

BILATERAL SECURITY TREATY BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND JAPAN (SEPTEMBER 8, 1951)

Introduction

Although the American Occupation of Japan came to an end on April 28, 1952, when the San Francisco Peace Treaty went into effect, the United States was hardly prepared to abandon its military presence in Japan. With Japan a key strategic partner in Cold War Asia, the Korean War still in progress, and the military threats from China and the Soviet Union apparently very real, American planners were insistent that substantial U.S. forces needed to remain in place in Japan. At the peace negotiations in 1951, the Japanese delegation was pressured to endorse a separate security agreement with the United States. The Japanese were reluctant to accept this ongoing subordination to America, but had no choice but to acquiesce, signing the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty on the same day (September 8, 1951) as the San Francisco Peace Treaty. The Security Treaty was revised and renewed in 1960 and almost 50,000 American troops are still stationed in Japan today.

Selected Document with Questions

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Bilateral Security Treaty between the United States of America and Japan (September 8, 1951)

Japan has this day signed a treaty of peace with the Allied Powers. On the coming into force of that treaty, Japan will not have the effective means to exercise its inherent right of self-defense because it has been disarmed.

There is danger to Japan in this situation because irresponsible militarism has not yet been driven from the world. Therefore, Japan desires a security treaty with the United States of America to come into force simultaneously with the treaty of peace between the United States of America and Japan.

The treaty of peace recognizes that Japan as a sovereign nation has the right to enter into collective security arrangements, and further, the Charter of the United Nations recognizes that all nations possess an inherent right of individual and collective self-defense.

In exercise of these rights, Japan desires, as a provisional arrangement for its defense, that the United States of America should maintain armed forces of its own in and about Japan so as to deter armed attack upon Japan.

**Primary Source Document with Questions (DBQs) on
BILATERAL SECURITY TREATY BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
AND JAPAN (SEPTEMBER 8, 1951)**

The United States of America, in the interest of peace and security, is at present willing to maintain certain of its armed forces in and about Japan, in the expectation, however, that Japan will itself increasingly assume responsibility for its own defense against direct and indirect aggression, always avoiding any armament which could be an offensive threat or serve other than to promote peace and security in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

Accordingly, the two countries have agreed as follows:

Article 1. Japan grants, and the United States of America accepts, the right, upon the coming into force of the Treaty of Peace and of this Treaty, to dispose United States land, air, and sea forces in and about Japan. Such forces may be utilized to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East and to the security of Japan against armed attack from without, including assistance given at the express request of the Japanese Government to put down large-scale internal riots and disturbances in Japan, caused through instigation or intervention by an outside power or powers.

Article 2. During the exercise of the right referred to in Article 1, Japan will not grant, without the prior consent of the United States of America, any bases or any rights, powers or authority whatsoever, in or relating to bases or the right of garrison or of maneuver, or transit of ground, air, or naval forces to any third power.

Article 3. The conditions which shall govern the disposition of armed forces of the United States of America in and about Japan shall be determined by administrative agreements between the two Governments.

Article 4. This treaty shall expire whenever in the opinion of the governments of the United States of America and Japan there shall have come into force such United Nations arrangements or such alternative individual or collective security dispositions as will satisfactorily provide for the maintenance by the United Nations or otherwise of international peace and security in the Japan area.

[Dennett and Durance, eds., *Documents on American Foreign Relations*, vol. 9, 1951, pp. 266–67]

Questions:

1. Is the 1951 Security Treaty consistent with the spirit of Article 9 of the 1947 Constitution?
2. How would you characterize the relationship between the United States and Japan under the Security Treaty? How was this treaty in the interests of the United States? Of Japan?
3. Under the Security Treaty, what was the explicit function of the U.S. troops stationed in Japan? Was it simply to defend Japan from external attack?