

American Smart Power in the New Era of U.S., Japan and China Relations

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Summary [7/05/10]

Through this paper, I analyze the dynamics of American smart power in the new era of U.S., Japan and China Relations post-George W. Bush in the Asia Pacific region principally from a U.S. perspective. While analyzing this question, I will look specifically at four areas: 1) China's economic power, 2) Japan's search for a more equal U.S.-Japan relationship, 3) soft power rivalries, and 4) regional security. Given the new dynamics among the U.S., Japan and China, I conclude that the U.S.' smart power strategy will give it increased leverage for promotion of U.S. interests as well as continued cooperation for regional stability and prosperity. The success of this strategy, however, will be tempered by demands on the U.S. domestically and internationally. Moreover, external forces outside the region as well as domestic restraints of other key actors in the region¹ including Japan and China will also impact on the effectiveness of

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America's smart power. Finally, this smart power strategy should work toward the amelioration of tensions among the three powers over various issues.

Introduction

The concept of “smart power” was developed by Professor Joseph Nye in 2003 “to counter the misperception that soft power alone can produce effective foreign policy.” Smart power combines hard and soft power as an integrated strategy.² Hard power, “the ability to coerce, grows out of a country's military and economic might.”³ Soft power “arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals and policies. When our policies are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, our soft power is enhanced.”⁴ The Obama administration has now made “smart power” a key element of its foreign policy strategy. Subsequently, Hillary Clinton at her confirmation hearings for Secretary of State emphasized the importance of this concept. She stated, “I believe that American leadership has been wanted but is still wanted. We must use what has been called smart power' meaning the full range of tools in our disposal,

¹ Paul J. Smith, “China-Japan Relations & the Future Geopolitics of East Asia,” *Asian Affairs* (2009), 233: par. 97, <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=0&did=1658373541&SearchMode=1&sid=5&Fmt=3&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1277720487&clientId=1974>.

² Joseph S. Nye Jr., “Get Smart-Combining Hard and Soft Power,” *Foreign Affairs*, 88, no. 4 (2009): par. 2, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65163/joseph-s-nye-jr/get-smart>

³ Joseph S. Nye Jr., “Soft Power and American Foreign Policy,” *Political Science Quarterly*, 119, no. 2 (2004): par. 4, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/20202345.pdf>

⁴ Ditto: par. 32.

diplomatic, economic, military, political, legal and cultural, picking the right tool or combination of tools for each situation. With smart power, diplomacy must be the vanguard of foreign policy.”⁵

Besides the administration's public statements on American smart power, there are initiatives already taken which strongly demonstrate the administration's emphasis on the maximization of American smart power. The Secretary of State, for example, has started a process called “Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review,” modeled on the Defense Department's Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), to work for the deeper integration of U.S. diplomacy and development policies, which both involve American soft power. President Obama asked for an increased FY2010 International Affairs Budget-9.5% up from that of the FY2009. This budget funds “the State Department's diplomatic programs, global health initiatives on HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, and other development and humanitarian assistance programs to help stabilize fragile states, reduce global poverty and assist refugees. It also covers U.S. food aid and democracy, human rights and public diplomacy efforts...”⁶ The Obama Administration's new focus on global development includes ‘elevating development as a central pillar of U.S. national security equal to diplomacy

⁵ *Transcript of Hillary Clinton's Confirmation Hearing* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2009), 16, http://www.cfr.org/publication/18225/transcript_of_hillary_clintons_confirmation_hearing.html

⁶ “U.S. Global Leadership Campaign; Colin Powell, USGLC Leadership Applaud Obama FY 10 Budget's ‘Smart Power’ Funding,” *Science Letter* (2009): par. 6&9, <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=0&did=1655869421&SrchMode=1&sid=6&Fmt=3&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1277720553&clientId=1974>

and defense, reestablishing the U.S. as the global leader on international development and fostering the next generation of emerging markets by enhancing our focus on broad based growth for democratic governance.’⁷

In line with the Obama administration's foreign policy orientation, the U.S. is implementing smart power initiatives, for example, in Southeast Asia, which are also linked to the protection of American national interests in the region. These policies not only help the U.S. build up its economic capacity in the Southeast Asia but also reverse the decline in American soft power in the region. Moreover, these strategic initiatives are building further on the Bush Administration's Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-U.S. Enhanced Partnership by signing the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC); making preparations to set up a permanent ASEAN mission later this year;⁸ meeting with all 10 ASEAN members in a so-called first U.S.-ASEAN summit; creating the Mekong Initiative⁹ and officially joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership.¹⁰ Although the smart power concept is important for U.S. overall foreign policy, it is an opportune time to examine various aspects of this policy in the new era of U.S., Japan, China relations post George W. Bush in the Asia Pacific region. Namely, these aspects are

⁷ “A New Way Forward on Global Development,” (2010): par. 7, 20 & 23. http://foreignpolicy.com/files/fp_uploaded_documents/100503_2010_05_03_10_46_51.pdf

⁸ Embassy of the United States of America, “Press Release” (Bangkok: U.S. Embassy, 2010), 1, <http://bangkok.usembassy.gov/news/press/2010/nrot004.html>

⁹ ‘In July 2009, the U.S. joined with Southeast Asia to launch the Lower Mekong Initiative in order to promote cooperation on issues of regional importance, namely, environment, health, education and infrastructure.’ Bureau of Public Affairs, “U.S. and the Lower Mekong: Building Capacity to Manage Natural Resources (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 2010), 1, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/scp/fs/2010/134808.htm>

U.S. execution of this policy, its potential impact on improving America's image in the region as well as protection of U.S. interests. It helps that at the end of 2009, there was already a moderate change in U.S. favorability in Japan, China and South Korea since Obama became President.¹¹

The new dynamics among the U.S., Japan and China, however, actually predates the Obama administration due to economic and security shifts among the three nations in the 1990s post Cold War. In the 90s, China is on the rise economically, also spurring increases in its defense spending. The U.S.-Japan strengthen their alliance while China becomes an engine for both U.S. and Japanese economies. All three nations in a unipolar world, dominated by U.S. soft and hard power, also become increasingly involved in multilateral economic and security frameworks or mechanisms. As these trends continue post 9/11, the dynamics among the three nations are still characterized not only by cooperation but also by competition and conflict involving history, trade, security and political influence.

Post 9/11 China influence has grown not only in the Asia Pacific but also in other regions of the world. While China's economic power continues

¹⁰ 'The Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership agreement (TPP, previously known as 'P4') between Brunei Darussalam, Chile, N. Zealand and Singapore was signed in 2005. The U.S. along with Australia, Peru and Vietnam have now joined. The idea is to create a trade agreement as a model for the Asia Pacific.' New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement* (Wellington: New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2009), 1, <http://mfat.govt.nz/downloads/trade-agreement/transpacific/transPac-Factsheet-2Mar09.pdf>

¹¹ Juliana Menasce Horowitz, "Obama Popular in Japan, China and South Korea," Pew Research Center Publications (2009), <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1409/obama-asia-trip-popular-japan-china-south-korea>

to rise, the PRC is also modernizing its military and increasing its power projection beyond Taiwan, for example, by a developing a blue navy and limiting access to its “sovereign” areas in the South and East China Seas. In 2009 as well, China has significantly celebrated the 60th anniversary of its founding, in the aftermath of the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Japan, post 9/11, has marched steadily towards becoming a normal nation through legislation as well as expanded SDF participation for global cooperation. However, with the changeover in August of 2009 to a liberal coalition government led by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), there is a push to re-examine the alliance and develop a more autonomous Japanese foreign policy. At the same time, U.S. soft power in the Asia Pacific region declined under the George W. Bush's administration due to its focus on the “war on terror” and unilateral policies.¹²

Post G.W. Bush, the U.S. elected a Democratic administration under the leadership of Barack Obama in 2008. The new administration realizes that not only does it have to improve America's global image but also the U.S. must once again strengthen its presence and influence in the Asia Pacific region. Along with this idea, President Obama during his visit to Japan last year, stressed that his administration will “improve prosperity, security and human dignity in the Asia through our close friendship with Japan which will always be a centerpiece of our efforts in the region.”¹³

¹² Stephen M. Walt, “Alliances in a Unipolar” World, *World Politics* 61, no. 1 (2009): par. 34, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/world_politics/v061/61.1.walt.html

¹³ Ditto.

While reassuring Japan of its special status, the Obama administration is also drawing closer to China through top level dialogues, multilateral mechanisms and exchanges between President Obama and President Hu Jintao. The Obama administration along with President Hu Jintao agreed on “positive cooperative comprehensive” relationship for the 21st century in April of 2009 on the sidelines of the G-20 Financial Summit in London.¹⁴

In addition, President Obama at the first and the second meetings of the Strategic and Economic Dialogue (S & ED) in July 2009 and May 2010 respectively stated “the relationship between the U.S. and China will shape the 21st century, which makes it important as any bilateral relationship in the 21st century.”¹⁵ And in July of 2008, The Chicago Council Fund public opinion poll showed how the American people weigh that relationship as well. Americans said “that Japan is very important to the U.S., placing it internationally behind the “special relations” with Britain (60%); Canada (53%) and China (52%).¹⁶ When asked whether Japan or China is more important to the U.S. in terms of “vital interests,” a majority or 51% of

¹⁴ The Press Office, “Statement on Bilateral Meeting with President Hu of China” (Washington D.C.: The White House, 2009), 1, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Statement-On-Bilateral-Meeting-With-President-Hu_Of_China/

¹⁵ The Press Office, “Statement of President Barack Obama to the U.S. China Strategic and Economic Dialogue” (Washington D.C.: The White House, 2010), 1, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/statement-president-barack-obama-us-china-strategic-economic-dialogue>

¹⁶ *Anxious Americans Seek a New Direction in United States Foreign Policy –Results of a 2008 Survey of Public Opinion* (Chicago: Chicago Council, 2008), http://www.chicagocouncil.org/UserFiles/File/POS_Topline%20Reports/POS%202008/2008%20Public%20Opinion%20208_US%20Survey%20Results.pdf

Americans say China is more important while 44% say Japan is more important.”¹⁷ Along with U.S. recognition of China's growing importance, there are existing tensions between both countries, for example, over trade, the over evaluated yuan, Taiwan, Iran and North Korea.

Under the Hatoyama administration, Japan was also strengthening ties with China, building on the recent warming up of political relations with China dating back to the administration of PM Shinzo Abe (9/06-9/07). Most recently, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visited Japan in May of this year and met PM Hatoyama for bilateral talks. Premier Wen emphasized then that Japan is “a strategic partner, not competitor or rival.”¹⁸ Furthermore, both countries continue to emphasize building a “mutually beneficial relationship.” Under the new Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) administration of Naoto Kan (6/09-present), Japan's strengthening of ties with China should continue. Japan like the U.S. has underlying tensions with China including historical, trade and territorial disputes. Along with these above dynamics, the interrelationships among the three powers continue to shift due to such factors as China's rising economic power; Japan's search for a more equal U.S.-Japan relationship; soft power rivalries and the state of regional security. This paper examines these four specific areas while analyzing the dynamics of American smart power in the new era of U.S., Japan and China relations.

¹⁷ Ditto.

¹⁸ “Chinese Premier's Asia visit conveys Peace, Friendship, Cooperation: FM,” *English.news.cn* (2010); par. 8.
http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-06/04/c_13332383.htm

China's Economic Power

In the 80s, Japan was the world's top creditor and the U.S., the world's top debtor. Some of the highest US.-Japan deficits were during that decade. At that time, the U.S. was Japan's top trading partner. Then the 90s became Japan's lost decade with the recession continuing into the new millennium. In the 90s, while China experienced consistently a 9-10% growth rate, the idea of a China threat was increasingly emphasized. Moreover, "China in June of 1996 for the first time surpassed Japan as the largest source of the U.S. trade deficit with 40% of the U.S. imbalance."¹⁹

Now in the new millennium, among the important challenges that the 'U.S.-Japan alliance faces is Chinese economic growth.'²⁰ At the same time, all three powers' economies are becoming increasingly interdependent. Moreover, as China's economic power grows so does its voice in such key economic groups/organizations as the G-20, WTO, the IMF and the World Bank.²¹ China has become the world top's creditor and the third largest economy. And in 2007, China overtook the U.S. as Japan's number one trading partner and moved up as Japan's second largest export market.²²

¹⁹ Robert D. Hersey, Jr., "China has become Chief Contributor to U.S. Trade Gap," *The New York Times*, (1996): par. 1& 5, <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/08/21/business/china-has-become-chief-contributor-to-us-trade-gap.html>

²⁰ Joseph S. Nye, Jr. "Statement," in the *Hearing before the Subcommittee on Asia, The Pacific and The Global Environment on Japan's Changing Role* (Washington, D.C.: House of Representatives, 2009), 12, <http://www.internationalrelations.house.gov.111/50632.pdf>

²¹ U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, "The U.S.-China Trade and Economic Relationship," in *2009 Report to Congress* (Washington D.C.: USCC, 2009), 21, http://uscc.gov/annual_report_full_09.pdf

China is now the 'U.S.' number two trading partner; its largest source of imports and the largest export market for American goods outside of North America.'²³ And Japan is now the US.' fourth trading partner. And while the U.S. trade deficit with Japan has fallen, the American deficit with China is about 6 times larger than that of the U.S.-Japan deficit. Moreover, "China's holding of American financial assets including over 1/2 a billion U.S. dollars of U.S. Treasury debt has become a source of influence as well as a new issue of concern in Washington."²⁴

In the past, we often heard of how U.S. and Japan formed almost 40 % of the world's GNP. Alternatively, in 2015 the U.S., 'China and Japan's combined GDP is estimated to be 47.3%. Also in 2015, it is estimated that China will have 7.2% of the world's GNP vs. Japan's 7.1% and 33% for the U.S.²⁵ And this year, it is predicted that China will overtake Japan as the number two economy. Trade frictions including non-tariff barriers are a constant irritant for important China trading partners like the U.S. and Japan.

²² Emma Charlett Avery, Kerry Dumbaugh and William H. Cooper, *Sino-Japanese Relations: Issues for U.S. Policy* (Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2008), 14, http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/R40093_20081219.pdf

²³ Michelle O'Neill, "Remarks by Michelle O'Neill Acting Under Secretary of Commerce" (Washington D.C.: The U.S. Department of Commerce, 2009), 1, http://trade.gov/press/speeches/oneill_042709.asp

²⁴ Fei Ling Wang, "Sino American Relations-Dynamic Stability Facing New Factors," *EAI Background Brief*, no. 396, (2008): par.3, <http://www.eai.nus.edu.sg/BB396.pdf>

²⁵ Tadashi Hayashi, "The Japan-U.S.-China Economic Relationship: Status and Political Relevance," *Japan Economic Currents-A Commentary on Economic & Business Trends*, no. 63 (2006): par.4+Figure. 1, <http://www.kkc.or.jp/english/activities/publications/economic-currents63.pdf>

Amidst economic tensions between the U.S. and China, the economic recovery of the U.S. became the number one issue of the 2008 U.S. Presidential campaign with the Lehman brothers' shock and the bailout of the automobile industry. The Obama-Biden Democratic ticket was able to appeal to voters more strongly about their policies to handle the economic crisis. Although an Obama administration promised to be more protectionist than a McCain one concerning trade, voters were more concerned about lower taxes for the middle class, jobs creation and other social benefits. Moreover, during the campaign, China was not a big campaign topic. However, Presidential candidate Obama stated, "China is rising and it's not going away. They're neither our enemy nor our friend. They're competitors."²⁶ As a candidate, he also criticized Beijing's crackdowns in Tibet and China's lack of openness to American goods and services.²⁷

Since assuming office, President Obama has already met with China's President Hu Jintao at the former's first G-20 and G-8 meetings in 2009 and then visited China on November of 2009. While President Hu Jintao visited the U.S. in July of 2009, the Strategic & Economic Dialogue was established in line with a more comprehensive U.S.-Sino relationship. The S & ED, which upgraded the former SED²⁸ under the previous administration, includes the Secretaries of State and Treasury as well as more top cabinet

²⁶ "Transcript-The Democrats' First 2008 Presidential Debate," *New York Times* (2008): par. 304, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/27/us/politics/27debate_transcript.html

²⁷ Fei-Ling Wang, "Sino American Relations: Dynamic Stability Facing New Factors," *EAI Background Brief*, No. 396 (2008): par. 42, <http://www.eai.nus.edu.sg/BB396.pdf>

level officials. Compared to its predecessor, the S & ED broadly covers not only economic and environment but also strategic issues between both countries. Prior to COP 15, the U.S. and China, during the first S & ED, importantly signed the MOU on Enhancing Cooperation on Climate Change, Energy and Environment. The second S & ED, which was held this May in Beijing, resulted in 26 different outcomes over a broad range of issues.

In spite of historical and geopolitical frictions between Japan and China, these disputes have been taking a back seat to their warmer political relations and increased economic relations since the inaugural of PM Abe's administration in 2006. The unthawing of Sino-Japanese relations has continued to present. For example, during President Hu Jintao's visit to Japan in 2008 during PM Yasuo Fukuda's administration, both sides released a Joint Press statement on the Strengthening of Exchange and Cooperation between the Government of Japan and the Government of the People's Republic of China. The statement emphasized 70 action items for a "mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests."²⁹

²⁸ During the Bush Administration, the SED, which was established in 2006, met semiannually. The SED, headed by U.S. Treasury Secretary and the Chinese Vice Premier, focused principally on economic issues and environmental matters. *The Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environmental Hearing on U.S.-China Relations: Maximizing the Effectiveness of the Strategic and Economic Dialogue* (Washington D.C.: House of Representatives, 2009), 2, <http://www.internationalrelations.house.gov/111/52146.pdf>

²⁹ Foreign Ministry of Japan, *Joint Press Statement on the Strengthening of Exchange and Cooperation between the Government of Japan and the Government of the People's Republic of China* (Tokyo: Foreign Ministry of Japan, 2008), 1, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/china/pv0805/press.html>

At the same time, the U.S. and Japan are still in a recession with very large budget deficits, high rates of unemployment and increasing welfare expenditures. And although China's economic growth continues to be strong, its economic development is unequal between its interior and coastal areas. Moreover, China's economic development has made it the highest consumer of energy and oil in the world. Concurrently, China's economic power is increasing, giving it a louder voice at the decision making level within multilateral institutions; expanding its soft power within and outside the Asia Pacific region and allowing it to be more resistant to U.S. demands for currency appreciation and caps on carbon emissions. At the same time, China needs U.S. and Japanese higher technology and markets for exports and investments.

Japan and China, while recognizing their “mutually beneficial relationship,” have expanded further on their economic ties, for example, establishing high level Japan-China economic talks under PM Taro Aso and President Hu Jintao. At the 4th Japan-China Energy Conservation Forum in Beijing held on November of 2009, both China and Japan agreed to cooperate on 42 projects in the fields of energy saving and environmental protection.³⁰ In December of 2009, then DPJ Secretary General Ozawa led a delegation of parliamentarians to China. Ozawa, at China's request, then successfully arranged for a visit with the Japanese emperor by Xi Jinping, the frontrunner to succeed President Hu Jintao. Although PM

³⁰ Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, *Cooperation Agreements reached at the Fourth Japan-China Energy Conservation Forum* (Tokyo: METI, 2009), 1, http://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/data/20091108_01.html

Hatoyama stepped down, dissolving his cabinet in June of this year, the new DPJ leadership under PM Naoto Kan needs to convince voters of DPJ's measures to restore the Japanese economy, which is increasingly dependent on the Chinese economy, and his party's capacity to lead the nation not only nationally but also globally.

The Obama administration is already using a smart power strategy to embrace the new dynamics among the U.S., Japan and China concerning China's economic rise. On one hand, this entails engaging China in bilateral as well as multilateral mechanisms. Bilaterally, for example, there is the S & ED and the new U.S.-China Renewable Energy Forum. Multilaterally, through mechanisms like G-20 and FTAs etc., the U.S., Japan and the EU as well as the emerging economies including China and India must work together on common interests in spite of different ideologies. Moreover, although approaches may vary, each of the powers has a vested interest in the region's economic security which in turn is affected by traditional and non-traditional security issues as well as divergent national interest and values.

Both U.S. and Japan are maximizing economic opportunities while emphasizing cooperation, common interests and benefits with China. Of course, while China's economic power continues to rise, both the U.S. and Japan are also working towards their own economies' respective recoveries through stimulus packages, the New Green Deal (U.S.); the fostering of a "low carbon society" (Japan); and free trade agreements. To balance China's economic rise, the U.S. is carrying out its smart power strategy by further strengthening its relationship with ASEAN; working towards the revitalization of APEC and joining the Trans Pacific Partnership. Along

with these kinds of initiatives, the U.S. could also work towards 'ratifying pending trade agreements in the region such as the Korea-US FTA; make an effort to complete the Doha Round and publicize the idea of a U.S.-ASEAN Free Trade.³¹ These kinds of inclusive mechanisms can give the U.S. increased leverage in the region as well as remind other actors in the region including China of U.S. potential.

Japan's search for a more equal U.S.-Japan Relationship

The issue of China's rising economy as well as its military power is one key to understanding the new era of U.S.-Japan-China relations. However, another key issue is Japan's search for a more equal U.S.-Japan relationship. Given that Japan is the U.S.' most important ally in Asia, Secretary Clinton's and then President Obama's first official visit in Asia was to Japan. And PM Taro Aso was the first foreign leader to visit the Obama White House.

At the beginning of the Obama Administration, Japan's then Prime Minister Taro Aso, a Liberal Democratic Diet member, continued to emphasize the importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance and support the dispatch of the SDF for a refueling mission to the Indian Ocean to support the U.S. led multinational forces' antiterrorism operations. PM Taro Aso was then followed by PM Yukio Hatoyama, the head of the DPJ, whose

³¹ Ellen Frost, "Statement," in the *Hearing before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission on China Activities in Southeast Asia and The Implications for U.S. Interests* (U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 2010), 164, http://www.uscc.gov/hearings/2010hearings/transcripts/10_02_04_trans/10_02_04_trans.pdf

diet members did not extend the SDF mission there. Moreover, prior to the DPJ assuming the reins of government, DPJ touched on the idea of an “alliance without bases,” a concept which it later abandoned, and also “sought to reduce home nation support.”³²

In the midst of this transitions, the U.S.-Japan alliance commemorated the 50th anniversary of its revised Security Treaty in January of 2010. Moreover, Japan provides over ‘\$4 billion in host nation support or over 40% of the total bilateral host nation support that U.S. forces receives from all of its allies combined.’³³ The U.S. and Japan as well continue to share a very interdependent relationship not only economically but also in terms of security and diplomacy. In addition, the U.S.-Japan relationship has become a global partnership since the end of the 20th century to address transnational issues. However, Japan has grown stronger within the relationship due to the expansion of SDF duties to address transnational issues including non military logistical support of the U.S. Also Japan's position as an alliance partner has been strengthened due to domestic forces pushing Japan to become a normal nation.

After the Democratic Party of Japan took over the reins of government in 2009, PM Yukio Hatoyama stated, at a Joint Press conference with President Obama, that the ‘U.S.-Japan alliance is the cornerstone of Japanese diplomacy.’ However, he further added, ‘In line with changes

³² Kent Calder, “Japan's Changing Role,” in *Hearing before the Sub-committee on Asia and the Pacific and the Global Environment on Japan's Changing Role* (Washington, D.C.: House of Representatives, 2009), 11, <http://www.internationalrelations.house.gov/111/50632.pdf>

³³ Ditto, 36.

in the times and the international environment changes, we should further deepen and develop the Japan-U.S. alliance and build a new alliance that is even more constructive and future oriented.”³⁴ Hatoyama has also said “we want to build a relationship on which Japan, from an active stance can speak straightforwardly about what we are thinking.”³⁵

Although the DPJ recognizes the importance of the alliance, the Hatoyama administration first appeared it would not follow through on the original agreement to move the Futenma base to northern Okinawa. This shift occurred, in spite of many years of negotiation between the US. and Japan. Moreover, the Guam International agreement was signed last year by PM Taro Aso and Secretary Clinton to expedite the transfer of the base as well as 8,000 Marines to Guam. After waffling on the original agreement made last year, the Hatoyama administration finally agreed to forge ahead on a similar plan with some variations in spite of domestic opposition in Okinawa and within the coalition. Subsequently, Mizuho Fukushima, the head of the New People's Party, a Hatoyama administration coalition partner, however, refused to sign the administration's renewed agreement with the U.S. about the transfer of the Futenma base. After PM Hatoyama then dismissed her from the cabinet, the New People's Party

³⁴ Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, Joint Press Conference by Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama of Japan and President Barack Obama of the United States of America (Tokyo: GOJ, 2009), 1, http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/hatoyama/statement/200911/13usa_keiken_e.html

³⁵ “East Asia community’ concept not intended to exclude U.S.: Hatoyama,” *Japan Today* (2009): par.11, <http://www.japantoday.com/category/politics/view/east-asia-community-concept-not-intended-to-exclude-us-hatoyoma>

stepped down as a coalition partner. However, the reversal of Hatoyama's campaign promise to take the Futenma base out of Okinawa; financial scandals involving himself on one hand and the DPJ General Secretary Ozawa on the other; low public support for government policies in the face of a weak economy, help trigger the early end of PM Hatoyama's administration.

Beyond the Futenma base issue, there is a renewed call by the Democratic Party of Japan for an autonomous Japanese foreign policy. In the 2009 DPJ Manifesto, the party clearly states as its goal “build a close and equal Japan-U.S. alliance to serve as the foundation of Japan's foreign policy. For this purpose, having developed an autonomous foreign policy strategy for Japan, determine the assignment of functions and roles between Japan and the United States and work positively to fulfill Japan's responsibilities in this regard.³⁶ Also importantly, the party proposes “the revision of the Japan U.S. Status of Forces Agreement; re-examining the realignment of the U.S. military in the security of the Asia Pacific region and the significance of U.S. military bases in Japan.³⁷ These policy statements show that Japan wishes to interact on a more equal plane with the U.S. with latitude to change Japan's policy directions.

³⁶ The Democratic Party of Japan, *2009 Manifesto Change of Government* (Tokyo: DPJ, 2009), 28, <http://www.dpj.or.jp/english/manifesto/manifesto2009.pdf>

³⁷ The Democratic Party of Japan, *DPJ Manifesto for The 2005 House of Representatives Election: Nippon Sasshin Toward a Change of Government* (Tokyo: DPJ, 2005), 24, http://www.dpj.or.jp/english/manifesto5/pdf/manifesto_05/pdf; The Democratic Party of Japan, “Foreign Relations and Defense,” in *DPJ 2007 Manifesto* (Tokyo: DPJ, 2007), 47, <http://www.dpj.or.jp/english/manifesto/manifesto2007.html>

In 2005, the then DPJ President Seiji Maehara, who is now a member of PM Naoto Kan's administration, stated, "It is quite conceivable that despite our status as a close ally to the United States, Japan will refuse the U.S. requests for cooperation if these involve international contributions that do not receive the understanding of the Japanese people. Conversely, Japan may participate independently in operations in which the U.S. does not participate. We must develop our relationship so that we can accept each other's views regarding this question."³⁸

How autonomous a foreign policy and assertive role for Japan in the global community does the DPJ and its coalition partners wish to achieve is a key question. One of former PM Hatoyama's informal foreign policy advisors 'would like to maintain the alliance while downsizing U.S. bases in Japan where possible and stationing forces on SDF bases operated under joint control.'³⁹

The Japan Forum on International Relations offers the DPJ additional recommendations for a more assertive Japan while maintaining the alliance. They suggest how Japan can promote its own brand of positive pacifism to support its role in the global community. The Forum, founded in 1987 with independent citizens from business, academia, politics and mass media, recommends that Japan replace the "Yoshida Doctrine" with the idea of

³⁸ Seiji Maehara, "Agenda for Strengthening Japan-U.S. Alliance-Achieving World Peace and Happiness through Prosperity" (2005): par. 6, <http://www.dpj.or.jp/english/news/051029/04.html>

³⁹ Jitsuro Terashima, "Common Sense about the Japan-U.S. Alliance," *Japan Echo* (2010): 20.

“positive pacifism.” According to this concept, Japan would still adhere to “renouncing war” but would be a responsible contributor to a global “no war community”.⁴⁰

The Forum, specifically, recommended the following to the new DPJ administration:

“1) review the “Basic Principles of National Defense,” including the Three Non-Nuclear Principles 2) Cooperate with the U.S. military transformation process and approve the exercise of the right to collective self defense; 3) Thoroughly review “the Three Principles on Arms Exports”; 4) Improve and strengthen the national system of intelligence gathering and analysis; 5) Take the initiative in promoting dialogues and cooperation in East Asia; 6) Strengthen and develop Japan-U.S. strategic concert toward China; 7) Confront the existing cases of infringement upon Japan's national sovereignty 8) Establish a “General Law for International Peace Cooperation” and 9) Simultaneously pursue nuclear non proliferation, disarmament and strict control of peaceful use.”⁴¹

Reexamining the alliance and other parts of the relationship for a more equal partnership is an important part of Japan's process to seek an autonomous foreign policy. Included in that process as well will be the formulation of a new National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG). The

⁴⁰ Policy Council, *Positive Pacifism and the Future of the Japan-U.S. Alliance* (Tokyo: The Japan Forum on International Relations, 2009), 8-13, <http://www.jfir.or.jp/e/pr/pdf/32.pdf>

⁴¹ Ditto.

Hatoyama administration decided to postpone the formulation of a new NDPG until the end of 2010. Whether his successor PM Naoto Kan will remain the head of government long after the Upper House elections held in July remains to be seen. In any event, the new NDPG, when the DPJ produces it, will allow the party to put its imprint on a key document for Japan's new directions concerning the alliance and Japan's roles not only in the Asia Pacific region but globally.

Also related to Japan's search for autonomous foreign policy inside and outside the alliance was the Hatoyama administration's call for an East Asia Community. PM Naoto Kan announced he is also interested in pursuing this concept. This concept is not new.⁴² Presently, what has evolved is an East Asia Summit, which was established in 2005 with ASEAN +3, then adding New Zealand, Australia and India. At present, the East Asia Summit does not include the U.S. Although at first, PM Hatoyama did not emphasize U.S. participation in the proposed East Asia Community, he has later said he did not mean to exclude the U.S. At the same time, the East Asia Community is still a vague idea. Meanwhile, Australia is also proposing an Asian Pacific Community. The U.S. has said it is interested in exploring some role related to the East Asia Summit. However, it is also looking at pushing more Trans-Pacific institutions like APEC and the

⁴² For example, the East Asian Vision Group (EAVP), originally set up in 1998, recommended an East Asia Community. For more details about their recommendations for an East Asia Community, please see East Asia Vision Group (EAVG) report *Towards an East Asian Community* 2001 (Tokyo: MOFA, 2001) 1417, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/report2001.pdf>

Trans-Pacific trade agreement. The East Asia Summit, ASEAN +3 and a possible East Asian Community, however, would potentially allow Japan a more autonomous foreign policy and increase its leverage with other actors in the region.

Another point regarding the Japan's search for an autonomous foreign policy role concerns Japan's need to maintain its balance between the U.S. and China. The idea of a China threat has not disappeared in Japan.

Consequently, while Japan draws closer to China, the Hatoyama government "has also moved to upgrade ties, including security links with Asian powers that share a fear of China, including India, Indonesia and South Korea."⁴³ One analyst calls this a 'balancing process for Japan a kind of strategic hedging, namely, maintaining the alliance with the U.S. and simultaneously increasing efforts to nest into the growth of China and Asia.'⁴⁴

As Japan finds its new balance between the U.S. and China, the U.S. must also utilize its smart power to keep its balance between Japan, its best ally in Asia and second largest creditor; and China, its best creditor and biggest potential rival on different levels. Moreover, the American smart power strategy needed to address Japan's search for a more equal partnership involves increased public diplomacy to smooth frictions related to U.S. base realignment issues. U.S. smart power is also needed to work

⁴³ Ryo Sahashi, "New Thinking about Foreign Policy Strategy in Japan," *East Asia Forum* (2010): par. 7, <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2010/01/27/new-thinking-about-foreign-policy-strategy-in-japan/>

⁴⁴ Ditto.

with Japan towards a constructive and future oriented alliance based on mutual interests for regional and global stability as well as prosperity. Also in the future, each side needs to dialogue further on what an equal partnership entails. Does the U.S. envision Japan becoming more and more of an ally like Great Britain? Will Japan stop short of becoming a normal nation and concentrate more on becoming a civilian middle power?

Soft Power Rivalries

The U.S. image in the region and what it stands for took a beating during the war on terrorism, the unilateralism of the Bush era and the unfolding economic crisis during the 43rd President's second term. While America's soft power suffered a decline, China's soft power was on the rise and Japan's steadily competed in the Asia Pacific region. Effectively, China has increased its soft power in the region, for example, through its charm offensive including 'financial assistance without strings; the ASEAN-FTA; enhancing its cultural attractiveness as well as the expanding of its influence in the private sector and its relations with Chinese overseas and local business networks in Asia.'⁴⁵ China's soft power is also strengthened by its military diplomacy related to non-traditional security

⁴⁵ Both Hu and Premier Wen Jibao "have made multiple trips to many parts of the world including developing regions, to promote mutual cooperation, trade and dialogue. This diplomacy has often been called China's charm offensive." Marc Lanteigne, *Chinese Foreign Policy-An Introduction* (USA & Canada: Routledge), 2009, 12.; H.H. Michael Hsiao and Alan Young, "Soft Power Politics in the Asia Pacific: Chinese and Japanese Quests for Regional Leadership," *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*: par 5, <http://www.japanfocus.org/-Michael-Hsiao/3054>

matters including humanitarian missions and anti-piracy countermeasures. In addition, China's brand of soft power is linked to its participation in multilaterals like ASEAN + 3 East Asian Summit and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Japan, as the number two economy worldwide; the only Asian nation in the G-8; the fifth largest donor of foreign aid and the second largest U.N. donor, is still very important in the Asia Pacific region. Moreover, Japan is the largest donor of aid to the ASEAN countries surpassing the U.S. In addition, Japan's increased export of Japanese culture, innovation and technology all contribute to its brand of soft power not only in the Asia Pacific but also worldwide. Japan's soft power is linked as well to Japan's participation in such multilaterals like ASEAN + 3, the East Asian Summit and ASEAN-Japan FTA. While Japan's soft power is growing in the region, Japan's 'role is still not commensurate with its actual capacity'⁴⁶ because of its reduced overall foreign assistance budget, 'past historical issues and territorial disputes with different nations.'

The Obama administration is presently addressing the problem of U.S.' diminished soft power in the Asia Pacific region through its smart power strategies. Underlying this strategy is an emphasis on defense, diplomacy and development. Secretary of State Clinton mentioned in a meeting

⁴⁶ Ellen L. Frost, "China Impact on Regional Integration in Asia," in *Hearing before U.S.-China Economic and Security Commission on China's Expanding Global Influence: Foreign Policy Goals, Practices and Tools* (Washington D.C.: U.S.-China Economic and Security Commission, 2008), 157, http://www.uscc.gov/hearings/2008hearings/transcripts/08_03_18_trans/08_03_18_trans.pdf

with Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada in January of 2010, “The President and I have worked bilaterally and multilaterally to ensure that the U.S. is not only back, but here to stay. By the end of this week, I will have made 4 trips to the region and touched every corner of N.E. Asia to S.E. Asia from China and India to the Pacific Island, Australia and New Zealand.”⁴⁷

Towards the maximization of American smart power in the region, the Obama administration, for example, is strengthening its alliances in the region; forging closer ties with multilaterals and increasing its development aid. Last year, President Obama has already importantly, for example, visited Japan, China and Korea as well as attended the annual summit of APEC in Singapore. In the near future, he plans to visit Indonesia and Australia. Moreover, in May of 2010 at the end of the 2nd U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue, President Obama “announced a goal of sending 100,000 American students to China in the next four years to learn Mandarin, to experience Chinese culture, and to learn about the hospitality of the Chinese people, while they serve as ambassadors for the U.S. in China.”⁴⁸ In addition, the U.S. military is also engaging in humanitarian missions and public diplomacy in the area. The U.S.’ increased

⁴⁷ Clinton Hillary, “Remarks with Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada after their Meeting” (Washington D.C.: The Department of State, 2010), 1, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/01/135088.htm>

⁴⁸ Hillary Clinton, “Concluding Joint Statements at the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue” (Washington D.C.: The Department of State, 2010), 1, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/05/142207.htm>

international affairs budget as well will expand U.S. developmental assistance in key areas like food, health and human rights.

Overall, President Obama efforts to show a new American image to the world also impacts on U.S. soft power in the Asia Pacific region. Important examples of these efforts include the President's appeal for a nuclear free world through concrete policies such as the first Nuclear Security Summit held April 2010 in Washington D.C. to prevent nuclear terrorism and the release of the latest Nuclear Posture report; the federal government's new environmental activism domestically and internationally; and America's focus on a more pragmatic and cooperative approach to diplomacy.

There is a sense that all three powers are working towards the maximization of their soft power in the region. While both China's and Japan's soft power respectively is growing, the U.S., under Obama, has an opportunity to increase its soft power in positive ways through its smart power strategies in the area. President Obama during his visit to Japan signaled, "As an Asia Pacific nation, the U.S. expects to be involved in the discussions that shape the future of this region to participate fully in appropriate organizations as they are established and evolve."⁴⁹ In other words, the U.S. through soft power can show the region once again the value of the American model for prosperity and stability. At the same time, the U.S. through its smart power strategies will need to balance

⁴⁹ The Press Office, "Remarks by President Barack Obama at Suntory Hall" (Washington D.C.: The White House, 2009), 1, [http:// www.whitehouse.gov/the_pressoffice/remarks-president-barack-obama-suntory-hall](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_pressoffice/remarks-president-barack-obama-suntory-hall)

perceptions, trust and sensitivities about relationships with key actors in the region, especially China and Japan. For example, it will be important to show that the U.S. is not giving more importance to China over Japan as China's economic and geopolitical power grows.

IV. Regional Security

Through its American smart power, the U.S. needs to address non-traditional and traditional security problems in the Asia Pacific region and “build a common regional and security agenda”.⁵⁰ In line with this goal, the 2010 U.S. Quadrennial Defense Review emphasizes the need for ‘effective strategic communication to sustain as well as build new networks and partnerships.’⁵¹ This is an important point as it relates directly to the kind of smart power the administration's aims for. In the QDR, this kind of communication is further detailed as “the need to improve our ability to understand the concerns, perceptions, and attitudes of foreign governments and populations as well as the ways in which our words and actions may affect allies and partners. Thoughtful engagement, communication, and collaboration with allies and partners who share our interest in fostering peace and security remain essential.”⁵² Further in the QDR, it is clearly stated that ‘there is no neat divide between defense,

⁵⁰ Kurt M. Campbell, “Regional Overview of East Asia and the Pacific” (Washington D.C.: The Department of State, 2010), 1, <http://www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2010/03/137754.htm>

⁵¹ Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review*, (Washington D.C.: DOD, 2010), iii, http://www.defense.gov/qdr/images/QDR_as_of_12Feb10_1000.pdf

⁵² Ditto, 57.

diplomacy and development.’⁵³ And to carry out different missions, the Department of Defense will need to work with different U.S. civilian agencies and overseas partners. As the preeminent military power in the region, the strengthening of its alliances in the Asia Pacific region is essential to American smart power under the Obama administration. While realigning its security posture in the Asia Pacific region, the U.S. also remains firmly committed to the region. The U.S., while balancing the expansion of Chinese military power, is still strong force for the amelioration of transnational issues.

Although U.S. key alliances in the region are basically stable, troubles still remain regarding the transfer of Futenma base inside Okinawa prefecture. Although PM Hatoyama finally signed a renewed agreement about the transfer,⁵⁴ local opposition is strong and a final assessment of the proposed location should be carried out by August of this year. After PM Hatoyama resigned, his successor-PM Naoto Kan, however, agreed to honor this agreement which, reconfirmed both government's commitment to the prior agreements made in 2006 and 2009 regarding the transfer of the Futenma base.

Although the alliance remains “the cornerstone” of the U.S.-Japan bilateral relationship, how Japan will support the alliance concerning future global missions is still uncertain. Post Cold War, Japan has increasingly

⁵³ Ditto, 74.

⁵⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Joint Statement of the U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee* (Tokyo: MOFA, 2010), 1, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/scc/joint1005.html>

marched towards becoming a normal nation through legislation, expansion of the SDF mandate to emphasize global cooperation and upgrading its Defense Agency to a Ministry as well as concretizing its non military logistical support within the alliance. With the Democratic Party of Japan now at the head of a coalition government with an overwhelming majority in the LH since 2009, Japan will most likely devote more efforts towards becoming a civilian power versus a normal nation. Moreover, the DPJ in its 2005 Manifesto besides enhancing the value of the Japan-U.S. alliance also stated it wanted to make rebuilding Japan-China relations one of the top priority issues for Japanese diplomacy. Given these policy directions, Japan's movement towards becoming a stronger civilian power could have a more positive impact on how China sees the alliance.

China worries about U.S. alliances or security groups in the Asia Pacific region targeting China. As the importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance was reinforced by new agreements post Cold War, China saw these changes as a form of containment. Alternatively, it would also see, however, an independent Japan as a threat as well. China did not look favorably as well on a new strategic quadrilateral grouping formed under the PM Taro Aso administration with the U.S., Japan, Australia and India. This quadrilateral group, originally a trilateral among the U.S., Japan and Australia, met only once before fading away. The trilateral, which was established in 2005, continues today with the members reassuring China that the group is not meant to target China.

Both the U.S. and Japan have separate bilateral strategic dialogues with China. However, on June 7, 2009, the three powers planned to actually hold the first formal or Track 1 U.S.-Japan-China Trilateral among senior

officials to discuss regional and global issues. This is not the first time this idea has come up. In 1998, during the Clinton administration, Beijing agreed to trilateral talks with the U.S. and Japan. However, Chinese analysts agreed the time was not right for formal bilateral security forum because of “tensions over the revised U.S.-Japan defense guidelines and the TMD issue, the lack of basic trust between China and Japan, and the fear that China would be isolated in a two-against-one format in which it engaged the U.S.-Japan alliance as a corporate entity.”⁵⁵ The idea of a formal trilateral was later introduced by China to the G. W. Bush administration. Apparently, the Bush administration, however, was not receptive because of concerns about South Korea’s perceptions towards such a meeting. Ironically, again because of the same concerns, this time China was reluctant to hold the formal trilateral scheduled in 2009 and the meeting was cancelled.

If it is possible within the framework of the U.S. smart power strategies to create such a trilateral dialogue, this mechanism could allay fears regarding China’s soft and hard power intentions. Moreover, the trilateral or quadrilateral, if Korea is included, could also contribute to balancing soft and hard power competition as well as to regional security and prosperity. However, given the dynamics in the new era of U.S.-Japan-China relations, the stabilizing of U.S.-Japan relations under DPJ leadership should come

⁵⁵ Thomas Cristensen, “China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance and Security Dilemma in E. Asia,” *International Security* 23, no. 4 (1999): par. 44, <http://find.galegroup.com/gtx/infomark.do?&contentSet=IAC-Documents&Type=retrieve&tavID=T2008&podId=AONE&docId=A61557378&source=gale&srcprod=AONE&userGroupName=wash59545&version=1.0>

first. At the same time, if China's economic power exceeds that of Japan, the balance in such a trilateral relationship could become difficult.

Beyond bilateral partnerships, China would like to focus on a more multi-polar order in the Asia Pacific region not dominated by the U.S. Accordingly, China has carved out different spheres of influence without the U.S. like the SCO, ASEAN + 3 and the EAS. One Chinese scholar has suggested that the U.S., China and Japan establish an official trilateral and eliminate alliances. Another Chinese scholar suggests that a collective security mechanism by a U.S.-Japan-China Trilateral replace the U.S. led alliance in East and Northeast Asia. He further suggests that this mechanism include the U.S., Japan, South Korea, China, North Korea and even Russia.⁵⁶ The first suggestion favors China's orientation for the region but runs counter to the American smart power strategy to stay engaged in both its alliances and multilaterals. The second suggestion is a twist on the first but is not foreseeable in any near future given the varying perceptions about collective security, divergent interests, lack of trust on different levels and mixture of democratic and non-democratic nations among the proposed members.

The U.S. is presently using its smart power as related to regional security to counter China's growing influence in the Asia Pacific. The realignment of U.S. forces in Asia, for example, continues to show U.S. commitment to the region and balances the expansion of Chinese military

⁵⁶ Jian Junbo, "Doubts over U.S.-China-Japan," *Asia Times Online*, (2009): par. 21, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/KF16Ad01.html>

power. The U.S. military is also working with its allies and partners throughout the region to carry out joint military exercises and training; engaging in public diplomacy through humanitarian missions, port calls and public forums as well as expanding regional cooperation on non-traditional security issues.

Although the “U.S. Pacific Command controls the most powerful and deployable naval and air combine in Asia,”⁵⁷ both the U.S. and Japan see China’s rising military power as a potential threat. China argues, however, that its larger defense budget is a natural way to modernize its military commensurate with its economic power. At the same time, China also states that its military budget is much smaller than the U.S.’ and that China has not yet become a strong blue navy power.

Besides, China’s increasing defense budget, its military modernization as well as projection strategies are also a concern. One such projection strategy the Pentagon describes as a design by Beijing to construct a ‘string of pearls,’ namely, “naval facilities reaching from Southeast Asia to the Persian Gulf to allow China to protect seaborne trade and project its influence in the Indian Ocean.”⁵⁸ Moreover, ‘China has embarked on its

⁵⁷ Richard Fisher, “Chinese Naval System Modernization Trends,” in *Hearing before the U.S. China Economic and Security Review Commission on The Implications of China’s Naval Modernization for the United States* (Washington D.C.: U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 2009), 163, http://www.uscc.gov/hearings/2009hearings/transcripts/09_06_11_trans/09_06_011_trans.pdf

⁵⁸ Daniel Twining, “Prepared Statement,” in *Hearing before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission on The Impact of China’s Economic and Security Interests in Continental Asia on the United States* (Washington D.C.: USCC, 2009), 144, http://www.uscc.gov/hearings/2009hearings/transcripts/09_05_20_trans/09_05_20_trans.pdf

largest naval modernization since the PRC was founded in 1949.⁵⁹ Also China is working towards the construction of anti-ship ballistic missiles which would allow the PRC to control the sea from its shore. This kind of weapon has the potential to hinder access around not only China's periphery but also help it project further out into the South and East China seas.⁶⁰

The U.S., Japan and China increasingly need to work together concerning non-traditional security issues like climate change, terrorism, food security, HIVs etc. At the same time, traditional security issues also demand their attention and cooperation. North Korea, for example, is a wild card for the power balance in the region. North Korea's aggressive actions including the launch of missiles; invasion of Japan's EEZ; the recent sinking of a South Korean submarine (2010); and the continued development of nuclear weapons is a great challenge for all three powers, all of which have a vested interest in stabilizing the peninsula.

Although North Korea and China share ideological and economic ties, how much pressure can or will China exert on this neighbor remains uncertain. As China grows stronger militarily and economically, North Korea, with China behind it, could grow less inclined on one hand to any

⁵⁹ "China's Activities Directly Affecting U.S. Security Interests," in 2009 *Report to Congress of the U.S.-China Economic & Security Review Commission*, (Washington D.C.: USCC, 2009), 128, http://www.uscc.gov/annual_report/2009/chapter2_section_2.pdf

⁶⁰ Paul A. Giarra, "Anti-Ship Ballistic Missile* Implication for the USN," in *Hearing before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission on the Implications of China's Naval Modernization for the United States* (Washington D.C.: USCC, 2009), 32-35, http://www.uscc.gov/hearings/2009hearings/transcripts/09_06_11_trans/09_06_11_trans.pdf.

further concessions regarding its belligerent actions. At the same time, both U.S. and Japan alternatively hope that China will become more transparent about its defense, while serving as a strong counterforce to North Korea.

Besides the North Korean wild card, another important security issue is Taiwan. Since the election of President MaYing-jeou in 2008, Taiwan has progressively drawn closer to the mainland. Concurrently, China continues to modernize its military with the aim of precluding any defeat over Taiwan as well as projecting its power beyond its immediate periphery. The Obama administration like its predecessors adheres to the one China policy while also lending Taiwan defense support, for example, through arms sales. The Obama administration's reconfirmation this year of a proposed \$U.S. 6.4 billion arms sales to Taiwan, originally made by the G.W. Bush administration, angered China. Although Taiwan continues as a crucial security issue for China and the region, the present Taiwanese government has helped ameliorate some of the tensions between the mainland and itself through public announcements and concrete actions to intensify linkages between both sides. At the same time, Japan and the U.S. are still committed to “the peaceful resolution of issues concerning the Taiwan strait through dialogue.”⁶¹

For U.S. smart power strategies, the maintenance of key alliances in the region; deepening trust with non-alliances and showing how the U.S.

⁶¹ Foreign Ministry of Japan, *Joint Statement of the U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee* (Tokyo: MOFA, 2005), 1, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/scc/joint0502.html>

military can be a force for peace and stability without waging war is key. Through U.S. smart power strategies, working with Japan and China on non-traditional security matters is also crucial for the prosperity and stability of the Asia Pacific. Japan, as the U.S.' top ally and China, with its growing soft and hard power, can also work together to ameliorate tensions related to traditional security issues like the Korean Peninsula and Taiwan.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Obama administration's emphasis on smart power as a key element of its foreign policy is also important for the new era of U.S.-Japan-China relations post George W. Bush in the Asia Pacific region. The dynamics among these three powers have an important impact on economic, political and security trends in the region. Although the U.S., Japan and China are not an official triangular relationship, the U.S. as the pre-eminent economic and military power; China, as the top emerging economic power and largest Asian military power and Japan, as the second largest economy and the top ally of the U.S. form a triangle by default.

The need for the U.S. to rethink its foreign policy, namely, maximizing its hard and soft power or its “smart power” to strength partnerships and alliance; reaching out to not so friendly nations; upgrading the U.S. image globally was clearly recognized by the Obama administration. While investing strongly in the three tiers of this strategy-defense, diplomacy and development, the administration is making an effort to reverse a decline in its image and presence in the Asia Pacific region. This decline can be attributed to the past administration's focus on the war on terrorism, the U.S.

economic crisis and American unilateralism.

Along with the U.S. decline in the region, China has become the top emerging global economy; increased its soft power in the area through financial aid without conditions; carried out a “charm offensive” and engaged increasingly in confidence building measures. At the same time although Japan continues to be a key player in the area through aid, technology, investments and its own brand of soft power, it still lacks a clear vision of the role it wishes to play in the alliance, in the region and globally as an autonomous nation. Moreover, Japan's soft power is limited by historical and territorial disputes as well as constitutional restraints.

The new dynamics among the U.S., Japan and China concerning economics, politics and security already started in the 90s. However, post George W. Bush, there is a new window of opportunity for all three powers to go beyond the dynamics of past history to create more constructive partnerships because of the leaders in place, the interdependence of these nations and the increasing need to cooperate on transnational issues such as nuclear proliferation, climate change and disease in spite of unresolved differences on other policy matters.

In the new era of U.S.-Japan-China relations, each nation is facing similar and different challenges. The U.S. and Japan with huge budget deficits and aging societies, must stimulate economic recovery through innovation, new fiscal policies as well as trade and investment promotion. While Japan aims for a more autonomous foreign policy in and outside of its U.S. alliance, it also desires a more equal partnership with the U.S. At the same time, the U.S. recognizes Japan as an equal partner and, through public statements and actions, continues to reassure Japan of its special

status in U.S.' eyes. However, the close relationship between both countries can erode if resentment builds up not only regarding the transfer of the Futenma base but towards general U.S. military presence in Japan.

With the Democratic Party of Japan still lacking experience in governing the nation, after a more than 50 year rule of the Liberal Democratic Party, it remains to be seen what “roadmap,” this party will develop for Japan bilaterally. At the same time, “some former diplomats in Japan warn that Beijing’s leaders are seizing on the momentous political change in Tokyo as a chance to improve ties with Japan and possibly drive a wedge between the U.S. and Japan.”⁶² It is important that the U.S. smart power strategy bridge the gaps in communication between the Obama administration and the DPJ, working together for a renewed U.S.-Japan relationship, avoiding the above scenario.

As President Obama stated in his 2010 State of the Union Address, he will not accept second place for the U.S. In this light, we can also say that American smart power is a way to maintain as well U.S. pre-eminence in a vital region for U.S. national interests. The U.S. smart power strategy is also a means for the U.S. to achieve a new understanding with not only Japan and China but also other key actors in the region including India, Australia and Korea. President Obama spoke about emerging powers like China in terms of ‘cultivating spheres of cooperation not competing spheres of influence to lead to progress in the Asia Pacific.’⁶³ While ‘cultivating

⁶² Martin Fackler, “In Japan, U.S. Losing Diplomatic Ground to China,” *The New York Times* (2010): par. 12, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/24/worldasia/24japan.html?_r=1&partner=rss&emc=rss

spheres of cooperation, 'and maintaining it bilateral relationships, the U.S. is aiming for an inclusive mechanism in the Asia Pacific where it can play a major role in the security and prosperity of the region. At the same time, China and Japan have developed their own spheres of influence outside of their relationships with the U.S. through such mechanisms as ASEAN + 3 and the EAS. The U.S. through its smart power strategies must also balance these situations as well for its own national interests.

While maintaining this pre-eminence to protect U.S. interest does not mean that a new balance among the U.S., China and Japan could not create a win-win situation for the region. American smart power in a pragmatic way can also work towards an Asia Pacific region where new synergies are generated for cooperation vs. conflict. The U.S. smart power strategy is one "platform" to initiate dialogue about traditional and non-traditional security issues including tensions on the Korean Peninsula, China's growing military capacity and U.S. military realignment in the region.

While it is in the hands of each power's leaders to move forward in maximizing this window of opportunity in U.S.-Sino-Japanese relations, their respective hands will also be tied by national interest, domestic constraints, other key actors' policies in the region as well as external events outside the Asia Pacific. In the short term, American smart power has already scaled up its relationship with China while fostering its special relationship with Japan and increasing overall U.S. presence in

⁶³ The Press Office, "Remarks by President Barack Obama at Suntory Hall" (Washington D.C.: The White House, 2009), 1, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president/barack-obama-suntory-hall>

the region. In the long term, will the Obama administration be able to maintain the momentum on his smart power initiatives as he still faces two wars; domestic economic issues and a recalcitrant Congress? At the end of the Obama administration's first term, it would be a good time to re-examine the impact of American smart power in the Asia Pacific region. Moreover, in this paper, I have principally addressed this topic from an American perspective. In the future, I would like to analyze even further the perspectives of China and Japan about American smart power in the new era of U.S., Japan and China relations.

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