

**Transcript of**  
**“U.S.-Japan Relations After September 11”**  
**with**  
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It is nice to be back in Washington. I am glad to be here just as a private citizen, unconstrained by government rules under which I was not able to be as frank as I wished when I was an ambassador here. Before discussing post 9/11 US-Japan relations, let me go just back briefly to the 1990s at the time when I was posted here in Washington as an ambassador and the subsequent years in the rest of the 1990s.

I went back to Tokyo in the end of the 1990s and wrote a book that came out of Nikkei Shimbun in 1997. The title was Japan-US Alliance: From Drift to Revitalization. The drift, of course, was my sense of the relationship at that time, and revitalization was my hope[,] which I really felt at the time when I went home. The key question at that time was that after the end of the Cold War, why we need the alliance, [or] why we need each other in the post Cold War world. I do not think that question has really been answered since that time.

You will recall that President Clinton came to pay a state visit in the spring of 1996, and there were two documents signed by the President and then Prime Minister Hashimoto. One was a joint declaration of security and the other was a document which was titled “the message to the peoples of the United States and Japan.” Both documents, I think, were a joint attempt by the two political leaders, President Clinton and Japanese Prime Minister [Hashimoto], to re-define the relationship, and then on that basis, to reaffirm the alliance. Yet, in my view, no sustained effort followed between the two governments, or I should say between the two countries since that time.

There were a couple of notable exceptions to that. I must mention that one was enactment of [a] Japanese law concerning U.S.-Japan defense cooperation, which passed the Diet in 1988, I believe. The other exception was very close policy coordination, which was achieved between the United States, South Korea, and Japan in dealing with North Korea. You would recall it as [the] so-called “Perry Process,” which was initiated during the Clinton Administration in dealing with North Korea. Both South Korea and Japan worked very closely with the Clinton Administration trying to develop common strategy dealing with North Korea, and it worked to a certain extent [by] persuading North Korea to start engaging in dialogue on a serious basis. There were two notable exceptions to the general state of the relationship, which continues to drift throughout the 1990s. Just before 9/11 last year, you might also recall that we celebrated commemoration service of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the San Francisco Peace

Treaty. There was a joint commemoration event in San Francisco, which I had the pleasure of attending, but both publics in the United States and also in Japan paid little attention to it. I do not think the event had much impact on our relationship. And then came 9/11.

Actually I went back to Tokyo from [the] commemoration in San Francisco on 9/10 and on the 11<sup>th</sup>, [a] former student of mine—I've been teaching at a couple of universities in Tokyo, Japan after I left the government—and one of my former students, who just got a job with Asahi Shimbun, called me at 10:30 night and asked me if I was watching television. So I said, "No, I do not watch television at this time of the night," and she said, "well you would better turn on television and you'll find something extraordinary." So that was how both my wife and I viewed what was happening to NY and also to this town. How did America and Japan respond to 9/11? Of course, the United States worked very successfully to build [a] forged global anti-terrorism coalition around the world. And its military operation in Afghanistan was very successful and impressive. On the part of my country, Prime Minister Koizumi acted rather speedily and passed the law, which allowed our Self Defense Forces to dispatch a few ships to the Indian Ocean to refuel American and British ships deployed there. Such actions were completely unprecedented in the post-war Japanese history and one might also notice that none of the neighbors like South Korea and China, which always were very sensitive to our defense and security policies, came out with the explicit criticisms of our actions. This was a big change in terms of Japan's post-war security policy.

But still, I am very much troubled by the future of the Japan-U.S. alliance. And that is what I am going to talk about for a few more minutes. I am worried about the future of Japan. Of course I am not an economist, so I have no authority to talk about Japanese economy. As some of you may know, the recent statistics seemed to be a little bit more encouraging than those of the recent past, but I am not so sure if [the] Japanese economy can really come out of the series of recession we have been experiencing throughout the 1990s. What I am worried about is that we are totally unprepared for what Japan is going to face after we get out of the present recession, whenever it is going to be. As many of you know, we are just approaching a period when a significant demographic change is going to take place in Japan, which has [many political, economic, social, and even cultural implications.] And, no Japanese political leaders have been able to explain what these implications are going to be for Japanese society. In other words, I do not think we, the Japanese, are in any way prepared. The Japanese are so pre-occupied with what we face today, [and are] unprepared for what we are going to face tomorrow. And of course, if we are not going to be able to deal with this problem successfully in coming five, ten, and fifteen years, Japan's positive influence in the international scene, in particular, in the Asia-Pacific region, is going to wane. That, in turn, is going to affect the trans-Pacific relationship between the United States and Japan. So this is something which concerns me very much. But this is, of course, the issue which only the Japanese can deal with and we cannot count on, [in any way,] the Americans for [helping] the kind of problem we are going to face in the coming years. But on the other hand, there is another factor which [troubles] me regarding the future of our relationship and that comes from the American side.

There have been some signs that I [could] see, even before 9/11, about America's foreign policy which began to worry me a little bit. The trend is more apparent after 9/11 that the United States has become so powerful in military terms. Everybody was aware, even before 9/11, that the United States had become the only superpower in the world in military terms. There were many around the world, including many Americans, who argued that the United States had become the superpower after the collapse of the Soviet Union. My argument was always that there was no superpower in the world after the Cold War. America was certainly the most influential and powerful country in the world, and probably militarily the only superpower. [But,] certainly in my view, America was one of the major powers, but certainly not [a] kind of superpower, which the term meant. For example, in the 1950s and the 1960s, the United States was really the dominant power in the world and was able to lead the world as in the way it wished. But the world has changed and I never thought that the U.S. was the superpower, even though it was certainly the most influential power in the world and it is going to be the most influential country in the world in the coming years. There is no doubt about that. But I always thought it was a little bit [exaggerated] to say that America was the only remaining superpower after the Cold War ended.

But anyway, 9/11 proved to the world that the U.S. was really the superpower in military terms. As a result, what happened was that it created the sort of perception around the world that your allies and friends have become marginalized from the standpoint of the Americans. It created the perception, which was shared by your allies, friends, and probably by the United States itself, that America has become so powerful that it can deal with all the problems in the world by itself and can solve all the problems in the world if America wished to solve it. This put your friends and allies not only in Europe but also in Asia somewhat in a very ambiguous position. I think, for example, of the famous phrase which came [from President Bush, the so-called "Axis of Evil" proposition; and also "if you are not with us, you are with terrorists." ] This kind of rhetoric, I think, disturbed some of your friends and allies not only in Europe but also in Asia. This is the kind of situation [in] which we find [ourselves] today. I would argue that, for example, the response to 9/11—which I described a few moments ago—I think the Japanese response was more motivated by the desire on the part of the Japanese politicians, [and] by the public, [to not] repeat the humiliating experience which we had during the Gulf War. It was also motivated by some true understanding of the nature of the threat of international terrorism. So we still have some [work to do to] redefine our relationship: why we need each other, what is the purpose of our partnership and alliance, and where we want to go from here towards our common goals.

[I would like to make] one final point before inviting your comments and discussions. [While we] define our relationship, I would like you to pay a little bit of attention to the term "the West," which we have been using for some years to identify the countries which share common values and interests with the United States. During the Cold War, the term "the West" was something which was easily accepted by the Japanese. Because in Cold War terms, "the West" always meant [a] political concept denoting those countries which stood against threat of communism, and wanted to defend democracy

and free political and economic freedom. After the Cold War, there was no longer “the East” as opposed to “the West.” The term “the West” has become [an] increasingly civilizational concept to refer to those countries which share western civilization. And in that context, Japan doesn’t fit well in this concept of “the West.” There are important democracies and market economies outside the western world as defined by the civilizational concept of “the West.” For example, India: India is the largest democracy in the world in terms of population. Japan is also [a] very important democracy and market economy as far as the Asia-Pacific is concerned. But how do you define those countries, which share basic values of political and economic pluralism with the United States and other European countries. I will raise this question to you and let me just finish my brief presentation, and I invite you to make comments. Thank you very much.