatsu Toka no Gozen Kaigi [Imperial Conference of August 10, 1945]," pp. 74–75. The studies by Hasegawa and Suzuki were completed before *Showa Tenno Jitsuroku* was published.

[24] Ibid.

the postponement of the Supreme War Council meeting to the unavailability of its member, is therefore questionable. In fact, the statement that "a Council member was unavailable on that day," was deleted from the 1997 reprint of the *Shusen Shiroku*.[25] Although the *Shusen Shiroku* is a primary source, its account of this situation—a juncture that is critical for analyzing the factors that led to Japan's surrender—cannot be taken at face value.

2. The Objectives Standpoint (1): The Atomic Diplomacy Theory

Based on the chain of events described above, I would now like to reexamine the debate surrounding the use of nuclear weapons from the standpoints of objectives and efficacy.

With regard to the objectives of the atomic bombings, there is a longstanding debate between proponents of the so-called orthodox and revisionist perspectives.[26] It could be said, however that what is referred to as "revisionism" in the West is conversely closer to the "orthodox" perspective in Japan, making such terms less meaningful for Japanese participants in the debate. For this reason, I will intentionally avoid the use of these labels in this paper and focus instead on the substance of each argument, referring to what is known as the orthodox perspective as the Cost Minimization Theory, and what is known as the revisionist perspective as the Atomic Diplomacy Theory. For convenience's sake, I will address the Atomic Diplomacy Theory first.

The Atomic Diplomacy Theory is the argument that the United States knew Japan would surrender even without the use of nuclear weapons, but chose to use them for another reason: to intimidate the Soviet Union, with postwar considerations in mind. Nobel laureate physicist Patrick M.S. Blackett famously stated, "… the dropping of the atomic bombs was not so much the last military act of the second World War, as the first major operation of the cold diplomatic war with

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[25] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ed., *Shusen Shiroku* [Historical Record of the End of the War] (reprint) (Tokyo: Kankocho Bunken Kenkyukai, 1993), p. 536.

[26] For studies from orthodox perspectives, refer to the following: Asada, *Genbaku Toka no Shogeki to Kofuku no Kettei* [The Shock of the Atomic Bombing and the Decision to Surrender]; Len Giovannitti and Fred Freed, *The Decision to Drop the Atomic Bomb* (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1965); William Craig, *The Fall of Japan* (New York: Dial Press, 1967); Robert J. C. Butow, *Japan's Decision to Surrender* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 1954); Richard B. Frank, *Downfall: The End of the Imperial Japanese Empire* (New York: Penguin Group, 1999); Michael Kort, *The Columbia Guide to Hiroshima and the Bomb* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Robert James Maddox, *Weapons for Victory: The Hiroshima Decision* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1995); Miscamble, *The Most Controversial Decision*; Newman, *Truman and the Hiroshima Cult*. For studies from revisionist perspectives, refer to the following: Gar Alperovitz, *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* (vol. 1 and 2) (New York: Vintage Books, 1996); Hasegawa, *Anto* [Secret Feud]; Patrick M. S. Blackett, *Fear, War, and the Bomb* (New York: Whittlesey, 1949); Leon V. Sigal, *Fighting to a Finish: The Politics of War Termination in the United States and Japan, 1945* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988). For studies that blend the orthodox and revisionist perspectives, refer to the following: J. Samuel Walker, *Prompt and Utter Destruction: Truman and the Use of Atomic Bombs against Japan* (New Delhi: Dev Publishers & Distributors, 1997); Martin J. Sherwin, *A World Destroyed: The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977); Feis, *Japan Subdued*; Andrew Rotter, *Hiroshima: The World's Bomb* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Barton J. Bernstein, "Roosevelt, Truman, and the Atomic Bomb, 1941-1945: A Reinterpretation," *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 90, no. 1 (Spring 1975); Barton J. Bernstein, "The Perils and Politics of Surrender: Ending the War with Japan and Avoiding the Third Atomic Bomb," *Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 46, no. 1 (February 1977); Barton J. Bernstein, "Understanding the Atomic Bomb and the Japanese Surrender: Missed Opportunities, Little-Known Near Disasters, and Modern Memory," *Diplomatic History*, vol. 19, no. 2 (Spring 1995); Lisle A. Rose, *Dubious Victory: The United States and the End of World War II* (Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1973). For a study that distinguishes between the significance of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, refer to the following. Campbell Craig and Sergey Radchenko, *The Atomic Bombs and the Origins of the Cold War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

Russia now in progress."[27] The historian Gar Alperovitz later developed this argument further.

The weakness of the Atomic Diplomacy Theory lies in the absence of any conclusive evidence that "atomic diplomacy" was an objective of the bombings. Alperovitz's research has been criticized for issues such as forced interpretations of source materials and inaccurate citations.[28] Moreover, a number of questions regarding this theory remain unresolved, such as whether merely possessing nuclear weapons, without actually using them, might have been sufficient to intimidate the Soviet Union. One might also wonder whether the United States, in reality, refrained from blatantly threatening the Soviet Union with nuclear weapons for a time after the war. In recent years, the Atomic Diplomacy Theory as posited by Blackett and Alperovitz has increasingly tended to be rejected.

As a result, some researchers have attempted to narrow the scope of the atomic diplomacy argument. Hasegawa, for example, argues that after the success of the first nuclear test, the United States no longer needed Soviet participation in the war against Japan and instead hurried to use nuclear weapons to force Japan to surrender before the Soviets could enter the war against Japan, thereby preventing the expansion of Soviet influence in postwar East Asia.[29] If this were true, however, it is difficult to reconcile with the fact that President Truman still wanted the Soviet Union to enter the war against Japan even after the successful nuclear test.[30]

It also makes it difficult to explain why the United States issued the "Byrnes Note." The Byrnes Note was the response from Byrnes to an inquiry from Japan regarding its potential acceptance of the terms of the Potsdam Declaration with the added condition that the sovereignty of the emperor be maintained. In the note, Byrnes responded to the Japanese inquiry without answering in the affirmative or negative and instead drafted a reply simply reiterating the terms of the Potsdam Declaration, stating that "From the moment of surrender the authority of the Emperor and the Japanese Government to rule the state shall be subject to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers…." Byrnes secured the agreement of the United Kingdom, China (the Nationalist government based in Chongqing), and the Soviet Union, before sending this response to Japan.[31]

At the time that Japan indicated its potential acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration with the added condition, Soviet forces had already begun invading Manchuria. If the United States had truly wanted to force Japan to surrender as quickly as possible due to U.S. concerns about the Soviet Union, there can be no doubt that it would have either immediately accepted Japan's added condition or at least deliberated on accepting it, with an eye to preventing the expansion of Soviet power. There is in fact no evidence of such deliberations taking place. Instead, the United States remained uncompromising toward Japan, fully aware that this risked prolonging the war.[32] Rather than moving to facilitate Japan's surrender as quickly as possible, the United States even went to

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[27] Blackett, *Fear, War, and the Bomb*, pp. 136–137.

[28] Robert James Maddox, "Gar Alperovitz: Godfather of Hiroshima Revisionism," in *Hiroshima in History: The Myths of Revisionism*, ed. Robert James Maddox (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2007).

[29] Hasegawa, *Anto* [Secret Feud], pp. 234, 239–240, 271.

[30] "Truman Letters to Bess Truman, July 18 and 20, 1945," in *Dear Bess: The Letters from Harry to Bess Truman, 1910–1959*, ed. Robert H. Ferrell (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1983), pp. 519–520.

[31] Mainichi Shimbunsha Tosho Henshubu [Mainichi Shimbun Book Editing Department], ed., *Taiheiyo Senso Hishi: Bei Senji Shidosha no Kaiso* [Secret History of the Pacific War: Recollections of American Wartime Leaders] (Tokyo: Mainichi Shimbunsha, 1965), pp. 305–307.

[32] Bernstein, "The Perils and Politics of Surrender," pp. 24–25.

the effort of seeking Soviet agreement on the Byrnes Note at the risk of providing the Soviets with an opportunity to take advantage of the situation by stalling for time.

The United States would indeed presumably have been seeking to minimize Soviet influence in postwar East Asia as much as possible. It is important to remember, however, that nuclear weapons had never been used in anger before, and it was still uncertain how decisive a weapon they would prove to be in warfare, or even if they would actually detonate after being dropped from an aircraft. The nature of Soviet participation in the war ultimately depended on the Soviets. The United States had no way of knowing the intensity, scope, or duration of any Soviet attacks, nor could it even determine whether the Soviets would actually join the fight.

Stimson noted in his diary on August 9, "The bomb and the entrance of the Russians into the war will certainly have an effect on hastening the victory. But just how much that effect is on how long and how many men we will have to keep to accomplish that victory, it is impossible yet to determine."[33] This was the situation as seen from the U.S. side.

3. The Objectives Standpoint (2): The Cost Minimization Theory

In contrast to the Atomic Diplomacy Theory, the Cost Minimization Theory posits that the atomic bombings were intended to bring the war to an early end, thereby preventing the casualties that would otherwise have occurred.

It is important to note here that even if the Cost Minimization Theory is more supportable than the Atomic Diplomacy Theory, this does not immediately prove the correctness of the use of nuclear weapons from the perspective of cost minimization.

It seems difficult to question the fact that, amid the uncertainties about the effectiveness of atomic bombing and the fulfillment of promises by the Soviet Union, the use of nuclear weapons by the United States was aimed at ending the war early and preventing further casualties. In fact, during the U.S.-U.K. Combined Chiefs of Staff meeting held alongside the Potsdam Conference, the estimated date for ending organized Japanese resistance was set as November 15, 1946 (not 1945).[34] This means that, at that stage, the war was expected to last 15 months longer than it actually did in the end. During those 15 months, many more Allied soldiers would have died at the hands of Japan, and the lives of Allied prisoners of war and non-combatants in the Asia-Pacific region would have continued to be at risk.

The United States sought to end the war early on their own terms, utilizing every means at its disposal to prevent further casualties among its own forces, including the use of nuclear weapons and the Soviet entry into the war.[35] If the war could be ended solely through the use of nuclear weapons, the United States would likely have placed less weight on humanitarian concerns surrounding the use of nuclear weapons than on concerns about the expansion of Soviet influence in postwar East Asia, which would become inevitable with the Soviet entry into the war against

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[33] Hiroshima: Henry Stimson's Diary and Papers, Part 9, July 28 thru Aug. 9, 1945, http://www.doug-long.com/stimson9.htm; Barton Bernstein, H-Diplo Roundtable on Tsuyoshi Hasegawa's *Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman, and the Surrender of Japan, H-Diplo*, vol. 7, no. 2 (January 2006), https://issforum.org/roundtables/, p. 17.

[34] "Meeting of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, July 19, 1945," *Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)* Vol. II, p. 115.

[35] Gideon Rose, *How Wars End: Why We Always Fight the Last Battle* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), p. 113.

Japan.

Notwithstanding Japan's heavy responsibility for the war, however, the question remains: were there no alternatives to using nuclear weapons to bring the conflict to an early end?

Alternatives to the use of nuclear weapons, such as an invasion of the Japanese home islands, would certainly have resulted in greater costs for both sides. There is debate about claims that the United States overestimated the number of U.S. casualties that would result from an invasion of Japan's home islands, with those claiming that it was an overestimation referring to it as the "one million casualties myth."[36] Yet the fundamental issue is not whether or not there would have been one million casualties. Even if the resulting casualties had only numbered in the tens of thousands, that still would not have been an easily acceptable figure for a democratic nation. Even conventional bombing and naval blockades, which would have resulted in fewer casualties on the U.S. side than an invasion, would likely have caused tremendous damage to the Japanese side.

Thus, it is difficult to say that military alternatives to the use of nuclear weapons, such as an invasion of Japan's home islands, conventional bombing, or naval blockades, would necessarily have been preferable.

What, then, about diplomatic alternatives to military actions? Would there, for instance, have been a different outcome if the Potsdam Declaration had been issued with different content or in a different format?[37]

First, let us examine the clause about preserving Japan's emperor system that was included in the original draft of the Potsdam Declaration. After the war, Stimson and Under Secretary of State Joseph C. Grew remarked that if the United States had explicitly declared early on that Japan could retain its emperor system, it might have helped to bring the war to an early end.[38] While it is indeed true that the U.S. public held a harsh view of Emperor Hirohito at the time,[39] public opinion can be shifted through persuasion, and governments oftentimes adopt policies that run contrary to the views of the public. Public opinion itself is also subject to change, as U.S. public opinion about Emperor Hirohito in fact subsequently did.

There is, however, some rationality in the idea that a clause on preserving the emperor system could not be issued, at least not in the form of a stand-alone condition. The opposition of Truman and Byrnes to a clause on preserving the emperor system was based on their concern that offering one concession could incentivize the Japanese side to demand further concessions.

The historian Barton J. Bernstein points out that Truman and Byrnes thought that relaxing the terms would instead embolden Japan's military to seek further compromises, thereby prolonging the war.[40] Furthermore, on July 16, the former secretary of state Cordell Hull, advised Byrnes

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[36] Stimson, "The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb"; J. Samuel Walker, "The Decision to Use the Bomb: A Historiographical Update," in *Hiroshima in History and Memory*, ed. Michael J. Hogan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 31.

[37] Historian Robert P. Newman argues that the Potsdam Declaration was appropriate because it was not harsher than what was presented to Germany, but he does not address the possibility of any deficiencies relating to the Declaration. Newman, *Truman and the Hiroshima Cult*, p. 70.

[38] Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947), p. 629; Joseph Grew, "The War Could Have Been Ended without the Bomb," in *The Atomic Bomb: The Critical Issues*, ed. Barton J. Bernstein (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1976), p. 31.

[39] *Washington Post*, June 29, 1945.

[40] Bernstein, "Kensho: Genbaku Toka Kettei made no 300-nichi" [Examination: The 300 Days Leading Up to the Decision to Drop the Atomic Bombs], p. 400.

through Grew, that a failure to secure Japan's surrender despite having made a concession about preservation of the emperor system would galvanize the Japanese, while in the United States, there would be a terrible political backlash. Thus, if Japan had then rejected a declaration that included a clause on preserving the emperor system, the U.S. government could have faced harsh domestic criticism for not just risking appearing weak to the enemy, but also failing to achieve its objectives.[41]

Secondly, let us consider the possibility of providing advance warning about the use of nuclear weapons. The historian Herbert Feis argues that the United States should have taken the risk of disclosing the results of the nuclear test.[42] In addition to such a disclosure, the United States surely also had the option of providing a demonstration.

The historian Richard B. Frank argues that a demonstration would not have been effective, given that even after the actual atomic bombings, Japan's military asserted that the United States only had a few more nuclear weapons left in their stockpile.[43] Nevertheless, one could consider it significant that providing an advance warning or demonstration would have strengthened the Potsdam Declaration as an ultimatum. While nuclear weapons were seen as psychological weapons with the expectation that their use would be psychologically shocking,[44] there is room for debate about whether the threat from an advance warning would have been more effective than the shock from their actual use without any warning.

Thirdly, let us consider what difference it might have made if the Potsdam Declaration had also been signed by Stalin. The United States issued the declaration without obtaining prior approval from the Soviet Union. In response to this, Japan, noting the absence of Stalin's signature on the Potsdam Declaration, became even more deeply committed to the strategy of seeking Soviet mediation.[45]

Had the United States approached the Soviet Union about the matter in advance, it is highly likely that Stalin would have agreed to signing the Potsdam Declaration and having it released prior to entering the war as a way to justify scrapping the Japanese-Soviet Neutrality Pact.[46] It was Stalin who stood to lose by being excluded from signing the declaration.[47]

Lastly, what if a deadline for accepting the Potsdam Declaration had been set and the declaration had been issued through diplomatic channels? With regard to a deadline for

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[41] "The Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of State, July 16, 1945," *Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conference of Berlin* Vol. II, p. 1267.

[42] Feis, *Japan Subdued*, p. 187.

[43] Frank, *Downfall*, pp. 270–271.

[44] Stimson, "The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb."

[45] Togo Shigenori, *Jidai no Ichimen: Togo Shigenori Gaiko Shuki* [One Aspect of the Era: Diplomatic Notes of Togo Shigenori] (Tokyo: Hara Shobo, 2005), pp. 353–354; Yomiuri Shimbunsha, ed., *Showashi no Tenno* (3) [The Emperor in Showa History (vol. 3)] (Tokyo: Chuokoron Shinsha , 2011), pp. 355–356.

[46] David Holloway, "Jockeying for Position in the Postwar World: Soviet Entry into the War with Japan in August 1945," in *The End of the Pacific War: Reappraisals*, ed. Tsuyoshi Hasegawa (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2007), p. 174.

[47] While Feis speculates that Stalin would not have agreed to sign the Potsdam Declaration unless its issuance was delayed until after the Soviet entry into the war, this view remains questionable. On the other hand, Feis does acknowledge that if Stalin had signed the declaration, Japan's response to it might have been different. Feis, *Japan Subdued*, p. 96. Boris Slavinsky, *Nisso Senso e no Michi: Nomonhan kara Chishima Senryo made* [USSR-Japan: On the Way to War: A Diplomatic History of 1937-1945], trans. Kato Yukihiro (Tokyo: Kyodo Tsushinsha, 1999), pp. 13–14.

acceptance, the declaration only stated "We shall brook no delay." Some historians therefore see this as meaning that strictly speaking, the declaration cannot actually be characterized as an ultimatum.[48] Furthermore, the historian Hatano Sumio points out that, had the declaration had been issued through diplomatic channels, it cannot be ruled out that the assertions of the Allies and the intentions of the Japanese government could have been mutually communicated.[49]

Nevertheless, Frank tends to dismiss outright the possibility that choosing a different path might have led to a different outcome, basing his conclusions on what happened on the path that was actually taken. Frank contends that the fact that the Potsdam Declaration was not issued through diplomatic channels is not a key issue, basing his argument on the absence of evidence that the Japanese side ever seriously discussed the fact that it had not been delivered through such channels.[50] This kind of interpretation remains problematic, as there were in fact Cabinet members, like Minister of Agriculture and Commerce Ishiguro Tadaatsu, who had argued that "The government should not respond to something so unofficial."[51]

Prime Minister Suzuki's "*mokusatsu*" statement (to the effect that the declaration would be ignored) is often mentioned in this context. It is perhaps more natural, however, to view this statement simply as part of a response by Suzuki to a reporter's question, rather than an official rejection of the Potsdam Declaration by the Japanese government. In fact, as of August 2, the British Foreign Office did not consider the "*mokusatsu*" statement to necessarily be the Japan side's last word on the matter.[52] After all, governments of defeated nations, even when privately prepared to surrender, often outwardly maintain the pretense of continuing to fight wars right up until the last possible moment due to domestic considerations, as was the case with the Pietro Badoglio administration prior to Italy's World War II surrender.[53]

Truman had said to Stimson that the order for the atomic bombing would remain active until the Japanese side communicated their acceptance of the U.S. side's final ultimatum.[54] If that were the case, the atomic bombing would have taken place even without Suzuki's "*mokusatsu*" statement.[55]

The journalist Naka Akira points out that if we accept what Truman said, it leads to an absurd situation where an extremely high-level political judgment—evaluating Japan's response to the Potsdam Declaration—was to be made by the U.S. bombing squadron commander in the

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48　Robert H. Ferrell, ed. *Harry S. Truman and the Bomb: A Documentary History* (Worland: High Plains Publishing Company, 1996), p. 95, footnote 2.

49　Hatano Sumio, *Saisho Suzuki Kantaro no Ketsudan: "Seidan" to Sengo Nihon* [Prime Minister Suzuki Kantaro's Decision: The "Sacred Decision" and Postwar Japan] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2015), p. 150.

50　"Commentary by Frank," in H-Diplo Roundtable on Tsuyoshi Hasegawa's *Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman, and the Surrender of Japan*, p. 15.

51　Ishiguro Tadaatsu, *Nosei Ochibakago* [Basket for Fallen Leaves of Agricultural Policy] (Tokyo: Oka Shoin, 1956), p. 427.

52　"Minute from Mr. De La Mare to Mr. Sterndale Bennett [F4839/584/61] August 2, 1945," No. 596, *Documents on British Policy Overseas Series* 1, Vol. I (The Conference at Potsdam, July-August 1945), ed. Rohan Butler and M.E. Pelly (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1984), p. 1251.

53　Paul Kecskemeti, *Strategic Surrender: The Politics of Victory and Defeat* (New York: Atheneum, 1964), p. 191.

54　Truman, *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman*, p. 421.

55　Nishijima Ariatsu, *Genbaku wa Naze Tokasareta ka: Nihon Kofuku wo Meguru Senryaku to Gaiko* [Why Were the Atomic Bombs Dropped? Strategies and Diplomacy Surrounding Japan's Surrender] (Tokyo: Aoki Shoten, 1971), p. 270; Iokibe, *Nichibei Senso to Sengo Nippon* [The Japan-U.S. War and Postwar Japan], p. 117.

Southwest Pacific responsible for the atomic bombing operation.[56]

It is possible that Japan's response to the Potsdam Declaration may have been different, if one of the approaches outlined above, or a combination of them (the inclusion of a provision permitting the retention of the emperor system alone would likely not have sufficed), had been pursued. It must surely have been possible to understand at the time that doing so could increase the likelihood of Japan accepting the terms of the declaration. During the Potsdam Conference, Stimson actually suggested that it might be possible to bring Japan to surrender by incorporating one of the following three elements into the surrender ultimatum: a clause providing for the retention of the emperor system, an advance warning about the use of nuclear weapons, or Stalin's signature.[57]

Those who justify the use of nuclear weapons in line with the Cost Minimization Theory reject not only the military alternatives to the atomic bombing but also the diplomatic alternatives, based on the various reasons I have discussed above. If a ground invasion of Japan's home islands had actually taken place, however, they might have said something like this: "It was impossible for the emperor to make the decision to surrender. If he had done so, War Minister Anami would surely have refused to sign the imperial rescript, or he would have resigned, forcing the entire Suzuki Cabinet to resign, thus thwarting the moves of the faction in favor of surrender contingent on one condition. The Japanese military's insistence on the four conditions for surrender and its calls for a final battle on the home islands meant that the fall of Tokyo was unavoidable…."

Historian Michael Kort, who, as with some of the aforementioned researchers, argues that the use of nuclear weapons was justified, contends that the reinforcement of the Japanese military for the final defense of Japan's home islands (Operation *Ketsugo*) is evidence that Japan was determined to fight to the end.[58] Regardless of Japan's true intentions, however, during wartime it is only natural from a military perspective for a state on the verge of being invaded to prepare to fight to the end.

The historians Lawrence Freedman and Saki Dockrill argue that the use of nuclear weapons by the United States was justified because Japan would also have used atomic bombs during the war had they been available.[59] This is, however, merely an assumption based on another assumption, and even if Japan had the intention of using nuclear weapons, Freedman and Dockrill's argument does not address the question of whether using them for the political goal of forcing an enemy to surrender on one's own terms can be considered equivalent to using them in retaliation in response to a crisis of national survival.

It is interesting to note here a memorandum from Undersecretary of the Navy Ralph Bard to Stimson, dated June 28, which included the following sentence: "Following the three-power

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[56]　Naka Akira, *Mokusatsu: Potsudamu Sengen no Shinjitsu to Nippon no Unmei* (jo) [The "Mokusatsu" Statement: The Truth about the Potsdam Declaration and Japan's Fate (vol. 1)] (Tokyo: Nippon Hoso Shuppan Kyokai, 2000), p. 79.

[57]　Kurihara Ken and Hatano Sumio, eds., *Shusen Kosaku no Kiroku* (ge) [Records of Maneuvering for Ending the War (vol. 2)] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1986), p. 319.

[58]　Michael Kort, "The Historiography of Hiroshima: The Rise and Fall of Revisionism," http://www. theamericanpresident.us/images/truman_bomb.pdf.

[59]　Lawrence Freedman and Saki Dockrill, "Hiroshima: A Strategy of Shock," in *From Pearl Harbor to Hiroshima: The Second World War in Asia and the Pacific, 1941–45*, ed. Saki Dockrill (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 1994), p. 209.

conference [the Potsdam Conference] emissaries from this country could contact representatives from Japan somewhere on the China Coast and make representations with regard to Russia's position and at the same time give them some information regarding the proposed use of atomic power, together with whatever assurances the President might care to make with regard to the Emperor of Japan and the treatment of the Japanese nation following unconditional surrender. It seems quite possible to me that this presents the opportunity which the Japanese are looking for." While of course acknowledging that the success of such a policy was not certain, Bard added, "The only way to find out is to try it out."[60] Setting aside the feasibility of Bard's proposal itself, one perhaps cannot say definitively that sufficient measures were taken to avoid the atomic bombings of the two cities and the civilians living in them—an action that does not align with humanitarian principles.

The manner in which the decision to use nuclear weapons was made, was lacking in cautiousness. Or rather, it appears that there may not have been any kind of action that one could characterize as a "decision" at all.[61] The atomic bombing orders were issued on July 25 with the approval of Stimson and Chief of Staff of the Army George Marshall, but no presidential order was issued. Bernstein points out that Truman did not make the decision to use nuclear weapons, and that he simply opted not to overturn the already established course of action.[62] General Leslie R. Groves Jr., who oversaw the Manhattan Project, also described the process as Truman opting to continue with the existing plan (rather than deciding anew himself as the newly inaugurated president to actively choose to use nuclear weapons).[63]

There was a faction of people within the United States who, like Groves, were in fact proactive in their support for the use of nuclear weapons.[64] Moreover, it is not the case that the use of nuclear weapons and the Soviet entry into the war against Japan were coordinated as part of a joint U.S.-Soviet strategy for ending the war.[65] Additionally, one cannot overlook the fact that the interval placed between the first atomic bombing and the second was insufficient.

In other words, while the use of nuclear weapons was, as proponents of the Cost Minimization Theory argue, driven by the goal of minimizing the costs of war, it was also an action that was conducted without a sufficient degree of caution. The historian J. Samuel Walker describes this as a "lack of incentives not to use the weapons."[66] Ultimately, the United States prioritized its unconditional surrender policy over humanitarian concerns regarding the use of nuclear weapons.

4. The Efficacy Standpoint (1): The Nuclear Factor Theory

Next, I will examine the Nuclear Factor Theory and Soviet Factor Theory from the standpoint of

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[60] Ralph A. Bard, "Memorandum on the Use of S-1 Bomb," June 27, 1945, Harrison-Bundy Files, Record Group 77, microfilm publication M1108, folder 77, National Archives, Washington, D.C., last updated June 30, 2017, http://www.doug-long.com/bard.htm.

[61] Michael D. Gordin, *Five Days in August: How World War II Became a Nuclear War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 40.

[62] Bernstein, "Roosevelt, Truman, and the Atomic Bomb, 1941–1945," p. 61.

[63] Leslie R. Groves, *Now It Can Be Told: The Story of the Manhattan Project* (New York: Harper, 1962), p. 266.

[64] Ibid., p. 265.

[65] Holloway, "Jockeying for Position in the Postwar World," p. 175.

[66] Walker, *Prompt and Utter Destruction*, p. 92.

the efficacy of the atomic bombings.[67]

As is well known, it is exceedingly difficult to determine whether the direct cause of Japan's surrender was the use of nuclear weapons or the Soviet entry into the war. These two events occurred in extremely rapid succession, and the subsequent acceptance of the terms of the Potsdam Declaration was the net result of a chain reaction of actions stemming from the combined psychological states of numerous groups of people. It is therefore incredibly challenging to conclusively argue which of the two events was the more significant factor. Conversely, proponents of the so-called "double shock" theory, which posits that both the atomic bombing and the Soviet entry into the war were necessary factors,[68] also encounter difficulties in arguing that either one alone would have been insufficient.

Although it is not my aim with this paper to determine whether the use of nuclear weapons or the Soviet entry into the war was the decisive factor in Japan's surrender, I would like to touch upon certain suggestions drawn from historical materials as well as interpretations based on them. That said, it is essential to exercise caution here as well, since even if one could argue that the use of nuclear weapons was a more important factor in causing Japan's surrender than the Soviet entry into the war from the Efficacy Standpoint (a stance that I approach with skepticism in this paper), such an assertion would be based on the wisdom of hindsight. It would also not validate the judgments made at the time of the decision to use nuclear weapons nor would it justify the Cost Minimization Theory from the Objectives Standpoint. The Cost Minimization Theory and the Nuclear Factor Theory are not the same.

As for elements in the arguments supporting the Nuclear Factor Theory, it was obvious that the destructive power of nuclear weapons far exceeded that of conventional bombing, and that additional atomic bombings would have caused extensive devastation. Frank places emphasis on how the atomic bombings raised the possibility that the U.S. military invasion of the Japanese home islands, which had been a fundamental premise for the Japanese side's argument that Japan ought to fight to the bitter end, might not even be implemented.[69]

Meanwhile, by the time of the atomic bombings, many Japanese cities had already been destroyed with conventional bombing. Regardless of whether or not the United States possessed nuclear weapons, there was already deep-seated anxiety in Japan about the possibility of an invasion of the Japanese home islands,[70] and it was this anxiety that drove Japan to seek Soviet mediation. What is more, the opposition of the Japanese military to acceptance of the terms of the Potsdam Declaration remained unchanged even after the atomic bombings. As previously noted, even if Emperor Hirohito and Togo were prepared to accept unfavorable conditions as a result

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[67] For studies on the Nuclear Factor Theory, see Asada, "Genbaku Toka no Shogeki to Kofuku no Kettei [The Shock of the Atomic Bombing and the Decision to Surrender]." For studies on the Soviet Factor Theory, see the following: Hasegawa, *Anto* [Secret Feud]; Ward Wilson, "The Winning Weapon? Rethinking Nuclear Weapons in Light of Hiroshima," *International Security*, vol. 31, no. 4 (Spring 2007).

[68] Sumio Hatano, "The Atomic Bomb and Soviet Entry into the War: Of Equal Importance," in *The End of the Pacific War*, ed. Hasegawa, p. 112.

[69] Frank, *Downfall*, pp. 239, 343, 348; Richard B. Frank, "Ending the Asia-Pacific War: New Dimensions," in *The Termination of Wars in Historical Perspective (International Forum on War History: Report)*, ed. National Institute for Defense Studies, Ministry of Defense (NIDS) (Tokyo: NIDS, 2016), p. 54.

[70] Hasunuma Shigeru, "Kaiso 4 (1950-nen 3-gatsu 31-nichi) [Memoirs 4 (March 31, 1950)]," in *Shogen Kiroku Taiheiyo Senso: Shusen e no Ketsudan* [Pacific War Testimony Records: The Decision to the End the War], ed. Sankei Shimbun Shuppan Kyoku (Tokyo: Sankei Shimbun Shuppan Kyoku, 1975), p. 254.

of the atomic bombings, they may still have been acting under the assumption that the Soviet mediation strategy would continue to be pursued.

One piece of evidence used by proponents of the Nuclear Factor Theory is the testimony of Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal Kido.[71] In his testimony, Kido stated that "just as the weight of the peace faction had increased to the point where it had reached a balance with the weight of the faction calling for continued fighting, the atomic bombings significantly weakened the position of the latter, and the peace faction gained the upper hand. And then with the Soviet entry into the war against Japan, I think the position of the faction seeking to continue fighting weakened further, making the peace faction stronger still. Therefore, I believe that the war could have been ended even just with the atomic bombs alone, but the Soviet entry into the war made the process even easier."[72] This statement gives the impression that Kido was throwing up a smokescreen.

Kido had been an advocate of the strategy of seeking Soviet mediation, so it would have been difficult for him to say that the entry of the Soviets into the war was the decisive factor in Japan's surrender, as it would be tantamount to him acknowledging the failure of that strategy.[73] Nevertheless, Kido's emphasis on the atomic bombings as a decisive factor may not have been solely for self-justification. The interview of Kido was conducted on April 17, 1950, when Japan was still under occupation and the position of the emperor had not yet been fully settled, with discussions about his abdication still ongoing. Refraining from attributing Japan's surrender to the Soviet entry into the war may also have been partly motivated by a desire to protect the emperor, who had been involved in the efforts to arrange for mediation by the Soviets.

Kido also stated after the war that, "if the military leadership could say that the loss of the war was due to science, rather than because they were lacking in strength of spirit or tactical capabilities, it would help save face to some extent when surrendering." This implies that Japan was able to accept defeat because it was science, or in other words atomic bombing, that had allowed the military to preserve its honor.[74] Yet at the August 10 Imperial Conference where the decision to accept the terms of the Potsdam Declaration was made, Emperor Hirohito did not state anything to the effect that the military had done well, or that he was convinced that they would surely have achieved results in the battle for the home islands but that there was nothing that could be done about the disparity in scientific capabilities that the atomic bomb represents, and that there was therefore no option but to surrender. In fact, the opposite is true. At this final step of the war, the emperor instead criticized the military.[75]

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[71] Asada, "Genbaku Toka no Shogeki to Kofuku no Kettei [The Shock of the Atomic Bombing and the Decision to Surrender]," pp. 207–208.

[72] Kido Koichi, "Shusenji no Kaiso Jakkan [Some Reflections at the Time of the War's End]," in *GHQ Rekishika Chinjutsuroku: Shusenshi Shiryo* (jo) [GHQ Historical Section Testimonies: Historical Documents from the End of the War (vol. 1)], ed. Sato Motoei and Kurosawa Fumitaka (Tokyo: Hara Shobo, 2002), p. 44.

[73] Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, "The Atomic Bombs and the Soviet Invasion: Which Was More Important in Japan's Decision to Surrender?" in *The End of the Pacific War*, ed. Hasegawa, p. 137.

[74] "*Danwa* [Conversation]" (April 17, 1950), in *Kido Koichi Nikki: Tokyo Saibanki* [Kido Koichi's Diary: The Tokyo Trials Period], ed. Kido Nikki Kenkyukai [Kido Diary Research Association] (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai [University of Tokyo Press], 1980), p. 443.

[75] "Hoshina Zenshiro Shuki [Hoshina Zenshiro Notes]," in *Shusen Shiroku* (ge) [Historical Record of the End of the War (vol. 2)], Ministry of Foreign Affairs, p. 599.

5. The Efficacy Standpoint (2): The Soviet Factor Theory

Next, as with the Nuclear Factor Theory, the Soviet Factor Theory is supported by the immediate shock of the events concerned, and the fact that, as the hours ticked away, Japan's position grew increasingly perilous. The Soviet entry into the war effectively nullified any remaining possibility of Japan defending against an invasion of its home islands, a possibility that had already been in doubt. The political scientist Paul Kecskemeti argues that even with the use of nuclear weapons, Japan would have clung to the hope of Soviet mediation had the Soviets not entered the war against them.[76] This argument is the most convincing when viewed in light of the process leading to Japan's acceptance of the terms of the Potsdam Declaration. While Japan's military leadership remained committed to continuing to wage war even after the entry of the Soviets against Japan, it is worth noting that immediately after the Soviet entry into the war they shifted (during the Supreme War Council meeting on August 9) from outright rejection of the Potsdam Declaration to arguing about surrender conditions with acceptance of the terms of the Potsdam Declaration in mind. It is easy to imagine the sense of loss Japanese leaders must have felt after learning of the Soviet entry into the war, and the psychological difficulty in recovering from such a blow.

One common argument in support of the Nuclear Factor Theory is based on a passage in the Imperial Rescript Ending the War: "Moreover, the enemy has begun to employ a new and most cruel bomb, the power of which to do damage is indeed incalculable, taking the toll of many innocent lives." However, the second draft of the Cabinet's proposal on August 14 contained the following sentence, which was removed from the final draft: "We ordered the imperial government to seek mediation from a third country, but this unfortunately did not come to fruition, and this is the reason why We ultimately accepted the provisions of the Joint Declaration of the Powers."[77] This perhaps indicates that caution is needed when basing arguments for the Nuclear Factor Theory on the content of the Imperial Rescript.

Despite this, the above points do not allow one to definitively conclude that the Soviet entry into the war was necessary to cause Japan to accept the terms of the Potsdam Declaration. It was the Soviet refusal to mediate that was critical. Unlike the use of nuclear weapons by the United States, the Soviet entry into the war against Japan was not an action taken for the purpose of bringing the conflict to an early resolution. It is clear that the Soviet entry into the war was an act of aggression against Japan, and even if one accepts the Soviet Factor Theory, it cannot possibly be used to justify the Soviet action.

Conclusion

Within the discourse concerning the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States, the Atomic Diplomacy Theory does not necessarily need to be paired with the Soviet Factor Theory, nor the Cost Minimization Theory with the Nuclear Factor Theory. In fact, based on research in recent years and newly declassified documents, it is possible to examine the Cost Minimization Theory from the Objectives Standpoint, and the Soviet Factor Theory from the Efficacy Standpoint.

While the Cost Minimization Theory tends to be used to justify the atomic bombings, in

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[76] Kecskemeti, *Strategic Surrender*, pp. 203–204.
[77] Chaen Yoshio, *Misshitsu no Shusen Shochoku* [The Imperial Rescript Ending the War behind Closed Doors] (Tokyo: Yushodo Shuppan, 1989), p. 273.

this paper I have highlighted that, if it had been conveyed to the Japanese side that there was zero possibility of Soviet mediation, or if Stalin's signature had been on the Potsdam Declaration, or if the Potsdam Declaration had been issued as an official document, the outcome may have been different. With regard to these points, it must be said that the process leading to the use of nuclear weapons by the United States was lacking in the cautiousness warranted by the magnitude of the tragedy it would cause.

The atomic bombing of Japan by the United States during the closing stages of the Pacific War has cast a long shadow over postwar Japan-U.S. relations. On May 27, 2016, U.S. President Barack Obama became the first sitting U.S. president to visit Hiroshima, marking a pivotal moment in the addressing of the issue. Additionally, during the G7 Summit held in Hiroshima from May 19 to 21, 2023, leaders of countries that had been Allied powers and Axis powers fighting on opposite sides of World War II came together 78 years after the end of the war to bow their heads at the Cenotaph for the Victims of the Atomic Bomb. It is necessary to move beyond emotional debates and conduct objective analysis of the use of nuclear weapons as an example of failed war termination policy.

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Western Europe, Universal Values, and Activation of the "Comprehensive" Security System: Focusing on the Mediterranean in the 1970s and 1980s[*]

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Abstract

Western European security today has fulfilled its function of maintaining order by emphasising universal values such as freedom and democracy in addition to military aspects. This article discusses events from the late 1970s to the early 1980s, focusing on the Mediterranean, which became the focus of national policy coordination, while also referring to developments in international organisations such as the Western Alliance and European integration. The region was a strategic point of confrontation in the Cold War in Europe, and during this period, the political and economic agendas of the Western powers were also linked to security issues due to the political changes of the preceding period. The existence of such normative concepts, which also played a strong role in Cold War strategy and alliance cohesion, provided the ideological basis for the southern enlargement of European integration, which converged as an important policy objective of Western European security. In this sense, the broad alliance management in the Mediterranean and the deepening and widening of European integration during this period can be positioned as a milestone in the activation of the "comprehensive" Western European security that has continued to the present day.

Introduction

The world today is witnessing drastic changes in the security environment, making it particularly important to reexamine its underlying history. In Europe, after more than a quarter of a century of relative stability, the changes are shaking up national sovereignty and other principles that have established the international order since the modern era and have been accepted for better or worse. This trend would be immeasurably shocking and expected to have a major global impact, which at the same time makes it all the more necessary to understand the history of the formation of this order.

In the period between the late 1970s and the 1980s, the contemporary European security system in the above context underwent key changes that led to its current form.[1] The international order at the time, coupled with regional issues and the involvement of international organisations,

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[1] For reviews of contemporary European security, see David Galbreath, Jocelyn Mawdsley and Laura Chappell eds., *Contemporary European Security* (London: Routledge, 2019); Roberta N. Haar, Thomas Christiansen, Sabina Lange and Sophie Vanhoonacker eds., *The Making of European Security Policy: Between Institutional Dynamics and Global Challenges* (London: Routledge, 2021).

such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Community (EC), predecessor of the European Union (EU), contributed to shaping the unique political dynamics that defined Western European relations during this period.[2]

This immediately brings to mind the Cold War that swept across the world in the latter half of the 20th century.[3] Many scholars share the understanding that the period of eased tensions in the 1970s, namely *détente*, was followed by renewed intense East-West confrontation in the 1980s.[4] In the context of the Cold War in Europe, while military tensions escalated once again, efforts to maintain *détente* continued, and such events had significant meaning, including laying various groundwork for terminating the Cold War.[5]

Furthermore, Western European relations during this period cannot be discussed without acknowledging the importance of universal values, such as freedom, democracy and human rights regarded as semi-evident assumptions in the current international order. Needless to say, NATO and the EC were the twin pillars that supported post-war Western Europe.[6] This period is defined by deepening and widening European integration, with support from the North Atlantic alliance.[7] As discussed later, the policy objectives of different countries converged through international organisations, invoking the above normative concepts, along with a shared understanding that economic integration and political stability contribute to security. Such political dynamics formed the "comprehensive" Western European security system that has continued to this day.[8] However,

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[2] In this article, the term "Western Europe" is broadly used to refer to the liberal bloc in Europe, which generally overlaps with the territories of NATO and the EC at the time and includes states not belonging to either organisation.

[3] As a recent comprehensive work, see O.A. Westad, *The Cold War: A World History* (London: Allen Lane, 2017).

[4] Major studies on this period include Leopoldo Nuti ed., *The Crisis of Détente in Europe: From Helsinki to Gorbachev, 1975–1985* (London: Routledge, 2010); Kiran Klaus Patel and Kenneth Weisbrode eds., *European Integration and the Atlantic Community in the 1980s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Kristina Spohr and David Reynolds eds., *Transcending the Cold War: Summits, Statecraft, and the Dissolution of Bipolarity in Europe, 1970–1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Martin Klimke, Reinhild Kreis and Christian F. Ostermann eds., *Trust, but Verify: The Politics of Uncertainty and the Transformation of the Cold War Order, 1969–1991* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016).

[5] For example, Mark Gilbert, *Cold War Europe: The Politics of a Contested Continent* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), chaps. 9 and 10.

[6] On the relationship between NATO and the EC during the Cold War, see works such as Martin A. Smith and Graham Timmins, "The EU, NATO, and the Extension of Institutional Order in Europe", *World Affairs*, vol. 163, no. 2 (Fall 2000), pp. 80–84. While the term "European Economic Community" (EEC) is also frequently used in previous studies and primary sources, the "EC" is used throughout this article as it focuses on the period after the EEC evolved into the EC.

[7] N. Piers Ludlow, "From Deadlock to Dynamism: The European Community in the 1980s", in *Origins and Evolution of the European Union*, ed. Desmond Dinan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 218–232; Wilfried Loth, *Building Europe: A History of European Unification*, trans. Robert F. Hogg (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), chap. 5.

[8] In this article, the term "comprehensive" is used to mean the Western European security framework in the 1970s and 1980s that extended beyond strictly the military dimension and encompassed the maintenance of political and economic order, incorporating issues of universal values. In other words, this article focuses on examining the ideological nature underlying the phenomenon of this period, rather than on expanding the definition of security to include economic and social aspects. Although a detailed conceptual analysis of this phenomenon is beyond the scope of this article, it resonates with scholarly interest in post-Cold War European security. For discussions on the cooperative relationship between NATO and the EU, see works such as Jolyon Howorth, "EU-NATO cooperation: the key to Europe's security future", *European Security*, vol. 26, no. 3 (2017), pp. 454–459; Nele Marianne Ewers-Peters, "Positioning member states in EU-NATO security cooperation: towards a typology", *European Security*, vol. 32, no. 1 (2023), pp. 22–41.

Western European policies on universal values were coordinated only after the various constraints of earlier periods had been removed. Under what conditions and through what processes was the "comprehensive" Western European security system activated?

This article examines the issues surrounding security in Western Europe in the late 1970s and the 1980s in connection with the Western alliance and European integration.[9] In doing so, particular attention is paid to the Mediterranean, a strategic area of historical importance and a priority for the Western alliance during the Cold War. As will be discussed in detail, the political and economic stability of the region was closely connected to security challenges. With the manifestation of universal values, the Mediterranean became an area around which Western European countries coordinated their policies. This article looks at Western European postures in the Mediterranean during this period and attempts to deduce the origin of the European order.

Advanced studies have long been conducted on political, diplomatic and international history focusing on the 1970s and 1980s, benefiting from the declassification of archival documents in various countries and institutions. Research on Europe has also made remarkable strides,[10] with many historians taking keen interest in the political and diplomatic developments at the end of the Cold War, a pivotal period in world history.[11] Meanwhile, few have discussed the interaction between security in Western Europe and European integration from the prism of universal values.[12]

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[9]   The holistic consideration of NATO and European integration was also inspired by the latest literature including Leonard August Schuette, "Shaping institutional overlap: NATO's responses to EU security and defence initiatives since 2014", *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, vol. 25, no. 3 (August 2023), pp. 423–443.

[10] On recent specific contributions, see Diego A. Ruiz Palmer, "The NATO-Warsaw Pact competition in the 1970s and 1980s: a revolution in military affairs in the making or the end of a strategic age?", *Cold War History*, vol. 14, no. 4 (2014), pp. 533–573; Emmanuel Mourlon-Druol, "Steering Europe: Explaining the Rise of the European Council, 1975–1986", *Contemporary European History*, vol. 25, no. 3 (2016), pp. 409–437; N Piers Ludlow, "*More than just a Single Market*: European integration, peace and security in the 1980s", *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, vol. 19, no. 1 (2017), pp. 48–62; Angela Romano, "Re-designing military security in Europe: cooperation and competition between the European community and NATO during the early 1980s", *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire*, vol. 24, no. 3 (2017), pp. 445–471; Frederike Schotters, "Mitterrand's Europe: functions and limits of 'European solidarity' in French policy during the 1980s", *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire*, vol. 24. no. 6 (2017), pp. 973–990; Matthew Ford and Alex Gould, "Military Identities, Conventional Capability and the Politics of NATO Standardisation at the Beginning of the Second Cold War, 1970–1980", *The International History Review*, vol. 41, no. 4 (2019), pp. 775–792; Benedetto Zaccaria, "Jacques Delors, the End of the Cold War and the EU Democratic Deficit", *Journal of European Integration History*, vol. 26, no. 2 (2020), pp. 285–304; Susan Colbourn, "Debating détente: NATO's Tindemans Initiative, or why the Harmel Report still mattered in the 1980s", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 43, no. 6-7 (2020), pp. 897–919; Flavia Canestrini, "Economic sanctions and new strategies in East-West economic relations in 1981–1982", *The International History Review*, vol. 44, no. 3 (2022), pp. 675–693.

[11] Frederic Bozo, Marie-Pierre Rey, N. Piers Ludlow and Leopoldo Nuti eds., *Europe and the End of the Cold War: A Reappraisal* (London: Routledge, 2008); Svetlana Savranskaya, Thomas Blanton and Vladislav Zubok eds., *Masterpieces of History: The Peaceful End of the Cold War in Europe, 1989* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010); Mary Elise Sarotte, *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe*, updated ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

[12] For example, Robert Pee and William Michael Schmidli eds., *The Reagan Administration, the Cold War, and the Transition to Democracy Promotion* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019) excludes Europe from its subject; the link with security issues is not fully examined in Anna Michalski, "The Enlarging European Union", in *Origins and Evolution of the European Union*, pp. 271–293. On the other hand, Emma De Angelis and Eirini Karamouzi, "Enlargement and the Historical Origins of the European Community's Democratic Identity, 1961–1978", *Contemporary European History*, vol. 25, no. 3 (August 2016), pp. 439–458 covers a slightly different period but raises similar issues as this article.

As for the Mediterranean, which is the main focus of this article, there are pioneering multifaceted works on the transformation of international relations and regional order in this region, including the neighbouring Middle East.[13] However, they primarily address security issues of the Cold War, with limited linkages made to issues related to universal values.

This article therefore takes a comprehensive look at the political and economic agendas of Western European powers and international organisations, mainly relating to security issues in the Mediterranean, as well as discourses on universal values such as freedom and democracy. Drawing extensively on archival sources from major countries and organisations, it aims to take a holistic view and provide an outline of Western European relations during this period. In doing so, the article seeks to illustrate the process by which the above elements interplayed with each other in Western Europe in this period and shed light on its historical significance.

1. Security Issues in the Mediterranean

(1) The Mediterranean's Strategic Position in the Modern Age

To begin the discussion, this article briefly presents the contemporary history of the Mediterranean and European strategy.[14] It is Britain that exerted dominance over the Mediterranean through the peak of the 19th century and continued to have a prominent presence well into the latter half of the 20th century.[15] Due to its geographical characteristics, the Mediterranean remained the focus of modern European international relations where imperial rivalry unfolded among the great powers. In the catastrophic two world wars in the 20th century, intense battles were fought over sea control in the region. After the Second World War, the Mediterranean gained further strategic importance in the emerging landscape of the Cold War. As epitomised by the Truman Doctrine of 1947, the Eastern Mediterranean was one of the focal points in the East-West confrontation at the beginning of the Cold War.[16]

The Mediterranean during the Cold War was deemed not only a cornerstone for alliance strategy but also NATO's vulnerable Southern Flank.[17] When a series of events occurred in the mid-1970s, as discussed later, Western European powers grew deeply concerned about the situation in the region.[18] In this context, Britain's reduced worldwide engagement due to economic stagnation and decolonisation had a substantial impact, both politically and militarily. At this time, control over the Mediterranean shifted from Britain to the United States, according to some narratives, including "Americanization of the Mediterranean" discussed by a prominent contemporary

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[13]   Elena Calandri, Daniele Caviglia and Antonio Varsori eds., *Détente in Cold War Europe: Politics and Diplomacy in the Mediterranean and the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016).

[14]   For an overall history of the Mediterranean, see profound monographs such as Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, 2e éd. (Paris: Armand Colin, 1966); David Abulafia, *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean* (London: Allen Lane, 2011).

[15]   Robert Holland, *Blue-Water Empire: The British in the Mediterranean since 1800* (London: Allen Lane, 2012).

[16]   Elena Calandri, "The United States, the EEC and the Mediterranean: Rivalry or Complementarity?", in *Détente in Cold War Europe*, p. 33. The historical context of the Truman Doctrine—Britain had become unable to continue supporting the legitimate government of Greece during the civil war and thus asked the United States to replace it as the provider of assistance—is also suggestive.

[17]   Dionysios Chourchoulis, *The Southern Flank of NATO, 1951–1959: Military Strategy or Political Stabilization* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015).

[18]   *Documents on the British Policy Overseas [DBPO], Series III, Volume V: The Southern Flank in Crisis, 1973–1976*, pp. vii–xxxvii.

historian.[19] Nevertheless, the British presence did not disappear entirely,[20] and as the regulating force of the Cold War diminished, the fact that even the United States, the leading power of NATO, gradually reduced its involvement, cannot be overlooked.[21]

In other words, the upheavals in the Mediterranean implied the temporary emergence of a "power vacuum" that would unsettle the Western alliance. In response, Western European countries began attempting to stabilise the situation as stakeholders.[22] Within this context, issues surrounding universal values surfaced, and together with the security agenda, they characterised Western European relations under the transformation of the Cold War. However, certain conditions still needed to be met for these issues to bring about policy coordination among Western European nations.

(2) Cold War Strategy and Universal Values: The Mediterranean as a Focal Point

How did Western Europe turn universal values into its policy objectives during this period? In reality, political and military aspects heavily influenced the circumstances surrounding normative concepts, such as democracy and human rights, and policies were coordinated and aligned among countries following a highly complex process.

Respect for universal values was enshrined in the preamble of the North Atlantic Treaty signed in 1949 and was a major condition that member states were expected to accept. In other words, normative principles were part of the terms of NATO, an alliance of liberal democratic states.[23] Nevertheless, military considerations repeatedly took precedence over the treaty's ideals and principles under the Cold War. The military imperative was unquestionable, from the inception of the Truman Doctrine through the accession of Greece and Turkey in 1952,[24] creating a troublesome phenomenon: states that did not necessarily have solid democratic foundations were unavoidably incorporated into the alliance for Cold War strategy.

Moreover, there were numerous instances in which universal values took a backseat even

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[19] Ennio Di Nolfo, "The Cold War and the transformation of the Mediterranean, 1960–1975", in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Volume II: Crises and Détente*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 256–257.

[20] For Britain's political and military involvement in the era of decolonisation and after, see Ito Nobuyoshi, "Beyond the 'master-narrative' of decolonisation: Reconsidering the end of empires in the 20th century", *ACTA 2021, Independence Wars since the XVIII Century: XLVI International Congress of Military History (29 August–3 September 2021, Athens), Volume 2* (2022), pp. 319–335.

[21] Jussi M. Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 489.

[22] Effie G.H. Pedaliu, ""A Sea of Confusion": The Mediterranean and Détente, 1969–1974", *Diplomatic History*, vol. 33, no. 4 (September 2009), pp. 735–750. The EC's Mediterranean policy in the same period was also an important political project. Christophe Berdat, "L'avènement de la politique méditerranéenne globale de la CEE", *Relations internationales*, no 130 (2007), pp. 87–109; Guia Migani, "La politique globale méditerranéenne de la CEE, 1970–1972", dans *L'Europe sur la scène internationale dans les années 1970: à la découverte d'un nouveau monde*, dir. Antonio Varsori et Guia Migani (Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2011), pp. 193–210; Elena Calandri, "Understanding the EEC Mediterranean Policy: Trade, Security, Development and the Redrafting of Mediterranean Boundaries", in *Europe in a Globalising World: Global Challenges and European Responses in the „long" 1970s*, ed. Claudia Hiepel (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2014), pp. 165–184.

[23] Specifically, the preamble reaffirms the parties' "faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and their desire to live in peace", and proclaims to safeguard the freedom, rights, and civilisation common to humanity. North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO], Official Text, "The North Atlantic Treaty", Washington D.C., April 4, 1949.

[24] Chourchoulis, *The Southern Flank of NATO, 1951–1959*, chap. 1.

in Western Europe where freedom and democracy were espoused.[25] In particular, authoritarian regimes persisted in the Iberian Peninsula, despite being regarded as part of the Western bloc, and cooperating with Iberian states was seen as a necessary evil for Cold War strategy. Portugal, under António Salazar's *Estado Novo* regime, was among NATO's original members. Although Spain, under Francisco Franco's dictatorship, was barred from the North Atlantic alliance, it established strong ties with the West through a bilateral agreement with the United States. In addition, a military junta was established in Greece in 1967, and serious repression of human rights and freedoms became rampant.

For NATO, these developments represented a significant deviation from the ideals of the alliance and became an easy target for critique from the Eastern bloc. Yet the Western alliance could not simply dismiss these countries considering strategic and military interests. Furthermore, as authoritarian regimes often resolutely claimed "anti-communism" to assert loyalty to the alliance, Western Europe's criticism of these regimes became largely half-hearted.[26] Thus, the Mediterranean came to be viewed as a vulnerable region for NATO, and this instability was exposed in dramatic form in the mid-1970s.

2. The Mediterranean during the Turning Point in Western European Security

(1) Political Changes in the Mediterranean and the Manifestation of Universal Values
In the 1970s, referred to as the transformation period of the Cold War, *détente* progressed between the United States and the Soviet Union and in Europe, respectively.[27] The Helsinki Final Act, adopted at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) in August 1975, became a symbol of European *détente*. Additionally, it is well known that Basket III on human rights in the Final Act later played a historic role in an unintended manner.[28]

Besides, there was a series of major shifts in regional order in the Mediterranean during this period. The aforementioned Southern European countries with authoritarian regimes underwent

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[25] For details on Portugal, Spain and Greece discussed below, see Helen Graham and Alejandro Quiroga, "After the Fear Was Over? What Came after Dictatorships in Spain, Greece, and Portugal", in *The Oxford Handbook of Postwar European History*, ed. Dan Stone (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 505–511.

[26] This tendency was particularly pronounced in the United States, the leader of the Western alliance. David F. Schmitz, *The United States and Right-Wing Dictatorships, 1965–1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[27] Jussi M. Hanhimäki, *The Rise and Fall of Détente: American Foreign Policy and the Transformation of the Cold War* (Washington D.C.: Potomac Books, 2013).

[28] Andreas Wenger, Vojtech Mastny and Christian Nuenlist eds., *Origins of the European Security System: The Helsinki Process Revisited, 1965–75* (London: Routledge, 2008); Angela Romano, *From* Détente *in Europe to European* Détente*: How the West Shaped the Helsinki CSCE* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2009); Poul Villaume and Odd Arne Westad eds., *Perforating the Iron Curtain: European Détente, Transatlantic Relations, and the Cold War, 1965–1985* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2010); Michael Cotey Morgan, *The Final Act: The Helsinki Accords and the Transformation of the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018). For the role of the CSCE through the end of the Cold War, Daniel C. Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect: International Norms, Human Rights, and the Demise of Communism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Matthias Peter und Hermann Wentker Hrsg., *Die KSZE im Ost-West-Konflikt: Internationale Politik und gesellschaftliche Transformation 1975–1990* (München: Oldenbourg, 2012); Poul Villaume, Rasmus Mariager and Helle Porsdam eds., *The 'Long 1970s': Human Rights, East-West Détente and Transnational Relations* (London: Routledge, 2016); Nicolas Badalassi and Sarah B. Snyder eds., *The CSCE and the End of the Cold War: Diplomacy, Societies and Human Rights, 1972–1990* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2019); Jakub Tyszkiewicz ed., *Human Rights and Political Dissent in Central Europe: Between the Helsinki Accords and the Fall of the Berlin Wall* (London: Routledge, 2022).

democratisation in dramatic fashion.[29] The Greek military junta collapsed due to its self-destructive intervention in the Cyprus conflict, and a civilian government returned. Portugal, after Salazar's exit, overcame the turmoil of the Carnation Revolution (Revolução dos Cravos) and an attempted coup by the radical left, and a new government was established through democratic elections. In Spain, Franco's death raised the momentum for democratisation, leading to the establishment of a new regime under the king and civilian politicians. Subsequently, each of these three countries sought to accomplish their accession to integrated Europe as a diplomatic priority. Spurred by the EC's willingness to accept their application, they all participated in European integration in the 1980s.[30]

The political shift in Southern European countries and the southern enlargement of the EC, which occurred as a political consequence of the transformation, are portrayed in a positive light by a prominent historian, who refers to them as "democracy triumphs".[31] However, it should be noted that the importance of democracy and other normative concepts upheld by Western Europe was frequently cited in this context.[32] As Western European countries explored the possibility of coordinated external policy, they increasingly prioritised universal values amid the mood of European *détente* and the international environment, premised on the antagonistic structure of the Cold War. This marked a clear departure from earlier years when Western European countries had to tacitly tolerate authoritarian regimes within the bloc, due to the Cold War strategy.

In the three Southern European countries that had shed authoritarianism, consolidating democracy and achieving political stability became urgent tasks. The idea that they would contribute to Western European order as a whole was closely tied to the policy interests of Western Europe. During this period, the EC actively promoted political cooperation among its member states,[33] which also signified the strengthening of Western European security. Coupled with the unique circumstances of *détente*, the situation surrounding Western Europe changed significantly, and issues of universal values emerged as a multilateral policy agenda.

(2) The Destabilisation and the Continuation of European *Détente*

European *détente*, which reached its peak in Helsinki, entered another transitional phase in the late 1970s. As a reconciliation between the United States and the Soviet Union shifted from destabilisation to collapse,[34] concerns arose over the potential retreat of European *détente* and the

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[29] Mario Del Pero, Víctor Gavín, Fernando Guirao e Antonio Varsori, *Democrazie: L'Europa meridionale e la fine delle dittature* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 2010); Encarnación Lemus, Fernando Rosas y Raquel Varela coord., *El fin de las dictaduras ibéricas (1974–1978)* (Sevilla: Fundación Centro de Estudios Andaluces, 2010); Jörg Ganzenmüller Hrsg., *Europas vergessene Diktaturen? Diktatur und Diktaturüberwindung in Spanien, Portugal und Griechenland* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2018); Maria Elena Cavallaro and Kostis Kornetis eds., *Rethinking Democratisation in Spain, Greece and Portugal* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

[30] For example, William I. Hitchcock, *The Struggle for Europe: The Turbulent History of a Divided Continent, 1945 to the Present* (New York: Random House, 2003), chap. 10. See also Christian Salm, "Diffusing Democracy in Europe: The European Parliament and European Community Enlargement Policy 1974–79", *Journal of European Integration History*, vol. 27, no.1 (2021), pp. 99–120.

[31] Ian Kershaw, *Roller-Coaster: Europe 1950–2017* (London: Allen Lane, 2018), pp. 293–307.

[32] De Angelis and Karamouzi, "Enlargement and the Historical Origins of the European Community's Democratic Identity, 1961–1978", pp. 454–457.

[33] Maria Găinar, "Aux origines de la diplomatie européenne: Les Neuf et la Coopération politique européenne de 1973 à 1980", *Relations internationales*, no 154 (2013), pp. 91–105.

[34] In terms of Western European security, the failure of U.S.-Soviet negotiations on nuclear disarmament came

resurgence of confrontation in Europe.[35] Among other things, the United States' waning credibility to Western Europe, especially with regard to nuclear deterrence, created a serious rift in U.S.-European relations, and vast political resources were expended to eliminate this divide.[36]

In contrast, in the 1980s, the contradictions and limitations of communism became evident in Eastern European satellite states. In Poland, for example, activities by the innovative trade union Solidarity (Solidarność) prompted frequent strikes and demonstrations. In December 1981, the Polish government declared martial law, and carried out a crackdown on Solidarność and imposed significant restrictions on civilian life. Although fears of military intervention by the Warsaw Pact grew, the Soviet Union, strained both militarily and economically, ultimately refrained from invading Poland.[37] Solidarność endured severe repression and went on to lead the Polish democratisation movement.

Additionally, the continuous and foreshadowing effect of European *détente* cannot be overlooked when discussing the nature of this period. The CSCE's confidence-building mechanism, known as the Helsinki Process, played a critical role in facilitating ongoing East-West dialogue. In terms of Basket III of the Helsinki Accords, the CSCE follow-up meetings held intermittently from the late 1970s through the 1980s functioned as a buffer in the European Cold War.[38]

Of course, the realities of European international relations at the time posed troublesome constraints on the Helsinki Process. The first CSCE follow-up meeting held in the late 1970s could not overcome differences on human rights in Eastern Europe. The following meeting, which started in 1980, was fraught with disputes over the Polish situation. However, it eventually resulted in an agreement to hold the Conference on Disarmament in Europe (CDE),[39] and including persistently addressing human rights in the East, the follow-up meetings achieved outcomes that would impact events in later years. Unlike U.S.-Soviet relations, European *détente* retained its vitality into the 1980s, with the CSCE continuing to serve as a framework for maintaining order in the region.[40] Under these circumstances, issues related to the Mediterranean began to emerge as a political issue

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as a considerable shock. Letter from Weston (Washington) to Mallaby (Head of the East European and Soviet Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office [FCO]), January 10, 1980, FCO 28/3984, EN 020/4, *DBPO, Series III, Volume VIII: The Invasion of Afghanistan and UK-Soviet Relations, 1979–1982*, No. 30.

[35] Therefore, this period is often described as the decline of European *détente*. In recent years, however, historians have emphasised its continuity as well. Maria Eleonora Guasconi, "'Keeping *Détente* Alive': European Political Cooperation and East-West Dialogue during the 1980s", *De Europa*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2019), pp. 87–101. For a work that examines European *détente* from a longer perspective, see also Oliver Bange and Poul Villaume eds., *The Long Détente: Changing Concepts of Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1950s–1980s* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2017).

[36] For example, Marilena Gala, "'The essential weaknesses of the December 1979 "Agreement"': the White House and the implementing of the dual-track decision", *Cold War History*, vol. 19, no. 1 (2019), pp. 21–38; Andreas Lutsch, "The zero option and NATO's dual-track decision: Rethinking the paradox", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 43, no. 6-7 (2020), pp. 957–989.

[37] *DBPO, Series III, Volume X: The Polish Crisis and Relations with Eastern Europe, 1979–1982*, pp. xii–xxi. The Polish government's hardline response also appears to have been aimed at preventing the deployment of Soviet troops.

[38] Angela Romano, "More Cohesive, Still Divergent: Western Europe, the United States, and the Madrid CSCE Follow-Up Meeting", in *European Integration and the Atlantic Community in the 1980s*, ed. Kiran Klaus Patel and Kenneth Weisbrode (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 39–58.

[39] For CDE, see Kosaka Hirofumi, "Overcoming the Second Cold War: The Conference on Disarmament in Europe and the Relaxation of East-West Tensions, 1983–1986", *The International History Review*, latest article (2023), pp. 1–19.

[40] Colbourn, "Debating détente", pp. 903, 912.

for security in Western Europe.

3. The Prerequisites of a "Comprehensive" Security System in the Mediterranean

(1) The Strategic and Military Landscape of the Mediterranean in the 1970s and 1980s

Establishing a strategic environment in the Mediterranean was a prerequisite for Western Europe to pursue a "comprehensive" security system through universal values. Such a strategic environment was likewise indispensable to the period examined in this article. A broader look at the circumstances of this age reveals that there was repeated manoeuvring between the United States and the Soviet Union across various fronts, and that the countries remained strongly conscious of the region's importance to Cold War strategy. Basically, NATO had its preponderance in the Mediterranean supported by the U.S. Navy's 6th Fleet, and the Soviets challenged it in every possible way—and tactics during this period unfolded in a similar manner.

Offensive campaigns by the Soviet Union in the Mediterranean often targeted NATO as a whole: for instance, the Soviets argued that NATO's forces in the Mediterranean posed a severe threat to Eastern Europe,[41] and therefore, the United States was the one truly responsible for arms control negotiations. The demand for the U.S. Navy's complete withdrawal from the region was inconceivable not only for the United States but also for its allies like the Federal Republic of Germany, which directly faced Eastern Europe on the frontlines connected by land.[42]

Wariness of the Soviet Union was particularly pronounced over nuclear weapons. During this period, the modernisation of NATO's theatre nuclear force was considered an urgent necessity. As Western European countries deepened their reliance on U.S. extended deterrence, it was highly concerned that potentially vulnerable Mediterranean countries might succumb to Soviet military intimidation and undergo "Finlandization".[43] Furthermore, aircraft carriers and bombers of the U.S. Navy, responsible for nuclear deterrence in the Mediterranean and Atlantic, were strategically indispensable, leaving NATO with no room for concessions. Nonetheless, the Soviets intensified their critiques of NATO and the United States, stating that the very existence of such forces impeded East-West disarmament.[44] Similarly, in the context of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) negotiations, the Soviets suddenly proposed the creation of a nuclear-free zone that covered the Mediterranean. All of these challenging issues that demanded significant compromises required NATO to react with caution.[45]

It was the Secretary General of NATO, 6th Baron Carrington, who increasingly worried

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[41] Gespräch des Bundesministers Genscher mit dem sowjetischen Außenminister Gromyko, 220-370.70 SOW-2068/79, November 22, 1979, *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland [AAPD] 1979*, Dok. 343.

[42] Memorandum of Conversation, New York, September 28, 1981, *Foreign Relations of the United States [FRUS] 1981–1988, Volume III: Soviet Union, January 1981–January 1983*, Doc. 90; Gespräch des Bundeskanzlers Kohl mit dem amerikanischen Sonderbotschafter Nitze, November 19, 1982, *AAPD 1982*, Dok. 311.

[43] Gespräch des Bundeskanzlers Schmidt mit Premierminister Callaghan, Präsident Carter und Staatspräsident Giscard d'Estaing auf Guadeloupe, Januar 5, 1979, *AAPD 1979*, Dok. 3; Note of the Prime Minister's Talk with the Belgian Prime Minister, M. Martens, at 10 Downing Street, September 12, 1979, PREM 19/15, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew, London [TNA].

[44] Memorandum of Conversation, Geneva, January 26, 1982, *FRUS 1981–1988, Vol. III*, Doc. 137; Gespräch des Bundesministers Genscher mit dem sowjetischen Außenminister Gromyko in Wien, 220-371.76 INF-2282/83, Oktober 15, 1983, *AAPD 1983*, Dok. 303.

[45] Memorandum from the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (McFarlane) to President Reagan, Washington, March 26, 1984, *FRUS 1981–1988, Volume XI: START I*, Doc. 87.

about the risk of easy concessions to Soviet demands targeting the Mediterranean. Having served as Defence and Foreign Secretary under the British conservative governments, Carrington stressed the importance of the U.S. role in Western European security and sounded an alarm over the situation. He noted that the issue of nuclear weapons could not be resolved by Europe alone, and that the United States could not remain indifferent if the Soviet military threat increased in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean.[46] His warnings inadvertently highlighted Western Europe's structural dependence on U.S. nuclear deterrence.[47]

Conventional forces also became a focal point of the East-West confrontation in the Mediterranean. During the Cold War in Europe, NATO's military capabilities were always in question—how NATO could maintain balance and credibility through U.S. nuclear deterrence—relative to the overwhelming superiority of the Warsaw Pact's conventional forces. This sobering recognition was vividly reflected in a NATO publication comparing the military capabilities of the two alliances during this period. The sections related to the Mediterranean stated as follows.[48] Land forces viewed a conventional offensive against the central Mediterranean—specifically northern Italy—as the greatest concern for NATO. Its naval forces were to cover a broad area, entering the Mediterranean from the Iberian Peninsula via Gibraltar and sailing toward Turkey. This required countering not only the Soviet Navy's Mediterranean Fleet but also the Black Sea Fleet. However, the U.S. Navy was also engaged in missions outside NATO, such as in the Indian Ocean, and an imbalance in forces between the two alliances was inevitable. As for air forces, the geography of the Mediterranean made securing its sea lines of communication important. Accordingly, it was thought that the two alliances competed in both air-land and naval-air operations.

In short, the general understanding within NATO at the time was that, even in the Mediterranean where the West held a comparative advantage, the situation of direct military confrontation with the Warsaw Pact remained unchanged whether by land, sea or air. The perception of being outmatched by conventional forces in the region was a real threat that was widely shared among the allies.

(2) The Mediterranean as a Focus of Alliance Management

During this period, the Mediterranean was also recognised as a critical region by Western Europe for alliance management. On the assumption that the severe international environment of the Cold War significantly influenced the preferences of various actors, this section reassesses a series of events from the perspective of political dynamics within the alliance and their inherent factors.

From a geographical standpoint, the importance of the Mediterranean as a nexus for NATO was repeatedly emphasised. For example, a 1980 publication described that NATO linked Western and Northern Europe and North America through Southern Europe, namely the Mediterranean.[49]

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[46] NATO, Speech by Lord Carrington, "Why NATO?", the Dallas Assembly and the Dallas Citizens Council, October 9, 1985.

[47] This point resonates with discussions emphasising the U.S. role in European integration. Geir Lundestad, *"Empire" by Integration: the United States and European Integration, 1945–1997* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[48] The following extract is based on NATO Information Service, *NATO and the Warsaw Pact: Force Comparisons*, 1984.

[49] For details, see NATO Information Service, *Aspects of NATO: Cultural Co-Operation, the NATO Research Fellowship Programme*, 1980.

It reaffirmed the significance of the region for NATO that encompassed the liberal Europeans.[50] Member states bordering the Mediterranean were expected to contribute in a manner befitting their role in regional security. Countries such as Italy, Greece and Turkey, which comprised NATO's naval forces together with the U.S. and Britain and sent personnel to standby forces, were assigned a special contribution to keep the strategic environment in the Mediterranean to the West's advantage.[51]

The dramatic changes in the situation in the Middle East neighbouring the Mediterranean also had a vast impact on broader security issues.[52] Particularly, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 was deeply shocking. In response, U.S. President Jimmy Carter sent a letter to British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, calling for greater cooperation in coordinated engagement in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean.[53] Notwithstanding the involvement of direct interests, the impact on the Southern Flank of NATO could not be ignored by member states.[54] At the ministerial session of the North Atlantic Council meeting in June 1980, Secretary General Joseph Luns addressed this issue in his opening speech, suggesting that security concerns related to the broader order enveloped NATO as a whole.[55]

Conversely, it could be said that NATO seized the opportunity presented by the major changes in the Middle East and the resurgence of East-West confrontation to reaffirm the strategic importance of the Mediterranean.[56] Maintaining political and military order in this region inevitably emerged as a crucial challenge facing NATO at this time.[57] With all the talk of the Soviet naval buildup, and with U.S. response capabilities being limited, the cooperation of countries bordering the Mediterranean was essential for maintaining Western dominance.[58] It also became critical to strengthen relations with extra-regional countries, and so NATO explored wide-area cooperation that included Middle Eastern countries wary of Soviet activities in the Mediterranean.[59]

Underlying the series of processes was the strong sense of alarm toward regional security

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[50] Countries not bordering the Mediterranean also closely followed the issue of regional alliance management. Botschafter Wieck, Brüssel (NATO), an das Auswärtige Amt, 114-6745/81, Fernschreiben Nr. 2041, Dezember 7, 1981, *AAPD 1981*, Dok. 350.

[51] NATO, *European Defence: 12 years of the Eurogroup*, 1980; NATO, *Aspects of NATO*, Series 1, No. 11, "Air Defence", 1982.

[52] Amin Saikal, "Islamism, the Iranian revolution, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan", in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Volume III: Endings*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 112–134.

[53] Letter from Carter to Thatcher, Undated, Thatcher MSS, THCR 3/1/5, Churchill Archive Centre, Cambridge [CAC], available in Margaret Thatcher Foundation [MTF].

[54] Botschafter Pauls, Brüssel (NATO), an das Auswärtige Amt, 114-1084/80, Fernschreiben Nr. 16, Januar 8, 1980, *AAPD 1980*, Dok. 6.

[55] NATO, Speech by the Secretary General at the Opening Ceremony of the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Ministerial Session in Ankara, June 25, 1980.

[56] NATO, Press Communique M-DPC-2 (80) 27, Final Communique, December 10, 1980.

[57] Some literature points out that the U.S. has tended to view the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean holistically. Osamah F. Khalil, "The Crossroads of the World: U.S. and British Foreign Policy Doctrines and the Construct of the Middle East, 1902–2007", *Diplomatic History*, vol. 38, no. 2 (April 2014), pp. 299–344.

[58] Memorandum from Acting Secretary of State Stoessel to President Reagan, Washington, July 11, 1982, *FRUS 1981–1988, Vol. III*, Doc. 195; Remarks of the President and Prime Minister Bettino Craxi of Italy Following Their Meetings, October 20, 1983, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, Simi Valley, California [RRPL].

[59] Gespräch des Bundeskanzlers Kohl mit König Hussein in Amman, Oktober 6, 1983, *AAPD 1983*, Dok. 291.

by Western Europe. The Mediterranean, affected by the Soviet's expansionist moves and an unstable situation in the Middle East, was critically important for alliance management by NATO countries, which regard political freedoms and economic stability as prerequisites for security. They proposed cooperative policy agendas through the NATO framework and strongly advocated for support to Mediterranean countries. The countries named were newly democratised nations like Greece, Spain and Portugal.[60] Upholding freedom and democracy, Western Europe closely monitored security in the Mediterranean also from the perspective of alliance politics.

As illustrated above, during a period of renewed East-West confrontation in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Mediterranean remained unneglectable as a focal point of European security. Ensuring political stability in this region became a key issue for the North Atlantic alliance. Universal values then became intertwined, laying a foundation for a "comprehensive" security system in Western Europe.

4. The Nexus of Security and Universal Values: The Political Dynamics of a "Comprehensive" Security System

(1) Security in Western Europe and European Integration: Universal Values as "Catalysts"

From the mid-1970s, the stabilisation of NATO's Southern Flank emerged as a key policy issue for Western Europe not only on the military but also on the political and economic fronts. Following political changes and democratisation in the three Southern European countries that triggered these developments, Western European postures in the Mediterranean became increasingly "comprehensive", linking political economy and security, while incorporating universal value discourses.[61] This section discusses primarily the broad trajectory leading to the EC's southern enlargement and the universal values that unfolded against this backdrop.

The accession of Greece, Spain and Portugal to the EC in the 1980s represented a "political" project for "economic" integration. Incorporating economically underdeveloped states was not necessarily an obvious choice for the EC, an association comprised primarily of advanced nations that achieved recovery and economic growth after the Second World War.[62] The fact that these three Southern European countries acceded to the EC in a relatively short period suggests a logic beyond economic rationality. In other words, the EC's southern enlargement materialised because the three countries' aspiration to "return to Europe" through democratisation aligned with the agenda of Western Europe, which regarded the consolidation of democracy in Southern Europe as a political interest.[63]

The wave of democratisation that swept Greece, Spain and Portugal in succession embodied political maturity and the noble ideals of democracy. To underpin it, expectations rose for a "twofold solidarity—European and Atlantic".[64] In this context, these three countries' applications

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[60] Assembly of Western European Union [WEU], *Proceedings of 24th Session, 1st Part, June 1978, Volume II, Official Report of Debates*, Recommendation 313 on Security in the Mediterranean, 3rd Sitting, June 20, 1978, Historical Archives of the European Union, Firenze [HAEU].

[61] NATO, Press Communique, M-DPC-1 (80) 11, Final Communique, May 14, 1980.

[62] Agricultural issues and economic disparities became the primary focus of the southern enlargement of the EC. Nicos Poulantzas, *La crise des dictatures: Portugal, Grèce, Espagne* (Paris: F. Maspero, 1975).

[63] Graham and Quiroga, "After the Fear Was Over?", pp. 516–518.

[64] Assembly of WEU, *Proceedings of 23rd Session, 1st Part, June 1977, Volume II, Official Report of Debates*, 1st Sitting, June 20, 1977, HAEU.

to participate in the EC were welcomed as a milestone for establishing democracy in the region.[65] Against this backdrop, stabilising the regional order in the Mediterranean and ensuring security in Western Europe were linked to including Southern Europe in the EC as an economic unit, alongside NATO's military strengthening. Functioning as its "catalysts" were universal values, such as freedom and democracy.

Of course, the pathway to the EC's southern enlargement was not without obstacles. In Greece, Prime Minister Konstantinos Karamanlis led a centre-right New Democracy (Nea Dimokratia: ND) government, and fervently sought to participate in European integration as a way to break free from the negative legacy of the military junta. For Karamanlis, European integration was the only option for rebuilding and stabilising democracy in the country.[66] Following an agreement with the EC in 1979, Greece officially acceded in 1981.[67] However, in the general election that same year, the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (Panellinio Sosialistiko Kinima: PASOK), led by the leftist politician Andreas Papandreou, defeated ND. He launched an openly anti-Western European campaign, calling for a reversal of EC accession and withdrawal from NATO's military structure. PASOK's seizure of the government raised concerns about a deterioration in Greece's relations with the EC and NATO.[68] In the end, Papandreou quickly backtracked on his previous statements after becoming Prime Minister, maintaining Greece's EC membership and its relations with NATO, though friction caused by his political grandstanding left a lasting impact.[69]

Similarly, in the case of Spain and Portugal, security considerations in both countries strongly played a role in their accession to the EC, despite severe conflicts of interest over agricultural issues. Particularly in the context of the gradual transformation of the "special relationship" between the United States and Spain,[70] the latter's new position as a member of Western Europe was also important for NATO. The U.S. administration under Ronald Reagan supported the Spanish "return to Europe" following democratisation, and aspects such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law were emphasised.[71] Conversely, it was feared that if membership negotiations in the Iberian

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[65] Assembly of WEU, *Proceedings of 24th Session, 2nd Part, November 1978, Volume III*, Document 790, "Draft Recommendation on Europe's external relations", Report submitted on behalf of the General Affairs Committee by Gessner (Rapporteur), November 2, 1978, HAEU.

[66] Omilia tou k. Konstantinou Karamanli tin imera tis ypografis ton symfonion entaxis tis Elladas stin EOK, Athina, Maiou 28, 1979, available in Centre virtuel de la connaissance sur l'Europe, Université du Luxembourg [CVCE], also in *Konstantinos Karamanlis Archeio: Gegonota kai keimena, Tomos 11: I Ellada stin Evropi 1977–1980, Periodos B', 1 Ianouariou 1979–15 Maiou 1980*, sel. 143–144, 146.

[67] Despoina I. Papadimitriou, "Episkopisi tis istorikis exelixis tis ellioikis koinooias kata too 20o aiooa", sto *I Ellada ston 19o kai 20o aiona: Eisagogi stin Elliniki Koinonia*, E' Ekdosi, epim. Antonis Moysidis kai Spyros Sakellaropoulos (Athina: Ekdoseis Topos, 2017), sel. 234–236. See also Eirini Karamouzi, *Greece, the EEC and the Cold War, 1974–1979: The Second Enlargement* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

[68] CC (81) 33rd Conclusions, October 20, 1981, CAB 128/71, TNA.

[69] For details, see Eirini Karamouzi and Dionysios Chourchoulis, "Troublemaker or peacemaker? Andreas Papandreou, the Euromissile Crisis, and the policy of peace, 1981–86", *Cold War History*, vol. 19, no. 1 (2019), pp. 39–61.

[70] Misael Arturo López Zapico, "Las relaciones hispano-norteamericanas desde la Segunda Guerra Fría hasta la crisis del comunismo soviético: de la cuestión de la OTAN al nuevo marco de cooperación", *Pasado y Memoria: Revista de Historia Contemporánea*, núm. 19 (2019), pp. 19–49. On the U.S.-Spain relationship in the post-Franco era, see also Morten Heiberg, *US-Spanish Relations after Franco, 1975–1989: The Will of the Weak* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018).

[71] NATO, Speech of Minister Perez Llorca before the Atlantic Council, December 10, 1981; Remarks of President Reagan and President Felipe Gonzalez Marquez of Spain Following Their Meetings, June 21, 1983, RRPL.

Peninsula failed, it would fuel serious political instability in both Spain and Portugal and might heighten security concerns. Notably, the question of the Spanish membership in NATO became a domestic point of contention, and the developments were closely watched also vis-à-vis the EC.[72]

Overall, however, the southern enlargement of the EC was viewed noticeably positively as not only stabilising democracy in Southern Europe, but also contributing to strengthening and safeguarding Western Europe that valued freedom, and mutual communication intensified on political cooperation, particularly on external policy.[73] The integration of the three Southern European countries into Europe followed a complex process involving not only economic interests but also a security agenda and political intentions. Throughout this process, universal values upheld by Western Europe, such as freedom and democracy, were espoused and drove up support for the southern enlargement. These developments were made possible only after the wave of democratisation in the 1970s. In this sense, the early 1980s marked a turning point in international relations in Western Europe.

(2) Alliance Cohesion and Universal Values: Tensions and Limitations

As noted earlier, by nature as a military alliance, universal values often took a backseat within NATO due to the practical need to counter the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, but this situation as well changed in the early 1980s. Out of an extended period of exclusion, momentum developed for Spain to join NATO following its return to democracy, which would fully link the Mediterranean and the Atlantic and was expected to bring significant strategic benefits.[74] Spain's accession to NATO was finally implemented in May 1982—the inclusion of the entire Iberian Peninsula into the North Atlantic alliance marked an important achievement for Western European security.[75]

However, even at that time NATO members did not necessarily share all universal values or display strong cohesion as an alliance.[76] While Spain's accession reinforced the alliance in the Western Mediterranean, instability persisted in the Eastern Mediterranean. Greece and Turkey, which had long been in conflict despite being NATO allies, frequently came to the brink of armed

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[72] *Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados*, Sesión Plenaria núm. 191, 27 de octubre de 1981, pp. 11295–11338, available in CVCE. See also Giulia Quaggio, "Walls of Anxiety: The Iconography of Anti-NATO protests in Spain, 1981–6", *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 56, no. 3 (2021), pp. 693–719.

[73] Assembly of WEU, *Proceedings of 26th Session, 1st Part, June 1980, Volume I*, Document 833, "25th Annual Report of the Council to the Assembly of Western European Union on the Council's activities for the period 1 January to 31 December 1979", March 28, 1980, HAEU.

[74] Botschafter Wieck, Brüssel (NATO), an das Auswärtige Amt, 114-2967/81, Fernschreiben Nr. 745, April 21, 1981, *AAPD 1981*, Dok. 110. See also Mark Smith, *NATO Enlargement during the Cold War: Strategy and System in the Western Alliance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), chap. 5.

[75] However, the accession was not without adverse effects: neighbouring Portugal, a founding member of NATO, expressed dissatisfaction over the increasing presence of Spain. Gespräch des Bundeskanzlers Schmidt mit Premierministerin Thatcher in Versailles, Juni 5, 1982, *AAPD 1982*, Dok. 175.

[76] During the same period, the rise of so-called "Eurocommunism" and socialism stood out in Western Europe, raising concerns about their impact on the North Atlantic alliance and European integration. While a detailed discussion is beyond the scope of this article, recent works on this subject include Ioannis Balampanidis, *Eurocommunism: From the Communist to the Radical European Left* (London: Routledge, 2018); Francesco Di Palma, *Trouble for Moscow? Der Eurokommunismus und die Beziehungen der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands (SED) mit den kommunistischen Parteien Frankreichs (PCF) und Italiens (PCI) 1968–1990* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021). As literature taking the same perspective as this article, Nikolas Dörr, "NATO and Eurocommunism: The Fear of a Weakening of the Southern Flank from the mid-1970s to mid-1980s", *Journal of European Integration History*, vol. 20, no. 2 (2014), pp. 245–258.

hostilities.[77] Additionally, the U.S. inaction in the Cyprus crisis in summer 1974 brought about the backlash from Greece and caused its withdrawal from NATO's military structure. The Greek government applied to rejoin four years later as part of the "return to Europe", but the debate grew complicated due to Turkey's tenacious opposition.[78] NATO, both a military alliance spanning the Atlantic and the Mediterranean and an international organisation, became a hotbed of power politics in the Eastern Mediterranean, causing a situation that could undermine its cohesion and credibility.[79]

On the one hand, Turkey's actions noticeably disrupted the unity of the alliance, but on the other hand, its geographical importance was unmistakable. Secretary General Carrington praised the role of Turkey, which opened to both the Black Sea and the Mediterranean and is advantageously located for strategic operations against the Soviet Union.[80] Even if Turkey's presence had adverse effects on alliance cohesion, it could not be disregarded for NATO's Cold War strategy and alliance management, and cooperation with Turkey was essential also for European integration. The country experienced some setbacks in its democracy, such as military coups, and Turkey's instability constantly remained a challenge for Western Europe, which began to confront the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe based on universal values.[81]

As such, military agendas and strategic considerations remained central to alliance management, and there were indeed limitations to aligning member countries through the lens of universal values. Generally, however, it is undeniable that, following political changes since the 1970s, the stabilisation of NATO's Southern Flank and the southern enlargement of the EC became an imperative and were promoted by various actors, which were also thought to benefit the alliance as a whole.[82] The argument that Western European relations at this particular period were at a significant turning point provides insight for understanding the characteristics of this time.

Conclusion

In the late 1970s and the early 1980s, the transition marked by the destabilisation of European *détente* and the resurgence of East-West confrontation forced Western Europe to reorient their security agenda. Security became closely intertwined with political economy, not only to confront

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[77] NATO, Press Communique M1 (80) 14, Final Communique, June 26, 1980. See also Christos Kassimeris, "NATO and the Aegean Disputes", *Defense & Security Analysis*, vol. 24, no. 2 (June 2008), pp. 165–179; Sotiris Rizas, "Managing a conflict between allies: United States policy towards Greece and Turkey in relation to the Aegean dispute, 1974–76", *Cold War History*, vol. 9, no. 3 (August 2009), pp. 367–387.

[78] Press Office Bulletin, "Visit of Greek Prime Minister", October 23, 1979, Ingham MSS, INGH 2/2/2, CAC, available in MTF.

[79] Furthermore, when the northern part of Cyprus, *de facto* divided state since 1974, declared its "independence" in 1983, concerns grew that it would cause a serious fissure in both NATO and the EC. CC (83) 34th Conclusions, November 17, 1983, CAB 128/76, TNA.

[80] NATO, Address by Lord Carrington, "NATO: A Partnership for Peace", Ankara University, Turkey, November 5, 1985.

[81] Assembly of WEU, *Proceedings of 29th Session, 1st Part, June 1983, Volume II, Minutes and Official Report of Debates*, 1st Sitting, June 6, 1983, HAEU; Record of a Meeting at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office between the Minister of State, Baroness Young, and a United States Congressional Delegation, January 23, 1984, PREM 19/1404, TNA. See also Ayşegül Sever, "Turkish Perception of the Mediterranean and Euro-Mediterranean Relations in the 1980s", *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, vol. 24, no. 1 (2015), pp. 53–68.

[82] NATO, Press Communique M-DPC-1 (81) 7, Final Communique, May 13, 1981; NATO, Press Communique M-1 (84) 10, Extracts for Publication from the Minutes of the Ministerial Meeting of the Council, May 31, 1984.

the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe but also to reinforce unity within their own bloc. The "catalysts" were universal values, such as freedom and democracy, embedded in NATO and the EC and, as components of the Cold War in Europe, significantly influenced alliance strategy. Western Europe also explored universal value-driven multilateral cooperation in the political and economic spheres, which was believed to serve security interests as well. That is why issues of universal values emerged as a key policy challenge for Western Europe during this period.

This phenomenon signified a decisive shift from condoning grave contradictions to the ideals championed by the liberal bloc. The driver of this shift—the upheaval in the Mediterranean in the mid-1970s, namely the collapse of authoritarian regimes and democratisation in the three Southern European countries—abated the search for political stability and security imperatives in the region and became a factor that firmly established subsequent Western European international relations. The Mediterranean gained attention for the broader alliance management and the deepening and widening European integration, and Western Europe sought to coordinate its policies around the Mediterranean through NATO and the EC.

The above historic developments suggest that active political dynamics involving NATO and the EC were in play in this period. Security issues and politico-economic challenges became mutually complementary. In addition, policy objectives that concerned all of Western Europe were established, ideologically underpinned by universal values, such as freedom, democracy and human rights. Despite inherent tensions and limitations, these concepts were discussed with a degree of substantive authenticity, which has still characterised the security system in contemporary Europe. In the late 1970s and the early 1980s, Western European security was activated into a multilayered structure that cut across multiple international organisations and evolved into a "comprehensive" system.

There is a splendid sentence on international relations by a Japanese prominent scholar: "Each sovereign country comprises a system of power, a system of interests, and a system of values".[83] To borrow this quote, the experience of Western Europe with the Mediterranean during this period marked a pivotal moment when these three systems converged. The significance of the series of events, for that matter, can only be fully understood within the historical context of Western European security.

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[83] Kosaka Masataka, *International Politics and the Search for Peace*, trans. Carl Freire (Tokyo: Japan Publishing Industry Foundation for Culture, 2023), p. 31.