

Japan in an Era of Geopolitics:

A New Foreign and Security Policy Direction



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Foreword

Toward the end of my term as Country Representative for the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Japan, it is my pleasure and great honor to present this publication, *Japan in an Era of Geopolitics: A New Foreign and Security Policy Direction*.

Being one of the more recent among our around 110 country offices around the world, our Japan Office was reopened in 2011. Since around that time, Japan's progress on its foreign affairs and security has been truly remarkable. We wanted to create a source to highlight the comprehensiveness and backgrounds of these changes to the world, to readers inside Japan and to policymakers in Germany and Europe, to underpin the increasing focus on Japan as an outstanding partner in the Indo-Pacific and beyond. In times of uncertainties stemming from Russian aggression against Ukraine and challenges to the international order across the globe, including particularly through the rise of China, it is the primary objective of this publication to become a meaningful reference for politicians, senior government officials, think tankers, and all those interested and to serve as a tool for increasing mutual understanding and enhancing cooperation between Europe and Japan in the field of foreign affairs and security.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the cooperation of the well-known authors for each subject. Their concise contributions provide a well-founded overview and insight into most crucial aspects of Japan's foreign and security policy and have managed to even surpass our original aspirations. Among that group of distinguished scholars, a very special appreciation is owed to our editor, Associate Professor Michito Tsuruoka of Keio University, for his time and great efforts over the entire process. His guidance and cooperative coordination on top of his personal writing made him the central pillar to this whole project. Lastly, I would like to add a deep-felt acknowledgment to my colleagues and everyone involved in the publishing process as another set of pillars making this publication possible.

March 2024

Rabea Brauer

Country Representative
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Japan Office

Editor's Introduction

Understanding Japan's foreign policy and security in a changing world

The level of interest in Japan's foreign policy and security measures is on the rise both domestically and internationally. However, it remains quite challenging to understand the true nature of these policies. Established stereotypes are also fragmented. Some still see Japan as a nation whose pacifism and economic orientation prevent it from fulfilling a security role, leading to its continued dependence on the United States. Others, on the contrary, have often criticized Japan as being a dangerous country bent on pursuing "remilitarization." While a series of major changes in Tokyo's foreign and security policy have attracted much attention, it is unrealistic to assume that the fundamentals of Japan's foreign policy and security could undergo an abrupt and total change. In times when change is most apparent, the need to calmly identify and understand underlying continuities becomes particularly crucial.

Whether or not Japan has a strategy for its approach to foreign policy and security has been a matter of debate for a long time. Some lament a lack of strategic vision, while others praise recent changes as though they were the successful results of a well-executed Japanese strategy. Though it might seem

a banal conclusion, the reality can be found somewhere between the two. Even if concepts and principles are not emphasized on a daily basis, it is inconceivable that a systematic approach is entirely absent. Likewise, strategies that appear successful in certain fields may not function as well in others.

From another perspective, there is no consensus as to whether Japan's foreign policy and security have become more international and global or more inward-looking. In the realm of security, in particular, it is a fact that Japan's international engagement has expanded compared to the past, both within the Japan-US alliance and in its relations with other partners. Meanwhile, as the security environment surrounding Japan deteriorates, there are also compelling reasons to devote resources to pressing issues closer to home.

Furthermore, within Japan, while some—including political leaders, practitioners, and experts—advocate for strategic discussions and more international engagement, there are also those who prefer bottom-up discussions, eschew strategic rhetoric, and highlight constraints on international engagement. The particular discourse one encounters will significantly shape one's perception of Japan's approach to diplomatic and security affairs.

Given these circumstances, achieving a balanced and proportionate understanding of Japan's foreign policy and

security is no easy task. Naturally, such complexities are not unique to Japan; however, the range of perspectives applicable to Japan may be especially wide.

This volume endeavors to address Japan's foreign policy and security landscape as comprehensively as possible. While this is not to say that all issues are covered, a concerted effort has been made to value diversity both in the matters addressed and in the interpretations offered. Some areas have exhibited conspicuous changes and strategic developments in recent years, while there are others where this has not been the case.

Most of these articles deal with Japan's relations with specific regions and its foreign policy stance on functional issues. While the coverage is not exhaustive, with several areas remaining unaddressed, the volume encompasses a broad spectrum of subjects. These extend beyond Japan's alliances and neighbors—countries such as the United States, China, Taiwan, and the Korean Peninsula—to include Southeast Asia, Australia, India, the Middle East, Russia, and Europe, covering both the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). On a thematic level, it addresses domestic aspects of foreign policy and security, foreign aid, maritime security, arms control and non-proliferation, climate change, human rights, trade policy, and cyber issues. Contributors provide analysis of developments until the Abe

administration (2012–2020) and ongoing and emergent challenges spanning the period from the Abe administration to the present.

The overall picture that emerges of Japan's foreign policy and security through this volume will depend on the reader's interests. It does not seek to impose a particular view. If one highlights areas where significant progress have been made, Japan's foreign and security policies might seem dynamic and successful, whereas focusing on areas laden with challenges could paint an entirely different picture. What is essential is to be cognizant of the basis of one's own interpretations by arriving at an informed understanding of these perspectives.

This volume aims to furnish the resources necessary for readers to develop just such a nuanced understanding. While each article can stand alone, we encourage readers to go through as many articles as possible, not limiting themselves to those directly relevant to their specific areas of interest. This will make the distinctions between and characteristics of different regions and themes more discernible within the broader context.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Japan Office for initiating and managing this project, particularly to Rabea Brauer, Country Representative, Naoki Takiguchi, Senior Programme Manager,

and Kikyo Taguchi, Programme Officer, as well as to the authors who were kind enough to join the project and contributed their expertise and insights. While there is already an extensive literature on Japan's foreign policy and security, I take particular pride in this project's accomplishment of bringing together such a distinguished group of leading experts from various disciplines in Japan. Furthermore, as the editor, I am extremely pleased that the English translation will allow us to share these perspectives with a wider audience.

Note: Content of articles reflects developments up until mid-2023.

Michito TSURUOKA

List of Abbreviations

ACSA	Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement
AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
AMF	Asian Monetary Fund
AMF	ASEAN Maritime Forum
ANZUS	Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty
AOIP	ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific
AP4	Four Asia-Pacific partners (NATO)
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASW	Anti-Submarine Warfare
AUKUS	Australia-UK-US Security Cooperation
AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control Systems
Brexit	[UK's withdrawal from the EU]
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BSEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation
CAP	Comprehensive Assistance Package (NATO)
CCDCOE	Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (NATO)
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CEPEA	Comprehensive Economic Partnership in East Asia
CLMV	Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam
COVAX	COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility
COVID19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CPTPP	Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership
CTU	Counter Terrorism Unit (Japan)
DDA	Doha Development Agenda
DPJ	Democratic Party of Japan
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EAFTA	East Asia Free Trade Area
EaP	Eastern Partnership (EU)

EAS	East Asia Summit
EC	European Communities
ECAFE	Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (UN)
EDD	Extended Deterrence Dialogue (Japan-US)
EEC	European Economic Community
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy (EU)
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EU	European Union
EURATOM	European Atomic Energy Community
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FMCT	Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty
FOIP	Free and Open Indo-Pacific
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
FTAAP	Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific
G20	Group of Twenty
G4	Group of Four
G7	Group of Seven
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GCAP	Global Combat Air Programme (Japan, the UK and Italy)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHQ	General Headquarters, the Supreme Commander for the Allies Powers (Japan)
GNI	Gross National Income
GNP	Gross National Product
GSOMIA	General Security of Military Information Agreement
GUAM	Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova
HADR	Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
INF	Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces
IPCP	Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme (NATO)
IPEF	Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity

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IPMDA	Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness
IRBMs	Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missiles
IS	"Islamic State"
ISA	Information Security Agreement
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force (Afghanistan)
ISRT	Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance and Targeting
ITPP	Individually Tailored Partnership Programme (NATO)
IUU	Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated
JAEP	Japan-ASEAN Exchange Projects
JAGEF	Japan-ASEAN General Exchange Fund
JAIF	Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund
JCG	Japan Coast Guard
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JSP	Japan Socialist Party
JUCIP	Japan-US Commercial and Industrial Partnership
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party (Japan)
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
MDA	Maritime Domain Awareness
MFN	Most Favored Nation (Treatment)
MFO	Multinational Forces and Observers
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan)
NAC	North Atlantic Council (NATO)
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDPG	National Defense Program Guidelines (Japan)
NFU	No First Use
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NISC	National center of Incident readiness and Strategy for Cybersecurity (Japan)
NPDI	Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative
NPR	Nuclear Posture Review (US)
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NSC	National Security Council (Japan)

NSG	Nuclear Suppliers Group
NSS	National Security Strategy (Japan)
NSS	National Security Secretariat (Japan)
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OECD-DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
OSA	Official Security Assistance (Japan)
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
P5	The permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (Permanent 5)
PDI	Pacific Deterrence Initiative
PKO	United Nations Peacekeeping Operations
PLA	People's Liberation Army (China)
PRC	People's Republic of China
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team (Afghanistan)
Quad	Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Australia, India, Japan, and the US)
RAA	Reciprocal Access Agreement
RCEP	Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership
ROK	Republic of Korea
SDF(s) / JSDF(s)	Self-Defense Force(s) (Japan)
SI	Stockholm Initiative
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SLBM	Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SOM	Senior Officials' Meeting
SPA	Strategic Partnership Agreement (Japan-EU)
SSM	Surface-to-Ship Missiles
STOVL	Short Take-Off and Vertical Landing (aircraft)
TAC	Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia
THAAD	Terminal High Altitude Area Defense
TICAD	Tokyo International Conference on African Development (Japan)
TISA	Trilateral Information Sharing Arrangement (Japan, ROK, US)

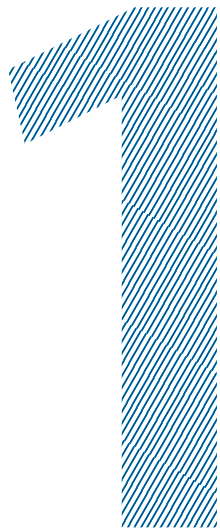
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TPNW	Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDOF	United Nations Disengagement Observer Force
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
US	United States of America
USMCA	US-Mexico-Canada Agreement
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WHA	World Health Assembly
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWII	World War II



Section I

Security and Defense



International Politics and Security After Russia's Invasion of Ukraine and Japan:

From the Perspective of Middle-
Power Diplomacy

Yoshihide SOEYA

Introduction

The long transition period in international politics following the end of the Cold War in 1989 came to an end when Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022. Not only is the invasion likely to continue to impact international politics for years to come, it will also have an important influence on China's strategy in Asia. Here I consider how developments in Russia and China in relation to the invasion will affect international politics and European and Asian security. I look particularly at the role of Japan and other advanced democracies exploring cooperation centered on their relationship with the United States, examining their position and role from the perspectives of middle-power democracy and middle-power cooperation.

The Russian invasion appears to be motivated by imperialist ambitions, with China pursuing a very similar impulse in Asia. And in both Europe and Asia, the United States is fronting the defense against the Russian and Chinese challenge. In other words, the invasion of Ukraine has again foregrounded the centrality of the three great powers—the United States, China, and Russia—in rivalry in international politics and security. Rather than encroaching on the relationship among the three superpowers, the advanced democracies are exploring cooperation within that framework centering on their respective relationships with the United States—namely, middle-power cooperation.

This perspective will be important particularly when considering Japanese diplomacy. Conservative discourses on diplomacy and security in Japan have traditionally underscored autonomy and self-help, often arguing as though Japan could have its own independent strategy. Since the invasion, there has been a lot of bold talk directly linking the Ukraine lesson to Japan's safety and defense.

Such talk will not, of course, translate directly into Japanese foreign policy. For the current administration, however, it represents a domestic factor that cannot be ignored, potentially obscuring the reality of Japanese policy as a consequence. I have continued to argue that, while burdened with this structural complication, postwar Japanese diplomacy has effectively remained within the framework of middle-power diplomacy. This article is based on the conviction that the same analytical perspective remains valid in considering the actual state and future vision of Japanese diplomacy since the invasion. I begin by revisiting Japan's middle-power diplomacy.

Japan's middle-power diplomacy: Domestic and international perspectives

Viewed analytically, what has always kept postwar Japanese diplomacy within the framework of middle-power diplomacy is its underpinnings in the postwar Constitution (particularly

Article 9) and the Japan-US Security Treaty. This framework can be considered in terms of the domestic structure of foreign policy making and the position of Japanese diplomacy in international politics.

Postwar Japanese politics and society split into left and right from the base points of the 1946 Constitution and the Japan-US Security Treaty (signed in 1951 and revised in 1960), the two main pillars of Japanese diplomacy. Importantly, while the Constitution was rooted in the logic of postwar settlement prior to the 1947 outbreak of the Cold War, the Security Treaty emerged in response to the Cold War. This produced a clash between morality—the remorse over Japan's wartime actions which lies at the heart of the Constitution—and pragmatism centered on the Security Treaty that nursed ambitions for constitutional revision in the face of Cold War realities.

Given this domestic structure, as the product of compromise between the Constitution and the Security Treaty, the foreign policy of successive governments has embodied neither the left nor right position but has rather remained moderate. I have therefore argued that, empirically, postwar Japan has consistently pursued neither major-power nor small-power but rather middle-power diplomacy. For decades after the war, that diplomacy was muddled by domestic political conflict, and was essentially introverted in nature.

The situation gradually began to change as of the 1980s with the labelling of Japan-US relations as an alliance. The end of the Cold War and the outbreak of the Gulf War in January 1991, however, exposed the problems of Japan's introverted diplomacy to the international gaze. The Japanese government was traumatized by its inability to contribute in any meaningful sense to the Gulf War beyond massive financial assistance. The Act on Cooperation with United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Other Operations (the International Peace Cooperation Act) was enacted in June 1992, and September saw Japan's first postwar dispatch of its Self-Defense Forces (SDF), sent by the Miyazawa administration to join United Nations peacekeeping operations in Cambodia. While this was a small first step in terms of the international contribution of an advanced democracy, the international response was divided. In Europe and the United States, Japan's move was lambasted as too little, too late, a view shared by Japanese policymakers. Japan's Asian neighbors, however, viewed the move suspiciously as the beginning of Japanese militarization, which was also the argument of the Japanese left.

Accordingly, my argument on Japan's middle-power diplomacy aimed at moving beyond this fractured image of diplomacy by taking the middle way. Ultimately, such diplomacy would rest on the revision of Article 9. However,

the basic concept behind this constitutional amendment is a vision of middle-power diplomacy grounded in internationalism. The experience of the early 1990s confronted Japan with the reality that Article 9 was obstructing Japan's international contribution, including SDF international peace-keeping activities.

The above experiences and lessons should be recalled when considering Japan's involvement in international politics post-invasion. When it comes to the diplomacy of the current Kishida administration, it was highly significant that Prime Minister Fumio Kishida opened his speech at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore (Asia Security Summit) on June 10, 2022 with a reference to "Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa, who went before me as ... the leader of the Kouchikai, the policy group I belong to." Kishida said that "Squarely addressing the reality that Japan was called upon to play a greater international role in the security arena, Miyazawa, after an extensive debate in Japan, managed to get the International Peace Cooperation Act passed, and he deployed Japan's SDF to Cambodia based on this Act."

Kishida then laid out the five pillars of the "Kishida Vision for Peace," namely, maintaining and strengthening the rules-based free and open international order, enhancing security, promoting realistic efforts to bring about a "world without nuclear

weapons," strengthening the functions of the United Nations (UN), including UN Security Council reform, and strengthening international cooperation in new policy areas such as economic security. Self-help receives some emphasis in the context of strengthening security, but all the other policies are grounded in international cooperation. That outright internationalism also emerges clearly in the Kishida administration's diplomacy in relation to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The world post-invasion and Japan's response

Russia claims that what is effectively the military invasion of an independent sovereign state is a special military operation for the protection of Ukrainians of Russian descent living in eastern Ukraine and for the demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine. Beneath, however, one senses the unilateralism of a great power along with President Putin's obsession with restoration of the Russian Empire.

(1) The rules-based free and open international order

The invasion is, firstly, an outright challenge to the rules-based free and open international order supported by the advanced democracies, who have banded together to provide Ukraine

with weapons and other military assistance, as well as emergency financial support, and to impose economic sanctions on Russia. The issues faced by the United States and the other advanced democracies are, however, just too great. In particular, given that China too is making moves (discussed below), the United States will really struggle to handle the dual fronts of Europe and Asia. The military withdrawal from Afghanistan ordered by the Biden administration in May 2021 was doubtless prompted partly by the desire to divert resources into the administration's China strategy. Now, resistance to Russia on the European front has added to the burden.

Japan's diplomacy is built around its position as an advanced democracy. The Kishida administration is actively involved in the G7 Summit talks among the leaders of the major powers, as well as in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU). It is also pressing resolutely ahead with monetary, trade, and visa sanctions on Russia and support for Ukraine. Russia, naturally, has hardened its line on Japan and the future of Japan-Russia relations is highly uncertain.

(2) Europe's security order

Secondly, the invasion has completely redrawn the map of Europe's security order, exposing a new antagonism between Russia and Europe/NATO.

While Western euphoria over its Cold War "victory" has long been described as an illusion, Russia's actions have shattered that illusion entirely. Putin's efforts to prevent Ukraine from joining NATO at all costs appear to be fueled by his refusal to accept the defeat of the Soviet empire in the Cold War.

In May 2022, Finland and Sweden, which maintained military neutrality for many years during the Cold War, took the step of applying for NATO membership, and in April 2023, Finland became NATO's 31st member. This was nothing less than an "own goal" scored by Russia (Michito Tsuruoka), but at the same time, expansion has also burdened NATO with new and difficult challenges.

Still constrained by Article 9, Japan cannot pursue full military cooperation with the NATO countries. The Japan-NATO Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme (IPCP) signed by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at a North Atlantic Council meeting in May 2014 represented an important development in cooperation between Japan and NATO. The IPCP comprises quintessential middle-power cooperation, including cyber-defense, humanitarian aid and disaster relief, anti-terrorism measures, disarmament, arms control, and non-proliferation.

The June 2022 NATO summit held in Madrid following the Russian invasion was attended by Prime Minister Kishida as the first Japanese leader to do so.

Specifically, he participated in a special NATO partner session with other Asia-Pacific leaders from Australia, New Zealand, and South Korea. NATO called the four countries the Asia-Pacific Partners, or AP4. The session was an acknowledgement of the importance of cooperative ties between the Asia-Pacific and Europe amidst the growing synchronicity of moves by Russia and China, as discussed below.

(3) A malfunctioning UN Security Council

Thirdly, the United Nations Security Council has become dysfunctional, removing any certainty over the role of the United Nations in international security. The postwar international order began with the establishment of the United Nations by the Allied nations in the wake of their triumph over the Axis nations of Japan and Germany. The initial UN vision collapsed immediately due to the outbreak of the Cold War, but the functions of the organization recovered in the 1990s once the Cold War ended. The United Nations and international law just managed to function despite numerous issues during the US-led Gulf, Afghan, and Iraq Wars. This time, however, Russia as a permanent member of the Security Council has emerged as a destroyer of the international order. And, as explored below, a certain bond has formed between Russia and China.

Back in the postwar period, Japan and Germany transformed themselves into the honor students of the international community, contributing to the construction of a free and open world order, and today they are standing up as advanced democracies against the challenge presented by Russia and China. From a macro perspective, the UN order has flipped completely upside down.

In that sense, while the UN reforms in which the Japanese government has been involved for many years are entirely legitimate, realistically, their prospects are not necessarily that bright. Regardless, however, following the Ukraine invasion, the power of international law and the UN's role in crystallizing world public opinion are key. The developing nations which make up the bulk of UN membership are not on an equal footing with the advanced democracies in terms of their relationships with Russia and China. Neither are India, Indonesia, and those other nations which have observed the principles of nonalignment and neutrality for so long. Rather than trying to bring these nations belonging to the political world's third force—the “global south”—on to the same footing, it will be important to continue steadily with engagement policies from the perspective of middle-power diplomacy.

China and the Asian order

(1) China-Russia ties

Turning next to Asia, China's self-assertiveness is clearly underpinned by nostalgia for Imperial China or Sinocentrism. In recent years, China has been emphasizing its so-called century of humiliation following the Opium Wars as a means of rallying Chinese nationalism. As it steadily builds national power, it has also ceased disguising its conviction that Asia is naturally China-centric. Globally, China has made clear that it will not hesitate to challenge the values and mechanisms of the postwar Western-centric world order.

The imperialist dreams driving both Russia and China today have also formed a psychological bond between the two, while in that psychological dimension, the greatest rival and obstacle for both is obviously the United States. Another commonality is the way in which this mindset has given the Russian and Chinese people a certain tolerance for political dictatorship.

At the same time, however, while Russia is primarily focused on Europe, China's eyes are firmly on Asia. They are not necessarily providing each other with full support in their respective regions, nor are their US strategies completely shared. In particular, China will be closely watching the impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on its own dream of "liberating" Taiwan.

(2) The Taiwan issue

Since the Joint Communiqué of the Government of Japan and the Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) was announced on September 29, 1972, Japan has maintained that it fully understands and respects China's claim that Taiwan is an inalienable territory of the PRC. Since US-China diplomatic relations were normalized in January 1979, the United States too has acknowledged China's position that there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China. Both Japan and the United States have, however, never explicitly stated that they share China's position, maintaining a politically ambiguous position on the issue of Taiwan's attribution. The US Congress also adopted domestic legislation entitled the Taiwan Relations Act in April 1979 in apparent opposition to China's assertion that Taiwan is a Chinese internal affair, noting that it would not rule out the possibility of the United States coming to the defense of Taiwan.

Since the 1970s, China has been claiming sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands, which are effectively controlled by Japan. This claim is based on the very typically Chinese assertion that the islands have been part of Taiwan since ancient times. For Japan, therefore, a situation arising in Taiwan is highly likely to translate into a Senkaku Islands situation. In that case, it would become an issue of self-defense for Japan, simultaneously triggering

Article 5 of the Japan-US Security Treaty, which requires a joint US-Japan response in the event of an attack on territories under the administration of Japan. The basic security postures of Japan and the United States consequently mean that China has to be very careful about exercising military force against Taiwan.

Now, Russia has invaded Ukraine. If China were to stage a military invasion of Taiwan, it would mirror the Ukraine invasion and would be greeted by many democracies as an imperial attack on democracy. In that sense, Russia's invasion has probably adversely affected China's Taiwan "military liberation" strategy. This situation has made the role of diplomacy as important, or even more important, than a military response. Next, therefore, I examine the substance of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) concept which has become the face of Japanese diplomacy.

FOIP and the Quad

Indo-Pacific diplomacy centered on the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) among Japan, the United States, Australia, and India was originally an Abe initiative and has been maintained by the Kishida administration as a pillar of Japanese diplomacy. Already at the time of the Abe administration, however, the thrust of the initiative had shifted from pushback against China to a vision of regionalist diplomacy.

The origin of the Indo-Pacific concept in

Japanese diplomacy was a speech given by Abe to the Indian Parliament in August 2007 during his first administration, in which he described the coupling of the Pacific and Indian Oceans as "broader Asia" and made his first formal call for a Quad framework whereby cooperation between Japan and India would bring the United States and Australia into that broader Asia. Stepping down from his position after a year for health reasons, when Abe returned in December 2012, he presented the Quad internationally as "Asia's democratic security diamond," which is what locked in the international perception that the Indo-Pacific diplomacy advocated by Abe was an aggressive effort to curtail Chinese ambitions.

Abe subsequently reacted sensitively to the November 2014 announcement of the Belt and Road Initiative by Chinese President Xi Jinping: in his August 2016 keynote speech at the 6th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) held in Nairobi, Kenya, Abe called for the "union of two free and open oceans and two continents" (namely, Asia and Africa).

Senior diplomatic officials from Quad members have been meeting regularly on the sidelines of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) meetings since 2017, and since 2018, announcements of the results of their consultations have included the expression "free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region" and the principle of support for ASEAN

centrality—both intended to communicate that the Quad is not necessarily intended to exclude China.

While this practice reflects the working-level sensibilities of the diplomatic authorities, the change in Abe's China diplomacy as of 2018 was also important. In October 2018, Abe and Xi Jinping held summit talks in Beijing. When Xi Jinping came to Japan in June 2019 for the Osaka G20 summit, he met again with Abe, who formally invited the Chinese president to visit Japan as a state guest the following spring (a visit that was not realized due to the outbreak of COVID-19).

Next to join the Quad calendar were a foreign ministers' meeting as of September 2019 and a summit meeting as of March 2021. A string of joint declarations has extolled the rule of law, a rules-based international order, and freedom of navigation and overflight as the principles of Quad cooperation, with an obvious undertone of concern in relation to China. At the same time, the Quad has never come out openly against China, and specific areas of cooperation stretch from global issues such as the pandemic and climate change to cooperation cognizant of competition with China primarily in the economic sphere, as well as non-traditional security cooperation.

As FOIP and the Quad are widely regarded as a China containment strategy, the Quad framework too may well be perceived as the Japan-US

alliance with the addition of Australia and India. In reality, a look at the substance of Quad consultations and results reveals typical middle-power cooperation, suggesting that the framework could be more accurately understood as Japan-Australia-India cooperation with the addition of the United States. The concept of an expanded Quad is consequently likely to continue down that trajectory to embrace South Korea and European nations.

Conclusion

July 8, 2022 saw the tragic assassination of Shinzo Abe. As Japan's longest-serving prime minister not just postwar but in all of modern Japanese history from the Meiji era onward, Abe leaves a complex and weighty legacy in terms of Japan's economy, politics, and diplomacy.

Particularly important are the three national security documents approved by the Kishida Cabinet on December 16, 2022: the National Security Strategy (NSS), the National Defense Strategy, and the Defense Buildup Program. Leaving a detailed analysis of these documents to other articles, here I will note only that they represent a paradigm shift in the security mindset of the Japanese government. The traces of Abe's slogan of "escaping from the postwar regime" which could be glimpsed in the earlier version of the NSS approved by the Abe Cabinet on December 17, 2013 emerge with far greater clarity in the revised version.

First, it has been regarded as a major characteristic and indeed strength of Japanese diplomacy under the postwar regime that Japan abstains from direct involvement not only in the military sphere but also in the power-balance game amongst the great powers, virtually “stepping down from the stage of power politics” (Masataka Kosaka). The revised NSS, however, directly engages with areas such as military deterrence, the balance of power, and geopolitics. Second, where defense capability had a very limited role and position in Japan’s national strategy under the postwar regime, the NSS now grants it central importance. Further, where the former strategy explicitly rejected the idea of required defense capability, the new NSS calls on Japan to develop defense capabilities with attention to entities with powerful military capabilities, setting the actual goal of doubling defense spending to 2% of Japan’s GDP.

Given the recent moves by Russia and China discussed above, this paradigm shift might seem a logical evolution, but the legal constraints arising from Article 9 have not been entirely removed and the NSS too explicitly states that there will be no change to Japan’s basic policy of maintaining an exclusively national defense-oriented policy. In other words, the conditions prescribing Japan’s national power and security policy lag behind the new security paradigm of the NSS. As a result, the NSS fills the gap with a consistent trajectory of Japan-US military integration. Being unable to

abandon the Japan-US alliance is the fate of Japan’s middle-power diplomacy.

However, by pursuing such a trajectory, Japan only continues to limit its strategic options. This is where Japan needs to recognize the importance of diplomacy, and the NSS also notes the priority of diplomacy over defense capabilities. However, that reference to diplomacy too seems overly fixated on the idea of a geopolitical and geoeconomic struggle with China.

Japan’s middle-power diplomacy needs to adopt the flexible two-pronged approach of consolidating Japan’s position on the stage of power politics based on the Japan-US alliance while also seeking out Japan’s strengths and autonomy in middle-power cooperation. Many Asian countries are increasingly uneasy about the growth of Chinese power but at the same time recognize that geography compels coexistence, and Japan is really no exception. The greater the concern over China, the more important it will become to develop a network of cooperative relations among countries in the Asian region.

Deeper involvement in European security in response to the novel situation of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine will effectively expand the horizon of Japan’s middle-power diplomacy. From the same middle-power perspective, the importance of strengthening relations among the AP4 nations—Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and South Korea—invited to

the NATO summit in June 2022, should also stand out. The same applies to the expanded Quad discussed above. And standing squarely in the way of such agendas is the key diplomatic issue of repairing Japan-South Korea relations.

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2

Japan's Security Policy

Ken JIMBO



Introduction

A number of turning points—indeed, watershed moments—can be identified in Japan's security policy, presenting an evolutionary process that falls into decades: the 1950s and 60s as the post-World War II period when the San Francisco Peace Treaty was concluded and Japan's exclusively defense-oriented posture was established within the Japan-US security framework; the 1970s and 80s, when the Nixon Doctrine prompted adjustment of the division of roles within that framework as well as expansion of Japan's defense arrangements; the 1990s, when Japan focused on cooperation with the post-Cold War international community and stepped up its engagement in regional security; the 2000s, which brought involvement in the war on terror and other aspects of global security; and the period from the 2010s onward when Japan returned its gaze to regional security in response to China's military rise.

The two dimensions shaping that historical evolution have been, first, how to procure power, and particularly military power (Japan's defense capability, the military power of the United States as Japan's ally, and cooperation with the international community) and, second, in what space to exercise that power (defense of Japanese territory, the area around Japan, the wider region, and the global domain). The above evolutionary process could consequently be regarded as Japan moving on from

the early postwar years when it had extremely limited defense capabilities and depended primarily on the military power of the United States within the Japan-US security framework to gradually acquire its own capabilities and continue to expand the spatial dimension.

Throughout the entire postwar period, however, Japan has been unable to exchange its military role as a US ally for an autonomous security policy. The role that Japan can play in response to the military threats it faces, and the possible outbreak of conflict has been limited to some territorial defense grounded firmly in the assumption of the United States stepping in should the conflict escalate. Japan's lack of autonomy also manifests in the way that it has proclaimed an exclusively defense-oriented policy while in practice avoiding developing the required defense capability—in other words, the quantitative capability to counter a threat, instead long maintaining a basic defense capability, comprising the minimum necessary defense capability so as not to form a power vacuum that becomes a source of instability in the surrounding region.

Modern Japanese security policy could be characterized as a departure from this underlying structure. Here I recap the role of Japan's security policy from the perspective of deterrence and the expansion of escalation management capacity.

The evolution of deterrence and escalation management in Japan's security policy

(1) Establishment of a basic national defense policy and an exclusively defense-oriented posture

Tracing how the concept of deterrence has developed in Japan's security policy requires examining the evolution of Japan's security environment and how potential conflict has been shut down. The Basic Policy on National Defense, approved by a Cabinet decision in 1957 under the Nobusuke Kishi administration, noted that "the objective of national defense was to prevent direct and indirect aggression, but once invaded, to repel such aggression." At the same time, it also explicitly required "dealing with external aggression based on the security arrangements with the US until the United Nations will be able to fulfill its function in stopping such aggression effectively in the future," while the role that Japan could play was "building up effective defense capabilities by steps within the limit necessary for self-defense in accordance with national strength and situation."

It was the United States that served the central deterrence function in the establishment of Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) and Japan's postwar defense capability, with Japan's role

restricted to a few limited functions. While maintaining this basic division of labor between itself and the United States, Japan has gradually expanded the role that its defense capability can play. Specifically, the aim has been to develop Japan's independent capacity to counter "an invasion by conventional forces at a level below local warfare." The exclusively defense-oriented posture established in that context lays out a "passive defense strategy" under the conditions that "defensive force is used only in the event of an attack, that the extent of the use of defensive force is kept to the minimum necessary for self-defense, and that the defense capabilities to be possessed and maintained by Japan are limited to the minimum necessary for self-defense."

(2) The "Basic Defense Force Concept" and Japan-US security cooperation

One inflection point in Japan's defense concept responded to the transformation of the Asian strategic environment, including the changing US-Soviet relationship during the late 1960s détente, the American withdrawal from the Vietnam War and the Nixon Doctrine's demand that US allies share the defense burden, and the shift in the international architecture wrought by Sino-American rapprochement. The November 1969 Sato-Nixon Joint Communiqué called for Japan to play a greater role in Asian peace and security and affirmed that the

security of South Korea and Taiwan was closely linked to Japan's security. Where Japan's security policy was formerly a regional concept centered on territorial defense, greater involvement in the surrounding region emerged as a policy issue.

Serving as the points of connection for the new policy direction were the 1976 National Defense Program Guidelines and the 1978 Guidelines for US-Japan Defense Cooperation. In the process of creating these guidelines, the Japanese government clarified that it would take the Basic Policy on National Defense as its basic approach—an approach guided by the line of thought that, rather than directly countering military threats to its territory, Japan would instead possess only the minimum necessary basic defense capability as an independent nation so as not to create a power vacuum that might become a source of instability in the surrounding region. The plan was to leave room for sufficient expansion in Japan's defense capabilities to respond to "a limited, small-scale invasion" but, should conflict escalate beyond that point, to bring the Japan-US security framework into play.

(3) Regional security engagement and globalization

Japan's defense policy and the basic relationship between Japan and the United States within their alliance began

to change in the 1990s with the end of the Cold War and the concomitant process of redefining alliance policy. When Japan expanded its defense capabilities during the Cold War, its ability to engage in peacetime surveillance and reconnaissance in relation to Soviet military strength in the Soviet Far East and the anti-submarine capacity represented by Japan's defense of the Soya, Tsugaru, and Tsushima Straits were both consistent with the United States' Asia strategy. In other words, the roles of Japan's exclusively defense-oriented posture and the Japan-US alliance had a certain alignment and complementarity.

Post-Cold War, however, the attenuation of the Soviet threat saw strategic concerns shift to small to medium-scale regional conflicts and the transfer of weapons of mass destruction. As tension grew in Japan's security environment, particularly in relation to North Korea's nuclear program (the first nuclear crisis) and the Taiwan Strait crisis (the 1996 missile crisis), the central issue in the alliance's realignment became how to position the Japan-US alliance for regional stability. The morphing of the threat into not a territorial defense issue but rather the extra-territorial issue of regional instability forced both the alliance and Japan's own defense policy to take on a much greater regional focus. The April 1996 Japan-US Joint Declaration on Security and the subsequent 1999 Act on Measures to Ensure the Peace and Security of Japan in Perilous Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan consequently

positioned the Japan-US security framework as the cornerstone of regional deterrence and response while also requiring Japan to shoulder more of the burden of regional security, augmenting the legal basis and capacity for Japan's provision of regional logistical support for US forces.

The September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the United States and the subsequent US-led global war on terror expanded the geographic scope of Japanese security into the global arena. The 2001 Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law and the 2003 Act on Special Measures concerning Humanitarian Relief and Reconstruction Work and Security Assistance in Iraq saw the JSDF replenishing fuel for multinational forces in the Indian Ocean and engaging in humanitarian and reconstruction assistance in Iraq, among other activities. The 2004 National Defense Program Guidelines noted that interdependence among nations and globalization made the growing international terrorist threat and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction pressing issues for the international community. In other words, the expansion of the security policy space was driven by the recognition of the direct connection between Japan's security and the global arena.

Tracing the trajectory of Japan's postwar security policy, we can see that the expansion of JSDF capabilities and the changing division of labor in Japan-US defense cooperation were

accompanied by an enlargement of the space addressed by Japan's security policy. This development prompted the widespread perception that the postwar legal constraints on Japan's security policy had been overcome and that a linear expansion of the policy space would ensue, with Japan set to become an "ordinary country."

The military rise of China and growing concern over North Korea's nuclear missile development, however, necessitated yet another change in direction. In the 2010s, Japan reduced JSDF involvement in global missions and peace-keeping operations (PKO) to focus instead on military issues with direct relevance to Japan. Having undergone a spatial expansion from the territorial to the regional and then the global, the reach of Japan's security policy returned to regional security and territorial defense.

Japanese security policy issues since the 2010s

(1) Three strategic fronts: China, North Korea, and Russia

Japan's current security environment is characterized by the need to simultaneously address military challenges on three fronts: China's emerging military capabilities, North Korea's ongoing nuclear missile development, and Russian forces' moves in the Russian Far East.

The problem is that China, North Korea, and Russia all have different characteristics in terms of their military power, making it difficult to apply one policy to them all. If Japan were to build its defense capabilities separately for each risk scenario, it would impose a heavy burden on the order of battle for the JSDF and the necessary defense capability. And if military partnership were to deepen between China and Russia, China and North Korea, and Russia and North Korea, their added capacity to coordinate operations and employ diversionary tactics would make the JSDF strategic planning burden even greater.

China: US-China antagonism and Japan's inferiority to China

Until the early 2000s, Japan assumed an East Asian strategic environment in which the United States enjoyed overwhelming dominance over China and Japan had the autonomous capability to secure air and maritime superiority over China. It was possible to maintain the Japan-US alliance and to shape Japan's defense policy on the assumption that the United States and Japan could remain superior to China in their respective relations with the latter.

Since the 2010s, however, China's "Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD)" capabilities in relation to the United States have expanded to the extent that a strategic environment must be assumed in which the supremacy of US forward-deployed forces is no longer unconditional. Even though the US military outperforms the

Chinese military in terms of conventional forces and operational capabilities, it has become difficult for the United States to maintain strategic superiority in the Western Pacific; the estimated cost of military intervention in contingencies in the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea has risen significantly.

In Japan-China relations, not only is it very hard for Japan to deter China on its own, but it is also becoming even harder to maintain Japan's autonomous capability in terms of crisis escalation management. The 2018 National Defense Program Guidelines envisaged a harsh situation "when maintaining maritime and air superiority becomes untenable." The situation is undoubtedly becoming even graver.

North Korea: Deployment of nuclear missile capacity

Second, North Korea's nuclear missile development poses a serious and imminent threat to Japan's security. Defense of Japan 2022 notes that "considering that North Korea has already conducted six nuclear tests, it is conceivable that North Korea has made considerable progress in its nuclear weapons program," and that "North Korea is considered to have already miniaturized nuclear weapons to fit ballistic missile warheads" and possess the capability to launch an attack on Japan with a ballistic missile fitted with a nuclear warhead." Assuming a North Korean ballistic missile attack as a nuclear attack, it calls for more effective deterrence and the

development of ballistic missile defense. Japan will need to maintain a system of extended deterrence using nuclear and conventional forces under the Japan-US alliance while also developing its missile defense.

The various types of missiles used by North Korea to transport nuclear weapons too are becoming increasingly long-range, with more diverse launch modes. They have the improved operational accuracy and capability required for saturation attacks; secrecy and immediacy; and an upgraded surprise attack capability. Since March 2021, North Korea has been conducting test launches of a low-altitude irregular trajectory missile allegedly employing technology employed in Russia's Iskander. This missile diversification enabling North Korea to neutralize the missile defenses of target countries is having the effect of making the latter's defense efforts more costly.

Russia: Strategy spoiler

Third, there has been a dramatic change in Japan's perception of Russia. The 2013 National Security Strategy noted that it was critical for Japan "to advance cooperation with Russia in all areas, including security and energy, thereby enhancing bilateral relations as a whole." Efforts have subsequently been made to build confidence, including establishing the Japan-Russia Foreign and Defense Ministerial Consultation (the "2+2" Ministerial Meeting) and bolstering defense exchange (e.g. Japan-Russia

joint search and rescue training) and visits between defense ministers. Even with Russia straining relations with the United States and Europe through its 2014 invasion of Crimea and its intervention in the Syrian civil war in 2015, Japan continued to work tenaciously to maintain a stable relationship with Russia. Undoubtedly, the Japanese government had the political will to resolve the Northern Territories issue by concluding a Japan-Russia Peace Treaty.

Japan's quest for stable relations with Russia included another strategic element—the notion that stabilizing relations with Russia was vital in dealing with China, Japan's overriding security challenge. Amidst increasing competition and hostility in US-China and Japan-China relations, greater alignment between Russia and China would exacerbate the deterioration of Japan's security environment. While it would be difficult to alienate Russia and China, the Japan-Russia relationship might help disperse Russia's strategic interests in Asia. Positioning Japan-Russia economic relations and Japan-Russia peace treaty negotiations in this way would allow Japan to pursue strategic interests beyond the resolution of the Northern Territories issue.

Japan was forced to fundamentally alter this strategic positioning of Japan-Russia relations, however, due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Post-invasion, the Japanese government strongly condemned Russia

and, together with Western countries, implemented comprehensive economic sanctions against it. In March 2022, Russia lashed back at Japan for its “anti-Russian behavior,” announcing the suspension of the peace treaty negotiations and Russia’s withdrawal from the dialogue on joint economic activities in the four northern islands. Since then, there has been no sign of improvement in the bilateral relationship.

These changes in Japan-Russia relations mean that Russia can develop its policy toward Japan in the Far East without considering its economic relationship with Japan or bilateral peace treaty negotiations. Given the growing difficulty of severing Russian and Chinese interests, further China-Russia military alignment seems likely. In fact, the Russian and Chinese militaries have been deepening joint action in the maritime and air spaces around Japan. In 2019, Russian Tu-95 strategic bombers and Chinese H-6 bombers were already making joint flights from the Sea of Japan to the East China Sea as part of the “China-Russia joint aerial strategic patrol.” Another joint flight was conducted in May 2022 after the Ukraine invasion. “Vostok 2022” in September 2022 saw the Chinese and Russian navies conduct a large-scale joint exercise in the Sea of Okhotsk and the Sea of Japan.

The progress in China-Russia military relations is closely tied to the two countries’ shared strategic interests. Russia and China appear to aim to counter US

military power in the Western Pacific and disrupt the Japan-US alliance. The indication that Russia might deploy military forces and align with China in the event of a Taiwan contingency will also complicate operational planning by Japan and the United States. Russia’s buildup of its Far Eastern forces (including missile deployment) and expansion of military activities will have a significant impact on the JSDF’s posture, operational planning priorities, and reform direction. For example, if the JSDF is forced to allocate more resources to Japan’s northern defenses, the situation could effectively delay the southwestern shift by the JSDF designed to address China’s movements in that direction. Japan’s national security strategy must address Russia as a cost imposer and spoiler.

(2) Creation of three national security documents and Japan’s deterrence and response capabilities

In December 2022, the Japanese government adopted three national security documents: the National Security Strategy (NSS), the National Defense Strategy, and the Defense Buildup Program. The adoption of these documents represents the greatest watershed in Japan’s postwar history, including the sweeping enhancement of Japan’s defense capabilities in the next five years, boosting of defense spending to 2% of Japan’s GDP, and the introduction of long-range “counterstrike capabilities.”

The security environment posited in the three documents is one in which the international community is facing its “greatest postwar trial,” with Japan too “finding itself in the midst of the most severe and complex security environment since the end of WWII.” The NSS begins by noting that “globalization and interdependence alone cannot serve as a guarantor for peace and development across the globe,” a harsh attack on the expectations born out of a liberalist worldview. Observing the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine and Ukraine’s failure to deter the invasion, it also focuses on capability-based strategic design whereby a country builds its capabilities with an eye to the capabilities of others.

In terms of the regional situation, China is deemed the “greatest strategic challenge,” North Korea as “an even more grave and imminent threat to Japan’s national security than ever before,” and Russia as a “strong security concern.” The characteristics of these threats, moreover, are noted as multi-dimensional, including not only conventional warfare and nuclear weapons, but also hybrid conflict that combines the space, cyberspace, and electromagnetic domains, as well as information warfare in the cognitive domain.

The three documents as a denial strategy

There are a number of points in relation to the kind of deterrence and escalation management system that Japan could conceivably roll out over the decade

from 2022. The first concerns the major feature of the strategy introduced by the three documents. While they have not been given the formal title of a security and defense strategy, synthesizing the thinking that runs through the strategy, the aim is clearly to build the capability to make it clear to potential invaders that it would not be worth the cost they would incur if they invaded Japan using military means. On the other hand, it is not explicitly stated that Japan will develop defense capabilities to realize a balance of power by equipping the JSDF to the same scale as China in terms of conventional forces (aircraft, ships, submarines, and missiles, etc.). China’s national defense spending is already around five times as much as Japan’s (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Military Expenditure Database, 2021), with China vastly surpassing Japan in terms of its quantities of 4th and 5th-generation fighter jets, new destroyers and frigates, and new submarines. Even if Japan were to boost its defense spending substantially, the enormous difficulty of pursuing a quantitative balance strategy is apparent.

Underpinning the strategy in the three documents is assessing the capabilities of countries of concern and acquiring the capability to deny such countries the ability to conduct operations if they seek to change the status quo by force. The aim is to acquire denial capabilities that use the capacity to continue fighting (operating in a swift as well as persistent manner to crush the opponent’s will

to invade) as well as stand-off defense capabilities (disrupting and defeating invading forces from a distance, thereby deterring an invasion of Japan itself), and, should deterrence fail, to ensure an asymmetric advantage while gaining superiority across domains. Collectively, these can be labeled a Japanese-style denial strategy.

The meaning of standoff defense and counterstrike capability

The second point is the positioning of “advanced standoff missiles” and “counterstrike capability” which will be pursued as part of the NSS. An important element of the above Japanese-style denial strategy is the broad acquisition of means that will increase the cost of a military invasion of Japan. In that context, the strategy emphasizes the time and space elements of “defense capabilities that will enable Japan to disrupt and defeat invasion much earlier and at places further afield” as a target by 2032. “Much earlier” indicates the capability to disrupt conflicts, blitzkrieg operations, and surprise attacks early, while “at places further afield” means maintaining the ability to attack from a distance rather than close to Japanese territory or Japanese maritime or air space. One could interpret this as Japan seeking to give greater “strategic depth” to JSDF capabilities, including boosting Japan’s denial capability.

A few options remain, however, in terms of that long-range strike capability. First is the expansion of Japan’s existing

standoff defense. The December 2022 Cabinet decision defined standoff defense as “capabilities to deal with ships and landing forces attempting to invade Japan, including remote islands from the outside of their threat envelopes.” In the sense of deploying JSDF attack assets outside threat envelopes to attack enemies from out of range amidst the growth in China’s capacity to attack through conventional warfare, this approach lies along the same trajectory as short-range defense.

The second approach would aim to acquire long-range, wide-area strike capabilities, including maritime (the East China Sea and the Sea of Japan) and land (the Chinese mainland and North Korea) areas. This would mean acquiring a broad range of attack options, such as attacks on Chinese naval vessels far across the East China Sea or on military targets on the Chinese mainland. The 2032 target of “disrupting and defeating invasion much earlier and at places further afield” could be correctly regarded as reflecting this second approach.

This approach raises the question of whether Japan would primarily target attacks on its own territory or whether it would include strike capabilities to address a Taiwan contingency. Would Japan’s long-range, wide-area strike capabilities be primarily anti-ship, targeting offshore naval vessels, or are fixed terrestrial targets in China or North Korea’s missile defense capacity envisaged? It is still unclear what scenario

Japan's strike capabilities are expected to address.

The three documents provide an interpretation of the politically contested concept of "counterstrike capabilities." They describe counterstrike capabilities as "key to deterring invasion against Japan," going on to explain that "in cases where an armed attack against Japan has occurred, and as part of that attack ballistic missiles and other means have been used, counterstrike capabilities enable Japan to mount effective counterstrikes against the opponent's territory." It is not clear why the three documents specify the occurrence of an armed attack, and an attack in which ballistic missiles and other means are used, but during the prior policy coordination process, the concern was raised that counterstrike capabilities could be perceived as preemptive strike capabilities, so this may well have been an effort to contain the whole counterstrike issue within the interpretation of Japan's defense as exclusively defense-oriented.

At the same time, though, the government notes that counterstrike capabilities "squarely apply to measures for self-defense taken under the Three New Conditions for Use of Force, presented in the 2015 Legislation for Peace and Security." It should be noted that because these conditions enable Japan to exercise the right to self-defense in cases "when an armed attack against a foreign country that is in a close relationship with Japan occurs"

(limited exercise of the right to collective self-defense), the government evidently assumes that Japan's counterstrike capabilities can also be used in cases where Japan itself is not necessarily directly under attack (for example, a crisis in the Taiwan Strait).

The third approach is the interpretation of filling the gap between China's intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs) and the United States' military capacity missile gap. Because the United States was not able to possess IRBMs under the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty concluded during the Cold War, it has been left at a significant disadvantage in terms of US-China conflict escalation management (In February 2019, the US notified Russia of withdrawing from the treaty and resumed intermediate-range missile development). The idea would be to fill that gap with Japan's long-range strike capability.

Given China's massive ballistic and cruise missile arsenal, however, Japan would struggle to close that gap with the same number of missiles. The standoff defense capability envisaged in the NSS, too, aims for precision-guided strikes on military targets using (upgraded) Type 12 surface-to-ship missiles (SSMs) in ground-launched, ship-launched, and aircraft-launched versions, Hyper Velocity Gliding Projectiles for island defense, hypersonic missiles, and Tomahawks, etc. This is a strike capability of a very different nature from the firepower of China's DF-21 and other

IRBMs. As the current strategy does not suggest Japan possessing ballistic missiles with greater firepower, there is apparently no intention at this stage of addressing the missile gap.

Conclusion

This article traces the historical trajectory of Japan's security policy from the perspective of deterrence and escalation management. It considers the transformation sought in the three national security documents announced in December 2022. The Japanese government stresses that the changes "fall within the purview of Japan's Constitution and international law [and] ... do not change Japan's exclusively defense-oriented policy." In that sense, the three documents stand as an extension of Japan's postwar defense policy.

The expansion of Japan's "denial" capabilities through long-range strike capabilities (standoff defense capability) sought in the three documents, however, adds depth to Japan's strategy, giving the JSDF more leeway to execute its own escalation management. In a strategic environment in which the US military does not necessarily enjoy a clear advantage over China in terms of conventional forces, Japan's new policy will enable it to support US intra-theater operations through joint operations with the JSDF, as well as to expand its own response capabilities.

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3

How Has Japan's Domestic Political Mood Swayed Its Foreign and National Security Policy?

Building on the Premise of Japan as an Adaptive State

Hiroyuki AKITA

Introduction: Japan as an adaptive state

There are two, one might say entirely opposite, approaches to analyzing the relationship between Japan's domestic politics and its foreign and national security. One is to focus on the successive political leaders and cabinets and trace what kinds of political principles have been advocated and what kinds of policies have been constructed by each of these leaders and cabinets over the years. If this is the *deductive* approach, the alternative is the *inductive* approach. The inductive approach entails first identifying what kinds of external foreign and national security developments have impacted upon Japan and exploring how these have affected the internal political mood and public opinion and the expectations upon the government as to how it should respond. It then addresses how these reactions and expectations have in turn guided the foreign and security policies of each of the cabinets.

Here I adopt the latter of the two approaches. As opposed to a state that creates its policies in line with a predetermined strategy direction, Japan is more what can be described as an "adaptive state"—one that takes the blows from external forces and creates and implements policy in the process of adapting to those impacts.

A former high-level US government official, who had overseen the long-term strategy of the US armed forces

for many years, observed to me that by looking back over Japan's history since the Meiji Restoration, one can see that Japan determines its course in response to major impacts from outside, rather than acting in accordance with a defined strategy.

This observation is correct, and for Japan such an approach is by no means a negative trait. Japan relies on imports for most of its energy and is barely self-sufficient in terms of food production. It is also an island nation surrounded by non-friendly, nuclear-capable countries such as China, Russia, and North Korea. That is, from a geopolitical perspective, Japan is extremely vulnerable and located in a highly unpredictable region. With these conditions to work with, it would be neither reasonable nor advisable for Japan to establish and seek to follow a predetermined long-term strategy. Only the US and a very limited number of other superpowers can afford such a luxury.

The external environment around Japan involves such a great number of unforeseeable variables. Japan's strategic DNA, as it were, is that of an adaptive state that sustains its prosperity and stability in the face of whatever blows it may sustain from external forces by responding flexibly and maintaining the versatility to absorb the shock of such impacts. Since the 17th century, the steps that this DNA has guided Japan to take have both generated great success and pushed the nation to the brink of destruction.

How Has Japan's Domestic Political Mood Swayed Its Foreign and National Security Policy?

The Edo Shogunate, which governed a unified Japan for a great many years, pursued a consistent national policy of isolation from 1639 to 1853. Japan closed its borders to preserve its independence when the European powers began seeking to expand their colonies into Asia. Yet when it was confronted with strong demands from the US and other powers to open its borders, Japan made a 180-degree turn. In 1868, the Meiji government, which had been born from the fall of the Edo Shogunate, switched Japan's course to accept the opening of its borders, quickly adopt western civilization, and successfully modernize the country.

Japan subsequently formed the Anglo-Japanese Alliance with Britain and, in 1905, secured a narrow victory in the Russo-Japanese War. Entering an alliance with Britain was also a strategic adaption to ensure survival in the face of Russia's southern advance. However, with the power vacuum that arose within China upon the fall of the Qing dynasty in the early 20th century, it was Japan's turn to set out on the road to becoming an empire. This journey ultimately led Japan to declare war upon Britain and the US in 1941 and suffer a devastating defeat. In the 1950s, Japan began another abrupt change of course. Japan reconciled and formed an alliance with the US, placing the violence and animosity of the Second World War behind them. This relationship with the US subsequently grew in strength and continues today.

Observing these major developments over the years—national isolation, opening to the world and adopting Western civilization, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, becoming an enemy of Britain and the US in the Second World War, and later forming an alliance with the US—Japan's foreign affairs strategy appears utterly disjointed. In reality that is not the case. Japan's approach has been to adapt to the changes in its external environment and adopt what it considers the most appropriate foreign and national security policy for each situation.

Building on the premise of Japan as an adaptive state, this article analyzes how public opinion and the domestic political mood have impacted upon foreign and national security strategy. We highlight and examine four periods in time since 2010 in which external developments have exerted significant influence on Japan.

The first is Russia's invasion of Ukraine, from late February 2022 to the present. Secondly, we then take a step back in time to 2010, when tensions between Japan and China regarding the Senkaku Islands grew into a highly volatile crisis. Thirdly, we turn to the shifts in Japan's security environment between 2012 and 2016. In 2013, President Obama declared that the US should no longer be "the world's policeman." China subsequently began establishing a military stronghold in the South China Sea, and Russia's President Putin forcefully annexed the

Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine. The fourth period to address is the Trump Administration from 2017 to 2021. Japan too found itself in an extremely critical position following the entry into office of President Trump—a leader who perceived the Japan-US Alliance as a liability rather than an asset.

February 24, 2022 to the present: Russia's invasion of Ukraine sends shockwaves through Japanese public opinion

Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 exerted an extremely large impact upon Japanese public opinion and domestic politics. While Japan was geographically somewhat removed, this conflict in Europe was perhaps the greatest shock it received since the Second World War. This was, after all, the first time since the Second World War that a major power, with a huge nuclear arsenal, had suddenly launched a full-scale invasion of a neighboring country.

The Kishida administration, acting in union with the other G7 members, has imposed a succession of strict economic sanctions, which it continues to uphold at present. Japan has frozen the assets of Russia's central bank and businesses, and placed limitations upon the export and import of key items. More significantly, Japan has also placed President

Putin, Foreign Minister Lavrov and other such figures under sanctions. Japan has effectively committed to not pursuing diplomacy with Russia as long as President Putin remains in power.

The Japanese public quickly expressed strong support for these measures. In an opinion poll by the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* (conducted April 22–24, 2022), the economic sanctions imposed on Russia by the Kishida administration were supported by almost 90% of respondents—namely, 44% deeming the existing sanctions appropriate, and 42% calling for stricter sanctions to be imposed. The percentage of those who support taking in refugees from Ukraine is also as high as 90%. This is an inconceivably high level of support given Japan's typically extreme caution when it comes to accepting immigrants and refugees. A high-ranking Japanese government official has reflected that it has been the overwhelmingly strong support from the Japanese public that has allowed the government to act at such an unprecedented speed to take in Ukrainian refugees. The support for sanctions against Russia has also remained strong in the face of rising energy prices and other widespread economic effects of Russian sanctions.

The Japanese public's strong reaction to the invasion of Ukraine is not solely due to anger or resilience toward Russia. According to an observation from a member of the Japanese national security authorities, there is an

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increasing sense of impending crisis that allowing Russia's reckless violence to go unchecked will prompt China to grow more aggressive and adopt a hard line in the Taiwan Strait and other regions. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has expressed strong concern that Russia's actions in Ukraine may "infect" China, repeatedly warning that "Ukraine today may be East Asia tomorrow." Japanese voters share this growing apprehension.

This public opinion has prompted changes in Japan's domestic politics and is also gradually exerting a marked impact on foreign policy. To come directly to the point, the increasing number of voters with growing concern for Japan's security has led to much greater support for the conservative parties that advocate strengthening Japan's defense capabilities and its alliance with the US.

This tide of opinion became clear with the House of Councillors election on July 10, 2022. The election saw a strong victory for the incumbent Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which won 63 seats, single-handedly securing the majority of the seats up for reelection. In its campaign pledge, the LDP had committed to raising defense spending, specifically to at least 2% of GDP. Achieving this goal would entail drastically strengthening Japan's defense capability within five years. The LDP also set out a principle to ensure greater deterrence by allowing the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) to possess what it referred to at the time as the "capability to strike enemy bases."

Aside from the LDP's successes, there were also considerable gains in the House of Councillors election for the Japan Innovation Party, an opposition party supportive of strengthening Japan's self-defense capability and revising the constitution. Liberal parties that oppose such steps or adopt a cautious approach to these topics, such as the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan and the Japanese Communist Party, did, on the other hand, suffer losses. The conservative parties therefore increased their influence within the House of Councillors, placing them in the position to exert a considerable impact on foreign policy.

A joint study by the *Asahi Shimbun* and a research group led by Masaki Taniguchi at the University of Tokyo indicated that after the House of Councillors election, 73% of members of the House of Councillors supported strengthening Japan's defense capability, a drastic rise from 47% following the previous election in 2019. Likewise, the percentage of members of the House of Councillors who supported revision to the constitution—which does not currently specify Japan's right to possess Self-Defense Forces—rose to 62%. The majority of these respondents wished the revisions to ensure not only that the constitution specify Japan's right to possess SDF, but also revisions to introduce a state-of-emergency clause, which is also as yet not covered in the constitution.

Japan's National Diet is composed of two

houses: the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors. It is the House of Representatives that holds superiority to approve treaties. The Kishida (LDP) administration also secured victory in the House of Representatives election in October 2021. This meant that, like the House of Councillors, the House of Representatives also has a strong component of conservative members who support the strengthening of Japan's self-defense capability and the Japan-US Alliance.

The rising power of the Chinese military and the nuclear armament of North Korea have prompted increasing concern among Japan's public and political circles regarding the deteriorating national security environment around Japan. Russia's invasion of Ukraine exacerbated such anxiety, which is expected to prompt the acceleration of efforts to develop policy to strengthen Japan's defense capability and alliance with the US.

As part of such efforts, in December 2022 the cabinet passed the largest enhancement to its defense capability since the Second World War. The defense budget is to be doubled, in terms of percentage of GDP, between FY 2023 and FY 2027, from the current level of approximately 1%, to around 2% by 2027. It also approved a strategy to properly equip the SDF with "counterstrike capability"—such as medium- and long-range cruise missiles—for the first time.

This will in turn prompt a shift in the division of roles in the Japan-US Alliance. The SDF have typically been devoted to the role of the protective shield, while relying on the US armed forces for the offensive capabilities of the spear. This division of roles is however likely to change to ensure that the SDF are to some extent responsible for counterstrikes. Public opinion polls by major media outlets generally suggest that most people support such policy decisions. This is a reflection of how Russia's invasion and the increasing tensions in the Taiwan Strait are changing Japan's sense of national security.

2010–2012: The beginnings of protracted confrontation between Japan and China

We have looked at Japan's internal trend toward movements to strengthen the Japan-US Alliance. However, this current did not always flow in the same direction. Japan did at one point attempt a different route, which ended in disaster. The severe trauma served as a lesson for Japan's public and political leaders which has led to the current course. To examine that disaster, we return to developments in Japan in 2009.

On August 30, 2009, the opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), seized the reins of government from the LDP following a landslide victory in the House of Representatives election. DPJ party

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leader Yukio Hatoyama became prime minister in what was Japan's first change in government in around 15 years. The DPJ counts labor unions as one of its support bases, and adopts a more liberal stance than the LDP. The DPJ had therefore campaigned on the pledge that it would seek a close and equal relationship with the US. It had advocated revising the US-Japan Status of Forces Agreement—and its special treatment for US armed forces in Japan—and downsizing US bases in Okinawa.

Put briefly, Hatoyama's approach was to pursue reconciliation with China while reducing Japan's reliance upon the alliance with the US. This was based on the fantasy that Japan could maintain friendly relations with China through dialogue, without heavily relying on the US armed forces as a deterrent. In the late 1990s, Hatoyama had advocated a vision for a national security relationship with the US by which Japan would be fully equipped with a missile defense network and therefore able to ensure its own safety without US troops permanently stationed in Japan. Having neglected how effective the US forces were as a deterrent, Hatoyama's approach neither worked in practice nor garnered public support. Relations between Japan and the US cooled considerably under Prime Minister Hatoyama as a result of the issues surrounding the US military bases in Okinawa. A political funding scandal delivered the additional blow that ultimately saw the Hatoyama administration forced to resign after just

over eight months.

Naoto Kan—who succeeded Hatoyama as prime minister and inherited an uneasy relationship with the US—was confronted with a highly severe crisis between Japan and China in September 2010. The crisis was sparked by an incident near the Senkaku Islands on September 7, 2010, in which a Chinese trawler, which had been ordered to leave the area, rammed Japan Coast Guard (JCG) patrol boats. The JCG arrested the trawler's skipper and detained the crew.

The Senkaku Islands are under the administration of Japan, which effectively controls the islands as its territory. However, China also asserts its territorial rights to the islands, making the area a flashpoint for conflict between Japan and China. China responded to the incident by fiercely protesting that the Senkaku Islands are China's inherent territory, and adopting exceptionally forceful measures, such as canceling ministerial-level meetings, detaining Japanese nationals, and halting exports of rare earth minerals to Japan. With violent anti-Japanese demonstrations taking place across China and Japanese-owned supermarkets and other such targets vandalized, Japan's relationship with China turned cold.

While at first glance this crisis with China could appear to have arisen from the Senkaku Islands issue, its main cause was Japan's deteriorating relationship with the US. China, having seen through

the cracks in the Japan-US Alliance that had begun to form during the Hatoyama administration, adopted a hard line toward Japan as it sought to use the trawler collision incident as a chance to increase the pressure in the Senkaku Islands issue. China seized the opportunity to begin regularly sending public and fishing vessels to the Senkaku Islands' territorial waters.

This crisis damaged the Japanese public's view of China substantially. An opinion poll of Japan and China conducted in late October 2010 by the Japanese *Yomiuri Shimbun* and the Chinese weekly *Oriental Outlook* (*Liaowang Dongfang Zhoukan*, published by China's Xinhua Publishing) showed that as many as 79% of Japanese respondents identified China as a country that posed a military threat, almost as high a percentage as the 81% who perceived such a threat from North Korea (respondents were able to select multiple responses). On the other hand, when it came to countries that respondents believed important to Japan, the US was selected by 60% of respondents, a considerably higher percentage than the 27% who selected China. Likewise, as many as 75% of respondents felt that the Japan-US Security Treaty is instrumental in the peace and stability of the region. Japanese support for the Japan-US Security Treaty seemed to grow with the rising tension with China in the Senkaku Islands.

The DPJ administration also saw another crisis that deepened the

fissure between Japan and China. It began with the Japanese government's nationalization of the Senkaku Islands on September 11, 2012 under the cabinet of Yoshihiko Noda, who had succeeded Naoto Kan as prime minister. The Japanese government had been managing the islands under lease from the landowner. However, in April 2012, Tokyo governor and renowned right-winger Shintaro Ishihara unveiled and set in motion a plan to buy the islands from the owner. Apprehensive that this could provoke China, the Noda Cabinet preempted Ishihara by nationalizing the islands. China vigorously opposed this development and anti-Japanese demonstrations blew up across China once again. Japanese-owned supermarkets and factories were set on fire. With China sending large numbers of public vessels into the Senkaku Islands area, it was even speculated that a conflict between Japan and China could develop.

The Japanese public became ever more opposed to and mistrusting of China. An opinion poll by the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* in late September 2012 indicates that 66% supported the nationalization of the Senkaku Islands. Regarding the issues that had arisen following the nationalization of the Senkaku Islands—Chinese public vessels repeatedly intruding upon the islands' territorial waters and anti-Japanese demonstrations becoming widespread in China—as many as 56% of respondents felt that the Japanese government should adopt a strong attitude toward China, a significantly

greater percentage than the 37% who felt that improving relations between Japan and China should be a priority.

The DPJ government was ultimately defeated in the House of Representatives election in December 2012, and the LDP retrieved power after an absence of three years and three months. The DPJ was not only relegated to the opposition, but also tasted a historically crushing defeat that even brought the party close to losing its position as Japan's second party.

It was the Japanese public's rising concern toward China that facilitated the LDP's return to government. The LDP, under party leader Shinzo Abe, were able to return to government because the public had grown convinced that returning the conservative LDP to government was necessary in order to protect Japan's national security, as it would restore the Japan-US Alliance and in turn repair the power balance between Japan and China. In December 2012, Abe made a triumphant return as prime minister and began his journey to becoming the longest to hold office.

2012–2017: The US renounces its role as the world's policeman

In 2013, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who had guided the conservative LDP to retrieve power from the liberal DPJ, set to work restoring Japan's alliance

with the US. He began by strengthening the makeup of the JCG and the SDF, as a means of correcting the balance of power in Japan's relations with China, in which China held the upper hand.

In FY 2013 budget, Prime Minister Abe raised the funds allocated to defense—which up until then had been continuously decreased—for the first time in 11 years. He also put a temporary stop to the existing plans for the National Defense Program Guidelines and the Medium-Term Defense Program, which determine the armament and personnel capacity of the SDF. He decided to completely overhaul these plans in light of the military situations in China and North Korea. During Shinzo Abe's time in office, the defense budget rose consistently, from around 4.6 trillion yen in FY 2012 (original budget), to 5.4 trillion yen in FY 2022. Including the funds appropriated in the supplementary budget, Japan's defense spending exceeded 6 trillion yen.

In addition to this, Prime Minister Abe set to work enhancing the JCG. He significantly increased its budget and proceeded with the adoption of large patrol vessels, the latest model jets, and drones to strengthen security around the Senkaku Islands. The fleet of JCG large patrol vessels was increased to 70 vessels by the fall of 2021. While the fleet still amounted to only half of that of China, the Abe administration's efforts to bolster the resources available ensured that Japan was just about equipped to

conduct 24-hour surveillance of the Senkaku Islands.

Having witnessed the failures of the DPJ government, Japan's voters strongly supported the Abe administration's policy approach from the outset. This was reflected in the results of the July 2013 House of Councillors election. The LDP secured the majority in both the lower and upper houses with a landslide victory for the Komeito, which made up the coalition cabinet with the LDP.

Meanwhile, however, the environment outside of Japan was becoming ever more challenging. Weary from the prolonged conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, the US had clearly become inward looking. The development that particularly provoked Abe's concern was the US officially abandoning its role as "the world's policeman."

In January 2012, the Obama administration's new national defense strategy abandoned the two-war planning construct that had secured the capability for the US military to fight two large-scale conflicts simultaneously. This was followed in September that year by President Obama further stating in an address on the Syria conflict that the US "should not be the world's policeman." Abe consequently became apprehensive that in pursuing a diplomatic and national security policy that so completely relied upon the US, Japan could be endangering the continued existence of their alliance.

Just as Japan was facing such concerns, it was blindsided by a development in the South China Sea in early 2014. China reclaimed seven reefs and began constructing a military position in the South China Sea. By May of the following year, the construction had expanded to an area of around 8 km². An airstrip, radar, and other facilities for military aircraft were subsequently also installed, creating what is essentially a Chinese military base. Estimates from a US think tank and other experts indicate that around a quarter of internationally traded goods transit through the South China Sea. Almost all crude oil imported by Japan from the Middle East travels via the South China Sea. The Abe administration has made clear its concerns regarding China's construction of a military base on many occasions. In coordinated efforts with the US and European countries, Japan has also raised the issue at forums such as the G7 and East Asia Summit meetings.

It was the US response that further amplified Japan's concerns. While verbally opposing China's actions, the Obama administration did not adopt practical measures to prevent the construction of the base. Although the US regularly dispatching warships within 12 nautical miles of the base as a means of keeping China in check, when this provoked China's anger, it even reduced the frequency of such expeditions. Seemingly seeing through the Obama administration's response, China accelerated military expansion in the East

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and South China Seas. On top of this, North Korea similarly continued missile launches and nuclear tests as it sped up its nuclear missile development.

In July 2014, Prime Minister Abe responded to these developments by embarking on a decision that radically changed Japan's national security policy. For the first time since the Second World War, he changed the interpretation of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution to enable Japan to exercise its right of collective self-defense. The right of collective self-defense enables Japan to retaliate with military force should one of its allies or friendly nations be under attack, even if Japan itself is not directly under attack. Previous cabinets had all adopted the interpretation that the constitution permitted Japan to possess the right of collective self-defense, but not to exercise it. Such an interpretation meant that if the US—even, for instance, a US warship patrolling near Japan—were to be attacked by a third country, Japan would not be allowed to fight alongside US forces, unless Japan itself had been attacked.

In July 2014 the Abe cabinet sought to change this by making the bold move of passing a decision that approved a reinterpretation of the constitution. Noting that changes in Japan's national security environment mean that even uses of military force against a foreign country could actually threaten Japan's survival, the reinterpretation allowed that in the event of an armed attack that

is against a country that has a close relationship with Japan and places Japan's existence at threat, Japan may invoke its right of collective self-defense and join the counterstrike. The Abe administration further sought to ensure that this reinterpretation of the Constitution would be reflected in the running of the SDF by addressing the particulars in a package of national security bills that it submitted to the Diet in the spring of 2015 and pushed through to enactment.

The decision to approve exercising the right of collective self-defense was a major turning point in Japan's postwar national security policy and was accompanied by significant domestic political risks. It naturally shook Japan's political circles. The major opposition parties were fiercely opposed on the grounds that the Abe cabinet had destroyed Japan's principle of exclusively defensive security policy and was set on making Japan a country capable of waging war. Yukio Edano, Secretary-General of the main opposition party, the DPJ, was emphatic that the legislation flew in the face of constitutionalism and was the worst to be proposed since the Second World War. He even argued that in seeking the enactment of such bills, the Abe cabinet had lost its sense of reason and was careering out of control. Fraught with confrontation, the Diet's deliberations on the bill were unprecedentedly long, stretching over 100 hours in the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors, respectively. The Abe cabinet was, however, ultimately

able to steamroll the objections from the opposition and ensure that the bills were approved and enacted by the Diet in September 2015.

The Japanese public, while supportive of strengthening of the alliance with the US, was divided on whether exercising the right of collective self-defense should be approved. This was largely due to fears that Japan would become embroiled in a war. Mass protests and demonstrations opposing the bills were held across Japan while the Diet's deliberations were taking place. An opinion poll by the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* in September 2015, directly after the laws were enacted, shows that a mere 28% of respondents supported exercising the right of collective self-defense, while those opposed accounted for 53%.

This caused a drop in the Abe cabinet's approval rating. Previously at 50% in May 2015, it declined sharply to 40% directly after the enactment of the national security legislation.

A former aide to Prime Minister Abe has stated that he made the decision to approve exercising the collective right of self-defense despite being fully aware of the public backlash that would result. He was emboldened by his fear that allowing the SDF to sit by idly while US forces were under attack in the vicinity of Japan would lead to the US armed forces no longer being able to pursue involvement in Asia and to the breakdown of the alliance with the US.

While Abe did face a backlash on this occasion, his approval rating recovered gradually. The recovery was the direct product of the effects of his economic stimulus measures known as Abenomics and other such financial policy. It is also important to recognize that the public gradually came to agree that ensuring the ability to exercise the right of collective self-defense was a step that Japan inevitably had to take if it wished to maintain an alliance with the US. Prime Minister Abe secured a resounding victory the following year in the July 2016 election of the House of Councillors. Along with the Komeito, with which the LDP formed a coalition cabinet, his government won over two-thirds of the seats. This was followed by an overwhelming victory in the October 2017 House of Representatives elections, with the LDP securing, as expected, over two-thirds of the seats.

In the meantime, the Abe cabinet had made another significant achievement in internal affairs. In December 2013, it established Japan's National Security Council (NSC), a body bringing together the prime minister and key cabinet members to serve as a form of control tower for guiding diplomatic and security policy. The National Security Secretariat (NSS) was also set up in January 2014 to support the operation of the NSC. The NSS is a selection of talented experts from the foreign and defense ministries, the National Police Agency and the SDF.

The forming of the NSC and NSS greatly

improved Japan's policy decision making. Firstly, they helped to overcome the damaging silo mentality that pervades government bodies, in this case the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, the National Police Agency, and the ministries and agencies involved in finance. Typically, when an incident or crisis occurred, policy decisions had been slow to come about, due to the considerable time required for the different ministries and agencies to coordinate with each other. By serving as a central command center, the NSC and NSS enabled policy decision making to proceed very smoothly. Secondly, the establishment of these organizations allowed for progress in the sharing of intelligence within the government. The Japanese government bodies involved in intelligence include the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which gathers information on diplomacy, the Ministry of Defense, which gathers intelligence from military attachés and transmitted information, the Cabinet Office, which operates reconnaissance satellites, and the National Police Agency, which is responsible for information on peace and order. The poor sharing of information—because each agency had tended to keep key information close to its chest—has been significantly rectified since the establishment of the NSS.

2017–2021: The Trump administration unsettles Japan

In November 2017, a new shockwave struck Japan. Donald Trump, a less than keen supporter of the US alliance with Japan, won the US presidential election. While campaigning, Trump had continuously voiced criticism of the Japan-US Alliance. He had, for instance, stated his belief that it would be unfair for Japan to do nothing should the US come under attack. On the subject of the US forces in Japan, he had also argued that Japan should bear all costs for US forces stationed in Japan. Until then, no US president had criticized the Japan-US Alliance so frankly. In return for the US committing to Japan's defense, Japan provides the US forces with military bases, as well as shouldering a considerable amount of the costs of stationing such troops in Japan. It was widely understood that while the US may be a little dissatisfied with the alliance, it recognized that the benefits of maintaining it were greater.

The Japanese public was greatly concerned. In an opinion poll by the *Yomiuri Shimbun* shortly after Trump's inauguration in late January 2017, as many as 70% responded that concern was their primary feeling regarding the future of Japan-US relations, while only 4% were primarily hopeful. At the same time, support for the Japan-US Alliance was deeply rooted, such that 60% responded that the government should maintain policies that prioritize the

alliance, significantly more than the 34% who responded that the alliance should be revised.

Such concern spread throughout not only the Japanese public but also the Abe cabinet and the government. Abe felt increasingly on edge, concerned that a misstep in dealings with President Trump could actually result in the collapse of the alliance with the US. Prime Minister Abe had 14 meetings with President Trump during his term. Japanese government insiders report that Trump consistently complained about the unfairness of the Japan-US Alliance at almost every one of those meetings.

President Trump's dissatisfaction with the alliance covered two key points. Firstly, he criticized Japan for not fulfilling its responsibility to ensure its own self-defense and instead free riding on the US. On one occasion, following a relentless onslaught from Trump on this point, Prime Minister Abe strongly retorted by reminding Trump that he had pushed through national security legislation (that allowed Japan to exercise its right of collective self-defense) despite it causing him a considerable drop in his approval ratings.

President Trump's second point of dissatisfaction was the financial costs of the alliance. Not content that Japan bear only the costs of the US forces stationed in Japan, Trump demanded that Japan and its other Asia-Pacific allies

also cover the costs of any US military force pursued in the region. When the North Korea crisis heightened in 2017, President Trump pushed Prime Minister Abe to take a greater role in protecting the area, on the grounds of the vast expense for the US to dispatch three aircraft carriers to the Korean Peninsula area.

Abe recognized that Trump's views were not to be dismissed as off the wall, but did more or less reflect the opinion of much of the US public. An opinion poll published by the US' Eurasia Group in November 2019 suggested that as many as 57.6% of the US public felt that the US should reduce its armed forces stationed in Asia.

According to several government and LDP insiders, at internal meetings Abe voiced the following concerns about the prospects for the alliance with the US:

- North Korea's nuclear armament and China's enhancement to its military have significantly increased the costs and dangers to the US in providing defense to Japan.
- The Japan-US Alliance will become a less effective deterrent unless Japan contributes more to reflect the increased costs and risks of its defense.
- If Japan neglects efforts to strengthen its defense capability, US voters will, sooner or later, become dissatisfied

with bearing the obligation to defend Japan.

The awareness of these dangers prompted the Abe administration to set out to expand partnerships with other friendly countries, in addition to strengthening the alliance with the US. In August 2016, it unveiled the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) strategy, a vision to cooperate with countries in the region stretching from the Pacific across the Indian Ocean that share values such as the rule of law. The idea was to complement the linear alliance between Japan and the US with a broad network of national security cooperation with friendly countries other than the US.

Abe called upon and encouraged not only the US but also Australia, India and Southeast Asian countries to cooperate and give their approval. In particular, Japan joined with the US, Australia and India to develop a four-country framework, known as the Quad, for pursuing greater cooperation. In July 2017, Abe visited NATO Headquarters in Brussels and appealed to Europe to work with Japan on strategy for the Indo-Pacific. France and other European Union (EU) member countries subsequently developed their own Indo-Pacific strategies and FOIP became a keyword in the strategies of the key powers.

Such proactive policies toward diplomacy and national security worked to Prime Minister Abe's advantage in domestic politics as well. The Abe

administration led the LDP at both the House of Representatives election in 2017 and the House of Councillors election in 2019 and secured victories in both, continuing to hold power for over seven and a half years, until September 2020. When his two periods in office—the first from 2006 to 2007 and the second from 2012 to 2020—are combined, Shinzo Abe served as prime minister for a total of 3,188 nonconsecutive days, the highest total in the history of Japan's constitutional government. Abe's second period in power totaled 2,822 days straight, making him the longest-serving prime minister in Japan's history.

Conclusion

We have retraced Japan's foreign and national security policy over the years and explored how it relates to its domestic politics. As touched on at the beginning of this article, Japan is geopolitically vulnerable, given its location surrounded by China, Russia, and North Korea, and its lack of resources. Japan must therefore devise and implement foreign policy in the process of adapting to the changes in its external environment. This distinctive approach was thrown into relief as we looked back over the developments from the Hatoyama (DPJ) administration to the Kishida administration.

Japan's voters also instinctively understand Japan's geopolitical vulnerability. This has allowed a particularly growing

tendency among voters in recent years to expect leaders to adopt courses that steadily adapt to external changes, as opposed to radical approaches to diplomatic and national security policy.

Two governments disengaged themselves from such voter expectations—one, the Hatoyama administration, ended in failure, while the other, the Abe administration, was highly successful. What separates the two is the presence—or lack—of realism about the international environment and Japan's national strength. Hatoyama's approach to diplomacy and national security was that Japan could coexist with China through dialogue and cooperation, even if it decreased its reliance on the US. This was rooted in liberal ideals but did not work in practice.

In contrast, Abe pursued policies based on out-and-out realism. He understood that coexisting with China would require stabilizing the power balance by strengthening the alliance with the US, and he acted accordingly. Prioritizing Japan's union with the US, Abe managed to keep his own right-winged political beliefs and historical views relatively downplayed and in check. Out of consideration for not only Japan's neighbors but also the US and European countries, he ultimately limited his official visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, which enshrines a number of Japan's Class-A war criminals, to just one occasion. In August 2015, the 70-year anniversary of the end of the Second World War, he published

a statement expressing his profound grief and sincere condolences regarding Japan's actions in the war.

Japanese voters supported Prime Minister Abe's domestic and diplomatic and national security policy and its prioritization of realism. Prime Minister Kishida, who served as foreign minister in the Abe administration for a number of years, has also carried on Abe's course. Given the increasingly challenging conditions around Japan presented by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, China's military expansion and North Korea's nuclear armament, Japanese public opinion is unlikely to shift in the future.

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4

The Constitution and National Defense

Yasuaki CHIJIWA

Introduction

Like Germany, Japan was occupied by Allied Forces following its defeat in World War II. One of the objectives of the Allied Occupation was to demilitarize the country. The Imperial Army and Navy were duly disbanded, and Japan was disarmed. Under this policy, and under instructions from Occupation forces, a new constitution was drawn up. This was promulgated on November 3, 1946 and came into force on May 3, 1947. Article 9 of the Constitution contained the following provisions:

Article 9. Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.

(Clause 2) In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.

In renouncing “war” as defined as wars of invasion, there is nothing particularly unusual about the first part of Article 9 in terms of international law. The distinctive aspect is the provisions in Clause 2, that is, the clear declaration that “land, sea, and air forces, as well as

other war potential (*senryoku*), will never be maintained.”

This clause led some people to make the extreme case that Japan was not allowed to exercise the right of self-defense and could not maintain defensive forces of any kind. But such extreme views were never realistic and by the middle of the 1950s—after some fierce debate—the position of the Japanese government was that even under Article 9, Japan was entitled to exercise the right of self-defense, and could also maintain defensive forces within certain limits. The present Self-Defense Forces (SDFs) were established on July 1, 1954.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine that started on February 24, 2022, as well as growing concerns in recent years about the risk of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan, have had a major impact on Japanese people’s views of national security. In a poll of Japanese voters by the *Asahi Shimbun* in April 2022, more than 60% of respondents agreed for the first time that Japan should strengthen its defense capabilities. On December 16, 2022, the government carried out revisions to the “three national security documents” (the *National Security Strategy*, the *National Defense Strategy*, and the *Defense Buildup Program*). The headline points have been the aim to increase the size of the defense budget to around 2% of GDP (from a previous level of around 1%), and the decision to develop a “counter-strike capability” that will allow Japan to hit belligerent missile bases overseas

that might be used to launch missile attacks against Japan.

Meanwhile, the Constitution itself, including Article 9, has not been revised once since it was enacted shortly after World War II. The hurdles to constitutional amendment are high, requiring at least two-thirds approval of all the members of the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors as well as majority support in a national referendum. Balancing a realistic response to Japan's actual security environment with the restrictions of Article 9 will continue to be an unavoidable point of contention for anyone considering Japanese national security policy in the years to come.

From the establishment of the conventional constitutional interpretation on national security to the passing of the Peace and Security Legislation

In this section, I want to examine the subject of the Constitution and national defense by looking at the path that Japan's security policy has followed from the mid-1950s until Shinzo Abe's time in office in three periods. For reasons of space, I will omit the initial tortuous path that led from the drawing up of the Constitution to the establishment of the conventional interpretation of the

Constitution on national security in the mid-1950s.

(1) The Cold War period

The first period ran from the establishment of the conventional constitutional interpretation on national defense to the end of the Cold War.

On December 22, 1954, the government at the time, led by Prime Minister Ichiro Hatoyama, issued an interpretation regarding Article 9. The government's position was that the Constitution did not renounce the right of self-defense, which was held as a matter of course by any independent sovereign state. Although the Constitution renounced war, it did not give up the right to fight in self-defense. The government's view was that Article 9 recognized Japan's right of self-defense as an independent sovereign state. Accordingly, "It is not a violation of the Constitution for Japan to maintain an organization for self-defense, and to establish a competent force with the necessary levels of armed capability to carry out this objective."

In fact, the National Police Reserve, which was the precursor to the SDF, had already been established before this, on August 10, 1950. When the Korean War broke out on June 25 that year, members of the United States Army Forces in the Far East stationed in Japan were sent to Korea as United Nations (UN) troops. Since this led to a shortage of personnel

to maintain public order within Japan, an armed organization was formed as a matter of urgency on instructions from the General Headquarters of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (GHQ) to make up for this deficiency. At the same time, it was made clear that this new organization was not a military organization, but merely a police reserve that should be regarded as an extension of the existing police powers. With this interpretation, a third way was taken avoiding both the necessity of revising Article 9 and the extreme interpretation of Article 9 according to which Japan could maintain no armed forces whatsoever, and declaring explicitly that Japan would remilitarize. In effect, Japan pushed ahead with incremental de facto rearmament, while maintaining Article 9 of the Constitution.

While Japanese memories of the disastrous experience of World War II caused by rampant military power remained raw, revision of Article 9 was impossible. At the same time, as the Cold War tensions continued to intensify, the US applied considerable pressure on Japan to remilitarize. Within Japan itself, conservative parties like the Kaishinto Party also pushed for Japan to reestablish armed forces. The government's interpretation of 1954 represented a balancing point. In the following year, 1955, West Germany joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Bundeswehr (Federal Defence Forces of Germany) was formed at the same time as part of the same set of

policy decisions.

The point for the government interpretation of 1954 was how to reconcile the wording of Article 9, which declared that "land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, would never be maintained," with the existence of the SDF, which had already been founded as a force. To ensure consistency, the Japanese government incorporated *senryoku* as the concept of "minimum necessary force for self-defense." If the SDF was seen as *senryoku*, they would contravene the Constitution. But the SDF was not *senryoku* and only a "minimum necessary force for self-defense," so their existence would be brought in line with the stipulations of the Constitution. This interpretation helped to secure the constitutionality of the SDF.

But what does the "minimum necessary force for self-defense" really mean in practice? In effect, this was defined by contrasting it with examples that would exceed the "minimum necessary force for self-defense."

Let us look at some cases, following developments as outlined below. One example of exceeding the minimum necessary force was the use of force overseas for any purpose other than self-defense, such as the use of force in activities within the framework of the UN.

Another would be the exercise of the right of collective self-defense. This way

of thinking deliberately ties the concept of “minimum necessary force for self-defense” to the difference between individual and collective self-defense in international law, and holds that while the first of these falls within the extent of the minimum necessary for self-defense, the latter does not. This interpretation marks a major difference with Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which regards an attack on one or more of the parties as an attack against them all.

This insistence that Japan would not use force overseas for reasons other than self-defense, and would not exercise the right of collective defense even in self-defense, was seen as evidence that the SDF represented a “minimum necessary force for self-defense,” and not the *senryoku* whose maintenance was forbidden by Article 9.

In fact, during the Cold War period, there were almost no circumstances in which it would have been necessary to deploy the SDF overseas or exercise the right of collective self-defense.

On September 8, 1951, Japan concluded a Treaty of Mutual Security and Cooperation with the US. This was revised on January 19, 1960, and continues in effect today. The framework of the Japan-US Security Treaty can be expressed as cooperation of material (*mono*) and personnel (*hito*). Japan gives material assistance to the US by providing the use of bases in Japan, while the US provides personnel:

namely US troops who will fight for Japan if necessary. The basic framework of the Japan-US Security Treaty is an exchange, centered on the use of US bases in Japan. Japan allows the US to use bases in Japan, and in exchange the US agrees to defend Japan from enemy attack.

During the Cold War era, the provision of bases to the US under this treaty formed the core of Japan’s contributions to the Western side. The foundation of Japan’s security policy was to provide bases to the US, and at the same time gradually rebuild the defensive capability that had been reduced to zero as a result of Japan’s disarmament after the war. Subsequently, Japan gradually put its defensive capabilities in place, under four Five-Year Defense Buildup Plans. In the 1970s, these Five-Year Plans were replaced by the *National Defense Program Guidelines* (*boei taiko*; now known as the *National Defense Strategy*).

Within Japan, there were deep differences of outlook and political sympathies during the Cold War that reflected the ideological divide between the eastern and western blocs. As the main opposition party for many years, the Japan Socialist Party campaigned for a position of demilitarized neutrality for Japan. Within Japanese society, there was a deep-rooted school of opinion that regarded the existence of the SDF as contravening the Constitution, and in this climate, it was easy to accuse any suggested change to national security policy of being tantamount to a “revival

of Japanese militarism.” Deploying the SDF overseas or exercising the right of collective self-defense would have been out of the question. The defense policy continued to be subject to strict restrictions, including a cabinet decision (November 5, 1976) that set the size of the defense budget to no more than 1% of GNP (although this was later scrapped by a subsequent cabinet decision of December 30, 1986, in fact defense spending continued at around 1% of GNP) and the principle of an “Exclusively Defense-Oriented Policy (*senshu boei*),” which limited Japan’s ability to develop a counter-strike capability. The Exclusively Defense-Oriented Policy dictated that Japan would use force only after coming under attack from another country, and even then would use only the minimum amount of force necessary to repel the attack. Answers given to the Diet on July 5, 1955 by Arata Sugihara, then Director-General of the Defense Agency, are generally taken as the first explicit mention of this policy.

(2) Peacekeeping operations and the “War on Terror”

The second period started after the end of the Cold War. During this time, Japan started to participate more actively in international peacekeeping operations.

The event that prompted the shift from the position that had prevailed during the Cold War was the crisis in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf War that followed

from 1990 to 1991 after the end of the Cold War. Following a UN resolution, an international military coalition moved to expel Iraqi troops from occupied Kuwait. Japan’s contribution was mostly limited to financial support, and this led to stinging criticism from the international community. Inspired partly by the fact that Germany had sent minesweepers to the Persian Gulf, Japan decided to follow suit, and eventually managed to gain a certain amount of recognition for its contributions.

This prompted a debate on what Japan could do under the limitations enforced by Article 9 not in response to an invasion or in self-defense, but within the context of international peacekeeping operations. On June 19, 1992, the Act on Cooperation with United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Other Operations (PKO Act) was ratified, allowing the SDF to participate in PKOs. And on September 17 that year, the SDF was duly dispatched to join PKO activities in Cambodia.

As evidence for the constitutionality of participation in PKO activities by the SDF, there was a debate, initially within the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), centered on the idea known as “Ozawa’s theory.” This was based on ideas expressed in a statement on the subject given on February 20, 1991, by a research committee headed by Ichiro Ozawa, former Secretary-General of the LDP. This defined the first clause of Article 9 as renouncing invasive wars

of aggression, and claimed that Article 9 did not renounce the “use of force within the framework of the UN,” and argued that even if the SDF used force in the course of participation in international peacekeeping, this would not contravene the constitutional ban on maintaining *senryoku*.

Ultimately, however, the Japanese government looked for evidence that participation in PKOs by the SDF was constitutional not in the Ozawa’s theory, but in the traditional thinking about the “minimum necessary force for self-defense.” On April 28, 1992, Atsuo Kudo, Commissioner of the Cabinet Legislation Bureau, said in answer to a question in the Diet that the participation of SDF personnel in PKO missions overseas would not be regarded internationally as a use of force by Japan, and that this did not represent the dispatch of armed force overseas as banned by the Constitution. On the other hand, it could be argued that since participation in international peacekeeping was not self-defense, the use of force in this kind of operation would be unconstitutional.

This led to arguments about the “integration (*ittaiika*)” of the SDF in actions that were tantamount to the use of force. If the SDF is engaged in operations overseas, for example participation in PKOs, they may assist armed forces from other countries engaged in the same activities, such as by replenishing supplies or transportation. These activities themselves do not represent the use

of force. But, according to the “integration” argument, there might be cases in which Japan would be legally adjudged to have been engaged in the use of force as well, because of the closeness of its involvement in the exercise of force by others. The argument is that when another country’s forces are engaged in the use of force, the activities of the SDF, through their close involvement with these forces, might become “integrated” in practice with the use of force by that country’s forces—and that Article 9 does not allow the SDF to participate in activities of this kind.

Later, in the context of the “war on terrorism” in the aftermath of the attacks on the US on September 11, 2001, the SDF was dispatched to the Indian Ocean and Iraq. Unlike the German involvement in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), the SDF only engaged in activities that did not involve the use of force, such as refueling support to the “Coalition of the Willing” and humanitarian and reconstruction assistance and security assistance in Iraq. In this context, too, in addition to a strict prohibition on activities by the SDF itself, the areas within which the SDF was allowed to operate were limited to “non-combat zones (*hi sento chiiki*; specifically, the SDF was dispatched to Samawah)”. This was driven by the need to be able to demonstrate that the SDF was operating in non-combat zones set apart from the “combat zones” within which the troops of other countries were engaged in the use of force, to avoid any possibility of

“integration” with the use of force by other countries’ troops.

(3) Limited recognition of the exercise of the right of collective self-defense

The third period covered the years up to the passage of the recent package of security-related legislation in 2015.

In the years that followed the Gulf War, Japan successfully sent the SDF to participate in PKOs and to help in the “war against terrorism,” while managing to balance this against the provisions in Article 9.

Meanwhile, the international security environment surrounding Japan has become increasingly challenging in recent years. China has been behaving increasingly like a regional hegemon, while North Korea has worked to develop its nuclear and missile capabilities. In this challenging environment, a problem for Japan was that for many years, Japan had taken the view that the collective self-defense exceeded the “minimum necessary force for self-defense.” According to this view, even if US forces active near Japan and contributing to Japan’s security came under attack from a third country, the SDF would not be able to launch a counterattack unless they were attacked themselves. Likewise, if a third country launched missiles at the US, Japan would not be able to intercept the missiles, despite

having the capability to do so.

For many years, invoking the right of self-defense had always come with the proviso that it meant “in the event of an armed attack against Japan.” In other words, it was only the exercise of the right of individual self-defense that was recognized. This changed on July 1, 2014, when a cabinet decision under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe added a new set of conditions that allowed Japan to use force “also when an armed attack against a foreign country that is in a close relationship with Japan occurs and as a result threatens Japan’s survival and poses a clear danger to fundamentally overturn people’s right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness.” This opened the way to legislation to allow Japan to exercise the right of collective self-defense.

Even so, for the exercise of the right of collective self-defense to be recognized, it was not sufficient for an attack to have taken place against a country that is in a close relationship with Japan—it was also limited to a situation that “as a result threatens Japan’s survival and poses a clear danger to fundamentally overturn people’s right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness” (a so-called “Survival-Threatening Situation”). This imposition of such strict limits on the exercise of the right of collective self-defense was felt to be necessary because the constitutional interpretation of the “minimum necessary force for self-defense” was still maintained. The decision to impose limits on the exercise of the

right of collective self-defense can be seen as having created a framework for defending the “minimum necessary” line.

Based on the 2014 cabinet decision, on September 19, 2015, Japan passed the new package of Legislation for Peace and Security. This recognized that Japan could exercise the right of collective self-defense in Survival-Threatening Situation. The same legislation also allowed an expansion of participation by the SDF in PKOs and similar activities. Following this new legislation, the geographical limits that restricted the SDF to participation in PKOs only within non-combat zones were scrapped, and revised to allow them to operate in zones other than those in which actual combat is taking place.

In spite of these changes, however, the previous constitutional interpretations—that Japan can maintain only the “minimum necessary force for self-defense,” and that contributions to PKOs must not be integrated with the use of force—have not changed. The limited recognition of the exercise of the right of collective self-defense, precisely by limiting the conditions within which Japan can exercise this right, serves to underline that Japan’s recourse to the right of collective self-defense remains within the boundaries of the “minimum necessary force for self-defense.” Although the new definition of the areas within which the SDF can participate in PKOs as “zones in which other countries

are not actively engaged in combat operations” is more lenient than the previous restrictions, which limited the SDF to “non-combat zones,” it nevertheless still attempts to guarantee that SDF activities in these areas will not become “integrated with the use of force” by other nations. In this respect, the restrictions remain unchanged.

The present situation and agendas of the Constitution and national defense

Despite the changes outlined above, there is still a tendency in some sectors of Japanese society to regard the very existence of the SDF as contravening the Constitution. And even if people do recognize the constitutionality of the SDF, it is necessary to follow the rather tangled logic that we have seen in the previous section. Given this, there is a school of opinion, heard chiefly from conservatives, that argues in favor of revising the Constitution to insert a clear reference to the existence of the SDF.

Under Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, the ruling LDP was victorious in the elections for the House of Councillors held in July 2022, having made an election pledge to amend the Constitution. However, the concept of “constitutional revision” is not as straightforward as it might appear at first glance, and numerous possible approaches exist. The proposal for constitutional revision put together

by the LDP on March 26, 2018, says that it will maintain both clauses of Article 9 as it currently stands as well as the existing constitutional interpretations. The proposal says adding a new clause in addition to these, making clear and explicit reference to the maintenance of the SDF.

It is true that the Legislation for Peace and Security does not resolve all the issues with regard to the Constitution and defense. For as long as Japan holds to the constitutional interpretation that says the country can maintain SDF only to the “minimum necessary for self-defense,” it will continue to be necessary to draw a line somewhere that defines what that “minimum necessary” means in practical terms.

On collective self-defense, the Peace and Security Legislation marks a limited acknowledgment of this right. For example, Ken Jimbo, a specialist on security affairs, has argued that the current legal interpretation does not make it clear whether Japan can intercept missiles fired by a third country at a target outside Japan itself (for example on US territory or US troops operating at sea). Likewise, the argument that PKOs must not be “integrated” with the use of force is still maintained as before. This means that even in international peacekeeping and similar operations, the SDF is still limited to operating in zones where other countries are not currently engaged in actual combat. Opinions are likely to differ on whether

this delineation will be effective in actual operations.

Meanwhile, if the plan for constitutional revision is merely to add a clause explicitly making clear the existence of the SDF, then ultimately the question whether the SDF represent *senryoku* renounced in the second clause of Article 9 will continue to be a point of contention for as long as the second clause remains in place. In this sense, the main purpose of the new clause may be to elevate existing government interpretations to the level of formal inclusion in the text of the Constitution. Of course, this would not be without significance in itself—but nevertheless, issues remain, in particular the need to weigh the significance of a limited amendment of this kind against the possibility of widespread unrest accompanied by an organized opposition movement and the risk that a proposal to amend the Constitution might be defeated in a referendum (a defeat that would damage the legitimacy of the SDF and would make the prospect of meaningful constitutional change unthinkable for the foreseeable future).

Conclusion

As we have seen in this article, the main events from the 1950s (when the government’s interpretation of the Constitution affecting national security became established) until the present can be thought of in three separate stages.

First was the period up to the end of the Cold War. During the Cold War era, Japan's provision of bases to US forces under the terms of the Japan-US Security Treaty was highly significant in itself, and simply by pursuing an incremental defensive capability under the constitutional interpretation that it was allowed to maintain the minimum necessary for self-defense, Japan was recognized as playing a role within the Western alliance. By contrast, any response that went beyond this in national security policy was made impossible by fierce ideological disagreements within the country.

Second was the period after the Gulf War, when Japan started to contribute to international peacekeeping. However, evidence for the constitutionality of the SDF participation in PKOs and the "war on terrorism" continued to be based on the concept of the "minimum necessary for self-defense."

Third was the period that lasted until the enactment of the Peace and Security Legislation, in the context of an increasingly challenging security environment in East Asia. The enactment of this legislation made possible the exercise of the right of collective self-defense and an expansion in the scope of participation in PKOs. Even so, the constitutional interpretation that SDF should be limited to the "minimum necessary force for self-defense" continues to be maintained.

Because of the complications and limits of the constitutional interpretations on national security, there is a certain amount of support for the idea of constitutional revision. However, as I explained at the outset, the Constitution itself sets the hurdles to revision quite high, and it is difficult to see any meaningful constitutional reform becoming a reality in the near future.

Some people believe that Japan should simply change the traditional "minimum necessary force for self-defense" interpretation of the Constitution, without necessarily amending the Constitution itself. This view argues that Article 9 prohibits only wars of invasion, and does not restrict the exercise of the right of self-defense as recognized by international law or the use of force as part of measures for collective security based on the UN Charter. However, constitutional scholar Masanari Sakamoto has raised doubts about whether this interpretation reflects an appropriate understanding of the Japanese text of the first clause of Article 9.

The concept of "minimum necessary force for self-defense" has been the biggest point in the relationship between the Constitution and national defense in postwar Japan. It is fair to say that how Japan interprets and organizes this concept in light of the regional security environment will be the focus in the years to come.

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5

Russia's Invasion of Ukraine Obliges Revision of the Japanese Constitution

Akihisa NAGASHIMA

Russia's invasion of Ukraine launched on February 24, 2022 was a reckless act that destroyed the post-war international order. That world order had been underpinned by a system of international cooperation led by the United Nations (UN) comprising the Second World War's victors, combined with a nuclear non-proliferation regime created by the five permanent member nations of the UN Security Council (the permanent five, or P5). The nuclear non-proliferation regime is an international arrangement that entrusts the "adult supervision" of nuclear arms to five nations with nuclear capability (the US, Russia, the UK, France, and China), and does not allow any other nations to possess nuclear arms. However, Russia, which was supposed to be one of the "adults" to strictly supervise the use of nuclear arms, has not only failed to supervise, but has actually engaged in nuclear intimidation against Ukraine, a nation without nuclear capability. This is very different from North Korea, one of the poorest countries in the world, showing off its nuclear weapons; what President Putin has done is to invade another country, trample on the UN Charter, and use nuclear intimidation to fundamentally undermine the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Turning to post-war Japan, our country espoused the principles of pacifism and international cooperation enshrined in its Constitution, resuming its place within the international community in 1952. The principle of pacifism was stipulated

in both the preamble and Article 9 of the Constitution, and provided the basis for post-war Japan's self-restraining security strategy, including our exclusively defense-oriented policy and the Three Non-Nuclear Principles. Meanwhile, the principle of international cooperation was reflected in the diplomatic stance fully supporting the UN-led international order, primarily from an economic perspective. I refer to this combination of approaches as our "post-war diplomatic and security regime." However, the foundations upon which Japan built its post-war regime has collapsed due to Russia's recent atrocities. That is to say, the dramatic developments marking this new era of war in Ukraine have produced a situation in which the very *raison d'être* of the Japanese Constitution is being called into question.

It is well known that the Japanese Constitution's pacifism shares common origins with the ideals expressed in the UN Charter. The first paragraph of the Constitution's Article 9 includes the statement "...the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes." These words are virtually identical in meaning to the UN Charter's Article 2 Item 3, "All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered" and Article 2 item 4, "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the

threat or use of force....” However, the second paragraph of the Constitution’s Article 9, including the statement “land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized” is a provision unique to the Japanese Constitution. This was what provided the basis for post-war Japan’s unusual security strategy. In particular, Japan’s exclusively defense-oriented policy, which is the fundamental principle guiding its approach to defense, is explicitly described in the *Defense of Japan* (Annual White Paper) as meaning that “defensive force is used only in the event of an attack, that the extent of the use of defensive force is kept to the minimum necessary for self-defense, and that the defense capabilities to be possessed and maintained by Japan are limited to the minimum necessary for self-defense. The policy including these matters refers to the posture of a passive defense strategy in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution.” There is nothing surprising about the first part of this description—a posture of passive defense, whereby “defensive force is used only in the event of an attack”—given that it corresponds to international law, which clearly prohibits preemptive attacks. However, the second part, stating that both “the use of defensive force and the defense capabilities to be possessed and maintained” must be kept to “the minimum necessary” represents a surprisingly reluctant attitude toward defense. The reason I say this is that other countries defend peace and the

lives of their citizens by maintaining considerable defense capabilities and using them to the full. In contrast, such an excessively self-restrained policy on the part of Japan very much reflects the post-war global context and anti-war sentiment among the Japanese people that gave rise to the pacifism enshrined in Japan’s Constitution.

Japan’s Constitution was influenced particularly by the three basic points relating to its revision (known as the MacArthur Notes) proposed to the Japanese on February 3, 1946 by US Army General Douglas MacArthur who was the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers that occupied Japan for seven and a half years. MacArthur’s second basic point, presented below, was incorporated fully into the Constitution’s preamble (“...we have determined to preserve our security and existence, trusting in the justice and faith of the peace-loving peoples of the world. ...”), as well as Article 9:

War as a sovereign right of the nation is abolished. Japan renounces it as an instrumentality for settling its disputes and even for preserving its own security. It relies upon the higher ideals which are now stirring the world for its defense and its protection. No Japanese Army, Navy, or Air Force will ever be authorized and no rights of belligerency will ever be conferred upon any Japanese force.

However, post-war Japan's security policy, based on the pacifism of a Constitution drafted under such circumstances, must now confront today's tense international situation while still containing three arguably critical anomalies. They are: (1) the Constitution's key precept is now mere formality, (2) Japan has intensified its sense of dependence on US, and (3) the burden on the Japanese people has grown. I explain these three issues in order below.

The first anomaly is the irreconcilable gap between the Constitution's stipulation that "land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained" and the existence of Japan's ground, maritime, and air Self-Defense Forces (SDF), which are among the largest and most powerful armed forces in the world. In the early years of the Constitution, the SDF (including its precursor) was indeed small in scale, lending some plausibility to responses the government often gave to questions in the National Diet, such as the explanation that Japan's self-defense capability did not amount to war potential (of the type prohibited in the Constitution). However, Japan is now the world's fifth-largest military power in terms of the size of its budget. Asserting that self-defense forces on this scale do not correspond to war potential is simply disingenuous. In short, the continuous growth of Japan's defense capabilities as the surrounding security situation intensified means that the Constitutional precept prohibiting

maintenance of war potential has now been reduced to merely an empty shell.

The second anomaly relates to the government's adherence to an exclusively defense-oriented strategy in order to comply with the Constitution, which has had the effect of constraining Japan's defense capability to the minimum necessary for self-defense. As a result, until recently, Japan was prohibited from exercising the right to collective self-defense to contribute to the mutual defense of its allies, and even the SDF's participation in UN peace-keeping operations outside Japan faced major constraints. In addition, strict curbs have been placed on Japanese action to prevent the maintenance of offensive weapons and uphold the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, as well as on our security-related initiatives in the aerospace sector. In trying to make up for this inability to adequately help itself, Japan has become utterly over-reliant on the US and its other allies regarding all aspects of national security. A prime example of this over-reliance occurs every time the US president changes, when the Japanese government adopts a subservient stance by reconfirming that the US will fulfill its obligation to defend Japan under Article 5 of the Japan-US Security Treaty with regard to the Japanese territory of the Senkaku Islands.

The third anomaly could be described as the flip-side of the second, namely, the inequality and unfairness intrinsic to the

Japan-US Security Treaty. Article 5 of the treaty states only that the US would act jointly with Japan to counter any armed attack in the territories under the administration of Japan, and mentions nothing about any obligation Japan might have to defend US territories. From the US perspective, this provision is clearly unfair. On the other hand, Article 6 attempts to make up for Article 5, so to speak, by specifying Japan's obligation to grant the US military use of bases and facilities in Japan in order to maintain peace and security in the Far East. From the Japanese perspective, this provision represents inequality. In other words, the Japan-US alliance—unlike other US treaties of alliance—is not a mutual defense treaty. That is why the Japanese people are forced to put up with all the accidents, other incidents, noise pollution, and environmental damages caused by US military bases that resemble vestiges of the occupation era. The structural instability in the Japan-US alliance caused by this anomaly has always been its Achilles' heel, casting a dark shadow wherever alliance-based cooperation takes place.

For reasons including the resolution of these anomalies, Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution should be revised. The revision I propose is a straightforward one, as follows: simply delete Article 9's second paragraph, retaining its first paragraph. As I pointed out earlier, the first paragraph of Article 9 corresponds to the UN Charter's ideals; if interpreted in conjunction with the principle of international cooperation expressed in the Constitution's preamble, this paragraph does not excessively restrict Japan's security strategy. The problem lies in the provisions of Article 9's second paragraph, which are now divorced from reality. Removal of these provisions will allow for a significantly more proactive diplomatic and security strategy, while retention of Article 9's first paragraph will serve to reaffirm this country's declaration to all parties inside and outside Japan that we will never again be an aggressor nation. Only by doing so will Japan be able to break free of its post-war diplomatic and security regime and more actively fulfill its obligation to maintain and develop the international order as a typical sovereign state and an equal ally to the US.

Akihisa NAGASHIMA



Akihisa Nagashima is a 7th term Member of the House of Representatives with the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan (LDP). He joined the LDP in June 2019. He currently serves as the party's Deputy Chairperson of Policy Research Council and Acting Director-General of International Bureau.

He previously served as Senior Vice Minister of Defense in the Noda Cabinet in 2012. He also served as Special Advisor to Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda for Foreign Affairs and National Security between 2011–2012, and as Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Defense in the Hatoyama and the following Kan Cabinets in 2009–2010.

Prior to his political career, Nagashima joined the Council on Foreign Relations in 1997, working at the Council's Washington Office as Research Associate for the Task Force on Korea, and lately as Adjunct Senior Fellow in Asia Studies. Before studying and working in Washington, D.C., he conducted research on the history of the Japan-US alliance as a visiting scholar at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, from 1993–95.

He earned his M.A. in International Relations/International Economics from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in Washington, D.C. in 1997, and received an LL.M. in Constitutional Law from Keio University Graduate School of Law, Tokyo, in 1988.



Japan's Constitution and Role as a Middle Power

Masaharu NAKAGAWA

Introduction

It is a fact that a variety of opinions exist with regard to the Japanese Constitution that was drawn up during the US occupation after World War II, including some who argue that Japan should revise the Constitution and formulate a new, autonomous constitution. However, it is also true that the path Japan has followed from the end of the war to the present, guided by the universal values of peace, democracy, and respect for human rights, has contributed to a positive evaluation of the current Constitution. Even if changing times mean that there must eventually be a debate on constitutional reform, the Constitutional Democratic Party does not support the argument that Japan should come up with a totally new autonomous constitution.

Developments to date, the status quo, and outstanding issues

With regard to national security, Article 9 of the Constitution renounces war and states that Japan will not maintain armed forces and does not recognize the right of belligerency. Even from the period when the Constitution was first enacted, however, the interpretation of successive Japanese governments was that this provision does not deny Japan the right to defend its own territory and interests. Later, when the Korean War began, in the context of increasing instability in the region, the Japanese government

established the National Police Reserve, later the Self-Defense Forces (SDFs), and effectively moved to restore some of the nation's military strength. At the same time, the signing of the US-Japan Security Treaty clarified the duty of the United States to come to Japan's defense. Japan would limit its defense program to the minimum necessary for self-defense (and would maintain an exclusively defense-oriented policy), while otherwise relying on the deterrent force of the United States. In exchange, Japan allowed the United States the use of bases in Japan to pursue US security policy in the Far East.

In the years that followed, the Japanese government's interpretation of the Constitution was based on the assumption that Japan as a sovereign state naturally possesses the right to self-defense as determined by international law. Even under Article 9 of the Constitution, the renunciation of military potential did not include the exercise of individual self-defense, and the Constitution was understood to allow Japan to maintain minimal forces at a level necessary for self-defense. The country operated the SDFs on this basis. Successive governments maintained the position that Japan's strategy was based on the exclusively defense-oriented policy, limiting the possible use of the SDFs to the right to individual self-defense and refusing to commit to the right to collective self-defense. For many years, until the passing of the recent Legislation for Peace and Security, debates on defense in the

National Diet were always based on this interpretation of the Constitution.

What has been the role of Japan's inhibitory defense framework, as defined by Article 9, in the decades since the war? Let me state my conclusion first: Broadly speaking, I believe that the Constitution, which delivered peace and allowed the country to focus on economic recovery and development, and the way in which it has been interpreted and administered by governments over the years, have been largely positive for Japan.

Basically, the Constitution has performed three important roles.

First, the Japanese Constitution played the fundamental role of developing trust in Japan among neighboring countries. Before the war, in an attempt to compete with the Western imperial powers, Japan colonized Korea and Taiwan, and then launched advances into Manchuria and Southeast Asia that eventually led to its defeat in the war. There was skepticism in neighboring countries about whether postwar Japan would truly be reborn as a nation based on the keynotes of peace and democracy. Japan worked to gain the trust of these countries by explaining that it would operate the exclusively defense-oriented policy, based on the ideal of pacifism as laid out in the Constitution.

Second, through the signing of the US-Japan Security Treaty, it was possible to keep Japan's defense budget spending

to a minimum. Under the terms of the Japan-US Alliance, Japan allowed the United States to use bases in Japan and provided an important foothold for US security strategy in the Far East. In return, the United States guaranteed a deterrent for Japan, including the protection of its nuclear umbrella. The United States has repeatedly pressed Japan to assume a more proactive military role, but Japan has consistently insisted on maintaining the exclusively defense-oriented policy. In terms of the shield and the spear, Japan has used the provisions in the Constitution to explain to the rest of the world its decision to focus exclusively on the defensive qualities of the shield.

Third, by placing a clear constitutional brake on the possibility of Japan's ever becoming a military threat to other countries, the Constitution has helped to build the fundamental trust necessary for Japan to move forward with its peace-based diplomacy as a middle power. When the United States differentiates clearly between enemies and friends, and pursues a hardline foreign policy as a superpower, based chiefly on military pressure, this stance provides room for Japan, as a country that does not rely on military power, to act as an intermediary in diplomatic negotiations. As tensions and antagonisms increase between the United States and China, proceeding only in one direction will exacerbate the instability in the regional security situation. Japan's role should be to exercise neutral diplomatic efforts

to ensure that these tensions do not escalate. There is also value in maintaining the potential to find solutions through Japan's distinctive position in responding to authoritarian regimes in countries like Iran, Myanmar, and North Korea. A situation that makes it possible for Japan to set limits on its own military spending, to do without offensive military potential, and to pursue peace-based diplomacy, is extremely valuable for a middle power caught between antagonistic superpowers. Japanese diplomacy should make greater use of these advantages, and look to build an autonomous foreign policy.

I believe that we also need to think about a new response to the international changes that have taken place in recent years, affecting conditions in the region around Japan. The time has surely come to explore the potential to develop Japan's current security strategy, based on its bilateral alliance with the United States, into one that can evolve into a collective security framework, including United Nations reforms.

Among the major changes in the international climate in recent years, the rise of China and Russia's invasion of Ukraine have increased concerns about a possible emergency involving Taiwan. At the same time, the progress of North Korea's nuclear and missile development programs has increased the threat to Japan. In response to these trends, it is important that the Japanese government does not limit its vision to the

relationship with the United States but looks beyond that to develop multilateral cooperative relationships in the Indo-Pacific region through the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) framework that incorporates Australia and India. In particular, in the context of escalating tensions between the United States and China, it will be important for Japan, which has traditionally relied exclusively on its Security Treaty with the United States, to develop closer relationships with the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and countries like South Korea and Canada, in addition to the Quad framework. As a security direction for Japanese diplomacy, I think it will be important for Japan to build on the Japan-US Security Treaty framework, which has functioned in the past as a bilateral arrangement, and look to develop it into a collective security framework, and in this way check China's aspirations toward hegemony in the region. NATO and the EU have played an important role in the security of their respective regions. Likewise in the Asia-Pacific, the security framework should be not structured solely around the antagonisms between major powers like the United States, China, and Russia. Japan should take the lead as a middle power in working to build a collective security system by collaborating with Quad and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as well as countries like South Korea and Canada.

Conclusion

If there is to be a debate in Japan on revising Article 9 of the Constitution, this discussion must not simply be along the lines of the argument that as an American ally Japan should change its policy to allow it to fight alongside the United States, simply because that is what is being demanded by the United States. Neither should Japan scrap its focus on the right to individual self-defense and embrace the right of collective self-defense simply for this reason. In terms of the bilateral alliance with the United States, the current division of offensive and defensive roles (the shield and the spear) represents the best option for Japan as a middle power. Japan should continue to maintain this division of roles as a middle power based on the exclusively defense-oriented policy. However, if in the future the possibility emerges of achieving a collective security system based on the United Nations or multilateral cooperation in the Asian region, this will provide an opportunity to think seriously about constitutional revision. Japan should play a proactive role and should take the lead in promoting regional security policy. The time for a debate on constitutional reform will be when the world moves to establish a system of this kind. I want to build a national consensus, by debating the norms and provisions of the constitution, including how Japan should be involved in the military side. Space, cybersecurity, electromagnetic waves, and other things, and their relationship

with constitutional rules and guidelines, are a challenge for the future. At the present stage, what is required is to work steadily to build Japanese independence and a defense vision for Japan as a middle power, in response to changes in the actual security environment. At the same time, it will also be important to work to secure understanding for Japan's position, not only among countries in Asia, but also from the United States and the EU countries.

Reference material

From the preamble to the Constitution of Japan

We, the Japanese people, desire peace for all time and are deeply conscious of the high ideals controlling human relationships, and we have determined to preserve our security and existence, trusting in the justice and faith of the peace-loving peoples of the world.

Article 9 of the Constitution of Japan

Article 9. Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.

2. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.

US-Japan Security Treaty Articles V and VI

Article V

Each Party recognizes that an armed attack against either Party in the territories under the administration of Japan would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional provisions and processes.

Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall be immediately reported to the Security Council of the United Nations in accordance with the provisions of Article 51 of the Charter. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security.

Article VI

For the purpose of contributing to the security of Japan and the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East, the United States of America is granted the use by its land, air and naval forces of facilities and areas in Japan. The use of these facilities and areas as well as the status of United States armed forces in Japan shall be governed by a separate agreement, replacing the Administrative Agreement under Article III of the Security Treaty between Japan and the United States of America, signed at Tokyo on February 28, 1952, as amended, and by such other arrangements as may be agreed upon.

Masaharu NAKAGAWA



Masaharu Nakagawa is Member of the House of Representatives (9th term) with the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan (CDP).

He started his career at the Japan Foundation. After serving as Member of Mie Prefectural Assembly for 12 years (three terms), he was first elected as Member of the House of Representatives in 1996. As Next (Shadow) Finance Minister of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), he committed himself in creating the manifesto for the 2009 summer election.

In the DPJ administration, led by PM Yukio Hatoyama in 2009, he served as Senior Vice Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. Moreover, in the Naoto Kan administration from 2010, he was appointed Chair of Foreign Relations and Security Research Committee in the ruling party. In the Yoshihiko Noda administration, he was sworn in as Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. Finally, he was given the portfolio of Disaster Management, New Public Commons, Gender Equality and Civil Service Reform in 2012.

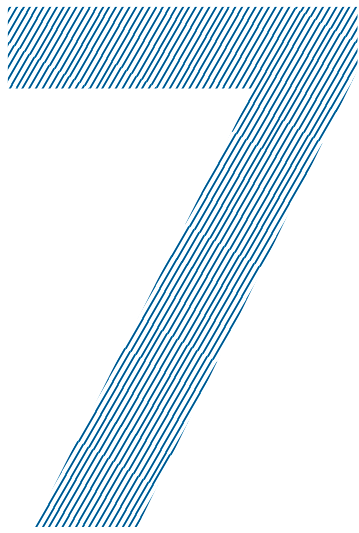
After the national election in 2012, he served as the Acting Secretary-General of the opposition. He struggled for the DPJ's recovery in the Parliament. And he served as Chair of General Meeting of DP Diet Members and as Chair of CDP Constitutional Research Committee.

He is actively involved in issues such as e-books, ethnic groups in Myanmar, and promoting the acceptance of foreigners and multicultural coexistence society, joint studies of the histories of Japan and South Korea. For creating a more equal and civil society internationally, he has established the Progressive Caucus Japan, a group of Japanese Progressive parliamentarians.



Section II

Japan in the Indo-Pacific



Japan and the United States:
Past, Present, and Future

Tsuneo WATANABE

Introduction: Reasons for high assessments of the late Shinzo Abe in the United States

On July 20, 2022, the United States Senate adopted a unanimous resolution honoring the achievements of the late Shinzo Abe, former Prime Minister of Japan who was assassinated on July 8 at a political rally. The wording of the resolution praised Abe for his efforts in strengthening the US-Japan Alliance, as well as expanding the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)” strategy. It likewise extolled him for “leadership that laid a lasting foundation for the United States and Japan to partner for decades in promoting freedom, prosperity, and security around the world, and opposing authoritarianism and tyranny.”

Compared to past administrations of Abe’s Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), his government earned notably high marks in America. The reason for this lies in the role Abe played in engineering the transition away from the national policy known as the “Yoshida Doctrine,” a liberal route for Japan’s national strategy distinguished by economic growth and light armament maintained in the past, to the pragmatically rooted “Proactive Contribution to Peace” for the purpose of realizing the FOIP. The Yoshida Doctrine, essentially maintained by all Japanese administrations previous to Abe, was a strategy adopted by Japan under Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida (the prime

minister from 1946 to 1947 and from 1948 to 1954) following the nation’s defeat in 1945. It focused upon reconstructing Japan’s domestic economy while relying heavily on the security alliance with the United States. The basic policy was to contain investment in military strength to the minimum necessary level, while expanding the national budget for economic growth and social security in moving to stabilize the administration. The Yoshida Doctrine was a national strategy, which succeeded in paving the way to Japan’s high economic growth from the 1960s, while instilling a particularly stable political foundation for the LDP even among the ranks of democratic countries around the world.

However, LDP administrations prior to the Abe era chose to adopt only a moderate approach to the overseas dispatch of Self-Defense Forces (SDF) and bolstering of Japan’s own military strength for the purpose of upholding the functions of the US-Japan Alliance and United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. The reason for that route lies in the fact that during the Cold War, an agreement was reached with the Japan Socialist Party (JSP) and other left-wing political parties to not recognize the exercising of the right of collective self-defense as stated in the Japanese constitution. This stance can be said to exist in stark contrast to European allies, which participated in the multilateral alliance of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) upon the foundation of exercising the right of collective self-defense.

This changed with the first Abe Cabinet, which took control of Japan's government in 2006. Abe defined the state of Japanese politics under the aforementioned restrictions on Japan's defense and security as the "Postwar Regime," while clarifying his stance of moving away from those checks. These attempts prompted warnings not only from Japan's domestic left wing, but also from liberals in the United States. Before winning wide-based support for this stance, however, Abe's personal health issues forced him to step down as Prime Minister. As it turned out, however, the policies of the following two LDP cabinets, along with the three Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) cabinets after that, disappointed Japanese voters in terms of both the diplomatic security and economic fronts. In the general election of December 2012, an LDP administration headed by the now healthy Abe was returned to power.

It was also around this time that China shifted to a policy of regular intrusion by its coastguard vessels into the waters around the Senkaku Islands—a group of uninhabited isles in the East China Sea owned and administrated by Japan. In September 2012, the DPJ administration of Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda arranged for government purchase of one portion of those islands from the existing Japanese owner. This action triggered major scale anti-Japanese demonstrations in China, which in turn aggravated anti-China sentiment among the Japanese people and fueled the hopes of the hawkish Prime Minister Abe.

The second Abe administration championed the economic policy known as "Abenomics"—a mix of quantitative easing and expansionary fiscal policy, which produced a certain degree of progress in stabilizing his government. In 2014, Abe's Cabinet promoted a decision that partially approved the exercise of the right of collective self-defense. Peace and security legislation based on that new constitutional interpretation was enacted in 2015 on the strength of collaboration with LDP coalition partner party Komeito. Rooted in these foundations, at the very least Japan managed to define the legal foundation for the use of force, even in cases other than for purposes of protecting its own nation, within the scope of the US-Japan Alliance and multilateral security missions.

Moreover, in addition to unveiling the strategic concept of the FOIP, the Quad Leaders' Meeting, a concept targeting broad-based collaboration between the US, Japan, Australia, and India, including the quest for security in the Indo-Pacific region, was originally proposed by Prime Minister Abe in 2007. US President Joe Biden, in a telephone conference with current Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida following Abe's death, praised Abe for his foresight in suggesting the launch of the Quad. Biden referred to that concept as one of Abe's "enduring legacies," ranking alongside the FOIP strategy.

In this article, I present an overview of the current status and direction of Japan's alliance cooperation, while also

reflecting on the historical background of this stance.

The US-Japan Alliance: Historical transition and current status

Upon recovering its independence in 1951, Japan entered into the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security with the US. The current version of that treaty was signed in 1960, following revision into a more bilateral version. It was around this time, against the backdrop of the Cold War, that Japanese student movements sympathetic to the socialist camp launched fierce protests. On June 15, 1960, for example, a clash occurred between a student demonstration surrounding the National Diet and police forces, leading to an uproar that included the death of a student from the University of Tokyo. The Diet had no choice but to approve the revised treaty in the midst of that confusion. Taking this pandemonium and the resulting public backlash to heart, the Prime Minister at the time, Nobusuke Kishi, resigned from his post. The revised edition of what became known in Japan as the Japan-US Security Treaty contained clear mention of the duty of the United States to protect Japan (a concept not present in the previous version). Deleted, meanwhile, was mention of the so-called “Civil Disturbance Clause” linked to involvement in Japan’s domestic affairs, along with other changes leading to a more bilateral accord.

Kishi, however, having served in posts such as Minister of Commerce and Industry in the cabinet of Prime Minister Hideki Tojo, which head the march to war against the US, projected a strong reactionary image. With that being a factor in stirring up a left-wing backlash, he was left with no alternative but to resign, and was likewise forced to relinquish his pet policy of constitutional reform. Shinzo Abe is the paternal grandson of Nobusuke Kishi, while it warrants mention here that Abe held his grandfather’s achievements in great respect.

Hayato Ikeda, who succeeded Kishi as the LDP leader and Prime Minister (1960–1964), clamped down on the route of constitutional revision seeking independence for the Japanese nation. Instead, he initiated the so-called “Income Doubling Plan” in the fall of 1960, laying the foundation for Japan’s accelerated economic growth policy that followed. Having originally worked his way up in the Ministry of Finance, Ikeda possessed outstanding financial expertise. He was appointed Minister of Finance in the cabinet of Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida, who had originally been trained as a diplomat and did not specialize in financial affairs. As a politician, Ikeda made his mark for establishing favorable relations with the US government financial officers who headed up the drafting of Japan’s financial and economic policies during the American Occupation. While Ikeda’s key focus was on the US-Japan Alliance, rather than issues such as restoring

Japan's military might or advancing constitutional reform, he may be characterized as a leader who installed the "Yoshida Doctrine," which viewed economic growth as the priority, as Japan's prevailing long-term strategy. Current Prime Minister Fumio Kishida is the present leader of the Kouchikai faction a leading faction within the LDP established by bureaucrat-turned-politician Ikeda in 1957. In that sense, Kishida is a politician integrally linked to the genealogy of this bloc.

During the Cold War, the US-Japan Alliance functioned as a bulwark in the global standoff between America's armed forces and US liberal leaning allies and the Soviet Army and Warsaw Pact forces. Within this setting, Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) capability contributed to the US military's anti-Soviet policy and on other related fronts. In actual practice, however, in comparison to West Germany and other first-line allies standing in opposition to Warsaw Pact military strength, US expectations for Japan's military strength were limited. I believe it can be stated, rather, that the outlook was high that Japan's economic growth would serve as an effective development model for capitalist countries—notably for nations of Southeast Asia for which concerns existed about potential swings to Communist rule.

Accordingly, during the Cold War years, in comparison to West Germany and other US allies in Europe, South Korea

(distinguished by its confrontation with North Korea at the Demilitarized Zone at the 38th parallel north) or other nations, US prospects for Japanese military might were not high. As such, Japan lost the opportunity for rearmament as a "normal nation." Among Japanese opposition parties, strong influences were wielded by the JSP and the Japanese Communist Party, two parties which championed Marxism. As a result, Japan experienced no rejection of class warfare akin to the Godesberg Program ratified by the Social Democratic Party of (West) Germany in 1959, which was accompanied by a shift to social democracy. This also can be said of the type of transition to a more realistic defense policy subsequently engineered by Willy Brandt of the German Social Democratic Party (Chancellor of West Germany from 1969 to 1974). Such changes failed to occur in Japan until the 1994 formation of a coalition government comprised of the LDP, the JSP, and the New Party Sakigake, a cabinet headed up by Tomiichi Murayama of the JSP as Prime Minister.

In 1968, Japan's GDP surpassed that of West Germany to become the world's second largest economy. Among the byproducts emerging in the wake of this success from the 1970s, however, was trade friction with the US surrounding textiles, steel, and other industries. In the midst of rising fears within the US of the weakened state of the nation's industrial competitiveness, the period from the 1980s through the 1990s witnessed

the rise of theories describing potential threats posed by Japan. America's chronic trade deficit with Japan came to be viewed as a critical theme in US-Japan relations, with trade friction escalating into a serious political issue between the two nations.

In both Japan and the US, officials involved in cultivating ties of security between the countries came to view these developments with a sense of crisis, and focused on that matter in issuing proposals to both countries. A key example of such efforts consisted of the Armitage-Nye Reports authored by Richard Armitage (former Deputy Secretary of State under the administration of President George W. Bush) and Joseph Nye (Harvard University professor). Five of these reports were issued during the years of 2000 through 2020.

In the initial Armitage-Nye Report of 2000, it was noted how the majority of US policymakers had lost interest in Japan during the 1990s following the end of the Cold War. Despite this indifference, however, the authors insisted that Japan was in fact moving into its first major period of transition in the post-World War II era, a situation necessitating reconsideration of the role to be played by Japan in the international community. The aim was to appeal to US policymakers about the importance of the US-Japan Alliance.

The second Abe Cabinet, formed in 2012, shared awareness of the issues

raised in the Armitage-Nye reports up to that point concerning the US-Japan Alliance. Abe's government adopted a positive approach in cabinet approval of partial exercising of the right of collective self-defense, establishing Japan's own National Security Council, passing legislation for peace and security and addressing other issues. In the fifth and final Armitage-Nye report of 2020, it was noted to the effect that, "For the first time in its history, Japan is taking an equal if not leading role in the alliance with the United States." A positive evaluation was given to the "establishing a regional policy agenda, furnishing guidance in free trade agreements and multilateral cooperation, and the new strategy of the role of the United States in forming regional order in the midst of unstable conditions." This report cites the progress, advanced under Japan's initiative, leading to the conclusion of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) from which the Trump administration later withdrew against the backdrop of the rise of protectionism in the US. Likewise mentioned was the signing of the accord between the European Union (EU) and Japan for an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and other moves to maintain the minimum rules for free trade, as well as the previously mentioned expression of the FOIP by the Abe administration.

Within these reports, advance proposals were made with regard to the US-Japan

Alliance, now considered to be equal and indispensable for the region. They include expansion of the relations of cooperation between the nations of Asia and Europe, confronting the challenges to regional stability mounted by China and North Korea, expansion of cooperative ties in economics and technology, and other issues on which consensus has been reached by the current governments of the US and Japan.

Deepening of the US-Japan Alliance to avoid halting progress

The alliance between the United States and Japan has lost none of its value over the long road of the past 70 years. A key reason for this includes the support stemming from the aforementioned efforts by persons from both nations. Above all else, however, is the fact that the changes in the international environment surrounding the US and Japan in recent years have heightened the value of such a coalition for both sides. In a world characterized by the advance of economic globalization, there are signs of decline in the US-focused international order upon which the world developed following World War II, with new challengers appearing on the scene. A shift has occurred from the sources of the threats sensed by the US away from the former Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact nations, as well as international terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda, to China which continues to expand

its presence on the strength of global economic influence. As this comes to pass, the role of Japan as an ally on the frontlines of confronting China, as well as a nation wielding economic influence in the region as the world's No. 3 economic power after the US and China, will grow increasingly crucial for the US. Along with this, the US and Japan are also aligned in terms of their awareness of today's hazards.

In Washington, there has been no change in the threats perceived to be posed by China even in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine from February 24, 2022. The national defense strategy conveyed by the Biden administration to the US Congress on March 28 of that year underscored China as the priority issue—rather than dealing with Russia even as it continued to advance into Ukrainian territory. China was also defined as the most important competitive rival for the US, and an intensifying challenge for the Department of Defense. It was noted that actions will be taken to uphold and strengthen the nation's deterrence capacity against China, while stressing moves to defend the US mainland against Chinese threats in the cyber domain, outer space, and other arenas.

As suggested in that report, with the exception of the possibility of attacks on the US mainland using strategic nuclear arms, Russia lacks the capacity to strike the US with conventional forces. What's more, Moscow is also devoid of either the will or the economic power needed

to undertake such an assault. China, on the other hand, while maintaining fewer tactical nuclear arms than either the US or Russia, demands attention for its formidable economic might. In fact, that capacity qualifies China as the only nation with the potential to obtain the military capacity to attack the US mainland with conventional means. American and Japanese leaders are well aware that the geopolitical environment surrounding both nations does not necessarily reflect conditions enabling peace of mind. This understanding has contributed to a consensus to collaborate with the purpose of competing with China, as well as for the sake of sustaining stability in the Indo-Pacific region where China is strengthening its influence.

At the summit of Quad nations held in Tokyo in May 2022, President Biden and Prime Minister Kishida issued the “Japan-US Leaders Statement: Strengthening the Free and Open International Order.” That document opens with the declaration: “Today, Japan and the United States affirm a partnership that is stronger and deeper than at any time in their history.” The following passage reads: “Guided by our shared values; anchored by our common commitment to democracy and the rule of law; inspired by the innovation and technological dynamism of our economies; and rooted in the deep people-to-people ties between our countries, the Japan-US relationship is the cornerstone of a free and

open Indo-Pacific region.” Considering the long history of US-Japan relations touched upon above, it should certainly be clear that this statement represents far more than mere rhetoric.

Prime Minister Kishida and President Biden called upon China to stand with the international community and unequivocally condemn Russia’s actions in Ukraine. The two leaders likewise expressed strong opposition to any unilateral attempts by China to change the status quo or make unlawful maritime claims in the East China Sea, while advocating the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and encouraging the peaceful resolution of cross-strait issues. These pledges express the need for checks against China, while likewise confirming the US-Japan Alliance as “ways and means” and “assets” for the sake of realizing a strategic stance shared by both the US and Japan. In that way, this presents a vision of forging support for the existing international order in which regional nations will not be threatened by the tyrannical actions of superpowers.

Within this joint statement, the US-Japan agreement for the strengthening of Japan’s own military capacity reflects the new reality of the US-Japan Alliance positioned to confront the overwhelming improvements in China’s military capacity. While it is said that China currently maintains over 1,000 short-range missiles (ballistic and cruise types), it goes without saying that

Taiwan alone is not the target of such weapons. It makes far more sense to conclude that those missiles are aimed at the bases of the US military in Japan and Japan's own SDF. From the Chinese perspective, the reason for this stance lies in the reality that without disabling potential interventions from the US and Japan both politically and militarily, it would prove difficult for Beijing to unify Taiwan through armed force.

At the very least, in the event that the US were to opt for military intervention to cope with emergency situations in Taiwan, under the stipulations of the US-Japan Security Treaty Japan shoulders the responsibility to provide support for US military actions. For that matter, any crisis in Taiwan, a nation lying adjacent to Japanese territorial waters, would pose a grave situation directly linked to Japan's national security. Upon such developments, there is a high possibility that, in response to Japanese support for the US, China would issue threats implying the potential for launching of missile attacks on Japan's SDF bases or other targets. With no guarantees that counterattacks would be mounted by the US against China, Japanese leaders find themselves in a difficult situation. As things stand today, furthermore, under the spirit of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty signed between the US and Russia, which remained in effect until 2019, the US has not undertaken deployment of land-launched intermediate-range ballistic missiles in Japan. Under the provisions of the

US-initiated Pacific Deterrence Initiative (PDI) of 2021, meanwhile, the US military currently remains at the stage of conducting studies into deployment of such intermediate-range missiles.

Because any moves by Japan to host deployment of US missiles are projected to generate stiff political resistance in the targeted localities, the Japanese government has placed the priority on maintaining its own counterstrike capabilities. Within the three national security documents determined by the Kishida Cabinet and the National Security Council in December of 2022 (*National Security Strategy*, *National Defense Strategy*, and *Defense Buildup Program*), decisions included purchases of the US-made "Tomahawk" cruise missile, along with the conversion of Japanese-produced missiles to longer range strike capacity.

Also set forth as the targets of this national security overhaul is the raising of Japan's defense budget to 2% of the nation's GDP within a five-year time. Under Japan's trying fiscal conditions, which currently comprise the worst level among the world's developed nations, this goal will not be easy to achieve. There is no reason, however, for excessive pessimism. This upbeat interpretation may be traced to major shifts taking place in the views of national security among the Japanese public. In an opinion poll conducted by the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* (the world's largest financial newspaper) from December

23 to 25, 2022, 84% of respondents expressed the view that the explanation provided by Prime Minister Kishida of a tax increase to cover defense spending was “inadequate.” Despite this dissatisfaction from a sweeping majority of the Japanese people, however, 55% said they “support” a plan to strengthen defense capabilities over the coming five years (vs. 36% expressing “non-support” of that stance).

In reaction to Japan’s policy to expand its defense capacity, agreement was reached in January 2023 through a US-Japan summit meeting and the US-Japan “2+2” talks (of diplomatic and defense cabinet officials) for “modernization of the alliance.” In a joint statement issued following the summit, it was noted: “The leaders of the US and Japan have indicated to cabinet members to strengthen cooperation with regard to development and effective operation of Japan’s counterstrike capabilities and other capacities.” Furthermore, within the “Joint Statement of the US-Japan 2+2 Talks,” agreement was reached between the two nations on the specific measures of “intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and targeting (ISRT) for the purpose of effective operation of Japan’s counterstrike capabilities and other US-Japan cooperation.”

US-Japan economic security policy targeting China

Yet another critical theme for the US-Japan Alliance concerns economic security policies. In the Biden-Kishida joint statement of May 2022 (examined above), for instance, confirmation was made of efforts to work through export controls and other means for the protection and cultivation of important technologies, along with cooperation in support of specific competitive advantages to maintain supply chain resilience. Furthermore, in keeping with the “Basic Principles on Semiconductor Cooperation” adopted by the Japan-US Commercial and Industrial Partnership (JUCIP), agreement was hammered out to establish a joint task force to study the development of next-generation semiconductors.

On July 29, 2022, the US-Japan Economic Policy Consultative Committee (the “Economic 2+2”) convened a meeting of the diplomatic and economic ministers from both nations. Following that exchange, the participants expressed recognition of the following effect: “In addition to the importance of strengthening supply side resilience, fostering and protecting critical emerging technologies, and ensuring stable energy supplies, it is also recognized that the existing international order is being challenged not only by unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force, but also by attempts to realize personal strategic

interests through the unfair and opaque use of economic influence. Agreement has been reached to discuss diplomacy, security, and economy as one, and for Japan and the US to lead cooperation in the international community.”

The aim of these economic security policies is to target China, an object of concern on the security front specifically by placing controls on advanced technology for both military and civilian use which will serve as a military gamechanger, thereby raising the hurdle on the use of military force by China against Taiwan or other nations. The Economic 2+2 noted: “The Ministers also intend to collaborate in promoting and protecting critical and emerging technologies in a manner consistent with international rules and norms, including through research and development, as well as export controls, so as to support technological competitiveness and resilience and to address the challenges posed by the illicit diversion of technology critical for weapons development.” However, this issue presents an even greater challenge for effective coordination between the US and Japan than such collaboration for the purpose of Japan’s defense force development. This is because for both the US and Japan the ties of private sector companies with China run deep, thereby wielding a strong influence on the politics of the economic community. That makes it difficult to readily reflect agreements between governments in policies possessing real effectiveness.

Moreover, within the industrial communities of both the US and Japan, there is recognition that industrial competition lies on the foundation of competitive relationships. In addition, for the Japan side there is the recent bitter experience of the one-sided withdrawal from the TPP by the Trump administration. That created a situation in which, under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, Japan was levied with punitive tariffs on steel, aluminum, and other products in the same way as those assessed on the EU. This changed with the transition to the Biden administration. On February 27, 2022, the governments of the US and Japan agreed to exempt imports of Japan-produced steel and aluminum to the US from application under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act. However, it is difficult to anticipate that the Democratic Party administration of Joe Biden, which relies on labor unions as one of its key support bases, will return to the existing CPTPP. Within the Republican Party as well, the forces of protectionism have continued to swell since the Trump years. As such, regardless of which party assumes the reins of the government following the presidential election in the fall of 2024, the current conditions fail to suggest a return to the ranks of the CPTPP.

In this way, with economic security policies easily impacted by discord in US-Japan trade, there are elements that discourage expectations for the smooth implementation of such strategies by the two nations. In terms of security,

meanwhile, there is increasing importance for US-Japan cooperation in the face of concerns about the impact that China exerts on that domain in both the US and Japan, as well as moves by Beijing to achieve the political and security goals of economic statecraft. On this point, the Economic 2+2 statement reads: “The Ministers expressed grave concern about, and opposition to, harmful uses of economic influence, including economic coercion as well as unfair and opaque lending practices, in ways that threaten the legitimate interests of sovereign nations, as well as those of individuals and industries. The Ministers affirmed these practices undermine legitimate sovereign choices, challenge the free and open rules-based international order, and are best addressed through a collective response.”

Viewed overall, there is the shared perception that when it comes to US-Japan economic security policy addressing China, the effectiveness of collaboration and joint responses will generate greater results than individual actions. This issue also overlaps with US-Japan cooperation on the military and defense front. While there is no need to become over-pessimistic, the journey to achieving consensus on effective joint policies promises to comprise a long and winding road.

Conclusion

Coming face to face with China’s expansionary policies in the Taiwan Strait, the East China Sea, and the South China Sea, along with the enhancement of its military capacity in the background, the significance of the relations between the United States and Japan have been reconfirmed, with moves underfoot in both nations to raise their respective military might. The failure of Japan to possess a complete package of military power, including offensive capabilities, represents a weakness in the event that China attempts to use a crisis in Taiwan to drive a wedge between the US and Japan. Going forward, the most critical theme in the US-Japan Alliance lies in the bolstering of Japan’s own defense capabilities, with this comprising one key plank in Japan’s policies toward America.

For both the US and Japan, an urgent theme in the quest to avoid ceding overwhelming technological strength to China, as well as preventing China from rising to a dominant position in the military balance, is bilateral cooperation to limit exports and investment to China. On the other hand, the fact that both American and Japanese companies have deepened their respective ties with the Chinese economy comprises an element of uncertainty in achieving economic security policies, which can also emerge as an ingredient for China in advancing its US-Japan separation policy. For Japan, although Washington and Tokyo are in fundamental agreement on their

competitive stance toward China, factors such as the lack of continuity between the US Republican and Democratic administrations linked to partisan conflict between those political parties represent serious concerns. For the US, meanwhile, a source of anxiety lies in the question of whether the current Kishida administration, successor to the long-running government of Shinzo Abe, which generated such a major transformation in Japan's alliance policies, will be able to advance its policies with the same degree of momentum that the Abe administration achieved.

In the large-scale military exercises staged by the Chinese People's Liberation Army from August 4, 2022 near the Taiwan Strait, five missiles fired by China landed in Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). In an opinion survey conducted by Nippon Television Network and the *Yomiuri Shimbun* on August 10 and 11, 80% of the respondents reported that they "felt concern about the possible use of force against Taiwan by China." In addition to recognition of this threat, the Japanese people are also amply aware of value of the alliance between Japan and America, which has been passed the test of history over the years. Considering these and other factors, I foresee little likelihood of any changes in the direction of moves to beef up Japan's defense capacity or further tighten the alliance with the US going forward.

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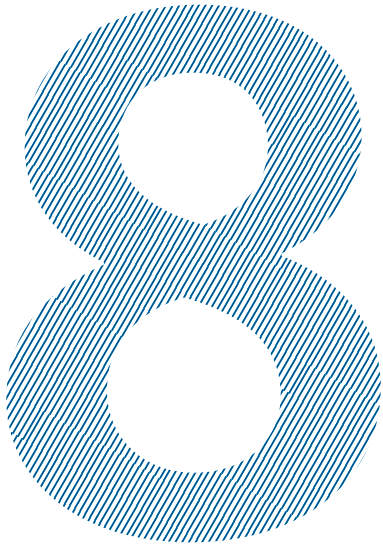
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8

Japan and China:

Japan as a First Responder to China's
Rise

Shinji YAMAGUCHI

Introduction

Japan and China, separated only by a thin stretch of sea, are neighboring countries that share a close relationship, which has seen each exert various forms of influence on the other from ancient times to the present. Economically and socially, Japan and China are deeply interconnected with and important to each other, but they are also regional rivals in the realms of politics and security. The trends in this relationship hold substantial implications for the Indo-Pacific region.

The importance of Japan-China relations is not confined to Asia. With China's advent as a great power, the world is confronted with an array of challenges in dealing with China, including security tensions and weaponization of economic interdependence. Given its geographical and historical proximity, Japan has encountered and dealt with these issues since earlier than the countries of the West. In this sense, Japan can be regarded as a forerunner in dealing with challenges concerning China.

The Japan-China relationship has experienced periods of both amity and contention. On the whole, from the 1970s until the early 1990s, friendly ties between Japan and China were prominent. While a variety of issues arose, these were dealt with adequately. However, from the late 1990s, the relationship gradually became more unstable, and since 2012, it has been

largely characterized by a state of affairs in which security tensions form the underlying tone, even as efforts are made to seek stability.

This article will examine the primary factors influencing Japan-China relations, the trajectory along which these relations have unfolded, the strategies Japan has adopted in its approach toward China, and the current challenges that need to be addressed.

Historical background (The development of Japan-China relations)

(1) Factors influencing Japan-China relations

What factors have guided the trajectory of Japan-China relations? This section will identify five key elements that have significantly impacted the development of these relations.

First and foremost is the power balance. Since the onset of its Reform and Opening-up period, China has sustained high levels of economic growth. By 2010, the GDP of China surpassed that of Japan, and by 2020, it reached approximately three times that of Japan. Meanwhile, the defense budget of China in 2020 was approximately four times that of Japan. Such disparities in power are expected to continue widening in the future. For Japan, determining how to engage with China that has emerged

as a superpower represents a core issue in its foreign policy.

Second, there is the American factor. The United States represents one of the most significant external conditions impacting Japan-China relations. For Japan, the US is positioned as an ally with which Japan shares both values and strategic interests. It forms the axis of Japan's diplomatic and security policies. However, from Japan's perspective, there has always been the anxiety that the US might abandon Japan in favor of relations with China, coupled with the concern of being drawn into the US hardline policies toward China.

China has long viewed the US as its primary threat, except for certain periods of time. The US is perceived by China as seeking military containment of China, exerting pressure for democratization, and potentially interfering in the Taiwan issue. On the other hand, in the 1970s, China and the US were able to align strategically against the Soviet Union, and in the mid-2000s, the deepening economic interdependence made it seem as though US-China strategic cooperation could underpin global order. However, since the 2010s, as tensions between Japan and China, as well as between the US and China, have intensified, the trend toward a closer US-Japan alliance and a balancing strategy against China has become increasingly pronounced.

The third factor is economic interdependence. In 2007, China surpassed the US

to become Japan's largest trading partner, and by 2020 accounted for 23.9% of Japan's total trade. For China as well, Japan ranks as its second-largest trading partner and fourth-largest investor. Despite the fact that the political relationship between the two countries has not always been smooth, their economic interdependence has continued to deepen. Underpinning this has been the view (primarily on the Japanese side) that politics and economics can be decoupled, allowing for the deepening of economic relations irrespective of political tensions. This economic interdependence has been viewed as a safety valve against political and security conflicts.

In recent years, however, economic dependence has increasingly been weaponized to serve national political interests. Increasingly, China has become more inclined to employ economic tools as weapons to exert pressure on its partners. The potential problems that Japan's economic dependence on China could bring about have been recognized since relatively early on in Japan.

The fourth factor is security issues, which has become the central focus in Japan-China relations primarily from the 2010s onward. The security threats posed by China, as perceived by Japan, have manifested themselves in the following ways. A first example of such a perceived threat is coercion in what is termed the "gray zone," which refers to situations that are aggressive but

fall short of open warfare. China has sought to assert its effective control by repeatedly sending its Coast Guard into Japan's contiguous zones and territorial waters surrounding the Senkaku Islands (a group of five uninhabited islands located approximately 150 km from Yonaguni Island).

In 1895, Japan incorporated the Senkaku Islands into its territory after confirming that they were uninhabited and unclaimed by any sovereign nation. After World War II, the Senkaku Islands were placed under US administration and, in 1972, were returned to Japan along with Okinawa. In 1968, the potential existence of large undersea oil fields near the Senkaku Islands was highlighted in a survey by the United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE), which drew attention to the islands. In 1970, first Taiwan and then China began to claim sovereignty over these islands. However, until the late 2000s, China had not taken significant action to enforce these claims. This changed in the 2010s when China began to intensify its pressure and assert its intention to establish effective control over the area.

A second example of a perceived security threat posed by China is the increasing activity of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in the areas surrounding Japan. Entering the 2000s, China accelerated the modernization of its military power, achieving particularly significant improvements in the capabilities of its

navy and air force. At the same time, the PLA has substantially expanded its area of operations, which was previously limited to the vicinity of mainland China.

The fifth factor is the intertwining of domestic politics in both countries with issues related to history. Japan-China relations are prone to being influenced by the domestic political landscape of each country. This is largely due to the historical experiences of the two nations. The memories of China's defeat by Japan in the Sino-Japanese War and the subsequent invasion of China by Japan during the Second Sino-Japanese War have played a significant role in the formation of China as a nation. From the latter half of the 1980s through the 2000s, historical issues between Japan and China became increasingly prominent. In particular, one increasingly contentious issue was the visits of Japanese Prime Ministers to Yasukuni Shrine, a Shinto shrine that commemorates those who died fighting in wars waged by modern Japan. Because the shrine includes Class-A war criminals from World War II among those it commemorates, official visits by Japanese Prime Ministers have been a frequent source of controversy, both at home and overseas.

Furthermore, stable leadership in both countries contributes to the stability of Japan-China relations, while relations tend to be more volatile under fragile leadership. For Chinese leaders, being perceived as pro-Japanese can pose a risk in domestic politics. In Japan as well,

domestic politics influences the country's policy toward China. Japan saw a succession of short-lived governments and frequent changes in administration, which led to problems in pursuing a stable policy toward China.

(2) The development of Japan-China relations

From the normalization of diplomatic relations in 1972 until the end of the Cold War, Japan-China relations maintained a stable and amicable relationship. This was made possible by the following two factors.

Firstly, a cooperative relationship was established between Japan, the US, and China based on their shared opposition to the Soviet Union. Until that point, the US and China had been adversaries, but as they both came to view the Soviet Union as a common enemy, they drew closer to each other. In this context, China accepted the existence of the Japan-US alliance, recognizing that it was not directed against China.

Secondly, there was a belief on the Japanese side that integrating China into the international community would be in Japan's interest. Japanese leaders had thought that a modernized and stable China would contribute to a peaceful international order, which, in turn, would contribute to Japan's own security. Even after the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident, when international sanctions were

imposed on China, Japan moved quickly toward lifting its sanctions in the belief that China's isolation would not be beneficial for the international community.

The end of the Cold War gradually changed this stable relationship. Initially, the dissolution of the Soviet Union eliminated the shared hypothetical enemy. After the Cold War, Japan and the US continued their alliance and redefined the role of the alliance as a system for stabilizing the region. China viewed this redefinition as something that could be directed against its own interests and thus as a cause for concern.

Moreover, from the latter half of the 1990s, historical issues became a major problem. China attempted to stabilize the rule of the Communist Party after the Cold War by using the cohesive power of nationalism, which involved the implementation of patriotic education. The history of the Second Sino-Japanese War was the most critical theme for boosting patriotism, making Japan an easy target for criticism. In 2005, large-scale anti-Japanese demonstrations were held in China with the purpose of opposing Japan's bid to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council. On the Japanese side, there grew a widespread sense of disgust toward China for repeatedly raising historical issues and demanding apologies.

On the other hand, given China's enormous economic potential, investments from Japanese companies in

China significantly increased, especially following China's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001. In fact, the growing Chinese economy was important for the stagnant Japanese economy, which was struggling with low growth. This contrast between the warming economic relationship and the cooling political relationship between Japan and China came to be described as "cold politics, hot economics (*seirei keinetsu* in Japanese)."

The challenge for Sino-Japanese relations in the 2000s was to stabilize this uncertain situation. In October 2006, newly appointed Prime Minister Shinzo Abe chose China as the destination for his first foreign visit, where both sides agreed to establish a "mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests." This vision aimed to ensure that neither country would pose a security threat to the other and to foster long-term collaboration in areas such as energy and environmental conservation. Symbolic of this was that, in June 2008, Japan and China agreed to jointly develop gas fields in the East China Sea. However, this strategic relationship of mutual benefit between Japan and China was left largely unrealized. China proceeded with the development of the gas fields on its own, sidestepping mutual agreement.

In the 2010s, security issues became a focal point in Sino-Japanese relations. In September 2010, off the coast of the Senkaku Islands, a Chinese fishing boat

repeatedly rammed into a Japan Coast Guard patrol vessel. When the captain of the Chinese fishing boat was arrested and detained, China perceived this as Japan attempting to reinforce its control over the Senkaku Islands, prompting a strong backlash.

Furthermore, at this time, China effectively restricted its exports of rare earth elements to Japan. This was a significant development, as it demonstrated that China was willing to leverage its economic relationships to exert political influence—a departure from the previous pattern where the economic relationship had been maintained despite political tensions. This move also indicated that China was increasingly turning away from the principles of a market economy and openness to the outside world and was beginning to prioritize a more inward-looking national security logic.

In 2012, Shintaro Ishihara, the famously nationalist Governor of Tokyo, moved to have the Tokyo Metropolitan Government purchase the Senkaku Islands from their private owner. The Japanese government, believing this move could further complicate the situation, decided to purchase the Senkaku Islands itself in order to stabilize the situation. In response, China reacted vehemently, normalizing the dispatch of its government vessels to the waters around the Senkaku Islands. Inside China, intense anti-Japanese demonstrations were allowed to take

place, intensifying criticism of Japan. It is believed that China's reaction to the situation surrounding the Senkaku Islands was influenced by the fact that it coincided with a period of domestic uncertainty in Chinese politics during the transition from the Hu Jintao administration to the Xi Jinping administration. From this point onward, security-related tensions between Japan and China came to the fore.

Current situation and challenges

(1) The Abe administration and formation of strategy toward China

The basic policy line toward China, which remains in place today, was laid down during the second term of the Abe administration. This section analyzes the strategy toward China under the second Abe administration and beyond and the new challenges that the Suga and Kishida administrations, which succeeded it, have faced.

2012 saw the formation of the second cabinet under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, which built a China strategy that aimed for a stable relationship based on economic ties while counterbalancing China's security threats. Among the firm measures taken by the Abe administration against the security threats posed by China were strengthening Japan's own defense, enhancing the Japan-US

alliance, and promoting multilateral initiatives such as the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)."

First, let's consider the strengthening of Japan's own defense. The Abe administration revised the National Defense Program Guidelines, highlighting the importance of defending the southwestern islands and addressing "gray zone" situations. Needless to say, this policy was intended as a response to China's expansion.

Next to consider is the enhancement of the Japan-US alliance. The Abe administration worked constantly to persuade the US to recognize the problems associated with China's actions. The US, for its part, was growing increasingly wary of China's assertive stance in maritime affairs. The joint statement released during President Obama's visit to Japan in April 2014 explicitly stated that the Senkaku Islands fell under Article 5 of the Japan-US Security Treaty, thereby reaffirming that the defense of the Senkaku Islands was included within the scope of the Japan-US alliance. In 2015, the establishment of the "Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation (The New Guidelines)" promoted a seamless response, one that included strategies for dealing with gray zone situations. Additionally, when President Trump, who held distrust toward US allies, took office in 2017, Prime Minister Abe succeeded in building a personal relationship of trust with President Trump.

Thirdly, there is the proposal of the FOIP concept, which encourages: multilateral cooperation for principles such as the rule of law, freedom of navigation, and free trade; economic prosperity through enhanced connectivity; and peace and stability in maritime affairs. The strategic dialogue among Japan, the US, Australia, and India, known as the “Quad,” emerged as a noteworthy new framework for cooperation. There was also further collaboration in the Indo-Pacific region with European countries, including the United Kingdom and France.

On the other hand, the Abe administration maintained a pragmatic flexibility and, within the broader framework of a balancing strategy toward China, aimed for the stabilization of bilateral relations between Japan and China.

Although Prime Minister Abe visited Yasukuni Shrine in December 2013, this was to be his last visit during his tenure. Temporarily, at least, this effectively moved the issue of history out of the spotlight in Japan-China disputes, allowing competition between the two nations to proceed on a more stable footing. In November 2014, the first Japan-China summit meeting since 2012 took place, accompanied by the announcement of a four-point agreement aimed at stabilizing the relationship. While acknowledging the differences in the two countries’ positions on various issues, these initiatives sought to establish crisis management mechanisms in order to prevent

unintended escalation. After long and tortuous negotiations, a maritime and aerial communication mechanism between the defense authorities of the two countries was initiated in June 2018, setting up a foundation for crisis management.

Furthermore, the Abe administration believed that the economic relationship between the two countries could contribute to stabilizing their overall relations. In particular, it was thought that Japan could reap economic benefits by partially cooperating with China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). In May 2017, Toshihiro Nikai, then-Secretary-General of the Liberal Democratic Party, attended the Belt and Road Forum and delivered a personal letter from Prime Minister Abe to President Xi Jinping calling for the resumption of mutual visits at the leadership level. In June that year, Prime Minister Abe vowed Japan’s willingness to cooperate with the BRI. This was followed up, in October 2018, by a visit to China by a Japanese Prime Minister, which took place for the first time in seven years.

This stabilization of relations with China occurred as the US, under the Trump administration, pivoted to a tougher stance on China from 2018 onward, intensifying US-China tensions. In this context, it can be said that Japan successfully managed to strike a balance between a close-knit alliance with the US and a stabilized relationship with China.

(2) China policy challenges under the Suga and Kishida administrations

While the Suga administration (from September 2020 to October 2021) and the Kishida administration (from October 2021 to the present) have carried on the basic strategic line toward China laid down by the Abe administration, new points of contention and challenges have emerged. This section covers three major points of discussion that have proved important.

Security: How to respond to the Taiwan issue

In the context of security challenges, the issue of Taiwan has increasingly become a focal point of discussion. China has pursued a path of peaceful reunification with Taiwan by fostering economic integration with the island in hopes that this will lead to political unification. However, as can be seen with the inauguration of the Tsai Ing-wen administration in 2016, Taiwan has not been receptive to this path toward unification, and the limits of the peaceful reunification strategy have become apparent. China has never ruled out the option of achieving the unification of Taiwan through the use of force. With the modernization of the PLA and the widening gap in military strength between China and Taiwan, the possibility of China opting to use military force is becoming more likely than ever before.

The joint statement released after the Suga-Biden summit in April 2021

emphasized the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, explicitly encouraging the peaceful resolution of issues between the two sides of the strait. This was the first time since 1969 that a reference to the Taiwan issue had been included in a Japan-US leaders' statement. Mention had been made of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait the Japan-US Security Consultative Committee (2+2) level, and the Taiwan issue had been within the scope of interest of the Japan-US alliance. However, in light of China's military modernization and active operations in the Taiwan Strait, the significance of reiterating this position at a Japan-US leaders' summit is substantial.

In the event of a crisis concerning Taiwan, there is a strong possibility that Japan, which hosts US military bases, will be embroiled in it. Moreover, the significance of Taiwan in the military, political, and economic spheres is growing. Taiwan is geographically important, situated in a key position connecting the East China Sea, the South China Sea, and the Western Pacific. It boasts a mature democratic system and occupies a significant position in semiconductor manufacturing. However, there are limitations to Japan's capacity and legal basis for involvement in the Taiwan issue, and China's vigilance is exceptionally high. Consequently, this issue has become a significant point of discussion for Japan.

Economic security

In recent years, economic security has become an important issue for Japan. This is due to China's weaponization of economic interdependence in its attempts to exert influence in various forms, the increasingly clear decoupling taking place between the US and China in advanced technologies, and a recognition of the risks posed by supply chain vulnerabilities made evident by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Japan has long faced the risks posed by its economic interdependence with China. As already noted, restrictions on the export of rare earth elements and damage to local Japanese businesses due to anti-Japan demonstrations are examples of these risks. In response to such risks, Japanese companies have pursued a "China + 1" strategy, aiming to avoid excessive dependence on China.

The Suga and Kishida administrations have begun the process of considering how to address these risks at the state level. In May 2022, Japan enacted the Economic Security Promotion Act. This legislation aims to enhance the autonomy of core infrastructures and strategically important materials, as well as to strengthen the resilience of supply chains.

The challenge moving forward will be to strike a proper balance between prioritizing economic security and maintaining the principles of free trade. An emphasis on economic security leading

to unabated protectionism would be undesirable for Japan, which has enjoyed the benefits of the free trade system.

Differences in political systems and values

Governed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the Chinese state is grounded in a political system and set of values distinct from those of Western countries. China prioritizes maintaining the single-party rule of the CCP and places national security above universal human rights. However, as China's policy of reform and opening up has progressed, there has been a gradual reduction in violent human rights suppressions. Western nations hoped that even if China was to continue its authoritarian regime, it would evolve toward a more modernized, humane, and softer form of authoritarianism.

However, the Xi Jinping administration's elevation of the security of the state and of the CCP as its supreme value has led to a strengthening of repression across society. Xi Jinping has intensified crackdowns on human rights activists and NGOs and has ramped up oppression against religions and ethnic groups. This is particularly true in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, where repression has intensified, as is seen in the detention of Uyghurs and other groups in internment camps. Furthermore, the administration suppressed the Umbrella Revolution in Hong Kong and effectively abandoned the "one country, two systems" principle. This marked a

stark reversal from the previous trend toward a more moderate form of authoritarianism.

How to respond to the increasingly authoritarian CCP has become a significant issue for Japan. Historically, Japan has tended to adopt a relatively tolerant stance toward China's human rights issues and its political system. However, China's authoritarian posture is now affecting not only Japanese nationals in China but also Chinese nationals in Japan, with a series of incidents involving the detention of businessmen and researchers. Japan is increasingly being pressed to take a firmer stance on these issues.

Conclusion

In the context of China's rise, Japan-China relations have undergone significant transformations. Japan has found itself in a geographical, political, economic, and military position where it must promptly respond to the various challenges brought about by China's ascendance. In this sense, Japan has become a forerunner in dealing with issues related to China.

Japan-China relations experienced a period of friendship from the 1970s to the 1990s. However, from the latter half of the 1990s to the 2000s, the post-Cold War changes ushered in an unstable era in which economic interdependence deepened, historical issues rose to the forefront, and political relations

remained unstable. This phase of the relationship was often described as "cold politics, hot economics." Since 2010, the relationship has entered a phase where security issues have become the central axis of contention. Economic interdependence has been weaponized and no longer functions as a safety valve.

Under the second Abe administration, Japan placed its strategy toward China at the forefront of its foreign policy. It launched initiatives such as strengthening its own defense, enhancing the Japan-US alliance, and proposing the vision for the FOIP as counter-balancing measures against China. At the same time, it sought to stabilize its relationship with China, aiming to reap economic benefits while steering clear of any decisive confrontation. The subsequent administrations under Prime Ministers Suga and Kishida have carried forward this balancing strategy, standing firm against China's pressures while ensuring that the bilateral relationship does not spiral out of control. However, fresh challenges are emerging, such as the Taiwan issue, economic security, and human rights concerns. Whether these issues will reshape Japan's overall China strategy will likely become a pivotal point of discussion.

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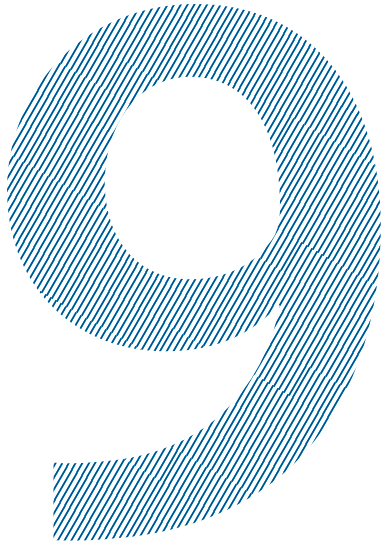
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Japan and Taiwan

Yasuhiro MATSUDA

Introduction

In the sphere of Japan's diplomacy and security policies, the role of Taiwan has been taking on increasing prominence in recent years. The relationships with the United States and China are Japan's foremost diplomatic challenges, and Taiwan's situation stands as the most destabilizing aspect of US-China relations. Frameworks such as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Initiative (FOIP) highlight Taiwan as an essential element. However, while economic and societal relations between Japan and Taiwan are amicable, there is a conspicuous absence of formal diplomatic ties, matched by a similarly sparse presence of direct security associations.

This article aims to present an overview of Japan's policy toward Taiwan, to analyze how Japan has managed its relations with Taiwan amidst the constraints emanating from its relations with China, and finally, to highlight the policy challenges currently faced by the Japanese government.

The Japanese government's basic stance toward Taiwan

First, let us revisit the fundamental framework of Japan's policy toward Taiwan. As a direct consequence of Japan's normalization of diplomatic relations with the

government of the People's Republic of China in 1972, it severed diplomatic ties with the Taiwan-based Republic of China's government and, as will be discussed later, maintained relations by establishing organizations of a semi-official nature. The arrangement that was formed concerning Taiwan following the severance of diplomatic ties is commonly referred to as the "1972 system." Many other countries have severed relations with Taiwan and established quasi-official relationships similar to that between Japan and Taiwan. This has resulted in Taiwan's marginalization from international organizations that only recognize sovereign states. Hence, the 1972 system also carries a broader meaning in reference to Taiwan's status within the international system, to which the island has had no option but to adapt.

In the Japan-China Joint Communiqué of 1972, Japan recognized that the Government of the People's Republic of China is "the sole legal government of China." Concerning China's claim that "Taiwan is an inalienable part of the territory of the People's Republic of China," Japan "fully understands and respects this stand of the Government of the People's Republic of China, and it firmly maintains its stand under Article 8 of the Potsdam Proclamation." This means that while Japan currently does not recognize Taiwan as part of China, it would accept such a status quo if Taiwan were to become a part of China in reality. Therefore, Japan would not support Taiwan's independence at present.

Foreign Minister Masayoshi Ohira stated in the Diet on November 8, 1972 that, on the assumption that the Taiwan issue would reach a peaceful resolution, he considered the issue of contention between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan to be essentially an internal matter for China. This statement also carries an implication that, should force be used, the Taiwan issue would cease to be a purely internal Chinese matter. Furthermore, a senior official with Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated in the Diet on February 28, 1975 that Japan was "not in a position to comment" on the legal status of Taiwan in international law.

In its Diplomatic Bluebook, Japan defines its relationship with Taiwan as a "non-governmental, working-level relationship" centered on the economy and culture. Following the loss of diplomatic ties, Japan and Taiwan each established institutions equivalent to embassies—namely, the Interchange Association and the Association of East Asian Relations—deemed "private institutions." Through these bodies, they have strived to maintain practical relations. In 2017, the Interchange Association was renamed the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association, and the Association of East Asian Relations was renamed the Taiwan-Japan Relations Association. It is worth noting that while Japan maintains the pretense of these being civilian organizations, the Taiwan-Japan Relations Association is located within Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. According

to Taiwanese statistics, the total trade between Japan and Taiwan reached 85.31 billion US dollars in 2021, making Japan Taiwan's third-largest trading partner and vice versa.

While there are numerous constraints regarding official contact between Japan and Taiwan, both the government and society of Japan took a favorable view of the democratization and localization that progressed under the Lee Teng-hui administration (1988–2000). Taiwan's profile in Japan has been increasingly prominent since the 1990s, reaching a zenith when a massive donation exceeding 20 billion yen was sent to Japan from Taiwan following the 2011 off the Pacific coast of Tohoku Earthquake. Furthermore, since Shinzo Abe—famous as a pro-Taiwan figure—became Prime Minister, the phrase "a crucial partner and an important friend, with which it shares fundamental values (*kachi wo kyōyū suru taisetsuna yūjin*)" has been appended to the official explanation concerning Taiwan.

According to a public opinion poll conducted by Taiwan in 2021, 75.9% of Japanese people harbored a sense of affinity for Taiwan. Similarly, a Japanese survey from the same year revealed that 60% of Taiwanese respondents chose Japan as their "most favored nation or region." These figures point to a strong and reciprocal sense of closeness between the general populace of Japan and Taiwan, a mutual regard that, paradoxically, seems to be maintained in

inverse proportion to the deteriorating relations between Japan and China, as well as between China and Taiwan.

How has Japan responded to the dynamics of cross-strait relations?

China has sought to restrain the burgeoning closeness between Japan and Taiwan, occasionally exerting political pressure. This tendency has been particularly apparent in the realms of politics and security. On the other hand, in Japan, policy adjustments toward Taiwan have been consistently seen as remaining within the confines of the framework established in the 1972 system, with criticisms or concerns from the Chinese side regarded as being unwarranted. However, it is also possible to discern certain trends or shifts in Japan's ongoing involvement with Taiwan.

I have previously argued that there are four areas in which Japan may make decisions that would ultimately be favorable to Taiwan, even if these are strongly opposed by China. Successive Japanese cabinets, when faced with the zero-sum nature of cross-strait interests and China's strong opposition, have prioritized "Japan's inviolable national interests and values" and "Japan's sovereign judgment," with the result that they have made several "Taiwan-friendly" policy decisions that go against China's intentions in the following domains.

The first domain relates to Japan's security and the Japan-US alliance. Japan has consistently called for a peaceful resolution to the Taiwan issue based on dialogue between China and Taiwan and has strongly expressed regret over threats of military force. The "Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation" of 1997 and the joint announcement by the Japan-US Security Consultative Committee (2+2) in 2005 explicitly stated for the first time the importance of the "peaceful resolution of issues concerning the Taiwan Strait through dialogue." Despite China's repeated demands to exclude Taiwan from being regarded as the potential site of a "situation in areas surrounding Japan" under Japan's Act on Measures to Ensure the Peace and Security of Japan in Perilous Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan (Act No. 60 of 1999), Japan has never acquiesced to these requests. Moreover, in 2003, Japan took the unprecedented step of stationing a retired Ground Self-Defense Force Major General in its Taipei office of the Exchange Association to begin gathering military intelligence in Taiwan.

The second domain pertains to Japan's sovereignty, specifically the question of who is allowed to enter Japan from Taiwan and who from Japan can visit Taiwan—areas where the Japanese government does not favor Chinese interference. For instance, in 1994, Japan allowed Hsu Li-teh, the Vice Premier of Taiwan, to attend the opening ceremony of the Asian Games in Hiroshima. Similarly, in 2004, Japan permitted former

President Lee Teng-hui to visit for sight-seeing. While visits to Taiwan by former Japanese prime ministers had been rare, they became frequent following the visit by former Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori in 2003. Furthermore, in 2018, Jiro Akama, Senior Vice Minister of Internal Affairs and Communication, made an official visit to Taiwan. This visit represented the highest-ranking journey to Taiwan by a government official since the cessation of formal diplomatic relations. All of these personal exchanges were carried out in the face of strong opposition from China.

The third domain pertains to the non-political realms of economics and culture. Although China should, in principle, not oppose Japan and Taiwan growing closer in this domain, there have been instances where China has not hesitated to do so. For example, China strongly discouraged Taiwan's bid to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) even before it became a member itself. Similarly, China voiced strong opposition to the Japan-Taiwan Fisheries Agreement concluded in 2013. However, Japan, along with the United States, advanced Taiwan's accession to the WTO and concluded the fisheries agreement, ignoring China's opposition.

The fourth domain involves humanitarian issues. For instance, in response to the major earthquake that struck central Taiwan in 1999, Japan dispatched an international emergency aid team to Taiwan. On this occasion, China attempted to compel countries to obtain

its consent before dispatching aid, yet Japan bypassed such formalities and quickly sent humanitarian assistance to Taiwan. Moreover, Japan permitted former President Lee Teng-hui to visit in 2001 for heart disease treatment in the face of Chinese opposition. Japan has also increasingly shown support for Taiwan's participation in the World Health Organization (WHO). Beginning in 2004, Japan expressed a "hope" for Taiwan's gaining observer status at the WHO's annual World Health Assembly (WHA), later strengthening this expression to outright "support."

Mounting concerns over Chinese military action toward Taiwan

In recent years, in the domain of security, Japan has grown increasingly concerned, particularly about potential Chinese military action against Taiwan. In March 2021, during the US-Japan 2+2 meeting, the phrase "the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait" was used, and was subsequently mentioned at the US-Japan Summit in the following month. However, this referred to the "Taiwan Strait" rather than "Taiwan": It placed an emphasis on the significance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, most of which is international waters, and should not be misconstrued as a declaration of support for Taiwan.

Even among senior Japanese government officials, who usually exercise

caution in their statements, Yasuhide Nakayama, the Senior Vice Minister of Defense, and Deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso made comments in private contexts in June and July 2021, respectively, suggesting that Japan should aid in Taiwan's defense in case of a so-called Taiwan contingency. However, these statements were subsequently corrected by Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato, indicating that they did not represent Japan's official policy.

The 2021 *Defense White Paper* ("Defense of Japan 2021") stated for the first time that "stabilizing the situation surrounding Taiwan is important not only for Japan's security but also for the stability of the international community." However, the phrase "the situation surrounding Taiwan (*Taiwan wo meguru jōsei*)" is not new and has been repeatedly used by the Japanese government in responses at the Diet, Japan's legislature. Thus, it does not represent a shift in Japan's official language or stance.

In any case, these discourses undoubtedly signal an intensifying sense of crisis in Japan concerning the situation in the Taiwan Strait. However, no legal framework in Japan allows the inference that Japan should directly defend Taiwan. The linchpin of Japan's policy remains the support of the US military within the framework of the US-Japan alliance, depending on whether the situation significantly impacts Japan's peace and security—in other words, for "Japan's security."

Amid reports raising concerns about the possibility of warfare in the Taiwan Strait, former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe stated in a March 2022 teleconference with President Tsai Ing-wen that "any contingency concerning Taiwan would be also an emergency for Japan and for the Japan-US security alliance." This pronouncement was greeted warmly in Taiwan but met with criticism from China. While the understanding that a Taiwan contingency could escalate into a crisis for Japan was commonplace among experts, a statement by a former Prime Minister carried a distinct weight. It widely informed Japanese society that a Chinese invasion of Taiwan would immediately bring the flames of war to Japan.

A public opinion survey published by the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* in April 2021 found that 74% of respondents approved of Japan's involvement in Taiwan's stability. Moreover, the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war in February 2022 further heightened concerns about China's potential use of military force against Taiwan. According to a survey released by the *Mainichi Shimbun* in March 2022, 89% of respondents expressed worry about China's invasion of Taiwan. In another poll published by the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* in May of the same year, in response to a question regarding how Japan should prepare for a crisis in Taiwan instigated by China, the combined total of those who thought "Japan should prepare within the current legal framework" (50%) and those who believed "Japan should enhance

its responsiveness, including through revisions to the law" (41%), reached a substantial 91%. Conversely, only 4% thought "there was no need to prepare." The psychological state of Japanese citizens in this regard seems comparable to that of European citizens concerned about Russia instigating warfare in Europe.

Such apparent public sentiment, however, does not signify a change in the country's policy. According to a *Sankei Shimbun* report published on January 3, 2022, Japan declined an offer by Taiwan's government to exchange defense information. Japan's Taiwan policy is, for now, still nested within the framework of the 1972 system.

On the other hand, any enhancements to Japan's defense capability could make a Chinese attack on Taiwan that much less feasible, thereby bolstering Taiwan's security indirectly. Of course, should Japan be attacked, it can exercise its right of individual self-defense and retaliate. Similarly, if the US were to be attacked, Japan could exercise its right to collective self-defense, albeit to a limited degree. The security of Japan and Taiwan are therefore intricately intertwined.

In December 2022, Japan undertook a revision of its three principal security-related documents, including the National Security Strategy, signaling an intention to fundamentally enhance its defense capabilities. This policy outline involved a

doubling of the defense budget over the course of five years. In regard to Taiwan, the phrase "the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait" was reiterated throughout these documents. Regarding the development of Japan's defense capabilities, specific measures to deter military aggression from China were also explicitly outlined, including enhancing base resilience, fortifying the capacity to sustain combat operations, and acquiring "counterstrike capabilities." Although Japan has refrained from explicitly committing to the defense of Taiwan and does not engage in defense exchanges with the island, it is possible to interpret this policy shift as a strategic maneuver intended to indirectly deter China's potential use of force against Taiwan by bolstering Japan's own defense abilities.

The provision of COVID-19 vaccines and welcoming application to the CPTPP

Compared to defense capabilities, Japan has instead demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting Taiwan directly, especially in areas outside of traditional security domains. One standout example of this is Japan's response to Taiwan's COVID-19 vaccine shortage.

Faced with a shortage of vaccines to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, Taiwan found relief in aid from Japan. From June to October 2021, spread over six

separate consignments, Japan shipped approximately 4.2 million doses of the domestically produced AstraZeneca vaccine to Taiwan, effectively amounting to almost the entire quantity of vaccine that Japan had produced. At the time, China was blocking Taiwan's vaccine procurement attempts, pressuring the island to accept Chinese-made vaccines instead. Adding to this pressure, the ruling government in Taiwan was facing difficulties in the form of intense criticism from the opposition party for the surging infections and vaccine shortages. Japan's timely vaccine delivery played a significant role in stabilizing the public mood in Taiwan, with some likening the move to the massive airlift operation during the Berlin Blockade.

Although the primary reason for this vaccine aid was humanitarian, Japan's foreign minister, Toshimitsu Motegi emphasized the notion that it was reciprocation for Taiwan's humanitarian assistance to Japan during its struggles with COVID-19 in 2020. Japan's "vaccine diplomacy" toward Taiwan, even if carried out under the banner of humanitarianism, hints at a strategic inclination that cannot be denied.

On the economic front, Japan immediately welcomed Taiwan's application to join the CPTPP in September 2021. Notably, Taiwan's application received far more media coverage in Japan than China's. Historically, Japan has supported the joint participation of China and Taiwan in international

bodies such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the WTO. The warm welcome for Taiwan's CPTPP application thus reflects a continuation of this established approach.

However, the promotion of free trade between Japan and Taiwan faced the hurdle of import restrictions on food from five Japanese prefectures, including Fukushima, due to the nuclear accident. This obstacle was relaxed in February 2022. Of course, the transition from a "welcome" to Taiwan's application to outright "support" for its membership in the CPTPP requires Taiwan's compliance with the standards of the CPTPP, which included the natural expectation of lifting import restrictions on Japanese food products. Taiwan has declared its compliance with the CPTPP rules and made the necessary amendments to its domestic laws.

The sequence of events—Japan's vaccine donations, Taiwan's lifting of food import restrictions, and Japan's endorsement of Taiwan's application to the CPTPP—highlight a positive diplomatic feedback loop between Japan and Taiwan.

Conclusion: Future policy challenges

Japan's policy toward Taiwan may appear to have undergone significant changes, but in reality, these shifts can be interpreted within the framework of the traditional 1972 system.

Japan has historically made decisions favoring Taiwan over China's objections, particularly in the aforementioned four domains, where they aligned with Japan's inviolable values and interests. In other words, while the framework of the 1972 system itself has not changed, Japan's stance in support of Taiwan has become markedly stronger.

Additionally, as China intensifies its efforts to alter the status quo in its periphery, there is a growing apprehension in Japan regarding a potential flare-up in the Taiwan Strait. This concern could potentially lead to structural shifts, allowing for more robust security-related information sharing and collaboration between Japan and Taiwan in the future. However, given the premise of a “non-governmental working-level relationship” (as defined by Japan) primarily focused on the economy and culture, constraints remain significant, and the specifics of the current situation remain unclear to those not directly involved. The potential scope of Japan's solo military options in the event of a Taiwan contingency is limited, leaving little choice but to wait for a US military deployment. However, by fundamentally strengthening its defense capabilities, Japan can hope to exert a certain level of deterrence against potential military aggression by China.

In fact, Japanese diplomacy has made significant contributions in non-military domains, as seen in its timely large-scale

supply of COVID-19 vaccines. Looking ahead, future challenges include fostering Taiwan's engagement in key international economic frameworks, such as supporting Taiwan's accession to the CPTPP and encouraging its actual participation, which involves managing pressure from China.

Amid signs of further improvement in Japan-Taiwan relations, the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in July 2022, a strong proponent of stronger ties with Taiwan, has somewhat obscured the push toward strengthening the relationship. Although the current situation remains unclear, Japan's support for Taiwan appears to have lost momentum, especially when compared to the United States, where support for Taiwan's self-defense has been rapidly escalating.

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10

Japan and South Korea:
From Adrift, Crisis to Reset

Yasuyo SAKATA

Introduction

Japan and the Korean Peninsula endured a fraught history marked by colonial domination under the guise of Japan's annexation of Korea between 1910 and 1945. With the culmination of World War II in Japan's defeat and the consequent liberation of the Korean Peninsula, the latter was subsequently divided into North and South. Against the backdrop of the Korean War (1950–1953), Japan signed the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951 and later, as part of the postwar settlement process, finally entered into diplomatic normalization with the Republic of Korea (hereafter, South Korea) in 1965 after almost 14 years of negotiations. It is also important to note the instrumental role played by the United States, an ally to both nations, in fostering collaboration both bilaterally between Japan and South Korea, as well as trilaterally among Japan, South Korea, and the US.

In recent years, Japan-South Korea relations have plummeted to what has been characterized as their “postwar low.” However, in this context, the term “postwar” refers to the period following the 1965 normalization of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The postwar relationship between the two can be delineated into three distinct phases: a “foundation” phase grounded in the Cold War-era Treaty on Basic Relations Between Japan and the Republic of Korea concluded in 1965 (first phase), a post-Cold War phase of “development”

marked by the Japan-South Korea Joint Declaration of 1998 (second phase), and, lastly, a phase of “drift and disarray” in the post-Joint Declaration era (2000s–2010s) (third phase).

The latter half of the third phase, characterized by drift and disarray into the second decade of the 2010s, culminated in an outright “crisis.” The legal foundation established during the 1965 normalization of diplomatic relations (Japan-Republic of Korea Claims Agreement) was shaken, and without a comprehensive vision or action plan like the 1998 Joint Declaration, the relationship began to drift. Structures built since the post-Cold War 1990s were systematically undermined. Historical grievances (particularly disputes over the plight of “comfort women” and wartime labor) resurfaced, spilling over into the security and economic arenas. The most forward-looking developments were social and cultural exchanges on the part of younger generations centered on pop cultural elements like manga, films, and literature, which began to flourish with South Korea's relaxation of restrictions on Japanese mass culture in 1998. Politics, however, has not kept pace. Nevertheless, as of 2022, Japan-South Korea relations have begun to mend and improve, suggesting that the relationship could be characterized as having entered a fourth “reset” phase in the 2020s.

In this article, I begin with an overview of the recent trajectory of Japan-South

Korea relations, specifically, the tumultuous third phase characterized by “drift and disarray” during the Abe (or Abe-Suga) era of the 2010s. The second administration of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (2012–2020) and the subsequent tenure of Yoshihide Suga (2020–2021) confronted some of the most challenging moments in bilateral ties between the two countries. In South Korea, conservative and progressive forces remain in a closely contested balance. Throughout the Abe-Suga period, Japan engaged with both the conservative leadership of Park Geun-hye (2012–2017) and the progressive administration of Moon Jae-in (2017–2022). Although both the Park and Moon governments clashed with Japan over historical issues, the years from 2018 to 2019 under Abe and Moon were particularly contentious, with disputes extending beyond historical grievances to encompass security and economic confrontations. This escalation was largely a consequence of negative linkage politics pursued by both sides, culminating in a complex diplomatic crisis. Such was the gravity of these frictions that the postwar bilateral relationship was feared to be on the brink of collapse, marking it as an unparalleled nadir in postwar bilateral relations.

In the subsequent section, which surveys the current situation and contemporary challenges, I delve into the relationship as it stands in the 2020s, specifically in the years following the Abe-Suga era, under the stewardship of Prime Minister Kishida. October 2021 saw the advent

of a new Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) administration led by Fumio Kishida. Although the LDP is fundamentally a party that aligns with conservative ideologies, Kishida, although he previously served as the Foreign Minister during Abe’s second tenure as prime minister, belongs to a political lineage that diverges from Abe. Whereas Abe hailed from the Seiwakai faction influenced by Nobusuke Kishi, Kishida, in contrast, comes from the Kouchikai faction, which is in the liberal lineage of former Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida. While firmly grounded in the realism of the LDP, Kishida seeks to mend relations with Japan’s Asian neighbors.

On the other side, in South Korea, the March 2022 presidential election saw the victory of the conservative People Power Party candidate, former prosecutor Yoon Suk Yeol. Since assuming power that May, the Yoon administration has ardently pursued the reinvigoration of US-South Korea and Japan-South Korea ties. Initially cautious, Kishida has nevertheless displayed a positive inclination towards dialogue, earnestly advancing rapprochement with South Korea. The concerted efforts of leaders from both nations led to President Yoon’s state visit to Japan on March 16, 2023 a significant milestone that coincided with the resumption of bilateral summit talks in Tokyo after a 12-year hiatus. Barely two months later, on May 7, Prime Minister Kishida reciprocated with a visit to South Korea, re-establishing shuttle diplomacy between the two neighbors. In mid-May,

in the run-up to the G7 Hiroshima Summit, President Yoon, as an invitee, visited Japan, providing an opportunity for trilateral dialogues among Japan, South Korea, and the US.

As described above, the Japan-South Korea summit between Kishida and Yoon March 2023 signaled that postwar Japan-South Korea relations have entered a fourth phase characterized by re-engagement and reconciliation, one that seeks a renewed architecture for bilateral ties in a new era. In this article, after reviewing the trajectory of Japan-South Korea relations and contemporary challenges, I will examine prospects for the 2020s.

Recent trajectories: Japan-South Korea relations in the Abe-Suga/Park-Moon era (2012–2022): Drift, disarray, and crisis

During the Abe-Suga era, specifically under the administration of Shinzo Abe (December 2012 to September 2020) and Yoshihide Suga (September 2020 to October 2021), Japan-South Korea relations encountered one of its most challenging eras as the two Prime Ministers interacted with two distinct South Korean administrations, namely the conservative leadership of Park Geun-hye (February 2013 to March 2017) and the more progressive regime of Moon Jae-in (May 2017 to May 2022).

(1) The Abe/Park era (2012–2017)

During the Abe/Park era, both Japanese and South Korean leaders hailed from conservative political backgrounds, fostering hopes among some for a rapprochement in bilateral relations. Prime Minister Abe's grandfather, Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi, and his uncle, Prime Minister Eisaku Sato, along with President Park Geun-hye's father, President Park Chung-hee, were instrumental in normalizing diplomatic relations between Japan and South Korea. With the backing of the United States, progress was made in the trilateral security cooperation between Japan, the US, and South Korea in connection with North Korea. Nevertheless, disagreements over historical grievances precluded strategic harmony from the very outset.

Firstly, regarding strategic and security cooperation, in December 2013, the second Abe Cabinet was the first to formulate a National Security Strategy. Positioning South Korea as a security cooperation partner of paramount importance, immediately following the US in rank, the strategy signaled a keen interest in nurturing Japan-South Korea ties. However, South Korea's strategy prioritized US-China relations, with President Park choosing to visit China immediately after the US, resulting in the relegation of Japan to a secondary position to China for the first time. Conversely, with the advent of the Kim Jong-un regime and the advancement of

North Korea's nuclear and missile development, the US Obama administration took the lead in promoting Japan-US-South Korea security cooperation. As a result, in 2014, the three countries signed the Trilateral Information Sharing Arrangement (TISA), a mechanism brokered by the US for Japan and South Korea to indirectly share information on North Korean missiles. This agreement was set to evolve into the Japan-South Korea General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA).

However, historical grievances served as significant obstacles to advancing the relationship. During the Park administration, several points of contention arose, notably Prime Minister Abe's December 2013 visit to the Yasukuni Shrine and his August 2015 statement on the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II (the Abe Statement). Nonetheless, the most significant challenge was formulating a response to the comfort women issue, whose re-emergence was precipitated by a ruling by the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Korea in August 2011. From the perspective of the Japanese government, the involvement of the Japanese military had already been acknowledged in 1993 under the Miyazawa administration, with a statement issued by Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono (the Kono Statement). Furthermore, the Asian Women's Fund was jointly established in 1995 as a government-civilian initiative intended to facilitate programs to provide compensation to former comfort women

from countries including South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia, and the Netherlands, lasting until 2007.

Unsatisfied with these efforts, however, several South Korean civic groups initiated lawsuits in a movement that soon gained international traction, with advocacy at the United Nations and in the US, leading to the 2011 Constitutional Court ruling in South Korea, which urged a more proactive response from the South Korean government. In the face of this issue, the Abe and Park administrations found themselves mired in a contentious relationship from the outset. Nevertheless, in 2014, the Abe administration decided to uphold the Kono Statement. Subsequently, in December 2015, Foreign Ministers Yun Byung-se and Fumio Kishida (then a member of Abe's Cabinet) reached a new agreement on the comfort women issue.

These efforts to resolve historical disputes led to further advancements in security cooperation. The US Obama administration, seeking to bolster dialogue between Japan and South Korea, played a mediating role, most notably during the trilateral summit on the sidelines of the Nuclear Security Summit in Hague in March 2014. The Obama administration also backed the 2015 comfort women agreement, and the Japan-South Korea GSOMIA was finally ratified by the end of 2016. Pursuant to the comfort women agreement, the Reconciliation and Healing

Foundation was established in 2016, modeled after initiatives in Germany and other countries, with the intention that this foundation would oversee collaborative projects between Japan and South Korea. However, the execution of this agreement was interrupted midway when, in March 2017, President Park Geun-hye was impeached before completing her term.

(2) The Abe-Suga/Moon era (2017-2022)

The tenuous restoration of Japan-South Korea relations, accomplished with so much effort, faced new challenges with the inauguration of the progressive Moon Jae-in administration in May 2017, plunging the relationship into what has been called a “postwar low.” The situation was further exacerbated by US President Donald Trump, inaugurated in January 2017, and his perceived neglect of alliances and Japan-US-South Korean collaboration.

The Abe/Moon era grappled with three central issues: North Korea, historical grievances, and strategic challenges. The North Korean issue was the most pressing concern. The Kim Jong-un regime’s nuclear testing and its first intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launch test in 2017 triggered the third North Korean nuclear and missile crisis. While on the surface, the Japan-US-South Korea collaboration seemed intact, the reality was a relationship of

shared space but divergent dreams. Adhering to the so-called “Three No’s” policy reportedly conveyed to China that same year, the Moon administration distanced itself from the US-South Korea missile defense, including Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD), as well as from Japan-US-South Korea military cooperation. From 2018 to 2019, historic first-time summit-level talks between President Trump and Chairman Kim Jong-un took place on three occasions (in Singapore, Hanoi, and Panmunjom), facilitated by President Moon. The Moon administration took the initiative in convening three Inter-Korean Summits in April, May and September 2018, consistently pushing for a dialogue-based approach. In contrast, while not outrightly rejecting dialogue, the Abe administration maintained a pressure-oriented stance towards North Korea, urging President Trump to adopt a more cautious approach. While the Trump administration tackled North Korea employing both dialogue and pressure, substantive results in denuclearization remained elusive.

Beyond their approach to North Korea policy, a growing chasm between Japan and South Korea became particularly conspicuous in matters of historical grievances and strategic issues. The bilateral relationship from 2018 to 2019 moved beyond mere drift and disarray and into a state of crisis. Born out of the negative linkage politics that both nations unfurled, this was a multifaceted diplomatic crisis spanning historical,

economic, and security dimensions.

The discord between Japan and South Korea stemmed once again from historical grievances. In January 2018, President Moon Jae-in articulated his position on the comfort women issue. Espousing a victim-centered approach, he revisited the 2015 comfort women agreement. While professing respect for the agreement, the South Korean government effectively neutralized it by dissolving the Reconciliation and Healing Foundation, which had been funded in part by the Japanese government. Subsequently, the issue of wartime laborers resurfaced. At the end of October 2018, South Korea's Supreme Court rendered a verdict on the matter, instructing related Japanese companies to pay damages to former wartime laborers. The Japanese government holds the view that claims, including those from wartime laborers, were "finally and irrevocably settled" with the 1965 Claims Agreement, a perspective affirmed by South Korea's Roh Moo-hyun administration in 2005. The Japanese government viewed the South Korean Supreme Court's decision as a "violation of international law," one that, if enforced, would prompt Japan to resort to retaliatory measures. South Korea thus found itself caught between a rock and a hard place, obligated to honor both the 1965 Korea-Japan Treaty and South Korea's Supreme Court ruling.

Further exacerbating Japan-South Korea relations was an incident between their

militaries in 2018. In early October, the entry of a Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force vessel into Busan was refused for the first time. The maritime ensign it had traditionally flown, which by rights should be respected under international law, sparked controversy when it came under opposition from South Korean civic groups for evoking wartime memories of the Rising Sun flag. In a subsequent incident in December of the same year, a South Korean naval vessel allegedly directed its radar at a Japanese P-3C patrol aircraft, which escalated into a diplomatic row between the two nations. In other words, historical grievances and diplomatic mistrust had spilled over into the sphere of Japan-South Korea defense cooperation.

The strategic divide between Japan and South Korea deepened. As the strategic competition between the US and China, economic and technological security concerns, and the Indo-Pacific Strategy and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD; encompassing Japan, the US, Australia, and India, often referred to as Quad), came into sharper focus, the Moon administration advanced its own New Southern Policy. Nevertheless, it maintained a deliberate distance from both the US-China rivalry and the Indo-Pacific Strategy, thereby widening the gap with Japan. In December 2018, during Japan's review of its National Defense Program Guidelines, South Korea's ranking as a security partner (outside the context of the Japan-US alliance) was downgraded from first

place (as per the 2013 National Security Strategy) to fourth, trailing Australia, India, and ASEAN. While this modification primarily reflected Japan's strategic pivot towards the Indo-Pacific Strategy, the influence of the Japan-South Korea discord cannot be denied.

The distrust between Japan and Korea eventually escalated into a diplomatic crisis from the summer to autumn of 2019. That summer, the Abe administration announced a strengthening of export controls targeting South Korea. In July, regulations were tightened on strategic materials related to semiconductor manufacturing, and in August, South Korea was removed from Japan's so-called whitelist. From Japan's perspective, these were measures concerning economic security and export control and did not violate World Trade Organization (WTO) rules. However, the sudden manner of the announcement of these measures, coupled with statements by certain Japanese politicians linking them to historical disputes, bred misunderstanding in South Korea. As a countermeasure, the Moon administration decided to sue Japan at the WTO, downgraded Japan in its own export control categories, and even advocated for the termination of the Japan-South Korea GSOMIA. The Trump administration, which had previously been on the sidelines, intervened proactively in light of the GSOMIA issue. In November of the same year, with US mediation, South Korea "temporarily" suspended the termination of

GSOMIA, and Japan agreed to take part in dialogues concerning export controls. Consequently, Japan-South Korea export control dialogues (at the Director-General level) took place in December 2019 and March 2020. However, South Korea's hopes of being reinstated on the whitelist remained unfulfilled, leading to the discontinuation of the dialogues in May.

As detailed above, although the immediate crisis was averted, the Japan-South Korea relationship reverted once more to a state of drift, compounded by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020. In August 2020, Prime Minister Abe, citing health concerns, unexpectedly announced his resignation, prompting the subsequent inauguration of the Yoshihide Suga administration that September. Having supported the Abe administration for many years in his capacity as Chief Cabinet Secretary, Prime Minister Suga continued Abe's policy line, and high-level dialogues between the two nations ceased. Although the advent of the Biden administration in the US in January 2021 saw a renewed emphasis on Indo-Pacific Strategy and strengthening the trilateral cooperation between the US, Japan, and South Korea, the mending of Japan-South Korea relations remained at a standstill.

Current situation and contemporary challenges: The Japan-South Korea relationship in the Kishida/Yoon era (2022–Present): Reengagement and reconciliation

From 2021 to 2022, new leadership and administrations emerged in both Japan and South Korea—Prime Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan’s LDP (from October 2021) and President Yoon Suk Yeol of South Korea’s conservative People Power Party (from May 2022)—setting Japan-South Korea relations on a path to the restoration and improvement of ties.

In contrast to the Moon administration, South Korea’s Yoon administration demonstrated its proactiveness in repairing Japan-South Korea ties from its very inception in May 2022. From a strategic vantage point, the Yoon government of South Korea’s role as a “global pivotal state” and its Indo-Pacific strategy underscored the significance of bilateral cooperation between the US and South Korea and between Japan and South Korea, as well as the trilateral collaboration among all three states. Consequently, it positioned the rehabilitation of the significantly damaged Japan-South Korea relationship as a top issue on its foreign policy agenda. Although the Kishida administration demonstrated some initial caution, a series of talks at the ministerial level,

including between Japan’s Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi and South Korea’s Foreign Minister Park Jin, as well as subsequent high-ranking and practical dialogues, have seen the Japanese stance shift progressively to a more proactive engagement.

A significant factor behind these developments was the support and encouragement of the Biden administration in the United States, which is a mutual ally of both Japan and South Korea. The US has led the way in championing trilateral cooperation between the US, Japan, and South Korea and creating platforms for dialogues between the leaders of Japan and South Korea. The inaugural trilateral summit between Presidents Biden and Yoon and Prime Minister Kishida took place in June 2022 on the sidelines of the NATO Summit in Madrid. Subsequently, in November of the same year, another trilateral summit was conducted during the East Asia Summit (EAS) in Cambodia. This occasion also marked the first formal Japan-South Korea summit between Kishida and Yoon.

In response to President Yoon’s announcement of the Indo-Pacific strategy guidelines (officially announced in December 2023) during the EAS, both President Biden and Prime Minister Kishida offered their support, leading to the adoption of the Phnom Penh Statement on Trilateral Partnership for the Indo-Pacific. The declaration represents a comprehensive document

promising cooperation not only on the North Korean issue but also in the domains of the Indo-Pacific, Ukraine, and global engagements, emphasizing collaboration not just in military aspects but also in economic and technological security, as well as regional development.

Following the establishment of a foundation for strategic cooperation among the US, Japan, and South Korea, significant steps were taken to resolve longstanding issues in Japan-South Korea relations in the spring of 2023. First and foremost, on March 6 of the same year, President Yoon made a crucial decision regarding the long-contested issue of wartime laborers, effectively resolving a matter of paramount concern. In a move that honored both the 1965 Treaty and South Korea's Supreme Court ruling, a third-party compensation mechanism was adopted, not through compensation by the sued Japanese companies but via a South Korean foundation, in favor of the plaintiffs and victims. Accepting this arrangement, the Japanese government welcomed President Yoon's visit to Japan on March 16, when the leaders of the two countries held a summit in Tokyo. This meeting, the first of its kind since 2011, marked the resumption of shuttle diplomacy between Japan and South Korea, which had been on hiatus for 12 years.

The summit, on March 16, served as a turning point, resolving the three primary issues under contention—wartime

labor, export controls, and the Japan-South Korea GSOMIA agreement—and reopening a path for renewed cooperation between Japan and South Korea across various fields. A second summit took place on May 7 when Prime Minister Kishida visited Seoul. The third meeting occurred between May 20 and 21, when President Yoon visited Japan to participate in the G7 Hiroshima Summit as a G7 partner country. For the first time, both leaders jointly visited a monument dedicated to Korean victims of the atomic bombings at the end of World War II, located within the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park.

In 2016, President Obama visited Hiroshima to pay respects to the victims of war and the atomic bombings. This was often called the "Hiroshima moment" of reconciliation for US-Japan relations. President Yoon's visit this time signified a "Hiroshima moment" for Japan-South Korea relations. Following the G7 Summit, President Biden hosted a standalone summit at Camp David on August 18, marking a significant milestone in Japan-US-South Korea relations. This event, the fourth meeting between the leaders of the three countries, was unique in being the first standalone trilateral summit, underscoring a collective aim to elevate diplomatic cooperation to a new level. In adherence to commitments established in Phnom Penh, the three countries affirmed their intention to solidify collaboration by institutionalizing dialogue at multiple levels, including regular summits and

ministerial consultations, with a view to confronting global issues ranging from Ukraine to the Indo-Pacific region. How much implementation can be achieved? How sustainable can it be? These are the key questions to determine the success of the trilateral process. The future trajectory of Japan-South Korea bilateral relations will continue to attract attention, evolving in parallel with the deepening of trilateral cooperation.

Conclusion

As outlined above, the Japan-South Korea relationship has entered the fourth phase: a “reset or reengagement toward recovery, renewal, and reconciliation.” October 2023 marked the 25th anniversary of the Japan-South Korea Joint Declaration of 1998 (the Kim Dae-jung–Obuchi Declaration). President Yoon’s administration is aiming to craft what they termed as a “Kim Dae-jung–Obuchi 2.0” relationship, symbolizing a new era of ties between the two nations. Japan is likely to reciprocate this sentiment. As both nations grapple with a challenging security environment, it is essential to recognize their shared values of liberal democracy and their commitment to upholding a rules-based international order. As equal and advanced partners, Japan and South Korea need to collaborate with the global community. Strengthening their bilateral foundation and implementing various agreements is an essential first step in fostering this new era of Japan-South Korea relations. The cooperative spirit led by both Prime

Minister Kishida and President Yoon, as well as that of other leaders from both nations, is now being tested.

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11

Japan and North Korea

Atsuhito ISOZAKI

Introduction

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, hereinafter, North Korea) is the only member of the United Nations with which Japan does not maintain diplomatic relations. After 35 years of Japan's colonial rule over the Korean Peninsula, which lasted until 1945, Japan normalized its diplomatic relations with the Republic of Korea (South Korea) in 1965. Yet, more than half a century later, the relationship between Japan and North Korea remains fraught, plagued by numerous unresolved issues and mutual distrust, with no prospects for improvement on the horizon.

However, there have been moments in the past when Japan and North Korea approached each other with a view toward normalizing diplomatic relations. This article looks back on the trajectory and context in which efforts by the two countries to draw closer were, despite initial promises, ultimately thwarted. In particular, it delves into the factors that led to a significant deterioration in relations between the two nations after the signing of the Japan-North Korea Pyongyang Declaration in 2002. Additionally, it provides a discussion on the current state of Japan-North Korea relations under the Suga and Kishida administrations.

Historical context

The first period in which Japan and North Korea sought to move closer

to each other came in the mid-1950s, during the Cold War. Following the death of the Soviet Union's supreme leader, Joseph Stalin, in March 1953, a mood of peaceful coexistence emerged between the United States and the Soviet Union. This, in turn, improved relations between Japan and the Soviet Union and so fostered an atmosphere conducive to Japan and North Korea also drawing closer to each other. At the time, the newly established North Korean state was heavily influenced by the Soviet Union, a fact that serves as a backdrop to these developments. In February 1955, North Korea's Foreign Minister Nam Il conveyed to Japan that North Korea was prepared "to discuss in detail various issues concerning the establishment and development of relations with Japan." In response to this overture, trade between Japan and North Korea expanded under the administration of Prime Minister Ichiro Hatoyama, and direct shipping routes between the two countries were established. In December 1959, a repatriation program for Koreans residing in Japan commenced, resulting in the migration of nearly 100,000 Korean residents in Japan and their Japanese spouses to North Korea, an exodus from a capitalist to a socialist country whose scale is unparalleled in history.

However, the landscape shifted significantly in May 1961 when Park Chung-hee, a military officer, seized power in South Korea. Following this development, Japan-South Korea relations advanced,

and in June 1965, the Treaty on Basic Relations Between Japan and the Republic of Korea confirmed South Korea as the “only lawful Government” on the Korean Peninsula. Consequently, Japan-North Korea relations rapidly cooled. In the context of the Cold War, it proved challenging for Japan to establish amicable relations with both North and South Korea.

A second period emerged towards the end of the 1960s, coinciding with the *détente* between the United States and the Soviet Union and the rapprochement between the United States and China. Particularly influenced by the Sino-American developments, Japan and China also rapidly drew closer to each other, resulting in the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and China in September 1972. In Japan, this context gave rise to a sentiment that favored placing importance on relations with North Korea, China’s ally. This sentiment led to a flurry of visits to North Korea by Japanese journalists and politicians and the establishment of the Parliamentarians’ League for the Promotion of Friendship between Japan and North Korea. However, this swift rapprochement between Japan and North Korea proved to be an unpalatable development for South Korea, which had just normalized its diplomatic relations with Japan. North Korea demanded that Japan adopt an equidistant diplomacy between North and South Korea, but Japan did not comply with this request, instead advocating for the gradual build-up of exchanges in economic,

cultural, and humanitarian fields.

It is worth noting that, up until the 1970s, the Japanese public held a generally favorable image of North Korea. Even conservative media outlets reported positively on North Korea’s “economic development.” Notably, in October 1971, Ryokichi Minobe, the Governor of Tokyo, visited North Korea and met with Prime Minister Kim Il-sung. During this visit, Minobe went so far as to unabashedly praise Kim Il-sung, declaring, “In the competition between capitalism and socialism, one has only to observe the current situation in Pyongyang to reach a clear conclusion. We discussed that it is evident that capitalism is losing.”

A third period can be situated around the time of the end of the Cold War. In July 1988, South Korean President Roh Tae-woo declared, “We are willing to co-operate with North Korea in its efforts to improve relations with countries friendly to us, including the United States and Japan; and in parallel with this, we will continue to seek improved relations with the Soviet Union, China, and other socialist countries.” For Japan, the implication of this statement was that South Korea would not oppose the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and North Korea.

In the face of the impending collapse of socialist regimes around the world, North Korea sought to improve its relations with Japan as a way to navigate through this critical situation. On

the Japanese side, as well, there was a desire to advance the normalization of diplomatic relations with North Korea as a final step in resolving the issues that had remained outstanding since the war. In September 1990, both the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the main opposition party, the Japan Socialist Party (JSP), dispatched a high-level delegation to Pyongyang. The delegation reached an agreement with the Workers' Party of Korea that "diplomatic relations should be established as soon as possible," followed in January 1991 by the initiation of formal negotiations for the normalization of diplomatic relations between the two governments.

However, the normalization talks suffered a significant setback after suspicions arose concerning the involvement of North Korean agents in the November 1987 bombing of Korean Air Flight 858. Suspicion emerged that a woman, who was alleged to have taught Japanese to the North Korean operatives responsible for the bombing, might herself be a Japanese national abducted by North Korea. This development led to the breakdown of the normalization negotiations during the 8th round of talks in November 1992. At this time, suspicions were also emerging regarding North Korea's nuclear development. While the Japanese side insisted on a comprehensive resolution that included the nuclear issue, the North Korean side was entirely unresponsive, further complicating the background of the negotiations.

The fourth turning point arrived with Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visit to North Korea on September 17, 2002. Until that point, attempts at rapprochement between Japan and North Korea had largely been linked with trends in international politics and moves by the major powers. However, the approach taken in 2002 was distinctive in that not only did Japan and North Korea mutually and proactively seek a rapprochement but they did so by advancing negotiations in which both governments played a central role, as distinct from the party-to-party diplomacy that had been practiced until that time.

A significant factor behind Koizumi's achievement of the first-ever Japan-North Korea summit was the fact that the issue of the abductions of Japanese nationals by North Korea had become a national concern in Japan. In pre-summit administrative negotiations, the North Korean side reported that of the abductees, "eight had died, five were alive, and one had never entered the country." Kim Jong-il, North Korea's supreme leader, apologized to Koizumi during the summit, explaining that "in the 1970s and early 1980s, our special forces were carried away by a reckless quest for glory."

The Japan-North Korea Pyongyang Declaration, signed by both leaders at this juncture, was a groundbreaking agreement encompassing various issues. It committed to the commencement of discussions for the resumption of

negotiations for the normalization of diplomatic relations; Japan's expression of "deep remorse and heartfelt apology" for its colonial rule; the initiation of specific consultations by Japan to implement grant aid and low-interest loans following the normalization of diplomatic relations; the initiation of specific consultations by both parties to renounce property and claims that had arisen before the end of World War II; North Korea's commitment to measures preventing the recurrence of issues of concern affecting the lives and security of Japanese nationals; adherence by both parties to all international agreements related to nuclear issues; and North Korea's intention to extend the moratorium on missile launches in and after 2003.

Reflecting on Japan's colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula before World War II, Japan provided South Korea with economic cooperation amounting to 500 million US dollars at the time of the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and South Korea in 1965. It was a shared understanding between Japan and North Korea that a similar financial provision would be made if diplomatic relations with North Korea were normalized. Prior to this point, North Korea had insisted that these funds be referred to as "compensation" or "reparations," but in the declaration, North Korea made a concession to Japan's position.

North Korea, which until then had dismissed the abduction issue as a

"fabrication by the Japanese government," dramatically changed its stance. Some of the factors underlying Kim Jong-il personally apologizing to Japan during the summit are believed to be North Korea's desire to leverage economic cooperation from Japan as a catalyst for its own economic development, as well as its hope to approach negotiations with the United States through Japan.

At the end of September 2002, when a Japanese government investigation team visited North Korea, the North Korean authorities provided explanations for the deaths of eight individuals, attributing them to gas poisoning, traffic accidents, drowning, and suicide. In Japan, this sparked intense backlash due to the perceived implausibility of these explanations, with many critics noting that "there are too many unnatural points." On the other hand, the five individuals who were confirmed to be alive were repatriated to Japan on October 15 of that year. By the end of October, negotiations for the normalization of Japan-North Korea relations resumed in Kuala Lumpur, but they were once again interrupted due to friction over allowing the families of the already repatriated abductees to return to Japan. The Japanese government lacked the leeway to choose actions that could be perceived by its citizens as weak.

Although the North Korean side repeatedly insisted that "the abduction issue has been resolved," in an effort

to break the impasse, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi made a second visit to Pyongyang on May 22, 2004. At the 2nd Japan-North Korea summit, Japan promised to provide 250,000 tons of food aid through international organizations and medical assistance equivalent to 10 million US dollars. In response, Kim Jong-il permitted the repatriation of three family members of the abductees. Kim Jong-il also committed to “going back to square one and reopening the investigation” into the safety and whereabouts of the other abductees. Although North Korea did later report back on the reopened investigation, it did not provide any concrete evidence or documents to substantiate its findings.

In June 2008, at a Japan-North Korea working-level meeting held in Beijing, North Korea promised to conduct another investigation into the abduction issue, and both sides agreed that results would be produced by the fall of that year. However, as Japan continued to see frequent changes in its prime minister, North Korea effectively reneged on its agreement.

At the end of 2011, Kim Jong-il passed away in North Korea, with the regime passing into the hands of his son, Kim Jong-un. In Japan, at the end of 2012, Shinzo Abe, who had shown a strong interest in the abduction issue, was returned to the position of Prime Minister and expressed his determination to resolve the issue during his tenure. Prior to this, in August 2012, the

Red Cross societies of both countries held their first official talks in a decade in Beijing. The discussions were focused on collecting the remains of Japanese nationals who had died in North Korea and arranging for their family members to visit the graves. During the chaos at the end of the Pacific War, many Japanese nationals, including refugees from Manchuria, were stranded on the Korean Peninsula. Consequently, although the Japanese government had been conducting operations to collect the remains of war dead in other regions, it had been unable to do so in North Korea, the presumed resting place of a significant number of Japanese nationals.

North Korea adopted a cooperative stance, including permitting the entry of Japanese family members to visit graves. At Director-General level talks between the foreign ministries of both countries, held in Ulaanbaatar in November 2012, both sides agreed to work together on the issue of collecting the remains of Japanese nationals. They also reached a consensus on continuing discussions regarding the abduction issue.

Subsequently, in May 2014, Japan and North Korea reached a comprehensive agreement in Director-General level talks held in Stockholm, Sweden. North Korea declared its intention to “conduct comprehensive and full-scale investigations concerning all Japanese nationals, with the ultimate goal of resolving all issues related to Japanese nationals.”

In response, Japan signaled its policy to partially lift sanctions on North Korea. In July 2014, at Director-General level talks in Beijing, North Korea informed the Japanese side of the makeup of its fact-finding committee, which was reported to include members from the Ministry of State Security, the Ministry of Social Security, and the Ministry of Defense, among others. It was planned that the committee would be organized into four subcommittees, which would address the issues of abductees, missing persons, the remains of Japanese nationals, and remaining Japanese nationals and Japanese spouses. The “missing persons” category includes individuals whom Japan cannot rule out as having potentially been abducted, while the “remaining Japanese nationals and Japanese spouses” refers to individuals who did not repatriate to Japan after the end of the war, as well as Japanese women who accompanied their Korean husbands from Japan as part of repatriation programs that began in the late 1950s.

However, in response to North Korea’s 4th nuclear test in January 2016 and its launch of what was effectively a long-range ballistic missile the following month, the Japanese government announced a set of enhanced sanctions, including the reinstatement of previously lifted sanctions and new measures such as a fundamental prohibition on money transfers to North Korea. In retaliation, North Korea announced the complete suspension of its investigations regarding Japanese nationals

and the disbandment of the special fact-finding committee. Subsequently, the mutual distrust between Japan and North Korea deepened, leading to a continued stalemate between the two countries.

North Korea nevertheless persisted in conducting nuclear tests and missile launch experiments, prompting Prime Minister Abe to harden his stance, stating, “What is needed is not dialogue, but pressure,” and “dialogue for the sake of dialogue is meaningless.” However, in a significant shift that began in May 2019, Abe began to advocate for “unconditional dialogue.” This pivot came after US and South Korean leaders had held multiple meetings with Kim Jong-un, and public opinion in Japan became increasingly polarized between those emphasizing “pressure” on North Korea and those advocating for “dialogue.”

From 2018 to 2019, Kim Jong-un launched a diplomatic offensive, engaging in three summit meetings with US President Donald Trump, five with Chinese President Xi Jinping, and three with South Korean President Moon Jae-in. Nevertheless, he consistently ignored Prime Minister Abe’s proposal for “unconditional dialogue.” Nevertheless, given Abe’s frequent vows that he would personally ensure the return of all abductees, it was clear that he would not take part in a summit meeting without the prospect of progress on the abduction issue, a fact that was undoubtedly recognized by North Korea.

In other words, just as Japan has harbored increasing distrust toward North Korea over the issues of abductions, nuclear weapons, and missiles, North Korea has also grown increasingly distrustful of Japan. Abe, who garnered national popularity with his strong condemnation of North Korea over the abduction issue and his implementation of unilateral sanctions and hardline measures, was perceived by North Korea as lacking the will to make conciliatory moves toward resolving the abduction issue. Instead, North Korea saw him as merely using this issue for domestic political gain. In the end, despite prioritizing the abduction issue as his “highest priority,” Abe not only failed to secure the repatriation of any abductees but also did not manage to hold a single summit meeting with North Korea. He ultimately stepped down from his position as Prime Minister without making any apparent progress on these issues.

Current situation and challenges

With Abe’s sudden resignation during the COVID-19 pandemic, Yoshihide Suga, who explicitly declared his intention to continue Abe’s policies, took over the post of Prime Minister of Japan. Although Suga, like his predecessor, identified the abduction issue as its “highest priority,” his policy towards North Korea did not exhibit any distinctive features. Meanwhile, consumed with the response to the COVID-19

pandemic, his government was unable to devote significant attention to Japan-North Korea relations.

Like Abe, Suga repeatedly issued strong condemnations of North Korea over the issues of abductions, nuclear weapons, and missile tests. On the other hand, Kim Jong-un has not once made direct reference to the Japanese government in his New Year’s speeches or other public addresses. While North Korean media continue to unleash criticism toward Japan, the sources of these statements are not high-ranking officials like Kim Yo-jong or Kim Yong-chol, who are often involved in critiquing the United States and South Korea. Instead, the criticisms are at most attributed to individuals with titles such as “researcher at the Japan Research Institute” or “spokesperson for the Korean Olympic Committee.” This current posture of North Korea implies that it does not regard Japan as a significant negotiating partner.

While Japan-North Korea relations have remained at a standstill for an extended period, China’s GDP has grown to three times that of Japan, once the world’s second-largest economy, while South Korea’s per capita income has caught up with that of Japan. From North Korea’s perspective, it would naturally be more expedient to secure a partial lifting of economic sanctions from the United States and to obtain aid from China and South Korea rather than pinning its hopes on potential financial assistance funds from Japan that would

accompany the normalization of diplomatic relations.

For a long time, Japan's diplomacy toward North Korea has essentially been a matter under the exclusive control of the Prime Minister. However, even back-channel contact was scarce under the Suga administration. The Japanese family members of the abductees are aging, and there is a growing concern that the issue of abductions may be fading from public consciousness.

The administration of Fumio Kishida, which was inaugurated in October 2021, has also adhered to the policy of "unconditional dialogue," and there has been no significant change in Japan's policy towards North Korea. The Prime Minister's Office website states: "The abductions issue, which is a top priority for the administration, is a humanitarian issue with a time constraint. There is no time to lose before we resolve the abductions issue. We will boldly take every possible action to realize the return of all abductees at the earliest possible date. [Prime Minister Kishida is] determined to meet with Chairman Kim Jong-un face to face, without any conditions." It also declares, "Japan seeks to normalize its relations with North Korea, in accordance with the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration, through comprehensively resolving outstanding issues of concern such as the abductions, nuclear and missile issues as well as settlement of the unfortunate past."

In May 2022, a conservative government led by Yoon Suk Yeol came to power in South Korea, the first in five years. This development could potentially make it easier for Japan, the United States, and South Korea to align their stances and focus on applying pressure on North Korea. However, in response to this shift, North Korea has heightened its vigilance. Consequently, whether these developments will lead to a breakthrough in the stalemate of Japan-North Korea relations remains an open question.

Conclusion

The perception of North Korea among the Japanese public has undergone a significant transformation—from being relatively favorable in the Cold War era to extremely negative as the result of issues such as abductions, nuclear weapons, and missile tests. In this context, the first-ever Japan-North Korea summit, held in 2002, succeeded in repatriating five abductees. Despite North Korea's long-standing claim that the abduction issue was a "fabrication by the Japanese government," Japan continued to believe in the possibility of resolving this issue. The return of these abductees was the result of Japan's persistent efforts to find a solution. Forcing Kim Jong-il, known for his tough stance, to apologize was a rare diplomatic victory for contemporary Japan. The Japan-North Korea Pyongyang Declaration, the only document signed by the leaders of both countries, has

since become the foundation of Japan's policy toward North Korea.

Since this breakthrough, however, Japan-North Korea relations have proceeded on a downward spiral. Now, North Korea appears to have determined that it doesn't need to appeal to Japan for economic cooperation. Rather, by advancing negotiations with the United States and achieving an easing of sanctions, it believes it can secure support not only from China but also from South Korea. In comparison to the period immediately following what is referred to as the "Arduous March" in the late 1990s—a time of unprecedented famine—North Korea's domestic economy has relatively stabilized, while Japan's economic power has relatively declined.

Nonetheless, this does not mean that North Korea can afford to continue to ignore Japan entirely. Even if Japan lacks the capacity to advance negotiations with North Korea on its own, the Japanese Prime Minister can still send messages to the US President that may serve as a brake on the progress of US-North Korea relations. If North Korea is considering the resumption of negotiations with the United States, a certain degree of improvement in Japan-North Korea relations is also likely necessary. In this sense, Japan holds a hidden card in its hands.

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12

Japan and ASEAN: Changing Partnership and Its Prospects

Mie OBA

Introduction

Relations between modern Japan and Southeast Asia can be traced back to the migration of ordinary Japanese to Southeast Asia in the 19th century. Following two civilian-led “southbound” booms in the prewar era and the Japanese imperialism of the Second World War, postwar Japan established diplomatic relations with Southeast Asian countries that had won their independence and built new relationships through reparation, sub-reparation, and economic cooperation. Since then, Japan’s Southeast Asia policy has been driven by expectations of the region as a source of raw materials needed for Japan’s recovery and economic growth and as a market. Japan established a significant economic presence in Southeast Asia through the “trinity” of trade, investment, and aid, which enabled political influence in the region.

This vertical relationship between Japan and Southeast Asian countries gradually shifted. Southeast Asian countries established the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and pursued their hedging diplomacy with key countries beyond their region while expanding the ASEAN grouping. For them, ASEAN functioned to stabilize relations among its members, secure benefits from Japan and other countries outside the region, and serve as a framework for influencing the broader regional order. In this context, as well as pursuing bilateral diplomacy with individual Southeast

Asian countries, Japan pursued ASEAN diplomacy to build partnerships with the countries in the region from around the mid-1970s.

This article focuses primarily on Japan’s ASEAN diplomacy, explaining how relations and approaches to cooperation between Japan and both ASEAN and Southeast Asian countries have changed over time, and the factors that contributed to these changes. On this basis, the paper also considers the key issues in current and future Japan-ASEAN partnerships.

Developments thus far

(1) The beginning of Japan-ASEAN relations

When five Southeast Asian countries established ASEAN in August 1967, the Japanese government did not display especially strong interest. However, as a backlash from Southeast Asian countries against Japan’s economic presence surfaced, forcing Japan to reconsider its diplomacy with Southeast Asian countries, Japan began to give greater weight both to bilateral relations with countries in the region and to diplomatic engagement with ASEAN. The most direct trigger for this change was trade friction over synthetic rubber exports. Japan’s synthetic rubber exports hit Malaysia and Indonesia, which were natural rubber-producing countries, hard. These countries banded together

as ASEAN to press Japan for talks, rather than individually negotiate. As a result of their efforts to push Japan to come to the negotiating table, the Japan-ASEAN Synthetic Rubber Forum was held in 1973. While this Forum was not a comfortable start to relations between the two parties, it was later hailed as the starting point for “Japan-ASEAN friendship and cooperation.” In 1974, the Japanese government was shocked by large-scale anti-Japan demonstrations held in Bangkok, Jakarta, and other major cities to protest a state visit by the Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka (the “Malari incident”). Japan was also prompted to re-think its Southeast Asia policies following the change in the regional environment occasioned by the turn to communism in Indochina following the Fall of Saigon in 1975.

As Japan explored new regional approaches as an economic super-power against the backdrop of such events, it began to focus on strengthening relations with ASEAN. In March 1977, the Japan-ASEAN forum was launched with the aim of consultation on a full range of economic problems. Japan also obtained the status of an ASEAN dialogue partner, together with the United States, Australia, and other Western states in the Asia Pacific and the European Community (EC).

Japan’s Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda was invited to the second ASEAN leaders’ summit in Kuala Lumpur as a special guest alongside the Prime Ministers of

Australia and New Zealand in August 1977. In a policy speech delivered in Manila immediately after the summit, Fukuda outlined three principles, which later became known as the “Fukuda Doctrine”: (1) Japan would never become a military power; (2) Japan would pursue heart-to-heart relations with ASEAN; (3) Japan would build an equal partnership with ASEAN and serve as a bridge between ASEAN and Indochina. The issuance of this Fukuda Doctrine later became known as a key event contributing to stabilizing Japan-ASEAN relations.

(2) Deepening Japan-ASEAN relations after the Cold War

With the end of US-Soviet and China-Soviet rivalries, Asia’s complex Cold War structure dissolved. The civil war in Cambodia, which had been a symbolic conflict of the Cold War in Asia, ended with a peace agreement in 1992, and a new Cambodia was established in 1993. Japan played a major role in the Cambodian peace process.

In response to the changes in the international environment occasioned by the end of the Cold War, ASEAN countries, both in their individual diplomatic efforts and through a combined approach as ASEAN, proactively advanced a hedging strategy that involved forming relationships with all major powers and achieving a balance that ensured that no single country could exercise influence

over their region. ASEAN worked to strengthen ties with countries such as South Korea, China, India, and Russia by using mechanisms such as the dialogue partner system. Moreover, ASEAN sought to bolster its own voice and influence on the Asia-Pacific regional order through the formation of regional institutions with itself as the center (ASEAN Architecture).

As ASEAN expanded its partnership with external powers in these ways, Japan's importance to ASEAN declined in relative terms. On the other hand, Japan increasingly emphasized cooperation with ASEAN more than before, in response to Southeast Asian countries' proactive diplomacy by utilizing the ASEAN framework. Japan was heavily involved in the process of establishing the ASEAN architecture mentioned above. Additionally, with the expansion of ASEAN membership to include Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam, Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Industry played a central role in industrial cooperation designed to mitigate disparities between ASEAN's original members and these new member countries (known collectively as "CLMV"). The Obuchi administration of Japan established the ASEAN-Japan Solidarity Fund for the purpose of human resource development and poverty reduction, and provided financial assistance under this framework to the ASEAN Fund, which was established by ASEAN in July 1998 to strengthen cooperation within the region.

In the wake of the Asian financial crisis that began in the summer of 1997, Japan mobilized its economic strength to support countries that had suffered from the crisis. The Asian Monetary Fund (AMF) initiative that Japan's Ministry of Finance formulated was derailed by strong opposition from the United States and disinterest from China. However, the Japanese government proposed the New Miyazawa Initiative in 1998 and a second stage of the same initiative the following year, under which financial assistance was provided to Thailand, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, and the Philippines. The Miyazawa Initiative subsequently developed into the Chiang Mai Initiative under ASEAN+3.

The early 2000s saw a shift in the power balance between Japan and China, as China expanded its economic and political presence expanded after joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001. Japan-China competition for leadership in shaping the regional order became more visible, and the two countries vied for stronger links with ASEAN. Japan and China both rushed to sign Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with ASEAN and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC). Japan joined the TAC in July 2004 and entered an FTA with ASEAN in 2008. Japan also hosted a special Japan-ASEAN leaders' summit in Tokyo in December 2003, showcasing the depth of linkages between Japan and ASEAN. As moves toward the establishment of the East Asia Summit began in earnest, Japan and China disagreed over

the scope and modality of the Summit's membership. Moreover, in 2006 Japan responded to efforts by China and South Korea to advance economic integration among the ASEAN+3 members by proposing the Comprehensive Economic Partnership for East Asia (CEPEA), which would pursue economic integration in the ASEAN+6 grouping. These two initiatives later coalesced in establishing the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

Moreover, Japan announced that it would commit funds totaling 70.1 million US dollars to support cooperation and integration as ASEAN moved toward forming a regional community, and these funds formed the basis of the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) established in 2006. The Japan-ASEAN General Exchange Fund (JAGEF) and Japan-ASEAN Exchange Projects (JAEP) fund, both of which had been operating as part of Japan's cultural cooperation and assistance program since the Fukuda Doctrine era, were incorporated into this new JAIF in 2008.

(3) Southeast Asia's emergence as a strategic arena and Japan's ASEAN diplomacy

The rise of China became even more pronounced in the 2010s. In this period, China moved toward forming a new international and regional order through expanded investment and infrastructure development projects, such as Xi

Jinping's 2013 announcement of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). With the release of the Made in China 2025 plan in 2015, China also made clear its intention to become a technology power. China's approach drew the attention of the United States, and US-China strategic competition became even more evident. Southeast Asia became a strategic arena in which the US and China would compete for influence as this competition escalated.

Meanwhile, from the start of the 2010s, Japan began situating ASEAN member countries as partners in establishing a rules-based order, strengthening cooperation in the fields of politics and security while seeking to limit China's power. Japan's National Security Strategy, approved by Cabinet in 2013 during Shinzo Abe's second term as Prime Minister, identified the ASEAN countries alongside South Korea, Australia, and India as countries with which Japan would strengthen its cooperative relations, describing them as "countries with which it shares universal values and strategic interests," and committing to "further deepen and develop cooperative relations with the ASEAN countries in all sectors, including politics and security." Another special Japan-ASEAN summit meeting held in Tokyo to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Japan-ASEAN relations in 2013 adopted a Vision Statement affirming a strengthening of cooperation with ASEAN and Japan positioned as

“partners for peace and stability.” Prime Minister Abe also announced an additional contribution totaling 100 million US dollars to “JAIF 2.0,” identifying four priority areas: (a) maritime cooperation; (b) disaster management; (c) counter-terrorism and transnational crime including cybercrime; and (d) ASEAN connectivity.

Attempts to build a rules-based order in the economic realm were also pursued in the form of negotiations toward the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and RCEP. Even after the United States’ withdrawal from TPP negotiations as part of the “America First” policy of the Trump administration inaugurated in January 2017, both the TPP and RCEP grew in importance as frameworks for the maintenance of a rules-based free trade system, regardless of their differences in membership, level of freedom, and scope. The TPP was ratified by all 11 negotiating countries other than the United States, with the CPTPP concluded in February 2018 and coming into effect in December of the same year. India withdrew from RCEP negotiations in 2019, but the partnership agreement was nonetheless signed by the remaining 15 countries at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in November 2020, and became effective in January 2022.

The Abe administration also embarked in earnest on defense cooperation with ASEAN countries, associating this cooperation with the goal of forming and maintaining a rules-based order. After

the establishment of the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology in April 2014, Japan entered into defense equipment and technology transfer agreements with the Philippines (2016) and Malaysia (2018). Similar agreements have since been signed with Vietnam (2021), Indonesia (2021), and Thailand (2022). Japan has also supplied new and used patrol vessels to the Philippines, Vietnam, and Malaysia under its ODA program. Alongside these bilateral defense cooperation initiatives with specific ASEAN countries, in November 2016 the Japanese Defense Minister Tomomi Inada announced the Vientiane Vision, a comprehensive framework for defense cooperation with ASEAN, including both multilateral and bilateral initiatives. An update of this framework, the Vientiane Vision 2.0, was announced three years later, in November 2019.

The Abe administration also included strengthening of defense cooperation and infrastructure development support for ASEAN as part of its Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) vision. The countries of ASEAN, however, took the skeptical view that FOIP was a framework for curbing China’s influence. From around spring 2017, prompted by an improvement in Japan-China relations, the Japanese government made efforts to demonstrate that FOIP was not a China containment mechanism, including by proposing the possibility of cooperation between FOIP and China’s BRI. These efforts, however, did not completely

quell the doubts of ASEAN countries. ASEAN itself announced the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) in June 2019, proposing an inclusive approach to Indo-Pacific cooperation including not only countries like Japan and the United States, but also China, India, and others.

China's economic presence and political influence, and its actions to disrupt the existing maritime order such as land reclamation and construction of military facilities in the South China Sea, is causing concern for ASEAN countries. At the same time, however, the existence of the Chinese market and investment and assistance from China are essential to economic growth in ASEAN. For these reasons, the countries of ASEAN are working both individually and collectively to maintain a hedge strategy, regardless of individual differences in the closeness of their relations with the United States and China. Meanwhile, they are also strengthening ASEAN itself and attempting to overcome adverse conditions. In a move that can be interpreted as evidence of this approach, at the end of 2015 ASEAN announced, as anticipated, the intention to establish an ASEAN Community.

Current status and issues

The COVID-19 pandemic brought the pre-existing strategic competition between the United States and China into even sharper relief. Huge public spending on COVID-19 countermeasures placed immense strain on many

countries' finances. The governments of ASEAN established economic recovery and activation as their highest priority, and no longer have the option of severing relations with China, having developed even deeper economic ties through the pandemic. China is strengthening its approach to ASEAN countries too, as part of its advocacy of a new order based on "win-win" relationships.

Meanwhile, the Biden administration in the United States has expressed the intention to counter the China-led "win-win" order with the formation of a "rules-based" order in the Indo-Pacific. The Biden administration has adopted policies to counter China by strengthening collaboration with its alliance and partner countries, and on this basis is engaging proactively with ASEAN. At this point, the United States remains the preeminent power in the region, but the Biden administration is yet to fully regain the trust lost in the course of the Trump administration's "capricious" policy approach.

Under growing pressure from the United States and China, ASEAN's diplomatic freedom is narrowing. Ironically, however, hedging strategies are of growing importance for ASEAN precisely because of this predicament. As a US ally, Japan is also finding its policy options reduced. The Suga administration followed almost identical policies toward ASEAN as were established by the Abe administration that came before them. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida proposed

the “FOIP 2.0” in his speech which title was “The Future of the Indo-Pacific” in New Delhi in March 2023. This speech mentioned the new pillars of cooperation one of which was “Extending Efforts for Security and Safe Use of the ‘Sea’ to the ‘Air.’” It implies Japan’s serious concerns about the activities of China to pursue the maritime hegemon in East and South China Sea. In other words, Japan’s FOIP is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish from the US version of FOIP that has a stronger focus on China containment.

In order to attract ASEAN to the FOIP vision, the Japanese government is seeking to connect FOIP more closely with AOIP and pursuing a discourse of advancement in Japan-ASEAN AOIP cooperation. The Japan-ASEAN leaders’ summit in November 2021 identified a number of initiatives for Japan-ASEAN AOIP cooperation, including technical cooperation in relation to illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, cooperation on plastic waste, high-quality infrastructure cooperation through the Japan-ASEAN Connectivity Initiative, and support for the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases. ASEAN is accepting of Japan’s trajectory, on the basis that stronger partnership and support from a third-party country rather than the US and China is something to be welcomed, but it is also carefully maintaining a degree of distance from FOIP itself.

In this context, seven ASEAN members—all except Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar—have joined the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) established under US leadership at the end of May 2022. Some see the decision of seven of the ASEAN countries to join IPEF as a product of Japan’s active persuasion. A more important factor, however, was that these seven countries expressed a degree of interest in rulemaking and stronger cooperation in the areas identified by IPEF for negotiation, including the digital economy, supply chain resilience, climate change, and green energy. The move could also be interpreted as one of the aforementioned hedging strategies to counterbalance the influence of China. Nonetheless, there is considerable cynicism among Southeast Asian countries regarding the substance of the United States’ commitment to their region and the permanency thereof. The Biden administration’s hosting of two successive Summits for Democracy also proved unpopular, on the basis that it may exacerbate divisions unnecessarily.

Conclusion

As the climate in East Asia grows more tense as a result of escalating competition between the United States and China, the positions of Japan and ASEAN have much in common. This article has made repeated reference to ASEAN’s hedging strategies, but Japan too is faced with the dual imperatives of responding to security threats and contingencies as its alliance relationship with the United

States deepens, and at the same time building a stable and reasonably broad relationship with China, a country with which it is geographically proximate and deeply entwined economically.

Moreover, the world cannot be seen in black-and-white terms. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, there has been a tendency, especially in Europe and North America, to discuss the world in terms of a binary conflict between authoritarian and liberal systems, highlighting collaboration between China and Russia. However, as evidenced by its decision to abstain from the UN resolution condemning Russia in March 2022, China is keeping a subtle distance from Russia. Likewise, ASEAN is seeking to take an inclusive approach rather than simply isolating Russia. Indonesia as host of the 2022 G20 summit, Thailand as the Chair of APEC, and Cambodia as the Chair of ASEAN have all adopted a policy of not excluding Russia from major gatherings.

The world is better seen as gray rather than black and white, and this complex international order is supported by the actions of emerging and developing economies such as the ASEAN member countries. The reality is that these countries are more numerous than developed countries in numerical terms, and their influence on the international order is growing.

One thing that is clear is that the era in which the Japan-ASEAN relationship

could be discussed in terms of Japan providing some form of assistance to ASEAN countries is now at an end. Considering the major structural changes in the international order outlined in this paper, Japan must endeavor to strengthen its partnership with ASEAN, and work collaboratively on the formation of a new regional order. There are three parts to this task. One is the development of a peaceful, inclusive, and rules-based regional order founded on cooperation and respect for each country's sovereignty. The second is the realization of an order designed for "co-existence," one that transcends business ties and achieves a balance across the three issues of economic growth, sustainability, and fairness. What is even more important than these is to cultivate the mutual understanding and mutual trust that will enable further deepening and strengthening of the partnership between Japan and ASEAN. Advancing the Japan-ASEAN partnership will surely become even more important in the future to achieve a regional order that is desirable for partners on both sides.

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13

Japan and Australia

Tomohiko SATAKE

Introduction

Japan and Australia have been strengthening their security relationship almost continuously from the end of the Cold War through to the present day. Originally, cooperation between the two countries centered on peacekeeping operations (PKO) and non-traditional security issues, but has gradually expanded even to encompass traditional security cooperation with an eye to military preparedness. Today, it is not unusual for the two countries' relationship to be described as a "quasi-alliance." Some consider that in practical terms at least, Japan-Australia cooperation is now comparable to a formal alliance.

Why has Japan-Australia security cooperation strengthened to such a degree? This article sheds light on this question primarily by examining three factors: the rise of China, alliance relationships with the United States, and Japan and Australia's shared view of what constitutes a desirable international and regional order.

One of the factors behind the strengthening of Japan-Australia security cooperation after the Cold War, and especially since the 2000s, was undoubtedly the structural change in international politics commonly described as the rise of China. As China's challenge to the international order grew stronger from the latter half of the 2000s, Japan and Australia began pursuing bilateral negotiations and institution-building

toward security and defense cooperation in addition to Japan-US-Australia strategic dialogue. Both Japan and Australia also set about strengthening their own defense capabilities, informed by growing concerns over China.

However, there were also significant differences between two countries in terms of perception of the threat China posed. With its geographical distance from China and strong economic ties with it, Australia was disinclined to aggravate China or to become embroiled in Japan-China disputes in the East China Sea. In contrast to the souring of Japan-China relations owing to historical issues and the disagreement over the Senkaku Islands, Australia, at least on the surface, had maintained good relations with China not only economically but also politically and militarily until the mid-2010s.

The fact that Japan and Australia's security cooperation was strengthened almost continuously despite this "China gap" between the two countries is attributable largely to the alliance relationships that both countries hold with the United States. Japan and Australia both gain vital advantages from the security provided by the United States and its maintenance of a military presence in the region. Japan-Australia security cooperation was positioned as one way of strengthening or supplementing these alliances and military presence. Australia also considered defense engagement with Japan to be essential in light of the high likelihood of

Australia being involved in the security of Japan and Northeast Asia by virtue of the Australia, New Zealand and United States (ANZUS) Security Treaty.

This does not necessarily mean that the strengthening of the Japan-Australia security cooperation was motivated by concerns over “abandonment” by the United States. In addition to their respective alliances with the United States as part of the US-centered “hub and spokes” configuration, both Japan and Australia had a strong intrinsic interest in maintenance of the free and open international order underpinned by this configuration. Both countries also supported liberal values such as freedom, democracy, and the rule of law. Thus, they proactively and constructively supported the US-led order in the region and sought to maintain and strengthen it. This “perception of order” held in common across the two countries had a crucial role to play in the strengthening of their security cooperation.

This article proceeds below to review the timeline of Japan-Australia security cooperation since the end of the Cold War, explaining the processes whereby this bilateral cooperation evolved to the point that it is described as a “quasi-alliance” relationship. The paper then examines Japan-Australia security cooperation since the Prime Ministership of Yoshihide Suga in Japan, identifying the challenges facing bilateral security cooperation and commenting on prospects for its future.

Japan-Australia security cooperation after the Cold War

The end of the Cold War was proclaimed at the Malta Summit between the United States and the Soviet Union in December 1989. A delegation from the Australian Department of Defence promptly visited Japan in March of the following year, initiating an unofficial “strategic dialogue” with the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The defense ministers of Japan and Australia each visited their counterpart’s country in 1990 and 1992 respectively, and defense exchanges were initiated in areas such as PKO seminars and joint exercises. Official bilateral talks between foreign affairs and defense officials, and among defense officials, were launched in February 1996. The countries agreed to hold regular Prime Ministerial meetings from 1997, and committed to promoting defense exchanges, information sharing, and cooperation on security issues in the region.

One of the reasons Australia moved closer to Japan at this time was the Japan-US alliance. Australian government officials moved to ensure that Japan remained within the boundaries of its alliance with the US after the end of the Cold War. This was vitally important to Australia as it sought to ensure the US military presence was sustained beyond the Cold War era. Moreover, especially from the time of the Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1995–96, a small number

of policymakers in Australia were thinking strategically about strengthening security relationships with other democratic countries, Japan included, in preparation for the future rise of China. Australia's approach to Japan was thus informed by considerations including the maintenance of US presence in the region hinging on the Japan-US alliance, and hedging against China's future rise.

In contrast, this kind of strategic thinking was rare among policymakers in Japan. For Japan the importance of Australia lay in the general fact that it was a US ally and part of the Western bloc of countries, as well as sharing a regional/international interest in PKO, demilitarization, and nuclear non-proliferation. Australia's active support for Japan's expanding regional role was important especially as Japan strengthened its involvement in the international order-building during and after the Gulf War. As early as the Diplomatic Bluebook of 1991, Japan indicated that Australia was "an indispensable partner" for Japan in tackling regional and global issues.

In this way, the move toward direct security cooperation between Japan and Australia was less a reaction to China as a direct "threat" and more a product of cooperation on regional and global issues. Notably, the two countries bolstered their working relationship on issues such as counterterrorism and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the course of contributing actively to the United States-led

"war on terror" following the multiple terrorist attacks on the US in 2001. The momentum for stronger bilateral cooperation on security was also heightened through the direct cooperation between Japan's Self-Defense Forces (SDF) and the Australian military in peacekeeping operations in East Timor beginning in 2002, humanitarian aid and disaster relief activities following the earthquake off the coast of Sumatra, Indonesia in December 2004, and the humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to Iraq in 2005.

As China's rise became more pronounced from the middle of the 2000s, a line of thinking began to emerge in Japan that placed cooperation with Australia in a strategic context. Elected Prime Minister in September 2006, Shinzo Abe espoused a "value diplomacy" approach, strengthening collaboration with Australia, India and other democratic countries in addition to the United States. Japan-US-Australia-India cooperation, as promoted both by Prime Minister Abe and his diplomatic advisors, was clearly founded on geopolitical thinking with an eye to China. The Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation was released in March 2007, committing to a stronger relationship between the two countries in a variety of fields.

Australia was also active in promoting the strengthening of security ties with Japan, both as a hedge against the future rise of China and with a view to bolstering the United States' military presence in the region. At the same time,

under Prime Minister John Howard, the Australian government was also moving to strengthen economic relations with China, making it wary of excessive provocation of China. Kevin Rudd, the Prime Minister after Howard, was also proactive in strengthening his country's alliance with the United States and security cooperation between Australia, Japan and the US, but declared that Australia would not participate in the Japan-US-Australia-India security cooperation proposed by Prime Minister Abe on the grounds that it may provoke China unnecessarily.

Ironically, it was immediately after this time that China's hardline stance on external relations became entrenched. China dispatched vessels to the area around the Senkaku Islands on an ongoing basis from 2008, and in December of that year two of the vessels entered Japan's territorial waters for the first time. In March 2009, there was a near miss between the US naval survey ship the USNS Impeccable and five Chinese vessels, which engaged in obstructive behavior. In April of the same year, Australia issued a new defense White Paper that sounded an unprecedentedly strong warning about the rapid modernization of China's military capabilities and its lack of transparency, and embarked on a large-scale military strengthening known as "Force 2030." Some observers took exception to the harsh assessment of China expressed in the White Paper, but ultimately this view of China relations was backed by none

other than Prime Minister Rudd, who had long been seen as sympathetic to China.

Consequently, the close partnership between Japan and Australia continued to grow stronger even after the advent of the Democratic Party of Japan government in September 2009. Security cooperation was gradually institutionalized through developments such as the signing of an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) in May 2010, and an Information Security Agreement (ISA) in May 2012. Following the Great East Japan Earthquake disaster of March 2011, Australia sent as many as three of its stable of four C-17 transportation aircraft to Japan and undertook disaster support operations together with the United States. Later, when Japan resolved to send SDF personnel to South Sudan on PKO, Australia dispatched two military personnel to South Sudan to engage in provision of information relating to the performance of the SDF's duties and to support liaison and coordination with relevant agencies including the United Nations.

The governments formed by both the Democratic Party of Japan and the Australian Labor Party also lent their support to the United States' Asia-Pacific "rebalance," as well as sharing concerns over how China's power was altering the status quo in the East China and South China Seas, emphasizing the importance of the "rule of law" and "rules-based order" in international society. The joint

declaration as a result of the Foreign and Defense Ministerial Consultations (“2+2”) held in Australia for the first time in June 2012 called for China’s responsible and constructive involvement in the “rules-based international order,” as well as confirming that Japan and Australia would promote freedom of the seas, peaceful resolution of disputes, and other aspects of compliance with maritime norms. In this way, despite their differences in perception of China as a threat and approach to relations with China, Japan and Australia were in complete agreement regarding the maintenance of US military presence, and the preservation and strengthening of the rules-based order that this presence supported.

Japan-Australia security cooperation had thus already been strengthened significantly by the time Shinzo Abe returned as Prime Minister in December 2012. Nonetheless, had Abe not become Prime Minister, the Japan-Australia relationship may not have grown as strong as it is today. Together with Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott, Prime Minister Abe elevated the Japan-Australia relationship to the status of a “special strategic partnership,” expanding joint military exercises and robustly promoting cooperation on defense equipment and technology—especially initiatives toward the joint development of Australia’s next generation of naval submarines. Prime Ministers Abe and Abbott also worked to strengthen the bilateral relationship overall, including

on the economic front, bringing to completion the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations that had been in train since 2007.

The cooperation on joint submarine development initiated by the two Prime Ministers was thwarted in April 2016 when Australia selected France to manufacture its next generation of naval submarines. The failure of Japanese submarines to gain selection was attributed, among other things, to mismatches in technology and capability, as well as insufficient experience on the Japanese side and the absence of support from the United States. Moreover, there were some concerns in Japan over the possibility of the joint submarine development leading to leakage of Japan’s most precious technologies, while some in Australia expressed doubts regarding the enthusiasm of Japanese companies and their production capacity overseas. It is also said that Japan’s initial presentation of a downgraded proposal for its Soryu-class submarines was a major disappointment to the Australian side. The underlying cause of this breakdown in submarine cooperation was the mutual lack of trust between the two parties.

Even so, the strengthening of bilateral security cooperation persisted, as China continued to challenge the existing order. In January 2017 ACSA was revised and the decision was taken to apply it to situations other than humanitarian aid and disaster relief. When the newly

inaugurated President Donald Trump announced the United States' withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in the same month, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe collaborated closely with his Australian counterpart Malcolm Turnbull to persist with the TPP and maintain the free trade system, resulting in the establishment of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) in March 2018. The announcement by Japanese Foreign Affairs Minister Taro Kono of the resumption of the Japan-US-Australia-India security dialogue in October 2017 was met with the full support of both incumbent and opposition parties in Australia. This "Quad" would subsequently become established as the core of the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" concept espoused by Japan.

In this way, despite changes in government and leadership in both countries, Japan-Australia security cooperation has been strengthened almost continuously since the end of the Cold War. This strengthening has occurred in the context of the rise of China, as well as both countries' alliance relationships with the United States, and a shared perception of the international order. The rise of China in particular, even if not an urgent and direct "threat" to either country, was perceived as a clear challenge to the "rules-based order" led by the United States. Having benefited greatly from this order, both Japan and Australia worked to maintain and bolster it by actively supporting the US presence in

their region and building a broad-ranging and diverse cooperative relationship not limited to the military sphere.

Issues in Japan-Australia security cooperation

Japan-Australia security cooperation has maintained its strong momentum even after the fall of the Abe administration in September 2020. In November of that year, the countries reached an "in-principle agreement" on a Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) that had been under negotiation for a period of eight years. The RAA was formally signed by both Prime Ministers in January 2022. Moreover, since June 2021, Japan's SDF has been permitted to protect weapons and other military assets not only of the United States but of Australia as well. The RAA took effect in August 2023, and was first operationalized in the same month, in a US-Australia F-35 deployment exercise held in Australia and the Japan-Australia "Exercise Bushido Guardian 23" held in Japan.

The new Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation announced in October 2022 included statements that Japan and Australia would "consult each other" and "consider measures in response" to contingencies that may affect their sovereignty and regional security interests. These statements resemble the provisions of Articles 3 and 4 of the ANZUS Treaty, which stipulate that the parties shall consult together

and respond to threats in the Pacific. The Declaration does not give rise to the same obligations as a treaty, but is nonetheless symbolic of the strengthening of bilateral relations. Despite having no legally binding force, such a commitment had never before been undertaken by Japan with any country apart from the United States (subsequently, however, Japan issued a similarly-worded joint declaration with the United Kingdom).

Japan and Australia have thus taken steps to render their “quasi-alliance” relationship in a more tangible form, but many issues remain unresolved. The principal of these concerns is the legal constraints on Japan’s security policy. The SDF’s protection of other countries’ military assets, for example, is restricted to “activities that contribute to the defense of Japan.” Leaving aside military contingencies within Japan and on the Korean Peninsula, it is unclear whether or not this provision would apply to contingencies in locations such as the South China Sea. Furthermore, asset protection by the SDF is limited only to “extremely passive and limited use of the minimum weaponry necessary for the purpose of protection from an intrusion that does not amount to a military attack.” This means that the SDF could not use weapons for the purpose of protecting the Australian military when attacked by a foreign force within this framework.

Moreover, paragraph 1 of Article 95 of the Self-Defense Forces Act excludes “locations where combat activities are

currently occurring” and guarantees that protection of assets shall not be “combined with the use of weapons” by parties such as the United States military. In other words, protection of the military assets of other countries under Article 95-2 of the Self-Defense Forces Act is designed for attacks by non-state actors in peacetime or “gray zone” situations, and should be seen as distinct from “alliance” cooperation that envisages a joint response to contingencies. For the SDF to perform such cooperation would require the recognition of an “Survival-Threatening Situation,” by which time the outcome of the conflict may already be decided.

The second issue is the strengthening of the collaboration between the SDF and the Australian military in operational terms. At the aforementioned Japan-Australia 2+2 meeting of June 2021, the two countries’ ministers agreed to “deepening real-world defense cooperation.” In practice, as well as the legislative strengthening described above, the two countries have been moving to improve the mutual operability of the SDF and Australian military. One example of this is the June 2021 signing of a memorandum on midair refueling by the Japan Air Self-Defense Force and Royal Australian Air Force, and the successful compatibility tests conducted during joint exercises in April of the following year. At the Japan-Australia 2+2 in December 2022, the two countries announced that they were considering future deployment of SDF F-35 fighters in patrols of Australia.

Nonetheless, there is no guarantee that the two countries will collaborate more deeply in the event of an actual emergency, regardless of how many such exercises are conducted. For their cooperation to function fully in an emergency situation would surely require more detailed planning with an eye to the type of scenario that may unfold. For a start, Japan and Australia have not instituted documents or frameworks equivalent to those that exist in the case of Japan and the United States, such as the Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation and the Alliance Coordination Mechanism. Developing the specifics of bilateral cooperation through planning of this type will be crucial in order for Japan-Australia and Japan-US-Australia cooperation to function effectively in an emergency situation.

The final issue is further strengthening of regional engagement. Bolstering Japan-Australia cooperation in the area of defense is certainly important, but this is not the only aspect of bilateral security cooperation. As we have already seen, the two countries have been cooperating across a wide variety of areas including PKO and nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as climate change countermeasures and energy security. This kind of cooperation for regional order building is growing in importance as the existing order is destabilized by the rise of China. Small countries in regions lacking fundamental strengths are especially susceptible to the direct influence of China, and some

observers even point to several countries already being swayed by China in practice. As two of the region's advanced democracies, Japan and Australia build on their existing cooperation to work with other like-minded countries within and beyond the region to provide assistance to smaller countries in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, with a view to preventing a "redrawing" of the regional order by China.

Conclusion

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, along with its invasion of Crimea eight years earlier, sent shockwaves across the world. The way that the rules and norms of state-to-state engagement that international society had woven out of the experience of two world wars was broken so easily, moreover by a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, seemed altogether like a return to the world of the 19th century and prior. In this context, active support for Ukraine is being offered not only by European countries but also Japan, Australia, Korea, and other Indo-Pacific countries committed to preserving the postwar rules-based order.

If the status quo in Europe continues to be changed by force, the impact will sooner or later be felt in the Indo-Pacific region as well. This is why Japan and Australia are working with Europe to limit the extent of change by supporting Ukraine and applying pressure on Russia through sanctions. Surely these

efforts will send an important message to China, which like Russia, has plans to alter the existing order. As Russia's aggression in Ukraine further destabilizes the rules-based order, the true value of Japan-Australia security cooperation as a means to uphold this order will be put to the test.

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14

Japan and India

Toru ITO



Introduction

In 2014, Japan upgraded its relationship with India to a “Special Strategic and Global Partnership.” Japan now ranks its relationship with India—alongside Australia—as second only to that with the US, the only country with which it has a formal alliance. At the same time, the relationship between Japan and India in terms of their economic relations and the interaction and movement of people between the two countries does not bear comparison with Japan’s respective relationships with the US and Australia. Japan also has far more interaction with China, South Korea, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) nations in terms of the flow of commodities, people, and money. While Japan’s relationship with India may come under an impressive title, it is in fact only just beginning to take shape.

This article provides an overview of how the relationship between Japan and India has developed over the years—from a long period in which the two countries, despite having some affinity with each other, remained estranged, to the more recent shift toward working to enhance a strategic relationship. We will build on this to discuss the current developments and challenges in Japan-India relations.

The long period of estrangement

India has long been known as a country that is friendly to Japan. This sense of friendship grew through interactions such as the Japanese art historian and curator Tenshin Okakura developing a friendship with poet and philosopher Rabindranath Tagore; the revolutionary Subhas Chandra Bose fighting alongside Japanese forces in the struggle for independence from Britain and Germany; Justice Radhabinod Pal questioning the authority of the Tokyo War Crimes Trials and calling for not-guilty verdicts for the Japanese military and political leaders on trial, and Jawaharlal Nehru, India’s first prime minister after independence, choosing to waive India’s right to receive war reparations from Japan, and donate the baby elephant Indira to Ueno Zoo. Moreover, due to the failure of Japan’s Imphal Campaign which meant that Japan never brought India under its control, the history between Japan and India presents no issues such as the negative legacies that Japan bears in its relations with many of the countries of South and Southeast Asia.

Despite this, Japan and India remained estranged for a long time in the Cold War era. India in the Cold War was certainly no enemy to Japan. However, India pursued socialist economic policies and non-alignment diplomacy under the Nehru administration, and once his daughter, Indira Gandhi, formed the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace,

Friendship and Cooperation in 1971, India's diplomacy took an increasingly more distinct slant toward relations with the Soviet Union. Seeking to represent the interests of the developing southern countries, India also often actively took the lead in delivering harsh criticism of the advanced Western nations at gatherings of the United Nations (UN), summit meetings with non-aligned nations, and other such forums. As a member of the club of advanced Western nations with its diplomacy grounded in its alliance with the US, Japan found India unapproachable. Japan and India also held only very few prime ministerial meetings and shared limited trade and investment, such that their bilateral relationship consisted largely of yen loans and other such assistance. The Cold War status quo acted as a barrier hampering Japan-India relations.

The collapse of the Cold War status quo should therefore have signaled the dawn of progress in Japan's relations with India. The Soviet Union was dissolved, and India, able to utilize the 1991 Gulf War as a catalyst for embarking on economic liberalization, was very keen for investment. The then Narasimha Rao administration did in fact adopt the Look East policy, under which it appealed to Japan to increase its investment. However, at that time Japanese enterprises were focusing their efforts on China, South Korea and ASEAN and had extremely little interest in India, a country that had only just liberalized its economy. Amid such developments,

India launched nuclear testing in 1998, and Japan invoked economic sanctions against India, putting a stop to any new official development assistance. This meant that, despite the end of the Cold War, the 1990s were a lost 10 years for relations between Japan and India.

The developments leading up to the Special Strategic and Global Partnership

It was the rapprochement between the US, Japan's ally, and India, that opened the door to the new era of Japan-India relations. The mid-1990s Taiwan Strait crisis and other such events had led the US to begin to sense a threat from China and explore the possibilities for cooperation with India. While imposing economic sanctions upon India in response to its 1998 nuclear testing, the Clinton administration launched a strategic dialogue with India's Vajpayee administration, and in March 2000, Clinton paid a historical visit to India as the first US president to do so in 22 years. Prompted by this development, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori also visited India in May of the same year and announced a "Global Partnership between Japan and India." Nevertheless, in the early 2000s, Japan's diplomacy and national security interests were almost exclusively focused on the fight against terrorism, its response to the Iraq War, and its issues with North Korea, meaning that its interest in India was limited.

This tide was turned by the anti-Japanese rioting across China in spring 2005. The unrest prompted the narrative of China as a threat to also take hold within Japan. Wary of the developments in China, Japan began to seek rapprochement with India in earnest, and while visiting India shortly after the unrest in China, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi reached an agreement with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to give the global partnership a strategic orientation. This was the beginning of a system of annual reciprocal prime ministerial visits, and during Prime Minister Singh's visit to Japan in 2006, Japan-India relations were formally upgraded to a strategic partnership, ensuring that cooperation between the two countries also applies to the region in which they hold influence.

The first Shinzo Abe administration, which sought to create an "Arc of Freedom and Prosperity" in Eurasia under what it referred to as the principle of values diplomacy, focused the key to its initiatives with India on developing a four-country framework between the democracies of Japan, the US, Australia, and India. In 2007, the four countries held meetings of their senior government officials and joint naval exercises. However, China furiously opposed these developments, of which it perceived itself the clear target. Ultimately at that point in time the four-country framework met a natural end when its advocate Prime Minister Abe, as well as the conservative leaders US President Bush and Australian Prime Minister Howard, withdrew.

Despite this, there was no change in the underlying tone of bilateral relations between Japan and India, which focused on progressing their strategic relationship in light of the developments in China. While Japan saw a change of government from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), the DPJ government pushed ahead with the Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation that had been formed during the LDP administration and launched negotiations for cooperation on nuclear power for civil use. With increasing tension surrounding the Senkaku Islands as a result of the 2010 fishing trawler collision incident and other such developments, Japan also agreed with India to pursue cooperation in maritime security including the safety and freedom of navigation.

The second Abe administration, which subsequently retrieved power from the DPJ, set out not only to develop bilateral relations, but also to revive the previously derailed four-country framework. Abe and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who took office in 2014, had an especially good rapport, due to them both being nationalists and at the same time economic reformists. When Modi chose Japan as his first destination to visit outside of South Asia after taking office, Abe extended him a warm welcome, even taking an entire day to show him around Kyoto. Modi's agreement to raise Japan-India relations to a special strategic partnership, on a level with Japan-Australia relations, was also

taken as a signal of support for Abe's vision for Japan, the US, Australia, and India to form what he termed a "security diamond." Consultations under the four-nation framework were in fact held in 2017 for the first time in 10 years. The naval exercise Malabar began to be practiced as a four-country exercise in 2020, and the framework became established as the Quad, with regular leaders' summits since 2021.

Developments in the bilateral relations between Japan and India included India adopting Japan's bullet train system for its high-speed railway between Mumbai and Ahmedabad in 2015, and the following year Japan responding by forming an agreement with India for cooperation in nuclear energy for civil use, despite concern from the Japanese public given India's position as a nuclear-armed power outside the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. There were also marked developments in the field of national security. In addition to the signing of an agreement on defense equipment and technology transfer, an agreement on information protection and an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA), the 2+2 meetings of foreign and defense ministers have been routinized, and joint India-Japan exercises have been implemented across the military in the army, navy, and air forces. In the field of diplomacy and national security, Japan now appears to effectively rank India as a quasi-ally.

The deterioration of India's relations with China and development in its expectations toward Japan

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic prompted countries around the world to close their borders, and the stagnation in the distribution of goods and the movement and interaction of people between Japan and India naturally also impacted upon their relations. The movement of people between the two countries was, aside from certain exceptions, brought to a halt not only in terms of diplomacy between the leaders of state, but at every level. This period also saw the resignation of Prime Minister Abe—who had served as the key proponent for strengthening the strategic relationship with India—in September 2020. The assassination of former Prime Minister Abe in July 2022 during an election campaign event also even prompted concerns for the future of Japan-India relations.

There was, however, no change in the trend toward strengthening Japan-India relations. A key factor behind this appears to have been India's ever-growing expectations toward the West as its relationship with China deteriorated. The Modi administration had initially hoped to pursue the development of trade and investment with China as a means of stimulating India's economy. However, after China blocked India's application for membership

of the Nuclear Suppliers Group and calls for UN sanctions on the head of a Pakistan-based terror organization, and India boycotted Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a standoff between Indian and Chinese forces in the Doklam plateau between China and Bhutan in 2017 caused the mood in India to become predominantly wary of China. Furthermore, during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, a military confrontation between India and China in the Galwan Valley in the Ladakh region resulted in 20 Indian fatalities, which prompted India to boycott Chinese products and adopt other such approaches in a distinct shift toward shaking off Chinese influence in its economy.

Despite its increasing tension with China, India was reluctant to form an alliance in military terms—whether with the US or Japan—due not only to the risk of such an alliance intruding on its strategic autonomy, but also the danger of provoking China. India takes the stance that however much it seeks to cooperate with the Quad, its relationship with the Quad does not directly address the threat that India faces from China on the ground, because the interests of the other three members—Japan, the US, and Australia—have, from the start, been focused on the Indo-Pacific maritime region. Seeking to secure concessions by playing the card of strengthening cooperation with the West is becoming an ever less effective diplomatic and political move for India in the face of an increasingly confident

China under Xi Jinping.

India's expectations toward the Quad—and toward Japan, as a country that is particularly limited in terms of the weapons and other such military assistance it can provide—are therefore focused on forms of non-military cooperation that may assist it in its response to China. This firstly means infrastructure development in and outside of India and means of tackling debt issues that will serve as alternatives to China's BRI. Given that the fully Chinese-funded project to develop the Port of Hambantota in Sri Lanka, at India's doorstep, became ensnared in a debt trap and had to be ceded to a Chinese enterprise on a 99-year lease, there is a growing expectation upon Japan to provide such high-quality infrastructure under financing that is transparent and repayable.

One of the signs of this was the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor, a collaborative vision announced by Japan and India shortly after India boycotted China's BRI. However, the reality of that vision was not all positive. Following the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, the Modi administration sought to rival the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor by pursuing the development of the port of Chabahar in Iran and seeking to establish an International North-South Transport Corridor joining Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Russia, and in doing so it also sought the cooperation of Japan. Although the then-Abe administration was keen to cooperate,

Japan-India cooperation was derailed as the US Trump administration withdrew from the nuclear deal and resumed sanctions against Iran. In Sri Lanka, following the resignation of China-friendly President Mahinda Rajapaksa in 2019, Japan and India were jointly commissioned to develop the eastern terminal of the Port of Colombo. This agreement was, however, scrapped when the former president's younger brother, Gotabaya Rajapaksa, took power, and the project was ultimately entrusted to a Chinese enterprise.

Of the infrastructure projects underway between Japan and India, the key focus should surely be given to the project to strengthen connectivity with ASEAN by improving the roads and other such infrastructure in northeast India and Bangladesh. Facilitating the distribution between ASEAN, home to a number of overseas locations for Japanese enterprises, and India and Bangladesh, with their large populations of young people and remarkable economic growth, is anticipated to have significant benefits for Japan as well. Within India also, the development of infrastructure at the border close to China is considered advantageous in terms of military mobilization. While the project is in that sense clearly a win-win proposition, a sense of uncertainty surrounding the project is developing due to the coup d'état in February 2021 and ongoing military rule in Myanmar, India and Bangladesh's foothold joining them with ASEAN.

The second form of non-military cooperation sought by India is assistance with redeveloping supply chains to avoid dependence on China. Military offensives by China related to the de facto border, the Line of Actual Control, have led to growing anti-Chinese sentiment in India, and while the Modi administration has proclaimed its aspirations for an "Atmanirbhar Bharat"—a "self-reliant India"—imports from China have, far from declining, actually continued to increase. When the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic struck in spring 2021, India, facing the collapse of its medical care system, was forced to rely on oxygen concentrators and ventilators produced in China. India's efforts to redevelop supply chains are also motivated by the fact that its domestic production of smartphones—a commodity owned by most Indian citizens—is, despite some progress, ultimately reliant on China for parts such as semiconductors, displays, and sensors, as well as the rare metals that serve at the raw materials for those components.

This sense of danger was reflected by Prime Minister Modi's emphasis that India particularly prioritizes the pillar of supply chain resilience, as he declared India's participation in the pillars of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) other than trade, at the Quad Leaders' Summit in Tokyo in May 2022. Within its relations with Japan, the US, and other nations—whether in the context of bilateral relations or within the Quad framework—India consistently

places emphasis on initiatives toward strengthening supply chains, in particular those primarily handling important and emergent technology.

India's response to the Russian invasion of the Ukraine

For Japan and the other advanced Western nations, it is the discourse on common values and interests that has formed the premise for strengthening strategic relations with India. It is the argument that, as a country that prizes freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law just as the nations of the West do, India also shares the same interests as the West in terms of confronting the threat that China, an authoritarian nation with contrasting values, poses to safety and order in its growing prominence. This message can be interpreted from leaders' statements and summit documents, whether they be related to Japan-India bilateral relations or the Quad framework.

India's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine that began in February 2022 flies directly in the face of the validity of such discourse. India avoided criticizing Russia and has continued to maintain a neutral standpoint at every opportunity—bilateral relations, the Quad, and the UN. Not only refusing to participate in the Western-led economic sanctions upon Russia, but India also began to purchase large quantities of discounted

Russian crude oil and fertilizer.

Given that India was in the process of developing closer relations with the West, its stance has prompted shock and disappointment. However, such shock and disappointment reflect our lack of understanding as to just how important a partner Russia still is to India as a nation. As touched on above, however much India may seek to develop its relations with Japan and the US, there is no way that Japan and the US can provide a military response to India's security concerns, given that it is also in nature a continental nation. India is also dissatisfied with the advanced nations of the West due to their lack of concrete measures to address the poverty issues of the Global South, such as the rise in prices of crude oil and food that have accompanied the war. With such issues to consider, India is unable to abandon relations with Russia as its longtime partner on the other side of China.

Conclusion

As we have seen, India's geopolitical and economic interests do not always coincide with those of Japan and the other countries of the West. There are also the additional concerns posed by the retreat of democracy in India, an increasingly pronounced phenomenon under the Modi administration, in particular the pressure and regulations placed upon minorities, the media, and civic groups. This is resulting in an increasingly conspicuous alienation of India from the

West in terms of values as well. The civic society, media, and political assemblies of Europe and America are becoming growingly critical of such issues and have on occasion officially expressed their concerns at the leader of state and foreign minister level.

Japan adopts a contrasting approach to tackling such issues. In his policy speech at the Indian Council of World Affairs during a visit to India in March 2023, Prime Minister Kishida praised India as the “world’s largest democracy” and recognized how India has implemented its politics based on election and debate. This is not only the truth, but also a seemingly clever approach in the sense that it avoids the kinds of potentially condescending rhetoric adopted by the countries of Europe and America. It is also understandable that Japan would on that basis call on India, as the leading figure of the Global South, to develop a free and open international order based on the rule of law.

However, if this means turning a blind eye to the growing authoritarianism within India, it is surely questionable as a mid- to long-term strategy for Japan. If non-liberal democratic values are allowed to take root and such systems become the norm in India, a country that is undoubtedly becoming the third

superpower in economic and military capability, the concept of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) will be nothing but pie in the sky.

Japan must address this by drawing on its strengths as the only member of the G7 aside from the North American and European countries. As a fellow nation of Asia, Japan must first praise India for having accepted a liberal democratic political framework based on elections and debate, without adopting a condescending tone. On this basis, Japan needs to, as a minimum, work with India to reconfirm the importance of such values and convey the need to live up to such values together. While further developing relations with India in the desired economic areas, we need to pursue a strategy that will prevent the emergence of a second China and to bring India back as much as possible to the ideal type of liberal democracy.

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Section III

Japan in a Wider World



15

Japan and Europe:

The EU, the UK, France, and Germany

Michito TSURUOKA

Introduction

Relations with the United States were of overwhelming importance in Japan's foreign relations at the start of the postwar period. Consequently, the relative weight of relations with Europe declined significantly compared to the prewar period. Circumstances changed due to Japan's rapid economic growth of the 1960s, its membership in the G7 beginning in 1975, and the full return and growing role of Japan in the international community as a major economic power and relations with Europe began to once again deepen and expand. However, the focus of attention during this period was the trade friction that characterized the relationship between Japan and Europe. As a result, the history of Japan-Europe relations was frequently understood to be one of trade friction.

This situation also began to change in the mid-1990s. While economic ties continued to deepen, there was now a growing interest in political relations as dialogue and cooperation moved forward in the area of foreign policy and security. These developments led to the emergence of new forms of Japan-Europe relations. In terms of Japan's relations with the European Union (EU), the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and the Japan-EU Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) both signed in July 2018 marked a critical turning point. In the meantime, Japan has been deepening its bilateral ties with such major European countries

as the United Kingdom, France, and Germany. These newly developed relations go beyond economic ties and the security and defense dimensions have been gaining traction in recent years. This can be seen as the emergence of new Japan-Europe relations in the age of the Indo-Pacific.

This article reviews the extent to which Japan's relations with the EU (and its predecessor, the European Communities: EC) and the United Kingdom, France, and Germany developed while also identifying the place of Europe in Japan's foreign relations.

Past developments

(1) Transformation of Japan's relations with the EC and EU

The Allied Occupation of Japan after its defeat in the Second World War was essentially an American occupation, although British and other forces did have a presence in the occupation. Japan regained its independence through the San Francisco Peace Treaty that came into force in April 1952. At the same time, the Japan-US Security Treaty (the original Japan-US Security Pact) was concluded. Thus, Japan embarked on its postwar path under the shadow of the preponderant influence of the US. In all instances, the United States led the way in realizing Japan's subsequent return to the international community. As such, the Japan-US Alliance came to serve

as the foundation for Japan's foreign relations.

It was the Cold War that triggered a renaissance in Japan's relations with Europe. Within the overarching architecture of the Cold War, the United States, Western Europe, and Japan were brought together as the principal actors of the "free world." In light of this Cold War structure, Hayato Ikeda, the Japanese prime minister who served during the first half of the 1960s, advocated the theory of the "Three Pillars" comprising of the United States, Europe, and Japan. During the 1960s, Japan successfully joined the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and was also able to transition to normal trade relations through the lifting of restrictions provided under Article 35 of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Needless to say, US support played a key role in these advances but the normalization of Japan's bilateral relations with the countries of Western Europe, as represented by the Japan-UK Treaty of Commerce, were also critical in facilitating these developments. Japan's relations with the countries of Western Europe were gradually restored as Japan returned to the international community after its defeat and joined the ranks of the advanced nations.

During the 1960s when Japan was in the midst of its phase of accelerated economic growth, no noteworthy advances were made in its economic relations with Western Europe. It was in

the mid-1970s that saw a rapid expansion of economic relations, which ignited trade friction. From that point on, the Japan-Europe agenda was monopolized by the subject of trade friction. Europe recorded large trade deficits with Japan and increasingly protectionist voices in Europe were clamoring for the restriction of imports from Japan. It was at about this time that an internal document of the EC Commission came to light mocking the Japanese as "workaholics living in rabbit hutches." In the eyes of Europe, Japan was increasingly viewed as a fearsome threat and as being both enigmatic and fundamentally different than the West—the so-called "revisionist" view.

It is true that Japan at this time retained numerous protectionist measures and that it was by no means fully open to the inflow of foreign goods and capital. Against the backdrop of continued economic development, a new understanding began to grow within Japan that deregulation and the liberalization of domestic markets would actually benefit the Japanese people. As this awareness spread, Japan itself underwent major changes during the 1980s and 1990s.

The Hague Declaration signed in July 1991 by Japan and the EC rectified the singular focus on trade friction, brought common values to the forefront and marked the first step taken by the two sides toward political dialogue and cooperation. It was Japan that took the initiative in promoting an agreement

but given the intense trade friction that persisted at this time, the negotiations proved to be bumpy and difficult. There was no straightforward way to reconcile a commitment to common values with the revisionist view which emphasizes that Japan is different, and the Japanese initiative for promoting political dialogue was easily dismissed as a ploy for deflecting attention from the intense friction that characterized Europe's trade with Japan.

Ironically, it was the collapse of Japan's bubble economy in the 1990s that put an end to Japan-Europe trade friction and Europe's revisionism about Japan. As the Japanese economy stagnated, Europe no longer had reason to be overly fearful of Japan. This rendered it much easier to speak of common values and to pursue stronger ties in the spheres of foreign policy and security. However, this did not directly lead to a strengthening of political and security relations. For a number of years to come, it was said of Japan-Europe relations that "the problem is that there are no problems."

However, after the mid-2000s, China provided the "problem" for Japan and Europe. Initially, this emerged as a major agenda item on the Japanese side. From the Japanese perspective, European awareness and attitudes toward China were simply naïve and this perception led to a buildup of dissatisfaction on the Japanese side.

The debate over lifting the EU arms

embargo on China that arose around 2005 was emblematic of this difference in perception. The EU ban that was introduced as part of the sanctions levied against China following the Tiananmen Square incident of June 1989 covered only lethal weapons and was no more than a non-binding political declaration. Hence, its effectiveness was questionable. However, it was argued that lifting the embargo could send the wrong message to China. Moreover, it was feared that the actual export of arms could affect East Asian security, including military balance in the Taiwan Strait. For these reasons, Japan (along with the United States) strongly opposed the lifting of the EU ban.

This problem revealed that the EU was more or less exclusively focused on economic matters when considering its China policies and, more broadly, its Asian policies in general, and that it was not taking into account the impact of its actions on matters affecting regional security. At this time, the EU was dealing with the arms embargo as a purely economic decision. The strong opposition that this approach invited from Japan and the United States served as an opportunity for the EU to start paying closer attention to the security environment in Asia.

However, this incident deeply implanted a negative impression on the Japanese side that "Europe is irresponsibly seeking to sell weapons to China" and "Europe does not understand Asia's

security challenges.” Unfortunately, these impressions had lasting effects. But not all was negative. On the positive side, the incident led to the 2005 launch of the Strategic Dialogue on East Asia’s Security Environment and resulted in substantive discussions between Japan and the EU on security issues in Asia, including problems related to China. These developments can be viewed as a byproduct of the disagreement on lifting the EU ban on arms exports to China.

(2) Japan’s relations with the UK, France, and Germany

The EC/EU naturally plays a central role in Japan-Europe relations, particularly in trade matters. But from the Japanese perspective, the importance of Japan’s bilateral relations with such major European countries as the United Kingdom, France, and Germany must not be overlooked.

In addition to historical and cultural interests, circumstances were such that bilateral ties between Japan and individual European countries could be more readily developed in such specific areas as the exchange of students and the presence of corporate expatriate communities. However, a related problem was that Japan was unable to keep pace with the expanding competences and significance of the EC/EU. Since multilateral institutions in Asia remained underdeveloped for many years, Japanese diplomats seemed to

feel more comfortable interacting with national capitals than with Brussels.

For a variety of reasons, Japan has almost always identified the United Kingdom as its closest European partner. First, the UK has been the most pro-free trade nation among the major Western European countries, and Japan has consistently looked to the UK as its most reliable partner in ensuring an “outward-looking Europe.”

In Japan’s effort to restore its relations with Western Europe during the 1960s, the Japan-UK Treaty of Commerce, concluded in 1962, proved to be a turning point. Moreover, it was Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher who encouraged Japan to undertake direct investments in the EC when trade friction between Japan and Europe had become particularly intense during the 1980s. Thus, Britain played a critically important role for Japan at a time when France had adopted a particularly strong protectionist position in the EC and West Germany had also maintained a cautious stance. In more recent years, when the European Commission and some EU member states remained lukewarm toward negotiating an economic partnership agreement (EPA) between Japan and the EU, it was the UK government under Prime Minister David Cameron that pushed past this reluctance and cleared the path to negotiations. It is therefore natural that Japan has considered the UK to be its most reliable partner in Europe.

The second reason is rooted in the fact that Britain is the closest European ally of the United States. Given the prime importance to Japan of the alliance with the US, this fact has always been a source of reassurance for Japan when preparing to engage in dialogue and cooperation with Europe in the areas of politics and security. Due to these circumstances, the United Kingdom has for many years been Japan's gateway to Europe (EU). It can be said that whenever a problem arose, Japan's long-held practice was to first talk to London.

A critical turning point in Japan's ties with the UK and the expansion of this relationship into the security domain was Prime Minister Cameron's visit to Japan in April 2012 and the release of the joint Japan-UK statement entitled "A Leading Strategic Partnership for Global Prosperity and Security." The joint statement set forth a new commitment to promoting security and defense cooperation with such shared values as freedom and democracy as the foundation. One of the most important points of the document was the reference to bilateral cooperation in defense equipment which was Japan's first commitment of the kind with any country other than the United States.

Compared to the status of Anglo-Japanese relations, Japan's bilateral ties with France and Germany generally remained low key for many years. In the area of trade, Japan was particularly concerned with France's protectionist

stance. After the November 1962 visit of Prime Minister Ikeda to Europe, it was reported that President Charles de Gaulle had ridiculed the Japanese premier by calling him a "transistor salesman." Although later revealed to be apocryphal, this story accurately reflects the mood that prevailed at the time in Japan-France relations.

A major agenda item emerged in Japan's relations with Germany after the 1990s. This pertained to reforming the United Nations Security Council and the expansion of its permanent membership to include Japan and Germany. A total of four countries aspiring to permanent membership, including India and Brazil, formed the Group of Four (G4), and Japan and Germany worked to strengthen their cooperation within this framework. However, as is well known, these efforts did not bear fruit. Japan and Germany have also been pursuing opportunities for cooperation in arms control and arms reduction, primarily in the area of nuclear weapons.

Since the mid-2000s, the principal reason for Japan's persistent skepticism toward Germany has been its relations with China. While China's accelerated economic growth has led to a rapid development of ties between China and the whole of Europe, Germany has been the driving force in this process. After taking office in 2005, Chancellor Angela Merkel visited China almost every year. All the while, German interest in Japan remained low. As a result, during this

period, the perception took root within Japan that “Germany is only interested in China” and “Germany is too soft on China.” These sentiments would have a lingering negative impact on the development of relations between Japan and Germany.

Current situation and challenges

(1) New stage in Japan-EU relations

Japan-EU relations, as well as Japan’s relations with Europe in general, including both economic and political dimensions, began to shift and make large strides around 2015 as a critical turning point. There were multiple factors that brought about this shift. The first relates to China. As mentioned in the preceding section, the issue of lifting the EU arms embargo on China and the honeymoon phase of the economic ties between the two sides stood as impediments in the development of relations between Japan and Europe. To indulge in a bit of oversimplification, these impediments were rapidly transformed into facilitating factors that promoted the development of relations between Japan and Europe. This transformation was triggered by a number of events and developments, including the expansion of China’s presence in the EU market, particularly its acquisition of European companies, which gave rise to growing European fears that its technologies

were being absorbed and appropriated by China. Also, China’s assertive stance in the South China Sea and its human rights record raised concerns and criticism in Europe. As EU views on China changed, the perception gaps that had long existed between Japan and the EU on China—referred to as the “China gap”—began to shrink.

The second factor has its roots in the start of the Donald Trump administration in the US in January 2017 and the tailwinds that it generated for promoting closer Japan-Europe cooperation. Under the banner of “America first,” the new administration appeared to turn its back on the rule-based international order, including the principles of free trade. As supporters of the existing order, Japan and Europe found themselves in a position where the need for mutual cooperation was dramatically enhanced. It was no coincidence that the Japan-EU EPA negotiations, which previously appeared to have run out of steam, suddenly reached an agreement in principle in July 2017, only six months after the birth of the Trump administration. As protectionism and unilateralism threatened to gain momentum under Trump, Japan and the EU found a new strategic imperative in resisting these trends by demonstrating the enduring values of free trade to the world.

The Japan-EU EPA was formally signed in July 2018 and came into force in February 2019. At the same time, the two sides concluded an SPA that established

a broad framework for mutual cooperation, including political and security cooperation. Initially, Japan was almost exclusively interested in the EPA, to the extent that it was understood that Japan had agreed to negotiate the SPA only as a quid pro quo for moving forward on the EPA. Ultimately, however, the SPA served as a powerful driving force for raising Japan-EU relations from a mere trade and economy relationship to one with far broader horizons that included problems related to basic values and the international order.

With the relative decline of American power and its traditional leadership in supporting the rule-based international order and the rise of China as a challenger to the status quo not sharing these values, the importance of Japan-Europe cooperation has increased and their EPA and SPA have gained a new strategic significance.

Against this backdrop, the Japanese side was beginning to change the meaning of Europe in its overall foreign relations. While the relationship with Europe had been seen as just one regional category in the world, Europe emerged as one of the main partners that would always remain on the central stage in Japan's foreign policy radar screen in dealing with major international policy matters related to the United States, China, and the wider international order. In short, Europe was "mainstreamed" in Japan's foreign relations. The process of Europe's mainstreaming was pushed

forward by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe who remained in office between 2012 and 2020 to become the longest-serving premier in Japan's political history. Abe developed a close personal relationship with President Jean-Claude Juncker of the European Commission and the two were instrumental in advancing the development of Japan-EU relations.

A similar change was also taking place on the European side. As it became increasingly aware of the challenges posed by a rising China, Europe realized that these challenges could no longer be dismissed as the compartmentalized problems of a geographically-distant Asian region. Consequently, Europe began to accept and adopt the novel concept of the "Indo-Pacific." Abe had been advocating for a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" since 2016 and had been calling on the EU and the individual European countries to get on board. As it searched for new directions in its Asian policies, the EU was beginning to find that it needed to formulate strategies for the broader Indo-Pacific region and the value of Japan as a like-minded partner increased as a result.

From around 2015 and 2016, the Japan-EU Summit and G7 Summit meetings began expressing concerns about the situation in the South China Sea and East China Sea. References have been made to the importance of the peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait since 2021. It is notable that while the United States and Canada are members of

the G7, Japan, the European countries (Germany, France, UK, and Italy) as well as the EU account for the remainder of the membership. Thus the combined relative weight of Japan and Europe in the G7 is significant, making it an important framework where Japan and Europe meet.

In light of these developments, the EU announced the “EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific” in September 2021, which Tokyo welcomed. Whereas in the past, the EU’s Asia policy was heavily tilted toward China, the new EU strategy emphasized the importance of relations with such partner countries as Japan and Australia, as well as with the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). This was understood to symbolize the rebalancing of the EU’s Asia policy. Additionally, the EU emphasized the connectivity between Asia and Europe and concluded a Connectivity Partnership with Japan in September 2019. This partnership aims to promote infrastructure investment in such areas as communication and transportation, and concrete projects are now beginning to emerge. How far these initiatives can be expanded remains a challenge for the future.

(2) Japan’s changing relations with the UK, France, and Germany

In comparing Japan’s relations with the major countries of Europe, the fact that the United Kingdom is seen as Japan’s closest partner in Europe remains unchanged.

Nevertheless, the referendum of June 23, 2016 that decided Britain’s exit from the EU brought on major challenges in relations between the two countries, because Brexit means that Britain can no longer function as Japan’s gateway to the EU. With this in mind, leading up to the referendum, Tokyo lent its support in various ways to proponents of remaining in the EU. Following the referendum, Japan endeavored to ensure close and smooth ties between the UK and the EU and predictability in the relationship. The Japanese government’s main aim in its involvement in EU-UK affairs was to safeguard the interests of Japanese companies operating in the UK.

The most immediate aim of the Japan-UK EPA (Japan-UK Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement), signed in October 2020, was to mitigate the negative impact of Brexit. The agreement was also intended to move post-Brexit bilateral relations in a positive direction in overall terms. However, the EPA was largely a mere roll-over of the provisions contained in the Japan-EU EPA, which actually made it possible for the two countries to conclude it in such a

short time. However, the Japan-UK EPA managed to go beyond the scope of the Japan-EU EPA in a few new areas, such as e-commerce, consumer protection and gender issues. As a strategic framework, the Japan-UK EPA also provides a foundation for stepping up British involvement in the Indo-Pacific. Such matters as cyber defense and mobile communication have also become important agenda items in Japan-UK relations.

In February 2021, the United Kingdom applied for membership in Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and its accession protocol was signed in July 2023. Meanwhile, London dispatched a carrier strike group led by HMS Queen Elizabeth, the Royal Navy's brand new aircraft carrier, to Japan and the Indo-Pacific region. The March 2021 edition of the Integrated Review, the British government document on foreign, security and defense policies, sets forth a "tilt to the Indo-Pacific," while the Integrated Review Refresh 2023 published in March 2023 is committed to making the country's involvement in the Indo-Pacific as a "permanent pillar" of Britain's international policy. In bilateral Japan-UK relations, a Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) came into force in October 2023, which is expected to promote bilateral defense cooperation by simplifying procedures for the deployment of troops to the partner country for joint military exercises and other purposes.

However, concerns have been voiced that the February 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine may have a negative impact on the future of Britain's engagement in the Indo-Pacific. In view of the UK's assistance to Ukraine and its role in reinforcing the deterrence and defense posture against Russia, the asset and resource constraints of the British military bring into question whether the UK can maintain its involvement in the Indo-Pacific. Nevertheless, Britain's Indo-Pacific engagement including its response to the rise of China is in line with the medium- to long-term interests of the UK, and this should not be seen as a matter of choosing between Europe and the Indo-Pacific. Britain, therefore, can be expected to reach the conclusion that involvement in both spheres is necessary.

In addition, AUKUS, the tripartite framework involving the United States and the United Kingdom for assisting Australia in its acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines, stands as a symbol of the medium- to long-term commitment of these countries to the security of the Indo-Pacific. Furthermore, the launching of the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP), a multinational initiative led by Japan, the UK, and Italy for the joint development of a next-generation fighter aircraft was announced in December 2022 with deployment scheduled for the mid-2030s. GCAP features multinational cooperation not only in development and manufacturing but also in maintenance and export to third

countries, spanning decades. For the UK, GCAP, together with AUKUS, constitute an important pillar of its Indo-Pacific engagement.

Despite the continuing importance of Japan-UK relations, particularly in security and defense, it is clear that the UK cannot continue to function as Japan's gateway to Europe. This reality has sent Japan in search of prospective new gateways. Naturally, in light of their relative weight in the EU, the top candidates would be Germany and France. While other possibilities can be explored, including Poland with its key role in Central and Eastern Europe, and Italy, which is a G7 member country, the natural course of action would be to begin by focusing on Germany and France. Simply put, Brexit has enhanced the importance of Germany and France in Japan's relations with Europe.

While Germany would be the first choice from an economic perspective, France has long been Japan's most important European partner after the UK particularly in foreign and security policy terms. With territories in the South Pacific and the Indian Ocean, France is an "Indo-Pacific power" that stations its troops in various parts of the region, constituting a foundation for the country's engagement in the Indo-Pacific. In May 2021, the French Navy's Mistral-class amphibious assault ship called on a Japanese port and joined Japanese and American forces to participate for the first time in a joint land-based exercise

in Kyushu. Although not large in scale, this was nonetheless a full-fledged exercise that included amphibious exercises. Additionally, the French military has already on several occasions dispatched its naval vessels and aircraft to participate in surveillance of North Korea's ship-to-ship cargo transfers activities with the aim of ensuring compliance with the UN Security Council's sanctions against North Korea. Interaction between Japan's Self-Defense Forces and the French military is growing rapidly through such exercises and operations. France was actually the first European country to formulate a strategy for the Indo-Pacific, which encouraged countries such as Germany and the Netherlands, as well as the EU, to follow suit.

With regard to Germany, it can be said that the revamping of China policy was closely linked to its assignment of greater importance to Japan. The release of Berlin's "Policy Guidelines for the Indo-Pacific Region" in September 2021 marked a turning point in this regard. This document places cooperation with Japan and other partner countries, as well as with the ASEAN countries, at the forefront of German policy for the region. It should be noted that this document has a lot in common with the EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific that was issued approximately a year later.

Building on these developments, in the fall of 2021, the German Navy deployed

its frigate *Bayern* to the Indo-Pacific region, conducting joint training with Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force and taking part in surveillance of North Korean ship-to-ship cargo transfer activities as a demonstration of Germany's increasing engagement in the Indo-Pacific region. In the summer of 2022, for the first time in its history, the German Air Force deployed six Typhoon fighter

jets accompanied by aerial refueling and transport aircraft to the Indo-Pacific region to participate in joint multinational exercises conducted in Australia. On its way home, the group made a stop in Japan. Given that Europe's military engagement in the Indo-Pacific region has long been led by the UK and France, the growing engagement of Germany represents a notable new development.

Japan's frameworks with the UK, France, and Germany

	United Kingdom	France	Germany
Information Security Agreement	◎ (signed July 2013, effective January 2014)	◎ (signed and effective October 2011)	◎ (signed and effective March 2021)
Defense Equipment Agreement	◎ (signed and effective July 2013)	◎ (signed March 2015, effective December 2016)	◎ (signed and effective July 2017)
ACSA (Acquisition and Cross-Serving Agreement)	◎ (signed January 2017, effective August 2017)	◎ (signed July 2018, effective June 2019)	○ (signed January 2024)
RAA (Reciprocal Access Agreement)	◎ (signed January 2023, effective April 2023)	△ (agreed to start negotiations May 2024)	
Foreign and Defense Ministerial Meeting (2+2)	◎ (started January 2015)	◎ (started January 2014)	○ (first meeting held online in April 2021/first Inter-Governmental Consultations March 2023)
EPA (Economic Partnership Agreement)	◎ (effective January 2021)	◎ (Japan-EU EPA)	◎ (Japan-EU EPA)

Source: Compiled by the author from Ministry of Foreign Affairs website and others.

In comparing Japan's bilateral relations with the United Kingdom, France and Germany, there are clear indications that some aspects of these three

relations are synchronized and interconnected. The above table lists the status of various agreements that are currently in effect between Japan and these three

European countries, such as information security agreements, agreements on defense equipment cooperation, and access and cross-servicing agreements (ACSA). In most instances, Japan first entered into these agreements with the United Kingdom, followed by similar agreements concluded with France and finally with Germany. A notable exception is the Foreign and Defense Ministerial Meetings (2+2) that were first launched with France. The United Kingdom and France exhibit a certain level of competition with regard to their engagement in the Indo-Pacific, including naval deployments. Germany has also joined the fray in terms of formulating an Indo-Pacific strategy, and these three major European countries have led the way in guiding the path taken by Europe (EU) as a whole. It is possible that, in certain cases, the UK, France and Germany will continue to keep an eye on each other's movements as they move forward in their broad policies toward Japan and the Indo-Pacific region.

Having already entered into agreements on information security and defense equipment cooperation, the focus of defense-related cooperation between Japan and Europe is now moving toward concluding more substantive ones, first in the form of ACSA, followed by RAA. It should be noted, however, that these agreements only provide a basic framework for cooperation and do not mean that further cooperation will be achieved automatically. Nevertheless, the very act of building these frameworks does

signal the intent of the participating countries to develop their relations over the long term.

Security and defense matters appear to account for a relatively large share in Japan's bilateral relations with France and Germany. This impression can be attributed to the fact that most trade and economic matters are addressed between Tokyo and Brussels, and that security and defense matters attract special attention because they represent a new area of concern that has been expanding at a rapid pace. Therefore, it would be incorrect to think that security and defense have suddenly come to dominate Japan-Europe relations. The truth of the matter is that trade and economic relations still represent the principal pillars of Japan-Europe relations and most likely will remain so in the future.

Conclusion

Since the mid-2010s Japan-Europe relations have undergone significant qualitative changes and the two sides are now in the process of developing true strategic partnerships. Furthermore, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine that began in February 2022, Japan-Europe, including Japan-EU and Japan-North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) cooperation has developed as a result of Japan's decisions to introduce severe sanctions against Russia and to support Ukraine.

Looking to the future, two critical questions beg to be answered. First, will the mainstreaming of Europe in Japan's foreign relations really take root? Second, as the war in Ukraine is prolonged, will Europe continue its engagement in the Indo-Pacific, a region of essential and indispensable importance to its own interests? As for Japan's relations with the EU and its bilateral ties with the UK, France, and Germany, a lot depends on whether effective cooperation can be re-established between the United Kingdom and the EU (including Germany and France), which will be in the EU's own interest as well.

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Japan and NATO

Tsuyoshi GOROKU



Introduction

Japan-North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) relations have steadily evolved over the past 15 years. However, because this process has been advancing relatively inconspicuously, it cannot necessarily be said that this relationship is widely recognized and acknowledged. Japan is NATO's longest-standing out-of-theater partner, while for Japan, NATO stands as a long-term partner with which it shares values and interests. Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, efforts to develop closer ties between Japan and NATO have been gaining momentum. This article reviews the historical development of Japan-NATO relations and discusses related current and future issues.

Past developments

During the Cold War, although Japan and NATO were both part of the "West," there was very little interaction between the two. This can be attributed to the fact that both had their hands full with pursuing national security in their own respective regions. The strong anti-militarism that reigned in post-war Japan was another contributing factor, ensuring that the Japanese government would maintain a passive stance toward approaching NATO, that had been formed as a "military alliance."

Nevertheless, toward the end of the Cold War, the two sides did undertake

to initiate some informal contact. During this period, Japan and Western Europe shared a common concern with the Soviet deployment of its new Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) and the direction of the US-Soviet INF negotiations that had started in 1981. The Nakasone administration, which took office in 1982, feared that the United States and Western Europe would determine their negotiating policies without the participation of Japan and that this would result in the redeployment of the Soviet INF to the Far East after being reduced and removed from Europe. At the same time, there was a sense that it was necessary to respond to Soviet pressure with a strong showing of "Western unity." Consequently, Japan set out to upgrade and activate its consultations, not only with the United States, but also with the European members of NATO. A certain theme was repeatedly emphasized in these consultations, and this was embedded in the G7 Williamsburg Summit Statement of May 1983 as the following basic principle: "The security of our [G7] countries is indivisible." This continued to define the West's basic policy until the conclusion of the INF Treaty in 1987. When the INF negotiations reached an impasse, Japan expressed its unequivocal support for the US deployment of its new INF in Europe that was based on NATO's "double-track decision." Although Japan and NATO thereafter did not engage in formal consultations throughout the 1980s, the series of close informal strategic consultations marked a clear milestone.

It was in the 1990s that formal talks between Japan and NATO commenced. With the end of the Cold War, NATO was now reassessing its role and seeking to build relationships with non-member countries. Japan, on the other hand, was looking for new approaches to contribute to the international community based on the lessons of the Gulf War and the self-criticism that it had not been able to play a satisfactory role in the Gulf War. At the same time, the broad range of national security issues that were emerging at this time gave new impetus to discussions between Japan and Europe on matters related to political security, which previously had not received significant attention.

Against this backdrop, Japan actively endeavored to deepen its relations with various European organizations, such as the European Community (EC) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). It was in this context that formal dialogue with NATO was initiated. As the first step, the Japan-NATO Security Conference was established in 1990, bringing together senior officials and security experts from both sides. This was followed in 1991 with the visit of NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner to Japan, the first visit of its kind, while 1993 saw the launch of Regular High-Level Consultations between Japan and NATO, which continues to the present day. While progress was made during this period toward generating a better mutual understanding of respective interests

and concerns, these interactions did not go so far as to result in direct cooperation. Thus, the situation during these years may be characterized as “dialogue for the sake of dialogue.”

What changed this situation dramatically were the 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States and the Afghanistan War that followed. The United States, an ally of Japan, had come under terrorist attack. By the end of the same year, the administration of Prime Minister Koizumi had signed on to the maritime interdiction operations launched under the US-led “Operation Enduring Freedom.” Japan’s contribution would be to dispatch vessels of the Maritime Self-Defense Force to the Indian Ocean to engage in refueling the warships of countries participating in interdiction operations (Japan’s involvement continued until 2010, including a period of temporary suspension). While this initiative grew out of Japan’s support for the United States, Japan’s refueling efforts involved the ships of various NATO nations, including the US.

Although Japan was unable to make a direct military contribution in Afghanistan, it did play a leading role in reconstruction and development projects, thus expanding its diplomatic horizons. It was in this arena that Japan crossed paths with NATO that was globalizing its activities after the terrorist attacks of 2001.

In August 2003, NATO took over command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Its sphere of activity was initially limited to the capital city of Kabul and its environs, but was later expanded to cover the entire country. As NATO's mission expanded to include reconstruction, it became necessary for it to partner with various international organizations and NGOs, as well as with out-of-theater countries.

It was in this process that direct cooperation between Japan and NATO started. Since 2007, Japan has collaborated with Provincial Reconstructions Teams (PRT) sponsored by NATO member states and provided support to NGOs and local administrative bodies in implementing more than 100 projects in such areas as primary education, vocational training, and medical services and public health. To facilitate the operation of this framework and to work in closer coordination with NATO, Japan dispatched liaison and coordination officers to the NATO Senior Civilian Representative in Kabul in 2008. In the following year, Japan sent a civilian support team consisting of development experts to a PRT led by Lithuania. Given the continued poor security situation, Japanese assistance and activities were made possible only with the cooperation and support of NATO/ISAF.

Japan has supported medical and educational activities for the Afghan military through the NATO Afghan National Army Trust Fund and has also assisted in strengthening the management of

arms and ammunition through the Partnership for Peace Trust Fund. Projects implemented under the latter program include ones undertaken in countries other than Afghanistan (such as Tajikistan and Ukraine).

Alongside these examples of frontline cooperation, progress has also been made in strengthening political partnerships. Following the 2006 NATO Riga Summit, NATO embarked on bolstering its cooperative ties with Japan, Australia, and other countries. In response, Japan has identified NATO as a partner with which it shared vital common values. In January 2007, Prime Minister Abe became the first Japanese premier to attend the North Atlantic Council (NAC). Noting that Japan and NATO could not afford to act separately and without coordination in the face of a diverse range of security challenges, Prime Minister Abe called on Japan and NATO to "move on to a new phase of cooperation." In addition to the discussion of Afghan assistance, time was given in this session to the threats posed by North Korean nuclear missiles and the rise of China. For Japan, NATO would henceforth serve as an increasingly important "forum" for providing input on East Asian affairs, particularly to the European member states.

This momentum toward enhanced Japan-NATO cooperation was maintained during the approximately three years of the Democratic Party of Japan government that began in September 2009. For instance, in May 2012, Foreign

Minister Gemba attended the Meeting on Afghanistan held at the NATO Chicago Summit, and Japan and NATO concluded an Agreement on the Security of Information and Material in 2010 in light of the growing interactions at practical levels.

The second Abe administration that came into office in December 2012 would later become the longest-serving government in Japan's constitutional history. It was under this administration that further progress was made in Japan-NATO relations now characterized as a "reliable and natural" partnership. While remaining firmly moored in its relationship with the United States, under the principle of "proactive contribution to peace" espoused by the second Abe administration, Japan sought to expand and enhance cooperation with countries of the Indo-Pacific region and European countries, including NATO, with which it shared common values and interests. For its part, NATO revised its partnership policy in 2011, and a Joint Political Declaration was adopted during NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen's visit to Tokyo in April 2013. Japan acted at this time to create a new ambassador post to NATO to be held concurrently by Japan's ambassador to Belgium (Japan's permanent mission to NATO was established in 2018).

In May 2014, the Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme (IPCP) was announced, containing the details of policies, principles, and specific areas of

cooperation between Japan and NATO. The IPCP called for the strengthening of high-level dialogue and the promotion of defense cooperation and exchanges, and identified the following as priority areas for cooperation: cyber defense, maritime security, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief operations, arms control, non-proliferation, and disarmament. In the following years, the IPCP was revised twice, in May 2018 and June 2020, with the latter version containing the addition of human security to the areas for cooperation and a reference to enhancing consultation on the East Asian situation.

Various examples can be cited of specific cooperative programs and actions implemented under the IPCP. In 2019, staff from the Ministry of Defense were dispatched to NATO's Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE) in Estonia, and Japan participated in cyber defense exercises organized by NATO and CCDCOE. In the area of maritime security, Japan has participated in joint training exercises such as those held in the Gulf of Aden and the Baltic Sea, and Japan's defense attaché stationed in the United Kingdom has been dispatched to NATO's Allied Maritime Command as a liaison officer since 2019. Personnel exchanges have also included the dispatch of Self-Defense Force officers to the NATO Headquarters.

Over the past decade, Japan-NATO cooperation has expanded beyond support for Afghanistan for several reasons.

First, the two sides share a commitment to basic values that include freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Second, there is a growing sense of urgency on both sides that rises from the recognition that the rules-based international order is being threatened and shaken. Of particular concern are the increasing attempts made by China and Russia to change the status quo through the use of force, which has given rise to a shared awareness of the interdependence and mutual impact of security in various regions of the world. Addressing the NAC in May 2014, Prime Minister Abe stated that Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and its military aggression in eastern Ukraine was a "global issue that also impacts Asia" and warned that frequent attempts were being made to unilaterally change the status quo by force or coercion in the East China Sea and South China Sea. NATO Secretary General Rasmussen responded by stating that the "security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic and Asia-Pacific regions cannot be treated separately" and went on to stress the importance of dialogue with like-minded partners such as Japan.

In recent years, NATO has shown a growing interest in China and the Indo-Pacific region. The joint press statement issued during Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg's visit to Japan in October 2017 strongly criticized North Korea's nuclear and missile programs and expressed concern about the situation in the East China Sea and South China Sea.

The London Declaration, issued by NATO leaders in December 2019, contains a brief reference to China's growing influence and states that this presents "both opportunities and challenges." This statement is the first-ever reference to China in NATO history. Subsequently, in December 2020, the NATO Asia-Pacific Partners (AP4) consisting of Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, and New Zealand, participated in the NATO Foreign Ministers' Meeting, where issues related to the changing global balance of power, including China's rise, were discussed.

Current status and challenges

Faced with the ongoing Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the NATO 2022 Summit in Madrid marked a historical milestone in reaffirming the Alliance's unity. To coincide with the adoption of NATO's new 2022 Strategic Concept, leaders of partner countries, including the AP4, were invited to attend the Summit. The 2022 Strategic Concept identifies Russia as the "most significant and direct threat" and refers to China as posing "systemic challenges." Furthermore, the document once again expresses concern for the deepening strategic partnership between China and Russia. While it is only natural for NATO to be focused on Russia given the current situation, Japan should certainly welcome its continued demonstration, from a medium- to long-term

perspective, of vigilance against China's movements and the stance for strengthening relations with the AP4 countries.

Prime Minister Kishida was the first Japanese prime minister to attend a NATO Summit. It should be noted that the decision to travel abroad ahead of a House of Councillors election was highly unusual and indicative of the great significance assigned by Prime Minister Kishida to face-to-face participation in the Summit. Moreover, this decision sharply boosted interest in NATO and Japan-NATO relations inside Japan.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine, the Kishida administration has closely worked with the G7 countries and has imposed unprecedented sanctions on Russia. Public support for the sanctions remains relatively high, and many Japanese do not view the war in Ukraine as a distant event with no personal repercussions.

Discussions and actions to strengthen Japan's deterrence and defense posture, including an increase in defense spending, have accelerated. While Japan continues to provide Ukraine with large-scale assistance in various fields, it is particularly noteworthy, in the context of Japan-NATO relations, that during his visit to Kyiv in March 2023, Prime Minister Kishida announced that Japan would henceforth supply non-lethal equipment to Ukraine through NATO's Trust Fund for Comprehensive Assistance Package (CAP).

Japan's decision to become actively involved in geographically distant European affairs is based on the recognition that Russia's actions constitute a problem that goes beyond Europe to affect the very foundations of the international order and that the international community, including Japan, must not send the wrong message on changing the status quo through the use of force. This decision by Japan was made with China and North Korea foremost in mind. Furthermore, the decision embodies the hope and expectation that NATO (and the European countries) will respond and reciprocate in the event of any future conflict that may arise in East Asia with the same show of solidarity and support.

Prime Minister Kishida stated at the NATO Madrid Summit that the "security of the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific are inseparable," thus emphasizing the "indivisibility" of the security of the two regions, and underscored his strong sense of urgency that "Ukraine today may be East Asia tomorrow." To further deepen Japan-NATO cooperation, the two sides agreed to fundamentally update the current IPCP to match the requirements of the new environment. It is Japan's understanding that the first critical steps were taken at the NATO Summit for "opening up horizons for a new era of Japan-NATO cooperation."

Responding to these developments, Secretary General Stoltenberg visited Japan in January 2023. The Japan-NATO

Joint Statement released at this time welcomed the revision of strategic documents undertaken by each side and applauded the progress made in drafting the Individually Tailored Partnership Programme (ITPP) between Japan and NATO, which identifies specific and practical areas of cooperation. The Joint Statement also reaffirmed the importance of cooperation in addressing challenges in areas such as cyberspace, outer space, and disinformation.

In order to further advance Japan-NATO cooperation in the future, it will be necessary to explore opportunities for consultation and cooperation in new areas of common interest beyond the existing arrangements on cyber defense and maritime security. For instance, there is an urgent need to address the issue of intermediate-range missiles in the “post-INF era,” which can very easily affect the deterrence and defense posture of both Japan and NATO countries. In addition, both have a common interest in addressing the challenges posed by the modernization of Russia and China’s nuclear arsenals, which have serious implications for the current structure of arms control, arms reduction, and non-proliferation. In recent years, China and Russia have made particularly striking progress in deepening their political and military alignment and cooperation. In February 2022, the leaders of the two countries agreed to promote mutual cooperation on a wide range of issues, including military cooperation, and clearly stated

their opposition to the NATO enlargement. Even after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, China has maintained its pro-Russian stance, and the two countries have become more actively engaged in joint military activities in the areas surrounding Japan. It would prove beneficial to both Japan and NATO to jointly evaluate the possibilities and limitations of Sino-Russia military cooperation and to discuss possible responses. To do so, it will be necessary to deepen consultations at various levels and to allocate the necessary human and financial resources.

Conclusion

Today, the rules-based international order is facing challenges and turbulence. In order to maintain and strengthen this order, Japan has been diligently strengthening its bilateral and multilateral partnerships with both intra-regional and extra-regional partner countries, while continuing to regard the Japan-US alliance as the cornerstone of its security. It is in this context that Japan has been steadily developing its relationship with NATO in what has been described as a “reliable and natural partnership.” Since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, there has been a growing awareness of the link between the affairs of the European region and those of the Indo-Pacific region. This, in turn, has further increased the need for Japan-NATO cooperation. Against this background, Prime Minister Kishida attended the NATO Vilnius Summit in July 2023 for the second consecutive year.

At this meeting, Japan and NATO agreed to an ITPP for the four-year period from 2023 to 2026 with 16 goals covering four priority issues. It will now be important to move forward on meaningful cooperation while reviewing the actual activities being carried out in each area.

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17

The Significance of Cooperation Between Japan and Germany

Minoru KIUCHI

Introduction

I have spent around 10 years in Germany, first as a child, and then as a diplomat with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, and I consider the country my second home. Since becoming a parliamentarian in Japan, I have made it my life's work to develop the cooperative relationship between Japan and Germany, including by serving as Secretary-General of the Japan-Germany Parliamentary Friendship League.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay my respects to Rabea Brauer and all at the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung who work so hard to develop and promote friendship between our two countries, and continue to make an enormous contribution to deepening bilateral relations. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to them for offering me the great honor of contributing to this publication.

The theme of this article is "The Significance of Cooperation between Japan and Germany"; I will discuss the importance of this bilateral relationship within the international community, and the relationship's development.

The importance of the Japan-Germany relationship

The year 2021 marked the 160th anniversary of friendship between Japan

and Germany. Our two countries, which share this long history of friendly relations, are similar in many ways. First and foremost, among our similarities are our national characters such as diligence and discipline. In addition, both our countries achieved remarkable recoveries from the Second World War, becoming world-leading economic superpowers. SMEs account for 99.5% or more of the domestic companies in both countries. Furthermore, both our countries play key roles in the stability and prosperity of their regions, with Japanese defense spending amounting to US\$53.0 billion, and German defense spending amounting to US\$64.2 billion in FY 2021, ranking among the highest levels in the world. But the most important similarity of all lies in our shared values with regard to freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

In recent years a number of global issues have come to the fore, such as protectionism and global warming, and unilateral attempts by countries such as Russia and China to change the status quo by force, disrupting regional peace and stability. Within this context, Japan and Germany play essential roles and exercise tremendous influence in the Asia-Pacific region and Europe, respectively. Under such circumstances, given that Japan and Germany share the same values and many other similarities, I am convinced that further cooperation between our two countries will benefit from this mutual compatibility, producing one of the world's

strongest bilateral relationships, and enabling us to contribute greatly to worldwide peace and stability.

Development of the Japan-Germany relationship during the Abe administration

During the second Abe administration launched in 2012, relations between Japan and Germany advanced rapidly. In March 2015, Angela Merkel, the German chancellor at the time, visited Japan for the first time in seven years, and our two countries' leaders affirmed their shared values, embarking on a new stage in the development of their relationship of trust.

Until then, Germany had prioritized its relationship with China due to its economic ties with that country, but I believe that the summit meeting in 2015 represented a turning point in Germany's efforts to strengthen its engagement with Asia.

From then on, Prime Minister Abe and Chancellor Merkel held repeated talks, and the resulting cooperation between Japan and Germany has had an extremely significant impact on the world. As advocacy of protectionism gained momentum in the United States and Europe, our two countries defended the free trade regime and played leading roles within the international community, enabling the Japan-European Union

(EU) Economic Partnership Agreement to go into effect in 2019.

Meanwhile, the two leaders' efforts to promote cooperation in the national security field were groundbreaking. With China's maritime expansion in mind, Prime Minister Abe and Chancellor Merkel agreed during their summit meetings in 2019 to oppose unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force, to collaborate in maintaining a world order based on the rule of law, and to cooperate in establishing a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)." In 2020, Germany announced its Policy Guidelines for the Indo-Pacific, indicating that it would cooperate with Japan and strengthen all forms of engagement in the region.

Since the second Abe administration, relations between Japanese and German parliamentarians too have become more active than ever before. Until the COVID-19 pandemic, I myself visited Germany on almost an annual basis and spent time with many German parliamentarians, engaging in discussion with them and learning a great deal in the process. Likewise, many German parliamentarians have visited Japan. These communications have brought pragmatic results, with a wide variety of topics discussed including economic matters such as SME-related policies, science and technology, environmental policies including decarbonization, China's hegemonic ambitions, and national security policies. The Japan-Germany Parliamentary Friendship League, in

which I serve as Secretary-General, had 135 parliamentarians as members as of July 26, 2022, demonstrating how highly Japan's parliamentarians value Germany.

Following the resignation of Prime Minister Abe, the policy of promoting cooperation between Japan and Germany has continued unchanged during the administrations of Yoshihide Suga and Fumio Kishida. During this time, Germany's engagement with the Asia-Pacific region and the strengthening of collaboration between our two countries has advanced. The year 2021 witnessed the signing of the Agreement on the Security of Information, the Japan-Germany Foreign and Defense Ministers' Meeting ("2+2"), the German Navy frigate *Bayern's* visit to Japan and joint exercises involving both countries, followed in 2022 by the deployment of German Eurofighter jets to Japan. Furthermore, in April 2022, Chancellor Scholz demonstrated the importance he places on Japan by choosing it as the first Asian country he visited after taking office. Chancellor Scholz subsequently visited Japan again for the first bilateral Inter-Government Consultations and the G7 Hiroshima Summit.

Further reinforcement of the Japan-Germany relationship

Japan and Germany share much in common, and our two countries'

cooperation and leadership now play a more important role than ever within the international community. We currently face an exceptionally challenging international situation characterized by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and China's maritime expansion based on hegemonic ambitions and the force of arms. It is no exaggeration to say that, without our bilateral cooperation and leadership, it would be impossible to achieve international peace and stability within such a context. It is therefore crucially important not only to hold frequent Inter-Government Consultations addressing various fields such as national security, economy, energy, and environment, but also to ensure that communication between our two countries' parliamentarians takes place regularly.

At the same time, as a Japanese parliamentarian for whom Germany is a second home, and as Secretary-General of the Japan-Germany Parliamentary Friendship League, I will continue dedicating myself to strengthening bilateral cooperation by elevating the relationship between our two countries to a new level.

Conclusion

Japan's former Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, advanced the cooperation between Japan and Germany further than ever before in various fields, including national security, economy, environment, science and technology, and his passing was a great loss for both our

The Significance of Cooperation Between Japan and Germany

nations. He considered Germany to be one of Japan's most important partners and worked hard to establish a relationship of trust, also contributing to the activities of the Japan-Germany Parliamentary Friendship League.

In addition to harboring great individual potential, both Japan and Germany have

roles to play and responsibilities to fulfill by demonstrating leadership within the international community. We must do all in our power to further develop the relationship that former Prime Minister Abe established between our two countries in order to maintain a world order based on the rules he delineated and to realize global stability and prosperity.

Minoru KIUCHI



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After his graduation from the University of Tokyo (Faculty of Arts and Sciences majoring in International Affairs), he started his professional career at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. After first being elected Member of the House of Representatives in 2003, he served as State Minister for Foreign Affairs and State Minister of the Environment, and Visiting Professor at Takushoku University. Kiuchi also functioned as the party's Director for Foreign Affairs Division and Acting Director-General for International Bureau before assuming Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives. He is concurrently Secretary-General of the Japan-Germany Parliamentary Friendship League.



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Japan and Russia

Hiroshi YAMAZOE

Introduction

When discussing Japan's diplomacy and security, the relations between Japan and Russia contain a peculiar ambiguity. In Japanese society, the presence of Russia's economy and culture since the end of the Cold War has been small compared with the countries of Asia, the US, and major Western European countries, and wariness also remains because of historical memory. In international issues, while there are continuous discussions in Japan regarding the US, China, the Korean Peninsula, and the nations of Southeast Asia, on occasion Russia abruptly becomes the focus of attention as a main diplomatic matter pertaining to territorial problems and disputes. This article attempts to consider whether such Japanese relations with Russia, which are easily confused because attention is intermittent in this way, can be understood within the overall image of Japanese foreign and security policy.

Prior history

(1) Historical memory since the time of the USSR

When Japan entered modern international relations in the latter half of the 19th century, Russia gave a certain stimulus to Japan. In response to Russia approaching Japan from the north, Japan advanced investigations and responses in international relations and concluded the Treaty of Shimoda with Russia in

1855 as one of Japan's first international treaties. Thereafter, Russia gradually advanced into the East Asian region, the Russo-Japanese War broke out in 1904, and Russia continued to be the main object of Japan's strategy.

What looms large in the present historical memory of the Japanese are numerous events that occurred in 1945. In August 1945, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) invaded Manchuria, the southern part of Sakhalin Island, and the Kuril Islands, committed atrocities against the local residents (not only Japanese, but also Chinese and Koreans), and transported about 600,000 people to the USSR (the Siberian Internment). This took place while the 1941 Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact was still in effect, and the fact that the USSR, although it was not attacked by Japan, committed an unjustified invasion and acts of violence left an adverse impact on the sentiment of the Japanese people in a different way from the cases of China and the US.

Moreover, the USSR treated the occupation of the Northern Territories (the four islands of Hokkaido) as if they had been incorporated into the territory of the USSR. A territorial dispute emerged which continues to the present day, and this has become a problem for the Japanese people. Because the countries agreed that the "four Northern Islands" are Japanese territory since the 1855 treaty and there has been no agreement for Japan to turn over the islands to the

USSR or to Russia since 1945, Japan's basic position through to the present day is that these are Japanese territory.

In 1956, the USSR sought to normalize diplomatic relations with Japan, the Soviet-Japanese Joint Declaration was signed, the state of war was ended, and diplomatic relations were formed. Japanese detainees were freed and returned to Japan, but during those 10 years more than 50,000 had died. A peace treaty was discussed in that process, but no agreement was reached for resolving the territorial issue. The text of the Joint Declaration, which was signed instead of a peace treaty, stipulated that the USSR would transfer the Habomai Islands and the island of Shikotan to Japan after the conclusion of a peace treaty between the USSR and Japan. The USSR also approved Japan's membership in the United Nations (UN).

At that time, the USSR did not view the US-Japan security framework as a problem, but the USSR has been hostile to the framework since the Security Treaty between the United States and Japan was revised in 1960, and refused to hold discussions with Japan regarding territory. Japan adopted a stance of demanding the return of all the "four Northern Islands," calling them the "inherent territory" of Japan. Relations as neighboring countries were managed with fishery agreements and other arrangements and cultural exchanges also advanced, but the relations between Japan and the USSR were defined by the

dual confrontation structure of the Cold War and the territorial issue.

The Japan Ground Self-Defense Force deployed a tank division in Hokkaido to prepare against a Russian military landing, but the US military did not station troops in Hokkaido. During the 1970s, when the USSR achieved the capabilities of submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM) which are launched from nuclear submarines, it increased its military capabilities for the defense of the areas around the Sea of Okhotsk where these are operated. As part of those efforts, the USSR established military bases on Iturup Island and Kunashiri Island and deployed combat aircraft and tanks to prepare against control of surrounding waters and seizure of the islands by the US military. In 1983, there was an incident where the Soviet military, which was overly concerned about nearby US military activities, mistook a Korean Air Lines plane for a US military aircraft and shot it down while it was flying from the Kamchatka Peninsula toward Sakhalin Island, and the signals intelligence intercepted by Japan and the US at that time was used to condemn the USSR.

(2) New relations with the Russian Federation

The Soviet Union collapsed in 1991 and relations with Japan greatly improved around the time that the successor Russian Federation was established. The USSR proposed to Japan the holding

of regular maritime safety consultations equivalent to the Incidents at Sea Agreement between the USSR and the US, and an agreement between Japan and the Russian Federation was reached in 1993. Japan and Russia had both become democratic, market-economy system countries, relations were managed in line with that foundation, and people-to-people and economic exchanges greatly expanded. Japanese companies advanced into Moscow and other large Russian markets, their products were welcomed, Toyota operated a factory in St. Petersburg, Japanese firms participated in oil and natural gas concessions on Sakhalin Island, and Japan diversified its energy import sources.

Regarding the territorial issue as well, President Boris Yeltsin held frank discussions based on mutual beneficial relations and legal credibility, and several interim common understandings were reached. "Visa-free travel" was arranged whereby Japanese former residents of the four Northern Islands could visit graves without passing through Russian immigration procedures. From 2001, President Vladimir Putin stabilized domestic society, created an environment for development, and aimed at conducting stable relations with Western countries. As part of this, he demonstrated an eagerness to resolve border issues that cause instability, achieved resolutions with Latvia and China, and advanced negotiations with both Estonia and Japan. Nevertheless, there was a wide gap in the positions of Japan, which

maintained the principle that the four Northern Islands were all Japanese territory, and Russia, which required legal foundations and benefits to explain to its own people in order to transfer territory.

(3) National Security Strategy of the Abe administration

In Russia, the policy of focusing on the Far East and East Asia was strengthened when Putin began his third term as president in May 2012, and Russia advanced relations with China, India, South Korea, Japan, and other countries in parallel. Russia initiated maritime military exercises with China and approached Japan about strengthening the framework for dialogue in the security field.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe who took office in December 2012 deemed that Russia desired to advance relations with Japan, and worked to position Russia in Japan's national security framework. Abe called for "proactive contribution to peace" whereby Japan would contribute to the peace of Japan and the world not passively but by proactively taking action, and advanced preparations for a system that could consistently analyze and strengthen national security across ministries and agencies. In parallel with these works, through summit meetings Abe confirmed that relations between Japan and Russia would not be confrontational but rather advance as comprehensive relations, and held the first "2+2" meeting of the foreign and

defense ministers of Japan and Russia in November 2013.

In December 2013, the Japanese government established the National Security Council and published the first National Security Strategy (NSS). In the section on advancing cooperation with partner countries (IV-3), after discussing the Republic of Korea, Australia, the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), India, and China, the strategy touches on the issue of North Korea, which involves cooperation with relevant countries including Russia. Subsection (4) then directly addresses Russia and reads as follows.

(4) Under the increasingly severe security environment in East Asia, it is critical for Japan to advance cooperation with Russia in all areas, including security and energy, thereby enhancing bilateral relations as a whole, in order to ensure its security. Based on this recognition, Japan will cooperate with Russia in securing peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region. With regard to the issue of the Northern Territories, the most important pending issue between the two countries, Japan will vigorously negotiate with Russia under a consistent policy of resolving the issue of the attribution of the four islands and concluding a peace treaty.

What can be seen from these efforts is the idea of enhancing bilateral relations with Russia overall to ease conflicts of interest and gain Russia's understanding and cooperation on security issues originating in North Korea and China that are difficult to avoid. In September 2012, tensions between China and Japan regarding the Senkaku Islands intensified, and while solidifying Japan's security foundations the Abe administration worked at stabilizing relations with China. However, in January 2013 there was an incident where a Chinese warship locked its weapons-targeting radar on a Japan Self-Defense Force ship. Japan had asked China to establish procedures to avert dangerous actions so that even though there were political tensions, accidental confrontations would not occur for that reason. In this regard, in view of Japan's long experience of procedures to avert clashes at sea with Russia, it was thought that there was more accumulated trust that contributed to stability with Russia than with China.

Prime Minister Abe was strongly aware that the Northern Territories issue should be resolved from the political and humanitarian perspectives, and he sought new means under the initiative of the Prime Minister's office because advances had not been achieved using the prior approaches. Abe sought an entry point through close dialogue with President Putin and Japan-Russia cooperative relations. Abe's personal enthusiasm stood out, and in Japanese

society, where there was little interest in Russia aside from the Northern Territories issue, the mass media tended to cover Japanese-Russian relations pulled by whether or not there was progress in the Northern Territories issue. For that reason, assessments were often seen that Abe was moving too close to Putin in order to resolve the Northern Territories issue.

Nevertheless, in its NSS the Abe administration gave priority to addressing North Korea and China issues while deepening collaboration with countries worldwide, and the Northern Territories issue was not its only item concerning Russia. While Russia was moving closer to China, conflicts of interest also emerged between those two countries, and because Russia was working to involve India, South Korea, and Japan in the development of the Russian Far East, positioning Japan in Russia's interests was considered effective. By advancing Japan-Russia relations, the Abe administration must have had the two large goals of easing aggravation of problems with China and finding a path toward the resolution of the Northern Territories issue.

(4) The shock of Russia's violation of Ukraine's sovereignty

In February 2014, Russia held the Winter Olympics in the southern city of Sochi, and Prime Minister Abe attended the opening ceremony and met with

President Putin. At that same time, however, there was political upheaval in Ukraine as Russia had the Crimean Peninsula separate from Ukraine and be annexed by Russia and then began to instigate and support secession and armed struggle in the Donbas region in eastern Ukraine.

Japan condemned Russia's change of the status quo by force and its violations of Ukraine's territorial integrity and of human rights. These were necessary assertions to defend Japan's position regarding the Northern Territories and other territories. Japan took a clear stance of condemning Russia together with Ukraine, the nations of Europe, and the US. The EU and the US began placing economic sanctions on Russia, and Japan also implemented the economic sanctions that were feasible. Japan postponed defense and other exchanges with Russia and the implementation of high-level, highly symbolic dialogues. Meanwhile, Japan compiled and continues to implement a Ukraine assistance package of approximately US\$1.86 billion, which is one of the largest as bilateral assistance, including energy efficiency improvements and judiciary system reforms so that Ukraine can develop over the long term.

The circumstances concerning this Ukraine crisis caused dual difficulties for the Abe administration's NSS. These are the management of cooperative relations to uphold the international order and the worsening of Japan-Russia

relations. Because highly effective sanctions on Russia implemented by Japan were limited and the above-mentioned significance of Japan-Russia relations was maintained, even slightly, from the perspective of those who were harsh on Russia, the Japanese response appeared to be halfway. On the other hand, Russia assumed only the US pressure made Japan take actions hostile to Russia, and presented a harsh stance toward Japanese interests while seeking removal of the sanctions. It is thought that Russia's further development of relations with China from this time is designed to supplement its economic and diplomatic relations and also intended as a warning of possibly causing harm to American and Japanese interests.

Prime Minister Abe sought ways to achieve at least to some small extent the difficult demands of both continuing dialogue between Japan and Russia and advancing the priority issues of the NSS. After many high-level dialogues had been postponed for some time, Japan received several key Russian figures with visits to Japan by Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov in April 2016, President Putin in December 2016, Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu in March 2017 (for the 2nd Japan-Russia meeting of foreign and defense ministers), and Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov in December 2017 (this had been postponed from March 2014). In this process, while Japan and Russia both stressed their different positions, they reached an agreement on the

significance of continuing exchanges of opinion through dialogue. Also, both countries had dispatched warships to counter piracy in the Gulf of Aden from the past, and the level of collaboration was stepped up through joint exercises in November 2018 including receiving helicopters and personnel from a Russian warship on a Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force ship. Through such developments, it may be understood that Japan and Russia both limited further degradation of bilateral relations and acted in concert to promote practical cooperation.

Nevertheless, after all, it is difficult to say that the Abe administration moved toward achieving the two strategic interest goals which it was aiming at regarding Russia. Russia advanced not only economic cooperation but also military cooperation with China, delivered relatively high-level equipment to China including Su-35 fighters and S-400 surface-to-air missile systems, and demonstrated strengthening of cooperative relations through military exercises. In July 2019, Russian and Chinese bombers linked to both countries' airborne warning and control systems (AWACS) were jointly patrolling the East China Sea and the Sea of Japan and a Russian A-50 AWACS aircraft entered airspace above Takeshima Island, which is under Japanese sovereignty. Japan strongly protested to Russia, and so did South Korea, which claims the island as its own territory. From 2018 through 2020, the participation of Chinese

troops in large-scale Russian military exercises was also conspicuous. Russia and China strengthened their common stance toward opposing alliances that involved the US, and unlike China, the leeway for Russia to act advantageously for Japan declined.

When President Putin visited Japan in December 2016, Prime Minister Abe proposed an eight-item economic cooperation program and Russia compiled a framework in the interests of cooperative relations with Japan, which Japan implemented. In November 2018, the two countries agreed on accelerating negotiations on a peace treaty based on the 1956 Soviet-Japanese Joint Declaration, and Japan showed a flexible negotiating stance. Regardless, in January and February 2019, statements by Minister of Foreign Affairs Lavrov and the hardening of Russian public opinion made it clear that Russia was not prepared to turn over any territory whatsoever to Japan. With this, it became clear that under the methods taken by Japan to date Russia did not seek to gain benefits through cooperative relations with Japan or to exploit differences in the Japanese and American positions.

In this process, Russia's tone in expressing dissatisfaction with Japan was more amicable than its tone toward the US. But within the context whereby Russia asserted its territorial rights to the four Northern Islands for military purposes, Russia developed the narrative that Japan, which is in an alliance

with the US, has no free will and that if the islands were turned over to Japan, the US military would locate military bases there. However, this type of narrative was not seen officially from 2014 to 2015. It was emphasized when there seemed to be some progress in the 2018 territorial issue negotiations, and it is not very clear if it was raised based on specific national security concerns and countermeasures or was rhetoric related to the territorial issue negotiations. The Abe administration did not consider revisions to Japan-US relations that would lose crucial strategic interests for the purpose of its negotiations with Russia.

Present conditions and issues

(1) Continuity in the Suga administration and the Kishida administration

Prime Minister Abe resigned because of poor health in September 2020, and the administration of Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga was formed. Suga had served as Chief Cabinet Secretary for nearly eight years under Prime Minister Abe, and generally maintained the existing policies in foreign affairs and other ongoing policies. Suga worked to form close relations with the US Trump and Biden administrations and aimed at maintaining stable relations with China and Russia while advocating the necessary positions.

In relations with Russia, similar to Prime Minister Abe, while not an outstandingly passionate approach, Suga continued the dialogue between leaders, steadily advanced bilateral cooperation based on cooperation plans, and worked to make Russia a stable partner as much as possible.

The administration of Prime Minister Fumio Kishida was formed in October 2021. Throughout 2022, Kishida expressed the idea of revising the NSS, and a different handling of Russia was also expected. Right after he took office, Prime Minister Kishida had a telephone meeting with President Putin, and then four months passed without any further meetings.

(2) Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and Japan's determination regarding the principle of international order

From 2021 through 2022, Russia prepared military forces near its border with Ukraine and tensions heightened. On February 17, 2022, Prime Minister Kishida had his second telephone meeting with President Putin and requested that issues be resolved through diplomatic means rather than a unilateral change of the status quo through force. On February 18, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicated its willingness to continue

negotiations with the US regarding the deployment of missiles and confidence-building measures. However, on February 21 Russia declared that it had recognized the territories controlled by breakaway forces in eastern Ukraine as "independent countries," and on February 24 Russia announced it was initiating a "special military operation" to maintain safety in those territories and launched a full-scale war against Ukraine which greatly surpassed that purpose.

On that same day February 24, Minister of Foreign Affairs Yoshimasa Hayashi summoned Russia's ambassador and condemned Russia's actions as an attempt to change the status quo by a unilateral use of force that violated Ukraine's sovereignty. At 11 pm, Prime Minister Kishida attended an emergency online G7 meeting. Since then, as a member of the G7, the Japanese government has advanced measures one after another placing sanctions on Russia and providing support to Ukraine, in coordination with each nation.

Japan was harsher on Russia compared to the 2014 Ukrainian crisis and took measures that would entail pain for Japan itself largely because of the same reasons as the other G7 nations. That is, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine was too clearly a large-scale invasion of another country, even when compared with the opaque method of the so-called "hybrid warfare strategy" of 2014. Moreover Russia, which has a duty to uphold the international order as a

permanent member of the UN Security Council, did not fully utilize the UN or other dialogue frameworks as means to resolve its international issues, made the unilateral assertion which was not objectively verified that a neo-Nazi administration was oppressing the residents of eastern Ukraine, disregarded the sovereignty of the independent state Ukraine, and sent the military to cause large-scale humanitarian damages. This had a more severe negative impact on the international order overall compared to other regional conflicts. For that reason, Japan, which has a duty to maintain the existing international order as a member of the G7, views this as an issue that is not limited to regional conflict in Europe and is taking measures so that Russia cannot unilaterally gain benefits.

Moreover, there is very little that Japan can expect to gain strategically from taking a flexible stance toward Russia. Through several years of a flexible approach, it has already become clear that Russia will not take actions that would benefit Japan regarding issues concerning China and territorial issues. On the contrary, if Russia succeeds in unilaterally changing the status quo by force, the normative strength of the international order will be weakened, and there are concerns that people who believe that the status quo can also successfully be changed nearby Japan by force will gain momentum. Therefore, it is considered necessary for Japan to clearly show its opposition to such circumstances.

Prime Minister Kishida has greatly advanced Japan's approach to national security by supporting Ukraine, which is resisting the Russian invasion, and reinforcing Japan's own preparations against this type of situation as important pillars. The NSS which was revised in December 2022 notes the problems caused by Russia's actions and Japan's basic stance toward Russia as follows.

By its recent aggression against Ukraine and others, Russia's external and military activities and others have shaken the very foundation of the international order, and are perceived as the most significant and direct threat to security in the European region. In addition, Russia's external and military activities and others in the Indo-Pacific region, including Japan, together with its strategic coordination with China, are of strong security concern. ...

With regard to the relations with Russia, Japan will respond in a manner that protects its own national interests in light of the severe security environment in the Indo-Pacific region. In addition, Japan will prevent Russia from taking actions that undermine the peace, stability, and prosperity of the international community, while cooperating with its ally and like-minded countries and others. As for

the Northern Territories issue, which is the greatest concern regarding our diplomacy with Russia, Japan's basic policy of concluding a peace treaty through the resolution of the territorial issue remains unchanged.

In preparing for the May 2023 G7 Hiroshima Summit, Prime Minister Kishida strengthened cooperative relations that support Ukraine and worked to set a venue to promote dialogue between Ukraine and India, Indonesia, Brazil and other countries which desire to pursue independent diplomacy.

Facing Japan's stance of not accepting its activities in Ukraine, Russia added Japan to its list of non-friendly nations, suspended peace treaty negotiations, and took other retaliatory measures. Although there is bilateral cooperation for maritime safety around Hokkaido and fishery agreements are being implemented, the environment for practical discussions has worsened forcing their delay. Japan implemented measures prohibiting imports of Russian coal and gold, but the policy of keeping the Sakhalin 2 liquefied natural gas (LNG) project concessions as advantageous to Russia as possible has been maintained. While the sanctions on Russia aim at limiting its resources to conduct war over the short term and its growth prospects over the middle to long term, the perspective of not disrupting people's livelihood from the problems caused by

Russia is necessary, and like other countries Japan is being forced into taking difficult choices and actions.

Conclusion

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine appears to have greatly changed Japan's policy toward Russia. However, what has greatly changed in Japan is similar to what has changed in Europe, the US, and other nations with which Japan maintains strong cooperative relations. For example, Germany has also been forced to greatly change its relations with Russia and its defense efforts. Beyond that, while it may be said that Japan was advancing bilateral practical cooperation in its relations with Russia up to 2022, improvements of conditions concerning major strategic interests were not gained from Russia. Japan demonstrated flexibility requiring major decisions in economic cooperation programs, peace treaty negotiations based on the 1956 Soviet-Japanese Joint Declaration, and other initiatives, while Russia conversely came to take a hard line in its attitude regarding territorial issues. Having experienced the ineffectiveness of adopting a flexible position, Japan has been unable to expect any benefit from a more flexible stance toward Russia since February 2022.

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19

Japan and Ukraine/ Eastern Europe

Atsuko HIGASHINO

Introduction

The Russian invasion of Ukraine that began in February 2022 has been met with the same sense of shock and alarm in Japan as in the rest of the world. The way that the West has stood up against a change in the status quo using military force has also changed, particularly compared to the relatively low level of general concern at the time of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in March 2014 or at the outbreak of the conflict in the eastern regions of Ukraine in the summer of that year. As Europe underwent a tectonic shift in the decades after the Cold War, Japan started to build cooperative relationships, first with the countries in Central and Eastern Europe that had newly joined the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) before gradually starting to strengthen relations with Ukraine and other former members of the Soviet Union in later years. As discussed in this article, although these efforts were not without their success, Russia continued to be the main pivot of Japan's diplomacy. This tendency remained fundamentally unchanged even after the occupation of Crimea in 2014 and the outbreak of fighting in the Donbas region. However, the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 dramatically undermined the "Russia-first" Japanese diplomacy, forcing various revisions and changes.

This paper first provides an overview of a number of previous Japanese diplomatic

policies, including "Eurasian Diplomacy" and the "Arc of Freedom and Prosperity," before analyzing the main characteristics of Japanese diplomacy since 2014. Then we will examine the changes that the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine has brought to Japanese foreign policy in the region. In keeping with the conventional EU practice, I will refer to EU member states such as Poland and the Czech Republic as "Central and Eastern European countries" and to non-EU states such as Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia as "Eastern European countries," following the definition by the European Union.

From "Eurasian Diplomacy" to the "Arc of Freedom and Prosperity"

(1) "Eurasian Diplomacy"

One example of Japan's early attempts to give greater attention to its relations with the former Soviet states was the "Eurasian Diplomacy," unveiled by Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto in June 1997. The main focus of this framework was Russia, followed by the countries in Central Asia and around the Caspian Sea. Japan was actively engaged in development of the Caspian Sea together with the United States and European countries at the time, which is one likely factor in the background of this policy. Countries such as Ukraine and Moldova were not explicitly included as the targets of the framework.

The “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity,” announced by Foreign Minister Taro Aso roughly a decade later in November 2006, clearly marked a shift in focus from “Eurasian Diplomacy.” In his speech unveiling the idea, Aso stated that while the “basis of Japan’s foreign policy is to strengthen the Japan-US alliance, as well as to strengthen our relationships with our neighbouring countries, such as China, Korea, and Russia,” Japan was “aiming to add a new pillar around which our policy will revolve” by developing collaboration with Central and Eastern European countries as well as with Eastern European countries.

The same speech referred to a plan to support democracy across the “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity” stretching from North-eastern Asia through Central Asia and the Caucasus to Turkey and from there to Eastern Europe and the Baltic. The Arc covered the region that had changed dramatically since the end of the Cold War and the end of the East-West conflict. Countries mentioned as targets for support included the so-called GUAM nations (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova) as well the Community of Democratic Choice that was launched with the aim of encouraging democracy and protecting human rights.

The important point about the policy framework was the fact that Japan launched diplomacy with the former Soviet states through collaboration with the Central and Eastern European countries to which Japan had provided

assistance in the years after the end of the Cold War, together with the EU and NATO. The policy framework was suggested in 2006. This coincided with the conclusion of the early stages of a major project of eastern expansion by both the EU and NATO, and a major transitional moment in international politics in Europe after the Cold War. Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic were the first to achieve NATO membership in March 1999; they were joined in March 2004 by Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. In 2004, a total of 10 countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean achieved EU membership, including the Czech Republic and Poland. These were followed by Romania and Bulgaria in 2007. As a result, the borders of the EU and NATO shifted significantly eastward, and countries such as Ukraine, Moldova, and Belarus came to share a border with the EU and NATO. It was a natural development that the EU and NATO started to step up their outreach activities in the region. In 2004, for example, the EU’s European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) started in earnest, and the Union began to work on measures to strengthen its relations with countries that were not seen as likely targets for EU expansion in the short term.

Another important development was the so-called “Color Revolutions” that took place in several former Soviet states in parallel with these undertakings by the EU. A sequence of revolutions swept

across a number of former Soviet states—including the “Rose Revolution” in Georgia from 2003 to 2004, the “Orange Revolution” in Ukraine in 2004, and the “Tulip Revolution” in Kyrgyz in 2005. This led to increasing expectations in Europe for accelerating democratization in these countries.

These conditions on the European side meant that the “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity” was a well-timed idea. However, it is hard to say that much substantial progress was made either with Japan-European collaboration built around the framework, or with the efforts to strengthen relations with the countries targeted for assistance. One major reason for this was that the frameworks including target countries such as GUAM and the Community of Democratic Choice faded before they had even started to function properly. Another factor, perhaps the most significant, was that the idea was largely a personal project of the then-Foreign Minister Taro Aso, and opportunities to speak about the idea in Japanese diplomacy dwindled rapidly after Aso left his position in August 2007.

The Eastern European countries that had been the main focus of the “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity” entered a period of extreme instability that lasted until the second half of the first decade of the new century. Ukraine struggled with its domestic politics in the aftermath of the Orange Revolution and entered a prolonged period of confusion that

culminated in the Maidan Revolution of 2014, while Georgia experienced conflict with Russia in the summer of 2008. In the EU, the Russia-Georgia War led to a growing awareness of the urgency of building strong relations with the former Soviet states that lay in between the EU and Russia, and 2009 saw the full start of the Eastern Partnership (EaP), a new policy framework focused on building relations with Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Belarus. This framework produced several important outcomes, including various reforms in the target countries, and the signing of association agreements between the EU and Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia.

There was considerable overlap between the countries covered by the EaP and those covered by the “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity,” and if Japan and the EU had sought to coordinate their activities in these regions, they might well have been able to achieve cooperation on aid with a certain degree of synergy. The desire to find a way to cooperate in the region with the EU and NATO had also been mentioned in plans for the “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity.” However, there are no signs that any such attempts were actually made between Japan and the EU. No doubt part of the reason for this was a mismatch in terms of timing, in the sense that opportunities to refer to the “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity” idea in Japanese foreign policy more or less disappeared right around the time that the EaP was launched. There was also a decisive difference between

Japanese and EU policies with regard to Eastern Europe. Since the EU now shared borders with Eastern European countries, the EU was engaged in its Eastern European policy with a real sense of concern that unrest in Eastern Europe could contribute directly to greater unrest in the EU itself. By contrast, Japan's policies on Eastern Europe lacked the same sense of urgency. The "Arc of Freedom and Prosperity," which had been launched as a pioneering attempt to collaborate on providing aid to Eastern European countries with the EU and NATO, as well as the Central and Eastern European countries that had newly been acceded to the EU, ended without leaving any tangible lasting results. It certainly did not compare with the international spread and impact of the later framework for a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)."

(2) Occupation of Crimea and Japan's response: Balancing a focus on Russia with support for Ukraine

In this context, Ukraine faced a number of severe challenges. The Yanukovich administration collapsed following the Maidan Revolution in February 2014, and in March of the same year, Russia illegally occupied Crimea. In response to the Russian occupation of Crimea, Japan shared with the G7 and the EU the view that no use of armed force to alter the status quo could be tolerated and that no violation of the integrity, sovereignty,

and territorial unity of Ukraine could be accepted, and imposed sanctions on Russia. However, it is also true that the Abe administration at the time continued to send a message to Russia that Japan was buckling under pressure from the United States and had no choice but to impose sanctions on Russia against its own will. In September 2014, former Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori went to a meeting with President Putin carrying a letter from Prime Minister Abe. At the meeting, he is believed to have told Putin: "If we have imposed sanctions on Russia, it is only because the United States keeps telling us to do so. But I believe that they have been imposed in a way that has not caused any actual damage to Russia." (Komaki Akiyoshi (2020), Abe vs Putin) Certainly, it is fair to say that the sanctions imposed on Russia from 2014 were "peer pressure sanctions" whose economic impact was deliberately blunted. They were chiefly limited to the freezing of the assets of 40 individuals and two organizations and to the imposition of import restrictions on all freight originating from the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol. Russia was overwhelmingly the main focus of the Abe administration's "Eurasian Diplomacy," and Japanese foreign policy clearly made it a priority not to damage its relations with Russia, even after Russia was guilty of a clear breach of international law by its occupation of Crimea.

On the other hand, it is also true that the Japanese government has continued to provide steady assistance to Ukraine,

where fighting has been ongoing in the eastern parts of the country since 2014. To give one example, from 2018 to 2019, the Japanese government formulated a plan “to improve civilian safety and bolster the response capability in areas affected by the crisis in the eastern regions of Ukraine” (worth a total of US\$123,000) and provided, through the United Nations (UN), latest medical supplies to UN hospitals in Ukraine, including ventilator machines, anaesthesia facilities, and emergency aid kits. From 2014 to 2019, the Japanese government provided medical equipment worth approximately US\$1.5 million to Ukraine. Japanese diplomacy at the time thus had two sides to it: although maintaining relations with Russia continued to be the major precondition of Japanese foreign policy, Japan also provided assistance to Ukraine, which was facing an increasingly protracted conflict in its eastern regions. To put it another way, we might say that diplomacy with Russia and assistance for Ukraine were able to coexist without conflict or contradiction in Japanese foreign policy at the time.

(3) Eastern Europe in the context of “Connectivity” between Japan and the EU

In the second half of the 2010s, after the idea of the “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity” fizzled out, that of the EU and Japan cooperating in supporting other regions resurfaced. This was the Partnership on Sustainable Connectivity

and Quality Infrastructure, which was announced in September 2019 during the Abe administration. Thus, Japan and the EU aimed to work together “in the four areas of digital, transport, energy, and people-to-people exchanges, with a commitment to establishing a Connectivity Partnership based on sustainability as a shared value, quality infrastructure and their belief in the benefits of a level playing field.” Along with the Western Balkans, Central Asia, and the Indo-Pacific, “Eastern Europe” was also explicitly mentioned as an area where Japan and the EU would cooperate under the Connectivity Partnership.

Part of the background to this idea was the emergence of problems stemming from China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) vision for a huge economic zone linking China and Europe. As a result of this initiative, launched by China in 2013, there were worries about environmental damage caused by irresponsible development and the risk of countries falling into the so-called “debt trap.” The idea was that Japan and the EU would work together to prevent any negative influences that might be brought by the BRI by providing sustainable and high-quality infrastructure in the areas targeted by the BRI.

However, it would be hard to cite any notable successes for the project with regard to the Eastern European countries, although some cooperative successes were achieved in the West Balkans, where there were some

synergistic effects with the “West Balkans Cooperation Initiative” launched by Prime Minister Abe in 2018.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine and Japanese diplomacy

As fears mounted about a possible Russian invasion of Ukraine from the end of 2021, Japanese diplomacy faced a difficult dilemma. The G7 countries issued a statement (at a meeting of G7 finance ministers on February 14, 2022) announcing that “any further military aggression by Russia against Ukraine will be met with a swift, coordinated and forceful response.” It was a strong warning designed to deter Russia from going ahead with a military invasion, and Japan fell in line with this as a member of the G7.

On the other hand, even in the days immediately before the invasion, there was still a deep-rooted opinion in Japan that said that maintaining Japan’s relationship with Russia should be the top priority. This view was clearly apparent in the debate held in a regular session of the House of Representatives on February 8 to discuss the motion (which was eventually passed) on the “Resolution calling for improvement in the situation of concern around Ukraine.” The language of the resolution showed clear signs of the care that had been taken to avoid pointing the finger at Russia directly, noting only that “the

situation around Ukraine’s borders has been destabilized due to moves by *external forces* (italics mine), and the tense situation continues” and also stressing that “changes to the status quo through force *by any country* must not be tolerated.”

Even so, once the actual invasion was launched on February 24, the government shifted its priorities to walk in step with the other G7 nations and imposed unprecedentedly harsh sanctions on Russia. They included financial sanctions, restrictions on exports to Russia, cancellation and withdrawal of most-favoured-nation (MFN) status, restrictions on imports from Russia, and freezing of assets belonging to the oligarchs. Japan continued to impose sanctions largely in line with those imposed by the G7 and the EU, expanding its sanctions further in response to the so-called “annexation” of four provinces in the eastern and southern parts of Ukraine.

In response to a request from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Japanese government has also provided support for Ukrainian refugees as a “humanitarian international aid program” in accordance with the Act on Cooperation with UN Peacekeeping Operations and Other Operations (the International Peace Cooperation Act). In line with the government’s plan for humanitarian international peacekeeping operations to provide support to affected people in Ukraine, passed in the Cabinet on April 28, approximately

103 tons of aid supplies, including blankets, plastic tarpaulins, solar lamps, kitchen sets, and other equipment, were shipped between May and June of 2022 on eight cargo flights from the United Arab Emirates, where they had been stored, to Poland and Romania, the chief destinations for refugees from Ukraine. It is commendable that by April, some two months after the invasion began, US\$7.25 million in aid had been provided to Ukraine as well as US\$365,200 to Poland and US\$365,200 to Moldova, among the surrounding countries.

But it is the provision of non-lethal equipment to Ukraine that also deserves special mention. At the end of February 2022, the then-Ukrainian Minister of Defense Oleksii Reznikov sent a letter to Japanese Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi, asking for provision of equipment, and on March 4 deliberations began in response to the letter. As a result, Japan started to provide non-lethal equipment within the limits allowed by the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology. The equipment provided included bulletproof vests, helmets, protective masks, protective clothing, and small drones. Since the bulletproof vests counted as defense equipment under the Three Principles, the government added, on March 8, a new clause “Ukraine, which has come under aggression in violation of international law” to the operational guidelines to allow for their provision. In August of the same year, a further donation of civilian vehicles was also announced.

Further, following the revisions to the National Security Strategy in 2022, the government decided in January 2023 to relax the guidelines for the operation of the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology, thus making it possible to export defense equipment with lethal capability to friendly countries. It has been reported that the government is looking to revise the guidelines so that countries that have been invaded in violation of international law, such as Ukraine, will be included within the category of countries eligible for such exports. If this change becomes a reality, it will mean a major shift in the export of Japanese defense equipment. In May 2023 the government also confirmed its intention to provide treatment for wounded Ukrainian soldiers in Japanese Self-Defense Force hospitals. The horizons of Japanese support are steadily expanding.

Conclusion

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has brought various changes to Japan’s diplomacy with regard to Russia and to its diplomacy with regard to Ukraine and the countries surrounding Ukraine, and also—although the following aspect has not been discussed in depth in this article—to its diplomacy with regard to the United States and European countries that provide assistance to Ukraine. While Japan’s relationship with Russia, which used to be regarded as an overwhelming priority, has entered into a

period of stagnation, that with Ukraine and with the other countries supporting Ukraine have been strengthened since the invasion.

Japan's somewhat passive attitude toward sanctions against Russia stands out in the field of energy, where exceptions are still made at present for crude oil from the Sakhalin 2 oil and natural gas development project in which Japanese companies participate. Nevertheless, especially since the start of 2023, Japan's diplomacy with regard to Ukraine and its collaboration with the G7 and the EU in providing support for Ukraine have produced numerous positive results. In March, Prime Minister Kishida was finally able to visit Kyiv. President Zelensky was also able to participate in the Hiroshima G7 Summit in May in person. At the summit, Japan not only helped put together the G7 Leaders Statement on Ukraine, which combined strongly phrased language including "Today we are taking new steps to ensure that Russia's illegal aggression against the sovereign state of Ukraine fails and to support the Ukrainian people in their quest for a just peace rooted in respect for international law" but also played a role in bringing about meetings between President Zelensky and the leaders of invited countries including India and South Korea.

Japan can also play a large role in assisting Ukraine's recovery, and Ukraine has high hopes for Japan in this regard. Japan has accumulated know-how in

providing assistance to other nations in the past. The question now is how it will be able to put this know-how to use in assisting Ukraine.

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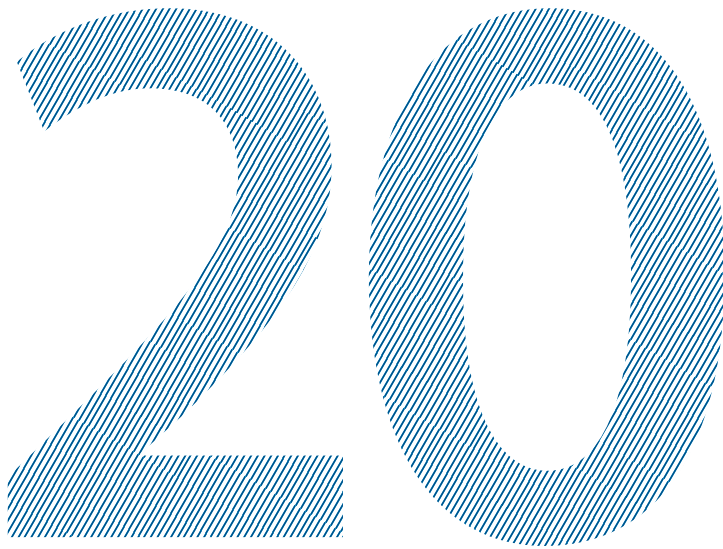
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Japan and Middle East:
Deepening Cooperation Beyond
Energy Security

Amane KOBAYASHI

Introduction

The year 2023 marked a pivotal juncture in contemplating the past, present, and future of Japan-Middle East relations. This is because, 50 years ago, in 1973, the first oil crisis (or oil shock) significantly shook Japan's political and economic foundations, shaping its diplomatic relations with the Middle East up to the present day.

Japan relies on imports to satisfy most of its oil needs, with approximately 90% of those imports coming from the Middle East. 50 years on from the oil crisis, the dependence on Middle Eastern oil has increased and is now over 95%. At that same time, against the backdrop of diminishing engagement from the United States, the Middle East is witnessing an expansion of Chinese and Russian presence, and global energy and trade relationships with the Middle East are undergoing substantial transformations. Viewed from the broader perspective of energy security and the maintenance of international order, Japanese diplomacy in the Middle East is under considerable pressure for reform.

In this article, after contextualizing the significance of the Middle East in the context of energy security and Japan's diplomatic relations, I analyze the strengthening of Japan's Middle East policy under the Abe administration, along with new developments in light of decarbonization and the shifting regional order of the Middle East. In this

paper, North African countries are also positioned and discussed as part of the Middle East.

Japan's diplomatic relations with the Middle East: Historical background and energy security

Between 1957 and 1958, a private Japanese company, Arabian Oil (formerly the Japan Petroleum Trading Company established in 1956), secured rights to extract oil from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, marking the commencement of its independent oil development endeavors. Since then, oil produced in the Middle East has fueled Japan's rapid economic expansion and has continually been at the heart of Japan-Middle East relations. Moreover, since the 1973 oil crisis, Japan's substantial reliance on Middle Eastern oil imports, coupled with the region's political and security volatility, has shaped its diplomatic approach to the Middle East. To safeguard Japan's peace and prosperity, the longstanding policy of the Japanese government has emphasized fostering peace and stability in the Middle East and the maintenance of amicable relations with Middle Eastern countries.

Simultaneously, on the security front, Japan has encountered difficulties in balancing its engagements in the Middle East with its commitments to the Japan-US Alliance. This challenge is particularly pronounced in light of

the 1991 Gulf War and the ensuing US-led War on Terror initiated after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Furthermore, it is important to note the pivotal role of Japan's Self-Defense Forces (SDF), which operate under stringent constitutional constraints. The SDF has leveraged its engagements aimed at Middle Eastern stabilization—including post-Gulf War minesweeping in the Persian Gulf, assignments in Iraq, and refueling missions in the Indian Ocean under two Special Measures Acts—as an opportunity to enhance their operational scope and refine the supporting legal frameworks. Beyond these engagements, the SDF has been intensively deployed in the Middle East, focusing on ceasefire monitoring between Israel and Syria in the Golan Heights as part of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and in the Sinai Peninsula with the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO). They have also tackled piracy off the coast of Somalia and the Gulf of Aden and conducted intelligence-gathering in the Gulf of Oman and the northern Arabian Sea.

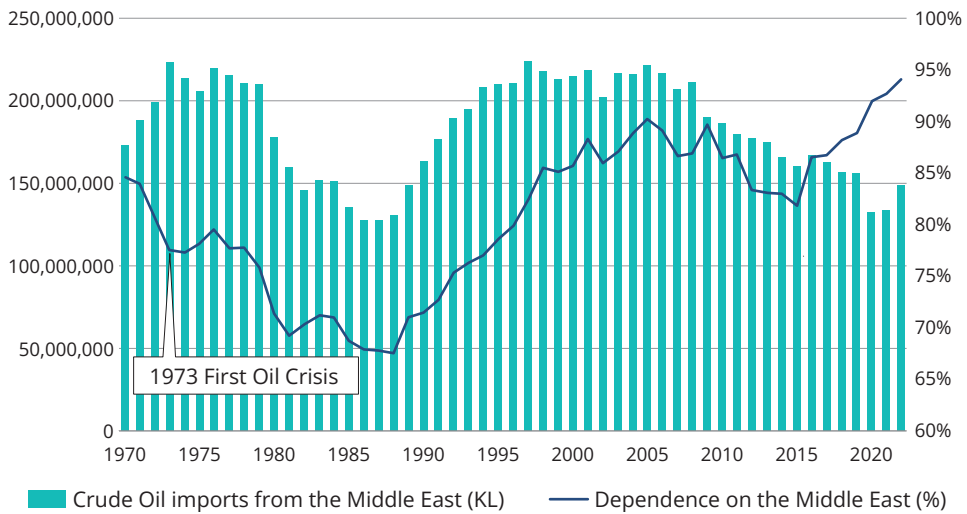
After the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, Japan suspended the operations of most of its nuclear power plants, causing its energy self-sufficiency rate, formerly at about 20%, to plunge to around 10%. Japan is highly dependent on imports for most of its energy resources, such as crude oil, natural gas, and coal, and while there has been progress in increasing power generation from renewable energy sources,

partially restarting nuclear power plants, and implementing energy conservation measures, securing a stable supply of energy remains a substantial challenge. Although oil constitutes about 40% of Japan's total primary energy consumption, around 99% of its crude oil is imported, predominantly from the Middle East. After the first oil crisis, Japan endeavored to diversify the sources of its oil imports, reducing its dependence on the Middle East to around 68% by FY 1987. However, with the development of Asian countries, nations like China and Indonesia have lost their excess oil export capacity, resulting in the resurgence of Japan's oil dependence on the Middle East, which has fluctuated around 90% in recent years.

Given this background, the political and security destabilization in the Middle East consistently poses substantial risks to Japan's energy security and the safety of its citizens. During the Gulf War, the Iraqi government detained 213 Japanese nationals residing in Kuwait and Iraq to use as "human shields." More recently, a terror incident in southern Algeria in 2013 resulted in the loss of 10 Japanese lives. Additionally, the June 2019 attack on a tanker owned by a Japanese shipping company navigating near the Strait of Hormuz underscored the direct threat that instability in the Middle East poses for Japan's interests.

On the other hand, drastically reducing the dependence on the Middle East for crude oil and natural gas imports over

Figure: Trends in Japan's dependence on crude oil imports from the Middle East



Source: Prepared by the author from Agency for Natural Resources and Energy.

the short term is no easy task. Firstly, with about half of the world's proven crude oil reserves, the Middle East has substantial export capacity, allowing for the bulk purchase and shipment of crude oil, which is economically advantageous for importing countries. Its crude oil production costs are also the lowest in the world. Conversely, oil production volumes and development costs in non-Middle Eastern countries tend to be unstable, making it difficult to secure stable amounts of oil over the medium to long term. Also, among major oil-producing nations, the Middle East is relatively close to Japan and Asian countries, keeping transportation costs low. Moreover, since many refineries in Japan are designed and operated on the assumption of refining crude oil from the Middle East, making significant changes to the source of crude oil imports in

the short term is not easy, either from a technical or economic perspective. Unlike countries such as China, where the government can exert control over companies, it is also difficult for the Japanese government to intervene with private oil companies to reduce dependence on the Middle East.

Japan's oil imports have decreased by about 1.5 million barrels per day from their peak in the mid-1990s, and oil demand is expected to decline due to population decline and the development of energy-saving technologies. However, even if oil import and consumption volumes decrease, it remains improbable that dependence on the Middle East will fall rapidly in the short term due to the factors mentioned above. The Japanese government predicts that oil demand will fall by over 7.5%

between 2021 and 2027. However, even if the entire reduction amount were dedicated to lowering Middle Eastern oil imports, dependence on the Middle East is unlikely to fall below 70%.

Strengthening Japan's engagement with the Middle East under the Abe administration

Unlike its recent predecessors, the second Abe administration (December 2012 to September 2020) actively engaged in the Middle East. After the Koizumi administration (April 2001 to September 2006), which experienced the terrorist attacks on September 11, the US invasion of Afghanistan, and the Iraq War, Abe was the first Japanese Prime Minister to visit the Middle East, making one visit during his first administration and nine visits over the course of his second administration and beyond.

This active engagement stemmed not only from the critical importance of stability in the Middle East for Japan's energy security but also from an increase in incidents in which Japanese citizens and interests became targets of terrorist attacks and military conflicts due to destabilization in the region. Additionally, in its advocacy of "proactive contribution to peace," the Abe administration prioritized engagement in stabilizing the Middle East from the perspective of contributing to the international order's stability.

Japan's first-ever "National Security Strategy," formulated in December 2013, stated the following:

Stability in the Middle East is an issue that is inseparably linked to the stable supply of energy, and therefore Japan's very survival and prosperity. Given that the Gulf states are the largest source of crude oil for Japan, in order to ensure the stability of the Middle East, Japan will engage in constructing multi-layered cooperative relations with these countries, encompassing wide-ranging economic cooperation beyond resources and energy, as well as politics and security. In this context, Japan will play a proactive role in the resolution of major issues affecting the stability of the Middle East, including the issue of democratization in Arab countries that stems from the "Arab Spring," the situation in Syria, Iran's nuclear issue, the Middle East peace process and peacebuilding in Afghanistan.

Further, with the internal conflicts and regime collapse in Middle Eastern and African countries sparked by the Arab Spring of 2011 and the subsequent rampant spread of international terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda and the "Islamic State (IS)," terrorist attacks on Japanese citizens and interests became an increasingly serious threat.

In January 2013, shortly after the inauguration of the second Abe administration, an Al-Qaeda-affiliated armed group attacked a natural gas plant in south-eastern Algeria, leading to the death of 10 Japanese citizens. Moreover, in 2015, Japanese citizens were captured and killed by “IS” terrorists in Syria. The same year, several other Japanese citizens were killed and wounded when an IS-affiliated group attacked a museum in Tunisia. Against the backdrop of these incidents, the Japanese government has strengthened its intelligence gathering and consolidation system on the Middle Eastern situation and international

terrorism, establishing a Counter Terrorism Unit (CTU) in December 2015. At the G7 Ise-Shima Summit leaders’ meeting in May 2016, Japan, as the chair country, consolidated the “G7 Action Plan on Counterterrorism and Violent Extremism.”

The inauguration of the Trump administration in the United States in 2017 marked a diminished engagement with the Middle East, juxtaposed against deepening conflicts within the region itself. In this context, Japan endeavored to assume the role of a “mediator” in the Middle East region. In June 2019, Prime

Prime Ministerial visits to the Middle East (post-2006)

First Abe Administration	April–May 2007	Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, Egypt
Second to Fourth Abe Administrations	April–May 2013	Saudi Arabia, UAE, Turkey
	August 2013	Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Djibouti
	October 2013	Turkey
	January 2014	Oman
	January 2015	Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Palestine
	November 2015	Turkey
	April–May 2018	UAE, Jordan, Israel, Palestine
	June 2019	Iran
	January 2020	Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman
Kishida Administration	April–May 2023	Egypt (also Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Singapore)
	July 2023	Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar

Source: Prepared by the author based on materials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Minister Abe made a diplomatic visit to Iran, the first by a sitting Prime Minister in almost 41 years. That December, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani reciprocated with a visit to Japan. These visits were emblematic of Japan's proactive efforts aimed at easing tensions between the United States and Iran. Moreover, seeking to ensure the safety of its vessels, the Japanese Cabinet authorized the deployment of SDF with the purpose of intelligence gathering in the northern Arabian Sea and around the Gulf of Aden. However, the US military's assassination of Iranian commander Qasem Soleimani on January 3, 2020 prompted the rapid escalation of tensions between the US and Iran, effectively nullifying the momentum for Japanese mediation. Despite these exacerbated tensions, Prime Minister Abe persisted in his diplomatic endeavors, visiting Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Oman starting January 11 to work towards regional tension reduction.

As the United States has scaled back its engagement in the Middle East, leading to a more fluid political and security environment in the region, Japan has sought to intensify its engagement with the Middle East. This endeavor is driven by Japan's aspirations to ensure energy security and the safety of sea lanes with the goal of alleviating and stabilizing regional tensions. Historically, Japan's relations with Middle Eastern countries have predominantly centered on economic and cultural aspects, and its leverage in diplomatic and security

aspects is rather limited. To overcome this challenge, the Abe administration can be argued to have endeavored to augment Japan's presence by strengthening diplomatic relations at the highest levels, deploying SDF, and enhancing economic cooperation with various countries in the region.

Japanese engagement in light of Middle Eastern regional order changes and “decarbonization” initiatives

Since 2020, there has been marked progress in dialogues and confidential negotiations aimed at easing tensions among Middle Eastern nations. The Qatar diplomatic crisis of June 2017—characterized by the severing of ties with surrounding countries—was resolved in January 2021. Subsequently, in March 2023, Saudi Arabia and Iran took pivotal steps to normalize their diplomatic relations after a seven-year hiatus. Moreover, beginning in August 2020, Israel initiated a series of diplomatic reconciliations, normalizing its relations with the Gulf Arab states, Morocco, and Sudan. In light of these geopolitical recalibrations, the risks to Japan's energy security from unforeseen shifts in the Middle Eastern milieu have considerably diminished compared to the preceding years.

However, the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has had a profound impact on Japan's energy security.

Historically, Japan had imported just under 4% of its crude oil from Russia. However, with the Japanese government's decision to impose sanctions on the import of Russian crude oil and petroleum products exceeding the established price ceiling, Japanese companies have refrained from procuring Russian oil, thereby increasing the reliance on crude oil produced in the Middle East. In June 2023, the Middle East accounted for 97.3% of Japan's crude oil imports, sourced primarily from Saudi Arabia (41.5%), UAE (37.4%), Kuwait (10.1%) and Qatar (4.9%).

Japan's energy policy has traditionally focused on diversification initiatives to extend oil procurement beyond the Middle East and broaden energy sources beyond oil while focusing on energy conservation. Procuring crude oil and natural gas from Russia was also a move in line with policies of multilateralization and diversification. However, the cessation of oil imports from Russia has, ironically, resulted in near-complete dependence on the Middle East.

The 2023 edition of Japan's Diplomatic Bluebook frames the Middle East as a region holding approximately 50% of the world's oil reserves and about 40% of natural gas reserves, emphasizing its significance as a global energy supplier. Moreover, against the backdrop of high population growth, the Bluebook highlights the region's significant potential as a market due to economic diversification and decarbonization efforts underway,

primarily in the Gulf states. At the same time, the Bluebook notes that the region is fraught with multiple destabilizing factors and challenges, including historical conflicts, tensions between Iran and its neighbors, political turmoil in the wake of the Arab Spring, and the growing risks associated with the spread of violent extremism. Moreover, with a view toward maintaining and strengthening a free and open international order anchored in the rule of law, Japan is described as actively pursuing diplomatic efforts to mitigate tensions and build stability in the Middle East. These initiatives involve various frameworks, such as the Japan-Arab Political Dialogue, that are structured to ensure adequate consideration of the awareness of problems and the needs of individual countries.

However, Japan's current Middle East diplomacy is not aimed solely at securing oil and natural gas but also at exploring the potential for broader cooperation. In July 2023, Prime Minister Kishida's visit to the Gulf Arab states marked the first visit to Saudi Arabia and the UAE by a Japanese Prime Minister in three and a half years and to Qatar in a decade. During this visit, in addition to stabilizing energy procurement, proposals were raised concerning collaborations aimed at the practical application of decarbonization technology and the production of hydrogen and ammonia with a view to establishing the Middle East as a future global supply for clean energy and critical minerals. Furthermore, Prime

Minister Kishida's visit coincided with the exchange of more than 50 memorandums between the governments and companies of each nation and Japanese companies.

Prime Minister Kishida emphasized the evolution of Japan-Middle East relations into a "new global partnership, moving beyond the conventional energy relationship of oil-consuming and oil-producing countries." Anchoring this strengthened relationship in economic and technological collaboration for decarbonization is a meaningful diplomatic strategy, reflecting Japan's strengths and the prevailing international situation. It can also aid in securing a stable supply of oil and natural gas during the transition to decarbonization. Prime Minister Kishida's tour of the Gulf states can be regarded as sowing the seeds for expanding Japan's political and economic footprint in the Middle East.

On the other hand, the October 7, 2023 attack on Israel by Hamas and subsequent large-scale military operation on the Gaza Strip by the Israel Defense Forces have increased the risk of serious destabilization in the Middle East region. It will also force the US, which has been trying to reduce its engagement in the Middle East, to change its policy. As there have already been incidents of attacks on and capture of Japanese vessels in the Red Sea, the Japanese government needs to maintain continuous engagement to protect Japan's interests and ease regional tensions.

Conclusion: The Middle East as part of the Indo-Pacific region?

Given the multifaceted instability risks the Middle East continues to harbor alongside its potential for economic development, the nexus between endeavors aimed at political stability and economic growth within the region is crucial. Building a more expansive cooperative relationship between Japan and the Middle East so that Japan can contribute to political stability and economic development in the region has the potential to reduce conflict risks in the short term. In the medium to long term, such an approach can be expected to facilitate energy security not only for Japan but also for the broader Asian region and accelerate global decarbonization efforts.

In this context, the concept and strategy of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" can serve as a cornerstone in Japan's Middle Eastern diplomacy, functioning as a geo-strategy that combines economic, diplomatic, and security elements and as a mechanism for multilateral cooperation. Put differently, from the standpoint of "ensuring the security of sea lanes and energy in the Indo-Pacific," there is an opportunity here for Japan and other countries outside the region to engage cooperatively in the Middle East.

On the other hand, there is not yet any consensus among the Quad countries (Japan, the US, Australia, and India),

which are at the forefront of the FOIP concept/strategy, about whether the “Indo-Pacific region” should be envisioned as including the Middle East and Africa. Notably, the US and Australia have scarcely mentioned the Middle East in their respective Indo-Pacific strategies. While India has traditionally maintained deep ties with the nations of the Persian Gulf and Eastern Africa, this relationship is primarily bilateral and does not figure prominently within the regional “Indo-Pacific” context.

In 2017, Foreign Minister Taro Kono emphasized that the Middle East is positioned at the center of Japan’s Indo-Pacific strategy and that maintaining peace and stability in the Middle East was important for ensuring a free and open maritime order. The 2023 Diplomatic Bluebook likewise articulates that, given its strategically advantageous geopolitical location with access to the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, Oman plays a pivotal role in bringing the FOIP concept to fruition. Nonetheless, there has yet to be any indication of a clear strategy for including engagement with the Middle East under the FOIP concept.

In this connection, China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has a much clearer lead in terms of strategy and substance, explicitly incorporating the Middle East and Africa into its overarching geo-strategy and offering concrete project proposals. The Middle East is posited as a critically significant region within this initiative, serving as the nexus of the “Belt” and

“Road,” with its sea lanes bridging the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. China’s enhanced political, economic, and security engagement in the Middle East is further exemplified by President Xi Jinping’s attendance at the China-Arab States Summit and his mediation in the reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran. However, in the energy sector, China’s reliance on the Middle East for crude oil imports was below 50% (as of 2021), markedly lower than Japan’s. A contributing factor here is the predominance of state-owned entities amongst China’s major energy firms, which allows the government to regulate the companies to preclude an over-reliance on imports from specific nations or regions.

The increasing political and military presence of Russia and China in the Middle East and Africa, in conjunction with the reduced engagement of the United States, has substantial implications for Japan’s economic activities and security interests in these regions. Japan increasingly needs to deepen, broaden, and diversify its engagements with the Middle East. This is true not merely from the vantage point of energy security but also regarding safeguarding sea lanes, upholding a liberal international order, and formulating a holistic geo-strategy for the wider Indo-Pacific region.

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Section IV

Global Challenges



21

Japan's United Nations Policy Through the Lens of Human Rights Diplomacy:

The Role of Human Rights Norms and
the Shifting Status of Multilateralism

Maiko ICHIHARA

Introduction

Japan engages in the most active human rights diplomacy in Asia. In the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Japanese government accepted several thousand Ukrainian refugees into the country's borders. Mention of the importance of human rights, democracy, the rule of law, and other liberal values has become a nearly constant presence in diplomatic papers and statements. Even a Japanese version of the Magnitsky Law, which would allow Japan to sanction parties deemed guilty of human rights abuses overseas, is being discussed in a parliamentary caucus reaching across political party lines. Such moves comprise a new trend within the post-Cold War order, growing particularly conspicuous upon entering the 21st century, signaling that Japanese human rights diplomacy is in a transitional period.

What particular route has Japan traveled to arrive at the current point in its human rights diplomacy, along with the nature of the themes emerging within this shift? This article analyzes the roles of human rights norms in the vicissitudes of Japan's human rights diplomacy, focusing primarily on the status of human rights diplomacy being advanced at the United Nations (UN).

Developments to date

(1) From regulative norms to constitutive norms

Japanese diplomacy in the post-World War II era has been understood as a reflection of core values such as pacifism, anti-militarism, and anti-traditionalism. This tendency has been explained as the result of the acceptance and internalization by Japanese public opinion of the spirit of the Constitution of Japan, which was originally enacted in 1946 with the aim of preventing any remilitarization of Japan. The quest for peace and anti-militarism was born out of the country's experience of the trampling of human life, dignity, and freedom in the ravages of war. In other words, the norms of peace and anti-militarism embraced the norms of human rights. Against this backdrop, the former Japan Socialist Party, labor unions, and progressive intellectuals, as well as the general public demanded moves toward unarmed neutrality, along with rejection of institutions such as the Japan Self-Defense Forces (SDF) and the US-Japan Alliance.

This was an earnest debate aimed at reconsidering the approach to foreign policy rooted in awareness of Japan's responsibilities. However, rather than exploring the positive role on the part of the Japanese people crucial in helping bring about international peace, the discussions tended to focus on how to constrain the Japanese government's

external actions. As a result, Japan's pacificism and anti-militarism did not necessarily function as forces serving to complement human rights as universal values. These norms evolved as "regulative norms" that function in the capacity of self-regulation, as framed by Peter Katzenstein, a prominent political scientist at Cornell University.

This fact appears in the discourse on human rights seen in the context of diplomacy. One example is the diplomatic speeches by Japan's foreign ministers in the National Diet. From the 1950s through the 1960s, "human rights" was not mentioned in this legislative body. The first time the term appeared in the Diet was during a speech in January 1975 by Kiichi Miyazawa, Foreign Minister in the cabinet of Prime Minister Takeo Miki. However, the remarks were mere mentions of human rights as a value shared in common by Japan and the United States. Subsequently, with the sole exception of Foreign Minister Sunao Sonoda (serving in the cabinet of Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda) who addressed the Diet in September 1978 and called for approval of the International Covenants on Human Rights, the term "human rights" did not appear in such speeches or statements.

The first mention in the Japanese Diet of the need for human rights protection in the international community was made in January 1988, during a speech delivered by Foreign Minister Sosuke Uno in the cabinet of Prime Minister Noboru

Takekita. In this speech, Uno touched upon the importance of solving human rights issues, and expressed the intention to work through the UN, US-Japan relations, and other capacities to protect human rights. Behind these words was a sense of self-esteem in Japan, which had emerged as an economic superpower. Other factors included the momentum toward liberalization in Asia, such as the democratization of countries such as the Philippines and South Korea, the peace movement in Cambodia, and China's reform and opening-up. Almost all subsequent inaugural speeches of foreign ministers have included references to human rights. This stance was particularly articulated in January 1997 by Yukihiko Ikeda, Foreign Minister in the cabinet of Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, who declared that "Japan will also move to play a vigorous role in the protection of human rights."

Bhubhindar Singh, a political scientist at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, has described the transformation in Japan's security policy as a shift from a "peace state" to an "international state." To rephrase this transition, since the end of the 1980s, human rights norms have been driven by Japan's ascendancy as an economic superpower and the wave of liberalization in Asia. Within Japanese diplomacy, human rights gained the status of "constitutive norms," in addition to "regulative norms."

(2) Human rights within Japan's United Nations policy

Nevertheless, the actual status of Japan's human rights diplomacy, especially in the application of such diplomacy in the country's UN policy, was conducted in what can only be described as a limited capacity. Indeed, there have been few instances in which the Japanese government engaged in vigorous human rights diplomacy at the UN. An exception has been Japan's criticism of North Korea for its abductions of persons from other countries, with proposals of resolutions to the UN Human Rights Council calling for the early return of these victims submitted every year since the latter half of the 2000s. This stance, however, is hardly limited to efforts to improve the human rights conditions in other countries. Rather, it consists of demands for improvements in the human rights status of Japanese abductees by North Korea. As such, the principal motive of these demands lay in the promotion of Japan's own national interests.

Japan also expanded its backing for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as well as support for Sadako Ogata, who led the UNHCR. A large amount of funding was channeled to the UNHCR, and Japan became one of the major financial sponsors. On the other hand, Japan has done little to expand the acceptance of refugees within its own borders. Compared to other developed democracies, which have accepted refugees recognized

under the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees at a rate of tens of thousands of individuals per year, the number of such refugees allowed to enter Japan has largely been limited to double-digits on an annual basis.

Meanwhile, the Japanese government has also made efforts to promote the concept of human security at the UN. Based on proposals from Japan, the Trust Fund for Human Security, the Commission on Human Security, and the Friends of Human Security forum were successively established at the UN. The Commission on Human Security, co-chaired by Sadako Ogata and Indian economist and philosopher Amartya Sen, issued its final report in 2003. The concept of human security promoted by the Japanese government has placed its focus on "freedom from want," thereby stressing the importance of poverty reduction, improved health and hygiene, and other causes. There is the understanding, furthermore, that the key emphasis is not placed on either so-called "freedom from fear" or the "rights-based rule of law" as classified by Fen Hampson, a political scientist at Carlton University. Consequently, the human rights stance promoted by the Japanese government effectively consists of the right to life and social rights, instead of civil liberties.

Moreover, with Japan's enactment of the International Peace Cooperation Law in 1992, Japan has expanded its participation in UN Peacekeeping

Operations (PKO). In the early 1990s, a steady stream of 2nd-generation PKO efforts were launched. In addition to ceasefire monitoring and disarmament operations, the function of support for nation building was also incorporated into the PKO framework. Within the UN PKO, Japan worked through support of elections and other means to assist in establishment of democratic political systems capable of safeguarding human rights. Nevertheless, public opinion was opposed to foreign engagement from the perspective of anti-militaristic norms (especially accompanying dispatches of the SDF), leaving no choice but to limit the role of Japan in such areas. In addition, Japan is known to be strong in the economic field, but not in the human rights field. Thus, the international expectation for Japan was also for it to play a leading role in economic assistance.

In sum, human rights protection in Japan's UN policies has been traditionally and conspicuously weak in content, with this also extending to prominent limitations in terms of practical support as universalism. One reason for this outcome is that while human rights norms began to exhibit a role as constitutive norms, at least one phase of the motivation behind that change was found in the national interest of achieving recognition as a global power. This produced a weakening of the power needed to truly promote universal values. Secondly, pacifism as a regulative norm acted to suppress

Japan's external initiatives, with the fact that this led to discussions stressing the importance of the principle of non-interference in domestic affairs also functioning as one contributing factor to the weakness.

Current status and issues

While human rights diplomacy, as seen in Japan's UN policies, was subject to the restrictions of regulative norms, changes began in the 2010s. Human rights diplomacy became even more vigorous than before. Furthermore, there was a shift away from the UN as the primary stage for human rights diplomacy in favor of other multilateral frameworks.

(1) Activation of human rights diplomacy

Japan began seriously attuned to human rights situations in other countries, which embodied a major transformation. The first such shift included the "Arc of Freedom and Prosperity" of the first Cabinet of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (2006–07), the values-based diplomacy of the second Abe administration in 2012, and the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" concept. However, while these policies sought to promote liberal principles as universal values, the treatment of human rights steadily weakened in reality. Such a stance was chosen to address the concerns of Southeast Asian countries that were reluctant to choose between China, which does not see

human rights violations as a problem, and Japan, which advocates for human rights. This was reflected in the conceptions of universal values used by the Japanese government. From around the mid-2010s, the main concepts used shifted from those that are opposed by China and Russia, such as human rights and democracy, to governance norms that are comparatively more palatable on the global front, such as transparency, accountability, and the rule of law.

The transition from the Abe administration which tended to be seen as distinctly conservative, to the government of his successor Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga in 2020, brought increased pressure from within the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to implement policies of a conservative bent. That trend led to anti-China nationalism, in particular. Criticism of the Chinese government's gross suppression of human rights in Hong Kong and against the Uighurs, and calls for the Japanese government to take diplomatic action on such issues, increased as a result. There is no doubt that the factors behind this action included the growing necessity to address serious human rights issues in Asia, exemplified by the loss of freedom with the enactment of the National Security Law in Hong Kong, the coup in Myanmar, and forced labor and sterilization in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. But the movement within the party had an impact beyond events. While grave human rights concerns arose in 2019, including the suppression

of protests against to the Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation (Amendment) Bill in Hong Kong, and the release of the *Xinjiang Papers* by the *New York Times* indicating that the Uighurs were being subjected to genocide, the fact that the Human Rights Diplomacy Project Team was launched within the LDP Foreign Affairs Division in 2021 was not a simple time lag.

(2) Priority shift from the United Nations to the G7

New difficulties have arisen in the quest to promote human rights at the UN level. China and Russia, two authoritarian countries that abhor criticism of their human rights violations from other countries, are beginning to take coordinated actions aimed at creating counter-narratives concerning human rights norms.

The Chinese government has advanced its own distinctive approach to human rights diplomacy since the establishment of the People's Republic of China. As pointed out by Andrew Nathan of Columbia University and Robert Ross of Boston College, from the early stages of the Cold War, the Chinese government has promoted an understanding of human rights centering around anti-imperialism, ethnic self-determination, the right to development, and cultural relativism. With the arrival of the 2020s, however, Chinese counter-narratives

began to vividly express the move in lockstep with the Russian government. On November 26, 2021, just prior to the Summit for Democracy sponsored by the US government that December, an op-ed by the ambassadors of Russia and China to the United States was published in *The National Interest* magazine in an attempt to redefine liberal concepts such as human rights and democracy. The two ambassadors argued that both China and Russia are in fact democracies and insisted that interference in the domestic affairs of other countries under the pretext of human rights is anti-democratic behavior.

Such moves coincide with the decline in the ethical standing of the United States as well as its withdrawal from the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) due to populism in America, which adds to the seriousness of the issues at hand. This environment makes it easier than before for developing countries to be co-opted into China's human rights stance. Take, for example, the UNHRC session in July 2021, where dueling statements were presented opposing and supporting the Hong Kong National Security Law. As it turned out, 27 Council members supported the opposing statement (developed democracies such as European countries, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand). In contrast, however, 53 countries (Asian, African, and Latin American countries) sided in favor of the statement supporting the Chinese position. If this trend continues going forward, the

human rights concept could be diluted further at the UN stage.

In the realm of human rights diplomacy, it is easier for mini-lateral frameworks such as the Group of Seven (G7) to take swifter and effective action than the UN. This is because G7 is a group of developed democracies that share universal values. One such case occurred upon the military coup carried out in Myanmar on February 1, 2021. At that time, the UN Security Council found itself unable to release a statement condemning the coup due to moves by China and other members to avoid criticizing the takeover. The UNHRC managed to adopt a resolution on February 12, but it avoided criticizing the coup and was largely limited to expressing concern. In stark contrast to this was the reaction of the G7, which issued a condemnation of the coup only two days after it was staged. The same pattern was witnessed surrounding the Hong Kong National Security Law. In the G7 Foreign Ministers' Statement on Hong Kong issued on June 18, 2020, the phrase "grave concern" was adopted with regard to China's decision to impose this law. The wording of the statement adopted a stronger tone than that of the Japanese foreign minister's statements. Given that China and Russia are likely to continue staging counter-narratives at the UN, the key to such inroads may very well lie in upholding the solidarity of the G7, while searching out means of collaboration with non-G7 countries.

Conclusion: Challenges for the future

There are two types of challenges for Japan's approach to human rights diplomacy channeled through multinational frameworks. First, Japan needs to actively engage in the development of narratives capable of upholding liberal values. Compared to its Western counterparts, there is a wider range of initiatives that could be effective if the Japanese government takes them. While China and Russia advocate the logic that Western countries impose human rights concepts upon non-Western states as unique "Western values" rooted in the importance of civil liberties, Japan is a non-Western state. If Japan as a non-Western country promotes human rights norms centering on civil liberties, it would provide a counter-narrative to the distorted interpretation of human rights promoted by China and Russia.

To achieve this, the Japanese government must move beyond the approach to understanding human rights that focuses on the right to life and social rights evident in the concept of human security. It should reassess the invaluable role of civil liberties. As noted by Amartya Sen, it is crucial to reaffirm the decisive need to ensure individual freedoms even in the quest to eradicate poverty.

Second, if words are not perennially accompanied by action, they will lack persuasiveness. It is essential for the

Japanese government to promote civil liberties both at home and abroad. This should not be limited to actions aimed at foreign countries, such as criticism of human rights violations, support for human rights activists at risk and refugees, and reconsideration of the supply chain. Efforts to improve the human rights situation domestically will express a commitment to universal values. Indeed, Japan has a long list of human rights issues that need to be reviewed. A mere shortlist of such issues includes same-sex marriage, optional separate surnames for married couples, the rights of foreign workers, civil servant labor dispute rights, and capital punishment.

Finally, in order to facilitate substantive activities for the protection of human rights abroad, a human rights support framework independent of the government must be established. Human rights constantly encounter conflict with sovereignty norms, and governments hesitate in human rights diplomacy in order not to undermine relations with other countries in areas such as the economy and security. If Japan follows the model of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, which works through domestic non-governmental organizations to empower pertinent assistance, it should be possible to strengthen human rights diplomacy through an "all-Japan" agenda. Through the skillful use of public-private partnership frameworks such as the Summit for Democracy sponsored by the US government or

the Sunnylands Initiative spearheaded by private actors in the Indo-Pacific, it should prove possible to institutionalize human rights advocacy efforts geared to utilize such civilian players. Japan needs creative approaches to make its human rights diplomacy more active.

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The number '22' is rendered in a large, bold, sans-serif font. The digits are filled with a fine, light blue diagonal hatching pattern. The background features a white field with teal and blue geometric shapes: a teal triangle in the top-left corner and a blue triangle in the bottom-right corner. A thin red horizontal line is positioned below the title.

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Japan's Cybersecurity Policies

Mihoko MATSUBARA

Introduction

The period covered in this article begins with the cyberattacks on Japan in 2000, which prompted the country to earnestly engage in enhancing its cybersecurity capabilities, and extends to the cybersecurity threats associated with Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and ransomware attacks that occurred in the summer of 2023. This paper aims to review the cybersecurity policies and international cooperation that Japan has thus far pursued and examine future policies that Japan is required to develop as the threat landscape has changed.

Pre-Tokyo 2020

The Japanese government was prompted to earnestly engage in enhancing cybersecurity capabilities in January 2000 when cyberattacks defaced the websites of the Science and Technology Agency, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, and other government agencies. The rapid development of information technologies (IT) made it urgent for the government to take cybersecurity measures and to develop relevant policies. This led to the establishment of the Cabinet Secretariat's Information Security Measures Promotion Office at the end of the following month. The office was reorganized in 2005 as the Cabinet Secretariat's National Information Security Center. In September 2011, Japanese media reported a series of cyberattacks on major Japanese defense contractors: Mitsubishi Heavy Industries,

IHI Corporation, and Kawasaki Heavy Industries. These attacks further heightened Japan's concern and interest in cybersecurity.

Against this backdrop, Tokyo was selected to host the 2020 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games in September 2013. The Olympic and Paralympic Games had been regularly hit by various threat actors because of the global attention they attracted. As both physical security and cybersecurity were indispensable to the successful hosting of the Games, such awareness further reinforced Japan's commitment to strengthening its cybersecurity. Pursuant to the Basic Act on Cybersecurity enacted in November 2014, the National Information Security Center was reorganized and launched as the National Center for Incident Readiness and Cybersecurity (NISC). The primary functions of the center include formulating Japan's cybersecurity policies and collaborating with government ministries and agencies, acting as a liaison in international cooperation, promoting public-private cooperation for protecting critical infrastructures, and collecting the latest cyber threat intelligence. Several other ministries and central government agencies also play a role in Japan's cybersecurity. These are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (cyber diplomacy), the Ministry of Defense (national security), the National Police Agency (counter-cybercrime), the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (information and communications), the

Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (industries in general), and the Digital Agency (digital transformation).

The damages caused by cyberattacks can easily spread across multiple industrial sectors and national borders by impacting supply chains. For this reason, it is crucial to deepen international cooperation in sharing intelligence on cyberattack modus operandi and best practices, and gain support for human resources development. In addition to engaging in bilateral cybersecurity consultations with Australia, Estonia, France, Germany, Israel, India, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States, Japan is actively engaged in multilateral cooperation with the European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and other organizations.

Since it is indispensable for Japan to ensure a safe and secure business environment in Southeast Asian countries where a large number of Japanese companies operate, Japan has actively promoted cybersecurity cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Beginning in 2009, meetings of the ASEAN-Japan Collaboration on IT Security (currently known as the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Policy Meeting) have been held annually with the attendance of Director-Generals, Deputy Director-Generals, and other senior government officials from those countries to discuss the protection of critical infrastructure. In 2018, the Japanese Ministry of Internal

Affairs and Communications established the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre in Bangkok, Thailand.

As the host country of the G7 Ise-Shima Summit held in May 2016, Japan issued the "G7 Principles and Actions on Cyber" as one of the outcome documents of the Summit, which included an agreement on G7 cooperation for strengthening cybersecurity. Additionally, the Quad framework between Japan, the United States, Australia, and India also pursues cybersecurity cooperation.

Current situation and challenges

The 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games held during the COVID-19 pandemic came to a close in September 2021 with successful cyber defenses. Although the Games faced 450 million cyberattacks, which was twice as many as experienced in the 2012 London Summer Games, these attacks did not result in any disruption to the operations of Tokyo 2020. This constitutes a remarkable accomplishment in the history of protecting the Olympic Games from cyberattacks. Assistant Professor Brian Gant of Maryville University in the United States, who specializes in cybersecurity, has praised the Tokyo Olympics as a real success story to be emulated by organizers of all types of events.

In response to supply chain challenges during the pandemic, Japan enacted the

Economic Security Promotion Act in May 2022. The legislation aims to ensure the stable supply of critical goods and materials, stable access to key infrastructure services, and support for the development of critical advanced technologies, and none of the three objectives can be achieved in the absence of cybersecurity. For this reason, this law is of key importance in strengthening Japan's cybersecurity.

In September 2021, the Japanese government issued a new Cybersecurity Strategy. This document states that in order to heighten its deterrence capabilities against cyberattacks, "Japan reserves, as options, all viable and effective measures, i.e. political, economic, technological, legal, diplomatic, and all other feasible means." The declaration was a precursor of the National Security Strategy released in December 2022 which has drawn special attention to a concept called "active cyber defense." The introduction of active cyber defense will allow the Japanese government, including the Ministry of Defense and the Self-Defense Forces, to take action for "eliminating in advance the possibility of serious cyberattacks that may cause national security concerns to the Government and critical infrastructures and for preventing the spread of damage in case of such attacks, even if they do not amount to armed attack."

This action would be taken even when cyberattacks "do not amount to armed attack" but can cause major damage.

The May 2021 ransomware attack on the Colonial Pipeline in the United States demonstrated that even a financially motivated cyberattack against a single company can cause widespread damage through supply chains and ultimately lead to a national security crisis. The ransomware attack on the Port of Nagoya in July 2023 halted cargo loading and unloading for approximately two days and seriously disrupted the operations of the automotive and apparel sectors. That is why it has become more important to implement active cyber defense and to protect critical infrastructures through public-private partnerships.

Conclusion

Russia's military invasion of Ukraine, which began in February 2022, has involved continuous destructive cyberattacks and espionage against Ukraine. With the prolongation of the war, the countries supporting Ukraine, including Japan, must also stay vigilant about cyberattacks that aim at disrupting military and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine.

In today's world, no economy or national security can stand without digital capabilities. For this reason, cybersecurity is the pivotal point for both economic security and national security. Because the damage from cyberattacks can spread across borders through supply chains, which makes it essential to pursue public-private cooperation both

domestically and globally. Now is the time for Japan to work in unison for protecting critical infrastructure and extending the scale of cyber threat intelligence sharing.

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She also contributed "Japan's 5G Security Strategy and Competition in Emerging Technologies" to the Strategic Japan project (Competition in New Domains) at the Center for Strategic and International Studies' Japan Chair in 2022. Her second book, *Ukraine's Cyber War*, was published from Shinchosha in August 2023, and awarded by the Digital Policy Forum in 2024.



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Japan's Climate Change Policy

Yasuko KAMEYAMA

Introduction

Japan, alongside fellow developed countries, has constantly been called upon to address global warming and climate change since the 1980s, when these issues first began to prompt discussion on an international level. Yet unlike the European countries, Japan's approach to tackling these issues has not been entirely proactive. In October 2020, however, following then-Prime Minister Minister Yoshihide Suga's declaration of the government goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, Japan took a significant change of course toward decarbonization and rapidly launched efforts to that end. This article explains the stance that has thus far been adopted in Japan toward climate change, as well as the ways of thinking behind it, and suggests what factors may have prompted the change of course in 2020. It also offers insights on potential future developments.

Of the total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions globally, carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from energy combustion account for around 70%, while the remainder is due to CO₂ emissions resulting from deforestation and other land-used changes, and GHGs other than CO₂ such as methane and nitrous oxide. In Japan, in contrast, CO₂ emissions from energy combustion account for around 90% of GHG emissions. Recognizing that Japan's climate change policy is therefore inseparably linked with its energy policy is an important

prerequisite to understanding the developments described below.

Background

From the 1980s onward, global society followed the approach that the relatively wealthier developed countries should take the lead in working toward reducing GHG emissions. This formed the basis for the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992 and the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. While recognizing climate change as a legitimate issue, Japan has argued that, given the greater progress it has achieved in improving energy efficiency in contrast with other countries, those major GHG emitters that are behind in energy efficiency improvements—specifically, the US and China—should ensure greater reduction in emissions than Japan. Japan also planned to increase the share of nuclear power generation, as an initiative to decrease the carbon intensity of energy supply. Renewable energy has been less than popular on the grounds of excessive costs. However, the March 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and the consequent Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accident saw stronger public opposition to nuclear power, and a decline in its share of the power generation sector. While this finally allowed for the introduction of policy toward the widespread use of renewable energy, by this point Japan had already fallen significantly behind other nations in terms of the extent to which it had introduced renewable energy sources.

By the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015, there had been sufficient growth in industries drawing on emissions reduction to develop new business, such as renewable energy, electric cars, and IT-related industry, largely in Europe and America. Backing from such industries could also be said to have helped bring about the adoption of the Paris Agreement. On the other hand, Japan in 2015 was still clinging tightly to the stance it had always adopted—namely, that for the sake of Japan's economic activity, reducing emissions should be avoided as far as possible due to the costs it poses for enterprises in terms of the additional investments that need to be made in energy conservation. The goal Japan set itself in July 2015 was therefore 26% reduction in emissions in comparison with 2013 by 2030, a target that could be achieved without considerable effort.

Decarbonization efforts did, however, subsequently gain further momentum across the globe with the growing popular concern that was prompted as the public began to recognize the increase in extreme weather events. Since 2019, there has been a rise in the number of countries declaring their aims to reduce emissions to net zero by 2050. A number of groups formed between enterprises in the financial and other sectors have in turn announced independent goals for net-zero emissions. It was Japanese enterprises that were taken aback by this development. As they sought to catch up with this

rapid change of approach among enterprises overseas, Japanese enterprises also launched their own commitments to reducing emissions, as well as calling for the government to establish similar goals and create systems to support enterprises. This prompted the Japanese government declaration of October 2020 that was touched on at the beginning of this commentary. In April 2021, Japan also responded to calls from the US under the newly inaugurated Biden administration by changing its target for 2030 to reduce GHG emissions by 46% in comparison with 2013, and further seeking to push the reduction as high as 50%. Proclaiming decarbonization as part of the new strategy for growth, Japan strives to develop and ensure the widespread adoption of innovative technology that draws on energy career such as hydrogen and ammonia.

Current developments and future challenges

Why did Japan fall behind other nations in its climate change strategy until around 2015? Possible causes were Japan's overestimation of its role as a leader in energy efficiency, and the lack of interest among the public. With respect to energy efficiency, there are indeed a vast number of products that have achieved world-class energy efficiency, including hybrid cars or household appliances such as air conditioners and refrigerators, which represent the culmination of ceaseless efforts by

Japanese enterprises. At the same time, the thermal insulation performance of Japanese houses, for instance, is not of a standard to be proud of. Until the relevant legal reform in April 2022, measures to ensure improvements in the thermal insulation of buildings were repeatedly shelved because of the large initial investment costs and the gradual nature of the results, which require a period of over 30 years to present themselves. Moreover, with attention focused exclusively on energy efficiency, efforts toward the decarbonization of energy have, as noted above, only recently entailed the introduction of policies to promote the use of renewable energy, since the 2011 nuclear power plant disaster. The use of electric cars is not yet widespread. Japan's resolve was also dampened by the US declaration of withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and other such setbacks brought about in US climate change policy by the Republican Trump administration between 2017 and 2020. While investment in reducing emissions continued to pick up speed in the US, at the state and industry level, this was overlooked by Japanese policy decision-makers.

The lack of public interest is perhaps the more serious issue. It seems that ideas that have been drummed into the Japanese public over the years—that Japan is a leader in energy conservation and that the US and China should be the first to reduce emissions—have become ingrained beliefs. Although Japan is also experiencing increased climate

damage, such as severe rainstorms and strong typhoons, the Japanese media has avoided linking such phenomena with climate change. The lack of public interest also precludes climate change from becoming a talking point at election time. The results of a recent project to compare international public opinion polls show that Japanese respondents generally demonstrate a lower awareness than respondents from other countries across the surveys.

While Japan and Germany are similar in many respects, Japan has a lot to learn from Germany in terms of public awareness towards climate change. Japan needs to learn from Germany regarding education on climate change in schools, means of disseminating information, and improving people's capacity to identify the impending crisis as an issue that directly affects them.

Due in part to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Japan's emissions have already declined around 20% in comparison with 2013. With just six years to go until 2030, it will be far from easy to continue to reduce emissions at the same pace. At the same time, there is hope that those measures that could not be undertaken until now will be promptly put in motion, and further momentum will gather toward achieving the goal.

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Japan's Trade Policy:

Advancing Multilateralism Through
Mega-FTAs

Yorizumi WATANABE

Introduction

Reflecting on recent history, 2016 proved to be a watershed year for the international economic landscape, one that was characterized by major stumbling blocks. Key among these were the June referendum in the United Kingdom, which prompted the country's "Brexit" decision to leave the European Union (EU), and the victory of Donald Trump in the United States presidential election that November. Fueled by a blend of nostalgia for past glories and misleading rhetoric about immigration, the Brexit discourse tragically undermined the merits of economic integration. Today, the decision to leave the EU has left the UK grappling with the consequences of high inflation and stagnant growth. In parallel, Trump's "America First" trade policies unnecessarily escalated a trade war with China, causing disruptions in the global supply chain. These events precipitated a paradigmatic shift in international trade from a rule-based order to a "power-based disorder." The subsequent emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and the outbreak of the Ukraine war have only compounded these complexities, plunging the global situation into deeper uncertainty.

This article deliberates on the appropriate trade strategy that Japan should pursue in this era of unprecedented uncertainty.

The historical development of Japan's trade diplomacy

(1) The TPP agreement, 60 years after Japan's accession to GATT

Japan's entry into the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which is regarded as the cornerstone of its trade policy, took place in September 1955. 60 years later, the conclusion of the agreement on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in October 2015 represents another moment of considerable significance.

Japan's accession to GATT was far from straightforward. Although the country finally managed to attain provisional membership as an observer in 1953, it had to wait until 1955 to secure full membership. This achievement, largely facilitated by the support of the United States, was met with resistance from several Western nations, notably the UK, France, and the Benelux countries, who invoked Article XXXV of GATT against Japan. This provision allows for a type of "discrimination" whereby existing members may recognize a new member while reserving the right to withhold key GATT privileges such as most-favored-nation (MFN) status and national treatment, effectively amounting to a veto. Consequently, Japan found itself essentially excluded from GATT relations with Western nations, with the exception of the United States, until the early 1960s.

To escape this predicament, Japan was compelled to accept various “grey-area measures” that either violated GATT rules or circumvented GATT principles, including quantitative restrictions and voluntary export restraints intended to stave off the market disruption that Western nations feared would be caused by Japanese products. This situation persisted until the conclusion of the Uruguay Round (1986–1994).

In the wake of the first oil crisis in October 1973, a growing demand for energy-efficient and resource-conserving products such as the improvement in car fuel efficiency emerged among Western consumers. This shift led to a significant transformation in manufacturing industries, which began to move away from heavy industries into lighter production on a smaller scale. Japan's electrical, electronics, and automotive sectors adeptly rode this wave of change. Subsequently, Japan's major industries made advances in terms of technology and knowledge intensification. However, this evolution sparked intense trade friction with the United States and the European Community (EC).

The essence of these trade frictions lay in the superior competitiveness of Japanese products in the international market, which led to significant trade imbalances. However, matters were complicated even further by various non-tariff barriers stemming from differences in business practices, particularly the perceived “closed” character of

the Japanese market. Japan was often labeled as a country that employed unfair trade practices, seemingly enjoying the benefits of a free trade system while not actively opening its own market. In September 1986, at the GATT ministerial meeting in Punta del Este in Uruguay, the EC came close to targeting Japan for its lack of a balance of benefits. Japan countered by arguing that GATT was a system designed to realize a balance of rights and obligations through negotiations; it sought the equalization of competitive conditions in trade, but not in terms of competition outcomes. This rebuttal effectively quashed the balance of benefits argument, thereby thwarting the EC's attempt to escalate the issue of Japan into a formal agenda item in the Uruguay Round.

At the time, Japan's trade policy was solely supportive of a multilateral trade system, while it exhibited marked skepticism towards regional integration. This stemmed from the view that customs unions and free trade agreements (FTAs) represented departures from GATT's MFN principle and were only reluctantly accepted as exceptions within the framework of regional integration. However, as the Uruguay Round a large-scale multilateral trade negotiation, expanded to include services and intellectual property rights, significant developments in regional integration were already underway, notably with the EC's third expansion in 1986 (with the accession of Spain and Portugal) and the establishment of the US-Canada FTA in 1989.

In particular, the United States' gradual pivot towards regional integration had a powerful impact on subsequent expressions of regionalism. In 1985, the US concluded an FTA with Israel. While negotiating in the Uruguay Round, it was simultaneously engaged in discussions for the US-Canada FTA, which evolved into the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with the addition of Mexico in 1994. This was the same year the agreements reached during the Uruguay Round were ratified at the Marrakesh Ministerial Meeting in April. By this time, it was evident that the United States, once the leading advocate of the post-WWII free trade regime, had shifted its trade policy in favor of the dual strategy of balancing GATT's multilateralism with a regionalist stance epitomized by NAFTA's "hub and spoke" FTA system. Following the stagnation of the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Doha Development Agenda (DDA), also known as the Doha Round, US trade policy increasingly leaned towards FTA-focused regionalism. A case in point is the Trump administration's signing of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) to replace NAFTA, which President Trump had openly disdained. Despite being a trade agreement, some of the USMCA's stipulations, such as a 2.6 million car import quota from Canada and Mexico, respectively, into the US market, seem more indicative of a managed trade rather than a purely free trade approach.

(2) Japan's response to regional integration as a global trend

The core of globalization is encapsulated in the cross-border movement of four key elements: goods, services, capital, and people. The European Economic Community (EEC), now the EU, began as a customs union in 1958 before deepening its market integration after 1993 to establish a single market that promotes the free movement of these four elements. Inspired by the EU's success, regional economic integration has emerged as a global trend, even among countries in the developing world. This kind of economic integration predominantly takes the form of FTAs, where member countries reciprocally abolish trade barriers, including tariffs and non-tariff measures. According to JETRO's "World FTA Database," 476 FTAs existed worldwide as of December 2023.

In the face of a global trend toward bilateral and regional market integration, Japan has also increasingly embraced market integration since the turn of the 21st century. Preferring the term Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) to signify a broader scope than traditional FTAs, as of December 2023, Japan had enacted and signed 21 EPAs with 24 countries and regions since its first EPA negotiations with Singapore in 2001. These EPAs comprise approximately 80% of Japan's total trade volume (See Table 1 "A list of Japan's EPAs").

Table 1: A list of Japan's EPAs (As of January 2021)

In Force or Signed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Japan-Singapore Economic Partnership Agreement • Japan-Mexico Economic Partnership Agreement • Japan-Malaysia Economic Partnership Agreement • Japan-Chile Economic Partnership Agreement • Japan-Thailand Economic Partnership Agreement • Japan-Indonesia Economic Partnership Agreement • Japan-Brunei Economic Partnership Agreement • ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement • Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement • Japan-Switzerland Economic Partnership Agreement • Japan-Viet Nam Economic Partnership Agreement • Japan-India Economic Partnership Agreement • Japan-Peru Economic Partnership Agreement • Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement • Japan-Mongolia Economic Partnership Agreement • Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP12) • Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP11) • Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement • Japan-US Trade Agreement • Japan-US Digital Trade Agreement • Japan-UK Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement • Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement
Under Negotiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Japan-Turkey Economic Partnership Agreement • Japan-Colombia Economic Partnership Agreement • Japan-China-Republic of Korea Free Trade Agreement
In Suspension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Japan-GCC Free Trade Agreement • Japan-Republic of Korea Economic Partnership Agreement • Japan-Canada Economic Partnership Agreement

Source: Compiled by the author from Ministry of Foreign Affairs website and others.

The single most distinguishing feature of Japan's EPAs is their role in reinforcing the outcomes of Japan's foreign direct investment (FDI). Essentially, these agreements seek to increase the competitiveness of Japan's manufacturing networks, particularly in East Asia, by reducing trade barriers and fostering a more favorable investment environment in its partner countries. Following the Plaza Accord in September 1985, the Japanese yen

strengthened significantly. In response, many manufacturing businesses shifted their component production bases to countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). These manufactured components are traded internationally, assembled into final products, and then exported to various countries, including those in the West, as well as back to Japan. In this sense, Japan's EPAs are instruments that serve

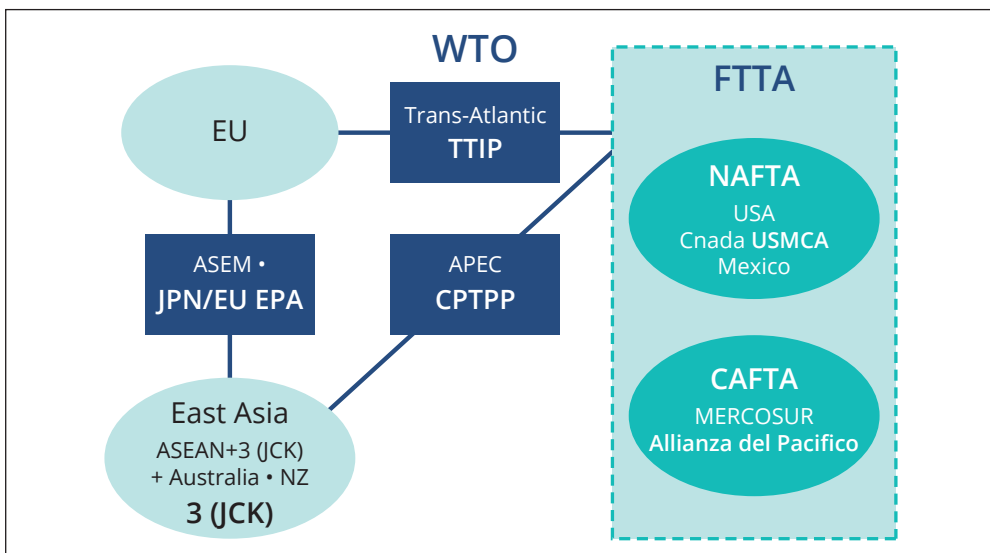
to safeguard and advance the overseas production activities of Japanese companies, formalized through treaties with foreign nations. Put another way, EPAs can be seen as legal instruments that maintain and strengthen the *de facto* integration that has evolved from the production and distribution networks resulting from Japanese FDI. The EPAs with the ASEAN countries are pioneering examples of this.

Japan's EPAs may thus be understood as consolidating the *de facto* integration formed by the combination of active FDI and local production by Japanese enterprises into a formal international treaty that provides legal stability. Accordingly, Japan's EPAs can be considered tools for achieving *de jure* integration.

(3) Japan's leadership role in three mega-FTAs: The CPTPP, Japan-EU EPA, and RCEP

In my view, there are three "poles of growth" now driving the global economy. First among these is the EU, where economic integration is most advanced, with 20 of its 27 member countries using the euro as a common currency. Second is the North American region, centered around the United States and including Canada and Mexico under the USMCA. The third is the rapidly growing East Asian region, home to the 15-nation Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), comprising the 10 ASEAN countries as well as Japan, China, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand (See Figure 1 "The three mega-regions and regional FTAs").

Figure 1: The three mega-regions and regional FTAs



Source: Prepared by the author.

While each of these three mega-regions continues to experience further internal integration, there have also been notable developments in inter-regional mega-FTAs. Of particular interest in this context has been the TPP (initially known as P4), which originated as an FTA among the four nations of Singapore, Brunei, Chile, and New Zealand. During the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting in November 2008, interest in joining this FTA was expressed by the host country, Peru, as well as Australia, while the United States showed interest in the services sector. The US, concerned about increasing market integration in East Asia in which it played no part, had actively supported the idea of a Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP), which was proposed at APEC 2006 as an APEC-wide FTA. This move evolved from P4 to P9, then P11, and eventually included Japan in July 2013, forming a critical mass in the Asia-Pacific region. The TPP reached an agreement in Atlanta in October 2015. However, in January 2017, then-President Trump withdrew the United States from the agreement.

The US withdrawal from the TPP was regarded as a significant setback for the establishment of a robust trade order in the Asia-Pacific region. Nevertheless, Japan was able to lead the remaining 11 countries to maintain momentum with the launch of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), or TPP11, in December 2018.

In addition to the CPTPP, another significant regional mega-FTA is the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (Japan-EU EPA). This monumental agreement, which came into effect in February 2019, covers about a quarter of the world's GDP and a third of global trade. The Japan-EU EPA is seen as a testament to the joint leadership of Japan and the EU in fostering free trade. Accompanying this economic partnership is a Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) emphasizing political cooperation and promoting the sharing of the universal values of democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and market principles.

Finally, there is RCEP, which came into effect in January 2022. The origin of the RCEP dates back to a proposal made by Japan in 2006 for an "ASEAN+6" arrangement comprising ASEAN, Japan, China, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and India, which was initially framed as the Comprehensive Economic Partnership in East Asia (CEPEA). This proposal was essentially a counter to China's proposed East Asia Free Trade Area (EAFTA), which had been conceived as "ASEAN+3" (i.e., ASEAN with Japan, China, and South Korea). Japan's strategic inclusion of India in its proposal was intended to counter-balance China's growing influence. The "ASEAN+6" framework was eventually adopted as a model for East Asian free trade, a decision that was reinforced at the ASEAN summits held in Cambodia in 2012. RCEP negotiations, which began in May 2013, took a significant turn when

India withdrew in the final stages, citing concerns over the influx of Chinese products. Although this development disrupted Japan's initial expectation of countering China's influence, the RCEP still represented a crucial framework for Japan, marking its first FTA relations with both China and South Korea.

Current situation and challenges

On September 16, 2021, shortly after the conclusion of the RCEP agreement, China formally applied to join the CPTPP. Japan, which participates in a security alliance with the United States while being deeply intertwined economically with China, especially in terms of trade and investment, finds itself in a delicate position amidst escalating US-China tensions. The announcement of China's intention to join the TPP has led to widespread analysis of Japan's challenges in navigating this diplomatic dilemma. In my view, however, this development presents an excellent opportunity for Japan to demonstrate its real prowess in trade diplomacy.

Firstly, Japan has concluded 21 EPAs to date, including one with the EU, its world's largest trade partner. Japan has also signed a trade agreement with the United States, although this arrangement is confined to trade in goods only. Furthermore, Japan played a pivotal role in building a consensus to establish the RCEP, which comprises 15 countries,

including China. Most notably, Japan was instrumental in saving the TPP from disintegration after the withdrawal of the United States in January 2017. Japan's success in maintaining the TPP agreement by persuading countries such as Vietnam and Malaysia to remain committed despite their diminished interest following the US withdrawal has earned it widespread respect for its negotiating skills. This prowess will be crucial in ensuring China's strict adherence to the existing TPP terms without any relaxation. Specifically, this means taking a firm stance against any concessions regarding the regulation of state-owned enterprises and the transparency and fairness of data circulation.

Secondly, although there is some apprehension on Japan's part regarding the United States' reaction, this concern hinges primarily on the level of mutual trust in the Japan-US relationship. From Japan's perspective, it is simply a matter of making it clear to the US that its negotiations with China are conducted "on behalf of the US."

Thirdly, it's important to remember the unpredictable nature of negotiations. A crucial aspect in this regard is the power dynamic between Japan, an original signatory to the TPP, and China, an aspiring member. This relationship does not place the two on an equal footing. Newcomers must either accept the rules established by the original members or opt to leave the negotiations. In essence, China faces a "take it or leave it" scenario.

It is highly unlikely, and indeed inappropriate, for China to seek amendments to the existing rules as a new aspirant. China's application to join the TPP at this juncture is informed by its understanding that a swift US re-entry into the TPP under the Biden administration is unlikely. Moreover, even should negotiations with China over TPP membership get underway, they are not expected to be concluded swiftly, within two to three years.

Developments on the part of the United States can most likely be expected following the US presidential election in the fall of 2024. Barriers to the US rejoining the TPP, which it already agreed to in 2015, are likely to be resolved more swiftly than the negotiations concerning China's potential membership. As a result, there is a high probability of the US re-entering the TPP prior to China's accession. From Japan's perspective, it might be prudent not to pre-judge the outcomes of these negotiations. Adopting an "all are welcome" approach to China's application and offering technical support to China on the more challenging aspects of the agreement could be a strategic move for Japan to build goodwill with China.

Conclusion

On May 23, 2022, during his visit to Tokyo, US President Biden announced the launch of a new economic initiative, the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF). This marked the first major US-led

venture since the country's withdrawal from the TPP under former President Trump, five years earlier in January 2017. The IPEF was founded with the participation of 14 countries, including Japan and the US.

The IPEF is composed of four main pillars: 1) trade, 2) supply chains, 3) the "clean economy" (i.e., clean energy, decarbonization, and infrastructure), and 4) the "fair economy" (i.e., tax and anti-corruption measures). While the IPEF does not extend to trade liberalization measures like tariff removal, it does encompass elements that could be considered as "TPP Plus," such as cooperation in the digital economy, strengthening supply chain resilience, and collaboration in sustainable infrastructure development.

What is China's perspective on the IPEF? Despite the enactment of the RCEP, China has formally applied for membership in the CPTPP, possibly perceiving the IPEF as a relatively feeble "paper tiger." China clearly recognizes the significant hurdles it faces in joining the CPTPP, which has much higher standards than the RCEP, particularly in terms of tariff elimination. China is likely to sideline the US proposal of the IPEF in favor of hastening its efforts to start negotiations for CPTPP membership. Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong already expressed his welcome for China's participation. With China actively seeking to initiate negotiations with the capitals of CPTPP member

countries, its diplomatic overtures are making Japan's somewhat reluctant stance appear somewhat conspicuous.

Even once China's negotiations for CPTPP membership get underway, it is expected that the process will take at least five years. As the United Kingdom joined the CPTPP before China, Japan could leverage this opportunity to coordinate with the UK to adopt a firm stance in its dealings with China. The UK, drawing on its challenging experiences with China over Hong Kong, could prove to be a formidable ally for Japan in these negotiations.

For Japan, the dilemma of choosing between the US and China presents a dichotomy that will have to be circumvented. The current confrontational and divisive state of US-China relations is not necessarily permanent. There is a substantial possibility for the easing of tensions between the two, especially on the economic front. This is evidenced by the expansion of US-China trade even amidst ongoing sanctions. Japan should strategically employ trade as a catalyst for peace. On the one hand, Japan should advocate for the US to reconsider early rejoining of the TPP, using the IPEF as a platform. On the other, Japan should engage in proactive negotiations with China, focusing on ensuring its compliance with rules-based trade in its negotiations to join the TPP. In doing so, Japan should take the initiative to integrate both the US and China into the Asia-Pacific economic

sphere, thereby contributing to regional peace and prosperity.

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Japan's Maritime Security Policies:

FOIP, Quad, East China Sea, and
South China Sea

Tetsuo KOTANI

Introduction

As a resource-poor trading country surrounded by seas and characterized by a long coastline and numerous islands, maritime security is an issue of critical importance for Japan in maintaining its sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as in securing its maritime transportation routes. Postwar Japan returned to the international community following the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty as a nation with virtually no military capabilities. For this reason, it had no choice but to rely on the United States for its maritime security. Beginning in the 1970s, Japan responded to the continued buildup of the Soviet Far Eastern Fleet in Vladivostok by endeavoring to acquire capabilities for blockading the Tsushima Strait, the Tsugaru Strait, and the Soya Strait. The ability to control these key choke points was considered vital to restraining the activities of the Soviet fleet stationed in Vladivostok. At the same time, under the aegis of the doctrine of “defending sea lanes up to 1,000 nautical miles,” Japan acted to enhance its intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities in the waters surrounding the Nansei and Ogasawara Islands in a move designed to ensure the arrival of US reinforcements. Japan’s commitment to controlling the three straits and the enhancement of its ISR capabilities around the Japanese archipelago succeeded in effectively containing the Soviet fleet within the Sea of Japan.

With the end of the Cold War, China’s maritime expansion came to replace the Soviet Union as the primary source of Japan’s maritime security concerns. During the 1980s, China established a near-sea defense strategy covering the areas of its first and second island-chains. Beginning around 2008, the People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLA Navy) extended the scope of its activities up to the first island-chain. By 2020, the scope of PLA Navy activity had crossed the second island-chain and routinely extended into the Western Pacific. In the East China Sea, the PLA Navy has been conducting military drills and exercises and information gathering. In the South China Sea, China has reclaimed and militarized large-scale artificial islands. The PLA Navy has also been dispatching submarines and other naval vessels to the Indian Ocean for conducting anti-piracy activities. These initiatives are believed to be aimed at forestalling US military intervention in the event of a contingency in addition to maintaining China’s sea lanes. Combined with the reinforcement of China’s missile capabilities, these maritime activities have greatly changed the region’s military balance. China has also used government vessels and fishing boats to constantly and unilaterally change the status quo in the waters surrounding the Senkaku Islands and the Spratly Islands in contravention of international law, creating a “grey zone” situation that cannot be defined as either “peacetime”

or “contingency.” Furthermore, since 2016, China has been increasing its pressure on Taiwan’s Democratic Progressive Party administration and expanding its military activities in areas surrounding Taiwan. It is increasingly feared that Japan will be pulled into the conflict in the event of a Taiwan contingency.

China’s naval and maritime expansion has become a major issue in securing Japan’s territorial defenses and sea lines of communication. Furthermore, China’s assertion of its own maritime interests has come to present a serious challenge to maritime legal order, in response to which the Japanese government has adopted various policies and actions. First, Japan has been upgrading its defenses along the first island-chain. Second, Japan has pursued various initiatives for maintaining maritime legal order, which includes initiatives for promoting a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)” and pursuing strategic dialogue in the Quad (Japan, US, Australia, India) framework. The remainder of this article provides an overview of Japan’s maritime security policies centered on island-chain defenses and maintaining maritime legal order, and reviews current conditions and future challenges.

Maritime security initiatives under the Abe administration

Since 2008, China has been dispatching maritime law enforcement vessels to

the territorial waters of the Senkaku Islands and has expanded the scope of the activities of its naval vessels and military aircraft from the East China Sea to include the waters of the Pacific. The Japanese government responded to these developments by revising its National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG) in 2010, and shifting the concentration of its defensive stance from a northern to southwestern focus. Along the same lines, Japan strengthened its ISR capabilities around the Nansei Islands by adopting a “dynamic defense force” strategy. The NDPG was further revised in 2013 under the second administration of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and committed the nation to strengthening the defenses of the Nansei Islands by building a “dynamic joint defense force.” Under this strategy, while maintaining maritime and air superiority, Japan began to emphasize the ability to deploy ground forces from the Japanese mainland to the Nansei Islands. Various measures were taken to support the new strategy, including reinforcement of fighter and early warning aircraft at Naha in Okinawa, introduction of standoff missiles, increase of the number of submarines, creation of new amphibious and rapid deployment forces tasked with defending remote islands, and deployment of early warning units, surface-to-ship and surface-to-air guided missile forces in the Nansei Islands. As an additional measure, the posture of the Japan Coast Guard (JCG) was strengthened, and a special Senkaku Unit was created and stationed on Ishigaki Island.

China has been steadily upgrading and enhancing its comprehensive capabilities around the Nansei Islands. In response to these developments, Japan once again revised its NDPG in 2018. While retaining the concept of a “dynamic joint defense force,” the 2018 Guidelines committed to building a “multi-domain defense force” that combines cross-domain capabilities in such new domains as space, cyberspace, and electromagnetic spectrum with the traditional domains of land, sea, and air. This strategy is designed to cope with situations in which Japan finds it difficult to maintain maritime and air superiority. Faced with such circumstances, the objective is to be able to organically fuse capabilities across all domains to generate synergy in operations so that inferiority in individual domains can be overcome. To achieve this strategy, the NDPG includes initiatives for such actions as an increase in the number of fighter aircraft and enhancement of their capabilities, creation of new hyper velocity gliding projectile units intended for the defense of remote islands, deployment of long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicles for strengthening ISR capabilities on Japan’s Pacific flank, deployment of short takeoff and vertical landing aircraft (STOVL) on Izumo-class destroyers, development of integrated air and missile defense systems, creation of a new dedicated space operations force, creation of a new cyber defense force, and creation of a new electronic warfare force. Parallel to this, the JCG has continued to enhance

its capabilities and to strengthen its cooperation with the Maritime Self-Defense Force.

Meanwhile, Japan has also worked to strengthen its cooperation with the United States. The Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation revised in 2015 expands the range of peacetime Japan-US cooperation and contains provisions for cooperation in information gathering, surveillance and reconnaissance, maritime security, training and exercises, and air and missile defense. These Guidelines also provide for new programs for cooperation in the defense of remote islands and cross-domain operations (including cyber and space) in the event of an armed attack on Japan (Japan contingency). In the defense of islands, it was determined that the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) would be primarily responsible for preventing and repelling invasions and retaking islands, while the United States Armed Forces would conduct operations in support of these operations. Furthermore, various mechanisms were established to ensure the effectiveness of alliance coordination. These consist of an Alliance Coordination Mechanism for strengthening policy and operational coordination, and a Bilateral Planning Mechanism.

The South China Sea and the Indian Ocean contain maritime transportation routes that are of vital importance to Japan. In these regions, Japan has undertaken to support capacity-building

in coastal countries, and the SDF has begun to conduct presence operations. In November 2016, then-Defense Minister Tomomi Inada announced the Vientiane Vision for Japan-ASEAN defense cooperation. The Vientiane Vision calls for the preservation of the rule of law, strengthening maritime security, and building ASEAN capacity in multiple fields. Various initiatives have been launched under this framework. For instance, in 2016, Japan provided 10 patrol boats and two large patrol vessels to the Philippines. In 2020, Japan provided the Philippines with air surveillance radar systems that will enable the Philippines to monitor the movements of the PLA in the Bashi Channel with the expectation that the information would be shared with Japan. Furthermore, the Maritime Self-Defense Force has been dispatching naval vessels, including helicopter destroyers, to the South China Sea and Indian Ocean every year since 2017 to conduct training and friendly calls to countries in the region (the Indo-Pacific Deployment).

Responding to the challenges posed to maritime legal order in the Indo-Pacific region, the Japanese government's National Security Strategy (NSS) formulated in December 2013 calls for maintaining the principle of "Open and Stable Seas" based on international law and rules. To realize this objective, then-Prime Minister Abe advocated the "Three Principles of the Rule of Law at Sea" at the Shangri-La Dialogue of May 2014. The

three principles call on nations to make and clarify claims based on international law, not use force or coercion to drive claims, and settle disputes by peaceful means. In August 2016, Abe presented the concept of FOIP and promoted the rule of law, connectivity, and maritime security. In September 2019, the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held for the first time to discuss cooperation in promoting FOIP. At this time, the four countries reaffirmed their shared commitment to close cooperation in the areas of maritime security, quality infrastructure and connectivity. In subsequent years, ASEAN and such European countries as the United Kingdom and France expressed their support for FOIP. These developments indicate a growing and shared awareness of the importance of maintaining a rule-based international maritime order.

As outlined above, the principal measures taken under the Abe administration in response to China's maritime expansion consisted of tasking the SDF with strengthening the defenses of the Nansei Islands, and working through FOIP to extend international cooperation for maintaining maritime legal order. These policies were continued under the administrations of Yoshihide Suga and Fumio Kishida that followed, and became established as Japan's basic position on maritime security.

Initiatives and challenges under the Suga and Kishida administrations

Then-Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and President Joe Biden met in Washington DC on April 16, 2021. In the joint statement released after the summit meeting, the importance of the security of the Taiwan Strait was emphasized for the first time since 1969, or in 52 years. Following the re-election of Tsai Ing-wen of the Democratic Progressive Party as president of Taiwan in 2022, Chinese military aircraft had begun to repeatedly cross the median line of the Taiwan Strait to enter Taiwan's air defense identification zone, raising concerns for the possibility of unexpected incidents and accidents. Against this background, the leaders of Japan and the United States reaffirmed the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait and urged a peaceful resolution of the cross-strait issue. On his part, then-Prime Minister Suga expressed Japan's determination to strengthen its defensive capabilities. The two sides also agreed to begin consultations on joint responses in the event of a Taiwan contingency. Subsequently, Japan affirmed the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait with Australia, the EU and other like-minded countries.

When former US Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan in August 2022, China responded by conducting large-scale military exercises in areas surrounding Taiwan. China set up a total

of six exercise zones around Taiwan that simulated a blockade of Taiwan, and five ballistic missiles were fired into Japan's exclusive economic zones, forcing local fishermen to suspend their operations. During this period, commercial vessels were forced to circumvent the exercise zones, while some airlines were left with no choice but to cancel their flights. These developments made it clear that in the event of an actual naval blockade of Taiwan, the global supply chain would be exposed to high levels of risk. For Japan, a Taiwan contingency may not only lead to attacks on Japanese territory, but could also massively disrupt trade and fishing activities. Following these exercises, the PLA has been routinely crossing the median line in the Taiwan Strait, raising concerns that it is becoming increasingly difficult to differentiate between a military exercise and an actual invasion.

In December 2022, the administration of Prime Minister Fumio Kishida revised Japan's NSS. Citing China's attempts to unilaterally change the status quo in the Senkaku Islands and the Spratly Islands and calling attention to growing Chinese pressure against Taiwan, the document identified China as posing the "greatest strategic challenge" to Japan's security and the international order, and expressed concern that China has been strengthening of its strategic ties with Russia, which has invaded Ukraine. Both this NSS and the National Defense Strategy call for responses based on enhancing Japan's comprehensive

national power and promoting cooperation with allies and like-minded nations. The two documents indicate that in order to realize these strategies, Japan will have to double its defense budget to reach a level of 2% of GDP. The additional budgetary outlays will allow Japan to defend against new ways of warfare enumerated in the National Defense Strategy, which include missile attacks, hybrid warfare, asymmetric attacks, and the threat of using nuclear weapons. Japan will defend itself by strengthening "counterstrike capabilities" that leverage stand-off defense capabilities, by deploying integrated air and missile defense capabilities, by reinforcing unmanned asset defense capabilities, and by upgrading the sustainability and resiliency (war sustainability) of these systems.

Regarding "counterstrike capabilities," given the qualitative and quantitative enhancement of Chinese and North Korean missile capabilities, it will be difficult to respond only by strengthening Japan's missile defense capabilities. For this reason, "counterstrike capabilities" are intended to thwart a second or subsequent strike from an adversary. That is to say, "counterstrike capabilities" are positioned as part of denial deterrence to neutralize the adversary's attack. It is believed that Japan's principal counterattack targets will be such fixed targets as air and naval bases and some moving vessels, and will be aimed at preventing the adversary from gaining air and sea superiority.

The above strategies are believed to be geared toward a Taiwan contingency, in the event of which Japan will help maintain the operational foundations of US military forces by focusing on the defense of the Nansei Islands and will also provide logistical support. Through these means, Japan will endeavor to prevent landing operations on Japanese territory and secure sea lines of communication. It appears that the formulation of Japan-US joint operation plans for a Taiwan contingency is approaching its final stages. However, it remains unclear whether Japanese public opinion will support Japan's participation in the defense of Taiwan. As it is fully conceivable that China will engage in information warfare to affect public opinion in order to estrange Japan from the United States, there is an urgent need to devise countermeasures.

Among the initiatives taken by the Suga and Kishida administrations for maintaining international maritime order is the elevation of the Quad to the level of heads of government. A video summit meeting was held in March 2021, and face-to-face summit meetings have been held beginning in September 2021. These summit meetings have allowed the leaders of the four Quad countries to reaffirm their cooperation for realizing FOIP and to share their concerns regarding the situation in the East China Sea and South China Sea. In the summit meeting held in May 2022, Quad leaders announced the establishment of the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime

Domain Awareness (IPMDA) aimed at information-sharing for promoting maritime domain awareness in the region. It is hoped that IPMDA will bolster support for ASEAN and Pacific Island nations, enabling them to participate in monitoring illegal fishing activities, mainly carried out by Chinese fishing vessels, and to contribute to the protection of marine and environmental resources. The Quad is now going beyond its initial mandate for maintaining maritime security and promoting cooperation in the areas of infrastructure and connectivity, and is venturing into such new areas of concern as climate change, emerging technologies, cybersecurity, and enhancing supply-chain resilience. As such, the Quad is emerging as a public-goods provider for the region. Furthermore, in 2020, Australia joined the Malabar naval exercises conducted by Japan, the United States and India, in effect transforming these exercises into a de facto joint Quad naval exercise. Since its inception, there have been persistent calls and strong expectations for the Quad to engage in military cooperation. This brings into question whether the Quad will be able to continue functioning as a regional purveyor of public goods.

The Kishida administration has launched into strengthening Japan's security cooperation with the Philippines and South Korea. With regard to the Philippines, Japan has been considering entering into a visiting forces agreement. Japan has also conducted joint trilateral exercises

involving the coast guards of Japan, the United States and the Philippines, and has engaged in trilateral consultations between the national security advisors of the three countries. These initiatives are thought to be aimed at strengthening relations with the Philippines with the possibility of a Taiwan contingency in mind. However, because the Philippines must also pay close attention to its relations with China, it is difficult to predict what substantive advances can be made in creating cooperative arrangements. With regard to relations with South Korea that have long been weighed down by problems of historical perception and interpretation, it is notable that the administration of President Yoon Suk Yeol has adopted a realistic approach to national security policies. Against this backdrop, Japan, the United States, and South Korea have restarted their cooperation in anti-submarine drills and missile defenses, and are eyeing to expand their cooperation into the area of Indo-Pacific security. While South Korea's primary concern is the threat from North Korea, it is expected that advances can be made with the Yoon administration in securing maritime transportation routes and supporting capacity-building in coastal countries.

Regarding capacity-building support for coastal countries, a system for Official Security Assistance (OSA) has been created under Japan's new NSS, allowing the provision of direct assistance to the armed forces of foreign countries. While under the existing framework for

Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA), assistance is limited to the law enforcement agencies of foreign countries, OSA will now allow Japan to assist in enhancing the deterrence capabilities of like-minded countries. Moreover, the government is currently considering revising laws to enable Japan to provide lethal weapons to foreign countries. It can be expected that if enacted, such revisions will permit Japan to provide higher-capacity weapons to foreign countries through OSA.

Conclusion

Given its geopolitical circumstances, Japan has a vital need to pursue maritime security in order to maintain its territorial security and its sea lines of communication. During the Cold War, Japan predicated its security on its alliance with the United States with its overwhelming naval power, and in order to ensure the reinforcement of US military forces, Japan developed necessary capabilities for anti-submarine warfare, anti-mine warfare and fleet air defense during this period. However, due to the maritime expansion of China and the relative decline in US naval power, Japan is now being forced to allocate its resources to territorial defense rather than to the security of its sea lines of communication. The conversion of destroyers developed for anti-submarine warfare to aircraft carriers tasked with carrying out air defense missions bears eloquent testimony to this shift. Consequently, Japan is finding it

necessary to alter its defense posture and operational doctrine from securing its maritime transportation routes to defending its territory. However, the importance of securing sea lines of communication is also increasing, and Japan is responding to this need by supporting capacity-building in coastal countries, and working to maintain the maritime order by reinforcing international cooperation through FOIP. On the other hand, China shows no signs of hesitating in its pursuit of changing the status quo, and is adopting an increasingly aggressive stance. This makes it necessary for Japan not only to pursue peacetime international cooperation, but to more actively participate in international cooperation frameworks that are designed to cope with contingencies that arise when deterrence has failed.

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Japan's Arms Control and Non-Proliferation Policy

Nobumasa AKIYAMA

Introduction: The framework and issues stipulating Japan's nuclear policy

In seeking to grasp the structure used to stipulate Japan's disarmament and non-proliferation policy, it can be said to be useful to become acquainted with the framework of the "Four Pillars of Nuclear Policy," along with three primary factors and two dilemmas. To begin, the "Four Pillars of Nuclear Policy" refers to the four approaches comprising Japanese nuclear policy announced in the administrative policy speech delivered by the then Japanese Prime Minister Eisaku Sato in January of 1968. More specifically, this consists of the three "non-nuclear principles" (non-possession, non-production, and non-introduction of nuclear weapons); nuclear abolition and disarmament; reliance upon the US for nuclear deterrence; and peaceful use of nuclear energy. In retrospect, these four pillars have been generally upheld over the years to date.

It is also vital to consider three elements as the specific factors which effectively define Japanese nuclear policy. The first concerns the geopolitical conditions in East Asia. The second is the economic growth and its sustainability, and particularly the need for energy security. The third is the historical experiences which functioned to heighten anti-nuclear sentiment and momentum within Japan. Among these experiences, I am referring

to the detonation of atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki toward the end of World War II (with Japan still the only nation to have endured atomic bombings), and the "Daigo Fukuryu Maru Incident" in 1954.

Meanwhile, as the outgrowth of these policies and the factors comprising their foundation, Japan has also been confronted with two dilemmas. The first comprises promotion of nuclear disarmament as the national mission of the sole country to ever come under atomic attack, versus the reality that within the current fierce strategic environment, the extended nuclear deterrence of the US has become indispensable for Japanese security. The second dilemma concerns the fact that while Japan, as a nation severely poor in natural resources, has pursued the so-called nuclear fuel cycle rooted in the demands for energy security, that the nuclear fuel cycle is inevitably accompanied by the risk of nuclear proliferation.

Nuclear disarmament and the Japan-US alliance

(1) Cultivation of domestic anti-nuclear sentiment and the Japan-US Security Treaty

In August of 1945, atomic bombs were successively dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, causing the deaths of approximately 140,000 and 74,000 persons, respectively, by the end of that year. In

March 1954, the “Daigo Fukuryu Maru,” a deep-sea tuna fishing boat operating in Bikini Atoll of the Marshall Island in the South Pacific, was exposed to radioactive fallout from a hydrogen bomb test conducted by the US. This resulted in contamination from radiation to the crew members and their fish catch. The tuna boat incident prompted the launch of an anti-nuclear petition drive by housewives in the Suginami Ward district of Tokyo, which soon grew nationwide in scale. In August of that same year, the Japan Council for Signature Campaign Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs was formed. While in its early days this campaign flourished as a bipartisan national movement, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) subsequently withdrew. After that, the effort split off to come a movement championed by the Japanese Communist Party and Japan Socialist Party. Assuming elements of partisanship in this way, the endeavor retreated from its former presence as a national campaign. Within Japanese society, however, I believe it can also be said that the standard for nuclear abolition had taken root as what came to be known as the “nuclear allergy.”

On the other hand, security-related demands heightened with regard to extended nuclear deterrence offered by the United States. For example, China conducted its first successful nuclear test in October 1964, thereby emerging as a nuclear-capable state. For Japan as well, this triggered debate on

whether or not the nation should maintain nuclear weapons. Within Japan, however, where anti-nuclear sentiment was on the rise, objections voiced with regard to the return of Okinawa to Japan with the nuclear capabilities there as-is were by no means limited in number—including many protests from within the LDP. Politically speaking, it was extremely important for the then-Prime Minister Eisaku Sato to engineer the return of a “nuclear-free” Okinawa in his negotiations with Washington. As this process unfolded, in December 1967 Sato declared the previously mentioned three non-nuclear principles of “non-possession,” “non-production,” and “non-introduction.” Later on, these three ideologies led to him being named the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate in 1974.

(2) The “nuclear issue” in the context of the Japan-US alliance

As this came to pass, however, a secret agreement was signed between Sato and US President Richard Nixon, which effectively recognized the introduction of nuclear weapons in Japan by US forces in the event of emergencies. Then in 1981, former US Ambassador to Japan Edwin O. Reischauer revealed that US Navy warships had routinely carried nuclear weapons into Japanese ports under the understanding between Japan and the US. This brought to light the reality that the “non-introduction” principle had not in fact been upheld. In 1991, President

George H.W. Bush declared the withdrawal of both ground and sea deployed strategic nuclear weapons on Japanese soil, bringing an end to Japan port calls of warships carrying such arms.

Today, the single greatest challenge in the relations between Japan and the US consists of how to uphold the credibility of extended nuclear deterrence. In 2009, as work was being advanced on the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) under the administration of President Barrack Obama, debate developed on the issue of No-First Use (NFU; the pledge to never use nuclear arms as initial means), the move toward professed “sole purpose” (limiting the role of atomic arms to deterrence of and retaliation against nuclear attacks) and other diminishing roles of nuclear weapons. Within this process, at hearings convened by the Strategic Posture Committee of the US Congress that same year, the Japanese government voiced concerns that such a declaratory policy would inevitably lower US nuclear deterrence in East Asia. As it turned out, in addition to Japan, South Korea, European allies and other nations also voiced anxieties about such a declaratory policy, with the result that the US failed to pronounce the unconditional introduction of NFU. This process potently suggests the need for greater alignment of the recognition and understanding of allies surrounding extended nuclear deterrence between the governments of Japan and the US (as well as within both governments).

For its part, the Japanese government does not support NFU declarations and the move toward “sole purpose” by the US. There are two main reasons for this stance. The first is that in order to heighten deterrence against North Korea, in addition to nuclear weapons there is also a need to deter use of weapons of mass destruction. Along with this, in the interest of raising the threshold of use as well, it will be necessary to retain the potential of retaliation using nuclear arms. The second reason relates to China, which has declared its support of NFU. Despite that, however, in view of the state of that nation’s troop buildup, military exercises and other factors, it remains unclear whether Beijing will continue to uphold NFU into the future. Moreover, within the lack of transparency and the resulting low trust placed in declarative policy, in the event that Japan and the US act on their own to declare NFU, the potential is high that greater restrictions would be placed on policies.

Against the backdrop of such conditions, the governments of Japan and the US have begun the Extended Deterrence Dialogue (EDD) with the purpose of upholding and enhancing the credibility of US extended deterrence, while moving to raise these talks to a more substantial level.

The dilemma of peaceful use of nuclear energy and nuclear non-proliferation: Energy security and nuclear power

The dearth of natural resources domestically in Japan and the nation's dependence on overseas sources of fossil fuels came to be seen as a vulnerability for the domestic economy. As one measure aimed at surmounting such a weakness, the Japanese government set its sights on energy diversification through nuclear power, as well as attainment of "semi-domestic" energy sources via promotion of the nuclear fuel cycle. However, promotion of the peaceful use of nuclear energy is effectively inseparable with nuclear non-proliferation.

With the arrival of the post-World War II era, nuclear power research activities were banned in Japan by the General Headquarters of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (GHQ). In 1953, however, US President Dwight D. Eisenhower delivered an address at the United Nations (UN) entitled "Atoms for Peace," in which he advocated international cooperation in the supervision of nuclear materials and peaceful use of nuclear energy. With the rise of efforts to promote such global collaboration, Japan also received those benefits. Japan passed the Atomic Energy Basic Law in 1955, with an agreement concluded for Japan-US cooperation in the field of nuclear energy. In 1966, Japan

commenced its first commercial nuclear energy operation with the introduction of an improved version of the Calder Hall nuclear power station (using a graphite furnace) from Great Britain. Over the following years, however, nuclear power generation in Japan was advanced on the strength of the introduction of a steady series of light-water reactors from the US, based upon their superior technical and economic efficiency.

The 1970s were accompanied by the experiences of two serious energy crises, causing reduction of energy dependence on overseas sources to emerge as a critical issue. With that, nuclear power generation was promoted as an effective means of resolving energy security related concerns. As of 1997, nuclear energy had risen to comprise approximately 37% share of Japan's total power generation, although this was followed by a decline in that share reflecting the overall growth in energy production. Nevertheless, even at the point in time prior to the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accompanying the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, the share of nuclear power remained at around 30%.

The Fukushima accident, however, brought major change to the field of nuclear safety in Japan. The majority of the nation's nuclear power plants either failed to comply with safety standards and undergone decommissioning, or undertaken improvement work on safety facilities in seeking to adapt.

As of October 2022, only six nuclear power reactors were in actual operation (compared to 57 reactors prior to the accident).

Moreover, from the perspective of energy security, Japan has moved to reduce its dependence on overseas uranium, promoting a nuclear fuel cycle plan aimed at securing “semi-domestic” energy. This effort has failed to proceed as envisioned, however, due to the setback suffered in the “Monju” fast breeder reactor project and other setbacks. From the standpoint of energy security and technical development, Japan has held to the course of reusing spent fuel. When it comes to plans for the use of plutonium separated from such fuel, however, we can expect demands for the exercising of heightened cautions from the standpoint of nuclear non-proliferation.

Multilateral framework for disarmament diplomacy

(1) The NPT and Japan

Japan, despite its calls for promotion of nuclear disarmament as one of the “Four Pillars of Nuclear Policy,” failed to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) when that agreement was originally adopted in 1968. Instead, Japan inked that pact in February 1970, just prior to it becoming effective the following month. For that matter, another six years passed before

Japan actually ratified the NPT in June 1976.

There were two main reasons for this delay in Japan’s signing and ratification of the treaty. The first lies in fears of abandonment of the nuclear option. With China succeeding in its nuclear test in 1964 to join the ranks of nuclear powers, conservative politicians and others expressed concerns that Japan’s choice to join the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state would shut off its potential to own nuclear weapons to confront Beijing.

As the second reason, concerns were expressed that acceptance of the safeguard obligations under the NPT could limit the rights for peaceful use, while also pointed out was the possibility of leakage of industrial information through inspections. In other words, fears existed that Japan would find itself at a disadvantage compared to nations that possessed nuclear arms. After it was subsequently learned that the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) had entered into a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Japan resolved the safeguard issue by also joining an “EURATOM equivalent” safeguards accord. Furthermore, with the launch of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) of nations prompted by nuclear tests by India in 1974, NPT membership became a prerequisite for international transactions for nuclear materials and equipment. These and

other developments generated further pressure for Japan to also ratify the NPT.

Overall, therefore, Japan opted to support the NPT system, which was also considered significant for the purpose of ensuring the legitimacy of peaceful use of the nation's own nuclear power, while simultaneously launching the promotion of peaceful use and the bolstering of nuclear non-proliferation. In this way, Japan effectively presented itself as an "honor student" within the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. Likewise, supported by the experiences of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the strong support of domestic opinion, Japan moved to powerfully promote the cause of nuclear disarmament at international forums.

(2) Japan makes friends through the NPT

In 2007, a study entitled "A World Without Nuclear Weapons" was released by Henry Kissinger, Sam Nunn, George Schultz, and William Perry. Then in 2009, President Barack Obama delivered an address in Prague, in which he declared his vision for achieving the peace and security of a world free of nuclear arms. With this, the sentiment favoring nuclear disarmament was heightened. In 2010, following ratification by the NPT Review Conference of an action plan comprised of 64 items as an outcome document, Japan launched the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) with

the purpose of advancing implementation of these visions. This initiative was comprised of 12 non-nuclear weapon states spanning a diversified range of regions and security positioning. During a session of the UN General Assembly in September of that year, convened was the first foreign ministers meeting (jointly sponsored by Japan and Australia) to address nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. This framework was subsequently adhered to in implementing joint statements by the NPT Review Conference and other bodies concerning improvements in nuclear transparency, the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), disarmament and non-proliferation education and other themes.

Around this time, another group moving to promote this type of disarmament and non-proliferation agenda was the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) originally launched in 1998 with its proclamation of "A World Free of Nuclear Weapons." Within this declaration, it is proposed that nations maintaining nuclear arms prepare a legally binding document pledging NFU. The reason that Japan, which supported promotion of nuclear disarmament, failed to join the NAC was the inclusion of this NFU clause.

Yet another coalition of like-minded nations, in which Japan did participate, was the Stockholm Initiative (SI). As divisions surrounding nuclear disarmament deepened in the international community, the SI was launched with

participation by 16 nations, seeking to raise the momentum leading to the success of the 10th NPT Review Conference (scheduled to convene in 2020). The intention was to furnish a bridge between nations recognizing the need for nuclear weapons from the perspective of security, and those insisting that nuclear arms be banned. In the quest for irreversible and verifiable nuclear disarmament, the SI undertook discussions through the so-called “stepping-stone approach” of achieving nuclear transparency, restrictions on the nuclear doctrine, measures to limit risks of escalation and other feasible realistic and concrete measures. However, with regard to restrictions on the nuclear doctrine, while NFU, “sole purpose” and other specific definitions were debated, no clear consensus was reached in that area.

(3) Japan’s stance on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Japan, based on the experiences of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, has appealed for the inhumanity of nuclear weapons through UN resolutions, submission of documents to the NPT Review Conference and other avenues. However, with regard to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) adopted by the UN in 2017 and came into effect in 2021, Japan has maintained a cautious stance. Domestically, calls for Japan to

join the TPNW, or at least participate as an observer, are on the rise, including from the Komeito, junior partner in the ruling coalition, headed up by the LDP. Nevertheless, the Japanese government chose not to take part in the initial meeting of the parties to this treaty as an observer in June 2022. Regarding the TPNW, high-ranking Japanese government officials have recognized, albeit off the record, that they share the ultimate goals of the treaty. But even so, no mention of the TPNW was made through official documents by the time of the submission of a resolution for elimination of nuclear weapons to the UN General Assembly First Committee in October 2022.

Behind this cautious Japanese government stance lies concerns that approval of the TPNW, which bans threats of or actual use of nuclear arms, would inevitably lower the credibility of extended nuclear deterrence, as well as undermine the relationship of trust with the US. The situation in Japan differs from that of Germany—a nation which maintains an agreement for nuclear sharing with the US and is committed to working through that responsibility and a more solid system to achieve extended nuclear deterrence. Between Japan and the US, there are no systematic arrangements for sharing of the capacity, decision-making, or responsibilities concerning the use of nuclear weapons (referring to nuclear deterrence). In East Asia, in contrast, efforts by China and North Korea to strengthen

their nuclear capabilities are conspicuous, pointing to the need to search out means of enacting stronger deterrence. In the midst of such conditions, there is the desire to avoid adopting a friendly approach to the TPNW, which could very well transmit signals undermining recognition of the credibility of nuclear use in the eyes of Japan's adversaries.

(4) Nuclear abolition resolutions at the United Nations

Among initiatives in which Japan promoted nuclear disarmament at multilateral forums, there is the nuclear abolition resolution that has been submitted to the UN since 1994. Virtually every time since 1994, this resolution was adopted with approval of 150 or more member states. However, while it was accepted without dissenting votes until 1999, at the 2000 session the US chose to cast a negative vote. After that, reflecting considerations for its ties with the US, Japan has carried out adjustments aimed at avoiding US opposition. In comparison, following the adoption of the TPNW in 2017, divisions emerged in the international community surrounding nuclear disarmament. The Japanese government stance was that providing a "bridge" between those mounting strong appeals for bans on nuclear weapons and those insisting upon the need for nuclear deterrence was indispensable for the practical promotion of nuclear disarmament. Working from the perspective

of the critical need to convince nuclear weapon states to become involved in disarmament, Japan explored means of incorporating such nuclearized nations in the resolution. To Japan's consternation, however, this course of action generated backlash from countries strongly insisting upon nuclear abolition, leading to split votes on the separate adoption of several paragraphs.

These split votes can be said to symbolically express the deepened divisions in the international community, along with the fading global expectations for efforts to narrow those gaps and find common ground. This undermined efforts to maintain the Japan position.

Conclusion: The current state of disarmament and non-proliferation policy

As examined above, while the "Four Pillars of Nuclear Policy," along with three primary factors and two dilemmas, have steadily evolved over the decades, they can be said to continue to comprise the foundation of Japan's arms control disarmament and non-proliferation strategy. In this regard, it can be said that Japan currently faces the following key issues in the arms control and disarmament and non-proliferation field.

On the regional level, within the East Asia strategic environment, which continues to grow in severity linked to the strengthened nuclear capabilities

of China and North Korea, Japan faces a number of pressing challenges. For example, to what degree can efforts channeled through the Japan-US alliance (including extended nuclear deterrence) and regional partnerships be used to ensure the reliability and response capacity of deterrence targeting Beijing and Pyongyang? This encompasses the issue of how to simultaneously advance reduced nuclear risk—including arms control talks with China. Yet another related theme lies in how to realize the “denuclearization” of North Korea, a state which has conspicuously bolstered its nuclear and missile capabilities in recent years. If such progress proves difficult in the near future, what other options are available?

One particular focus lies in the area of improvements in the credibility of extended nuclear deterrence. Within the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Moscow is using nuclear threats to seize advantages on the battlefield. As this comes to pass, the casting of the “long shadow of nuclear weapons” over an environment in which mutual deterrence between major powers tends to be functioning serves to threaten security on a regional scale. This has fanned fears in Japan of the so-called “stability and instability paradox,” fueling debate of “nuclear sharing” with the US. Going forward, depending upon the development of strategic ties between the US and China, there is the possibility that the approach of mounting deterrence against China will come to be treated as a core theme.

For China, the aim is to strengthen deterrence against the US, and use the forging of mutual vulnerability with the US to lower US influence in the region. Under these circumstances, China is said to be reluctant to engage in arms control. For Japan, there is a vital need to search out effective means of engaging with China and the US, paving the way to dialogue concerning reduction of the nuclear threat.

On the global level, a key issue consists of how Japan will contribute to upholding the credibility of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime focused on the NPT. Based on its identity as “the only nation to have endured atomic bombings,” a key focus will be on what approach Japan will use between the realistic policy demands of pursuing realization of “a world without nuclear weapons” and addressing the need for extended nuclear deterrence on the security front. At the 2022 NPT Review Conference, current Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida utilized the general discussion session to state that Japan is determined to “firmly uphold” the NPT as its “guardian.” Upon the convening of the first meeting of the International Group of Eminent Persons, Kishida declared that Japan would fulfill the role of a “bridge” for raising sentiment surrounding nuclear disarmament in the international community. On the practical front as well, Japan issued strong assertions favoring a moratorium on the production of weapons use nuclear fissile materials, action

taken out of consideration for China and the increased volume of its nuclear warheads (this proposal was rejected by China at the 2022 NPT Review Conference), greater transparency and other moves. The status of nuclear weapon possession and deployment, nuclear fissile materials production, storage and control and other information is critical for stipulating the baseline for nuclear disarmament, and enjoys wide support in the NPT community for raising transparency. This intelligence would also furnish major benefits for Japan in terms of its national security. For China, however, which was previously inferior to the US in terms of its nuclear capabilities, this is extremely delicate information from the aspect of security, prompting strong opposition to its use.

At the G7 Summit held in Hiroshima in May 2023, the "Hiroshima Vision" was compiled as the first-ever leader's statement to address nuclear disarmament at a G7 gathering. Upon that occasion, the G7 heads, as well as the leaders of India, Brazil and other participating nations, visited both the site of the atomic bombing and the Atomic Bomb Museum in Hiroshima, as well as listening to the stories of survivors of that attack. This interaction holds great significance from the aspect of upholding the international norm for sustaining the history of non-use of nuclear weapons.

For Japan, there have been steady demands over the years to adhere to

a policy of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation functioning as a balance between the realism of security and the pursuit of idealism stemming from its status as the only nation to have endured atomic bombings. The question of how to surmount the stiff challenge of achieving compatibility between these two policies, which admittedly appear contradictory in essence, promises to be the focal theme in hammering out an effective course of action toward that end.

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Japan's Foreign Aid Policy

Ippeita NISHIDA

Introduction

In June 2023, the Japanese government established a new Development Cooperation Charter. In line with the National Security Strategy (NSS) revised earlier, the new Charter positioned development cooperation as “one of the most important tools of Japan’s diplomacy.” Japan’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) has traditionally been expected to contribute to security and the pursuit of economic gain while responding to the demands of international society, but the new Charter introduced a stronger expectation of the strategic role of ODA. Moreover, in April 2023 a new assistance framework specifically for security was launched separately from ODA. Today, defense capacity building assistance has become well established, and Japan’s range of foreign aid policy instruments is expanding, including into the area of military affairs, which Japan has traditionally hesitated to pursue.

This article offers an overview of ODA and other foreign aid policy instruments to advance understanding of Japan’s diplomatic and security policies. It focuses especially on the emphasis placed on the strategic dimensions of foreign aid in a changing international society, and also examines the recent development of frameworks beyond ODA.

Developments to date

(1) Outline of Japan’s foreign aid

Basic standpoints and features

The 2023 Development Cooperation Charter defines the purposes of development cooperation as (a) to contribute even further to the formation of a peaceful, stable, and prosperous international community under a free and open international order based on the rule of law; and (b) to contribute to the creation of a favorable international environment and the realization of Japan’s national interests. It states a basic policy of dissemination and implementation of international norms of inclusiveness, transparency and fairness through non-military cooperation, human security, and equal partnerships with developing countries, and commits to pursuing cooperation in accordance with the three priority policies of “‘quality growth’ in the new era and poverty eradication through such growth,” “realization of peaceful, secure, and stable societies, and maintenance and strengthening of a free and open international order based on the rule of law,” and “leading international efforts to addressing increasingly complex and serious global issues.”

Japan joined the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) in 1961. According to DAC statistics of 2019, Japan is the fourth largest donor country in the world,

having expended 15.588 billion US dollars on development assistance. In terms of development assistance expenditure per capita of population, Japan ranks 16th in the world, while expenditure as a percentage of GNI is just 0.29%, less than half of the international target of 0.7%. Around one-quarter of these funds comprises contributions to international organizations, while the remainder is allocated to bilateral ODA. Within this bilateral assistance, around 45% is grant aid including technical cooperation, and around 55% is interest-bearing loan aid. In terms of regional distribution, the highest percentage, around 61.1%, is spent in the Asian region, which is geographically proximate and has historical ties to Japan. The largest allocation is to the field of economic infrastructure, which accounts for 52.1% of the total (compared to the DAC average of 16.9%), while emergency assistance (e.g. humanitarian aid) is the lowest, receiving approximately 3.6% (DAC average 14.9%).

From foreign aid recipient to top donor

For the seven years from its defeat in World War II in 1945 until the return of sovereignty in 1952, Japan received aid under the United States' Government Appropriation for Relief in Occupied Areas. After Japan regained sovereignty it received project loans from the World Bank, which built the basis for industrial development and improvement of the lives of Japanese people. This experience became the foundation for the Japanese

approach to aid, which upholds the value of supporting partner countries' autonomous growth.

Postwar Japan began providing foreign aid in 1954. The goal at the time was to recuperate Japan's position in international society and improve relations with countries in Asia through postwar reparations. Later, as part of the Cold War, development assistance was required to play a role in halting the spread of communism in Asia. In addition, proactive efforts were made to use tied-aid for export promotion that would advance Japan's own economic prosperity.

Aid programs were also established in the high economic growth period from the 1960s to the 70s, and wartime reparations were gradually replaced by financial cooperation. In 1968 Japan became the world's second largest economy. While its international presence and influence grew, combined with memories of pre-war colonial experiences, Japan's vigorous economic advancement became a source of distrust in Southeast Asia. Japan's responsibilities as an economic superpower were also called into question, and these factors prompted a review of Japan's approach to ODA. As a result, Japan adopted policies to lower the tied-aid proportion and formulated aid approaches more attuned to the recipient countries' population, such as assistance with basic living needs.

While doing so, following the oil

shocks of the 1970s, Japan became more conscious of the need for stable procurement of resources and energy, and the government started to direct its development assistance, previously centered on Asia, toward regions such as the Middle East and Africa as well. Japan subsequently began increasing its supply of aid strategically, and in 1991 became the world's largest donor country, dispensing funds close to twice the value of its development assistance budget today.

Organization

Japan's development assistance budget is spread across all national government organs apart from the Ministry of Defense. The core organ, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), has an International Cooperation Bureau that formulates aid policy and coordinates across all associated ministries and agencies. The key institution for implementation of aid policy is the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which has centralized responsibility for technical cooperation, loan aid, and grant aid. A Country-based ODA Taskforce is established in each aid recipient country, with Japan's local consular outpost and JICA office forming the backbone of a team that conducts information-gathering and project development activities.

There are two separate structures for the delivery of international emergency humanitarian aid. The Secretariat of the International Peace Cooperation

Headquarters within the Cabinet Office is responsible for disasters caused by conflict. It dispatches Self Defense Force (SDF) troops and personnel, and provides in-kind contributions in accordance with the Act on Cooperation with United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Other Operations (PKO Act). For major natural disasters and humanitarian crises other than conflict situations, under the Act on Dispatchment of the Japan Disaster Relief Team (JDR Act), the secretariat within JICA organizes and dispatches cross-ministerial JDR teams and delivers aid supplies. Moreover, the MOFA has an emergency grant aid scheme to support relief activities for refugees and evacuees regardless of the type of disaster.

In addition, within the Ministry of Defense, International Policy Division is tasked with coordinating cooperation with countries and international organizations other than the United States, and plays the central role in planning and coordinating external military assistance projects such as capacity building assistance. Furthermore, in April 2023, a non-ODA economic aid scheme known as Official Security Assistance (OSA) was launched under the Foreign Policy Bureau of MOFA. OSA is a grant aid scheme designed to provide equipment and support infrastructure development for defense agencies in developing countries.

(2) Development cooperation in the post-Cold War period and its linkage with international peacekeeping operations

Expansion of ODA and shift from quantity to quality

The end of the Cold War brought two major changes in Japan's foreign aid approach. The first was an expansion of the geographic areas targeted by ODA. To uphold regional stability and support smooth transition to a market economy, substantial aid was provided to neighboring Russia which was politically and economically fragile at that time, as well as to former communist states in central Asia and central and eastern Europe. Driven by concerns over the spread of weapons of mass destruction, Japan also provided funds and technical assistance related to destruction and disposal of surplus nuclear weapons. In 1993, the first Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) was launched. Japan had already been allocating around 10% of its total ODA budget to Africa from the second half of the 1980s, but strengthened its involvement further in the 1990s, compensating for the decline in aid from European and North American donors experiencing "aid fatigue" after the Cold War.

The other significant development was the shift in focus from quantity to quality of aid. As explained earlier, in 1991 Japan became the world's largest donor country (a title it continued to hold

until 2000). This position required the government to become more articulate about its aid principles and policies to aid communities and its taxpayers, and in 1992 the first Official Development Assistance Charter (ODA Charter) was formulated. Around the same time, however, Japan experienced an economic downturn, which at the end of the 1990s resulted in the ODA budget being reduced as part of the government's financial rehabilitation efforts. Japan's ODA was required to adopt a focus on quality rather than quantity, including improvement of accountability to the Japanese public and the development of more effective aid programs. One part of this was a review of ODA for China, which was growing in economic power and political confidence, and the government stopped providing yen loans to China in FY 2007.

Peace-building initiatives

Japan also embarked on a program of peace-building in response to the destabilization and unraveling of the international order after the Cold War. This move was in line with the trend in international society at the time, but Japan also had its own reasons for pursuing peace-building. In the Gulf War, unable to provide military assistance owing to constitutional restrictions, Japan instead contributed around 13 billion US dollars in total to the US-led multinational forces. This contribution, however, was not properly acknowledged by international community—an experience still remembered

among Japanese policymakers as “the Gulf Shock.” Subsequently, the Japanese government refined its constitutional arrangements and began dispatching SDF troops on activities such as UN peacekeeping operations. In the context of development assistance, too, peacebuilding was instituted as one of the pillars of Japan’s international cooperation from the 2000s, and the government has started to assist post-conflict and fragile countries. For example, in recovery assistance for Afghanistan, which had a strong element to support the United States, Japan delivered a total of 5.791 billion US dollars to projects such as strengthening the government’s capacity to maintain order. Furthermore, in post-Saddam Iraq, ODA worked in tandem with the military, providing civil welfare support to complement the recovery assistance operations conducted by units deployed by the SDF. This served as the prototype for collaboration across diplomacy, defense, and development that later became known as the “All Japan” approach.

Shift to more strategic aid: foreign aid policy under the Abe administration

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s second administration was the longest-running in Japan’s history, at close to seven years and eight months (from December 2012 to September 2020). During this period Japan’s development cooperation approach changed in two key ways. The first was the export of infrastructure systems designed to connect Asia’s

growth with Japan’s own economy. ODA was given the role of stimulating private sector investment and helping Japanese firms win contracts, but externally, this was justified in terms of respecting the recipient country’s economic autonomy and raising its governance capabilities through highly transparent processes. Emphasis was placed on “high-quality infrastructure investment” to distinguish this approach from the opaque aid methods adopted by China. The concept of high-quality infrastructure was also incorporated into Japan’s “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)” vision and normalized internationally through forums such as the G7 and G20.

The other key change was the rendering of an even clearer relationship between development assistance and security policy. The NSS drawn up in 2013 was positioned as “presenting guidelines for” ODA policy, which had previously been handled separately from security matters, and the NSS included the establishment of structures for provision of support for recipient countries’ military forces. In light of this and other developments, the ODA Charter was revised in 2015 into the Development Cooperation Charter, with a stronger emphasis on how international peace and security contributes to Japan’s national interest. With regards to the relationship with military affairs, while upholding the conventional principle of avoiding the use of ODA for military purposes and to aggravate conflict, the conditions for application of ODA were relaxed, with

the Charter stating: "In case the armed forces or members of the armed forces in recipient countries are involved in development cooperation for non-military purposes such as public welfare or disaster-relief purposes, such cases will be considered on a case-by-case basis in light of their substantive relevance."

Current conditions and challenges

(1) Responding to new threats

The resignation of Prime Minister Abe was followed by the short term of Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga from the same Liberal Democratic Party as Abe, and then-Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, whose administration was established in October 2021. Traditionally Japan had been strong in the field of international public health including infectious diseases, yet the government was slow to initiate an international response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), preoccupied with formulating its domestic response. On the other hand, to counter China's "vaccine diplomacy," the Quad of Japan, the US, Australia, and India established a vaccine supply framework for Indo-Pacific countries, and pursued humanitarian and development cooperation with security partners. Japan also assisted developing countries through the COVAX Facility, and provided Taiwan with around 3.4 million vaccine doses that were surplus to requirements in Japan. This number equates to more

than one-third of the doses Taiwan needed at the time, enabling the Taipei government to avoid relying on made-in-China vaccines.

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Japan shifted its attitude toward Russia, shelving discussions toward a peace treaty and freezing the Japan-Russia Economic Cooperation Plan agreed under the Abe administration, which had promised to deliver 300 billion yen of Japanese investment in areas such as energy and development of Russia's far eastern region. Japan also imposed sanctions in line with Europe and the US, and is providing Ukraine with humanitarian assistance as well as supplying non-lethal military equipment.

Based on the awareness that the security environment is growing markedly more difficult owing to challenges to the international order by actors such as China, the Kishida government has drawn up policy documentation including a new NSS in late 2022. The new NSS calls for a comprehensive approach to the exercise of national power, across the fields of diplomacy, defense, economy, technology, and information, and indicates that ODA and other forms of foreign aid will be used toward the maintenance and advancement of a free and open international order. The new NSS also explicitly states that "Japan will provide equipment and supplies as well as assistance for the development of infrastructures to like-minded countries" and that "a new

cooperation framework for the benefit of armed forces and other related organizations will be established.” Following this, Japan began its OSA program in April 2023. The Kishida government is also showing signs of bolstering development cooperation for the stability of the Indo-Pacific. The Quad leaders’ summit held in May 2022 announced contributions of more than 50 billion US dollars to infrastructure over the next five years, along with the launch of an Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response (HADR) Partnership and stronger support in the area of non-traditional security. At the Asia Security Summit (Shangri-La Dialogue) held in the following June, Prime Minister Kishida announced the Kishida Vision for Peace, which includes further advancement of the FOIP concept and expansion of ODA.

(2) Future issues

As we have seen, foreign aid is thus gaining in strategic value as a policy tool for Japan, but the challenges going forward are ODA budget and the development of systems for military assistance.

Firstly, it is unclear how much increase in budget can be practically expected to support the expansion of ODA. The government is already planning a major increase in its defense budget, which is to double in five years. Developments such as the weak Japanese yen and energy price rises driven by the Ukraine

crisis are directly impacting the Japanese economy, and the squeeze on expenditure will only intensify in the future. Meanwhile, Japan’s national debt has reached two times its GDP, making it the worst among all developed countries. It should be noted that Japan’s thinking regarding expanding ODA under such conditions is in direct contrast to that of the United Kingdom, which has already formulated a policy of cutting ODA expenditure, formerly 0.7% of its GNI, in light of the pandemic-induced weakening of the country’s finances. An opinion poll conducted by the Cabinet Office in 2022 found that over half—54.3%—of respondents believed that Japan’s ODA should remain around its current level. The difficulty remains to draw a direct connection between expansion of aid and national interest, and it is unclear how much public support the government will be able to garner for such a move.

The next challenge is the development of structures and systems. The fact that Japan has been providing foreign military aid under the banner of capacity-building assistance since 2012 is still not well understood by the public. Even prior to that, Japan accepted foreign military personnel as students of the National Defense Academy and other educational institutions. Capacity-building assistance projects that provide human resource development and technical assistance directly to the military in developing countries are now recognized among the government officials as an important means of furthering

collaboration with such countries. During the FY 2021 alone, some 47 projects were conducted across 15 countries and one organization (ASEAN), mainly focused on Southeast and Central Asia. Although limited to non-combat fields, these projects extend across a broad range of subject matter, from humanitarian assistance and international aviation law through to submarine medicine. Mindful of China, some of these projects are crafted with strategic intent. Moreover, discontinued SDF equipment can now be used in material cooperation under the “three principles of defense equipment transfer.” These principles underpin the recent cost-free provision of Maritime Self-Defense Force training aircraft to the Philippines, and the provision of defense equipment to Ukraine.

Japan did not, however, have a mechanism for supplying new defense equipment to foreign governments, and this has become known as a “gap in the foreign aid scheme.” The aforementioned OSA is designed to overcome this problem, but in its initial year, FY 2023, the OSA budget is only 2 billion yen and the projects planned are relatively small-scale, such as provision of communications systems to four target countries including the Philippines. Even if OSA is ramped up in line with its achievements in the future, it lacks the usability of mechanisms such as loan aid and purchasing assistance. Its implementation needs to accord with the “three principles of defense equipment transfer” and the

operating policies thereof, which limits its scope of application. Although systems are taking shape, Japan is still new to the field of military aid, and will need to cultivate the understanding of the Japanese public as it works to develop its structures in this area.

Conclusion

This article has outlined how Japan's foreign aid policy, traditionally centered on development cooperation, has shifted in line with three factors: pursuit of economic profit, demands from international society, and contribution to security. Conscious of China's rise, Japan has placed particular focus on security in recent years. This section makes four concluding points in light of this evolution.

The first concerns the strategic uses of foreign aid based on new policy directions. ODA has been charged with the strategic role of maintaining regional stability and international norms, beyond bilateral diplomacy. Capacity-building assistance and OSA are expected to provide means of direct involvement in defense administration and military strategy, which still wield major influence in the governments of many developing countries. Behind these approaches is the intention to counter attempts by countries such as China and Russia to reshape the international order, and they are likely to be applied more often in the future in collaboration with like-minded countries

such as the United States and Australia. It is possible that as these moves progress, Japan's foreign aid will be imbued with new roles and functions.

The next issue is the image of Japanese ODA in international society. Following the Great East Japan Earthquake Disaster of March 2011, Japan received assistance from 163 countries and 43 international organizations. This included many developing countries, something which the Japanese government attributes to the "feelings of trust and gratitude" earned over many years of cooperation at the grassroots level. Bringing security to the forefront and focusing aid on direct national interest may alter the image and reputation of Japan's ODA in the future. Moreover, aid to the least developed countries, which require the most assistance, might decline even further, contrary to global requirements.

The third point is the difficulty of collaborating with countries that constitute the so-called "global south." Many developing countries in Southeast Asia and elsewhere are concerned about being caught in the middle of great power competition between the United States and China. India, while being a member of the Quad, is taking its own approach to foreign affairs and not participating in the West's sanctions against Russia. Likewise, other more advanced developing countries are maneuvering flexibly in an increasingly multipolar international society, seeking

to boost their own status and influence. These countries are on a trajectory of economic growth, and foreign aid as a proportion of their inbound capital flows is decreasing. The rise of new donors such as China is placing them in an advantageous competitive environment as recipients. As the emphasis on instrumental relationships grows even more in the diplomatic sphere, Japan can no longer expect to maintain its diplomatic relations and influence through the conventional development aid approach. This is a fact that will require further careful reflection. Many developing countries are cautious about foreign engagements that may lead to interference in internal affairs, and Japan may need to steer carefully between international norms such as basic human rights.

The final point concerns OSA. The separation of the OSA framework from ODA was an effective means of avoiding reputational risks for Japan's foreign aid. However, the three principles of equipment transfer that govern OSA are now the subject of discussion among the ruling parties in Japan's National Diet, including the case of permission to transfer lethal equipment. Future developments in this discussion are not to be missed. It is also conceivable that infrastructure support will be used in the future for the SDF to establish regional supply hubs and activity bases in regions such as Southeast Asia. If that becomes possible, Japan will secure regular military access to the areas in question,

which is expected to contribute to the gathering of intelligence on regional situations, promotion of collaboration with like-minded countries, and multilateral deterrence efforts against China's attempts to alter the status quo by force. It will be crucial for Japan to raise its profile as a credible partner that contributes to regional stability, while taking care to avoid inviting unwarranted criticism of its involvement in the region.

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Links to Key Security-Related Information for Japan

The Constitution of Japan

https://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb_english.nsf/html/statics/english/constitution_e.htm

National Security Strategy of Japan

<https://www.cas.go.jp/jp/siryoku/221216anzenhoshou/nss-e.pdf>

National Defense Strategy [of Japan]

https://www.mod.go.jp/j/policy/agenda/guideline/strategy/pdf/strategy_en.pdf

The Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States (Japan-U.S. Security Treaty)

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/q&a/ref/1.html>

Japan-United States Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA)

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/q&a/ref/2.html>

Diplomatic Bluebook (Annual Report)

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/index.html>

Defense of Japan (Annual White Paper)

https://www.mod.go.jp/en/publ/w_paper/index.html

Prime Minister's Office of Japan

<https://japan.kantei.go.jp/>

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/index.html>

Japan Ministry of Defense

<https://www.mod.go.jp/en/>

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