

# 1 **Japan and the U.S.: It's Time to Rethink Your Relationship**

2 By Kyle Mizokami - September 27, 2012 - Issei Kato/Reuters

(FK 12.6)

3 *Their Cold War-era alliance is outdated. How can they build a security agreement for a new*  
4 *century?*

5 Article 9 of the Japanese constitution turned Japan into a pacifist country. "The Japanese people  
6 forever renounce war as a sovereign (self-governing) right of the nation and the threat or use of  
7 force as means of settling international disputes." Written by Americans and signed by Japan in  
8 1947, the constitution forbids the island nation from maintaining a military and using force to  
9 achieve political goals. In the place of armed forces were "self-defense forces".

10 Japan's limited offensive capabilities meant it needed the United States for additional support,  
11 which came in the form of an official alliance ushered in in 1960. The mutual security treaty  
12 cemented a permanent security relationship between the two countries. The United States  
13 pledged to defend Japan from the communist threat, and in return, Japan granted it use of  
14 Japanese territory as a base for "maintenance of the peace and security of the Far East." Japan is  
15 not obligated to defend American territory.

16 The alliance allowed Japan to offload its broader foreign policy to the United States. Instability  
17 in the Persian Gulf, North Korea, even the concept of nuclear deterrence were not direct  
18 concerns for Japan. As a result, Japan has been able to live with defense spending capped at 1  
19 percent of GDP, among the lowest of the industrialized world.

20 The United States, too, was well-served by the alliance. America needed a strong Japan as a  
21 regional partner, where it served as an anchor on the far side of the Pacific and a gateway to  
22 Asia. Washington was able to station large air and naval forces off the coast of Asia. Without the  
23 use of Japanese territory, deterrence of the Soviet Union in Asia, as well as the wars in Korea,  
24 Vietnam, and Cambodia, would likely have been beyond America's ability to undertake.

25 Japan's reliance on the United States for protection undermines Japanese credibility in the world.  
26 It projects the image of an economically strong country that is unable to defend itself. Vietnam is  
27 fully responsible for its own defense, and yet somehow Japan is not. A country not responsible  
28 for its own defense is not the equal of a country that is.

29 It's not that Japan doesn't have a reason to defend itself. Japan does live in a dangerous  
30 neighborhood: three neighbors possess nuclear weapons, with one openly hostile (North Korea)  
31 and the other two having long-standing territorial disputes with Japan. As the third largest  
32 economy in the world, Japan no longer needs another country to protect it and its interests. Japan  
33 has the ability to build a force capable of defending itself, but it chooses not to.

34 The alliance also compromises Japanese sovereignty in a way that is no longer justifiable. Under  
35 the terms of the 1960 treaty Japan has no veto rights over American deployments of troops and  
36 equipment to Japanese territory. Theoretically the United States could deploy its entire armed

37 forces to Japan, so long as it "contributes to the security of Japan and the maintenance of  
38 international peace and security in the Far East."

39 Such a provision was a good idea when Japan was politically, economically, and militarily weak.  
40 Today, Japan is not weak. If we want the Japanese to assume the role of an equal partner, they  
41 must have greater input on what happens on their own soil.

42 Like Japan, the United States has benefitted greatly from the bilateral relationship. While the  
43 notion of defending Japan's Home Islands during the Cold War was clearly in the American  
44 interest, today the United States risks being drawn into territorial disputes in which it has no  
45 clear national interest, with an ally unprepared for war.

46 The alliance shackles the United States to a total commitment of Japan's defense. This was  
47 appropriate when the primary adversary was the Soviet Union, and to a lesser extent North Korea  
48 and China. Today, however, America risks conflict over longstanding territorial grievances in  
49 Asia. Japan has territorial disputes with most of its neighbors. One need look no farther than the  
50 current crisis over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands to see a situation where America might be  
51 dragged into a conflict against China and Taiwan.

52 The alliance also risks drawing America into conflict alongside a Japanese ally that is unprepared  
53 to do its share of the fighting. Japanese forces know only the defense; offense-minded American  
54 forces would be obliged to assume responsibility for the offense in any conflict. The idea of  
55 America counter-attacking China or some other Asian country over a handful of tiny islands is  
56 ludicrous, but here we are.

57 While it is generally agreed that China is a *potential* adversary, it is not openly hostile to Japan  
58 and America to the extent that the Soviet Union and Maoist China were. In fact, Chinese and  
59 Japanese strategic interests, are often very similar. The economies of both countries rely heavily  
60 on one another. Now, what happens when the alliance views China through its outdated lens?  
61 China is not the Soviet Union. China is something new. An obsolete alliance and its engendering  
62 strategic outlook cannot be allowed to drive Japanese or American strategy.

63 What would a revised U.S.-Japan security agreement look like? Firstly, reform would be based  
64 on the mutual interests of both countries. Allow the United States to continue to transfer forces to  
65 Japan, but give Japan the ability to veto a transfer. The veto would be a largely symbolic step.

66 Since both Japan and the United States face the same ballistic missile threat in Asia, why not  
67 make Japan a member of the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD)? Why not a  
68 joint U.S.-Japanese ground forces unit. Integration would demonstrate a greater common resolve,  
69 and perhaps save both sides money.

70 As surely as World War II is over, so is the Cold War -- yet the United States and Japan are still  
71 working together under a framework that's totally outdated. It's time for a new Japan-United  
72 States security agreement, one that renews the security relationship between the two countries  
73 while allowing for the complexities of the post-Cold War era. For more than half a century, the  
74 United States and Japan worked together to help create a secure and prosperous Asia.

## Common Core-Aligned Reading Materials Creation

Question Composers: Andrea Schulewitch & Julie Wakefield

Name of the Text: Japan and the U.S.: It's Time to Rethink Your Relationship

Author(s): Kyle Mizokami

Grade Level: 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> Grade

Subject: Geography (Cooperation & Conflict)

Flesch-Kincaid: 12.8

### Essential Understanding/Purpose (Remember to choose text worth reading!)

What is the purpose of having your students read this piece of text? What is their take away/essential understanding?

International relations between Japan and the United States. Mutual Security Treaty has led to contemporary alliances that were built on outdated Cold War treaties.

### Qualitative Text Complexity

Which aspects of the text are the most complex for the students? Why?

- The text describes regional issues that require students to understand the relative location of countries around Japan
- Keeping the pros/cons of maintaining the Mutual Security Treaty for Japan and United States separate

### Vocabulary

1. Which words have the meaning provided for the students within the text?
  - Self-defense forces, Pacifists, Bilateral, and Shackles
2. Which words will I provide a definition for my students?
  - None (Context clues can be used to figure out the meaning of difficult/confusing words)
3. Which words will I craft questions about to support my student's understanding of the word and the text?  
"Self-defense forces" "Pacifists" "Bilateral" "Shackles"

### Questions to Guide Reading

Text Dependent/Specific Questions	Possible Answers- Including Line Numbers & Teacher Notes					
What might the title tell us about the article?	This question will give insight into the students' background knowledge about Japan-United States relations. Students could refer to World War II, technology, and economic relationships.					
In line 6, the treaty states "the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation". Using lines 7-9, explain what this means.	Students will understand that independent self-governing nations have the right to use war as a method of expansion or settling disputes. The treaty forbids Japan from having this right.					
Create a t-chart using information from lines 10-24 to identify what the United States and Japan got from the Mutual Security Treaty.	<p>This question allows students to fully comprehend the original purpose of the treaty.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1060 657 2005 966"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="1060 657 1522 698">Japan</th> <th data-bbox="1524 657 2005 698">United States</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="1060 699 1522 966"> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Protection from the Communist threat</li> <li>2. Granted use of Japanese territory for peace and security</li> <li>3. Fewer foreign policy concerns</li> </ol> </td> <td data-bbox="1524 699 2005 966"> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Given permission to use Japanese territory to defend against Communism – Soviet Union, Vietnam, Korea, and Cambodia</li> <li>2. Gained a Pacific alliance with a gateway to Asia</li> </ol> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Japan	United States	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Protection from the Communist threat</li> <li>2. Granted use of Japanese territory for peace and security</li> <li>3. Fewer foreign policy concerns</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Given permission to use Japanese territory to defend against Communism – Soviet Union, Vietnam, Korea, and Cambodia</li> <li>2. Gained a Pacific alliance with a gateway to Asia</li> </ol>
Japan	United States					
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Protection from the Communist threat</li> <li>2. Granted use of Japanese territory for peace and security</li> <li>3. Fewer foreign policy concerns</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Given permission to use Japanese territory to defend against Communism – Soviet Union, Vietnam, Korea, and Cambodia</li> <li>2. Gained a Pacific alliance with a gateway to Asia</li> </ol>					
In lines 27-28 it states, "A country not responsible for its own defense is not the equal of a country that is". Agree or disagree with this statement using textual evidence to support your position.	One of the author's main contentions is that Japan has lost global credibility due to this treaty. We want students to be able to discuss what a credible nation is. Does a credible nation have to include a military and the use of force to achieve political goals? Students must use examples from the text to support their opinion.					

### Considerations

1. Do you have questions to support students understanding of vocabulary, complex sentences, figurative language or word choice?
2. Do your questions have multiple answers within the text?
3. Do your questions include more than just recall questions? Do they rely on inferential thinking, based in text?
4. Do any of your questions encourage synthesizing multiple areas of the text to answer a single question?
5. Are your questions building a coherent body of knowledge around an important topic, concept or theme?
6. Do your questions create a clear path towards the essential understanding?

## Questions to Guide Reading

Text Dependent/Specific Questions	Possible Answers- Including Line Numbers & Teacher Notes
<p>Politically and economically, how has Japan's situation changed since the signing of the original treaty in 1947?</p>	<p>Understanding these changes is the reason the author believes this treaty needs to be revisited.  <u>Politically-</u> They don't have to fight off Communism, former enemies are now adversaries, still hold a strategic Pacific location (North Korea)  <u>Economically-</u> 3<sup>rd</sup> largest economy in the world, Defense spending capped at 1% of the GDP, international interdependence with former political enemies</p>
<p>In line 42, "bilateral" and in line 46 "shackles" are used to describe the relationship between Japan and the United States. Discuss the author's purpose in using those two words.</p>	<p>The conflict behind this treaty today resides in the discrepancy between the intended benefits that resulted in the imbalance of responsibilities for each nation.</p>
<p>Using the maps provided (below), discuss the scale of the map #1. What is the estimated relative size of islands in this dispute? (2.7 sq. miles)</p> <p>Discuss the implications of the American involvement in the conflict mentioned in lines 50-51. (consider information learned from maps)</p> <p>Pull up this interactive map to show students the territorial conflicts:  <a href="http://www.cfr.org/japan/us-japan-security-alliance/p31437">http://www.cfr.org/japan/us-japan-security-alliance/p31437</a></p>	<p>Understanding the absolute location of potential American military involvement is important to understanding the need to update the treaty.</p> <p>Lines 50-51 is just one of many long-standing territorial conflicts that Japan is involved in.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NIMBY and lack of interest other than we're involved in this treaty with Japan.</li> </ul>
<p>Review lines 52-54, then refer back to line 9, and discuss what it entails. How is this different than armed forces?</p>	<p>In comparison to American "offense-minded" armed forces, Japanese forces are self-defense forces that have limited power in international affairs and participate only in internal maintenance of the peace.</p>
<p>How would the proposed security agreement change the relationship between Japan and the United States?</p>	<p>This would allow Japan to build stronger regional relationships with nations that it shares strategic and economic interests with such as China. Although the United States would maintain its strategic bases in Japan, it would no longer have as many obligations to defend Japan.</p>
<p>What were the original intentions of the mutual security agreement and how have the regional alliances changed since then?</p>	<p>The original intention of this agreement was for the United States to have a strategic location in this region to monitor Communism</p>

expansion and Cold War threat. After World War II, having the presence of the US military, Japan was able to rebuild much faster. The United States presence and support allowed for Japan to rebuild alliances in the region and grow economically.

The treat of Communism and Cold War threats diminished over the years, making the strong US military presence no longer necessary. The end of the Cold War instigated a review of the Mutual Security Treaty.

Students can support their answer with various points made throughout the article.

### **Considerations**

1. Do you have questions to support students understanding of vocabulary, complex sentences, figurative language or word choice?
2. Do your questions have multiple answers within the text?
3. Do your questions include more than just recall questions? Do they rely on inferential thinking, based in text?
4. Do any of your questions encourage synthesizing multiple areas of the text to answer a single question?
5. Are your questions building a coherent body of knowledge around an important topic, concept or theme?
6. Do your questions create a clear path towards the essential understanding?

## **Culminating Writing Task**

- ❖ **This should prove their understanding of the text by using evidence and reasoning.**
- ❖ **It should meet the requirements of the CCSS writing standards for your grade level. (Informational/ Argumentative) pg. 63-66**
- ❖ **The writing assignment can be a formal essay or a few short paragraphs.**

### **Instructions:**

Allow students access to the internet to research changes within the last couple of years that have expanded the boundaries of the agreement. Using newly acquired information, students will create a revised agreement between Japan and the United States based on the economic and political needs of both countries today.

Teachers discretion when deciding the requirements for this assignment.

Possible ideas: Debate, Essay, Simulated Hearing, etc.

**Create a checklist or rubric that can be used by you or other teachers using this text that will help to measure student success or difficulty with this reading and writing assignment. Be sure to use the writing standards in this process. (ELA Standards pgs. 63-66)**

Maps to be used with Question 7

Map #1

<http://www.voanews.com/MediaAssets2/projects/figdet/Islands-inset.jpg>



Map #2

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Senkaku\\_Islands\\_dispute](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Senkaku_Islands_dispute)

