

When Domestic Factors Matter: The Relocation of US Bases in Okinawa

Hyon Joo Yoo

How and to what extent do domestic factors matter in foreign policy? More specifically, how did domestic processes in Japan impact the US-Japan agreement on relocating US bases in Okinawa? What types of domestic obstacles did the Japanese government confront in carrying out the relocation plan? Since 1996 the central government of Japan has been struggling in carrying out what it has promised to the United States: the construction of a new heliport to replace the US Marine Corps Air Base Futenma. This article looks at domestic elements that created obstacles for the Japanese government in fulfilling the commitment with the United States. It argues that although international settings provide incentives for states to choose cooperative policies toward allies, domestic variables limit the efficiency of implementing policy choices. More specifically, a clear division of domestic actors in multiple political and social layers works as a major obstacle that delays or blocks the processes of implementing alliance cooperation.

Key Words: US-Japan Alliance, two-level games, domestic obstacles, Okinawa, Henoko, base activists

How and to what extent do domestic factors matter in foreign policy? More specifically, how did domestic processes in Japan impact the US-Japan agreement on relocating US bases in Okinawa? What types of domestic obstacles did the Japanese government confront in carrying out the relocation plan? Since 1996 the central government of Japan has been struggling in carrying out what it has promised to the United States: the construction of a new heliport to replace the US Marine Corps Air Base Futenma. This article looks at domestic elements that created obstacles for the Japanese government in implementing the relocation plan and fulfilling the commitment with the United States. On a broad scheme, this article explores an inextricable relationship between domestic and international politics in foreign policy outcomes. It is in line with existing works

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about “bringing the state back in,” or the *innenpolitik*, that pay attention to the role of internal factors as an important variable in accelerating or blocking state behavior.

While placing the main theme of the argument in this line of thinking, this article highlights a discrepancy between international and state levels with respect to security issues. Interestingly, the problem of relocating US military bases in Okinawa runs contrary to what Japan has achieved in broader alliance strategies. Japan’s policy increasingly covers wide-ranging security challenges in the region, including North Korea’s conventional and nuclear weapons, and potential military threats abroad. Japan offered logistical support for the US forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, proving a significant ally for America. However, such efforts were not reflected in the issue of relocating US bases. While the central government in Japan underscores the strategic importance of Okinawa for maintaining the US-Japan alliance and preserving Japan’s security, it faces difficulty in persuading the domestic audience into supporting the national security objectives.

This article examines diverse factors in Japan’s domestic politics in relocating the US Marine Base in Okinawa. It argues that although international settings provide incentives for states to choose cooperative policies toward allies, domestic variables limit the efficiency of implementing policy choices. For domestic variables, I suggest that a clear division of domestic actors in multiple political and social “layers” is a major obstacle that delays the process of implementing alliance cooperation. In other words, divisions between and within the central government, the local government, and interest groups would hamper effective cooperation with alliance partners.

ALLIANCE COOPERATION AND DOMESTIC FACTORS

A general consensus among many scholars demonstrates that there are at least two broad categories of international elements that explain alliance cooperation. First, common external threats offer strong incentives for alliance partners to cooperate and create cohesive alliance relationships (Walt 1990). Even when common external threats do not exist in the beginning, international settings can give leeway to the alliance partners to redefine common enemies and create cohesion between alliance members. For instance, when Germany and Austria-Hungary formed a dual alliance in 1879, there were no clear, uniform, external threats that brought these two countries together. While Austria-Hungary was overtly concerned about Russia, Germany’s major threats came from possible retaliation by France over Alsace-Lorraine. However, by 1914 cooperation between Germany and Austria-Hungary had increased because of growing

common external threats from the Triple Entente (Weitsman 2004). This theoretical argument implies that external threats have a strong influence on the cohesion of alliance.

Another explanation for the cause of alliance cooperation relies on alliance security dilemma (Snyder 1997). This theoretical argument demonstrates that states engaged in an alliance constantly face two types of fears. One is the fear of abandonment, which means that states are concerned about a possibility in which their allies would leave the alliance or fail to provide help. The other is the fear of entrapment, which occurs when states are afraid of being dragged into unwanted conflicts that their allies initiate. Risks of abandonment and entrapment are intertwined in that reducing one of them increases the other. If states seek to reduce alliance commitments in order to handle the fear of entrapment, they become estranged from their alliance partners and they face increased risks of abandonment. However, if states seek to strengthen commitments in order to avoid the risk of abandonment, strong support emboldens alliance partners and the risk of being entrapped in conflicts initiated by allies increases. The alliance security dilemma, therefore, predicts that states that are more likely to feel abandonment fears are more willing to coordinate their security policies with what their alliance partners desire. They would also increase commitments to help their allies in order to secure the alliance as the benefit of such an option outweighs the cost. In alliance politics, fears of abandonment and entrapment are conducive to cooperation among alliance members.

However, external settings that drive states to a general direction of security strategies with respect to their alliance cannot delineate how states implement such strategies. As a few scholars have expressly noted, structure-driven theoretical arguments only give a general direction of foreign policy because it is not designed to explain particular state behavior (Waltz 1979; Elman 1996). A key theoretical question, then, is: "How do states confront and coordinate interests and views by various domestic political actors in order to carry out alliance commitments?"

To this extent, there are major attempts to bring the state, or the second image, back into the discourse of foreign policy (Barnett and Levy 1991; Snyder 1991; Morrow 1993; Sterling-Folker 1997; Rose 1998; Bueno de Mesquita 2002). What seems most relevant encompasses two level games that demonstrate processes in which central decision makers reconcile both domestic and international imperatives (Putnam 1988). Although Putnam's two-level games focus on how to deal with domestic and international factors for international negotiation, the logic still has some implications on how domestic politics influence the fulfillment of alliance commitment. This model suggests that conflicts among heterogeneous domestic actors who have contrasting positions regarding a policy option are likely to impede cooperation at the international level. Any decision-process to

endorse or implement international agreements is required in the domestic level and it involves many actors, such as “bureaucratic agencies, interest groups, social classes, or public opinion” (Putnam 1988, 436). Leaders who face a clear division within a state where actors have diverse preferences will have difficulty in carrying out their commitments in the international level.

Conflicts among domestic actors may exist in various *layers* of social and political systems. As a pluralistic approach purports, the role of states is a relatively passive set of institutions and an arena for competition, bargaining, and negotiation among various domestic interest groups (Milner 1997; Moravcsik 1997). Sources of domestic pressures on the central government come from conflicts between rent-seeking actors who have not “internalized” the cost and benefit of national strategies and seek individual benefits by sacrificing aggregate welfare (Moravcsik 1997, 529). For domestic actors, an agreement between alliance partners is not a done deal. Rather, they seek to revise the alliance agreement in a way to reflect their interests. A clear division between various actors will create conflicts between those who seek to change the alliance agreement in their favor and those who try to maintain the agreement including the central government that has a strong desire to remain credible to international partners and people that would benefit from an existing deal.

This phenomenon may lead to “involuntary defection” in which a state reneges on what it promises to international partners as the result of conflicts between domestic actors (Putnam 1988, 438). The two-level games depict that the effect of clear domestic divisions increases the risk of involuntary defection. In other words, a division between domestic actors, reinforced by strong opposition groups, undermines the political standing of leaders and precludes the central government from winning the legislative support and convincing diverse domestic actors to concede. Leaders’ weak political position will diminish the prospect of international cooperation by limiting their capability of obtaining ratification and implementing the alliance agreements. However, the two-level games also assume that this condition can work as a bargaining advantage in negotiating with other states. Leaders who have weak political standing will be able to “drive a better bargain” in international negotiations than those who have solid domestic standing (Putnam 1988, 440). For instance, American negotiators often exploit the difficulties of winning congressional ratification to conclude better international deals.¹

Confronting a domestic division, leaders seek to “maximize the chances of ratification” by making reparations for people who might cast votes for the agreements (Putnam 1988, 444). However, such an effort does not necessarily yield a successful outcome. Rather, it can make the ratification process even more complicated. While leaders gain new supporters on their side, an even stronger opposition may emerge among those who do not reap benefits from the

agreements and those who favor no agreement. Moreover, the diverse layers of institutional constraints can multiply this complexity. The process of approving international agreements in the domestic level involves several ratification procedures by various political agencies and government organizations. For instance, in the negotiation between the United States and Europe about agricultural trade, each side has to obtain ratification from diverse agricultural organizations. At each stage to deal with these organizations, “cleavage patterns, ratification procedure, side-payments, and so on need to be considered” (Putnam 1988, 449-450).

The final ratification must be “voted up or down” and any modification to agreements in the international level is a rejection unless leaders in both countries approve the amended agreements (Putnam 1988, 437). Although modifying agreements is not impossible, it necessitates various government organizations to renegotiate their positions. Since existing agreements already reflect the positions of government organizations about related issues, “[the agreement] package is almost sure to be non-negotiable” (Putnam 1988, 446). This implies that even if there are proposals to revise existing agreements, resistance to changes may be prevalent among government organizations. Consequently, a domestic division becomes intensified between political actors that call for amending alliance commitments and government organizations that are unwilling to do so.

The following demonstrates how a discrepancy between international and domestic levels, discussed above, has influenced Japan’s fulfillment of an alliance agreement with the United States in relocating the US base in Futenma. The driving force behind the Japanese government to move forward with the agreement lies in external environments. However, a strong division between domestic actors in Japan has hindered the government despite its willingness to accomplish the task. The upshot is tantamount to “involuntary defection” as Japan has not been able to begin the construction of new facilities to replace the Futenma base for the past 18 years.

ALLIANCE COOPERATION DRIVEN BY EXTERNAL THREATS

CHANGES OF THE US-JAPAN ALLIANCE AND THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF OKINAWA

Japan’s security strategy with respect to the alliance with the United States clearly reflects the external settings. Since the post Cold-War era, growing external uncertainties have driven Japan to work closely with the United States in restructuring the bilateral alliance (Funabashi 2000; The Henry Stimson Center Working Group 2000). Japan’s National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG) addressed new security concerns that are compatible with the US Quadrennial

Defense Review (QDR). It recognized terrorist activities, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and ballistic missiles, as new security challenges (Japanese Ministry of Defense 2004). Japan passed anti-terrorism legislation before it deployed refueling tankers to the Indian Ocean in order to assist the US operation in Afghanistan. The Japanese government agreed with the United States to clearly identify the stability of the Taiwan Strait and the Korean peninsula as their core security concern. Such an agreement was originally discussed in the working-level Defense Policy Review Initiative (DPRI) in 2002 and was confirmed later at the two plus two meeting in 2005. The joint statement issued after the meeting was the first official confirmation of Tokyo's security interest concerning regional challenges beyond Japanese security.

Japan has also gradually responded to mounting threats from ballistic missiles in the region. Series of provocative missile tests and nuclear detonation, particularly from North Korea, necessitated an important adjustment in the alliance with the United States. (Hughes 2009). As early as September 1993, the government of Japan (GOJ) launched a joint research project with the United States, or Theater Missile Defense Working Group (TMDWG), to study technical requirements for missile defense and potential cooperation between the two countries. In a few months, the Japan Defense Agency (JDA) noted that the existing 1976 defense framework was no longer relevant to meet new missile threats and announced a new defense plan. Japan initiated joint research with the United States in the 1980s and formally participated in the US missile defense programs in the late 1990s. Tokyo's cooperation with Washington came with the purchase of US technologies, making Japan the second most powerful nation in the ballistic missile defense (BMD) capability (Chanlett-Avery and Rineheart 2013, 16).

These changes in the US-Japan alliance shed light on the geopolitical importance of Okinawa. Okinawa holds two thirds of the US service members in Japan and is in close proximity to possible regional and global contingencies (Nikkei Weekly 2006). The American forces in Okinawa have extended from their traditional tasks to defend Japan and surrounding areas to the deployment to East Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. Futenma, the US Marine Corps air station, is regarded as essential for sustaining the US capability to respond to regional and global crises. One aircraft in the Futenma Marine Base can carry "fully equipped combat-ready military units to any point in the world on short notice and then provide field support required to help sustain the fighting force" (Japan Times 2009). The Futenma base is also a backup of the air force in Kadena in Okinawa, the hub of the US force in the Asia Pacific. The Third Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF) in Okinawa is in high readiness and has "the ability to prevent war, swift and lethal" (Kirk 2013, 49). Marines participated in fifteen operations in the past decade including humanitarian crises such as Operation Tomodachi in

the wake of the tsunami near Tokyo in 2011. Recently, 45 marines and sailors in Okinawa were dispatched to the Philippines for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in November 2013 after the typhoon Haiyan. As US Lt. General Gregson mentioned, “Okinawa’s geographical importance makes it absolutely essential as a permanent base for US Marines in the Pacific” (Japan Times 2002).

The Japanese government understands the strategic importance of US forces in Okinawa to maintain deterrence against regional conflicts, such as contingencies in Taiwan and the Korean peninsula (See Chanlett-Avery and Rinehart 2014, 4). As Shigeru Ishiba, former defense minister of Japan, clearly noted, the relocation of the US Marines in Futenma outside Okinawa means that the force cannot play a deterrent role (Japan Times 2009).

This strategic importance of Okinawa was reflected in the agreement between Tokyo and Washington about a Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF). In 1996 Japan and the United States agreed to transfer all functions of Futenma, located in the residential area of Ginowan city, to the Henoko district of Nago city, a less populated area within Okinawa.

DOMESTIC OBSTACLES: A DIVISION IN THE VARIOUS POLITICAL LAYERS

This section demonstrates that the central government’s FRF plan, or the Henoko plan, was not well received by domestic actors. The focus is placed on how diverse actors in various political layers sought to change or block the plan. It also explores how the Japanese government attempted to alleviate such domestic problems while reassuring the United States.

INCONSISTENCY OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN OKINAWA

The central government in Tokyo had difficulty in obtaining strong support from the Okinawan Prefectural Government (OPG) regarding the FRF plan. The OPG was capricious by changing its positions several times for more than 16 years under two governors. Sometimes the OPG tenuously agreed with the “basic principle” of the plan while imposing specific conditions to modify the existing plan, which was not acceptable by the US and Japanese governments. At other times, the OPG expressed a clear opposition demanding that a new airport be built outside Okinawa. Such an opposition was designed to legitimize governors’ political positions in Okinawa by selectively aligning themselves with base activists when necessary—particularly at election time.

The OPG provided a tepid support for Tokyo’s construction plan as early as 1999. There are a few elements that explain Okinawa’s compliance. Compared to

the previous governor, Ota, who was strongly against the US forces in Okinawa, Governor Keiichi Inamine, backed by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), was willing to negotiate with the central government. To appeal to the Okinawa governor who emphasized the importance of economic development in the island, the GOJ led by Keizo Obuchi proposed material incentives with 100 billion yen for ten years in order to boost the economy in Okinawa. The Obuchi cabinet designated Nago city for the place of a G-8 Summit meeting in 2000 to galvanize economic activities in the island.

Instead of an outright rejection to the relocation plan, Governor Inamine maintained a practical approach for a while to obtain economic gains from Tokyo. However, he requested that the new port in Henoko be used for civilian and military purposes and be reverted to civilian control in 15 years. Although the United States and Japan were opposed to setting the time limit for the use of the port by the US military, they agreed that the new port could have civilian and military functions. Inamine, then, requested the reduction of US forces and called for relieving the burden on Okinawa. The United States responded by conducting a study on how to reduce the marine training drills in Okinawa (Reuters 2001). Tangible changes appeared as some training exercises for US marines in Okinawa gradually moved to the Pacific area, including Guam (Johnston 2002).

However, Inamine became defiant of the US military bases in a few years. Particularly after he was reelected as governor in November 2002 he proactively raised problems related to US military bases. Such a change came out only five months after the Okinawan Prefectural Government and the central government signed off on a “basic” construction plan and agreed with the location of the heliport to be built in Henoko. It is possible that Inamine was not happy about Tokyo’s reluctance to give clear answers to a limited time frame for a new heliport that he demanded as a condition of his agreement. It is also possible that a series of crimes committed by US soldiers roused even stronger protests in Okinawa and Inamine could not ignore them to maintain his legitimacy. Accordingly, the Okinawan governor strongly urged the United States to remove a large number of US marines when he had a meeting with Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in 2003.

Inamine started to question the feasibility of the FRF plan. He ordered his staff to draft an assessment about the US military bases and prepare a proposal to fully reflect Okinawa’s opinion as a substitute for the current plan agreed on between Washington and Tokyo (Shimoyachi 2004). In order to address Inamine’s challenge, the United States and Japan made another effort to reflect concerns from Okinawans by scaling down runways of the new facility in Henoko. Nevertheless, Governor Inamine was not pleased. He became more critical of the plan and even demanded that the new heliport be outside of Okinawa (Takahara 2005). In the end, the central government decided not to provide political and economic support for the governor. When Inamine went to Tokyo

to lodge a complaint and highlight the danger of US military exercises, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi refused to meet the governor, reflecting the strained relationship between the central and local governments.

The next Okinawan governor, Hirokazu Nakaima, backed by LDP, accepted a new construction plan “in principle.” However, he attached one condition that the new facility should be built a little bit farther out from the coast in Henoko (Johnson 2007). Nakaima’s proposal did not please anyone in Tokyo, Washington, and Okinawa. The GOJ and the US government utterly refused to reconsider the location of the base and wanted to implement the way it was planned. The Okinawa prefectural assembly, dominated by Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), criticized Nakaima’s proposal and called on a new facility to be built outside Okinawa. Nevertheless, Nakaima had a strong desire to quickly resolve this issue. He consistently pushed the United States and Japan to accept his demand in order to move the US Marine Base in Futenma to a new heliport in Henoko. Nakaima noted, “Relocating [the Futenma base] outside of Okinawa prefecture would be best. But we can’t resist accepting relocation within the prefecture” (Johnson 2009).

However, Nakaima suddenly turned resistant to the FRF plan when he was running for a second term in 2010. The Okinawan governor agreed with base activists and Okinawan residents and called for the complete removal of the US military base. Reportedly his about-face regarding the base issue helped him be reelected governor. A formal statement came out from Nakaima. He demanded the Futenma air station be located out of Okinawa and rejected the environment assessment report by the Japanese Ministry of Defense (*Ryukyu Shimpo* 2012).

Nevertheless, the Tokyo government believed that it was still possible to win over the Okinawan governor (*Kyoto News* 2010). Nakaima, as former head of the Okinawa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, had connections with the business community in Okinawa and politicians in Tokyo and made efforts to obtain national funding for public projects. Tokyo made relentless efforts to induce the Okinawa government to accept the plan. In 2013 Governor Nakaima reached a deal with Prime Minister Abe approving a request from the central government to work on a landfill project for building a heliport in Henoko. As a response, the Tokyo government promised to provide 346 billion yen for development assistance in 2014 and 300 billion yen per year until 2021. Tokyo also promised to accelerate returning Futenma and other military bases in Okinawa. In July 2014, the Okinawa Prefecture approved the rock-drilling project in Henoko as part of the landfill work for building new facilities in Henoko.

However, the Nakaima-Abe agreement does not necessarily mean that Tokyo will no longer face obstacles from the local government of Okinawa. Resistance from the Okinawan people became visible particularly after the Tokyo-Okinawa agreement. The Okinawa Prefectural Assembly condemned the governor for

selling out Henoko in Nago city and demanded his resignation. Moreover, Tokyo has had difficulty in getting an approval from the Nago city mayor, who has ardently opposed the FRF plan and his opposition to setting up a storage yard in the Henoko fishing port for construction materials might delay the construction of new facilities (See Japanese Ministry of Defense 2014).

BASE ACTIVISTS AND THE PEOPLE OF OKINAWA

Base activists and the people of Okinawa are not easy for the central government to handle. One major reason lies in the fact that there is a clear division within the Okinawans. The level of opposition varies among the residents of Okinawa, ranging from a radical demand of removing all US forces completely from the island to a moderate request of reducing forces. However, what is clear is that the FRF plan is not very popular. A public survey conducted by Kyoto News Agency and Ryukyu Shimpo revealed that only 9.6 percent of the people of Okinawa supported the central government's plan to build alternative facilities in Henoko (Takehiko 2004). Another survey conducted by the Okinawan Prefectural Government in 2012 revealed that about 49 percent of respondents were not satisfied by the central government's FRF plan while 22.3 percent said neither positive nor negative (Rykyu Shimpo 2014). In the same survey, only 9 percent of respondents were satisfied. However, this does not necessarily mean that everyone in Okinawa is vocally opposed to the plan. Some people tend to accept the reality that they have to live with US forces. Like civil society groups and base activists, the general population of Okinawa believes that removing US forces from the island is a most desirable outcome. However, they understand that it is impossible to remove US bases from Okinawa completely within a short period of time (Fackler 2012). As a recent study has revealed, although Okinawan's attitudes toward US bases evinced a strong enmity historically, the degree of the opposition has gradually decreased since the end of the Cold War (Kagotani and Yanai 2014). Some residents in Okinawa have a flexible approach to the US bases. For example, the Nago fishing cooperative is a local pro-base group in Henoko. It has a strong influence on the FRF plan because the Okinawan governor is required to obtain this group's consent before he approves commencing pre-construction surveys in the waters off Cape Henoko (Ji Ji 2013). A leader in the fishing association and other residents, including several military landowners, constitute the Henoko Administrative Committee, an important decision-making body. The committee has been in favor of the plan proposed by the central government mostly because of Henoko's village-wide financial dependency on the central government (Williams 2013).

Nevertheless, there is no denying that recalcitrant opponents of US military bases exist in Okinawa. Civil society groups evinced concerns about crimes by US servicemen, the noise pollution, the danger of military exercises, and

environmental problems. Among them, environmental activists are the most effective groups that have been influencing the FRF plan and changing the environmental procedure taken by the central government. Their main goal is to suspend the Henoko plan completely and remove all US forces from Okinawa.

In 2004 civil activists and ecologists successfully stopped a seabed drilling survey that the Japanese Defense Agency attempted to do to investigate areas off the coast of Henoko for the FRF plan. While holding sit-ins everyday near the Oura bay, environmental activists blocked construction vehicles heading toward Henoko and surrounded a drilling platform in waters with small boats (Allen and Sumida 2004). In order to evade the blockade by base activists, Japan's Defense Facility Administration Bureau (DFAB) spent a few weeks to move a floating crane through waters from Nakagusuko port to Henoko. Originally, the DFAB had a plan to conduct 63 drilling tests by drilling holes into the seabed and gather data on the underwater terrain. Ecologists argued that tests of the seabed would cause environmental damage and threaten coral reefs and the lives of rare sea animals, particularly a sea mammal dugong. Opposition members wore wetsuits with air tanks and got on small boats to block the tests of the seabed (Johnston 2009). Scuffles took place as a diver gave a threatening gesture at a demonstrator and activists climbed up the scaffolding tower. Fishermen also demonstrated in their fishing boats to prevent research by the government officials (Kirk 2013, 34). In December 2004, activists brought this issue to the court claiming that the drilling project should be suspended and the FRF plan should be terminated.

In March 2006, the government study team left the site without completing the survey. By that time, Tokyo was already considering an alternative to the Henoko plan believing that the survey would not be successfully completed (See Japanese Ministry of Defense 2013, 159). The relocation plan was originally designed in 1996 to build a mile-long floating platform off the coast of Henoko. This option to build a port in the ocean was deliberately planned both by the central government in Japan and the United States in order to reduce danger and noise for residents near the area. However, confronting strong opposition to a drilling project for more than two years, the central government modified a plan with a V-shaped runway on part of the US Marine's Camp Schwab with two 1,800-meter runways including 200-meter overruns. In May 2006, Japan and the United States announced an agreed new plan. Both an original plan with an off shore heliport and a new plan with the V-shaped runways located in Henoko and the distance between these two is not far away. However, the change of location was the result of vehement resistance by civil society groups.

Okinawan activists made efforts to internationalize the issue of FRF by bringing it to the US courtroom. Environmental activists noted that the final draft of the FRF plan did not give rare species and the natural environment of the Henoko area careful consideration. In the meantime, they noticed a case that

the US court ruled in favor of a California-based non-governmental organization (NGO), the Center for Biological Diversity, to stop the US Air Force's live-fire raid training on a migratory bird habitat in the Northern Mariana Islands (Tanji 2008, 479-480). In September 2003, Okinawan activists along with the NGO and a nonprofit environment law firm Earthjustice filed a lawsuit against the US Department of Defense (DOD) and Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in the US district court of San Francisco. The lawsuit claimed that the US DOD failed to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) by constructing a new port in Henoko that would destroy the dugong's natural habitat. According to the lawsuit, the US had an obligation under the Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention) to mitigate the effects of the Federal undertakings outside the United States and protect Okinawa's dugong, a globally threatened mammal. Although the US DOD attempted to dismiss the lawsuit arguing that Okinawa dugong did not constitute historical significant property and that the FRF plan was not the DOD's undertaking but the Japanese government's work, the court ruled against the DOD's claims.

In January 2008, the US district court closed the case by ruling in favor of the plaintiffs. The federal judge addressed the responsibility of the US DOD and ordered to submit documentation that would evaluate the impacts of FRF on dugong and whether or not the Japanese government's environmental assessment report would be sufficient to meet the DOD's obligation under the NHPA. The DOD provided documents to the court in April recognizing that Japanese Defense Ministry's environmental impact assessment did not include the effect of the plan on the survival of dugongs. The DOD then offered its commitment to continue researching the impact and consult with environment specialists. As one recent study has revealed, the lawsuit exposed major problems in the Japanese Defense Ministry's assessment and increased pressure on the Tokyo government to take transparent processes in assessing the environmental impacts of the implementation of the FRF plan (Tanji 2009). Because it was recorded as the first case that applied NHPA to a US project abroad, it established a strong foothold for environmental activists in Okinawa to carry out more effective anti-base movements.

EFFORTS OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND AN INTENSIFYING DOMESTIC DIVISION

In order to alleviate opposition from Okinawans to the relocation plan, the Japanese central government employed various types of incentives ranging from financial aid for economic development to compensation for noise pollution. Although it was a taboo to directly link subsidies from the central government to bases, some studies recognized that Tokyo's financial incentives were directed

at a NIMBY (not in my backyard) issue in Okinawa (Calder 2007; Hook 2010; Envall 2013; William 2013). The central government has relied on contributions made by taxpayers to pay rents to landowners in Okinawa since 1972. The rent has been raised on a yearly basis, reaching a total of 91 billion yen (approximately 910 million US dollars) in 2011, a 31 times increase from 1972 (Shimoji 2011).

However, the unequal distribution of financial incentives across villages in Okinawa has created a wide range of disagreements. There is a stark difference between those who own property in the US military bases and receive compensation and those who live far away from the bases and are excluded from social and economic benefits. Within Nago city where the Henoko heliport is to be built, there are two groups of people that have contrasting views about the FRF plan. The administrative committee of Henoko, most adjacent to Camp Schwab, approved the plan while Kushi, located farthest away from the US base, was opposed. The Kushi village passed a unanimous resolution to exhibit its opposition to the approval of the FRF, and its residents participated in anti-base efforts. The socio-economic conditions intensify the difference between these two villages (Williams 2013, 975-976). Although some Kushi residents receive payments for leasing land to the US military, their major economic foundation lies in agriculture. Moreover, in contrast to Nago as a whole in which population has roughly doubled for the past several years, Kushi has not grown at all. The clear difference between the two villages represents a deepening divergence within Okinawa. As the two-level games predicts, the increase of economic incentives that the central government offers to Okinawa is conducive to even stronger opposition from a group of people who cannot benefit from the FRF plan.

THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT LOCATED BETWEEN OKINAWA AND THE UNITED STATES

While the central government in Tokyo had difficulty in carrying out the FRF plan to replace the Futenma base with a new port in Henoko, the United States started to express its concerns publicly about the delay of the construction. When visiting Okinawa in November 2003, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld was concerned about the safety aspect of Futenma Air Base in which military officials there were still using temporary offices, while waiting to move to an alternative base in Nago city, for almost 18 years (Brooke 2004).

In 2005, the United States and Japan reached a major agreement as an attempt to reduce burdens in Okinawa. They decided to relocate the headquarters of the III MEF located in Camp Courtney in Okinawa to Guam. An agreement between the two countries also included a reduction in the number of marines (18,000) by between 3,000 and 5,000 and the replacement of Futenma's main runway with Nayutabaru and Tsuiki Air Bases. The two governments discussed relocating 12

KC-130 midair-refueling tankers stationed in Futenma Air Base to Kanoya self-defense force's base in Kagoshima Prefecture. Moreover, Washington and Tokyo started to consider moving some military exercises conducted by F-15 fighters in Kadena Air Base in Okinawa to other regions in Japan, including Fukuoka and Hokkaido, thereby decreasing the number of take offs and landings at Kadena.

Despite the gradual decrease of US forces, the Okinawan government registered a substantial disagreement with the FRF plan and argued that Futenma Air Base should be moved off of Okinawa. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld revealed his displeasure by cancelling his scheduled trip to Japan in October 2005. The Japanese government had to reassure the United States and reconfirmed its promise that the agreement between the two countries would be "fully executed" while pushing the Okinawan governor to accept the FRF plan (*Japan Times* 2005). Japanese Defense Agency Chief Yoshinori Ono noted that the government would stick with the plan of constructing new facilities in Henoko. He urged, "I very much hope that the people in Okinawa will accept [the plan]" (*Japan Times* 2005). Secretary Rumsfeld also confirmed the point made by the Japanese Defense Chief. He noted, "It is an arrangement that our two countries, our two governments have entered into. It's done" (Kambayashi 2005). Even newly elected Governor Nakaima, supported by the LDP, was opposed to the V-shaped runway plan for the facility of Henoko. He instead demanded the port be moved farther out on the peninsula. Again, Tokyo and Washington resisted such a demand.

The United States became even more disappointed as the FRF plan was challenged by Yukio Hatoyama who became Prime Minister in September 2009, overturning 55 years of LDP-domination in Japanese politics. In contrast to LDP leaders who were trying to implement the FRF plan, Prime Minister Hatoyama, who expressed his desire to have an "equal" relationship with the United States, publicly announced that he would work on having Futenma relocated to Honshu, the main island of Japan, or even outside the country. People who were opposed to the FRF raised their hope that the plan would be cancelled or at least revisited under the Hatoyama administration (Johnston 2009). Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada heighten this expectation by stating in October 2009 that the Hatoyama government was considering alternative options for Henoko. The proposal by Hatoyama in fact reflected the principle of DPJ regarding the Okinawa issue. DPJ's Okinawa vision paper in 2008 demanded that the US bases should be reduced drastically and then removed from Okinawa entirely (See Democratic Party of Japan 2008). Members in DPJ, therefore, were supportive of the prime minister (Kambayashi 2003).

A clear division within Japanese elites became obvious regarding the relocation issue in this period of time. While DPJ's view was shared partly by the Japanese Communist Party that called for the complete removal of US forces from Japan,

the Socialist Democratic Party argued that in order to reduce the burden on Okinawa, Iwakuni Marine Corps Air Station in Yamaguchi prefecture and other regions in Japan should take more responsibility (*Nikkei Weekly* 2002). However, politicians in LDP had a desire to stick with the FRF plan, as they were the most supportive for the existing plan to relocate the Futenma Air Base. LDP members started to levy harsh criticism of Hatoyama and DPJ. LDP member, Fumio Kyuma, emphasized the importance of the US Marine Corps in Okinawa as an effective deterrence against regional threats to Japan. There also existed a view among government officials particularly in the Ministry of Defense that there was not enough time to revise the FRF plan and downplayed Hatoyama's suggestion.

The United States clearly rejected Hatoyama's controversial claim to renegotiate the deal. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates reconfirmed that Washington stuck to the original agreement with Tokyo and pressured the Japanese government to follow through the commitment as soon as possible (Dickie 2009). With increasing pressure from conservative politicians in Japan and the US counterparts, the Tokyo government led by DPJ dropped a few hints that it might revert its position. Prime Minister Hatoyama announced that he postponed the decision about transferring the US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma after local elections in Okinawa would be completed. He then postponed his decision again until his self-imposed date, May 31, 2010. Still displeased by the Hatoyama government, Washington suspended talks with Tokyo regarding the Henoko plan in November 2009. The US policy elites clearly expressed their frustration. The US Marine Corps commander in the Pacific stated, "National security policy cannot be made in towns and villages," an indirect complaint against Hatoyama who seemed too attentive to Okinawa's election in handling the issue of US military bases in Okinawa (Fackler 2010a). Japanese conservatives also criticized Hatoyama's indecisive position. The LDP leader Sadakazu Tanigai expressed his concerns that Hatoyama's plan had eroded bilateral relations with the United States (Fackler 2009).

The Japanese public, concerned about estranged relations with Washington, also turned against the Hatoyama government. Public surveys revealed that more than half of the Japanese people wanted Hatoyama to resign if he failed to resolve the base issue by the deadline. Eventually, the Hatoyama government reverted its position. In April 2010 Foreign Minister Okada said that the government would stick with the original proposal to relocate the Futenma Air Base to Henoko. Hatoyama explained, "It was necessary to give the Japan-US alliance agreement priority because maintaining trust between the two countries serves as the best deterrence" (Tabuchi and Fackler 2010). Okinawans raged against Hatoyama. More than 90,000 protesters, including Okinawa governor Nakaima, the speaker of the Okinawa assembly, and mayors of Okinawa, staged a large anti-base

demonstration (Fackler 2010b). Three days before his self-imposed deadline, Hatoyama publicly announced that he decided to honor the existing agreement with the United States at the nationally televised press conference. Failing to mollify angry Okinawans and convince policy elites in Japan, Hatoyama resigned six days later. A series of incidents became a dilemma for the central government. When Tokyo sought to stick with the Henoko plan that it had agreed to with Washington, it confronted tough opposition from Okinawan activists. However, when the government attempted to reflect the voice of Okinawan activists, it was severely criticized by the United States, conservative elites, and the general public in Japan.

CONCLUSION

This article has demonstrated how an internationally driven alliance agreement confronts challenges from conflicts between various actors in domestic politics. Japanese leaders had to deal with domestic obstacles, including disagreements between the local government, Okinawan residents, and the central government, in carrying out the FRF plan. First, Okinawan governors showed lukewarm support of the “principle” of the Henoko plan while they occasionally aligned themselves with anti-base movements. This course of action was designed to serve their political interest at the expense of the national security strategy. On the one hand, the alignment with anti-base movements helped them to be reelected as Okinawa’s governor. On the other hand, by showing support for the principle of the FRF plan, they obtained economic assistance for Okinawa from the central government and, therefore, solidified their political standing in the island.

Second, Okinawan residents were divided into those who supported the existence of US military bases and those who strongly opposed it. An attempt by the central government to incentivize the support for US bases with side payments did not remove opposition from Okinawa. In fact, it exacerbated an existing division between these two groups of people. Moreover, the case of the US court decision that worked favorably for environmental activists generated political momentum for more proactive anti-base movements by taking the Okinawa issue internationally. This can increase pressure on the Japanese government to become more transparent about implementing the FRF.

Third, the case of Hatoyama demonstrated that there was a strong force within the Japanese politics that put an emphasis on the US-Japan alliance. A person who attempted to go contrary to such a force was politically ostracized. Based on this experience, it is unlikely for the central government, regardless of the leadership and the political orientation, to seek to revoke the Henoko plan in the

future.

There are some theoretical aspects to discuss. While structural realism is not interested in exploring how states carry out alliance agreements, this article has revealed that it is important to understand the processes in which states implement their commitments. Even if states reach an agreement with their alliance partners, it does not necessarily mean that they can carry it out immediately. Alliance cooperation can be bogged down because of domestic conflicts between diverse domestic actors who seek to challenge and modify the alliance agreement in their favor. Although domestic politics might not be able to alter the general direction of alliance strategies agreed on between allies, they could cause inefficient alliance cooperation. As discussed above, leaders in Japan confronted strong domestic opposition and were not able to build a new facility in Henoko to replace the Futenma Air Base for almost two decades. This made Japan frustrated and caused the United States to question the solidarity of the alliance relations. In other words, domestic politics are significant to the extent that they not only make alliance cooperation inefficient but also estrange relations between allies.

This implies that while it is important to find and redefine common grounds to increase the cohesiveness of alliances, it is also important to understand the internal processes of alliance partners and guard against a possibility in which allies involuntarily failed to follow through with the commitment because of domestic turmoil. In particular, understanding what types of government that alliance partners have will be useful to envisaging the effectiveness of alliance cooperation. Democracies can make these domestic processes even more complex and unpredictable due to a range of elements including various degrees of autonomy in the executive branch, voice of a legislative body, and a strong influence from civil society. A pluralistic society that reflects diverse views of members is likely to undercut the efficacy in carrying out alliance agreements. This runs contrary to a general consensus among US policy makers that democracies are reliable allies because their political institutions establish the credibility to make them abide by contractual commitments and guard against the arbitrary abrogation of international treaties. Given that most US allies in Europe and Asia are democracies, this finding shows that Washington should not always expect to obtain cooperation from these allies even after agreements are reached and external settings push them to comply with these agreements.

¹ Although negotiations are one major point in the two-level games theory, this article attempts to find the relevance of the theory to understanding how the central government carries out international agreements after negotiations. The focus is placed mainly on how domestic divisions slow down and even block the implementation of alliance cooperation.

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