



**The Japanese-European security relationship
during the second Abe administration**

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The Japanese-European security relationship during the second Abe administration

During the second administration of Shinzo Abe, Japan has shifted away from its traditional postwar policies of limited international engagement and the maintenance of a strictly defensive military posture. This new course has not only allowed Tokyo to assume a more active role in its own national security and reemerge as a prominent player in global affairs, it has also opened the door to strategic partnerships beyond the US-Japan alliance, principally with European governments and supranational institutions. Based on their mutual commitment to the supremacy of international law and the promotion of a peaceful, rules-based order, the Abe administration has worked with European leadership at the national and supranational levels to present a transregional united front opposing coercive revision of the status quo. Tokyo and these Western partners continue to enhance counterterrorism cooperation in the face of the complicated international political challenges and the enduring security threat posed to both Japanese and European interests and citizenry by non-state actors. While the US-Japan alliance remains the codified crux of Tokyo's security policy, the Abe administration's pivot away from Japan's restrictive past has prominently included an initiative to augment Japanese global security posture by upgrading longstanding relations with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union to include frameworks for security cooperation and concluding defense-focused agreements with European governments. As the Japanese government leaves behind its postwar passivity, European supranational organizations and state governments are emerging as key security partners for Abe and future Japanese leaders.

A new era of Japanese engagement

Prime Minister Abe has broken with the time-honored foreign and defense policies of his predecessors. While the succession of Japanese governments during the postwar era reaffirmed their constitutionally binding commitment to the strictly limited operational mandate of the Japanese armed forces, played a passive role in global affairs, and wholly relied on the United States to provide the assets and manpower necessary to guarantee Japanese security under the terms of the 1960 Japan-US Security Treaty and its 1951 predecessor, Abe – who also served a 12-month term as prime minister during the previous decade – acceded to the premiership for the second time in December 2012 with the avowed goal to restore Japan's status as a “normal country.”¹ To this end, he is affecting the adoption of a more active security posture and reasserting Japan's role as a world power through a sustained amplification of diplomatic engagement. While the prime minister and his administration have implemented this new course in an incremental manner that relies on a diverse set of initiatives, Abe's second term has succeeded in setting Japan on a new trajectory in international affairs and redefining Japan's role in the world.

¹ Chico Harlan, “Japan plans to boost military capability in overhaul of pacifist defence strategy,” *The Guardian*, July 30, 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/30/japan-military-capability-defence-strategy>

Abe has prioritized the achievement of the legal framework and administrative reforms necessary for a shift to a more assertive defense policy. Upon entering office, the prime minister carried over his rhetoric emphasis on the necessity of relaxing the operational restrictions on the Japanese military overseas from his campaign speeches to his addresses and remarks delivered at home and abroad. While he presented his reformist agenda as facilitating Japan's "proactive contribution to peace" worldwide, Abe openly acknowledged that his plan for expansion of the legally sanctioned role of the armed forces was "the first of its kind and a sweeping one in [Japan's] post-war history."² With this focus on revision of entrenched defense policy, Abe's Liberal Democratic Party followed its 2012 Lower House victory by gaining control of the House of Councilors in 2013 and winning reelection in the 2014 House of Representatives election. Bolstered by these consecutive election victories, he secured parliamentary authority to create a Japanese National Security Council and leveraged the LDP's bicameral majority to pass legislation that allows Japan to exercise the right of collective self-defense – a malleable concept which current and future Japanese governments can invoke to authorize Japanese forces to engage in combat overseas in support of allies and allied interests. A further relaxation of the legal limits of Japanese military operations is possible as Abe is on the record supporting constitutional revision.³

The Abe administration has also enhanced Japanese security posture through diplomatic, economic, and technical means. Concurrent with the security legislation debate in the Diet, the Japanese and US foreign and defense ministers revised the 1997 Guidelines for US-Japan Defense Cooperation. As well as modernizing the document to address cyber and space, this new April 2015 iteration expands bilateral security cooperation beyond the Asia-Pacific region to reflect the new "global nature of the US-Japan Alliance" and includes language that establishes a framework for the conduct of collective security cooperation.⁴ The bilateral committee underscored the new dynamics of the relationship by characterizing the new guidelines as offering "a strategic vision for a more robust Alliance and greater shared responsibilities."⁵ Regarding economic support for Japan's new active security posture, Abe increased the defense budget – a move that reversed an 11-year decline in Japanese defense spending.⁶ Finally, in the area of defense acquisitions, Japan is not only modernizing its platforms,⁷ it is adding capabilities. In March 2015, the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Forces commissioned the first of two Izumo-class helicopter carriers – the largest vessel in the Japanese fleet since World War II. While this ship class has an ostensibly defense-focused anti-submarine warfare role, it

² "'Toward an Alliance of Hope' - Address to a Joint Meeting of the US Congress by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe," Office of the Prime Minister of Japan and his Cabinet, Sept. 29, 2015, http://japan.kantei.go.jp/97_abe/statement/201504/uscongress.html.

³ "Japan is Back: A Conversation with Shinzo Abe," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2013 Issue, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/interviews/2013-05-16/japan-back>.

⁴ "The Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation," Ministry of Defense of Japan, April 27, 2015, http://www.mod.go.jp/e/d_act/ampo/shishin_20150427e.html.

⁵ "Joint Statement of the Security Consultative Committee," Ministry of Defense of Japan, April 27, 2015, http://www.mod.go.jp/e/d_act/ampo/js20141219e.html.

⁶ Isabel Reynolds, "Japan Defense Budget to Increase for First Time in 11 Years," *Bloomberg*, Jan. 30, 2013, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-01-29/japan-s-defense-spending-to-increase-for-first-time-in-11-years>.

⁷ In December 2011, Japan began the process of replacing F-4 fighter aircraft with the next generation F-35 fighter aircraft: "Defense of Japan 2015," Part III, Chapter 2, Section 4, Ministry of Defense of Japan, http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/pdf/2015/DOJ2015_3-2-4_1st_0730.pdf.

features a flattop akin to an aircraft carrier and can accommodate the short takeoff and vertical landing of an F-35B fighter aircraft.⁸ Additionally, the Abe administration has invested resources in the formation and training of SDF units with amphibious assault capabilities.⁹

Abe has presided over a policy of enhanced international engagement. The prime minister, who has been leading the effort, became the most traveled Japanese premier upon his arrival in Sri Lanka in September 2014 – the 49th country he has visited while in office. While relations with East Asian neighbors remain frosty, Abe holds the distinction of being the first leader of Japan to visit all 10 ASEAN member states. During these visits to Southeast Asia as well as on his trips to South Asia, he has emphasized Japan's shared concern with the contentious maritime security environment in Asian waters and pledged infrastructure investment. While traveling in Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and the Caribbean, the premier, who toured with an entourage of Japanese industry leaders, has fostered economic ties, announced development aid packages, and looked to garner international support for Japan's emergence as a more active player in international security – a policy he describes abroad as a “proactive contribution to peace.” Western capitals from across the European continent have also welcomed Abe. His visits to Europe include a security-focused summit with then-NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen in May 2014 which will be discussed in detail in Section IV of this paper. Finally, the Abe administration concluded the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement with 11 other Pacific Rim governments in October 2015, though it will not come into force until the Japanese Diet ratifies the agreement.

While Japan is yet to pursue the political framework and technical capabilities necessary for separate strike capability, Abe's active foreign policy and adoption of a more assertive security posture fundamentally alter Japan's relationship with the outside world. Under the terms of the new security bill and the revised defense guidelines, Japanese forces will not only find themselves with frontline responsibilities in confronting challenges to their country's territorial sovereignty, these documents prepare the way for Japanese combat overseas. Furthermore, the premier's energetic foreign outreach not only builds strategic relationships and opens new markets, it also complicates and expands the scope of Japanese security policy as these visits provoke non-state actors that seek revision of the status quo abroad. However these challenges do not represent unique threats to Japan, but rather reflect the nature of the global security environment in which states that share Japan's values and priorities operate.

⁸ Paul Kallender-Umezu, “Izumo Drives Japanese Naval Buildup,” *Defense News*, April 12, 2015, <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/show-daily/sea-air-space/2015/04/12/japan-navy-izumo-helicopter-antisubmarine-china-asw-msdf/25411743/>.

Sam LaGrone, “Japan Commissions Largest Warship Since World War II,” *United States Naval Institute*, March 25, 2015, <http://news.usni.org/2015/03/25/japan-commissions-largest-ship-since-world-war-ii>.

⁹ Yuka Hayashi, “Japan Builds Amphibious Force Modeled on U.S. Marines,” *The Wall Street Journal*, July 18, 2014, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/japan-builds-amphibious-force-modeled-on-us-marines-1405597172>.

Revisionism in the East and West

Japan is returning to international prominence in a geopolitical landscape that demands officials in Tokyo and leaders in European capitals contend with challenges to territorial integrity from revanchist regional hegemons. In the East China Sea, the PRC has adopted increasing coercive tactics to dispute Japan's sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands. In the West, Russia has followed up annexing the Crimean Peninsula by waging a proxy war in eastern Ukraine and conducting aggressive military maneuvers primarily directed at – but not limited to – EU and NATO member states in Eastern Europe. While both of these conflicts are deeply rooted in the longstanding political and strategic dynamics of their respective regions, the convergent interest of the Japanese government and European states and supranational entities in supporting the maintenance of a rules-based international order has begat a transcontinental solidarity between Japan and Europe that rejects both the Chinese and Russian attempts at dispute resolution by coercive means.

In pursuit of its claim to the Japanese-administered Senkaku Islands, China has eschewed peaceful redress based on international law in favor of unilateral action and intimidation. Japan traces its control of the archipelago back to the Meiji government's incorporation of the islands into Okinawa Prefecture as *terra nullius* in 1895.¹⁰ However, the PRC disputes the legality of this annexation and references an array of travel logs and historical maps dating back to the Ming Period as evidence of centuries of Chinese sovereignty over the island chain – which it refers to as *Diaoyu*.¹¹ Citing the Japanese government's nationalization of the property that comprises the Senkakus in 2012 as the impetus, Beijing has resorted to promoting its grievance over the territorial status quo through coercive measures. In 2013, a PLA Navy vessel locked its fire-control radar on a Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) asset in the vicinity of the disputed islands and Beijing issued a unilateral declaration extending the Chinese Air Defense Identification Zone to include the Senkaku Islands' airspace. The Japanese Ministry of Defense reports that the number of times that Japan scrambled fighters in reaction to Chinese sorties has steadily risen from under 50 times in FY2008 to 464 times in FY2014 and that the size of the Chinese vessels sent on patrols near the Senkaku Islands has increased markedly.¹² The United States in the capacity of Japan's guarantor of security has played a primary role in confronting Chinese aggression in the East China Sea and President Obama has affirmed that the articles of the US-Japan alliance apply to the Japanese-administered island chain.¹³

¹⁰ To view the Japanese government's case for its claim in detail, see:

“Japanese Territory: Senkaku Islands,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/index.html>.

¹¹ To view the Chinese government's case for its claim in detail, see: “Diaoyu Dao: The Inherent Territory of China,” China Internet Information Center, <http://www.diaoyudao.org.cn/en/index.htm>.

¹² “Defense of Japan 2015,” Part I, Chapter 1, Section 3, Ministry of Defense of Japan, http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/pdf/2015/DOJ2015_1-1-3_web.pdf.

¹³ “Joint Press Conference with President Obama and Prime Minister Abe of Japan,” The White House, April 24, 2014, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/04/24/joint-press-conference-president-obama-and-prime-minister-abe-japan>.

Similarly, Russia's seizure of the Crimean Peninsula in February 2014 marked the beginning of the Kremlin's efforts to force a revision of the status quo in Eastern Europe. The Russian government followed up this annexation, which came in the wake of the ousting of Kremlin-friendly Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich in the midst of mass pro-Europe movement, not only by fomenting unrest in eastern Ukraine, but also by initiating a campaign of military brinkmanship against Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia – all of which have historically been vassals of Moscow, but are now both EU member states and NATO allies. In an effort to reestablish hegemony in this former Russian imperial and Soviet sphere of influence in Europe, Kremlin warplanes have repeatedly violated the airspace of the Baltic States and Russian military assets have performed threatening maneuvers and dangerous aerial intercepts in border areas in the region. Furthermore, Russia controversially apprehended and remanded to prison Estonian intelligence agent Eston Kohver in September 2014 while he was operating in, according to Tallinn, Estonian territory. Western European allies of these newer eastern NATO and EU states have not been exempt from Moscow's brinkmanship: Russian bombers have conducted threatening sorties as far away as the Iberian Peninsula and Russian submarines have been spotted in the territorial waters of the United Kingdom.¹⁴ The European response has included EU sanctions of Russian industry and individuals, a sizable uptick in the number of NATO exercises conducted in Eastern Europe, modernization and expansion of military capabilities at the state level, and the hosting of greater numbers of American troops and assets in order to augment US force posture in the region. All the while, NATO continues to expand eastward as evidenced by the invitation to join the alliance extended to Montenegro in December 2015.

The Japanese government and European leadership have presented a united front in support of a rules-based international order that rejects coercive revision of the status quo both Eastern Europe and East Asia. Regarding Europe's supranational entities, then-NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, in a summit between the Western alliance and Japanese government in 2015, emphasized “there is no doubt that the security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic and Asia Pacific regions cannot be treated separately” and that NATO-Japan relationship has been deepening based on a shared commitment to defend an international order based on peace, security, and the primacy of law.¹⁵ The EU also joined the Japanese government the same year in a joint declaration that condemned “any unilateral actions that change the status quo and increase tensions” in the East and South China Seas and endorsed seeking “peaceful and cooperative solutions to maritime claims, including through internationally recognized legal dispute

¹⁴ For an exhaustive list of Russian provocations in Europe see: Thomas Frear, Lukasz Kulesa, and Ian Kearns, “Policy Brief –Dangerous: Brinkmanship: Close Military Encounters Between Russia and the West in 2014,” European Leadership Network, November 2014, <http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/medialibrary/2014/11/09/6375e3da/Dangerous%20Brinkmanship.pdf>. Thomas Frear, “List of Close Military Encounters Between Russia and the West, March 2014 – March 2015,” European Leadership Network, <http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/medialibrary/2015/03/11/4264a5a6/ELN%20Russia%20-%20West%20Full%20List%20of%20Incidents.pdf>.

¹⁵ Joint Press Point with NATO Secretary General-Anders Fogh Rasmussen and the Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, May 6, 2014, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_109507.htm.

settlement mechanisms.”¹⁶ At the national level, the leaderships in France, Portugal, and the United Kingdom have denounced any alteration of the status quo in Asia-Pacific waters through force as illegitimate, and the UK has stood with Tokyo in support of curtailing Chinese maritime adventurism through implementation of the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea.¹⁷

Japanese government ministers have offered condemnation of the Crimean annexation with language that underscores the supremacy of the tenets of international law in summits with the European political elite, and Prime Minister Abe has explicitly and repeatedly characterized the Russian land grab as an impermissible unilateral change to the status quo by force that impacts the security environment in East Asia.¹⁸ Going even further, Abe told the press at a 2014 briefing at NATO headquarters in Brussels that Russia’s coercive tactics in the Ukraine were “not somebody else’s problem,” but rather “a matter that involves Asia”¹⁹ – a sentiment he echoed the next year at the G7 when he emphasized Japanese support for peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law “whether they be the situation in Ukraine or the situations in the South and East China Sea.”²⁰ Beyond rhetoric condemnation, Abe has joined European leaders in imposing significant sanctions on the Russian financial sector, defense industry, and individuals – a demonstration of solidarity with Western governments given that Russia is also a key power in the Asia-Pacific region.²¹

In light of Japan’s shared interest with Europe in promoting a rules-based international order and Tokyo’s shift toward a more autonomous, active security posture, potential exists for European relations to play an even greater role in Japanese security policy. As Japan assumes a greater share of responsibility for the defense of its own territory, the strategic value of consulting with like-minded European partners facing a similar revisionist challenge on preparedness, frontline defensive posture, and the establishment norms for countering territorial incursion and military provocations will

¹⁶ “23rd Japan-EU Summit Joint Press Statement,” European Commission, May, 29, 2015, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-15-5075_en.htm.

¹⁷ “JOINT COMMUNIQUE By the Prime Minister of Japan and the Prime Minister of the Portuguese Republic,” Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 2, 2014, http://www.mofa.go.jp/erp/we/pt/page4e_000082.html. “Japan-France Defense Ministers’ Meeting (Overview of the Results),” Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jan. 16, 2014, http://www.mofa.go.jp/erp/we/fr/page18e_000049.html.

“Second Japan-UK Foreign and Defence Ministers’ Meeting (2+2),” Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jan. 8, 2016, http://www.mofa.go.jp/erp/we/fr/page18e_000049.html.

“UK-Japan Foreign and Defence Ministerial Meeting Joint Statement,” Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jan. 21, 2015, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000066165.pdf>.

¹⁸ Joint Press Point with NATO Secretary General-Anders Fogh Rasmussen and the Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, May 6, 2014, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_109507.htm.

“Prime Minister Abe’s Meeting with Mr. Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Secretary General of NATO, and Attendance at the North Atlantic Council,” Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 6, 2014, http://www.mofa.go.jp/erp/ep/page23e_000240.html.

¹⁹ “Press Conference by Prime Minister Abe during his Visit to Europe,” Office of the Prime Minister of Japan and Cabinet, May 7, 2014, http://japan.kantei.go.jp/96_abe/statement/201405/0507naigai.html.

²⁰ “Press Conference by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe Following the G7 Summit in Schloss Elmau,” Office of the Prime Minister of Japan and Cabinet, June 8, 2015, http://japan.kantei.go.jp/97_abe/statement/201506/0608speech.html.

²¹ Alexandra Martin, “Japan Announces Fresh Russia Sanctions,” *The Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 24, 2014, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/japan-announces-new-russia-sanctions-1411553420>.

“Japan steps of sanctions as tensions rise with Russia,” *BBC*, Sept. 24, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-29345451>.

increase. Deepening cooperation with European capitals to include the codification of international procedures based on international law for confronting these adversarial, invasive tactics would allow Japanese forces to take on an expanded defense role in an environment with greater predictability and operate in an internationally agreed upon manner to reinforce stability. Finally, internationalizing China's challenges to Japan's sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands through Tokyo's active participation in the promotion of a global rules-based international system with the European leadership would both frame Chinese unilateral aggression in a manner that transcends the regional context and bring to bear pressure from the international community on the PRC to seek resolution to its grievances in a peaceful, constructive manner.

International terrorism

In addition to geopolitical struggles between power blocs, the international security landscape also includes non-state actors waging a global campaign against governments and their agents who promote democracy and human rights and associate closely with the United States. During Abe's second term, Japanese citizens and interests have emerged as targets of Islamic extremists while attacks by these militant groups in Europe have markedly increased in lethality. In response, both the leadership in Tokyo and European governments have pivoted to a strong anti-terror posture. However, in contrast to US treaty obligations regarding the maintenance of territorial sovereignty discussed in the previous section, the role of the United States in defending the assets and citizenry of its NATO allies and US-Japan alliance partner against attacks perpetrated by non-state actors is much less clearcut. Having adopted robust anti-terror policies in a security environment marked by the ambiguity of the extent of American commitments, counterterrorism has emerged as a nexus for the deepening of security cooperation between Japan and Europe.

Abe's has broken with the past and responded to terrorism with a hard line. The prime minister has confronted two terror incidents: the killing of 10 Japanese hostages in January 2013 by a multinational group of Islamist terrorists assaulting the Tigantourine gas plant in In Amenas, Algeria – a facility which had contracted the services of the Japanese firm JGC Corp. and ISIL's murders of journalist Kenji Goto and aspiring security consultant Haruna Yukawa in January 2015. A bungled rescue attempt by Algerian authorities that earned the ire of the Japanese government marked the response to the first incident, but regarding the latter, Abe's explicit refusal to pay ISIL's desired \$200 million ransom for the two men demonstrated a sharp contrast with Japan's passive past – in which then-Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda paid the West German terrorist group Red Army Faction \$6 million to release hostages held aboard a Japan Airlines aircraft in 1977. Furthermore Abe vowed “to make the terrorists pay the price” for the execution of two Japanese citizens in Syria²² and doubled down on his Mideast policy by pledging an additional \$810 million of aid to the region in his UN address in September 2015.²³

²² Martin Fackler, “Departing From Japan’s Pacifism, Shinzo Abe Vows Revenge for Killings,” *The New York Times*, Feb. 1, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/02/world/departing-from-countrys-pacifism-japanese-premier-vows-revenge-for-killings.html>.

²³ “Address by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the Seventieth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Sept. 29, 2015, http://www.mofa.go.jp/fp/unp_a/page4e_000321.html.

Regarding Japan's counterterrorism capacity and capabilities, the prime minister advanced his recalibration of Japanese security posture through the National Diet in part by arguing for the need for the SDF to deploy in defense of Japanese citizens without geographic limitations, and his administration has formed terrorism intelligence units within the Foreign Ministry that operate in the Mideast, North Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia.

European governments have adopted a series of muscular anti-terror measures in response to the recent increase in frequency and severity of terrorist attacks. For more than a decade, European citizens and interests have been the targets of manifold acts of violence carried out by Islamic extremists groups. Indeed, hundreds of civilians died in the 2004 bombing of commuter trains in Madrid and the 2005 bombing of the London transport system and smaller-scale attacks have been perpetrated against European interests overseas, European Jews in particular, and even specific individuals like the late filmmaker and irreverent Dutch media personality Theo Van Gogh. However, the occurrence of the November 2015 ISIL-orchestrated massacres in Paris and the March 2016 bombings of crowded civilian transportation centers in Brussels on the heels of the al Qaeda-directed assault on the Parisian office of the satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* in January 2015 suggested a new, more deadly round of violence was beginning. Following the second Parisian attack, French President Francois Hollande declared that "France is at war" with extremist militants and increased the frequency of airstrikes on the group in the Middle East.²⁴ Meanwhile in London, the British Parliament reversed its August 2013 decision to abstain from participation in the air campaign over Iraq and Syria and authorized bombing in the region and the doubling of the size of the Royal Air Force air wing available for the mission. Domestically, the French government granted authorities extraordinary policing powers through the declaration of a 3-month state of emergency, and security services and law enforcement agencies from across the continent collaborated in a manhunt that ultimately resulted in the apprehension of the last living attacker in the Brussels neighborhood of Molenbeek. While responses to the Brussels bombings the following March focused on enhancing the physical security of potential targets like monuments and transportation hubs, the NATO and EU leaderships called for European unity in the face of the durable, persistent threat posed by international terrorism. French Prime Minister Manuel Valls characterized these bombings as the most recent in a series of "acts of war" against Europe.²⁵

Confronting a common adversary scattered globally, Japanese and European governments have a convergent interest in countering terrorism. The Abe administration and EU leaders have already identified Central Africa – a region which has seen

²⁴ "Paris Attacks: The Violence, Its Victims and How the Investigation Unfolded," *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com/live/paris-attacks-live-updates/hollande-says-france-is-at-war/>.

²⁵ "Statement by President Donald Tusk following the terrorist attacks in Brussels," The European Council of the European Union, March 22, 2016, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/22-tusk-statement-bombings/>.

"Statement by the North Atlantic Council in response to the terrorist attacks in Belgium," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, March 23, 2016, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_129520.htm.
Griff Witte, Souad Mekhennet, Michael Birm Baum. "Islamic State claims responsibility for the Brussels attacks," *The Washington Post*, March 22, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/brussels-on-high-alert-after-explosions-at-airport-and-metro-station/2016/03/22/b5e9f232-f018-11e5-a61f-e9c95c06edca_story.html.

European military deployments and Japanese investments in infrastructure designed to promote stability – as an area to enhance coordination of counterterrorism efforts.²⁶ The Japanese and the UK foreign and defense ministers specifically committed to intensifying strategic cooperation against ISIL in a 2015 bilateral summit.²⁷ Additionally, Abe and his Cabinet have been outspoken in their condemnation of recent terrorist acts in Europe, the connections of these attacks to a greater phenomena that includes the attacks on Japanese citizens in Algeria and Syria, and their desire to enhance anti-terror cooperation with European capitals and supranational organizations. Potential opportunities for proactive, mutually beneficial collaboration between European and Japanese leaders include a robust intelligence sharing apparatus that supersedes any one government's reach and establishing military cooperation that can bring power to bear effectively across a wide geographic space. Domestically, authorities share the burden of maintaining and implementing a readiness posture and hardening possible targets without betraying the liberal values enshrined in both Western and the Japanese constitutions.

The evolving Japan-Europe security relationship

Japan's security relations with the West go beyond exchanges and coordination in the face of an imminent common threat. During his second term, Prime Minister Abe and his administration have cultivated deeper relations with NATO – Europe's principle security institution – and Japan-EU relations have broadened beyond economic engagement to include defense policy colloquies and military cooperation. Furthermore, bilateral defense accords between Tokyo and European governments have proliferated under the current Japanese leadership. As a result, Japan-European security ties have substantially deepened along with Tokyo's pivot from a passive defense posture.

Under Abe's second administration, Japan's relationship with NATO has developed from an amicable association to a formal security partnership. While Japan – NATO's oldest extra-regional partner – has collaborated with the alliance in a variety of areas over the past few decades including financially supporting NATO initiatives in Afghanistan and coordinating maritime security efforts in the Gulf of Aden, Prime Minister Abe and then-Secretary General Rasmussen formally codified the relationship between Tokyo and the Western allies with a 2013 joint political declaration, a document that established both parties' shared interest the promotion of a peaceful, rules-based international system and liberal democratic principles as well set out an outline for future cooperation.²⁸ The following year, the more detailed Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme between Japan and NATO signed by Abe and Rasmussen during the former's visit to Brussels superseded this 2013 agreement. The new accord, in addition to establishing a partnership framework based mutual strategic interest, identified "priority areas for cooperation," committed the signatories to an ongoing high-

²⁶ 22nd Japan-EU Summit Joint Press Statement," The Council of the European Union, May 7, 2014, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/workarea/downloadAsset.aspx?id=15281>.

²⁷ "UK-Japan Foreign and Defence Ministerial Meeting Joint Statement Annex: Areas for Cooperation," Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jan. 21, 2015, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000066167.pdf>.

²⁸ "Joint Political Declaration between Japan and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, April 12, 2013, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_99562.htm.

level dialogue, and opened the door for Japan to participate in NATO exercises.²⁹ In his remarks to the North Atlantic Council (NAC), NATO's executive body, Abe – who became the first Japanese prime minister to address the NAC in 2007 – underscored the evolution of the relationship, “We are more than simply ‘natural partners’ that share the same values. We are also ‘reliable partners’ corroborated by concrete actions.”³⁰ Rasmussen expressed similar sentiments that welcomed further concerted efforts based on the propinquity of both parties security policies and dispatched NATO Deputy Secretary-General Alexander Vershbow to Tokyo in 2015 for consultations with the Japanese Cabinet with the express purpose of exploring new areas for broadening of Japan-NATO cooperation.³¹

International security has recently emerged as a prominent sector of cooperation in the Japan-EU relationship. The Japanese government – whom President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker distinguished as the supranational entity's “longest standing strategic partner in Asia”³² – has held 23 consecutive annual summits with the leadership in Brussels. Traditionally, the agenda for this succession of fora and Japan-EU exchanges in general has consisted of the steady broadening of trade relations toward the eventual conclusion of a free trade agreement and the promotion and facilitation of commercial interchange in the private sector through joint initiatives like the EU-Japan Business Dialogue Roundtable, the Executive Training Programme, and the EU Gateway Programme. In recent years, the relationship has gone beyond economic cooperation to include a series of meetings between EU and Japanese defense officials at the highest levels and an October 2014 joint counter-piracy exercise with both Japanese and European Union naval assets (EU Naval Forces Operation Atalanta). Looking toward the future, the Japanese and EU leaderships have announced plans to conclude a strategic partnership that will include clauses on security issues and further Japanese participation in EU Common Defence and Security Policy (CSDP) operations beyond the current collaboration being considered in Mali and Niger referenced in the earlier section “International terrorism.”³³

The Abe administration has also been fostering bilateral security ties at the state level with European governments. During his visit to the United Kingdom in May 2014,

²⁹ Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme between Japan and NATO,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, May 6, 2014, http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2014_05/20140507_140507-IPCP_Japan.pdf.

³⁰ Japan and NATO As ‘Natural Partners’ - Speech by Prime Minister Abe,” Office of the Prime Minister of Japan and his Cabinet, May, 6, 2014, http://japan.kantei.go.jp/96_abe/statement/201405/nato.html.

³¹ “Benefits of Closer Japan-NATO Cooperation,” Tokyo Foundation, Sept. 18, 2015, <http://www.tokyofoundation.org/en/articles/2015/japan-nato-cooperation>.

“バーシュボウNATO事務次長の訪日（結果）,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Sept. 16, 2015, http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/erp/ep/page4_001375.html.

³² “Statement by Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, at the joint press conference following the EU-Japan Summit in Tokyo.” European Commission, May 29, 2015, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-15-5079_en.htm.

³³ “EU-Japan Political Relations,” Delegation of the European Union in Japan, <http://www.euinjapan.jp/en/relations/political/>.

“23rd Japan-EU Summit Joint Press Statement,” European Commission, May, 29, 2015, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-15-5075_en.htm.

“Draft Annual Report from the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament: Main aspects and basic choices of the CFSP – 2014,” Council of the European Union, July 20, 2015, <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11083-2015-INIT/en/pdf>.

Abe and his British counterpart, David Cameron, initiated negotiations on an acquisition and cross-servicing agreement – a framework document designed to increase interoperability amongst Japanese and British forces – and agreed to explore further enhancing bilateral security cooperation by holding “two-plus-two” meetings featuring both governments’ defense and foreign ministers.³⁴ These measures built on the signing of a joint statement on security issues and the exchange of defense memoranda in 2012, the conclusion of the Japan-UK Information Security Agreement that came into effect in 2014, and a 2013 agreement to collaborate on defense technology research – Japan’s first partnership of this kind with a counterpart other than the United States.³⁵ Japan also holds “two-plus-two” meetings with the French foreign and defense ministers – the first of which took place in January 2014. Paris and Tokyo agreed on a regulatory framework in March 2015 that governs the transfer of defense equipment to third parties.³⁶ Similar to the UK, a Franco-Japanese information security agreement preceded this deepening of security ties.³⁷

Japan’s recent enhanced international security engagement with European supranational entities and governments has not only led to the conclusion of defense-focused agreements, it has also laid the groundwork for even deeper, broader strategic relationships between Tokyo and Western partners. NATO Deputy Secretary-General Vershbow hinted in June 2015 that the Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme could, like its predecessor, have a short life since the passing of legislation relaxing restrictions on the Japanese armed forces “could lead to a significant widening of NATO’s practical military cooperation with Japan.”³⁸ Moreover, the joint declaration with the EU mentioned above used open-ended language regarding Japan’s future role and participation in CSDP activities. The UK government has already embraced Japanese partnership, having described Japan as “our closest security partner is Asia”³⁹ in its 2015

³⁴ “UK-Japan Joint Statement,” Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, May 1, 2014, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-japan-joint-statement>.

³⁵ “Defense of Japan 2015,” Part III, Chapter 3, Section 1, Ministry of Defense of Japan, http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/pdf/2015/DOJ2015_3-3-1_web.pdf.

“Defense of Japan 2015,” Reference 66: Recent Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with the United Kingdom (Past Three Years), Ministry of Defense of Japan,

http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/pdf/2015/DOJ2015_reference_web.pdf

“Defense of Japan 2015,” Part III, Chapter 2, Section 4, Ministry of Defense of Japan,

http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/pdf/2015/DOJ2015_3-2-4_web.pdf

³⁶ “Japan-France Relations (Basic Data),” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan,

<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/europe/france/data.html>.

“Japan-France Summit Meeting,” Office of the Prime Minister of Japan and his Cabinet, June 7, 2013,

http://japan.kantei.go.jp/96_abe/diplomatic/201306/07france_e.html.

Kiyoshi Takenaka, “Japan, France sign defense pact to spur cooperation, joint development,” *Reuters*, March 13, 2015,

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-france-defence-idUSKBN0M91Q020150313>.

³⁷ “Japan-France Summit Meeting,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, June, 8, 2015,

http://www.mofa.go.jp/erp/we/fr/page2e_000025.html.

“Defense of Japan 2015,” Part III, Chapter 3, Section 1, Ministry of Defense of Japan,

http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/pdf/2015/DOJ2015_3-3-1_web.pdf.

³⁸ “NATO and East Asia: Speech by NATO Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow at the Institute for Security and Development Policy (ISDP) in Stockholm, Sweden,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, June 15, 2015,

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_120648.htm.

³⁹ “National Security Strategy and Strategic Defense and Security Review 2015,” Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Nov. 23, 2015,

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/478933/52309_Cm_9161_NSS_SD_Review_web_only.pdf.

National Security Strategy and Strategic Defense Review document. The agenda of the Japanese and French Cabinet ministers' annual dialogue has expanded to include discussions of the security situations in Europe, East Asia, and Africa as well as cyber threats and nonproliferation. Along with the positive diplomatic momentum of these relationships, the negative pressure of the Euro-Japanese enduring convergent interest in combating terrorism and standing against unilateral changes to the status quo also continues to incentivize strategic cooperation.

Conclusion

As the Japanese military begins operating more actively in an expanding threatscape that includes challenges to its territorial integrity and international terrorism, the need to form security partnerships that augment the US-Japan alliance will emerge. Looking to Europe is a natural first step due to shared Euro-Japanese challenges, values, and prior security ties. However, this will be just the beginning of the transformation of Japanese policy in this new era of active Japanese engagement across the globe. With the Japanese military slowly expanding its operational mandate and geographic reach, opportunities for deeper security collaboration and partnerships outside of the US-Japan relationship will present themselves. Close to home, ASEAN is pushing back against Chinese maritime aggression. Farther afield, Georgia – whose South Ossetia and Abkhazia territories were seized by Russia in 2008 – is a potential partner in promoting a rules-based international order. Central and East African governments are struggling to protect their citizenry against the terrorist acts of Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram – a terrorist group affiliated with ISIL – which Abe administration officials already identified as germane to Japanese counterterrorism initiatives in the 2015 Franco-Japanese foreign and defense ministers' summit. While constitutional restraints and a multigenerational commitment to pacifism by the Japanese population and political classes preclude the reemergence of Japan as a global military power, Abe's revision of Japan's traditional passive global engagement posture and restrictive military policy will greatly alter Japan's role in the international security community.

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