CHAPTER 2

Forming Alliances in Asia, 1949–1951

No single Pacific nation, or any combination of such nations, can be expected, unless it has reason to believe it will be backed by the US, to commit itself to a course which might prove futile and even disastrous.

—Pete Jarman (US ambassador to Australia)

Between 1951 and 1954, the United States formed the hub and spoke system of alliances in Asia. However inevitable this appears in retrospect, prior to America’s entry into the Korean War there was considerable doubt about the extent of its security interests in Asia. Although the United States had demonstrated a strong commitment to the security of Western Europe through NATO in 1949, it was uncertain whether Washington would draw a similar defensive line in Asia. Within President Harry Truman’s administration there was debate about Asia’s importance and disagreement over whether America needed to play a substantial security role in the region.

Past scholarship has focused on why a system of mainly bilateral alliances, rather than a multilateral “Asian NATO,” formed during this period. Victor Cha argues that America’s desire to maximize control over client state allies led it to prefer bilateral alliances. Christopher Hemmer and Peter Katzenstein write that a lack of collective identity inhibited efforts to realize a multilateral alliance. Others examine the region’s unsuccessful efforts toward a multilateral “Pacific Pact,” and suggest that these efforts were mainly national attempts to secure bilateral alliances with the United States. The architect of the alliance system, John Foster Dulles, attributed the mainly bilateral structure to residual fear of Japan. More recent scholarship, drawing on extensive archival research, has emphasized the interests and agency of the US allies rather than Washington.

In this chapter I argue that during the creation of alliances with Japan, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand, the alliance audience effect influenced when and how each alliance was formed. It also ensured that,
with the exception of the US-Japan alliance, the treaty texts were remarkably consistent: interdependence between seemingly discrete commitments meant that the US had to treat each of its allies equitably. In contrast to Cha’s argument that the US deliberately constructed a system of bilateral alliances in order to maximize its influence, this chapter emphasizes the historical contingencies which led first to an alliance with Japan and then explains how this development affected negotiation of the subsequent alliances.

During the 1949–1951 period, US military capabilities were never seriously doubted by states in Asia. Instead, the issue was US interests: did Washington intend to keep some of this military power in Asia, and continue to play a regional role? Due to this uncertainty, states monitored how the United States behaved within its other relationships. As expected by H1, these observations influenced assessments of Washington’s reliability. Before the Korean War, states observed US policy toward the republics of Korea and China, and concluded that Washington might not be willing to provide security in Asia. States also monitored US conduct toward Japan, and were unnerved by the prospect that the wartime enemy would receive a de facto security guarantee through the presence of US forces, but that wartime allies would not receive any security assurances.

As expected by H2, doubts about US reliability prompted these allies to change their strategic policies: most responded by encouraging Washington to play a greater role in Asia. This involved seeking formal alliances with the United States or offering to host military forces. When their initial efforts failed, states like the ROK and ROC investigated the possibility of an Asian anti-Communist “Pacific Pact” alliance. Finally, as expected by H3, US officials understood that these relationships were interdependent. They sought to prevent developments in one alliance adversely affecting other relationships by either reassuring the concerned ally or avoiding behavior likely to cause concern. In particular, the decision to defend South Korea against Communist attack was strongly influenced—perhaps even determined—by the belief that to not do so would damage regional beliefs about America’s reliability. If America “lost” South Korea in the same way that it had “lost” China, it was feared that the subsequent loss of Japan would be a foregone conclusion.

This chapter applies the alliance audience effect framework to a group of states that were not yet formal treaty allies of the United States. However, in 1949 the basic structure of the hub and spoke system existed even though no formal alliances had been signed. By the definition of alliance proposed in chapter 1, Washington’s relationships with Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Japan, and the republics of Korea and China were informal alliances. Through its colonial relationship and basing arrangements, the US was clearly committed to the defense of the Philippines. Through postwar arrangements and the presence of occupying forces, in 1949 the presence of
US forces guaranteed the security of both Korea and Japan. Previous military cooperation with wartime allies Australia and New Zealand established the bedrock of cooperation that would soon be formalized by an alliance treaty.

In this chapter, I first provide an overview of major events in the 1949–1951 period. Then I consider the alliance audience effect framework against the policies of South Korea, Japan, Australia, the Philippines, and New Zealand. I conclude the chapter with an overall assessment of the framework against the regional security dynamics from 1949 to 1951.

**Historical Overview, 1949–1951**

At the conclusion of the Second World War, the United States occupied both Japan and South Korea. In 1948, the Korean Peninsula was divided and two separate nations were established: the Republic of Korea (ROK or South Korea), led by President Syngman Rhee, and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea), led by Kim Il-sung. Following the withdrawal of Soviet forces from North Korea in 1948, the US withdrew its forces from South Korea in 1949.8

In Japan, the United States aimed to create a strong nation, anti-Communist in outlook, which could assist Washington’s efforts to counter Communist aggression in Asia. Unlike South Korea, US officials considered Japan—with its significant manufacturing capacity, advantageous location, and island geography—to be of immense strategic significance. But in 1949 there was not yet a peace treaty to officially conclude the Second World War, and the Chinese civil war complicated the issue of Chinese representation at any peace conference. Although the US had previously supported the Chinese Nationalists, led by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, in their civil war against the Chinese Communist Party, “By early 1949 the Truman administration had concluded that the United States should disengage from the Chinese civil war and . . . ‘let the dust settle’” before formulating a new policy.9 Truman decided the best strategy was to attempt to prevent Communist domination of Formosa—the island now known as Taiwan, to which the Chinese Nationalists had fled—by providing economic and diplomatic support, but no military aid.10

But Washington’s policy choices cast doubt on its willingness to play a substantial security role in Asia. In May 1949 the United States withdrew its military forces from South Korea, despite Seoul’s pleading for them to stay. This decision was consistent with the Pentagon’s view that “Korea was of no long-term strategic interest.”11 In August 1949 the Truman administration published the China White Paper, which “attempted to demonstrate that the United States had done all that it could for the Nationalists . . . [their]
defeat could not . . . be attributed to any lack of aid from Washington . . . but rather was due to [their own] military ineptitude and political corruption."12

In January 1950, Truman announced that the US would not use military force to intervene in the ongoing Chinese civil war. “Expecting that Taiwan would fall, the administration directed American diplomatic missions worldwide to explain to host governments that the island possessed no strategic significance and that Washington had no responsibility for it.”13

On January 12, 1950, the secretary of state, Dean Acheson, outlined America’s Asia policy in a speech to the National Press Club in Washington. After voicing his firm commitment to the defense of Japan, Acheson described a “defensive perimeter [that] runs along the Aleutians to Japan and then goes to the Ryukyus . . . to the Philippine Islands.”14 The geographical limits of this defensive line were immensely important. South Korea and Formosa were on the wrong side of the line, and this delineation unnerved even those countries explicitly included within the defensive perimeter.15

John Lewis Gaddis writes that in 1950 the United States “endorsed, but then almost immediately backed away from, a strategy of avoiding military commitments on the Asian mainland.”16 This policy reversal was prompted by North Korea’s invasion of South Korea on June 25, 1950. Within a matter of days, the US decided not only to defend South Korea but also to place the US Navy’s Seventh Fleet in the Taiwan Strait. This second measure served two purposes: deterring Communist attacks against the Nationalists and restraining the Nationalists from attacking the mainland and thus widening the Korean War. These two areas—which had been excised from Washington’s defensive perimeter in January—were suddenly brought back in.

The Korean War placed renewed emphasis on the negotiation of a peace treaty to conclude the Second World War. In January 1951 John Foster Dulles was appointed as a special representative of President Truman and was instructed to negotiate not only a peace treaty with Japan but also a “mutual assistance arrangement among the Pacific island nations (Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Japan, the United States, and perhaps Indonesia).”17 Some nine months later the Peace Treaty of San Francisco was signed, as were bilateral security pacts with Japan and the Philippines and a trilateral Australia-New Zealand-United States (ANZUS) pact.

As I argue below, events in the 1949–1951 period provide strong support for the alliance audience effect framework: states observed Washington’s treatment of other allies and resultant beliefs about US reliability influenced their security policies. Awareness of this interdependence was a strong influence on US policymakers, encouraging them to reconceive their interests and redraw their defensive line in Asia. Gaddis writes that “Korea, hitherto regarded as a peripheral interest, had . . . become vital if American credibility elsewhere was not to be questioned.”18
South Korea

America Decides to Withdraw from the Korean Peninsula

From its beginning, South Korea was extremely insecure, and it looked to the United States for assistance. In late 1948 the US ambassador, John Muccio, wrote that only the US military presence provided “minimum Korean external and internal security.” Muccio assessed that American support for Korea appeared “to render more secure [the] U.S. position in Japan . . . [and] preserve [a] democratic showcase in northeast Asia . . . and thereby . . . restore [the] faith of Asiatic people in US professions of interest and help.” For Muccio, the significance of the American commitment to Korea extended beyond the shores of the Peninsula: it would affect regional perceptions of American reliability.

On February 21, 1949, the secretary of the army, Kenneth Royall, conducted a press conference in Tokyo. He speculated “that in case of war with the Soviet Union . . . Japan is . . . a liability, and that it might be more profitable from the viewpoint of United States policy to pull out all troops from Japan.” The American political adviser in Tokyo, William Sebald, thought Royall’s words suggested that “even though it was our duty to disarm Japan it is not our responsibility if someone else cuts Japan’s throat as a result.” Within the US government, there was significant disagreement about the strategic value of various Asian countries. Some policymakers thought the US presence in Asia was a distraction from Europe, while others—particularly General Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) in Japan—feared that Asia would be neglected. This uncertainty over US policy was already worrying some states: in February 1949, President Rhee complained that one of the “principal difficulties” of regional security was “the vacillation of the U.S. State Department, which . . . had played a strong part in the loss of China, and might be seriously harmful in Korea.”

The National Security Council (NSC) reviewed its Korea policy in March 1949, and defense officials emphasized that the withdrawal of Russian forces from North Korea justified a reciprocal withdrawal of US forces from South Korea. For others—mainly in the State Department—it was essential to increase the ROK’s military capacity first. Though some officials were concerned about being entrapped into a conflict in mainland Asia, Muccio noted that President Rhee had specifically promised “that he would refrain from any action that might embarrass the U.S. position in the Far East and that he would not take any offensive military action against north Korea.”

The NSC assessed that “abrupt and complete U.S. disengagement could be expected to lead directly” to Soviet domination of Korea and would also
“be interpreted as a betrayal by the U.S. of its friends and allies in the Far East.”

Despite South Korea’s lack of strategic importance, the need to avoid reputational damage precluded a complete abandonment of South Korea. As Gaddis notes, “judgements [previously] based on such traditional criteria as geography, economic capacity, or military potential now had to be balanced against considerations of image, prestige, and credibility.”

Despite this, the NSC had no intention of entering into a formal alliance with South Korea. This would risk “involvement in a major war in an area in which virtually all of the natural advantages would accrue to the USSR.”

Such a promise would also be an overcommitment of US policy, given that the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) believed that “the U.S. has little strategic interest in maintaining its present troops and bases in Korea.”

As Charles Dobbs notes, military leaders considered Korea “a strategic liability, regardless of its symbolic importance.”

Although “leaders in the Pentagon were inclined to simply write off the Peninsula,” Washington could not abandon Korea completely.

If US inaction resulted in South Korea following “China along the path of communism [then] the Japanese, responding to prevailing winds, might be difficult to keep in the Western camp.”

The NSC split the difference between these two extreme options, and adopted a compromise policy of providing technical, economic, and military support designed to minimize “the chances of south Korea’s being brought under Communist domination.”

Though the United States desired the establishment of a sovereign and democratic Korean state, these objectives were to be pursued in a manner “which would enable the U.S. to withdraw from Korea as soon as possible with the minimum of bad effects.”

As Gaddis argues, “what American policy-makers sought in Korea was a graceful exit, followed by a ‘decent interval’ in which the South Korean government could pull itself together as a bulwark against further Soviet expansion.”

In March 1949 the NSC recommended that the US forces be withdrawn because “withdrawal from Korea at this time would not adversely affect the U.S. position in Japan.”

**Rhee Reacts to Withdrawal Plans But Also to US Behavior Toward Other States**

When Rhee was informed of these withdrawal plans, he was reluctant to publicly announce them. Muccio assessed that Rhee was “tarrying, hopeful of more concrete confirmation that the US really intends to carry out assurances of military aid I have given him verbally.” Rhee also “expressed hope for some kind of agreement by which the US would guarantee Korean independence and protection in case of attack.”

Rhee believed “the withdrawal of American troops without such a preliminary undertaking . . . would be open to serious misunderstanding in Korea . . . and in other countries, and might, therefore, have disastrous consequences.”
Although Rhee announced the withdrawal plans in April, he continued to push for an explicit US security guarantee, making his case by referring to US policy toward other countries. After Washington suspended military support to the Chinese Nationalists, Rhee told Muccio that “there was a question in the minds of the Korean people whether the United States can be relied upon. The Korean people never thought . . . that the United States would drop China.” Despite Muccio’s efforts to reassure him, Rhee thought Washington had “decided it is not worth while to try to defend Korea.” In particular, he cited Secretary Royall’s February 1949 statement on Japan as “indicative of the American position in this respect. If Japan was outside the United States defense line . . . then Korea must be well outside that line.”

In May, Rhee attempted to coerce the United States into a more explicit security arrangement. The South Korean press, “unquestionably inspired by governmental circles,” began to hint at a “mutual defense agreement,” with one paper even reporting that an alliance would be concluded within a month. Rhee also issued “a press release demanding inclusion of the ROK within the American ‘first line of defense.’” But these attempts to shame or blackmail Washington into a policy reversal failed to get the desired results. Ambassador Muccio told Rhee that the “US had never entered into [a] mutual defense pact with any single nation, adding constant public reference here was embarrassing and would be productive of no favorable result.”

The reaction in Washington was even stronger. Acheson cabled Muccio and instructed him to reprimand Rhee for this “grave breach [of] ordinary diplomatic courtesy.”

In a meeting with State Department officials, the Korean ambassador to the United States emulated Rhee’s approach. He noted that Communist radio broadcasts liked to criticize American policy by arguing that the US had “washed its hands” of China and “was now preparing to do the same thing in Korea.” This idea was challenged by American policymakers, who suggested that the Chinese Nationalists had “put their hands in their pockets” by failing to put up any effective resistance to the Communists. The Korean ambassador was also told that a formal defense pact was “out of the question for the U.S.”

Despite Seoul’s lack of success, Rhee continued to publicly call for a bilateral security treaty. But he also began to note that a “Pacific Pact similar to the Atlantic Pact” could assist South Korea against the Communist threat. Bruce Cumings writes that “Rhee and his scribes spilled oceans of ink in tracts and speeches calling for a Pacific treaty.” In the absence of a solid American commitment to South Korean security, the idea of a Pacific equivalent to NATO had some appeal, but Junghyun Park concludes that “the primary objective of forming the Pacific Pact was not . . . to construct an independent and autonomous regional security system.” Rather, it was to “provoked the U.S. into engaging actively in the regional order.”

Meanwhile, US policymakers managed these relationships with an awareness of the interdependence between them. In describing the importance of
Korea’s continued survival, the acting secretary of state noted that the “abandonment of Korea would raise grave doubts in the minds of those Japanese who are trying to establish a democratic nation . . . regarding our determination to help them do so.” For their part, Korean officials continued to regard US policy toward China as having relevance to American reliability. The Korean foreign minister, in a meeting with Rhee and Muccio, “flew into [a] rage, [and] declared [that the] United States had sold China down [the] river and were pursuing [the] same course respecting Korea.”

Reluctant to become too involved in Asian security, on May 18, 1949, Acheson released a statement downplaying the prospects of a Pacific Pact. While noting the “serious dangers to world peace existing in the situation in Asia,” Acheson’s statement claimed that “a Pacific defense pact could not take shape until [the] present internal conflicts in Asia were resolved.” Undeterred, Rhee continued to talk up the possibility of such a pact and informed the US embassy that it was the subject of preliminary discussions between the Korean and Filipino governments.

In late May 1949, as US troops withdrew, Muccio was taken aback at the depth of nervousness in South Korea. He reported a “sense of crisis bordering on panic. . . . Among factors responsible are propaganda line espoused by government at retention [of] US troops . . . China debacle, et cetera.” Korea continued to request that a final withdrawal be delayed and a firmer security guarantee articulated but these pleas fell on deaf ears in Washington. In place of an explicit security guarantee, on June 8 the State Department issued a tepid statement that claimed that the withdrawal of US troops “in no way indicates a lessening of United States interest in the Republic of Korea, but constitutes rather another step toward the normalization of relations.”

In late June, senior Defense officials considered their possible response options to a North Korean invasion of South Korea. Because “Korea is of little strategic value . . . [the] use of military force in Korea would be ill-advised and impracticable in view of . . . the over-all world situation.” Though the Truman Doctrine had been applied to Greece and Turkey, it was not fit for Korea: this “would require prodigious effort and vast expenditures far out of proportion to the benefits to be expected.” Eager to avoid any commitment of US forces to South Korea, the JCS recommended that in the event of a North Korean invasion, US citizens be evacuated and the problem referred to the United Nations.

Privately, Washington had decided its position: it had drawn its defensive line, and South Korea was on the wrong side of it.

**THE CHINA WHITE PAPER AND ACHESON’S DEFENSIVE PERIMETER SPEECH**

Concurrently, the Chinese Nationalists suffered several defeats at the hands of their Communist foes. In August 1949, the Truman administration issued a
China White Paper, which attributed defeat of the Nationalists not to a lack of US support but to their own “military ineptitude and political corruption.” On January 5, 1950, President Truman announced that the United States would no longer provide military assistance to the Nationalists. This official abandonment of Nationalist China further alarmed President Rhee, who raised this issue with Philip Jessup, an American ambassador at large. Jessup considered his discussion “very significant” and he reported “that all of the Koreans were disturbed by the President’s recent statement on Formosa and still hope that we may do something to help the Nationalists there.”

One week later, on January 12, 1950, Acheson outlined America’s Asia policy in a speech to the National Press Club in Washington. He announced a “defensive perimeter [that] runs along the Aleutians to Japan and then goes to the Ryukyus . . . to the Philippine Islands.” The speech immediately alarmed Korean officials: “the fact Korea found itself on the other side of that line . . . appeared to raise the serious question as to whether the United States might now be considered as having abandoned Korea.” In an interview years later, the Korean ambassador to the United States described Acheson’s speech as “sort of an invitation to the Russians or the Communists to come in” and recalled that he “begged them to reconsider that policy.” In an April 1950 discussion, he expressed the hope that “the American defense line in the Far East could be extended to include South Korea” and stressed “the importance [to] which the Korean Government and people attached to their apparent exclusion from the defense plans of the United States in the Far East.”

Downplaying the importance of the defensive line, the new assistant secretary of state for Far Eastern affairs, Dean Rusk, cited the economic and material aid the US was providing as proof of Washington’s commitment. Despite efforts to reassure him, Rhee continued to doubt Washington’s reliability. In January 1950, Soviet intelligence reports suggested that Rhee felt South Korea, like Formosa, would not be defended by US forces. According to Thomas Christensen, Korean leaders felt that “the ROK would receive the same treatment as the” Chinese Nationalists. However, Rhee believed that America’s conduct toward Korea would be, to some degree, influenced by developments in Japan: the United States “would not write off South Korea entirely . . . until after the issue of Japan was resolved.” Importantly, evidence like this suggests that Rhee’s pleas to Muccio, Jessup, and others were genuine. A leader like Rhee might, in an effort to secure a greater American commitment, exaggerate the extent to which he was observing, and was influenced by, developments in the US-ROC and US-Japan relationships. But this evidence suggests that Rhee’s fears of abandonment were genuinely amplified by US vacillation toward Formosa and inconsistent rhetoric about Japan: what he was saying to his American interlocutors was very similar to what he was saying in private. These Soviet reports also suggest that Rhee’s fears were so acute that he was willing to pursue a closer security relationship with Japan: Rhee “was discussing the need for closer collaboration with Japan.
in the future as a solution to the potential for abandonment by the United States.”\textsuperscript{59} Given Rhee’s own hatred of Japan, such reports emphasize the severity of his concerns about US reliability: he would have considered such an option only if he believed Washington’s security reliability to be very poor.

In Seoul, Ambassador Muccio grew more concerned that Korean officials were closely monitoring how the United States was treating other countries in Asia and that these observations were negatively affecting their beliefs about America’s reliability. Muccio cabled Rusk to express his concern about public US government statements “from which the name of Korea very frequently is omitted. These omissions are always noted here in Korea, and they add to the sensitivity and fear . . . that the United States Government . . . will abandon Korea at the earliest opportunity.”\textsuperscript{60} Muccio also expressed concern about the travel plans of senior US officials. The tendency of officials to visit Japan but not Korea gave “credence to [the] Korean fear and suspicion that the United States is more interested in developing and sustaining their recent enemy than their long friends!” After learning that the secretary of defense, Louis Johnson, would visit Tokyo but not Seoul, President Rhee “was much distressed . . . he had become depressed and angered . . . that the U.S. Department of Defense was showing its indifference to the fate of Korea.”\textsuperscript{61} In the words of Peter Lowe, “the absence of distinguished American visitors seemed to underline [a] lack of interest in the fate of Korea.”\textsuperscript{62}

On May 18, 1950, Acheson appointed one of his advisers, John Foster Dulles, to investigate a peace settlement with Japan. As part of this process, Dulles visited Korea and met with President Rhee in June. Rhee repeated his familiar pleas for further assistance, and again “expressed deep concern over the fate of Formosa, saying that its loss would be greatly deplored by Korea.” Dulles said that the Formosa issue was “under-going constant review within the Department of State” and noted that economic aid was continuing and some military aid would soon resume. Despite Dulles’s attempts to reassure Rhee by noting that “formal pacts, alliances or treaties were not necessary prerequisites to common action against a common foe,” he could not repair the damage already done.\textsuperscript{63} Rhee continued to frantically search around for possible allies and in April 1950 he dispatched a special envoy to Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines to “sound out some possibility of military alliances . . . something similar to NATO.”\textsuperscript{64}

\textbf{Japan}

\texttt{TOKYO UNNERVED BY AMERICA’S TREATMENT OF KOREA AND NATIONALIST CHINA}

As noted earlier, during the 1949–1950 period there was significant debate about Washington’s commitment to Japan and whether a peace treaty
should be concluded. The political adviser in Japan, William Sebald, felt that Royall’s comments in February 1949 could not have been “better designed to revive Japanese interest in the possibility or desirability of an orientation towards the Soviets, particularly in the light of recent events on the continent of Asia.”

The JCS viewed Soviet aggression as the main threat to Japan, but the State Department assessed the primary threats as internal: “agitation, subversion and coup d’état. The threat is that of a conspiracy inspired by the Kremlin, but conducted by the Japanese.” The State Department felt that “the early conclusion of a peace settlement” offered the best prospect of cementing Japan’s anti-Communist outlook. They were particularly concerned about the Defense Department’s desire for military bases in Japan, which would “constitute an irritating and not a stabilizing influence on the Japanese population.” Though the need to maintain US forces in Japan would complicate an overall peace treaty, a British official had earlier suggested that US security needs in Japan could be met through “a US-Japanese bilateral pact providing for post-treaty U.S. base facilities in Japan in return for US protection of Japan.” However, at this time, tensions between State and Defense hindered the development of an agreed Japan policy.

These disagreements persisted into early 1950, when developments in the US-China relationship changed Washington’s calculus. When the United States ceased support of the Chinese Nationalists, some Republican critics lambasted it as “a final betrayal and sellout of an American ally.” From the Pentagon’s perspective, the decision to abandon Formosa only increased the value of bases in Japan. However, in April 1950, MacArthur felt that 95 percent of Japanese would oppose US bases on Japan’s main islands. Fearing that a peace treaty with Japan would lead to the loss of these facilities, Defense officials dismissed diplomatic advice that Japan was eager for the occupation to end. Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson “was convinced that the only propaganda for a peace treaty . . . came out of the Department of State.” Japan’s leaders feared that an early US withdrawal could damage the country’s security. In August 1949 Sebald cabled Acheson, noting that many Japanese feared that a “withdrawal would open wide the flood-gates of Communism. They point to what happened in China, and reinforce their position by saying that our military withdrawal from [South] Korea has made Soviet control of all Korea inevitable.” Although the Japanese prime minister, Shigeru Yoshida, preferred a peace treaty that avoided US bases on Japan’s main islands, he felt that some bases were “preferable to an indefinite continuation of the Occupation.” Because MacArthur “forbade Yoshida to negotiate directly with Washington on security matters,” three Japanese delegates visited Washington to sidestep the supreme commander.

The true purpose of their mission was to suggest the conclusion of a peace treaty and an end to the occupation. This delegation met with Joseph Dodge, the financial adviser to SCAP, in Washington on May 2, 1950.
the Japanese finance minister, “conveyed a personal message from Prime Minister Yoshida to Mr. Dodge to the effect that the Government desires the earliest possible [peace] treaty. As such a treaty would require the maintenance of U.S. forces [at bases in Japan] to secure the treaty terms and for other purposes, if the U.S. Government hesitates to make these conditions, the Japanese Government will try to find a way to offer them.”

In making this offer, Japan had paid close attention to Royall’s February 1949 statement, but Ikeda noted that “emphasis had been given [to] this by later public statements of the United States Government in writing off Formosa . . . [and] the fact that South Korea is not strong and could, perhaps, easily be abandoned.” Japan had observed America’s behavior toward Korea and Formosa, and worried about suffering the same fate: “The Japanese people are desperately looking for firm ground. . . . They were skeptical on just what and when and where the United States would stand firm, and particularly with respect to Japan.”

Unlike South Korea, Japan had been specifically included in Acheson’s defensive perimeter speech. Despite this explicit assurance, Japan was sufficiently unnerved by America’s treatment of the ROC and ROK that it felt it necessary to seek Washington’s recommitment to Japanese security. But unlike Rhee, with his incessant complaints and extortion efforts, Japan brought a significant offer to the table. Yoshida was so disturbed by the prospect of American unreliability that he was willing to make a significant concession in order to improve both that measure of reliability and also Japanese security. His offer of bases in mainland Japan was a decision that would be unpopular in Japan, so Yoshida had no motive to lie or purposefully invoke the issue of American reliability when explaining Japan’s willingness to host US forces. This lends credence to Ikeda’s presentation of the basing offer: after Royall’s statement, and having observed America’s treatment of Korea and Nationalist China, Japan feared that American unreliability damaged its own security. In order to improve American reliability and solidify its role as Japan’s protector, Yoshida made the critical decision to offer basing rights in mainland Japan.

**Chapter 2**

**The Korean War Demonstrates American Reliability and Changes Japan’s Calculus**

When North Korea invaded South Korea in June 1950, many in Washington believed that the US response would be viewed as a litmus test of America’s security reliability. Intelligence analysts thought that Japan would “regard the position taken by the United States as presaging US action should Japan be threatened with invasion.” Inaction would “strengthen [an] existing widespread desire for neutrality,” but “Rapid and unhesitating US support for the ROK . . . would reassure the Japanese . . . [and] would enhance their willingness to accept US protection and its implica-
Following the US intervention, General MacArthur reported that the Japanese were immensely relieved; they believed it meant the United States would “vigorously defend them against Russian invasion.” An American official was told that “99 percent of all Japanese supported the Korean operation, despite a widespread antiwar sentiment.”

Tokyo had earlier outlined its fears of abandonment and secretly offered to host US forces. Now, the North Korean invasion had reaffirmed both the dangers of Communist aggression and the desirability of a US security guarantee. But US intervention in Korea also changed Japan’s calculations: now that Tokyo had a more informed assessment of Washington’s reliability—determined by its capabilities and interests in Northeast Asia—it could afford to drive a harder bargain on the issue of military bases. On July 29, 1950, Yoshida told a parliamentary committee that he was “against leasing military bases to any foreign country.” When asked about how Japan would ensure its security, a vice minister of foreign affairs intimated that “Japan would rely upon UN protection as in the case of the Republic of Korea.” This position puzzled some US officials, who found it “mystifying in view of the Korean war which has pointed out the true character of Communist aggression and the need for firstclass armament and bases to stave off aggression.”

But the alliance audience effect theory provides an explanation for Tokyo’s reversal. Now that the United States had defended South Korea, Japan could make a more informed judgment of American reliability and adjust policy accordingly. Sebald, in Tokyo, was not as perplexed as his colleagues in Washington. He assessed that Prime Minister Yoshida’s comments “laying the groundwork for future bargaining.” Officials in Washington eventually came to a similar conclusion: because the Japanese now knew that “US bases in Japan will prove a critical factor in protecting the whole US position in the Far East . . . it would be logical for the Japanese (who have never hesitated to play power politics on a grand scale) to intimate that the price for these all-important bases in Japan is greater than the US had perhaps reckoned.” Embassy officials in Tokyo felt that “notwithstanding official denials and public confusion on the issue, there exists in Japan a large body of opinion which, in light of the Korea conflict, would be in favor of establishing a Japan[ese] defense force.” Whereas the United States had once intended to disarm Japan to ensure it would never again threaten its Asian neighbors, the Korean War challenged the feasibility of this policy. The choice was that “either the US assumes the full burden of defending Japan or it must enlist Japan’s assistance in helping to provide such defense.”

In January 1951, John Foster Dulles was appointed as an ambassador and given responsibility to conclude not only a peace treaty with Japan but also a “mutual assistance arrangement among the Pacific island nations (Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Japan, the United States, and perhaps Indonesia).” He arrived in Japan in January 1951 to discuss the peace treaty with Prime Minister Yoshida. By this time, the allied position on the Korean
Peninsula had worsened: after being pushed back to the Pusan beachhead in September 1950, UN forces counterattacked and moved north of the 38th parallel, but Chinese forces had entered the war in October.\textsuperscript{83} Dulles, in a memo to Acheson, warned that these developments had harmed the American bargaining position with Japan: items “which in September it seemed that we could obtain unconditionally merely by stipulating them” now had to be the subject of intense negotiation.\textsuperscript{84}

In meetings with Japanese officials, Dulles “learned that American military reversals in Korea had, as he feared, stiffened the prime minister’s spine.”\textsuperscript{85} Yoshida now knew the value that Japanese real estate had in the eyes of American strategists, but he also better understood the Communist threat in North Asia. US diplomats had earlier mused on how America must either wholly provide for Japan’s defense or convince it to rearm: these circumstances provided an opportunity for Yoshida to press for the former option. He warned Dulles that “it was necessary to go very slowly in connection with any possible rearmament” due to the risks of resurgent militarism and the economic cost of such a decision. Dulles insisted that “Japan should be willing to make at least a token contribution and a commitment to a general cause of collective security,” but Yoshida was unwilling to discuss the specifics of rearmament.\textsuperscript{86} One Japanese official said, “If we organize 300,000 troops as your Mr. Dulles wanted us to do, your government will insist that we send some of these troops to Korea.”\textsuperscript{87} Walter LaFeber also notes Yoshida “seemed obsessed by the fear that Americans wanted Japanese troops to be used in Korea.”\textsuperscript{88}

After a difficult discussion on January 31, Dulles insisted that Japan must create a small army and “until Yoshida accepted his position, Dulles declined to discuss the terms of the peace treaty.”\textsuperscript{89} Yoshida eventually conceded and “secretly agreed to creating limited ground forces.” At 50,000 men it was not the size Dulles had desired, but it was a sufficient sign of good faith.\textsuperscript{90} Conveniently for Japan, its small size also meant that it was unlikely to play a role in the defense of South Korea. A draft bilateral agreement, which would be signed following the peace treaty, noted that “Japan desires . . . that the United States . . . should maintain armed forces of its own in and about Japan so as to deter armed attack upon Japan.”\textsuperscript{91} While this agreement contained only “a vague promise to defend Japan. . . . After Truman’s massive response in Korea . . . no sane person doubted how U.S. forces would react if Japan were attacked.” Though Dulles wanted more from Japan, he achieved only a “blurred, complicated commitment from Yoshida to rearm.”\textsuperscript{92}

By February 1951, Dulles had achieved substantial progress toward achieving a settlement with Japan, but he knew this had the potential to complicate relations with other friendly states in Asia. In April 1950 he had commented that any defensive guarantee to Japan “would be regarded as somewhat anomalous by our Allies because Japan, an ex-enemy country,
would be obtaining a U.S. commitment which every one of our friendly Allies coveted.” Although the February 1951 draft agreement did not explicitly obligate the United States to defend Japan, US officials saw a “danger” if Washington gave “Japan guarantees which we did not give [to] the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand.” Such discrimination might mean that these wartime allies would not support a lenient peace treaty with Japan and would instead demand that Japan not be permitted to maintain a postwar defense force. As evidence presented later in this chapter shows, the need to address the risk of allied dissatisfaction was a key determinant of the hub and spoke security architecture.

The Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand

Before the outbreak of the Korean War, Japan and South Korea were not the only countries in Asia worried about Washington’s reliability. The primary concern of Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines was a possible resurgence of Japanese militarism, but there was also a growing awareness about the threat of Communism in Asia. The US embassy in Canberra assessed that Australian “complacency has been somewhat shaken by the withdrawal of United States defenses . . . the collapse of China, and the deteriorating situation in southeastern Asia, and there is evidence of a dawning realization of the dangers of Australia’s isolated position.” Officials reported that “Australia is anxious to see the US military position in the western Pacific strengthened.” Some feared that Australia would tie its acceptance of the Japanese peace treaty to some form of security guarantee. Percy Spender, Australia’s foreign minister, felt that Australia did indeed have some bargaining power in this matter due to its role as America’s “most important fighting ally in the Pacific war.” But America’s desire for a peace treaty with lenient terms alarmed Australian officials: it raised the possibility of Australia facing a resurgent Japan without allied support.

The Philippines was also concerned about American reliability and the continued presence of US troops in the Pacific. The development of the North Atlantic Treaty (NAT) raised questions as to why a similar Pacific Pact had not arisen, with President Elpidio Quirino publicly saying that such an arrangement “seems advisable.” In March 1949 the American embassy in Manila reported that the idea of a multilateral alliance with the ROC and ROK “reflects the anxious search of the Filipinos for some measure of definite security against possible outside aggression. It does not indicate any change in their basic hope . . . that the United States will come to the defense of the Philippines in the event of an emergency.” In a discussion with an American diplomat, Quirino said that the chaos “existing in much of the Far East could not be improved without strong moral and economic leadership . . . the US is the only country that could supply a leadership adequate to remedy
existing conditions.” Quirino’s apprehension was so sincere that he was willing to consider Japanese membership in such a pact. The chargé of the American embassy in Manila cabled Acheson, noting that because “President Quirino holds no love for the Japanese, his idea that Japan should form a part of any Pacific Pact is very significant.”

For their part, in late 1949 US officials were reluctant to provide either bilateral security guarantees or support the idea of a Pacific Pact. The assistant secretary of state for Far Eastern affairs, William Butterworth, specifically warned Acheson that Australia might “try to obtain a US security guarantee in return for concurring generally in the substance of our proposals for a Japanese peace settlement.” Butterworth was concerned that an “Australian request would attract requests from the Philippines, Korea, and other quarters and revive discussion of a possible Pacific Pact modeled on the Atlantic Pact.” Beyond his fear that one bilateral pact might cascade into a series of alliances, Butterworth thought a multilateral Pacific Pact might unintentionally signal that “these are the states we intend to defend and that the rest are being abandoned.”

Undeterred by the lack of US enthusiasm, Rhee, Quirino, and Chiang Kai-shek discussed the prospect of a Pacific Pact among themselves. In July, Quirino raised the pact with US embassy officials in Manila: though Washington was “greatly occupied elsewhere, especially Western Europe,” Quirino felt that the United States was “making a mistake in neglecting [its] real friends in Far East. . . . These friends now feel abandoned, [as] a result (of) US troop withdrawals (from) South Korea . . . and of US abandonment of [its] policy [of] aiding [the] Chinese Government.” Though he thought the US should lead, because Washington “was too indifferent or occupied, the Philippines, China and Korea had gone ahead to develop cooperative measures to protect themselves. . . . Should the US wish to participate, it would of course be welcome.” Officials from China, Korea, and the Philippines talked up the prospects of a Pacific Pact. A Chinese minister told the US embassy in Manila that the three nations were “determined [to] go ahead with [the] union even if no other states join it. He stated that these three states want US leadership but suggested that leadership might be elsewhere by default.”

US officials were more skeptical, noting the divergent interests between the three nations. With the ROK and ROC both desperately in need of US military aid that was not forthcoming, it was assessed that they desired “that Quirino take the lead in ‘pulling their chestnuts from the fire,’” with the expectation that the United States would be the “eventual cornerstone” of a Pacific Pact. But to avoid the impression of US interest—which officials feared would give credence to accusations of external interference and colonialism—it was decided that the US would “maintain our present public coolness to the whole idea.” For Acheson, the charter membership of the Chinese Nationalists “saddles [the] embryonic union with [a] hopeless military
problem.” Given his suspicions, he instructed diplomats to avoid making statements which could be interpreted as either US support or opposition to the Pacific Pact concept.  

The pact’s poor prospects became undeniable when the Philippines moved to organize a meeting of Asian nations to discuss the concept. Known as the Baguio Conference, this proposed summit did not receive significant support within the region. New Zealand felt the conference would be “of no value unless it included the United States and the United Kingdom.” Australia’s response was to seek Washington’s view, with the US embassy adding its analysis that the concept of a Pacific Pact would “not prove acceptable [to] Australia, unless there were evidence of strong, immediate or ultimate US backing.” The State Department’s reply to its embassy in Canberra was that while Australia’s attendance should not be discouraged, Washington’s final position could not be determined now, though the State Department “considers [the] development of [a] regional coalition [in] SEA [Southeast Asia] more important to its future plans than it has in the past.”

Despite America’s cautious attitude, on March 10 the Australian foreign minister, Percy Spender, went “all out in support of a Pacific pact.” He explained to the Australian Parliament that by this, he meant a “defensive military arrangement” between Australia, the United Kingdom, and other countries. Spender had “in mind, particularly, the US whose participation would give such a pact substance it would otherwise lack. Indeed it would be rather meaningless without her.” In this speech, Spender seemed to be signaling that Australia would throw strong support behind a Pacific Pact only if the United States would commit. He was publicly urging Washington to reconsider its position and commit to a larger security role in Asia. Acheson expressed some approval of Spender’s speech but the diplomatic stance was unchanged: the US felt it could not provide early help, or promise final support, to any association of states in Asia. Any such organization had to be completely indigenous to the region in order to have the best prospects of success.

The embassy in Canberra, concerned that the importance of Spender’s remarks had not been adequately appreciated, again cabled Washington. Ambassador Jarman emphasized that Spender’s earlier comments “represent concessions to [the] US position” on a lenient peace treaty with Japan, and that the new government in Australia had “gone out of its way to strengthen [the] US-Australian relationship.” Noting that Australia would do “everything possible [to] promote [a] Pacific Pact with military commitments,” Jarman reported that Canberra had “not so much turned down [an] invitation” to the Baguio Conference, but thought it of little value without US involvement. Jarman’s reporting suggested that Australia was “anxious [to] come to grips soonest with [the] Communist problem in Asia.” But doubt about Washington’s regional strategy and reliability caused Canberra to hesitate. Jarman wrote that Spender “appears [to] consider that no single Pacific
nation, or any combination of such nations, can be expected, unless it has reason to believe it will be backed by the US, to commit itself to a course which might prove futile and even disastrous.” As Ambassador Jarman saw it, Australian doubts about the persistence of the US presence in Asia meant that Canberra was unwilling to sign up to any pact which the United States did not also join.

**The US Defense of Korea Reassures Friendly States**

As discussed earlier, intelligence analysts believed that if US inaction led to the fall of Korea, it would create the impression in Southeast Asia that “the USSR is advancing invincibly, and there would be a greatly increased impulse to ‘get on the bandwagon.’” Historians cite concerns about credibility as one of the primary factors in Truman’s decision to dramatically reverse American policy on Korea. Gaddis writes that “there was almost immediate agreement in Washington that Korea, hitherto regarded as a peripheral interest, had . . . become vital if American credibility elsewhere was not to be questioned.” Kaufman assessed that “the credibility of the administration’s foreign policy was at issue . . . both among America’s allies and its adversaries.”

The decision to defend South Korea did influence the views and policies of US allies in the region. Initially, this was represented in diplomatic exchanges. On June 30, Acheson cabled all US diplomatic missions, noting that “widespread support [of the] SC [Security Council] resolution on Korea and US action in support of resolution continue. Pessimism and gloom in Philippines have been succeeded by vigorous approval US actions which [are] viewed as support of democracy in Asia.” On July 28 the Australian prime minister, Robert Menzies, met with President Truman and said that “Australia was wholeheartedly behind American policy and wished to play its full part in the defense of the free world.” As Rosemary Foot writes, “the allied response to the U.S. decision to intervene in Korea was all that had been anticipated” by Washington.

Once the full impact of this recommitment to Korea had been realized, states made new assessments of US security reliability and adjusted their policies accordingly. As expected by the alliance audience effect theory, these judgments led them to adopt particular forms of behavior. A US official wrote that while the Australian foreign minister, Percy Spender, had previously focused on obtaining “some assurance that the United States would defend Australia in the event of aggression. . . . This emphasis is no longer important in Spender’s or other Australian eyes since our defense of South Korea is more than ample proof to Australia that we would defend them if attacked. . . . [W]hat he really wants is closer participation in all stages of high level Washington planning.”
As US intervention in Korea increased Australia’s confidence in American reliability, Australia directly supported the military effort in Korea and instead of focusing primarily on a security alliance guarantee, Canberra agitated more strenuously for a closer defense planning relationship.

Dulles had earlier expressed his concern that Australia and New Zealand might seek alliances as their price for endorsing a lenient peace treaty. Now that America had agreed to provide for Japan’s security, other countries requested similar arrangements. This issue of consistency was a recurring theme throughout 1950 and 1951. Australia, in particular, freely complained to any US official willing to listen. One wrote that Spender had the “feeling that ‘friends don’t get the same consideration as weak sisters’ and that the Australians ‘are not getting a fair go.’ Every time we extend the NAT, as to Greece and Turkey, we strengthen that feeling.”

In February 1951, at a trilateral meeting in Canberra, the foreign ministers of Australia and New Zealand bluntly told Dulles that due to domestic political concerns, they could not accept a lenient Japanese peace treaty—which permitted Japan to rearm—without some form of security assurance from Washington. Dulles was prepared for this position: his offsider, John Allison, later described Washington’s willingness to sign a trilateral alliance as “bait to get Australia and New Zealand to sign the [peace] treaty. They still had great reservations about a treaty which didn’t put limitations on Japan’s rearmament.”

Dulles explained that he had authority to discuss security pacts and noted several possible arrangements, such as a series of bilateral alliances, a trilateral Australia–New Zealand–United States pact, or a quadrilateral alliance with the Philippines. By February 17, a draft trilateral treaty had been developed, although it was still possible that the Philippines and Japan might also join the alliance as charter members. However, Dulles concluded that any arrangement which “put the Philippines in the position of being in effect an ‘ally’ of Japan” was “a step for which their public opinion was not yet prepared.” Rather than a multilateral Pacific Pact, it was becoming clearer that the security landscape of Asia would now be dominated by one trilateral and two bilateral alliances.

However, this was not the end of the matter. Once the Philippines discovered that a trilateral alliance had been negotiated, it “strongly deplored the preferred position given to Australia and New Zealand,” believing that the absence of such a treaty with the Philippines implied that “the US does not regard the Philippines as a sovereign nation.” The US ambassador tried to explain to President Quirino that “our public statements regarding the defense and security of the Philippines do in fact constitute a closer alliance than is the case with Australia and New Zealand,” but this assurance had little impact. Leaders in the Philippines were angered by this apparent inconsistency in alliance commitments, and so the United States agreed to negotiate a bilateral alliance with Manila.
Australia and New Zealand had no objection to the conclusion of such an alliance but they carefully monitored these developments to ensure that Manila did not receive any preferential treatment. In early August 1951, an Australian diplomat “expressed concern as to whether any possible arrangement between the United States and the Philippines might contain provisions which would be harmful to the Australian-New Zealand trilateral.” One week later, Australia’s ambassador in Washington noted that “if the agreement with the Philippines turned out to be more explicit in its commitments than the treaty with Australia and New Zealand, the reaction in Australia would be very bad.” Rusk indicated that the agreement with the Philippines would be no more explicit than that for Australia and New Zealand.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Philippines had attempted to secure a more explicit security guarantee: its draft of the treaty stated that “an armed attack against either country shall be considered an attack against both.” Despite receiving the US draft—which replicated the language of the draft ANZUS treaty—the Philippines urged Washington to consider a stronger commitment along the lines of the NAT. The US ambassador in the Philippines, Myron Cowan, assessed that President Quirino wanted “to obtain something a little different from [the] Australian New Zealand pact which will give some special recognition to [the] special relationship” between the Philippines and the United States. While Quirino’s request could be refused without “serious consequences,” Cowan suggested the State “Dep[artmen]t put what frosting it can on his cake.”

However, Dulles knew that cake frosting had to be equitably distributed among new allies. The Australians had already indicated that the trilateral ANZUS treaty would be endangered if the provisions of the US-Philippines pact were considered to be more advantageous. When the Philippine foreign minister, Romulo, failed to secure this change, he requested that the agreement be titled a “Mutual Defense Treaty.” Dulles noted that although the working title of a “Security Treaty” had been adopted “to keep it consistent with the U.S.-Australia-New Zealand security treaties,” he had no objection to this minor change. The difference was not a substantive one, and was thus unlikely to provoke objections from Australia or New Zealand. Having failed to obtain extra frosting on its cake, Manila was able to secure a small, face-saving garnish to differentiate its alliance from ANZUS.

Assessing the Alliance Audience Effect, 1949–1951

KOREA

Throughout 1949 and the first half of 1950, Korean fears of abandonment were inspired, and then bolstered, by a number of events. Several directly concern the US-Korea relationship: the withdrawal of US troops in 1949, the
exclusion of Korea from Acheson’s defensive perimeter speech, and Washington’s unwillingness to provide a security guarantee, all gave Rhee good reason to doubt US reliability. But US policy toward other Asian states also generated South Korean fears of abandonment. Royall’s statement, which cast doubt on Washington’s obligation to defend Japan, had a significant impact on Rhee. Seoul lamented US vacillation over the issue of Formosa, believing that a similar dynamic could occur if Korea ever needed assistance. The publication of the China White Paper, and the seeming abandonment of the Chinese Nationalists, intensified these fears. Other factors, such as the unwillingness of senior officials to visit Seoul, added insult to injury by suggesting that Japan was valued more than Korea. These facts support H1, which expects that a state will observe its ally’s behavior in other alliances and these observations will affect assessments of reliability.

H2 expects that if a state perceives its ally to be unreliable, it will act to mitigate the risk. Rhee tried to reduce the risk of abandonment by first attempting to obtain a security guarantee from Washington. When these pleas fell on deaf ears, he sought to blackmail the United States into providing assistance and also encouraged efforts toward a wider Pacific Pact, which might have provided a regional front against Communist aggression. These efforts persisted until the outbreak of the Korean War.

H3 expects that US actions will be influenced by the possibility that its behavior in one alliance will affect the reliability perceptions of its other allies, and this dynamic was clearly a factor in this period. When US officials became aware that Korea’s fears of abandonment were aggravated by their observations of US behavior toward Japan and Formosa, they sought to counteract this by carefully explaining why Korea’s security remained important to Washington. Muccio noted that the United States, by modifying its rhetoric about other relationships and ensuring equality of senior official visits, might avoid further aggravation of Korean fears.

JAPAN

As expected by H1, Tokyo closely observed America’s treatment of the ROC and ROK, and was unnerved by America’s vacillation toward Taipei and seeming abandonment of Seoul. These developments led Tokyo to doubt American reliability even though Japan was still under occupation by US forces, and had been explicitly and deliberately included within the defensive perimeter articulated by Acheson. Despite having good evidence to suggest that Washington would defend Japan against attack, Tokyo still worried about US reliability.

As expected by H2, Japan acted to mitigate this risk: it first tried to solidify America’s military presence in the region by offering bases in mainland Japan, as this would reduce the likelihood of abandonment. However, America’s involvement in the Korean War—and Japan’s reaction to it—provides
further support for H1 and H2. After the United States decided to defend South Korea, Japan had new and improved information about US interests. Tokyo believed that if the US would defend South Korea, then it would also defend Japan: this meant that Tokyo could drive a harder bargain on the issue of military bases. As the tide of the Korean War changed, Japan adopted a stronger position on the issue of rearmament. Yoshida feared that the US would pressure Japan to use a newly created army overseas, but was also now confident that the US would defend Japan. This allowed him to bargain hard and create only a token police force despite Dulles’s desire for a larger Japanese army. Thus, Yoshida was able to effectively mitigate both the risks of abandonment (through US bases on Japanese soil) and the risk of entrapment (through the creation of only a small Japanese military force).

Finally, as expected by H3, America’s behavior toward Japan was influenced by the possibility that it could affect the reliability perceptions of its other allies. US diplomats were aware that US treatment of Japan was being closely watched. Ambassador Muccio, in Seoul, urged Washington to ensure that Japan was not unduly prioritized over other states, like South Korea. Policymakers in Washington believed that if Japan received security assurances, it was likely that wartime allies would demand similar agreements. Throughout 1949 and early 1950, America’s preference was to avoid new alliances but it slowly became clear that at a minimum, a new security pact with Japan would be necessary to maintain bases there after the peace treaty was signed. Because wartime allies would be angered if Japan—a former enemy—received a security guarantee and they did not, other pacts were also required as the price of securing regional support for a lenient peace treaty that did not prevent Japanese rearmament.

AUSTRALIAN, NEW ZEALAND, THE PHILIPPINES

Before the outbreak of the Korean War, Australia, the Philippines, and New Zealand were all concerned about the US security presence in Asia. Although it was often not expressed in the same terms as used by Korea or Japan, uncertainty about Washington’s commitment to security in Asia alarmed these nations and raised questions about US reliability. Diplomatic reporting tied this feeling to the withdrawal from Korea and the China situation, thus supporting H1.

Uncertainty over Washington’s reliability influenced these nations in several ways. First, they were extremely wary of concluding a lenient peace treaty: they felt this would raise the risk of a remilitarized and revisionist Japan. Beyond this, the primary impediment to a multilateral Pacific Pact was US unwillingness to provide early support: Australia in particular was afraid of becoming involved in something that might “prove futile and even disastrous” without US involvement. As H2 expects, pessimistic assessments of Washington’s security reliability led these three nations to adopt
cautious policies and they were unwilling to countenance a lenient treaty or commit to security agreements unsupported by the United States. This changed when Washington decided to intervene on the Korean Peninsula: now confident of US reliability, these three countries were willing to support the US with military force.

As Dulles negotiated new alliances, he was aware of the need for a level of consistency across the agreements. As H3 predicts, the United States was aware that developments in its relationship with Japan would affect its relationships with Australia, the Philippines and New Zealand, and this possibility influenced US policy. Specifically, this interdependence led to a degree of consistency across the alliance commitments. The US administration knew that to offer Japan an alliance—but refuse such arrangements to wartime allies—would likely result in those allies refusing to support the peace treaty with Japan. But within the development of the Asian alliance system a strange dynamic was also at play: the alliance audience effect was a force for consistency across the alliance texts. Japan, as an occupied and defeated wartime enemy, was the exception: it received an informal security guarantee but ceded many rights to its American occupiers. But Washington believed that it had to treat other allies on a basis of equality, lest one become disgruntled and refuse to sign the peace treaty with Japan. A belief in interdependence led the US to simultaneously manage its alliance negotiations and ensure that no ally felt short-changed due to the more favorable treatment of another US ally.

In August and September 1951, three security agreements were signed in San Francisco. The first was the Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Republic of the Philippines. The second was the ANZUS Security Treaty between Australia, New Zealand, and the United States of America. The third agreement was the US-Japan Security Treaty, which was signed shortly after the overall Japanese Peace Treaty that provided for a multilateral settlement of the Second World War.

On first glance, there may not seem to be a significant degree of interconnectivity between these relationships. However, this chapter has shown that as these security pacts were negotiated and agreed the alliance audience effect was clearly at work. Although other examinations of this period have stressed America’s desire for control as the key determinant of the bilateral hub and spoke system, the need to maintain Washington’s image as a reliable ally was an immense and pervasive influence on US policy. The road to this eventual outcome looks straightforward in hindsight, but Washington was not always viewed as a reliable security partner in Asia. Until it intervened in Korea, uncertainty over the US security posture in Northeast Asia was very influential: many states feared abandonment and doubted US reliability. Washington’s decision to defend South Korea resulted in several countries assessing the United States to be of greater security reliability. This not only
supports H1 and H2 of the alliance audience effect framework but also challenges Mercer’s expectation that a demonstration of loyalty does not generate expectations of future loyalty.\textsuperscript{131} If allied beliefs about American reliability had not improved as a result of the decision to defend South Korea, Japan would not have bargained hard on basing rights, nor would Australia and New Zealand have placed less emphasis on obtaining a security guarantee than on gaining access to military planning.\textsuperscript{132}

By highlighting the role of historical contingency, this chapter also challenges the narrative of Victor Cha’s \textit{Powerplay} account. Cha’s argument is underpinned by the assumption that the United States \textit{chose} to develop a network of bilateral alliances in Asia, but the reverse chronological order in which he examines his three case studies doesn’t adequately recognize the degree to which Washington’s policies were shaped by the preferences and actions of regional countries.\textsuperscript{133} The bilateral alliance with Japan was an important priority: it was required to place the US military presence on a stable footing. But given fears of a resurgent Japan, lack of common interest between regional countries, a desire to avoid conspicuously excluding non-allies, and the need to secure the agreement of wartime allies to the San Francisco peace treaty, it is hard to conceive of how an alternate alliance structure might have evolved at this time. Contrary to Cha’s argument, Washington did not “set out to design a security architecture for Asia that contained the communit threat but also managed the risks associated with these newfound commitments.”\textsuperscript{134} Instead, historical circumstance—and interdependence between seemingly discrete security relationships—best explain the development of the hub and spoke alliance system.\textsuperscript{135}

In September 1951, as alliances with Japan, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand were signed, this system was still incomplete. In the next chapter, I examine the formation of alliances with the republics of Korea and China, and also consider how America’s alliances coped with the opening stages of a significant security challenge: the First Taiwan Strait Crisis.