

Strategic Thought in Northeast Asia

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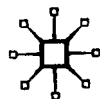
**Japanese Strategic Thought
toward Asia**

Edited by

*Gilbert Rozman, Kazuhiko Togo,
and*

Joseph P. Ferguson

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JAPANESE STRATEGIC THOUGHT TOWARD ASIA

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69. Based on the Obuchi-Yeltsin telephone conversation of July 31, 1998. See *Kyodo tsushin*, July 31, 1998.
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71. *Obuchi Keizo no 615 nichi*, p. 64.
72. Sato and Komaki, *Nichiro shuno kosho*, pp. 261–71.
73. Suettinger, *Beyond Tiananmen*, pp. 392, 400.
74. *Mainichi shimbun*, May 22, 2000; *Sankei shimbun*, June 13, 2000.
75. Jiang stated that "the rise of Asia was only possible with friendship and cooperation between Japan and China, and the two countries must take a long and broad view of bilateral relations." See Akio Takahara, "Japan's Political Response to the Rise of China," in Ryosei Kokubun and Wang Jisi, eds., *The Rise of China and a Changing East Asia Order* (Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange, 2004), p. 166.
76. *Asahi shimbun*, October 21, 2000.
77. <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/kaidan/kiroku/s_mori/arc_00/asia4_00/gh.html>.
78. The Mori-Putin negotiations could be followed through newspaper and other media reports, but this synthesis is based on my personal involvement as director general of European affairs, August 1999–April 2001.

CHAPTER 5

Japanese Strategy under Koizumi

T.J. Pempel

Strategic thinking within the Koizumi administration, not surprisingly, reflected far more elements of continuity with past policies than stark adventures into unexplored territory. In particular, Japan continued to base much of its strategic thinking on a "comprehensive" notion of national security—a conceptualization transcending any exclusive focus on overt military security of national borders and domestic security from terrorism. Instead, it has been expansive enough to weave in concerns about economic security, security from illicit migration and drugs, energy and food security, protection from the worst forms of environmental pollution, and the like. This broader orientation can be traced to the early 1980s, and remains largely in place.

Furthermore, Japan continues to abjure unilateralism in preference to bilateral arrangements. Generally, Japan seeks to forge its policies in accord with multilateral organizations such as the United Nations, the WTO, or the IMF. In recent years, Japan has also worked within regional bodies. It eschews unilateral actions or aggressive efforts to forge new regional or global arrangements. As a consequence, its strategic thinking is typically concentrated on its individual relationships with other nation states, while continually seeking to prove itself an upright member of the international community. Japan's bilateral security arrangement with the United States remains the keystone in Japan's arch of foreign policies; relations with the Asian region are important supplements.

Nevertheless, distinctly new ideas and surprisingly new directions were introduced, particularly with regard to military and external security,

many of which appear unlikely to be reversed, taking Japanese strategic policies into new directions. In some instances these changes grow out of shifts in domestic politics; in others they reflect adaptations to altered regional and global conditions. Understanding these deep structural changes is prerequisite to examining the specific strategic actions and policies under Koizumi *per se*.

Changing Structural Conditions Facing Japan under Koizumi

The Koizumi administration's strategic thinking and behavior were deeply affected by the intersection of conditions at three different analytic levels—national, global, and regional.

Changes in Japanese Domestic Political Structures

Domestically, Japan has been going through a fundamental regime shift. By "regime shift" I mean the establishment of a new equilibrium among political institutions, public policies, and the socioeconomic roots of power.¹ Japan's so-called 1955 system rested on an equilibrium among institutions, policies, and socioeconomic blocs that has now been upended. The deep predictabilities of that earlier system have been replaced by considerable political fluidity as the country moves toward establishing a new system based on new relationships that are likely to shape and structure Japanese politics for several decades.

The end of the old regime and the transition to a new one began with the bursting of Japan's asset bubble in 1990–91 and the subsequent 1993 splintering of the LDP. In their wake came powerful political and economic breaks with the past plus fundamental, albeit slow moving, structural readjustments in who holds power and how that power is exercised.² Most fundamental in influencing Japan's strategic thinking and behavior have been the following three items.

First, Japan's electoral and party systems are now fundamentally different from those that prevailed from 1955 until 1993. The electoral Left, once an undeniable and frequently strident voice constraining conservative governments on a wide number of security fronts, has all but vanished. The demise of the Left followed the decision of the Social Democratic Party of Japan (SDPJ) to enter government in the eclectic seven-party coalition of 1993–94 and then later in its "strange bedfellows" alliance with the LDP. Socialist leader Murayama Tomiichi took over the prime minister's office and proceeded to renounce virtually all

of the party's prior security planks, among other things endorsing the constitutionality of the SDF and the U.S.–Japan Security Treaty, effectively undercutting the party's *raison d'être*. The electoral response included a massive renunciation by long-standing supporters, an internal party split, and the socialists' overall marginalization. Since the mid-1990s, party and electoral politics in Japan have moved security debate and public opinion substantially to the Center–Right.

The new electoral system, meanwhile, has lessened the need for parliamentary candidates to appeal to established interest group constituencies or to rely heavily on factional endorsements to gain their party's nomination. The current system puts a premium on media-savvy populist candidates who can attract individual voters. Not a few successful parliamentarians have taken advantage of the diminished Left, winning office through appeals around a new mixture of populism and nationalism.

A second important domestic change concerns economics. For most of the postwar era, Japan's approach to foreign policy rested predominantly on its ever-expanding economic muscle. Political and business leaders from a host of countries in developing Asia looked to Japan as the logical model for emulation in pursuing their own economic strategies.³ Meanwhile, Japanese foreign assistance, trade, production networks, and bank loans became increasingly pivotal in advancing the economic fortunes of much of Asia. The combination long reinforced Japan's position as the undisputed leader of Asia's region-wide development, a model known widely in Japan as the "flying geese model."

Japan's once unchallenged regional economic leadership was eroded by the country's economic slowdown plus the simultaneous successes of other Asian countries including South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Malaysia, and eventually and most significantly, China. Japan's relative inability to stymie the pandemic Asian economic crisis of 1997–98 further undercut its own national confidence, as well as that of many of its neighbors, in Japan's ability to rely on its economic powers to shape regional events. Although Japan remained by far the most economically sophisticated and industrially advanced country in Asia, its position at the unchallenged center of regional economic developments was no longer automatic.⁴

Still a third element in Japan's regime shift has been the change in policymaking powers *within* Japan's ruling coalition. Under the 1955 regime, policymaking had been characterized by a high degree of functional separation—what the Japanese call *tatewari gyosei*, what von Wolferen labeled the truncated pyramid, and what others have labeled iron triangles.⁵ Most characteristic of this system was the development

and implementation of specific policies through close coordination among individual bureaucratic agencies, the interest groups they allegedly were responsible for regulating, and LDP politicians with a demonstrated interest and expertise in the policy areas involved. The predominant arenas where policy was formulated were the agencies themselves and the relevant functional committees of the LDP's Policy Affairs Research Council. Highly marginalized by these silo-like decisions were the interests or influence of other ministries, interest groups, or opposition politicians. Equally diluted was any strong initiating or coordinating role for top policymakers such as the cabinet or the prime minister.

This has changed radically. Particularly under Koizumi, bureaucratic and LDP party powers were reduced whereas both the Cabinet and the Prime Minister's Office gained enhanced powers to generate policies, many of which involve trampling on hitherto sacrosanct bureaucratic or LDP turf. In January 2001, Japan's 20 odd ministries were recombined into 14, with an important redistribution of functions and powers in many of the most important. Previously tight links between agency and constituent interest groups were weakened, and the long-standing system of vertical administration was altered. Previous powers of bureaucratic officials were checked. The number of political appointees in each ministry, which had previously been limited to only the top two posts, was more than tripled for most agencies, providing additional layers of political control over earlier agency autonomy.

Perhaps most importantly, a new and well-staffed Cabinet Office, plus a bolstered Cabinet Secretariat, gained substantial muscularity in initiating and coordinating policies. At the end of 1999 the Prime Minister's Office had a staff of only 582 and the Cabinet Secretariat had 184. By the end of 2001, the new Cabinet Office had nearly 2,200 staff and the Secretariat had more than tripled to 487.⁶ Under 1999 legislation, the prime minister was also given explicit authority to engage in policy planning and to initiate legislation. A new Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy (CEFP) gained considerable leeway to generate a mixture of policies aimed at addressing the country's extensive economic and financial problems.

Collectively, these measures altered the previous balance of power between elected officials and senior bureaucrats. Agency autonomy declined whereas the power of elected politicians, and particularly politicians in the executive branch, rose. Relatedly, the power of individual LDP leaders, including the once formidable faction leaders, was reduced as the prime minister and the Cabinet gained in policymaking oversight

and strength at the expense of party institutions and individuals. All of these bolstered Prime Minister Koizumi's predisposition toward taking a "presidential" and personal leadership role in key decisions as well as to his efforts to undermine long-standing practices and power holders in the LDP. Nowhere was this more visible than in Koizumi's masterful purge of his intra-party opponents in the September 11, 2005 election.

Without question, Koizumi lacked a strong background in diplomacy. Moreover, his political attention was concentrated principally on Japan's long-standing and truculent financial and economic problems. Nevertheless, he also demonstrated a strong personal predilection for shaping national security policy, often taking the lead in overseas diplomatic missions such as those to the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), to the United States, or to ASEAN. He has explicitly and regularly campaigned to enhance Japan's political, diplomatic, and military influence to a level commensurate with its economic heft.

The previously powerful role played by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was also eclipsed, in part as a result of the general trends noted above, but accelerated by a series of scandals that made it clear that Japan's "best and brightest" diplomats were less than exceptional when it came to resisting the temptations of mind-numbing greed and arrant stupidity. The tenure as foreign minister of the popular but frequently erratic Tanaka Makiko, and the sticky fingered ODA policies of former foreign vice minister Suzuki Muneo did little to bridge the widening gap between bureaucrats and politicians and nothing at all to enhance the strategic and policymaking influence of the Ministry.

Finally, and of particular importance in shaping strategic policy, the LDP saw the rise within the party of a vastly more nationalistic or revisionist leadership cadre. The combination of North Korea's nuclear program, China's steady rise, and anti-Japanese rioting in China enabled Japan's conservative nationalists to advance their own strategic and military goals while aligning the country more closely than ever with U.S. goals across Asia. Anxious to make Japan "a normal nation," conservative politicians and opinion leaders such as Abe Shinzo, Nakajima Mineo, Nakamura Katsunori, Hiramatsu Shiego, Okazaki Hisahiko, Hasegawa Keitaro, and Kase Hideaki moved into more prominent policymaking roles within the party.⁷ A bipartisan group of young Turks pushed as well for a rekindled national pride and a more activist pursuit of their vision of Japan's national interest. Koizumi himself was a foremost champion of this shift to revisionism and heightened nationalism, embodied most notably in his various visits to the Yasukuni shrine. Undoubtedly, much of Koizumi's ideological orientation had deep and long-standing roots;

but not coincidentally, his overt nationalism served the tactical purpose of appealing, through the flourishes of flags and trumpets, to long-standing party supporters such as agricultural interests, local financial institutions, the postmasters, and others that approved portions of his economic program.

Meanwhile, erstwhile "pragmatists" and adherents of the long-standing Yoshida line—with its predominantly economic focus and limited foreign policy role—were eclipsed, men such as Kato Koichi, Miyazawa Kiichi, and Kono Yohei. So was the Heisei Kenkyukai, the factional organization of Hashimoto Ryuichiro, a group with numerous individuals having close ties with China.⁸ As Richard Samuels has phrased it: "The consolidation of party power behind revisionist leadership has . . . worked to marginalize pragmatists and unify the LDP around revisionist goals to [a] heretofore unprecedented degree."⁹

The ideological shift and the rise of nationalism were evidenced as well by the fact that Japan reopened parliamentary discussions about constitutional revision, with a particular focus on Article 9, the role of the emperor, and the importance of spiritual education. New domestic political conditions have released Japan from some of the long-standing taboos surrounding such issues.¹⁰ The Research Commission on the Constitution was established by the Diet in the House of Representatives and submitted a progress report in November 2002. A series of proposed revisions followed in June 2003, which, among other things, called explicitly for change in Article 9 and the creation of explicit provisions for the maintenance of armed forces. In December 2004, the LDP put forward its explicit proposals for change. These were formalized in celebration of its fiftieth anniversary on November 22, 2005.¹¹

Unlike earlier efforts at constitutional revision, this series of moves had support both among the opposition parties and the general public. A Yomiuri poll of Diet members in 2002 showed that 71 percent favored revising the Constitution up 11 points from 1997 with 55 percent favoring revision of Article 9. This last figure was up 14 points from the prior poll.¹²

As late as 1986, only 23 percent of the general public had supported revision; since 1998 this figure has consistently exceeded 50 percent.¹³ A Yomiuri poll released in April 2005 showed that support was up to 61 percent of respondents, the second-highest figure since the opinion poll was first taken in 1981 and the second consecutive year that support for constitutional revision exceeded 60 percent, with 65 percent reported in 2004.

In addition to opening up discussions on constitutional revision, Japan's Ministry of Education gave voice to the enhanced nationalism. In 2005 it approved the middle school textbooks that reduced overt

discussion of Japan's actions in World War II (WWII) on such matters as comfort women, the Nanjing Massacre, and Unit 731. Moreover, maps in the new books were redrawn to make explicit Japanese claims on hitherto disputed islands, notably Dokdo-Takeshima and the Senkakus.

In and of themselves, such domestic changes, important though they were, did not lead directly to some new and clear-cut national strategic framework. But they set in motion undeniable moves away from long-standing presuppositions critical to the continuation of the Yoshida line, for example bureaucratic autonomy, economic primacy, and checks on unabashed nationalism. Equally less in evidence were the occasional one-man adventures in foreign policy by politicians such as those of Kanemaru Shin to press normalization with the DPRK in 1990 or Ozawa Ichiro to cut an aid-for-islands deal with Russia in March 1991.

Changes in the Global Balance of Forces

The end of the cold war, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and China's tentative embrace of quasi-capitalist economics, along with the increased importance of so-called rogue regimes, failed states, and nonstate terrorist networks changed the broad configuration of regional politics in East Asia, as well as many of the premises underlying Japanese strategic thinking. Gone were the certainties about friends and enemies so deeply entrenched during the long era of bipolarity. So too was the near state-monopoly on the instruments of violence and the formulation of national policies. By the time of Koizumi's accession to office the threat of nuclear warfare between superpowers had virtually disappeared, as had any serious threat of invasion of Japan, only to be replaced by the increased number of relatively small, often failed, states, some with a limited nuclear capacity giving them a newfound capacity to play an enhanced role in global and regional politics. In particular, North Korea took on a much more forbidding character for Japanese policymakers with its 1998 launch of a Taepodong missile over Japan, its April 23, 2003 declaration that it was pursuing a nuclear weapons program, and its unprecedented decision to end its adherence to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). Nonstate groups, from terrorist networks to NGOs, demonstrated enhanced ability to shape regional events, further complicating Japanese strategic thinking.

By the time Koizumi acquired the prime ministership, the United States, Japan's most significant ally and its major military guarantor, had become the world's only remaining superpower. As of the early years of the twenty-first century the United States was spending about five times

more on its military than its next closest competitor and its total military budget was greater than that of the next twenty countries combined. Its military capabilities in a host of military systems vastly exceeded those of most other countries.¹⁴

This uncontested military prowess was put to new uses under George W. Bush in a series of unilateral strategic and foreign policy actions designed to reshape the global status quo. These moves were in direct contrast to the prior 50 years of a predominantly multilateral and status quo-oriented U.S. foreign policy.¹⁵ The Bush administration also articulated a "for us, or against us" dichotomy that obliterated the nuances by which states had long shaped their foreign policies.

In keeping with its new unilateral and preventative military actions, U.S. military and strategic thinking also underwent comprehensive overhaul with the move from a "threat-based" to "capabilities-based" military. The new U.S. doctrines were laid out in the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) of 2001, the Bush speech at West Point June 2002, and the National Security Strategy (NSS) of September 2002. The new doctrine called for the United States to take on three major goals—"[to] defend the peace by fighting terrorists and tyrants . . . [to] preserve the peace by building good relations among the great powers . . . [and to] extend the peace by encouraging free and open societies on every continent."¹⁶ New were Bush's elevation of the terrorist threat to the level of that posed by tyrants, the explicit notion of preemptive warfare to achieve his goals, and the aim of actively removing the causes of terrorism and tyranny through military action.

The QDR argued that new, post-cold war challenges would require massive changes in the existing U.S. basing system. Forces would need to be closer to what the United States identified as the "arc of instability" stretching from Northern Africa to Southeast Asia. America's new focus would be on mobility to conduct expeditionary operations in distant theaters against adversaries armed with WMD, rather than on the fixed bases designed to ward off, or respond to, conventional attacks from well-identified adversaries. The United States plans to close many bases in Western Europe and Northeast Asia pulling back some 60,000–70,000 troops along with 100,000 civilian employees and family members. But it also plans to require additional bases and stations in the Middle East and Central Asia.¹⁷

Certain "bedrock" allies such as Japan and probably Australia would be home to central U.S. basing hubs. These hubs would be supplemented by a large number of "lily pads" holding prepositioned equipment to which rapidly deployable forces can deploy and/or "leap

to and from" in response to contingencies in a wide variety of geographical locations.

Thus, the United States requested that Japan allow for the transfer of U.S. military command functions for the U.S. Army I Corps (now based in Fort Lewis, Washington) to Camp Zama in Kanagawa Prefecture. Such a transfer would underscore and enhance Japan's role in broader U.S. global military strategy as well as deepening ties between the U.S. military and the Ground SDF. Since the sphere of action of the Army I Corps reaches to the Middle East, however, the relocation of headquarters from Fort Lewis to Camp Zama would also expand considerably the geographic scope of the current U.S.–Japan Security Treaty beyond its current focus on "the Far East." This in turn opens up the possibility that Japan will shift from its long-standing support of "collective defense" to the more activist doctrine of "collective security." The former stresses the defense of Japanese territory through the alliance with the United States, but is seen as purely "defensive defense." In contrast "collective security" is a broader conception, holding that Japanese security requires the country to consider engaging in collective actions to enhance its overall security in ways that require a broader geographical sweep. Included would be peacekeeping actions under UN auspices, or activities that expanded Japan's defense perimeter well beyond the Japanese homeland.

Meanwhile of equal salience to East Asia, the new doctrine calls for a substantial reduction and repositioning of U.S. forces in the Republic of Korea (ROK). This would remove the U.S. tripwire at the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone) allowing U.S. forces in the ROK to conduct more than just one task, that is, its traditional defense of the ROK from DPRK attack.

Changing Regional Dynamics

The Asian region became far more integrated and regionally cohesive during the past two decades or so. This integration involved a mixture of formal, top-down, governmentally driven regional institutions along with more important but less formal, bottom-up linkages driven primarily by the economic activities of corporations and financial institutions.¹⁸ Pan-regional ties were far more numerous and vastly more significant in the economic sphere than in security. Moreover, Southeast Asia has shown more signs of cooperation and integration than Northeast Asia. In the north, nationalist competition, unresolved territorial disputes, and ghosts from the historical past continue to work at cross purposes

with efforts to reduce the predilections for unchallenged sovereignty through deeper regional cooperation and connection.

Over and above any normal nationalist competition in the region, two particular problem areas loom large and have risen in relative importance—the Cross-Strait problem of Taiwan and the DPRK's decision to remove itself from the NPT and to assert that it has become, and deserves to be treated as, a nuclear power. Cross-Strait relations took a negative turn with the Chinese shelling across Taiwan prior to the 1996 elections and the subsequent U.S. positioning of forces from the Seventh Fleet in defensive positions in the Straits. The election of the nominally pro-independence DPP's presidential candidate, Chen Shui-bian, in 2000 and his close and contested reelection in March 2004 worsened ties across the Strait. Equally problematic were threats of military action by the PRC in the event that Taiwan went too far in testing precisely where the "red line" lay between "one China" and Taiwanese statehood. Early in 2005 China passed an anti-secession law that called for the forceful repatriation of Taiwan in the event of unspecified Taiwanese moves deemed provocatively pro-independence by the PRC.

The ongoing challenges stemming from North Korea's actions were even more destabilizing to Northeast Asian security and challenged Japan directly. A mixture of bilateral Japanese–DPRK negotiations plus Japanese participation in the six-party talks was the result.

Japan has played an ambivalent role in Northeast Asia's ongoing tension between regionalization and nationalism. For a long time the country was an ardent supporter of closer Asian ties, particularly when these involved economic links, "open regionalism," and no overt threat to Japan's close ties with the United States. Thus, Japan opposed the East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC) advocated by Malaysia's prime minister Mahathir but was a strong proponent of APEC and is a regular participant in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), for example, while at the same time using ODA and private sector investment to bolster economic links between Japan and the region. It unsuccessfully proposed an AMF to deal with the liquidity problems in the Asian economic crisis and has supported the ASEAN + 3 process.

Support for enhanced Asian regionalism was easier for Japan when its economic prowess afforded it unchallenged leadership ideologically, technologically, and financially. Things became more problematic with the bursting of Japan's asset bubble, a decade of domestic economic torpor, and the country's demonstrable inability to head off the sweeping devastation of the Asian economic crisis. The economic achievements of South Korea, Taiwan, much of Southeast Asia, and eventually

the hyper-growth of China also reduced the relative influence of Japan's regional economic muscle.

As Japan's enthusiasm for the Asian region was overwhelmed by events in Iraq and North Korea, and as China gained an enhanced appreciation for the benefits of regional leadership, Japanese leadership of the region has been challenged by China. The latter has increasingly used regional forums to advance its influence throughout the neighborhood, in many cases in ways that proposed a challenge to Japan. Perhaps its most notable came in 2001. At the ASEAN + 3 meeting in Brunei that year, China dramatically proposed an ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement (FTA) to be come into effect within ten years. Challenged to do the same, and to demonstrate a continued Japanese capability to "lead" within East Asia, the best that Japan could muster was the promise to consider freer trade with its Southeast Asian neighbors. In the years since, China has become an active player in formal and informal (e.g., Track II) regional bodies whereas Japan more often remained passive. In the recent race to create a series of bilateral FTAs, China again has moved at far greater speed within the region than Japan, as has been most recently seen by active negotiations between Australia and China toward an FTA compared to Japanese unresponsiveness to Australian efforts to initiate similar talks.

China's position in the Asian region was further enhanced, and complicated Japan's security position, because of its close cooperation with the Bush administration's "war on terror." Although the Bush administration came into office in 2001 with strategic presumptions that China would be its next major "strategic competitor," that predisposition was muted by China's nominal opposition to Muslim fundamentalism (particularly as manifested in its Western province of Xinjiang) as well as its active (if less than fully pro-U.S.) role in the six-party talks aimed at resolving the issue of the DPRK's nuclear weapons program.

Overall, therefore, Japanese strategic thinking under Koizumi was compelled to deal with an Asian region that in the early years of the twenty-first century showed less openness and easy receptivity to Japanese leadership, as well as a region in which China continued to press for, and to acquire, greater relative importance. Meanwhile, however, once somewhat peripheral trouble spots such as the Korean peninsula and the Taiwan Strait took on greater significance in Japanese policy and planning.

In summary, during Koizumi's premiership Japanese domestic politics was going through a major transformation characterized by enhanced nationalism and prime ministerial power whereas bureaucratic autonomy,

the power of the Left, and functional specificity were in decline. The United States has moved into a position of unchallenged military supremacy and the Bush administration pursued unilateralism and preventative wars while also beginning to reconfigure its long-time basing strategies. Within Asia, intra-regional rivalry between Japan and China rose as did the significance of once marginal areas of potential dispute, particularly Taiwan and the DPRK. Japanese strategic thinking and actions under Koizumi reflected, responded to, and sought to exploit these deep changes.

Japanese Strategic Thinking and Behavior under Koizumi

The most important aspects of Japanese strategic thinking and behavior during the Koizumi administration were played out at two different levels. Certain general trends characterized Japanese strategic activities more or less across the board. These largely supplemented Japan's long-standing focus on economic diplomacy by expanded uses of the Japanese military. The second shift involved a tilt from Japan's developing ties to the Asian region and embracing the United States more closely than at any time in the recent past.

Embrace of a More Active Military Role in Support of the United States

The single most striking feature of the Koizumi administration's approach to the country's foreign policies and its national strategic activities was the rather clear-cut break from Japan's earlier "passive pacifism," "pacifism in one country," or "culture of antimilitarism."¹⁹ In its place has come what, was an expanded geographical scope for Japan's security and a stepped-up role for its military. These changes were most explicit with the Koizumi administration's active support for U.S. military actions in Afghanistan and Iraq, but they resonated far more broadly.

The base line from which these changes began was the overt U.S. disdain for what Japan saw as its generous \$13 billion contribution in support of U.S. actions in the 1991 invasion of Iraq. Among Japan's foreign policy and strategic elite, the take-away message was that "boots on the ground" rather than "checkbook diplomacy" were vital to maintaining close ties with the United States. The redefinition of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty in 1996-97, Japan's willingness to commit to a broader geographical scope for the treaty that included the Far East generally

(and Taiwan at least implicitly), and Japan's decision to allow its SDF troops to participate in UN peacekeeping operations all represented tangible markers along this shifting strategic path. Overcoming prior political and popular taboos inhibiting such moves was also congruent with the rising nationalism among many politicians and their desire for Japan to strengthen its defense and security posture and to enhance its global and regional weight.

Japan was also aware of its easy marginalization at the time of the 1994 DPRK nuclear problems. The United States settled the issue with North Korea on a strategic level, but then passed on the bill for the key portion of the solution (KEDO) to nonparticipants, South Korea and Japan.

When the Bush administration came to power it clearly envisioned a much more active and cooperative role for Japan. This had been articulated in the election-year report, "US and Japan: Toward a Mature Partnership," generated in October 2000 by Richard Armitage (subsequently deputy secretary of state) and a half dozen Japan specialists most of whom joined the administration.²⁰

For many in Japan, especially within the military and within the ruling LDP, American demands for such an enhanced security role were hardly unwelcome; rather they provided an excuse to bolster ties to the United States and to pursue more activist military policies long on the shelf. Particularly under Prime Minister Koizumi's administration, Japan embraced the strategy of overt bandwagoning with the superpower, giving few signs that it ever considered alternatives such as balancing with other nation-states against the rise in U.S. power or embracing exclusively Asian regional institutions. The result was the rapid and wholehearted embrace of closer U.S.-Japan security ties. For most Japanese prime ministers before Koizumi, Kishi's political evisceration over the renegotiation of the security treaty in 1960 had stood as a warning to any politician becoming too overtly supportive of U.S. foreign policies.²¹ Koizumi moved to become in Asia what Tony Blair was in Europe—an unabashed adherent of U.S. foreign policies.

Unlike Japan's collective foot dragging in 1991, Koizumi moved quickly to coordinate Japanese actions with those of the United States following the attacks of September 11. Just two weeks after the event, Koizumi visited the United States to express his active support for the war against terrorism. Following the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, on October 29 of 2001, the Japanese Diet enacted the "Special Anti-Terrorism Measures Law" and "Amendment to the Self-Defense Forces Law." These provided the legal justification that allowed Japan to send

three convoy vessels to the Indian Ocean on November 26, 2001, in support of the United States in Afghanistan and represented the first dispatch of Japanese military forces out of the "areas surrounding Japan" since 1945. Japanese tankers serviced not only U.S. and British vessels but also those of a variety of European navies as well as ships from Australia and New Zealand, moving Japan closer to "collective security" than ever before.

Koizumi also proved to be one of the industrial world's few strong supporters of U.S. actions in Iraq. Japan went so far as to provide SDF ground troops in support of the American-organized "coalition of the willing," despite vociferous domestic opposition to the war and to Koizumi's actions and the absence of any UN legitimization of those actions, a step long taken as mandatory for Japanese commitment of its military forces to overseas operations.

Sending troops to Iraq rested on various legal changes. In June 2003, Japan passed three laws—the Bill Concerning Measures to Ensure National Independence and Security in a Situation of Armed Attack; the Bill to Amend the Security Council Establishment Law; and the Bill to Amend the Self-Defense Forces Law and the Law Concerning Allowances, and the like of Defense Agency Personnel. Overwhelming majorities in both houses of parliament supported these bills, in striking contrast to prior, highly contentious debates over even the minutest SDF activities. The new laws gave Japan a legal foundation for expanding the prime minister's authority and for building a rapid response system in cases of emergency (in contrast, for example, to the disastrous lack of such capabilities at the time of the 1994 Kobe earthquake). Japan also pledged a \$1.5 billion grant to Iraq for aid and \$3.5 billion in loans at the Madrid donors' conference in October 2003.

In July 2003 another law was passed—the Law Concerning Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq. This law, followed up with a December 19 general order from Minister Ishiba to the SDF, led to Japan sending troops for reconstruction activities including medical services to local inhabitants, long-term repair and construction of infrastructure, school rehabilitation, and the like.

These laws explicitly removed many long-standing constraints on the SDF thereby authorizing them to take part in a range of new activities. By mid-2003, Japan had pledged to send some 500 troops in support of the United States. They arrived in Sarawah Iraq in January of 2004, and even though they were restricted from combat actions—indeed they required military protection, first by the Dutch and then by the Australians—their mission was one that would have been unthinkable a decade or two

earlier. Authorization for these forces to continue was extended in December 2004 and December 2005, even as many other countries in the dwindling "coalition of the willing" were pulling troops out. As Robert Uriu argued, "... Koizumi seems intent on using this unique opportunity to fulfill his long-term desire to move Japan toward a more active foreign policy role." That role hewed closely to U.S. preferences.²²

Furthermore, in October 2005, Japan agreed that the U.S. Kitty Hawk aircraft carrier based in Yokosuka would be replaced by the nuclear-powered USS George H.W. Bush in 2009. This would be Japan's first time hosting a nuclear aircraft carrier.²³

Koizumi's support for the United States had economic as well as strategic rewards. It was not clear whether or not the U.S. decision to cut out France and Germany from development of oil fields in Iraq would explicitly benefit Japan; allocations of drilling rights remain quite confidential. But without a doubt Japan's strategic support for the United States made it much easier to go forward in developing the Azadegan oil field in Iran for an estimated \$2.8 billion, a deal likely to have been opposed by the United States had Koizumi not been so close on Iraq.²⁴

Beyond expanding Japan's support of the United States in the Middle East, Japan under Koizumi began to devote more explicit attention to the country's own strategic situation. Six governments in East Asia have deployed or possess ballistic missiles—China, ROK, Russia, Taiwan, Vietnam, and North Korea. Of these China, North Korea, and Russia have missiles capable of reaching Japan. Most immediately worrisome for strategic thinkers in Japan, the DPRK's Nodong has a range of about 1,300 km. enabling it to reach most parts of Japan; its Taepodong travels even further. Japanese thinkers and policymakers became more overtly sensitive to this situation and were less quick to assume that the U.S. nuclear shield would "solve" any consequent security problem for Japan.

As a consequence, Japan began to consider a more active military role in and around the home islands as well as in the Middle East. This was clear in Japan's new NDPO of December 2004.²⁵ That document laid out the country's mid-term defense buildup plan for the fiscal 2005–09 period. Among the most important elements, the document broke precedent by identifying China and North Korea as potential security concerns. It also explicitly stressed the country's need to deal with both ballistic missile and guerrilla attacks as well as traditional invasion threats involving Japanese airspace and territorial waters. Japan's security interests were overtly expanded from defense of the home islands to include international security, international peacekeeping, and counterterrorism as key targets of Japan's overall national defense strategy.

To meet the newly characterized threats, Japan, it was argued, needed a new "multifunctional military capability with a centralized SDF command and a rapid reaction force."

The overall thrust of the new NDPO was to strengthen air and naval capabilities, including the capability for force projection. It also wove into Japanese strategic thinking explicit cooperation with the United States on missile defense, arms exports, export by Japan of technologies developed in that project, as well as enhanced interoperability of weapons systems. Japan explicitly considered the purchase and deployment of a U.S.-made missile system as early as 2006 along with missiles that would be launched by Aegis-equipped destroyers and a ground-based Patriot missile system as backup. Japan ordered PAC-2 Patriot interceptor missiles and announced plans for the subsequent purchase of PAC-3 Patriots to be delivered in FY 2006. The expanded SDF role was also reflected in an August 2003 request for a tenfold increase in spending on missile defense to \$1.2 billion and an expected outlay of \$1 billion for missile defense from 2004 through 2007.

Japan was also one of eleven charter members of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) in May 2003. The PSI drew Japanese support, including a September 2003 exercise with the United States in the Coral Sea designed to practice interception of ships suspected of smuggling. (Interestingly, however, Japan insisted that the exercise not be built around a hypothetical DPRK smuggler so as not to antagonize North Korea.) In October 2004, Japan for the first time hosted a PSI interdiction exercise in Tokyo Bay involving nine naval and coastguard ships from four countries. Japan also engaged in increased naval exercises during an August 2003 joint exercise with the Russian and South Korean navies. In September 2003, Japan and China agreed to accelerate their own bilateral defense exchanges including reciprocal naval ship visits.

Important as all of these changes have been in Japan's overall strategic posturing, the country by no means abandoned other legs of its "comprehensive security policy." Nor did its moves toward closer links with the United States mean abandoning Japanese efforts to enhance cooperation across Asia. Most particularly, Japan remained active in a number of new or recent regional institutions particularly the ASEAN + 3 process and the currency swap arrangements set out in the Chiang Mai Initiative of May 2000. Japan also supported moves toward the development of an Asian bond initiative. And though it has moved far more slowly than many other Asian countries, including China and the ROK, Japan has been active in pursuit of various bilateral FTAs.²⁶ Furthermore, in the quasi-competitive race to be the nice neighbor to the North, China and

ASEAN countries reached agreement on the "Code of Conduct in the South China Sea" so as to avoid military conflicts. And in 2003, China acceded to ASEAN's 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC). But Japan quickly followed suit acceding to the Treaty on July 2, 2004.²⁷ Japan was a participant in the East Asian Summit of December 2005 that included the ASEAN + 3 countries, India, Australia, and New Zealand, but not the United States. Yet there was no doubt that strengthening ties with the United States remained a vastly higher priority for Japan than improving ties to the rest of Northeast Asia.

Overall, Japan's strategic thinking under Koizumi took on an explicitly more important role for traditional security concerns, including an enhanced role for Japan's military and moved Japan into a much closer and more explicit overlapping with U.S. strategic planning. Asia and the tentative embrace of Asian regionalism were by no means abandoned, but they began to take on a secondary importance behind the heightened focus on remaining quite close to the United States. Bilateral ties were revitalized and expanded at the diplomatic level and personally close ties were fostered between Bush and Koizumi, most overtly manifested in Koizumi's visit to Bush's Crawford "ranch" on May 22–23, 2003. There, and in subsequent Diet speeches he set out to "globalize" the bilateral ties, also referring explicitly to them as an "alliance," a term previously taboo.²⁸ To critics, once-pacifist and passive Japan suddenly appeared willing to play an enhanced and active role in support of U.S. military policies, serving even as America's "deputy sheriff" in various parts of East Asia,²⁹ most notably vis-à-vis North Korea.

East Asian Manifestations of Japan's New Strategic Thinking

The general features of Japanese strategic thinking and behavior outlined above were manifested in several important cases involving Japan's links in East Asia. Of greatest importance were relations with the PRC and with the DPRK.

Historical memories continued to cast a long shadow over relations between Japan and China. These played out on a host of ad hoc issues from Koizumi's regular visits to the Yasukuni shrine, the revision of Japanese history textbooks, anti-Japanese protests at soccer matches in China, ongoing competitive claims to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, Chinese intrusions into the Japanese consulate in Shenyang in pursuit of North Korean asylum seekers, and the like. Just as historical legacies lay beneath the surface of many problems, so too was the psychological perception that China seemed to be "rising" whereas Japan was at best "stagnant."

Japan's bilateral ties to China had long been kept close through economic assistance. Japan has provided about \$35 billion in economic assistance since the normalization of relations between the two countries. Furthermore, bilateral trade and investment ties between the two moved forward at a rapid pace, and China now outstrips the United States as Japan's major trade partner. At the same time, concerns within Japan have expanded about the potential strategic and diplomatic implications of an economically stronger China, particularly as its rapid economic growth allows it to expand its military budget geometrically. Thus, Japan announced in October 2001 that it would reduce and redirect its ODA to China in recognition of the country's rising economic success and diminished need. The result was an overall reduction combined with a shift from multi-year pledges of ODA to China in favor of a single-year pledge system and a shift in focus away from infrastructure and construction to environmental protection, increased living standards, education, institution building, and technology transfer. This naturally irritated bilateral ties.

As was noted above, China, following the Asian economic crisis and following its accession to the WTO, began to demonstrate a renewed interest in Asian regional diplomacy. Mentioned above were China's efforts to generate an FTA with ASEAN. Within Northeast Asia, China also normalized relations with the ROK and expanded trade and economic relations so that by 2001 China was the ROK's number one target of investment. In 2002, China-Hong Kong became South Korea's largest export market.³⁰ Seoul also began cooperating with the PRC on military matters. In some instances, their closer ties tilted them against Japan. For example, both China and Korea issued declarations indicating their opposition to Japan's bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council (Korea's President Roh actually came out explicitly in favor of a seat for Germany, making even more striking his unwillingness support Japan's claims). Then in April 2005, President Roh announced that his country would seek to be a "balancer" in the Asian region, a role that implied a new proximity to China at the expense of Korea's prior ties to the United States and Japan. All of these actions created frustrating diplomatic problems for Japan, which had traditionally taken for granted its own leadership role in Asia, but particularly among ASEAN and with the ROK. And as a demonstration of hostility to Koizumi's continued visits to Yasukuni, both President Roh and Chinese prime minister Wen Jia-bao cancelled a normal three-way meeting with Koizumi and shunned bilateral meetings with him during the following East Asia Summit.

China also began exploring the waters near Japan and periodically broaching areas that Japan claimed were within its national economic zone. In one such instance, on November 10, 2004, the Japanese Navy discovered a Chinese nuclear submarine in Japanese Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) near Okinawa. Although the Chinese apologized and called the sub's intrusion a "mistake," Defense Agency Director Ono gave it wide publicity, further inflaming Japanese public opinion against China. From that point on, relations between Beijing and Tokyo went steadily downhill, culminating in the Japanese-American announcement on February 19, 2005 that Taiwan was of special military concern to both of them, which China in turn denounced as an "abomination."

Tensions soured as a result of China's expanding its blue water navy and its increased activities in search of enhanced energy resources both in the Middle East and in West Africa. These worsened further in the spring of 2005 when both China and Japan announced plans to explore for natural gas in waters contested by the two countries.

Bilateral tensions were also exacerbated by the situation in Taiwan. Japan's official position on the Taiwan issue has long involved mutedly ambiguous support of the long-standing "one China" policy, but increasingly Japan has aligned itself with the United States in suggesting that it would provide overt support to U.S. actions designed to fend off any enhanced Chinese military pressures against Taiwan. Such overt support contrasted with the actions of such close U.S. allies as Singapore and Australia, who indicated they were not willing to help Taiwan in any cross-Straits conflict with China.

Without a doubt, Taiwan has great strategic importance to Japan. On average, there is one Japanese vessel passing the Bashi Channel located at the southern tip of Taiwan heading for Japan every 15 minutes. This makes the Strait of Taiwan immediately important to Japan's national security. But beyond sea lanes, Taiwan is an economically successful democracy with long historical ties to Japan and increasingly anxious to demonstrate its autonomy from the PRC. Perhaps even more importantly, as a potential thorn in the side of an increasingly worrisome China, Taiwan has appeal to many Japanese policymakers.

Furthermore, Taiwan has been an increasingly important fulcrum in Japan's developing stronger ties to the United States. This was made clear in the 1996 rearticulation of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. Coming as it did on the heels of the Chinese missile tests across the Taiwan Straits in March 1996, and explicitly stating that Japan's security was linked to that of the "Asia-Pacific" (implicitly at least including Taiwan), the Chinese saw the actions as explicitly aimed at them, rather than at a

reinforcement of the status quo (as it was interpreted by both the United States and Japan).³¹

Soon after Koizumi came into office, former Taiwan president Lee Teng-hui was granted a visa to visit Japan for medical treatment. A second visa for touring was given in 2004. On April 4, 2005, members of Lee's Taiwan Solidarity Union made a very public visit to Yasukuni in memory of Taiwanese who had served in the Japanese military during WWII. Then on February 19, 2005, Japan and the United States signed a new military agreement in which, for the first time, Japan joined the administration in identifying security in the Taiwan Strait as a "common strategic objective." As Chalmers Johnson noted, "Nothing could have been more alarming to China's leaders than the revelation that Japan had decisively ended six decades of official pacifism by claiming a right to intervene in the Taiwan Strait."³²

It was clear by the middle of 2006 that relations between Japan and China had plummeted to one of their worst levels since relations had been normalized some 30 years earlier. Competing nationalisms boiled to the surface and were most manifest in Chinese popular demonstrations against Japan, first at soccer matches and then on the streets. These demonstrations came with the clear support of the Chinese government, but it was also clear that Japan was not particularly anxious to take steps to reduce tensions, as some 85 legislators made a collective (if long planned) visit to Yasukuni in April 2004, and Koizumi made a highly publicized visit on August 15, 2006—a symbolically important date—further enflaming bilateral and regional relations. As a tangible manifestation of these declining bilateral ties, Chinese vice minister Wu Yi in May 2005 abruptly cancelled a scheduled visit with Koizumi, presumably because of his continued Yasukuni shrine visits.

Japanese relations with North Korea were perhaps the single most problematic set of bilateral ties faced by the country. By 2005, North Korea occupied a position within Japanese strategic thinking as the most probable and immediate military threat to the country. Relations had ebbed and flowed over the postwar period, but like relations with China, those with the DPRK were continually affected by the legacy of Japan's colonial history, overlaid with the equally important vestiges of the cold war and the often problematic actions of pro-North Korean residents within Japan.

Nevertheless, Japan and the DPRK began normalization talks at the end of January 1991, and five rounds took place between then and 1992. A long break of seven years followed, but Japan's participation in KEDO and the apparent resolution of the 1994 nuclear threats kept relations on

a generally positive note. Then in August 1998, North Korea fired a long range Taepodong right over Northern Japan—"a brazen act that shook the Japanese out of their remaining complacency about North Korea the way *Sputnik* shook the United States in 1957."³³

In addition to the threat posed by its missiles, the DPRK remains the only country in Northeast Asia that has not signed the Chemical Weapons Convention. And North Korea has been a continuous irritant to Japan domestically. Pro-North Korean residents in Japan contribute as much as ¥4 billion to the DPRK every year, much of the money moving on ships between Niigata and Pyongyang. DPRK transfers of illegal drugs, most especially metaamphetamines, to Japan pose an additional problem within the country (and unlike the situation with drugs from China, lacking normal diplomatic relations with the DPRK, Japan has found it impossible to engage in bilateral efforts to curtail illegal exports).³⁴

Also contributing to poor relations were the Japanese Coast Guard's sinking of a North Korean spy ship on December 22–23, 2001; the failure of five North Koreans to obtain asylum within the Japanese consulate in Shenyang, China, in May 2002; Japan's decision to salvage the wreck of the spy ship from China's EEZ in June and July of 2002, and eventually to put it on public display in downtown Tokyo, well-marked as it was with signs indicating the threats the ship (and the DPRK) posed to Japan.

In the face of such longstanding irritants, Koizumi sought to improve bilateral relations. A year of quiet negotiations led to an apparent breakthrough visit by Koizumi to Pyongyang on September 17, 2002. Though allegedly briefed by U.S. officials before the visit on what the United States allegedly claimed was North Korea's moves toward a nuclear weapons program, Koizumi attempted to normalize relations between Japan and the DPRK. Koizumi extracted an explicit confession from Kim Jong-il that his country had abducted various Japanese citizens over the preceding decades as had long been claimed by Japanese officials. While the acknowledgment itself could have served as a positive step toward improved relations, Kim also announced that a substantial number of the abductees had died (often under mysterious and hard-to-believe circumstances). Japan had been putting forward 11 cases involving 16 Japanese citizens. Only 5 allegedly remained alive; the DPRK claimed that of the remainder 8 had died and 3 had never entered the country. The 5 who were alive were permitted to return with Koizumi to Japan on the promise that they would subsequently return to North Korea after a short visit to see relatives. The public outcry in Japan against the North, however, combined with mass media sympathy for the abductees made their return to the North politically impossible.

Normalization of bilateral Japan–DPRK relations was even more implausible.

Then in October 2002 during a visit by assistant secretary of state for the Far East, James Kelly, the DPRK acknowledged having a highly enriched uranium program. This declaration and the subsequently tough policies of the United States toward the DPRK, combined with the abductees issue and the North's growing missile arsenal presented Japan with a dilemma: improved ties with the DPRK or adherence to U.S. policies?

The question of how to move toward denuclearization of the Korean peninsula has been the overarching issue for the countries of Northeast Asia since the Kelly visit. Following unsuccessful demands by North Korea for bilateral talks with the United States, the six-party talks were begun in Beijing in August 2003, but they met little success. A second round in February 2004 led to agreement by all parties on several principles, most notably the desire to denuclearize the Korean peninsula issue through peaceful dialogue. Koizumi made a second visit to Pyongyang in May 2004 in an attempt to advance the talks, but the third session of the six-party talks in June was a stalemate. But Koizumi, in part because of his close ties to the Bush administration, was able, during his second visit, to stress the need for a U.S. initiative. This apparently convinced the United States to table a concrete proposal at the next meeting of the six-party talks. Still, U.S. negotiators (hemmed in by a deep internal division between neoconservatives and pragmatists in the Bush administration) were restricted to simply reading the official position paper, refusing to elaborate or negotiate. Not surprisingly, the DPRK refused to agree to future talks. Throughout the process, Japan, with U.S. support, continued not only to press for denuclearization but also for a resolution of the kidnapping issue. The United States, alone among the remaining five parties, supported Japan in pressing the abductees issue.

On February 10, 2005, the DPRK issued a statement saying that it already owns nuclear weapons and that the six-party talks would be postponed indefinitely. On March 31, the DPRK Foreign Ministry proposed that the six-party talks be switched to a disarmament conference, in light of its claim that the country is itself a nuclear power.

Only after the Bush administration began to soften its hostile tone about the DPRK being an "outpost of tyranny," about the need for "regime change," and to hint at a willingness to put some serious proposals on the table did the talks resume. And it was not until September 2005 that they finally reached some measure of agreement. This was essentially on a statement of principles with few tangible timetables

concerning concrete steps to be taken by the DPRK and other parties. But following a U.S. decision to freeze North Korean assets in a Macao bank, the DPRK broke off talks completely. Meanwhile, the DPRK moved to a much more potentially ominous posture with missile tests in July 2006 and a nuclear test in October. Throughout the process, Japan largely supported the U.S. while also seeking to advance its own security against potential DPRK conventional or nuclear threats. Among these have been measures to restrict North Korean shipping from entering Japan and talks of an economic blockade by Japan of the DPRK.

Certainly, public opinion in Japan remains skeptical of immediate normalization while the issue of nuclear and missile development makes it highly unlikely that the Japanese parliament would approve any economic assistance to the DPRK, an obvious requirement of any normalization agreement.

In summary therefore, as Japan moved to strengthen its bilateral ties to the United States and to increase its own military posture, relations between Japan and the Asian region though close economically became progressively more tense in the military and diplomatic arenas between Japan and China, the ROK, and the DPRK.

Conclusion

Japan under Koizumi substantially challenged past guideposts of the country's security thinking and began to advance new policies. Most importantly, Koizumi responded to changes in domestic, regional, and global conditions by advancing Japan's close ties to the United States, creating an enhanced military role for the SDF and the Coast Guard, and expanding the country's efforts to take on a vague but increasingly tolerated role as a "normal" country. As Japan moved more closely into security collaboration with the United States it expanded its own definition of "security" in ways that strengthened its bilateral ties across the Pacific while at the same time creating conditions that as at least a residual factor have worsened Japan's ties with other countries in Asia, most notably China and the DPRK.

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