

David Arase and Tsuneo Akaha (eds.) *The US–Japan Alliance: Balancing Soft and Hard Power in East Asia* (Nissan Institute/Routledge Japanese Studies Series) Oxon: Routledge, 2011, 200 pp., ISBN: 978-0415679732 (paperback).

This book provides a timely and interesting discussion on the current debate on Japanese security policies. In the first half, three authors discuss the general trend and issues regarding the US–Japan alliance today, with particular focus on its hard and soft power aspects. In the latter half, four scholars present their views on the US–Japan alliance from Chinese, Korean, Russian and European perspectives. Although the views vary depending on authors, almost all contributors agree that, since the expansion of roles and missions of the US–Japan alliance during the Bush–Koizumi period (or 'post 9/11 militarization' in this book's term), Japan has increasingly committed itself to the alliance by expanding Self Defense Forces (SDF) overseas activities and modernizing its defense equipment in favour of US 'hegemonic' interests. Accordingly, the authors argue, countries in the region and the European Union see that Japan has shifted its posture from its previous 'civilian state' stance (that aims to enhance its soft power worldwide, mainly through non-military means) to more 'normal state' status by expanding its hard power – namely, military capabilities.

Such an observation may partly capture the recent trend of Japanese security. Since the end of the Cold War, Japan has expanded its contributions to international security, most notably on non-traditional security issues and humanitarian assistance, while distancing itself from traditional state-to-state conflicts. Japan's soft approach (or so-called 'internationalist' stance) toward global security issues might have saved, or perhaps promoted, Japan's public image as a 'peace country', which Tokyo has attempted to project in the world since the Cold War era. In the past two or three years, however, Japan has faced emerging new security challenges in its region, such as an increasingly assertive China and the escalating tension in the Korean Peninsula due to North Korea's provocative actions. In facing those security challenges, Japan's defense focus has inevitably shifted from previous non-traditional international security concerns to more traditional national defense issues, including conflicts over territories and maritime resources with surrounding countries. Thus, Japan's latest National Defense Programme Guidelines (NDPG) places more emphasis on traditional threats caused by state-to-state conflicts, compared with the former NDPG that focused on

non-traditional threats such as terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

It is debatable, however, whether the current shift in Japan's defense posture can be simply described as the rebalancing of its emphasis from 'soft' to 'hard' power, as suggested by some scholars of this book. Despite an increasingly severe security environment surrounding Japan, its defense expenditures (that symbolize its 'hard power') have decreased for ten consecutive years. Under the current severe economic situation, Japan's defense ministry has attempted to establish more cost-effective defense measures, including cuts in defense procurement costs. Tokyo's recent announcement of the revision of three principles on arms exports should be understood in this context (rather than Japan's inclination to 'hard' power). Without revitalizing Japan's domestic defense industry and encouraging its participation in international joint development programmes of weapons, it would be difficult to keep Japan's defense expenditures at the current level.

True, Japan has been strengthening and modernizing its defense equipment by increasing the number of Maritime SDF submarines and the Aegis-equipped destroyer fleet, constructing a new and the largest-ever DDH, and choosing F-35s as the Air SDF's next generation fighter aircraft. Rather than radical departures from its past defense policy, however, the pace of Japan's defense build-up and modernization process is never outstanding compared with other major regional powers such as China, Russia, South Korea, and India – all of which have consistently increased their defense budgets during the last decade. More importantly, some Japanese defense equipment could be used for improving its 'soft power' worldwide, by contributing to peacekeeping, counter-piracy, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief activities. The real question is, therefore, how to use those 'hard' resources to improve its global image, rather than what kind of resources it has.

Equally important is how to understand 'collective soft power' generated by the US–Japan alliance. Although most contributors to this book (with the exception of chapter seven written by Christopher W. Hughes) understand the US–Japan alliance as 'instrumental in encouraging Japan to boost its hard power' (p. 170), the alliance can also become a tool for both Washington and Tokyo to collectively project their soft power by contributing to non-proliferation, global warming, the eradication of terrorism, and democracy and human rights promotion. Indeed, these 'soft' aspects of the alliance have been repeatedly confirmed by Japan and the US as major missions of the alliance. Simply put, strengthening

the US–Japan alliance does not necessarily contradict Japan's effort to keep and enhance its soft power globally. Of course, as indicated by the conclusion of this book, whether the US–Japan alliance projects its 'hard' or 'soft' aspects greatly depends on the security environment in the Asia–Pacific region for years to come, as well as the future orientation of the US security policy in this region.

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* The views expressed in this review are those of the author, and do not represent official viewpoints of the National Institute for Defense Studies or the Ministry of Defense, Japan.

Masuma Farooki and Raphael Kaplinsky, *The Impact of China on Global Commodity Prices: The Global Reshaping of the Resource Sector*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2012, 207 pp. ISBN-978-0-415-59789-0 (hardcover), ISBN-978-0-203-15591-2 (ebook).

What is the impact of China on global commodity prices? In this book, Masuma Farooki and Raphael Kaplinsky attempt to answer this question. They use a rather dense presentation style, complete with 50 figures and 38 tables, to show that China's impact on commodity prices arises from a complex linkage between a set of factors including: 1) China's re-emergence as the world's largest economy; 2) China's commodity-intensive growth path; 3) China's growing impact on other economies; 4) the changing nature of commodity price movements; 5) the commodity's demand–supply fundamentals; 6) the financialization of commodity markets; and 7) the decisions of stakeholders who determine investment responses in commodity sectors.

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to China's comeback and views the country's economic performance as an 'economic miracle'. Chapter 2 examines the impact of China on the global economy and refers to China as a 'driver economy'. Chapter 3 focuses on the role of China in global commodity sectors and the importance of the commodity sectors in the overall economic strategy of many countries. Chapter 4 describes China as a driver of demand for commodities and analyzes the country's growth path in the context of its fast and sustained economic development. Chapter 5 identifies the determinants of the supply response to the rising demand in the commodity sectors. Chapter 6 sheds light on the impact of the financialization of commodity markets on the evolution of commodity