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Shifting Bilateralism: Understanding Change in the US-Japan Alliance During the Cold and Gulf War

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In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for Distinction in the Department of Political Science

By

Grant Anderla
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Project title: Shifting Bilateralism: Understanding Change in the US-Japan Alliance During the Cold and Gulf War

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Abstract

Emerging from a violent past as unlikely partners, the alliance of the United States and Japan has withstood years of cooperation and competition. Today, the two nations face regional threats from North Korea and China. Considering the unique alliance, I hope to provide a framework for understanding inter-alliance management and policy making processes. Subsequently, I consider one main question in my research. What factors explain continuities and changes within this alliance relationship? To address this question, I consider leadership role conception, role prescription, and norms of consultation that contribute to changes within alliance relations.

Analyzing these variables in the case of the US-Japan alliance provides a clearer understanding of what contributes to policy change in bilateral alliances. Research on alliances often fails to address normative variables and attributes much of change to arguments posed in the realist camp that emphasize system pressures. Focusing on different aspects of decision-making expands the research on change in alliances and fills the gap of intra-alliance relations research. I analyze the alliance at two different time periods in the relationship. First, alliance relations and security policy during the Nixon and Sato leadership give a better understanding of the Okinawa Reversion and Nuclear Deterrent issue of 1972. Second, the 1991 Persian Gulf Crisis raised tensions due to unclear roles and a lack of norms of consultation. The roles that these nations play in the alliance illustrate how tensions are alleviated or heightened due to role variation and the strength of consultation norms. Role conceptions and perceptions along with formal or informal norms of consultation contribute to changes in alliance relations. The presence of norms of consultation and alignment of roles alleviates tension.

Introduction

North Korea's development of a nuclear weapons program and North Korea's missile tests in and near the Sea of Japan present unique security challenges for any alliances engaging in the region.¹ The geopolitical situation in the region therefore makes any research on the US-Japan alliance valuable. The United States and Japan interact; conscious of these regional threats, seeking to develop policy that protects against these threats. What factors explain continuities and changes within this alliance relationship? During the Cold War, the United States sought alliances to prevent the spread of communism and fascism. The United States formed beneficial alliances in Northeast Asia via the San Francisco Treaty System.² The alliance between the United States and Japan has experienced a number of changes during its history. For the US-Japan alliance, tensions caused by change did not break up the alliance. Analysis of decision-making and interaction helps to present alternative explanations for change in alliance relationships that can inform policymakers. This research benefits international relations literature by seeking to understand leadership interactions in alliances alongside potential factors that influence policy change in foreign relations.

First, I provide a literature review of alliance literature and include the literature of two variables that influence our understanding of change in alliance policy. While realist theories have strengths for understanding alliances, there are limitations that should be addressed. This review considers two explanations for change in alliance relations. First, roles are important for understanding nation behavior. Roles provide nations with norms and behaviors for acting in

¹ Claire Phipps, "North Korea: ballistic missile launched over Japan – as it happened" *The Guardian*, (September 15, 2017).

² Victor Cha, *Powerplay: The Origins of the American Alliance System in Asia*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016.)

the international system. According to Holsti, role conceptions are “the perceptions, values, and attitudes of the actor occupying a position” that are the “crucial independent variables in explaining role performance.”³ This means that an actors behavior is tied to its role conception. On the other hand, role perceptions are “the norms and expectations cultures, societies, institutions, or groups attach to particular positions.”⁴ Role perceptions tie a certain expectation or norm to a nation and inform the role conception. Second, norms of consultation are the socially constructed methods for improving cooperation and co-determination. Thomas Risse argues that, “norms of regular consultation, of joint-consensus building, and nonhierarchy should legitimize and enable allied influence.”⁵ In other words, allies can influence each other through cooperation and discussion regarding shared interests and policy.

Historical analysis and following decision-making processes help understand US alliance policy changes over time and improve shared understanding of roles and norms between allies. Historical analysis researchers analyze the processes and interactions between states to explain larger trends in the international system. Methodologically, I use process tracing, historical analysis, and broadly follow some of the methods used by Holsti and Risse-Kappen in their research on foreign policy decision-making. This methodology helps me to draw parallels with other policy changes to determine if alliance change is influenced by roles and norms. Primary documents and policy information give some idea about the processes of decision-making and possibly show where tensions arise from. Data primarily comes from the Digital National

³ Kalevi J. Holsti, “National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy.” *International Studies Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (1970): 239.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Thomas Risse-Kappen, “Cooperation among Democracies” (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 34.

Security Archives. Other sources include newspapers, speeches, and memorandum that I draw from relevant databases.

I then give a background of the history of the US-Japan alliance for context regarding the alliance. Following this background, I give data referencing the time when President Richard Nixon was in office. First, I use data from 1969 to 1972 to discuss the issue of Okinawa's reversion from the United States to Japan. This data is primarily in the form of memoranda and reports on the issue from within the Executive Branch and State Department of the United States Government. In the second section, I observe the US-Japan alliance during the Gulf War Crisis. Using information about both President Bush and Prime Minister Kaifu along with content from government officials, such as speeches and memoranda, I consider how tensions rose in the alliance at this time period. From my analysis, I conclude that nations that understand each other's roles and establish norms of consultation improve foreign policy making because of better information and mutual understanding.

Review of the Relevant Literature

In this section, I provide a basic review of alliance literature that emphasizes bilateral alliances. I consider two schools of thought on alliance relations, namely, realist and constructivist approaches. Much of the current literature on alliances focuses on formation and explanatory components of alignment. Authors do not often write about the longevity of alliances and political shifts in alliance relations. A variety of factors can explain cooperation among states. I consider realism first to acknowledge the importance of the theory, however, I do not use this approach for explaining my thesis. With regard to constructivism, I discuss a role-based approach and a normative approach focused on consultation.

Realist Theory

Realist theory argues that alliances exist to build up material power and prevent conflict by securing more power than other states.⁶ In realist theory, there are two primary forms of the alliance. A balancing alliance occurs when a state forms an alliance to gain a benefit from the other states' resources. Alternatively, states form a balancing alliance to oppose threatening power from rising states. The alternative to a balancing alliance is a bandwagoning alliance. Bandwagoning alliances occur when an alliance-seeking state joins the stronger side of a conflict to try to ensure its own safety.⁷ Importantly, these two types of alliances exist to gain an advantage against an enemy or prevent enemies from gaining power. In realism then, one type of alliance is a weaker state aligning with a stronger state to gain protection while the larger state aims to protect resources and maintain international control.⁸ Realist theory argues that states' primary motive is maintaining material power strength over other states and alliances are one way for states to build material power.

Realists view power as material, emphasizing the importance of military size, amount of weapons, and economic strength. Moreover, alliances involve "military collaboration" which entails "military cooperation against particular other states."⁹ This cooperation involves physical presence of material strength. Bilateral alliances continue since there is little need to leave the

⁶ For an in-depth analysis of realist theory, consider, Stephen Walt's *Origin of Alliances* (1990), Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Relations* (1979), George Liska's *Nations in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependence* (1968), and Hans Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations* (1948).

⁷ Charles Glaser, "Realism," in *Contemporary Security Studies*, ed. Alan Collins (Oxford University Press, 2016), 18. Charles Glaser provides these descriptions of balancing and bandwagoning and uses the Waltzian theory of realism to provide these definitions.

⁸ George Liska, *Nations in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependence*, (Washington, DC: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968). Also read, Stephen M. Walt. 1990. *The Origins of Alliances*, (Cornell University) for more on realism.

⁹ Glenn H. Snyder, "Alliances, Balance, and Stability" *International Organization* 45, no. 1 (1991): 123.

alliance for a weaker power, and stronger states benefit from having additional allies to balance against opposing large powers.¹⁰ Again, this literature emphasizes the importance of balancing in terms of material power and places much less emphasis on factors like diplomacy, norms, and a possibility of peace through community. Glenn Snyder considers the alliance to be an “explicit mutual declaration of future intent” that holds states to engage physically in potential conflict.¹¹ At the system level, he considers alignment as the “expectations held by policymakers” wondering who will support the other in situations of conflict.¹² Alignment is directly related to conflict and threat of power shifts.

The realist literature exists in two major forms related to the international system. Structural realism considers power relations in a bipolar system, like in the case of the bipolar struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Structural realists argue that smaller states will align with a larger state for security. Traditional realism, on the other hand, emphasizes factors of threat perception, bargaining, and competition among state interests.¹³ The variables considered by traditional realism encompass a larger number of possible explanations for alliance formation but still place much of the focus on material power. Certainly, these variables explain aspects of alliance relations.

However, realism fails to explain diplomatic influence over allies or non-use of material power in conflict. For example, European influence on US foreign policy during the Korean War cannot be entirely explained by power balancing or shifting threat perceptions.¹⁴ Thomas Risse-

¹⁰ Glenn H. Snyder, "Alliance theory: A neorealist first cut," *Journal of International Affairs* 44, no. 1 (1990): 103-123.

¹¹ Snyder, "Alliances, Balance, and Stability," 123.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Thomas Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation Among Democracies: The European Influence on US Foreign Policy* (Princeton University Press, 1995), 12.

¹⁴ Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation Among Democracies*, 75.

Kappen argues that US allies in Europe and Canada influenced the United States decisions surrounding the armistice agreement during the Korean War. The allied negotiations played a role in shifting the US away from conflict and choose ceasefire instead. Realism also struggles to explain the absence of conflict, for example, in the case of nuclear non-use. Nina Tannenwald argues that a “nuclear taboo” exists that prevents the use of nuclear weapons. She argues that there is a global norm of nuclear non-use that comes from antinuclear nonstate actors and public opinion.¹⁵ Realism fails in part because it tends to infer state interests from the power structure of the international system rather than considering interests independently from the real power relationships.¹⁶ Liberal and constructivist theories can help to understand state interests with variables like diplomatic communication or role development which influence national interests without material power change.

Role Theory

When considering bilateral alliances, there are endogenous factors that are at play within alliance relations. Individual actors within a state often determine the direction of foreign policy. Role theory emphasizes the importance of elite policymakers in determining foreign policy and public opinion is considered ineffective in shifting foreign policy generally.¹⁷ Broadly, roles are norms of behavior that involved parties adjust policy toward and subsequent state actions may suggest conformity or rejection of those norms. Kalevi Holsti considers that role conception is

¹⁵ Nina Tannenwald, “Stigmatizing the Bomb: Origins of the Nuclear Taboo,” *International Security* 29, no. 4 (2005): 5-49.

¹⁶ Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation Among Democracies*, 20.

¹⁷ Cristian Cantir and Juliet Kaarbo, "Contested Roles and Domestic Politics: Reflections on Role Theory in Foreign Policy Analysis and IR Theory," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 8, no. 1 (2012): 5-24.

the set of “appropriate behaviors” related to perceived “functions and positions.”¹⁸ Essentially, a leader determines their appropriate actions based on its conceptualized function within their position. This position can be within the state or in the international system at large and provides the leader with a framework for determining his or her functions. A nation’s role is crafted by a leader and stems from an understanding of function and position in international relations.

The leader’s conception of their nation’s role is potentially significant for determining the direction of policy in the alliances.¹⁹ Analysis of state behavior can benefit from research on role conceptions for two reasons. First, “identities and role conceptions are social phenomena, they can be shared, even among most of the individuals in a state.”²⁰ Second, foreign policy makers act “based on the ideas about the roles of their states in the world and which roles will be acceptable to their constituents.”²¹ For these reasons, foreign policy is partially directed by role conceptions held by foreign policy makers. Leaders construct normative expectations for themselves and for their allies, resulting in expectations for each nation.

Holsti’s study on role conception provides examples of social and normative factors that influence a leader to conceive a national role. In foreign policy decision-making, the role expectations are difficult to determine because of the variation in influence from domestic or external changes. For both role conception and role prescription factors like culture, citizenship,

¹⁸ Kalevi J. Holsti, “National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy.” *International Studies Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (1970): 239.

¹⁹ For more research that uses role theory, consider, Kalevi Holsti, “National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy,” (1970), Stephen Walker, “*Role Theory and Foreign Policy Analysis*” (1987), James Rosenau, “*Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity*” (1990), and Chavetz, et al, “Role Theory and Foreign Policy: Belarussian and Ukrainian Compliance with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime,” (1996).

²⁰ Glenn Chavetz, Hillel Abramson, and Suzette Grillot, “Role Theory and Foreign Policy: Belarussian and Ukrainian Compliance with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime.” *Political Psychology* 17, (1996): 733.

²¹ *Ibid.*

social mores, traditions, and leaders' self-conceptions determine the role of the nation. Endogenous and external factors like political opinion, ally interests, and international conflict contribute to the formation of role conceptions. According to Holsti, the decisions that result from a role conception can generally be understood by observing leadership.²² Leaders develop a role conception, but public opinion, national values, ideology, traditional roles, and political needs also directly affect national role conceptions. Further pressure comes from treaty commitments, informal understandings, and external system structures but Holsti argues that these variables may not be as influential.²³

Holsti observes a number of factors that influence the leader in determining their role and actions. His study focuses on where these role conceptions come from. To determine origin of roles, he analyzes nine hundred seventy-two leadership statements and agreements between nations to determine what types of role conceptions exist. He categorizes seventeen role conceptions perceived by states. Examples of these role conceptions include *regional protector*, *regional leader*, *faithful ally*, and *regional-subsystem collaborator*. These concepts are useful and provide a framework for my understanding of the US-Japan alliance although I use different terms. The use of these role conceptions moves the research away from analysis of independent decisions and poses opportunities for the study of more general decision-making. Considering individual decisions in relation to the national role conception assists in understanding decision-making because role conceptions determine behavior.

To test how roles impact foreign policy and alliance relations, I use the approach taken by Holsti, Chavetz, et al, and Dal and Erşen. I focus on the speeches, conversations, and writings of

²² Holsti, "National Role Conceptions," 243.

²³ Ibid.

leaders and other members of foreign policy and government institutions to understand role conceptions and expectations. I then connect these role conceptions and expectations to role performance to assess how roles determine foreign policy.

Norms of Consultation

Normative factors play an important role in determining the ability of allies to influence one another. Allies sometimes determine policies and roles through deliberation and consultation. Decision-making is a direct result of intra-alliance dialogue between governments. Regular consultation may arise as a norm within an alliance.²⁴ Analyzing dialogue and norms as a normative approach helps understand the value of communication in inter-alliance policymaking. According to Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, constructivists studying change understand that, “idea shifts and norm shifts are the main vehicles for system transformation” in an ideational international structure.²⁵ To understand how political change can occur in alliance structures, understanding norms is important. Changes in policy from consultations are seen in a number of cases. The US and Great Britain established a norm of consultation during the Korean War that prevented General MacArthur from attacking China without prior consultation with the British.²⁶ Western Europe used influence to push the US towards armistice negotiations in the Korean War.²⁷

²⁴ Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation Among Democracies*, 34.

²⁵ Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change." *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (1998): 894.

²⁶ Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation Among Democracies*, 46.

²⁷ Thomas Risse-Kappen, “A Liberal Interpretation of the Transatlantic Security Community,” in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 378.

Through norms of consultation, smaller states can influence larger states in an alliance.²⁸ Allied nations like Great Britain can influence US decisions on policies regarding the nuclear ban and preventing conflict pursuit, such as in the case of the Korean War. Among other explanations, “norms of regular consultation, of joint-consensus building, and nonhierarchy should legitimize and enable allied influence.”²⁹ From both allies, increased communication and deliberation allows for growth of influence from both allies, but particularly for the smaller ally. Consultation leads to “co-determination” between states and allows for more political symmetry and shared goals. However, a lack of consultation or a disconnect between two allies in this regard can strain the relationship and reduce cooperation.

Some argue that “talk is cheap,” but a number of constructivists challenge this view, seeking to consider communication and consultation affect foreign policy making. For example, during the Cold War the deliberation during the “two plus four” talks between East and West Germany, the United States, France, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union played an important role in concluding the Cold War.³⁰ The two plus four talks helped establish the reunification of Germany by 1990 through meetings and other forms of consultation between the group of six actors. The deliberations that led to reunification show the possibility for nations to debate and change their goals.³¹ Communication of norms and desired interests resulted in a largely beneficial end.

²⁸ Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation Among Democracies*, 37.

²⁹ Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation Among Democracies*, 34.

³⁰ Thomas Risse, “Let’s Argue!’: Communicative Action in World Politics” *International Organization* 54, no. 1 (2000): 1-39.

³¹ *Ibid.*

Research regarding the non-use of nuclear weapons often includes normative communication as an explanatory variable.³² Rather than real power balancing alone, socially constructed factors like shared values and communication of norms play a role in preventing the use of dangerous weapons.³³ Political relationships like those between Great Britain and the United States or Japan and the United States play an important role in exploring the effects of communication in explaining the changing state of alliances. Communication increases saliency and helps to “develop mutual trust, confidence, and similar perceptions of international problems.”³⁴ However, as with many constructivist arguments, there remain challenges for measurement and operationalization in explaining how much these normative variables really contribute to influencing foreign policies of allied nations. For the norm of consultation in particular, two challenges persist. First, the increased use of consultation in alliances may decrease the norms explanatory power because allies may be less likely to create new norms once others are established.³⁵ Second, Risse-Kappen recognizes that, “political actors tend to lie about and obscure their ‘real’ motives.”³⁶ These issues do not necessarily negate the validity of the study but impact my ability to determine the significance of consultation in certain instances.

The research regarding alliance relations could benefit from more explanations that use normative variables and methods to explain aspects of foreign policy decision-making. There is a focus on material power interests in the literature and research on the internal dialogues between

³² Nina Tannenwald, “The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Normative Basis of Nuclear Non-Use.” *International Organization* 53, no. 3 (1999): 433-468.

³³ Tannenwald, “The Nuclear Taboo.”

³⁴ Kalevi J. Holsti, “Change in the International System: Interdependence, Integration, and Fragmentation,” in *Change in the International System* eds. Ole R. Holsti, et al, (Boulder, Westview Press, 1980), 30.

³⁵ Thomas Risse-Kappen. *Cooperation Among Democracies*, 40.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

allies should be included to the literature. I aim to fill this gap of alliance literature by using alternative explanatory variables that focus on identity and socially constructed relations. I use role theory as a basis for doing deeper analysis on the effects of identity on alliance relations. I explore norms alongside identity research, norms of consultation being one example of possible norms.

Research Design

In this section, I present my variables and methods used for this research. First, I provide the variables and measurements. Next, I present my hypotheses and consider the implications of these hypotheses. Finally, I provide a brief overview of the data sources used in my research.

My dependent variable is a change in alliance policy or relations. Change includes an improvement or deterioration of relations or a specific policy change. To measure changes in relations, I make assessments of the statements made by policy-makers to determine a view of the relationship. Policy change is measured by the emergence of a new policy.

My first independent variable is role fulfillment. Role fulfillment occurs when a nation acts as its role conceptions and expectations suggest. This variable is measured by analyzing statements and communications between leaders in the alliance and comparing the actions of the nation against the conceptions and expectation.³⁷

The second independent variable is the norm of consultation. Norms of consultation can be formal or informal, meaning a treaty or agreement clearly includes them or they exist because of shared desire to communicate frequently. I measure this variable by searching speeches, statements, or other communications for language that suggests an interest in consultation or

³⁷ This method is used by Kalevi Holsti in “National Role Conceptions in Foreign Policy” and by Glenn Chavetz, et al in “Role Theory and Foreign Policy.”

continued discussion.³⁸ I primarily focus on speeches from leaders but include relevant statements and speeches members of government closely involved with policymaking.

I test two hypotheses in this research. The first emphasizes the relationship between nation's roles and political symmetry between allies. The second considers the effect of norms of consultation on political symmetry.

H1: Allied nations that fulfill their role conceptions and follow expected behavior will experience positive change in alliance relations and policy formulation.

H2: Allied nations that employ norms of consultation will have a stronger understanding of expected behavior and benefit from a more stable, low-tension relationship.

If nations fulfill roles and norms of regular consultation exist, it is likely that changes in policy or relational status of the allies will be positive and bilateral decision-making will improve. Role performance can impact an alliance because a country's role gives allies the ability to predict actions. If nations understand ally roles, the nation can predict desired outcomes and can determine policy actions better. Norms of consultation seem closely connected to role theory and allow allies to determine roles and increase understanding of mutually desired policies.

The data I used for this study are primary source materials on policies and leadership statements concerning the role of the allies or that provide some evidence that there is a consultative relationship that is well established. These primary sources are in the form of speeches or memoranda directly referencing the policy relations between allied nations. Other types of data include congressional research reports or Congress member statements.

Furthermore, policy memoranda provide a broader view of alliance relations from within the

³⁸ Thomas Risse-Kappen uses this method in his book *Cooperation Among Democracies*.

United States. This information I used comes from the Digital National Security Archive, Foreign Relations of the United States, and newspaper archives.

It is important to recognize a number of challenges and biases within this research. With the two different time periods, the relationship's consultation is further institutionalized as time progresses. It is difficult to measure the effects of consultation within the alliance over time but the communications between the governments remain relevant. Unfortunately, formal consultation norms do not exist for every situation which limits my ability to determine the effectiveness of formalized norms in policy decision-making. As consultation becomes regular, allies may not explicitly state that consultation is needed even when consultation occurs regularly. Over time then, regular norms of consultation may become less clear, but large amounts of diplomatic and communication data help uncover consultation's impact. It is also important to note that government officials and leaders are not always honest about their interests. Although information can be misleading, words play an important role in understanding the goals and interests of a nation.

The two selected time periods have different types of information available and the databases do not provide information that is entirely equal in depth or value. While the case study of the Okinawa Reversion uses direct statements from leaders in the form of declassified documents regarding national security policy, the section on the Gulf War uses less information from classified sources and includes fewer direct statements from the president or close advisors. However, this section includes a larger variation in the source type and includes Congressional statements and congressional research.

Finally, a note on my case. The US-Japan alliance is unique because of its long history of bilateralism and shared decision-making. The United States directly influenced the construction

of Japan's constitution and government. Japan relies heavily on US security, which further implies a unique relationship. Analyzing this alliance gives opportunities to see how decision-making processes happen in strong alliances. My two observations within the case, the Okinawa reversion policy and the Persian Gulf War challenge both present unique opportunities for analysis. Both are closely tied to security, but the context is significantly different for each. I chose these separate time periods because I could consider the impact of changing leadership and shifting international dynamics. The first issue was during the Cold War while the second was immediately after, and global dynamics shifted. Looking at different time periods allows me to see whether role dynamics and consultation are truly influential to alliance relations.

Historical Background – US-Japan Alliance Relations since 1945

In 1945, at the end of a brutal conflict, the United States forced the Japanese to surrender and established a military occupation of the defeated nation. The primary goal of this occupation was to prevent Japan from remilitarization and fascist rule.³⁹ The United States had to make a choice to deal with Japan. Ultimately, the US government determined that the best option was to form a close bilateral security alliance to prevent Japan from aligning with communists in Asia. This alliance structure enabled the United States to closely monitor Japan and push Japan to support US interests.⁴⁰ National Security Advisor George Kennan described Japan as the “key to Asia” that would allow the United States to engage in the region.⁴¹

Three major developments occurred during the occupation of Japan. First, the US introduced a new constitution in 1947 and established a new government. Article 9 of the

³⁹ Cha, *Powerplay*, 122.

⁴⁰ Cha, *Powerplay*, 123.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

constitution was the most significant shift for Japan, which required Japan to “forever renounce war as a sovereign right” along with a promise not to maintain a “war potential.”⁴² Second, the Americans pushed to reform much of the civic environment. The government became a parliamentary democracy, church and state were separated, and Japan’s education system reformed to push new liberal democratic values.⁴³ The United States pushed for major economic reform at this time as well. Early in the occupation, General Douglas MacArthur pushed to improve economic growth unsuccessfully. Production was low, unemployment was high, and the possibility of famine was on the horizon. MacArthur and the occupation government, under the direction of the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP), implemented some economic reforms but these were ultimately unsuccessful due to concerns about reparations and low investment and lending. There was a push from some in the United States to implement a change in occupation policies.

In 1948, George Kennan presented a report to Secretary of State George Marshall on the status of the occupation in Japan.⁴⁴ In his view, the policies of the early occupation were not beneficial to Japan or the United States. He suggested that a more hands-off approach should be pursued and “economic recovery should be made the prime objective of the United States policy in Japan for the coming period.”⁴⁵ This approach led to a “reversal of US policy in Japan” which lowered the number of occupation forces, punitive policies, and removed the overly dominant role that the United States played. Policies sought to protect Japan from external threats and ensure stable economic growth to eliminate a possible shift towards communism. For example,

⁴² The Constitution of Japan. Artic. IX.

⁴³ Cha. *Powerplay*, 125.

⁴⁴ George Kennan, “Report by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff,” *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, The Far East and Australasia*, Vol. VI. Document 519, March 25, 1948.

⁴⁵ Kennan, “Report by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff,” Document 519.

tax reform and inflation control policies revitalized the Japanese economy by 1950. The United States provided a large amount of humanitarian aid to Japan in the form of food and materials to improve industry growth. One other major initiative in addition to economic reform was a decrease of US military presence in Japan. Kennan viewed this decrease as necessary to reduce the number of US tactical forces to reduce spending and the “psychological impact of their presence on the Japanese population.”⁴⁶

In 1951, John Foster Dulles went to Tokyo to discuss the possibility of a peace treaty with Japan. The proposed treaty was beneficial for Japan and led to an end of purging of Japanese elites (an occupation strategy to eliminate far-right sympathizers) and Japan received full sovereignty of the islands, with the exception of Okinawa.⁴⁷ The peace treaty also required the United States to consider their regional power position and alliance formation. Victor Cha argues that the United States formed a bilateral alliance with Japan because it “legitimized and enshrined America’s near-absolute control over Japan’s internal and external affairs.”⁴⁸ Ultimately, this strategy, called “powerplay” by Cha, positioned the United States as the defender of Japan and East Asia from communism and allowed vast control over Japan’s position in the international system. Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida created a strategy that focused on economic reform while the United States guaranteed the security of Japan. Japan’s strategy was a direct result of this US decision and shifted Japan to become a nation that would avoid rearmament and maintain a small defense force. This relationship is the basis for the military shield that the United States provided for Japan following the occupation.

⁴⁶ Kennan, “Report by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff,” Document 519.

⁴⁷ Cha, *Powerplay*, 139.

⁴⁸ Cha, *Powerplay*, 142.

One major point of contention seemed to remain at this time. The United States maintained complete control over Okinawa to fulfill its defensive role in the region. The United States did not consider Okinawa to be a part of Japan during the occupation and control over the island did not pose any obvious problems in the eyes of the United States. However, by the 1960s, the Japanese government considered Okinawa to be a part of Japan. It was during this time that there was a call to revert Okinawa to Japan for the sake of Japan's sovereignty and the overall strength of the alliance.

The main negotiations regarding reversion were the debates to pursue a "denuclearized" reversion of Okinawa. When considering change in the US-Japan alliance, the "denuclearized" reversion of Okinawa represents the most significant change in US policy in the region. Within the Nixon government, top security and foreign policy advisors discussed maintaining nuclear deterrence across the globe frequently. In Japan, the non-nuclear policy remained the largest concern for reversion. Before reversion, the United States stored nuclear weapons in Okinawa and regularly transported nuclear weapons in the surrounding sea. Should reversion occur, the storage of nuclear weapons in Okinawa would directly violate the non-nuclear policy of Japan. Prime Minister Sato eventually decided that the goal of reversion could only be met if the result was the denuclearized version.⁴⁹ Eventually, the United States reverted control of Okinawa to Japan and the alliance shifted towards a more equal relationship.

⁴⁹ Kei Waikazumi and John Swenson-Wright, "Denuclearized Reversion: The Prime Minister's Decision," in *The Best Course Available: A Personal Account of the Secret U.S.-Japan Okinawa Reversion Negotiations*. (Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 2012).

Data and Analysis

The Okinawa Issue: Fulfilled Roles and Important Consultations

Japan took control of Okinawa with full sovereignty in May 1972, following debates over security and sovereignty in the US-Japan Alliance. The Vietnam War increased tension for the United States and it was the US view that maintaining a strong relationship with Japan was vital. Maintaining the alliance ensured that the United States could stay engaged with the war. For military strength to continue, the United States viewed that the island of Okinawa was the vital basing location for the United States to maintain regional control. For the Japanese, this was the most significant political issue for US-Japan relations. It was the view of the Japanese government and citizens that the US presence in Okinawa represented continued American oppression and excess control of Japan's sovereignty. This limit on Japanese sovereignty had been an issue since the United States first occupied Japan after World War II. The United States considered Okinawa to be an issue since Kennedy's presidency. Each of the Prime Ministers of Japan had sought change to the Okinawa policy very early in the relationship. Most significant in these efforts were the three prime ministers leading up to reversion – Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi, Hayato Ikeda, and Eisaku Sato.

During the 1960s, the United States believed that sending aid to Okinawa and negotiation with Japan would largely solve the Okinawa problem.⁵⁰ In 1965, Prime Minister Sato focused heavily on the reversion of Okinawa and sought to reunite the island with Japan. For Japan, the major concerns were the US use of bases for nuclear-equipped weapons (B-52 bombers, and

⁵⁰ I. M. Destler, et al, *Managing an Alliance: The Politics of US-Japanese Relations*, (The Brookings Institute, 1976), 25.

nuclear submarines, etc.) and the quality of life for Okinawans.⁵¹ The United States was concerned about losing its position in the region because of increasing Japanese domestic opposition that could damage the stability of the security alliance. 1966 and 1967 signaled the beginning of major efforts by the Japanese government to negotiate the reversion of Okinawa to Japan in the next 5 years. President Nixon and his administration focused on reversion in 1969, when Nixon took office.

Nixon immediately emphasized a larger focus on international relations and the National Security Council began research on specific foreign policy issues. The Nixon administration quickly identified Okinawa as a difficult issue and “two key members of the inter-departmental study group on Okinawa became members of the new NSC staff.”⁵² With the Japanese Prime Minister pushing for reversion and Nixon’s staff focusing on US-Japan relations, there was an immediate move for determining how to best deal with the Okinawa issue.⁵³

The negotiations between the United States and Japan emphasize two important factors regarding the relationship. The negotiations of the 1960s witnessed significant improvements and growth in communication between the nations, partially due to shared economic benefits in combination with growing international interest in Japan. Furthermore, the United States and Japan shared desired outcomes such as increased security in Asia and growth in global trade. These negotiations signal both some shared understanding of ally roles and a strengthening in norms of consultation.

⁵¹ Wakaizumi, “Denuclearized Reversion: The Prime Minister’s Decision,” 55.

⁵² I. M. Destler, et al, “Managing an Alliance,” 32.

⁵³ Ibid.

Fulfilling Roles in the Alliance

A denuclearized reversion was seemingly difficult in the 1960s, particularly because of the US desire to maintain a strong security stance in Asia. This policy challenge was recognized by many of the members of the Foreign Ministry in Japan and Sato's advisors often suggested that the United States would not easily allow denuclearization. Shimoda Takezō, the ambassador to Washington at the time, suggested that achieving homeland-level reversion, let alone denuclearized reversion “would require considerable negotiation and mutual compromise by both governments.”⁵⁴

Before Nixon met with Prime Minister Sato in late November of 1969, a State Department Telegram considered the probable conversation topics between the two leaders. It emphasized reversion and the “stalemate on nuclear storage.”⁵⁵ The telegram goes on to state that the most the United States could hope for was a re-entry policy that would allow the United States to bring nukes back into Japan if an emergency existed.⁵⁶ However, this stipulation drew concern in the United States government and, more specifically, the United States military.

The United States viewed that it should maintain its nuclear security posture in East Asia and other regions. I consider this goal of maintenance as a part of the US role conception in the alliance. In 1969, a National Security Council Paper stated that it was generally agreed upon “that the primary military purposes of our strategic forces are:

- —to reduce the likelihood that nuclear war will occur.
- —to protect ourselves and our Allies from the destructive consequence of nuclear wars, insofar as we can, and

⁵⁴ Wakaizumi, “Denuclearized Reversion,” 55.

⁵⁵ “Prime Minister Sato’s Talks with the President,” November 10, 1969, *United States Embassy (Japan)*, DNSA Collection: Japan and the U.S., 1960-1976.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

- —to be capable of controlling strategic nuclear conflicts so that the possible outcomes leave the United States and its Allies in a relatively advantageous position.”⁵⁷

This set of goals suggests that the United States role was considered as a regional protector and challenger of communism. The United States viewed itself as what I would call a “peace enabler” or “peaceful guardian.” On November 4, 1972, Nixon spoke about peace in a nationwide radio address. He spoke about a “structure of peace” that he was attempting to create through “prolonged democracy” and “strength.”⁵⁸ He argued that part of this peace structure was the development of “patterns of international behavior that will be accepted by other powers.”⁵⁹ Nixon’s statements reflect his desire to fulfill the US role as a peace enabler or guardian. The US nuclear shield policy was an extension of the structure of peace intended to deter enemies and protect allies in the event of nuclear weapon use. To add to this, the philosophy of the Nixon Doctrine was to remain committed and contribute to a peaceful world.⁶⁰ Much of Nixon’s focus was on Asia and he was willing to protect allies if nuclear attack occurred but hoped to avoid military involvement.⁶¹ The nuclear shield was vital to the strategy for preventing threats from other nations.⁶² The nuclear umbrella, or “extended deterrence” policy was an arm of the US peace structure and maintaining was vital to fulfilling the US role.

Japan was averse to nuclear weapons since the occupation and domestic pressure in Japan contributed to Sato’s decision to push for a denuclearized reversion. Japan’s role conception was

⁵⁷ National Security Council Staff, “Paper Prepared by the National Security Council Staff: US Strategic Posture: Basic Issues,” June 5, 1969, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972, 1.

⁵⁸ Address by President Nixon, November 4, 1972, Foreign Relations of the United States.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ “General Philosophy of the Administration: The Nixon Doctrine,” October 12, 1971, *Office of the White House*. Digital National Security Archives: Nuclear Nonproliferation, 1.

⁶¹ Richard Nixon, “Richard Nixon Remarks,” July 25, 1969, Foreign Relations of the United States, 92.

⁶² General Philosophy of the Administration: The Nixon Doctrine, 2.

the faithful ally seeking to achieve peace. In a January 3, 1972 meeting between Ambassador Johnson and Ambassador Ushiba, the Japanese diplomat told Johnson that, “the concept of deterrence is still very unclear to Japanese politicians.”⁶³ This quote illustrates the opposition of roles between the United States and Japan. Moreover, the quote suggests how consultation could benefit the alliance because more developed consultation may have helped the Japanese understand the need for deterrence capability. The Japanese government believed that as tensions decreased, deterrent power should decrease as well. A misunderstanding of deterrence policy could contribute to a difference in role performance. This disagreement about policy behavior could also contribute to problems with completing denuclearized reversion.

Allowing US nuclear presence near Okinawa following reversion ensured that both allies fulfilled their role conceptions. The United States continued to fulfill its role as the peaceful guardian and Japan fulfilled its role as the peaceful partner opposed to a nuclear Okinawa and gained control over the island. The reversion was a crucial change in the relationship and helped stabilize the relationship. Because both nations fulfilled certain role conceptions, namely the guardian and support roles, expected behavior became clearer and the alliance maintained its stability. This policy shift supports the first hypothesis. Nations that are able to fulfill their roles are better allies because they follow expected allied behavior and know what to expect from allies.

How Consultations Helped Reversion

In a US Embassy status report to the State Department in 1970, a joint communiqué between Nixon and Sato outlines the interests of the two countries. After reaffirming the Treaty

⁶³ Ambassador Johnson and Ambassador Ushiba, Memoranda of Conversation. January 14, 1972. Department of State.

of Mutual Cooperation and Security, the two “agreed to enter immediately into consultations regarding specific arrangements, with the necessary legislative support, for accomplishing the early (during 1972) reversion of Okinawa without detriment to the security of the Far East, including Japan.”⁶⁴ Many of the documents from this time-period indicate that continued consultations should occur, at least informally. The United States repeatedly spoke on the importance of maintaining a security structure in the region – with the goal of deterring communist expansion. The joint Nixon-Sato statement heavily emphasized norms of consultation for creating effective reversion policies. The joint communiqué from Nixon and Sato reads, “The President and the Prime Minister agreed that their Governments should consult closely to assure a smooth transfer of administrative rights, including the solution of a number of financial and economic problems.”⁶⁵ The document points to the US-Japan Consultative Committee as the group tasked with pushing through the necessary work that would enable the reversion to go smoothly. For Nixon and his foreign policy team, a smooth reversion was considered necessary early on to ensure that the United States got to maintain involvement in the region. Nixon and Sato viewed these consultations as integral to creating mutually beneficial reversion policies.

The status report includes details of preparatory work the United States was doing to ensure a smooth reversion of Okinawa and explains the United States role perception for Japan. According to the report, the most important goals for the United States were to maintain US business presence on Okinawa, to transfer civil administrative duties to the Japanese government, to shift defense responsibilities to Japan, and to build up economic strength of the

⁶⁴ United States Embassy (Japan), “Okinawa Reversion Negotiations: Status Report after Nine Months,” September 2, 1970, Confidential, Airgram, DNSA collection: Japan and the US, 1960-1976, 2.

⁶⁵ United States Embassy (Japan), “Okinawa Reversion Negotiations,” 2.

island for its residents. Japan granted control of Okinawa to the United States under the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security Between Japan and the United States, a treaty signed in 1960. Notably, the agreement states that, “Japan will grant the United States of America ... the use of facilities and areas in the Ryukyu Islands and the Daito Islands in accordance with the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security ... and its related arrangements.”⁶⁶ So, while reversion policy was largely agreed upon, the issue surrounding nuclear weapons policy persisted because the United States was previously granted free reign to use military facilities on Okinawa.

Prime Minister Sato viewed consultation as a key aspect of the security relationship between the United States and Japan. In remarks to the Diet on January 31, 1968, he discussed the requirements for the possibility of a nuclear armed submarine arriving in Japan.⁶⁷ He stated that prior consultation was necessary for any US weapons entering the country.⁶⁸ The United States had to consult Japan about bases on Japan, but Okinawa continued to have nuclear weapons stored there until 1972. This required consultation regarding weapons is implied by Article IV of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security and consultation certainly occurred leading up to the decision on reversion.⁶⁹

Based on the Japanese decision to allow the United States to use bases and transport nuclear weapons into Japan, they understood the US defensive role while still paying attention to domestic public opinion. These domestic struggles, in part, cemented the Japanese role perception of an anti-nuclear Japan that contrasted the US conception of Japan. Although Sato

⁶⁶ “Agreement Between the United States of America and Japan Concerning the Ryukyu Islands and the Daito Islands,” June 17, 1971.

⁶⁷ Japan and the United States: Diplomatic, Security, and Economic Relations, Part I, Digital National Security Archives, 1960-1976.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Article IV of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security Between Japan and the United States of America, 1960, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs Japan*.

was opposed to nuclear weapons from early on, it remains unclear what ultimately pushed him to seek the denuclearized reversion.⁷⁰ The decision seems partially influenced by the role conception that Sato had for Japan as a security ally of the United States. The secret decision to allow nuclear weapons to enter the country also signals his belief in the importance of the US defensive role. It is important to recognize that this was a secret decision because it suggests that leaders, ambassadors, diplomats, and policymakers consulted regularly behind the scenes.

It is also significant to note that many of the conversations regarding nuclear weapons occurred during backchannel negotiations. These consultations occurred for many years before reversion and particularly during the Nixon-Sato period. A norm of consultation does exist between the United States and Japan. The norm is explicitly stated in the US-Japan Security Treaty but also underlies the overall behavior of the United States and Japan as allies. The reversion negotiations are examples of this norm working both explicitly and informally. The norm of consultation is one of many possible norms that helps settle disputes. In the case of the Okinawa reversion negotiations, the second hypothesis is supported, if only marginally. The frequent deliberations about Okinawa during the Nixon presidency suggest that consultation helped create the reversion policy. Reversion was a major policy concern for a time and norms of consultation were able to address this type of policy-making process. Norms were established for transfer of government power during the occupation and may have contributed to the smooth reversion of Okinawa.

Ultimately, the United States made the decision to give control of Okinawa back to Japan by the year of 1972. The agreement stipulated that the United States was required to remove nuclear weapons from Okinawa on the condition that they could place them back on the island in

⁷⁰ Wakaizumi “Denuclearized Reversion,” 62.

the case of an emergency. The United States was also allowed to bring these nuclear weapons into any base in Japan rather than Okinawa alone. The United States continued to store nuclear weapons and transport them in and out of Japan even following reversion.⁷¹ In a briefing paper on reversion in 1972, the United States maintained this position and refused to allow inspection of possible storage sites in Japan. This silence is a part of a policy of non-confirmation previously established to maintain secrecy about the location of nuclear weapons. It is therefore likely that nuclear weapons remained either on or very nearby Japan.⁷² In 1972, however, this policy decision-making process facilitated consultation and allowed both the United States and Japan to fulfill their individual role conceptions.

The Persian Gulf War and the Alliance: Role Mismatch and Weak Consultation

In the first post-Cold War conflict, the Persian Gulf War, Japan struggled to understand its role as a part of the international community. Japan's decision-making following the Persian Gulf War created tension with the United States at the time.⁷³ The slow response of Japan and the lack of clarity about US requests for assistance ultimately increased tensions between the United States and Japan. This conflict occurred at the same time that the United States and Japan were having economic disagreements due to large growth in the Japanese economy in the 1980s.

⁷¹ It is clear now that the emergency transit and storage of nuclear weapons was decided in secret by the US and Japanese governments. Prime Minister Sato's special envoy Kai Wakaizumi revealed this in his memoirs. Ultimately, the United States continued to fulfill their defensive role even though it appeared to the public that they were removing the nuclear weapons. Moreover, denuclearizing Okinawa allowed the United States to push for the free use of other bases across Japan.

⁷² "Japan: Okinawa Reversion – Contingency Background Paper," May 1972, State Department, DNSA collection: Japan and the U.S., 1960-1976.

⁷³ Amy L. Catalinac, "Identity Theory and Foreign Policy: Explaining Japan's Responses to the 1991 Gulf War and the 2003 U.S. War in Iraq," *Politics & Policy* 35, no. 1 (2007): 58.

Both nations had an interest in the oil of the Gulf region but did not have similar security policies toward the region. Japan did not engage militarily during this conflict while the United States committed approximately 500,000 personnel. In this section, I analyze Congressional Reports, US Congress member statements, and leadership statements to provide an understanding of the US-Japan alliance during the Gulf War Crisis and the tensions that arose due to lack of communication and misunderstanding of roles.

The Gulf Crisis started when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990. Saddam Hussein argued that Kuwait was stealing oil and Kuwait's high production of oil placed Iraq at an economic disadvantage.⁷⁴ Iraq sought compensation for the allegedly stolen oil. Saddam Hussein had a strategic interest in Kuwait, owed the nation a significant amount of money from the Iran-Iraq war, and sought access to the Persian Gulf and increased oil reserves.⁷⁵ The response from the international community was quick and it unanimously condemned the attack the day after it occurred. The United States aimed to have the Iraqi forces removed from Kuwait by January 1991. When this did not occur, the United States and a coalition force launched a series of attacks on Iraq and the Iraqi forces.⁷⁶ Ultimately, the coalition forces pushed Iraq out of Kuwait and the war ended. Although the United Nations and the allied nations were unified in their actions toward Iraq, tensions arose between the United States and Japan at this time due to disagreements about the proper responses for the two allies.

Japan's relationship with the Middle East was largely uneventful prior to 1990. Japan purchased oil from the region through the 1970s and 1980s but was largely disconnected from

⁷⁴ Robert Owen Freedman, *The Middle East After Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait*. (Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 1993), 4.

⁷⁵ Freedman, *The Middle East*, 5.

⁷⁶ Catalinac, "Identity Theory and Foreign Policy," 61.

politics in the region.⁷⁷ Japan's relationship with the Middle East was primarily an economic one that benefited by purchasing oil during the 1970s and 1980s. Japan's role conception in the international system remained closely tied to US security interests and did not seem tied to the Middle East.

The US decision to invade Iraq challenged Japan's role conception within the alliance and within the international system at large. With the Cold War at an end, Japan had solidified its role as the pacifist partner to the United States. The actions of Japan during the Persian Gulf War signaled an instance when the United States questioned Japan's role in the alliance.⁷⁸ The Japanese role in this conflict was constructed by exogenous pressures and a lack of developed international role. How was Japan to act as an ally without a role conception in the post-Cold war era?

On August 5, 1990, Japan imposed economic sanctions on Iraq prior to following the United Nations resolutions.⁷⁹ Japan quickly condemned the invasion and "froze Kuwaiti assets in Japan, embargoed Iraqi exports, halted Japanese private loans and investment to Iraq, and suspended official aid and trade credits."⁸⁰ Japan imported about sixty percent of its oil from the Gulf Region in 1990 but stopped importing oil during the Gulf War due to large reserves.⁸¹ In the following weeks and after forceful convincing from members of the United States government, Japan halted trade with Iraq and gave 100 million dollars to a coalition force.⁸² Eventually,

⁷⁷ Inoguchi Takashi, "Japan's Response to the Gulf Crisis: An Analytic Overview." *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 17, no. 2 (1991): 257.

⁷⁸ Takashi. "Japan's Response to the Gulf Crisis," 257.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 258.

⁸⁰ Andrew Bennett, Joseph Leggold, and Danny Unger, "Burden-sharing in the Persian Gulf War," *International Organization* 48, no. 1, (1994): 62.

⁸¹ Freedman, *The Middle East*, 140.

⁸² T. R. Reid, "Japan Follows U.S., Cuts Trade With Iraq; Decision Seen Especially Difficult for Tokyo," *The Washington Post*, August 6, 1990.

Japan gave approximately one billion dollars to support the coalition forces in the Middle East. A few weeks later, this sum increased to four billion dollars. Japanese contributions totaled thirteen billion by the end of the conflict.⁸³ The economic response of Japan's government supported US interests in the region.

However, the United States believed that Japan's financial contributions were not enough. According to a 1990 Yomiuri newspaper article in Japan, "U.S. Officials stated that these efforts were not enough and cautioned that Japan would face criticism 'unless Japanese flags fly in the Gulf.'"⁸⁴ The Japanese government was caught between the United States pressure to contribute more than financial support and the Japanese public and government call to avoid military contributions.

Roles Lost in Translation

Japan faced two major challenges that slowed decision-making processes regarding the conflict. First, negative public opinion of the government response along with budgetary constraints prevented reactionary policy pursuits. Second, the United States continuously sent mixed signals about its interests abroad. Together, these two difficulties intensified the strain in the relationship. It was the view of the United States government that Japan failed to meet the expectations of an economically powerful nation in the post-Cold war international community.

To illustrate these difficulties further, I use a Congressional Research Service (CRS) report and a number of cables between the US Embassy in Tokyo and the Secretary of State, officials and researchers scrutinized Japan's actions alongside US actions. The authors of the CRS report discussed the effects of the Gulf Crisis on the US-Japan alliance and argued that the

⁸³ Reid, "Japan Follows U.S.," *The Washington Post*.

⁸⁴ Catalinac. "Identity Theory and Foreign Policy," 61.

invasion “represented a major test for the U.S.-Japan alliance relationship.”⁸⁵ The report suggests that the tension between the United States and Japan arose from economic competition and a lowered security threat from the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War.⁸⁶ In meetings between United States and Japanese officials, “President Bush and other U.S. leaders made clear ... that the United States expected Japan to do more than offer political support” and some officials “expected Japan to have a ‘physical presence’ in the Gulf” rather than merely maintaining a financial commitment.⁸⁷ While there was acknowledgment of Japan’s constitutional limits, “officials at the White House, U.S. Ambassador Michael Armacost and others were in favor of such a [military] presence and suggested it to Japanese leaders.”⁸⁸ Kaifu’s attempts to engage militarily failed due to lack of support from the Diet. At one point, the Kaifu administration did try to introduce a bill that would allow about one thousand Self-Defense Force members to go to the region in a support role, but Diet opposition quickly challenged this proposition and LDP support was essentially nonexistent.⁸⁹ It was not until after the conflict had ended that Japan recognized how to play a role in the post-Cold War community.

The United States goal in the Gulf Crisis was twofold. The United States desired to sustain the sovereignty of Kuwait and defend the supply of oil in the region. President Bush outlined these goals in a speech to Congress in 1990. He emphasized the need for the United States to “defend common vital interests ... support the rule of law ... and stand up to

⁸⁵ Larry Nicksch and Robert Sutter, “Japan’s Response to the Persian Gulf Crisis: Implications for U.S.-Japan Relations,” *Congressional Research Service*, May 23, 1991, 1.

⁸⁶ Nicksch and Sutter, “Japan’s Response to the Persian Gulf Crisis.”

⁸⁷ Nicksch and Sutter, “Japan’s Response to the Persian Gulf Crisis,” 5.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

aggression.”⁹⁰ He also spoke about the economic risks Iraq’s invasion posed: “an Iraq permitted to swallow Kuwait would have the economic and military power ... to intimidate and coerce its neighbors.”⁹¹ Bush’s assertion is that Iraq may use its new power to gain more control of oil reserves. However, in the months leading up to the war, Bush and his administration struggled to explain the US goals to different audiences, including allies abroad.⁹² This challenge in the alliance suggests a lack of clear US goals, which resulted in a negative effect on public opinion in the United States and created confusion in Japan about US interests.⁹³ Specifically, the unspecified interests and statements provided by the Bush administration fail to inform Japan about what behavior should be expected. This necessarily creates difficulty within the alliance and consultation would have made US interests clearer to allies.

In the United States, members of Congress and other US officials bemoaned the fact that the United States was taking on much of the burden of the effort and its allies were not doing enough. For example, representative Duncan Hunter introduced a bill that would push the President to negotiate with Japan to increase Japan’s economic contribution to the Gulf Crisis.⁹⁴ The goal was to make Japan pay the United States the amount equal to Japanese oil imports from the Middle East in 1990. If they failed to pay, the U.S. would impose import duties on Japan.⁹⁵ Representative Pete Stark shared his frustration in the House of Representatives when he said, “Why not quit complaining about our budget deficits and help pay more of the cost of the

⁹⁰ George H.W. Bush, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Persian Gulf Crisis and the Federal Budget Deficit.” *The American Presidency Project*. September 11, 1990.

⁹¹ Bush, “Address Before a Joint Session of Congress,” September 11, 1990.

⁹² David Hoffman, “Messages as Mixed as Audiences: President Struggles to Articulate Goals,” *The Washington Post*, November 15, 1990.

⁹³ Niksch and Sutter, “Japan’s Response to the Persian Gulf Crisis.”

⁹⁴ Rep. Hunter, Duncan (R – CA), HR 641, 102nd Congress.

⁹⁵ Rep. Hunter, Duncan (R – CA).

Persian Gulf operation” in reference to an article discussing Japan’s frustration with the United States failing to lower its budget deficit.⁹⁶ As the United States paid more for air strikes and military engagement in the region, some found the Japanese lack of involvement frustrating. For “many U.S. officials, the Japanese government largely failed the test by responding to the crisis in ways that gave priority to Japanese political, legal and fiscal restraints at the expense of broader international responsibilities.”⁹⁷ Japan failed to fulfill the role as the partner that the United States perceived it should be.

From a foreign policy perspective, the decision-making process for the Japanese government was difficult. The potential for both international and domestic backlash were present, albeit for different reasons. Prime Minister Kaifu was responding to criticism from the Japanese public regarding the U.S. invasion and the Liberal Democrat Party government was concerned about committing to a military response.⁹⁸ There seem to be two main reasons for this hesitation. First and most obviously, the constitutional restriction on military use constrained Japan significantly. The ambiguity of constitutionally legitimate actions exacerbated this problem. Use of force was restricted by the constitution except for cases of self-defense.⁹⁹ Second, it seems that Kaifu did not recognize the magnitude of the invasion, resulting in his slow response and inability to make a decision regarding the Self Defense Force.¹⁰⁰ He did introduce a bill at the time that would have allowed the SDF to be sent to Iraq, but by October the Japanese

⁹⁶ Rep. Fortney H. Stark, 137 Congressional Record Daily Edition 243, Japanese Disappointment in United States Budget Deficits; How About Some More Help in the Persian Gulf?

⁹⁷ Niksch and Sutter, “Japan’s Response to the Persian Gulf Crisis,” 1.

⁹⁸ Takashi, “Japan’s Response to the Gulf Crisis,” 260.

⁹⁹ The Japanese Constitution, Article IX, 1946.

¹⁰⁰ Takashi, “Japan’s Response to the Gulf Crisis,” 260.

Diet voted it down.¹⁰¹ Even with relatively fast-acting initial decision to commit to the United Nations sanctions, other decision-making was slow and vague and the Japanese government “stumble[d] almost continuously” while trying to formulate policy toward the Persian Gulf war.¹⁰²

The Japanese public and some members of the government did not support engagement with the conflict. While the oil supplies were important to Japan, Kaifu and others asserted that the conflict had little effect on Japan.¹⁰³ The United States had a number of reasons for engaging in the war, but Japan considered the conflict to be a “fire on the other side of the river.”¹⁰⁴ Providing financial support seemed to be the policy that allowed Japan to fulfill a role as a pacifist partner to the United States. The government and public both had concerns about engaging militarily. As evidence of this, Japan designated the first four billion dollars of support for non-lethal activities.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, Japan believed that the US response would elicit increased conflict.¹⁰⁶ Japan was focused on issues closer to home and working towards energy independence prior to the crisis and did not aim to change its policy. Japan hoped to maintain its role as the pacifist partner with the United States fulfilling its security needs.

The US role conception as stated by President Bush aimed to deter the aggression of states like Iraq and help other nations in self-defense.¹⁰⁷ The president and his administration suggested that the United States was prepared to lead the international community in ending this

¹⁰¹ Bennett, et al, “Burden-sharing in the Persian Gulf War,” 65.

¹⁰² Takashi, “Japan’s Response to the Gulf Crisis,” 258.

¹⁰³ Bennett, et al, “Burden-sharing in the Persian Gulf War,” 62.

¹⁰⁴ Steven R. Weisman, “Japan Counts the Costs of Gulf Action – or Inaction,” *New York Times*, 27 January 1991.

¹⁰⁵ Steven R. Weisman, “Japan Pledges \$9 Billion to War Amid Opposition,” *New York Times*, 24 January 1991.

¹⁰⁶ Andrew Bennet, et al, “Burden-sharing in the Persian Gulf War,” 63.

¹⁰⁷ Bush, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress,” September 11, 1990.

crisis. President Bush, in a joint session of Congress said, “there is no substitute for American leadership.”¹⁰⁸ Secretary of State James Baker said, in 1990, “we remain the one nation that has the necessary political, military, and economic instruments at our disposal to catalyze a successful response by the international community.”¹⁰⁹ As the U.S. fulfilled its role conception as the international coalition leader, it pressured other nations to follow in its footsteps to halt Iraq’s aggression. The Bush administration used public statements to emphasize its expectations of the international community and “U.S. officials used their allies’ dependence to pressure them.”¹¹⁰ US political leaders met with other world leaders “to underscore that the burden of this collective effort must be shared” and to fail to do so foundered the relationship.¹¹¹ Japan’s slow reactions and internal debates suggested a lack of conviction to the United States. For some, “the Japanese response reinforced [doubts about cooperating] with Japan because of what they [U.S. officials] view as fundamentally divergent and competing economic and other interests of the two countries.”¹¹² The tension that arose during this conflict was partially based upon a lack of shared understanding of roles.

The evidence in this section illustrates that mismatched interests and misunderstood roles of the United States and Japan plagued the relationship. The mismatch of expectations supports the first hypothesis because tensions rose between the two nations and the allies did not formulate a mutual policy regarding the conflict. Japan did not have developed role conceptions for engagement in international crises and the United States held high expectations for allies.

¹⁰⁸ Bush, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress,” September 11, 1990.

¹⁰⁹ Andrew F. Cooper, Richard A. Higgott, Kim R. Nassal, “Bound to Follow? Leadership and Followership in the Gulf Conflict,” *Political Science Quarterly* 106, (1991): 393.

¹¹⁰ Bennett, et al, “Burden-sharing in the Persian Gulf War,” 51.

¹¹¹ Bush, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress,” September 11, 1990.

¹¹² Niksch and Sutter, “Japan’s Response to the Persian Gulf Crisis,” 1.

How Role Confusion Impacts Consultation

In 1990, Japan misunderstood the US role and the lack of consultation intensified the problems of role mismatch. Japan's role conception as a peaceful supporter of US foreign policy did not fit with the US role perception of Japan as a burden-sharing ally that should do more than provide political and financial support. Moreover, Japan's role in the international post-Cold War community was not developed in such a way that allowed Japan to have strong decision-making abilities in this case. Japan played the role of the pacifist partner since World War II and the Gulf Crisis was the first instance where they were expected to break that role developed over 40 years. Breaking away from a role constructed over decades does not happen easily. Japan failed to see the importance of this conflict in the same light that the United States saw the conflict because of the mismatch of role conception and perception alongside a lack of consultation. The oil-dependent United States overestimated the Japanese dependence on Middle Eastern oil. Japan sought energy independence. The lack of regular consultation intensified these problems because the allies did not share direct interests, and the allies had not considered what their interaction would be in international conflict.

Japan's role conception remained as a peaceful partner of the United States and this role mismatch constrained Japan's ability to consult with the United States. Because individuals, groups, and larger communities socially construct norms over long periods of time, consulting about sudden issues through the usual channels fails. US-Japan relations focused largely on economics in the 1980s, and the US-Japan alliance maintained its protector-partner security relationship. Japan's economic growth throughout the 1970s and 1980s did create two challenges for their role. First, the United States role expectation for Japan shifted and US officials believed that Japan should fulfill leadership roles. Second, the economic growth combined with the

effects of sudden conflict pressured Japan “to take on new global political responsibilities” yet did not prepare Japan for engaging directly in conflict.¹¹³

The formal norms of consultation in US-Japan treaties and agreements were established to ensure continued discussion of the defense of Japan in case of conflict. The US-Japan relationship emphasized economic ties so consultation would have occurred more frequently regarding issues of trade or currency rather than armed conflict. Because the Gulf Crisis emerged so quickly, Japan was not prepared to consult about the process for offensive military engagement, particularly outside of Asia. Moreover, Japan’s embrace of pacifism constrains Japan’s ability to engage anyway. The slow response of the Japanese government shows the lack of preparedness for this type of situation and the desire to remain pacifistic.¹¹⁴

The Gulf War therefore served as a push for Japan to become an international community member. First and foremost, the role that Japan should play in the international system was unclear at the beginning of the crisis. The Japan of the post-Cold War was “apprehensive about what it sees as the imposition on it of unwanted roles by the United States.”¹¹⁵ The United States shift in expectations was sudden and consultation on new Japanese role expectations did not occur. Japan’s desired role would have maintained a commercial focus that benefits from a pacifistic security policy.¹¹⁶ Following the conflict however, it seemed that there was an increased desire in Japan to play a larger role in the international community. In a memorandum to Assistant Secretary of State for the Near East and South Asia John Kelly it was noted that “Japan is seeking a way to move beyond ‘checkbox diplomacy’ to a more active leadership role

¹¹³ Takashi, “Japan’s response to the Gulf War,” 262.

¹¹⁴ Takashi, “Japan’s response to the Gulf War,” 262.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

in the emerging new world order.” This, along with similar assessments, suggested that the Gulf Crisis was a wake-up call to Japan; one that was “a positive step toward mitigating this tension” that arose due to the crisis.¹¹⁷

Ultimately, this conflict forced Japan to have a deeper interest in playing a role in the international community and moving beyond ‘checkbook diplomacy.’¹¹⁸ First, because Japan had received backlash from the United States, there was an increased desire to engage more in the future. Second, this conflict lowered public respect for Japan in the United States and increased anti-American sentiments in Japan.¹¹⁹ Ambassador Armacost suggested that Japan learned from the crisis that it could not merely follow the United States lead in foreign policy.¹²⁰ By doing “too little too late ... Japan has been intermittently exposed to such criticism from abroad” which has had both negative and positive effects.¹²¹ It has both created isolationist desire but also an increased desire to play a more proactive role in the international system rather than a reactive one. However, the institutionalized anti-military sentiment still exists strong in Japan, even after the tensions from the Gulf Crisis.

Although the impacts of the conflict did not improve the alliance relationship, the findings support the hypotheses. The first hypothesis is supported by the lack of role understanding in the conflict. The United States fulfilled its role but had expectations that Japan failed to meet, resulting in tensions increasing. The second hypothesis is supported, albeit, less

¹¹⁷ Allen L. Keiswetter to John H. Kelly, May 2, 1991, “Your meeting with Japanese Director General of Middle Eastern and African Affairs Makoto Watanabe,” *United States Department of State*, Memoranda.

¹¹⁸ Michael Armacost, March 14, 1991, “The Gulf War: Impact on U.S.-Japan Relations.” *United States Embassy in Japan to The State Department*, Cable, 1.

¹¹⁹ Nicksch and Sutter. “Japan’s Response to the Persian Gulf Crisis,” 1.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ Takashi, “Japan’s Response to the Gulf Crisis,” 262.

than the first. Consultation is difficult to assess in this case for three reasons. First, the Gulf Conflict occurred suddenly, making any significant amount of consultation unlikely to occur. Second, the lack of a developed role for Japan in military conflict weakened Japan's ability to consult about engagement. Finally, social pressures from inside of Japan constrained the government's ability to make decisions about the conflict early on. Japan had to act quickly but did not have the experience to do so.

Conclusion

Based on my findings, role theory provides a framework for understanding how roles contribute to the determination of US foreign policy decision-making toward allies. Second, a norm of consultation can improve the ability to determine policies if implemented early in the alliance. These two variables can positively influence change in alliance relations between two countries.

This research suggests that these variables are also not mutually exclusive or even alternative explanations for decision-making in foreign policy. It seems that these explanations complement other explanations and expand the understanding about decision-making. Increased understanding and compliance with roles improves the ability of two allies to make well-developed policy decisions. Consultation may foster increased mutual understanding of roles and of possible domestic pressures from each nation. Furthermore, domestic politics and domestic interests seem to play a large role in determining how foreign policy decision-making is done. Of course, issues of national security also influence decision making on foreign policy, particularly in the context of defense and security policy.

The data that I collected and analyzed support the proposed hypotheses; changes in alliance relations and policy decision-making are partially influenced by understanding of national role conceptions and norms of regular consultation. The decision to revert a “denuclearized” Okinawa to Japan signals a mutually beneficial political decision. Okinawa’s reversion was beneficial to Japan because it eased domestic pressures and granted sovereignty. For the United States the policy was beneficial because the United States maintained its defensive capabilities in the region. The normative basis for consultation found in agreements and many secret conversations between US and Japanese leaders suggests that consultation is positively influential for decision-making. The Persian Gulf Crisis, on the other hand, suggests a more complex relationship challenge for the United States and Japan. The lack of shared role conceptions and expectations post-Cold War increased tension between the allies. In the 1990s, consultation was less effective because Japan’s role conceptions did not meet the United States expectations and a norm had not developed to formulate conflict policies outside of the protector-partner relationship.

Foreign policy creation, particularly focused on alliances, can benefit by integrating methods for identifying roles and improving the norm of consultation. If the United States and Japan were to focus more on where the roles come from, namely, how domestic pressures impact role development, policymakers could predict allies’ interests sooner. Greater attention to ally’s roles would also increase trust between nations because roles give some predictive power and strengthen understanding of national interests. Consultation is a necessary part of any relationship, though particularly pertinent for international relations. Integrating formal structures for the norm of consultation seems more powerful than assuming it will occur. While leaders will consult over policy, it would be beneficial to establish an agreement that explicitly

states the intention to consult over specific policies repeatedly. In these ways, foreign policy could be beneficially impacted by deeper understanding of roles and norms of consultation.

In future research, studies that use consultation should consider framing specific agreements and assessing how the effectiveness of the formalized norm changes over time. Analyzing these same variables in the context of other alliances may also be beneficial to verifying the usefulness of this form of analysis. The norm of consultation is only one possible norm that can be impacted by role variation and it would be valuable to consider alternative norms and their relationship to the role of the nation. If I were to continue this work, I would analyze the formation of the United States and Japanese role conceptions and address how domestic challenges effect role conception in greater depth. It is important for future research to provide a complete picture of role development to ensure the validity of leadership behavioral analysis. Roles and consultation provide a lot of opportunities for analyzing change and decision-making. Research on decision-making should aim to combine theory and practice for understanding foreign policy change in alliances.

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