

KOREAN PERCEPTION ON DEFENSE COOPERATION WITH JAPAN

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ABSTRACT

The Republic of Korea and Japan are two most important security allies of the United States in East Asia, yet they lack substantial defense cooperation between each other. This thesis looks at the current condition of defense cooperation between the Republic of Korea and Japan and possible area of improvement in the future. Based on the quasi-alliance model, this thesis introduces the capabilities complementary model to explain what is necessary for bilateral defense cooperation. Ultimately, these quasi-allies will only enhance defense cooperation if the Republic of Korea feels its security is scarce and the Japanese capability is compatible to its own.

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INTRODUCTION

Despite the strong public and political oppositions in the Republic of Korea (ROK) to enhance defense cooperation between Japan, in what conditions can the ROK and Japan enhance their defense cooperation? Japan and the ROK share mutual threats from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and certain degree of China's expansionist posture in the South China Sea. They are also both liberal democracies and allies of the U.S. Although they have similar threat perceptions and national characteristics, they often resist to enhance cooperation on substantial matters that would potentially improve their security. Many scholars explained this irrational behavior by Japan and the ROK by citing disputes over history as the main issue, more specifically Japanese Imperial colonization from 1910 to 1945, but this does not explain why in some cases they choose to improve their ties.¹ Better defense cooperation between Japan and the ROK is essential to sustain stability and prosperity in the Asia Pacific region. With the recent rebalance to Asia strategy under the Obama administration, the regional security structure is gradually shifting from the traditional "hub-and-spoke" system to more multilateral defense cooperation framework among regional maritime democratic states, such as Japan, Australia, India, and the U.S or simply known as the Quad. This is not to say that the hub-and-spoke system will be replaced by the Quad framework, but enhancement of multilateral cooperation will reduce the economic burden by larger powers and give more transparency in the military capabilities and strategies among the participants. The same framework should apply to Japan and the ROK to be complementary to the updated security strategy in the Asia Pacific region. Hence, it is important to understand under what conditions Japan and the ROK improve their defense cooperation. In defense, there are different levels and categories of cooperation. This essay focuses on the intelligence sharing component of bilateral cooperation because Japan, the ROK, and the U.S. agree that intelligence sharing would be an essential step for advanced defense cooperation.² Through the complementary capabilities model, this essay argues that the bilateral cooperation on intelligence sharing is only enhanced when both countries feel

¹ Brad Glosserman and Scott A. Snyder, *The Japan-South Korea Identity Clash: East Asian Security and the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

² Yonhap News Agency, "S. Korea, U.S., Japan to increase military intelligence sharing: top U.S. diplomat," April 20, 2016.

the regional security is scarce and their capabilities are complementary to each other. In addition to this introduction section, this essay is divided into four chapters. The first chapter introduces the recent historical background of the intelligence sharing agreement, specifically the overview of failed negotiation on GSOMIA in 2012 and conclusion of the trilateral intelligence sharing agreement in 2014. The second chapter explains why the ROK decided to conclude the trilateral intelligence sharing agreement using the complementary capabilities model. The third chapter presents the alternative explanation by other scholars on the similar matter, one from advanced theory derived from realism and another explanation based on constructivism, followed by the final chapter of conclusion.

HISTORICAL FAILURE AND ACHIEVEMENT OF INTELLIGENCE SHARING

Japan and the ROK have previously attempted to increase their bilateral intelligence sharing mechanism through GSOMIA (General Security of Military Information Agreement) in the early 2010s. GSOMIA is an agreement by two countries on protection of classified shared military intelligence. GSOMIA is not an agreement that enforces signatory states to share their military intelligence, but rather an agreement on the commitment to the protection of the shared military intelligence. Japan has already signed GSOMIA with the U.S., France, and NATO, and similar agreement with India, and the ROK have signed with 24 countries, such as the U.S. Britain, Australia, Russia, and NATO.³ Hence, both countries are familiar with this agreement, especially on the ROK side. Since January 2011, Japan and the ROK began to communicate on the possibility of GSOMIA in the high official level.⁴ At this point, Minister of Defense Kim expressed to conduct the negotiation in a “low-key” rather than speeding up the process.⁵ After almost a year and half of negotiation, they both confirmed to conclude the agreement on June 2012, however, President Lee Myung-bak decided to postpone the agreement one hour prior to the conclusion. The Japanese media understood the last-minute decision by President Lee as the result of pressures coming from anti-Japanese

³ Kikuchi Yuji, “Nikkan Himitsu Jouhou Hogo Kyoutei no Shomei Enki,” August, 2012, National Diet Library, p. 1. And Hayashi Takashi, “Nikkan Gunji Jouhou Houkatsu Hogo Houan Teiketsu Enki no Youin Bunseki,” December 2014, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Command and Staff College Review, p. 1.

⁴ “Daijin Rinji Kaiken Gaiyou,” January 10, 2011, Ministry of Defense.

⁵ Ibid.

groups in the ROK and the government's concern for upsetting China by aligning with Japan on defense.⁶ This sudden policy change frustrated the Japanese government and the ROK lost certain credibility to its counterpart. After two years from this failed negotiation, on December 2014, Japan and the ROK successfully signed the intelligence sharing agreement with the U.S. as the mediator. According to the trilateral intelligence sharing agreement, Japan and the ROK can only share intelligence through the U.S., which seems less progress since they both have GSOMIA with the U.S. However, this agreement indirectly connected two “quasi-allies” in Northeast Asia.

What made the ROK change its mind to sign the trilateral intelligence sharing agreement after two years from the failed negotiation on GSOMIA? The largest obstacle for the ROK to enhance defense cooperation with Japan is notably the anti-Japanese pressure from the public. According to the Genron NPO, 70.9% of Korean participants said they have unfavorable views toward Japan in 2014.⁷ On the other hand, 54.4% of Japanese participants said the same for Korea on the same year.⁸ Public views are largely reflected in policy making in Japan and the ROK, especially when it comes to policy towards their neighboring countries. This is not something unique for Japan-ROK relations. For instance, Japan-China relationship deteriorated during the Koizumi administration, especially from 2001 to 2006 since he visited Yasukuni Shrine every year during these years. Yasukuni Shrine is a controversial subject in the regional politics because the graves of the Class-A war criminals from WWII are worship in its cemetery. On the other hand, the Fukuda administration, which did not visit Yasukuni or avoided any provocative actions toward China, had favorable relationship with China and concluded the Joint Statement between Japan and China on Comprehensively Promoting a Strategic, Mutually Beneficial Relationship with President Hu Jintao.⁹ Around 60% of Chinese participants had unfavorable views toward China during the Koizumi era and it peaked up to 92% in 2013, the year when Abe visited Yasukuni

⁶ “Hannichi Kanjou & Chugoku Hairyo... Kankoku, Nikkan Gunji Jouhou Houkatsu Hogo Kyoutei ni Nanshoku,” May 25, 2015, Sankei News.

⁷ “Dai 3 Kai Nikkan Kyoudou Yoron Chousa Kekka,” May 28, 2015, Genron NPO.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Sheila Smith, *Intimate Rivals*, (New York; Columbia Press, 2015).

again.¹⁰ The same figures dropped to high 30% during Fukuda era. Among many sensitive issues, defense cooperation remains a high hurdle since it directly relates to the history of Japanese military activities in East Asia during the Imperial era before 1945, especially for the victimized countries such as the ROK and China. This is a rather unique case in the region since Japan has successfully enhanced defense cooperation with other maritime democratic states in the Asia Pacific region. On October 9, 2013, Australian Prime Minister Abbott stated, "... Japan is Australia's best friend in Asia and we want to keep it a very strong friendship..." and later he described Japan as a "strong ally".¹¹ In addition, Japan and India concluded The Agreement Concerning Security Measures for the Protection of Classified Military Information.¹² There were no signs of anti-Japanese protests when Australia and India announced their defense alignment with Japan, hence the alignment allergy with Japan is most evident in the ROK and China. This is why it is important to conduct an empirical study for Japan-ROK defense cooperation rather than applying conventional international relation theory to this particular relationship.

COMPLEMENTARY CAPABILITIES MODEL

The complementary capabilities model explains the rationale of the ROK when it enhances its defense cooperation with Japan when their capabilities show compatibilities. As explained above, the ROK, or its policy makers, faces pressure from the anti-Japanese public and political opponents when it tries to enhance defense cooperation. However, looking at the history, the ROK has previously made progress on defense cooperation with Japan, most recently with the trilateral intelligence sharing agreement also including the U.S. Under the complementary capabilities model, the ROK only agrees to improve defense cooperation with Japan when two conditions match. This is when the ROK perceives that Japanese capability is complementary to its own and when the ROK feels the national security is scarce.

¹⁰ "Dai 11 Kai Nicchuu Kyoudou Yoron Chousa Kekka," October 21, 2015, Genron NPO.

¹¹ "The Australia-Japan Defence Relationship: Improving Interoperability at the Operational Level," November 2015, Center for Defence and Strategic Studies.

¹² "Fact Sheet: Japan and India Working Together for Peace and Prosperity," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, December 12, 2015. On October 2015, Japan participated in the India-US Malabar exercise, which is a joint naval drill. They are also increasing defense cooperation on disarmament and non-proliferation, counter-terrorism, cyber-security, and many other traditional and non-traditional security spheres.

In May 30, 2015, the defense ministers from Japan, the ROK, and the U.S. met in Singapore during the Shangri-La Dialogue to discuss about regional security. The joint press statement wrote “[t]he three ministers seriously assessed the North Korean threat and agreed to closely coordinate with the international community to deter North Korean provocations.”¹³ The DPRK has been the prominent threat to the ROK since the Korean War and to Japan especially since 1998 Taepodong-1 launch, when the missile flew over Japan for the first time. According to realist thinking, countries with common security threat will cooperate to balance its power against the adversary state. However, this is not the case for Japan and the ROK. Many academic and government publications have been mentioning that more the DPRK conducts missile or nuclear tests, Japan-ROK defense relationship will strengthen, but the reality shows that the DPRK threat is not the only factor that pushes the ROK to enhance defense cooperation with Japan. The capabilities complementary model explains that exterior threat is a prerequisite condition rather than the exclusive reason. The 2 by 2 model (figure 1) below is the summary of the capabilities complementary model.

	Security Scarce	Security abundant
Complementary Capabilities	Yes (Quadrant 1)	No (Quadrant 2)
No Complementary Capabilities	No (Quadrant 3)	No (Quadrant 4)

FIGURE 1. CAPABILITIES COMPLEMENTARY MODEL.

In figure 1, in both cases where security is abundant (quadrant 2 and 4), no cooperation takes place. This is obvious since any dependency on foreign military is only useful and effective when a country feels the need to balance against an exterior threat or power projection from a third party. For example, in Europe after WWII the U.S. and European countries formed

¹³ “U.S.-ROK-Japan Defense Ministers Meeting Joint Press Statement,” Department of Defense, May 30, 2015. The same joint press statement says, “The three ministers applauded the Trilateral Information Sharing Arrangement, noting that the Arrangement serves to strengthen mutual understanding and cooperation among the three sides on the growing nuclear and missile threats posed by North Korea.”

the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to contain communist expansion and deter any military attack against the Soviet Union. Similarly, the Arab League member states signed a regional collective security agreement in 1950 after their war against Israel in 1948.¹⁴ The only condition for countries to think their securities are abundant is when there are no external threats. However, this is an unrealistic scenario since every country feel insecurity from some kind of threats, whether it is predictable and specific agents or unpredictable and unidentifiable actors. Even the U.S., the country with most powerful military and geographically isolated from most disputed areas in the world, still perceive threats from terrorism, nuclear weapon strikes, and cyber attacks. In the world where military technology is highly advanced and weapons are accessible in many channels, countries are constantly under the possibility of incursions.¹⁵ For the ROK, the DPRK has always been a threat since the Korean War and been prepared to protect its country from a possible invasion by the North. The ROK military consists of 495,000 ground troops, 70,000 sailors, and 65,000 airmen, in addition to 30,000 U.S. troops stationed in the ROK.¹⁶ On the other hand, the DPRK military comprise 1.2 million personnel, including 1 million ground troops, 60,000 sailors, and 120,000 airmen.¹⁷ The DPRK has conducted nuclear tests in 2006, 2009, 2013, and 2016 and has numbers of plutonium-based nuclear weapons, figures vary from 8 to 40 weapons depending on reports.¹⁸ Even the technologically advanced and well-trained ROK

¹⁴ Jonathan Masters. "The Arab League," Council on Foreign Relations, October 21, 2014. <http://www.cfr.org/middle-east-and-north-africa/arab-league/p25967>. The 1948 Arab-Israeli War was the first war the Arab League collectively fought against their common threat. The war ended with the 1949 Armistice Agreement but the members of the Arab League still saw Israel as a threat. In the following year, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Egypt, and Yemen signed the Treaty of Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation Between the States of the Arab League and it was adopted on June 17, 1950.

¹⁵ C. J. Chivers, "Black-Market Weapon Prices Surge in Iraq Chaos," The New York Times, December 10, 2006. Just like the legal competitive market, black-market weapons price fluctuates according to supply and demand. In early 2003, a Kalashnikov in northern Iraq usually cost from \$75 to \$150, depending on its condition and style. Three years later the same weapons cost \$210 to \$650, the price increase was mainly due to the influx of new comers into the black-market, such as Western weapons contractors, Sunni insurgent groups, Shiite paramilitary units, and criminal organizations. These weapons were initially the U.S. issued arms dedicated to the Iraqi Army and police, which many of them were sold in black-markets for personal profits.

¹⁶ Michael Green, Kathleen Hicks, and Mark Cancian, "Asia-Pacific Rebalance 2025 Capabilities, Presence, and Partnerships," Center for Strategic & International Studies, January 2016.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid. Chinese report claims Pyongyang possesses 20 nuclear weapons and has uranium enrichment capacity to build 40 weapons by 2017. Western reports predict the number of the DPRK nuclear arsenals to be

military and United States Forces Korea have not been able to deter against series of nuclear and missile testing and incidents like the sinking of the ROK Navy corvette Cheonan in March 2010, which resulted in deaths of almost 50 South Korean sailors.¹⁹ In a situation where these tests and incidents are conducted by the DPRK, the ROK perceives its security as scarce. As long as the ROK feels threatened by the DPRK, its security will always be scarce (quadrant 1 and 3).

Legal Capability

According to the complementary capabilities model, under the “security scarce” condition, the only component that determines whether the ROK will or will not cooperate is the capability of Japan. This simply explains that when the ROK feels Japanese capability is not complementary to its own capability, the ROK will not find appealing to enhance its defense cooperation with Japan. In terms of the military spending, Japan exceeds the ROK by \$4 billion dollars.²⁰ However, higher defense spending in Japan does not necessarily mean that the ROK finds Japanese defense capability complementary to its own. This is illustrated in the intelligence capability between Japan and the ROK. In order for countries to establish some sort of intelligence sharing agreement, they need to ensure that their shared intelligence is protected from leaking or espionage activities by the counterpart. The Official Secrets Act is implemented by many countries to punish whistleblowers who are, or formerly were, employed by the government that leaked national confidential intelligence to the public, and in most cases these intelligences are related to national security. In the most recent memory of the U.S., Edward Snowden was charged under the 1917 Espionage Act which the complaint read that he was charged with theft “unauthorized communication of national defense information... [and] willful communication of classified communications intelligence information to an unauthorized person.”²¹ Until recently, Japan did not have the

8 to 16.

¹⁹ Victor Cha, “The Sinking of the Cheonan,” Center for Strategic & International Studies, April 22, 2010.

²⁰ Aude-Emmanuelle Fleurant, “SIPRI Military Expenditure Database,” Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2015. In 2015, Japan spent US\$ 40.885 billion and the ROK spent US\$ 36.435 billion on defense.

²¹ Peter Finn and Sari Horwitz, “U.S. Charges Snowden with Espionage,” The Washington Post, June 21, 2013. After the leak, Snowden fled to Hong Kong where he claimed the country that provided the “cultural

legal capacity similar to the Official Secrets Act, which is why Japan was called the “spy haven” during the Cold War. However, this was drastically changed under the second Abe Cabinet since December 2012, which introduced the National Security Council (NSC), the National Security Strategy (NSS), and the National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG). This was part of Abe’s vision of making Japan a “normal” (futsuu) country by pursuing the “Proactive Contributor to Peace” model. According to this model, he believes that Japan needs to actively engage with regional and global security matters to enhance the world peace and prosperity.²² Abe also introduced the state secrecy law in December 2014. According to the explanation provided by the Cabinet Office, this law allows the Heads of Administrative Organs in the government to designate “Specially Designated Secrets” (SDS).²³ In a nut shell, the state secrecy law is similar to the Official Secrets Act that authorizes the government to sentence imprisonment up to 10 years to public officers who conduct any unauthorized disclosure of SDS.²⁴ The SDS is defined as “information that pertains to national security” under this law.²⁵ Although the ROK has not officially commented on the state secrecy law in Japan, it provided more reasons for the defense community in the ROK to believe that Japan is now more capable of protecting defense intelligence from being exposed to the public.

Another step forward for “normalizing” Japan by Abe was the implementation of the right of collective self defense by the Self-Defense Force. The right of collective self defense, along with the individual self defense, is an “inherent right” that is promised in the UN Charter to every member states, however, until recently it was seen as unconstitutional in Japan since the Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution states, “the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling

and legal framework to allow me to work without being immediately detained.”

²² “Nihon no Anzen Hoshou Seisaku: Sekkyokuteki Heiwa Shugi,” The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, March 2016. MOFA explains that there are three key components to the Proactive Contributor to Peace model and those are: 1) Continuing posture as a peaceful nation; 2) Remain as the leading country in world political economy; and 3) Enhance cooperation with partners and allies.

²³ “Main Points of the Act on the Protection of Specially Designated Secrets,” Cabinet Secretariat, 2014.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

international disputes.”²⁶ On July 1, 2014, Abe and his Cabinet reinterpreted the Constitution and enabled the Self-Defense Force to practice the right of collective self defense. According to Michishita and Azuma, Japan’s right of collective self defense expands its role in case of the Korean contingency and it also shows Japanese commitment to the security of the ROK.²⁷ More specifically, the authors state that with the new constitutional interpretation, Japan will become more active in underwater-minesweeping operations near the Korean peninsula. Eventually Japan’s advanced role in security of the ROK will lead to Japan-ROK cooperation on Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) and sharing intelligence related to it. Traditionally, neighboring countries are skeptical about Japan’s relaxation of arms regulation or security laws, but the ROK government refrained from making an official statement regarding the new interpretation of the Article 9.²⁸ The Foreign Minister of ROK only mentioned about the new Japanese security bill as far as saying that Japan would need consensus from the ROK to operate near the Korean territory or when conducting any activities related to the security of the ROK.²⁹ The reason for this gesture by the ROK is because they understood the necessity for stronger defense cooperation with Japan, especially if the new security law increased Japanese capability in the ballistic missile defense system.

Physical Capability

Under the second Abe Cabinet, the physical capability to obtain more defense intelligence has also increased. The Japanese Ministry of Defense announced that it will add two more Aegis equipped ships in the 5-year-plan midterm defense white paper in 2014.³⁰ The Japanese BMD is founded on two missile defense systems, the Aegis system (SM-3) and PAC-3 system. When the missile defense system detects missiles flying towards Japan, the Aegis system will first operate to destroy these missiles in atmospheric space and if this does

²⁶ “The Constitution of Japan,” Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet. The second paragraph of the Article 9 continues, “In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.”

²⁷ Tokunari Michishita and Kiyohiko Azuma, “Chapter 7: Chousen Hantou Yuji to Nihon no Taiou,” *The Korean Peninsula and East Asia*, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2015).

²⁸ “Kankoku, Anzenhoshou Kanren-houan Seiritsu mo Mokunin Nicchukan Shunou-kaidan Misue, Tainichi Kanekei Kaizen Ni Fushin,” Sankei News, September 21, 2015.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ “Bouei Keikaku no Taikou: Chuki Boueiriyoku Seibi Keikaku,” The Ministry of Defense, March, 2014.

not shoot down all the missiles, PAC-3 will activate to destroy them from the land. The sophisticated Aegis system requires maintenance every four years to maintain its capability. This maintenance takes up to 6 months in addition to the annual check ups that takes up to two months.³¹ Since Japan only had four Kongo-class Aegis-equipped ships with BMD capability, it was difficult to be fully prepared to detect missiles from the DPRK by its own defense equipment. Japan usually relies on the U.S. BMD system from the 7th Fleet, which owns 6 Aegis equipped ships, and the X-Band Radars in Aomori and Kyoto. Recent announcements to upgrade and increase the numbers of the Aegis-equipped ships is Japan's attempt to develop its autonomous BMD system.³² If Japan successfully increases the number of the Aegis equipped ships to 8, it will give more incentives for the ROK to cooperate with Japan on defense intelligence sharing, especially on the DPRK missile activities.

Conventionally, Japanese enhancement of its intelligence capability was conducted through joint effort with the U.S. However, the expansion in the Japanese Aegis system is different from this conventional practice and it contributes more to the autonomous Japanese missile defense capability. The autonomous effort by Japan is important to strengthen its intelligence capability, and this is critical for Japan to enhance defense cooperation with the ROK. This section introduces the U.S. capability in Japan to highlight the significance of the autonomous intelligence capability in Japan. The U.S. first introduced X-Band Radar system (TPY-2 Radar) in Tsugaru, Aomori, located in northern part of the Japanese mainland, in June 2006.³³ Although the official position by the U.S. and Japan says that the intelligence obtained by the X-Band Radar in Japan will be equally shared between them, it is located in the Shariki U.S. Sub Base, which is under full control of the U.S. military. There is no legal mechanism to

³¹ "Aegis-kan Mondai wa Han-nichi Kankoku no Kabe... 8-wari Taisei de Misairu Bouei Kyouryoku Mo," Sakei News, February 6, 2015.

³² Currently Japan possesses four Aegis-equipped ships with BMD system called Kongou-style ships and two Aegis-equipped ships without anti-ballistic missile called Ango-style ships. It is in the process of implementing BMD systems on to the Ango-style ships and also introducing two more Aegis-equipped ships with BMD systems.

³³ "TPY-2 Radar (X-Band Radar) Ni Tsuite," The Ministry of Defense, April 2013. Other than Japan, the X-Band Radar system is located in the U.S., Israel, and Turkey.

allow Japanese Self-Defense Force or the government to check the intelligence obtained by the X-Band Radar. To enhance the U.S.-Japan joint missile defense, the same radar system was introduced in Kyoto in October 2014.³⁴ The X-Band Radar in Kyoto is operated by the U.S. and Japan is only accessible to the intelligence provided by the U.S. This passive position of Japan was questioned when the radar was implemented in Aomori in 2006 at a Diet session, but then Prime Minister Koizumi refused to answer it by saying that the mechanism of the U.S.-Japan intelligence sharing is classified under the agreement.³⁵ Therefore, even the U.S. introduces missile defense radars in Japan, as long as it is in the U.S. base (or sub base), it does not directly enhance the Japanese missile defense capability. The new X-Band Radar system in Japan is appealing for the ROK because X-Band Radar system in the region, in addition to the one in Guam, will be linked to Terminal High Altitude Area Defense Missile (THAAD) in case it is implemented in the ROK.³⁶ The U.S. and the ROK are allies, and also bilaterally signed GSOMIA, hence the ROK is comfortable relying on the U.S. to share its intelligence about the DPRK missiles. This is why it was important for Japan to develop its own defense missile system and improve its capability to meet the demand from the ROK.

Both the implementation of the state secrecy law and announcement of increase in the number of the Aegis-equipped ships with anti-ballistic missile capability took place between 2012 and 2014, which was between when Japan-ROK GSOMIA failed and Japan-ROK-US trilateral intelligence sharing agreement was signed. According to the complementary capabilities model, the ROK found Japan's enhanced intelligence sharing capability through change in the legal structure and upgrade in the Aegis system compatible to its own intelligence obtaining capability (quadrant 1). Even when the ROK feels its security is scarce,

³⁴ "Kyoto He Beigun Missile Bouei Radar Haibi Tai Kitachousen Daga Chugoku Ga Hihan," NewSphere, October 24, 2014.

³⁵ "Touben Honbun Johou," The House of Representatives, May 10, 2006. Communist Party Representative, Chizuko Takahashi, submitted a question to the Liberal Democratic Party "if there is any guaranty that Japan will have the access to the intelligence obtained by the X-Band Radar system in Aomori" on February 28, 2006.

³⁶ Junichi Abe, "Kankoku Heno THAAD Haibi Ni Chugoku Ga Yokoyari Wo Ireru Riyuu," Japanese Business Press, May 10, 2016.

it will not increase the level of defense cooperation with Japan unless the ROK feels Japan's capability is complementary to its own (quadrant 3). Although President Lee postponed the agreement on GSOMIA with Japan in June 2012, if the Japanese defense capability was advanced enough to be beneficial for the security of the ROK, he would have concluded the GSOMIA. For instance, when President Park Chung Hee signed the Japan-ROK Basic Treaty in 1965, there were massive protests among the public and political opponents against normalizing with the former imperial power that colonized Korea for 35 years. However, because Park understood that the economic gain outweighed the political risk, he agreed to sign the treaty. Many scholars would argue that personal favoritism towards Japan and strong anti-communist ideology by Park played a significant role in his decision making, but if there was not enough economic benefit that accompanied from normalizing with Japan, he would not have signed the normalization treaty. More recently, the ROK and Japan, signed by the foreign ministers, agreed to settle on the comfort women issue on December 2015. One poll shows that 50.7% of Korean respondents do not support the agreement, especially the strong criticism comes from younger generation which only 31% of the respondents in the 20s support it.³⁷ Since the comfort women issue was one of the major political obstacle that stood between Japan and the ROK, this agreement was seen as a significant breakthrough for improvement in their relationship. In this agreement, Japan offered Prime Minister's "sincere apologies and remorse" and financial support to establish a foundation for the former comfort women, while the ROK promised that the issue is resolved "finally and irreversibly with this announcement".³⁸ Abe did not face significant amount of criticism for concluding this agreement from the public nor from the political opponents, unlike Park. Regardless of the political risk, Park chose to conclude the comfort women agreement because it was hurting their overall relationship.³⁹ Historically, the ROK government faced pressures from the

³⁷ Misato Nagakawa and Trevor Kennedy, "Public Divided Over Comfort Women Agreement," East Asia Forum, 22 January, 2016. On the Japanese side, 49% of respondents support the agreement while 36% indicated that they do not support it.

³⁸ "Announcement by Foreign Ministers of Japan and South Korea on the Issue of Comfort Women," Council on Foreign Relations, December 28, 2015.

³⁹ The bilateral meeting between President Park and Prime Minister Abe in November 2, 2015 was their first time meeting without any third party at the table. Even this meeting was a sidelined event during Japan-ROK-China trilateral summit.

public and political opponents when they cooperated with the Japanese counterparts. Some cases the government pulled back from pursuing cooperation, as it was the case with GSOMIA in 2012, but when potential gains outweighed the political risks, they agreed to enhance cooperation, as it was the case with the Japan-ROK-U.S. trilateral intelligence sharing agreement in 2014. Therefore, the complementary capabilities model explains that the ROK government is active in making decision about whether to cooperate with Japan based on its evaluation on the gains rather than being reactive to the public pressure.

ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS

Cooperation between Japan and the ROK has been a popular subject for political scientists specialized in East Asia. What is fascinating about this relationship is that it can not be explained by classical realist theory, which predict that countries with common threats and interests would align to balance its power against adversaries. According to this realist prediction, Japan and the ROK would enhance cooperation because they both perceive the DPRK as a threat and they are also “quasi-ally” via the U.S. These countries also have liberal democratic system. Realists calculate state behavior based on power balance, which for them is a zero-sum resource, hence history, religion, culture, ethnicity, and other intangible things are less relevant, and these components are more studied by constructivists. However, the current situation between Japan and the ROK proves that they do not act according to the balance of power-based realist thinking. What stands between them and what drives them closer? This section introduces other academic findings about the Japan and the ROK cooperation.

In the classic of Japan-ROK defense cooperation, “Alignment Despite Antagonism”, Victor Cha argues that Japan and the ROK are “quasi-allies”, the relationship which “two states remain unallied but share a third party as a common ally.”⁴⁰ As written above, Cha introduces his quasi-alliance theory by comparing it with classical realist prediction of behaviors of states that share the same external threats. The author updates this simple realist

⁴⁰ Victor Cha, *Alignment Despite Antagonism*, (California: Stanford University Press, 1999): p3.

calculation of state behavior by inserting the perception of abandonment and entrapment by quasi-allies. Rather than using the level of threats as the dependent variable for state behavior, Cha claims that the state perception on the abandonment/entrapment by shared allies is what determines the behavior of quasi-allies.

	Security Scarce	Security abundant
Strong commitment by shared ally	May not (Quadrant 1)	May not (Quadrant 2)
Low commitment by shared ally	Yes (Quadrant 3)	Yes (Quadrant 4)

FIGURE 2. QUASI-ALLIANCE THEORY.

The model above (figure 2) shows the variables that determine whether quasi-allies enhance or reduce the level of cooperation with each other. According to this theory, quasi allies only cooperate when the security commitment by shared ally is weak. Here strong commitment means less likelihood of abandonment and weak commitment means high percentage of abandonment. In essence, this theory explains that “[p]erception of external threat are conditioned not only by objective conditions (i.e., behavior of adversary) but also by the behavior of the shared ally.”⁴¹ Cha’s quasi-alliance theory shows the impact of the U.S. behavior to the closeness of Japan-ROK relationship. Post-WWII history proves that this prediction is largely true. It was most illustrated in the late 1960s, when the Asia Pacific region was at the center of the Cold War. This was after Japan and the ROK normalized their relations and the ROK sent their troops to Vietnam to support the U.S. In July 25, 1969, President Nixon announced the so-called Nixon doctrine in Guam, which projected the U.S. policy to reduce the military presence in Asia, and let the Asians govern their regional security.⁴² Due to the unpopularity of the war in Vietnam at home and the defense budget

⁴¹ Ibid.: p49.

⁴² “Office of the Historians, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, 1969-1972, Document 29,” United States Department of State.

constraints, the U.S. needed to gradually reduce its commitment to Asia. Four months after his speech in Guam, Japan and the U.S. announced the Sato-Nixon Communique in November 21, 1969. This communique was largely on the reversion of Okinawa, but it also included the “Korea clause” in article 4, which declares that the security of the ROK is essential to Japan’s own security.⁴³ Therefore, alignment of Japan and the ROK in the late 1960s came under the Nixon doctrine. This is a plausible explanation for the behavior of quasi-allies. However, this is not always true, especially in recent case. On October, 2011, Secretary Clinton published an article “America’s Pacific Century” on Foreign Policy magazine and it is often seen as the blue print for rebalance to Asia strategy. In this article, Clinton writes, “[w]e are also starting to pursue new trilateral opportunities with countries diverse as Mongolia, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, and South Korea.”⁴⁴ The U.S. commitment to Asia is vividly illustrated in this essay, it is evident from strong message like “[j]ust as Asia is critical to America’s future, an engaged America is vital to Asia’s future.”⁴⁵ During his presidency, Obama followed this policy to bring Japan and the ROK closer despite their political frictions. Obama hosted two trilateral meetings with Park and Abe during the nuclear security summits during his presidency. The quasi-alliance theory explains the awkward relationship between Abe and Park over history and territory during the rebalance strategy, but more recently the bilateral relationship is slowly improving. The trilateral intelligence sharing agreement on December 2014, the Abe-Park meeting in November 2015, and comfort women agreement in December 2015 are all signs of progress in their relationship. In a survey conducted by Foreign Policy, 66% of the participants that were chosen among the U.S. top International Relations scholars on foreign-policy research said East Asia will be the area that will be the greatest strategic important to the U.S. 20 years from now.⁴⁶ This is understandable considering many mid and long term opportunities and challenges for the U.S. are concentrated in the Asia Pacific region, such as China’s rise, the

⁴³ “Joint Statement of Japanese Prime Minister Eisaku Sato and U.S. President Richard Nixon,” The World and Japan Database Project, Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo.

⁴⁴ Hillary Clinton, “America’s Pacific Century,” Foreign Policy, October 11, 2011.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Daniel Maliniak, Susan Peterson, Ryan Powers, and Michael J. Tierney, “The Best International Relations Schools in the World,” Foreign Policy Magazine, October 7, 2015.

DPRK nuclear threats, and the TPP, and it is difficult to see the U.S. abandoning rebalance to Asia strategy in foreseeable future. If the quasi-alliance theory is applied to the future of Japan-ROK relations where the U.S. maintains its rebalance strategy, they will continue to avoid to enhance their cooperation. However, as recent signs of rapprochement already suggest, this will not happen because Japanese defense capability, namely intelligence and missile defense system, is becoming more compatible to the ROK's capability. Since the ROK perceives Japanese capability has improved under the second Abe Cabinet, it will enhance its cooperation with Japan even there is a strong U.S. commitment to the Asia Pacific region.

Unlike realism which claims that states behave according to their assessment of power, constructivism understand that states, and other agents in international relations, behave based on their identities which is founded on their social and historical background. In "Japan-South Korea Identity Clash", Brad Glosserman and Scott A. Snyder take constructivist approach to understand the behaviors of Japan and the ROK, especially over different perspectives on the regional history. Constructivist approach enables to analyze the Japan-ROK friction from looking at the history of the problems and public sentiments toward the other countries. In essence, the regional history is the cause of the deteriorated bilateral relationship, and it is the historical legacies that develop anti-Japanese sentiments among the Korean public. Both Japan and the ROK are mature democracies and industrialized countries, and in democracy, public opinion greatly reflects the government policies.⁴⁷ The authors explain when the ROK was under dictatorship, its foreign policy towards Japan was able to be implemented without paying too much attention to the public sentiments.⁴⁸ This is true for the greatest achievements in Japan-ROK relations, 1965 Japan-ROK Basic Treaty. The normalization talk between Japan and the ROK took close to 15 years due to anti-Japanese sentiments in the leadership, most notably President Syngman Rhee, and the public. President Park Chung-Hee was more pragmatic than the former leader and chose to conclude the Basic

⁴⁷ Brad Glosserman and Scott A. Snyder, *The Japan-South Korea Identity Clash: East Asian Security and the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015): P5.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Treaty, however, the public still remained strongly opposed to this deal. Unlike today's polity in the ROK, Park regime was under the military dictatorship and even when the elections were held, the legitimacy of the voting system still remains unclear. Hence, Park had less incentives to reflect public sentiments to his policies. Although the authors successfully explain the importance of the anti-Japanese sentiments among the Korean public in framing foreign policy towards Japan, they are not clear about "when", or in what conditions, these countries enhance cooperation. Throughout this book, the authors examine the public polls from Japan, the ROK, and China on the favorable or unfavorable sentiments to neighboring countries. This study teaches us the historical facts and public emotions during each events, but does not provide prediction on future relations. Instead the authors conclude the book by recommending trilateral cooperation with including the U.S., and ultimately with what they call the "grand bargaining" to reconcile the Japan-ROK relations.⁴⁹ The "grand bargaining" involves Japan, the ROK, and the U.S. to acknowledge their portion of causing the political friction and asks them to promise that they will never politicize these sensitive issues again. For instance, according to this proposal, the U.S. needs to admit its failure to coordinate better post-WWII settlement.⁵⁰ Also Japan is required to abandon the claim for the sovereignty over Takeshima/Dokto and make financial payments for the sufferings of individual comfort women.⁵¹ While major efforts are made by Japan and the U.S., the proposal suggests the ROK to simply accept these acknowledgements. The "grand bargaining" is an ambitious proposal that is less realistic due to the unequal amounts of efforts need to be made among the three states. In reality, Japan and the ROK concluded the comfort women agreement in December 2015 as it was proposed as a part of the grand bargaining strategy. However, this was only possible because the ROK accepted to include the phrase "the issue is resolved finally and irreversibly" in the agreement, which was a significant compromise from the ROK. Constructivism helps to understand the link between public sentiments to policy and significance of national identity to state behavior, but it undermines the pragmatic thinking behind policy makers, especially when it is related to alliances and security. Even the times

⁴⁹ Ibid. P171.

⁵⁰ Ibid. P172.

⁵¹ Ibid.

when politics seem to be irrational, there are always levels of pragmatism behind them.

CONCLUSION

Japan and the ROK are quasi-allies because of their shared ally, the U.S. However, regardless of their common threats and interests, they refuse to enhance defense cooperation. This essay introduced the complementary capabilities model which explained that the ROK will only improve its defense cooperation with Japan when its security is scarce and the Japanese capability is compatible to its own. In reality, the ROK has been security scarce from when it was first founded. The military capabilities, both conventional and nuclear, of the DPRK are drastically different compared to the time during the Korean War. Occasionally, the DPRK conducts surprise attacks to the ROK and launches missiles toward the Sea of Japan. Hence, the complementary capabilities model explains that the level of Japanese defense capability determines whether the ROK will align with Japan or not. The failure of GSOMIA in June 2012 and success of the trilateral intelligence sharing agreement in December 2014 proved the complementary capabilities model to be a sound argument. Between the two negotiations, Japan upgraded its intelligence sharing capability, both physically and legally. As for the physical capability, Japan increased the number of the Aegis-equipped ships with anti-ballistic missile capability, and as for the legal capability, the second Abe Cabinet introduced the state secrecy law and also reinterpreted Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution to allow to exercise the right of collective self defense. The argument based on this empirical study is that the ROK decided to conclude the trilateral intelligence sharing agreement because it perceived the new Japanese intelligence system and legal framework is complementary to its own.

Many academic works have previously written on Japan-ROK relations. Realism would predict that Japan and the ROK will cooperate due to their similar perception of threats towards their common adversary, the DPRK. However, external threat on its own did not bring these two countries together. The quasi-alliance theory, proposed by Victor Cha, explains the level of fear of entrapment/abandonment determines the closeness of quasi-allies. This assessment explains most behaviors between Japan and the ROK, but it is less applicable

to recent relations, especially under the U.S. rebalance to Asia strategy. Constructivists focuses on the idea that each nation have different historical and social background, thus they each have unique motive for their policies and behaviors. Glosserman and Snyder introduced the public polls as the evidence to show how public sentiments affect policies. This is true, especially in democracy, but this theory does not help to understand the conditions Japan and the ROK will cooperate. In addition, identity is a fluid notion and it is likely to change rapidly in this globalized society. Therefore, when assessing defense cooperation, realism is most suitable theory in international relations because it calculates the capability, not only the physical component of it but comprehensive aspect that contributes to power as a whole. The complementary capabilities model not only explains about the past but it also teaches what is required for Japan and the ROK to enhance their defense cooperation for the future. In order for them to establish better and constructive defense relationship, both countries need to have capabilities that are compatible to each other. As China's rise continues and the DPRK improve its missile technology, Japan and the ROK will face more necessity to enhance their cooperation in the future. The next step for them is to reach the GSOMIA agreement as soon as possible and persist their improvement in capabilities for their national securities and the regional peace.

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