

# Study on US Policy toward Japan after the Cold War

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## Abstract

With ending of the Cold War, Us policy toward Japan also has had great changes. Japan turned from “the Communism Breakwater” in the Cold War into the “fortified point to push forward the global strategy” for US. The Japanese-American relationship after the Cold War almost didn't break away from the security system in terms of its basic framework, but adjustment was made on the former system in terms of the content and level. The geographical sphere of the security system was expanded to break through indigenous limits of Japan and formally expand to the entire Asian-Pacific region, and the fuzzy concept of “neighboring regions” was used to delimit the extensive scope for security cooperation between US and Japan. The military cooperation was strengthened in depth and width and the security system was directly connected with the United Nations' peace-keeping activities and the international rescue operation. Alliance between US and Japan presented an intensified tendency. And Japan and US are planning to go towards “global alliance”.

**Keywords:** After the Cold War, US policy toward Japan, Alliance between US and Japan, American-Japanese relationship, Influences

## 1. US policy toward Japan during the Cold War period

Japan is the hereditary enemy for US to strive for hegemony in the Pacific region, and US had decided to whittle Japan by the opportunity of Japan's surrender as early as before the Second World War came to an end. The Second World War ended up with the Fascist Group being defeated and Japan became a defeated nation. US solely occupied the whole territory of Japan in the name of an alliance. US carried out the policy of occupying Japan, with the purpose to destroy the root cause of Japanese militarism and eradicate influences of the militarism, which was extremely necessary to set up a democratic and peaceful new Japan. It is a pity that, when the US policy toward Japan had been carried out for two years and the above reform was far from being finished, the American government suddenly came to a stop and changed its policy toward Japan from punishment and reform to reviving and propping up Japan. On September 8, 1951, US held a conference of making peace in Japan in San Francisco. On the same day when the “San Francisco Treaty” was signed, Japan signed “US-Japanese Security Treaty” with US with the identity of an independent country. The Treaty was aimed mainly to establish the military relationship between Japan and US and US privilege in Japan after the Treaty came into effect. On February 8, 1952, Japan and US signed “Executive Agreement” which stipulated detailed rules of “US-Japanese Security Treaty” (Zhao Jianmin & Liu Yuwei, 1989). Signing of “San Francisco Treaty” symbolized Japan evolved from an occupied defeated country to an independent sovereign country and began to take part in the international society with an independent identity. “San Francisco Treaty”, “US-Japanese Security Treaty” and “Executive Agreement” constituted the system of Japanese-American relationship, namely, San Francisco system or security system. Establishment of this system symbolized Japanese-US relationship changed from hostility to the new development stage of partnership. The global strategy of US had had great adjustment and autonomy of Japan had been continuously strengthened, but Japanese-US relationship had not taken great changes, and any adjustment or friction during the period belonged to the evolution process of the security system. Out of the need for their strategic development, Japan and US evolved from the subordinate partnership to the interdependent alliance.

## 2. US policy toward Japan after the Cold War

The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Radical Change of East Europe caused the international political pattern that formed after the Second World War to make fundamental changes. In order for US to fulfill the wild ambition of “monopoly” and for Japan to realize its dream of being a great political power and military power,

the two countries made a series of regulations on the security system. US strengthened the alliance system with US-Japanese alliance as the center in the Asian and Pacific region.

### *2.1 Us policy toward Japan during the period of George Bush Administration*

Japan is the major allied country of US in the Asian and Pacific region. After George Bush came into power, he attached great importance to developing US relationship with Japan and considered US-Japanese alliance the basic shaft of the Pacific community.

US and Japan reinforced overall cooperation in politics. Ever since 1989, George Bush Administration took an initiative to push forward US-Japanese basic shaft to the whole world and requested Japan not only to burden duties for US in the Asian and Pacific region but also in other regions in the world and to conduct extensive cooperation and coordinated action with Japan in any global issue. In January 1992, George Bush visited Japan, with an aim to attempt to regulate US-Japanese relationship. On January 9, George Bush and Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa signed "Tokyo Declaration" and "Action Plan" for the relationship between the two countries in the future, which emphasized that the two countries would set up more intimate "Global partnership" and "shoulder the particular responsibility to build a new era". (Xiao Wei, 2000)

In the issue of security, George Bush Government continued to urge Japan to bear more defense duties based on the security system of the two countries and emphasized strengthening the military cooperation between the two countries. In 1990 when the US Defense Minister Cheney paid a visit to Japan, he expressed that US had extensive interests in the Asian and Pacific region and had common targets with Japan, so US had to insist on the forward deployment strategy with Japan as the frontline and base and continue to shoulder defense affairs in the Asian and Pacific region. (Zhao Xuegong, 2001) After the Cold War, at the time when US requesting Japan to bear expenditure in defense affairs, US also opposed to Japan enlarging its military power on a large scale, with the purpose to maintain US leadership in the security system in the Asian and Pacific region and keep control over Japan developing any weapon system that was not complementary with Japan.

### *2.2 Us policy toward Japan during the period of Clinton Administration*

Clinton Administration paid similar attention to relationship between US and Japan, and believed in the conceptualization of the new Pacific community, "the international economic issue which US ought to give top priority to is to set up more established new partnership with Japan", and declared that "the core of the Pacific community is the US-Japanese relationship." The Clinton Government even thought, success or failure of US in Asia, even in the whole world, rested with whether US was able to create "an overall and long-lasting partnership" with Japan.

In terms of security, US further strengthened its alliance relationship with Japan and continued to maintain its military presence in Japan, requesting Japan again and again to bear more expenditure in defense affairs. In March 1994, U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee held a conference in Tokyo, negotiating that "after the Cold War, in order to maintain stability in the Asian and Pacific region, US and Japan ought to reinforce on the alliance relationship which was based on the security alliance guarantee treaty between US and Japan." (Yang Maosheng, 1991). According to US, US-Japan alliance was still the backbone for peace and security in Asia after the Cold War and US could also resorted to this relationship to constrain Japan militarization. In February 1995, the United States Department of Defense "East Asia Strategic Report" declared, US security was the key to US security policy in the Asian and Pacific region. Afterwards, US and Japan began to prepare to revise the US-Japanese security treaty and determined to switch the focus of the security treaty from defending Japan to maintain security in the Asian and Pacific region. From April 26 to 28, 1996, Clinton paid an official visit to Japan and signed with Japan "U.S.-Japan Joint Declaration on Security", reiterating the significance of US-Japan security guarantee system. The two parties came to a unanimous conclusion that, since unstable elements still existed in the Asian and Pacific region, presence of US continuing the military force was indispensable to maintain peace and stability of the Asian and Pacific region, and relationship between US and Japan in terms of security guarantee was one of the extremely important conditions for US to carry out "the positive contacting policy" within the region. The two parties also proposed in the Declaration that, "security guarantee, politics and economy are the three major backbones for US-Japanese relationship". (Zi Zhongyun, 1994) In September 1997, US and Japan finished the revision on "Guidelines for U.S.- Japan Defense Cooperation", which symbolized that the military cooperation between US and Japan entered a new stage.

In terms of economy and trade, US government continued to impose pressure on Japanese government and urged Japan to open its market to enable US commodities to enter Japan successfully and change the imbalance of trade between US and Japan for a long time. Trade friction between US and Japan has had a long history. Ever since the Nixon Administration, all previous US governments have been criticizing on Japan closing its domestic market and carrying out discriminatory trade policies and requesting Japan to make substantial efforts in opening its market. During the period of George Bush Administration, the trade friction between US and Japan

aggravated, involving more and more products and departments, trade deficit to Japan increasing year by year, which was especially obvious in the automobile industry. After Clinton came into power, friction of US and Japan in terms of economic trade became more and more serious and the contradictions between them aggravated. In order to alleviate this problem, US and Japan began to hold negotiations on trade framework. With efforts of the two countries, US made certain progress in opening its market in Japan. Within the period afterwards, as a result of rapid development of US economy and continuous economic malaise of Japan, trade friction between US and Japan exhibited a mitigatory trend.

### *2.3 Us policy toward Japan during the period of Bush Administration*

Bush paid more attention to the alliance relationship between US and Japan after he came into power. He proposed enhancing the international position of Japan to further play its role in the international world, and strengthening alliance between US and Japan, considering Japan “an important footstone for peace, stability, security and prosperity” (Xiao Wei, 2000) in Asia. In terms of security, after Bush came into power in 2001, he changed totally Clinton’s strategy of emphasizing China and ignoring Japan in East Asian diplomacy and pushed the US-Japanese relationship to the front position, advocating vigorously “a mature partnership relationship” with Japan, concealing the economic contradictions between US and Japan, strengthening the strategic alliance between US and Japan, highlighting the strategic role of Japan in the Asian and Pacific region and encouraging Japan to get rid of “cheque diplomacy”, take part in defense affairs together with US and bearing US’s burdens. Japanese-US relationship entered a “strategic honeymoon stage”, which offered a favorable environment for Japan to conduct the strategy of “political catch-up”, participate in the global affairs and play the role of leader in Asia. (Zhao Xuegong, 2002)

In terms of anti-terrorist cooperation, the “9.11” Event accelerated greatly the pace of US to strengthen their alliance relationship, and US-Japanese relationship presented unprecedentedly improved, with the following two new characteristics. Firstly, the alliance relationship was poured into anti-terrorist elements. After “9.11” Event, more anti-terrorist content was added to US-Japanese alliance. In “The National Security Strategy” issued in September 2002, US looked upon Japan as the primary dependent power to attack terrorism. Secondly, Japan took a positive and active attitude in cooperating with US action. US-Japanese military cooperation achieved a breakthrough development, and the status of Japan in the alliance got further enhanced. In November 2005, Bush announced that US-Japanese relationship was a kind of “equal partnership relationship” established on the basis of “common value, common interests and common obligation to freedom”. (Cui Liru, 2006)

### *2.4 Us policy toward Japan during the period of Obama Administration*

At the time of reinforcing US-Japanese alliance, the US-Japanese relationship under the new situation was again surveyed and a new policy toward Japan would be carried out that was distinguished from the Republican Party Bush Administration. After the Second World War, Japan has been following US. In order to secure its military and strategic status in the Asian and Pacific region, US set up its alliance relationship with Japan. The US-Japanese alliance relationship got further improved during the period of Bush Administration. Japan being the most important ally friend of US in the Asian and Pacific region, Obama Government continued to reinforce the alliance relationship between US and Japan, which is the footstone of US in the Asian and Pacific region in terms of military strategy and diplomatic policy, and even Obama Administration will never change. However, in such critical issues as North Korea and Afghanistan, US orientation in its diplomacy may not necessarily be contradictory with Japanese stake. Obama proposed holding a conversation with North Korea and expressed his support on Bush Administration decision to delete North Korea from the list of countries that supported terrorism, towards which Japan displayed a quite reluctant attitude. Although Obama Government had the consistent position to withdraw its soldiers in Iraq as soon as possible, mostly the government put upon its full strength to the anti-terrorist issue in Afghanistan. After Obama took his office, US might ask Japan to send more self-defense troops to go to Afghanistan to keep peace and bear more international obligations, which Japan was quite reluctant to. Thus, there are a lot of inharmonious elements existing in US-Japanese relationship in lots of aspects.

## **3. Characteristics of US policy toward Japan after the Cold War**

Firstly, military alliance needs to be further strengthened. US and Japan strengthened overall cooperation. Ever since 1989, George Bush had pushed US-Japanese basic shaft to the whole world and required Japan not only to shoulder burdens for US in the Asian and Pacific region, but also in other regions in the world and to cooperate extensively with US in any global issue. During the Clinton Administration period, US further strengthened its alliance relationship with Japan, continued to maintain its military presence in Japan and required Japan again and again to bear more expenditure in defense affairs.

Secondly, the contradiction in the economic and trade area is outstanding. US government has been continuously imposing pressure upon Japanese government to compel Japan to open its domestic market, make American

commodities enter Japanese market successfully and change imbalance between US and Japanese trade that had lasted for a long time. However, since the contradiction has had a long time and is closely associated with the economic development and national power of the two countries, neither of the two countries is willing to make a concession and such a situation will last long.

#### 4. Influences of US policy toward Japan after the Cold War upon the Asian and Pacific region

For the time being, US and Japan further strengthen their military alliance relationship filled with Cold War mentality, which may bring about great negative influences on security and stability of the Northeast Asia and even may result in a new military competition. This, obviously, runs counter to the main stream of peace.

Firstly, US and Japan reinforced military alliance relationship, strengthened their military cooperation, regarded North Korea as their primary threat and had the intention to interfere in the situation of Taiwan Strait, which would necessarily lead to strong opposition by such countries as North Korea and China, etc., and anxiety and discomfort of other countries and cause the security situation in the East Asia to lose balance and give rise to a turmoil. US-Japanese security treaty became the largest threat to security of countries within the community. In order to maintain their own national security, countries within the community have to keep certain military strength, and it might be possible that a new military competition was generated.

Secondly, US and Japan jointly made a declaration that they would list the issue of Taiwan Strait in China as their "common strategic target", which endangers the most central interest of China and will necessarily arouse strong opposition from the Chinese government and its people. This would impair Sino-Japanese and Sino-US relationship and would also be unfavorable for peace and stability of the situation of Taiwan Strait.

Thirdly, US and Japan strengthened their military alliance relationship, which was not helpful for the progress of integration of cooperation in Asia. It is an intense will of most Asian countries to lay emphasis on Asian integration and accelerate cooperation and integration of Asian countries. In the past several years, under vigorous propelling of China, the tendency of common cooperation in Northeast Asia has been favorable and cooperation between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China, Japan and South Korea has also achieved significant progress. It has become a common view and mainstream within the community of Asia for Asian countries to strengthen mutual cooperation. Nevertheless, US and Japan reinforced their military alliance relationship, with the intention to generate contradictions in Asia and instigate internal contradictions within Asian countries, which leads to mutual suspicions and distrust in each other in some Asian countries and defers pace of cooperation and integration in Asia.

Although US and Japan have acute contradictions in the field of trade, this would not endanger the alliance relationship between the two countries. Whether in the field of economy, or in the aspect of security, the two countries have high reliance upon each other. The relationship that US and Japan not only cooperate but also compete will become the main line for development of their relationship. US would resort to NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) to control Europe and intend to control the entire Asia by means of the Asian and Pacific association it has attempted to establish with Japan as the center. By contrast, Japanese government urgently takes the global strategy of US to attain its purpose as a political power and military power. It was reported by the Reference News that US government would reorganize its troop on a global scale, "diminish US military troops in South Korea and in Europe, and meanwhile, take US soldiers in Japan as its fortified point to push forward its strategy in Asia and Pacific region so as to intensify the function of the headquarter." At the appropriate time, Japan will turn from "Communism breakwater" during the Cold War to "the fortified point to push forward the global strategy" of US. Japan and US are planning to go towards "global alliance" (Shishan Yizheng, 1997).

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