

BOOK REVIEW

Heazle, M. & O'Neil, A. (Eds.). (2018). *China's Rise and Australia–Japan–US Relations: Primacy and Leadership in East Asia*. Edward Elgar, 296pp.

William Jones^a

This edited volume brings together eleven academics across eleven chapters to investigate Australian and Japanese perspectives and perceptions of American security engagement in East Asia. The central focus of the book is twofold: how do these two regional powers perceive their relationship with America in the wider East Asian region, and how is China's rapid rise altering the security relationship between and among these longtime American allies.

The first chapter deals with parsing the nature of America's security relationship in East Asia writ large. Namely, it is an academic and jargon-heavy chapter debating whether America seeks 'hegemony' or 'primacy'. The nature of the terminology used is highly academic and not necessarily germane for the general reader. However, it is germane to an academic discussion on determining intent and then derivative actions of American foreign and security policies in East Asia. The second chapter by Hall and Heazle describes American foreign policy in the post-Cold War era. The authors provide an historical review of the 'liberal ideological' foreign policy perused from the 1990s up to the Trump presidency. They find that in this period, the US followed an ideologically-based liberal policy towards markets with an expressed intent to spread liberal values as seen in the R2P doctrine. They note that this eventually led to backlash during the Obama presidency, seen in deteriorating relationships with once staunch allies such as the Philippines, and strong challenges from China in the South China Sea.

Van Jackson in chapter 3 provides clarity to the questions of why and how America is engaging via its foreign policy in East Asia. The author does this by questioning what primacy looks like in words, how it plays out in practice and offers an interesting reason for the disjuncture. The author argues that American leaders may evoke the language of primacy through different methods. This was seen in the Obama administration's push for economic liberalisation and institution building through the Trans-Pacific Partnership and other forums, and the Trump administration's more balance-of-power-focused approaches. Interestingly, the author points to the difference between the immediate conduct of foreign policy as being highly fluid and reactive and juxtaposes this against the Department of Defense's planning guidance which is long term in nature. This helps provide clarity for the assumptions of primacy which include the dominance of strategic life of other states from the more banal reality of a massive American military which is caught in between the long-term strategic planning and fluid policies of different administrations.

^a William J. Jones (william.jon@mahidol.edu) is a Ph.D. Candidate at the Mahidol University Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies, and an Assistant Professor of International Relations at the Mahidol University International College, Thailand.

In chapter 4, Rapp-Hooper details the nature of America's networked security relationships in East Asia. This is historically bound in the 'hubs and spokes' approach taken since WWII and endures to the present. The author is keen to show the challenges of the Trump administration's policy towards its allies by not committing to a *carte blanche* status quo policy but demonstrating less than full commitment and how this has strained relationships. The author further notes the need for increased networked security arrangements to deal with traditional security issues such as China, and non-traditional security issues such as maritime law enforcement. Extending this analysis in chapter 5, Cooper provides close details of the strengths and capabilities of both the American and Chinese military assets from a macro and regional perspectives. The author provides insight into the nature of symmetric capabilities and aversions to risk among these great powers. The author argues that there is a possibility of a bifurcated East Asian security order, largely due to the failure of the hub (America) to continue to commit fully to being the hub in the 'hubs and spoke' security architecture.

Mori in chapter 6 and Sahashi in chapter 7 chronicle Japanese perception and policy response to American foreign policy in East Asia. Mori details how America's slow shift of priorities under the Obama administration from the Middle East to East Asia was not as robust and convincing as the earlier promised 'pivot to Asia' period. Instead of shifting military assets and focusing on taking a leading role, Obama's response was slow - using existing bilateral and multilateral forums for security cooperation. Mori notes a dichotomous policy eventually emerged towards China as competitor and collaborator. This ambiguous policy was noted to change sharply under the Trump administration. This point is where Sahashi picks up with describing the architecture of Japanese security cooperation in the post-Cold War period. Sahashi notes that Japanese policy makers wanted to re-engage and deepen security cooperation with its American ally, but due to American ambiguity and Japan's serious concerns over territorial disputes with China, Japan's security policy was forced to be more proactive. This is seen in the redeploying of Japanese armaments to its southwest, and regionalising its security policy to engage in anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, moving to strengthen ties with Australia, and engaging with ASEAN and India in a more robust fashion. Lee in chapter 8 provides a review of the academic literature surrounding the question of American decline and its possible effects.

In chapter 9, Kersten cuts to the heart of the possible future trajectories of Japanese and Australian foreign and security policies. The author argues that geographic proximity and strategic need have pushed Japan to seek deepening alliance partnerships with like-minded states, namely Australia. This was evidenced by Prime Minister Abe actively courting then Australian Prime Minister Abbott in the mid-2010s. The highlight of this was seen in the attempt to strategically align the two countries via the Soryu submarine deal from Japan to Australia. This major weapon deal was aborted by the incoming Prime Minister Turnbull and had soured the possible structural intertwining of these two countries' militaries. This highlights the very real difference between partnerships and alliances, and the strategic calculus of relative geography: the Japanese, eager to build alliances and access export markets for military hardware, against an Australia that is eager to carry on and build alliances. However, the major geographic realities of these two liberal value-based countries show the barrier to strategic mid-power alliance building. Hanada in chapter 10 shows the degree to which Japanese policy has shifted during the Obama period.

Namely, centralising intelligence apparatuses, establishment of a National Security Council, engaging in UN peacekeeping and trying to build partnerships with Australia in multiple policy areas including, but not limited to weapons procurement, to intelligence sharing.

The volume is purposed for academics, researchers and possibly practitioners who are interested in the fast-evolving security relationships between two middle powers in East Asia - Australia and Japan. It further demonstrates how they are reacting to perceptions of American decline vis-à-vis China's increasingly active foreign policy in East Asia which has upended over 70 years of status quo security dynamics. The strength of the book lies in the various authors' abilities to provide insights into the structures, parameters, and reasons for foreign security policy decisions of these two powers. The book also lays bare the uncertain future of security relationships given the fluidity of American engagement. From geostrategic differences to new partnerships straining established partnerships, i.e., AUKUS, the volume allows readers to 'peek around corners' to see Japanese attempts to engage in a more independent foreign security policy, and the difficulties Australia faces in internally deciding to be more independent due to its historical, geographical, and economic ties. The volume allows readers who are interested in this specific sphere to gain further insights into the historical context or unfolding security dynamics that will impact the East Asian region for the foreseeable future.