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Japan's role in international affairs

TAKASHI INOGUCHI

A debate is under way – both in Japan and in capitals around the world – about the role Japan should play in international affairs. Some maintain that Japan should do more, given its position as one of the world's leading economic powers. Others worry that the emergence of an active, assertive Japan would alarm its neighbours and disrupt existing patterns of relations among the great powers. The worst-case scenario, according to some, is that an energetic Japan might become aggressive and militaristic.

In this article, the international and domestic factors that will shape the course of Japan's foreign and security policy in the near future are analysed. The article begins by examining the international and domestic pressures that are pushing Japan in the direction of a more activist role in international affairs. Next, the international and domestic impediments to a more active Japanese role are assessed. Finally, Japan's role in two issue areas of particular importance, international economic affairs and international security institutions, are examined.

The pressures on Japan to play a greater role in world affairs are beginning to overwhelm the countervailing obstacles. Japan, in short, will probably play a more active role internationally in the future than it has in the past. Moreover, this development should be encouraged, provided two conditions are met. First, Japan's policies must be in harmony with those of the international community as a whole. In practice, this means that Japan's actions should be linked to multilateral undertakings wherever possible. Second, Tokyo's initiatives need to be grounded by a solid domestic consensus about the broad course and content of Japan's foreign policy.

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INTERNATIONAL PRESSURES FOR A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN WORLD AFFAIRS

A number of developments in the 1980s began to push Japan in the direction of a more active international role. In security affairs, the United States embarked on a systematic campaign to strengthen its military forces, both conventional and nuclear. The belief in Washington, at least during the first term of the Reagan administration, was that the Soviet Union had to be countered militarily if it was to be contained politically. With that in mind, the United States encouraged its allies, including Japan, to strengthen their own forces. Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone supported this policy by increasing defence spending, increasing the amount of support provided to US troops stationed in Japan and entering into a number of joint technological ventures and wide-ranging joint military exercises with the United States. These exercises essentially overturned Japan's longstanding policy of restricting the activities of its Self-Defense Forces (SDF) to local venues.

At the same time, the economic fortunes of the United States and Japan began to go in opposite directions. By the mid-1980s, the United States was immersed in record budget deficits as a result of a severe recession, deep tax cuts and high levels of military spending. Its fiscal resources were limited, and its long-term economic competitiveness began to suffer. Japan's economy, on the other hand, was robust. Japan's industrial competitiveness, bolstered by favourable exchange rates, generated ever-higher levels of exports. This, in turn, embedded Japan even more deeply in the international economic system, giving it a wide range of international economic interests and making it highly interdependent with other countries.

By the time Yasuhiro Nakasone and Ronald Reagan left office in 1987 and 1988, respectively, the Cold War order was beginning to crumble. The US military build-up, combined with Soviet economic weaknesses and a commitment in Moscow to improve relations with the West, led to the signing of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in December 1987. This treaty, the first to eliminate entire classes of nuclear weapons from the arsenals of the superpowers, marked an end to the most intense phase of the US–Soviet military competition and led many to conclude that further improvements in East–West relations were likely to be forthcoming. And, indeed, they were. The collapse of Soviet power in Eastern Europe in 1989, the Soviet decision to accept the reunification of Germany and the signing of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty in 1990 clearly indicated that the Cold War was over. The final chapter in the Cold War unfolded in December 1991, when the Soviet Union itself disintegrated.

These developments have had a tremendous impact on international relations as a whole and on Japan in particular. The old bipolar international order has collapsed, but a new order has not yet emerged in its place. What is clear, however, is that this new order will be multipolar in character and that all of the world's leading powers, including Japan, will have an important role in shaping it. Many world leaders would like to see Japan play a more active role in these deliberations.

Second, with the demise of the Soviet military threat, military power is not as important in international affairs as it once was. This is not to say that it has become unimportant, only that economic power has become increasingly significant. Many people around the world feel that Japan, with its immense financial, industrial and technological resources, should be more active in addressing international problem areas. The most pressing issues in the world today, many would argue, are not deterrence and defence, but economic reconstruction (in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union) and economic development (in the Third World). Few states are in a better position to deal with these economic problems than Japan. Policy-makers and analysts around the world are putting pressure on Japan to do more. Clearly, one of the driving forces behind Japan's growing role in world affairs has been the demand by the United States and others for Japan to assume more global responsibilities.

Other economic and political developments have also propelled Japan into a leading role in world affairs. Under President George Bush, the United States has maintained rigid tax and energy policies, and US industry, on the whole, has failed to become significantly more competitive internationally. As a result, the United States lacks significant financial or economic leverage in its international dealings. Second, a cascade of events in Europe – the liberation of Eastern Europe and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, German unification, the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union and the signing of the Maastricht Treaty on European economic and political union – has kept Europe preoccupied. Most of Europe's intellectual energy and economic resources are being devoted to local problems. Finally, other countries with large trade surpluses, such as Taiwan and some oil-exporting countries, are unwilling or unable to play a leading role in international affairs.

Thus, Japan with its high savings rates and large trade surplus has emerged as virtually the only country that can afford to underwrite large-scale international public policy actions.

DOMESTIC PRESSURES FOR A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN WORLD AFFAIRS

'Occupying an honourable place in the international community' was an aspiration of Japanese people even before this phrase was written into the 1952 Constitution. Since 1952, Japan's desire to be accepted as a full-fledged member of the international community has been reflected in its membership in international institutions such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Western Economic Summit.

More recently, Japan has begun to play a more influential role in institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. This is not at all surprising, given Japan's position in the international economic hierarchy and the Japanese people's long-standing interest in multilateral organizations. In the World Bank, for example, Japan's capital share was 2.77% in 1952 when it obtained membership and 6.69% in 1987, second only to the United States. In the International Development Association, an arm of the World Bank, Japan's replenishment share was 4.44% in 1961 and 20.98% in 1990, again second only to the United States.[1]

Japan is also interested in attaining a prominent position on the UN Security Council and would like to establish closer ties to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Community (EC) and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). If the international community encouraged and endorsed developments along these lines, Japan would not hesitate to pursue them. Japan's self-confidence in this regard is clearly growing.[2]

It is important to keep in mind, however, that there are internal debates in Japan on the international stance that country should take. For example, an inconclusive debate about the perennial US–Japan trade imbalance has been conducted between Japan's Economic Planning Agency and the Ministry of Finance. The US government has argued that Japan must eliminate structural barriers against imports to reduce Japan's trade surplus. In response, the Economic Planning Agency has argued that the root cause of the trade imbalance is macroeconomic: US savings rates must be raised, and the US fiscal deficit must be reduced. The Ministry of Finance, on the other hand, has argued that Japan needs to run a large trade surplus, given existing international demands for economic assistance and foreign direct investment. In addition, the Ministry worries that savings rates in Japan will decline as the population ages, and the country's capital resources will dwindle as a result. In short, the former is aggressive in calling for changes in an ally's savings and spending behaviour, while the latter is self-serving in its justification of the *status quo.*

Policy disputes also emerged in the internal deliberations leading up to the agreement reached between Japan and the EC in July 1991. According to the terms of this agreement, Japan and the EC are to hold regular consultative meetings on a wide range of issues, including security. The EC was reluctant to enter into discussions with Japan on security issues, especially European security issues; France, in particular, was adamantly opposed to this. Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs was anxious to move in this direction, but the Ministry of International Trade and Industry was apprehensive: it feared that pushing ahead in the security arena would create a backlash on trade issues, given that Japan had perennial trade surpluses *vis-à-vis* most EC members. In the end, Japan and the EC agreed that they would attempt to provide 'equitable access' to each other's market. The Ministry of International Trade and Industry is not unaware of the need to liberalize the Japanese economy in light of the fact that Japan is virtually the only country with a large trade surplus; criticism from abroad is likely to mount unless such efforts are vigorously undertaken by Japan.[3]

INTERNATIONAL IMPEDIMENTS TO A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN WORLD AFFAIRS

Japanese misconduct in the 1930s and 1940s casts a long shadow over Japan's international activities even today.[4] It is important to recognize that Japan's actions in the 1930s and 1940s were indeed very cruel. Although most Japanese acknowledge this, many feel that Japan behaved no more brutally than other powers. In addition, abetted by the version of history propounded by the Allied occupation powers, most Japanese regard themselves as victims of a past engineered by the militarist cliques. As a result, Japan has not always done enough to atone for past misconduct.

Not surprisingly, many of Japan's neighbours – the two Koreas, China, the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong – are apprehensive about Japan's growing economic influence. The concern is that economic preponderance could transform at some point into military dominance. Although official protests to the Japanese government have been rare, unofficial murmurings are not uncommon. Various newspapers in the region expressed concern, for example, about Prime Minister Nakasone's visit in 1985 to the Yasukuni shrine for the war dead, including war criminals; about Japan's decision in 1986 to build an advanced jet fighter (the FSX) on a largely indigenous basis; about Japan's growing levels of defence spending (which surpassed 1% of gross national product in 1987); about Japan's decision to send mine-sweepers to the Persian Gulf in 1991; and about Japan's recent moves to pass legislation that would allow the SDF to be sent abroad.

Powers outside the region also have reservations about Japan's growing role in international affairs. The five victorious allies in World War II whose pre-eminent positions were institutionalized in the United Nations – the United States, Britain, France, China and (now) Russia – naturally do not want to give up their places of prominence. However, UN financial contributions of the vanquished powers of World War II – Germany and Japan, in particular – have been increasing at a faster rate than those of the victorious powers.[5] As a result, German and Japanese influence in UN debates has been growing. The funding issue is delicate, however, because although the victorious powers do not want to see the UN fall apart or their institutional positions deteriorate, they are not, by and large, able to increase their own contributions; the US Congress, for example, is adamant about any increase in US support for the United Nations. In addition, the five permanent members of the Security Council are reluctant to introduce the question of permanent membership for Germany and Japan.

Ironically, one of the main countries presenting a covert barrier to Japan's assumption of a greater role in world affairs is the United States, which has for many years publicly argued that Japan should assume more of the collective defence burden. As a recent US Defense Department memorandum indicates, there is a great deal of interest in some segments of the US policy establishment in maintaining a pre-eminent global military position. According to this memorandum, the United States should seek to maintain a military position that would enable it to dominate a unified Europe, a restructured Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) or a more assertive Japan.[6] Thus, some in the United States would like to share the defence burden without relinquishing the pre-eminent military position the country now enjoys.

Two things work to moderate these impediments, however. First, those Pacific Asian countries with close economic ties to Japan – trade, investment, manufacturing and training – tend to have higher economic growth rates than countries that do not. Recognizing the increasing dependence on Japanese capital and technology for their own economic development, they have tended to moderate the otherwise harsh criticism of Japan. Japan's application of economic sanctions following the Tiananmen Square massacre in June 1989 is a good example of this.

Second, Japan's economic success has encouraged others to emulate the Japanese model – that is, the Japanese system of financing, manufacturing, distribution, education, health care and pollution control. Some South-east Asian countries have even adopted Japanese-style police and military institutions; others have attempted to hire Japanese forces to provide internal security at a time of rapid socioeconomic change.[7] This suggests that views in Asia are changing from what they were 30 or 40 years ago.

DOMESTIC IMPEDIMENTS TO A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN WORLD AFFAIRS

The increasing demands for Japan to assume more global responsibilities, in conjunction with the international and domestic opposition to such steps, has led Japanese policy to zigzag in a manner frequently characterized as 'two steps forward and one step backward'. In the words of Ichiro Ozawa, the former secretary-general of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, it is 'the Japanese way of leaving everything in an ambiguous state and accumulating established facts through makeshift circumstantial judgments'.[8]

For example, Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki visited the United States in May 1982 to meet President Ronald Reagan; they subsequently issued a communiqué in which the word 'alliance' was used. In terms of shouldering more responsibilities, confirmation of an alliance relationship by a Japanese prime minister was 'two steps forward'. However, Suzuki reinterpreted the word 'alliance' and insisted that this did not refer to a military alliance – thus, 'one step backward'. This was later followed by Suzuki's abrupt resignation, Yasuhiro Nakasone's assumption of power and Nakasone's subsequent championing of legislation that paved the way for military co-operation with the United States. This move represented another 'two steps forward'.

Similarly, the Japanese government's response to the Gulf crisis in 1990–91 was also characterized by zigzagging.[9] The Japanese government introduced a bill in the Diet that would have allowed Japan to send Self-Defense Forces abroad for peace-keeping operations, but the bill was killed in late 1990 because of pacifist sentiments at home. Following the Gulf War's end in March 1991, the Japanese government, emboldened by apparent public support for the SDF's mine-sweeping operation in the Gulf, tabled a revised bill, potentially opening the way for the SDF to be sent abroad. However, by failing to accommodate the Democratic Socialist Party demand for a revision of the bill – which insisted that the Diet had to give prior approval before the SDF could be sent abroad – the bill was killed. In the spring 1992 session of the Diet, the government tried to advance its position by confining SDF missions to UN peace-keeping operations.

The reasons for such fluctuation in Japanese foreign policy lie in the domestic impediments to an activist policy. First, the pacifist tendencies that grew out of Japan's experiences in World War II are still strong. A particularly powerful domestic approach is known as 'pacifism in one country', which reasons that even if other states are aggressive, Japan should restrain itself from using force or participating in violent international conflicts.

Second, domestic vested interests oppose taking any steps that might undermine economic prosperity at home. Many believe that the preservation of Japan's economic dynamism is the key to overcoming global economic difficulties.

Third, decision-making in Japan is consensual, and it is undermined by a lack of strong political leadership. Consequently, it is difficult for the Japanese government to move quickly to shoulder new international responsibilities. Instead, the government tends to move incrementally. For example, it might attempt to develop a broader or more flexible interpretation of the Constitution. Thus, a consensus would be sought, which would seek to incorporate as many divergent positions as possible.

NET ASSESSMENT

The pressures on Japan to assume a more active role in world affairs appear to outweigh the countervailing forces. Japan has the will, the need and the capacity to assume more global responsibilities. It is driven by a tenaciously held aspiration to occupy an honourable place in the world, increasingly dictated by the self-interested need to sustain international stability and economic prosperity. It is also likely to enjoy high savings rates and increasing technological accomplishment for some time. Thus, as long as Japan does not deviate substantially in its positions from the international community as a whole, the United States and other leading powers will, with but limited reservations, continue to prod Japan to do more. If the world economy avoids the beggar-thy-neighbour policies of the 1930s, economic interdependence will deepen. This, in turn, will strengthen Japan's overall international position.

Naturally, Japan's historical legacy, its weakly articulated vision of its international role and its feeble political leadership will prevent it from taking up some responsibilities with vigour. These, however, are constraints that Japan will have to live with for the foreseeable future.

JAPAN'S ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

In examining Japan's role in international economic affairs, one has to consider both unilateral actions, such as economic aid, and multilateral activities in institutions such as the Group of Seven (G-7) and the World Bank.

The argument of 'yen for development' has been made by many and is fairly well accepted by Japan.[10] Acting within the financial constraints imposed by savings rates, energy and food needs, demographic structure and other factors, Japan's role in aiding development is bound to constitute a major pillar in its approach to shouldering global responsibilities.

Japan's financial contributions to Third World economic development, human and social needs and environmental protection are expected to be increasingly aimed towards Africa, South Asia and the Middle East, compared with previous support, which was largely concentrated on East and South-east Asia. Staggering amounts of debt accumulated by countries such as Brazil and Mexico have also drawn Japanese banking interests to Latin America. In the 1980s, Japanese banks increasingly helped compensate for the difficulties associated with bad debts. In the Pacific, Japan has been encouraging both recipient and donor countries alike to consider not only what is essential for manufacturing and infrastructure development, but also the needs associated with environmental protection and social and political stability. Thus, Japan's role has become much more complex and wide-ranging in the Asian Pacific.

The sudden disappearance of command economies in many Eurasian countries has also expanded Japan's role. Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu's pledge to aid East European countries in January 1990 was the first of its kind. The Japanese government's recent emergency aid to Mongolia to facilitate the transition to a market economy is another. Most recently, emergency aid was given to the Commonwealth of Independent States. In addition, a number of plans are being drawn up in Japan to help the CIS – especially the Russian Republic – move away from its tightly regulated economy. In light of the growing mood of reconciliation between the Russian Republic and Japan after the August 1991 abortive *coup d'état* in Moscow, these plans could become quite extensive, at least in the long term. Aiding the CIS has been made particularly attractive because of increasing needs by Japan for energy and other resources still to be exploited in Siberia, the Far East and Central Asia. In addition, there has been a steadily growing geographical division of labour among the European Community (Moscow and St Petersburg), the United States (the vast industrial area surrounding the Urals) and Japan (the vast Siberia, the Far East and Central Asia).[11]

The eagerness of North Korea to bring in Japanese capital and technology to make itself more competitive *vis-à-vis* South Korea has reinforced the expectation that Japan would help North Korea so that, should there be a sudden reunification of the two Koreas, South Korea would not be bankrupted by the heavy burden of absorbing North Korea.

Of course, Japan's contributions to the execution of the Gulf War included a large transfer of funds to the United States. Due in part to

Japan's Gulf War contributions, the US current account deficit decreased from $92.1 billion in 1990 to $8.6 billion in 1991.[12]

Japan's unilateral actions increasingly include the dissemination of the 'Japanese development model'. Many would like to draw on this model and the Japanese development experience. The latest to import the Japanese model is Peru, under President Alberto Fujimori. Some of Japan's East and South-east Asian neighbours (for example, China and Malaysia) and former socialist countries (such as Hungary) find it relevant to their own development.

Japan's role in multilateral economic activities is no less important. Japan's multilateral activities take place in such international institutions as the IMF, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the OECD, the Bank for International Settlement (BIS), the G-7, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Post-Ministers' Conference of the Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN). Japan makes a significant contribution in two areas of multilateral activities: surveillance and systems design.

In this context, surveillance is the monitoring of data pertaining to global management and to the improvement of indicators and measurement for such monitoring. Japan's surveillance activities involve wide-ranging policy areas, detailing economic, technological and social activities.[13] These contributions have been quite robust, and Japanese technical expertise has had considerable impact on organizations such as the OECD and Asian-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC). Befitting its status as an economic superpower, Japan has moved ahead steadily in consolidating economic surveillance, in part because organizations such as the IMF and World Bank have become less vigorous in this task.

Systems design includes envisioning, conceptualizing and institutionalizing devices and mechanisms for global management. Requests for such a role have been increasingly heard from within and outside Japan. The need for systems design covers virtually all major fields, including manufacturing (for example, the Intelligent Manufacturing System, a system of jointly constructing and utilizing manufacturing technologies), environmental protection (for example, a system of controlling carbon dioxide emissions around the globe), administrative institutions (for example, a system of recruiting and training bureaucrats) and economic development (for example, a system of state-led, yet market-based, economies, much like Japan's in the 1950s and 1960s).[14]

The latest Japanese development in systems design can be found in the way in which US-led World Bank lending strategies were called into question by World Bank Executive Director Masaki Shiratori, who pushed successfully for the publication of a controversial study on the industrial strategies of South Korea, Indonesia and India. The study argued that select government intervention can complement market mechanisms and thus promote economic development.[15] If World Bank lending policies change in the direction envisioned by Shiratori, then economic development policy of recipient countries will also change to an enormous extent.

Growing interdependence and finite financial resources force donors like Japan to weigh many different options before arriving at the best portfolio of contributions. This process requires donors to have a much more global outlook and a clearer sense of global citizenship. In other words, the Japanese need to depart from the all-too-often narrowly conceived calculations of national interest. Domestically, the Japanese must rectify and restructure their often opaque system to ensure that the Japanese entry into global systems design is more apparent and acceptable to the rest of the global community. Japan's role in envisioning, conceptualizing and designing global systems in the future is bound to grow when the Japanese are convinced of such needs.

JAPAN'S ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL SECURITY INSTITUTIONS

Japan's role in international security is an area that creates controversy, as the attendant phrases 'cheque-book diplomacy' and 'revivial of militarism' imply. However, Japan's role in international security has begun to take shape steadily, albeit slowly. Aside from bilateral regimes and devices such as the Japan–US Security Treaty and the Japan– Republic of Korea Basic Treaty, which are not covered here, the five most important institutions for Japanese security are the UN, NATO, CSCE, the G-7 and the Post-Ministers' Conference of ASEAN. As long as Japan's role is to consolidate global peace and development, its role in relation to these five institutions must be discussed, even if one has difficulties envisioning how this might unfold. The Japanese government has several concerns regarding the United Nations: deletion of the 'enemies' clause in the UN Charter, accession to permanent membership on the Security Council, participation of Japan's SDF in the UN peace-keeping forces and monitoring of arms transfers. The Japanese government also wants to enhance its current 'observership' status in the CSCE and in NATO. The Japanese government wants to see the G-7 raise several global issues, including security, as part of their agenda for discussion and co-operation. Finally, the Japanese government would like to see the Post-Ministers' Conference of ASEAN take up regional security issues.

Japanese participation in the UN

The United Nations, an organization established by the major victors of World War II, originally excluded Japan as a defeated country. It was not until 1956 that Japan was able to become a member, and today Japan still lives with the 'enemies' article (Article 107) of the UN Charter. Although the three original 'enemies' of the UN – Japan, Germany and Italy – make financial contributions that together match that of the United States – some 25% – none of these countries is represented on a permanent basis on the Security Council. Italy has recently proposed that the 'enemies' clause be deleted from the UN Charter. Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa, too, has expressed Japan's long-term desire to enhance its representation, albeit in a characteristically vague expression in a speech at a UN Security Council meeting engineered by British Prime Minister John Major.

Because of the torrent of resistance likely to face Japan when it moves onto the world stage, especially in the political and military arenas, the Japanese government prefers to move slowly. Even though permanent membership on the Security Council is one of the Japanese government's goals, the time is not yet perceived to be ripe for both the current permanent members and non-members, particularly for Japan itself, to move boldly in this direction. Japan would have difficulties fully abiding by a number of key clauses of the UN Charter that pertain to political and military roles, particularly those that apply to permanent members. A still-influential interpretation of Japan's Constitution forbids Japan from using military force for the resolution of international disputes. However, the special deliberative council of the ruling party has recently put forward a document asserting that the SDF's participation in the UN forces (as distinguished from UN peace-keeping operations) is fully constitutional.

Two bills, which were not addressed in the autumn session of 1991, have much to do with this point. If the interpretation of the Cabinet Legislative Bureau is accepted, these bills would allow Japan's SDF to participate as part of UN peace-keeping forces and would allow Japanese emergency relief forces to work on world disasters. These would clearly be two steps forward.

In autumn 1991, the two bills met with fierce opposition by some in the ruling party (which opposed the SDF's participation in the UN peace-keeping forces, if not the UN peace-keeping operations) and by the small opposition party, the Democratic Socialist Party, which demanded the Diet's prior approval before sending the SDF to those missions. Perhaps recognizing the lack of wisdom in skirting the well-established practice of consensus formation, Foreign Minister Michio

Watanabe has been hinting of late about a 'moderated' version of the two bills, clearly eyeing the spring 1992 Diet session.

Aside from the zigzagging domestic legislative process, reinforced by the scandals of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), international policies have been steadily shaped in favour of greater Japanese contributions. Cambodia is one example. Yasushi Akashi has been made head of the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees is Sadako Ogata; both appointments are widely regarded as conducive to greater Japanese financial (and other) contributions to the United Nations. Domestically, the latest changes in the SDF's officers' assignments suggest the SDF's preparedness to meet the likely contingency of being sent to join peace-keeping and other types of operations in Cambodia, and possibly elsewhere.[16]

Permanent membership on the Security Council will be no less difficult. Japan was not able to be elected as a non-permanent member in 1978, was barely able to get elected in 1986 and got elected with a handsome vote only in 1991. The permanent membership issue was raised in 1990 at a meeting between Mikhail Gorbachev and Helmut Kohl when the Treaty on German Reunification was concluded. At that meeting, Gorbachev suggested that Germany become a permanent member of the Security Council. Reacting to this conversation, Italian Foreign Minister Gianni de Michelis suggested that the two West European members – Britain and France – be replaced by the EC and Japan, with the EC participant rotating among the four major EC members: Germany, Britain, France and Italy. Although the Japanese government has not made any comment on these events, its position is in stark contrast to Germany's. Germany has repeatedly expressed a lack of interest in seeking permanent membership on the Security Council, if only for tactical reasons.

One positive step the Japanese government has taken in relation to UN participation is to propose that the UN pass a resolution whereby all member countries register all arms transfers with the United Nations. Although the proposal does not go very far, it reflects Japan's concern about arms proliferation and takes a positive step towards conflict management. Although arms control expertise in Japan needs further development, Japanese technical expertise in monitoring and surveillance argues favourably for such a role for Japan.[17]

Japan's relations with NATO

Japan's interest in improving its observership status in NATO is somewhat different from its interest in the UN. The steady development of the notion of international security or co-operative security, which has developed extensively in the context of US–Soviet disarmament negotiations, has been a major factor driving Japanese interests. This has two related components. One is that the United States and the former Soviet Union, the two major nuclear superpowers, have had a strong interest in promoting steady and stable arms reductions, along with joint research and development, manufacturing and monitoring of military weapons. Japan, a US ally, feels that it should be kept informed of developments in this area to a greater extent than has been the case in the past. Indeed, Japan feels that it should be kept abreast of developments to the extent to which NATO members are informed. The second component is that, as an ally of the United States, Japan feels that it cannot help but be part of the broader US-led international security coalition, which includes NATO and the Republic of Korea (ROK). Bilateral arrangements function well with respect to US–Japan and Japan–ROK security consultations. Regarding NATO, however, no such forum existed until 1991, when Japan's observership in NATO began. Today, Japan's participation is still nominal, and much remains to be done if Japan is to take up global security responsibilities in the future. Exposure to regular meetings of NATO and to NATO-sponsored seminars and conferences would provide an impetus for Japan to provide training for more personnel in the realm of international security – one precondition for Japan's ability to monitor arms transfers and arms control actions.

Japan's interest in CSCE

Japan's interest in the CSCE, although overlapping its interest in NATO, does have somewhat different origins. In Japan, there is apprehension that Europe may evolve independently, possibly leaving Japan outside its consideration. With the end of the Cold War, the notion of Europe has clearly changed. According to US Secretary of State James Baker, Europe now extends 'from Vancouver to Vladivostok'. This suggests that emphasis is being given to a 'greater Europe', particularly in regard to the CSCE, perhaps because of the tendency on the European continent to think more narrowly. Although Baker's statement did not arouse a strong negative reaction in Japan, the fact that Japan is the only major developed country excluded from the CSCE or from Baker's notion of a greater Europe is disturbing to some Japanese.

The recently concluded agreement between Japan and the European Community on establishing regular consultative mechanisms underlines the same sort of apprehension. In addition, the CSCE has introduced new criteria for judging societal behaviour. Human rights and arms control are two international relations criteria that have not been particularly familiar to the Japanese government; until recently, the government had favoured more traditional concepts of relations between sovereign states.

Japan and the G-7

Although having started as a loose organization through which advanced countries could consult and co-ordinate their policies on global, regional and national economic issues, by 1991, the G-7 had become a global custodian for many international security issues. Its 1991 declaration on arms control with respect to nuclear weapons, proliferation, arms production and trade is a major step forward, particularly for Japan, because the G-7 represents an international institution in which Japan has been anchored for some time. The Japanese government would like to see the G-7 continue its work in the security area.

Japan and ASEAN

Although ASEAN functions largely as a regional organization, the Post-Ministers' Conference of ASEAN includes non-members such as the United States, Japan, South Korea and Australia. Although started as an anti-communist alignment of Asian nations, since the demise of the Cold War, ASEAN has developed into a more all-encompassing institution, with emphasis given to free trade and regional security.

The East Asian Economic Grouping proposal by Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad of Malaysia has sought to develop an East Asian Free Trade Area. This then resulted in a pronouncement by the Post-Ministers' Conference about regional security. ASEAN has long been regarded largely as a mouthpiece, taking little significant action, and, since that pronouncement, ASEAN has manifested its fissiparity in developing jointly executable ideas on regional security. Yet, to Japan, which has long been concerned about regional security, as the United States steadily reduces its military presence in the region, ASEAN's initiatives present significant value as a local initiative. Japan cannot envisage regional security arrangements that are not driven by regional powers. Because of Japan's historical debts, its economic preponderance and the potential rivalry with the United States, it feels it must be deferential to regional preferences and pursue joint activities wherever possible.

CONCLUSION

In sum, as far as international security policy is concerned, more time is needed for the Japanese to articulate their thoughts, given the large-scale structural transition taking place around the globe and Japan's traditional piecemeal adaptation to change. At present, Japan's interests derive largely from its 'search for an honourable place in the world community', from its apprehension of being isolated and from its genuine desire to make positive contributions to international security.

Those who complain that Japan's international efforts have been half-hearted should keep in mind that Japan has been a global power for only two decades. Another constraint has been that many in Japan worry about the future: an aging population and declining savings rates could lead to a deterioration in Japan's international position some time after the turn of this century. It is not surprising, therefore, that Japanese policy has been tentative in the past. In some respects, this might well continue into the future.

Overall, though, Japan's readiness to play a more active role in international affairs is growing. This should be encourged as long as Japan's policies are compatible with those of the international community and Japan's initiatives are, by and large, undertaken in conjunction with multilateral ventures. Japan appears to be ready, willing and quite able to shoulder more global responsibilities. In all probability, therefore, Japan's contributions will steadily rise in tandem with the increase in the global demand for them and the rise in Japan's own capacity to supply them. As time goes by, Japan's international role is certain to broaden and deepen.

Notes

[1] Sadako Ogata, 'Shifting power relations in the multilateral development banks', *Journal of International Studies*, no. 22, January 1989, pp. 1–25.

[2] Kuriyama Takakazu, 'New directions for Japanese foreign policy in the changing world of the 1990s', *Gaiko Forum*, no. 20, May 1990, pp. 12–22.

[3] See Ministry of Industrial Trade and Industry, *White Paper* (Tokyo: Government Printing Office, 1991).

[4] See Barry Buzan, 'Japan's future: old history versus new roles', *International Affairs*, vol. 64, no. 4, Autumn 1988, pp. 557–73.

[5] In 1946, 33.9% of the UN's budget came from the United States, 0% from Japan, 6.6% from France, 12% from Britain and 6.3% from China. In 1968, 31.6% came from the United States, 3.8% from Japan, 14.6% from the Soviet Union, 0% from West Germany, 6% from France, 6.6% from Britain and 4% from China. In 1989–90, 25% came from the United States, 11.4% from Japan, 10% from the Soviet Union, 8.1% from West Germany, 6.3% from France, 4.9% from Britain and 0.8% from China. See Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *The UN and Japan* (Tokyo: Government Printing Office, May 1990), p. 11.

[6] Patrick E. Tyler, 'Pentagon's new world order: US to reign supreme', *International Herald Tribune*, 9 March 1992, pp. 1–2.

[7] Personal Communication with Atsushi Shimokobe, president of the National Institute for Research Advancement, 24 September 1991.

[8] Quoted in 'Ozawa heads new committee', *Liberal Star*, 15 June 1991, p. 2.

[9] Takashi Inoguchi, 'Japan's response to the Gulf War: an analytic overview', *Journal of Japanese Studies*, vol. 17, no. 2, Summer 1991, pp. 257–73.

[10] Shafiqul Islam, ed., *Yen for Development* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1990).

[11] The Japanese government is now thinking of providing official development assistance to the Central Asian republics.

[12] 'US current account deficit greatly improved to 8.6 billion dollars for 1991', *Mainichi shimbun* (evening edition), 18 March 1992, p. 1.

[13] Included in Japan's surveillance are monetary policies, commodity prices, exchange rates, economic growth rates, unemployment figures, energy demand and supply rates, climatic changes, environmental deterioration, population and migration statistics, details on criminals and terrorists, literacy rates, arms production and trade, telecommunications and airline networks, transportation data, depletable resources, health and hygiene, scientific and technological developments and income distribution. Thus far, Japan has not done much monitoring of civil liberties, political freedom or human rights.

[14] See 'Training customs officials from Asian countries', *Nihon keizai shimbun*, 25 August 1991, p. 3; 'Japan extends co-operation in environmental protection', *Nihon keizai shimbun*, 23 September 1991, p. 9; Okita Saburo, 'Contributions should be based on Japanese experiences', *Asahi Shimbun* (evening edition), 19 August 1991, p. 3.

[15] Steven Brull, 'Japan wants strings on aid', *International Herald Tribune*, 9 March 1992, pp. 9, 11; Susumu Awanohara, 'Question of faith', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 12 March 1992, p. 49.

[16] 'SDF personnel changes', *Asahi shimbun* (evening edition), 10 March 1992, p. 2.

[17] 'Consolidating the pool of arms control experts', *Nihon keizai shimbun*, 1 October 1991, p. 31.