The Opportunities and Risks to Britain from Enhanced Defence Cooperation with Japan

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Andrew Hetterley 15 July 2016

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Introduction

‘The United Kingdom (UK) and Japan reaffirm the dynamic strategic partnership between our two countries, based on shared values of democracy, rule of law, human rights and open and transparent markets. It is a relationship with a long history, while firmly oriented to the future. We have decided to reinforce our collaboration in the areas of: global peace and security; global growth and prosperity; and science, technology, innovation, education and culture’

UK-Japan Joint Statement: A dynamic strategic partnership for the 21st century 01 May 2014

The UK and Japan have had a long, complex and varied relationship over more than 400 years of history. Despite being oceans apart they have been drawn together through similarities of being an island off a continent, constitutional monarchy, and ambitious traders. They also both have distinct manners, insist on driving on the left and they seem to have maintained a constant fascination with each other. On the other hand, there is no ignoring the stark contrast found in their opposite alignments during WWII. As we progress into the twenty-first century relations have been strengthening and partnership has increasingly progressed towards alliance. If the

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2014 joint statement is realised in good faith then it arguably represents close to, if not the last step before a formal alliance. The question therefore follows what would happen if that next step was taken. This thesis will explore the risks and opportunities to the United Kingdom from such an alliance and the enhanced defence cooperation that could arise from it. The topic is ripe for analysis, highly relevant and spans a multitude of regional, global and future geo-political issues. It is intended to be quite specific to the question of alliance and defence issues, it is not an appraisal of the overall UK and Japanese diplomatic, economic and cultural relationship although these areas are brought in where directly relevant to the analysis. Furthermore, it is written with a British perspective with respect to the risks and opportunities going forward. Corresponding Japanese or other perspectives are mentioned but are not the focus. Historical analysis also plays a part in the work although this is for context moving forward; it is not the intention to appraise or critique past events.

The recent history of the United Kingdom features an intriguing range of military operations across an almost imperial era span of the globe. She has often worked alongside the hegemonic United States but has also stood shoulder to shoulder with a large and varied list of other countries. Why then would an alliance with Japan stand out as one of unique interest looking to the future? After decades of absence from the world military stages, Japan is beginning to project force abroad and has taken limited part in operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and in counter-piracy efforts off Somalia. She has aspirations to do more while operating a military comparable in size and capability to the UK. Both nations defend islands at range, both have interests vested in trans-Arctic trade where both face a resurgent Russia. Then there
is the question of Britain in the Pacific and the South China Sea specifically; does she or even can she, have a role to play? This last question set against the dynamic of the US in the Pacific opposite a rising China.

Scholarship already covers at length the UK’s relationship with the USA, Japan’s relationship with the USA and all of these nations’ relationship with China. Given the increasing importance to the UK of trade relations with all the nations of the South China Sea and that region’s strategic geographic importance, unsurprisingly there are also a plethora of recent texts that cover a range of crisis scenarios. One area that is perhaps not as comprehensively analysed is that of defence linkages within the UK’s relationship with Japan and the opportunities and potential consequences of expanding that relationship. There is much written on both nations’ military history in WWII and, to an extent, the aftermath. However, as the UK effectively withdrew from the Pacific region in the 1950s there was far less written on the subject at this juncture. Enhanced economic partnership beginning in the 1970s prompted an increased writing in that direction however as we arrive at the opening joint government statement there is somewhat of a literary gap, and thus opportunity moving forward.

The ultimate aim of this thesis will be to demonstrate that there is no simple, singular answer to what the balance of risk against opportunity could be by moving forward with this alliance. The author intends to show that there are three distinct geographic areas that when analysed reveal considerably varied answers to the question. As such, an optimal balance would be applying distinct and unique planning, presence and policy strands to the South China Sea, the Arctic region and the rest of the
world. To begin, the outlook of aligning with Japan militarily inside the South China Sea region is fraught with potential complications involving not only China but also the Koreas and Russia. There may be benefits to be had however they require a careful and respectful approach along with an understanding of the highly complex political terrain of the region. However, the author also believes that there is strong evidence to support a belief in net benefit for Britain in expanding military cooperation with Japan outside of the South China Sea region. This could extend over a range of missions including maritime security, humanitarian and disaster relief, and counter-terrorism. The prospect of varied and potentially frequent partnership with Japan across much of the world in support of mutual economic and security interests is not one without risk but arguably one with much potential.

Finally, there is the interesting and emerging question of the Arctic. There is an increasing array of work and analysis on the implications of global warming and its effects on trans-Arctic trade and the possibilities of extracting natural resources in the region. Consecutive to that is work on the implication for security and here the author will argue that this is an area under appreciated in potential and implication. The premise is that this region is unavoidable in its importance and is a prime opening in which to grow a UK/Japanese defence alliance as equally capable and vested partners. However, this region is seen as high risk, high reward and understanding the political landscape, particularly the Russian aspect, will be key to making the most of this region.

To answer the question of what the opportunities and risks to Britain from enhanced defence cooperation with Japan would be, the author will use a logical and systemic route of contextual analysis and regional brake-down.
Theoretical considerations are first and the literature review focusses on alliance theories but begins with broader international relations work and also includes some sociological aspects. From there and considering that despite the fact the thesis is forward-looking, there is a requirement to understand the status quo. The author thus follows up the theoretical with the historical context with a look at UK/Japanese relations, specifically since WWII. As this work is defence and security orientated there is also a need to understand the military capabilities, industries and orientations of both partners and an outline of these factors follows. Moving from contextual to regional analysis changes the breakdown of the follow-on chapters to divide across the South China Sea, the rest of the world and the Arctic region. Geo-political analysis proceeds a breakdown of risk/opportunity balance which is then wrapped up in a global perspective and conclusion. Throughout, the thesis will steer clear of policy recommendations and attempt to be a balanced appraisal of potential risk and opportunity. No attempt is made to predict events and whilst no definitive time horizon is in place it is broadly aimed at the next twenty years. There has been no access to closed or classified source material and is not politically motivated in any way. Everything has been openly sourced and the resultant analytical findings are the authors own. The work consists of five chapters and is broken down as follows.

**Chapter 1. Literature Review.** The literature opening chapter aims to outline a progression of theories and stances found across notable scholarship that will be relevant to the core analysis and findings of the thesis. Sections divide into contemporary views on international relations and then progressively focus towards alliance formation, maintenance and complications. Additionally, there is a look at relevant work on unipolarity, great powers and rising powers. Concluding the
Chapter 1 is a look at some interesting sociological and psychological theories surrounding living and cultural memory.

**Chapter 2. The Historical Context.** Composed of four short sections, each covering a distinct period of the post WWII historical timeline. Together they build towards the core analytical starting point. The first section begins immediately after the cessation of WWII and runs through to the Treaty of San Francisco and the end of allied occupation in Japan at the start of the 1950s. The second follows the contrasting paths of the UK through the core period of the cold war and Japanese economic recovery through to the 1970s. From there we look at the convergence in the 1980s brought about by the Japanese economic resurgence and a changing Britain. That period concludes amid the end of the cold war and the first Gulf war. The final section wraps up with the events of the twenty-first century to date.

**Chapter 3. Military Matters.** This chapter consists of two sections. The first is a comparative summary of what the Japanese may be looking for in establishing a military alliance/relationship with the UK. Our core question is being answered from a UK perspective, however it is important to lay out some of the key factors as to why Japan would be forward leaning into this alliance. The second section outlines the key differences and similarities of the Japanese and British militaries in terms of size, budgets, technical capabilities and mission sets. Mention is also made of both nations’ defence industrial bases and recent areas of collaboration. Here the author aims to
show that these factors considerably enhance the attractiveness of this alliance to both states.

**Chapter 4. Regional Analysis.** This chapter examines the potential political and international relations scenarios and crisis’ that a UK/Japanese alliance could face. The chapter is split into three sections. The first covers the South China Sea region and within further focusses on issues relating to China, the Koreas, Russia and other regional groupings. The second looks at the rest of the world and covers topics of the UK and Japan potentially working across missions such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. The third section covers evolving future scenarios across the Arctic region. In each section, the analysis covers the political and security issues involved, how a scenario could escalate and what Japan’s stance is on each issue. From there we identify possibilities of how and why the United Kingdom could become involved.

**Chapter 5. Risks and Opportunities.** In this chapter, all of the theoretical, historical and geo-political analysis are combined in order to arrive at a balanced appraisal of the potential risks and opportunities afforded by an enhanced military alliance between the UK and Japan. The chapter is divided into four sections: the South China Sea region is covered first, followed by the rest of the world, and in turn by the future of the Arctic region. In each case we examine the risks, the opportunities and assess the balance of both. A fourth section then draws them altogether to form a strategic global narrative.
Following Chapter 5, the author will lay out his conclusions and suggest areas for further work. We begin however with our literature and theoretical foundation.
Chapter One

Literature Review

Interstate treaties alliances and coalitions have been a popular subject for scholarship and theoretical development since the beginnings of the international system itself. Yet despite the constant evolution and refinement of this area of study it is entirely possible to identify a case study that tests and pressures what has already been written.

Our case study involves two great powers, the United Kingdom and Japan. They are both aligned with a superpower, the USA, but in individual bilateral agreements for the main. There is a rising power, China, in the equation which is a complicated scenario she is at once a significant economic trade partner and concurrent hegemonic challenger. The case study of examining an alliance between the UK and Japan thus sits quietly surrounded by thick coverage of the ‘special relationship’ between the UK and USA, the ‘Pacific tilt’ from America, the rise of China, and the security of the South China Sea.

This literature review will therefore outline a progression of theories that begins in the first section with a brief refresh on contemporary international relations and then progresses towards alliance theories. The second section examines the theoretical constraints, considerations and dilemmas involved inherent to being in an alliance. The final section of the chapter looks at some sociological and psychological based works on societal and living memory in addition to some contextual work on hegemony.
We begin with a brief revisit of contemporary foreign policy analysis and interstate relations theories. Of course, the subject is huge and the literature range matches. Here, we are only outlining the key theories that are of relevance to our case study and from where other theories build. The first is Neo-realism, the modern interpretation of the classic power-centric theory. Within this subset, Kenneth Waltz’s theory of structural realism from his Theory of International Politics is perhaps the best known text. Steven Lamy describes neorealism, or modern realism in some eyes, as a more nuanced version of realism that reflects interest in understanding security threats presented by the international system and the resulting strategy options that states must adopt to prosper. For our case study we need to outline two further sub-evolutions of neo-realism; offensive and defensive.

Offensive realism is described by John Mearsheimer in his Tragedy of Great power politics. Its tenets suggest that states pursue security policies that weaken potential enemies and increase their power relative to all others. States, in this view, remain competitive and individual in goals, outlook and strategic ambitions. Above all offensive realism values the importance of relative power. Defensive realism, typified in works by Robert Jervis and Jack Snyder present a slightly more optimistic view of the world. Here, whilst competition between every state remains,

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5 Mearsheimer 2001, 21


a critical factor of whether a state is an ally or enemy is central to how relations will fare. Defensive realists view that war is sometimes unavoidable despite a negative cost/benefit equation but explain the likely cause of this scenario as the presence of irrational forces. Cooperation is possible, but only likely to succeed with friendly states.

The second theory to be used is contemporary neoliberalism. Lamy outlines how this evolution of liberalism has progressed from free-trade centric commercial liberalism and community focused sociological liberalism to a brand heavier leaning towards functional integration. Allison posits that this extension beyond trade and development issues to the spectrum of liberal concerns has gained ground since the end of the Cold War in order to address contemporary security concerns of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, drugs and even pandemics. Robert Keohane suggests that responses to these threats will be broad coalitions and coordination of responses. This ultimately leads to a view that war can be avoided by creating security institutions such as alliances or arms control treaties. Lamy further summarises the core assumptions of neoliberal institutionalists to include: that states remain key actors in international relations albeit not the only ones; states seek to maximise absolute gains through cooperation; and, states will shift loyalty if

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8 Lamy 2014, 126-140
9 ibid
this is seen to be mutually beneficial and if they provide states with increasing
opportunities to secure their national interests.\textsuperscript{12}

From the capstone theories we can now begin to drill down further to the building
and maintaining of alliances and alignments. Snyder defines an alliance as a formal
association of states for the use (or non use) of military force, in specified
circumstances, against states outside of their own membership\textsuperscript{13}. Walt’s definition is
broadly similar; a formal or informal arrangement for security cooperation between
two or more sovereign states\textsuperscript{14}. He admits to using alliance and alignment
interchangeably although clarifies that alliances are formal and recognised whilst
alignments may not be, and may be temporary for specific and or unique issues only.

Walt goes onto identify three important hypotheses of alliance formation. The first
revolves around the balance of power and within it the competing views of balancing
against a strong or threatening state or a view that they bandwagon with it. Citing
Walt, Morrow identifies the balance of power as the best known theory of alliances
with neorealism as the current version of that theory in literature. The basis of this
theory posits that states band together against a threatening, rising or powerful state
seeking global domination with their goal being a peaceful status quo and the failure
of the revisionist state’s aspirations\textsuperscript{15}. Walt indicates two underlying reasons why
smaller states would align against a larger threat; a risk to their very survival lest

\textsuperscript{12} Lamy 2014, 133
\textsuperscript{13} Snyder, Glenn. 1997: Alliance Politics. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press
3:63-74
they let an aggressive hegemony become too powerful and therefore irresistible, and the notion that joining a weaker state enhances your own influence within that alliance vice a subjugation to the hegemony.\textsuperscript{16}

The challenges to balancing are neatly outlined by Morrow, beginning with the security dilemma where competing alliances enter into a spiraling arms race and threatens security rather than enhancing it. He then turns to the bandwagon argument, where states may align with the revisionist power rather than standing up to it\textsuperscript{17}. Walt views that if balancing is predominant then states are more secure because aggressors will face combined opposition whilst if bandwagoning is a dominant tendency then security is scarce because aggression is rewarded\textsuperscript{18}

The second hypothesis of alliance as identified by Walt involves ideological solidarity. In his 1979 work, he defines ideological solidarity as a tendency for states with similar internal traits to prefer alignment with one another in preference to those whose domestic characteristics are different. The theory provides four reasons why ideology factors into alliance formation and alignment. Firstly, that that similar states may align as a way to defend political principles. Secondly, a lack of fear between similar states leads each other to be seen as inherently good and not a threat. Third, enhancement of a regime by being seen to be part of a popular

\textsuperscript{16} Walt 1987, 6
\textsuperscript{17} Morrow 2000, 63-74
\textsuperscript{18} Walt 1987, 4
movement and lastly, it may even be prescribed\textsuperscript{19}. Crucially these reasons can exist for any ideology and are not prescriptive or exclusive to any one brand in particular.

Walt concludes that whilst there is an association between ideology and alignment, it is a modest one. Further, observed associations may be exaggerated although the author posits he is concentrating more on superpower/regional ally relationships here. Finally he points out that certain ideological traits are a source for division rather than alignment\textsuperscript{20}. These conclusions perhaps reflect a balanced analysis between a neorealist view that all states are compelled by the international system to complete for power and struggle for security irrespective of ideology\textsuperscript{21} and the view that liberal states have a predisposition for peaceful relations with each other but not necessarily with non-liberals to the same extent\textsuperscript{22}.

The third hypothesis as described by Walt involves the ability of states to create allies or proxies by military and economic aid. Much of this theory focusses on a larger state or superpower developing allies by political penetration and influence. However, it is valid to outline for contextual analysis in our case study of similar, great power alliance if we consider a scenario of niche provider or gap. Firstly, within the theory is the proposition that military assistance is offered and accepted when both parties feel it is in both their own interests. That could arguably apply to


\textsuperscript{20}Walt 1987. 181


\textsuperscript{22}ibid
equals assisting in filling specific capability gaps just as much as superpower wholesale arms supply to minor powers. Secondly, Walt concludes that whilst this theory itself does not feature as a prime driver for creating alliances they can make existing alliances more effective\(^{23}\). Therefore, where prior alliance exists, military aid could enhance it further.

Having looked at why states may seek to form alliances we now turn to the potential dilemmas and negative consequences of being part of one. Morrow points out that an alliance matters only under two conditions: (a) if the alliance affects the decision of the alliance to intervene on one another’s behalf in the event of war, and (b) if it allows states outside the alliance to determine that the allies will intervene to support one another.\(^{24}\) In essence a key factor in any alliance is its credibility and determination to follow through on its purpose. Walt points out that states are attracted to strength; the more powerful the state and the more clearly this power is demonstrated, the more likely others are to ally with it.\(^{25}\) Much of Walt’s arguments here refer to smaller powers aligning with superpowers and the importance of the superpower demonstrating its credibility; he uses the USA in South America effectively. In the case of two roughly equal great powers credibility may arguably be based more on reliability than capability. Snyder examines multipolar alliances, in particular the Bismarck system in his 1997 work. He provides an in-depth and even technical scoring of how bilateral relationships of the time worked. He also

\(^{23}\) Walt 1985, 3-43  
\(^{24}\) Morrow 2000, 67  
\(^{25}\) Walt 1987, 20
notes that above all, statesmen are rational cost-benefit maximisers. In review of Snyder’s work, Sofka feels that the cost/benefit and psychological aspects go further. Offering his own view of the Bismarck case, he discusses how states may have entered multiple alliances for multi-causal reasons, including domestic drivers, but have not truly committed to them beyond psychological reassurance or considered it likely that the purpose for their existence would ever actually manifest. In essence a partner in an alliance faces a prospect, to a varying and circumstantial chance that that an ally will not follow through on their stated intentions and obligations.

The prospect of not following through with an alliance leads into what has been described as the Scylla and Charybdis of abandonment and entrapment. Morrow describes abandonment as what occurs when a state’s ally refuses to come to its aid in a crisis. He further describes how this may come about as a result of one state acting too aggressively for the ally to support or for refusing to make concessions in a crisis. For both parties’ abandonment creates a negative image internationally. For the ally abandoned they may be seen as demonstrably aggressive given that assumed support has evaporated in light of their actions. Alternatively, or perhaps even simultaneously, the reluctant ally can be viewed as unreliable or guilty of taking advantage when it suits their sole interest.

Entrapment is essentially the opposite reaction. Here an aggressive state may be more likely to initiate action due to their trust and perceived enhanced power as a

26 Snyder 1987, 20-23
28 Morrow 2000, 69
result of their alliance. When they do so, entrapment pressures the ally not to abandon but to be pressured into committing. Upon instigation of the crisis the partner is thus drawn into hostile actions that they otherwise would not have been inclined to join and at a threshold below their own unilateral standard.29

The final section of this review considers a diaspora of other theories which could influence or help to explain aspects of the case study. To begin, we will consider some work on the theory of collective memory and its associated barriers to intercultural dialogue. This is relevant when we analyse any potential alliance where the prospective partners have been adversaries within living memory. Drezewiecka defines collective memory as a highly contested sense-making process that shapes the present through a selective appropriation of the past in order to support cultural identities and political goals. She goes onto highlight the increasing importance of self-perpetuating media representations of historical events on collective memory. This media effect can be compounded by cultural differences in interpreting popular culture, so called polysemic readings30.

For a case study, Drzewiecka examines the post WWII relationship between Polish Gentiles, Polish Jews and examines how living memory was heavily negatively influential long after the event. This leads to the relationship between cultural memory and history. Conceptually they may intertwine and produce intertwined multi-layered discourses of the past. As living memory dies out, cultural memory

29 Morrow 2000, 69

‘allows for the fabrication, rearrangement, elaboration, and omission of details about the past, often pushing aside accuracy and authenticity so as to accommodate broader issues of identity formation, power, and political affiliation’. In the present day, the talk of WWII is how the allies fought Hitler and the Nazis, during the war it was more common to refer to the enemy as the Germans. So whilst some cultural memories may be so strong and passed down through the generations, perpetuating adversarial stances, others may settle into history and collective forgiveness or convenience.

The second consideration in this section revolves around state alliances to a hegemon. As both the UK and Japan have had strong, albeit tested, relations over the years with the United States it is prudent to consider how the journey of America through bipolar cold war through unipolar hegemony to relative global or regional decline may have an effect. Keohane outlines how post WWII, the United States constructed a liberal-capitalist world political economy. Crucially economic issues and military linkages were not mixed allowing security cooperation and simultaneous trading competition. The hegemon, as Keohane continues, will seek to persuade others to conform to its vision of world order. US influence was undeniable in the primary focusing of the UK within the construct of NATO against the USSR whilst Japan was the partner of choice against communist China.


32 Collier 189-217

33 Keohane 2005, 217-243
However, whilst relations with the USA were clear during the cold war, what happens when the core reason for alliance end? Buzan notes the view of globalization; that the end of the cold war has brought about an overwhelming global military superiority of the West, led by the USA. Additionally the collapse of the rivalry with the Soviet Union that vied for the political space of the then titled third world has led to a far more powerful and influential bloc that, through a variety of institutions such as NATO and the EU, can impose legal, social, financial and economic conditions on aid, trade, credit and recognition. Supporters of this theory can point to the western involvements and interventions across the Middle East and Africa as evidence. Extrapolating further this theory would suggest that a state wishing to expand its power and influence would be attracted to joining the western bloc in policy and action.

Buzan then outlines the competing regionalist perspective that has evolved from US hegemony after the Cold War. Rather than stand up globally to the US, regional powers such as China, India and Brazil are responding by pushing for multi-polarity. The regionist perspective posits a decline of global power interest in the rest of the world and a view that many of the great powers are now in reality ‘lite powers’ more inclined by domestic pressures to avoid intervening in trouble spots and favouring local state solutions. This view may be seen as gaining ground with limited interventions in Syria and Libya vice the commitments in the previous decade into Iraq and Afghanistan. The author posits however that this may be a bit far to put

35 Buzan 2009, 11
credence in, considering the limited time, cases and evidence yet available. Furthermore, if US decline is a fact, and if China continues to rise at least as a regional power then this theory suggests states out with that region would be increasingly disinclined to become involved in any discourse within it.

However, if one viewed reports of the demise of US unipolarity as exaggerated then you can consider Ikenberry’s 2011 work on alliances in a unipolar world. He posits that within an alliance between state and unipolar hegemony, the junior partner’s influence will be diminished vice when aligned in a position of bipolar competition. This can lead junior partners, who wish to remain aligned but maintain influence, autonomy and freedom of maneuver to soft balance. The more confrontational soft balancing can involve diplomatic opposition of more aggressive hegemonic interventions, such as western opposition to the 2003 Iraq war however this soft balancing can include ‘leash-slipping’ as coined by Layne, where junior partners will form additional groupings or alliances. These formations do not oppose the hegemony; they are most often directly aligned with it but exclude them from actual membership. An example being the European Security and Defence Policy which enables Europeans to act independently of the United States on security matters.

The aim of this literature review has been to marshal a range of theories to underpin and help explain subsequent analysis in the work. Across the historical, military and

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geo-political themed chapters they are used to variously back-up or underpin hypothesis, analytic opinions or conclusions and assist in closing evidential or case study gaps. Having now established our theoretical baseline, we move to the historical context.
Chapter 2

Historical Context

In this chapter, the intent is to provide a narrative yet contextual historical baseline on which to build the core analysis of the thesis. Whilst the relationship between the United Kingdom and Japan can be traced back to the early seventeenth century, we will restrict the timeline to events following the conclusion of WWII. Since that cataclysmic event brought about a hard reset across many interstate relations and continues to influence to this day, it provides a logical start for the purposes of this thesis.

The chapter will be divided into four short sections, each covering a period of time with distinct characteristics and which collectively build towards our analytical starting point. The first of these covers the period from immediately after the cessation of WWII through to the Treaty of San Francisco in 1951 and the end of allied occupation in Japan in 1952. The second follows the contrasting paths of the UK through the core period of the cold war and Japanese economic recovery through to the 1970s. From there we turn to the Japanese economic resurgence of the 1980s, expanding linkages to the UK. This section concludes at the end of the cold war and the contrasting contributions both nations made to the first Gulf war. The final section wraps up with the period following 9/11 and the second Gulf War through to the 2007 joint statement from Tony Blair and Shinzo Abe.

The closing stages of WWII are comprehensively covered in scholarship. For the purposes of our analysis there are a number of factors to bring to the front from the
heavily analysed themes of nuclear weapons and the rise of communism. Firstly, the United Kingdom fought a bitter campaign against Japanese forces towards the end of the war, particularly in Burma. The end of the war brought with it the release of thousands of prisoners of war, many of whom had endured horrendous abuse during captivity. These events caused resentment towards Imperial Japan, carried back by the returning British servicemen into the national psyche\textsuperscript{38}. Consider also that the proportion of servicemen to civilians was far higher at this time compared to now. In addition, whilst the UK was involved in the post-war occupation of the Pacific region, she was assigned under General MacArthur’s plan the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Hong Kong and the Solomon Islands. It was to logically fall to the US to be the occupiers in Okinawa and to varying degrees across the Japanese mainland. And whilst the UK was on paper involved in the reconstitution and transition of the Japanese political construct, in practice this was a US lead\textsuperscript{39}. Arguably this was a positive and the first step in rebuilding an unlikely alliance since the US used its considerable resource, position and influence to create as close as you could get to a western model liberal democracy in Asia. At the same time the UK was not involved in any of the unavoidable negatives and difficulties that come with occupation and, in this case, issues that continue to be a thorn in US/Japanese relations.

\textsuperscript{38} Hudson, GF. “Anglo-Japanese Relations since the Peace Treaty” in \textit{World Affairs}, Summer 1953: 47–48

The US desire to end the occupation, fueled first by domestic calls for disarmament and then the conflict in Korea would be realised at the start of the next decade. The San Francisco Peace Treaty came into force between Japan and the UK on April 28, 1952. This landmark event restored full, and equal, diplomatic relations following the six years of allied military occupation. Of note, the UK was the first of the allied nations to ratify the treaty and this was widely seen as a strong indication of goodwill towards the new Japan. China and Russia, however, continued to drag their heels over the treaty despite US military warnings that unduly long allied occupation would be counter-productive and not be conducive to the long term security and reconstitution of the region.

This long term security was of increasing importance since at the time of the end of WWII US and British concern was more focused on preventing a militarily resurgent Japan. These concerns were fueled by lessons of post WWI with respect to Germany and the experiences of the Treaty of Versailles. As such the Potsdam conference held at the conclusion of WWII disarmed Japan completely. However, the rise of communism in China and the events of Korea changed the primary, but not exclusive, purpose of allied occupation in Japan from introspective prevention to an externally focused guarantor of security and sovereignty. Parallels could be drawn to the transition of Germany from enemy to protectorate when coupled with Russia moving from ally to Cold War adversary in the West. A new threat rose but the spectre of the old remained. The western alliances’ worst fears were a simultaneous resurgent imperial Japanese sentiment and an unstoppable spread of communism. It

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40 Hudson 1953, 47-48

41 ibid
was classic balance of power, fueled by living memory of previous lessons. Despite this however, economic drivers are already visibly influencing a move to create new allies from past adversaries and exploit opportunity.

With the conclusion of the San Francisco Treaty, Japan slowly began rebuilding a military force capable only of self defence and strictly bound to adhering to United Nations collective action. United States forces would remain in Japan as part of a bilateral security agreement. It was this development that fed considerable levels of communist propaganda and arguably fanned instability in Japanese internal politics. Meanwhile, across the Pacific region as a whole, the UK did not have a comparable desire or need to remain as committed as the US. Other than Hong Kong, the British presence progressively diminished as her foci and capacity were more than taken up by the escalating Cold War, post-colonial and commonwealth affairs, and the Middle East. Britain was quietly happy with the American positioning in the Pacific and in military terms effectively disengaged\textsuperscript{42}. From here the UK and Japan would slowly but steadily build an economic relationship.

The period between the ratification of the San Francisco Treaty and the 1970s is, for our analysis, somewhat of a dormant period of UK/Japanese relations. That does not however mean that relevant developments did not take place. The UK effectively completed her retreat from empire but became a nuclear power, slowly consolidated many relationships through the commonwealth and became a leading member of NATO. For Japan, a key step occurred in 1957 with the Basic Defence Policy which was aimed at developing an indigenous military capability designed to defend

\footnote{Hudson 1953, 48}
against invasion. She also renewed her mutual security treaty with the US in 1960. This sparked considerable domestic unrest and led to the resignation of then Prime Minister Nobusuke. Later governments of this period were at pains not to enter the increasingly complicated South China Sea regional security picture due to these domestic issues but faced increasing pressure from the US to begin to step up\footnote{Hudson 1953, 47-48}.

Japan faced a balancing dilemma here of avoiding abandonment by her key ally because she was not playing her part in maintaining Pacific security but also needed to avoid entrapment as a facilitator for wider US positioning in the region\footnote{Morrow, James. 2000. “Alliances: Why Write Them Down?” \textit{Annual Review of Political Science} 3:63-74}. Of note as a comparative issue is the Vietnam War, avoided by choice by the UK and by legislation in Japan. For the UK this absence, for all its practical reasoning, also demonstrated to the US that, despite being a close ally, its participation in military operations was not a given. The eventual result of that war underlines the decision. For Japan, non participation was clearly forbidden by its constitution and an overwhelming domestic feeling despite the potential ramifications of the further spread of communism across her own regional backyard.\footnote{Chelton, S. “Japan’s Security” in \textit{RUSI Journal} June/July 2012, Vol 157 No 3: 32-37}

As we progressed through the 1970s, the bilateral relationship between the UK and Japan was described as ‘correct and proper but low profile’\footnote{Umeza, Itaru. 2000 “UK and Japan; Bridging the Millennium, Bridging the Countries” in \textit{Anglo-Japanese Concerns II}. London: The Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation: 98-100}.

Japanese presence in the UK was noted as scarce and of little consequence or influence. However, in the 1980s, this changed as relations began to warm and expand.
For the UK the 1980s was characterised by change in its economic outlook and composition. Emerging from the winter of discontent, a distinct change of government heralded a definite but controversial move away from the last vestiges of primary industry dominance and a steady move into the tertiary sector. Britain was transforming. The corresponding growth in Japan was even more profound as her economy grew so fast as to provoke nervousness even in the US. By the mid 1980s Japan had committed to a big wave of inward investment into the UK. The then state-of-the-art car manufacturing plant in Sunderland being a key example. In total, over 100,000 jobs mainly in manufacturing were created as a result of this investment and around 40% of all Japanese investment in Europe headed straight towards the UK. Many Japanese companies established headquarters on British soil.47

The investment was not restricted to the commercial sector. Increasing linkages were established between British and Japanese educational institutions. Starting early with video links between secondary schools, designed to at once promote technology and language skills this culture permeated to university level with increasing exchanges and partnerships established. The growth and similarity of business studies degrees, and the demand for their graduates, being offered by both Japanese and British institutions fueled this relationship further.48

47 Umeza, Itaru 2000, 98-103

48 Partington, Professor T M., and Prof Fuji Shimizu, 2000 “UK and Japan; Bridging the Millennium, Bridging the Countries” in Anglo-Japanese Concerns II. London: The Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation: 74 - 84.

Across other aspects of British life, Japanese presence was seen and felt across the scientific and medical sectors. In addition, the cultural, architectural and tourist sectors were influenced by, and benefitted from, increasing Japanese presence too. Whilst all of this may have seen like an exemplar of neoliberalism in action, concerns at the time were directed at what was seen by many as one-way traffic. There were efforts to improve British investment in Japan such as the creation of the British Industry Centre in Yokohama and the reduction of property prices and removal of regulatory barriers for UK business start-ups. However, they did not match the success in the other direction. On balance though, these developments could be argued to be evidence of an increasingly aligned cultural ideology. Whilst no military alliance is formed or even proposed at this point, the foundation conditions are being put in place.

Despite the economic progress, this period in security terms was dominated by the Cold War. As such contact between the nations was effectively negligible as there was no need, desire or capacity to do otherwise. One event beyond the cold war should be highlighted as it is of significance to our analysis later. The Falklands War of 1982 saw the UK deploy a Naval task force 8,000 miles to retake a small group of islands invaded and occupied by Argentina. Strategically this reminded the world that the UK remained a capable military power which could fight at long distances and unilaterally. Very few nations beyond the US could aspire to conduct an operation half as challenging. However, for those that could aspire to such capability this conflict showed it could be done. It would be surprising if the more ambitious Japanese military strategists were not paying close attention. Indeed, one
Japanese military scholar, Jun Yanagisawa, in 2014 wrote a fascinating titled ‘Military Implications of the Falklands War: From Japan’s Point of View’. This piece is well informed and contains a wealth of implications and lesson drawn from the conflict and applied to the Japanese predicament⁴⁹. Prime Minister Abe is also apparently well informed on the conflict, linking it with the Senkaku Island dispute and citing Margaret Thatcher’s strategy there as inspirational⁵⁰.

Despite the lack of military contact between the UK and Japan at this time, there were many similarities between them with respect to the primary security threat present throughout the Cold War. The UK prepared to play its part in NATO facing the Soviet threat at sea across the Atlantic and prepared to defend against invasion largely expected through West Germany. Japan expected to fight the same adversary across the Pacific and face invasion Hokkaido Island to the North. The end of the cold war however brought into sharp relief two significant differences between the two powers. The first concerned the contrasting security situations of the South China Sea and the Atlantic. Japan, a non-nuclear power, faced almost immediately a rising, nuclear, China and an unstable North Korea. In contrast, the UK emerged into a comparatively harmonious Europe. NATO was preparing for expansion and the economic alliance of the European Union progressed to even greater integration in 1992.


The other key difference was the scale and type of response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1991. Japanese legislation had been designed to prevent entanglement in regional disputes such as Vietnam in the 1970s. However, there was no mechanism to allow participation in operations such as the liberation of Kuwait, despite a clear mandate from the UN. Japan did contribute $13 billion to the costs of the international coalition however her name was absent from the list of thanks issued by Kuwait upon her return to sovereign independence. In contrast, the UK responded militarily as rapidly as the United States and in a scale second only to them, with a force of over 50,000 deployed. This event arguably anointed the UK as the US partner of choice in expeditionary military operations.\(^{51}\)

The aftermath of the Gulf War through to the 9/11 and Gulf War II timeframe in security terms saw little change to the direction of the UK. She became firmly recognised as a likely partner to the US in most military operations. Continent and range seemed irrelevant, her intention was to remain a global, great power. For Japan there was a difficult period of nascent transition. She passed a peace keeping operations law in 1992\(^{52}\) allowing foreign operations albeit only those based on fully consensual international backing and legislation. Domestic hostility to the Japanese military remained and was demonstrated in 1994 when support for the previously totally pacifist Socialist Party collapsed. By taking part in a power sharing government based on it legitimising the Self Defence Force (SDF) it found itself out of office after only 18 months. However, after an overt presence and positive showing following the Kobe earthquake in 1995, the SDF began to gain domestic

\(^{51}\) Chelton 2012, 32-37

\(^{52}\) ibid
support. Extensive media coverage of Japanese military personnel engaged in these operations had been well received with their actions seen as a national force for good. This was only a stepping stone since by 2001 Japanese naval units went as far as sending refueling tankers to the Indian Ocean to support the US-led coalition. By 2003 Japanese soldiers were involved in post war security in Iraq\textsuperscript{53}. The tide had changed and neo-liberals could point to these developments as evidence of their beliefs. Japan finds herself supporting broad responses to contemporary security concerns but remains firmly allied and economically tied to her partner liberal democracies.

Despite these notable developments across their respective defence capabilities and ventures, a broadly similar outlook on security and a firm economic trading relationship, this period saw no real development into alliance. There are arguably many reasons for this not least a realist one where the condition of mutual benefit from such a partnership is not yet there or apparent. However also consider the collective memory of the UK, at this point still only 50 years removed from WWII. Phil Hammond, now UK Foreign Secretary at date, writing in 1999 covered indifferent to negative Japanese representation in the UK press at the time (over wartime apologies) and the unsuccessful efforts of then PM Tony Blair and Japanese Emperor Akihito in 1998 to further advance the relationship\textsuperscript{54}. Despite all the progress elsewhere there seemed, as Hammond put it, a still distinct generational disagreement of opinion of the Japanese characteristically and metaphorically split

\textsuperscript{53} Chelton 2012, 32-37

\textsuperscript{54} Hammond, Phil, 1999 “The Anglo-Japanese Relationship in UK and Japan; Bridging the Millennium, Bridging the Countries” in \textit{Anglo-Japanese Concerns II}. London: The Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation: 1 -11
between the Sony Walkman and the Burma railway. Perhaps the living memory component of the collective UK memory really did contribute to a ‘that’s enough’ mentality to the relationship. However, if that is the case then the British living memory of WWII in the 1990s would be collectively on average approximately 70-90 years old. If one places credence in the theory, then that would predict a significant drop inside twenty years given life expectancies. Indeed, by 2007 a visit by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to the UK concluded with a joint statement with Tony Blair in which the two leaders agreed to step up their cooperation on: promoting international security, tackling climate change, a commitment to Africa and achieving their goals in science, technology and innovation. Progress was to be monitored annually. Whilst not a defence alliance agreement this was arguably one of the final preparatory steps before it since it covers a range of adjacent issues and set the conditions for the follow-on 2012 agreement between Cameron and Noda which begins Chapter 4.

We therefore conclude the historical analysis at the start of the second decade of the twenty-first century. The US finally emerges from two costly counter-insurgency campaigns but scarcely catches breath before continuing with the war on terror and ISIS. Meanwhile she faces a resurgent Russia whilst simultaneously trying to execute a Pacific tilt. The UK continues to partner the US whilst demonstrating willingness to partner other great powers such as France in Libya and Mali. The rise of China has been very visible and her military growth and aggressive regional

55 Hammond 1999, 1-11

ambitions have been well documented. The regional balance of power is threatened and thus a key precondition for alliance formation is firmly in place\textsuperscript{57}. Japan increasingly demonstrates it can and wants to do more. More than ever the UK and Japan find themselves in ideological solidarity whilst the march of time increasingly flavours collective memory away from negatively biased living memory. A series of increasingly security orientated agreements have been signed. History has given us an informing and interesting set of conditions for our main analysis which begins with an examination of contemporary military matters.

\textsuperscript{57} Walt 1987, 6
During a visit to Japan in April 2012, Prime Ministers David Cameron and Yoshiko Noda issued a joint statement of intent outlining common ground and intent over a range of issues. These included the building of global, economic and social prosperity and promoting global peace and security. Of note within the latter subject are specific commitments for cooperation in defence, building on existing partnerships in international peacekeeping, and identifying potential avenues for defence industrial cooperation. This milestone event enabling significantly enhanced levels of bi-lateral cooperation, intent and clear international signaling is the perfect point in which to move into the core analysis of this thesis. For this chapter we are concentrating on the practical and technical military aspects as distinct to the theoretical, historical or political.

This chapter consists of two sections. The first is a comparative summary of why Japan would want to build a military alliance/relationship with the UK. Our core question is being answered from a UK perspective, however it is important to lay out some of the key factors as to why Japan would be forward leaning into this alliance. The second section outlines the key differences and similarities of the Japanese and British militaries in terms of size, budgets, technical capabilities and mission sets. Here the author aims to show that

these factors considerably enhance the attractiveness of this alliance to both states from the ground up.

Why then would Japan be forward leaning in developing a military alliance with Britain? From her perspective there are three main reasons, each with amplifying factors. The first involves her own security within the South China Sea region. The post-Cold War era has brought a number of challenges of which the rise of China is arguably the greatest and most pressing. Chapter two outlined the genesis of this, chapter four will explore the issue further.

Given these regional security concerns a shopping list of attributes compiled by Japan on prospective allies could include: viable diplomatic, economic and military great power; not embroiled in local regional disputes but able to project into the area; and aligned with the US themselves. These reasons may seem overtly obvious and simplistic at first glance however they stand with further scrutiny and remain coherent and sensible. In Chapter one we discussed the dilemmas of abandonment and entrapment\(^{59}\) facing Japan throughout the latter part of the twentieth century. These considerations arguably still apply given the multitude of threats that Japan perceives. However, it is in the abandonment scenario that brings one course of action to the fore and, whilst a long-term issue of perhaps doubtful fruition, should be

mentioned. Should Japan feel there is insufficient backing from the US, specifically in deterring major conflict, there remains the option to develop and deploy her own nuclear weapons. This subject is highly contentious, domestic pressures, living memory of both nuclear attack and nuclear accidents, and a whole host of other reasons combine against developing such a capability. However the scientific, technical and military capabilities are undeniably in place should that situation change and there remains a continuing discussion on the merits of actually doing so. Developing the weapons is a major challenge but equally matched by actually operating them and having a degree of interoperability and coordination with the US deterrent. This challenge has however been overcome decades ago by the UK and it would be highly surprising if Japanese military strategists were not interested in how Britain developed, deployed and continuously operated and improved her own nuclear arsenal over the years.

The most applicable and immediate reason why Japan would want to enhance a military alliance with the UK specifically however is due to her interest in broadening and increasing out-of-area operations. As we mentioned in Chapter two, the Japanese Self Defence Force is enjoying increased domestic popularity. In addition, growing willingness to deploy forces abroad as part of international coalitions is evident by her involvement in operations such as

Afghanistan and counter-piracy off the Somali coast. The international goodwill and military success attached to disaster relief and humanitarian relief operations will also assist in enhancing domestic appetite for more ambitious ventures. Given these aspirations, it would follow that Japan would wish to leverage experience from friendly states that have repeatedly demonstrated willingness and ability to deploy intercontinentally across a spectrum of military missions. Three states jump immediately into that category: the UK, France and Australia. Whilst the US may spring immediately to mind here, they are not the ideal model to base one’s own endeavors on since the scale of American capacity and capability is impossible to match.

The final reason for increasing collaboration is industrial. The Japanese defence sector is technologically highly proficient and in recent years has indigenously delivered for example the P1maritime patrol aircraft and the Mitsubishi X2 Shinshin stealth fighter demonstrator programme. However, despite being able to develop and manufacture at the cutting edge of technology the Japanese defence sector suffers from high production costs and, until an almost total ban ended in 2014, has been unable to export. These

61 Chelton 2012, 32-37
negatives can largely be attributed to historical legislation linked in to the broader issue of defence as a whole but is also partly attributed to contemporary domestic political and financial pressures. Certainly compared to other Japanese technology exports it is fair to say they are underperforming. To put this in to perspective, in FY 2013/14 defence exports from the UK were worth $16.4 billion\textsuperscript{64} compared to the total of Japanese defence exports from FY 2004/05 to 2013/14 which amounted to $4 million\textsuperscript{65}. With a desire to reduce domestic costs and improve gains from exports, collaboration is an obvious route. With America being a notoriously tough nation to export arms to, other friendly nations with developed access to markets are clearly appealing. All the more so if these nations are seeking entry into the burgeoning Asian arms market that is responding to the Chinese build-up.

Three nations fit the bill here: Israel, France and the UK.

No matter what the intent or driver behind a military alliance, key factors to its continuing success will arguably be the compatibility of the aligned armed forces themselves and the tangible benefits that can be gained from working together. In the case of Japan and the UK there are compelling reasons why the similarities and, concurrently and intriguingly, the differences between


their military structures and roles could enhance an alliance between them. In

terms of structure, technical level of equipment and capability they are a good
match. If we look at headline figures and according to respective government
sources, the Japanese Self Defense Force consists of nearly 250,000 full time
personnel; with around 50,000 reservists. The allocated budget for FY
2014/15 was $41 billion, representing 1% of GDP. For the UK the
corresponding figures are 156,000 with 75,000 reserves and a budget of $65
billion, equating to 2% of GDP. Of note the UK has shed a considerable
level of manpower over the past 10 years however expenditure has remained
by and large the same. Both nations’ armed forces have broadly similar
proportions of personnel between their armies, navies and air forces and are
generally very well equipped with modern equipment. Attempts to globally
rank overall effectiveness of any military is fraught with analytical pitfalls
however we can at least gauge macro similarities by using credible think tanks
and institutions. Within the last year, a study complied by independent
surveyors Global Firepower placed the global military effectiveness of the UK
at 6th and Japan at 7th while similar work by the Unz Review placed the
nations at 4th and 8th respectively. Credit Suisse ranked Japan ahead at 5th

"http://www.mod.go.jp/e/d_budget/pdf/280330.pdf"

UK_Defence_in_Numbers_screen.pdf

http://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.asp

and the UK at 10th\textsuperscript{70}. Both nations have notable indigenous defence industrial bases, many with strong links to high-end US defence companies working at the cutting edge of technology. For example, both countries partner the US in the F-35 Lightning II stealth fighter aircraft, the biggest and most expensive weapons programs ever at $1.5 trillion value to date. The UK builds 10\% of every aircraft while Japan operates one of the three final assembly lines\textsuperscript{71}. With all these factors combined arguably it appears that the overall capability, and thus potential compatibility, is a close match.

However, it is in the operations, experience, specialisations and future equipping of both militaries that potential avenues of cooperation and thus strengthening of the alliance open up even more. Arguably, here it is the key differences and similarities that compound and conspire to present an attractive alliance. The similarities provide a strong foundation to build on and exchange ideas and tactics whilst the differences provide openings for leveraging rapid growth in key individual gaps. On operations the UK boasts considerable experience on long range out-of-area deployments and has been involved in dozens of conflicts and other operations of varying sizes across the world. These deployments have been carried out in partnership with the USA, with European allies, bespoke coalitions or completely autonomously.


Other than France, no other nation of this size and capability can compete in this respect. If Japan wished to further its overseas abilities and commitments the UK provides a realistic model on which to model.

In terms of core missions, both are island nations that must defend natural resource access including fisheries and oil and gas fields. Additionally, both nations claim and defend sovereign territory at range. For the UK this includes the Falkland Islands, Cyprus and Gibraltar for example, whilst Japan reaches not quite as far but faces challenges over island sovereignty from China, South Korea and Russia. Both rely on the security of high density shipping lanes (the English Channel and the Malacca Straits) and both have continental mass on one flank and open ocean on the other.

At the tactical level across this backdrop of home operations Japan has continuing experience of the use of maritime patrol aircraft, a capability the UK is moving back into. In recent years Japanese and Chinese military aircraft have regularly and increasingly encountered each other at the fringe of airspace limits with several incidents of near hostilities\textsuperscript{72}. The UK is well versed with handling similar Russian incursions and has done so for decades through the Cold War and beyond; such operations are routine business. At the industrial level both nations’ defence sectors are actively seeking partners

for collaboration. Of interest in the 2012 agreement was the agreement to jointly develop and produce defence equipment with one programme to proceed as soon as possible. There has been two recent high profile bids for large defence contracts in each direction; the Japanese offer of the P1 maritime patrol aircraft and the UK offer of the Typhoon fighter aircraft. Neither was successful however their inclusion at the short-list stage in both cases would probably have been unthinkable a decade before and may actually have been more to do with entry into the competition than winning it.

The collaboration on integrating the meteor missile onto Japanese and British F 35 fighters however is highly significant however as this involves the development and integration of highly sophisticated and classified weaponry at high risk and cost whilst simultaneously rejecting American offerings to meet the requirement.

When we consider all of these factors covering military compatibility and interoperability, a range of reasons why Japan would themselves be forward-leaning on an expanded military alliance and combine that with the favourable

33 Chelton 2012, 32-37
set of conditions that were outlined in the preceding chapter covering the historical context, it could help explain why momentum is on the side of expanding this relationship. With that in mind we now move into an analysis of the various scenarios where the UK could find itself operating alongside Japan should such an alliance actually be realised in a crisis.

Chapter 4

Scenario Analysis
Having outlined the theoretical, historical and military factors relevant to enhanced defence cooperation between the UK and Japan, we now proceed to analyse the backdrop of geo-political scenarios where such an alliance could find itself operating within. This chapter will specifically examine the scenarios and how the UK could find herself involved while the following chapter will evolve them and unpack the potential risks and opportunities for the UK.

The range of different scenarios that could see British and Japanese militaries operating alongside each other is broad in terms of type, scale and they potentially span the globe. However, the author believes there are three distinct regions characterised by distinctly varying degrees of risk and opportunity to the United Kingdom. These groupings are (1) operations within the South China Sea region; (2) what we will call here ‘rest of the world’ operations; and (3) evolving future scenarios across the Arctic region. In each case of this analysis we will examine the political and security issues involved, how a scenario could escalate and what Japan’s stance is on each issue. From there we identify possibilities of how and why the United Kingdom could become involved (with an emphasis on the bilateral aspects and commitments).

The Rising Power
It is entirely sensible to begin any analysis of potential conflict in the South China Sea region with a look at the rise of China. The economic rise of China is well documented however equally noticeable has been the concurrent and substantial levels of growth and investment in her armed forces. In 1998 the Chinese military budget was $11.3 billion yet by 2014 it was $132 billion\(^{77}\) and it should be borne in mind that these are released figures, that the trend is very much against the global norm for shrinking defence investment, and that this budget goes toward a state owned and controlled defence industry. The overall levels of capability and revisions in military doctrine suggest that the Chinese military is being developed not just to be the dominant force in the region but also to be capable of at least matching, and repelling if necessary, the American Pacific presence even if reinforced.

In terms of offensive capability the worst case scenario, and therefore the subject of much military analysis and related scholarship, revolves around an invasion and occupation of Taiwan\(^ {78}\). But what of Japan? Tow notes that there has been a perceptible shift in Sino-Japanese relations since the mid 1990s and in particular the 1996 Taiwan Strait crisis. And whilst these relations have soured there remains at least a willingness to engage and attempt to defuse regional crisis that may have arisen from intensified Sino-


\(^{78}\) Cliff 2015, 17-34
American tensions\textsuperscript{79}. However, in 2001, Tow went on to identify three key factors which could substantially intensify Japanese apprehension over a perceived Chinese threat: military confrontation in the Taiwan Straits; significant developments in Chinese weapon systems that would overwhelm Japanese defences; and Chinese securing of energy sources by military means and at the expense of Japan\textsuperscript{80}.


\textsuperscript{80} ibid
Since that work there has been a growth in Chinese capability to achieve the first, significant developments in the second and continued antagonism over the third\textsuperscript{81}. The continuing disputes revolve around access to natural energy resources but have found a crux in a reignited historical dispute over territory. This territory is the Senkaku/ Diyaoyu islands, ownership of course which has legal implications for the maritime demarcation between the two nations. In his 2013 work, Kai He quotes fellow Japanese scholar Sugganama ‘if there is a flash point to ignite a third cites Japanese war it will be the ownership of the Daioyu Islands in the South China Sea’\textsuperscript{82}. The islands themselves are a clutch of five uninhabited rocks that barely cover a few square kilometers between them and a land use headlined by an albatross feather gathering business\textsuperscript{83}. Figure 1 below illustrates the relative geographical proximity of China, Taiwan and Japan to the disputed islands. It is in their position and surrounding rich reserves of natural resources including oil and gas that their real value lies. The claims go back to 1895 when Japan claimed them from no

\textsuperscript{81} Chelton, S. “Japan’s Security” in RUSI Journal June/July 2012, Vol 157 No 3: 32-37

\textsuperscript{82} He, Kai, and Huiyun Feng. 2013. Prospect Theory and Foreign Policy Analysis in the Asia Pacific. New York: Routledge. 94 - 95

previous owners.

Figure 1. Senkaku Islands\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{84} Image credited to Wikipedia “Senkaku Islands”
In recent years China has audibly stepped up her claim over the islands, the surrounding waters and in the skies above. Beijing has put in place an ‘air defence zone’ which extends over the islands and overlaps similar zones long established by her neighbours\textsuperscript{85}. Figure 2 below illustrates the overlapping air defence zones. Note the numerous two-way conflicts and a three-way contest to the South West of the centre of the map.

**Figure 2. Overlapping South China Sea**

**Air Defence Identification Zones**\textsuperscript{86}

\textsuperscript{85} Chelton, S 2012. 32-37

This disputed territory therefore represents perhaps the most challenging and critical test for any alliance since it is a two-sided dispute between Japan and China. In essence this brings into play at once movements in the balance of power between the two states specifically, not the region as a whole, and it involves disputed sovereign territory (although the uninhabited status somewhat dilutes this admittedly). According to Kai He, the Chinese efforts to secure access to the natural resources is driven by the need to sustain her rapid economic growth and is coupled by a desire for status and power in the region. In Chinese eyes, the Diaoyu Islands are sovereign and therefore they believe the moral high ground belongs to them. For Japan the economic and moral arguments are viewed the same but the situation on power is different. After a period of strong growth they have gone into somewhat of a relative decline but are arguably unwilling to accept it. Kai He models this shift in balance of power using a power transition theory which posits that in a historic sovereign territory dispute, the rising power will be increasing dissatisfied with the status quo and become a substantial challenger for ownership. Japan in response can view herself as a weaker power and opt for negotiation or peaceful resolution or if she views herself as stronger than a maintenance of rhetorical claim ensues. The latter scenario, according to the model, often results in conflict. Should the tensions escalate to flashpoint and ultimately into conflict it is highly likely that Japan would call on and

87 He 93-95
88 He 99-101
expect support from her allies since it would be seen as a violation of sovereign territory. The immediate question here is ‘what about the US’? Of course they are highly likely to be a factor in this scenario, however we can arguably predict any US involvement here as escalatory. For other allies, especially those dual-aligned with the US, this dispute over uninhabited islands carries high stakes risk of further escalation to a major regional conflict.

We therefore have an ongoing direct friction between China and Japan. In addition to this ongoing confrontation there are three other potential flash points that should be considered: an invasion of Taiwan; maritime trading route security, particularly the Malacca Straits; and the response to a major conflict between China and another regional power such as South Korea or Vietnam.

Any scenario that involves the invasion of Taiwan inevitably leads again to the question of major regional conflict between the US and China. Of all the possible flash points in the region it is this one that has attracted the most scholarship and military analysis when looking at worst case futures. We will not attempt here to add to that discussion but instead try and unpack any ramifications for a UK/Japan alliance. If the UK remained only aligned to the US, A British response to a major conflict in the Pacific could be substantial without actually involving direct support. For example, it could include a
stepping up of forces in the Middle East to compensate sudden American reductions. The US misn and interests in that region would not vanish just because of events elsewhere but the capacity of Washington to concurrently maintain force levels there and in a new Pacific crisis may not be there. That of course is one opinion that may be viewed as optimistic. Another argument is that the US would put pressure on allies to see a territorial invasion of Taiwan as a major threat to democracy itself and that every effort should be brought to repel any aggression and isolate China. Japanese support to the US, under any bilateral would be expected. This support would at least include the use of bases and likely include direct military assistance. Should the conflict escalate to attacks on the sovereign territory of Japan then that would be an undeniable trigger for support from allies. In essence any dual US and Japanese allies would again be double-locked into supporting action. China has in recent times in easing portrayed the US/Japan alliance as a tool for frustrating China’s quest to reassimilate Taiwan and furthermore sees Japan as a proxy for broader US interests in the region. It should also be borne in mind that additional treaty obligations such as the Five-Powers Agreement involving the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore are likely to similarly activate around a scenario of this magnitude.

The issue of broader maritime security and access to shipping lanes follows on from these scenarios and many of the same considerations apply. The

89 Tow 2001, 67-69
Malacca Straits is of particular importance since a quarter of the world’s seaborne goods traffic uses this chokepoint. For comparison, the Suez Canal sees the passage of 8%. While it is in the interests of China, Japan and indeed the whole of the region to ensure the security of this vital waterway, that common ground does not extend to a singular opinion on who is responsible and how they achieve it. Why is it specifically important to our analysis? The strait is vital to the movement of 80% of Japan’s petroleum imports and 60% of its imported foodstuffs, making Japan one of the most dependent user nations. For China, her dependence on the Malacca Straits accounts to 85% of overall imports and 80% of her energy imports.

Traditionally, Beijing has primarily provided financial assistance to the littoral countries of the Malacca Straits however her stance is changing and becoming more visible and audible. Wary of others’ regional presence, China has rejected greater Indian and Japanese security presence and involvement near the straits, going as far as rejecting propositions for naval counter-piracy patrols from Japan. China has also indicated opposition to increased US presence in the straits. We therefore have a strategically vital waterway which whilst not sovereignly contested provides a flashpoint of a different

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90 Freeman, Donald B. 2003. *The Straits of Malacca: Gateway or Gauntlet?*. McGill: Queen’s University Press


93 Ibid
nature since control, choking or other interference at even a small level could have significant economic effect considering the scale and value of reliance. Since a sizeable proportion of the ships using the straits originate from, or are bound for, the US, Europe and the UK, there is no ignoring any crisis here. Figure 3 below illustrates the position and route of the Malacca straits.

![Map of Malacca Straits](image)

**Figure 3. Malacca Straits**

The Korean Dimension
Discussion on Korean issues in the UK is often centred around the North Korean nuclear weapons programme and the threat such an armed regime poses to global security. The US stance and responses to the Pyongyang dynastic dictatorship’s actions over the years have been steadfastly strong and
Washington retains a significant military presence in South Korea aimed at securing and deterring the resumption of hostilities between two countries technically still at war\textsuperscript{94}. How does the Korean dimension affect our case analysis though? There are two dimensions to this, the first, the North Korean consideration is relatively straightforward. The second, covering South Korean aspects, is perhaps less so.

North Korean/Japanese relations are not particularly good. As North Korea accelerated its nuclear programme in the 1994, Japan was warned it would face ‘devastation’ for aligning with the US over placing sanctions on Pyongyang. The Japanese sanctions amounted to over half a billion dollars of remittances annually and a major source of valuable foreign currency. Since then relations have soured and warmed on cycles with corresponding missiles tests (occasionally over Japan itself) and lifting of food trading bans usually the representation of the climate\textsuperscript{95}. As a result of the state of relationship there remains a constant risk of conflict between North Korea and Japan, either directly and bilaterally or through being brought into a wider Korean conflict involving the North, the South, US and possibly China. North Korea has conducted a number of nuclear tests and continues to develop missiles with even greater range and allegedly have further aspirations of being able to

\textsuperscript{94} Parker, Geoffrey. 2012. \textit{Cambridge illustrated history of warfare}. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 342-345

\textsuperscript{95} Tow 2001, 62
reach the US with a nuclear or electromagnetic pulse (EMP) warhead. In terms of threat to Japan, North Korea maintains the military capability to threaten her territorial infrastructure, population and shipping lanes. Despite Japan outclassing the North Korean in overall defence capability the difference is unlikely to be sufficient to prevent significant damages and loss. In a broader Korean war, the issue of US basing again comes into play and the threat to Japan from such a regionally catastrophic would be considerable.

Whilst the threat of North Korean aggression and nuclear capability is widely messaged, as is the frosty relationship between Pyongyang and Tokyo, it is the relationship between Japan and South Korea that perhaps requires the greater exposure in our analysis. To be clear, Japanese/South Korean relations are not warm and strong, and the living and collective memory factors in this case appear to remain. For our analysis we need to consider two topics here: the territorial and historically rooted disputes between South Korean and Japan; and the implications of a future reunified Korea.

South Korea and Japan do maintain extensive economic trading ties and both are aligned with the United States, yet despite this, the relationship between the two countries could be described as tense. Two factors contribute to this status, these being unresolved historical grievances and, again, territorial

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http://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2016/04/north_korea_poses_emp_threat.html
disputes. The historical grievances reach back to the days of colonisation in the nineteenth century through to the events of WWII with a particularly thorny issue of returning of remains, locations of cultural artefacts and 'comfort women’ continuing to surface in disputes. Nationalist feelings in both countries fuel a cultural resentment and if we consider the theory of living memory this case arguably represents a particularly applicable example. An indication of the cultural feelings of how both countries towards each other could be taken from a 2014 BBC World Service Poll. The survey, a series on international perspectives found that 13% of Japanese view South Korea's influence positively, with 37% expressing a negative view, while 15% of South Koreans view Japanese influence positively, with 79% expressing negatively. This, according to the survey, makes South Korea, after China, the country with the second most negative perception of Japan in the world. These sentiments have also found a modern, exacerbating issue in the dispute over the Dokdo/Takeshima Islands. In a scenario not too dissimilar to the one outlined earlier with China, this dispute revolves around dual claimed ownership of a small clutch of islands.

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97 Tow 2001, 62-64
Figure 4 below illustrates their relative positioning. Again, the islands themselves are not the key factor but instead it is the surrounding waters, the incumbent fishing resources and ultimately the right to then stretch out Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ). Despite all of this, however, there has not quite been the same level of military presence associated with this affair in comparison to the Chinese dispute.

Fig 4. Dokdo/ Takeshima Islands

The second issue concerns any future reunification of Korea. The status quo has an American aligned South Korea and (an admittedly somewhat complicated) Chinese aligned North Korea. Reunification itself would likely be a tumultuous event likely headlined by regime collapse and humanitarian

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100 Image credited to Straits Times within War News Updates “Japan And South Korea Dispute Ownership Over The Takeshima - Dokdo Islands” http://warnewsupdates.blogspot.co.uk/2015/02/japan-and-south-korea-dispute-ownership.html
catastrophe in the North at best and major regional conflict at worst. We have already acknowledged the consequences of Korean themed conflict earlier but what if a transition of leadership in Pyongyang occurred without war? The constituent components of a reunified Korea would have one thing in common, that being lingering disputes with, and feelings against, Japan. What would it mean for the US? Would a reunified Korea lean west or east? Either scenario has ramifications for the balance of power since a western leaning unified Korea may provoke a more aggressive stance from China. With an eastern leaning outcome the response from the US is less predictable and could mean either enhanced US leaning on Japan for regional presence or alternatively a partial withdrawal if the view was actually one of reduced likelihood of subsequent regional conflict combined with American access to the Pacific markets\textsuperscript{101}.

\textbf{The Russian Dimension}

While a great deal of recent analysis covering the Pacific region has centred around the rise of China and the associated reactions of other states, the continuing significance of Russia and her ongoing disputes with Japan are also of relevance to our study. There are two key reasons why this difficult relationship is important to this work. One aspect is covered later in section three of the chapter and concerns the Arctic region. The second, covered here, is once again centred around disputed islands within this section’s zone of

\textsuperscript{101} Tow 2001, 64-65
discussion. In this case it is the Kuril (also known as the Kurile, Kuril or Chishima) islands. Figure 5 below illustrates their relative positioning to both nations.

![Figure 5. Islands disputed by Russia and Japan](image-url)

The Kurils have been claimed by Russia since the end of WWII. One difference applicable to these islands vice the others we have looked at is the current in-place local Russian administration and the presence of an indigenous population. Despite attempts at various times over the past four decades to warm relations between the two nations and resolve sovereignty there has been little tangible progress. Attempts have been made to compromise with even suggestions of partitioning. Prime Minister Abe on coming to power unsurprisingly promised to seek a ‘final’ and ‘mutually

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acceptable’ solution to the territorial dispute over the Kuril Islands\textsuperscript{103}. Given the lack of success of the negotiations, one analysis of this specific case concluded ‘given the current position of the two sides, there appear to be only two ways of resolving the issue: either Moscow needs to abandon its claim to the territories or Tokyo does; neither is likely’\textsuperscript{104}.

Now whilst this particular issue may seem to be of limited consequence to the UK, consider her robust response to the recent events involving Russian claims to the Crimea. Add to that the poor state of relations between the UK and Russia in general which have not been helped by the Syrian situation and the murder of Alexander Litvinenko. To this we add the current state of Japanese/ Ukrainian relations. Ahead of Prime Minister Abe’s official visit to the Ukraine during June 2015, President Petro Poroshenko stated ‘Japanese-Ukrainian relations are at the highest level now,’\textsuperscript{105}. Thanking Japan for her financial and diplomatic support over the Crimean crisis, Poroshenko added ‘This clear position [of Japan] can be explained in no small measure by the fact that Japan has the problem of the Kuril Islands, which were also annexed by Russia,’\textsuperscript{106}.


\textsuperscript{104} ibid


\textsuperscript{106} ibid
Therefore, given the current state of the interweaving relations between the UK, Russia and Japan, a strengthening of military ties and commitments between London and Tokyo is unlikely to be viewed favourably by Moscow. The Ukrainian complication is at once coincidental but also indicative of how international relations can conspire unexpectedly in one area to affect another. The view from the Kremlin of Japan reaching into their affairs in Europe being potentially matched by the UK reaching into the Far-East theatre could easily be one of unwarranted interference and certainly annoyance. Whilst this issue is arguably unlikely to escalate beyond increased diplomatic rhetoric at present there are implications for the future. The disputed islands sit at the Asian end of the Northeast Passage and whilst this has not been a primary factor throughout recent years it may about to be. We will revisit this aspect of the Russian dimension when we deal with the Arctic region in the third section.

The Rest of the Region

Given the previous entries in this section there may be an expectation that this one leads into a consolidation of further island disputes, however this is not the case. Japan’s relations with other regional neighbours have arguably a somewhat different character in many although not all respects. If we single out Vietnam first, she is indeed embroiled in territory disputes but with China, not Japan. In recent years there has been numerous hostile incidents involving
Vietnamese and Chinese fishing and naval fleets and even oil rigs in counter-claimed waters. The Japanese response has been one of support to Vietnam. In 2014, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said that Tokyo would provide Southeast Asian nations its ‘utmost support’ in their territorial disputes over the South China Sea, in a speech that received a hostile response from China\(^{107}\). Japan has gone on to assist Vietnam with the provision of coastguard ships and improve military relations between the two nations.

Vietnam’s alliances most notably include her membership of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), a grouping that also includes Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Phillipines, Singapore and Thailand. Although not a military alliance it does covers a broad spectrum of economic, cultural and diplomatic cooperation\(^{108}\). Figure 6 illustrates the ASEAN grouping of nations.


During a 2015 visit to Vietnam, Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida stressed ‘the supremacy of law in safeguarding order is of extreme importance for the sake of peace and stability in the region’ and quoted a speech by Abe also referring to the importance of the supremacy of law at sea. Thus Japanese/ASEAN relations are comparatively strong. It is worth noting that ASEAN nations other than Vietnam are also embroiled in territorial disputes with China and other 3rd party states. However, there are also disputes amongst themselves. The Spratly Islands dispute is perhaps the best known of these and is well covered in part due to US interests. Where does the UK fit in to this, however? An expanded Japanese alliance with ASEAN effectively overlaps another in place treaty: the Five Powers Defence Arrangement (FPDA).

The FPDA was signed in 1971 and under the arrangements, the five powers (Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore and the UK) are to consult each other immediately in the event or threat of an armed attack on Malaysia or Singapore for the purpose of deciding what measures should be taken jointly

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or separately in response\textsuperscript{111}. With concurrent positive steps in ties between Australia and Japan also underway, an enhanced UK/Japanese alliance potentially double-locks each other when considering Malaysia and Singapore, and any security threat either nation may face.

All of these scenarios involving China, the Koreas, Russia and the ASEAN nations if escalated have far-reaching consequences for an alliance between the UK and Japan. As we have seen there are many and cover a range of issues that compound the worst of historical, economic and sovereign territorial issues. The range of outcomes from these various disputes covers ongoing diplomatic spats and military stand-offs through major regional conflict. The stakes are high while the flash-points are low. There are many actors and the status of the various bilateral relationships complicated. Becoming involved in this region brings with it many considerations for an aspirant alliance partner and in the next chapter we will analyse the specific risks and opportunities arising from what we have outlined here. For now, though we move on to the question of an alliance between the UK and Japan across the rest of the world

\textbf{The Rest of the World}

In this section we consider the scenarios, mission types and other factors that could be applicable to enhanced UK/Japanese defence cooperation across the rest of the world. For the purposes of this thesis, the rest of the world is defined as any part of the world except the South China Sea region and the Arctic region (including approaches and transits through and around). In Chapter 3 we looked at the evolving and increasing contributions Japan has made to operations in Iraq and counter-piracy missions off the coast of Somalia. Having outlined the security of the South China Sea security section in the previous section, it is important to mention before we proceed a domestic conflict of views between increasing Japan’s operations at range vice strengthening her capabilities at home\textsuperscript{112}. Whilst acknowledging that area as an important and related area of scholarship, here we maintain an analysis based on a UK perspective and move forward with an assumption that Japan does indeed increase her scale and frequency of out of area operations.

So where, when and under what circumstances could the UK and Japan cooperate militarily across the rest of the world? A prudent start is to examine the recent texts from the respective governments. The 2014 joint UK/Japanese governments statement\textsuperscript{113} outlined commitments to ‘joint

\begin{footnotesize}

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contributions to international efforts towards maintaining international peace and stability’ and ‘supporting each other’s forces when deployed on operations’\textsuperscript{114}. The text then goes on to cover the risk of terrorism for our citizens, including from home-grown terrorism, and for partners overseas (specifically mentioning northern Africa and the Sahara). Mention is also made of working together in the field of maritime security to tackle piracy against ships off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulfs of Aden and Guinea and in the proliferation of weapons of mass effect/destruction\textsuperscript{115}. Further UK specific literature outlining her commitment to rest of the world operations is arguably not needed since her track record of deployments and commitments around the world speaks for itself. However, for Japan it is worth adding some commentary from Prime Minister Abe during a 2014 interview by Robin Laird of the Wall Street Journal. In the interview Abe spoke, unsurprisingly, about the importance of sea lines of communication and said ‘In particular, sea lanes of communication, stretching from the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz, the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden to the surrounding waters of Japan, passing through the Indian Ocean, the Straits of Malacca, and the South China Sea, are critical to Japan due to its dependence on the maritime transport of natural and energy resources from the Middle East. In this regard, Japan will provide assistance to those coastal states alongside the sea lanes of communication and other states in enhancing their maritime law

\textsuperscript{114} ibid

\textsuperscript{115} ibid
enforcement capabilities, and strengthen cooperation with partners on the sea lanes who share strategic interests with Japan. Laird’s analysis on the evolution of Japanese defence strategy from the interview was summarised as ‘What is underscored in the new strategy is the importance of blending military, security and political initiatives together in expanding effective Japanese alliance relationships’.

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117 ibid
Therefore, based off of recent historical precedent and joint intent, the potential scope for combined venture across counter-terrorist, counter-piracy, non-proliferation and maritime security missions is clear. The geographical area that such combined operations could take place is also of interest. If we look at the UK’s territorial waters across the world, where she has deployed her military forces to in recent years and then factor in the evolution and intent of Japan’s security interests we have a remarkably complimentary coverage of the globe. To illustrate this, we can view the UK’s territorial waters and
where the UK is operating abroad first at Figures 7 & 8 respectively below.

![Map of Where British troops are stationed overseas](http://u0v052dm9wl3gxo0y3lx0u44wz.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/UK-Territorial-Waters.png)

**Figure 7. UK Territorial Waters**

![Map of Openly Declared UK Military Operating Locations 2016](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-34919954)

**Figure 8. Openly Declared UK Military Operating Locations 2016**

Now add these perspectives to how Prime Minister Abe described the...
evolving Japanese security and defence strategy to the Wall Street Journal.

Figure 9. The Evolution of Japanese Defense and Security 120

Figure 9 was published within Laird’s article and illustrates the evolution of Japan’s defence strategy from defending the homeland and the previous, classic, interpretation of vital routes to one where over-the-horizon operations are just as important to the national interest as local ones\textsuperscript{121}. Of course all these areas are also covered by the mutual ally of the US however it is arguably a highly symmetrical set of areas of expertise and reach. For a final illustration on the matter consider a view of global maritime choke points and piracy risk zones below at Figure 10, and then overlay what we have just considered.

\textsuperscript{121}Laird, Robin. 2014.
With these complimentary areas of expertise, reach and access, the opportunities for cooperation could go beyond maritime security and counter-piracy. Other commitments in the 2014 UK-Japan Joint Statement cover visits from armed forces to bases, exercises and sharing of information. From this network of geographical and permissive enablers, a UK/Japanese alliance would be able to conduct a multitude of operations on land too. The nature of these operations would likely still be constrained by the Japanese legal framework and by domestic views on just how far their military could go. However, combined ventures covering disaster relief, humanitarian assistance and even peacekeeping would seem plausible even in the short term. The possibility of whether the Japanese will ever match the UK’s willingness and ability to conduct intervention operations at range is perhaps less certain although increased military interaction with the UK’s armed forces will certainly give the opportunity to evaluate how they may do so. The author posits that the technical and professional capabilities are likely to be quickly realised while the political permissions may well take a good bit longer. That said there is one area where domestic and political reluctance to

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intervention operations may be rigorously tested, an area where coincidentally the UK has a great deal of experience, that being counter-terrorism.

The UK's experience with counter-terrorism is well documented. In recent times a swathe of scholarship has covered the topic across the troubles in Ireland from the 1970s to the turn of the century and then moving in emphasis to Islamic extremism since then. Coverage has included domestic terrorism, operations abroad and the link between the two. For Japan there is a growing interest in counter-terrorism operations and they are no strangers to the subject on their own home front. The most infamous event on Japanese soil is perhaps the Matsumoto attack on a subway platform involving Sarin gas (often generically called the Tokyo underground attacks) that killed 8 and injured 200. Despite the incident making headlines across the world it is isolated and infamous only for its method as the motive has been present across other attacks. Other nationalist groups, such as the Red Army, and religious-cult linked attacks have occurred over the years and even included the downing of airliners during the 1970s.

Despite the horror of these attacks it is a pair of incidents in 2015 that is of perhaps the most relevance here. The executions by broadcast beheading of

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Kenji Goto and Haruna Yukawa by Islamic State (IS) in Syria prompted an angry yet indicative response from Prime Minister Abe. The premier assured the world that Japan ‘would not give in to terrorism’ and that he would expand his support to countries fighting IS. Further he added that Japan would work with the international community to bring those responsible for Mr. Goto’s apparent murder to justice. IS has cited Japanese foreign aid as a reason for the hostage taking. This relatively robust response compares and contrasts with the hostage crisis at the Japanese Embassy in Lima, Peru in 1996 which was met with a passive almost non-response. Even with a comparatively subdued attitude to intervention operations, compared to the US or the UK, the chances of further Japanese hostages linked to IS or other extremist groups linked to the opposing side of a future humanitarian must be considered a distinct possibility.

With the chance of co-located and similarly committed UK forces being increasingly likely, and both nations having zero tolerance to ransoms and demands, there exists a distinct possibility that joint counter-terrorist operations could take place. With the 2020 Tokyo Olympics now at an advanced state of planning, the subject of Japanese counter-terrorism is firmly front and centre in their national press. Some of the coverage is even critical of Prime Minister Abe’s funding and provision of the required intelligence.

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127 Tow 2001, 77
and direct action capabilities needed to combat any threat to the games\textsuperscript{128}. Of course if Japan is going to study recent successful security operations designed to protect a major capital city hosting the Olympic Games whilst facing domestic and international terrorist threats then the 2012 London games are arguably the exemplar and another reason why cooperation in this field is to be expected.

The Future of the Arctic Region

In the previous sections we have looked at continuing tensions and disputes in the South China Sea and then across other scenarios throughout the rest of the world and how they could affect a military alliance between the UK and Japan. In all these cases the possibility for conflict is based on today; they are ongoing hotspots. In this section however, we turn to a region attracting increasing analysis and one which is still evolving. We now turn to the evolving geopolitical scenario of the Arctic region and with it, the effects of climate change. The region may seem familiar but it is very much virgin territory with a vast potential and may turn out to be a major driver for defence cooperation between the two states.

Why is this region potentially so important for a UK/Japanese alliance? When most maps chart how the two nations are geographically separated they tend to show the world in rectangular format and chart the traditional shipping lanes that sail long routes either through the Suez Canal or around the Cape of Good Hope or perhaps even Cape Horn. However, when viewed from a North Pole central perspective, the straight line distance over the top of the globe between the two nations is far shorter. Historically this has been irrelevant as transit ‘over the top’ has been impossible or at best highly challenging and extremely limited in capacity. Global warming is however changing this. Scholarship in global warming is quite evidently a growth industry and attracts significant public, political and pressure-group interest. With respect to our analysis, recent works are in agreement that warming is most pronounced across the northern landmasses. Every summer unprecedented passages open up through the Arctic Sea ice while continental ice sheets are melting faster in the summer than they are reforming in the winter\footnote{Brooke, John. 2014. *Climate Change and the Course of Global History.* New York: Cambridge University Press. 563-565}. Other works examine the speed of temperature rise across the ice fields north of Greenland (3 degrees Celsius since the industrial Revolution) and predict that it may only take a few centuries to melt half the polar ice cap\footnote{Houghton, John. 2015. *Global Warming: The Complete Briefing.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.165-167}. Both Japan and the UK are both highly vocal on the issue of climate
change, indeed the Kyoto Protocols, perhaps the most significant agreement on the issue, was of course signed in the former. However, despite the significant threats climate change poses to society that will likely not change advantage being taken of some of its opportune consequences when they appear. With the melting of the ice, the reliability and potential capacity of the North-East Passage is increasing and there has even been speculation that other direct trans-Arctic routes may open up. Considering the distances currently involved in shipping goods from Europe to Asia, and of course the dangers and chokepoints we identified earlier in our analysis, there are significant security and economic drivers for exploiting options here. To illustrate the point, consider this graphical comparison of routes. The route has already been used by ships as large as 41,000 tons this decade and Chinese freighters started using the route in 2013; compared to only dedicated icebreakers and explorers only a few years before. Right now the window of transit is open only from July to November but has already demonstrated a 12 day transit time saving compared to the Suez route. Figure 11 below

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131 Tamnes, Rolf. Routeledge. 64-6


illustrates the routes themselves and the difference in lengths.

**Figure 11. Comparison of North-East Passage to Traditional Southerly Route**

If global warming opens the window of time and size of shipping further and allows more direct, faster routes, then the attractions for increasing its use are clear. A modern bulk-cargo ship may be carrying a five-figure ISO container load; the potential cost savings are huge. For our specific analysis here though this enhanced transit and reduced cost of trade has many ramifications. Whilst it may reduce reliance on the Suez Canal and the Malacca Straits, it potentially brings the UK and Japan increasingly into the more complicated and contentious facets of Arctic politics. This means further dealings with Russia, who feel they have a far reaching and significant right of claim in this part of the world.

There are also the broader international relations issues of the region which involve other territorial claims and in turn rights to exploit the regions rich reserves of natural resources. Hough’s work on the International Politics of the Arctic for example posits that ‘the prospect off climate change finally revealing the energy and mineral riches and a readily navigable Northwest (and Northeast) Passage that had attracted 16th-century kingdoms, though, has

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led many to speculate that the Arctic’s coming in from the cold will, instead, see it become a new stage for imperial rivalry and a nationalistic resource scramble\textsuperscript{135}. Hough goes on to describe a realist fear of potential conflict over the resources but balances it with an alternative liberal view that, hopefully, the international community will come together to manage this fertile ground\textsuperscript{136}.

From a UK perspective the interest in the Arctic also runs west but there are significant differences in the security picture of another route that is similarly opening up. The Northwest passage allows faster transit from the UK to North Canada and the West Coast of the US. This route though is in the main further away from Russia and flanked and separated by Greenland. The significant and dominant American and European Atlantic forces permanently stationed in the region provide against any threat. Should a threat or crisis occur in the Atlantic of course then that is a prime trigger for the activation of NATO. In contrast, the Northeast routes that run through to Japan and Asia have, once past the Scandinavian nations, a requirement to transit along the whole length of Russia before going through the Bering Strait and on into Asian waters. This does mean the US is involved in the security of that part of the route as it borders a part of its own sovereign territory in Alaska (with more than a little history with Russia). However, it is worth pointing out that

\textsuperscript{135} Hough, Peter. 2013. \textit{International Politics of the Arctic: Coming in from the Cold}. New York: Routledge. 13

\textsuperscript{136} Hough 2013, 13
US trade will likely be nowhere near as affected by the expanded opportunities of the Northeast passage since for her more direct and accessible routes to Europe, Asia and the Middle-East are already in operation.
We therefore now have the prospect of the UK and Japan facing each other in geographic terms almost directly with the world a shrunken place. The western approaches to the route run along UK territorial waters whilst the eastern end of the route, once past the Bering Strait, transits past the disputed Kuril Islands that we looked at earlier in the chapter. Essentially, history and climate change have conspired to place more fuel on the tinderbox. The mission for an alliance between the two nations in this scenario is manifold. The regional balance of power is arguably heavily in favour of Russia. NATO of course is a factor, but not all of the regional states are members and Russia still remains the dominant local military power. And local here stretches a very long way. Russia herself has recognised the importance of this route with Putin placing the development of it, along with the strategically parallel Baikal-Amur Mainline and Trans-Siberian Railways as a priority. From a Russian perspective this route offers her considerable opportunities too and will relish any access to any fresh source of natural resource. However, she will be aware of competitors and also faces the prospect that her northern flank, once sealed by nature will now be exposed. Considering the issues she is dealing with on the other three flanks, this will be a concern\textsuperscript{137}.

Thus the Arctic region whilst arguably not attracting the same level of scrutiny as the South China Sea or the Middle East may in time end up being

\textsuperscript{137} Kato, Mihoko. 2013. “Japan and Russia at the beginning of the Twenty-first Century: New dimension to maritime security surrounding the "Kuril Islands" in UNISCI Discussion Papers, 32
one, if not the most directly applicable and specifically relevant area of operations for expanded UK/Japanese defence cooperation. We have seen throughout this chapter that there is a surprisingly broad and varied collection of potential flashpoints and scenarios where such an alliance could find itself being activated. We have also seen how quickly and how easily many of these scenarios could escalate from minor to major conflict. In the next chapter we will combine this analysis with the earlier theoretic, historic and military contributions to unpack the risks and opportunities to the UK from each of these scenarios.
Chapter 5

Risks and Opportunities

In this chapter, all of the theoretical, historical and geo-political analysis are combined in order to arrive at a balanced appraisal of the potential risks and opportunities afforded by an enhanced military alliance between the UK and Japan. The chapter is divided into four sections: the South China Sea region is covered first, followed by the rest of the world, and in turn by the future of the Arctic region. In each case we examine the risks, the opportunities and assess the balance of both. A fourth section then draws them altogether to form a strategic global narrative.

The South China Sea Region

We start with what the author judges to be the area with the most risk for developing a UK/Japan military alliance. As we have seen in the historical analysis chapter the region has endured as much, if not more, post WWII territorial angst than Europe. Across key states in the region no realistic equivalent of the EU or NATO has emerged. In the contemporary analysis chapter, we also covered at length the multitude of continuing disputes and potential flashpoints. The region’s interstate political map is characterised by measuring bilateral relations across every combination rather than by determining a generic alignment or even groupings. ASEAN in the southerly part of the region is as close as it gets yet this represents alignment only across the relatively smaller powers of concern.

Therefore, the UK venturing back, militarily, into the South China Sea after a period of absence would be emplacing herself in the midst of a tinderbox. The risk may be
realised not just through an activation of an alliance agreement, even a military presence through maneuvers or exercises could be seen as a provocative move. London has to consider her considerable and oft heralded strong relations with other nations of the region. Predominantly this applies to the first country we looked at in Chapter 4; China. If we are to aspiring to be China’s ‘best partner in the west’\textsuperscript{138}, that will be difficult to coordinate with sailing UK warships or flying fighter jets alongside the Japanese in the same locality. If a Japanese warship visited the UK she could finish maneuvers with the Royal Navy and steam straight into a similar arrangement with the French Navy. There is every chance effort would be made to picture the three nations ships together and herald the event. Even this simple, small scale event would be a completely different proposition across the navies of the South China Sea.

This consideration does not just apply to China since there is South Korea to think about too. And whilst maneuvers with the North Korean or Russian navies would unlikely be on the cards, operating in their proximity would be a concern for whilst such a visible and provocative gesture may not come to pass or be managed to be subtler, any regional presence in our eyes may well be judged differently across the cultural divide. Overwhelming trade considerations may overcome the fact we have an alliance in an unfavorable direction by some states of the region there is no guarantee it will not be so elsewhere. The UK is one of only a few nations, and of an even smaller group amongst the great powers, who maintains direct diplomatic relations with North Korea through her own embassy in Pyongyang. There is a case

to be made that economic and diplomatic presence is of more importance to the UK in the region and could actually be threatened by introducing military presence.

Whilst the historical geo-political factors already provide indication of risk this must be combined with theoretical implications. An analysis of the region to determine balance of power is already complicated. Whom are you balancing against? Is the dominant power China or the US? The powers of the region, and the US are all likely to answer this one differently. From the Japanese perspective we could theoretically be an additional hedge against American abandonment or an increased voice against entrapment. However, from the UK perspective entrapment is the far more likely risk resulting from military involvement in the region. With arguably unparalleled support for US military ventures around the globe, an arrival into the region on the back of an alliance to another close American ally would likely be seen as a statement of joint endeavour and involvement. This is key since both the US and Japan would arguably now expect alignment and backing for their regional agendas and endeavours.

On the mitigating side, this dual alignment could go some way to ease any South Korean derived tension from UK/Japanese partnership. However, there would be no doubt on the issue of China and North Korea. Here we recall Morrow who pointed out how an alliance can be a significant influence on the decision of one state to intervene on behalf of, or alongside another. What happens if the UK is called into support a relatively minor dispute or stand-off? Whilst a coalition coming

\[139\] Morrow 2000, 69
\[140\] Morrow 2000, 63-74
together to diffuse the crisis may be the intended and realised result this must be balanced against two considerations. Firstly, would the UK really matter here and would her absence actually have made a difference? Secondly, what effect has the outcome and UK presence had on UK relations with the other parties involved in the crisis, not just in the aftermath but in the long term?

An answer to these questions may likely be none and bad respectively however it does not end there. The alternative to involvement is equally forbidding if an alliance is in place. If there is no UK response does this amount to abandonment? Would the UK be effectively abandoned in turn? At the very least serious diplomatic misgivings and questions on reliability could be expected to blight the UK. This is a classic Scylla and Charybdis dilemma of abandonment and entrapment as described by Morrow\textsuperscript{141}. Further complicating this theoretic quandary is the scale of risk which ranges from rhetorical stand-off through major regional conflict and beyond. The question must be asked that whilst avoiding a minor squabble may be seen as sensible, at what point is it nigh-on impossible to ignore a precipitous world war? And from there one can consider whether or not an alliance between the UK and Japan would really have made a difference at this point of crisis?

From a practical military perspective there are further risks that albeit minor in comparison to the preceding considerations should be mentioned. Projecting significant military power across the world is an ability only a few states possess. The argument over what constitutes significant is an undeniable one however there is

\textsuperscript{141} Morrow 2000, 63-74
no doubt that the UK can competently mount operations and project power at range. That said, the Pacific region represents a considerable challenge of reach and sustainability for the UK. There is no doubt it could be done however the question becomes one of scale, duration, reactivity and cost. In terms of scale the risk is the projection of insignificant levels of firepower in support of an alliance activation to have a meaningful effect. To counteract that and, say, project one of the new British aircraft carriers and that converts into considerable cost and material risk. Does the UK have enough assets to enable a rapid deployment in response to an emerging crisis? Even if the answer is yes what will be the effect on any operations elsewhere? When viewed through the lens of our previous theoretical considerations this dilemma is compounded. Send too little and we signal lack of real intent which in essence is abandonment by stealth. Send too much and the UK potentially becomes an escalatory factor which feeds counter-balancing action from the other side. Meanwhile there is a risk of potentially having to reduce commitments, or abandon them, elsewhere.

Considering this fairly comprehensive and compounding list of risks across historic, theoretic, military and geo-political risks are there any potential benefits from a UK/Japanese alliance in the region? In this case the author posits there is an alternative view but not one based on denial of risks but rather through intelligent mitigation and a realisation of actual likely impact of UK presence. To begin with there should be no illusion on the international perception of the UK as a perennial American ally, and anywhere the UK operates militarily there is a good chance of at least American military presence if not leadership. The close nature of UK/US intelligence sharing is also well documented. So whilst we may well see a new
region would this fundamentally change any already held perceptions? Would this be any regionally game-changing as to counteract the attraction of healthy trade in the case of China? Perhaps routine military maneuvers between the UK and Japan in the region, but outside of the disputed territorial areas would attract nothing more than obligatory comment. This view could argue that the UK operating at the edge of her reach with typically only a small portion of her national firepower, whilst attracting diplomatic comment, would negligibly affect the regional balance of power. At the other end of the spectrum do China and Russia really expect that the UK would do anything but side with the US in the event of a major conflict? A careful laying out of obligations and expectations could potentially allow the UK to develop a regional presence, perhaps based around Japan’s increasingly strong relations with the ASEAN nations and with which the UK could concurrently and synergistically enhance her other ties under the Five Powers arrangements. By managing expectations on the realistic level, scale, duration and frequency of any military presence the risk of falling into the abandonment/entrapment dilemma could also be mitigated in the case of minor disputes with antagonists. In the case of disputes between Japan and mutual allies, whilst the risks are acknowledged there is the mitigation of US interjection, leadership and influence.

On balance, the South China Sea region presents a challenge for a UK/Japanese military alliance. As we have seen the risks are many and varied and whilst there are opportunities they would seem to require considerable care and planning to exploit effectively. In terms of risk there is so much to consider and it is difficult to argue against considerations that range across a spectrum of historic, theoretic, military and political issues. Whilst it could be argued that UK military presence may amount to
only a negligible impact on the regional balance of power, there should also be 
acknowledgement that the diplomatic impact and potential economic fallout could 
more than counter-balance that in the wrong direction. That said, how could you get 
the best for an alliance out of the region? The broader Pacific region could be 
viewed as a heat map and whilst the core of the South China Sea may be a net risk 
for UK military operations there are other opportunities for Britain to dovetail with 
expanding Japanese security interests slightly further afield.

Given that US interests relate across the whole of the Pacific but seem focused on 
the South China Sea and that Washington already has an extensive and far more 
mature military integration with Tokyo it would seem that the most effective 
outcome of a UK/Japan alliance would be to concentrate on niche areas that avoid 
the worst of the hot spots. A model of a trilateral alliance already exists within 
Australia/Japan/USA and the former is hardly notorious for her presence or actions 
in the more contentious part of the region. With Australia already also involved 
within the Five Powers framework and heavily integrated with the UK and the US 
this embryonic agreement which so far has only extended to some exercises may be 
one to watch\textsuperscript{142}. Whilst this may seem to be cherry picking and avoiding 
responsibility it does play to strength and potentially free up US resources. ASEAN 
partner support, maritime security, Pacific rim disaster relief and humanitarian 
support missions would seem the best candidates. A strategy based around these 
may not avoid all diplomatic misgivings but would potentially avoid the worst of the 
territorial disputes. It would also strengthen the alliance whilst building the 
necessary regional familiarity and interoperability procedures that, should a major

\textsuperscript{142} Chelton 2012, 35
conflict emerge and the UK engage, the most effective British contribution could be made.

The Rest of the World

Whilst the analysis of the South China Sea region may be characterised by unfamiliarity, compounding risks and a need for careful planning, any pessimistic thoughts at this point may be at least partially removed as we turn to the rest of the world. Here the author hopes to again show a balanced view, but ultimately demonstrate net opportunities by some margin. In this case it is the opportunities and not the risks that dominate and span the historic, theoretic, military and geopolitical.

From a historic perspective, Japan arguably faces the albatross of her imperial past mainly regionally and domestically but not globally. What continues to be an aggravation, particularly around territory in her own back yard arguably ceases to be so operating at range. To be fair, it is the UK that carries far more historic baggage across the globe with respect to prior conflicts with a record of conflict, war or invasion across 170 of the UN’s membership of 192. Therefore, whilst UK forces entering into an operation has a certain probability of historical association, the addition of Japanese forces may not share that in many parts of the world. And of course there is the fact that the UK and Japan were themselves at war. Overall relations between the UK and Japan as we saw in the historical analysis have been steadily increasing and improving across economic, cultural and diplomatic avenues.

By adding defence to the portfolio, this broadens the reset and renewal of
UK/Japanese relations and may help in removing any lingering negative collective
memory. The image of modern day UK and Japanese servicemen operating together
as a force for good should not be underestimated. Domestically we have become
used to working again with Germany in NATO but this final step of reestablishing
relations has been absent from dealings with Japan.

From a theoretical perspective combined UK/Japanese operations across the rest of
the world also provides many opportunities. For Britain such operations are
common place and whilst working alongside the Japanese may become more
commonplace it is important to acknowledge that multilateral operations with many
partners are a far more likely proposition. In recent years these coalitions have
involved working with the US, France, Australia and many others from all over the
world. This fact in itself can arguably negate many of the dilemmas of
abandonment/entrapment. This is in part due to the constant flow of crisis and
perhaps by a constantly changing membership of the ‘coalitions of the willing’.
Membership or otherwise from a coalition can be significant, consider the positions
of France in the Iraq invasion of 2003 or the UK herself in the Syrian crisis of 2013.
However, look how in both cases the fallouts were short and reversed; France taking
a significant role in Libya in 2011 and the UK reengaging militarily in Syria as
quickly as 2015. In these cases, the issue revolved around superpower to great
power relations but in great power to great power relations the impact of
participation or otherwise may be even less pronounced. If the UK and Japan
combine on an operation this is a positive for the alliance, if one sits out a particular
crisis at worst it may be seen as disappointing but assuming an avoidance of over-
aggressive ventures unlikely to be seen as abandonment whilst there is every chance it would be seen as entirely acceptable given particular circumstances.

We should also not underestimate the cultural and ideological synergy that such an alliance delivers. Whilst both nations may be viewed in scholarship as perhaps neighborly on the liberal democracy scale they still represent their distant and distinct European and Asian identities. Combine this geographic and cultural diversity with Walt’s second hypothesis of alliance which highlights ideological solidarity, alignment across principles, strong inter-governmental relations and a lack of fear of each other. Walt did suggest that ideology may not be critical for alliance but here the author posits it may act as a contributing factor\(^\text{144}\). So for the UK there is not only the benefit of having a culturally diverse and geographically distant partner but also one that arguably meets Walt’s conditions. In international operations, cooperation and agreement across continents surely lends to strength and legitimacy. At once it presents a more united and globally credible position whilst perhaps undermining any specific continental baggage.

From a practical military perspective, the key benefit to the UK is reach and access. We saw earlier how complimentary the areas of interest and operation between the two nations are. Whilst Japan will admittedly bring very little to the table in terms of access or military specialism for the UK with respect to the Middle East or Africa for example, that will not be the case elsewhere. The UK has effectively lost any constant or even habitual military presence in the Far East since the handing over of Hong Kong. Granted there may have been minor deployments and exercise

\(^{144}\) Walt 1985, 3-43
participations however Japan offers the regional familiarity and access at a peer level. Since the capabilities, mission sets and, in the future, even specific equipment are broadly the same, the opportunities for the UK to expand her capabilities, reach and role past the tip of India and towards the broader Pacific alongside Japan, whilst acknowledging the proximate challenges outlined in the previous section, could be considerable. This expanse across the Pacific rim, stretching from the Bay of Bengal and past Thailand, Myanmar, Indonesia, and down to Australasia has been the scene of many military operations in recent years. Some such as the response to the 2006 tsunami and 2011 typhoon and floods that struck much of the region have involved UK forces. Having a partner and greater access to this region would be of significant help in any future operation there.

Despite all of these potential benefits there is however not an absence of some risk. When looking at rest of the world operations it is important to decouple the individual and inevitable risks inherent with the UK entering a specific operation with those that specifically arise from forming an alliance with Japan and then doing so. To illustrate the point, whilst there has been much debate and controversy over the UK in Iraq and Afghanistan it would be fair to say next to none has raised due to Japanese involvement there. Given the challenges Japan face in overcoming legal and domestic resistance to expanding her global defence presence, it is unlikely that Japan would be the one leading and persuading the UK into an operation in the Middle East or Africa in the short to medium term. The risk stems from the opposite effect and forms two questions. Firstly, will such an alliance actually come to anything substantial? And secondly, will it provide any meaningful military benefit to the UK? The former is a theoretical issue and reflects Sofka and Snyder who
discussed how states may enter numerous alliances for multi-causal reasons but have not truly committed to them\textsuperscript{145}. Morrow on abandonment also springs to mind\textsuperscript{146} and although we discussed mitigation of abandonment earlier there could be an alternative view on this. Should a state enter many alliances, across a multitude of interconnecting actors and still pick and choose engagements based on individual risk and hedged against a collective short term memory shocked by the next crisis, is that not soft abandonment? The second issue is one of practical military benefit. What will the UK military gain from operating alongside Japan across a multitude of rest of world operations? A cynical view would see a one-way street unless exploitation of the Pacific or other unfamiliar regions as described earlier is realised. However, that one-way street could be counterbalanced as a means for securing defence sector exports and a welcome boost for the UK economy and industry. This though begs the question, is the military role in the overall alliance security based or economic? After all Walt’s third hypothesis of alliance posits military assistance is offered and accepted when both feel it is in their own interests. He also points out that while military assistance does not build alliances it enhances existing ones\textsuperscript{147}.

On balance the risks require a degree of cynicism to fully endorse and arguably they could apply to any alliance rather than this one specifically. Economic crossover and the presence of the defence sector is inevitable and in this case we have already identified attractive expertise and capability in Japanese arms manufacturers. It could be said that any such concerns on payback have been far greater in the case of

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{145} Sofka 1998, 823-826.
\item \textsuperscript{146} Morrow 2000, 69
\item \textsuperscript{147} Walt 1987, 181
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
British military assistance and associated arms sales to other states recently.

Granted, there is a question over the scale and pace of Japanese endeavour across the rest of the world however the indications we noted in our analysis of Japanese intentions firmly indicated a resolve for considerable progress here. The spread of benefits appears highly attractive. By operating with new partners from other continents the UK can position herself as a global force with operating with diverse and multi-cultural allies. There may be a degree of one-way specialisation in this alliance’s early days however this can be capitalised upon if and when the time and need arrives to operate in unfamiliar territory.

The Future of the Arctic Region

In keeping with the previous regions, the Arctic offers its own distinct lens through which we can assess risk and opportunities for increased UK defence cooperation with Japan. Unlike the South China Sea and much of the rest of the world, the Arctic region still represents somewhat of a blank canvass. The region is not historically bare by any means; however, the geo-politics of the region are clearly still evolving. So whilst it is not completely virgin territory, it is largely a new frontier. There is still very much to play for here and as a result the region presents an opportunity to start afresh. The UK has no real baggage in the region specifically and, critically, there are no disputed British sovereign territory claims in the region (in stark contrast to the Antarctic region). Similarly, Japan has declared vested regional interests but has not been or claimed to be a major Arctic power and, unlike the situation in and around her local waters, she is free from historical Arctic disputes.
Theoretically, the region is arguably a textbook case for contrasting liberal and realist views in predicting the future. The opportunists, likely mainly liberal leaning here, would quickly point out the value of working together to maximise the potential gains afforded by a new and valuable source of natural resources. These sources are also there to be reaped along with the benefits of increased efficiency and reduced risk resulting from the emerging trans-Arctic shipping channels. From a balance of power perspective, the significant risks we will address later must be acknowledged first, however at present there is no spiraling arms race whilst the region is so vast that the question of who holds the balance of power changes as you move your finger across the continental-spanning routes.

The opportunity arises from a perspective that the security and viability of the emerging trans-Arctic routes are in every actor’s interests. For the UK, reducing costs of exports and imports to and from Asia is clearly highly desirable. And whilst this obviously equally applies to alliance partner Japan it applies to potential antagonist Russia in equal measure. From an economic perspective there is no loss to Russia from this route since existing bulk goods transiting to and from Asia transport by ship to the South rather than overland through Eurasia. In fact, she has much to gain herself since goods can be shipped from the length of her northern coastline, avoiding long and difficult overland transits. Therefore, an alliance of the UK and Japan operating together in the Arctic presented as one securing their respective ends of the passage and assisting and acknowledging the role of Russia, has a clear attraction and is a liberal economists dream. That view of how Arctic politics may work out however may be seen by realists as somewhat naive given the global political relationship between the actors in this case. However, our question
is not one of realism versus liberalism and there is arguably also opportunity in enhanced UK/Japanese defence cooperation set against a gloomier realist-based outlook for the future of the Arctic. If indeed a regionally dominant Russian led by fears and ambitions fed into a more hostile locality, then the emergent alliance of two great powers from opposite ends of the Northeast passage provides a significant measure of balancing. Given the current military balance of power on the Eurasian side of the Arctic and across the route could be calculated as Russia against Scandinavia, the increased and aligned UK/Japanese presence could have at least some influence on Russian calculations and actions. Whilst this perspective may be less important for enhanced transit routes it may well be crucial for the establishing, maintaining and long-term viability of resource exploration and exploitation in the region. Given the propensity of both nations to harvest the sea of her riches there is arguably every expectation that both the UK and Japan would be eager to prosper form emerging riches in the Arctic region.

From a strategic and practical military perspective there are additional opportunities from the UK and Japan operating together in the Arctic Region. Firstly, it would represent a clear demonstration of dual ability to transit large distances, integrate and operate in the most difficult of climates. Proof of interoperability here would be clear indicator of being able to operate elsewhere with comparative ease. By showing resolution to the security of resources and sea lines of communication that span the continents, it shows the commitment of ideologically aligned trading partners with a global perspective on economic prosperity and security. It is also a clear signal of combined power and influence.
The risks to the UK emanating from enhanced military cooperation with Japan manifesting in expanded Arctic operations are however equally manifold. We have already alluded to bringing in negative existing relations between Russia and both the UK and Japan. The historic and continuing disagreement over the Shikotan Islands we have already identified as becoming exacerbated by expanded Arctic crossings. That issue is an obvious antagonism yet politics and international relations have a habit of conspiring to bring together seemingly unrelated issues to cause effect. When we consider the sympathetic Japanese dealings with Ukraine and link the British/Russian difficulties over Crimea and a host of other Ukrainian linked issues, we can assume there is every likelihood that Russia will view the UK as a habitual antagonist in Russian territorial disputes. Furthermore, whilst the UK and Japan may be primarily concerned with the Eurasian longitudinal crossing zone and their respective littoral regions, Russia also has a vested interest in the latitudinal Polar crossing and ice-shelf. In this respect she faces Canada and the USA. The addition of the UK and Japan to the region, undisputed US allies, will be measured alongside these considerations. Therefore, whilst one perspective may be our presence brings balance, the opposite may be seen as true elsewhere. The result could be a spiraling arms race in across the Arctic territories. Russia clearly has no regional allies to the North but could approach others with potential economic interests in or through the region for support. One such potential ally in this respect could be China.

From a practical perspective there is no doubting the opportunities attributed earlier to a UK/Japanese military alliance however there are also concurrent risks. To project military force at range into this environment is undeniably challenging and
arguably at the edge of both nations’ capabilities. Whilst there is little doubt it is achievable, such a presence comes at a cost. This is not restricted to financial but most significantly it is a question of capacity. Having seen the spread of commitments undertaken by UK forces, and worth noting the debates over projection priorities in Japan, can London afford to add the Arctic to her list? If so does that mean more resource, spreading of resource or a reduction or elimination of other commitments elsewhere?

Overall, there appears to be a mixed range of potential risks and opportunities in operating together in the Arctic region. The exploitation of resources and the expanded use of the Northeast Passage whilst offering huge benefits are developing slowly. And whilst military operations there would require considerable resource there may not be the requirement, at least in the short to medium term, to maintain this permanently or at scale. Quite how far exploitation of the region will go is uncertain however the long-term gains for the UK could be considerable. Considering all these factors and when taking into account the risks and opportunities we have seen elsewhere, the author judges this region to be an ideal backdrop to develop a UK/Japan military alliance. It is relatively fresh, has great potential and can be developed over time with relatively low risk if handled correctly. However, the Russian dimension should not be underestimated. Given her own regional ambitions and existing perceptions on her Western, Southern and Eastern fronts, any significant movement and claim in the Arctic will be closely watched from Moscow. In addition, as we mentioned earlier this region bridges into a historical friction over disputed territory to the north of Japan. In an assessment of the region, the author judges it to be balanced compared to the others; there is reason
for optimism but equally reason for caution.

**Globally Integrated Perspective**

Having examined the risks and opportunities for the UK arising from a military alliance with Japan across three distinct areas of operation, we now bring these zones together to construct a holistic perspective. As we saw however, there is no common theme across the analytic divide we used; each area had unique characteristics and factors to be considered. As a result, there is no simple conclusion or generic statement that we can arrive at. In order to move forward with a global perspective, we can first give a scaled weighting of risk versus opportunity to each of the different areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>Risk</th>
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<tr>
<td>South China Sea</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rest of the World</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arctic</td>
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**Figure 12. Weighting of Opportunity Versus Risk Across Each Region**

Figure 12 illustrates a scaling of opportunity versus risk in each of the areas examined earlier. It is simplistic but sets out how the author sees the balance across the regions. The South China Sea was assessed to be the highest risk through the complexity of the geo-political landscape, numerous disputes and potential flashpoints, evolving changes in the regional balance of power and questions over what the UK realistically offers here. The existing relations that the UK has with the
other regional powers also influenced this scaling. The most critical element of risk here was assessed to be the potential for any one of a number of enduring disputes to escalate into a much larger crisis or confrontation. Ultimately, the hard question of what the UK would do in the event of a major regional conflict, post alliance agreement, would need to be addressed without a position of neutrality or even passive support option. Despite this however, there is still potential benefit to be reaped as long as mitigation and culturally intelligent planning is used ahead of any regional military presence or agreement. In addition, there is a distinction to be made between the core of the disputed territories and maritime boundaries in the South China Sea and even slightly further afield.

The Rest of the World was weighted the opposite. While a risk score was awarded for the chances of non or domestically prevented Japanese participation in operations, or the possibility of the UK being a one-way street improving Japanese expeditionary military capabilities, the overriding assessment leans the other way. For the UK the chance of operating together with a peer, ideologically aligned but culturally diverse Asian partner is of massive appeal. Not only will it support genuine security concerns such as terrorism and maritime security, it will enhance an already burgeoning national relationship and help complete the passing of historical considerations. In addition, Japanese expertise across and access to the Pacific rim and the potential of Australian and other Asian crossover helped score this region so highly. There is also something to be said for strengthening ties with other American allies; for practical collective voice reasons.

The Arctic scored evenly and for arguably good reason. So much potential
economically and a prime opportunity to genuinely develop an alliance as equal partners across an unfamiliar region growing in importance. In the face of that though lies considerable potential for further antagonism of a mutual challenge in Russia. The option of ignoring or failing to exploit the region is however a risk in itself. That risk is one of standing by whilst others exploit what may turn out to be one of the last truly undiscovered riches of the natural world. It is also a risk in not sharing but also in not protecting since overexploitation may affect our islands more than elsewhere. After all it is global warming that is actually providing the means to the ends; a degree of human guilt and responsibility to mitigate surely applies. There is much more work to be done in understanding the arctic, complicated by an inability to accurately determine exactly what and when the region will offer. There is much reason for optimism but also reason for caution and so whilst there may be balanced risk and reward in aligning with Japan over the region it could be argued that, given the global context, it is better to move forward together.

The author’s aim has been to show distinct regional differences when considering the risks and opportunities for the UK in expanding military ties with Japan. Whilst many alliances are characterised by combined protection, regional solidarity or mutual distrust of a neighbour, the UK and Japan really offer something different and complex when analysing a partnership. The final risk and opportunity is drawn from all of the preceding analysis. Whilst the political outlook of an alliance may be globally encompassing and the wording generic from a common ideology, the devil is always in the detail. For the UK to reap maximum benefit and mitigate the risks, the inherent differences that come with working with this partner across such diversely affected regions need to be accounted for and strategised accordingly.
Mathematically the stars in Figure 12 balance out and the risk is that a common global alliance strategy is too generic and balances the best of one region against risk of another. The opportunity is to grasp the issues separately and to create a diverse strategy that realises the UK’s strengths but more importantly understands her weaknesses and gaps in her understanding. The UK is rich with many alliances that have been tested and found strong over recent years yet Japan demonstrably offers something quite new and intriguing. As a partnership of great powers, their collective success or otherwise could say a lot about their roles in the world and in the mechanism of international security as a whole; many will be watching.
Conclusion

The Opportunities and Risks to Britain from Enhanced Defence Cooperation with Japan

We started our analysis from the 2014 UK/Japan joint statement which set out to reaffirm the dynamic, strategic partnership between the two countries and reinforce collaboration in the areas of: global peace and security; global growth and prosperity; and science, technology, innovation, education and culture. If this statement could be considered the last step before a full military alliance, then what potentially would be the opportunities and risks to the UK in doing so?

By undertaking analysis baselined against a range of theoretical, historical and military factors, we have seen why such an alignment has taken so long to come about but also why it seems so relevant and attractive now and in the future. However, the global backdrop against which any future UK/Japanese alliance would operate within is one of inherent risks and distinct regional characteristics. In examining the geo-political climate these partners would find themselves in, the author concluded that the core question should at first be answered distinctly across three arenas: the South China Sea; the rest of the world; and the Arctic region. In each case the author believes there is a varying balance of risk and opportunity that could not merely be averaged out to obtain a single global answer.

In the case of the South China Sea we saw a region laden with complex inter-state relationships, many territorial disputes and a host of ongoing frictions or uneasy alignments and partnerships. History is still evident throughout and serious questions abound over the balance of power and the long term intentions of the key actors. A rising China and heavy US interest also coloured our examination of the region. Whilst Chinese/Japanese relations featured heavily we also noted the complex interactions with the Koreas, Russia and others of this Pacific locale.

When we factored all of these issues in along with theoretical considerations, we identified a challenging set of conditions for the UK in aligning and operating alongside Japan in this region. This is unfamiliar territory for this British generation in security terms yet one which is so very much important for economic growth and sustainment. The flash points and potential crises are many yet there is arguably little difference the UK could make to the core of this region. There is probably more potential for negative consequences for being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Despite this there are two other issues to consider. The first is that despite the heat at the centre of the South China Sea, the Pacific is a big place. Not far from the core disputes lie a host of mutual allies in the ASEAN nations and a further cross-over with the Five Powers Agreement partners. There is perhaps more scope for developing strong links regionally here. The second issue though begs the question; can you truly avoid the heat of the region if you become involved in its affairs? If the UK does enhance defence cooperation with Japan, the consequences of dual alignment with the US and the prospect of major conflict within the South China Sea
are then heightened. What role the UK plays in that catastrophic yet highly plausible scenario could be greatly influenced through being a regional territorial partner.

Across what we termed as the rest of the world, we saw a litany of factors enticing closer defence cooperation between the UK and Japan. The former provides a logical model for a great power willing and able to commit to a range of military operations at range and across the globe. In Japan, appetite to commit and project power over the horizon is on the up and we have already seen first steps. For the UK, having a partner that is not only willing and able but also from a different continent and herself a staunch US ally represents a tantalising prospect. Of course it is not just politically and militarily appealing, there is a lucrative Asian defence market and the prospect of collaboration with a technically proficient yet inexperienced marketer would be senseless not to capitalise on.

Questions do remain though about just how far Japan is really willing to go and whether it will be a case of cherry-pickings the easier, less controversial operations whilst avoiding the wicked problems that seem to have followed the UK’s interventions as of late. At present that is only a cynical view, as is the discussion over the lack of Japanese expeditionary capabilities and any alliance in this respect being a one-way street against the UK’s favour. The UK remains a partner of many nations and organisations and applying any criticism to an emerging contributor to international security would in the author’s eye be unfounded. The resolve seems to be there and it is the pace that is up for debate. Ultimately, having an equal partner from the Pacific region should be seen as a net benefit to the UK if she wants to maintain her status as a global force.
The Arctic region presented a somewhat different analytical challenge. Whilst examination of the South China Sea and the rest of the world had significant historical and ongoing tensions and flash points, the Arctic represents a future enigma. Unexploited ends of the Earth are rare and in this case extracting benefit comes as a double edge sword when global warming is considered. Despite environmental concerns however, there is no doubt the nations of the world will seek to make the most from new openings to the North.

For a potential alliance between the UK and Japan, the Arctic offers a high risk, high opportunity avenue. It is not just in the potential of greatly reduced transit times and cost for shipped goods (avoiding many existing chokepoints and danger areas while doing so too) but in the extraction of increasing rare natural resources. Ignoring the area is likely too costly yet becoming involved potentially entails entanglement in new inter-state disputes. At the core of any disputes almost certainly means further aggravation with Russia, a mutually challenging and trying entity for both partners. Yet despite this the Arctic potentially offers an economic wealth in itself and in its lines of access and crossing. It also offers an alliance a growing space as equal partners ahead of when and where it may really be needed in the future.

Whilst the author has divided the world up into three distinct regions for analytical purposes there remains the realisation that a global perspective must still be taken. In this respect, a UK/Japan military alliance presents a fascinating prospect. They are not neighbours, they are not solely balancing or aligning and there is no common existential threat, indeed the potential scope and locale of operations is genuinely
global. What seems to bring the nations together is not just a similarity of ideology but also their identity and place in the world and it is in this perhaps unique circumstance that the greatest opportunities and risks lie. A simple and common alliance agreement with bland and malleable commitments will be a missed opportunity; for the UK the hard questions over the South China Sea and the Arctic need to be addressed specifically. Similarly, the most needs to made of the potential access to the wider Pacific region and the opportunities afforded by working with an Asian partner across some of the world’s more troubled lands and seas. Indeed, success or otherwise may say a lot about the roles of great powers in international security as a whole; many will be watching.

In terms of further work, the author suggests there are three areas where future endeavours could be directed towards. The first is a reversal of the perspective of this thesis. What would be the opportunities and risks to Japan from enhanced Defence cooperation with Britain? From the opposite perspective there is much to analyse and discuss. There is the conflict of interests and priorities between a challenging regional security situation and operating as a great power across the rest of the world. Questions could be asked as to what Japan has to gain and/or offer to regions that have significant levels of foreign intervention and presence already. There is also the option that these ventures have been of limited benefit or even detrimental to the intervening forces; would Japan be investing in failure?

The second area falls out of the last sections of Chapters 4 & 5 and concerns the future security of the Arctic and the consequences of global warming. Whilst researching the specific linkages between the UK and Japan, it struck the author how
much environmental change could influence the future security dynamic. The Arctic is one highlighted area as a result of tangible effects already however more generic work on how rising sea-levels and climate patterns may aggravate or alleviate regional security dynamics would make for informative and worthwhile scholarship.

The final avenue of potential future work progressively opened up throughout the writing of this thesis, that being the consequences of Brexit. Since only the outcome of the referendum became apparent before completion, and no understanding or even realistic proposals of how trade deals and agreements would conclude were available, there was no point in trying to analyse the consequences at this stage. However, it is prudent to identify it as a subject that could magnify the importance of UK/Japanese relations if they effectively become completely bilateral in the absence of any EU involvement. Once, or if, the issue of Brexit is resolved over the next few years, its effect on bilateral relations and associated security agreements would make for interesting reading.

As the writing of this thesis drew to a close two events arguably highlight the importance of the topic and perhaps the increased likelihood of enhanced military cooperation between the UK and Japan. The first, as we have just mentioned, is Brexit and with it the highlighting of British bilateral relationships. The second was the July 2016 reelection of Shinzo Abe by a decisive margin. With a clear mandate, Abe will be in a strong position to advance his foreign policy strategy.
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