SASAKAWA USA
Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA

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New report recommends strengthening U.S.-Japan Alliance through improved communications

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Recent changes on both sides of the Pacific Ocean have helped make the U.S.-Japan Alliance stronger than it has ever been. But are the existing structures of communication and coordination optimized for managing alliance relations? A new Sasakawa USA report released today examines all the relevant actors in the U.S.-Japan national security sphere, and recommends ways to improve communication, thereby advancing bilateral capabilities to engage with the region on military and security issues.

Managing the U.S.-Japan Alliance: An Examination of Structural Linkages in the Security Relationship seeks to provide insight into the black box of bilateral decision-making by examining how actors interact, and any inherent structural challenges that may exist. Author Dr. Jeffrey W. Hornung, Fellow for Security and Foreign Affairs at Sasakawa USA, finds that while the existing structures of bilateral communication and coordination are generally effective, they are not optimized for managing alliance relations, and alliance managers face an array of challenges in situations of peacetime, crisis, and conflict. The report concludes with policy recommendations meant to overcome these challenges.

Click here to access the report online.

A study such as this is long overdue. Despite an entire genre of alliance-related literature focusing on foreign policy and defense issues, there is a paucity focusing on the alliance's structural linkages.

"Seamless responses demand seamless communication," writes the author. "…We have to ask whether the allies are communicating seamlessly. If not, why? Are there structural hurdles that frustrate effective communication? If so, how can they be mitigated? This project seeks to assess all the channels of communication the allies have with one another in the national security realm as an attempt to answer the central question: Are the existing structures of communication and coordination optimized for managing alliance relations?"

"This important study represents a major step toward molding an ever stronger and better functioning U.S.-Japan alliance," Ambassador (ret.) James Zumwalt, Chief Executive Officer of Sasakawa USA, writes in the report's preface. "Dr. Jeffrey Hornung has undertaken an ambitious effort to explain the structure of the bilateral security alliance and the complex nature of the institutions and individuals that manage it on a daily basis… Dr. Hornung's careful research helps clarify the ways the senior leadership and the working levels on both sides of the Pacific interact to manage successfully an alliance that is constantly changing in response to a changing security environment."

Print copies of the report are available upon request.

About the Author

Dr. Jeffrey W. Hornung is the Fellow for the Security and Foreign Affairs Program at Sasakawa USA. From 2010-2015, Hornung worked as an Associate Professor for the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, a Department of Defense executive education facility in Honolulu, Hawaii. Prior to that, Hornung served as a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Ohio State University's East Asian Studies Center, a research assistant at George Washington University's "Memory and Reconciliation in the Asia-Pacific" project, and also worked for a member of the Japanese Diet during the 2001 House of Councillors election.

Hornung has written about Japanese security and foreign policy issues for numerous media, policy, and academic outlets. He is also co-editor of the forthcoming Routledge book *Chinese-Japanese Competition and the East Asian Security Complex: Vying for Influence* (Spring 2017).

Hornung received his Ph.D. in political science from the George Washington University. He also holds an MA in international relations with a concentration in Japan Studies from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) and a BA in political science and international affairs from Marquette University. During 2005-2006, Hornung was also a visiting scholar at the University of Tokyo where he conducted his doctoral research as a Fulbright Fellow.

About Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA

Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA is an independent American, non-profit, non-partisan, institution devoted to research, analysis, and better understanding of the U.S.-Japan relationship. Through research and education programs, Sasakawa USA facilitates people-to-people exchange and dialogue between American and Japanese policymakers, influential citizens, and the broader public.