

**CLAREMONT McKENNA COLLEGE**

**INTRODUCING THE STABILITY THEORY IN ALLIANCE POLITICS:  
THE US, JAPAN, AND SOUTH KOREA**

**SUBMITTED TO**

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## Introduction

Over 60 years ago amidst the tensions of the Cold War, the United States began alliances with two nations in Asia, one was arguably the most powerful nation in Asia at the time, whose expansion had only been stopped by their defeat during World War II, the other was a nation that had gone from being colonized to being split in half by outside powers. Despite their differences both alliances began in the midst of turmoil, and have expanded and developed into the current US-Japan and US-South Korea alliances. While this historic trajectory is obvious, scholars have debated and argued on what constituted the beginning of the alliances, why they have continued, and what their future trajectory will be. In doing so, most have followed one of several overarching theories such as realism, liberalism, or constructivism, to explain the alliances. However, in doing so, scholars have limited themselves to a narrow view of the alliances, which cannot fully explain in depth alliance continuation, and the current issues. This is because each theory has its limitations and defects from constricted analysis. There are several issues present and to start with, realism ignores domestic factors that policy makers must consider, assuming that the policy maker is a sovereign actor. Realism also ignores the transforming international system, one in which past crises cannot explain continued alliances. Liberalism has its own share of problems tending to ignore the importance of power in alliance politics, and overly focusing on democratic nations. Lastly, constructivism can only be used as a tool to understand the present, and cannot predict the future. It also cannot answer why norms diffuse differently throughout nations and people, thus it is unable to explain why certain interests have more impact in some countries, and why they events and circumstances happen when they do.

Throughout the course of my thesis, I will expound on the history behind these alliances, the underlying causes of their inception, their course throughout history, the present situation, and the trajectory for the future. In this discussion, I will include issues potentially impeding a continued alliance through a multi-faceted, inclusive approach compiling realist, liberalist, and constructivist theory into one comprehensive view. This approach provides a fuller understanding of the history

of the alliances, one which accounts for the different perceptions of important actors and the people of each nation. From this, I have arrived at my thesis, which I call the “stability hypothesis,” concerning what anchors and encourages the continuation of these alliances: namely, a desire for stability. This theory is similar to the concept of hedging, in that the alliances seek to protect against an unforeseen threat; however, my stability hypothesis continues from hedging and expands the concept to argue that even if each state had the ability to secure their nation without the aid of an alliance partner, these alliances would continue due to the other benefits received from having an extended alliance. The difference between it and hedging is that hedging relates to an alliance where each actor is seeking to stave off potential threats, whereas with stability theory, the actors are capable of adequately defending themselves thereby doing away with the need to disincentivize adverse actions. Stability theory explains the reasons why if Japan or South Korea had enough power and influence to protect against regional changes or instability that they would maintain their alliances. This desire for stability occurs among alliances which may have begun for different reasons, such as an outside threat, but through intra-alliance cooperation, they have arrived to consider a continued relationship as both essential and natural for the future. This stability hypothesis accounts for why alliances going through periods of persistent turbulence continue even if there were no tangible threats to physical security, particularly when ideological cohesion deteriorates and economics gains from trade weaken in relation to new trading partners.

Considering the prevalence of alliances in the international system, it is crucial to understand why these alliances form, why they collapse or endure, and what impact they have on global stability or instability. The United States’s first alliance was with France in 1778 in response to the Revolutionary War with Great Britain. Since then the United States has engaged in numerous alliances with countries ranging from Germany, Britain, France, and others in Europe, a bilateral alliance with Israel, a multilateral alliance under NATO, and five bilateral alliances in the Asia Pacific with South Korea (Republic of Korea-ROK), Japan, Thailand, Australia, and the Philippines. In many of these cases, these are military alliances in which the states have an agreement to protect

one another in case of attack. However, the specifics of this military commitment depend on the content of the contract. In the Asia Pacific this structure of alliances has been called a “hub-and-spoke-model” in that the US served as the hub, with its five alliances serving as the spokes. In these alliances, originally the Asian nations provided bases and ports, while the US provided deterrence and defense. Many alliances initially are started in response to a specific or perceived threat, while others can function to control the junior ally. Generally, these alliances can be counted on as there is an audience cost if an ally were to break the agreement. This audience cost means that a breaking of an agreement would mean the country which broke it could not be counted on to be trusted in future agreements, and would negatively impact their perception by both their citizens and other countries.

For the purposes of my thesis, I will be focusing on US led alliances with South Korea and Japan for a few main reasons. First, these two alliances have been among the longest lasting in Asia (by date), and the strongest. They are also both specific examples of alliances that began in the Cold War, yet have grown even stronger in the post-Cold War era. Furthermore, in comparison to their counterparts in Asia, more scholastic work has been done regarding the US-ROK and US-Japan alliances; therefore, allowing for a greater body of knowledge upon which to draw, and they also are arguably stronger and more important alliances for continued US presence in Asia, particularly when compared to the US-Thailand and US-Philippines alliances.

## Background and History

### Alliance formation under the Cold War

The US-Japan alliance dates back to the end of World War II when, in August of 1945, the second nuclear bombing at Nagasaki persuaded the Japanese emperor to step down to end the war. Following this, the Allied Powers led by the US took control of Japan in 1945 and occupied the nation until 1952, following the signing of the US-Japan Mutual Security Treaty and the Treaty of San Francisco in September 1951. The mutual security treaty allowed US troops to remain in Japan in exchange for the American promise to defend Japan, while denying any other nation the right to have troops or bases in Japan without American consent. The Treaty of San Francisco served to formally end WWII as well as address Japanese territorial issues and distribute reparation to the Allied Powers. These treaties followed the 1947 Japanese constitution in which Japan renounced “war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.” When expanded this included that “land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained.” These treaties and the Japanese constitution combined to serve as the basis of the US-Japan alliance, which has continued to shape relations up to the present.<sup>1 2 3</sup>

The situation in Japan following WWII was different than that of the other regional states as Japan was the only Asian country capable of “seek[ing] great power status,” despite their loss during the war. Thus, the US had to tread carefully in formulating a plan for a post-war Japan. This allowed three options when creating an alliance. The first and harshest option was the alpha option which restrained Japanese action to Japan, and allowed for only minimal reserved defense capabilities. This option was stricken as it assumed Japan would never become a great power again, and

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<sup>1</sup>Calder, Kent E. 2010. *Pacific Alliance: Reviving U.S.-Japan Relations*. Yale University Press. (32-35)

<sup>2</sup>Security Treaty Between the United States and Japan; September 8, 1951. [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/japan001.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/japan001.asp).

<sup>3</sup>Japanese Constitution, ch. 2, sec. 9. [http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/constitution\\_and\\_government\\_of\\_japan/constitution\\_e.html](http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html).

would have left Japan more open to Soviet influence. The second option was the gamma option, which was the most lenient in that the US would help create an independent Japan with a military strong enough to fend off communism; however, this option was quickly stricken as it would appear too threatening to surrounding nations, and would not guarantee Japanese compliance with an American war on communism. This left the final beta option in which Japan, under US guidance, “sought to create deep, robust ties to the United States and thereby modulate Japanese growth and development in a direction beneficial to U.S. interests.” Thus, the US had to carefully formulate how to treat an alliance with Japan, as this mutual defense treaty would not only serve to constrain against communism but also to “control, manage, and restrain Japan’s reintegration into the international system.”<sup>4</sup>

The US-South Korea alliance was also shaped by the ending of World War II, when in 1945 the Allied powers defeated Japan, Japan was forced to give up Korea as their colony. In 1948, under the guidance and support of the US, the Republic of Korea was born. Two years later, the Korean War began and following its end in 1953 the US and South Korea joined in a Mutual Defense Treaty in which Article 3 stated “[e]ach Party recognizes that an armed attack in the Pacific area on either of the Parties in territories now under their respective administrative control, or hereafter recognized by one of the Parties as lawfully brought under the administrative control of the other, would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes.” What is important to note from this is the final phrase “in accordance with its constitutional processes,” which shows that the US did not want to blindly be dragged into a second war with North Korea.<sup>5 6</sup>

As with Japan, the US’s intention in creating a tight bilateral alliance with South Korea was more than just containing the Soviet threat. An extended goal was also to contain South Korea,

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<sup>4</sup>Cha, Victor D. 2009. “Powerplay: The Origins of the American Alliance System in Asia.” *International Security*. 158-196. <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~govt/docs/cha.pdf>. (159, 182-185)

<sup>5</sup>Lee, Chae-Jin. 2006. *A Troubled Peace: U.S. Policy and the Two Koreas*. The Johns Hopkins University Press. (37-40)

<sup>6</sup>1953 Mutual Defense Treaty between the Republic of Korea and the United States of America. <http://www.usfk.mil/usfk/sofa.1953.mutual.defense.treaty.76>.

particularly President Rhee's policy of unification by force, termed "march north for unification." This process of containing another country through an alliance is termed powerplay, and is used to describe "the construction of an asymmetric alliance designed to exert maximum control over the smaller ally's actions." In this situation the US wanted to prevent Rhee from starting a second war with North Korea and rousing other communist countries, which the US did not want; particularly given that they already were dealing with an unsuccessful war in Vietnam and did not want to be drawn into another war simultaneously. Evidence that US officials and military leaders thought in this manner can be seen by US Commander General Clark's statement that the " 'biggest trouble came from Rhee,' " and that both the Truman and Eisenhower administrations contemplated an "overthrow of Rhee to deal with his intransigence." In addition to a purposefully unequal alliance, the US also retained wartime operational control over the South Korean Army, in case Rhee attempted to attack the North, or incite the North to attack. A final method of control was seen in the UN's National Security Council Resolution 170 (NSCR 170), which showed Rhee what actions the US would take if Rhee continued his unification policy. In the end the US found it easier to control Rhee's actions through economic leverage, as South Korea was at this point reliant upon political support and economic aid from the US. Another option would have been to distance US support of South Korea; however, that policy was not chosen because it could "embolden the adversary," or cause Rhee to "miscalculate based on ambiguous U.S. statements." <sup>7</sup>

The Cold War, which lasted from approximately 1947 to 1991, was an impetus to establish US alliances in Asia in response to the threat of a domino effect spreading communism further into the region. This threat from communism created the glue to hold the US-Japan, and US-South Korea alliances together. However, the ending of the Cold War created a dilemma. If the initial reason for the alliances was gone, then there should have been alliance dissolution given that the alliance no longer served its purpose. However, despite the conclusion of the Cold War the US-Japan and US-South Korea alliances have continued, been restructured and strengthened.

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<sup>7</sup>Cha 2009. (158-159, 173-176, 188)

This has created a dilemma in alliance political theory and Asian Studies to examine why this has occurred, particularly when other US alliances began in the Cold War have waned such as that of the US and the Philippines. One example for understanding this occurrence is NATO which was also formed under Cold War politics. When examining this case John Duffield argued that it still persists because of four main reasons. First, it still serves to protect against actual or potential dangers because there is already a system in place to respond to threats as they emerge. Secondly, there was the initial and still present institutional adaptation which serves to contain and control Eastern Europe. Third, it also serves to stabilize Western Europe which, in prior centuries, was often engaged in regional conflict. Lastly, it serves US economic interests in Europe through creation of stable relationships with European powers.<sup>8</sup> While this example has some import for US relations in Asia, it cannot fully explain the complexities involved in each particular case.

### **Alliance formation post-Cold War**

In 2002, the then Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld wrote a piece on US goals to transform the military from a threat based to a capability based force. This change in military preparedness was in response to the changing international threat environment. During the Cold War it was easy to identify the enemy as it was specific, generally a state, and the threat was a nuclear arsenal or military buildup. However, the characteristics of threats in the post-Cold War era are drastically different. Current threats are non-traditional, uncertain about where they are coming from, not a one-on-one confrontation, unspecified, and amorphous. Therefore in order to respond to this change the US military plan was twofold: if the enemy was known the US would work on vulnerabilities in order to “reduce competition from an overwhelming advantageous power.” For example, if a threatening nation had a strong navy, the US would focus on bettering the US navy and homeland security, to be able to dissuade the other power, and protect the US mainland and sea lanes. Secondly, in general the US would focus on becoming more “proactive” by focusing on

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<sup>8</sup>Duffield, John S. 1994. “NATO’s Functions after the Cold War.” *Political Science Quarterly* 109:763-787. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2152531>.

“flexible and expeditionary missions.” This entails not having an overly large longstanding army, but focusing on a smaller number who can be deployed quickly across the globe.<sup>9</sup>

A critical part of Rumsfeld’s article was that in order to accomplish this change in US grand strategy, the US would ask their regional allies to assume a greater role in their self-defense. This is necessary if the US military is going to focus on becoming “flexible” which entails having smaller better trained forces ready to be sent anywhere quickly. What this means in terms of alliance politics is that the alliances will naturally move toward becoming more equal and symmetrical as regional allies will have to assume a greater role in their defense. This indicates that the security-autonomy tradeoff lessens, because the United States’s allies will gain autonomy through securing their own borders. This will also create more equal institutions and institutional assets. For example the US could give back wartime operational control to South Korea, and likely reduce or disperse the American troop presence throughout Asia. This would likely lead to strengthened intra-alliance capabilities as nations would have better and greater co-operability and interoperability. The US also benefits from this change because the enhanced interoperability would actually generate capabilities that amplify US power. It would also create a basis of legitimacy for American power, as the US would not be acting as a hegemon forcing allied states into complicity, but rather would have equal and fair alliances, where the weaker ally still has an important say and function in the alliance, and is being developed from it. A more equal alliance will also serve to avert the impulse to counterbalance American power. Lastly this move will help to steer allies away from strategic apathy. Strategic apathy is when a state relies upon a stronger ally as their guarantor of protection, so that they do not have to focus on security. This notion also can be extended to regional issues where the state feels they do not have to intervene, thinking that the stronger ally will deal with the issue, and in an event such as this, it reduces the ability of the US military to maintain its flexible nature.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Rumsfeld, Donald H. 2002. “Transforming the Military.” *Foreign Affairs* 81:20-32. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20033160>.

<sup>10</sup>Rumsfeld 2002.

An example of a bilateral response to the changing US policy and strategic objectives was the 2+2 meeting in October 2005 with Japan and the US in which they “confirmed their shared view that emerging threats are now posed by such common challenges as terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.” This included formally adopting the “Common Strategic Objectives.”<sup>11</sup> Both of these statements served to expand the US-Japan alliance, particularly in dealing with greater issues than just a threat to each country. Both agreed to work together in situations dealing with terrorism, nuclear weapons, and threats to the sea lanes in Asia. This expansion of the alliance serves to entangle Japan in matters outside the region, while jointly entangling the US in regional matters. Galia Press-Barnathan spoke about this asymmetrical entrapment in her work on unipolarity. She argued that under unipolarity when there is one dominant nation, there is greater strategic uncertainty and a greater potential for “divergence in threat perceptions.” This divergence is over “what constitutes a threat and how to deal with it.” The unipolar power will fear abandonment in global issues, and entrapment in regional ones. In contrast, the junior ally will fear entrapment in global issues, and abandonment in regional ones.<sup>12</sup>

### **The US-South Korean alliance**

This leads us to the current situation of the US-South Korea alliance. In recent years, there has been a lot of turmoil in the alliance beginning in the early 2000s when there was an increase in anti-American sentiment peaking in 2003 with tens of thousands rallying and staging anti-American demonstrations on the streets of Seoul. This fervor culminated in Roh Moo-hyun, repudiated to be adamantly against US military presence in Korea, winning the 2003 presidential election, ushering in a new period in Korean history. The reasoning behind this increased fervor was President Bush’s refusal to follow Kim Dae Jung’s Sunshine Policy, as well as evidence of an unequal SOFA (Status

<sup>11</sup>Embassy of Japan. 2005. *Unprecedented Steps for Strengthening the U.S.-Japan Alliance - Achievements of the “2+2” Meeting on October 29, 2005*. Embassy of Japan. <http://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/english/html/twoplustwo.html>.

<sup>12</sup>Press-Barnathan, Galia. 2006. Managing the Hegemon: NATO (Alliances) under Unipolarity. *Security Studies*. (271-287)

of Force Agreement), when two American soldiers were acquitted of running over two South Korean girls and killing them. These tensions led scholars in both countries to question the future of the US-South Korea alliance, arguing that there were three potential possibilities. The first possibility was of an anchored Korea which remains allied with the US and West. The second option was a Korea adrift in which a deterioration of relations leads to a break in the alliance, with an eventual South Korean move towards alignment with China. The third option was a “Korea cut loose” with South Korea seeking autonomy without aid from another major power. The general consensus is that the third option is unlikely given that it would require South Korea to acquire nuclear weapons and divest a significant portion of their money into defensive purposes; however that means two choices still remain.<sup>13</sup>

To examine the likelihood of either scenario occurring, Cha examined the different possible variables for change. The first variable is the generational or demographic change known as the sam-pal-yook (or 386) movement. This was the generation of Koreans who were in their 20’s and 30’s during the 2000s who diverged from the older generations staunch support of the US. Instead they viewed the US as complicit in the authoritarian regimes and crackdowns on student protests from the 1960s to the 1980s, such as the Kwangju Incident. Due to this, the sam-pal-yook generation views the US as more threatening to peace on the Korean peninsula than North Korean provocations. This perception deepened under the Sunshine Policy of President Kim Dae Jung which advocated bettering relations by softening South Korea’s approach by using economic assistance and discussions rather than sanctions. However, President Bush differed greatly in this position and refused to create policy in line with President Kim’s wishes, creating the second issue variable. Therefore 51 percent of South Koreans polled in 2003 believed that North Korea’s return to nuclear proliferation was a direct result of President Bush’s policy. A third issue is over reunification. While South Korea maintains that a nuclear North Korea is “intolerable” so too

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<sup>13</sup>Cha, Victor D. 2003. “South Korea: Anchored or Adrift?” *Fragility and Crisis*. National Bureau of Asian Research. Edited by Richard J. Ellings and Aaron L. Friedberg with Michael Wills. [http://www.nbr.org/publications/strategic\\_asia/pdf/Preview/SA03/SA03\\_SKorea\\_preview.pdf](http://www.nbr.org/publications/strategic_asia/pdf/Preview/SA03/SA03_SKorea_preview.pdf). (110-112)

is the policy of using force against North Korea. This creates problems when deciding policy as the South Korean government has divergent objectives. The final major variable is the China issue. Beginning in 1995 trade between South Korea and China has rapidly increased surpassing even trade with the US. This is an oft cited example of evidence that South Korea is turning to China, especially given a shared Confucian heritage, a shared history of anti-Japanese sentiment, and historical ties between the two nations. In total these four main variables offer evidence to a decreasing US-South Korea alliance, and an increasing South Korea-China relationship.<sup>14</sup>

Other scholars have expanded this argument that the US-South Korea alliance is deteriorating. Armacost and Okimoto argued this in their 2004 article stating that the US-South Korea alliance is “beset by uncertainties” arising from these problems. Specifically they argued that a declining fear of North Korea coupled with a new nationalism arising from democratization is leading to divisions in the alliance. The issue over globalization is important because Korea suffered harshly during the 1990’s financial crisis and wants to ensure that it does not happen again. One view in Korea is that turning to regional integration and alignment with China will help avoid similar situations from occurring. This opinion is particularly forceful as it offers a solution to the unequal SOFA with the US and a way to avoid entrapment in US global directives. South Korean citizens view the unequal SOFA as insulting given that South Korea is a normal state without limitations on their use of force. This is particularly sensitive given that recent US grand strategy has been to require allies to assume more for their own defense, but some South Korean scholars and citizens feel that this has not been accompanied by an equaling of the alliance or a more equal SOFA. Therefore some South Korean citizens regard China as a “source of leverage with Washington. . . [or] as a strategic alternative to the United States.”<sup>15</sup>

However I, like Cha, point out that this perception only views the surface of the problems, and not the inner workings and other related issues. First while South Korea does not want to take harsh

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<sup>14</sup>Cha 2003 (113-118)

<sup>15</sup>Armacost, Michael H., and Daniel Okimoto. 2004. “The Future of America’s Alliances in Northeast Asia.” *Asia-Pacific Research Center - Stanford Institute for International Studies*. [http://iis-db.stanford.edu/pubs/20641/Intro\\_-\\_Future\\_of\\_America%27s\\_Alliances\\_in\\_NE\\_Asia.pdf](http://iis-db.stanford.edu/pubs/20641/Intro_-_Future_of_America%27s_Alliances_in_NE_Asia.pdf). (16, 18-23)

actions against North Korea, officials and scholars also recognize that the South Korean economy is closely linked to North Korean action. For example when North Korea launched a short range missile into the Sea of Japan in the 2000s the Korean market went down four percent. As South Korea values their economic strength, this recognition allows for more leeway in dealing with North Korea, as the government recognizes that an intransigent North Korea negatively affects the South Korean economy. Secondly, while there has been an increase in South Korea-China economic relations this does not indicate that South Korea is turning to China. Rather it is evidence of South Korea's growing economy which includes expanding economic ties. This opinion also ignores South Korea-China relations in history, where Korea was forced to be a tributary state of China, a status which South Korea does not wish to revisit. Furthermore, an alliance with China would not necessarily guarantee a north-south reunification, particularly under South Korean terms given China's support and relations with North Korea.

Moreover recent discussions of regional multilateral security involving South Korea have "implicitly anchor[ed]" US presence in Asia, a sign of the South Korean governments intentions regardless of public sentiment. Extending from this, despite heightened anti-US protests in the early 2000s there were also large pro-US rallies and counter demonstrations going on during the same time. This indicates that there is a "silent majority" who support a continued US presence, and views North Korea as the state behind tensions on the peninsula. Next is the issue that South Korean leaders who might hold personal anti-US presence sentiment will likely have their policy evolve while in office. President Roh was an example of this, despite his election based on policy supporting US troop removal, he later went on to say that "U.S. troops are necessary at present for peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and will be in the future as well." The takeaway is that a lack of public support will not always sway policy in South Korea, and one example was the decision to send troops to the war in the Middle East, despite widespread South Korean disapproval. The final issue is that of time, and as Cha wrote his article in 2003 when the main part of the crisis was going on, he was already seeing a decrease in anti-American sentiment and a negative

portrayal and view of the US. He gave evidence taken from a poll just one year after the death of the two school girls which had caused massive protests, and already there had been a significant decrease in negative sentiment. Additionally, both succeeding South Korean presidents following Roh have been from the Saenuri or conservative party.<sup>16</sup>

### **The US-Japan alliance**

The US-Japan alliance has had its own share of issues which can differ drastically from those of the US-South Korea alliance. Unlike the US-South Korea alliance, the US and Japan share similar “broad strategic interests” that pertain to global and not just regional issues. As a further difference with South Korea, Japan perceives a greater threat from China as an economic rival, and state with whom they have a rocky historical relationship. In comparison to the US-South Korea alliance, the US-Japan alliance is rapidly “expanding in scale and redefining.” However, the US-Japan also had a low point in relations in the 1990s following the disintegration of the Soviet Union. During this time the alliance was tested, as the US was angry over Japan’s lack of support in the Gulf War, Japan was upset over the detrimental effect of US presence in Okinawa, and trade negotiations between the two countries was heated. Yet in the case of the US-Japan alliance, many of these issues were dealt with more rapidly. One response was the 1995 Nye Initiative which was in “firm defense of the alliance.” Another was the creation of SACO - Special Action Committee on Okinawa - which negotiated revisions to defense guidelines. Japan also agreed to share more responsibility in global issues like international security, such as offering more SDF - Self Defense Forces - with an involvement in peace-keeping and anti-terrorism operations. Japan decided this for four main reasons, first in order to respond to the rising security challenges of the region, second Japan recognized the “political reward” of having an international role, third there was recognition that becoming a more normal state is natural, and lastly they did not want a repeat of US anger following the Gulf War. Additionally outside events like China’s provocations near

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<sup>16</sup>Cha 2003. (117-118, 120-124)

Taiwan acted as a reminder of “the alliance’s value as an insurance policy whose premiums were relatively modest.”<sup>17</sup>

Yet not all scholars maintain that there have been significant changes in the alliance. In 2000, Barnes defended the position that the US-Japan alliance has been so “ ‘over-determined’, so decisively shaped by multiple forces that even a development of such historical proportions as the end of the Cold War cannot... profoundly alter it.” He largely linked this to Japan’s continued status as a non-normal state with only semi-sovereignty. He lays blame for this on both Japan and the US, stating that Japan has continued to deny full responsibility both for its actions in World War II as well as during its colonial period. The US enabled this behavior by keeping the emperor in power following World War II, which seemed to signify that if the emperor would not be blamed for Japanese atrocities then neither would the people. A secondary issue is the anti-militarism which is protected in the constitution, and widely held by the people. Barnes felt that for Japan to fully modernize it would have to become a normal state which involves addressing its colonization and wartime atrocities. Therefore, the US alliance serves as a protection from having to do this which has factored into Japanese support of a continued alliance, as it protects Japan from having to deal with these issues. Barnes further argues that while there have been some changes in the alliance; overall they are not of great significance.<sup>18</sup>

One of the main issues arising for continued US led alliances in Asia is the question of multilateralism and whether or not it should or could be pursued. In the Cold War era, the trend was for exclusive, non-linked, bilateral alliances. Conversely, in the post-Cold War era, evidence suggests that a movement toward multilateralism in Asia is occurring, as the US attempts to link alliances. However, there are a multitude of issues standing in the way before new inclusive multilateral se-

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<sup>17</sup>Armacost and Okimoto 2004. (12-15)

<sup>18</sup>Barnes, Joe. 2000. “The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Odd, Uneasy, Likely to Last.” *Japanese Energy Security and Changing Global Energy Markets: An Analysis of Northeast Asian Energy Cooperation and Japan’s Evolving Leadership Role in the Region*. The James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy of Rice University. <http://bakerinstitute.org/publications/the-u-s-japan-alliance-odd-uneasy-likely-to-last/view?searchterm=European%20Union>.

curity institutions emerge. In the 1950s following the Korean War, US planners had to consider what forms they wanted their new alliances to take. Victor Cha argues that nations will choose different structures based on what their goal is. In the case of South Korea, as I explained earlier, the US wished to control South Korea because they believed if left unchecked Rhee would embroil them in a war with North Korea, a war in which they did not want a part. To counteract this, the US's powerplay was to control South Korea through a bilateral alliance, instead of a multilateral alliance. Cha argues that this occurred because "[i]f small powers try to control a larger one, then multilateralism is more effective. But if great powers seek control over smaller ones, bilateral alliances are more effective." Small powers will use multilateral forums to try and control a greater power because they do not have enough leverage or power to control a more powerful country individually. This is the opposite for a great power who will choose a bilateral alliance to control a smaller power because they do have the leverage and power to bully or entice the smaller power into bending to their will. Larger powers are less likely to choose multilateralism in this situation because it would require "bargaining and compromise." Therefore, because the US sought to stop South Korea from embroiling them in a second Korean War, the US chose a bilateral alliance in order to control Rhee and other overly warmongering South Koreans.<sup>19</sup>

There is also a debate on whether or not the US originally sought out a multilateral security institution in the Asia Pacific. Cha argues that the US rejected all proposed plans because it feared that if South Korea and Taiwan were in an organized security group that their leaders, Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek, respectively, would conspire together to entrap the US in a war against North Korea or China. The current Secretary of State at the time, Acheson stated as much saying that the "proposed pact would amount to a unilateral security commitment that could only entrap the United States." Therefore, to avoid the South Korean and Taiwanese governments pushing ahead in creation of a multilateral security system, US officials were sent to talk to Rhee and Chiang to dissuade them from joining or creating this alliance structure. The officials did so by threatening

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<sup>19</sup>Cha, Victor D. 2009. "Powerplay: The Origins of the American Alliance System in Asia." *International Security*. 158-196. <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~govt/docs/cha.pdf>.

to stop sending economic and military aid, as both nations relied heavily on US financial support. Cha also argued that another issue with the creation of a multilateral security system was that by the time this new framework was discussed the US already had bilateral alliances with each country, so interest waned in changing this structure. However, this did not mean that at no point did the US want a multilateral framework in Asia. Originally, the US had pursued the Pacific Ocean Pact, mainly because it left out South Korea and Taiwan, thus removing a large threat in creating a multilateral order, except it was never realized as President Truman did not fully support the idea, Japan itself did not wish to be a member, and other states did not want Japan to be a member. There was also the issue that other US allies opposed the plan, particularly Great Britain as they had been excluded in the Pact.<sup>20</sup>

The debate on why there is no similar organization to NATO or another sort of multilateral institution in Asia has recently amplified with different scholarly groups positing various theories. He and Huiyun summarized these different approaches when researching the subject for their 2011 work. They found that rationalists, which encompass neo-realists and neo-liberals, focus on “power disparity and institutional efficiency.” As many Asian states during the 1950s were undeveloped there was a power disparity between the US and their would-be Asian allies. This disparity would force the US to assume a disproportionate economic and security burden, so there was not a legitimate “burden-sharing purpose” to creating a multilateral structure. Thus a bilateral policy was chosen, as an Asian NATO “would constrain US policy autonomy more than bilateralism.” In addition, in the original NATO there was a clear border to be defended, a “contiguous land theater,” and the US was already allied or friends with some of the nations involved. This was not the case in Asia with nations spread apart and little regional cooperation. The constructivist approach to explain a lack of a multilateral theater in Asia was to look at the different identities that encompassed Asia at the time. During the 1950s there were different forms of government, general distrust of Japan, and little regional trade. Constructivists argue that “[m]ultilateralism

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<sup>20</sup>Cha 2009. (178-180, 190-192)

requires a strong sense of collective identity while bilateralism does not.” Therefore because there were no close ideological and economic ties in Asia, it made more sense from the US perspective to pursue multiple bilateral alliances in place of one greater multilateral alliance. There was also the issue that the social makeup of the US was drastically different from that of Asia, such that the US saw Asia as “alien” and “inferior” so bilateralism was a “useful tool for the US to maintain its superior status” and deal with the social differences on a smaller scale. He and Huiyun then posit their own hypothesis for approaching the subject from a political psychology prospect-threat alliance model. This theory argues that states will choose different alliance forms based on the level of threat involved in the decision. If there is a high threat where they could lose - a domain of losses - states will act more risky in order to try and squash their potential loss. However, when the state is in a domain of gains and thereby risk averse, they will act more cautiously to try and protect that potential gain. As weaker states have more risk in allying with stronger powers, they will choose a bilateral alliance to a multilateral alliance when there is a choice to ally with more than one strong power. For the stronger powers; however, if there is a high threat they will join the riskier multilateral alliances, and if there is a low threat they will join a bilateral alliance.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the debate on why there were no multilateral security arrangements during the Cold War, there seems to be agreement among scholars that there was a slow but steady movement to establishing multilateral alliances in Asia. Kuniko Ashizawa focuses on Japan and argues that since the 1990s Japan has begun pursuing a multilateral security arrangement under a new “multi-tiered approach.” This approach has four tiers, each having separate functions, but also “operat[ing] complementary to each other.” The first tier comprises strengthening and preserving current bilateral relationships showing the importance Japan places on preexisting alliances, particularly with the US. This is signified by bilateral arrangements being in the top tier, as well as placing importance on the continued presence of the US in regional matters. Ashizawa goes so far as to state that a new regional multilateral security framework must include the US, partially to keep the US engaged in

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<sup>21</sup>He, Kai, and Huiyun Feng. 2011. “Why is There No NATO in Asia?” revisited: Prospect Theory, Balance of Threat, and US Alliance Strategies. *European Journal of International Relations*. (2-5, 7, 9-10)

the region to prevent abandonment. The second tier is a “case-by-case ad hoc arrangements by certain groupings of states for dealing with specific security-related issues that cannot be discussed effectively by all members of a region.” An example would be nations’ dealing with China’s expanding territorial conflicts. The third tier focuses on regional security issues, and the fourth and final tier focuses on cooperation among regional states in non-security matters such as economics and trade.<sup>22</sup>

Ashizawa then goes on to explain the recent trend of proactive versus reactive foreign policy in Japan. He fleshes out four main reasons including a perceived change in the regional security order, a growing recognition of Japan’s major-power status, the legacy of history, and an acknowledgement of constitutional restraints. This perceived change in the regional security order relates directly to the US strategy of having allies take a greater role in burden sharing; and could also currently be extrapolated to include a rising China. Japan’s growing recognition of their transformation into a major power status began in the late 1980s when Japan became an economic giant globally. Yet despite Japan’s dominant economic power, Japan’s self perception was that of a smaller power given that their security arena was only regional and not global like other superpowers. However, by the 1990s the rest of the globe began to regard Japan as a great power, and slowly the Japanese state recognized this new international position. The third motive was Japan’s history first as a dominant military power, and then later as a state with a restrained military following the end of World War II. Japan’s economic rise led to rumblings in Asia wondering and fearing that Japan would become a resurgent power, therefore to pacify these fears Japan inserted itself into a planned multilateral regional order to assuage these fears. The last consideration was Japan’s constitutional constraints specifically Article 9 in which Japan renounced war and the use of force. This restrains Japanese military actions, therefore Japan’s options to dealing with an imbalanced regional order are to change the constitution, rely entirely on the US, or enter into multilateral

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<sup>22</sup>Ashizawa, Kuniko. 2003. Japan’s approach toward Asian regional security: from ‘hub-and-spoke’ bilateralism to ‘multi-tiered’. *The Pacific Review*. 361-382. (364, 375)

frameworks for solutions.<sup>23</sup>

Another view on the changing alliance structure in Asia is that there is a move to quasi-alliances. Cha describes these alliances as one in which “two states that remain non-allied but share a third power as a common ally.” Under quasi-alliances, perceptions are crucial both in how the weaker ally views the stronger, and also how this compares to quasi-allied partner’s perception. Cha argues that neither realism nor history can fully explain South Korea-Japan relations. Realism would say that because Japan and South Korea had common threats this would cause better relations and cooperation but Japanese-Korean relations have not always followed this pattern in periods of high threat. Scholars focusing on history would therefore argue that this is because of historical animosity caused by Japanese colonization of Korea; however, this does not explain the discrepancies over time. Therefore Cha posits a new theory that Japan and South Korea through a quasi-alliance interact according to relations with their mutually allied partner - the US. Cha makes this theory based on three assumptions, first that the most common response when states fear abandonment will be to up their commitment to the alliance, second if they fear entrapment they will weaken their commitment to the alliance, and third that states “aim to maximize their security from the alliance while minimizing their obligation to it.” Using these three assumptions he advances his thesis that if two states have an asymmetrical view of abandonment or entrapment with their mutual allied partner there will be greater friction. However, if there is a symmetrical abandonment fear there will be cooperation. In the case of South Korea and Japan both share a fear of abandonment, in both cases if the US leaves, then each country would have to take the full economic burden of defense. Specifically South Korea would have to slow down their economic growth to counteract the North Korean threat, and Japan would not only have to fully rearm but also take a greater authority in protecting the sea lanes around Japan.<sup>24</sup>

The first example Cha uses is Japanese-South Korean cooperation under the Nixon Doctrine

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<sup>23</sup>Ashizawa 2003. (363, 370-374)

<sup>24</sup>Cha, Victor D. 2000. “Abandonment, Entrapment, and Neoclassical Realism in Asia: The United States, Japan, and Korea.” *International Studies Quarterly* 44, No. 2:261-291. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3013998>. (261-263, 266-268, 271)

from 1969 to 1971. President Nixon's Guam doctrine was taken as a sign of abandonment by Japan and South Korea as the doctrine called for a large troop withdrawal from Asia going from 730,000 in the region to 284,000. This shared abandonment fear then prompted South Korea and Japan to strengthen their quasi-alliance by enhancing economic aid, the exchange of military personnel, and re-codifying their relationship by "extending the definition of Japanese security to include the ROK." Cha also notes that these years were marked by relatively few Japan-ROK disputes or frictions. A second example was from 1975-1980 following the Carter Plan, which stated US intent to withdraw all ground troops from Korea, the War Powers Act, and the Angolan Resolution which "raised Asian concerns that Congress was imposing legal restraints on further U.S. military involvement abroad." The South Korean and Japanese responses were similar to before in that they raised Japan-ROK discussions and ties, while simultaneously petitioning the US not to go through with the plan. Cha then went on to give examples of periods when Japan and South Korea had an asymmetrical fear of abandonment which led to tensions in the quasi-alliance despite shared threats such as North Korean provocation.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Cha 2000. (273-276,279-280)

## Theories

### Realism

Given the rocky and complex history of US led alliances in Asia, scholars have utilized various theories to address the issues and complications of the US-Japan and US-South Korean alliances. The first ideological theory is realism which argues that human nature fundamentally structures individuals to focus on their own self interests and motivations, and how the anarchical structure of the world system acts upon the agents of the state. In alliance politics, realists assume that because anarchy is inherent in the international system, the government acting as an autonomous actor will pursue survival as their main interest. As survival is the top priority realists believe this leads to the world being a zero sum game in that one states loss is another states gain. However, because most states cannot deal with all threats by themselves alliances begin as joint efforts to combat a common threat. Once the threat has been dealt with the alliance will disband unless a new common threat emerges.<sup>26</sup>

In realist scholarship on alliance politics there are six main theories which inform perceptions on why alliances begin, maintain, and collapse. The first is Kenneth Waltz's balance of power theory, which posits that states will ally in response to a threat from a greater power. To counteract this threat states will either balance or bandwagon. Balancing is when two states ally in opposition to the "principal source of danger," in essence allying with another state to counterbalance a greater power. States will choose this option if they risk their own survival if the threat is not dealt with, and will choose a relatively equal ally so that they can have influence, rather than risk being dominated by a stronger partner. Bandwagoning is when a state will ally with the principal source of danger. States will choose this option offensively to "share the spoils of victory" or defensively as a form of appeasement with a greater power. Using the balance of power theory the US-South Korea alliance can be explained by South Korea bandwagoning with the US, as the US has the greatest aggregate

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<sup>26</sup>Lemmons, David Frederick. 2012. "Alliances, Shared Identity, and Continued Cooperation." *Appalachian State University*. [http://libres.uncg.edu/ir/asu/f/Lemmons,%20David\\_2012\\_Thesis.pdf](http://libres.uncg.edu/ir/asu/f/Lemmons,%20David_2012_Thesis.pdf).

power and therefore greatest potential threat.<sup>27</sup>

Stephen Walt later expanded on Waltz's idea creating the balance of threat theory stating that countries will form alliances against the most threatening power not necessarily the strongest. Therefore threats depend not only on their aggregate power but also proximate power, offensive versus defensive power, and offensive intentions. Under the balance of threat theory, China or North Korea becomes the threat, despite the US's greater aggregate power. This is because China and North Korea are closer proximately; North Korea focuses openly on offensive power, and deliberately states their offensive intentions toward South Korea and the US. China's offensive power and intentions are more subtle in that they support North Korea economically and have also had their own conflicts with South Korea over how to deal with the north, and how to address South Korea's status as a tributary state of China in prior centuries.<sup>28</sup>

Next is Randall Schweller's balance of interests' theory in which a state's interest can be calculated through the difference between its value of the status quo and its value of revisionist changes. He created this theory in response to Waltz and Walt's theories by arguing that they didn't account for revisionist states, or those who want to increase their power, not just preserve their position. Therefore he argued that this means states do not always bandwagon in response to a threat, but rather that there are different systemic and unit interests which effect states' decisions. Schweller defines systemic costs as the relative strength of the states, and unit interests as the cost states are willing to pay to defend their values versus expand them. This theory relates less to the US led alliances, and more to the threats the alliances face. North Korea is an example of a revisionist state as they value their independence but also seek a changed status on the Korean peninsula, namely a reunified Korea. China is another example of a state that does not seek just the status quo, as

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<sup>27</sup>Walt, Stephen M. 1985. "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power." *International Security* 9:3-43. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2538540>. Within this article, Walt is responding to Kenneth Waltz's perspective and opinion.

<sup>28</sup>Walt 1985. Proximate power is a state's ability to project power; therefore regional states are often the most threatening. Offensive powers versus defensive powers are more likely to provoke alliances because of their strength. A states intention's of how to use their power is also crucial. If other states view the power as aggressive and threatening, it is more likely to provoke states to balance against them. Therefore perceived intent is just as important as actual intent.

can be seen by China's recent expansion into the global commons, and contestations with regional states over islands such as with the Philippines.<sup>29</sup>

James Morrow created a theory on security which states that alliances do not always respond to known threats but also form in response to perceived threats. However there is a secondary security dilemma in that there is a tradeoff between security and autonomy. Morrow defined security as the "ability to maintain current resolutions on issues [they] want to protect" and autonomy as the "degree to which state pursues the desired change in the status quo." Therefore in responding to threats states must make a decision whether an increase in security is worth a decrease in autonomy. An example would be South Korea has increased security from an alliance with the US; however, they have decreased autonomy because the US maintains operational wartime control, and places restrictions on missile defense, among other things.<sup>30</sup>

Glenn Snyder expanded this secondary security dilemma theory further in looking at intra-alliance politics. This dilemma occurs in intra-alliance politics where each allied state has to choose whether to firmly commit, and if so how much support to give. However this choice is conflicted in that the junior ally, aka the weaker state likely fears abandonment from its stronger ally, while the senior state fears entrapment. Abandonment "is "defection," but it may take a variety of specific forms: the ally may realign with the opponent; he may merely de-align. . . he may fail to make good on his explicit commitments; or he may fail to provide support in contingencies where support is expected." Entrapment means "being dragged into a conflict over an ally's interests that one does not share, or shares only partially." This secondary dilemma was evidenced in the

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<sup>29</sup>Schweller, Randall L. 1994 "Bandwagoning for Profit." *International Security* 19:72-107. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2539149>. For status quo states, their focus is on maintaining security, and self preservation; however, there are also revisionist states for which the potential gains outweigh the cost of war. Therefore, he defined four types of states: lions, lambs, jackals, and wolves. Lions are states which would pay a high cost to defend their values, lambs are weak states which would pay a lower cost to defend their values, jackals are "risk averse opportunistic" states who pay a high cost to defend, and an even greater cost to defend their values. Wolves are an example of revisionist states who are risk takers who value what they covet more than they possess.

<sup>30</sup>Morrow, James D. 1991. "Alliances and Asymmetry: An Alternative to the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances." *American Journal of Political Science* 35:904-933. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2111499>. (904-913) Saw that alliances also form in response to perceived threats. An example would be if State A began accumulating weapons for its defense against another country; however, because other states cannot know that State A's intentions are peaceful, they will begin to accumulate their own defense, potentially in the form of an alliance.

previous section as shown by Japan and South Korea's fear of abandonment by the US, either from a troop withdrawal or lack of support during a regional crisis. The US fears entrapment in these regional issues and therefore might seek to weaken their commitment to avoid entrapment. An example could be the current China-Japan tensions over the disputed Paracel Islands which Taiwan and Vietnam also claim. Thus far the US has urged the nations to seek a resolution, but has not fully involved itself in the ongoing problem. This is likely due to the fact that the US does not want to become entangled in a war with China, over an issue that does not directly affect the US.

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The final realist theory is on alliance continuation, or why alliances endure or collapse. Stephen Walt formulated this twelve years after his groundbreaking balance of threat theory. In this work he argued that there are three main reasons why alliances collapse, a changing perception in threat, declining credibility, and domestic politics. However, in each category Walt argues that the alliance will only dissolve if doing so only has low to moderate strategic ramifications. Therefore, a deteriorating US-South Korea alliance could indicate that South Korea's perception of China diverges from the US in that South Korea views China more favorably and less as a threat. Declining credibility could be that South Korea has become one of the top ten economies in the world, and thus it is economically feasible for South Korea to bear a greater burden of their security while also seeking greater autonomy. Domestic politics were evidenced in the previous section when looking at South Korean backlash to a continued US presence and the atrocities that are accompanied by

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<sup>31</sup>Snyder, Glenn H. 1984. "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics." *World Politics* 36:461-495. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2010183>. (461-471) Snyder believed that alliances are inevitable in a multi-polar world because states aren't satisfied with only moderate security so will align as a way to avoid isolation through other alliances, or to "preclude the ally from allying against them", therefore alliances beget counter alliances. In intra-alliance politics there is a secondary dilemma of fearing entrapment or abandonment which leads to two strategies. In strategy I the alliance game is to strengthen support for the ally, while the adversary game is to "stand firm". By giving a strong commitment to the alliance the fear of entanglement goes up while the fear of abandonment goes down. This choice is good in that you "enhance reputation for loyalty...[and] resolve"; however, you also "reduce bargaining power", "stop realignment option", "solidify adversaries alliance" and "provoke adversary". Strategy II is to "conciliate" with the adversary, and "withhold" support from the ally. Under this strategy of weak commitment the fear of entrapment goes down but the likelihood of abandonment goes up. The benefits of this option are that you "increase bargaining power over ally", "preserve realignment option", and "divide adversaries alliance"; however, the bad is that you "reduce reputation for loyalty...[and] resolve", and "encourage adversary to stand firmer".

having a US base in the middle of Seoul. He then gave five categories for why alliances endure, hegemonic leadership, to preserve credibility, domestic politics, institutionalism, and shared values and identities. Thus the presidents in each countries see a continued alliance as positive, for the US it wants to preserve credibility in being committed to its alliances, domestic politics in South Korea while anti-American at times also host a large number of pro-American citizens, particularly in the older and influential generations. There are also the benefits to keeping the institutional benefits of the alliance, especially as they have lasted for over 60 years already and there are actors reliant on this institution for their jobs. Lastly, throughout the alliance, the US, South Korea, and Japan have emerged as democratic nations who share identities and values.<sup>32</sup>

## **Liberalism**

The second theoretical group are the liberal scholars. Liberal scholars disagree with the basic principle of realism that conflict and competition are inherent in the international system. Instead they argue that conflict is not intrinsic, but rather international regimes pursue alliances as a way of cooperation through “complex interdependence.” Therefore, there is no specific goal of military protection, but that states ally if it serves their national interest more than unilateral action. Under liberalism both allied states gain from increased cooperation, as liberals believe the world functions as a positive sum gain, where absolute gains matter more. Therefore, due to this increased cooperation and interconnection, war is less likely because allied states have peaceful means to solve issues. Owing to this, liberal scholars often focus on institutions and regimes, as they argue that these institutions “alter transaction costs” because it makes following the regime easier than not following the regime. However, most liberal scholars have focused on addressing alliance continuation rather than alliance beginning, as it is an area in which currently is conflicted.<sup>33</sup>

John Ikenberry is an example of a liberalist scholar who wrote on this subject. He argued that

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<sup>32</sup>Walt, Stephen. 1997. “Why Alliances Endure or Collapse.” *Survival* 39:156-179. [http://www.lis.ulsiada.pt/old/apoio/espacoeuroatlantico\\_2008\\_2009/seguro/documentos/survival.pdf](http://www.lis.ulsiada.pt/old/apoio/espacoeuroatlantico_2008_2009/seguro/documentos/survival.pdf).

<sup>33</sup>Lemmons 2012.

neo-realism cannot explain alliance continuation, stating that the realist argument that the stronger ally can induce cooperation from their smaller ally is false. He argued the real reason was that alliances serve as an institution with rules and regulations which organize the allied partners, and incentivize a continued alliance. An example would be the US-South Korea alliance under which a weak South Korean nation was able to prosper and become one of the top economies by the aid of the US. This economic link served and still serves as an incentive for alliance continuation because it offers American investors a feeling of security to invest or do business in South Korea, and thus secures Korean businesses economic opportunities. For South Korea there is also the incentive to keep an alliance with the US as it allows South Korea to not bear the full burden for defense, and also allows access to greater technology and weaponry.<sup>34</sup>

Richard Neustadt was an advisor to President Kennedy who focused on the presidential office and intra-alliance politics to explain crises between allies. He believed it was the relationship itself that caused the crises stating “[i]t is woven from four strands: muddled perceptions, stifled communications, disappointed expectations, paranoid reactions. In turn, each “friend” misreads the other, each is reticent with the other, surprised by the other, each replies in kind. A spiral starts, and only when the one bows low before the other’s latest grievance does the spiral stop.” Therefore there was an emphasis on individual leaders whose “personalities, divergence of policy, priorities, [and] rationality of individual decisions” led to conflict in intra-alliance politics.<sup>35</sup> Like realism this stresses the importance of leaders of nations in the alliances, but less that they seek realist goals, but rather differences in personalities and perceptions play a greater role in understanding conflict in alliances. An example would be the relation of presidents George Bush and Roh Moo hyun. President Roh and President Bush had wildly opposing ideas on how to deal with North

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<sup>34</sup>Ikenberry, G. John. 1998. “Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Persistence of American Postwar Order.” *International Security* 23:43-78. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2539338>. Specifically that this continuation is because the “logic of order reduces incentives to engage in rivalry or balance against the [hegemonic power]”. The logic behind this is that rules and regulations from institutions reduce the returns to power, “that is, they reduce the long-term implications of asymmetries of power”. This reduction lowers the risk of participation which leads to a lessening need to resort to balancing against the hegemon because they realize that losses are only temporary as institutional rules “set limits on what actors can do with momentary advantage”.

<sup>35</sup>Neustadt, Richard E. 1970. *Alliance Politics*. New York, Columbia University Press. (56-60)

Korea, with each hoping and likely thinking that they would be able to work together to come to a solution. However little cooperation happened and each reacted negatively to the others lack of desire to compromise. The end result was that alliance relations deteriorated and mass protests happened in South Korea.<sup>36</sup>

Although Neustadt focused on US alliances in Europe his work can be extrapolated to US led alliances in Asia in that these alliances also face the different intra-alliance difficulties relating to misperceptions about intention and the negative policy decisions affected by this. This often occurs when allies don't recognize other considerations effecting policy makers' decisions such as domestic and international considerations, or the issue of time inconsistency. An example of the first issue was the apparent inequality in the recent US-ROK FTA (Free Trade Agreement). Consumers and producers in both countries were angry over the perceived inequalities and benefits that the other country would receive following a FTA. However, this ignores the power that powerful lobbying interest groups have in each country, which drastically affects policy formation. It also ignores that from the US perspective this agreement was a crucial way to show the world that the US-South Korea alliance is still strong despite the US slipping from South Korea's number one trade partner to number four. The second issue is of time inconsistency, in that policy makers have different time profiles of costs and benefits. This is when policy makers, for example the president, recognize that one policy will be better in the long run but the short run costs will be great. Since the president is either looking for reelection or a positive view on his presidency he will choose a different policy which is not as bad in the short run but does not help much in the long run. Therefore the best policy is not always chosen.<sup>37 38</sup>

<sup>36</sup>Halloran, Richard. 2007. "Tensions between U.S. and South Korea." *Real Clear Politics*. [http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2007/09/tensions\\_between\\_us\\_and\\_south.html](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2007/09/tensions_between_us_and_south.html).

<sup>37</sup>The Hankyoreh Media Company. 2011. "[Editorial] KORUS FTA unequal under the law." *The Hankyoreh*. [http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/english\\_edition/e\\_editorial/491522.html](http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_editorial/491522.html).

<sup>38</sup>Flake, Gordon L., and Troy Stangarone. 2011. "Why US Needs Korea Trade Deal." *The Diplomat*. <http://thediplomat.com/2011/08/17/why-us-needs-korea-trade-deal/2/>.

## Constructivism

The final and newest theory to look at alliance politics is constructivism which focuses on norms, identities, agents, and interests. Constructivism fundamentally diverges from realism and liberalism in that it assumes nothing is inherent, that interests are constructed. Identities therefore are dependent variables which are “relatively stable, role-specific understandings and expectations about self,” and shaped by interests. An institution is a “relatively stable set. . . of identities and interests” which are internalized in a larger group.<sup>39</sup> Another way to understand constructivism is to see it as based on two assumptions. The first assumption is that “the environment in which agents/states take action is social as well as material.” The second assumption is that “this setting can provide agents/states with understandings of their interests.” Norms develop from those interests that serve as a collective understanding and identity. Over time these norms become institutionalized and are viewed as inherent to the system.<sup>40</sup> An example of this would be that the Korean War changed US norms to believe that South Korea needed to be protected to stop the spread of communism. So the Korean War was an outside factor which served to change norms in the US based on US identity as a protector against expanded communism. As the alliance progressed the South Korean norm changed to accept an alliance with the US as normal, and any issues created by the alliance such as US extraterritoriality, bases in Seoul, and incidents by US soldiers stationed in Korea as the “growing pains” of an alliance that is working to become more equal.<sup>41</sup> Another example of this would be saying that Japan, the US, and South Korea are remaining allied because they share a democratic state, and other ideals which create ideological cohesion.

The main argument constructivists use for why alliances begin is that unlike realism and liberalism “states identify positively with one another so that the security of one is perceived as the responsibility of all.” Therefore if one state becomes a predator, in that they become predisposed

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<sup>39</sup>Wendt, Alexander. 1992. “Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics.” *International Organization* 46:391-425. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706858>. (392-394,396-400, 408)

<sup>40</sup>Checkel, Jeffrey T. 1998. “The constructivist turn in international relations theory.” *World Politics* 50:324-348. [http://muse.jhu.edu/login?auth=0&type=summary&url=/journals/world\\_politics/v050/50.2er\\_finnemore.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/login?auth=0&type=summary&url=/journals/world_politics/v050/50.2er_finnemore.html). (327-328, 331)

<sup>41</sup>Lemmons 2012.

to aggression, other states that are not originally power seeking states must react and “follow suit because anarchy permits the one to exploit them.”<sup>42</sup> Over time this tendency becomes institutionalized in the global system. As there is now a security issue in the system that creates the need for protection states will ally to serve their common interest. However, in Asia there is a preponderance of different values and beliefs held by regional actors, which acts as a source of instability. Due to these differing views in the region, there is instability when compared to other regions where there is greater coherence of ideology. This is also affected by the differing views in each state. For example, South Korea views China as their most important trade partner but the US as their most important security partner, which leads to instability from differing interests.<sup>43</sup>

In the context of the US led alliance structure in East Asia, realists would argue that the continued alliances with South Korea, Japan, Australia, Thailand, and the Philippines are in response to China’s rising threat, therefore these countries remain aligned to balance against China. However, evidence suggests that this is not true, rather that more Asian states are developing close economic relations with China; but, this does not mean that they are bandwagoning with China. There is also evidence that shows different Asian nations have varying views on the scope or level of China’s potential threat, and how much China’s rise will change the status quo. Liberal scholars would argue for alliance continuation because these alliances are not mere military alliances but rather are complexly interdependent, in that they address other types of issues like economics, trade, human rights, and reacting to national disasters. Therefore, these other benefits create a long lasting alliance, so long as all parties continue to receive benefits from the alliance. An example of this would be that South Korea and the US allied because the US saw it in their best interest to get an East Asian ally in order to stop the spread of communism, and South Korea saw it in their best interest because then they could receive economic aid from the US, and military support against North Korea. Constructivists argue that because the US has had such longstanding alliances with

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<sup>42</sup>Wendt 1992.

<sup>43</sup>Berger, Thomas. 2000. Set for stability? Prospects for conflict and cooperation in east Asia. *Review of International Studies* 26:405-428.

Japan and South Korea, over time this led to a shared identity, values, and ideals which acted as the glue to hold the alliance together. Yet the argument against this, is that those with close identities have not always remained allied such as the end of ANZUS, when New Zealand broke off a multilateral alliance with the US and Australia. This happened despite the close ideologies of the countries, including a shared European heritage. There is also the argument that the shared identities between the US and its Asian allies is overstated, with arguments evidencing that South Korea identifies more with China than the US.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Tow and Acharya. 2007. *Obstinate or Obsolete? The US Alliance Structure in the Asia-Pacific*. Canberra: Department of International Relations, Australian National University. (7-8, 10-11)

## Thesis

During the fall of 2012 I had the opportunity to study at Yonsei University under Professor Jae Jeok Park whose course on alliance politics in the Asia Pacific inspired this thesis. After our final exam Professor Park introduced his own theory on the subject: that the US and our Asian allies have continued an alliance begun during the Cold War as a way of hedging against new emerging threats and “against the emergence of an undesirable multilateral order in the region.” He defined hedging as “diversifying security affiliations” and “ ‘pursuing policies that . . . stress engagement and integration mechanisms. . . and emphasize realist-style balancing.’ ” Thus under hedging, states will remain allied not to protect against a real threat but rather potential threats. In the Asian case, the potential regional threats are China and North Korea; China because there is the question of how peaceful China’s rise will be, and North Korea because of their nuclear provocations. In Asia there are different perceptions of each threat and the greater issue is that each American ally including the US itself does not want to be entangled in a war with China, as each country has close important economic relations with China. In the case of North Korea there are also divergent views of perceived threat, but as of the time of this writing, despite increased North Korean rhetoric and threats they have neither launched a nuclear or military attack on another state. So this shows that while there are currently no blatant threats to US allies in Asia, there are sources of potential threats that encourage the continued alliance structure. Therefore the continued alliance occurs to hedge against potential threats in a period of uncertainty, and against a disagreeable regional order.

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Park argued that given the current uncertainty present in Asia there has been a move toward multilateral arrangements in order to help preserve the status quo. What is often confused is that the US is generally left out of these new evolving multilateral organizations, leading to an assumption that the US’s Asian allies are moving to China. However, Park argues that this is not true rather,

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<sup>45</sup>Park, Jae Jeok. 2011. The US-led alliances in the Asia-Pacific: hedge against potential threats or an undesirable multilateral security order? *The Pacific Review* 24:137-158.

that it is a specific form of hedging against a type of regional security that becomes “detrimental to the current US-led regional order” or “in the event that evolving multilateral gatherings... were to become disadvantageous to the current US-led order or should they ultimately fail.” An example of this would be that China often attempts to shut the US out of regional organizations, therefore American allies in Asia “substitute” for the US. For example Australia was allowed into the EAS (East Asian Summit) and therefore acts on behalf of maintaining the US led alliance structure in Asia. This also extends to other states, because although a dominant US in the region is not preferable it does serve to protect against an overly threatening and dominant China, especially given overwhelming Chinese control of the region historically.<sup>46</sup>

I was heavily influenced by the concepts of how the US led alliances continue in response to potential threats, and threat of instability without an alliance, as I believe neither China nor North Korea serve as a large enough threat to warrant a continued alliance as explained by realist theory. I also do not fully subscribe to the liberalist notion that the alliance has continued due to shared institutions, or the constructivist theory which argues a shared set of identities constitutes alliance continuation. I also do not view it solely as a way to hedge against potential threats and disorder. Instead I wish to take a qualitative approach in that each of these functions and reasoning’s serve to create a lasting alliance, but also that these alliances offer more than just security. Put simply, these US led alliances have continued though inertia and because there is no better alternative, or no other potential alliance which offers the same factors. I have termed this tendency the *stability hypothesis*. Initially, the alliances began based on realist assumptions that there was a threat and the alliances served as a response to it. In the case of South Korea during the first few months of the Korean War, the North managed to take over all of Korea up to the Busan perimeter. In this situation both the South Koreans and the US viewed North Korea as a threat either to their sovereignty, or as the cause for a communist spillover. Thus, during the war, the US largely supported the South, and following the war an alliance began to serve to protect from both nation’s threat while diverging

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<sup>46</sup>Park 2011.

slightly in intention. For Japan the threat was not as great, but due to Japanese actions during the Pacific War, Japan had little way to build itself back up without the support of the US, particularly given that almost all other Asian nations feared a resurgent Japan.

Over time institutions were formed and shared ideologies and goals among allies were shaped, with liberalist and constructivist factors encouraging alliance continuation. These two factors were critical in the post-Cold War era as the original threats to the alliance all but disappeared, the spread of communism was pushed back, North Korea became a weak state, and time tempered the fear of a resurgent Japan. By now other global threats were emerging which would test the strength of these alliances. The main test came from new US policy which encouraged allies to take more control of self defense; important in an era in which the US military was focused elsewhere on emerging threats. This change also meant that the US would begin to ask for allied assistance in regions and conflicts not necessarily relating to their allies. Thus while South Korea and Japan have not always fully supported American global intentions, they also have worked under the alliance to help financially or in peacekeeping efforts so as to aid US global goals, while also retaining a level of sovereignty in deciding what battles they choose. This has been particularly effective in areas in which the US, Japan, and South Korea find critical to regional security and stability.

Additionally, the continued alliances serve to address the security issues created by the Cold War, such as North Korean aggression and continued Taiwanese independence from China. The persistent US military presence in South Korea and Japan act as protection against North Korean attack, as in every scenario this joint effort ends with the US led alliance winning a second Korean war. As for Taiwan, while that situation is complicated in terms of US support, US presence in Asia has undoubtedly halted China from taking more provocative measures to regain Taiwan due to US presence in the region. Lastly, there are other strategic regions for a continued alliance, such as joint efforts to protect key energy and trade routes through the Malacca Strait and Indian Ocean, which all three nations are reliant upon to ship their products. South Korea and Japan have gained support from the US military bases by allowing Japanese and South Korean government funds to

be devoted to the economy and other endeavors instead of self security, and the US has gained military bases in Asia from which it can project power and support.

From this it is evidenced that there is more than one reason why the US-Japan and US-South Korea alliances have grown and developed. To fully understand this one must take a comprehensive look at realist, liberal, and constructivist ideologies as each informs and shapes the alliance. The longevity of the alliance has allowed for multiple motives for a sustained alliance even during times of low threat perception, such as the economic benefits and trade springing from the alliances. This has served to cement the alliance as a necessity and natural position in each country. Lastly the alliances serve to address the desire for a long-term peace in the region, and a stable alliance structure is one of factors to secure this. Through this multi-faceted, encompassing approach one can fully understand why the US led alliances have continued, and why it is likely that they will continue. It is because the US and their allies seek stable relationships and a stable global order, which a longstanding alliance has been able to help create and formulate and protect. Therefore regardless of lack of threat, institutional failure, or divergent norms these alliances would continue based on the stability hypothesis that the alliances have come to serve a multitude of roles which encourage alliance continuation, as the benefits and stability factors gained under an alliance outweigh greater autonomy, or potential alliances with other nations.

## Future of Alliances and Summary

This leads us to what the future of US led alliances in Asia holds. The first area is bilateralism in the US-South Korea and US-Japan alliances. In both situations, the issue of autonomy versus security is being rehashed in public debate. Japan and South Korea both recognize the benefits of a US alliance that brings trade, security, and economic aid; however, there is always the debate of how far that goes when it means a potentially harmful or disturbing US presence due to bases near the population like in Okinawa, or Seoul. This is particularly prominent in cases of pollution, rape, theft, and murder by US soldiers when stationed abroad. Yet despite these issues, the alliances will likely continue even if the North Korean and Chinese threats diminished or dissipated. This consensus has been repeatedly stated throughout the alliances' histories including 1998 South Korean government statements which "urge[d] the continued alliance with the U.S. even after Korean unification and the end of the North Korean threat." This is because even if the initial threat or reasoning for the alliances is gone they still serve to stabilize and protect the region from potential future threats, while offering additional benefits to the allied partners.<sup>47</sup>

These indications were substantiated in Glosserman and Snyder's 2008 survey and article in which they surveyed and interviewed important leaders, scholars, and policymakers in South Korea and Japan and arrived at statistics on the perceptions of Japan and South Korea towards their US led alliance, and its future. For Japan an overwhelming majority saw their top foreign policy concern as strengthening relations with the US, with China as a distant second. In terms of economics slightly more than half viewed China as Japan's most important trading partner with 43% saying the US and China were equally important trade wise. However this does not entail a positive view on China as 76% did not trust China to act responsibly, with 58% claiming China as the biggest threat to Japan. As for the US-Japan alliance a vast majority saw the US as Japan's most important security partner with intra-alliance relations as good to excellent. This included alliance

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<sup>47</sup>Cha, Victor D. 2000. "Abandonment, Entrapment, and Neoclassical Realism in Asia: The United States, Japan, and Korea." *International Studies Quarterly* 44. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3013998>. (273)

continuation as vital to Japan's security, even going so far as to state that US bases in Japan are important to Japan's national security. This last point is critical in that it shows Japanese acceptance of a continued US military presence in Japan, despite the issues surrounding it such as pollution, rape, theft, and other crimes. As for South Korea over 1/3 picked the US as the country their values most resembled. Like Japan, they viewed China as their most important economic partner, and the US as their most important security partner, but only 25% saw China as Korea's biggest threat. This figure is likely due to South Korea's more direct threat from North Korea. In a similarity to Japan, over 90% agreed that the US-South Korea alliance is vital to their national security, and US bases in South Korea should be maintained to protect against regional security issues, with 65% agreeing that the alliance is the most important contributor to Korea's security. The importance of the US-South Korea alliance is seen even post-Korean reunification with 95% supporting a continued alliance, and over half supporting a continued US presence in Korea post-reunification.

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Of the two alliances, there is generally more concern about the future of the US-South Korea alliance given their differing opinions regarding China, and more general public outrage over US bases and crimes committed by US military personnel in Korea, while in Japan there is still public outrage but it is more limited to just Okinawa. Japan and the US also share a more similar threat perception of China. However, this should not be an indicator that South Korea is turning to China. South Korea and China established diplomatic relations in 1992 following years of Beijing's denial of South Korean requests to open relations. In 2008 they raised these relations to a "strategic cooperative partnership." Nevertheless, there are still many issues blocking the way of closer relations between the two countries. As recently as 2012, a Korean Herald article dealt with this showing the different fields of conflict between South Korea and China. First is the issue of China's expanding economic zones which are venturing into other nation's exclusive economic

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<sup>48</sup>Glosserman, Brad, and Scott Snyder. 2008. "Confidence and Confusion: National Identity and Security Alliances in Northeast Asia." *Pacific Forum CSIS: Issues and Insights* 8, no. 16. [http://csis.org/files/media/csispubs/issuesinsights\\_v08n16.pdf](http://csis.org/files/media/csispubs/issuesinsights_v08n16.pdf).

zones (EEZ). In the case of Korea, China has recently “insisted on jurisdiction over Jeodo, Korea’s southernmost island” which South Korea has claimed as part of their EEZ. China has also, under their Northeast Project “claimed its past sovereignty” which would include the ancient Korean kingdom Goguryeo, which China claimed as a vassal state. Other issues have been poaching by Chinese fishermen in Korean claimed waters and a “rise in heinous crimes and financial frauds by Chinese nationals.” Additionally, human rights activist Kim Young-hwan, whom I had the honor to hear speak while studying at Yonsei, was tortured and otherwise abused while interrogated, when held for four months in Chinese jail on charges of attempting to help smuggle North Koreans out of North Korea. South Korea has demanded answers, but Chinese officials have thus far denied any allegations. Lastly, China continues to support North Korea economically and seeks regime survival. While South Korea does not want to see an economically poor North Korea given the burden it would place on the south in a reunification, China’s support of the north does not necessarily aid in reunification, particularly a reunification under South Korea’s terms.<sup>49</sup>

Scholars also examine why Japan is not showing a tendency of aligning with China or focusing inward. Gupta wrote about this stating that throughout Japanese history, the Japanese tendency is to focus on isolation over alignment, with the second option being to align with the most powerful nation. Therefore, he was interested in looking at why Japan is not “mov[ing] with the powerful” and turning towards China. While he does point out that Japan’s historic poor relations jeopardize this option, I think his assumption that Japan should be moving toward China is hasty and uninformed.<sup>50</sup> Neither Japan, South Korea, nor the US want China as their main ally given China’s “mixed signals,” with talk of a peaceful rise but increasing aggression territorially. This also ignores the fact that historically, China has overpowered Japan and South Korea, so turning from the

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<sup>49</sup>Hyon-hee, Shin. 2012. “Seoul-Beijing ties to face new test with Xi Jinping at helm.” *The Korea Herald*. <http://my.news.yahoo.com/seoul-beijing-ties-face-test-xi-jinping-helm-034002993.html>. “Despite ever-growing economic interdependence, South Korea and China remain discordant over history, territory, fishing, North Korean defectors and regional security issues”.

<sup>50</sup>Gupta, Sourabh, Samuels International. 2012. “Japan-U.S. Alliance: Persistent Inclinations of a Cautious Ally.” *East Asia Forum Quarterly*. <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2012/11/07/japan-us-alliance-persistent-inclinations-of-a-cautious-ally/>.

US to China would be little more than moving from one superpower to the next, and would not guarantee more autonomy or security.<sup>51</sup>

A secondary issue regarding Japan is whether or not Japan will become a normal state which entails the right to a standing army, collective defense, and having a normal alliance with the US. Japan's classification as a non-normal state stems from the renunciation of war under their constitution, which makes Japan one of the few nations in the world without a military, although Japan arguably has the second or third best military in the world.<sup>52</sup> However, despite this and being one of the strongest economic powers in the world, Japan is still a peaceful state with a constitution which restricts Japanese military action. The constructivist answer is that over the years Japanese citizens and leaders have formed a collective identity and norm as a peaceful nation of antimilitarism. However, that does not fully explain the situation. Miyashita expanded this notion to argue that these norms were also a product of politics, not just the historical events and a collective memory of the atrocities and horrors during World War II. His studies showed that the pacifist orientation was lower in the immediate postwar period which indicates a structural reasoning for a continued pacifist orientation. One example would be that the pro-US Liberal Democratic Party of Japan has generally supported a "dovish rather than hawkish security policy," and given the party's numerous years in leadership, the government heads, and its structure have also contributed to this orientation. Therefore, Japan has not changed the constitution because peace has been maintained without rearmament, and it has only been in recent years with an influx of new threats that Japan has begun increasing its "military assertiveness."<sup>53</sup> A final note on this is that Japan has also been hesitant to become a normal state as it would also entail entering into a normal alliance with the US, one in which Japanese forces would need to support the US militarily.

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<sup>51</sup>Baker, Carl. 2010. The Future of US Alliances in Asia: US-Japan-ROK Alliance Dialogue. *Pacific Forum CSIS US-Japan-ROK Trilateral Dialogue*. Tokyo, Japan. (1-4)

<sup>52</sup>Lind, Jennifer M. 2004. "Pacifism or Passing the Buck?: Testing Theories of Japanese Security Policy." *International Security* 29, no. 1: 92-121. <http://muse.jhu.edu/>.

<sup>53</sup>Miyashita, Akitoshi. 2006. "Where do norms come from? Foundations of Japan's postwar pacifism." *International Relations of the Asia Pacific* 7:99-120. <http://www.sfu.ca/~kawasaki/Miyashita.pdf>. (101, 106, 111)

Through Japan's constitutional limitations, Japan has actually had more autonomy in the alliance as they have "retained the right to define the nature and extent of its contribution in each case," in terms of international contribution and efforts. This creates a dilemma in which Japan wishes to become a normal state, but enjoys the autonomy given by a non-normal alliance with the US. Thus the likely outcome over time will be a trend towards revising the constitution to allow Japan the right to self-defense, and the right to send troops abroad to aid in peacekeeping efforts.<sup>54</sup>

Others have examined what the US response will be to a rising China in relation to our alliances in Asia. Stephen Harner examined this in his article arguing that the US will pursue "strategic accommodation" with China which will force out South Korea and Japan as security partners. He went so far as to critically judge Japan's fear of abandonment by claiming that there is "a suspicion that the Senkaku/Diaoyu Island crisis was escalated by Japan to forestall [the end of the alliances] eventuality."<sup>55</sup> However, I argue that while the US does not seek to aggravate the situation or create a militaristic competition like that of the Cold War, the US also wants to maintain dominance globally "not for primacy's sake - indeed, some Americans are tiring of shouldering global responsibilities - but because there are no clear alternatives." This is particularly due to the uncertainty of what China will do in the future. Therefore, the US will likely strengthen its current alliances in Asia to balance against China, without exacerbating the situation.<sup>56</sup>

The second area for the future is a potential multilateral arrangement between the US, South Korea, and Japan. When examining this in 2010, Carl Baker saw the future of trilateral cooperation based mainly on a continued threat from North Korea, which is particularly obvious as I write this

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<sup>54</sup>Mulgan, Aurelia George. 2005. "Japan's Defence Dilemma." *Security Challenges* 1, no. 1: 59-72. <http://www.securitychallenges.org.au/ArticlePages/voll1nolMulgan.html>.

<sup>55</sup>Harner, Stephen. 2012. "The U.S.-Japan Alliance is on the Wrong Side of History." *Forbes*. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/stephenharner/2012/11/28/the-u-s-japan-alliance-is-on-the-wrong-side-of-history/>.

<sup>56</sup>Blumenthal, Dan, Randal Schriver, Mark Stokes, L.C. Russell Hsiao, and Michael Mazza. 2011. *Asian Alliances in the 21st Century*. Project 2049 Institute. [http://project2049.net/documents/Asian\\_Alliances\\_21st\\_Century.pdf](http://project2049.net/documents/Asian_Alliances_21st_Century.pdf).

thesis, based on the current situation in North Korea.<sup>57 58</sup> The alliance will also continue to serve as a hedge against an unwanted change in regional order, and to preserve US, South Korean, and Japanese interests in the area. In some cases this could mean a hedge against China, but as I argued in the prior section it is not a hedge directly against China, but rather against China's recent military assertiveness, provocations, and territorial claims which could lead to destabilization, and threatening of regional waters and access. Despite what the threat is many scholars see the best path for trilateral cooperation would be in areas not colored by the China issue, such as nuclear energy, economic aid and assistance, crisis response, climate change, and similar areas of mutual participation. However there is evidence that the US and its allies while still economically engaging with China are looking to ensure regional stability such as "efforts to strengthen regional institutions such as . . . ASEAN, renewed focus on freedom of navigation, and the launch in December 2011 of a new trilateral U.S.-Japan-India strategic dialogue," along with the US-Japan-South Korea trilateral naval drills in 2012. Also to note is that China's internal situation is one of a growing middle class with demands for a higher quality of life among other issues, so Chinese leaders "confronting severe internal fissures could take refuge in nationalism, perhaps exploiting an external threat, real or imagined, to re-forge unity." This could explain why China has recently appeared more aggressive in international waters as a way to shore up national support.<sup>59</sup> Additionally, thus far China's actions have shown their tendency towards wanting to become a regional power not a world power, in that they focus on regional not global affairs, and want to protect the regions waters as a way of protecting their sovereignty.<sup>60</sup>

In summation, throughout this thesis I have sought to discuss the history of both the US-South Korea and US-Japan alliances, using a paradigm that encompasses realism, liberalism, and con-

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<sup>57</sup>Talmadge, Eric. 2013. "Japan Increasingly Nervous about North Korean Nukes." *Associated Press*. [http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5gF4UocmJnrnEZfBmUJrWcgo4Ua\\_w?docId=fb4392e1238f443a9aa07085cb73bd88](http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5gF4UocmJnrnEZfBmUJrWcgo4Ua_w?docId=fb4392e1238f443a9aa07085cb73bd88).

<sup>58</sup>Kim, Hyung-Jin. 2013. "North Korea may be preparing to test missile." *Associated Press*. <http://news.yahoo.com/skorea-nkorea-may-preparing-test-missile-095436309.html>.

<sup>59</sup>Armitage, Richard L., and Joseph S. Nye. 2012. *The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Anchoring Stability in Asia*. Washington, D.C.: CSIS: Center for Strategic and International Studies. (9)

<sup>60</sup>Baker 2010.

structivism to aid in understanding why the alliances began, why they have continued, what issues they have encountered, and the prospects for the future. By using a multi-faceted method, I was able to examine the alliances from different angles and perspectives, thereby developing a *stability hypothesis*. This helps to explain the alliance continuation due in part to an uncertainty about the future and a desire for stability, which benefits the continuation of a longstanding alliance as an institution to deal with future problems, and coupled with the notion that 60 plus years of alliance history has created cultural connections in which Japan, South Korea, and the US share a similar identity and goals. While these goals are not always aligned, the alliances serve to counter current mutual threats, as well as serving interests outside of national security such as economic cooperation, and forces ready to react in case of regional crises, as evidenced by the horrific 2011 Japanese earthquake and tsunami. This long history and multiple factors for alliance continuation create a system in which these alliances focus on stability as a main goal, thus introducing my stability hypothesis which is reliant upon a comprehensive approach to understanding the alliances, along with an understanding that alliance continuation is the most likely option given the benefits received from the alliance, and the instability that would be caused if the alliance was broken. Therefore, the US, South Korea, and Japan, should focus on creating more equal and harmonious alliances, while also focusing on areas of mutual concern such as environmental change, a nuclear North Korea, freedom of the seas, and regional crisis response.

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