The Hegemon's Alliance Security Dilemma:
US Accommodation With Japan and the ROK From 1994 to 2004

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I declare that this thesis is the result of my original work and all sources have been acknowledged.

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ABBREVIATIONS

DPRK Democratic People’s Republic of Korea
JDA Japanese Defense Agency
JMSDF Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force
HEU Highly Enriched Uranium
KEDO Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation
LDP Liberal Democratic Party
MOFA Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MTCR Missile Technology Control Regime
PHP Power Projection Hub
PSI Proliferation Security Initiative
PRC People’s Republic of China
ROK Republic of Korea
SOFA Status of Force Agreement
TMD Theatre Missile Defense
TCOG Trilateral Policy Coordination and Oversight Group
UN United Nations
UNSC United Nations Security Council
US United States
ABSTRACT

According to the logic of the offensive realism paradigm, the contemporary hegemon, the United States of America (US), ought to be coercing its junior allies to conform with the US security policies so that the US will retain its relative power in the international system.

However, in dealing with the nuclear and conventional threats posed by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) from 1994 to 2004, the US has showed more accommodation than coercion toward its junior allies, Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK). Why?

To analyse this puzzling behaviour by the US, I make some adaptations to the realist conceptual framework called the ‘alliance security dilemma’, which was originally proposed by Michael Mandelbaum and later refined by Glenn Synder. In many cases, Synder’s model has been used to focus on the fear of junior partners in an alliance that the major power will either abandon them in their hour of need or entrap them in conflicts that are harmful to their national interests, or perhaps even do both.

In this thesis I argue that the alliance security dilemma also applies to the major alliance partner. The explanation for the US’ s accommodation of Japan and the ROK is that the US fears that the junior allies may partially abandon the alliance framework, and in so doing, reduce its hegemonic status. Although US accommodation is best demonstrated during the 1993-94 nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula while the Clinton administration was in power, this trend continues during the current Bush administration.
The findings of this thesis contribute to the literature on alliance politics by suggesting that security dilemma continues to play a key role in alliance maintenance.
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