

On the Way Japan's Foreign and Security Policy Should Be

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I am Ito Kenichi, President of the Japan Forum on International Relations, Inc., and I am greatly honored to have been granted the valuable opportunity to speak at this hearing. As you deliberate on the budget for fiscal 2012, I would like today to share with you for your reference some of my thoughts with regard to the way Japan's foreign and security policy should be, focusing on policy toward the US and China.

The Japan Forum on International Relations (JFIR), where I serve as President, is a policy-oriented think tank specializing in foreign policy and international affairs. While undertaking a variety of research programs, JFIR has released 35 sets of policy recommendations over the past 25 years. JFIR devised a set of policy recommendations entitled "Positive Pacifism and the Future of the Japan-US Alliance" in October 2009, and another entitled "The Expansion of China and Japan's Response" in January of this year, each of which represents the culmination of approximately a year of deliberations on their respective topics. The full texts of these two sets of policy recommendations were both made public by running opinion advertisements in major national newspapers when they were announced, and they were concurrently submitted to then Prime Minister Hatoyama Yukio and Prime Minister Noda Yoshihiko respectively. I am quite grateful and honored to have the opportunity today to explain them to you, the honorable members of the Budget Committee of the House of Representatives.

The US and China are not only the world's number one and number two political and economic powers but are also our close neighbors, exerting decisive influence upon Japan's standing in the international community. It should be noted that the issue of how best to deal with the US and China is one of vital interest to Japan's very survival. Complicating matters, however, is the fact that Japan's relations with both the US and China stand against such an extensive background that they cannot be viewed simply as a mere buildup of bilateral relations. There are international and global trends swirling about, and it is within the context of these mega-trends that Japan-US and Japan-China relations must be considered.

Among those who have fatally misinterpreted historical trends on an international and global scale were the leaders of pre-war Japan. Having experienced the unprecedented disaster of World War I, humanity at the time took a step forward toward outlawing wars, lest such a tragedy be repeated. This intent was incarnated in the establishment of the League of Nations and the conclusion of the Kellogg-Briand Pact (General Treaty for the Renunciation of War). Given that this first step evolved into the foundation of the United Nations after World War II and further developed into the establishment of today's global collective security system, it marks the very origin of the international and global historical trends that, hesitant and immature as they may have appeared at first, have brought us to where we are at present.

However, the military bureaucrats in Japan who shaped the course of history from the Manchurian Incident to the Sino-Japanese War did not think that way. Their historical view was indicated in the 1921 "secret agreement of Baden-Baden". Nagata Tetsuzan and other Japanese military officers dispatched on a mission to Europe to consider the meaning of the European war thought that expediting construction of a "total war regime" in Japan to prepare for the coming world war was the only viable course of action open to Japan. As it turned out, Japan drew closer to Germany by signing the Tripartite Pact and ended up placing its own destiny in the hands of Hitler. Misreading the mega-trends of history puts a country directly on the path to ruin.

In what direction are the trends of today's world moving? The JFIR policy recommendations on "The Expansion of China and Japan's Response" clearly state that the incident involving a Chinese fishing boat ramming Japan Coast Guard patrol vessels off the Senkaku Islands in September 2010, the ban on the export of rare earth metals to Japan that followed, and a series of other strong measures against Japan, including the arrest and detention of Japanese citizens staying in China, "not only shocked Japan and the Japanese people but also heightened their distrust of China". However, the policy recommendations make another point in the next section. Please allow me to quote a rather long passage here:

"Under these circumstances, it is vitally important to comprehend the macroscopic background of the problem before reacting to each of the microscopic phenomena. After World War I, the "outlawry of war" was achieved and, after World War II, a war between major powers became essentially impossible due to "mutual assured destruction". Even so, "balance of power" politics were practiced during the Cold War confrontation between the two camps led by the US and the Soviet Union. As the Cold War

drew to a close, though, the US-USSR confrontation was resolved and universal values such as freedom, democracy, market economy and renunciation of war spread to every corner of the globe, the core bearers of which were the advanced democracies participating in NATO and the Japan-US alliance. In an era when “human security” and “responsibility to protect” are presented as principles of the international community, the advanced democracies that have become the core bearers of those principles can be described as a “no-war community” or a “collective security community”. In the post-Cold War world, nations are required to address themselves to resolving global issues beyond the scope of their narrowly-defined national interests. While “postmodern-stage” nations ready to tackle these issues head-on can be called “no-war community” nations, “modern-stage” nations such as China and Russia are not yet ready to do the same and have put up resistance”.

The greatest strength of Japan today is that it is in line with international and global trends. As a nation in the postmodern stage, Japan together with other such nations has today formed a “no-war community”. Japan is facing China not on its own but together with other nations of the “no-war community”. Sharing such a sense of solidarity with other “no-war community” nations should be, I think, the starting point of Japanese diplomacy.

In the “big bang” that followed the end of the Cold War, responsibility for governance of the globalizing world economy expanded from the G8 to the G20. To establish and preserve order and world peace alike, the “no-war community” should extend beyond modern democratic nations under NATO and the Japan-US alliance, bringing in other postmodern-stage nations. Neither China nor Russia should be excluded. Should one choose to call this a policy of “engagement,” then a policy of “engagement” must indeed be the basis of China policy in Japan and the “no-war community”.

Nevertheless, here is a question that we Japanese may need to ask ourselves: can we say for sure that we Japanese are not free riders when we claim that Japan’s greatest strength today is that it is riding major international and global trends? At the start of the Gulf War in 1990, the UN Peace Cooperation Bill was submitted to Japan’s Diet but, amidst a chorus of “either war or peace”, “do not repeat past failures”, and “don’t send our young men off to battle”, the bill had to be withdrawn. Given the chance to comment at a hearing at the time, I claimed that it was not a war but rather a police action by the international community against a criminal act of invasion, but I was the only speaker to make such comments. More than 20 years have passed since then. It was gratifying later on to see the contributions made by the Self-Defense Forces to international efforts for maintaining world

peace in Cambodia, Iraq, the Indian Ocean, and other areas. Yet it is also true that many Japanese would rather that Japan not be involved in such peace-keeping activities.

Let me now turn to US-Japan relations, whose roots can be traced back to the San Francisco Peace Treaty signed in 1951. Since Japan chose to become independent while maintaining Article 9 of the Constitution banning armed forces, it had no choice but to sign the US-Japan Security Treaty as well. For better or worse, this has led to the current reality of US-Japan relations. Should the Security Treaty be abandoned, the choice left would be between unarmed neutrality and a Constitutional amendment enabling armed self-defense. In order to retain Article 9's pacifism, Japan's basic stance needs to be one of maintaining the US-Japan alliance. At any rate, or for that very reason, ours needs to be a positive pacifism and not a passive pacifism.

Japan's pacifism heretofore has been passive pacifism in which not becoming an aggressor is itself deemed sufficient. The nation has spoken of "defense" or discussed "peace" only in a negative sense of not doing this or that. What Japan has sought to do or has done has remained unclear not only to the world but also to the Japanese people themselves.

The US likely calculated that it would serve its own national interests at some level to conclude a bilateral security treaty even with such a Japan. However, the Japan-US relationship and the global environment surrounding it are rapidly changing now. I think that the question "Should Japan-US relations remain unchanged from now on?" constitutes the very essence of the issues facing the two countries today. This question forms two sides of the same coin with the aforementioned question that I think we should ask ourselves: "Can we Japanese insist that we are not free-riders when we say that our biggest strength today is that we are riding on major international and global trends?"

During the Cold War, the possibility of a US-Soviet nuclear war posed the most serious threat to the security of humankind. Containing the Soviet threat in these circumstances was the biggest challenge faced by NATO and the Japan-US alliance. However, in the post-Cold War era since the fall of the Soviet Union, security threats have been proliferating around the world in various ways. Today, the purpose of NATO is no longer limited to the protection of the territories of its members. NATO has redefined its mission so that "the purpose of the alliance also encompasses contribution to the peace and stability beyond the territories of member countries". Even the Japan-US alliance has

redefined its purpose and incorporated “contribution to regional peace” therein. The commitment to world peace among the advanced democracies participating in NATO and the Japan-US alliance represents the irreversible, international and global 21st-century trend of what I call a “no-war community”. An effort to steer and invite as many countries as possible into this framework is an “engagement” policy and the ideal supporting such effort is positive pacifism. Our two policy recommendations “Positive Pacifism and the Future of the Japan-US Alliance” and “The Expansion of China and Japan’s Response” were designed and formulated on these bases.

US President Barack Obama has proclaimed a new strategic “pivot back to Asia” in conjunction with the withdrawal of American troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. This strategic policy shift is considered to have been driven by the US focus on “China’s expansion.” I do not think this point of view is wrong, but I would also like to note that the United States today looks at China in a completely different way than it did at the Soviet Union during the Cold War. China has consistently recorded double-digit defense spending increases in each of the past 24 years, and its defense expenditures hit the 100 billion dollar mark last year. In particular, there is no reason for overlooking the fact that China’s maritime expansion has attained a level enabling a strategy of “access denial” vis-à-vis the US. The Japan-US alliance needs to take risk-hedging measures in response, but it also bears acknowledging that the economic interdependence among Japan, the United States and China has reached a crucial phase. China will not hesitate to use its military capabilities psychologically and politically to enhance its national power. However, I do not think that China intends to physically and militarily employ its military power against the United States. This option was also the red line that the Soviet Union dare not cross during the Cold War. Japan and the United States have no other choice but to get China “engaged” in the international community. Thank you very much for your attention.