

CHANGING INTERNATIONAL SITUATIONS AND THE FUTURE OF THE JAPAN-US ALLIANCE SPEECH OF TAKU YAMASAKI JULY 6, 2004

I am honored to be here at the CSIS today. I also want to thank everyone who are involved in making this event happen.

1. Introduction

A hundred and fifty years ago, Japan began its journey to become a modern state by signing the Treaty of Peace and Amity with the US and thereby ending its self-imposed isolation policy. After that, under the motto of joining the great powers, Japan devoted all of its energy to strengthen its national power by upholding the credo of "Rich nation, Strong Army." This credo, particularly "Strong Army" part led Japan to a wrong path, which eventually led to its defeat in WWII. It was thanks to democracy and freedom that were planted and took root in Japan as well as a century-long "Rich Nation" policy that enabled Japan to pull itself out of this crisis.

Japan is now the second largest economic power in the world. Japan occupies an important position in the international politics and is expected to play an important role. Japan, however, has been traumatized by WWII, especially in the area of security policy, and still needs to catch up with "the global standard."

In this context, I would like to share with you my ideas for the future of the Japan-US alliance in the changing international situations.

2. Changes in the international security environment

With the end of the Cold War, the probability of a global scale armed conflict has strikingly decreased. However, various regional hostilities resulting from religion or ethnicities, which had been suppressed in the time of East-West rivalry, and the proliferation of WMD are more serious now than the time immediately after the end of the Cold War. Moreover, 9.11 accelerated changes in our threat perception. Today, non-state actors such as terrorist organizations have become one of the main actors that create causes of threat and the cause of security problem including illegal activities such as terrorism, piracy, and drug smuggling and other emergencies.

The US and Russia, which were the leaders of the two opponent camps during the Cold War, now have established trend of coordination and cooperation over security issues. Because today's freedom and prosperity are based on global peace and stability, it is highly unlikely that any responsible state would try to undermine this very foundation of the order and stability in this modern society. This forces us to become keenly aware of the existence of terrorists and rogue states that threaten this stable order.

The threat posed by terrorists and rogue states is not something we can address with rational calculation. In other words, we can't counter these threats by conventional notion of deterrence. The current situation in Iraq where skirmishes continue even after the state of war was declared to be over and

security has not yet to be stabilized is one example.

Sovereignty was transferred to the interim government of Iraq on June 28. Although we expect that democracy will be established in the new Iraq in due time after the planned general election, the turmoil will be likely to last for some time in the future. Bringing about democracy in Iraq is a challenging mission for us but democratic states in the world must unite to prevail against the war on terror.

In the meantime, in order to achieve genuine peace and stability in the Middle East including Iraq, it is absolutely necessary to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is one of the historic root causes of instability in the Middle East. The Iraqi War has been explained as an action based on international justice for the cause of liberating the Iraqi people from Hussein's oppressive regime and preventing the possible transfer of WMD, which Saddam Hussein had attempted to develop, from Iraq to the hands of international terrorists.

In my view, however, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not only a territorial dispute between different ethnic groups but also a religious war fought between the Muslims and the Jews over the holy land of Jerusalem, which could be described as a clash of civilizations.

Israel has refused to allow the UN to take the lead in the efforts to halt the cycle of bloodshed. I believe that the US, the only country that has leverage over Israel, should urge Israel to agree with the UN talking initiatives to implement the "Road Map" for peace in the Middle East which have been repeatedly rewritten.

In fact, many Arabs strongly feel that the US response to Israel-Palestinian conflict has been too lenient to Israel, to the point where it can be considered as a "double standard." I would strongly hope that Washington would take account of such views.

Situations in the areas surrounding Japan

In the Asia-Pacific region, since the 1990s, many bilateral relations that had been confrontational, such as Sino-Russia and Sino-ROK relations, have either been normalized or significantly improved.

However, this region includes several major powers with different ethnicities, religions, political systems and economic strength and the interests of these powers create a complicated power structure. Many historical problems such as territorial disputes or unification issues including the future of the Korean Peninsula, the cross-straits relations, and territorial claims of some islands remain unsolved. Recently, the disputes over the maritime interest among nations that are taking precautions to ensure the acquisition of prospective natural resources are also drawing attention.

Many countries in the region including China and India, both of which greatly contribute to global economic growth, have pushed ahead with military modernization against the backdrop of their economic development. In some part of the region, widening economic disparities, prolonged economic stagnation, deterioration of governing capability of some governments and activities of the Islamic extremist groups could allow international terrorist networks or piracy to be more active. In addition, proliferation of WMD and ballistic missiles, which are serious concern in the entire international community, is also threatening security in this region.

China and Russia

Let me now touch upon the recent military situation in Russia and China.

The force level of the Russian military in the Far East has been drastically reduced. For instance, compared their force level in 1989 in its peak with that in 2003, its ground and air forces in the Far East were reduced to less than one-third and the naval force were decreased to one-seventh.

In contrast, China is seeking to shift its emphasis of its military from “quantity” to “quality,” and modernizing its armed forces, with the primary focuses on their conventional capabilities which enable China to fight a modern warfare. To this end, China has been increasing its defense budget at a rate of over 10 % compared with its previous year’s budget over the past 16 consecutive years. It is officially publicized that Chinese defense budget is 185 billion RMB (approximately US\$25 billion). However, when including R&D and procurement from foreign countries, some estimated actual defense expenditure to be twice to three times of this figure. China’s vigilance against the independence of Taiwan is also thought to have given incentive to the increase in defense spending.

North Korea

With regard to North Korea, on May 22, Prime Minister Koizumi visited North Korea for a second time following his first visit on September 17, 2002 to meet with Kim Jong-Il, General Secretary of the Worker’s Party of Korea. As a result of this meeting, 5 children of the repatriated abductees returned to Japan. The real purpose of Mr. Koizumi’s visit in May was, however, to pave the way to implement the Pyongyang declaration, which was signed in 2002, in the tenure of a little over two years as Prime Minister.

Pyongyang Declaration refers to the full-fledged economic cooperation by Japan with North Korea after the normalization of diplomatic relations. In the second visit, Prime Minister Koizumi clearly stated that the resolution of abduction issues and North Korean abandonment of its nuclear program and a freeze on its missile program through six-party talks are the prerequisites for the normalization and economic cooperation. Mr. Koizumi also suggested this as a “road map” which should be implemented during Mr. Koizumi’s tenure.

In response, Mr. Kim promised to reinvestigate the abduction cases in question and made it clear that he would make efforts toward denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. The policy of “Dialogue and Pressure” by the US and Japan has been steadily yielding results.

On the other hand, South Korea under the Roh Moo-hyun administration has adopted a policy of accelerating “the Sunshine Policy” of the Kim Dae-jung administration, which has promoted the greater reconciliation of North-South relations. Some people point out, however, that the reconciliation can be an evidence that the Kim Jong-il regime’s work in the South is succeeding to some extent. I believe the solid Japan-US-ROK coordination and the framework of the six-party talks continue to be critical in attempting to halt North Korea’s power of strengthening of its military capabilities including WMD, ballistic missiles and special forces.

3. Future of the Japan-US alliance

Now, I would like to talk about the modality of the Japan-US alliance in the context of such a new international security environment.

Since the conclusion of the Japan –US security Treaty in 1951, the Japan-US alliance has played an important role as solidifier of “the most important bilateral relationship in the world.” I believe that it was the security foundation provided by the Japan-US alliance that has allowed Japan to enjoy peace and

prosperity for the last fifty years without repeating the tragic experience of the war.

Since the end of the Cold War, the Japan-US alliance has been developing into the stage of “global cooperation and coordination” to address more complicated and more unstable international security environment. Our two countries need to further enhance the already strong alliance to meet the needs of today in an appropriate way.

In the recent years, Japan has taken legislative measures including the enactment of 1992 International Peace Cooperation Law, the 1999 Japan-US Defense Guidelines-related Law, the 2001 Anti-terrorism Special Measures Law in response to 9.11, the 2003 Humanitarian Relief and Iraq Reconstruction Special Measures Law, and the 2003 Legislation to Respond to Situations of Armed Attack. These are aimed at making the Japan-US alliance more credible and enabling Japan to contribute more to peace and stability in the international society.

I believe that Japan should enact permanent legislation for international peace cooperation including the sending of Self Defense Forces (SDF) troops overseas in order to make a more active contribution to efforts to build international peace. Although a broader interpretation of the current constitution allows us to take part in international peace activities, defining international activities as a part of the primary missions of the SDF along with national defense requires that Japan revise Article 9 of the constitution in such a way that it clearly advocates the significance of contributing to international peace. The force structure and equipment of the SDF should also be transformed to reflect such changes of its missions. By doing so, Japan will finally be able to fulfill its duties and responsibilities that commensurate with the place Japan occupies in the international community.

I have envisioned a Japan with a constitution which upholds the national ideals to be a nation of high moral stature. The ideal constitution would call on the Japanese people to have spirit of decency, honor and public service at home, and to have willingness to make a contribution to the international community abroad. Japan is no longer allowed to be passive toward international peace.

As I mentioned earlier, the defense cooperation between Japan and the US is a cornerstone not only for peace and security of Japan but also for the peace and stability of the entire Asia-Pacific region.

In INSS special report in October 2000, (the so-called Armitage-Nye report), the equal partnership between the US and Japan is emphasized. I believe that the SDF and the US forces should jointly and cooperatively operate as much as possible in order to develop security cooperation between our two nations. As such, the Japanese constitution should clearly state that Japan possess the right of collective-self defense in order to strengthen the Japan-US alliance.

In fact, I think it suffices for the constitution to explicitly and comprehensively stipulate the possession of the right of self-defense in a general sense. However, from security policy viewpoint, it is also necessary to limit the scope in which Japan can exercise its right of collective self-defense. To this end, I think we should enact the national security basic law in which such a limitation on the exercise of right of collective self-defense will be articulated.

It is indispensable for Japan as a US ally, to enhance coordination and cooperation with the US including its military in order to maintain a stable security environment in the Asia-Pacific region. I understand that the US forces are now reviewing their entire military posture through transformation and the global posture review.

I expect this review to include the military posture of the US forces in Japan. In the vicinity of the US bases and facilities in Japan, the frequent departure and landing of US military aircrafts and incidents and/or crimes by US military personnel have had various impact on the local residents. In particular, such impacts are great in Okinawa where the US forces facilities are concentrated.

Bearing these factors in mind, the policymakers of Japan and the US need to have serious and intensified consultation to explore ways to consolidate US military bases in Japan while maintaining US military commitment to this region, as is the case with US forces in ROK.

4. Cloud above the Hill

Before completing my speech, I would like to introduce a Japanese writer Ryotaro Shiba's novel titled "Saka-no Ue-no Kuno" (Cloud above the hill), which is one of the most popular novels among Japanese leaders. This history-based novel describes three men in the Meiji era, a time of great transition, when Japan had just embarked on modernization. These three men devoted themselves to the efforts to build a nation out of nothing, aiming for the "cloud above the hill", which is a metaphor of their dream.

As I mentioned in the beginning of this speech, Japan in the first half of the 20th century was in the pursuit of "cloud above the hill" of joining the great powers of that day. In the latter half of the century, the economic development was "the cloud over the hill" for Japan. In the past, there was always a role model for Japan.

Today, however, we can no longer find "cloud above the hill" in another country as a leading model that Japan just follow. Now is the time for Japan to envisage a shape design for the country by our own hand and go forward.

In my view, the ideal state of Japan can be described as three key-words: "a nation of dignity", "dynamic economy", and "a society with human security". In particular, I want to see Japan that will proactively commit itself to the principles to build a peaceful world, activate its economy and provide the environment where the people can live a life full of hope and sense of fulfillment. It is also important that Japan gains respect from the rest of the world as a country of dignity, as well as for its full spectrum of contribution to the international community.

In the upcoming process of constitutional revisions, Japan should try to become a country of high moral stature articulating these ideas. To this end, I believe that it is now more important than ever to enrich the alliance with the US which is rooted in our common values of democracy and free market economy. I certainly hope that the US shares such view and embark on a road for an equal partnership with Japan.

These are some of my ideas on the future of Japan and the Japan-US alliance in the years ahead.

Thank you for your attention.