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THE SASAKAWA PEACE FOUNDATION

Japan and the United States after the Great East Japan Earthquake

Report of the 3rd Japan-U.S. Joint Public Policy Forum
October 27, 2011 • Edited by Bryce Wakefield





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Front cover photo: KAMAISHI, Japan (March 21, 2011) - Naval air crewman surveys areas affected by the tsunami caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Kevin B.Gray)

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PREFACE

It's been a year since northeastern Japan was struck by an earthquake and massive tsunami. Americans felt for their Japanese friends at the time of the March 2011 disaster, and many of us are still watching events there. Reconstruction will take years and will be a major undertaking. Continuing problems at the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant and suspension of operations at other plants throughout the country mean that Japanese will need to think of creative solutions to meet demands for power. Emotional stress will also continue to inflict a toll on survivors of the disaster. Recovery has been and will continue to be hard.

But the people of Japan can be assured that America is standing alongside them. Japan has no greater friend or ally than the United States, a fact that was confirmed in the wake of the disaster. The United States mobilized 16,000 troops to aid Japan's Self-Defense Forces in rescue efforts. The name of this mission, "Operation Tomodachi," symbolizes the true nature of the relationship between our two countries. We have our differences from time to time, but Japan and the United States will help each other out when the chips are down. That's what being friends—or "Tomodachi"—means.

In October 2011, the Woodrow Wilson Center and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation convened a conference to reflect on Operation Tomodachi and to explore the post-disaster future of the U.S.-Japan alliance. Participants discussed the lessons that policy planners in the two countries could learn from their joint rescue efforts, and considered issues such as Japanese national identity after the disaster and the place of the bilateral alliance in world politics in the years ahead. The event was the continuation of a fruitful partnership that the Wilson Center and SPF started in 2009, when the two organizations convened the inaugural Japan-U.S. Joint Public Policy Forum.

In addition to this annual conference, the Wilson Center each year organizes a number of public events and activities on Japanese politics, economics, and society. Like the Public Policy Forum, these events would not be possible without the generous assistance of SPF. Wilson Center Japan Scholars, whose

research activities in Washington the Center regularly hosts, are another valuable part of our Japan-related programming.

There's always room for improvement in relationships, even between good friends. As you will see when you read the following summary of the 2011 Japan-U.S. Joint Public Policy Forum, Operation Tomodachi demonstrated that there are areas, particularly in terms of crisis coordination, where our partnership can be enhanced. Although the tsunami was a heart-wrenching tragedy, it's comforting that Japanese and American scholars and policymakers are willing to come together to explore how to increase our resilience in the face of future disasters.

Jane Harman

Director, President, and CEO

Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

PREFACE

The March 11, 2011, earthquake was an unprecedented disaster for Japan. The number of victims injured, the area of the damage, and the size of the financial cost is almost incalculable. Meanwhile, efforts to deal with the nuclear accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant are still incomplete. While reconstruction efforts are underway, many in Tohoku, the region most affected by the tsunami, are struggling to put their lives back together.

As we help the survivors, we must recognize that many countries around the world extended their support by helping Japanese rescuers directly after the quake, and have continued to assist in restoration and reconstruction efforts. Among others, the United States, our only ally, extended generous support to Japan in many ways under “Operation Tomodachi,” the U.S. assistance mission in response to the disaster. During this mission, the U.S. Armed Forces and the Japanese Self Defense Forces worked successfully together. This was truly outstanding, and we believe that the Japanese now trust the United States more than ever before. We should build on this momentum so as to further strengthen bilateral relations, not only in terms of the security relationship, but on global economic and political matters as well. The Japan-U.S. Joint Policy Forum, which annually brings together Japanese and American government officials and academics, presented us with an opportunity to do so.

This publication outlines the scope of the disaster and issues discussed at the 2011 Japan-U.S. Public Policy Forum. The Sasakawa Peace Foundation and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars have co-organized this forum annually since 2009. William Perry, the 19th U.S. secretary of defense spoke at the inaugural forum, which was based around the topic of “A World Free of Nuclear Weapons.” For our second endeavor, in 2010, the theme of the forum was “Japan-U.S. Economic Partnership” in the wake of the global financial crisis. For the third conference, we focused on bilateral cooperation after the Great East Japan Earthquake.

At the most recent forum, Makoto Iokibe, president of the National Defense Academy of Japan and also the head of the Reconstruction Design Council established after the Great East Japan Earthquake, gave the first keynote speech. Iokibe's speech was followed by Richard Armitage, a former U.S. deputy secretary of state. Yukio Okamoto, of Okamoto Associates and an advisor to the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, moderated the following question-and-answer session. We are grateful that these two well-respected keynote speakers helped to make the 2011 forum successful. Also, we wish to thank Professor Toshihiro Nakayama, who provided us with invaluable advice for coordinating this forum.

We also had two remarkable panel discussions in the afternoon. I would like to express my gratitude to all eight panelists who made intellectual contributions as well as to Professor Naoyuki Agawa, who moderated one of the panels. As an organizer of the forum, I very much believe that it has become an opportunity for all of us to probe realistic options for those who manage the Japan-U.S. relationship. It has also stimulated discussion about future cooperation between Japan and the United States, as well as cooperation between these two alliance partners and other countries.

On a final note, I am sure that I speak for all Japanese when I say that we are extremely grateful for the significant help and warm words of encouragement from the people of the United States and other friends all over the world in the past year. And, together with our co-organizer, the speakers, and the audience, I would like to express our condolences to those who lost their lives in the Great Earthquake. We also extend our sympathy to the survivors. Lastly, I would like to extend our sincerest appreciation to all of those who have helped with planning and organizing this forum, as well as all the participants.

Jiro Hanyu

Chairman

The Sasakawa Peace Foundation

RESPONDING TO DISASTER

Bryce Wakefield

The people of Tohoku and surrounding areas are no strangers to earthquakes and their often disastrous consequences. In 1896, a deadly tsunami, the result of a magnitude 7.2 undersea quake, flooded the northeastern Japanese region's Sanriku Coast and killed 22,000 people. In March 1933, a tremor off the shore generated another giant tidal wave that killed more than 3,000. These tragedies would prompt authorities to build a massive sea wall, around 1.5 miles long and 30 feet high, in the small town of Taro, which had lost almost, respectively, 2000 and 1000 of its residents in the two disasters.¹ From the 1960s, a breakwater, slightly longer even than the wall at Taro, would be built in the bay near Kamaishi city, 40 miles to the south. Rising 207 feet from the bottom of the ocean to above surface, the breakwater would be the world's deepest and cost U.S. \$1.5 billion by the time of its completion in 2009.² The threat of natural disasters is taken extremely seriously in Japan.

Mostly, however, large coastal earthquakes pass without incident in the region. Shocks of magnitude 7 or more occur every few years off the east and northeast coast of the country. A magnitude 7.2 earthquake and related aftershocks, occurring on March 9, 2011, 105 miles off the coast of Sendai, a major city of around 500,000 to the north of Tokyo, therefore caused little concern once it was determined that there was no resulting tsunami. Indeed, for many the quake, which triggered the automatic brakes on trains running nearby and shook the region for 30 seconds, seemed more a nuisance than a threat. Sendai's municipal bureaucrats noted that "things did not fall off the shelves in the

**THE THREAT OF
NATURAL DISASTERS
IS TAKEN EXTREMELY
SERIOUSLY IN JAPAN.**

Bryce Wakefield is program associate for Northeast Asia at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

city government building” while scientists deemed the shaking as “not likely to cause any great distress.”³

There was little reason, therefore, to suspect that March 11 would be anything other than an ordinary Friday. That changed at 2:46 p.m. when a massive magnitude 9 quake—one of the five most powerful in recorded history, and the most powerful ever recorded in or around Japan—struck at sea, 80 miles east of Sendai. This new quake triggered several aftershocks, as well as a massive tsunami that reached the shoreline soon afterwards,⁴ destroying ports and other coastal and even inland urban infrastructure. Waves of annihilation crashed across vast swathes of countryside and engulfed parts of Sendai, instantly knocking out power to 1.5 million households in the vicinity.⁵ Debris, carried by water, fanned out along the runway of the city’s airport as travelers huddled, trapped, in the main terminal building and on its roof. The breakwater at Kamaishi and the wall in Taro were no match for the waves that surmounted them, while smaller-scale defenses in other towns also failed. Meanwhile, the long, narrow bays and harbors that punctuate the Sanriku Coast accentuated the surge, pushing water levels as high as 127.6 feet.⁶ In some areas, the tsunami traveled more than six miles inland.⁷ Entire towns, such as Rikuzentakata on the Sanriku Coast, were effectively wiped off

**A MASSIVE
HUMANITARIAN CRISIS
WAS UNFOLDING IN
A NATION USUALLY
WELL REGARDED FOR
LEVELS OF PUBLIC
SAFETY.**

the map. In all, some 128,000 residential and commercial buildings were completely destroyed, and 240,000 were mostly damaged.⁸ People in the affected area will be rebuilding for years to come.

More devastating, however, was the human cost. As of January 2012, official statistics place the death toll at 15,845, with 3,368 still counted as missing.⁹ As the true extent of the initial crisis became clear to outside observers in the days immediately

following the quake, cold weather and snow provided new threats to the roughly 430,000 survivors in affected areas, many of whom had no access to food, fuel, or blankets. In other earthquake related disasters, the most pressing immediate medical need is to deal with wounds caused by falling rubble. In contrast, around 90 percent of patients brought to Sendai Medical Center

in the days after the tsunami suffered from hypothermia, while 7-8 percent suffered from cervical spine damage and pulmonary embolisms—blood clots that travel from the legs to block the main artery or lungs—the result of sheltering from the harsh conditions, cramped, in cars.¹⁰ Cases of pneumonia were further aggravated among those who had inhaled polluted seawater and chemicals thrown into the air, causing a dreaded condition labeled “tsunami lung” (*tsunami hai*).¹¹ A massive humanitarian crisis was unfolding in a nation usually well regarded for levels of public safety.

Japan—and the world—responds

As if conditions in the area were not bad enough, many evacuees feared exposure to radiation from the crippled Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant, where a 48-foot wall of water had damaged reactors and pools containing spent nuclear fuel, while also knocking out poorly located emergency cooling systems.¹²

The Japanese government’s response to the nuclear crisis was marred by poor choices, most notably the decision of then-Prime Minister Naoto Kan to rely initially on Tokyo Electric Power Company (Tepco), the power monopoly which ran the plant, to handle the

emergency at Fukushima. Journalists and local government officials were quick to decry the low level of real-time information provided by the utility and the central government. Indeed, for many news organizations, particularly those that had flown reporters in from overseas, official intransigence about the disaster became the central theme of the stories they sent home. As conditions worsened at Fukushima, international media attention shifted away from the specific plight of the tsunami evacuees to the north, arguably a greater crisis than the fate of the ailing nuclear plants.¹³

Perhaps worse, the lack of information about Fukushima led to speculation abroad about the plant, a serious matter given that other governments were attempting to coordinate their own responses to the crisis. Shortly after the Japanese government established a 20 kilometer (12 mile) evacuation and

**THE LACK OF
INFORMATION
ABOUT FUKUSHIMA
LED TO SPECULATION
ABROAD ABOUT
THE PLANT.**

exclusion zone around the nuclear plant, U.S. counterparts, acting under the advice of their Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), warned American citizens within 50 miles of the plant to evacuate.¹⁴ Other countries followed the U.S. lead in issuing similar advisories to their citizens, undermining trust in the Japanese government's decision. One of the leaders of the U.S. State Department task force set up to deal with the disaster in Japan would later criticize the NRC in his best-selling Japanese-language book, noting that the warning "yielded a contradiction in the evacuation instructions of the United States and Japan" with no basis in established fact.¹⁵ Indeed, the NRC's advice was founded on the hypothesis of a complete meltdown occurring at one of the reactors, a worst-case scenario that independent nuclear experts in the United States thought excessive.¹⁶ While the NRC's actions deserve scrutiny, its members later pointed out that it was the lack of reliable information—ultimately the fault of the Japanese government—which caused the commission to make a "judgment based on supposition."¹⁷

Although the Japanese government's response to Fukushima left much to be desired, the immediate civilian reaction to the natural disaster was more admirable. Most notable was the level of preparedness and attention to long-established evacuation procedures observed by ordinary Japanese citizens. The foreign press "praised the earnestness and composure of the Japanese people who helped each other"¹⁸ and noted that such "critical conditions did not give rise to looting or panic" as they might elsewhere, a sign that despite the massive disaster, Japanese could "have faith that this society was going to be okay."¹⁹ Civilian rescuers also responded well. Consistent with their contingency plans, local police forces from all over Japan mobilized to form the Interprefectural Emergency Rescue Unit and, along with fire brigades and the Japan Coast Guard, were sent to search for survivors. A few days before the disaster, two Japanese rescue teams returned home from a mission in response to an earlier earthquake in Christchurch, New Zealand. These teams were dispatched to the new disaster zone straight away, while 66 of their colleagues still out of the country flew back immediately to take part in operations.²⁰

Japan's Ministry of Defense and Self Defense Forces (SDF) were also quick to respond. According to government documents, the ministry established an Emergency Headquarters four minutes after the quake and immediately began gathering information about the unfolding crisis. Within hours of the

tsunami coming ashore, Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa authorized the deployment of 8,400 SDF members and dispatched eight fighter jets, as well as all ships from the force's major maritime base at Yokosuka, to aid in search and rescue efforts.²¹ Over the next few days, as the scope of the disaster became clear, the number of Japanese troops engaged in such efforts was increased to 20,000, then to 50,000, and finally to around 107,000, almost half of the SDF's uniformed personnel. Around 540 aircraft and nearly 60 ships were also dispatched.²² On March 16, SDF reserve personnel were called to active duty for the first time ever.²³ In addition to searching for survivors, force members responding to the disaster cleared roads and other lines of communication and, later, provided basic comforts such as hot-water baths for evacuees.²⁴ The dedication shown by SDF members in their work bolstered the forces' standing among ordinary Japanese. While opinion polls taken by the Japanese Cabinet have long shown that the public takes a favorable view towards the SDF's

**THE EFFORTS OF
SOME OF JAPAN'S
FRIENDS AND
NEIGHBORS WERE
TRULY STAGGERING.**

role as a disaster relief organization,²⁵ a poll taken in June 2011 by the Pew Research Center showed that 95 percent now “described the Self Defense Force's response positively”—an unprecedented approval rating.²⁶

In addition to its own efforts, Japan was also quick to reach out to other nations. Real-time coverage of the tsunami in the international media conveyed the level of destruction to an overseas audience on an unprecedented scale,²⁷ and the visual impact may have been one of the reasons why the international response was so swift and deep. Social media also served to raise awareness about the extent of the damage, as offers of financial aid began to pour in from both public and private sources.²⁸ Some economic assistance was symbolic: the city of Kandahar in Afghanistan, a nation which has received vast quantities of aid from Japan, pledged U.S. \$50,000 the day after the tsunami. Other poor nations made similar contributions.²⁹ Meanwhile, the efforts of some of Japan's friends and neighbors were truly staggering. Taiwan's donation of U.S. \$165 million from both public and private sources was larger than any other similar single-nation contribution, even the impressive \$125 million pledge from the United States.³⁰ Amid appeals from international organizations for

donations, a few observers questioned why Japan, the nation with the third largest economy in the world, needed external private aid.³¹ However, such comments overlooked the “difference between meeting immediate human needs after a disaster (relief work) and the rebuilding of a region once the emergency has stabilised (reconstruction).” As international aid experts pointed out, a disaster on the scale of that which had just befallen Japan would stretch the resources of any government.³²

Foreign nations were also quick to offer urban search and rescue (USAR) teams to Japan, with the Japanese government choosing those teams that

**THE MOST VISIBLE
FOREIGN PRESENCE
IN JAPAN IN THE
DAYS AND WEEKS
FOLLOWING THE
TSUNAMI WAS THE
U.S. MILITARY.**

it believed were most experienced to deal with the problems the disaster presented. American and European teams were dispatched immediately from their home nations. The United States sent two 72-member teams and tons of rescue equipment. Taiwan sent 28 rescuers. South Korea initially sent 15, soon followed by 100 more, with 1,000 on standby should the Japanese government request their presence.³³ Australian Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd, meanwhile, expressed the

sentiments of many leaders in the Asia-Pacific when he declared that the Australian government, which also sent USAR teams to assist Japan, was “prepared to throw anything and everything at this.”³⁴ Indeed, even nations dealing with their own natural disasters offered to help. Prior to the tsunami, the biggest international news story in Japan had been the Christchurch earthquake, whose death toll of 108 included 28 Japanese citizens.³⁵ The Japanese media thus showed particular interest in the arrival in Japan of New Zealand rescuers who had also flown directly from the disaster site in their home country—their first ever overseas mission.³⁶ Despite tensions riding high between Beijing and Tokyo over a territorial dispute the year before, even China, the day after a major earthquake in its own province of Yunnan killed 27, managed to dispatch a team of 15 rescuers to Japan.³⁷ The world was behind the people of Tohoku in their time of need.

Operation Tomodachi

However, the most visible foreign presence in Japan in the days and weeks following the tsunami was the U.S. military. While the armed forces of other nations, notably Australia, provided logistical assistance during the emergency, the U.S. forces' unsurpassed capacity to deal with disaster, coupled with America's position as Japan's only formal security ally, ensured that the United States played a central role in response to the multiple crises. In total, the U.S. military mobilized approximately 16,000 troops, 15 vessels, and 140 aircraft to assist Japan in myriad operations.³⁸ The aircraft carrier *U.S.S. Ronald Reagan* and its carrier group, usually based in the Japanese port of Yokosuka, but performing exercises in the vicinity of the Korean peninsula, immediately moved towards Japan, providing an important landing platform for both American and Japanese helicopters. In addition to transporting food, the *U.S.S. Tortuga*, an amphibious landing ship, transported 300 SDF members and 90 vehicles from the island of Hokkaido to the Japanese mainland, where they could access affected areas. The United States identified Sendai Airport as an important hub of operations, crucial to reestablishing supply lines, and U.S. Marines worked with the SDF to quickly clear the runway of debris on March 15 and 16.³⁹ In just over two weeks of operations, U.S. service members also delivered massive amounts of needed supplies, including 1,707,815 gallons of water, 172 tons of food, 10 tons of medical provisions, and 34 tons of other relief items to those in need.⁴⁰

As with any real contingency, there were missteps that delayed crucial action, and the United States and Japan will be reviewing their operations to see where there is room for improvement. Although, as discussed later, many arrangements concerning cooperation between the U.S. forces and the SDF happened spontaneously, formal coordination between Japan and the United States occurred according to a framework that has been implemented and improved over the last 15 years. Since the mid-1990s, Japan has been paying increasing attention to military operations and playing a more active role within the U.S.-Japan alliance. Stipulations in the 1997 Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation enabled the Japanese Ministry of Defense, the Self Defense Forces, and the U.S. Forces in Japan to quickly establish bilateral coordination centers in the wake of the disaster to coordinate their activities more closely. Meanwhile an Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement

signed in 1998 anticipated the need for the cross provision of fuel and supplies that was so vital during joint disaster relief efforts.⁴¹ While usually viewed as enabling Japan to participate in regional security measures, these agreements facilitated the bilateral response to the domestic disaster.

However, American public relations efforts during the assistance missions stressed that the United States did not simply see its activities in light of its formal responsibilities under an administrative alliance framework. Starting with the name chosen to represent their response to the disaster, Operation “Tomodachi” (which mean “friends” in Japanese), the U.S. forces were keen to highlight the depth of sympathy Americans felt towards those suffering. U.S. tasks were not limited merely to “hard” operations designed to save lives and reestablish lines of communication, but also involved attempts to restore a semblance of normalcy to disrupted communities. For example, U.S. forces cleared rubble from schools, where they later also engaged in cultural exchange, introducing American culture to primary and junior high school students, as well as explaining the military’s role in the crisis.⁴² Some months after the tsunami, Americans stationed on the island prefecture of Okinawa to the south of Japan opened their homes to children living in affected areas, providing them with temporary relief from hardship.⁴³ In essence, the U.S. armed forces presented themselves as the manifestation of President Barack Obama’s words that America would “stand with the people of Japan as they contain this crisis, recover from this hardship, and rebuild their great nation.”⁴⁴

American expressions of solidarity toward Japan came at a critical juncture. Before Operation Tomodachi, bilateral relations between the two nations had been marred by disputes over the appropriate site for the relocation of a U.S. Marine base on Okinawa. The Obama administration sees the consolidation and relocation of the controversial Futenma air base and other facilities on the prefecture’s main island, and the transferal of 8,000 Marines and their dependents from Okinawa to Guam, as a sensible solution to complaints about the imposition of military facilities on local communities. Locals, however, fearing that new bases will institutionalize a U.S. military presence on the island, strongly oppose any transfer. Indecision by the Japanese government over whether to continue with a plan to relocate the bases has caused ongoing tension between the United States and Japan since 2009. While the issue of the base was by no means settled after the disaster, Operation Tomodachi

gave politicians in Washington and Tokyo, as well as local coordinators of the alliance, the chance to reaffirm their mutual commitments after such tension.

Indeed, appreciation for U.S. efforts in Operation Tomodachi was reflected in public opinion polls. The Pew poll taken after the disaster showed that 57 percent of Japanese thought that the United States had “done a great deal to assist their country,” while another 32 percent said that it had done “a fair amount.”⁴⁵ Overall perceptions of the United States improved after the disaster as well. Fully 85 percent of Japanese viewed the United States positively in the organization’s annual Global Attitudes Project survey in 2011, up from 66 percent the year before. Perceptions of U.S. assistance were directly linked to overall perceptions of the United States, with 93 percent of those who thought the United States had done a great deal expressing positive feelings toward their nation’s ally.⁴⁶ Japanese Cabinet Office polls also registered record levels of public goodwill towards the United States after the rescue efforts.⁴⁷

National solutions

What have Japan and the United States learned since the 2011 disaster and what will be the focus of the bilateral relationship as it evolves? On October 26, 2011, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation co-hosted their third annual Japan-U.S. Joint Public Policy Forum in Tokyo to focus on these questions. On the morning of the conference the first keynote speaker, then-President of the National Defense Academy of Japan **Makoto Iokibe**, explained how Japan had traditionally approached policymaking in response to particular crises and outlined pertinent lessons from the 2011 disaster. Former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State **Richard Armitage**, as the second keynote speaker, then discussed the need for Japan and the United States to think about their alliance strategically in the years ahead. The two speeches were ably moderated by **Yukio Okamoto**, founder of Okamoto and Associates and special advisor to former Japanese Prime Ministers Ryutaro Hashimoto (1996-1998) and Junichiro Koizumi (2001-2006).

APPRECIATION FOR U.S. EFFORTS IN OPERATION TOMODACHI WAS REFLECTED IN PUBLIC OPINION POLLS.

According to Iokibe, the Japanese government had developed its policy towards complex natural disasters as though sewing patches onto a quilt one by one. That is, beginning in 1961, Japan began to pass legislation in response to particular disasters. Measures to respond to typhoons, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and similar events were therefore implemented in retrospect, in order to make sure that mistakes in dealing with each disaster would not occur again. Iokibe believed that this legislative quilt was complete after the 1995 Great Hanshin earthquake, which struck the port city of Kobe, claiming the

**OPERATION TOMODACHI
ALSO UNDERSCORED THE
VALUE OF COOPERATION
UNDER THE BILATERAL
SECURITY ALLIANCE.**

lives of 6,434 people. However, he was shocked after the 2011 disaster to find that Japan had no basic system to respond to problems brought about by a major tsunami.

In the wake of the 2011 crisis, there was now a new series of lessons for Japan. While lauding

the efforts of the SDF, Iokibe noted that the forces' response to the earthquake also demonstrated that improvements needed to be made in how they conduct their operations. Most notably, the forces' lack of experience in joint operations between its three services was stark in comparison to the U.S. military, which worked far more efficiently in this regard. Iokibe noted that there was much to learn from the "organic" relationship between, for example, the U.S. Marines and Army. Operation Tomodachi also underscored the value of cooperation under the bilateral security alliance, as the superior capabilities of the American forces meant that they could reach areas where the SDF could not.

Consistent with his role as head of the Japanese government's post-disaster reconstruction panel, Iokibe also highlighted various lessons that affected communities could incorporate into their future urban planning. Plans for building new, more resilient towns and cities should not necessarily attempt to counter the destructive force of natural disasters, but instead mitigate their effect on surrounding communities. Artificial defenses did slow the impact of the waves, but could not completely hold them, and in some cases, such as Taro, the construction of additional walls actually accentuated the rise of the tsunami, pushing water over the original embankment. Instead of trying to repel tsunamis with seawalls and breakwaters, Iokibe proposed that Japan

spend more time relocating coastal communities in vulnerable regions to higher ground. After the nuclear disaster at Fukushima, Iokibe believed that there will also be greater call for green energy, and that the construction of new communities could serve to introduce innovative environmentally friendly energy solutions as models for the rest of the nation.

In contrast to the Kobe earthquake, where reconstruction was controlled and heavily regulated by local government, Iokibe believed that the recent disaster calls for a truly national response, as local communities will not be able to bear the cost of rebuilding on their own. This reflects differences in demographics between the two disasters. In 1995 many of those injured in the earthquake were employees of large businesses in the city, and continued to receive salaries as they recuperated. However, many of the fishing and agricultural concerns in the areas affected by the more recent disaster are owned by their operators and will need state help to survive. Also, relocating entire communities in order to avoid the next big tsunami will be costly. Although the task ahead seems daunting, Iokibe believed that Japan, which has often weathered disaster, can recover on its own. In fact, he was certain that his country can again find the energy within itself not merely to overcome its latest calamity, but to use reconstruction after the tsunami to usher in a new and positive era for its people.

Indeed, both keynote speakers at the conference viewed the tsunami as an opportunity to raise large national issues. Much of Armitage's speech focused on Japan's place in the world after the recent disaster. Citing a foreign policy speech by current Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda, the former deputy secretary noted that Japan's leaders understood that their nation was situated in an uncertain international environment, but were often unwilling to provide solutions to deal with this uncertainty or, at the least, protect Japan's national interests. In other words, in a region dominated by a rising China and made more problematic by a delinquent North Korea, Japan's position is often too inconclusive for its American partners. Armitage asserted that it was time for Japanese to have a fundamental debate about the place of their nation in the world, and that the central question of this debate should be nothing less than "What kind of country do you want?"

WHAT KIND OF COUNTRY DO YOU WANT?

While stressing that he was not in a position to answer this question for Japan, Armitage noted that there were essentially two possible responses. First, Japan could slip into luxurious obscurity. Having achieved high-growth earlier than other Asian nations, Japan could watch other countries in the region overtake it in terms of global prestige and influence as it slowly dropped into second-tier status. Japan's economy, the third largest in the world, is large enough to sustain the nation's aging inhabitants in relative comfort as the nation declines on the world stage. According to Armitage, not a few Japanese politicians and academics believe that this is the proper direction for their country. Indeed, Eisuke Sakakibara, one of the keynote speakers at the 2010 Japan-U.S. Public Policy Forum, suggested that such a managed decline was an attractive proposition.

However, Armitage believed that the recent disaster demonstrated that Japan should strive to be a first-tier nation. Early in his speech, he lauded the spirit of the people affected by this crisis, and hinted at a desire for them to transfer their tenacity to Japan's ruling political elites. Indeed, Japan has a responsibility to rebuild, not just to itself. Armitage suggested the massive outpouring of sympathy and aid from overseas was prompted by more than humanitarian impulses: it was a statement by the nations of the world of how they want to see Japan go forward. The international community, said Armitage, is not content to see Japan slide into insignificance. Other countries believe that because of Tokyo's influence and its willingness to be heard on important issues, such as human rights, "the world was made safer, and more humane" by a strong Japan.

Beyond the immediate need for reconstruction, Armitage noted that there were a series of problems that Japan needs to tackle if it is to maintain its international status. Tokyo's declining defense budgets over the last decade raise questions over whether Japan will continue to be a player with global influence. According to Armitage, such decline hardly constitutes a "top-tier statement." Despite the universal Japanese appreciation of the SDF in its role as a disaster relief organization, the former deputy secretary of state also stressed that disaster response should not be forces' primary mission. Instead, he emphasized that the SDF ought to focus on defending the nation from external threat, something that will be more difficult if the forces are deprived of necessary resources. In order to show that Japan

was serious about its role in the world, its leaders would need to raise their nation's defense spending above the 1 percent of GNP to which it has traditionally been limited.

In terms of factors that negatively affect Japan's ability to play an increased role in the world, Armitage also mentioned legal and policy related restrictions on military action in Japan, such as the nation's long-held policy principles restricting the export of Japanese defense technology. These principles complicated Japan's participation in joint weapons development, thereby raising the cost of procurement for Tokyo. Armitage would no doubt be pleased that the Noda administration softened the restrictions on arms exports in December 2011 to allow Japanese cooperation in arms manufacturing and export of Japanese technology for use in peacekeeping missions. However, other restrictions still remain. Armitage believed that Japan needed to go as far as debating the utility of Article 9, the "peace clause" of the Japanese constitution, which renounces war as a legitimate means of statecraft and outlaws the maintenance of forces armed for that purpose. Such a debate would likely be contentious. For many Japanese, Article 9 represents the core of their nation's post-World War Two identity as a pacifist state. However, the article restricts Japan from engaging in collective self-defense missions, which poses a problem for proponents of greater military cooperation with the United States abroad. While the Japanese government has sometimes creatively interpreted its constitution to allow the SDF to engage in joint overseas operations, Armitage believes that "it is time to have a really public discussion of collective self-defense... and let the chips fall where they may."

Successful evolution

The afternoon of the conference was taken up by two panels, the first of which, moderated by Keio University's Vice President for International Collaboration **Naoyuki Agawa**, featured experts who were directly involved in Operation Tomodachi and who could discuss the lessons learned during joint operations between the United States and Japan after March 11.

Reflecting both on their own experiences and on the overall response to the disaster, the panelists were unanimous in their opinion that Operation Tomodachi had been a profound success. Notably, they thought that the level of cooperation and coordination between Japan and the United States would

have been impossible just two decades ago. According to **Robert Eldridge**, deputy assistant chief of staff at the community policy, planning, and liaison office of the Marine Corps Bases Japan, this improved bilateral cooperation

THE LEVEL OF COOPERATION AND COORDINATION BETWEEN JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE JUST TWO DECADES AGO.

was due to a number of factors, not least a change in the structure of the international system. During the Cold War, Japanese domestic politics was divided over the status of the SDF, as well as over Japan's security arrangements with the United States, making bilateral military cooperation difficult. Also, international tension between the United States and the Soviet Union encouraged a focus in

policymaking circles on traditional security threats. In contrast, the United States, Japan, and its partners have had 20 years "in the post-Cold War period to look at complex emergencies around the world."

Another factor that influenced the way Japan in particular responded to the 2011 disaster was the memory of governmental failure after the Kobe earthquake, a factor also mentioned by Iokibe in the earlier keynote session. During that disaster, the SDF had been ill-prepared. Requests from local government for the forces' assistance were delayed in transmission, and when the forces were dispatched, traffic problems meant that their arrival at the scene was delayed even further. Worse, they had to negotiate with local authorities about the scope of their operations. In the period since, Japan has responded with legislation and training measures to improve coordination between the SDF and local governments. Also remarkable during the more recent disaster was the national government's willingness to rely on outside help, as well as on the assistance of the U.S. forces in Japan, an aspect of the response whose absence, because of earlier cultural reticence and bureaucratic intransigence, made the Kobe disaster worse than it should have been. According to Eldridge, who experienced the 1995 earthquake first hand, Kobe "was a wake-up call for Japan."

Finally, increased cooperation on the ground since the 1990s meant that there were greater points of contact between the SDF and the U.S. forces that

allowed operations to run more smoothly. According to **Robert Luke**, the minister-counselor for political affairs at the U.S. embassy in Tokyo, “a good part of the success was because of the very strong personal relationships that have been built up over many years working together.” A great deal of ad-hoc coordination between the SDF and the U.S. forces paid off. Indeed, individuals like Professor **Noboru Yamaguchi**, a retired general in the Ground Self Defense Forces, were called in by the Cabinet to help coordinate operations on the ground on a day-to-day basis. In constant communication with key figures like Eldridge, who was with the U.S. Marines in Sendai as they cleared the airport, and with politicians such as member of the Japanese House of Representatives **Akihisa Nagashima**, who played an important role in the political process, Yamaguchi and others strove to coordinate activity among the various players. However, much of this activity was outside the bounds of the past training between the American and Japanese forces. According to Luke, a former military attaché at the embassy noted at the time that cooperation between the U.S. and Japan “seemed to be working” but that it was “not working any way like we thought it was going to work.” On the military level at least, joint efforts often occurred spontaneously.

Learning from Tomodachi

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to assume that because of successful operations, there is no room for improvement in coordination between the United States and Japan. Indeed, as the panelists all indicated, Operation Tomodachi succeeded *despite* the absence of clear coordination. There is still much to learn. Yamaguchi in particular was critical of the lack of efficient whole-of-government mechanisms between the United States and Japan. The retired general once believed that a few coordination centers designed to facilitate military cooperation at high levels under the 1997 guidelines would be enough to deal with a major disaster. However, after the 2011 tsunami he realized that the “point-to-point” mechanism that the coordination centers represented was not sufficient and “there has to be connection at all levels.” This view was endorsed by Luke, who mentioned that there “needed to be a bilateral, interagency communication channel that would allow us all to be on the same page, both in terms of what Japan’s needs were, and what our response would be from the U.S.”

As already mentioned, one of the areas where effective communication and coordination mechanisms were sorely lacking was the joint response to Fukushima. In his detailed account of his various meetings with politicians and bureaucrats during the crisis, Nagashima made it clear that conflicting information from various sources in Japan confused NRC members and those in the United States charged with assisting Japan in its attempts to control the damaged reactors. Bureaucratic stovepipes in Japan meant that not only was there little effective communication with U.S. government counterparts about the nuclear crisis, but that Japanese ministries and agencies responsible for nuclear operations did not communicate with one another.

Indeed, greater coordination between the United States and Japan, when it did occur, brought to light many of the contradictory positions within the Japanese government. Nagashima, along with fellow parliamentarian and prime ministerial aide Goshi Hosono, convinced Prime Minister Kan and U.S. Ambassador John Roos to convene a U.S.-Japan planning, liaison, and coordination conference on the evening of March 21, attended by a wide

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range of representatives from a number of agencies in both governments. The conference immediately exposed inconsistencies among the Japanese agencies at the same time as it allowed for smoother coordination between the two governments. As Luke pointed out, the participation of the prime minister and other politicians also meant that decisions made at the meeting had

immediate “political buy-in,” giving those on the ground the confidence that they had the authority to conduct their activities. While it is something of a scandal that it took ten days for the principal decision makers to arrange such a conference, the regular coordination meetings proved so useful that they continued to be held until long after the immediate crisis had passed.

Despite the positive evaluation of most of the SDF’s search, rescue, and recovery missions, the panelists also agreed with Iokibe’s earlier statement

that there was ample room for greater coordination among the three services that make up the forces. Joint operations between the Ground, Land, and Air Self Defense Force only began in March 2005, and the response to the recent disaster was the first active exercise where a joint task force was set up among the branches to manage their movements. While Yamaguchi remarked that the SDF had made significant progress in force integration during this time, both he and Eldridge pointed out that there was still some length to go before the forces were no longer merely cooperating with one another on a mission-by-mission basis, but were actually integrated. This is one area where the SDF could truly learn from the U.S. military, which has long assumed that unpredictable contingencies require joint responses. Indeed, Eldridge noted that “even today in after-action reports on the U.S., and particularly on the Marine Corps, side, there is a clear message throughout that it is always important to know our fellow services and their capabilities.”

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Nagashima stated that such joint training is vital not only in preparation for disaster planning, but also in response to military contingencies. In fact, smooth communication among forces may be even more important when reacting to a “moving adversary.” Natural disasters have the propensity to wreak havoc on a massive scale all at once, but after the initial impact, the situation is usually inert. In contrast, military opponents can adjust their strategies and react to countermeasures taken after an initial attack. Therefore, according to Luke, the same kinds of spontaneous communication that occurred among the forces dealing with the 2011 disaster “may not be acceptable in a military contingency.” Effective coordination mechanisms cannot simply be established after the fact. They need to be established in normal times in preparation for contingency. Japan, according to Nagashima, “needs more effective crisis management mechanisms.”

Nevertheless, there are still many lessons to learn from Operation Tomodachi about natural disaster management. Yamaguchi noted that Japan and the United States should reflect back while thinking ahead, and “come up with new manuals and guidelines and institutionalize what we have learned

from the experience while it is still fresh in our minds.” Referring to a study that he conducted in 2005 to assess the capabilities of the SDF in precisely a major earthquake and tsunami scenario, Eldridge noted that Japan could have benefited greatly from a mutual disaster assistance agreement and that “with years of participation in disaster drills throughout the country, the response could have been even that much better.” Both Yamaguchi and Eldridge thought that prefectural governments needed to be more proactive about including Japan-based U.S. Forces into their disaster planning and drills, and mentioned that private sector actors, like small-to-medium enterprises and non-governmental relief organizations, should also take part and offer advice. With the foresight offered by such training, Eldridge said that Japanese and U.S. officials “would have had even closer working relationships with not only the people we are used to working with, but people that we are not used to working with.” Indeed, given the international response to the 2011 disaster, Eldridge noted that democracies in the region such as Australia, India, and South Korea should also be invited to participate in such drills, creating more integrated regional disaster response efforts.

Critical juncture

The second panel discussion at the 2011 Japan-U.S. Joint Public Policy Forum, moderated by **Toshihiro Nakayama**, professor of international relations at Aoyama Gakuin, examined the future of Japan and the U.S. alliance after the 2011 disaster. In a sense, the panel was a meditation on Armitage’s question

THERE ARE FOUR MAIN FRAMES THROUGH WHICH AMERICA’S JAPAN WATCHERS ANALYZE THEIR COUNTRY OF INTEREST.

about what kind of country Japan wanted to be, but also considered questions about how Americans viewed Japan after the crisis and the kind of alliance that Japan and the United States should maintain.

According to **Mike Mochizuki**, associate professor of political

science and international affairs at George Washington University, there are four main frames through which America’s Japan watchers analyze their country of interest. First, influenced by the writings of Chalmers Johnson, there are those who see Japan as a strong “developmental state . . . where

bureaucrats rule but politicians merely reign.” Under this model, Japan’s bureaucratic class implements long term strategies for the success of the nation as a whole. From the 1990s, in the wake of Japan’s financial woes, such views have given way to those initially championed by the Dutch scholar Karel van Wolferen, who pictured Japan as a “stateless nation,” a web of bureaucratic sectionalism and political consensus that reduced the national government to a mess of “indecision, political gridlock and political volatility.” In contrast to these two negative depictions of Japan is a perception that Japan and America are converging. That is, the pressures of globalization are pushing Japan not to become American in every way, but at least to be economically and culturally more open to the outside world. Alternatively, many Americans believe that an economically stagnant Japan may be a portent of an unpleasant American future after the Wall Street crisis from 2008.

The final frame used to analyze Japan is one outlined by the American historian Kenneth Pyle. Pyle believes that Japanese history is a series of long periods of consensus, punctuated by critical junctures where the nation as a whole recasts its assumptions about its politics and its place in the international community. Mochizuki pointed out that the 2011 disaster has actually served not to invalidate any one of the assumptions that Americans hold about Japan, but to reinforce them all in the eyes of their proponents. Nevertheless, he believes that in the final analysis it is Pyle’s view that is the most correct. Further, he believes that Japan was standing at a critical juncture even before the tsunami, and the disaster has simply served to accentuate the need for change.

Many of the political developments that Mochizuki cited to substantiate his claim that Japan was at such a juncture were endorsed by **Izuru Makihara**, professor of law at Tohoku University. The two scholars, for example, noted that there is significant generational change occurring in Japanese politics, with younger politicians taking the initiative to break down bureaucratic structures, as was demonstrated when Hosono and Nagashima worked to create the U.S.-Japan coordination committee after the disaster. While Pyle in his writings cited attempts by conservative former Prime Minister Shizo Abe (2006-07) to reform Japan as significant of a new juncture, Mochizuki and Makihara believed that it was rise of the more liberal Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), which came to power in 2009 after a half century of almost continuous rule

by the conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), that was a signifier of real change.

Makihara did note, however, that adjustments carried out under the LDP, notably voting system reform in the 1990s, made the change in government more likely. Restructuring of the cabinet system under the Hashimoto and Koizumi administrations from the mid-1990s also allowed Koizumi in particular to exert greater personal leadership than earlier prime ministers. His successors did not understand or capitalize on these reforms, and to make matters worse, their inadequate leadership was consistently compared to Koizumi's comparative boldness. A series of three disappointing LDP prime ministers after Koizumi allowed the DPJ to secure rule in 2009. There was bound to be confusion at such a juncture, and DPJ leaders, who also did not understand how to lead, faltered early after capturing the government, resulting in immense political disarray. The tsunami hit right at this critical juncture, the DPJ's weak response compounding the confusion in Japanese politics.

Inward or outward?

Such confusion has the potential to influence Japan's role in the world right at a time when the international situation is also extremely fluid. As **Bruce Jentleson**, professor of public policy and political science at Duke

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University, pointed out, Japan and the United States are experiencing the difficulties of "living in an era of profound change." Washington is already reassessing the emphasis it places on various regions of the world, and there is a "challenge for the United States and Japan to build on the foundation that has been laid for 60-plus years" of their security relationship. While the Obama ad-

ministration has conspicuously noted that the United States will be focusing more on Asia in its foreign policy, Jentleson cautioned his Japanese audience that this did not mean Washington would be neglecting its other interests in the world. Indeed, Jentleson noted that as a majority shareholder in global

military, economic, diplomatic, and political power, the United States has a truly global agenda.

Mired by political confusion in the wake of the tsunami, and lulled by the Obama administration's assurances of a "pivot" towards Asia, Japan might be tempted to take a passive approach to foreign policy on the assumption that the United States will be present to deal with regional problems. In Jentleson's eyes, such complacency would be a mistake. Occupied with its own financial concerns, the United States will increasingly be asking its regional friends and allies to become more involved in management of global issues. More alarming for Japan perhaps is that there is a new generation that has grown up in a very different world from its predecessors and is about to take the reins in U.S. foreign policy circles. While Jentleson noted that these new actors are not anti-Japan as such, they are not willing to sit by and let Japan coast on what they see as its global responsibilities. In particular, Japan will need to coordinate its foreign policy with a U.S. response to the rise of China, which, according to Jentleson, contains "a mix of deterrence and reassurance, of balancing and engagement." U.S.-Japan policy coordination in this area needs to become more active and nuanced, not less.

According to **Yoshinobu Yamamoto**, an advisor to the PHP Institute, Japan is fortunately not going to become more introverted as a result of the 2011 disaster. Yamamoto stated that the positive aspects of the joint response to the disaster show precisely the level of bilateral cooperation that Japan can achieve. Yamamoto also noted that power shifts in the future will prompt Japan to take a more active role in the world. In addition to the rise of China, the Group of 20 (G20) nations, not all of which share the same values as Japan and the United States, is exerting a growing influence on world politics, and according to Yamamoto, Japan will have to strengthen global partnerships to support the steady continuation of the liberal world order that it cherishes. By standing firm with other nations that share their beliefs, Japan and the United States should use their collective strength as a basis for "engaging in dialogue and mutual understanding" with regimes that harbor different values. Indeed, as already noted by Armitage, the United States sees the relationships it maintains with traditional allies as a basis for dealing with new partners and potential rivals abroad.

According to all the speakers on the second panel, however, there are specific issues that need to be resolved in order to show that Japan is serious about its role as a co-defender of the liberal world order, and to solidify its relationship with the United States. The first of these issues is the question of Japan's place within global trading regimes, and particularly its willingness to join the

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Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) free trade negotiations. Mochizuki was dismayed at how coverage of the TPP in Japan uniformly focuses on costs to local producers, with very little attention to the overall long-term benefits to the Japanese economy. He saw the agreement primarily as a mechanism designed to "build a new kind of economic order for the long-term prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region, and to really be a model of trade and

investment liberalization across the world." Moreover, the agreement would give Japan "leverage over China," which would then "try to achieve a higher standard for economic policy and openness." Makihara thought that observers of Japan could "expect to see some progress on the TPP," however Yamamoto expressed caution, claiming Japan had to liberalize "step-by-step."

Finally, there remains the issue of base relocation on Okinawa. While Mochizuki stated that the combined response to the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear crisis halted a "strategic drift" between the United States and Japan and alleviated tensions over the issue, he believed that there are more creative solutions to the base problem than the expensive and contentious Futenma replacement plan that is currently on the table. Indeed, as Mochizuki noted, there is still a strong feeling in Okinawa that if mainland Japanese believe the alliance with the United States affords them so much security, then mainlanders should take some of the burden off of Okinawa and host the bases themselves. In other words, the "view that Okinawans would also become much more willing to host the bases because of the success of Operation Tomodachi . . . is misguided." Makihara was doubtful that base relocation would take place any time soon, given that the DPJ is particularly responsive to local concerns

and unwilling to engage in the backroom negotiating in which former LDP governments so excelled. Mochizuki noted that it was not worth creating excessive tensions over the relocation of bases that could damage the U.S.-Japan alliance at a crucial point, and that the United States should consider other options to the current plan.

Conclusion

The response to the unprecedented and complex crisis that befell Tohoku on March 11, 2011, demonstrated the commitment of the United States—and the world—to Japan. The sheer destruction of communities and the memory of lost family members and loved ones will continue to weigh heavily on those who were directly affected, while lingering radiation, problems with power supply, and the prospect of future seismic cataclysm loom large in the thoughts of other Japanese. Nevertheless, Japan has proven time and again that it is particularly adept at overcoming disaster. Moreover, if the events after the recent catastrophe have demonstrated anything, it is that Japan can rely on the United States to assist it during such a major disaster, and that it can also find solace in its vaunted position across the globe. According to the speakers at the 2011 Japan-U.S. Public Policy forum, the international community is counting on Japan to rebuild, not just for its own sake, but for the sake of the world.

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THIS CAN BE OUR RENAISSANCE

Makoto Iokibe

Translated by Bryce Wakefield

The inadequacies of modern defenses

The people of the Japanese archipelago, blessed with abundant nature, have long engaged in fishing and agriculture. They embrace this nature, which is evident in the sharp distinctions between Japan's four seasons and the various gifts that these seasons bestow. However, occasionally nature can be extremely cruel, wreaking tremendous damage through such calamities as earthquakes or fires caused by lightning. Much as we might have tried, throughout our history we Japanese have not been able to resist the wrath of nature. With houses

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built of grass, wood, and mud, our ancestors simply had to shrug their shoulders, silently endure, and try to survive. Then, after each typhoon, or each tsunami, they had to work together diligently, to rebuild what was lost. The ability of the Japanese people to recover from disaster is thus the result of historical process.

Such patterns of endurance are evident even in the modern age. Consider the experience at Matsushima base near Sendai, where twenty planes at the Air Self Defense Forces base were completely wiped out by the recent tsunami. I was extremely upset because such planes are tremendously expensive. They cost 15 billion yen (U.S. \$186 million) each. As the president of the Japan Defense Academy, I was once told by a group set up to slash the national budget that the 150 billion yen

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my school required each year was too much and that we would have to make cost-cutting measures. So it was terrible losing the planes, which collectively represented an asset that was built up over two decades.

Nevertheless, on the side of the Matsushima base facing the ocean there is a large embankment, and inside the embankment is a moat, a canal created by the Date clan during Japan's feudal age. Those defenses have stopped almost all tsunamis since they were built. According to a commander at the base, the base authorities thought that the embankment and the moat would even stop the tsunami this time, which they assumed would rise to around 3 to 6 meters. But then, all of a sudden, a major tsunami alert was issued, and they suddenly realized that the defenses were inadequate. After this realization, the staff on the ground had five minutes to scramble the jets, a process that would normally take 10 or 15, before the arrival of the tsunami. If the support staff had done so, they would have likely been inundated while preparing the runways and planes for take-off. Instead, the order was given for everybody to get to the top floor of the main building. Even though we lost the planes, all of the SDF members at the base survived.

The waves still managed to spill over the embankment and into the base. However, the embankment and the moat dampened the force of the tsunami, and the waves came in more slowly than had the defenses been absent. Before flooding the base, the tsunami totally destroyed all the houses in the Omagari district, and even pushed boats into this residential area on the coast. Then it started coming in from the sides of the embankment, before surmounting it altogether, stopping only at the first floor of the building where the SDF members were sheltering. In other words, the Date clan's defenses, the embankment and moat that they built, did have an effect. These defenses would have stopped the tsunami altogether had the waves been somewhat smaller. So even pre-modern defenses have held up against the forces of nature.

Some modern measures were also effective during the recent disaster. After the Great Sanriku Tsunami of 1895, the year following the First Sino-Japanese War, a conflict that signaled Japan's emergence as a modern state, the mayors of certain cities ordered the transfer of residential areas to higher ground and declared that people could not live on the lowlands. The descendants of these people, who were still living in these highlands, survived the latest tsunami unscathed.

Nevertheless, the move was expensive, because at the time residents had to walk an hour or so home at night from their work at the port. During the Meiji era,¹ the local government had to pay compensation to people in order to take such measures. So after that, as the population increased, new levees were built on low lands and new houses were built within them. A good example is the ten-meter wall in Taro district, which was so large people referred to it as the “Great Wall of China.” If this levee had been left as it was built, I think the tsunami would not have breached it. The levee was shaped like the bow of a boat, to split an oncoming tsunami in two and push the water away to the sides, leaving the houses in the middle safe. But the population continued to grow after that and people began to live outside the levee. When the number of residents increased to a certain level, another levee was built. However these new defenses were designed in such a way so that they actually pushed

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the recent tsunami up higher and allowed the water to wash away the whole district, including the houses behind the original wall. These defenses, created in the modern era, were worse than useless against the last tsunami.

Japan’s postwar disaster prevention measures began in earnest with the typhoon that hit Ise Harbour in 1959. The typhoon claimed the lives of 5,000 people, almost as bad as the 6,000 that were lost in the Great

Hanshin (Kobe) earthquake in 1995. However, death was a common occurrence up until the 1950s. After all, 3.1 million Japanese had lost their lives and cities had been completely razed during the Second World War. Earthquakes that occurred during and directly after the war therefore barely made news. However, the Ise typhoon, which occurred when Japan’s period of economic high growth was ushering in a new era of peace, was an extreme shock. In the wake of this disaster, the legal measures that would result in the Disaster Countermeasures Basic Law began to take shape. The law was passed in 1961, providing a real framework to protect people from disaster.

Thereafter, the Diet continued to establish laws in response particular disasters such as earthquakes, typhoons, volcanic eruptions, and torrential rains. In other words, by responding to real situations after they happened, the

Diet added laws in a patchwork manner, learning from each generation and developing the legal disaster response framework gradually. Four new laws were added after the Kobe Earthquake, and at that time I thought the framework was pretty much complete. The disaster then was so great that I thought we had learned all we could.

But there was something missing: a basic law to deal with cataclysmic tsunamis. Throughout the postwar years we had experienced the ill effects of tsunamis, like the 1993 Okushiri Island disaster which killed 198, but this was a relatively small-scale event. It did not prompt the creation of a new basic law, because the affected community was able to gather an impressive amount of private aid to move everybody to higher ground, creating a safer town. However this time, the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear plant accident constituted a complex triple disaster, for which we were not prepared.

**THERE WAS
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TSUNAMIS.**

Japan's contemporary disaster planning

The Japanese people should actually be immensely proud of their ability to resolutely resist the effects of major quakes. For example, Kurahama City in Miyagi Prefecture suffered no fatalities despite being shaken at Shindo 7, the highest degree on the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) seismic intensity scale.² As a result of heightened interest in quake-resistant housing triggered by the Kobe Earthquake, Japanese society as a whole has become more resistant to severe seismic activity.

Another example of this preparedness is the performance of Japan's *shinkansen* or "bullet trains" during the recent disaster. While the Tohoku *shinkansen* line, which cuts through the three worst affected prefectures, was shaken violently, none of the ten or so cars travelling at around 270 kilometers per hour (168 miles per hour) was derailed. A train travelling at 265 km per hour (165 miles per hour) near Sendai in Miyagi Prefecture was closest to the epicenter, but automatically applied its brakes nine seconds before the quake hit. Another train travelling at 270 km per hour near Koriyama in Fukushima Prefecture braked 30 seconds before major tremors began. The early seismic

warning technology that made this possible is an impressive feature of Japanese earthquake resistance measures.

After the tsunami, I remember riding in a bus through the township of Kitazawa with members of the government's Reconstruction Design Council, which I chair. There were around thirty members in the bus and all of a sudden their mobile phones started ringing at the same time. When they checked their phones they saw a warning about a strong earthquake on its way and

**EARLY SEISMIC
WARNING TECHNOLOGY
IS AN IMPRESSIVE
FEATURE OF JAPANESE
EARTHQUAKE
RESISTANCE MEASURES.**

an advisory to prepare for the tremors. This was not of course an earthquake prediction, but a signal from an observation post at the epicenter. But all that the train travelling near Sendai needed was a nine second advance warning, so these signals can be very effective. Mostly there is more time than that, as evidenced by the stopping times of the other trains.

At a conference in Beijing this summer, I was asked to talk about reconstruction after the tsunami and I mentioned that the trains operating in the affected areas stopped safely. This was right after a lighting strike had caused a major accident on one of the Chinese high-speed trains in Fujian Province. Because my speech took place directly after the train crash, I did not touch on that disaster at all, but I noticed that people were listening very attentively. After that, my Japanese friends told me that perhaps I should have talked about it.

But I did talk about Mitsuru Sato, the boss of a factory who helped his Chinese trainee workers escape the waves before falling victim to the tsunami himself. I also mentioned how a young woman in Minimisanriku continued to call out to her fellow townspeople: "A tsunami is coming. Please evacuate," until she was swallowed by the waves. The three-story disaster prevention building where she had made her announcements over the loudspeaker was built by the government to withstand earthquakes and tsunamis, but it was almost completely submerged. It was truly horrific that only one person in the building, a man who climbed a small tower projecting from the roof, survived.

Factories went out of commission in the Tohoku region, creating disruptions in the global economy, just like the recent flooding in Thailand. Thanks

to the immense efforts of the Self Defense Forces, firefighters, and the police, supply chains, which had received a devastating blow, extended back into the disaster area. Ninety percent of these lines had been restored by summer 2011, and they are now running at 95 percent of their original level.

I think the reason that the response was so impressive comes down to the measures that Japanese society as a whole has taken to strengthen itself against disasters over the years. However, as I have already mentioned, our procedures for dealing with tsunamis are insufficient. Our Reconstruction Design Council is now considering basic, general laws to allow for a more suitable response to such disasters. Needs will cer-

THE NUCLEAR PLANT HAS CLAIMED NO LIVES AT THIS POINT. NEVERTHELESS, THE SITUATION AT FUKUSHIMA HAS HAD A PARALYZING IMPACT ON OUR NERVES AND OUR SPIRIT.

tainly be different depending on location and rapid individual responses should proceed in line with realities on the ground. So we must take necessary steps to ensure that there is flexibility in the legislation to enable the government to deal with the myriad problems in affected areas. We are aiming to have a basic tsunami disaster law in three years. Because it will take this long, we cannot be certain that the legislation will be in place for the next big disaster, but to go on as we have is not good enough, and we must start to prepare now.

Much has been made of the ongoing problems at the nuclear plant in Fukushima. However, 95 percent of the victims of this disaster were killed by the tsunami. The nuclear plant has claimed no lives at this point. Nevertheless, the situation at Fukushima has had a paralyzing impact on our nerves and our spirit. Nobody knew how to deal with events at the plant, and so the government relied at first on Tokyo Electric Power Company (Tepco) to fix problems there. Tepco continually tried their best to deal with the situation, but their inability to deal with the problem was the result of a lack of planning. There were serious deficiencies in their ability to expect worst-case scenarios before the disaster, and their insistence on stressing the safety of nuclear power rather than making improvements to their plants only made matters worse.

So, while we may have been prepared for earthquakes, a lack of planning marred our response to the other aspects of this complex disaster, and has left us with the gruesome figure of around 20,000 victims.

Operation Tomodachi and the response to the Great East Japan Earthquake

Nevertheless, in some areas the response was swift. The SDF was deployed on their largest-ever mission. Although there was always the expectation that 110,000 troops would be needed to deal with a disaster in a major urban center, nobody ever imagined that the forces would be deployed on this scale in Tohoku. The government and the Ministry of Defense raised the number of SDF members in the operation from 30,000 to 50,000 to 100,000 within one week. The Ground Self Defense Forces (GSDF) has about 140,000 members, more than half of which were mobilized. Such a mobilization should actually be prohibited under normal circumstances, because it is unsustainable. In order to effectively carry out troop rotations, only one-third of the troops should be mobilized at any one time. Also, mobilizing half of the troops for a single mission emptied out bases around the country and had the potential to create new dangers. While the troops did well, I could not help but worry about what would happen if there was another situation that required their attention.

The SDF also mobilized many ships. Although fighter aircraft and their support planes were not mobilized on a similar scale, helicopters were sent out swiftly. As for land deployments, extremely selective measures were taken. For example, the brigades on the Nansei Islands in the East China Sea, where tension between Japan and China has recently increased, were not mobilized. The troops in the Eighth GSDF Division in Kumamoto, which looks south to the East China Sea, also expressed their strong desire to head to the disaster area. However, it was decided after internal SDF discussion that only those who provided logistical and life support, and not battle groups, would be sent. Similarly, the First and Third Divisions, protecting the Tokyo metropolitan area and the cities in the Kansai region respectively, stayed in place, due to fears that the initial quake might trigger aftershocks in these areas. There was the issue of what to do if such an earthquake hit, for example, Osaka or Kyoto directly. Only to a certain extent were troops sent from these areas to provide life support functions in Tohoku.

However, there were a lot of places where the troops were uplifted root and branch, leaving their bases empty. In such a situation, Operation Tomodachi, the U.S. assistance operation, really was significant. The U.S. Marines took decisive action to provide relief to areas, such as Oshima in Kessennuma, where the SDF could not reach. I think Robert Eldridge will tell you more about this story later during the panel session. Their impressive power was also on display when they cleared the rubble to allow planes to fly in and out of Sendai Airport. The Marines impressed the Japanese people not only with a show of real power, but with their attention to detail. While the Marines conducted their activities, they were kind to the people on the ground, and did not simply rip through communities with heavy machinery, instead taking care to preserving photo albums and other cherished family items. Because of this, the people of Oshima and the Marines formed a strong bond of friendship which continues today.

Operation Tomodachi was also important from the point of view of integration between the various services of the armed forces. Japan started integrating its forces some years ago, and has come a long way since then. However, the United States has a longer history in this area and this was clearly on show. The Marines, U.S. Navy and other branches of the American military worked as an organic unit. Japan should learn from these operations. Although we are integrating our air, land, and marine forces, there is often a sense that the three SDF services, rather than acting organically, receive orders from the same command, but then respond to these orders in a compartmentalized fashion. Finally, as I said before, the SDF had emptied out of large areas of the country, leaving some to wonder what would happen in the event of another emergency. The presence of the U.S. forces and their preparedness to act in such an emergency was extremely important.

Actually, concern about another major disaster following the Tohoku quake was not idle speculation. The earthquake and tsunami in Tohoku was an extraordinary, unprecedented, and terrible disaster. However, there was some concern that it would follow a similar scenario to the Sanriku Earthquake that

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struck in the year 869. Like the recent tremor, the Sanriku Earthquake generated a massive tsunami off the Pacific Coast. After that, there were frequent earthquakes and eruptions in inland areas. On average, there is supposed to be a major earthquake like this in the area every millennium or so. However, there is the danger that a separate large quake occurring within this 1,000-year cycle could cause tectonic plates to move too quickly, disrupting the cycle, and precipitating seismic upheavals elsewhere in the country for the next few decades. We now need to take account of the possibility of an earthquake occurring in inland areas, including in the metropolitan centers of Osaka and Kyoto. It is said that earthquakes come when you least expect them, and they can also come, like a surprise attack, from different directions. This was true in the case of the Sanriku Earthquake, which generated a series of inland earthquakes that bounced across the land. One major quake occurred in Kyoto, the capital at the time, and eighteen years after the initial tremor, the massive Nankai Tsunami washed over Southeast Japan. We are again probably facing such a period of seismic activity. It is a bitter fact that we need to prepare for similar disasters in the near future.

If a new disaster occurs, we will be able to look to the deep bilateral cooperation between the United States and Japan fostered under Operation Tomodachi as a foundation, and by learning the lessons from our response to the recent disaster, enact even more effective joint measures. Further, because words alone cannot express our gratitude towards the United States, we should enter into a mutual assistance agreement to deal with such disasters. After all, earthquakes occur in cycles of hundreds of years on the stretch of the Pacific Coast between Vancouver and Seattle. The next time there is such a massive disaster, our capabilities will be stretched once more. However, we must strengthen the foundations of our cooperation on the back of these events, which are always forced upon us.

After an earthquake, the armed forces providing assistance usually switch between three distinct roles. The first is a lifesaving role, and is usually a central focus during the first three days after the initial tremor. Next, a transition must be made to retrieve the remains of the victims, together with major efforts to clear rubble and to police the streets. Then lifelines—access to food, water, fuel, and hot bathing facilities—are reestablished. The transition between these different roles occurred during the Kobe quake. However, the SDF only managed

to save 165 people at that time. Almost 80 percent of people who are rescued in a disaster come out on the first day, and the SDF could not insert its forces fast enough after the Kobe quake.

As the result of deep reflection after Kobe, the SDF undertook remarkable reforms. There are now platoons of 30 troops in regiments across the country, ready to mobilize 24 hours a day. These platoons can act as advance teams in the case of an emergency. There is also a central readiness unit—a force with special functions and abilities that can be mobilized at a moment’s notice. In addition, improvements in integration meant that among the organs of the Japanese government, only the SDF was able to respond to the 2011 disaster as a single agency, under the command of the Tohoku inspector general.

**AS THE RESULT OF DEEP
REFLECTION AFTER KOBE,
THE SDF UNDERTOOK
REMARKABLE REFORMS.**

One characteristic of this disaster was that the three distinct roles that I mentioned in reference to Kobe had to be undertaken at the same time. Only the SDF could get lifelines, water, and food moving. Only the SDF could police the streets. They had to perform these functions while also conducting search and rescue missions. That is why more than 100,000 troops were needed. While it is normal to halt search and rescue efforts after one week, there was so much twisted rubble after the recent disaster that human remains kept coming to light long after the tsunami receded. This meant that all three roles became intertwined. A special characteristic of the different roles this time was that they all occurred simultaneously and in parallel.

The practical and psychological aspects of reconstruction

When I assumed the chair of the Reconstruction Design Council, I found that we needed to address the conscience and spirit of the Japanese people, as well as more practical concerns. At about the same time, the moderator of one of the sessions of this conference, Professor Agawa, made reference to the greatness of Abraham Lincoln and his ability to perform his functions practically, but accurately. Lincoln made mistakes, but he consistently spoke of the integrity and common spirit of the American people, and he would not be shaken. Together with his victory in the Civil War, this made him America’s

greatest president. Agawa's intention was to stress that the Japanese people could do with leadership like this at the moment. However, upon hearing this, my friends wondered whether a search for true Japanese leaders at the time of crisis was a worthwhile exercise. "Iokibe-san," they asked, "when you submit your report in June, do you think there will even be a government?" I had to say that I did not think it really mattered. What matters to me is being able to outline the hopes of the Japanese people, their aspirations, and their spirit.

But because it will not do to rely on abstractions, we also recommended to the government that it implement practical, rational, and feasible measures. We had 16 members on the Reconstruction Design Council and several expert committees serving underneath them. These experts came up with concepts and by working with agents in the central bureaucracy their ability to propose new policies grew. In our initial meetings, various ministries like the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare all went off on different tangents because of their different responsibilities. We pleaded with them to cooperate and to think of their response in terms of what was needed, not in terms of what was

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in it for each of the ministries. There is no point in devising a response which does not consider the entire situation. In the end the staff sent from each ministry indicated that they were prepared to cooperate in this manner. It is

great that people had the knowledge, the sense of responsibility, and the flexibility to do what was needed. In compiling its report, our council managed to persuade each ministry to cooperate. Therefore, we simultaneously addressed both psychological issues and practical measures of policy implementation.

Also, the council stressed the importance of *mitigating* rather than *preventing* disaster. It speaks to the arrogance of human nature that we often think that we can contain massive disasters completely. Further, living in towns that have been made safe against all possible contingencies carries with it its own cost, namely inconvenience to daily life. Rather, we need to think of how to employ various methods to mitigate disaster. The most important of these is to build

cities near areas where people can take flight, and to build roads properly to allow inhabitants proper access to these areas.

However, there are towns where it is not so easy to find the appropriate terrain nearby. The inhabitants of fairly large towns like Kamaishi or Rikuzentakata do not think that there is enough space to move back to the surrounding highlands. It would probably be a good idea for them to create seaside hills as emergency evacuation areas. They could establish memorials there with the names of the dead carved on them and commemorate the disaster every year on March 11. They should place farmland, parks, and low density land on breakwaters that protect harbors and on seawalls along the coast. They should also construct levees at higher second ridge lines and place roads along them as a way of demarking the higher ground where the tsunamis would probably not reach. These multiple measures to diminish the size of the waves, move urban centers out of the area of first impact, and mark safe ground constitute what our report called “Defense in Depth.”

Also, buildings near the harbor should be constructed out of reinforced concrete to withstand tsunamis, with offices on the first three to four floors and residential space above the fifth floor. Regulations should also mandate external staircases for these buildings, so that people can flee to the roof when there is a tsunami. Normal two-story residential housing could be built above the second ridge line. It is possible to integrate a number of such measures to improve safety and mitigate disaster. The combination of moving cities to high ground and instituting deep defense policies would be groundbreaking for the Sanriku Coast, where tsunamis are relatively frequent.

As to building safer towns and cities, throughout Japan’s long history, our approach to natural disasters has been simply to endure them. We have to change our very history. Fortunately, building towns on hilltops is not a particularly new phenomenon, either in Japan, or in the rest of the world. We should build compact, safe towns on high ground. In addition, these new living arrangements will need to reflect long-term societal changes such as our aging population, and incorporate comprehensive facilities for the care of the elderly into their design. Also, there is the question of economic reconstruction. During the Kobe Earthquake, many of the people who were hospitalized worked for large companies. These companies had an interest in rescuing their workers, and ensuring that they received proper care so that they could recover

their strength and return to work as soon as possible. In addition, the companies continued to pay salaries to their immobilized workers. So during that disaster, reconstruction, not the welfare of the workers involved, was the biggest problem. This time it is different. Not only have houses been destroyed, but people have been deprived of their livelihoods. The coves where fishermen used

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BEEN DESTROYED, BUT
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OF THEIR LIVELIHOODS.**

to ply their trade lie under masses of rubble, and agriculture is in much the same shape. Therefore, it is not enough to rebuild, we must restore industry and occupations. We need to establish zones with special regulation to

revitalize commerce, and we must give incentives to foreign firms who have fled the area to reestablish their business there.

A national effort

We must also rebuild in smart ways that benefit us all. This time the state should support making Tohoku a pioneer of urban change for the benefit of the entire nation, even if it means enacting new regulations. Of course, nobody would be asking the region to do the impossible, just to do all that it can at this time. New green technology for urban areas really does have the potential to lift Japan out of its energy predicament. Because periodic earthquakes, especially around the Tokyo metropolitan area and down the eastern coast of Japan threaten our remaining nuclear energy infrastructure, everyone will support the creation of Tohoku as a model region that incorporates such long-term changes. It is precisely because there will be more earthquakes to come that this current generation, not our descendants a century hence, should carry the tab for such projects. Ten or 20 trillion yen (U.S. \$125-250 billion)—the amount to fund these projects—is a large investment, but the government can recover these costs in future times of plenty. We will also have to address anew how to deal with the next seismic disaster, and in order to do that properly, we will have to tackle our integrated tax and social security reforms well. I hope that this recent disaster will give us the chance to reform Japan in its entirety.

Indeed, addressing these problems may breathe new life into Japan and lead to a national revitalization. Even after the complete destruction of our

major cities during the Second World War, we were able to recover. What is important is our willpower. There is ample energy within Japanese society, so let us tap into it. Volunteers have done a great job in this crisis. The SDF and others have really given it their all, and they were supported by the United States under Operation Tomodachi. We cannot allow these efforts to come to naught. We must put our all into rebuilding. We also need to conduct an open reconstruction, engaging with the rest of the world throughout the process. I think that we should view this as a chance to develop a new Japan, a nation that no longer faces inward. This can be our renaissance.

NOTES

- 1 Japan's era of modernization, starting in 1868.
- 2 There are a number of scales to measure earthquake intensity in use in different parts of the world. In contrast to the moment magnitude (formerly Richter, hereafter MM) scale usually used in the United States, the JMA scale measures the degree of shaking at the earth's surface and can thus be used to gauge different levels of intensity across a wide area from the same quake. The MM scale is a measure of the energy released by the earthquake as a whole. Japanese media and government agencies therefore often use both: the JMA scale to measure varying local intensities, and the MM scale to measure the overall strength of a quake.

OUR DUTY

Richard L. Armitage

Like every American, I felt Japan's pain on 3/11. No American viewed the destruction without feeling the utmost sympathy and, in fact, solidarity with Japan. Though I very much appreciate the comments and thanks from everyday Japanese about Operation Tomodachi, let me assure you, Americans are not looking for your gratitude.

This was our duty. We did our duty.

I had the opportunity with several other Americans to come to Japan in May, working with Keidanren, the Japanese Business Federation, to try to find ways to support Japan in this recovery and this reconstruction. During that visit, some of our colleagues went to the Tohoku region and witnessed the devastation. What they saw truly energized us. They could not comprehend the magnitude of the problem, the scope of the damage. It was just too

AMERICANS ARE NOT LOOKING FOR YOUR GRATITUDE.

much for a mind to contemplate. But they did notice something that they took back to Washington: the spirit of the Japanese people. The spirit of the elderly—and they are primarily elderly in the Tohoku region—walking out every day, cleaning up

their yards, putting together their lives, showing a determination, a spirit, a tenacity that was unbelievable. One of the thoughts that our group took back to Washington was that if our members of Congress had one half of the tenacity, one half of the spirit, of the people of Tohoku, we would be a lot better off. I bet that some here in Japan, would probably say the same thing about Diet members in Nagata-cho, the political district in Tokyo, but I will leave that to you.

Richard L. Armitage is former U.S. deputy secretary of state.

I am going to make a few comments about the United States, because it is not a secret that our nation is a little bit grumpy these days. American citizens are feeling bad about their elected politicians. They hold them in record low esteem. They are very worried about their future. They are temporarily lacking in confidence. But I think that in America we are narrowing our differences. There is a general understanding that we have to dramatically cut our spending. We have to do something dramatic to close loopholes in the tax code. I am not saying that we need new taxes, but we do need to close loopholes. That much is generally agreed. Although it is messy, and untidy, and very public, this debate we are having is moving forward. In it, there is a general recognition in the United States that if we want to be a factor in the world, we have got to be strong at home. So, in a very real way, how we resolve our domestic discussion is going to indicate how prominent a role we can play in the world.

The Asia-Pacific and the re-rise of China

There is some really good news, I believe, as someone who has spent the majority of his adult life in the Asia-Pacific region, and that is, there is no difference of opinion, whether you are a Democrat or Republican in the United States, about the importance of the Asia-Pacific, and of the importance of America's relationship with Japan. As our defense secretary, Leon Pannetta just said here in Tokyo, "We are going to stay engaged in Asia." No matter how much we have to cut our defense budget—and we are going to have to cut it—we are going to stay engaged and stay present in Asia. This is not a political question in the United States, and I think that is good news.

The other day I read a speech that Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda gave at an Air Self Defense Forces base not far from here. He basically said that "the national security environment that envelops our country is murky. It is murky because of the activities of China in local waters, and their rapid military buildup." He went on to say the same was true of North Korea. As I read the speech, I was waiting for the conclusion. If the situation is murky and there is a rapid buildup, what are we going to do about it? Well the conclusion was not yet in that speech, so I will make some suggestions today, for both of us, both the United States and Japan. But first, I will briefly describe the regional stage.

First of all, as I have just said, the United States is also resident in Asia. We take the view that the Pacific Ocean does not separate us from Asia. It joins us to Asia. The biggest issue that we face together is obviously the rise of China. It is clearly the most important event, probably in the first half of the 21st century. And some say it is as important as the rise of a united Germany was in the 19th Century. It may even rival the importance of the rise of the United States in the 20th Century. But how that rise—that re-rise—goes, how China develops, is of enormous interest to all of us.

There are some who think that China's re-rise is a straight line, that it is inevitable that China will be the strongest nation in the world. Well she may

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be sometime. It is possible. But it is equally possible that the many problems China has could slow her down or make this re-rise difficult. So what are these problems? Well, the first one that comes to my mind is the fact there are 850 million farmers in China. But they only need 250 million. They have to find jobs for 600 million people, people

who are coming into the cities daily. I think the Chinese use the term “ant people.” They come into the cities from the countryside looking for work and it is very difficult for them to find it. The cities are swelling. The facilities to accommodate these people do not exist.

The problems of corruption in China are unbelievable. They are huge. They are of such magnitude that the Chinese president and prime minister are speaking publicly about the need to root out this corruption. It is sucking the lifeblood of China. People are not going to settle for it too much longer. China is in the midst of changing her economy from one which has been led by exports to one which depends more on internal consumption, something that will help Japan and the United States if they successfully change that economy. China is wrestling with huge environmental and social problems: the lack of fresh water; violence in Inner Mongolia, Tibet, Zengcheng; and demographic problems. These are not just the demographic problems that we all know about. I read today in Japanese newspapers about the question of female infanticide in China, leading to the predominance of males in society and a lesser number of females. Now that is a problem, but the real problem

is that older people in China are living longer. China's earlier demographic control policies mean that there is only one child to support them longer. In a very real way, China is a demographic time bomb.

Finally, there is a leadership change coming up in China next year. Leadership changes have implications in any country. All of us bureaucrats—or ex-bureaucrats such as myself—get nervous when leadership changes. Everyone wonders if there is going to be a seat at the table. Well, that is true in China as well. Now, Japan has had a little more experience with this phenomenon of changing leadership lately. Perhaps you do it better than most other countries, having had so much experience. But at any rate, you do understand the phenomenon.

The point is, all of these things are happening at the same time, posing questions about China's stability as it considers its role in the world. Last summer in Hanoi, Mrs. Clinton, our secretary of state, was very successful in getting eleven countries to stand up to China on the question of the necessity for freedom of navigation and peaceful resolution of problems. Well, China did not react very well to this diplomatic intervention. But it was not an idle intervention by Mrs. Clinton. It was very deliberate. You know, the Thirty Years' War in Europe ended with the Treaty of Westphalia. This treaty had as its central piece, the notion of the sovereignty of nations. But the sovereignty of the 17th century, absolute sovereignty, is not the same as the notion of a 19th century state which began to cede some sovereignty for the common good. So the question that Mrs. Clinton and others have is: "What kind of nation is China?" Is she a 17th century Westphalian state or a 19th and 20th century state? How does China view the global commons?

We do not know. As long as this question is open, there will be questions about the direction of China. Until we know how China is going to deal with freedom of navigation, disputed territories, space, undersea exploration, the internet, until she can answer those questions, there will always be questions about the direction of China.

Questions on the Korean Peninsula

In Washington last week, we were honored beyond recall to have President Lee Myung-bak of the Republic of Korea visit President Obama. It was a terrific visit and these two guys really get along, and that is good. In my experience,

we are all lucky to have a fellow like President Lee Myung-bak in the Republic of Korea. American policy makers may not generally tell you this publicly, but among themselves they say: “Oh, don’t you wish we had a time where we had Lee Myung-bak in Seoul and Junichiro Koizumi in Tokyo? So much good could have been accomplished.” That may be a little bit presumptuous of an American to say that, but that is what American policy makers really say when they are talking among themselves.

Among the world leaders that I have had the honor of meeting, I will have to say that Lee stands out. When he gets up in the morning, he knows what he wants to do with his country. He knows where he wants to go. He is not just working his inbox, like so many other leaders are, and it is very refreshing. But he is coming to the end of his term. Another year and he will be

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through. There will be new challenges for the new leadership in the Republic of Korea, and I think the good news for Japan and the United States is that he has done a lot to help advance our trilateral relationship.

Prime Minister Noda mentioned North Korea the other day, and I think I have to mention it too, before I get

to some specifics about the U.S.-Japan relationship and how we have to move forward after the U.S. Forces did their duty alongside the Self Defense Forces in Operation Tomodachi. Next year is going to be very interesting in Pyongyang. It is the 100th anniversary of the birthday of Kim Il-Sung. It is also the 70th anniversary of the birthday of Kim Jong-Il. The people of North Korea expect something special, but there is nothing to give them. I do not think that it is accidental that the North Koreans are now smiling a little bit at the United States and are tempting us with the notion they may return to the Six-Party Talks, which would be aimed, from our perspective, at the denuclearization of North Korea.

I personally am very much for the Six-Party Talks. I always think it better to be talking with your lips, even if you are not making much progress, than to be fighting, or talking with your hands or your feet. So I am very much for it, I do not expect much out of it, but I have got a feeling that the year 2012 for

all of us is going to be eventful, because if the North Koreans cannot flatter us and cajole us out of some assistance in order to meet the expectations of their population in their banner year, then they will do something threatening. I do not know what it would be—a missile launch, or another nuclear device detonation, something of that nature. But I can assure you of one thing: 2012 will be different. I am just not sure in which way.

What kind of nation do you want?

What about the United States and Japan? I am not known as a great philosophical thinker. My friends and enemies alike would tell you that, but I think there is a philosophical question that I cannot answer, because it is not mine to answer. It is yours, the citizens of Japan, to answer. Before we talk about where the U.S.-Japan relationship and alliance will go, the question you should ask yourselves is: “What kind of nation do you want?” Are you going to be a top-tier nation? Or are you going to be content with second-tier status? There are some politicians, some academics who think second-tier status is not so bad. Truth of the matter is, Japan is the world’s third-largest economy. Given the size of that economy and Japan’s median age, you could actually enjoy a relatively stable lifestyle for a long time as you slowly decline. This is what second-tier status, I think, condemns Japan to do. Your budget, your economy is so large that this decline would almost not be seen by the naked eye. But it would be happening.

I think every one of your American allies hope that you will have a debate, even a very public debate, on this question and come out with determination you want to be a first-tier nation. You know, 160 nations or so, as well as private organizations around the globe, tried to provide assistance to Japan after 3/11. Of course, this was at its heart, a humanitarian effort. But I suggest to you that it is actually much more than that. This was a statement by the international community of how they want to see Japan. They want a recovered Japan. They need a recovered Japan. They

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believe that the world was made safer, and more humane by a Japan fully engaged across the board in the defense of human freedoms and human rights, which takes a leading role in the great issues of the day, whether they are regional, or global. But the debate I have just mentioned is not one in which other nations—including the United States—can participate. This is a debate that Japan has to have on its own.

Debating the bottom line

But, if I may, a number of issues need to be discussed in this debate. As I said, when I read Prime Minister Noda's speech the other day, I kept waiting for the bottom line. What comes after "things are murky, and China is rapidly increasing its military capabilities?"

First, I would hope to see some change to the Japanese defense budget. It is not a secret that for ten years, the Japanese defense budget has gone one way: down. I realize, given the budget problems that both of our countries face, it is unrealistic to try to correct ten years of decline overnight, or in a year, or two years. But it seems to me that it would be right for the United States to expect and to hope that the prime minister would at least signal by a slight change in the trajectory of the defense budget the direction he ultimately hopes to go once Japan has put the fiscal house fully in order.

So I am not asking for any big increase, but I ask you this: is it appropriate that in terms of percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) spent for defense Japan ranks behind Panama, but just ahead of Ethiopia. Such a ranking is not a great tier, top-tier statement. Those are the facts, however. Now, to be true, the overall amount of money of the defense budget is quite large, but a lot of it does not go to things which actually will benefit the Self Defense Forces in terms of their real role and mission. It goes to salaries and things of that nature, which are good and necessary, but do not change the ability of the Self Defense Forces (SDF) to do all the things they want to.

Alongside that though, I am very happy with what I have read in Japanese newspapers about the public's support and appreciation of the SDF efforts after 3/11. As I said, we were proud to do our duty alongside of them. But I think there is a bit of a misperception. Of course the military has to be able to take part in any emergency that comes along. This is their duty. But at heart their job is not humanitarian assistance, or disaster

relief. At its heart, the job of the Self Defense Force is the security of this nation. *Security.*

There are significant policy obstacles in Japan to the ability of the SDF to provide security. I have seen successive defense ministers, and sometimes other politicians, talk about eliminating Japan's three principles on arms exports. These restrictions on exports are, to an American view, somewhat anachronistic. They were brought into life in 1967 to prohibit arms trade with communist nations during the Cold War, a very different time, and amended for political purposes in 1976 to ban arms exports to all nations, including the United States. But the Cold War is over and there has been no change to the policy. This is a real shame. The principles restrict full engagement in technical cooperation with the United States to enhance Japan's own defense technology, and it is time to really review them.

Finally, there is something that is going to be very controversial. I think it is time to have a very public discussion of the Article 9 prohibition on collective self-defense. Now why do I say this? You have here seated in the audience, a journalist by the name of Yoichi Kato, who has written about this. He has written about a base that exists in Djibouti. It is a Japanese base in a foreign country. It is not a "station." Nor is it a small village. It is a military base. On that military base are Ground Self Defense, Air Self Defense, and Maritime Self Defense Forces. They are working together in an integrated fashion, alongside militaries from 20 nations or so, patrolling the seas off of Somalia, trying to prevent and discourage the scourge of Somali and other piracy.

Now most Americans find it very hard to understand the difference between what is going on off the coast of Somalia out of that base in Djibouti and collective self-defense. It looks very much the same. I know the justification was that the mission is a law enforcement matter. To that I say, "O.K., whatever works." I am just delighted that Japan is taking part in these endeavors, but it seems to me that a careful explanation of the mission is due to the Japanese people, and for that matter to your ally, the United States. I am not predicting

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OF THE SELF DEFENSE
FORCE IS THE SECURITY
OF THIS NATION.
*SECURITY.***

the outcome of any discussion that the Japanese government has with its people; this is not mine to predict—it is yours. But I think given the events in Djibouti it is fair to say that maybe it is time to have a really public discussion of collective self-defense, and really involve the public in it, and let the chips fall where they may.

Besides security issues, there are other things that I think now, particularly, that we ought to be doing to enhance Japan's status. One of them is taking full advantage of the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) on free trade. I read

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in the newspapers that the government is moving in that direction. The United States strongly supports this move. The TPP is something that brings Japan more into the life of the region, and this, I think, is highly desirable. But I wonder why no one makes the argument of how beneficial TPP is for your own GDP. You should not be frightened of your agricultural lobby. We have the same problem with different lobbies in the United States, and like Japan sometimes we are fright-

ened off by them, doing things which are dramatically not in our national interests. So pressure from lobbies is something that is well understood in the United States. But when I look at the strength of the agricultural community, I think it adds 1.2 or 1.3 percent to your GDP. The influence of the Japanese agricultural lobby far exceeds the actual importance to bottom line GDP, and TPP enrollment by Japan will change bottom line GDP in a positive direction.

Finally, these are a few ideas or suggestions of what might be discussed in a Japanese debate, but the United States has to do things too. We have got to make sure that we are faithful to Japan. We have got to make sure that at every turn, we consult with Japan. We have to make sure that from our point of view there are no surprises in intelligence, surprises from North Korea or from China, or from anyone else and anywhere else. This is our duty to you. We have got to create the conditions where we can continue this long-lasting, stable, and deep relationship. Both of our nations are challenged with the re-rise of

China, and I think it is fair to say that we, the collective we, have the best opportunity of a peaceful re-rise of China if that re-rise is rooted in a region which has stable and strong democracies. I am talking about South Korea, Japan, United States, Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand, India. Stable, strong democracies, strong across the board, militarily, economically, and politically.

CONFERENCE AGENDA

OPENING REMARKS

JIRO HANYU, *chairman, Sasakawa Peace Foundation*

KEYNOTE SPEECHES:

IOKIBE MAKOTO, *president, National Defense Academy of Japan;*
chair, Reconstruction Design Council

RICHARD L. ARMITAGE, *former U.S. deputy secretary of state*

PANEL DIALOGUE

Discussants

IOKIBE MAKOTO

RICHARD L. ARMITAGE

Moderator

YUKIO OKAMOTO, *president and CEO, Okamoto Associates, Inc.*

PANEL 1:

Japan-U.S. Coordination in Recent Disaster Response Efforts

Panelists

NOBORU YAMAGUCHI, *professor, National Defense Academy of Japan*

ROBERT D. ELDRIDGE, *deputy assistant chief of staff, G-5, Marine Corps Bases Japan*

AKIHISA NAGASHIMA, *member of the House of Representatives;*
special advisor to the prime minister for foreign affairs and national security

ROBERT S. LUKE, *the minister-counselor for political affairs, U.S. Embassy in Tokyo*

Moderator

NAOYUKI AGAWA, *vice president for international collaboration, Keio University*

PANEL 2:

The Future of Japan and the Japan-U.S. Alliance

Panelists

MIKE MOCHIZUKI, *associate professor, George Washington University*

IZURU MAKIHARA, *professor, Tohoku University*

BRUCE JENTLESON, *professor, Duke University*

YOSHINOBU YAMAMOTO, *research advisor, PHP Institute; professor emeritus, University of Tokyo*

Moderator

TOSHIHIRO NAKAYAMA, *professor, Aoyama Gakuin University*

Closing Remarks

ROBERT HATHAWAY, *director, Asia Program, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars*

