



Ted Osius. *The U.S.-Japan Security Alliance: Why It Matters and How to Strengthen It*. Westport, Conn., and London: Praeger, 2002. xvi + 106 pp. ISBN 978-0-275-97806-8; ISBN 978-0-275-97805-1.

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## Challenges and Prospects for the U.S.-Japan Security Relationship Seen in a New Light

### Challenges and Prospects for the U.S.-Japan Security Relationship Seen in a New Light

A book may be likened to a bowl of soup. In the same way that a spoonful will suffice to understand the taste of the whole bowl, a couple of pages will give a hint as to what to expect from the whole book. So it is with Ted Osius's brief yet concise *The U.S.-Japan Security Alliance*. Osius, in the four-page preface, presents the reader with an excellent introduction to what is to come. He first touches upon some major landmarks of the bilateral alliance which occurred in the years following the end of the Cold War, including, but not limited to, the Higuchi Report, the Clinton-Hashimoto Joint Declaration, the Armitage Report, and the October 2001 decision by Japan to dispatch troops to assist the United States in Afghanistan. The preface identifies five key reasons why the U.S.-Japan alliance continues to retain its relevancy within the present-day Northeast Asian security environment.

The meat of the book consists of eight chapters (in addition to the preface). The first five of these are respectively entitled "Defense of Japan," "The Korean Peninsula," "Taiwan," "China," and "The East Asian Region." As the titles imply, all, save for the first chapter, are country- or region-specific. These are the chapters which, in Osius's words, "focus on the purpose of the security alliance" (p. xv), and in which the author makes the point that "U.S. and Japanese interests coincide not only to sus-

tain [the] alliance, but also to warrant strengthening, enhancing, and promoting it" (p. xv). Osius's methodology in these five chapters is uniform. In each chapter, he defines the relevant American and Japanese interests; then proceeds to analyze the policies of the United States, Japan, and other relevant state-actors; and finally outlines U.S. and Japanese options for the future.

Leaving aside the others, chapter 1, by virtue of its issue-centered nature, deserves separate mention. Here, Osius notes that "Japan has not succeeded in coming to terms with its prewar and wartime history" (p. 2). He uses the textbook controversy and Prime Minister Koizumi's August 2001 visit to the Yasukuni Shrine as two cases in point. With regard to animosities having their roots in history, Osius asserts that "Japan needs an open, forthright argument" (p. 5). The U.S. presence in East Asia is not solely aiming at providing reassurances to Japan's neighbors, but is a *sine qua non* for international stability in the region, he says. In his view, Japan, while primarily concerned with its territorial defense, has also gradually come to perceive regional stability as a vital interest. Osius finally outlines three future options for Japan. Two of these are "to rearm and become an active, independent player or to remain a passive junior partner, dependent under the U.S. security umbrella" (p. 6). The third option is his vision of the correct path to be taken. It is particularly noteworthy, for it reverberates throughout the whole book: "Japan ... can choose a middle road, between these two extremes, by becoming a

more autonomous, proactive partner *within* the alliance structure over the next 10 years” (p. 7, emphasis in original).

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 “examine the challenges and opportunities for a strengthened alliance between the United States and Japan over the next decade” (pp. xv-xvi). Chapter 6 deals with Okinawa. In this chapter, Osius maintains that Okinawa does have “legitimate complaints” (p. 53) about the present state of affairs in the U.S.-Japan security relationship, and notes that 75 percent of all bases in the exclusive use of U.S. Forces in Japan (USFJ) are concentrated in Okinawa. “Many [in Okinawa] wonder why, with the Cold War over and peace coming to the Korean peninsula, they must continue contributing so much to Japan’s peace and security” (p. 63), he writes. As a possible long-term solution, Osius proposes greater autonomy for Okinawa, while for the next ten years he sees no further alternative than U.S.-Japanese coordination and cooperation in assisting Okinawa’s troubles. Chapter 7 is entitled “Japanese and U.S. Challenges and Opportunities.” Osius identifies the limitations imposed by Article 9 and the deficiencies in domestic legislation regarding security issues as the challenges to the alliance which Japan must confront. On the other hand, he identifies increased U.S. unilateralism in the international arena pending the inauguration of the Bush administration (as exemplified in the U.S. renunciation of the ABM Treaty and the CTBT, and the withdrawal of support for the 1997 Kyoto Protocol) as the challenge which the United States brings into play. He finally makes the point that since “U.S. and Japanese interests overlap significantly ... consultation, give-and-take, and even power sharing should result in the best possible outcomes for both alliance partners” (p. 77). In the final chapter, Osius also makes clear where this consultation and give-and-take could take place: he refers to the two-level bilateral strategic dialogue which President Bush and Prime Minister Koizumi agreed to launch at the summit meeting held in June 2001. He also asserts that “this strategic dialogue could help transform the alliance ... [into] one that includes operational cooperation” (p. 81). No separate chapter has been allocated for a conclusion; but then, Osius has already provided the reader with the conclusion in the preface, where he remarks, “[i]f it is to thrive, the U.S.-Japan alliance must remain dynamic rather than static and must be nurtured, sustained, and enhanced” (p. xvi).

The author, Ted Osius, has served in the U.S. Department of State since 1989. He has held various diplomatic posts in Asia, and has also assisted Vice President Gore

as senior adviser on international affairs (1998-2001). Osius is thus well poised to write this book. However, this professional bond sometimes also operates to Osius’s disadvantage—at times, he seems to be towing the State Department line at the expense of an in-depth understanding of issues. An illustration might be his observation that “[f]ormer [Okinawa Prefectural] governor Ota in particular mastered the politics of victimization and succeeded in making the base presence a national issue” (p. 57). This statement not only places Governor Ota in a highly unfavorable position, but also completely overlooks the sensitivities of the Okinawan people as well as the crux of the problem in Okinawa. The Okinawan problem stems from a series of political disillusionments which Okinawans faced during and after World War II, the last of which this reviewer considers to be the 1972 reversion to Japan.[1] Sakae Midorima writes that the expectation Okinawans entertained with regard to the reversion was of one “to a peaceful and democratic Constitution *under which there are no bases*”.[2] The desire to do away with the bases failed to materialize with the 1972 reversion, and even today it remains intense. At the demonstration held in Ginowan in October 1995, where 85,000 people gathered, a high-school student called upon authorities to give them back their silent Okinawa, to “return [them] a peaceful island where there are no troops and no tragedies,” which is highly instructive in this regard.[3]

Osius has conducted an immense number of interviews with influential people, both in government and academia, and not only in Japan but also in Taipei, Seoul, and Singapore. A full list of these is available at the end of the book. On the other hand, the bibliography he provides is unexpectedly modest. Thus, it appears as though the author has collected most of the data—and in some cases, even figures—from interviews. Consequently, there are some cases where the figures do not match with those to be found in written sources.[4] In addition, some of Osius’s statements, whilst not mistaken, are potentially misleading. For example, he writes that “[p]oliticians in Tokyo called for a Status-of-Forces Agreement (SOFA) revision after a June 29, 2001, incident where a U.S. airman was charged with raping a woman in Chatan, Okinawa” (p. 56). Taken at face value, this statement is not incorrect. However, Okinawans’ (in contradistinction to Tokyo politicians’) demands for a revision of the SOFA surfaced in the immediate aftermath of the September 1995 rape incident, and have remained vocal to this day. This situation was exemplified in an August 2000 petition submitted by Okinawa

Prefectural Governor Inamine to the Japanese government, high-ranking officials, the U.S. Ambassador, and the commander of the USFJ, calling for a revision of the SOFA.[5]

Osius's book came out in the summer of 2002, and in some ways, the information it contains is obsolete already. Osius writes that "[c]urrently ... three-fourths of South Koreans support the U.S. presence, and fewer than 10 percent want U.S. forces out now" (p. 10), and that "[e]ven if nationalist sentiments rise to the surface during the presidential campaign in Seoul, it appears that South Koreans will continue to support America's presence" (p. 11). This prediction, as well as the accompanying figures, may have been correct prior to the accident in South Korea, where a U.S. military vehicle ran over two schoolgirls, leading to their deaths. As the suspect was on official duty at the time of the accident, the United States had the primary right to exercise jurisdiction over him under the terms of the U.S.-Korea SOFA. The subsequent acquittal of the suspect in a military tribunal sparked a wave of protests against the U.S. military presence in Korea, which gradually increased in their intensity and reached a climax on December 14, when 100,000 people gathered in Seoul for the largest anti-American protest ever.[6]

One final criticism that may be levelled at Osius is that although he has frequently referred to Japanese contributions to the so-called "war against terrorism," not even once has he commented on how a U.S. use of military force against Iraq would affect the bilateral security relationship.

All in all, however, if the book's weaknesses were to be weighed against its merits, the strengths would prevail. Notwithstanding its deficiencies, Osius's book is recommended reading for the general reader and undergraduate students as an orderly account of the U.S.-Japan security relationship. It is not commonplace to find such a lucid and informative book condensed into a mere one hundred pages. Or, returning to the analogy with the soup: this one sure tastes great—just needs a little more

salt.

#### Notes

[1]. Chalmers Johnson has provocatively termed these "betrayals [which] the Okinawans have experienced at the hands of the Japanese and the Americans." Chalmers Johnson, ed., *Okinawa: Cold War Island* (Cardiff, Calif.: Japan Policy Research Institute, 1999), p. 6.

[2]. Emphasis added. Sakae Midorima, "Okinawa to Beigun Kichi," *Nanto Bunka* 2 (1980), p.1.

[3]. Quoted in Morimoto Nagayoshi, "Chii Kyotei to Okinawa," *Hogaku Semina* 492 (1995), p. 6.

[4]. On page 59, for instance, the author notes that the base footprint in Okinawa has been reduced by 20 percent. However, Honma, writing in 2000, notes that the area covered by the U.S. bases has almost not changed at all since the reversion. Hiroshi Honma, "Okinawa Beigun Kichi to NichiBei Anpo Joyaku: ZaiNichi Beigun Chii Kyoutei," in *Okinawa Beigun Kichi-hou no Genzai*, ed. Kenji Urata (Tokyo: Ichiryusha, 2000), p. 26. The figures of the Okinawa Prefectural Government are supportive of Honma's view. For instance, as of March 2001, 74.8 percent of all bases in the exclusive use of the USFJ were located in Okinawa. See <<http://www2.pref.okinawa.jp/oki/okinawa.nsf/98ec0e16075d27aa492567340044e504/0667c427a5f5028549256b72001b24>>. In comparison, the figure in March 1995 stood at 75.1 percent. Naha Shuppansha Henshubu, *Anpo Joyaku to Chii Kyotei* (Okinawa: Naha Shuppansha, 1995), p. 239.

[5]. For a detailed treatment of the SOFA revision demands in Japan see Emre Saraoglu, *Political and Legal Factors in the Revision of Status-of-Forces Agreements: A Comparative Analysis of Japan and Germany* (Masters Thesis, Kyoto University, 2003).

[6]. "'HanBei,' So-ru o Ou: 10mannin ga Kogi," *Asahi Shinbun* (December 15, 2002), p. 1.

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