The Challenges of the U.S.-Japan Military Arrangement: Competing Security Transitions in a Changing International Environment (review)

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The Challenges of the U.S.-Japan Military Arrangement: Competing Security Transitions in a Changing International Environment. By Anthony DiFilippo. M. E. Sharpe, Armonk, N.Y., 2002. x, 260 pages. $72.95, cloth; $29.95, paper.

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Japan's activity since 9/11 in response to U.S.-led diplomatic and military campaigns against threats of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction in Afghanistan, Iraq, and North Korea suggests further significant changes in its overall security policy trajectory. Rapid passing in 2002 of antiterrorism legislation in Japan to enable the Self Defense Forces (SDF) to provide logistical support to U.S. forces engaged in the Afghan war, and the passing of a second set of laws in 2003 to enable SDF dispatch on reconstruction missions in "postwar" Iraq, do not as yet indicate that Japan has decisively broken from its antimilitaristic traditions. Nevertheless, these developments do indicate that the incremental pace of the remilitarization of Japan's security policy has accelerated, that it has become a more "proactive" player in international security, and that it is increasingly strengthening its alliance cooperation with the United States.

Against this background, the reader will find DiFilippo's *The Challenges of the U.S.-Japan Military Arrangement* a timely and valuable contribution to the ever-intensifying debate on the future direction of Japan's security policy. DiFilippo's volume was produced barely in time to include a brief mention of Japan's response to the Afghan war, but is still, nevertheless, one of the most up-to-date monographs on Japanese security policy. Moreover, the breadth of its ambition and coverage in addressing the majority of Japan's military activity is still useful in order to provide context for more recent developments.

Furthermore, not only is DiFilippo's work timely and ambitious, but on the whole it makes for a highly stimulating and refreshing read. DiFilippo is clearly not part of the usual U.S.-Japan circle of academic commentators and policymakers who have been involved in attempts to analyze, and in fact often it seems to legitimize, the strengthening of the bilateral alliance in the post-cold war period. DiFilippo's detachment from this dominant discourse also means he is able to bring a different perspective and more critical edge to debates about Japanese security policy. Academics often have remarkably short historical memories, and much of the debate today has developed to the point that it is assumed that the inevitable path for Japan's security policy must be stronger alliance ties, thereby forgetting that only just over a decade ago the alliance was in crisis as its fragilities were exposed by a series

of regional contingencies. DiFilippo's work will jolt those who confidently expect or desire Japan to be a loyal ally to the United States, and demonstrates an alternative reality for the alliance and Japan's security policy. In some senses, DiFilippo can be said to inherit the mantle of the declining breed of Japanese academia that has long struggled to hold back the advance of the alliance relationship.

The essential contention of DiFilippo is that since the end of the cold war, the U.S.-Japan bilateral relationship has been an alliance in search of a purpose and legitimation, but is ultimately unsustainable domestically and internationally, and, therefore, damaging to Japanese interests in the new security environment. DiFilippo argues that, above all, Japanese policymakers have sought to maintain and strengthen the alliance as a means by which Japan can move toward attaining "international credibility." In turn, the maintenance of the alliance has been dependent on finding new functions to replace the containment of the Soviet Union. DiFilippo sees the emphasis of the U.S. and Japanese governments on North Korea and China as means by which to talk up the renewed value of the alliance in the post-cold war period.

However, DiFilippo argues that this type of legitimation for the strengthening of the alliance is shortsighted and counterproductive. He points out that the problem of U.S. bases on Okinawa—a continued U.S. presence in Japan that exemplifies the reluctance of the alliance partners to adapt to changing post-cold war conditions—can only sap the basis of domestic Japanese political support for the security treaty. Japan's strengthened alliance with the United States is also seen to actually promote rather than mitigate international instability in East Asia. The assertion is that China, North Korea, and Russia cannot stand for a U.S.-dominated world order backed by the U.S.-Japan alliance. The eventual outcome can only be that Japan's close ties to the United States will obstruct its ability to seek improved relations with these regional powers, and that the possibilities for regional conflict will be enhanced. The alliance carries further costs in that it obliges Japan to assume a contradictory position on many of the values relating to security that it has purported to cherish in the postwar period. Japan is forced to rely on the U.S. nuclear umbrella, while at the same time espousing its nonnuclear principles; it has to sacrifice multilateral security frameworks in East Asia to the exigencies of the bilateral alliance; and it is handicapped in playing a larger role in the United Nations as long as it remains subservient to the United States.

DiFilippo, after demonstrating the opportunity costs and risks of the strengthened U.S.-Japan alliance, moves on to explore the debates among policy elites as to the reasons why the alliance needs strengthening and what form it should finally assume. He makes a broad distinction between what he terms as "incrementalists" and "structuralists." "Incrementalists" are

those in Japan and the United States who wish to see a gradual readjustment of alliance responsibilities; "structuralists" wish to see a wholesale restructuring of the alliance. DiFilippo also discusses a second strain of opinion that is opposed to the continuation of the alliance and identifies the two camps within this of Western revisionism and Japanese nationalism. In looking at these debates, DiFilippo ultimately sees the security policy debate in Japan as framed in terms of two choices: maintenance and greater strengthening of the alliance; or abandonment of the alliance in favor of a more independent security policy. DiFilippo regards both options as unwise in policy terms and stresses that they are out of kilter with domestic political sentiment regarding security policy. Drawing on official government and media opinion polls, he posits that the Japanese public remains unconvinced of the nature of the external threats facing Japan and the necessity and utility of the alliance in ensuring Japan's security. Public opinion is also ambivalent about whether Japan needs to abandon the alliance and seek a more independent military role.

DiFilippo thus builds toward his final argument concerning what he advocates as the most appropriate security policy direction for Japan. He asserts that Japan cannot "stay the course" of the present of relying on the incremental expansion of alliance cooperation with the United States, as domestic and international opposition to this will only rebound to Japan's disadvantage. Moreover, Japan cannot go it alone in security, as this would only destabilize the region due to fears of its remilitarization. Instead, DiFilippo contends, the only option open to Japan that can command both domestic and international respect, and achieve genuine international credibility for Japan, is to end the alliance with the United States and stand upon its antimilitaristic principles. This means Japan must enshrine constitutionally the nonnuclear principles in order to assure East Asian states that it will never seek to be a nuclear power, preserve Article 9 of the constitution, and strengthen the function of UN institutions within its security policy.

Hence, DiFilippo proposes a radical manifesto for Japan to follow in order to alter the current trajectory of its security policy, and to achieve a happy medium between Japan as dependent on the United States and as an independent military actor. I, myself, am highly sympathetic to any view that seeks to challenge the idea of Japanese "normalcy" as necessarily meaning enhanced military efforts, and attempts to present an alternative security reality to dependence on the United States. If the desire is really to see a proactive Japan contributing to security, then it must have an open debate on the value of the various options available.

Nevertheless, there are aspects of this monograph that I found to be important weaknesses. The first was the lack of sensitivity for the debate on security in Japan among policymakers themselves. DiFilippo's characterization of the security debate as polarized among pro-alliance and nationalists

lacks nuance at times. Most researchers are aware that, while these types of debates certainly exist and are influential, Japanese policymakers have long hedged the level of their commitment to the United States and thus steered their own middle way between dependence and independence in security policy. There is plenty of evidence from events both before and even after 9/11 (Japan's careful framing of separate SDF dispatch laws and capabilities for different conflict scenarios, for instance) to suggest that Japan is not ready to deviate from this strategy, and that policymakers themselves do *not yet* see the trajectory of further alliance integration as inevitable or irreversible.

This observation leads to a second weakness in the monograph. It is difficult to grasp what the author feels are the real motivations and objectives behind Japan's impulse to strengthen the alliance. Japan's policy is often said to be seeking "international credibility." Perhaps DiFilippo is arguing that Japan simply lacks an overall strategy and is content to ride on U.S. coattails. However, most researchers who have associated with Japanese policymakers will be aware that, even if they may not possess great strategic vision, they have at least shown constant resourcefulness not to see their state's foreign and security policy once again drift. Hence, I would have liked to have seen DiFilippo dig deeper than the mainly secondary and non-Japanese literature that he has accessed, and to attempt to discern what he feels Japan is seeking by "international credibility." If we could grasp exactly what DiFilippo sees as driving Japan's policy, this would give greater conviction to his arguments about its final trajectory.

A third weakness is the broad, but not broad enough, focus of the book. DiFilippo tends to describe Japan's security policy in purely military terms, and this is used as the yardstick by which its movement in line with U.S. security policy is measured. It is clear, though, that Japan has been practicing a comprehensive form of security policy, which means it is not purely reliant on the U.S.-Japan alliance to improve its general security environment, and that it does possess an alternative security paradigm that often diverges from that of the United States. It would have been instructive if DiFilippo had examined this aspect of Japan's security policy to demonstrate how it balances what he sees as the increasing reliance on the United States.

The fourth weakness is the overly normative tone of the monograph. In one sense, DiFilippo's normative advocacy of a radical manifesto for the alliance is to be welcomed due to its honesty. It is to be hoped that the community of U.S.-Japan security specialists should be as open about their own normative policy agenda to promote the alliance, rather than dressing it up in academic objectivity. However, DiFilippo risks falling into the same trap as these commentators by being seen to instruct Japan as to what it should do, albeit with greater awareness of what Japanese public opinion may actually desire. It may have been preferable for DiFilippo to have stuck to his

sharp policy analysis, rather than to stray into policy proposals. By doing so, he loses analytical focus, and he is conspicuously short of ideas for how Japan should instrumentalize a new form of security policy. For instance, his recommendations about the UN or multilateral institutions, so crucial to his overall argument for alternatives to the alliance, look extremely vague.

DiFilippo's work will perhaps be less well cited at first in the mainstream debate in the English language about the future of the alliance. This is less to do with any internal weaknesses in the construction of the monograph's argument. More likely to cause affront are its incisive arguments that uncover the inconsistencies of the alliance. That the book may sit for some time on the margins of the debate is actually, though, a reflection of its strengths. It is one of the few serious scholarly works that has dared to ask what is increasingly becoming the unthinkable about the true necessity of the alliance.

Japan's Reluctant Realism: Foreign Policy Challenges in an Era of Uncertain Power. By Michael Jonathan Green. Palgrave, New York, 2001. ix, 351 pages. $45.00.

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Michael Green reviews recent Japanese foreign policy initiatives in East Asia and makes a plea for active U.S. engagement with Japan in building a common approach to the region. An academic audience might find this argument puzzling: other things being equal, why wouldn't the United States want to engage its main Asian ally in regional matters? To understand the provenance of this book, one has to note the author's professional background and the ongoing policy debates in Washington.

After earning his Ph.D. at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in Washington, Green worked as a Japan analyst for the Pentagon's Institute for Defense Analysis, and then moved to the Council on Foreign Relations. With this career start in the world of the foreign policy establishment, he remained fully engaged in various government, private think tank, and international conference circuits. He now serves on the staff of the National Security Council (NSC) in the George W. Bush administration's White House because of his expertise in managing current concerns in U.S.-Japan relations.

Green's argument for a policy of partnering with Japan in regional affairs comes at least partly in response to the "Japan-passing" school of