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# Japan and the Security of East Asia

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## Introduction

The assumption that the end of the Cold War meant more security seems strange to many of Japan's policy makers and opinion leaders. On the contrary, the disappearance of the relative stability based on the bipolar structure during the Cold War intensified „the Japanese sense of uncertainty and foreboding".[1] Paradoxically, the political elites of Japan consider their country as more vulnerable than in the period of the Cold War.[2] This perception is reasonable given North Korea's missile threat, China's rise to greater economic and military power, the uncertain future of the protection of the U.S. "nuclear umbrella" [3] as well as Japan's "rudderless military" which is unable to defend the country effectively.

The big question facing Japan's political elites is: to what extent should the so-called Yoshida Doctrine be upheld. This doctrine has served Japan most successfully for nearly half a century, giving Japan sovereignty over economic matters but making her subservant to the United States on strategical political and security issues. Although there is no consensus in favour of a renunciation of the Yoshida Doctrine, the assumption that Japan should play a greater military role is no longer taboo. As George Wehrfritz and Hideko Takayama pointed out, "Japan still swears of the right to wage war, but its leaders are debating new ways to defend their country in a dangerous region. All of Asia is listening closely."[4]

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1 Eugene Brown, "Japanese Security Policy in the Post-Cold War Era. Threat Perceptions and Strategic Options". *Asian Survey* 34:5 (1994): p. 432.

2 See Tomokazu Takamine, "Eine Zeitbombe in den Beziehungen zwischen USA und Japan". *Japan Journal* December 1998/January 1999: 6–8; Nakasone Yasuhiro, "Japan's Firm Non-nuclear Resolve". *Japan Echo* 25:5 (1998): 28–32; Soeya Yoshihide, "The China Strategy", *Look Japan* 43:500 (1997): 17; Ken'ichi Iida, "Fostering Dialogue in East Asia", *Look Japan* 43:493 (1997): 3; Komura Masahiko, "Japan's Eurasian Diplomacy: New Perspective in Foreign Policy". *Japan Quarterly*, 46:1 (1999):4–9; Eugene Brown, op.cit., pp. 430–446.

3 "Smoke Alarms", *Newsweek*, March 29, 1999, p. 52.

4 "Smoke Alarms", op.cit., p.53.

What strategic options are at Japan's disposal? Generally speaking, Japan has three possibilities for assuring national security. They are (1) unilateralism: leading Japan towards becoming a more independent military power, (2) bilateralism: deepening the military alliance with the United States, (3) multilateralism: aiming to construct a regional security architecture in East Asia. Given Japan's economic and military capacities and its sensitive position in the triangular relationship between Beijing, Washington and Tokyo, any choice or combination of these three options could have a significant impact on the security structure in East Asia. It is thus not an exaggeration to say that the future security of the Asia-Pacific region will largely be determined by how Japan chooses to defend herself in the twenty-first century.

## Option 1: Unilateralism

Since the end of the Cold War the question of whether Japan will become a more independent military power has been the subject of intensive debate. Yuki Tanaka, for instance, cited the fact "that Japan was capable of developing the FSX fighter without U.S. involvement and wished to do so" as evidence of Japan's "increasing military self-sufficiency". He pointed out that "many Japanese believe that it should be recognized that Japan is now an equal partner in the alliance" with the United States. Also, Japan's efforts to obtain a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council was interpreted by Yuki as a "consequence of its stature" as a "more independent" military power.[5]

In contrast to Yuki Tanaka, Eugene Brown did not observe any grave indications that Japan pursued a much more unilateral build-up of its Self-Defense Forces (SDF) in the wake of the Cold War. "On current evidence", as Brown put it, "there appears little prospect that Japan will continue its recent enhancement of SDF capabilities." He is believed to have discovered a gap between the government's statements and its financial possibilities curbing its ability to act, particularly for the Midterm Defense Build-up Plan (Chukibo) covering FY 1991–1995. "Despite the highly publicized series of speeches in early 1993 by Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe in which he called for Japan to shift away from its 'defense-only' posture and acquire offensive military devices, such as aircraft carriers, bombers, and long-range ships there is currently neither the political will nor the budgetary wherewithal to maintain the SDF at its current personnel and equipment levels. Projected equipment modernization will outstrip the projected budg-

[5] Yuki Tanaka, "Will Japan Go Nuclear", *AMPO Japan-Asia Quarterly Review* 25:3 (1994): 49–53.

etary outlays, thus forcing the SDF to reduce personnel levels in order to accommodate to fiscal realities."[6]

Brown's observation, however, has proved to be short-sighted given the high level of modernization of SDF suggested by Japan's weapons procurements until 2010. According to Newsweek, during its 1996–2000 purchasing period Japan's maritime SDF quietly commissioned the Osumi, the first of three high-tech transport ships. Thus Japan laid the foundations for the build-up of aircraft carriers for the first time since the end of the World War Two, because the high-tech Osumi transport ships, ostensibly built to haul tanks and landing craft between Japan's islands, can also function as helicopters and jump-jet carriers. Another build-up program of the SDF, which will decisively enhance the fighting ability of the Japanese Air Force, is the shopping plan for airborne tankers. Japan is planning to buy the Boeing 767 in 2001–2005 for mid-air refuelling, in order to extend the range of its F-15 fighters. The new spy satellites hastily ordered by Japan after August 1998, when North Korea launched a three-stage Taepodong missile that sailed over Japan, will also greatly strengthen its independence in the area of intelligence.[7]

Another factor indicating a potential trend towards unilateralism is the fact that some Japanese opinion leaders increasingly hold the conviction that the reasons for Japan not being a nuclear power are no longer valid. "Japan, a country that has foresworn the possession of nuclear weapons", as the *Japan Echo* noted, "was stunned by the series of nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan [in May 1998], reading in them the emergence of yet another nuclear threat to the region."[8] The shock created by North Korea's missile shooting and the nuclear tests of India and Pakistan was so profound that the feeling of security of many Japanese was severely shaken. Not only did they begin to rethink "How safe is Japan", a rubric under which the mass-circulation *Yomiuri Shimbun* kicked off a front page series, but they are also making vigorous efforts to search for new ways to respond to the new security situation. Against this background, the idea that Japan should go nuclear began to carry more weight. Takubo Tadae, Professor of Kyorin University, suggested that Japan, in a situation where it is under threat of nuclear attack, should "publicly renounce the three non-nuclear principles, particularly that of not allowing nuclear weapons to be brought into the country".[9] His view that "possession of nuclear weapons by these democratic countries (India and Pakistan) establishes a beneficial nuclear balance on the Indian subcontinent" makes Takubo a seemingly convinced supporter of the theory of nuclear

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6 Eugene Brown, op.cit., pp. 439–440.

7 "Smoke Alarms", op.cit., pp. 54–55.

8 "A New Nuclear Arms Race?", *Japan Echo* 25:5 (1998): 26.

9 See "A New Nuclear Arms Race?", op.cit., p.27.

deterrence. In his opinion a democratic Japan in possession of nuclear weapons would not endanger the security of the Asia-Pacific region. Quite the reverse, it could contribute to the enhancement of regional stability.

Indeed, going nuclear is a strategic option Japan could adopt without any technical obstacles. There is no doubt that Japan has the ability to make an atomic bomb. "Countries like Japan and Germany", as Nakasone Yasuhiro, Japan's prime minister from 1982 to 1987 noted, "could acquire nuclear weapons, having the technology, the money, and even the plutonium necessary to build them."[10] According to Yuki Tanaka, "the Recycling Equipment Test Facility" (RETF), the plutonium extraction facility designed to extract plutonium from the Joyo and the Monju reactors, has a central place in Japan's nuclear capacity. If the plutonium extracted by the RETF from both reactors was all to be used for nuclear weapons, it could produce 40 tactical nuclear warheads. Japan could also produce uranium-based nuclear weapons using U-235 extracted at the Rokkasho facility.[11]

Japan has refused to be a nuclear power. Since 1967, when Prime Minister Sato Eisaku initiated it, Japan's governments have pursued a nuclear policy based on the so-called "three non-nuclear principles" that Japan will not possess, produce, or permit the entry of nuclear weapons. To abandon this policy, therefore, involves challenging the mainstream of strategic thinking in pacifist Japan. Even Nakasone Yasuhiro, a politician who fought hard in the past to secure Japan's right to develop nuclear research from General Douglas MacArthur, the Allied supreme commander in Japan and John Foster Dulles, former U.S. foreign minister, did not approve of the idea of going nuclear. "We are choosing", as he put it, "the proper course by abjuring nuclear weaponry. This is a decision based on humanitarianism and ethical sentiment, and I think it is a noble position. Our country is powerful, and we could have nuclear arms, but we choose not to do so. This is something in which we Japanese are entitled to take quite some pride. That is the way I feel about the matter." For Nakasone, Japan's non-nuclear policy is "a course of destiny".[12]

However, it is not true to say that Nakasone and Japan's strategic mainstream are not aware of the new security circumstances created for Japan through the end of the Cold War. In fact, they have clearly recognized the nuclear threat facing Japan. But they still reject the possession of nuclear weapons as the best way for Japan to respond to the nuclear challenge in the 21st century. From their point of view, the period of nuclear deterrence is

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[10] Nakasone Yasuhiro, "Japan's Firm Non-nuclear Resolve", op.cit., p. 28.

[11] Yuki Tanaka, op.cit., p.3.

[12] Nakasone Yasuhiro, op.cit., p. 29.

over and security should be based on a more fundamental political foundation. "The old power-based logic of nuclear deterrence and parity has been giving way to a new concept of political stability created through the application of human wisdom, mainly on the basis of confidence-building measures. The international community is steadily shifting its sights toward the creation of a world where nuclear weapons will be superfluous. In the twenty-first century, the idea that a country cannot defend itself without a nuclear arsenal or that it is not a great power because it has not nuclear capability will be considered an anachronistic relic of twentieth-century Cold War thinking."[13]

Recognizing the nuclear refusal stance of the mainstream political and opinion leaders in Japan, it is at the same time necessary to explain that the Japanese governments have never rejected the possession of nuclear weaponry by reference to the constitution. Even Nakasone did not try to refer to Article 9 of the constitution in order to justify his position. His argument is of non-constitutional nature. "My position", as he argued, "was that a whole range of considerations – moral, situational, geopolitical, and practical – led inevitably to the conclusion that Japan should not go nuclear."[14] In other words, it is still an option for Japan to go nuclear because the moral positions of the policy makers and the political situation could change. Indeed, the Japanese governments have always interpreted Article 9 of the constitution as allowing Japan to develop a military capacity including nuclear arms, so long as that capacity serves the defense of the country. As Yuki noted, Japan wants to keep its options open: to go nuclear or not.[15] At present, it is difficult to estimate under what conditions policy makers in Tokyo could opt for Japan's becoming a nuclear power. If they do so however, the structure of the security architecture of the Asia-Pacific region would undergo a fundamental change. Whether a Japan in possession of nuclear weapons would create more security or more instability in the region, remains an open question, too. One point seems certain, however, the outcome of the ongoing nuclear debate in Japan will have lasting influence on the development of the nuclear policy of Japan's neighbouring countries.

## Option 2: Bilateralism

Japan is a long-standing and close ally of the United States. This "special relationship", as Saeki Keishi noted, "was born of the post-war occupation

[13] Nakasone Yasuhiro, op.cit., p. 30.

[14] Nakasone Yasuhiro, op.cit., p. 29.

[15] Yuki Tanaka, op.cit., p. 52.

policy and the San Francisco Peace Conference and shaped by circumstances of the unfolding cold war, as embodied in such developments as the victory of the communists in China, the Korea War, and the Berlin blockade and airlift."[16] In fact, during the four decades of the East-West-Conflict the U.S.-Japan alliance was the bulwark of U.S. strategy for containing the expansion of the communism in East Asia. Even after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States has sought to strengthen its security ties with Japan, arguing that there is no preferable alternative to maintaining close military cooperation with Tokyo.

Joseph Nye, former Assistant Secretary of Defense of the United States, pointed out that Washington has four major alternatives to its military presence in the Asia-Pacific region including the U.S.-Japan alliance as the keystone of this strategy. They are: (1) withdrawal and pursuit of an Atlantic-only policy; (2) creation of a local balance of power; (3) creation of regional security institutions; and (4) creation of a coalition to contain China. Nye believes that not one of them could strengthen the U.S. strategic position in Asia and thus well serve American interests in this region. According to his analysis the "withdraw" concept would engender high costs for the United States. "History, geography, demography and economics", so he argued, "make the United States a Pacific power. Hawaii is in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Eight million Americans trace their ancestry to the region. Isolation from the most rapidly growing area of the world economy would have high costs." More than ever, creating a local balance of power would involve abandoning America's five formal alliances with Japan, Korea, Thailand, Philippines and Australia, and thus force the United States to play one state against another. This would likely lead to a re-militarized Japan and an arms race in the region. Also the idea of creating regional security institutions seems, according to Nye, to be unrealistic because "a regional institutional strategy alone is unlikely to provide a sufficient framework for stability in the region. As a supplement to alliances, such institutions make sense, but they are not easily or quickly developed under any circumstances." The idea of creating a coalition to contain China was categorically rejected by Nye: "If we treat China as an enemy now, we are likely to guarantee ourselves an enemy."[17]

Although the U.S.-Japan alliance is not defined as being anti-Chinese, Washington expects it to act as a stabilizing factor against the background of China's rising power and assertive behavior. "The United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region (EASR)" published by the Secre-

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[16] Saeki Keishi, "Beyond Anti-Americanism". *Japan Echo* 25:6 (1998): 10.

[17] Joseph Nye, "China and the Future of the Asia-Pacific Region". Paper presented at the 39th Annual Conference of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in Singapore, 11–14 September 1997, p. 11f.

tary of Defense in 1998, calls the U.S.-Japan alliance "the linchpin" of American security strategy in Asia. According to this document, the revised Guidelines for Military Cooperations between both countries would enhance the alliance's capability to respond to crises and are therefore "an excellent example of preventive diplomacy. They contribute to shaping the security environment by improving deterrence and stability in the region." By publishing the new EASR, which replaced the old one of 1995, Washington spelled out that the United States has in the long term absolutely no desire to withdraw from East Asia. "Today", so the strategy declared, "no Asia-Pacific nation can doubt U.S. commitment and intentions to remain engaged [in the region]."[18]

Having realized that there is no rational alternative to cooperation with the United States, Japan's political elite has decided in favour of maintaining and strengthening the alliance after the end of the Cold War. In May 1999, Japan's Parliament gave final approval to the new "Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation" which the American and Japanese governments have agreed upon in September 1997. Under the bills approved by the Diet in Tokyo, "Japan would assume its most active military role since it renounced all but defensive military force at the end of World War II".[19] The U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation consists of three fields: Cooperation in activities initiated by either government, Japan's support for U.S. Forces activities, and U.S.-Japan operational cooperation. What has largely expanded the military role of Japan is the military action in the "area around Japan". Japan will allow U.S. forces to use Japanese Self-Defense Forces facilities and civilian airports and ports. Japanese forces will help with search and rescue operations in non-combat areas, and Japan will help with spare parts and other logistics for the U.S. military and with evacuations from trouble spots. Japan's cooperative commitment also includes intelligence sharing, minesweeping operations, maritime traffic coordination, as well as air traffic control and air space management in and around Japan.[20]

Currently, there is no sign of a possible end to the Japanese government's close military relationship with the United States. However, the question of how long Japan can maintain this policy is open. The foundation on which the U.S.-Japan military alliance is based does not appear as stable as Washington and Tokyo illustrated it. Several factors prevent undue

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[18] The Secretary of Defense, "East Asian Strategy Report", Washington 1998, p. 19f.

[19] "Japan Expands Its Role As U.S. Military Partner", *International Herald Tribune*, May 25, 1999.

[20] For detailed information about the functions and fields of U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation see "East Asian Strategy Report", op.cit., p. 21ff.

optimism about the future of the U.S.-Japan alliance. Two of them particularly merit our consideration.

First of all, acceptance by the inhabitants of the U.S. military bases on Okinawa is increasingly declining. The military presence of the United States in Japan is focused on Okinawa, 20,700 marines, 7,500 members of the air force, and 900 soldiers being deployed to this island. If we put together the number of those serving in the U.S. military units and the dependants of the officers, the total military presence is about 53,000 persons. The Japanese inhabitants of Okinawa seem to have had enough of the U.S. military bases which cause noise and crime. From their perspective, the bases have prevented Okinawa from building up a civil industrial sector, occupying as they do 12% of the entire area of the island. Local displeasure reached a climax when 85,000 people demonstrated on the streets crying "Ami go home" after three American soldiers raped a schoolgirl in September 1995. According to an opinion poll, 80% of the inhabitants of Okinawa are championing the withdrawal of the American military units. Although the November 1998 voting out of Masahide Ota, former governor of Okinawa and one of the most radical opponents of the U.S. military presence in Japan, reduced the tension between Okinawa and Washington/Tokyo, the movement against the bases is expected to continue under the leadership of the new governor, Keiichi Inamine, albeit in a muted fashion. Tomokazu Takamine, editor-in-chief of Okinawa's largest newspaper *Okinawa Times*, thus spoke about a "time bomb", a bomb that might blow up the U.S.-Japan alliance.[21]

Secondly, to what extent the debate between the "nationalists" and the "structural reformists" will influence the destiny of the U.S.-Japan alliance is still open. After the outbreak of the Asia crisis, the United States urged Japan to reform its economic and social system. The Japanese elite is split into two groups in its response to the American demands. The structural fraction consists of advocates of another round of "opening", arguing that Japan must conform to "global standards" if it is to get back on its feet. These "structural reformists" see that for the most part "global standards" already apply in the United States and therefore seek reform, using America as an example. Fully aware that the adoption of these standards would mean a deepening of the Americanization of Japan, they pointed out that it is not a question of whether the Japanese like these standards or not. Japan simply cannot survive unless it moves in this direction.[22]

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[21] Tomokazu Takamine, "Eine Zeitbombe in den Beziehungen zwischen USA und Japan", *Japan Journal*, 6 (1998): 6–8.

[22] For an excellent summary of these arguments see Agawa Naoyuki, "Japan as the Fifty-first State", *Japan Echo*, 25:6 (1998): 12.

The "nationalists" find the demands of the United States "exasperatingly overbearing".[23] For them, Japan has already become "an American dependency", if not "the fifty-first American state". They sounded the alarm that Japan is being Americanized on all fronts, political, economic, social and cultural. They believe that "Tokyo does whatever Washington asks it to do" and that Japan's economic crisis is entirely a result of excessive dependence on America and compliance with American demands. According to the "nationalists", the roots of Japan's problems can be traced back to the system of education employed since World War II, to a masochistic interpretation of Japan's wartime history, and to complacency bred by her post-war pacifism. The only way to free Japan from these problems, they say, is to part company with the United States and to recast Japan's sense of pride. They announced that "the time has come for bidding adieu to America". Japan must put an end to the Americanization process.[24]

It would be erroneous to assume that these nationalist claims would disappear if the Asia crisis were overcome. Indeed, the sympathy of the Japanese toward the United States already began to decline at the beginning of the 1990s. As Mayumi Ito noted, polls conducted in 1991 and 1992 indicated a decline of the number of Japanese saying they like the United States. The October 1992 polls illustrated that 73.7 % of the respondents reported that they liked or moderately liked the U.S. This was a 4.4 % decrease from 78.1 % ascertained in October 1991. At the same time, the number that did not like the United States increased by 5.0 % from 17.6 % to 22.6 %.[25] This trend was obviously accelerated by the Asia crisis. Saeki Keishi discovered that "in recent years, anti-American sentiment has escalated in Japan". However, he didn't trace back this development to the economic crisis but to "our inner sense of psychological distance from that country".[26] Saeki doesn't regard himself as a "nationalist". For him, "both sides of the debate dominating Japanese public discourse today" are too "emotional". But even he appeals to the Japanese to rethink the "special relationship" with the United States. "If we are to start thinking independently again, we must begin by coming to grips with our distance from the United States, that is with our own national identity and national interest."[27]

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[23] Saeki Keishi, "Beyond Anti-Americanism", p.8.

[24] See Agawa Naoyuki, op.cit., p.12.

[25] Mayumi Itoh, "Japanese Perceptions of the United States", *Asian Survey*, 33:12 (1993): 1124.

[26] Saeki Keishi, op.cit., p.8.

[27] Saeki Keishi, op.cit., p.10.

It can be expected that the "movement of independent thinking" will also involve security strategic thinking in Japan. To what extent the U.S.-Japan alliance may be modified by the outcome of this debate remains to be seen. If the reasons for Japan's remaining a close military partner of the United States were to disappear, the consequence would be dramatic. In this case, Japan would seek ways of becoming a more independent military power, thereby placing the Asian countries in a new security situation. From the perspective of most Asian states, a new security structure would have to be created to compensate the loss of the two main functions of the U.S.-Japan alliance: restraining the build-up of Japan's military power and effectively holding China in check.

## Option 3: Multilateralism

If there is something which can be called "new" in Japanese foreign policy after the end of the Cold War, it is the increasing interest in multilateral engagement. There are two events that might be considered as the foundation of the Japanese multilateral movement after the collapse of the Soviet Union: The first was of an intellectual nature, and the second is of a political character.

The systematic intellectual stimulus for Japan to play a larger role in international politics derived first from Kuriyama Takakazu, former Japanese vice-minister of Foreign Affairs. Kuriyama published "a forcefully written article" in *Gaiko Forum* in 1990, arguing "that Japan should no longer follow a passive role in international affairs, but should adopt an active foreign policy, in association with the U.S. and Europe, to establish the basis for a post Cold War international order". Rawdon Dalrymple, former U.S. ambassador to Japan (1989–1993), believed that he "discerned the beginning of a substantial shift towards a more active Japanese role in the world", and called these claims the "Kuriyama spirit". Indeed, the "Kuriyama spirit" arose two years earlier than the "Ozawa-Report" which drew more attention from the public asking for a replacement of the "passive pacifism" by "an active pacifism".[28]

The political foundation stone for an active multilateral role for Japan was laid in 1992 with the passing of the "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations Cooperation Law" based on the recommendations of the "Ozawa-Report". This law made it legal for the Japanese government to use armed

[28] Rawdon Dalrymple, "Does Japan Want A Larger Role?", *Look Japan*, 43:497(1997):13. Takai Susumu, Kokuren PKO to heiwa kyorokuho (UN-PKO and the act for peaceful cooperation), Tokyo 1995.

forces to participate in a restricted range of peacekeeping operations (PKO). Despite the limitation of the PKO to non-military support activities such as election monitoring, humanitarian relief, and transport engineering, it paved the way for Japan's military forces to go abroad. Since then, Japan has participated in a total of six peacekeeping operations organized by the United Nations. The most important of these were the sending of the Self-Defense-Forces (SDF) to Cambodia in 1992, participation in peacekeeping operations in Rwanda in 1994, and the deployment of SDF ground force personnel on the Golan Heights on the Israeli-Syria border in 1996.[29]

In general, Japan's multilateralism since the end of the Cold War bears three characteristics illustrating the strength and weakness of Japan's foreign policy. The first relates to the build-up of an open regionalism in East Asia. Japan still seems to have a problem with the "East Asia Economic Caucus" (EAEC) first proposed by Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir in 1990 under the title of "Asian Economic Grouping". The proposal derived particularly from Mahathir's fear that the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) might be "hijacked by the U.S." His strongest motive was to create an Asian economic cooperation organization including only Asian members, such as ASEAN, China, Japan, and South Korea, and excluding the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. But Japan has been reluctant to actively participate in the EAEC, designed "with the clear purpose of ensuring an explicitly East Asian voice and identity". As Yong Deng observed: "To Mahathir's dismay, Japan has consistently declined his invitation to be directly involved in EAEC."[30]

The second aspect of Japanese multilateralism is Tokyo's increasing departure from old-fashioned Asianism. The Japanese elite now seem to pay more attention to the possibility of extending the scope of "region building" by including Russia and Central Asia. Instead of "Asianization", Tokyo is more willing to talk about "Eurasian Diplomacy". Komura Masahiko, Japan's Foreign Minister, currently called this diplomacy the "new perspective" of Japan's foreign policy. Following Zbigniew Brzezinski, former national security adviser to the U.S. president, Komura regards Eurasia as "the super continent" and as "home of 75 % of the world's population", accounting for "60 % of global GNP (gross national product) and 75 % of the earth's energy resources". Acknowledging that "a consistent perspective encompassing the

[29] For Japan's peacekeeping operations see Matsumoto Tatsuya, PKO to kokusaikôken (PKO and international commitments), Tôkyô 1994; Aurelia George Mulgan, "International Peacekeeping and Japan's Role", *Asian Survey* 35:12 (1995):1102–1117; Reinhard Drifte, "(K)ein ständiger Sitz im UN-Sicherheitsrat?", *Japan Journal* 1(1999): 4–6.

[30] Yong Deng, "Japan and APEC. The Problematic Leadership Role", *Asian Survey* 37:4 (1997): 364.

entirety of Eurasia has been missing", the minister of foreign affairs in Tokyo believes that the time is now coming to shape "a totally new and extremely broad foreign policy" in Eurasia.[31]

In fact, Tokyo is on the way to laying the foundation for creating a "super region" in Eurasia. It has intensified its efforts to improve Japanese-Russian relation, including a proposal to settle the dispute about the Kurile Islands. Japan's former Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryutaro suggested to the Russian President Boris Yeltsin who visited Tokyo in April 1998, to resolve the problem of the Kuriles by drawing a middle line through the four islands in dispute. In November 1998, Obuchi Keizo, Japan's incumbent prime minister visited Russia and signed with Yeltsin the "Moscow Declaration on Building a Creative Partnership Between Japan and the Russian Federation". Japan seems to be strongly interested in concluding a peace treaty with Russia by the year 2000. In her relation with South Korea, Japan has successfully moved President Kim Dae Jung to put his signature to the Japanese-Korean Declaration on "A New Partnership in 21st Century" by offering him a "sincere" apology for Japan's colonial regime on the Korea Peninsula from 1910 to 1945.[32]

In her relation with Central Asia and the Caucasus region, Japan is pursuing a "Silk Road Diplomacy" consisting of "three ways": political dialogue to promote trust and mutual understanding; "economic and resource development cooperation to facilitate regional prosperity; and cooperation for peace through non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, democratization and stabilization". According to Komura Masahiko, diplomatic relations with the countries of the "Silk Road region" are "an important dimension" of Japan's Eurasian diplomacy. "What kind of relations Japan forms with the former Soviet countries with which it previously had virtually no diplomatic ties will be a test of Japan's capacity as a global player to take a constructive part in the international community in a broader perspective embracing Eurasia as a whole." Assuming that Central Asia and the Caucasus as "hinterland of Russia, China, and Middle Eastern nations are the key to stability of the Eurasian region as a whole", Tokyo is making vigorous efforts to gain a foothold in the region. Azerbaijan seems to be the first chosen partner. In February 1998, Heydar Alijew, President of Azerbaijan, visited Japan to explore the best ways for Japan's engagement in his country. Six months later, Tokyo sent a high-ranking delegation to Azerbaijan to discuss cooperation possibilities in the framework of the Azerbaijan International Conference on Restoration of the Historic Silk Road.

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[31] Komura Masahiko, "Japan's Eurasian Diplomacy: New Perspective in Foreign Policy", *Japan Quarterly*, 46:1 (1999): 5.

[32] "Neue Ära im südkoreanisch-japanischen Verhältnis", *Japan Journal* 5 (1998): 4.

In contrast to her success in shaping a new relationship with Russia, South Korea and the "Silk Road" region, Tokyo's dealings with China, however, seem to be less satisfying. It still can not convince the Chinese that Japanese military cooperation with the U.S. does not include Taiwan. Nevertheless, the Japanese government made it clear that it would continue its efforts to maintain good relations with both China and the U.S. While the government is trying to keep a firm hold on this goal, impatience is growing among the intellectuals. As Soeya Yoshihide, Professor of Political Science at the Keio University, said, "in sum, the goal of Tokyo's strategy within the triangular relationship is to make its relations compatible with both Washington and Beijing. If, however, China were to make an enemy of the alliance, Japan would have no choice but to side with the U.S."[33]

The third characteristic of Japanese multilateral activities is Tokyo's avoidance of friction with the United States. We know that Japan's role in international affairs has rapidly increased in recent years. Since 1989, Japan is the largest provider of overseas development assistance in the world. 17.9 % of the 1998 budget of the United Nations came from Japan. According to the new scheme approved in December 1997, Japan's contributions to the United Nations will total 20.5 % in 2000, while Germany's contributions will be enhanced from 9.6 % to 9.8 %. As a result, Japan will pay more in 2000 than France, Russia, Britain and China together.[34] Japan is also one of the major shareholders of the Asian Development Bank, and its contribution is as high as that of the U.S. (15.8 %).[35] However, Japan played an active role in terms of multilateral management only in fields where no American opposition was expected. Indeed, Japan's contributions to regional and global management can largely be traced to the pressure or encouragement of the U.S. As George Yeo noted, "The Americans do want Japan to play a bigger role but in a way prescribed by America."[36] "Japan has acted", this is also the impression of Yong Deng in regard to Japan's contributions to multilateral economic regimes, "more like a supporter than a challenger for the U.S., more like a follower than a leader for other Asian economies."[37]

Given that Japan cannot possibly develop an independent security and military strategy, the restrictions for Japanese multilateral activities will

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[33] Soeya Yoshihide, "The China Strategy", op.cit., p. 17.

[34] Driffte, "(K)ein ständiger Sitz im UN-Sicherheitsrat?", p.4.

[35] Kubota Isao, "Behind the Asian Miracle", *Look Japan* 43:494 (1997):14-15.

[36] Quoted in Yong Deng, "Japan and APEC. The Problematic Leadership Role", *Asian Survey* 37:4 (1997): 362.

[37] Yong Deng, op.cit., p.362.

continue to exist. However, the question should be asked whether Tokyo could do more to translate its economic power into political bargaining leverage, enabling it to obtain more scope for shaping a more independent multilateral policy. Mojtaba Sadria believes that it is possible for Japan to enhance the fungibility of power by linking investment, trade and ODA (Official Development Assistance) to political demands. In fact, Japan has successfully tested this strategy with China and France, enforcing them to reduce nuclear testing. Particularly as regards China, Japan announced that it would cut some portion of its ODA, if nuclear testing continued. This approach did work. Mojtaba Sadria found this way more effective for Japan to gain political momentum than by sending Self-Defense Forces to participate in peacekeeping operations. He argued, "Only by understanding the accumulative power of these elements can we understand the capability of Japan to carry influence in the international sphere."[38]

## Conclusion

Japan possesses three strategic options to assure its national security: unilateralism, bilateralism and multilateralism. The option chosen will have fundamental impacts on the security structure of East Asia in the next century. A nuclear Japan would mean an end to the balance of power in the region, which would involve the countries in a new arms race. Strengthening the U.S.-Japan alliance might well thwart Tokyo's own attempt to balance between Washington and Beijing, moving China in a more assertive direction. Moving in a multilateral direction would involve pursuing a policy more independent of the U.S., which, in turn, would unavoidably worry neighbouring nations. To put it very simply: any decision for just one option would only infringe upon Japan's security, and thus destabilize the region. A combination of the unilateral, bilateral and multilateral activities could be found if Japan wanted to maximize its security profits given the absence of a highly institutionalized security architecture in East Asia. Despite the potential disadvantages of multilateralism, a more active participation in regional and global management could possibly enhance Japan's security on the condition that both the U.S. and China feel that they could benefit from this multilateral management. To find out this synthesis will be the strongest intellectual challenge for the Japanese elite in the twenty-first century.

[38] Mojtaba Sadria, "Japan as a Superpower?", *AMPO Japan-Asia Quarterly Review* 26:2 (1997): 27.