

The Revision of the US-Japan Security Treaty in 1960: Lessons for the Current US-Japan Alliance

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【概要】「安保改定と現代の日米同盟」

なぜ安保条約の改定か？ 米国における主要な関心 1960年 対 2010年

- 米国政治における同盟関係：1960年 対 2010年
 - 冷戦期のアイゼンハワーの関心
 - ソ連の脅威の増大
 - 東アジアの政治的不安定
 - 日本にとっての米国の役割
 - ポスト冷戦期のオバマの関心
 - 中国の脅威の増大
 - 非国家主体の影響力増大に関連する政治的不安定
 - 日本にとっての米国の役割
- 50年を経た諸問題の対比：1960年と2010年の比較
 - 同盟における「対等性」：時間とともに、明らかな「対等性」の高まり
 - 同盟 対 基地：分離できるのか？
 - 「事前協議」と意味のある協議
 - 「役割と任務」の共有
 - 地位協定問題：「発展していく」日本にとっての「対等性」と関連
 - 日本の地位協定 対 他の米軍海外基地
 - 日本におけるプライドおよびナショナリズムの問題との関連
 - 基地使用の決定と地位協定以外の問題：世論と「責任分担」
 - 占領後の米軍基地の整理
 - 沖縄の過去と現在一直面する課題を象徴する普天間

日本における更新・改定の政治：1960年安保条約改定をめぐる騒動

- 安保条約の更新・改定に伴う周知の問題
 - アイゼンハワー訪日撤回の決定
- 舞台裏の政治/ 不透明なプロセス
 - 自民党の固執に対する世論の反応：岸の辞任

- 歴史研究を通じて明らかになった、プロセスに関する新しい情報

改定後の同盟の発展における重要な節目：簡潔な観察

- 沖縄返還—新たな一連の政治、抗議、妥協
 - 昨今明らかになった「密約」
- 1980年代と1990年代における同盟の深化
 - 真の「対等性」に向けて日本が果たすより大きな役割
- 前回の「野党」の政権獲得をめぐる問題
 - 細川首相と「基地なき同盟」

新しい問題、古い条約：次の50年を構想する—新しい条約が必要？

- 同盟の新しい目的（冒頭に述べたことの繰り返し）
 - 「ソ連の脅威」を超えて
 - 一層能力を高める自衛隊にとってのより大きな役割
- 新しい政治環境
 - 同盟と自衛隊に対する世論の支持の広がり
 - 内閣府その他の世論調査
 - 2大政党間の目的の共有範囲の拡大：自民党と民主党
 - しかし、いまだに民主党内・連立政権内に分裂がある
 - 安全保障政策の立案および同盟はいまだに「政治」
- この「政治」は、ある程度1960年に類似
 - 吉田 対 鳩山；麻生 対 鳩山
 - 日米の力の低下に対する調整
 - 経済力が縮小、旧式化、低下する日本
 - 多極化する東アジアと米国のグローバルな役割の縮小
 - 新しい軍事技術に対する調整
 - グローバルな軍事生産の広がり
 - 攻守の区別の曖昧化
 - 民用 対 軍用技術の曖昧化
- 「原点回帰」？
 - アピール力のあるスローガンだが、上記のような課題のために非現実的
 - 21世紀の日米同盟は新しい政治的、戦略的、物理的現実に基づくべき—新しい未来に適合するために過去の強みを生かす

I would like to thank NIDS and my fellow panelists for having me here today. I must admit that it is a bit daunting to speak after Dr. Packard and Dr. Kitaoka, both of whose work I read as an undergraduate studying these issues for the first time over twenty years ago, and whose work continues to teach students of the alliance today. Also daunting, as a political scientist, is to follow this next generation of Japanese historians of this period represented on this panel, who have benefited from a recent wave of Japanese- and English-language research on the period based on newly released documents. I have learned a lot today myself.

Many of you in the audience have been involved in the recent controversies over the alliance this year. It has also been a busy year for me, and an exciting one as a scholar. Many issues that were taken for granted for years in our alliance have suddenly become areas of study again, such as the last revision of the Security Treaty now fifty years ago. Drs. Packard and Kitaoka were in Washington with me discussing these issues just last week at a major conference considering fifty years of the Security Treaty, where a common thread was that due political developments of the past year, many past issues have been reexamined, sometimes in a useful way.

We have heard from Drs. Kusunoki and Chijiwa some of the context of why the Security Treaty was revised the first time, now 50 years ago. I would like to offer my own perspective on this issue as a political scientist, and also consider how some of the same issues remain with us today, in 2010 – which, in part, is why it is still important to keep this “history” in the front of our minds. As some of you may know, my core academic specialty is the politics of security policy – and in both periods, 1960 and today, there is quite a bit of political wrangling apart from consideration of the policy issues themselves.

I would like to touch on three issues in my formal remarks. First, why revise the Security Treaty? What were the key issues to the United States in particular, and how do these compare to issues of concern to the United States regarding the alliance today? Second, what were the *politics* of Security Treaty revision – on both the US and the Japanese sides. Third, and in conclusion, I would like to wrap up the formal panel remarks with a few thoughts on how the treaty continues to provide a resilient basis for important security cooperation between our two countries. In a recent article I published as part of a “roundtable” on the anniversary of the Security Treaty published in the American journal, *Asia Policy*, I argue that it is time for a “renewal of vows” on our 50th anniversary, evoking an increasingly popular practice of married

couples in the United States today – to reaffirm their commitment to each other after a long time together.¹ I think the United States and Japan should work together this year both to address pressing concerns on the part of both parties, but also to reflect on what has led the alliance to be as resilient as it was been over the past fifty years and why it continues to be an important cornerstone for the security strategies of both countries.

1 Why revise the Security Treaty? Key issues of concern to the US in 1960 vs. 2010

In 1958, the time that renegotiation of the Security Treaty began in earnest, there were both domestic political and geostrategic considerations on the agenda. On the US side, President Eisenhower was focused especially on three Cold War-related concerns:

- A rising Soviet threat (for example, Sputnik was launched in October 1957, causing widespread concern among the American public about growing Soviet capabilities);
- Political instability in East Asia, especially Cold War rivalries related to decolonization and newly independent states (Indonesia in 1949; North and South Vietnam in 1954; Malaya in 1957);
- The US role for Japan: in particular, supporting Japan in international organizations and external relations and working to boost Japan's indigenous defense capabilities and linkage to the US military strategy of containment.

In Prime Minister Kishi's first year in office, Japan joined the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member, paid reparations to Indonesia, set up a new commercial treaty with Australia, and signed peace treaties with Czechoslovakia and Poland – but still there was much work to achieve on Japan's external relations front. Overall, though, my reading of the historical record of the period is that it was *not* primarily a US goal to renegotiate the Treaty, but rather a Japanese goal that various actors in the US agreed to somewhat reluctantly – with the State Department being

¹ Andrew L. Oros, "The 50th Anniversary: Time for a 'Renewal of Vows,'" *Asia Policy*, Vol. 10 (July 2010), pp. 28-34.

more open, and the Defense Department and the US military less so. Thus, to a large degree, the US was following a *Japanese* preference for Security Treaty revision – one that had much to do with domestic Japanese politics, and also a strong view among many Japanese that the existing treaty did not treat Japan “equally” as a sovereign state.

By contrast, I would characterize among President Obama’s primary concerns in 2010 as:

- A rising Chinese threat;
- Political instability related to the rise in power of non-state actors (Al Qaeda, piracy) – a factor stressed in the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) and new US National Security Strategy;²
- The US role for Japan: again, a concern about Japan’s indigenous defense capabilities, but now also greater interest in enhancing “interoperability” with US forces, and also Japan’s regional and global security role.
- In addition, as with the late 1950s, the concern about “equality” in the alliance is a strong theme, but with the exception of Okinawa, pressure for changes to the alliance have come primarily from the US, not from Japan in more recent times.

Thus, there are areas both of commonality and difference from 1960 and 2010. What is common to the US view of the importance of the alliance with Japan is the broader geopolitical and geostrategic context: It was and is not just an alliance about defending Japan. Then, Cold War concerns were primary; now, there are a wider range of geopolitical concerns, though the rise of China and growth of so-called “non-traditional security issues” are especially noted. Another area of commonality and difference is the US concern with Japan’s defense role. In both periods, the US has pushed Japan to play a greater role in its defense – and has worked with political and bureaucratic elites to realize this goal somewhat out of the public eye. Today, of course, defense cooperation is much deeper – but the underlying political constraints imposed especially by public opinion and by Japan’s constitution provide common themes.

² United States Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (February 2010) <http://www.defense.gov/qdr/images/QDR_as_of_12Feb10_1000.pdf>; The White House, *National Security Strategy* (May 2010) <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf>.

Apart from the agendas of the different US presidents – one Republican, one Democrat – one can consider broader parallels from 1960 and 2010 in issues related to the Security Treaty and the alliance in general. The parallels are many: amazingly, 50 years later many of the specific issues are the same. One overarching issue in particular is the theme of “equality” between Japan and the United States. This was a central political issue stressed by Prime Minister Kishi to the electorate (such as in the lead-up to the 1958 lower house elections), as it was by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) in the lead up to the August 2009 lower house elections (and also after Hatoyama Yukio become prime minister in September 2009).

Central to the question of “equality” was the specific issue of the Status of Forces Agreement with Japan, or SOFA. One spark to Prime Minister Kishi seeking to revise the Treaty was the 1957 “Girard Incident” where a US soldier shot a Japanese farmer woman in the back in a field just outside a US base, killing her in a premeditated plan, but the US Congress objected to Girard being tried in Japanese courts – despite a 1953 agreement between the US and Japan that US military personnel would be tried in Japanese courts for crimes committed outside of their official duties. Elite managers of the security relationship with Japan fully sided with Japanese officials that Sergeant Girard should be tried in Japanese courts, but the US Congress had a different view – leading to a political standoff that ultimately was averted in large part because of a veto threat by President Eisenhower to legislation proposed in Congress to mandate exclusive US jurisdiction in all SOFAs. This one incident is illustrative of a broader political point: that electoral politics and feelings of nationalism on both sides of the Pacific were important factors in security politics between the two states – then and now.

Also related to the theme of “equality” was the issue of “prior consultation” regarding the US use of bases in Japan, including whether there would be “meaningful” consultation or simply “prior notification”. This historical issue was revisited quite publicly in the last year as the DPJ government investigated the so-called “secret agreements” between the US and Japan related to “prior consultation” and to the introduction of nuclear weapons into Japan in the 1960s and 1970s.

Another common theme then and now was the vibrant debate over the distinction between the alliance (although the word “domei” was rarely used in public in 1960) versus the base issue: can they be separated? Could there be an “alliance without bases”? Related to this theme were a large number of specific base-related issues

apart from SOFA. Popular opinion against US bases was strong, leading to a plan to consolidate many US bases post-occupation (particularly outside of Okinawa, which was still administered by the US at the time of Security Treaty revision).

Finally, there was the question of possible shared “roles and missions” between US forces and the JSDF. Then, as now, the Japanese constitution played an important limiting role; and then, as now, elites worked to expand the role for the JSDF within perceived constitutional limitations. Prime Minister Kishi succeeded in having the Cabinet approve a Basic Plan for National Defense in 1957 which was an important milestone in the legitimization of the JSDF; Parliamentary Vice Minister of Defense Nagashima Akihisa has reported that the DPJ seeks to revise the National Defense Program Guidelines in the fall to allow for expanded operations of the MOD and JSDF in several areas.³ In both periods, the US has worked to expand JSDF roles and missions to play a greater role in Japan’s defense and in regional security related to US geostrategic concerns (the Soviet threat in the 1960s, a wider range of perceived threats today). From the US perspective, this issue was probably the most important related to renegotiating the Security Treaty. The US Department of Defense in particular noted that Japan’s spending on defense was actually declining in the mid-1950s at a time when the US was asking for more. This decline was reversed by Kishi as part of the Security Treaty re-negotiation.

2 The politics of Security Treaty Revision and Renewal

Apart from the numerous parallels in the issues related to Security Treaty revision in 1960 and issues in alliance management today, similarities in the politics of the alliance should be noted and perhaps learned from. As we know from Dr. Packard’s seminal work, public protests related to the 1960 Security Treaty revision were the largest in Japan’s history. These very public demonstrations certainly affected political elites, and ultimately led to the resignation of Prime Minister Kishi and the rise of a very different political agenda for Prime Minister Ikeda. While on a lesser scale, the mass demonstrations in Okinawa earlier this year also clearly affected political elites and also played a central role in the resignation of Prime Minister

³ Akihisa Nagashima, spoken remarks at “150 Years of Amity & 50 Years of Alliance: Adopting an Enhanced Agenda for the U.S.-Japan Partnership” conference (Willard Hotel, Washington, DC), June 17, 2010.

Hatoyama, also only after the Prime Minister signed a controversial political agreement with the United States related to the alliance.

A big difference to the politics of the alliance, however, is much greater transparency in the politics today. In part this is due to the DPJ deciding to make transparency a major part of their agenda upon coming to office, but also more broadly I would argue that this is a facet of 21st century democratic politics. This is an issue that I believe our alliance will have to come to terms with in the coming years.

As I re-read some important works about the Security Treaty revision in 1960 (as well as some new studies based on newly declassified materials), another similarity I was struck by was the pervasive political infighting within both of our countries related to alliance management. In a 2005 book by John Swenson-Wright called *Unequal Allies?*, the author reviews a large number of now declassified documents from the US Departments of State, Defense, and Presidential libraries that show internal disagreements among central actors, and how this affected the negotiations on Security Treaty revision – including cases of one administration official making public statements that seemed to contradict what another was arguing elsewhere.

In addition, reading of the US frustration with the lack of political leadership and stability on the Japan side reminded me very much of discussions I hear in Washington today. Allow me to offer one quotation from a report written by outgoing Ambassador to Japan John Allison in 1956. He writes: “The crux of our discontent with Japan lies in her political weakness... This weakness expresses itself in every sphere, foreign and domestic, military and economic. In each it takes the form of a timid, faltering government, afraid of its own shadow, groping at almost any means of shifting responsibility (especially onto the US), delaying decision, evading the problems with which Japan is confronted.”⁴ In later US embassy cables, we can see great enthusiasm for Prime Minister Kishi, who was seen as someone who acted decisively and would follow through on promises.

In addition to concerns about Japanese political indecisiveness, the US also was concerned about the extreme factionalism and political infighting among Japanese political elites. Arguably, it was this political infighting within the LDP that led to the circumstances requiring the resignation of Prime Minister Kishi – a change in leadership that certainly had a big effect on the evolution of the alliance after the

⁴ John Swenson-Wright, *Unequal Allies? United States Security and Alliance Policy Toward Japan, 1945-1960* (Stanford University Press, 2005), p. 226.

Security Treaty was revised.

3 New Issues, Old Treaty: Imagining the Next 50 Years – A Need for a New Treaty?

For sake of time, I have focused my remarks on parallels and contrasts of our alliance between 1960 and today – but, of course, there were many important milestones in between. In passing, I would like to note just three.

First is the reversion of Okinawa to Japanese administrative control in the early 1970s, which led to a new round of politics, protest, and compromise – including the recently revealed “secret treaties.”

Second is the deepening of the alliance in the 1980s and 1990s – which is important in particular for the move toward truer “equality” in the alliance as a result. Third are issues surrounding the last time the “opposition” came to power, through the coalition politics of the mid 1990s, which also caused great strain on US-Japan security relations as new patterns of interaction were innovated – and, again, when the bureaucracy came under control of a party other than the LDP. Prime Minister Hosokawa’s article calling for “an alliance without bases” in the important American journal, *Foreign Affairs*, is useful to review today.⁵ There are some parallels to the controversial *New York Times* opinion piece published by Prime Minister Hatoyama last year.⁶

To conclude, I’d like to set out a few new issues that we are facing together under an old treaty, and to consider what might be in store in the next 50 years of our alliance.

First, and as I set out at the start of my remarks, today there are many new goals for the alliance “beyond the Soviet threat.” And within these goals is a much larger role for Japan’s more capable Self-Defense Forces.

Second, there is, of course, a very different political environment both within Japan, under DPJ rule, and in the United States as well, where there is no longer a clear consensus on the US foreign policy agenda as there was in the early years of the Cold War. President Obama faces many challenges to his foreign policy leadership.

5 Morihiro Hosokawa, "Are US Troops in Japan Needed? Reforming the Alliance," *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 77, No. 4 (July/August 1998), pp. 2-5.

6 Yukio Hatoyama, “A New Path for Japan,” *New York Times*, August 27, 2009, <<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/27/opinion/27iht-edhatoyama.html>>.

In Japan today, there is widespread public support for the alliance and for the JSDF – a big contrast to 1960. Moreover, although it may be hard to see this given so much political controversy surrounding recent elections, there is a high degree of shared objectives in foreign policy among the two largest political parties in Japan today: the DPJ and the LDP. This is a big change from the so-called “1955-system” of ideological division between the LDP and JSP. Still, there certainly remains a “politics” of security policymaking and the alliance – and to some degree, this “politics” is similar to that of 1960. It is striking the continuity of strands of thinking about foreign policy – contrasting, for example, Yoshida versus Hatoyama Ichiro in the 1950s and Aso versus Hatoyama Yukio in 2009. Richard Samuels book, *Securing Japan*, provides a useful overview of this continuity of thought.⁷ My last book, *Normalizing Japan*, focuses on the continuity of domestic political cleavages over security policy issues between the Cold War and post-Cold War periods, though a number of specific policies have shifted due to changes in Japan’s external environment and domestic party change.⁸

Third, our alliance must adjust to a relative decline of both of our countries in terms of economic wealth and military capability. The reality is that we must plan for a smaller, older, and less wealthy Japan; a more multi-polar East Asia; and a decreasing US global role relative to the contributions of other world powers. Despite a relative decline, however, I believe the US-Japan alliance still will provide a core component of any new regional security architecture that may emerge.

Fourth, and finally, our alliance must adjust to the development and proliferation of new military technology: the rise of global military production; the growing ambiguity of the offensive-defense distinction; and the blurring of commercial-use versus military-use technology.

As a last word, I would like to proactively respond to an idea that one increasingly hears in broader discussions of the alliance in the US and Japan, which is whether it is time for the alliance to go “back to basics”? This is an appealing slogan, particularly in the context of today’s discussion showing shared challenges then and now, but in my view this is quite unrealistic due to the changes in the geostrategic environment and our two countries’ domestic politics as I have set out here. There is no going back.

⁷ Richard Samuels, *Securing Japan: Tokyo’s Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia* (Cornell University Press, 2007).

⁸ Andrew L. Oros, *Normalizing Japan: Politics, Identity, and the Evolution of Security Practice* (Stanford University Press, 2008).

The 21st century US-Japan alliance must be based on new political, strategic, and material realities – and build on strengths of the past to adapt to a new future. Personally, I am quite confident that our alliance will adapt in this way, and that it will do so successfully – though probably not painlessly. I look forward to seeing the 100th anniversary of our Security Treaty on my 91st birthday in 2060. I hope to see you there!