# The US-Japan alliance and the rise of China:

## Implications for the East Asian security order and the EU's regional role

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## Introduction

The US-Japan alliance, based on the 1951 bilateral Security Treaty, is one of Washington's main military partnerships that comprise America's "hub and spoke" security system in East Asia. As a product of the Cold War's bipolarity, the security arrangements between Tokyo and Washington served a purpose to deter the communist threat and expansion. However, the structural changes in East Asia after 1989 necessitated a redefinition of the alliance's strategic rationale. Those changes included the disappearance of the common enemy of the Soviet Union, the emergence of new security challenges, notably related to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea) nuclear developments, and, last but not least, China's rise and consolidation of its status as a major power in East Asia. In order to respond to the altered regional and global security environment, Tokyo and Washington needed to reconsider the Cold War division of allies' roles whereby the US was committed to Japan's defence, while Japan provided only bases and host-nation support to the US military forces.[1]

Since the mid-1990s, the bilateral alliance has been redefined, and its scope now includes both regional and global dimensions. The US-Japan security ties saw a period of unprecedented deepening during the term of former Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro (2001-2006), with Tokyo becoming an even stronger supporter of the American-led regional security order. Beijing, however, saw the consolidation of the alliance as directed at China and hence seeking to constrain its rising power in East Asia, notably by having impact on the Taiwan issue. The deterioration in Sino-Japanese ties under Koizumi reinforced the security dilemma between the bilateral alliance and the PRC, as well as Beijing's perception of Tokyo as a major tool in Washington's strategy of maintaining its primacy in East Asia. However, several new trends have emerged in the relations between Japan, China and the US in the post-Koizumi era and since Barack Obama became US President in 2009. These include stabilisation in Sino-Japanese ties, Tokyo's pro-Asia diplomacy under Prime Minister Hatoyama Yukio (2009-present), and America's increased focus on non-traditional security issues and multilateral engagement of East Asia under Obama.

This paper examines the post-Cold War dynamics between the US-Japan alliance and China, and assesses its impact on the evolving security order in East Asia. It also explores the potential for the EU to strengthen its security engagement with the region, especially in the context of the recent trend in East Asia towards multilateral cooperation on non-traditional issues.

The paper first analyses the strengthening of the US-Japan alliance and Japan's so-called security "normalisation", especially accentuated during Koizumi's term in office, before focusing on the manifestation in East Asia of strategic mistrust and security dilemma between Tokyo and

1 This division of tasks was based on Articles 5 and 6, respectively, of the revised 1960 Security Treaty.

Washington, and Beijing. The discussion then explores recent trends of engagement and cooperation by looking at the Sino-Japanese relations post-Koizumi, Hatoyama's diplomatic priorities and Obama's East Asia approach. Finally, the paper examines the primary components of the evolving security order and outlines the EU's involvement. It concludes by arguing that while the US-led security system continues to be a main provider for East Asian stability, it is increasingly complemented by regional multilateralism in non-traditional security areas, which opens up the way for Europe's strengthened engagement with the region.

**Alliance Enhancement and Japan's Security "Normalisation"**

A series of external pressures in the 1990s served as a catalyst for a redefinition of the US-Japan alliance and Japan's security policy. The 1994 North Korean nuclear crisis exposed the lack of military operability of the alliance, while the 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis and the 1998 North Korean missile launch over Japan further heightened Tokyo's regional threat perceptions. The Japan-US response to these developments was the revision in 1997 of the bilateral Defence Guidelines, which committed Japan's Self-Defence Forces (SDF) to extend non-combat rear-area support to the US military during regional security crises. The result was a broadening of the alliance's scope from a narrow focus on Japan's defence, which was its primary focus during the Cold War, to include regional contingencies. Ambiguously defined in the guidelines as "situations in areas surrounding Japan", the new strategic rationale for Tokyo and Washington was to tackle "latent, unspecified sources of instability" in East Asia.[2] As will be discussed later in the paper, this definition led to apprehensions in Beijing regarding the potential inclusion of a Taiwan conflict in the remit of US-Japan security cooperation, signalling also that "Tokyo moved from protégé to partner"[3] of Washington.

It was, however, in the wake of 9/11 and during the term of Prime Minister Koizumi that the strategic convergence of Tokyo and Washington on traditional security issues became more accentuated. By strengthening its defence ties with the US, expanding SDF overseas missions and modernising its military capabilities, Japan under Koizumi not only became a more reliable ally to America, arguably exceeding the expectations of the George W. Bush administration (2001-2009), but also increasingly came to be seen by a number of analysts as moving towards security "normalisation".[4] Indeed, Koizumi, a strong advocate of Japan's more robust foreign policy,

2 Kamiya, Matake (2003). Reforming the U.S.-Japan alliance: What should be done? In G.John Ikenberyy&Takashi Inoguchi (Eds.), *Reinventing the alliance: U.S.-Japan security partnership in an era of change* (pp. 91-116). New York and Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

3 Wu, Xinbo (2005). The end of the silver lining: A Chinese view of the U.S.-Japan alliance. *The Washington Quarterly,* 29 (1), 119-130.

4 See, for example, Hughes, Christopher W. (2005). *Japan's re-emergence as a "normal" military power.* Reprinted. London and New York: Routledge; Wu (2005); and Bisley, Nick (2008). Securing the "anchor of regional stability"? The transformation of the US-Japan alliance and East Asian security. *Contemporary Southeast Asia,* 30(1), 73-98.

dispatched the SDF on non-combat missions to the Indian Ocean and Iraq, revised Japan's national security doctrine, enacted into law a number of security-related bills, accelerated the introduction of Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system in Japan, and reached (in his final year in office) several security agreements with the Bush administration on the transformation of the alliance in the 21st century.[5]

The SDF deployments in the "war on terror" expanded the geographical scope of Japan's engagement beyond the East Asian region; indeed, something unthinkable in the Cold War era. The revised national security doctrine - the 2004 National Defence Programme Guidelines (NDPG) – provided for a new global role for Japan, which is now "to improve the international security environment" and is only second to the country's primary objective of national defence.[6] Finally, the Bush administration's focus on enhancing its military partnership with Tokyo and Koziumi's "responsiveness" to this reflected the strategic convergence of the US and Japan, seen in the shared threat perceptions (especially concerning North Korea and China) and consensus on the (military) means to tackle security challenges.[7] The net result of the Bush-Koizumi partnership was a broadened conceptualisation of the alliance's scope to include an aspect of "global cooperation" to the bilateral security framework.

The upgrading of the alliance was paralleled by Japan's acquisition of new military capabilities with the main incentive for this being the DPRK's provocative behaviour from the early 1990s on. In this regard, Japanese official documents have repeatedly emphasised the threat North Korea's missile and nuclear programmes pose not only to Japan's national security, but also to the stability in East Asia and "the entire international community".[8] From Tokyo's perspective, therefore, the strengthening of its defence posture and alliance with Washington has been seen as a necessary means to safeguard its national security interests in the face of the perceived threat from the North. Shared concerns about the rise of Chinese military power, as will be discussed in the following section, have acted as an additional stimulus for Japan and the US to deepen their military cooperation.

In the wake of the 1998 North Korean missile launch, Tokyo established its own spy satellite programme and from 2003 on deployed four satellites, as well as engaged with Washington in a

5 On the agreements, see, United States Department of Defense (2005). *Rumsfeld Hosts U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee*. October 29. Available at http://www.defense.gov/advisories/advisory.aspx?advisoryid=81 [accessed 25 March 2010]; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan (2006). *Joint Statement of the U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee*, Washington, DC. May 1. Available at http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/scc/joint0605.html [accessed 25 March 2010].

6 Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet (2004). *National Defense Program Guideline for FY 2005 and After*. Available at http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/policy/2004/1210taikou_e.html [accessed 28 March 2010].

7 Bisley, *Securing the "Anchor of Regional Stability"?*

8 See, for example, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan (2007). *Diplomatic Bluebook 2007*. Available at http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/2007/index.html [accessed 28 March 2010]; and Ministry of Defence, Japan (2008). *Defence of Japan (Annual White Paper)*. Available at http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/2008.html [accessed 28 March 2010].

joint research on BMD. The second North Korean nuclear crisis of 2002-2003 led to the Koizumi administration's decision in 2003 for the introduction of US-made both land- and sea-based missile defence systems. Subsequently, the first ground-based Patriot Advanced Capability 3 (PAC-3) was deployed in March 2007 during the term of Abe Shinzo (2006-2007).[9] These developments have strengthened further the bilateral security alliance. However, the deployment of, and joint cooperation on BMD also necessitate closer integration of Tokyo's and Washington's command and control systems. In turn, this is likely to draw Japan deeper into US regional security strategy and potentially exacerbate the "security dilemma" in East Asia, notably between the bilateral alliance and China.

Finally, the government of Fukuda Yasuo (2007-2008) in 2008 enacted a space bill, which allowed Japan's use of space for defensive purposes and hence opened up the way for the SDF's acquisition of early-warning satellites to detect missile launches. Indeed, it was North Korea's 2006 missile launch that promoted Tokyo to pass the new law. Equally important, however, was the fact that Japan's space development policy was long regarded as lagging behind those of other major powers, especially China. In this regard, Beijing's successful anti-satellite weapon test in 2007 was a "wake-up call" for Tokyo. At the same time, the test intensified the debate among US analysts concerning Chinese "anti-access strategies" designed to deter the US from intervening in a Taiwan crisis; strategies seen by some observers as indicator of a shift in the military balance of power in East Asia.[10]

The adjustment of the US-Japan alliance and Tokyo's defence posture to the post-Cold War regional security environment was facilitated by the changed domestic context of Japan's security policy. Most notable in this regard was the rightward shift in the security debate and public opinion in Japan, especially under Koizumi. The shift reflected the perceived threats from North Korea and China, and was stimulated by conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) politicians (notably Koizumi) who advocated a "normal" security role for Japan. Indeed, a major manifestation of this normalisation became the domestic debate concerning the revision of Article 9 of the 1947 post-war Japanese Constitution.[11] Koizumi and his successor Abe were some of the strongest proponents of the amendment, seeking to lift Japan's self-imposed ban on exercising its right to collective self-defence. Although the majority of the people oppose Article 9 revision, the Japanese public has gradually come to accept a strengthened military posture of the SDF in matters of national defence.

9 By the end of fiscal year 2010, PAC-3 systems are expected to be deployed at a total of 16 locations across Japan and thereby supplement four Aegis-equipped destroyers, which carry Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) interceptors.

10 Saunders, Phillip C. (2008). China's role in Asia. In David Shambaugh&Michael Yahuda (Eds.), *International relations of Asia* (pp. 127-149). Lanham: Rowman&Littlefield Publishers.

11 Article 9, also known as the "peace clause", renounces the use of military force as a legitimate instrument of statecraft and commits Japan to non-possession of war potential. The official government interpretation of Article 9 is that Japan is permitted to maintain only the minimum level of armed force necessary for self-defence, but is prohibited from exercising its right to collective self-defence.

## Strategic Mistrust and a Security Dilemma

### *Japan and China*

In the context of Sino-Japanese relations, mutual concerns of strengthened military postures and suspicion regarding one another's long-term strategic goals in East Asia have emerged as defining characteristics of their bilateral security interactions.

For Tokyo, a major concern has been the PRC's modernisation of its nuclear and missile arsenal. Japan has questioned if the objective of Beijing's military modernisation is the mere resolution of the Taiwan issue, as China's development and deployment since the mid-1990s of short- and intermediate-range missiles has increased its ability of striking not only Taiwan, but also Japan and some of the main US military bases in East Asia. Additionally, a perceived lack of transparency on the PRC's national defence, as well as the double-digit growth of its defence spending from the late 1990s on, has influenced the emergence of "the China threat" perception in Japan. For example, the 2004 NDPG mentioned for the first time in Japanese national security doctrine two specific countries – North Korea and China – as Japan's key security concerns.[12] The 2009 *Japanese White Paper on Defence* expressed worries about the impact of the PRC's military strength on "the regional situation and Japanese security", underlining that "China has not yet achieved the levels of transparency expected of a major regional power".[13]

China's view of Japan's changing security posture since the 1990s has mirrored Tokyo's mistrust toward Beijing. Chinese analysts have repeatedly expressed concerns regarding Japan's alleged re-emergence as a major military power, by emphasising Tokyo's drive to acquire new military capabilities, notably BMD systems, and its expansion of the SDF's overseas missions. The developments in Japanese security policy have been described in *China's White Paper on National Defence* as one of the "complicating security factors" in the region.[14] Especially under Koizumi's security "normalisation" course, Japan was seen as "fabricating" threats, notably coming from the PRC's military build-up, and abandoning "its post-war path of peaceful development to pursue political and military power".[15] Meanwhile, Beijing continued to promote a defensive image by stressing that China "will not pose a military threat to any other country" and, in response to Japan's repeated criticism of China's growing military budget, argued that Tokyo "should interpret its

12 Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, *National Defense Program Guideline for FY 2005 and After.*

13 Ministry of Defence, Japan (2009). *Defence of Japan (Annual White Paper),* pp. 49-50. Available at http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/2009.html [accessed 27 March 2010].

14 *Chinese Government's Official Web Portal* (2004). White Paper on National Defence. Available at http://english.gov.cn/official/2005-08/17/content_24165.htm [accessed 27 March 2010].

15 *Xinhua* (2005a). Japan's "sense of crisis" pure imagination. November 4. Available at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2005-11/04/content_3729035.htm [accessed 27 March 2010].

military tendencies to the world" for Japan's expanded military profile was perceived as worrying.[16]

Sino-Japanese relations in the politico-military area deteriorated to unprecedented levels during Koizimi's term in office. The deterioration illustrated how strategic mistrust is exacerbated by the unresolved history issue and linked to it deep-seated mutual animosity.

For many Chinese analysts, Japan has failed to come to terms with its militaristic past and hence remained a war-prone society with military power ambitions.[17] Beijing strongly protested Koizumi's yearly pilgrimages to the *Yasukuni* Shrine, regarding them as attempts by Japan to water down its wartime atrocities and deny its past aggression in East Asia.[18] Chinese President Hu Jintao decided to suspend his summit meetings with Koizumi, conditioning future bilateral summits upon Japanese prime minister's refrain from visiting the shrine. Additionally, LDP's moves under Koizumi to revise Article 9 were interpreted by many in China as an indicator of a growing political conservatism in Japan.[19] This only contributed to exacerbating Chinese worries about Tokyo's future strategic intentions in the region.

In Japan, meanwhile, negative popular perceptions and distrust of China have increased since the 1990s, not least due to the heightened anti-Japan sentiment within the Chinese society. Both the Japanese elites and public were alarmed by the 1995 Chinese nuclear tests and the 1996 Taiwan Strait, interpreting them as signals of the PRC's rising military assertiveness. Burdened by "apology fatigue", the Japanese came to believe that Beijing was taking advantage of its historical disputes with Tokyo in order to receive more economic assistance, as well as undermine Japan's international ambitions (e.g., a UNSC seat) and regional influence in East Asia.[20] There was also a perceived lack of appreciation for Japanese foreign aid to China and a strong feeling among the Japanese that their country's peaceful foreign policy path since 1945 was not given due credit in the PRC.

### *The US and China*

Strategic mistrust also underpins US-China relations, with the two powers wary of one another's strategic intentions in East Asia and divided by conflicting regional visions.

As in Japan, the "China threat" view in the US has gradually gained ground since the 1990s. Uncertainties concerning Beijing's both short-term and long-term goals have led to worries in

16 See, *Chinese Government's Official Web Portal*, White Paper on National Defence (2004, 2006); *Chinese Government's Official Web Portal* (2005). FM: Japan military "gossiping" hides issues. December 9. Available at http://www.gov.cn/misc/2005-12/09/content_122487.htm [accessed 27 March 2010].

17 Wu, Xinbo (2000). The security dimension of Sino-Japanese relations: Warily watching one another. *Asian Survey,* 40 (2), 296-310.

18 *Yasukuni* is a Tokyo shrine honouring fourteen Class A war criminals in addition to two and a half million Japanese soldiers.

19 Wu, *The End of the Silver Lining*.

20 Calder, Kent E. (2006). China and Japan's simmering rivalry. *Foreign Affairs*, 85(2), 129-139.

Washington that China, as it becomes stronger, might seek to alter the structure of the regional order, and hence challenge US leadership position, as well as interests, in East Asia.[21] In particular, US official documents have stressed that the PRC has the "greatest potential to compete militarily with the US", expressed concerns (in a similar way as Japan) that China's military modernisation has implications going beyond Beijing's "immediate territorial interests" (i.e., the Taiwan issue) and repeatedly pointed out at the limited transparency in Beijing's defence policy, which is viewed as increasing "the potential for misunderstanding and miscalculation".[22] America's post-Cold War security strategy in East Asia, especially seen in George W. Bush's reinforcement of the "hub and spoke" system of US bilateral alliances (notably with Japan), clearly shows that Washington has remained committed to sustaining its military primacy. To be sure, the US has increasingly come to recognise China's growing regional influence and the need for Beijing's cooperation in tackling regional challenges (e.g., North Korea's nuclear ambitions). Nevertheless, America has not shown willingness to share its leadership in East Asia with China, i.e. establish a kind of condominium of power, but has rather expected Beijing to be "fully cognizant"[23] of US intention to preserve its regional primacy and hence a Pax Americana.

China, on the other hand, has been a strong supporter of multipolarity, both at the regional and global levels. PRC's official documents have underscored the destabilising impact that "hegemonism and unilateralism" (clearly with reference to the US) have on international security, and pointed out at the eventual "world multipolarisation" as an outcome of the ongoing redistribution of power "among the major international players".[24] Recently, Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi has emphasised that the call for international cooperation on various security issues (including non-traditional ones) is seen to have become stronger, "as multipolarity and globalisation gather momentum".[25] Despite this rhetoric, Beijing's leaders hope for a multipolar world was seen to be replaced in the second half of the 1990s by a broader acceptance, admittedly with disappointment, of the inevitability of US continuing dominance.[26] In East Asia, in particular, the strengthening of the US-Japan alliance since the late 1990s has come to be perceived by the PRC as directed at China and seeking to constrain its rising power. This has also signified for

21 Medeiros, Evan S. (2005). Strategic hedging and the future of Asia-Pacific stability. *The Washington Quarterly*, 29(1), 145-167.

22 United States Department of Defense (2006). *Quadrennial Defense Review,* p. 29. February 6. Available at http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/policy/dod/qdr-2006-report.pdf [accessed 02 April 2010]; see also, *Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China,* various years. Available at http://www.defense.gov/pubs/china.html [accessed 02 April 2010].

23 Pei, Minxin (2007). China's hedged acquiescence: Coping with US hegemony. In Byung-Kook Kim&Anthony Jones (Eds.), *Power and security in Northeast Asia: Shifting strategies,* p. 104. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

24 *Chinese Government's Official Web Portal,* White Paper on National Defence (2004, 2006, 2008).

25 *People's Daily* (2010a). Chinese FM calls for cooperation to tackle security threats. February 6. Available at http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6889302.html [accessed 02 April 2010].

26 Foot, Rosemary (2006). Chinese strategies in a US-hegemonic global order: Accommodating and hedging. *International Affairs*, 82(1), 77-94.

Beijing that a Pax Americana would likely endure for sometime to come, which would necessitate China's adjustment to this geopolitical reality. In this sense, while the PRC has sought to accommodate US hegemony, it has also hedged against a possible negative impact of America's dominance, especially in East Asia, on Chinese interests.[27] Two important components of this hedging strategy have been Beijing's more active regional diplomacy and its military modernisation programme.[28] In this way, China has sought to reduce the risk of containment by the US and its East Asian allies, most notably Japan, as well as raise the costs of involvement by Washington (and Tokyo) in a potential conflict over Taiwan.

There is no doubt that the Taiwan issue has remained a major factor that could destabilise Sino-US relations. The PRC has repeatedly criticised the bilateral military cooperation between Washington and Taipei, and strongly protested US arms sales to Taiwan by describing them as "a crude interference in China's internal affairs" that "harms China's national security and peaceful reunification efforts".[29] The US, for its part, as seen in statements made by the Obama administration concerning its January 2010 arms sale package to Taiwan, has argued that the sales seek to preserve the military balance in the Strait and are consistent with Washington's long-standing policy of recognising only Beijing, while providing Taipei with defensive weapons.[30] For many in China, however, US Taiwan policy[31] is perceived as the basis of America's alleged containment of the PRC, with the strengthening of the US-Japan alliance seen as one of the major aspects of Washington's efforts in this regard.[32]

***The security dilemma in East Asia***

For the US and Japan, as discussed earlier in this paper, the need to deter North Korea has been a major factor driving their security cooperation since the late 1990s. It is also clear that the rise of China has acted as an additional stimulus for the two allies to deepen their defence ties, as well as for Japan to seek an expansion of its military capabilities. By reinforcing the alliance in order to tackle the threat from the DRPK, Tokyo and Washington have faced a security dilemma with

27 Ibid.

28 On Chinese hedging towards the US, see, Medeiros, *Strategic Hedging and the Future of Asia-Pacific Stability*, Foot, *Chinese Strategies in a US-hegemonic Global Order*, and Pei, *China's Hedged Acquiescence*.

29 *People's Daily* (2010b). Chinese FM urges US to stop selling weapons to Taiwan. January 31. Available at http://english1.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6883401.html [accessed 04 April 2010]; see also *Chinese Government's Official Web Portal,* White Paper on National Defence (2004, 2006, 2008).

30 *Yahoo!Asia news, AFP* (2010). US urges China against sanctions amid Taiwan spat. February 2. Available at http://asia.news.yahoo.com [accessed 03 February 2010].

31 This policy is based on the Taiwan Relations Act passed by Congress in 1979 and the simultaneous recognition by Washington of the government in Beijing as the only legitimate government of China. The Act does not officially commit Washington to intervene militarily on Taipei's behalf in case of an attack by the mainland, but only expresses America's interest in a peaceful resolution of the Taiwan issue, see, Zaborowski, Marcin (2006). US-China relations: Running on two tracks. In Marcin Zaborowski (Ed.), *Facing China's rise: Guidelines for an EU strategy* (pp. 83-100). Chaillot Paper No. 94, December. Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies.

32 Medeiros, *Strategic Hedging and the Future of Asia-Pacific Stability.*

Beijing with regard to the Taiwan issue.[33]

For China, its primary focus has been to attain military superiority with regard to Taiwan, as well as to deter the US (and Japan) from helping Taipei achieve independence. While pursuing economic interdependence with the island and emphasising the benefits of economic integration, Beijing has sought a more coercive approach to the reunification issue by means of reinforcing Chinese military capabilities and becoming more serious about the use of force. In this context, PRC's modernisation of its nuclear and missile arsenal has been particularly important.

The deterioration in Sino-Japanese ties and Japan's security normalisation, especially under Koizumi, have arguably contributed to exacerbation of Beijing's suspicions of the alliance's strategic intentions, as well as to the security dilemma in East Asia. Furthermore, Japan's willingness to assume a larger security role may have added to the complexity of America's policy towards Taiwan and hence Sino-US relations. Indeed, some Chinese analysts have argued that, for Japan, an enhanced alliance was "an excuse" for its security activism, while for the US (namely, the Bush administration), its open support for Tokyo's more assertive foreign policy became a means to balance Beijing and hence "consolidate US preponderance" in the region.[34]

With the expansion of the scope of security cooperation between Tokyo and Washington, and Japan's acquisition of new military capabilities, Beijing has come to perceive the alliance enhancement as interference in what it regards as a domestic matter. In this context, the PRC has worried that the "situational" (rather than a "geographical") definition of the region in the Revised US-Japan Defence Guidelines could include a future Taiwan contingency within the remit of bilateral security cooperation. China has also been concerned about US-Japanese development and deployment of a BMD system in East Asia, especially a mobile and sea-based one, as it could be extended for the defence of Taiwan and hence prevent re-unification with the mainland. The 2005 Joint Statement of Tokyo and Washington, which indicated the "peaceful resolution" of the Taiwan Strait issue as one of their "common strategic objectives" in the region, was strongly criticised by Beijing.[35] Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing stressed that the issue was China's domestic affair and "should by no means be deliberated in the framework of the security alliance".[36] The Joint Statement was also interpreted by some Chinese analysts as explicitly indicating Japan's willingness to "actively intervene in the Taiwan issue to contain China"; an involvement perceived as being accelerated by the US.[37] Beijing's response was the enactment of the Anti-Secession Law soon

33 Atanassova-Cornelis, Elena & Mendes, Carmen Amado (forthcoming 2010). Dynamics of Japanese and Chinese security policies in East Asia, and implications for regional stability. *Asian Politics&Policy,* 2(3), July-September.

34 Wu, *The End of the Silver Lining*.

35 United States Department of State (2005). *Joint Statement of the U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee*. February 19. Available at http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2005/42490.htm [accessed 17 May 2009].

36 *Xinhua* (2005b). US and Japan told to lay off Taiwan. March 7. Available at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2005-03/07/content_2659882.htm [accessed 04 April 2010].

37 Yang, Bojiang (2006). Redefining Sino-Japanese relations after Koizumi. *The Washington Quarterly,* 29 (4), 129-

thereafter, which underscored PRC's intention to employ "non-peaceful means" in order to "protect China's sovereignty and territorial integrity".[38]

The security dilemma dynamics between the US-Japan alliance and the PRC defines the mutual hedging between these powers. Washington, while emphasising common interests and bilateral cooperation with Beijing (since the Bush administration), has reinforced in the 2000s its security alliances and partnerships in Asia, with its alliance with Japan playing a central role in this hedging strategy.[39] For Tokyo, its close security relationship with America has been a major component of its own external balancing behaviour vis-à-vis Beijing.[40] Finally, China has adopted a strategy of "hedged acquiescence" towards the US, motivated in part by the unprecedented expansion of US-Japan security ties under the Koizumi-Bush partnership, as well as by its recognition of the strategic advantage enjoyed by the US as a balancer (notably with Japan) in Asia's geopolitics.[41] In addition to its military modernisation efforts and active regional diplomacy, Chinese hedging has included the development of new strategic partnerships beyond East Asia (including with the EU).

## Recent Trends of Engagement and Cooperation

### *Sino-Japanese relations*

The stabilisation of Sino-Japanese relations and both sides' emphasis on mutual engagement in the post-Koizumi era is a major trend that gives ground for optimism for a stable regional order in East Asia.

From a Chinese perspective, Tokyo's "non-provocative" behaviour on the history issue, i.e. the fact that none of Koizumi's successors has visited *Yasukuni,* has opened up the way for an improvement in the bilateral relations. The CCP government has sought to control the anti-Japan sentiments within the Chinese society by introducing restrictions on media reports critical of Japan, as well as focused on promoting a positive image of Japan and de-emphasising the history problem. In this context, Premier Wen Jiabao's speech in 2007 at the Japanese Diet, the first one by a Chinese Premier, explicitly acknowledged Japan's remorse and apology for its wartime aggression, and expressed the PRC's unequivocal appreciation for Japanese foreign aid to China. On the Japanese

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38 National People's Congress, People's Republic of China (2005). *Anti-Secession Law.* March 14. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/english/2005lh/122724.htm [accessed 04 April 2010].

39 Medeiros, *Strategic Hedging and the Future of Asia-Pacific Stability.*

40 For an argument concerning the shift of Japanese policy towards China from accommodation during the Cold War to a mixed strategy of engagement and balancing under Koizumi, see Mochizuki, Mike M. (2007). Dealing with a rising China. In Thomas U. Berger, Mike M. Mochizuki, & Jitsuo Tsuchiyama (Eds.), *Japan in international politics: The foreign policies of an adaptive state* (pp. 229-255). Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

41 Pei, *China's Hedged Acquiescence*.

side, the foreign policy approach, in particular, of Prime Minister Fukuda prioritised Japan's Asia diplomacy, especially deepening ties with the PRC, which contrasted with Koizumi's focus on strengthening relations with the US and thereby seeking to balance Beijing.[42] Prime Minister Fukuda and President Hu at their 2008 summit pledged to enhance "mutual trust in the political and security areas", strengthen Sino-Japanese cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region and work closely on issues of international concern.[43] This was termed "a new era of a mutually beneficial relationship" and has been stressed since then in a number of official statements on both sides.

In the security area, Japan and China have undertaken a number of steps towards enhancing military transparency and promoting confidence building. These include regular high-level defence meetings, an agreement for the establishment of an emergency communication hotline between the SDF and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) with a view to preventing accidental military clashes, and the first since 1945 mutual visits by naval ships.[44] An indicator of Japan's changing China policy, hence Tokyo's willingness to alleviate the security dilemma with the PRC, has been Japan's explicit statement concerning Taiwan. For example, Abe, in response to Wen's request at their 2007 summit to clarify Tokyo's position, said "I don't support Taiwan's independence".[45] Fukuda, for his part, underlined that he would not support Taiwanese referendum on seeking UN membership "if it leads [Taiwan] to take unilateral action to change *the status quo*" across the Strait.[46]

***Prime Minister Hatoyama's diplomatic priorities***

In contrast to the traditional US-centrism in Tokyo's foreign policy of the successive LDP-led governments, the diplomatic priorities of the new Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) administration of Prime Minister Hatoyama emphasise deepening Japan's ties with its East Asian neighbours, especially China.

Hatoyama has advocated the formation of an "East Asian community" and has invited Beijing, in particular, to cooperate with Tokyo for the realisation of this initiative. The Japanese Prime Minister has expressed his belief that the path to regional community building is through establishing a "win-win" relationship between Japan and China, and "expanding" it to the wider

42 Atanassova-Cornelis, Elena (2010). Foreign policy instruments and factors for policy change: Japan's security 'normalisation' reconsidered. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 38 (2), 279-306.

43 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan (2008). *Joint Statement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the People's Republic of China*. May 8. Available at http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/china/joint0805.html [accessed 05 April 2010].

44 The Chinese missile destroyer *Shenzhen* did a port call in Tokyo in November 2007, while the Japanese destroyer *Sazanami* docked at Zhanjiang in June 2008.

45 *Yomiuri Shimbun* (2007). Abe, Wen agree to build ties/ Focus on North Korea issues, strategic beneficial relations. April 12.

46 As quoted in Shimizu, Kaho (2007). Beijing embraces Fukuda: Taiwan referendum criticised, gas dispute lingers. *The Japan Times*. December 29. Available at http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20071229a1.html [accessed 06 April 2010].

Asian region.[47] Hatoyama's proposal draws upon the European experience whereby the existing cooperation among countries in Asia in areas such as climate, natural disasters, energy and maritime security would lead to "a multi-layered network for a functional community", with political cooperation seen as a long-term objective. To be sure, China has been one of the first countries in the region to promote the idea of an East Asian community, and Beijing and Tokyo differ concerning the membership of the envisaged community.[48] Nevertheless, Hatoyama's pro-Asia stance is likely to open up the way for a further deepening of regional cooperation, as well as the relations between the two East Asian powers. The Hatoyama administration has also expressed its willingness to enhance Japan's defence ties with China, which has converged with Hu's foreign policy priority of building a friendly relationship with Tokyo as part of Beijing's "comprehensive, strategic diplomacy". In this context, the SDF and the PLA will reportedly conduct in 2010 for the first time a joint naval drill for search and rescue operations; discussions on mutual cooperation in the areas of disaster relief and UN PKO are also expected to start this year.[49]

Japan-US relations post-Koizumi and, especially, under the current democratic administration of Hatoyama have seen major changes. The strategic convergence between Tokyo and Washington on traditional security issues and, related to it, Japan's pursuit of security normalisation seem to belong to the past. The upgraded bilateral alliance, and the personal relationship between Bush and Koizumi built in the course of five and a half years reassured Tokyo. This arguably provided the context domestically for the reinforcement of a more hard-line Japan's China policy during Koizumi's term. Successive Japanese prime minsters have not managed to stay in office longer than one year, however. This, in turn, has negatively affected Tokyo's ability to formulate a consistent foreign policy strategy and, equally important, create a relationship of trust with Washington, notably with the Obama administration. Prime Minister Hatoyama's focus on China, his statements, such as "we have so far depended on the US too much", and his call for a more "equal" alliance with America have raised questions in the US government whether Japan was seeking to distance itself from Washington and embrace Beijing, instead. To be sure, the US has welcomed an improvement in Sino-Japanese ties, as instability in relations between Tokyo and Beijing might potentially lead to a serious confrontation and, in turn, necessitate America's siding with one party against the other – a choice difficult to make and, obviously, with negative implications for US security strategy in the region.

Strains in Japan-US security relations have emerged due to Hatoyama's decision to review a

47 *Xinhua* (2009a). China, Japan vow to further improve bilateral ties. November 20. Available at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-11/20/content_12509362.htm [accessed 06 April 2010].

48 China supports an ASEAN+3-centred community, whereas Japan advocates a more inclusive community with India, Australia and New Zealand as additional participating states.

49 *Xinhua* (2009b). Japan, China agree to enhance defence exchanges. November 27. Available at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-11/27/content_12552393.htm [accessed 06 April 2010].

bilateral agreement for the relocation of the US Marine Corps Futenma Air Station in Okinawa, which was signed by Bush and Koizumi in 2006. Many in the Obama administration and the Japanese government are worried that the Futenma row might damage the bilateral relations, so the two sides are willing to resolve the issue as soon as possible. Tokyo has also withdrawn Japanese supply ships from the Indian Ocean in support of the US-led war on terror, after the law authorising the refuelling mission (initially enacted by Koizumi in 2001) expired in January 2010. Domestic considerations are arguably an important factor for these decisions, given that the DPJ needs the support of its left-wing coalition partner (the Social Democratic Party) in the 2010 Diet elections. Critics, however, warn that Hatoyama's policies may lead to US distrust of Japan.

To be sure, Prime Minister Hatoyama has not "abandoned" the alliance. Marking in January 2010 the 50th anniversary of the 1960 Revised Security Treaty, he stressed that Tokyo will work with Washington to deepen the bilateral relations in order to "adapt [them] to the evolving environment of the 21st century", while US forces in Japan will continue to "function as a public good" by contributing to regional stability and prosperity.[50] The two allies agreed in February 2010 to strengthen their security ties, especially by enhancing cooperation between the SDF and the US military in the areas of disaster relief and humanitarian assistance, as well as develop a common understanding regarding the security situation in East Asia in the framework of the deepening of the alliance. Despite this, Japan under Hatoyama is very unlikely to re-emerge as a pillar of the perceived US hegemony in a way that China feared was the case under Koizumi.

***Obama's East Asia policy and Sino-US relations***

The diplomatic priorities of the Obama administration in general, and in East Asia in particular, are also an indicator of a positive trend concerning both the relations between the US-Japan alliance and China, and regional stability.

In comparison to the Bush era, America under Obama is seen to have increased its focus on non-traditional security issues, including poverty, development and climate change. In this context, while the Obama administration has repeatedly stressed that the US-Japan alliance remains the cornerstone of East Asian security and prosperity, it has emphasised that Tokyo is a "great partner" to Washington in addressing global issues as well. Indeed, as noted by some Japanese observers, the convergence on non-traditional security between the governments of Obama and Hatoyama provides Japan with an excellent opportunity to broaden its cooperation with the US[51] and, thereby, realise Hatoyama's goal of adjusting the alliance to the altered global environment of the new

50 *Asahi Shimbun* (2010). Alliance makeover slated for year-end. January 20. Available at http://www.asahi.com/english/Herald-asahi/TKY201001190460.html [accessed 07 April 2010].

51 Ito, Masami (2010). As security pact with the U.S. turns 50, Japan looks to redefine relations. *The Japan Times*. January 19. Available at http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20100119f1.html [accessed 07 April 2010].

century.

A major departure from Bush's policies, notably his "go it alone" approach, is Obama's call for multilateral solutions to global problems and, specifically, his focus on engaging East Asia multilaterally. The US has signalled its interest in strengthening relations with ASEAN and, possibly, joining the East Asia Summit (EAS) after having signed in 2009 ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC).[52] Not only has Washington been determined to pursue multilateral diplomacy in Asia based on dialogue and cooperation, it also, as stressed by Obama in his Tokyo speech in November 2009, "expects to be involved in the discussions that shape the future of this region, and to participate fully in appropriate organisations as they are established and evolve."[53] How this US diplomatic priority will fit with Hatoyama's East Asian community idea or, indeed, China's own leadership ambitions in the region remains to be seen. In any case, Obama's focus on multilateral cooperation for tackling new threats and protecting the "global commons", as defined in the 2010 Quadrennial Defence Review, is positive for the relations among Tokyo, Beijing and Washington.[54] As the US-Japan alliances is redefined in order to cope with new security challenges, including natural disasters and maritime piracy, its cooperation with other major powers, especially China, will be increasingly important. The establishment of a multilateral mechanism for maritime security in the East and South China Seas, which would include the three powers along with other regional states,[55] would be one option for enhancing trilateral cooperation and hence building mutual trust between the US-Japan alliance and the PRC. The fact that Washington, Tokyo and Beijing have already agreed to conduct a trilateral policy dialogue to discuss various issues of common concern, including climate change and energy security, is also a positive sign.[56]

Obama's approach towards China also reflects US emphasis on cooperation and engagement in its East Asia strategy. The US President has reassured Beijing that he is not seeking to contain the PRC and stressed, instead, that the cultivation of "spheres of cooperation - not competing spheres of influence" would lead to progress in the region.[57] This has been welcomed by Chinese leaders who, themselves, view the bilateral relations as contributing to "peace and development of the Asia-Pacific region and beyond", and emphasise the need to develop them from a strategic and long-term

52 China was the first non-ASEAN state to sign the TAC in 2003; Japan followed in 2004.

53 As quoted in Murayama, Yusuke (2009). U.S. engagement in Asia relies on Japan as partner. *Asahi Shimbun.* November 16. Available at http://www.asahi.com/english/Herald-asahi/TKY200911160077.html [accessed 07 April 2010].

54 See, United States Department of Defense (2010). *Quadrennial Defense Review*. February 12. Available at http://www.defense.gov/qdr/images/QDR_as_of_12Feb10_1000.pdf [accessed 07 April 2010].

55 Funabashi, Yoichi (2010). A 21st century vision for the alliance. *Pac Net No. 7*. February 18. Pacific Forum CSIS. Available at http://csis.org/publication/pacnet-7-21st-century-vision-alliance [accessed 07 April 2010].

56 China proposed the establishment of a trilateral policy dialogue at a senior officials level during the George W. Bush administration and the first such meeting was planned for July 2009. The talks were postponed, however, due to Beijing's worries that such a meeting would anger North Korea given the tensions following the DPRK's missile and nuclear tests in 2009.

57 As quoted in Murayama, *U.S. Engagement in Asia Relies on Japan as Partner.*

perspective.[58] In this regard, the US-initiated in July 2009 high-level "US-China strategic and economic dialogue" is a clear expression of Obama's determination to elevate the bilateral partnership to one addressing a variety of global issues.[59] In East Asia, China's role as a key player in the six-party talks (SPT) seeking North Korea's de-nuclearisation will continue to be crucial for American interests, as Beijing now may be regarded as the "sole supporter" of North Korea's economy and Kim Jong-il's regime.[60] For the PRC, on the other hand, the explicit US non-support for Taiwanese unilateral change of the *status quo* across Strait (seen since the Bush administration) and Washington's willingness to treat China as a partner rather than rival will further allay Chinese fears about a perceived US-Japanese containment. The improved relations with Tokyo and Hatoyama's pro-Asia foreign policy stance are reassuring to Beijing as well. This is not to say that tensions between the US and China may not arise and, indeed, the latest bilateral row over the Obama administration's announcement in January 2010 of an arms sale package to Taiwan (rounding out the original 2001 Bush's arms package) is a case in point.[61] However, the row does not signify a major change in relations, but rather shows a familiar dynamics at work. While the US demonstrates its commitment to regional stability and determination, as stressed by President Obama, "to be an Asia-Pacific power",[62] China, by suspending bilateral military exchanges, defends what it regards as its "core national interests" of sovereignty and territorial integrity. President Hu's decision to attend the nuclear security summit in April and Obama's expected visit to the Asia-Pacific region in June, during which he intends to issue a statement reiterating the importance of US-China relations, are a confirmation of both side's willingness to maintain a stable and cooperative relationship.

The above discussion does not suggest that mutual hedging has not remained (or will not remain) a defining characteristic of the interactions between the US and Japan, and China. Rather, what is more accentuated in the post-Koizumi era and under Obama is the emphasis in all three capitals on the cooperative dimension of this hedging strategy.

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58 *News of the Chinese Communist Party* (2009). Top Chinese legislator puts forth proposals for further development of China-U.S. relations. September 11. Available at http://english.cpc.people.com.cn/66102/6755403.html [accessed 07 April 2010].

59 Cossa, Ralhp A. (2010a). Obama's East Asia policy: So far, so good. *Pac Net No. 5*. February 4. Pacific Forum CSIS. Available at http://csis.org/publication/pacnet-5-obamas-east-asia-policy-so-far-so-good [accessed 07 April 2010].

60 On China's policy towards the Korean Peninsula see, Wang, Fei-Ling (2009). *A strategic play in Northeast Asia: China engages the two Koreas and the United States*. Paper presented at the 5th ECPR General Conference, September 10-12, Potsdam: Germany.

61 Obama's arms package does not include submarines and advanced fighter aircrafts, the F-16 C/D, regarded by Taiwan as a high priority for its defence. China objects the fighters, in particular, as it does not consider them to be defensive weapons.

62 Cossa, Ralhp A. (2010b). US-China relations on a downward slide. *Pac Net No. 4A*. February 10. Pacific Forum CSIS. Available at http://csis.org/publication/pacnet-4a-us-china-relations-downward-slide [accessed 09 April 2010].

## East Asian Security Order and Europe's Regional Involvement

### *Current trends in the evolving regional order*

The US "hub and spoke" system in East Asia, centred on the US-Japan alliance, remains a main component of the regional security order and hence ensures America its primacy. The alliance has a critical stabilising function, especially in Northeast Asia, and plays an important role for balancing the rising power of China. As long as Tokyo considers its bilateral arrangements with Washington as the "cornerstone" of Japanese and regional security, the US-led system will surely have a stable pillar to stand on.

Looked from another perspective, the alliance has put a cap on Japan's potential re-armament (feared by Beijing) and has made American power "more predictable", thereby reducing (Chinese/regional) uncertainties as to how it may be exercised.[63] Even though the alliance enhancement under the Bush-Koizumi partnership came to be regarded by Beijing as a threat to its interests, the PRC has recognised the overall benefits of the US-led security system. Indeed, the stability in East Asia based on that system has created an environment, in which China has been able to focus on its primary goal of economic development.[64] Beijing is also seen to be using the hub and spoke arrangements to its own advantage by seeking to establish "an informal Chinese spoke" in the system, i.e. a "special bilateral relationship" with Washington, and thereby maximise its diplomatic manoeuvrability.[65] This suggests that, while the PRC will continue to hedge against a possible downturn in its relations with the US (and Japan), it will not seek, at least in the foreseeable future, to overthrow the existing order altogether.

For East Asian states, as they remain wary of China's long-term strategic goals in the region, the hub and spoke system, and US forward military presence continue to be seen as a major guarantor of their security needs. To be sure, most Asian countries (and Japan no longer seems to be an exception) recognise the growing influence of the PRC, which is now a major driving force of the region's economic development, and seek cooperative relations with Beijing. Although an improvement since the late 1990s in regional perceptions of China, especially in Southeast Asia but not in Japan, has been a significant change, some ASEAN states encourage Washington and Tokyo to assume a larger regional role in order to balance against Beijing.[66] Finally, territorial and sovereignty disputes, the rise of nationalistic sentiments and mutual distrust between countries in East Asia (notably Japan and China) underpin the view in the region that US military presence and

63 Ikenberry, John G. (2004). American hegemony and East Asian order. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 58 (3), 353-367.
64 Shambaugh, David (2006). Asia in transition: The evolving regional order. *Current History: A Journal of Contemporary World Affairs*, 105 (690), 153-159.
65 Ikenberry, *American Hegemony and East Asian Order.*
66 Saunders, *China's Role in Asia*.

America's role as a "stabiliser" are indispensable to East Asian security.[67] Indeed, no other major power, neither Japan nor China, is trusted by Asian states to assume such a role, and the US remains for now the only power both able and willing to provide the public goods from which all in the region benefit.[68]

Since the mid-1990s, however, a new trend has emerged in the evolving regional order in East Asia, which in many ways has complemented America's role rather than represented a direct alternative to the US-led system. The region has seen a "mushrooming" of multilateral/minilateral[69] fora and dialogues, which have helped build mutual trust and confidence. Their main characteristic is a focus on the economic and non-traditional security areas of cooperation. To be sure, in Northeast Asia, "hard security" concerns about North Korea's nuclear programmes have drawn Asian countries closer to one another, as seen in the US-Japan-ROK security consultations (known as the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group, TCOG) and the (currently stalled) SPT. The possibility in the future that another multilateral security framework in Northeast Asia could emerge from the SPT should not be ruled out, and it may offer opportunities for strengthening cooperation, especially between Japan and China, on less sensitive, non-traditional security issues.[70] The established in 2008 three-way talks among Tokyo, Beijing and Seoul are already an indicator that such concerns as natural disasters and infectious diseases are leading to greater intra-regional collaboration.

In the wider East Asian region, it is ASEAN that has been in "the driver's seat" of institution building. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the only region-wide security dialogue, has focused on developing security cooperation and confidence building, as well as provided the EU with an opportunity to strengthen its involvement in Asia. The ASEAN+3 (APT) process, for its part, has contributed to deepening regional ties primarily in the economic, monetary and financial fields, with its major achievement being the 2000 Chiang Mai Initiative for currency swaps. The APT is significant in that it has brought together only states from Northeast and Southeast Asia, thereby playing an important role for building intra-regional relations. Regional calls for the creation of "an East Asian community" also suggest a more clear trend towards "Asians only" multilateralism (i.e, without the US), although Japan's support for an expanded EAS and a more inclusive membership in the envisaged community indicate that balancing Chinese influence remains important for Tokyo. Indeed, Beijing's active involvement in, and promotion of various regional multilateral fora has

67 Sutter, Robert (2008). The United States in Asia. In David Shambaugh&Michael Yahuda (Eds.), *International relations of Asia* (pp. 85-103). Lanham: Rowman&Littlefield Publishers.

68 Ibid.

69 Minilateralism refers to security fora or dialogues, which have three of four participants, are usually conducted on an ad hoc basis and primarily deal with traditional security issues, see, Cha, Victor D. (2003). Multilateral security in Asia and the U.S.-Japan alliance. In G. John Ikenberry&Takashi Inoguchi (Eds.), *Reinventing the alliance: U.S.-Japan security partnership in an era of change* (pp. 140-159). New York and Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

70 Atanassova-Cornelis&Mendes, *Dynamics of Japanese and Chinese Security Policies in East Asia*.

placed it at the centre of East Asian cooperation, for "no regional institution can be considered effective" without Chinese participation.[71] The PRC's regional diplomacy of engagement has formed part of its "reassurance campaign"[72] aimed at reducing the "China threat" perception in the region, and, as mentioned earlier, of its hedging strategy towards the US.

The growth of regional multilateral fora and dialogues does not necessarily suggest that East Asia is likely to establish in the foreseeable future a security community, which would replace the current American-led system with a multilateral security order centred on a political community. Indeed, the diversity of political systems, centrality of the nation-state, and presence of competitive identities and parochial nationalism are major barriers to the formation of a political community, hence "Europeanisation" of East Asia.[73] Regional security organisations, namely the ARF, have failed so far to institutionalise the process that would lead to an effective resolution of conflicts, and thus remain limited in their ability to tackle serious security issues, especially in Northeast Asia. Finally, the lack of strategic trust and mutual suspicions between the two major powers, i.e. Japan and China, result in their rivalry for influence and make joint leadership for furthering regional institution building a difficult task.[74] All this points to the observation that an alternative to the US-led order has not materialised yet.

***EU's approach towards East Asia, and relations with Japan and China***

Europe has a strong interest in promoting political and security cooperation in East Asia. Indeed, the support for region-building activities in other parts of the world has been an important policy objective for the EU, as this is regarded as a means to enhance peace and stability both regionally (e.g., in Asia) and globally. The EU's policy towards Asia, as outlined in the Commission's Asia Strategy papers of 1994 and 2001, emphasises the need for Europe's strengthened engagement with the region in the political and security dimensions.[75] While not completely excluding hard security issues, as reflected in the EU's participation in the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation (KEDO),[76] the documents prioritise a number of non-traditional security areas of cooperation, including promotion of development and reduction of poverty, consolidation of democracy, protection of human rights, conflict prevention and tackling environmental problems.

71 Shambaugh, *Asia in Transition*.
72 Saunders, *China's Role in Asia*.
73 Ikenberry, *American Hegemony and East Asian Order.*
74 On Japanese and Chinese approaches to multilateralsim in East Asia and Sino-Japanese rivalry, see Atanassova-Cornelis&Mendes, *Dynamics of Japanese and Chinese Security Policies in East Asia*.
75 European Commission (1994). *Towards a new Asia strategy*. COM (94) 314 final, July 13, Brussels; European Commission (2001). *Europe and Asia: A Strategic framework for enhanced partnerships*. COM (2001) 469 final, September 4, Brussels. Available at http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/strategy_asia_2001_en.pdf [accessed 11 April 2010].
76 KEDO's activities have been suspended since May 2006 due to a lack of progress on North Korea's de-nuclearisation.

The Commission's latest Asia paper indicates the support for regional integration as one of the EU's strategic priorities for cooperation in the region.[77] With regard to East Asia, that support envisages enhanced dialogue in the framework of Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) and the ARF, as well as with ASEAN. Finally, the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS), which has proposed that the EU develop strategic partnerships with Japan and China (among others), is yet another signal that Europe is seeking to deepen its involvement in Asia's political and security issues.[78] While the nature of that involvement is yet to be further clarified, a major indicator of the EU's future role in East Asia is Europe's multi-dimensional approach to security stressed in the ESS, i.e. one that emphasises non-traditional security threats along with traditional ones.

As far as the EU's respective security relations with Japan and China are concerned, they have developed largely outside the framework of hard security issues, while not excluding them altogether.

The most institutionalised bilateral link in Europe's relations with East Asia is the one with Japan, which reflects the shared democratic values between the two actors. Euro-Japanese co-operation since the 1991 Hague Declaration has evolved as a partnership primarily in the area of "soft security", focusing, for example, on climate change, human security, foreign aid and economic development.[79] To be sure, Tokyo and Brussels have also tackled hard security issues through joint initiatives on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Japan and the EU have further cooperated in non-military crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction, which have been identified in the 2001 Japan-EU Action Plan (along with the above-mentioned issues) as some of the major areas for a deepened cooperation in the 21st century.[80] Finally, the launched in 2005 "strategic dialogue" on East Asian security has further boosted the EU's relations with Japan and, by extension, Europe's engagement in Asia.[81]

The EU's relationship with China is still not as mature as the one with Japan and does contain some important areas of divergence, especially with regard to views on democracy and

77 European Commission (2007). *Regional programming for Asia: Strategy document 2007-2013*. May 31, Brussels. Available at http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/asia/rsp/07_13_en.pdf [accessed 11 April 2010].

78 European Council (2003). *A secure Europe in a better world - The European security strategy*. December 12, Brussels. Available at http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf [accessed 11 April 2010].

79 For an analysis of the respective significance of the US and the EU in Japan's foreign policy, see, Atanassova-Cornelis, Elena (2005). Pursuing a major power role: Realism with the US and idealism with Europe in Japan's post-Cold War foreign policy. *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies (EJCJS)*. Available at http://www.japanesestudies.org.uk/articles/2005/Atanassova.html [accessed 11 April 2010]; for a critical examination of Japan-EU relations, see, Berkofsky, Axel (2008). True strategic partnership or rhetorical window dressing? A closer look at the relationship between the EU and Japan, *Japan Aktuell*, 2, 22-37.

80 Japan and the EU are currently negotiating a new Joint Action Plan, as the present one expires at the end of 2010. For the original text, see, http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/europe/eu/summit/action0112.html [accessed 11 April 2010].

81 A major impetus for establishing the dialogue was the issue of a possible lifting of European arms embargo against China, which dominated the EU's policy agenda in 2004-2005, Berkofsky, *True Strategic Partnership or Rhetorical Window Dressing?*

human rights.[82] The political dialogue between Brussels and Beijing has undergone significant evolution from the end of the 1990s on, which has increasingly reflected a number of common interests shared by the two partners. The EU has supported China's transition towards a more open society and has been seeking its full integration into the international community, indeed welcomed by Beijing as it looks for recognition as a great power.[83] A basis already exists for expanding bilateral cooperation in non-traditional areas, such as environmental protection and climate change, while Brussels and Beijing have also shown a willingness to deepen their consultations with regard to hard security issues, including nuclear non-proliferation.

In contrast to the relations between the US-Japan alliance and China, Europe's respective interactions with Japan and the PRC are not part to the geopolitical rivalries in East Asia, nor do they exacerbate regional security dilemmas. In fact, Brussels has been conspicuously absent from the region in strategic terms, something the EU has recognised as a weakness and is arguably seeking to correct. Europe's soft power and comprehensive approach to security, including its civilian-centred approach to peacekeeping and experience in anti-terrorism, is welcomed in East Asia.[84] By contrast, the US-Japan alliance (or America's other "spokes" for that matter) with its focus on the military dimension of security seems not well suited to address the growing number of non-traditional challenges faced by states in the region, notably in Southeast Asia.[85] Obama's East Asia policy suggests that Washington has recognised the shortcomings of its approach to regional commitments, as well as become more attentive to Asian multilateralism. The US may now be moving towards developing, what has been described as, the "missing element" in its relations with China, i.e. a parallel multilateral engagement of East Asia.[86] As Beijing plays a central role in Asian institution-building processes, America may learn from the EU's approach of opting for soft power and promoting regional cooperation when interacting with China and the region.[87] Finally, the growth in East Asia in recent years of multilateral groupings and dialogues reflects the understanding by regional states that closer collaboration is the best way for tackling transnational threats. This only strengthens the argument that Europe's greatest potential for expanding its security engagement with East Asia and furthering regional cooperation is in the area of non-

82 For a critical assessment of EU-China relations, see, Berkofsky, Axel (2006). The EU-China strategic partnership: Rhetoric versus reality. In Marcin Zaborowski (Ed.), *Facing China's rise: Guidelines for an EU strategy* (pp. 103-114). Chaillot Paper No. 94, December. Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies.

83 On EU's thinking on China, see, European Commission (2006), *EU – China: Closer partners, growing responsibilities.* COM(2006) 632 final, October 24, Brussels. Available at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52006DC0631:EN:NOT [accessed 11 April 2010]; on Chinese thinking on the EU, see, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PRC (2003). *China's EU policy paper.* October 13. Available at http://www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/zxxx/t27708.htm [accessed 11 April 2010].

84 Von Hoffman, Norbert (2007). How do Asians evaluate Europe's strategic involvement in East Asia?, *Asia-Europe Journal*, 5, 187-192.

85 Bisley, *Securing the "Anchor of Regional Stability"?*

86 Bersick, Sebastian (2006). Strategic considerations in the US-China relationship and the role of European soft power. *Asia-Europe Journal*, 4, 251-264.

87 Ibid.

traditional security.

**Conclusion**

In the 21st century, the regional security order in East Asia continues to be underpinned by bilateralism than multilateralism, and guided by the logic of power-balancing than regional integration. Indeed, nearly sixty years after the signing of the original US-Japan Security Treaty, the bilateral alliance between Tokyo and Washington remains a major provider for stability in East Asia, as well as a main pillar of the American-led security system in the region. Japan's willingness to enhance its regional role, namely in the Korean and Taiwan Strait theatres, has strengthened the deterring effect of the US forward deployment in East Asia, thereby ensuring Washington its regional primacy. As Asian states remain wary of China's long-term strategic goals, they continue to see the hub and spoke system as indispensable to their security needs. Finally, America's role as a "stabiliser" of major power relations, notably those between Tokyo and Beijing, remains important as well.

The post-Cold War dynamics between the US-Japan alliance and China indicates that strategic mistrust and security dilemmas are defining features of the evolving order in East Asia. The potential remains for instability in the relations between Tokyo and Washington, and Beijing, and a shift towards major power rivalry would definitely have serious regional repercussions. On the other hand, the improvement in Sino-Japanese ties post-Koizumi, Hatoyama's pro-Asia diplomacy and Obama's focus on greater US engagement with regional multilateralism indicate a positive trend towards alleviation of the security dilemma and cooperation. Indeed, while mutual hedging continues to define (and will do so in the foreseeable future) the interactions between the US and Japan, and China, the emphasis at the moment in all three capitals seems to be placed on the cooperative dimension of this hedging strategy. Economic interdependence and the need for collaboration with regard to a number of common regional/global challenges are important underpinning factors for this.

Developing outside the traditional and more sensitive area of hard security, there is a new trend in the evolving East Asian order, i.e. one of a growing focus on institution building. This trend reflects the priority that Asian states place on economic development and their increased concern about non-traditional security challenges. Given that an EU-style order in East Asia is unlikely to emerge in the coming decades, regional multilateralism in many ways complements the US-led system rather than presents an alternative to it by addressing those concerns that are perceived not to be dealt with sufficiently by America.

It is in this context that the EU, with its experience in multilateralism and being largely a "civilian power", has a strong potential to boost efforts for regional cooperation in East Asia in non-

traditional security areas. Indeed, Europe's strengthened involvement with the region will further exemplify to Asian states the benefits of a coordinated approach to tackling issues of common concern. The EU's multi-dimensional conceptualisation of security and the increasing importance placed in East Asia on transnational challenges is an area of convergence. Furthermore, it is on non-traditional issues that Europe may arguably work with both Japan and China, and thereby help them build mutual trust and enhance cooperation. Finally, the current positive trends in the relations between Tokyo and Washington, and Beijing present, perhaps, a unique opportunity for the EU to strengthen its role in that part of the world. While the American-led regional order is set to continue, Europe has much to offer for maintaining stability in East Asia. Whether it will do so remains to be seen.