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**Research statement:**

**Managing the American Medusa:  
US-Japan and US-EU Alliance Relations in Comparative Perspective**

### **1. Rationale**

The US-centred system of regional alliances in the post-war period has been crucial to underpinning the international security order, and more broadly the international political economy. In the post-Cold War period, 'post-globalisation', and post-9/11 periods, these alliance relationships clearly remain of crucial importance for governing the enhanced complexities of the regional and global security and political economy orders. Many of these alliance relationships are subject to deep tensions or are in open crisis over a range of issues including the response to transnational terrorism, weapons of mass destruction (WMD), the WTO and global and regional trade issues, the restructuring of international financial institutions, and environmental protection. In turn, the future of the alliances is a matter of active domestic policy and political debates within the US and amongst its partners, most notably forming one focus of the current US presidential election. Nevertheless, it is notable that in the US the emphasis is not upon evading alliance commitments but on how to better maintain alliances; whilst in other states the debate is similar in seeking to maintain alliances with the US, but looking to better manage the alliances in order to limit US unilateralism, preserve bilateral ties, and to enhance and foster global and regional frameworks for multilateral cooperation. All this is suggestive of the continued importance attached to US alliance relationships for global governance.

The US-Japan alliance as one of the key bilateral alliance relationships (if not the key bilateral relationship, and especially in East Asia, according to many US policy-makers) has been subject to similar international and domestic tensions, the questioning of its utility, and attempts to re-strengthen its security and economic functions. Arguably, the US-Japan remains vital for determining the emergent security architecture in the region, the future trajectory of Japan's security role, and the prospects for bilateral and multilateral cooperation amongst East Asian states in pursuing political and economic regionalism. At the global level also, the US-Japan alliance is increasingly one that acts to undergird US power projection to the Middle East and beyond, and is pivotal to governance issues in the IMF, WTO, G-8 and UN. Thus, the US-Japan alliance is not only inherently important in itself, but its current and future condition and that of the US-centred alliance system more generally are intimately bound together.

But despite the importance of the US-centred alliance systems, the US-Japan alliance, and the interconnection between the two, for the regional and global orders, there is a lack of consistent and comprehensive scholarship on these subjects. There are studies in existence relating to theories of alliances, but these tend to be focussed on traditional military or 'hard' security issues rather than addressing alliance relationships more broadly to encompass political economy questions. Moreover, most studies tend to provide empirical investigations of only one multilateral alliance institution or one bilateral dyad of the US alliance system, rather than providing

comparative investigations across these different alliance forms. Furthermore, few studies have as yet been undertaken that examine the impact of the post-9/11 context on the alliance arrangements.

In a similar way, there are a number of studies of the US-Japan alliance ties, but these tend to focus on military affairs or economic relations, without connecting the two. Additionally, few studies integrate the study of the US-Japan alliance into broader trends in alliance ties on a regional and global scale, by providing a comparison with developments in other alliances, and few cover developments post-9/11. Finally, studies of the US-Japan alliance are rarely conducted with a degree of comparison with the condition of other alliances in order to uncover common or divergent dynamics.

## **2. Objectives**

The objective of this project is to correct this major lacuna in extant scholarship. The project seeks to conduct a detailed investigation of the US-Japan alliance as its centrepiece or 'core', comprising the security and political economy dimensions, and through theoretical, historical and contemporary perspectives. In turn, the intention is to examine the 'core' case of Japan, in comparison with a number of other carefully selected 'control' alliance cases (especially the US-UK and US-Germany alliances) that assist understanding of the dynamics of the bilateral alliance relationship in the dimensions of security and political economy. At the same time, this detailed and comparative examination of the US-Japan alliance will be informed by more generic understandings of the functioning of alliance relationships, with the ultimate aim of utilising the findings from the US-Japan alliance as the principal focus of the project in order to then reflect back upon and adjust more generic understandings of the dynamics and importance of the US-centred alliance systems for regional and global security and political economy.

## **3. Methodology**

Specifically, the methodology of the project consists of three interrelated levels:

1. Detailed case studies of particular aspects of the core US-Japan alliance relationship in both the security and political economy dimensions, in comparison to US-EU ties
  - a. In the security dimension these case studies include differing responses to:
    - transnational terrorism post-9/11
    - 'rogue states' and the 'axis of evil' (North Korea, Iran, Iraq)
    - China's rise
    - missile defences
    - defence production
    - military bases and force realignments
    - multilateral regional organisations
  - b. In the political economy dimension
    - Trade frictions amongst allies over steel, agriculture, TIPS and dumping
    - China's accession to the WTO
    - Regional multilateral and bilateral trading arrangements
    - Regional financial arrangements
    - Governance and reform of international economic institutions

- Environmental protection and the Kyoto Protocol
  - UNSC reform/G-8 membership
  - International Criminal Court
2. Detailed theoretical and empirical comparative ‘control’ cases of other key US alliance relationships, comprising the security and political economy dimensions.
    - US-UK and US-Germany as the principal case studies, but also wider examination of US-EU ties in general
  3. Theoretical investigations of alliance relationships and their dynamics across the security and political economy dimensions, in order to contextualise the US-Japan.
    - Alliance theories in general
    - Theories of the US-Japan alliance
    - Theories of alliance relationships and the governance of security and political economy at the global and regional levels
  4. The methodology will involve a major international, and to a certain extent multidisciplinary, collaborative effort.
    - The US-Japan alliance core case studies will involve a number of scholars working on this relationships drawn from Japan, Europe, the US and East Asia.
    - It is envisaged that the need for additional expertise on the control cases will involve recruiting non-US-Japan expertise from specific alliance partner countries, including the UK, Germany and France.
    - The principal disciplines involved in the study will be political science (IR, IPE, globalisation studies, regionalisation studies), but it is also expected that on specific issues such as the global economy, international law and the environment there will also be a need for drawing on cognate disciplines such as economics, international law, and environmental science.

## 5. Workshop programme

- a. The aim is to conduct a series of three inter-linked workshops to be held in Japan (Tokyo), the UK (University of Warwick), and Germany (Berlin) which will address the issues outlined above.
  - The first workshop was held in Japan in March 2006 and focussed on US-Japan and US-EU political economy relations.
  - The second workshop will be held in Japan in August 2006 and will focus on security issues
  - The third workshop will be held in Berlin and focus on additional political economy and broader governance issues.

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