

Shifting Terrain:
The Domestic Politics of the US Military Presence in Asia
The East-West Center

Project Overview

Dr. Sheila A. Smith

- I. period of change in US alliances in the Asia Pacific
 - A. considerable analytical attention to the international and national security policies since end of the Cold War
 - B. alliance management debate to date has often ignored or downplayed the domestic impact of US forces
 - C. not simply a matter of strategic priorities and policies, but also intimately related to changes in domestic politics
 - D. half century of history of the US military presence in Asian societies, and in each alliance, policy of maintaining US military presence punctuated by moments of conflict and protest
 - E. need for careful look at the domestic dynamics and discourse on the US military presence

- II. Project approach and goals
 - A. locating our study within domestic societies – as an issue of national governance
 - B. a cross-national comparison of the Asia Pacific
 - C. taking a citizen's perspective
 - D. 4 in-country workshops

- III. Cases: Korea, Japan, and the Philippines
 - A. particular narrative and history of the alliance with the US
 - B. policy making framework within national-local politics
 - C. the opportunities and the challenges for citizens in articulating their interests

- IV. Some common themes beginning to emerge
 - A. acceptance of the process of linking local interests and national government policy depends on the development of a transparent and open policy making framework
 - B. citizen activism regarding the US bases both local and national
 - C. the US presence deeply affects the economic interests of community interests

- V. Individual presentations

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The Case of the Philippines

Dr. Patricio Abinales

- I. The puzzle of the American military presence in the southern Philippines
 - A. No casualties and highly popular, even among Filipino Muslims
 - B. Regarded by the “terrorist organization,” the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), as a vital broker in its peace talks with the Philippine government

- II. To explain this puzzle, we need to shift our lens from the “high politics” (nations, national capitals, national players) to “low politics” (peripheral areas, local actors)

- III. Two notable features:
 - A. Limited and very minimal “local” interaction with US – politically and militarily – throughout most of the southern Philippine, including Muslim Mindanao
 - B. Most dominant feature has been contradictory relations between national government and Muslim minority
 - (1) centralization vs. autonomy
 - (2) control vs. “self determination”
 - (3) ethno-religious

- IV. American military presence and national/majority vs. local/minority interaction
 - A. deterrence
 - B. source of largesse/resources
 - C. contending histories

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The Case of Japan

Dr. Naoki Kamimura

Title: “Japanese Civil Society, Local Government, and U.S.-Japan Security Relations in the Post-Cold War Period”

< Summary >

The post-Cold War period witnessed a surge in interest in civil society in Japan, with an increasing number of Japanese non-governmental and nonprofit organizations working in both international and domestic fields attracting growing public and governmental attention. National security issues have not been immune from these latest stirrings of Japanese civil society. Japanese citizens and civil society organizations, along with some local governments, challenged the country's security policy and its security relations with the United States in such issue areas as U. S. bases in Okinawa, the so-called Kobe Formula regarding nuclear ship visits, Japan's global nuclear disarmament initiatives, and Japan's collaboration with the United States' war on terrorism and the Iraqi war. My talk will briefly examine the impact of this rise of Japan's civil society on the country's national security policy and security relations with the United States in the post-Cold War period. My focus will be on the interaction between Japanese civil society actors and the Japanese and U.S. governments in these issue areas. I will also touch on the role of local governments in the state-civil society relationship regarding security policy and the U.S.-Japan alliance, for they have played roles as a potentially significant ally of civil society actors in Japan.

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The Case of the Korea

Dr. Katharine Moom

1. Understanding history and political context of US troop relocation/reduction is vital--from the perspective of govt authorities & that of local citizens/local residents.
2. Process of relocation/reduction/resettlement of troops is a competes with bilateral and national policies and strategic ends. Process can determine the success or failure of

policies.

3. Long-term integration and institutionalization of policy/political management at all levels of the ROK govt and between Koreans and Americans are necessary. Ad hoc efforts will be neither adequate nor effective in the medium to long term in dealing with the bilateral alliance and relationship.