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## **“The Japan-Australia Security Alignment: Its Development and Implications for Regional Integration of the Asia-Pacific”**

### **Key words**

Japan, Australia, Security alignment, JDSC, PKO, regional integration, Asia-Pacific

### **Abstract**

In the post-Cold War world, Japan-Australia security cooperation has emerged in spite of their military differences. The military capability of Japan's Self-Defence Forces (SDF) is constrained by Article 9 of the so-called Peace Constitution, which renounces the use of force and prohibits the exercise of the right of collective self-defence. Due to the strong influence of pacifism based on Article 9, Japan could not participate in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO) until the enactment of the International Peace Cooperation Law (PKO Law) in 1992. Despite the bilateral security treaty, Japan has never dispatched the SDF to US-led military operations. Unlike Japan, Australia's security policy is not constitutionally limited. Although the size of the Australian Defence Forces (ADF) is approximately one-sixth of that of the SDF (Ball 2006: 165-166), the ADF is more adept in terms of military deployment and more experienced in the field of UN peacekeeping missions. The ADF, unlike the SDF, was involved in the military activities during the wars in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq (Millar 1969; Takeda 2007: 184).

Notwithstanding these constitutional and organisational differences, both the SDF and the ADF have demonstrated security cooperation as UN peacekeepers and US allies. As UN peacekeepers, the SDF and the ADF contributed to post-conflict peacekeeping operations in Cambodia and East Timor. As key US allies, both countries supported the US-led War on Terror and contributed to post-war reconciliation for Afghanistan and Iraq. In this context, the recent rapid development of the Japan-Australia security partnership was showcased with the signing of the 'Joint Declaration on the Security Cooperation' (JDSC) on 13 March 2007 (MOFA 2007a).

This paper puts forward the concept of a “security alignment” and argues that this term appropriately describes the nature of current Japan-Australia security relationship. Although Wilkins (2012) regarded “alliance” as one of the ‘alignment’ archetypes, this paper, for convenience in the analysis of this case study, categorises keywords related to the Japan-Australia security relationship, such as security cooperation, strategic partnership, and security community, as a “security alignment,” which is flexible and different from a formal ‘military alliance’ that entails legally binding obligations for mutual defence.

To support my argument as raised above, this paper examines a) historical background of Japan-Australia relations during the Cold War period, b) Japan-Australia peacekeeping collaborations, c) the maturation of the security alignment in response to the US-led War on Terror, d) the JDSC as a symbol of the development towards a bilateral security alignment, and e) the implications of the Japan-Australia security alignment for

regional integration of the Asia Pacific, especially for the establishment of the Asia Pacific Community.

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Daisuke Akimoto is Assistant Professor at Soka University Peace Research Institute, Japan. He holds a PhD (Asian Studies and International Relations) from the University of Western Sydney, an MA (Peace and Conflict Studies) from the University of Sydney, and a BA (Humanities) from Soka University, Japan. His recent publications are: Japan as a 'Global Pacifist State': Its Changing Pacifism and Security Identity (Bern: Peter Lang AG International Academic Publishers 2013), and 'The Human Security Agenda: Australia and Japan' (with David Walton) in *New Approaches to Human Security: China, Japan, and Australia* (William T. Tow, David Walton, and Rikki Kersten eds.) (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2013). His research interests include Japan's pacifism and security policy, Japan-Australia relations, international peacekeeping operations, and nuclear disarmament.