

#### “The Art of the Bluff: The U.S.-Japan Alliance under the Trump Administration”

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Tell us this cannot happen, the Japanese said to their American friends, listening to Republican Party nominee Donald J. Trump during the 2016 campaign. Trump attacked Japan as an economic predator, disdained American allies as free riders, and broadly rejected the U.S. grand strategy that had benefited Japan tremendously. Friends in Boston and Washington D.C. (and New Hampshire) assured the Japanese that Trump was unelectable, and that under a Hillary Clinton presidency, Japan would resume its place as a valued American ally. Trump’s election was thus a profound shock to Japan—the latest in a long line of *shokku* from the United States to jolt Tokyo.<sup>1</sup>

Observers have speculated about the impact of Trump’s election on the U.S.-Japan relationship. Just how far would Trump’s foreign-policy revolution go, and how would Tokyo respond if pressured by the new President to contribute more to the U.S.-Japan alliance? Many observers (particularly many Japanese) protested that Japan was already making significant contributions, and that Japan’s lackluster economy, demographic problems, and pacifist tradition meant that Tokyo could only disappoint a U.S. president demanding greater burdensharing.<sup>2</sup>

Japan could certainly contribute more to the U.S.-Japan alliance—but it does not look like it will be asked to do so. In the span of just a couple of months, the Trump *shokku* appears to have passed. Much to the relief of

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<sup>1</sup> In the 1969 Guam Doctrine, President Richard Nixon declared that that America’s Asian allies needed to play a larger role in regional security. He announced his historic visit to Beijing in 1971, and soon thereafter—blaming Japanese financial policy for American trade deficits—the U.S. abandoned the yen-dollar rate that had prevailed since 1945. On the Nixon and Plaza shocks see Michael Schaller, *Altered States: The United States and Japan since the Occupation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), ch. 12; William W. Grimes, *Unmaking the Japanese Miracle: Macroeconomic Politics 1985-2000* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), ch. 4.

<sup>2</sup> On the Japanese contribution see Reiji Yoshida, “Trump Remarks Prompt Debate over Cost of Japan-U.S. Defense Ties,” *Japan Times*, 16 May 2016.

not only Tokyo but also the U.S. foreign-policy establishment, Trump has significantly backtracked from the revolution he promised at those red-hatted rallies. The President now seems unlikely to demand (and Tokyo seems unlikely to volunteer) dramatic increases in Japan's defense contributions. Japan's national security policy will thus continue the gradual, steady evolution that has characterized it over the past several decades.

### *Trump's Foreign Policy Revolution*

During his campaign, Trump challenged the prevailing American grand strategy, known as 'deep engagement' or 'global leadership.' According to this strategy, Washington sought to spread political liberalism, market capitalism, and American influence around the world.<sup>3</sup> Deep engagement relied on multilateral institutions [such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and so forth] to coordinate diplomacy, provide mechanisms for dispute resolution, and promote liberal economic development.<sup>4</sup> The strategy also rested on American alliances in key regions. American security guarantees deterred aggression, dissuaded allies from conventional military buildups,<sup>5</sup> slowed the spread of nuclear weapons to allies,<sup>6</sup> and thus dampened threat perception and arms racing.<sup>7</sup> Proponents of deep engagement also argued that U.S. alliances would create economic benefits for the U.S. through linkage opportunities.<sup>8</sup>

Trump campaigned on a platform that rejected this longstanding grand strategy. Walter Russell Mead called his election a "Jacksonian revolt" in American foreign policy, arguing, "For the first time in 70 years, the American people have elected a president who disparages the policies, ideas, and institutions at the heart of

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<sup>3</sup> On this strategy see Stephen Brooks, G. John Ikenberry, and William C. Wohlforth, "Don't Come Home, America: The Case against Retrenchment," *International Security* 37:3 (Winter 2012/13): 7-51; Michele Flournoy and Janine Davidson, "The Logic of U.S. Foreign Deployments," *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2012); Robert J. Art, *A Grand Strategy for America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> On the post-World War II liberal order see G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011). For discussion see the March 2017 ISSF policy roundtable at <https://issforum.org/roundtables/policy/1-6-liberal-internationalism> as well as the 2011 policy roundtable on the same topic at <https://issforum.org/ISSF/PDF/ISSF-Roundtable-2-4.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> On deterrence and assurance in U.S. alliances, see Jennifer Lind, "Geography and the Security Dilemma in East Asia," in Rosemary Foot, Saadia Pekkanen, and John Ravenhill, eds., *The Oxford University Handbook of the International Relations of East Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Art, *A Grand Strategy for America*, 139-145.

<sup>6</sup> Alexandre Debs and Nuno Monteiro, *Nuclear Politics: The Strategic Logic of Proliferation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Etel Solingen, *Nuclear Logics: Contrasting Paths in East Asia and the Middle East* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Alexander Lanoszka, "Protection States Trust? Major Power Patronage, Nuclear Behavior, and Alliance Dynamics," Ph.D. diss, Princeton University, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> On spirals see Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976). On U.S. alliances promoting regional stability generally see Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan*; Brooks, Ikenberry, and Wohlforth, "Don't Come Home, America;" Art, *A Grand Strategy for America*.

<sup>8</sup> Brooks, Ikenberry, and Wohlforth, "Don't Come Home, America," 42-44.

U.S. foreign policy.”<sup>9</sup> Trump’s discussions of foreign policy have been cryptic and relatively rare, but certain themes come across loud and clear.<sup>10</sup> Broadly, he sees the post-World War II, U.S.-led international order as having been bad for U.S. interests, and vows to put ‘America First.’

Trump is skeptical of the value of multilateral institutions, and of the agreements they produced. He tweeted that the United Nations was “just a club for people to get together, talk and have a good time. So sad!”<sup>11</sup> NAFTA, the WTO, and other trade deals were a “disaster” for America.<sup>12</sup> In Trump’s view, misguided liberal internationalist leaders had put system-maintenance ahead of America-maintenance. He lamented in a speech to a Joint Session of Congress, “For too long, we’ve watched our middle class shrink as we’ve exported our jobs and wealth to foreign countries. We’ve financed and built one global project after another, but ignored the fates of our children in the inner cities of Chicago, Baltimore, Detroit...”<sup>13</sup> Because of ‘bad deals,’ said Trump, “the factories shuttered and left our shores, with not even a thought about the millions upon millions of American workers left behind.”<sup>14</sup> Trump savaged the “job-killing” Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) throughout his campaign, and, once in office, withdrew the United States from the agreement.<sup>15</sup>

In Trump’s view, while U.S. leaders were foolishly playing a liberal cosmopolitan game, predatory trade partners were playing a mercantilist game—and America paid the price. “You look at what Japan has done over the years,” Trump said. “They...play the money market, they play the devaluation market and we sit there like a bunch of dummies.”<sup>16</sup> Trump decried China’s “massive theft of intellectual property, putting unfair taxes on our companies...and the at-will and massive devaluation of their currency and product

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<sup>9</sup> Walter Russell Mead, “The Jacksonian Revolt in U.S. Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2017).

<sup>10</sup> On Trump’s foreign policy see Randall L. Schweller, “A Third-Image Explanation for Why Trump Now: A Response to Robert Jervis’s ‘President Trump and IR Theory,’” *H-Diplo*, 8 February 2017 <https://issforum.org/roundtables/policy/1-5m-third-image>; Colin Kahl and Hal Brands, “Trump’s Grand Strategic Train Wreck,” *Foreign Policy*, 31 January 2017; Joshua Itzkowitz Shiffrin, “Donald Trump’s Foreign Policy Views are Actually Pretty Mainstream,” *Monkey Cage*, *Washington Post*, 4 February 2016; Josh Rogin, “The Trump Doctrine Revealed,” *Bloomberg*, 31 January 2016; Thomas Wright, “Trump’s 19<sup>th</sup> Century Foreign Policy,” *Politico*, 20 January 2016.

<sup>11</sup> See Colum Lynch, “White House Seeks to Cut Billions in Funding for United Nations,” *Foreign Policy*, 13 March 2017.

<sup>12</sup> Geoff Dyer, “Donald Trump Threatens to Pull US Out of WTO,” *Financial Times*, 24 July 2016.

<sup>13</sup> Remarks by President Trump in Joint Address to Congress, 28 February 2017, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/02/28/remarks-president-trump-joint-address-congress>.

<sup>14</sup> Inauguration speech of President Trump, accessed at <http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/20/politics/trump-inaugural-address/>

<sup>15</sup> President Trump quoted in Eunice Yoon, “Fears that the cost of Trump killing the TPP could include US jobs,” *CNBC.com*, 16 November 2016.

<sup>16</sup> Takeshi Kawanami and Kentaro Iwamoto, “Trump Fires Next Salvo, Naming China, Japan ‘Currency Manipulators,’” *Nikkei Asian Review*, 1 February 2017.

dumping.”<sup>17</sup> Richard Lighthizer, Trump’s nominee for U.S. Trade Representative, argued that the WTO was not “set up to deal effectively” with countries pursuing an industrial policy, and argued that with this in mind, the United States needed to negotiate new deals.<sup>18</sup> Both Trump and his advisor Peter Navarro at times mentioned imposing a 20 percent ‘wall’ tariff on Mexican imports, and upwards of 40 percent tariffs on China and others. Navarro, who now heads Trump’s recently created National Trade Council, suggested that “Trump will impose countervailing tariffs not just on China, but on *any* American trade partner that cheats on its trade deals using practices such as currency manipulation and illegal export subsidies.”<sup>19</sup> Trump argues that while he believes in free trade, “it also has to be fair trade. It’s been a long time since we had fair trade.”<sup>20</sup>

Trump also views U.S. alliances differently than the liberal internationalists who previously helmed U.S. national security policy. Rather than valuing alliances as part of a liberal community, Trump sees them as a means to an end: as vehicles for pooling resources against shared adversaries. Under this logic, if there is no shared adversary, or if there is no pooling (or, God forbid, both), then an alliance makes no sense.<sup>21</sup> The United States “subsidized the armies of other countries,” Trump said in his inaugural address, “we’ve defended other nation’s borders while refusing to defend our own; and spent trillions of dollars overseas while America’s infrastructure has fallen into disrepair and decay.” U.S. alliances made “other countries rich while the wealth, strength, and confidence of our country has disappeared over the horizon.”<sup>22</sup> The allies should be doing more to pull their weight. “They’re very unfair to us,” he said. “We strongly support NATO, we only ask that all NATO members make their full and proper financial contribution to the NATO alliance, which many of them have not been doing.”<sup>23</sup> Trump also protested the lopsided nature of the U.S.-Japan alliance. “You know we have a treaty with Japan where if Japan is attacked, we have to use the full force and might of

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<sup>17</sup> Noah Friedman, “Trump Accuses China of ‘Massive Theft of Intellectual Property’ and Unfairly Taxing US Companies,” *Business Insider*, 9 December 2016.

<sup>18</sup> “Lighthizer vows to crack down on unfair China practices,” *Financial Times*, 14 March 2017.

<sup>19</sup> Peter Navarro, “Trump’s 45% Tariff on Chinese Goods is Perfectly Calculated,” *Los Angeles Times*, 21 July 2016.

<sup>20</sup> The White House, Remarks by President Trump in Joint Address to Congress, 28 February 2017.

<sup>21</sup> Scholars advocating a strategy of “restraint” or “offshore balancing” make similar arguments. Barry R. Posen, *Restraint: A New Foundation for US National Security Policy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014); Barry R. Posen, “Pull Back: the Case for a Less Activist Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2013); Christopher Preble, *The Power Problem: How American Military Dominance Makes Us Less Safe, Less Prosperous, and Less Free* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009); Christopher Layne, “The China Challenge to U.S. Hegemony,” *Current History* (January 2008); Eugene Gholtz, Daryl G. Press, and Harvey Sapolsky, “Come Home, America: The Case for Restraint in the Face of Temptation,” *International Security* 21:4 (Spring 1997): 5-48.

<sup>22</sup> Inauguration speech of President Trump, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/20/politics/trump-inaugural-address/>

<sup>23</sup> Jacob Pramuk, “Trump Aims to Reassure Allies about US support, But Asks Them to Pay Up More,” *CNBC.com*, 6 February 2017.

the United States,” Trump said during the campaign. “If we’re attacked, Japan doesn’t have to do anything. They can sit home and watch Sony television, OK?”<sup>24</sup>

Trump also departs from liberal internationalists’ strong commitment to preventing nuclear spread. In Trump’s view this was regrettable (“I hate proliferation”), but probably inevitable.<sup>25</sup> He argues that because America is paying too much for its alliances, those alliances are unsustainable. “We’re protecting all these nations all over the world,” said Trump. “We can’t afford to do it anymore...at some point, we cannot be the policeman of the world.”<sup>26</sup> Because the allies are not contributing enough, the alliances are unsustainable; without the alliances, the allies will ultimately choose to acquire nuclear weapons. (“They have to pay us or we have to let them protect themselves.”)<sup>27</sup> Regarding Japan, Trump said: “If the United States keeps on its path, its current path of weakness, they’re going to want to have [nuclear weapons] ... because I don’t think they feel very secure in what’s going on with our country.”<sup>28</sup>

### *Japan and the Trump Shokku*

Japan has benefited tremendously from the institutions and alliances that Trump vowed to dismantle. Since the 1960s, trade deals gave Japan access to the U.S. and other markets, enabling Japan’s export-led growth strategy and its economic rise.<sup>29</sup> Multilateral institutions facilitated the spread of Japan’s bureaucrats, businesspeople, products, and culture around the globe, enabling Japan to become a leader in trade and global governance.

Alliance with the United States also conferred many benefits on Tokyo.<sup>30</sup> After the war, a commitment to building up Japan as a strong ally led Washington to abandon punishing reparations, bestow economic and

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<sup>24</sup> Jesse Johnson, “Trump Rips U.S. Defense of Japan as One-sided, Too Expensive,” *Japan Times*, 6 August 2016. This language oddly recalls the 1971 Nixon shock, when a similarly dismissive John Connally (Nixon’s Treasury Secretary) said that if Japan did not abide by fair trade, “they could just sit in their Toyotas in Yokohama and watch their color TVs and leave us alone.” Quoted in Bruce Cumings, “Japan’s Position in the World System,” in Andrew Gordon, ed., *Postwar Japan as History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 55.

<sup>25</sup> For an argument that the spread of nuclear weapons has stabilizing effects on international politics, see Kenneth N. Waltz, “More May Be Better,” in Sagan and Waltz, eds., *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons*, ch. 1.

<sup>26</sup> Transcript: Donald Trump Expounds on His Foreign Policy Views,” *New York Times*, 26 March 2016.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Zack Beauchamp, “Donald Trump: Make America Great Again by Letting More Countries have Nukes,” *Vox.com*, 30 March 2016; also see Jesse Johnson, “Amid North Korea Threat, Tillerson Hints that ‘Circumstances Could Evolve’ for a Japanese Nuclear Arsenal,” *Japan Times*, 19 March 2017.

<sup>28</sup> “Donald Trump Expounds on his Foreign Policy Views,” *New York Times*, 26 March 2016.

<sup>29</sup> On the economic benefits to Japan from the U.S.-Japan alliance, see Michael Beckley, Yusaku Horiuchi, and Jennifer M. Miller, “America’s Role in the Making of Japan’s Economic Miracle, paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, 2013.

<sup>30</sup> On Japan’s “Yoshida Doctrine” see Christopher W. Hughes, *Japan’s Remilitarisation* (London: Routledge, 2009); Andrew Oros, *Normalizing Japan Politics, Identity, and the Evolution of Security Practice* (Stanford: Stanford

military aid, and, over the years, temper retaliation to Japan's often mercantilist trade policies.<sup>31</sup> Of course, Tokyo does contribute financially to the expense of stationing U.S. forces in Japan,<sup>32</sup> and the Japanese bear other burdens as well. People living near bases endure many problems (crime, noise, environmental damage, military accidents) – particularly in Okinawa, where a tiny island bears a massive base footprint.<sup>33</sup> But the alliance enabled Japan to spend under one percent of GDP on defense. During the Cold War this was far below the amount spent by NATO countries, and today is less than half the global average of 2.4 percent of GDP.<sup>34</sup> In sum, Japan benefited in many ways from the postwar order that Trump was attacking; his ascent to the White House was a major shock.

The shock hit particularly hard because of Japan's worsening threat environment. Steady improvement in nuclear and missile programs has increased the threat of North Korea's weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and Japan continues to worry about political stability in Pyongyang.<sup>35</sup> Tokyo has also become increasingly concerned about China's rising defense budgets and military modernization. In recent years, Beijing's more assertive policies (for example, constructing and militarizing islands, surveilling and harassing the ships of rival claimants in island disputes, declaring an Air Defense Identification Zone) suggest that China seeks to become the region's dominant military power.<sup>36</sup> Particularly worrying to Tokyo, Beijing has also grown more assertive in its claim to the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, which are currently controlled by Japan. In the economic and financial realms, China has become the region's most pivotal economy. At a time when Japan sees China

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University Press, 2008); Richard J. Samuels, *Securing Japan: Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asian Security* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).

<sup>31</sup> On illiberal Japanese trade practices see Michael Mastanduno, "System Maker and Privilege Taker: U.S. Power and the International Political Economy," *World Politics* 61:1 (2009): 121-154; Eric Heginbotham and Richard J. Samuels, "Mercantile Realism and Japanese Foreign Policy," *International Security* 22:4 (Spring 1998):171-203; Yoshimitsu Imuta, "The Roles of Trade and Economic Cooperation in the Evolution into a Major Economic Power," in Mikio Sumiya, ed, *Japanese Trade and Industry Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), ch. 28.

<sup>32</sup> Japan contributes about \$1.5 billion in host-nation support per year. See Nobuhiro Kubo, Kiyoshi Takenaka, "Japan Agrees to Raise Host-Nation Spending for U.S. Military," *Reuters*, 16 December 2015.

<sup>33</sup> Yuko Kawato, *Protests Against US Military Base Policy in Asia: Persuasion and its Limits* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2017); Andrew Yeo, *Activists, Alliances, and Anti-U.S. Base Protests* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011), ch. 4.

<sup>34</sup> Data from Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2015. Some scholars argue that the one-percent figure does not capture important defense expenditures. See Robert Dekle, "The Relationship between Defense Spending and Economic Performance in Japan," in J. Makin and D. Hellmann, eds., *Sharing World Leadership? A New Era for America and Japan* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research); Richard J. Samuels, "New Fighting Power! Japan's Growing Maritime Capabilities and East Asian Security," *International Security* 32:3 (Winter 2007/2008): 84-112.

<sup>35</sup> Jeffrey Lewis, "North Korea's Nuke Program is Way More Sophisticated Than You Think," *Foreign Policy*, 9 September 2016. On the instability unleashed by a North Korean collapse, see Bruce Bennett and Jennifer Lind, "The Collapse of North Korea," *International Security* 36:2 (Fall 2011): 84-119.

<sup>36</sup> On such policies see Jennifer Lind, "Asia's Other Revisionist Power," *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2017).

assuming a more regionally dominant political, economic, and military role, the Japanese heard Trump demanding increases in military burden-sharing by America's allies, and declaring that he was 'prepared to walk' unless he got them.

Tokyo, as a major stakeholder in the liberal order, was also dismayed by Trump's broad rejection of multilateral institutions and processes. In particular, Trump's withdrawal from TPP—a deal on which Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe had expended a great deal of political capital at home—was a major blow. Abe saw TPP as a vehicle to overcome special interests and implement structural reforms aimed at improving Japanese competitiveness.<sup>37</sup> Brookings scholar Mireya Solis argues that the TPP was “the best shot to relaunch [Japan's] project of economic revitalization.”<sup>38</sup> Tokyo also valued TPP as a counterweight to China's emerging economic and financial dominance in East Asia. Japanese foreign policy expert Yoichi Funabashi laments the regional vacuum created by the death of TPP: “That vacuum will be filled immediately and China does not hide its enthusiasm for filling it.”<sup>39</sup> And as Trump argued for levying tariffs on economic competitors, Japan feared “a return to the trade wars of the 1980s and early '90s, where many Americans saw Japan as an untrustworthy economic adversary.”<sup>40</sup> In the realms of both trade and the military alliance, Trump's election seemed to portend a crisis in the U.S.-Japan relationship.

### *The Art of the Bluff*

Some observers would protest that Japan could not possibly make the kinds of dramatic changes in national security policy that Trump seemed poised to demand. Disapproving polls and numerous protests in 2015, when Abe pushed through new security legislation on 'collective self-defense,' showed the lack of popular enthusiasm for greater military assertiveness. “When it comes to changing military policy,” notes Japan scholar Sheila A. Smith, “public opinion polling reveals deep ambivalence.”<sup>41</sup> Japanese leaders are preoccupied with economic problems: with a debt burden that is the highest in the world (254 percent of GDP),<sup>42</sup> unfavorable demographics, and growing demands for social welfare from Japan's aging population. Thus, like any good negotiator (I hear someone wrote a book on that), Tokyo may sigh that Japan is doing all that it possibly can.

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<sup>37</sup> “The Battle for Japan,” *Economist*, 27 June 2014; Konrad Yakabuski, “Why Japan is Hell-Bent on Saving the Trans-Pacific Partnership,” *The Globe and Mail*, 23 December 2016.

<sup>38</sup> Mireya Solis, “Approval of the TPP Is Vital for Continued U.S. Power in Asia,” Room for Debate, *New York Times*, 6 October 2015.

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in Yakabuski, “Why Japan is Hell-Bent on Saving the Trans-Pacific Partnership.”

<sup>40</sup> Quote from Jonathan Soble, “After Trump Rejects Pacific Trade Deal, Japan Fears Repeat of 1980s,” *New York Times*, 25 January 2017.

<sup>41</sup> Sheila A. Smith, “Defining Defense: Japan's Military Identity Crisis,” *World Politics Review*, 12 May 2015. On Japan's security legislation see Jennifer Lind, “Japan's Security Evolution,” Policy Analysis no. 788, CATO Institute, 25 February 2016; Adam P. Liff, “Abe the Evolutionary,” *Washington Quarterly* 38:2 (2015).

<sup>42</sup> “China, US, Japan Top Borrowers,” *South China Morning Post*, 24 February 2017.

It's not. Increasing its military spending and roles would be indeed require Japanese leaders to make tough choices, just like politicians elsewhere who are forced to trade off guns and butter. But at one percent of GDP, Japan devotes half of the level of effort to defense compared to other high-income countries (whose average spending is 2.4 percent); and far less than countries facing a security threat (for example, Israel, South Korea, and Ukraine spend 5.4 percent; 2.3 percent; and 4 percent, respectively).<sup>43</sup>

Some observers might argue that Tokyo cannot increase its defense spending because leaders are constrained by 'antimilitarist' norms and institutions like the one-percent of GDP ceiling in defense spending, Article 9 of the Constitution, the three non-nuclear principles, and so forth. They are indeed significant in Japan's defense policy-making process, and valued by the Japanese public.<sup>44</sup> Over the past several decades, however, Japan's conservative leaders have discarded or massaged numerous constraints, such as reversing previous bans on the overseas dispatch of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (SDF), the military use of space, and arms exports.<sup>45</sup>

During the Cold War, Tokyo increased its burden-sharing when it confronted *both* a more dangerous security environment, and less effort by the United States.<sup>46</sup> In the 1970s, for example, the Soviets were building up their maritime capabilities in East Asia, and President Nixon (via the Guam Doctrine) informed U.S. allies that they would have to do more. At that time, Japan accepted new military roles, and made significant improvements that turned Japan's SDF into a world-class maritime force.

Today, given an increasingly threatening China and less American support (via a Trump Doctrine), this pattern suggests Tokyo could also increase its military spending and roles. And because of important changes in Japanese domestic politics (such as electoral reforms and the collapse of the Left), Japanese conservatives today are less constrained than were their Cold-War counterparts.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, Tokyo has already moved in this direction with Abe's reinterpretation of "collective self-defense" and with his recent statement that future Japanese military budgets will need to exceed one percent of GDP.<sup>48</sup> In sum, lamentations that Japan cannot

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<sup>43</sup> Data from World Bank, 2015, accessed at [data.worldbank.org](http://data.worldbank.org)

<sup>44</sup> On the legal and normative effects of these institutions see Thomas U. Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism: National Security in Germany and Japan* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Yasuhiro Izumikawa, "Explaining Japanese Antimilitarism: Normative and Realist Constraints on Japan's Security Policy," *International Security* 35:2, (Fall 2010): 123-160.

<sup>45</sup> On the evolution of Japanese security policy over time see Andrew L. Oros, *Japan's Security Renaissance: New Policies and Politics for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017); Hughes, *Japan's Remilitarisation*; Jennifer M. Lind, "Pacifism or Passing the Buck? Testing Theories of Japanese Security Policy," *International Security* 29:1 (2004): 92-121.

<sup>46</sup> Lind, "Pacifism or Passing the Buck?"

<sup>47</sup> On the left see Gerald Curtis, "Weak Opposition is a Cancer in Japan's Political System," *East Asia Forum*, 18 September 2016; on the increased prominence of national security policy in Japan see Amy Catalinac, *Electoral Reform and National Security in Japan: From Pork to Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

<sup>48</sup> "Japan PM Abe says no defense budget ceiling as 1 percent to GDP," *Reuters*, 1 March 2017. On the Japanese security legislation see Liff, "Abe the Evolutionary."



increase its military spending should be understood to be a bluff; Japan does “less when it can, and more when it must.”<sup>49</sup>

Fortunately for Tokyo, it appears that Trump was bluffing too. The President does not appear to be implementing the foreign policy that he campaigned on.<sup>50</sup> Early on, Japan was stricken by Trump’s Rising-Sun rhetoric, scorched-earth inaugural address, and various phone calls (in which the President made a startling overture toward Taiwan and inexplicably yelled at Australia). During his confirmation hearings, Rex Tillerson, Trump’s nominee for Secretary of State, also issued baneful warnings about confronting China in the South China Sea.<sup>51</sup>

But gradually, the Japanese began to feel cautious hope. Cabinet ministers visiting Japan—particularly Secretary of Defense James Mattis in early February 2017—reassured Japanese officials with statements like, “The U.S.-Japan alliance is critical to ensuring that this region remains safe and secure—not just now, but for years to come.” Fear not: the U.S. was “not planning any “dramatic military moves” in the South China Sea.”<sup>52</sup> The alliance that Trump lambasted during the campaign as rife with Japanese free-riding was, according to Mattis, a “model of cost-sharing.”<sup>53</sup> Tokyo was delighted. “Mattis’s visit was a resounding success,” commented journalist Martin Fackler. “He hit the right notes—U.S. commitment to Japan, but also to stability in the region.”<sup>54</sup>

Soon thereafter, Abe flew to the U.S. for a summit with Trump, held in Washington D.C. and Florida. Over the weekend, which was decorated by sunshine and photos of the two grinning leaders, Trump sounded like any other recent American president with remarks like, “The U.S.-Japan alliance is the cornerstone of peace

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<sup>49</sup> Jennifer Lind, “Japan’s Security Evolution,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 16 September 2015.

<sup>50</sup> For signs of greater conciliation toward China, see Jane Perlez, “Rex Tillerson and Xi Jinping Meet in China and Emphasize Cooperation,” *New York Times*, 19 March 2017; Nikhil Sonnad, “Rex Tillerson’s Tone on China Got a Lot Friendlier Once He Actually Got to China,” *Quartz*, 19 March 2017. On trade, see Binyamin Appelbaum, “President’s Growing Trade Gap: A Gulf between Talk and Action,” *New York Times*, 31 March 2017; Paul Krugman, “Trump Is Wimping out on Trade,” *New York Times*, 3 April 2017.

<sup>51</sup> Michael Forsythe, “Rex Tillerson’s South China Sea Remarks Foreshadow Possible Foreign Policy Crisis,” *New York Times*, 12 January 2017.

<sup>52</sup> Gideon Rachman, “Trump in a China Shop,” *New York Review of Books*, 7 March 2017.

<sup>53</sup> Phil Stewart and Nobuhiro Kubo, “Mattis Reaffirms U.S. Alliance with Japan ‘For Years to Come,’” *Reuters*, 3 February 2017.

<sup>54</sup> Personal communication, March 2017. On Secretary of State Rex Tillerson’s visit to Tokyo, see Tsubasa Tsuruga, “Abe, Tillerson Call for Stronger Alliance Amid North Korea Threat,” *Nikkei Asian Review*, 16 March 2017.

and stability in the Pacific region.”<sup>55</sup> According to the joint statement that Trump issued with Abe, the American commitment to Japan was “unwavering,” the alliance “unshakeable.”<sup>56</sup>

Tokyo swooned. “Abe and his closest aides left the U.S. with a sense of relief,” one Japanese newspaper commented.<sup>57</sup> Sheila Smith observed of the joint statement, “In many ways, it read like the to-do list for the U.S.-Japan alliance: Deterring aggression. Check. Senkaku Islands protection. Check. China. Check. But with Trump’s addition of alliance reciprocity. Check.”<sup>58</sup> Regarding the Senkaku islands, Japan “got what it wanted”: a statement, in writing for the first time, saying that the islands in the East China Sea controlled by Japan and claimed by China were protected under Article 5 of the U.S.-Japan security treaty.<sup>59</sup> A few months since his election, Trump significantly back-pedaled from his foreign-policy platform.<sup>60</sup>

Do these early policies simply reflect transitional turbulence, meaning the real Trump *shokku* is yet to hit? Probably not. Trump campaigned on a platform that demanded a sweeping transformation of American national security policy. In order to implement such an overhaul, four requirements would *all* need to be met. First, he would need the desire to make this significant change—he would need to believe that change was the right policy for the United States. Second, Trump would need to make the transformation of U.S. foreign policy a top priority of his administration (as opposed to tax reform or some other major endeavor). Third, he would have to use a great deal of political capital toward this effort. He would need to buttonhole; cajole; make deals. This is particularly the case given the widespread, *bipartisan* opposition to his foreign policy vision. Trump, after all, faces “GOP congressional committee chairmen at the top of defense, intelligence, and diplomatic panels in both the House and Senate, many of whom are wary, at best, of his approach...”<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> White House, Office of the Press Secretary, Remarks by President Trump and Prime Minister Abe of Japan in Joint Press Conference, 10 February 2017.

<sup>56</sup> The White House, Joint Statement from President Donald J. Trump and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, 10 February 2017.

<sup>57</sup> Koya Jibiki and Ken Moriyasu, “Abe Scores Big in ‘Fairway Diplomacy’ with Trump,” *Nikkei Asian Review*, 16 February 2017.

<sup>58</sup> Sheila Smith, “A Successful Meeting between Trump and Abe as America Is ‘Behind Japan, 100%,’” *Forbes*, 13 February 2017.

<sup>59</sup> Jibiki and Moriyasu, “Abe Scores Big in ‘Fairway Diplomacy.’”

<sup>60</sup> On Trump’s several policy reversals, see Stephen Collinson, “Trump’s Stunning U-turns on NATO, China, Russia and Syria,” CNN.com, 13 April 2017”; Kevin D. Williamson, “Ya Got Took,” *National Review*, 18 April 2017; Peter Baker, “As Trump Drifts Away from Populism, His Supporters Grow Watchful,” *New York Times*, 18 April 2017.

<sup>61</sup> Molly O’Toole, “GOP Foreign-Policy Power Brokers in Congress Could Foil Trump,” *Foreign Policy*, 16 November 2016. For more on the unpopularity of Trump’s foreign policies among mainstream Republicans, see Kori Schake, “Republican Foreign Policy After Trump,” *Survival* 58:5 (2016): 33-52; Eric Maurice, “McCain: World ‘Cries Out’ for US and EU Leadership,” *EU Observer*, 24 March 2017; Annie Linskey, “These GOP Foreign Policy Pros are Wary of Working for Trump,” *Boston Globe*, 18 November 2016.

Finally, such a fundamental overhaul would require maintaining a keen focus—attention to details in far-flung geographical areas, and across a multitude of issues.

Of these four requirements, Trump ticks only the first. As described earlier, the President clearly believes—and his beliefs are longstanding—that his policy of economic and foreign-policy nationalism best serves America. But he falls short on the three other dimensions. Trump appears highly interested in certain issues (e.g., health care, taxes, immigration, a border wall, possibly infrastructure) but reforming America’s alliances or remaking the international system do not seem to be among them. He will thus likely use his political capital to press for changes in his areas of particular interest, by default leaving foreign policy in the hands of the bipartisan foreign-policy “blob.”<sup>62</sup> Distracted by other issues and inquiries, and lacking staff in key positions, Trump is also not showing the kind of keen attention to foreign policy reform that such a massive transformation would demand. This is how a revolution dies: less Jacksonian revolt than Trumpian reversal.

Thus after the prospect of a shock in U.S.-Japan relations, Tokyo and Washington appear to be settling back into business as usual. The Japanese have managed the transition—and the President—shrewdly; Abe hurried to Trump Tower in November (bearing the gift of a \$3,800 gold-plated golf club) to congratulate the President-elect. At the February summit, Abe came with plans that addressed Trump’s economic agenda. The “U.S.-Japan Growth and Employment Initiative” proposed Japanese investment in U.S. infrastructure projects, such as in high-speed rail, which could create 700,000 American jobs.<sup>63</sup> Perhaps the golf club was really a hit; perhaps Trump really appreciated Abe’s jobs plan; perhaps the President changed his mind, or got distracted. In any event, the February U.S.-Japan joint statement sounded like it might have come out of a Clinton, Bush, or Obama White House. Under Trump, the two countries thus appear to be settling into their longstanding pattern since World War II, in which Washington seeks, and Tokyo accepts, minimal and gradual increases in Japan’s capabilities and roles.

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<sup>62</sup> Gordon Adams and Richard Sokolsky, “Don’t Let the ‘DC Blob’ Guide the Trump Presidency,” *National Interest*, 17 November 2016.

<sup>63</sup> Takashi Umekawa and Linda Sieg, “Japan Eyes U.S. Job, Investment Initiative Ahead of Abe-Trump Summit,” *Reuters*, 31 January 2017. Beijing may take a similar approach; see Edward Luce, “Xi Jinping’s Summit Plan to Tame Donald Trump,” *Financial Times*, 1 April 2017.