

Benchmarking America's Military Alliances: NATO, Japan, and the Republic of Korea



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The U.S.-ROK alliance, like all of America's alliances, is somewhat unique; America has not taken a cookie-cutter approach to alliance formation or evolution. However, despite their distinct histories of development, the similarities among these alliances—particularly in the case of South Korea—invite comparisons. In one sense, these comparisons are unfair and unhelpful, in that they often take on a “grass is greener” flavor while overlooking the strengths of the U.S.-ROK alliance. However, as the U.S.-ROK alliance looks to its future, a comparison of practices and structures from other U.S. alliances can be useful as part of a renewed vision for the U.S.-ROK security partnership, keeping in mind that these practices and structures arose out of unique historical forces both within and external to the respective alliances.

This paper will attempt to examine the historical evolution and current operational structure of the two military alliances that Korea is most often compared against: the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and U.S.-Japan alliances. The NATO alliance is arguably the most structured and institutionalized alliance, in modern times and perhaps historically. As such, Korea is often benchmarked against NATO—in terms of not only both military structure and operations, but also political equality within the alliance. The U.S.-Japan alliance is also a common point of comparison, less because of its functionality than due to a certain sense of rivalry for U.S. attention and Korea's general zero-sum approach on Japan issues in particular.

This paper will then draw lessons from each of these other alliances that may benefit a future U.S.-ROK alliance. In sum, the paper will argue for a broader political alliance in support of shared values backed up by a more equal military relationship and a shared security commitment.

A caveat is necessary. This attempt to benchmark the alliances is not meant to rank them in terms of value. Rather, it is simply an attempt to recognize the strengths that can be replicated, or weaknesses that should be avoided, in the reconceptualization of the U.S.-ROK alliance. Historically, each alliance has performed as needed; all three are success stories in their own right.

America's Alliances

Merriam Webster defines alliances as associations to “further the common interests of the members.”¹ They are, in practice, temporary measures for states to address security concerns. As those concerns change, the alliance too must either evolve or end; Botero warned that “allies last as long as the partner is useful.”² The United States has not always found alliances “useful,” and for most of its history has followed George Washington’s admonition to avoid permanent alliances.³ In some sense, then, the security treaty system of today is an aberration of history. The point here is that history—world or American—does not demand that the alliances of today, as resilient as they have proven to be, continue; we may desire them to live on but they do not have to do so.

While military alliances are the result of political cooperation, they also reinforce political ties through tangible signs of mutual commitment, thereby deepening and broadening the overall political, economic, and cultural relationship between the two allies. The formal commitment to shed national blood and treasure on behalf of each other’s people in a very significant manner raises the ally above other, less formal partners, even though another partner might be more economically or politically significant. At base, being an “ally” is seen, or should be seen, as a particularly important and binding mutual commitment.

America’s current alliance system is in large part a function of post-World War II history and the Cold War competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. It is important to note that America has seven treaty alliances (as opposed to other forms of partnership): NATO (1949), Japan (1951/1960), Republic of the Philippines (1951), Australia and New Zealand (ANZUS) (1952), Republic of Korea (1954), Thailand (1954) and Great Britain (1958).⁴

For all practical purposes, there is no standing military structure for the U.S. alliances with Thailand or the Philippines, or with ANZUS for that matter. To be sure, because there is a system for focused and sometimes intense cooperation with these partners but

¹ *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/alliance (accessed December 17, 2008).

² Giovanni Botero, *The Reason of the State*, translated by P.J. and D.P. Waley (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), Book VIII, pp. 13, 163.

³ Washington’s farewell address is often misquoted as arguing against “entangling alliances.” This “entangling” phrase, however, is taken from Jefferson’s first inaugural address. See www.freedomshrine.com/documents/washington%20farewell.html and www.freedomshrine.com/dociments/jefferson.html.

⁴ For texts of the relevant treaties, see: www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/treaty.htm (NATO); <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/q&a/ref/1.html> (Japan); http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/phil001.asp (Philippines); http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/usmu002.asp (ANZUS); http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/kor001.asp (ROK); http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/usmu003.asp (Thailand: US-Thailand security relations remain based on the 1954 Manila Pact that formed the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) which disbanded in 1977, and the 1962 Thanat-Rusk Communiqué. See <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2814.htm>); and <http://www.basicint.org/nuclear/1958MDA.htm> (Great Britain).

little everyday operational cooperation aimed at assuring each nation's security, these alliances offer little as a point of comparison. The U.S.-UK alliance is often viewed as the "special relationship" due to intense political and cultural connections. However, from a military standpoint, the conventional security aspects of this alliance have been largely subsumed within the NATO pact; the U.S.-UK treaty is focused wholly on cooperation in the area of atomic weapons.⁵

The NATO, U.S.-Japan and U.S.-ROK alliances, on the other hand, did create some very specialized and significant civilian and military structures to manage their respective security alliances and meet their distinct historical challenges. However, as these challenges have evolved, adjustments to changed conditions have been uneven, fitful, and angst-ridden. In the case of NATO, the strength of the alliance has come to be judged on its ability to incorporate new members from the former Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact countries as well as its ability to take on so-called "out of area" missions in support of larger political goals of the allies. For the U.S.-Japan alliance, the somewhat high level of, albeit narrowly focused, operational cooperation of the latter Cold War years has given way to a halting search for security cooperation that is in keeping with both Japan's self-limiting interpretation of its Peace Constitution as well as its desire for "normal nation" status. For Korea, where the Cold War framework if not rationale arguably still exists in great measure, the end of that era has engendered a sometimes emotional questioning of the alliance's *raison d'être* and applicability in a potential post-reconciliation period as well a demand on both sides for greater equality—equality of status (from the ROK side) and equality of responsibility (from the U.S. side). Each of these alliances is unique in their historical rationale, in the structures and processes that evolved from that history, and in the challenges they face going forward. But perhaps we can learn something from the U.S. relationships with NATO and Japan that is applicable to the future of the U.S.-ROK relationship.

The NATO Alliance: A Defense Conglomerate

The NATO alliance emerged directly from the end of World War II and the perception of a growing Soviet threat to Western Europe. Politically and ideologically, the alliance drew on the pre-war U.S.-UK Alliance Charter⁶ for its basic principles as well as on the 1948 Treaty of Brussels, which founded the Western European Union (WEU) and the subsequent 1948 WEU defense arrangement.⁷ The military alliance was formed with the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty of April 4, 1949, committing each member state to consider an armed attack against one state to be an attack against all states.⁸ Its original

⁵ The U.S.-U.K. Treaty remains a classified document, although authoritative "leaks" have established the basic text. See, for example, British American Security Information Council, *1958 U.S.-UK Mutual Defence Agreement*, <http://www.basicint.org/nuclear/1958MDA.htm> (accessed December 18, 2008).

⁶ *Declaration of Principles issued by the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom* ("The Atlantic Charter"), www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/b410814a.htm (accessed December 18, 2008).

⁷ *Treaty of Economic, Social and Cultural Collaboration and Collective Self-Defence* (Brussels, March 17, 1948), www.ena.lu?1avg=2&doc=14136 (accessed December 18, 2008).

⁸ *The North Atlantic Treaty* (Washington, April 4, 1949), <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/treaty.htm> (accessed December 18, 2008).

membership of 12 has since grown to 26 (with over one-third of these members added *after* the end of the Cold War).

The threat of Soviet invasion of Western Europe was judged to be real, if not imminent, for much of the Cold War period, to the extent that nuclear weapons were incorporated into the alliance plans as well as its integrated structure (although the latter only after a very real crisis of confidence). In a sense, there was not only a strategic rationale for NATO checking potential Soviet aggression, but also a palpable *operational* and even *tactical imperative* to ensure that the alliance had the robust structure to enable it to function both politically and militarily.

In this context, the Korean War is often cited as the galvanizing event for the alliance, as the allies saw the communist intervention as a signal that a more robust and integrated civilian and military structure was required if the alliance was to function.⁹ The North Atlantic Council (NAC)'s 1952 Lisbon conference, which examined events in Korea, was the political and bureaucratic turning point as it provided for much of what exists today in terms of civilian and military structure and decision making processes of the alliance.¹⁰

NATO is unique in both the level and rigor of its civilian and military integrated decision making. As for civilian leadership, the NAC is the highest decision making body within NATO and the only structure specifically directed by the Treaty. Chaired by the NATO Secretary General, it operates at both the ministerial level (semi-annually) and a more operational Permanent Representative level (weekly). It has "effective political authority and powers of decision" and oversees both the political and military processes of the alliance.¹¹

Under the banner of the NAC lies a dense web of civilian-led committees, foremost of which are the Defense Planning Committee (DPC) and the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG). These two civilian committees are the only bodies, other than the NAC proper, empowered to make decisions for the alliance. The DPC is the "ultimate authority with regard to the alliance's integrated military structure" and "provides guidance to NATO's military authorities and oversees the force planning process, which identifies NATO's military requirements, sets planning targets for individual countries to contribute to those requirements, and assesses the extent to which members meet those targets and provide other forces and capabilities to the alliance."¹² The NPG constantly reviews the alliance's nuclear policy in light of changing security challenges, providing a forum in

⁹ David C. Isby and Charles Kamps Jr., *Armies of NATO's Central Front* (London: Jane's Publishing Company Ltd., 1985), 13-14. See also *History of SHAPE and Allied Command Operations*, <http://www.nato.int/shape/about/background2.htm> (accessed December 18, 2008).

¹⁰ *Final Communiqué of 20-25 February 1952 North Atlantic Council Conference*, <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c520225a.htm> (accessed December 18, 2008).

¹¹ "The North Atlantic Council: NATO's Key Political Decision-Making Body," www.nato.int/issues/nac/index.html (accessed December 18, 2008).

¹² "The Defence Planning Committee," <http://www.nato.int/issues/dpc/index.html> (accessed December 18, 2008).

which both nuclear and *non-nuclear* members' voices can be heard on nuclear planning issues and in the development of alliance nuclear policy.¹³

While the NAC, DPC, and NPG are the sole decision making bodies on the civilian side of NATO, they are backed up by more than 35 additional committees, boards, task forces, groups, and working groups in a dense web of support organizations. The NAC itself has a standing dedicated staff—the International Staff—made up of some 5,500 civilian staff members worldwide to support the NAC and the committee structure.¹⁴

NAC duties are also supported by the Military Committee (MC), the senior military authority in NATO. The MC meets weekly and consists of the member countries' Senior Military Representatives of their Chiefs of Defense. However, it also meets at the higher Chiefs of Defense level on average three times a year. The MC's principal role is to provide direction and advice on military policy and strategy.¹⁵

Beneath the NAC and the MC lie the strategic, operational, and tactical forces led by the Strategic Commanders. One of the two strategic commands, Allied Command Transformation (ACT) exists to improve the alliance's military capabilities and “enhance the military interoperability, relevance, and effectiveness of the alliance.”¹⁶ As the name implies, ACT is focused on transforming NATO's forces to meet future security challenges, emphasizing training and education, concept development, experimentation, and research and technology, as well as leveraging ongoing NATO operations to improve the military effectiveness of the alliance. Headquartered in the United States, it is collocated with the U.S. Joint Forces Command (JFC), which has a similar charter for the U.S. military.

U.S. Allied Command Operations (ACO), led by the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), is the sole command with responsibility for NATO operations. The current structure of ACO is the result of combining several geographical commands after the Prague Summit of 2002 that focused on setting the alliance on a new path.¹⁷ ACO is responsible for the overall command of NATO military operations, conducting necessary military planning to include identification of required forces, and requesting use of these forces from member countries.

Subordinate to ACO are the operational forces of the two JFCs in Brüssel, the Netherlands, and Naples, Italy as well as the less robust Joint Force Headquarters in Lisbon, Portugal. These headquarters are capable of deploying and commanding tactical forces in support of military and political objectives of the alliance. The two standing JFCs have air, land and naval Component Commands, although these forces can be

¹³ “The Nuclear Planning Group,” <http://www.nato.int/issues/npg/index.html> (accessed December 18, 2008).

¹⁴ “NATO's International Staff,” http://www.nato.int/issues/international_staff/index.html (accessed December 18, 2008).

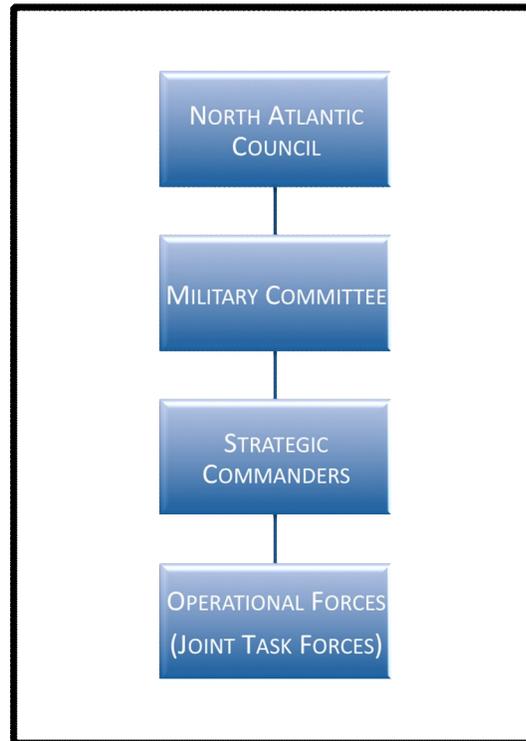
¹⁵ “The Military Committee,” http://www.nato.int/issues/military_committee/index.html (accessed December 18, 2008).

¹⁶ “Allied Command Transformation,” <http://www.act.nato.int/> (accessed December 18, 2008).

¹⁷ *Prague Summit Declaration* (November 21, 2002), <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm> (accessed December 18, 2008).

reapportioned to either the other JFC or the Joint Headquarters as needs arise. In this manner, the NATO command and control system closely mirrors the U.S. unified combatant command system.

Figure 1. NATO Operational Structure



What has been described here is a very institutionalized structure by which the allies' political objectives are operationalized (See Figure 1). There is of course a complementary set of norms and processes by which the alliance operates. Chief among these norms is consensus—a “NATO decision” is by definition a consensus decision, an expression of the collective will of all sovereign member states.¹⁸ This consensus building takes place within the very structured and intense workings of the NAC and MC, which meet weekly in regular session at the Permanent Representative/Senior Military Representative-level. The process is supplemented by additional consultations with partner countries such as the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council, as well as other consultative mechanisms. Both the structure and processes of NATO are highly institutionalized and formal, resembling in some ways an international conglomerate more than a military organization.

¹⁸ “Consensus Decision-Making at NATO,” <http://www.nato.int/issues/consensus/index.html> (accessed December 18, 2008).

As NATO has evolved, its military cooperation has changed in character as well. In the first four decades of its existence, the allies' military structure was aimed at securing Western Europe from Soviet invasion. With the end of the Cold War, the *raison d'être* of the alliance has evolved to contributing to broader regional peace and stability as well as meeting global challenges. This has not been an easy transition, and has likely only been possible because of the resilience provided by the alliance's intense institutionalization. While it was relatively easy to achieve consensus on how to defend Europe against the Warsaw Pact, the alliance has not been as successful in reaching a simple or quick "NATO decision" on intervening in situations of potential genocide (Yugoslavia) or armed repression (Kosovo), or in meeting the threat of militant Islam and international terrorism. The alliance eventually acted in these areas (e.g., the International Security Assistant Force (ISAF) deployment in Afghanistan), but neither the decision to deploy nor decisions on how to operate have been as easy as one might expect given NATO's history of consensus and institutionalized cooperation. But the alliance continues to evolve, as demonstrated by the 2008 Bucharest Summit Declaration, which outlined military cooperation ranging geographically from greater Europe to the Balkans, Kosovo, the Black Sea, the Gulf States, Iraq, Afghanistan, Africa, and even cyberspace, and functionally from the fight against terrorism to ballistic missile defense, non-proliferation and arms control, nuclear deterrence, disaster response, energy security, military transformation, and the establishment of new partnerships beyond Europe.¹⁹ The security agenda is very broad, comprehensive, and rich, but one indicative of an alliance still searching for a new rationale. Interestingly enough, Russia's resurgence and muscle flexing in late 2008 may provide additional impetus, suggesting the possibility of going "back to the future" and once again giving the alliance a close-to-home operational imperative to work from.

On a more informal level, the alliance is supported by both parliamentary and non-governmental entities. Created in 1955, the NATO-Parliamentary Assembly (PA) (formerly the North Atlantic Assembly) is an independent link between national parliaments and the NATO structure that helps "to build parliamentary and public consensus in support of alliance policies."²⁰ The NATO-PA has a robust working relationship with NATO proper, with the leadership of both organizations meeting regularly to exchange views on the state of the alliance. The Atlantic Treaty Association, a non-governmental entity created in 1954, acts as a "network facilitator," bringing together leaders in politics, academics, and diplomacy to further the values of the North Atlantic Treaty as well as educate and inform the public regarding NATO's missions and responsibilities. It carries out its missions through a network of 26 national associations in NATO member countries (e.g., the Atlantic Council of the United States), 15 associate member national associations in Partnership for Peace member countries, and one observer member national association (Israel). These support mechanisms appear somewhat unique among U.S. alliances; while there are indeed various "friendship

¹⁹ *Bucharest Summit Declaration* (April 3, 2008), <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2008/p08-049e.html> (accessed December 18, 2008).

²⁰ "The NATO Parliamentary Assembly," <http://www.nato.int/issues/npa/index.html>, and "NATO Parliamentary Assembly," <http://www.nato-pa.int/> (accessed December 18, 2008).

associations” coinciding with other alliances, none has the same level of formality nor the same focused agenda of support.

The NATO alliance is undergirded by a tremendous amount of cultural and economic exchange. Beyond America’s historical and cultural linkages to Europe, European and American culture continues to draw the allies together; for example, some 24 million travelers transited between the United States and Europe in 2007 (compared to 5.2 million for Japan and 1.5 million for the ROK). Similarly, merchandise trade volume between the United States and the EU (recognizing that this figure includes non-NATO countries) was over \$600 billion in 2006 (compared to \$208 billion in U.S.-Japan trade and \$82 billion in U.S.-ROK trade). When commercial services are figured in, the U.S.-EU trade volume approaches \$900 billion, indicating a significant degree of economic integration (again, by comparison, U.S.-Japan trade would be near \$300 billion, and U.S.-ROK trade near \$100 billion).²¹ This integration continues to be given priority on both sides of the Atlantic, as with the 2007 initiative on Transatlantic Economic Integration and the creation of the Transatlantic Economic Council.²² It must be recognized, however, that individually both Japan and the ROK rank above almost all individual European states in terms of trade with the United States. But the tremendous aggregate trade volume between Europe and the United States cannot be overlooked when trying to understand the inherent strengths of the NATO alliance.

Another interesting measure of cultural integration is student exchange levels. Here, the Europeans rank behind the Asian allies in some significant ways. According to study abroad data compiled by the Institute of International Education, in 2007/2008, the ROK was the third-largest single source of foreign students in the United States (behind India and China), with nearly 70,000 university students, or some 11.1 percent of the total foreign university student population. Japan ranked fourth, with some 34,000 students (5.4 percent). While Europe as a whole sent approximately 84,000 students (14.2 percent), only five NATO allies ranked in the top 25 [Canada (5), Turkey (8), Germany (12), UK (14) and France (18)].²³ Furthermore, if the definition of student is expanded to include all holders of F-1 and M-1 student visas (i.e., all students at the elementary, secondary and post-secondary level), the Europeans fall to some 12.3 percent of total students, while the ROK alone makes up approximately 14.4 percent and Japan 11.1 percent.²⁴

These statistics would appear to bode well for the future of the Asian alliances, however it is only part of the story. In terms of U.S. students abroad, the numbers are

²¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Foreign Trade Division, *Foreign Trade Statistics*, <http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/www/> (accessed December 20, 2008).

²² The White House, “Fact Sheet: Advancing Transatlantic Economic Integration through the Transatlantic Economic Council,” <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2008/12/20081212-7.html> (accessed January 3, 2008).

²³ International Education Exchange (IEE) Network, *Open Doors Online*, <http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/> (accessed December 24, 2008).

²⁴ U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Student and Exchange Visitor Program, *SEVIS by the Numbers*, <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/numbers/> (accessed December 27, 2008). Statistics shown are for 2006/2007. However, based on extrapolation of consistent trend lines, the relative rankings for 2007/2008 are expected to hold.

overwhelmingly tilted toward Europe: in 2007/2008, some 57.4 percent of the total 241,791 American students abroad were in Europe (with NATO countries accounting for nine of the top 20 global destinations), while Japan accounted for only 2.1 percent (5,012 students) and the ROK only 0.5 percent (1,312 students).²⁵ This indicates that, while a great percentage of Korean and Japanese young people are learning first hand about their ally's country, their American counterparts remain focused on Europe, a trend that does not bode well for the Asian allies.

In sum, the NATO alliance exhibits a significant degree of political, military, economic, and cultural integration. Its robust military structure, backed by a dense web of civilian apparatus and driven by an evolving strategic and somewhat focused operational imperative, provides assurance to the allies that they can effectively respond to tomorrow's security challenges. The alliance exhibits strong economic and cultural integration, to include civil society support specifically aimed at bolstering the alliance relationship and furthering its goals. Such integration is indicative of both the inherent strength as well as the resilience of the NATO alliance in face of changing conditions.

The U.S.-Japan Alliance: A Secretariat Alliance

Although arising from similar beginnings and some common shaping events, the U.S.-Japan alliance must be examined from the unique historical and political forces that led to its current structure. On one level the U.S.-Japan alliance may appear to be a poor cousin of the NATO partnership, as it lies at nearly the opposite end of the institutionalization spectrum. But it must be understood that the U.S.-Japan alliance evolved from similar yet distinctly different beginnings to meet similar yet distinctly different challenges, yielding a very different yet no less important alliance structure and operational profile.

Whereas NATO was facilitated greatly by a series of pre- and post-war agreements and treaties, politics—specifically the Japanese Constitution as well as the security pacts themselves—has been a primary constraint on the evolution of the U.S.-Japan alliance. In the aftermath of World War II, Japan enacted the so-called Peace Constitution, renouncing “war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat of use of force as a means of settling international disputes,” and forswearing land, sea and air forces.²⁶ Although fully supported by the United States at the time, the ideas enshrined in Article 9 of the constitution have become a persistent issue for the alliance to this day.

Similarly, the security pacts between the United States and Japan have served to limit the role of Japan, and in turn the development of the defense relationship. The original security pact of 1952 recognized a “danger to Japan,” but simply allowed for the stationing of U.S. troops in Japan for the defense of the Far East; Japan had no specific obligations other than to play host, although an eventual larger yet ambiguous role for Japan was acknowledged.²⁷ As the Cold War unfolded, however, it became apparent to

²⁵ IEE Network, *Open Doors Online*.

²⁶ “Constitution of Japan,” <http://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/etc/c01.html> (accessed December 22, 2008).

²⁷ *Security Treaty between Japan and the United States of America*, <http://www.ioc.utokyo.ac.jp/~worldjpn/documents/texts/docs/19510908.T2E.html> (accessed December 28, 2008).

the United States that a strong Japan, capable of some minimal level of self-defense, was necessary to meet the potential communist challenge in East Asia. As in the case of NATO, the Korean War drove home this need as U.S. forces in Japan were deployed to Korea and the requirement for a Japanese force to defend the homeland became apparent. The National Police Reserve (founded in 1950) and the subsequently established National Safety Agency (1952) were formed for this purpose and in 1954 evolved into the Japanese Self-Defense Force (JSDF) and Japan Defense Agency, respectively. However, their sole stated purpose remained the defense of Japan.

The 1952 security pact was revised in 1960 and both parties assumed an obligation to maintain and develop their capacity to resist armed attack in common and to assist each other in case of armed attack on territories under *Japanese* administration.²⁸ It is important to note that this revised treaty was still focused on Japanese territory only. It was accepted at the time that Japan could not, due to its constitutional interpretation, deploy forces from Japan. However, it should also be noted that this is an interpretation; the literal wording of the article is silent on both the deployment of forces and collective defense, another sticking point in bilateral relations. The renunciation of force to resolve international disputes as codified in the constitution has most often been interpreted within Japan to rule out collective defense or collective self-defense.²⁹ This has had a direct impact on the development, or lack thereof, of any significant combined military structure in the alliance. Under these constraints, rather than a combined alliance military structure, what has evolved in Japan might best be termed a bilateral cooperation structure.

A second constraint on the institutionalization of the military alliance and its management mechanisms has been Japan's domestic and bureaucratic politics. For most of the alliance's history, the Japanese Ministry of Defense did not exist, its predecessor being the Japan Defense Agency, a sub-cabinet level agency under the Cabinet Office and the Prime Minister. This created a situation where defense officials, ostensibly charged with creating and organizing a strong defense and security relationship with the United States as well as strong defense capabilities for Japan itself, were subordinated in a process that gave primacy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the one hand, and the Ministry of Finance on the other. Whereas the dynamic in Europe had been such that defense leaders held sway in the alliance management process, in Japan, defense bureaucrats and the Self Defense Force itself were decidedly junior partners in alliance business. This resulted in an alliance management structure focused minimally on the political and fiscal aspects of

²⁸ *Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States of America*, with Exchange of Notes and Agreed Minute, http://untreaty.un.org/unts/1_60000/11/4/00020165.pdf (accessed December 28, 2008).

²⁹ Ministry of Defense of Japan, "Japan and the Right of Self-Defense," www.mod.go.jp/e/d_policy/dp01.html (accessed December 20, 2008). The Japanese government has gone through an arduous series of interpretations to carve out allowances for the possession of self-defense forces and basic defense capabilities, as well as the right of self-defense itself. The arguments on collective defense are convoluted at best. According to the Ministry of Defense, the Government of Japan takes the position that Japan has the sovereign right under international law to collective self-defense, however it is "not permissible to use the right, that is, to stop armed attack on another country with armed strength, although Japan is not under direct attack, since it exceeds the limit of use of armed strength as permitted under Article 9 of the Constitution."

the relationship (both bilateral politics and domestic consequences of basing and defense industry development), rather than the operational necessities of a military alliance.

A third factor leading to a functional under-institutionalization of the military aspects of the U.S.-Japan alliance has been the general lack of an operational imperative. In the words of one senior U.S. defense official responsible for alliance management, “it had never *had* to function.”³⁰ Certainly, the U.S.-Japan alliance has never had to function as NATO did during the Cold War. While the strategic rationale was much the same, the operational threat that existed in Europe never fully materialized in East Asia. For a brief period in the later Cold War years, some semblance of operationalization of the U.S.-Japan alliance was achieved, particularly in the area of anti-submarine warfare activities in the Northwest Pacific. However, while deemed very important at the time, this was relatively modest, short-lived cooperation that has not been repeated at this level since. Lacking an operational imperative, the U.S.-Japan alliance structure has been seen as more a political management tool than a warfighting apparatus.

These constraints have resulted in a U.S.-Japan alliance structure with a sparse political management apparatus and essentially no combined military organization or process. It is only in recent years, and only in the area of missile defense, that the latter deficiencies have been addressed in any meaningful, albeit tentative, way. And it must be noted that only some in Japan would see the lack of institutionalization described above as a “deficiency;” many in Japan are very comfortable with this structure.

At the political level of the alliance management structure stands the Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee (SCC), or “two-plus-two,” composed of the U.S. Secretaries of State and Defense and their Japanese counterparts, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defense, which provides strategic direction to the alliance. This current makeup evolved from the original composition outlined in the establishment of the SCC (per an Agreed Minute to the 1960 Treaty, wherein the U.S. representatives were the U.S. Ambassador and Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Command (CINCPAC)). It was not until 1990 that this body was elevated to the cabinet level on the U.S. side. The SCC’s formal charter under the treaty is to carry out the functions of Article 4 to undertake consultations on the treaty including matters of prior consultation. However, the SCC also meets to “consider any matters underlying and related to security affairs which would serve to promote understanding between the two governments and contribute to the strengthening of cooperative relations between the two countries in the field of security.”³¹ Even with this broad charter, though, the dialogue has been limited by most accounts to issues of broad policy rather than operational import, or to the minutiae of basing and burden-sharing issues.

The SCC has directed at various times two supporting committees: the Security Subcommittee (SSC) and the Subcommittee on Defense Cooperation (SDC) (See Figure 2). The SSC, essentially an Assistant Secretary-level version of the SCC, was constituted

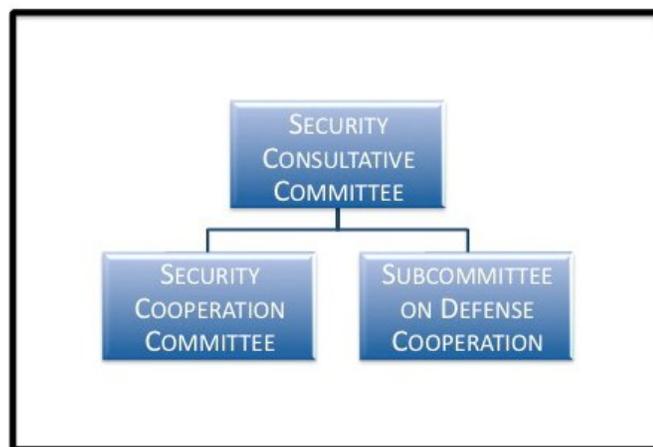
³⁰ Discussion with former Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs, the Honorable Richard P. Lawless, December 2008.

³¹ *Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States of America*, with Exchange of Notes and Agreed Minute. See final exchange of notes of January 19, 1960.

as the senior working-level venue to prepare and negotiate issues for the SCC, the final decision making body. Initially conceived as a wieldier and hence effective approach due to its lower rank and assumed smaller circle of participants, it too became bloated and somewhat ineffective. As a result, either the SSC was not used or workarounds were established. In the mid-1990s, then Deputy Assistant Secretary Kurt Campbell instituted the “mini-SSC” at his level to support the effort then underway to revitalize the alliance. The functions of the SSC, like the SCC, have been generally political in nature or policy oriented, dealing with either the broad strategic context of the alliance or more tactical issues related to the basing of forces in Japan (i.e., “Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) issues”). It is notable that there has not been a formal meeting of the SSC in at least eight years and the last official mention of it seems to have been in the 2002 SCC communiqué where it was directed to report on consultations to “intensify security consultations.” (While the SSC has not formally met for this purpose, the result of this directive was the Defense Policy Review Initiative process, described below).³²

The SDC dates from 1976 and has, when active, been somewhat focused on issues related to planning such as force planning and contingency planning. Most significantly, the SDC produced the 1979 and 1997 Defense Guidelines. The group is comprised of the members of the SSC (i.e., Assistant Secretary-level) with the addition of the Director General for Operations from the Ministry of Defense. However, like the SSC, this group has lain dormant, with most of its work being done in the form of “paper meetings” whereby the members exchange papers to develop consensus positions that are then passed to the SCC for approval. By many accounts, in the guidelines revision of 1996-1997, much of the actual coordination occurred at the level of the then-active mini-SSC.³³

Figure 2. U.S.-Japan Coordination Structure



³² *Joint Statement, U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee* (Washington, December 16, 2002), <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/scc/joint0212.html> (accessed December 18, 2008).

³³ Interview with U.S. defense official, December 2008.

At this point it is important to take note of what is glaring in its absence from even this spartan alliance management structure—a military coordination mechanism. Unlike the NATO alliance or the U.S.-ROK alliance, the U.S.-Japan alliance has no “combined” structures; i.e., there is no mechanism by which to exercise any overarching military authority. While a combined structure is not a prerequisite for a strong alliance, some type of robust coordination mechanism must exist if combined operations are to be achieved in a contingency.³⁴ Recognizing this, the 1997 Guidelines revision attempted to create such a bilateral coordination mechanism.

The allies’ 1996 review was intended to update the earlier 1979 Guidelines to the post-Cold War timeframe and “build upon the close working relationship” that previously existed.³⁵ The review’s objective was to identify “ideas and specific items that would contribute to more effective bilateral cooperation,” and to provide a “general framework and policy direction for the roles and missions of the two countries and ways of cooperation and coordination, both under normal circumstances and during contingencies.”³⁶ The resulting Guidelines recognized for the first time that effective bilateral military cooperation was necessary and established two bilateral coordination measures under the supervision of the SCC.³⁷ The first measure allowed for U.S. forces and the SDF to “conduct bilateral defensive planning under normal circumstances to be able to take coordinated actions in case of an armed attack on Japan” and conduct “mutual cooperation planning under normal circumstances to be able to respond smoothly and effectively to situations in areas surrounding Japan.” This dense, somewhat coded language requires a bit of parsing. In practice, “bilateral defense planning” means coordinated (as opposed to combined) planning for respective U.S. and Japanese actions to *defend the Japanese homeland*. “Mutual cooperation planning,” on the other hand, is much less defined and pertains to potential Japanese support for and cooperation with potential U.S. operations in areas surrounding Japan, that is, in Northeast Asia. This effort at bilateral coordination also allowed for the potential development of common standards for preparations as well as common procedures for the respective forces.

Complementing this attempt to develop a framework for operational cooperation is the second measure, the formally named “Bilateral Coordination Mechanism.” It is through this mechanism that the two governments will ostensibly coordinate their “respective activities in case of an armed attack against Japan and in situations in areas surrounding Japan.” As part of this mechanism, the two military forces are charged to “prepare a bilateral coordination center” in order to “coordinate their respective activities.” A

³⁴ The United States takes several doctrinal approaches to combined operational coordination. See Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Multinational Operations*, Joint Publication 3-16 (March 7, 2007), http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp3_16.pdf.

³⁵ *The Japan-U.S. Joint Declaration on Security: Alliance for the 21st Century*, (Tokyo, April 17, 1996), www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/security.html (accessed December 18, 2008).

³⁶ *Joint Statement, U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee, Completion of the Review of the Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation* (New York, September 23, 1997), <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/defense.html> (accessed December 28, 2008).

³⁷ *The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation* (1997), www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/guideline2.html (accessed December 18, 2008).

significant point here is that the 1997 effort did not lead to combined or even mutual actions—it maintained the very loose operational construct of coordinating the “respective activities” of the two allies. The Defense Policy Review Initiative (DPRI), a bilateral dialogue begun in 2003 to endeavor to “intensify security cooperation” has attempted to put some additional teeth into this cooperation mechanism, but to little avail. In 2005, DPRI efforts through the SCC to establish a formal “bilateral joint operations coordination center (BJOCC)” were no more successful, as the founding directive simply called on United States Forces Japan to “establish” a center for “shared use;” there was no directive for Japanese forces to actually show up.³⁸ While the BJOCC had its momentary success, it has now faded to a mechanism meant to provide political control of the alliance but not facilitate military operations in any meaningful or effective manner. To be fair, owing to the historical constraints discussed earlier, even this extremely modest attempt at operationalizing the alliance’s military capabilities has been viewed as something of a breakthrough in the security relationship.

As a final point of comparison, in NATO the allies have a robust coordination structure that extends from the ministerial level down to the operational commanders and to varying degrees beyond, resembling a huge security conglomerate. In stark contrast, in the U.S.-Japan relationship, the standing bilateral coordination structure essentially stops at the mid bureaucratic level, a secretariat of sorts, not extending in any meaningful, formal way into the operational militaries.³⁹ The militaries are left with ad hoc coordination (which, to their credit, they have become particularly adept at) or seek to have the political bureaucracy address operational issues. The former actually works surprisingly well at the service component level (i.e., between the U.S. Navy and the Maritime Self Defense Force (MSDF)) for exercises and training. Whether this would function sufficiently for combat operations is an open, and worrisome, question. The latter task of having the political bureaucracy manage operational decisions has been at best frustrating; in combat, it would be an unmitigated disaster.

As with the NATO alliance, the U.S.-Japan alliance exists in the context of a much broader political, economic, and cultural relationship. The United States and Japan, both G7/G8 members, have a long history of close political cooperation on issues of strategic importance such as environmental issues, international trade and finance, and global security issues such as the North Korean nuclear program. Similarly, the economic relationship is mature and robust, as detailed earlier. The two partners represent the two largest national economies and enjoy significant economic integration with over \$200 billion in two-way trade. Indicative of this integration, Japanese companies in the United States employ more than 600,000 Americans, while their U.S. counterparts in Japan provide some 250,000 Japanese jobs. While U.S.-Japanese economic relations have

³⁸ *Security Consultative Committee Document, U.S.-Japan Alliance: Transformation and Realignment for the Future* (October 29, 2005), <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/scc/doc0510.html> (accessed January 30, 2009).

³⁹ The term “secretariat alliance” was first used by Iain Nish to describe the Anglo-Japanese alliance of the late 19th Century. Iain Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance: The Diplomacy of Two Island Empires, 1894-1907* (New York: Athlon Press, 1985), p. 366.

become “more cooperative, less competitive,” it is important to note that U.S.-Japanese trade is not growing at a rate on pace with other trade relationships.⁴⁰

Cultural exchanges continue to bring the two peoples closer together, but only indirectly support the alliance relationship. As with the NATO alliance, there are several governmental and civil society-based educational and cultural exchanges, such as the government funded Japan-United States Friendship Commission and U.S.-Japan Conference on Cultural and Educational Exchange, or the private U.S.-Japan Foundation and U.S.-Japan Bridging Foundation.⁴¹ Unlike the Atlantic Council in the NATO case, none of these organizations have an explicit charter facilitating the goals of the alliance. Indeed, one would be hard pressed to find the word “alliance” on any of these organizations’ websites. However, the non-governmental U.S.-Japan Parliamentary Friendship League and related Parliamentary Exchange Program do actively work to build consensus on alliance issues between Congressional and Diet members.

In sum, while it is hard to overstate the political importance placed on this key relationship by both countries, the U.S.-Japan alliance does not exhibit the degree of integration—military, political, or cultural—that is evident in the NATO alliance. Nor has it needed to, as it has evolved from different circumstances to meet different challenges.

The U.S.-ROK Alliance: Building on Success

As discussed in the introduction of this paper, alliances are by their nature temporary creatures. When the ally and the alliance relationship cease to be useful, they are abandoned or whither away. The U.S.-ROK alliance has obviously been critical for both partners and has served the cause of peace and stability well. Early Cold War history has greatly shaped the evolution of the U.S.-ROK alliance, which emerged from World War II and the Korean War. Throughout its entire existence, the alliance has faced the existential threat of North Korean aggression. The North during much of this period was arguably stronger than its Southern counterpart, and was backed by the Soviet Union and China, in tandem or separately. This provided the necessary operational imperative discussed earlier—an imperative for “getting it right” to have a structure that was capable of defending the ROK. Moreover, for nearly three-quarters of the alliance’s existence, this operational imperative was complemented by the strategic rationale of the Cold War. Korea and the U.S.-ROK alliance fit neatly into the West’s broader attempt to confront and eventually defeat communism and potential Soviet-led expansionism. Both of these

⁴⁰ Statement by Alexander A. Arvizu, Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs to the Subcommittee on Asia, Pacific and Global Environment, House Foreign Affairs Committee, U.S. House of Representatives, June 12, 2008, <http://www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2008/06/105874.htm>.

⁴¹ The Japan-United States Friendship Commission is a U.S. government entity established by Congress and founded with trust money received during the return of U.S. facilities on Okinawa to Japan in 1975. The commission funds educational programs. It has no explicit or implicit linkage to the alliance, and no mention of the alliance is made in a history of the organization written in 1975. See <http://www.jusfc.gov/index.asp> and <http://www.jusfc.gov/pdf/historyofthecommission.pdf> (accessed 28 December 2008). Similarly, the U.S.-Japan Conference on Cultural and Educational Exchange is a government program with no alliance ties. See <http://www.jusfc.gov/usculcon/whatisculcon.asp>.

historical forces are slowly waning, as North Korea's military might atrophies and the allies continue to adjust to a post-Cold War world. These changes are presenting significant challenges to the allies.

Adding to this situation, the Republic of Korea itself has changed dramatically over the life of the alliance, providing an additional challenge to the partners' management of the relationship. As democracy flourished, Korea's economy grew stronger, and the ROK came into its own politically, there has been an increasing emphasis on achieving a more balanced relationship, a desire that the United States has come to embrace as well.

Following the Korean War, the United Nations Command (UNC), established in 1950 to defeat North Korean aggression and led by a four-star U.S. General, became the primary military vehicle for both the defense of South Korea and the U.S.-ROK alliance. In the early days of the UNC, with a Korean military that had only existed in modern form for less than a decade, it made sense for the United States to lead the alliance with ROK forces put under the Operational Command (OPCOM) of the Commander UNC. However, as Korea's economy developed and flourished over the following two decades, and as democracy began its sometimes tenuous hold on the country, it became clear that Korea, with a rapidly modernizing and increasingly professional military of its own, required and deserved a larger role.

In 1969 the United States and South Korea established a consultative system known as the Security Consultative Meeting (SCM), chaired by the respective Secretary and Minister of Defense and representing their Presidents, to provide a mechanism for the two sovereign states to issue unified guidance to the military forces defending the country. This was an extraordinary step, given the disparity of power between the two partners. This mechanism was complemented later by the establishment of the Military Committee Meeting (MCM), allowing a forum for the Chiefs of Defense (the respective Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) to consult on how to best implement strategic guidance received via the SCM as well as provide combined recommendations to the SCM and the respective national command authorities.

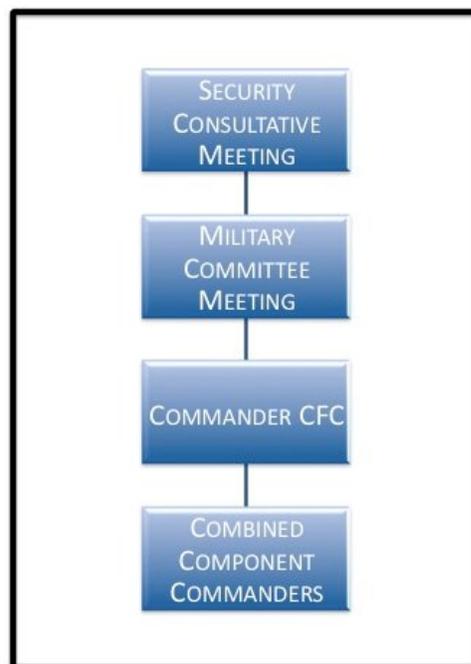
In 1978, in recognition of the development of South Korean forces, the current Combined Forces Command (CFC) was established and supplanted UNC as the "warfighter." While CFC was still led by a U.S. General, three very distinct differences marked the subsequent evolution of the military structure. Unlike the Commander UNC's broad OPCOM authority, the Commander CFC was given fairly defined and circumscribed authority over ROK forces. For peacetime, or more accurately for the period of armistice, the Commander CFC was given Operational Control (OPCON) of only those forward deployed ROK forces that were needed to ensure maintenance of the Armistice Agreement. This allowed him to exercise necessary but limited (in the case of the ROK) authority over all forces—U.S. and ROK—required to control the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). In wartime, following resurgence of North Korean aggression and only after ROK national command authority decision, the Commander CFC was by mutual agreement to be given OPCON over designated ROK forces. In 1994, "peacetime OPCON" was withdrawn from Commander CFC, and the ROK has since maintained full operational control of its own forces, a fact not well understood or appreciated in Korea.

In addition, the ROK was given a wide stake in the new command structure, with Korean officers and enlisted personnel accounting for roughly 50 percent of the combined command. Every aspect of the command is integrated. While the Commander remains American, his deputy is a Korean General of equal rank. Throughout the command, this pattern is repeated: an American officer leads a staff section while a Korean officer serves as the number two, and vice versa.

Finally, the military structure that evolved under CFC devolved greater responsibility—and authority—to ROK commanders and leaders. As the United States slowly removed itself from the front line, the ROK military took on an increasingly predominant role in its national defense. As but one example of ROK uniformed leaders stepping forward, in 1992 the ROK Deputy Commander of CFC was designated the commander of all ground forces—U.S., ROK and potentially UNC—that would be employed in the defense of Korea.

Under CFC, for the purposes of wartime planning, exists a professional ROK military that comprises the vast bulk of combat power the alliance would bring to bear. The Commander CFC would exercise his wartime authorities through combined component commanders responsible for ground, air, naval, marine, and special operations. These operational commanders follow the CFC pattern of U.S. and ROK integration and leadership; for example, the Ground Component Command is led by a ROK General and his deputy is an American.

Figure 3. The Current U.S.-ROK “SCM System”



This “SCM system” in many ways resembles the NATO system (See Figure 3). Decisions are, by definition, made through consensus (although in the smaller U.S.-ROK two-member group, the fact that one partner might drive a certain decision is admittedly harder to paper over and leads to perceptions that the United States “runs” the alliance). During the period of armistice or peacetime, the two partners engage in consultations, develop combined guidance through the interaction of the SCM and MCM, and issue that guidance to the Commander CFC—in a way very similar to the interaction between the NAC, MC, and Strategic Commanders in NATO. This process would be the same if hostilities were to reemerge. Due to the smaller number of partners, the SCM clearly does not require the fairly rigid consultative structure involving weekly meetings as present in NATO, but it is accurate to say that operational coordination is constant—perhaps more so than even exists in today’s NATO.

However, this system continues to evolve, an evolution that will be discussed in more depth below. Suffice to say at this point that by agreement, CFC will be deactivated in 2012 and replaced by an operational structure that puts a ROK commander in place as the warfighter—the supported commander—and establishes the U.S. commander in Korea as a supporting commander. The ROK will lead and the United States will support, in a very tightly coordinated combined defense system that reflects one more natural evolution in the life of the U.S.-ROK alliance.

The remainder of this discussion will focus on applying lessons from the history of NATO and the U.S.-Japan alliance to broaden and deepen both the U.S.-ROK military alliance and the larger political, economic and cultural partnership, and find the elusive “balance” in the relationship. Balance, though, cannot be achieved by downplaying or lessening the security cooperation that has been the cornerstone of the relationship. To be clear, that aspect of the relationship must continue to evolve, but in tandem with the broadening and deepening of the bilateral agenda.

Drawing from NATO’s experience, what is needed is a broader agenda, a broader appreciation of what “alliance” means, and a balance of security and military cooperation with expansive political, economic and cultural efforts. Once the ROK grew in economic and political strength and was able to be a true U.S. partner in the late 1960s and early 1970s, a robust strategic political consultation process was initiated, but this process has arguably been dominated by issues of national security and defense. A quick survey of summit statements from several decades yields an interesting agenda for the bilateral political relationship. The issues given the most attention have consistently been fairly narrow in scope and defined by security concerns: alliance management, North Korea, and inter-Korean relations. Economics has been a critical issue of the last few years with the debate on the Free Trade Agreement, but the scope is still bilateral. Similarly, a perennial issue over the last several years at the *summit level* has been the visa waiver issue. This is hardly a global agenda. To be fair, terrorism, trans-national crime, proliferation, climate change, energy resources, and more recently democracy expansion have been consistently mentioned. However, reference to these issues is either in laundry lists or is intentionally vague because there are no specific actions behind them. These issues are cited more in the form of a statement of normative agreement (e.g., non-proliferation is important) than agreement to take action. That is not to say that

normative agreements are not useful; they are all the more useful when backed by action. The allies must find—and articulate together—the linkages between shared strategic goals and the operational manifestation of the alliance, whether military, political, or economic. While NATO has had its own challenges, it has arguably been successful in this regard.

Several implications or suggestions for the U.S.-ROK alliance's military structure and security relationship can be drawn from our survey of the NATO and U.S.-Japan alliances. A key lesson from our survey is that the U.S.-ROK alliance must maintain not only a strategic but *operational* rationale. Both NATO and the U.S.-Japan alliance have faced challenges in transitioning their respective rationales from the Cold War to the post-Cold War period. Arguably, the ability of the NATO structure to operationalize the alliance has assisted this transition. While still evolving, the NATO alliance of today has a fairly clear strategic and operational direction. The same cannot be said for the U.S.-Japan alliance, where the strategic direction is less clear and operational imperative fairly non-existent, a condition that has arguably retarded the transition of that alliance. To avoid the dilemma that NATO faced at the end of the Cold War, the U.S.-ROK alliance must forge a new strategic and operational vision that goes beyond North Korea, the "other" that has shaped the alliance's collective identity all these years.⁴² This does not necessarily mean staking out a new object to oppose and stand "against," but could and should mean rallying around something the alliance is "for." The key here is that if the alliance is to retain resilience, it must re-envision itself and provide a new strategic and operational rationale: What is its purpose and how will it achieve that purpose together?

Related to this, the U.S.-ROK alliance should take note of the adjustment that has been made to the changing security agenda of the United States. An earlier examination of German and Japanese approaches to Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) noted that the two countries took different approaches, with the German debate focused on the human security aspects of the mission and the Japanese focused on burden-sharing.⁴³ Similarly, in the attempts of both alliances to adjust to a new U.S. concept of security that has broadened to include combating terrorism and Islamic extremism, NATO and Japan have taken different approaches with appreciably different outcomes. The NATO allies, taking a more normative, shared-values approach and building on a decade of steady moves toward "out of area missions," have insisted either collectively (as in the case of Afghanistan) or individually (as in the case of Iraq) to be a key partner in the U.S. agenda because they saw it as in their broader security interests as well. In Japan, on the other hand, the debate and the resultant Japanese actions have focused on the alliance itself and burden-sharing in a narrow sense. In other words, the NATO approach has been generally about what the allies can *do together* to address shared interests, while the Japanese approach has been about what Japan can (or must) *do for* the United States.

⁴² Jae-Jung Suh, "Bound to Last: Power, Interest and Identity in the U.S.-Korea Alliance" (PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2000), p. 72. Cited in. William T. Tow and Amitav Acharya, "Obstinate or Obsolete? The U.S. Alliance Structure in the Asia-Pacific," ANU working paper, December 2007, http://rspas.anu.edu.au/ir/pubs/work_papers/07-4.pdf, p. 10.

⁴³ Hartwig Hummel, "The PKO Debate In Japan and Germany in Comparison," paper presented at Hokusei Gakuen University, Sapporo, October 1, 1996, <http://www.phil-fak.uni-duesseldorf.de/politik/Mitarbeiter/Hummel/hokusei.pdf> (accessed December 18, 2008).

Arguably, in the latter case, this makes support extremely vulnerable, as seen in the on-again, off-again support for the navel refueling operation in the Indian Ocean.

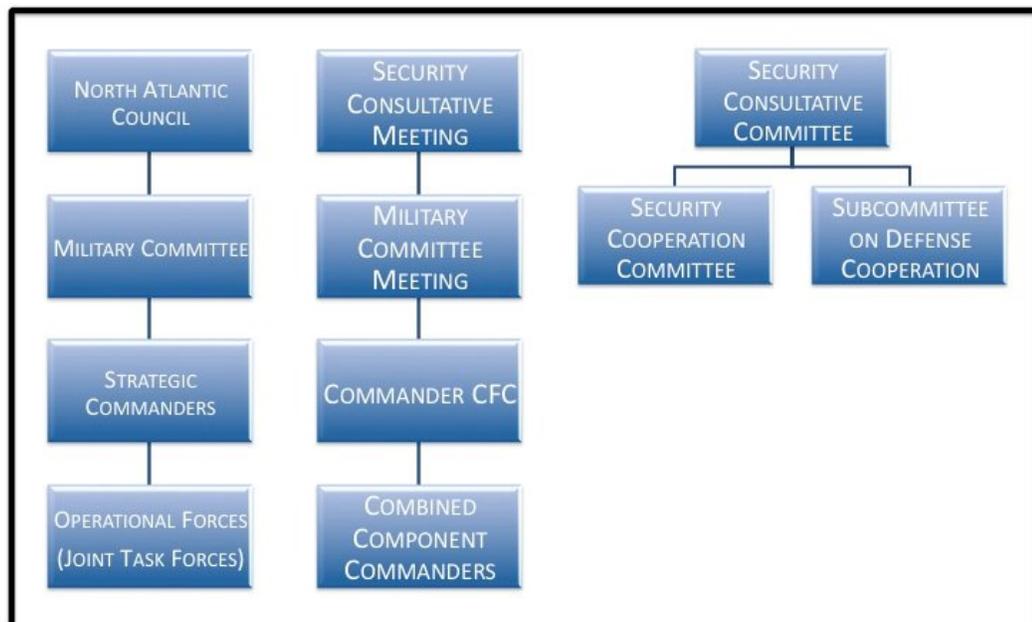
The ROK's recently ended deployment to Iraq was highly successful and something for both the Korean military and Korean people to be extremely proud of. However, its importance is undercut by the perception throughout much of the deployment that the Zaytun unit deployed to Iraq *for* the alliance. The decision making in the ROK government was much more nuanced than it is given credit for, but the general impression persists that Korea deployed to gain favor with the United States and strengthen the alliance. We saw that in Afghanistan, where the public perception of the rationale for deployment was similar, this was not sufficient to maintain public support. Korea's actions must support its interests first, then the shared interests of the alliance, deploying away from the peninsula not "for the alliance" but as part of an alliance response to mutual security concerns. In other words, the alliance is not the end in itself (as it appears in Japan) but rather it is the tool by which Korea seeks its broader national security goals (e.g., as in NATO meeting global security challenges). These shared interests then provide a much firmer rationale and predictable basis for ROK-U.S. cooperation.

Another area for strengthening the alliance in a meaningful as well as symbolic way is nuclear deterrence cooperation. In the early nuclear age and beginning of NATO, the United States faced the significant dilemma of restraining allies from developing nuclear capabilities, while at the same time assuring them that the U.S. nuclear deterrent would protect European cities. The British and French were not convinced and hence sought their own deterrent capability. Seeing this, from Eisenhower's time at the Supreme Allied Headquarters (SHAPE) until the early 1960s, the United States wrestled with the question of how to let the allies into the nuclear tent. The U.S.-U.K treaty was one measure. However, in the NATO context, the effort of the Nuclear Planning Group that began in earnest with the 1962 Athens conference and the U.S. decision to broaden NATO participation in nuclear planning, is arguably the prime example. This has been key to assuring the allies of the credibility of the U.S. nuclear deterrent and commitment to the alliance. Today, in both Korea and Japan, there are rumblings of a lack of confidence in America's commitment—evidenced in the consistent attempts by Korea to "clarify," "strengthen," and reiterate the U.S. commitment in the annual SCM communiqué. The development of a system by which the United States would share information on nuclear planning and consult with the ROK on issues of use and targeting would arguably ameliorate these concerns.

Figure 4 provides a comparison of the three allied structures and institutional mechanisms discussed in this paper. A final lesson to draw from our examination of NATO and the U.S.-Japan alliance is that maintaining rigorous civilian-military linkages in the alliance management structure is imperative. As NATO has demonstrated, the very active and close linkage of the NAC to the MC and to the Strategic Commanders (the operational force) is critical to ensuring operational capability and military effectiveness, as well as ensuring that those operational capabilities support political goals. The same unfortunately cannot be said for the ability of the U.S.-Japan alliance to operationalize their formidable combined capabilities. As the ROK and U.S. transition from the current

CFC system to a bilateral national command system, the strong linkages of the SCM to the MCM and to the respective operational commanders must be maintained. The two governments must continue the tradition of combined strategic guidance to our commanders. The end of a combined command (i.e., CFC) need not and cannot mean the end to shared purpose and combined operational capability. Similarly, the military-military relations of the United States and ROK must remain close—they must analyze together, plan together, train together and exercise together if they are to be able to fight together.

Figure 4. Three Allied Structures: NATO, U.S.-ROK, U.S.-Japan



Some will see this as an argument for maintaining the current structure. Certainly the CFC structure, unique in the world in some ways, is arguably the optimal solution to the *military* problem of defending against North Korea. But it is not the only solution, and in the broader context of achieving and sustaining a balanced U.S.-ROK partnership into the future, CFC and the political baggage that comes with the perceived unequal command relationship is just as arguably counter to the long-term interests of the two partners.

Rather, the need here is to find the optimal level of military integration for the new, more balanced alliance. The very good news is that the system being developed—a bi-national command system with close integration of capabilities (versus combining of forces) that facilitate combined operations in support of the ROK warfighter—is on the right track. The system, and the new alliance structure that supports it, will be capable of generating the necessary combat power for the alliance and ensuring unity of effort in any defense contingency. At the same time, it will ensure that ROK forces play the predominant role

in the defense of their homeland and that the United States plays a key supporting role as envisioned in the Mutual Security Treaty.

These military measures are of limited value, though, unless the United States and ROK develop a broader political consensus on what the alliance means. As with the NATO/EU relationship, the U.S.-ROK partnership must be seen as encompassing the full range of U.S. and ROK political, economic and cultural interests. That is not the case today, as demonstrated by the very constrained nature of the dialogues. The two partners must continue to develop a global political and economic agenda, formulate shared policy approaches, and seek ways to increase meaningful cooperative action. This governmental approach should be supported by a civil society initiative to bridge political and cultural gaps and bring the allies closer together. Taking a page from the NATO playbook, the two partners should seek to develop civil society supports similar to the Atlantic Council, i.e., organizations whose agenda goes beyond “friendship” to meaningful support for and furtherance of the alliance as a political, economic and national security entity.

The U.S.-ROK alliance has served the allies well. It faces challenges as it moves forward—some unique, others with precedents. The alliance cannot, in the first instance, be treated as a “given.” Recalling Botero’s admonition, it is necessary for the allies to make a concerted effort to ensure that the alliance continues to be useful. With that concerted effort, and with inspired leadership on both sides of the relationship, the U.S.-ROK alliance can continue to stand the test of time.