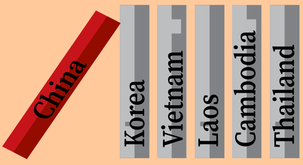
The San Francisco System

In the wake of WWII, the U.S. set to work in the Asian-Pacific to secure a lasting U.S. military presence in the area. These policies and their results have since been dubbed the San Francisco System.

What were U.S. Motivations for a Presence in the Pacific?

Communism & Containment

The domino theory spurred U.S. containment concerns. It posited that if one country in a region came under the influence of communism, then the surrounding countries would follow in a domino effect...



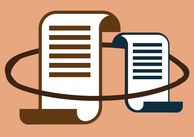
The rise of communism in the People's Republic of China, and the intensity of the Cold War with the Soviet Union motivated the U.S. to contain the spread of communism in the Asian-Pacific.

Timeline of Events:

- **1945** Allied occupation of Japan begins
- **1947** The Cold War begins
- **1949** Soviet Union tests first atomic bomb
- **1950** Outbreak of the Korean War
- **1951** PRC-Soviet Union sign Treaty of Friendship and Alliance
  U.S. and Japan sign Mutual Security and San Francisco Peace Treaties
  U.S. signs Mutual Defenses Treaty with the Philippines
- **1953** US-Republic of Korea Defense treaty
- **1954** US-Republic of China security treaty with Taiwan

U.S. policies in Asia-Pacific

Containment motivated U.S. policy makers to negotiate bipartisan security agreements with Japan and other Pacific countries.



"Hub and Spokes" Architecture

The San Francisco System is referred to as a "hub and spokes" mechanism. The U.S. represents the "hub" as the common factor of the policies. The "spokes" are the nations Australia, South Korea, the Philippines, and Japan that were tied to the U.S. while still remaining separate from one another.

The San Francisco Peace Conference
September 1951

The San Francisco Peace Treaty

The SFPT officially ended WWII, brought Japanese imperialism, and ended the Allied occupation of Japan. It also outlined the postwar expenditures and territorial disputes. The SFPT paved a controversial way for a lasting bilateral military relationship between Japan and the U.S.

At the time of its signage and even now, the treaty continues to alienate Japan from its Asian neighbors.

The U.S.-Japan Security Alliance

The original U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty was a ten-year, renewable military agreement that outlined a security arrangement for Japan in light of its pacifist constitution. U.S. forces would remain on Japanese soil after Japan regained sovereignty.

The value of the security pact to Washington was the use of Japanese bases that allowed for the advanced installment of U.S. forces in Asia.

The San Francisco System & momentous policies made in the Asian-Pacific continue to effect the geopolitical, economic, and militaristic landscapes of today.