

Evolution of Japanese Security Roles after September 11th

—New Dimension of Japan-US Security Alliance?^κ

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Post-Cold War Reconstruction and September 11th

More than a decade since the end of the Cold War, the Japan-US alliance has evolved its concept, roles and missions to adjust post-Cold War circumstances in the Asia-Pacific region. I once have called, in my previous article, this decade development as “from threat-driven to an interest-oriented regime¹.” It means that with the absence of the acute threat from Soviet Union that Japan and the US faced during the Cold War, the alliance has reconstructed not based solely on the threat perception but the emphasis were added on the shared security interest in the region. When I try to characterize these “interests”, they consist of 1) deterrence of lingering Cold War-type confrontation (Korean Peninsula, Taiwan Strait), 2) crisis management (Counter-Proliferation of missiles and WMD, Peace Keeping), and 3) the reassurance as a product given to most of the “friends and allies” in the Asia-Pacific region.

However, September 11th terrorist attack did pose new dimension apart from these agenda or I would say drastically highlighted one of the core agenda, in international security. Kurt Campbell, who used to be an US Assistant Secretary of Defense, describes this as “the first war in the age of globalization².” I think that is true, this is the first war derived from the heavy attack to the US core asset in the mainland, the war against the enemy that are asymmetrical but ‘highbrid’ in nature, and the war that waged on many fronts---from military strikes, better intelligence, and stronger financial regulations. This ‘first war in the 21st century’ has also given a “grand stance” for rising of “asymmetrical warfare” in the international relations³. When you say international security has drastically changed after September 11, I think one of the core changes that we

^κ This paper is based on my lecture at the France Department of Defense, “l’evolution de l’alliance de securite nippo-americaine après le 11 septembre 2001” (December 4, 2001).

¹ Ken Jimbo, “From a Threat-driven to Interest-oriented Regime: Japan-US Alliance Management after the Cold War—Japanese Perspective” Paper Prepared for 10th JIIA-IFRI Joint Conference, June 2001.

² Kurt Campbell, “Globalization’s First War?” *Washington Quarterly*, (Winter 2002).

³ Therese Delpech, “The Imbalance of Terror” *Washington Quarterly* (Winter 2002).

experienced was the change of the priorities of our threat perception, and how to deal with them.

When you look at the Japan-US alliance from the view point of the bilateral treaty, The US-Japan Security Treaty when it was concluded in 1951, when it was revised in 1960, from the Japanese point of view, was primarily a defense arrangement for the security of Japan. From the US point of view that was one important aspect of the treaty although it had an additional factor, which is the maintenance of peace and security in the situation surrounding Japan. For Japan this was not an alien element in the treaty to the extent that stability in the surrounding Japan is directly affecting, or could directly affect, the security of Japan.

Even with a stretched interpretation of the US-Japan Security Treaty as the instrument of alliance between the two countries, it did not go into the area of US-Japan cooperation including mutual cooperation for the maintenance of broader international order. I do not mean to say that Japan is not interested in that. As long as you confine yourself to the framework of the US-Japan security relationship as formulated by the US-Japan Security Treaty, it covers the national defense of Japan and the security of the Far East to the extent that it is linked with the security of Japan. It does not go beyond that. That is going to be the problem that has to be tested in the new environment, because what happened on September 11 is the kind of problem that belongs to the second category, not the first category.

When you refer the example of the Gulf crisis, the Gulf crisis was easier to the extent that it had nothing to do with the US-Japan Security Treaty and Japan did not have to bring that into the orbit of the US-Japan Security Treaty, precisely because it was based on the Security Council resolution and Japan was cooperating with the United States outside the Security Treaty.

The Afghanistan situation in the aftermath of September 11 has created a new situation which could not be dealt with in the context of the precedent in the context of the Gulf War for different reasons. Clearly, it was not within the orbit of the Far Eastern clause and the operation of Article 6 of the Security Treaty. At the same time, it could not be justified under UN authorization because there was no such authorization by the United Nations. The Koizumi administration took an extraordinary step by enacting new legislation that enabled Self-Defense Forces to cooperate with the US forces operating in Afghanistan, but confined them to logistic activities in the Indian Ocean. This was neither an operation under the US-Japan Security Treaty nor an operation under the authorization of the United Nations; it was a voluntary operation on the part of Japan in the form of

the participation of the Self-Defense Forces to the extent that it was confined to logistic support. The Government took the position that was compatible with Article 9 of the Constitution.

Policy Process for Anti-Terrorism Measures Bill

It is not too much to describe that the measures that Japanese government has taken were very “ambitious” and “historically quick” (if you consider the Japanese reactions during the Gulf War were often said, “too little, too late”). Within a week after September 11, the Japanese government had cobbled together a “seven-point program” to respond to the crisis. It included measures 1) allowing the Japanese Self Defense Forces (SDF) to provide logistical support to the US military in the event of a retaliatory strike, and 2) providing humanitarian and economic aid to affected countries, including emergency assistance to Pakistan and India. Pursuant to that plan, Japan provided \$40 million in emergency assistance to Pakistan and dispatched envoys to Iran and Pakistan to help build support for the U.S.-led coalition against terrorism.

It was on September 31 that three laws regarding anti-terrorism has passed the Upper House of the Japanese Diet. These include the Anti-terrorism Special Measures Bill and the revision of the SDF law. The defense-related legislation normally takes more than a year for consolidation, for some examples, Peace Keeping Operation Law in 1992, Japan-US Defense Guideline related laws in 1998.

It would be a legitimate question whether these have been major changes of Japanese security policy. My answer is half-yes and half-no. For the ‘yes’ part, this is the first time that Japan will send out the Self Defense Force to support the US during the military campaign. Also this is the first time after the WWII that Japanese forces operate in “out-of-area” mission other than peacekeeping operations. However, for the ‘no’ part, Japan will conduct these operations under the current interpretation of the Constitution, and not dealing to change the right of collective self-defense issues. So for the latter part of my presentation, the focus of the analysis will be given to 1) why Japanese government could react so quickly, and 2) what are the implications to Japanese security and to the alliance relations.

Koizumi Administration and the Legislation Process

Why Japanese government could take measures taken so quickly? I think that there are several

factors behind.

Gulf Syndrome and *Gaiatsu* (external pressure)

First, the memory of the Gulf War weighed heavily over Japanese deliberations in the wake of the terrorist bombings. There were clear tendency that supporters of the bilateral alliance feared that Tokyo had to take action or risk severe criticism in Washington and perhaps even a rupture in the relationship. There were a strong motivation for the alliance managers to not to recreate the situation of 1991.

Public Support

Second, the public were highly favor of governments' planning. An opinion poll conducted by the *Yomiuri Shimbun* newspaper showed that 83 percent of respondents said Japan should cooperate either "actively" or "to some extent" with the U.S. in efforts to militarily eradicate terrorist organizations responsible for the September 11 attacks.

The historically high public support over the Koizumi himself has pushed from behind. Since the beginning of the Koizumi cabinet, the popularity has been remaining more than 75%. In this situation, there are little options left for other coalition party, Komeito, and even opposition parties to take firm opposition toward Koizumi policy. The debate over the pre-recognition of the Japanese Diet over the Basic Plan of the SDF's operation was the only point that the Liberal Party, the largest opposition, could virtually negotiate with coalition parties. And they even failed.

Preparatory Process: Japan-US Defense Guideline

Third, the debate over the Japan-US defense cooperation guideline, followed by the legislation process of the "Law on the Situation Surrounding Japan" has worked as a preparatory process of the new legislation. For past several years, Japan and the US have closely consulted over the possible measures that Japan can take in case of the crisis. Japan has tried to expand the cooperation area where constitution is not violated but to the limit that interpretation permits, and the US has been fully aware of this process. Many debate on how to draw a lesson from the Guideline and how much should it go beyond showed the Guideline and its related laws were the baseline of consideration.

Emerging Concerns Over Crisis Management

Fourth, for the Japanese measures that have taken in the domestic context, Japanese experience of crisis in 1990s was the lesson over the crisis management. The religious cult, called

“Aum Shinrikyo”, sprayed the Salin Gas in the subway in March 95, and not only 12 people were killed, but it is said more than 4000 people were suffered from that incident. Also during the 90s, Japan has experienced several other crises like 95 Kobe earthquake, several high jackings of domestic flights, and terrorism on Japanese ambassador’s residence in Peru. Experiencing these incidents in such a short period of time, the crisis management was one of the key concept to be pursued among policy makers. It was a major step for Japan to strengthen the role of the prime minister’s office and the cabinet to deal with the crisis, comparing to the Japanese past behavior towards terrorism especially in the 70s.

Low-key Concerns from China and South Korea

Fifth, and interestingly, the response from Beijing and Seoul have been refreshingly muted. Given the factors that Japanese medias and leftist are very sensitive to what neighboring countries may think of, the relative silence from the two countries did help proceeding the legislation. Chinese diplomatic protocol always prevailed when Japan was going to take expanded roles especially in the security field. Various criticisms were raised during the Guideline legislation and Japanese interest on missile defense. The quietness might show the Chinese priority over the concern of expanded Japanese roles are being low, compared to their other implication of September 11.

So these are my situational analysis on how Japan-US alliance has reacted and what kind of evolution that Japanese security has experienced after September 11.

However you might have already figured out from my story that there are many agendas ahead, and these are agendas depending upon how we see the dynamics of international relations from viewpoint of both policy makers and academics.

Some agendas for the Japan-US alliance are following:

- 1) what was the legitimacy of the anti-terrorism war? Was it a temporary action against Afghanistan and toward Al-kaida, based on UN resolution 1368, or would it be an continuous long-time war. If so, what would be the role of the alliance.
- 2) How could Japan-US alliance react, if the US decides to expand their anti-terrorism campaign to Somalia, Yemen, and notably to Iraq?
- 3) How this development after September 11 would affect to US security policy and alliance

relations? Would they be more consultative and being multilateral because of terrorism's globalized nature, or the US would be more unilateral than ever because of their traumatic experience?

- 4) How these developments would affect to the major powers relations and balance of power in East Asia? To what extent China is cooperative to the US? Would US- North Korea relation seek for breakthrough from dead-lock situation of "axis of evil"? What are the implication of Southeast Asian countries, and how does it matter to security multilateralism in this region.

These are major questions we are facing today and will be in the near future. Yet, at least Japanese government has not reached those criteria of analyzing this dynamics. We are certainly in the very critical position how should we judge these questions.

Finally, let me say a few words to the "national emergency legislation" which is now under the discussion in the special committee in Diet. Many questions are being raised from opposition party that "why we need emergency legislation now, when the cold war is over and the direct attack toward Japanese territory became less probable?" However, for the defense community in Japan, the emergency legislation has been indispensable for a long time but the political situation in Japan had never allowed putting the legislation on the table. Surprisingly, Japan did not have enough legal background to ensure the activities of Self Defense Forces in the emergency of Japan. Although the issue of compiling military emergency bills has been studied by various administrations since 1977, with the studies made public in 1981 and 1984, Koizumi's Cabinet is the first to actually compile such bills and submit them to the Diet.

One of the bills spells out a framework to deal with a military attack, another details revisions to the Self-Defense Forces Law to enable forces to operate in the event of an armed attack, and the third specifies revisions to the Security Council of Japan establishment law. Various critics are there, such as, why the legislation don't deal directly with asymmetrical threat such as terrorist attack. But my answer is this is only a first stage of comprehensive package of the crisis legislation. There is another bill what we call "Program Law" to spell out the road map to accomplish the comprehensive package.