

The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Beyond Northeast Asia

Friday, May 8, 2008

A Message from the Japan Delegation

Welcome to the symposium on “The US-Japan Alliance: Beyond Northeast Asia” to be co-hosted by Hokkaido University’s Slavic Research Center and the Brookings Institution’s Center for Northeast Asian Policy Studies. This event aims to involve US foreign policy communities on Russia, Central Asia, the Middle East and Europe --- which have little interests in Japan’s commitment to these areas --- and to reshape Japan’s presence and image within the US Northeast Asian policy circles. “Getting Japan right” in the US is an urgent task. In the US, “conventional wisdom” has led many to assume that Japan unilaterally leans on the alliance with the US because of their worries about a future confrontation with an emerging China. Most experts in Japan, however, foresee a peaceful and stable cooperation between China and Japan as neighbors in the region and do not necessarily overplay the concern with China as the prevailing US perception of Japan suggests. In addition, Japan’s foreign policy does not focus solely on China and China-related issues, but has a broader perspective beyond the region even if it is still yet to be strategically well-coordinated through other areas. The symposium will bust the US perception of Japan’s foreign policy while revealing some pertinent realities of Japan’s foreign policy. Japan’s foreign policy and its global commitments must be re-assessed in order to enhance the US-Japan alliance.

Akihiro Iwashita, Director and Professor
Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University

Panel 1: China and Russia

China

Yoshifumi Nakai, Professor
Gakushuin University

1. What can go wrong with an ascending China?: Three assumptions we should NOT take for granted.

- A. The Chinese economy will keep on growing, independent of external factors.
- B. China is already a responsible stakeholder. China’s neighbors, therefore, should not worry about the growing influence of China in greater Asia.

- C. Chinese society is basically stable. (Look at the last Olympic games!) The gradual growth and affluence of the middle class will lead China into democracy.

2. Complexity number 1: S. Kransner's analysis

- A. Perplexing things happen in the real world in terms of sovereignty.
- B. Asia is full of those irregular arrangements (e.g., Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan).
- C. Unusual arrangements in terms of sovereignty are not necessary bad.

3. Complexity number 2: R. Cooper's analysis

- A. The world is divided into three kinds of states: pre-modern, modern, and post-modern.
- B. China is a modern state. The U.S. and Japan are also modern states but they are moving towards post-modern states.
- C. Asia is a messy place in terms of typology. There is a pre-modern state like North Korea. There are many modern states, and some of them are trying to acquire post-modern features by organizing themselves into particular regional organizations (e.g. APEC, ASEAN, and Asia Community).

4. What Japan can do

- A. Japan can distance itself from the war games in and around Asia.
- B. Japan can lead the anti-nuclear movement in and around Asia.
- C. Japan can offer moral support to Taiwan and economic support to other nations, like Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- D. Japan can persuade China and the U.S. to set up a system for a common Asian currency.
- E. Japan can contribute to post-modern commitments in Asia. Possible areas for contributions include the initiation of a visa-free regime, promoting measures to save energy and fight global warming, and the dispatch of rescue teams.

5. What Japan cannot do

- A. Japan cannot restart the government. The likelihood of the emergence of an Obama-esque politician in Japan is almost nonexistent.
- B. Japan cannot make a wholesale commitment to the U.S. leadership. No more "we are with you (no matter what)."
- C. Japan cannot fix the alliance structure in Asia. Only the U.S. can do so.

- D. Japan cannot revise the Constitution unless there is a great 9/11-like crisis.
- E. Japan cannot make the Chinese economy consumer friendly and less dependent upon export. Only China can do so.

Russia

Shinji Hyodo, Senior Research Fellow
National Institute for Defense Studies

How should we view Russia after the Georgian Conflict?

-A traditional trouble maker or a nontraditional security partner? -

1. Impacts of the Georgian Conflict

- Russia has demonstrated both the will and capability to take military action beyond its borders to protect its national interests and was denounced by the international community for its excessive use of armed forces.
- In the post-9/11 world, the key concerns for international security had become asymmetric threats. However, the Georgian conflict in South Ossetia has shown that traditional armed conflict among nations can still occur along Russia's borders.
- That the former Bush administration did not have an explicit Russia policy is in part to blame for Russia's hawkish foreign policy. The deterioration of US - Russia relations is having an impact on Russia's diplomacy in East Asia to some extent.

2. The dual structure of the US -Russia relations

- On the one hand, there is a clash of interests in areas of traditional security, such as NATO's eastward expansion, the deployment of MD systems in Eastern Europe and the Georgian Conflict.
- On the other, cooperation on matters of nontraditional security, such as combating global terrorism, the spread of WMD, energy security and climate change, has expanded and deepened, culminating in *the US-Russia Strategic Framework Declaration* signed last year.
- As the new Obama administration is focusing its security concerns on nontraditional issues, the US needs a more constructive relationship with Russia in many ways by pressing "the reset button."

3. Can we share common security views about Russia?

- The US tends to view Russia as a nontraditional security partner and Japan also is seeking to promote energy cooperation with Russia by importing fossil fuels

and by signing *the Japan - Russia Civilian Nuclear Cooperation Agreement*.

- After the Georgian conflict, Russia's image as a traditional trouble maker in neighboring countries, including Japan, has grown. Traditional security factors like the North Korean missile threat and China's growing influence still remain in East Asia. These realities have made Japanese security views more traditional.
- It is very important for US-Japan alliance managers to diminish the perception gaps regarding Russia in terms of security and share common global strategic views.

Panel 2: Europe and Middle East

Europe

Osamu Ieda, Professor, Slavic Research Center
Hokkaido University

Japan and Europe

East European studies in Japan

East European studies in the US and West European countries are largely motivated by practical interests in the area, such as colonial issues, diplomacy, geopolitics, economic ones or immigration issues. Japan, however, has never had such interests in Eastern Europe, still her studies on the area have greatly developed, and reached high academic achievements in quality and quantity as well. The number of East European specialists is now more than two hundred, and they have their own academic organization, the Association for East European Studies established in 1975.

The motivations for area studies have been idealistic or model seeking. The first generation of European and East European studies in Japan was from the pre-WWII era beginning with the Meiji Restoration in 1867. This generation was interested in the struggle of nations or the historic 'Rise and Decline' of nations. This generation not only admired the strong nations, but also felt sympathetic toward the defeated ones, such as the peoples of Eastern Europe. In the post-WWII era, on the other hand, it was the leftists or the liberal intellectuals who were mostly interested in Eastern Europe as an alternative model to capitalism or West European development or the Soviet type of socialism. This was the second generation of East European studies in Japan. We may say that the first and second generations of East European studies were a reflection of a question that has lingered since the Meiji Restoration: Where

should a modern Japan be heading? The third generation, that is, post-communist East European studies in Japan, in contrast, has no such motivation. This generation seems free from the traditional frame of area studies, such as East European studies, Russian studies, Middle East studies, African studies, East Asian studies, and so on. Is this a new era of area studies?

Japanese role and contribution to Eastern Europe

Japan did much to contribute to the normalization process of the post ethnic conflicts in Eastern Europe. Since Japan has no practical interests in the region and behaves as an idealist, it can maintain it is neutral. The Japanese government, however, has not made the best use of its many specialists in East European studies. Corroboration between the government and academia would be the key point in the future.

American-Japanese presence in Eastern Europe

In the absence of a Russian presence, East Europeans need a counterbalance to the heavy presence of Germany in the post-Communist era. In the military sense NATO plays the role of a counterbalance, and politically the EU steps in to fill that role. The US and Japan could contribute to this aim through scientific and academic cooperation, especially in the field of environmental studies and practices. Germany and the EU have specific commitments to the area in terms of environmental policies, and European specialists are not free from EU policies, which are not always beneficial to East European countries.

An experiment for US-Japan corroboration is 'Green democracy.' Initiated by US President George H.W. Bush in 1989, it worked effectively with the Japanese association in the 1990s. The idea for Green Democracy, which involves assisting environmental NGO-NPOs, was a step in the right direction. However, there is no verification of whether the Green Democracy had been rooted in Eastern Europe. Rather, Green Democracy seems to be declining and the REC-CEE (the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe), a representative trans-national organization, now functions as a subcontractor of the governments of EU countries. One of the most decisive reasons for this was a decline in commitment by the US and Japan. The US-Japan cooperation can achieve many positive things for the area.

Middle East

Keiko Sakai, Professor, Graduate School

How can the features of Japanese Academism contribute in policy-making on the Middle East

Importance of primary sources through field research

Disadvantage of lack of diplomatic relations

Japan's role in contributing her knowledge on "the rogue states" with which the U.S. has no official relationship

US policy failures in Iraq:

- (1) The immediate dissolution of Iraq's military and security apparatus, the purge of Ba'thist officials from their posts
- (2) The over-generalization of the "Sunnis" as "supporters of Saddam"
- (3) The failure to control the political emergence of Shi'ite Islamists

What should have been done, then?

1. Ba'thists should not have been considered as "Saddam supporters" immediately after the fall of Baghdad
2. Dulaymis should not have been considered as "al-Qaeda's supporters" in 2004
3. The split in the Shi'ite Islamist coalition in 2008 was easily predicted and the emergence of the coalition should have been prevented beforehand

What could have been done?

- (1) Differences between the Ba'thist regime and Saddam's regime
Being "Ba'thist" was not a decisive factor to belonging to Saddam's political elite, especially after the late 1980s
- (2) The myth of a "Sunni triangle" as a supportive body for Saddam's regime: it was not based on sectarianism or on one-party dictatorship, but based on a coalition-like system among local groups
Mobilizing tribal identity to consolidate a coalition-like ruling system among local groups from the Upper Tigris, the Middle Tigris, and the Upper Euphrates
The rise and fall of Sunni tribal groups: Feuds between Tikritis and Dulaymis and Juburis in 1995
- (3) Differences among the Shi'ite Islamist movements:

Separation of religious circles and laymen political leadership (Da'wa), and the dependency on religious authorities (SCIRI)

Institutionalization of religious authorities (Da'wa) and reliance on traditional networks of religious circles (SCIRI)

Sakai, "Modernity And Tradition In The Islamic Movements In Iraq: Continuity And Discontinuity In The Role Of The Ulama" *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Wntr, 2001

Sakai, "Tribalization as a Tool of State Control in Iraq: Observations on the Army, the Cabinets and the National Assembly", in Jabbar, Falih A. and Dawod, Hosham (eds.), *Tribes and Power: Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Middle East* (London: Al Saqi) 2003, p.136-(29 pages),

Failures could have been avoided if the following data were rightly analyzed:

(1) Primary sources

- (i) Saddam's period: [government sources] *al-Thawra*, 1968-1989 / *al-Waqā'i al-'irāqiyya*, 1968-89 / Annual Abstract of Statistics 1968-1992; [opposition] *Nida al-Rafidain* (SCIRI) 1990-2002 / *al-Sawt al-Iraq* (Dawa London branch), and other party organs collected in the UK and Syria
- (ii) Current Iraq: Arabic newspapers, and party organs, such as *Al-Da'wa*, *Al-Hawza*, *Al-Basā'ir*, *Al-Bayyina al-Jadāda*, etc.

(2) Arabic books on religious works, tribal compositions

- (i) Rich collection of religious thoughts written by contemporary Islamist thinkers, such as Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, Ali Shariati (Iran) etc.
- (ii) Tribal composition in Iraqi society al-'omirī, Thamir 'Abd al-Ṭasan 1992-94 *Mawsū'a al-'ashā'ir al-'irāqiyya*, vol. 1-9, Baghdad / al-Sāmarrā'ī, Yūsuf al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm 1989 *al-Qabā'il al-'irāqiyya*, Baghdad / al-Mu'ā'aydi, Khashī'a 1990 *A'alā al-rāfidayn*, Baghdad etc.

Tradition of Middle East studies in Japan:

- Knowing history and languages, and long-term field research are required to understand "the area"
- Strong antipathy toward Orientalism
- Empirical studies (area studies) are encouraged, and disciplinary social sciences are rather neglected

Japan Association of Middle East Studies (established in 1985, and has a membership of 672 [2005])

History 35.5%, "Area Study" 9.6%, Anthropology 8.6%, International Relations 8.4%, Politics 5.1%, Linguistics 4.7%, Economics 4.5%, Literature 4.2%, Philosophy 3.1%

Did the Japanese government utilize the results of academic works?

1. Japanese Academic Contribution to Policy-Making
 - (1) Think-tanks: only a few, small institutions with temporary researchers
 - (2) Academics: a strong aversion to being involved in policy-making
 - (3) Trauma of pre-war failure?
 - (4) The government's distrust of Middle East scholars? (Middle East scholars are often viewed as being "leftist", "supporters of Islamists", or "terrorist-nationalist")
 - (5) Scholars' distrust of the government policy-makers? ("They don't understand the area", "Their policy is determined by Washington, not by discussions with the scholars")

Why trauma? Why the lack of trust between academics and policy makers?

Lesson from the past include:

1. Pre-war period (-1945): studies in Islam for pre-war imperial policy for Muslim societies in China and Southeast Asia
2. Post-war period (-1973): "There is no policy on the Middle East other than to follow U.S. policy toward the Middle East region"
3. 1973 Oil crisis: "Oil-begging diplomacy." Private companies' economic activities in the Middle East. Iran and Iraq as well as Saudi Arabia, not only as suppliers of oil but also as markets for Japanese construction companies
4. 1990/1 the Gulf Crisis/ War: How to show Japan's presence in the political/ security field in the Middle East? "Japan will have more than just an economic role."
5. 2003 Iraq War: (i) nothing but to follow US policy, (ii) to secure the oil supply, (iii) proud of being the "main contributor to Iraqi economic development in the 1970s"

Sakai, "Japan-Iraq Relations: The Perception Gap and Its Influence on Diplomatic Policies", *Arab Studies Quarterly* September 22, 2001

Sakai, "'Stories of our boys', but for whom? The Japanese media's coverage of the SDF in Iraq", *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies*, Volume 1 Issue 3, October 2007

Need to reevaluate the empirical area studies

Panel 3: Central Asia and South Asia

Central Asia

Tomohiko Uyama, Professor, Slavic Research Center
Hokkaido University

Central Asia: Japan's Diplomatic and Academic Commitment

Success and Failure of Japanese and US Policy toward Central Asia

US policy toward Central Asia in recent years can hardly be called successful. Its call for democracy has failed to produce tangible results: the governments of Central Asia remain autocratic, and even the "Tulip Revolution" in Kyrgyzstan, which many Americans initially hailed as a move toward democracy, led to the formation of the Bakiev administration, which proved to be more authoritarian than the previous Akaev administration. Both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have decided to close US military bases in their territories. The latter case was especially alarming, as the decision was taken not because of US criticism of autocracy (as was the case with Uzbekistan), but because of the Kyrgyz citizens' disappointment at the lack of economic benefit of the base and anger over the behavior of US military service members. In fact, a decline in the image of the US in Central Asia began as early as the 1990s, when the US call for democracy was mostly dismissed for its inconsistencies and double standards; the war in Iraq further exacerbated the US image. On the other hand, the broad range of aid and educational programs conducted by USAID and other US institutions can contribute to fostering civil society in Central Asia and mutual understanding between the states of Central Asia and the US in the long run.

In contrast, Japan does not place great emphasis on the democratization of Central Asia, although it does refer to the need for democratization in a number of official documents. Some Japanese diplomats have even demonstrated their sympathy with authoritarian presidents, while others have sought to promote dialogue, rather than making simple accusations, on political issues. ("Central Asia plus Japan" dialogue was launched in 2004.) Regardless of whether this attitude should be interpreted as cynicism or pragmatism, it is

certain that Japan has aimed at contributing to the economic development of Central Asia through ODA rather than engaging in a sort of “Great Game” or imposing Japanese values. Japan is praised for helping Central Asian countries without excessive ambition, although its presence remains low-key because of the small scale of investment and trade. Japan’s aid policy is also sometimes regarded as haphazard and ineffective.

Thus, both US policy and Japan’s policy toward Central Asia have their positive and negative sides, but it is essential that the two countries have played different roles and provided a complementary choice of partners for Central Asia. However, there have been some worrisome tendencies in recent years. First, Japanese officials began to speak about “universal values,” which is in fact very close to American values, as manifested by the idea of an “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity” proposed by the then Foreign Minister Aso Taro. It is beneficial neither to Japan nor the United States if Japan is perceived as a mere executor of US strategy. Second, Japan and the United States have increasingly connected their Central Asian policy with Afghanistan, expecting that the development of transportation between the two regions will improve their economies and open them to the Western world. This does not always harmonize well with the Central Asian nations’ intention to give priority to security over economic contacts with Afghanistan.

What Can Academics Do?

Central Asian studies have made tremendous progress in Japan and the United States during the past twenty years, and academics have acquired experience in cooperation and dialogue with the people of Central Asia. In both countries, governmental circles often take it for granted that it is good for Central Asian countries to rid themselves of the Soviet legacy and to distance themselves from Russia, but academics (especially historians) understand that the Soviet past continues to frame the Central Asians’ worldview, for better or worse. For the most part, Central Asians consider the Soviet period to be a model of relative stability, are proud of having been once a part of a superpower, and see Russia as a familiar partner, although their interests may differ from Russian interests in concrete situations. Academics in Japan and the United States can recommend that their governments be mindful of Central Asians’ pride and treat them differently from Afghanistan and other underdeveloped countries, and to avoid confrontation with Russia and China over this region. Central Asia

is a neighbor of East Asia, and it is essential to extend prosperity and cooperation, not confrontation, in East Asia to Central Asia.

South Asia

Osamu Yoshida, Professor
Hiroshima University

US and India-Japan Relations

Japan as an earlier partner for India's economic liberalization

Japan's relations with India have been set by the way Japan entered into India in the latter's modest economic liberalization in the 1980s, i.e., as a modernizer of sophisticated engineering and manufacturing industries in the field of production of durable consumer goods like automobiles. In the final stage of the Cold War when India was still reluctant to throw away the idea of self-reliance, and when the Soviet Union was locked into its war in Afghanistan, the Japanese or East Asian way of successful development of national economies through enhancing export capacity offered India an attractive alternative for India to choose. Japan's disinterest in the regional or international politics of South Asia as well as less security-oriented foreign relations in general also looked to serve for India's choosing Japan as an interim partner in the final years of the Cold War. And Japanese businesses could establish a significant economic presence in India by the time the latter was forced to make fundamental economic reforms in 1991.

India, Japan and global partnership

The end of the Cold War, the Gulf Crisis and consequent economic reform completely changed the situations around India and India's embarking on the globalized economy undermined Japan's position. Foreign investment poured into India and external trade soared to unprecedented levels. Japan, however, did not keep pace with this new trend, partly because of its economic stagnation in the 1990s, but more so because many Japanese businesses concentrated their energies on manufacturing, which had competitive strength developed through their operations since the 1980s, rather than expanded their investment activities to other fields. Despite the broader economic opportunity available in India as an emerging market, Japanese businesses have reacted with self-restraint. This has not satisfied the Indians nor has it been compatible with the Japanese government's ambitious statements for a global

partnership that emphasizes the common political cause of democracy to unite the two Asian powers.

This restraining attitude on the part of Japanese businesses, however, may reflect the reality of India's political economy. Indian democracy has gone much further than Japan's to become a real political arena for various interest groups to fight for their shares. Indian elites' monopoly of national and international decision-making, which has been the driving force behind the present economic reform, is now being seriously threatened. This suggests the necessity for Japan's official policy on India to be decided on the basis of a realistic judgment of present political developments in India, and not just on the basis of the outlook of their identically intimate relations with the US.

US-Japan alliance and India-Japan relations

India and Japan are argued to share a lot of similarities in their strategic circumstances including their relations with China and their desire to acquire permanent seats on the UN Security Council. These similarities are felt enhanced as India has moved closer to the US in its foreign policy. The outlook of similarities, however, may not be real just as the democracies of the two are in different stages of their development. India will be a testing ground for Japan to develop a real strategic relationship with other Asian powers with which Japan has no regional constraints. But India's closer relations with the US will not ensure the latter's ally, Japan, a more intimate relationship with India, as India's foreign relations have been based on bilateral relations. To take a further step, Japan should develop more concrete political relations with India just as Japanese businesses did in the 1980s. This will help the US-Japan alliance possess broader meanings beyond East Asia and not the other way around.