



# THE US-JAPAN ALLIANCE A BRIEF STRATEGIC HISTORY

By Michael J. Green

## FROM ENEMIES TO ALLIES

When Emperor Hirohito announced the surrender of Japan to the United Nations on August 15, 1945, he exhorted his people to “endure the unendurable.” The war with America had been the most violent in either nation’s history. Racial hatred had motivated both peoples. Japanese schoolchildren were taught that Americans were devils and that they were spiritually weak and lazy. Americans lionized Admiral Bill Halsey, who famously ordered his sailors and marines in the Pacific to “kill more Japs.” Japanese-Americans on the West Coast were forced to abandon their homes and were sent to internment camps by the US government, a move not even considered for German or Italian Americans on the East Coast. After losing its island fortresses in the Pacific in 1944, Japan was subjected to repeated fire bombings from US B-29s that left Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka, and other major cities as cratered and grey as the surface of the moon. Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed with nuclear weapons. Across East Asia, allied troops liberated prisoners of war and civilian captives of the Japanese who were near starvation, and then learned about atrocities against POWs and Chinese civilians by the notorious chemical warfare unit 731. Toward the end of the war, Japanese women and girls were being trained with bamboo spears to fight to the death against the invading Americans. After the surrender, a corps of young women was organized to sacrifice their bodies for the vengeful GI’s so that other women might be spared. It had been a very ugly war.

Yet in a transformation that defied expectations and spoke to the triumph of the human spirit and the industriousness and generosity of the Japanese and American people, Japan emerged from the ashes of war to become the world’s second largest economy, and the closest American ally in the Pacific.<sup>1</sup> While Japanese and American children were taught to hate each other seven decades ago, today public opinion polls show that ninety-one percent of American opinion leaders and seventy-four percent of the general public feel Japan is a reliable ally. Together the United States and Japan are the

first and second largest contributors of funding to all major institutions established after the war to promote economic growth and stability, including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the United Nations. America’s close alliance with Japan put a picket fence of naval forces and economic aid that helped to block Soviet expansion in East Asia and to bring the Cold War to an end. More recently, the US and Japanese navies have worked side by side to provide relief supplies to the December 2004 Asian tsunami survivors and to refuel ships involved with the fight against the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan.

## JAPAN’S DILEMMA: How Much to Depend on America?

From the ashes of war and hate, Japan built a new relationship with the world based on close alliance with the United States, minimal military armament, and a focus on economic growth. But, Japan was not abandoning its national interests even after

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defeat. Throughout its history, Japan always tenaciously sought to maintain its autonomy in the international system. For 250 years before the arrival of Commodore Matthew Perry’s “black ships” in Edo Harbor in 1853, the Japanese Shogunate did that through isolation. The intrusion of the modern world meant that Japan had to make strategic choices about how it would relate with other powers in the system. Japanese leaders during the Meiji period chose to align with the world’s major power and entered into a bilateral treaty with Great Britain from 1902 to 1922. After an eighteen-year interlude in which various multilateral treaties failed to either protect Japanese interests or prevent Japanese expansion, Japan signed the axis pact and aligned with the power it thought

most dominant, Nazi Germany. After the war, the choice was clear: Japan would ally with the world’s preeminent power once again—this time it was the United States. However, Japan had chosen its global alliances with Britain and Germany with the aim of retaining a free hand in Asia, particularly vis-a-vis China and the Korean peninsula.

Background photograph: Surrender of Japan, 2 September 1945. Navy carrier planes fly in formation over US and British fleets in Tokyo Bay during surrender ceremonies. Source: Official US Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives.

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**F**or the early post-war architects of Japan's new foreign policy—led by the outspoken former diplomat turned prime minister, Shigeru Yoshida—the question was how to retain that free hand under the American system. In many respects, these Japanese leaders were dealing with a dilemma that smaller powers often face when allied with more powerful states. Thucydides noted this during the Peloponnesian Wars over two thousand years earlier, when he described the smaller Greek city-states' dilemma striking a balance so that they were not so dependent on powerful Athens that they were "entrapped" in wars they did not want, but

not so distant that they were "abandoned" in the face of powerful foes like Sparta. For the conservative Japanese elite like Yoshida, this problem was compounded by the Japanese people's war weariness, the dependence on America for economic aid, and the risk that Japan's scarred society might be vulnerable to spreading communism.

The conservatives around Yoshida had different visions for how to restore Japan's position in the world: some wanted to build on American aid to turn Japan into an arsenal to fight communism; others wanted to maintain a non-military pacifist stance, but under benevolent American protection. Yoshida brought these disparate groups together around alliance with the United States in 1951. Those who wanted rearmament would not achieve it without US pressure and technical assistance. Those who wanted pacifism could not risk it in a dangerous Northeast Asia without a US security guarantee. As historian John Dower noted in his own biography of Yoshida, "The reconsolidation and recentralization of conservative authority during the Yoshida era was inseparable from the strategic settlement reached between the United States and Japan."<sup>2</sup>

For Yoshida, the answer to the Thucydidean dilemma of entrapment versus autonomy lay in Article Nine of Japan's new Constitution, which states in the first clause that Japan renounces the right of war to resolve international disputes, and in the second that Japan will not maintain air, ground, or naval forces for that purpose. Yoshida believed that eventually Communist China would pull away from the Soviet bloc and that Japan needed a free hand to re-engage with Asia as it recovered economically, while still keeping a solid foot in the Western democratic camp. Article Nine of the Constitution allowed Japan to resist US pressure to arm more than the Japanese peo-

ple would accept, and to avoid entrapment in US confrontation with other Asian states like China and Vietnam. But Yoshida also left ambiguous the eventual future of the alliance relationship and Japan's own long-term strategy. As he noted, "Japan should not continue to remain at a level where it depends on another country for its defense."<sup>3</sup> The strategic bargain among the conservatives and with the US was made at a time when the two nations' power levels could not be compared. As Japan recovered economically, the US and Japan would be forced to adjust their strategic bargain, usually with the US ceding more autonomy to Japan while Japan picked up a larger burden for defense. While some of these adjustments followed crises, they ultimately led to an alliance relationship that grew stronger over time.

### **THE FIRST ADJUSTMENT: The 1960 Security Treaty Revision**

Japan had signed the September 8, 1951, US-Japan Security Treaty while still under military occupation by US forces, and therefore arguably agreed, under duress, to further stationing of US forces. Moreover, the treaty allowed US forces to continue playing a role in preserving domestic security within Japan. Eager to redress this inequity and establish sovereignty at home, the government of Nobusuke Kishi pushed to revise the security treaty. Japan would allow the US to retain bases in Japan for the security of the Far East, but Japan's new Self-Defense Forces, established in 1954, would take care of national security until help was needed from the US and/or the United Nations. As reasonable as that adjustment to the US-Japan alliance seems today, at the time it was deeply controversial with Japan's pacifist population. Before the treaty was approved by the Japanese Diet (parliament) in 1960, there had been massive demonstrations on the streets of Tokyo that forced US President Eisenhower to cancel a planned trip to Japan, and eventually forced Kishi to step down as Prime Minister. His successor, Hayato Ikeda, quickly changed the subject by promising to double Japan's national income in ten years. He did so in five years and the controversy about Japan's alliance with the US subsided for a time.

### **THE SECOND ADJUSTMENT: After the Vietnam War**

After successfully doubling its economic power in the decade of the 1960s, Japan had to contend with questions about the durability of American power in the wake of the North Vietnamese Tet Offensive in 1968. In addition, newly-elected US President Richard Nixon pledged that under his new "Guam Doctrine," Asian allies would have to start doing more to defend themselves. Japanese politicians who had wanted to turn their nation into an arsenal against communism saw an opportunity and agreed with then Defense Agency Director General and later Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone that Japan should double its defense budget to carry its share of the burden in defending Asia. At a 1969 summit, Nixon also secured Prime Minister Eisaku Satō's pledge that Japan had an explicit inter-



est in the security of the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Strait. Satō, who was not eager to move too quickly away from Yoshida's original framework for minimal defense efforts, had agreed to this formula to win Nixon's promise to return the islands of Okinawa, which had been under American control since the war.

The world had never seen the specter of American retreat the way it did in the late 1960s, which prompted the Japanese government to consider not only doubling the defense budget, but even its options for nuclear weapons.<sup>4</sup> In the end, however, the shift of responsibility to Japan and the readjustment of the strategic bargain with the US stopped short of what hawks like Nakasone had hoped it would be. The future suddenly looked very different in 1972, when President Nixon opened a new strategic engagement with the erstwhile US enemy, Communist China. Japan did not want to be left behind, and business and political leaders pushed to consolidate the close economic relationship with China that Yoshida was certain would come in spite of the Cold War divide. While the US waited until 1979 to establish formal diplomatic ties with Beijing, Japan rushed to normalize relations in 1972, within months of Nixon's opening to that nation. The opening of détente between the US and the Soviet Union further reduced the attractiveness of a military build-up along the lines proposed by Nakasone. While the US returned Okinawa to Japan in 1972, the Japanese government quickly moved away from Prime Minister Satō's pledge to President Nixon in 1969 that the security of Korea and Taiwan are important to Japan. Meanwhile, in 1977, the Japanese government announced the "Fukuda Doctrine," after Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda, which promised aid and cooperation with formerly colonized nations in Southeast Asia, including America's recent enemy, Vietnam.

### THE THIRD ADJUSTMENT: The New Cold War

Détente did not last, of course, and neither did the equilibrium established in the US-Japan alliance in the 1970s. The Cold War became hot again with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and their client state Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia in 1979. These aggressive moves on the international chessboard were accompanied by a build-up of Soviet ballistic missile submarines, bombers, and fighter jets in the Sea of Okhotsk, just north of Japan's northern-most island Hokkaidō. Operating in the far east of the Soviet Union, the Soviet Backfire Bombers could threaten critical sea lanes of communication across the Pacific. Soviet "boomers"—ballistic missile submarines—carried missiles capable of firing over the Arctic and into American cities. Japan still needed the United States, and increasingly America needed Japan's help containing this new threat.

To move beyond the contentious debate that had started in the late 1960s about how much to remilitarize, the Japanese government had prepared a National Defense Program Outline in 1976. The Outline determined that Japan would focus only on "exclusively defensive defense" of the home islands, and stop well short of earlier hawkish visions of an expanded Japanese

defense role in Asia. Japan needed a clear American commitment to help defend the home islands, and the Carter administration hoped it could secure a Japanese commitment to play a larger role in supporting US military operations in Korea or Taiwan. When the two governments reached a bilateral agreement in the 1978 Defense Guidelines, it was clear that the US would begin planning for the defense of Japan, but Japan was not ready to commit to playing any role in regional security. The pacifist undertow and fear of entrapment were still powerful forces in Japan.

However, because of the geography of the Japanese archipelago—stretching like a picket fence across the Soviet Far East—the line between defense of the home islands and regional security was blurred. In fact, by strengthening its ability to protect the straits between its islands and the airspace overhead, Japan would bottle up the Soviet military in the Sea of Okhotsk where the US Navy and Air Force could attack them. This was exactly what the two governments agreed to do, implicitly, in the 1982 Roles and Missions discussions, in the early years of the Reagan administration. While most Japanese citizens saw enhanced cooperation as a necessary thing to defend Japanese territory in the face of Soviet military build-up, the Japanese Self-Defense Forces actually played a much larger role in the US strategy to contain Soviet expansion, and to defeat the Soviets in a global war should it come to that. This was achieved without changing the Japanese Constitution or explicitly accepting a role in the security of Asia—precisely because geography had put the concept of "exclusively defensive self defense" right in the way of the Soviet Union's military expansion.

Japan's ability to contribute to US global strategy proved invaluable at a time when the Japanese economy seemed poised to overtake that of the US. Americans felt in the 1980s that Japanese products were too inexpensive, and they wanted to reduce the huge imbalance growing between American and Japanese exports by increasing the value of the yen, which Japan agreed to in the 1985 Plaza Accord. Ironically, rather than easing trade tension with Washington, the more valuable yen created negative headlines for Japan in the American press when Japanese companies used all their newfound wealth to buy icons like the Rockefeller Center in Manhattan and the Pebble Beach Golf Club in California. Pundits warned of the "Buying of America," and Democratic presidential candidate Richard Gephardt asserted in a speech in 1988 that while the US and the Soviet Union fought the Cold War, Japan was winning. That same year, polls showed that more Americans considered the Japanese economy more of a threat than the Soviet Union's nuclear missiles.

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## POST COLD WAR DRIFT AND THE FOURTH ADJUSTMENT

While few Japanese political leaders saw themselves engaged in an economic war with the US—and most worried more about how to keep the US economy open to Japanese exports than how to separate from America—the idea that Japan had new technological and economic power to shape the world seemed logical in Tokyo. Japan’s economic growth rate in the late 1980s was on a trajectory to overtake the US GDP by 2005, and the appreciation of the yen had put Japan in the position of top provider of official development assistance around the world. From Kuala Lumpur to Nairobi to Taipei, developing nations were looking at Japan’s model of controlled capitalism and import substitution as more appealing than the traditional Anglo-American *laissez faire* approach advocated by international institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank. It also helped fuel those countries’ enthusiasm for the Japanese model that many also were receiving more aid from Tokyo than they were from Washington or London. Japanese officials in international institutions began to argue the line advanced by Japanese economist Eisuke Sakakibara, that Japan’s economy had “surpassed capitalism” and should be presented as an attractive alternative for countries to follow.<sup>5</sup> Japan seemed poised to play a leading role in the world based on its economic success in the post-Cold War world. It looked like the difficult question of how far to rearm and how much to depend on the US for security might just be sidestepped by developing a new economic definition of national security.

When Emperor Hirohito died and the Berlin Wall came down, ending the Cold War in 1989, the Japanese people sensed that a new era was dawning. However, few anticipated how different that era would be from the roaring successes of the 1980s. The first surprise was the 1990–91 Gulf War—not because Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, since most Japanese thought the problem could be solved with economic adjustments—but rather because the US mobilized an international coalition to defeat Saddam with military power. Japan was left to watch from the sidelines, then asked to pick up the bill. The Japanese government was pressed reluctantly into providing \$13 billion to support the war effort, but still was granted little influence in the post-war settlement. Capturing the humiliation sensed by many Japanese was the Kuwaiti government’s post-war advertisement in US newspapers thanking the members of the coalition that had liberated them. Japan—which had contributed money but no troops—was not listed.

After finding that traditional military and diplomatic power still mattered and that the US retained the dominant share of power after the Cold War, the Japanese then discovered that their own economic model, which had turned into an enormous asset bubble, burst in 1990. The heady growth of the 1970s and 1980s ended, setting the stage for a “lost decade” of deflation and poor economic growth. The end of the bipolar Cold War structure also sent a tremor through Japanese domestic politics, causing the LDP to briefly lose power in 1993

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and, more importantly, causing the collapse of the old Socialist left—and the rise of a new and more centrist Democratic Party of Japan that could force real debates in the Diet about strategy. The rise of the “Heisei” Generation (Heisei is the Japanese name of the era begun after the death of Hirohito) of politicians born after the war also removed old taboos about sensi-

tive topics such as constitutional reform and led to a new assertiveness about Japan’s right to move beyond the post-war emphasis on war guilt.

Initially, Japanese strategic thinkers sought new outlets for their foreign policy in the “New World Order” proclaimed by President George Herbert Walker Bush in 1991. An LDP panel under Ichiro Ozawa produced a strategy paper in 1993 that focused on cooperation through the United Nations, which had played such a central role in the response to Saddam’s invasion of Iraq. In 1994, the government of Japan also published the “Higuchi Report” by an advisory panel that highlighted the importance of peacekeeping operations and other UN activities in Japanese security after the Cold War. Noting the central role of the UN Security Council during the Iraq War, the Japanese government also began a sustained push for a permanent UNSC seat. The UN had always been an important coordinate for Japanese foreign policy and an arena where Japan could play an independent role while still anchored in the US-centered international system. By the mid-1990s, however, it was becoming clear that the Gulf War was a unique case of Security Council solidarity and that the UN system would not be central to the post-Cold War order, as many had hoped.

Meanwhile, the sudden rise of Chinese power shifted Japanese strategic thinking back to Asia. Five decades earlier, Yoshida had predicted correctly that China would move away from the Soviet Union based on commercial and cultural ties with Japan and other Asian powers. However, Yoshida and his followers failed to anticipate that economic interdependence with China would fail to translate into strategic influence *over* China. When Beijing flexed its muscles in 1995 and 1996 by testing nuclear weapons and bracketing Taiwan with missiles as a warning to the pro-independence forces on the island, Japan warned that bilateral economic ties could be hurt. The Chinese were unmoved by these arguments. Coupled with the discovery of North Korea’s nuclear weapons programs and the test of the North Korean NODONG missile over Japan in 1994, these developments fueled a new realism and angst about Japan’s strategic position in Asia.



The fourth major adjustment in the US-Japan alliance began in that context. In September 1994, two US sailors and a Marine on the island of Okinawa raped a young Japanese girl and sparked protests across Japan. Editorials and political leaders in Japan began asking whether the presence of so many US bases was worth the trouble (there were about 48,000 US troops in Japan at the time, with 18,000 concentrated on the small island of Okinawa). After intense national debate, the answer came back “yes.” In the wake of belligerent moves by China and North Korea, opinion surveys showed a renewed appreciation by the Japanese public of the US-Japan alliance and the need for US forces in Asia. In Washington, the Clinton administration—and particularly the Pentagon—also came to realize how important the US-Japan alliance was to maintaining a stable balance in Asia as Chinese power grew. The US goal was not to contain China’s growth, but to ensure that US engagement and cooperation with Beijing was backed by strong US alliances in the region to dissuade China from choosing paths other than cooperation.

After a period of drift and inattention in the early 1990s, the US and Japanese governments began an intensive review of the alliance, which led to a joint declaration between President Bill Clinton and Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto in April 1996, “reaffirming” the US-Japan alliance and announcing expanded defense cooperation. Joint work on missile defense in response to the North Korean threat was a central part of this new cooperation. The two governments also agreed to revise the original 1978 US-Japan Defense Guidelines to include cooperation in the “areas surrounding Japan”—the first explicit move for US and Japanese forces to work together for the security of Asia beyond the immediate Japanese home islands.

The Joint Security Declaration inaugurated a decade of improved US-Japan alliance cooperation. At first, the focus was on East Asia, but after Al Qaeda attacked the United States on September 11, 2001, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and President George Bush brought the alliance to the global stage. Conscious of Japan’s reactive and ineffective response to the first Gulf War, Koizumi’s government moved smartly to ensure that Japan showed the flag early in responding to the new threat. Koizumi was one of the first world leaders to tell President Bush that the world was engaged in a global war against terrorism. “You must win,” he wrote the President, “and Japan will help.” In an early symbolic move, Japanese destroyers escorted the USS Kitty Hawk out of Tokyo Bay the week after the September 11 attack, flying the rising sun flag that most Americans had seen before only in World War II movies. Koizumi then passed legislation authorizing Japanese ships to refuel coalition forces operating against the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. In Iraq, Japan sent a battalion of engineers and other experts to ensure that Japan was contributing not only funds (which it did to the tune of \$5 billion), but also people. Koizumi also got high marks in Washington for pushing through much needed structural reform in Japan’s lackluster economy. By the time he left office in September 2006, Japan’s economy was back on a more positive track.

Koizumi and his government explained his close support for America to the Japanese people by arguing that Japan faced its own threats in Asia and needed America’s help. He also emphasized that the US-Japan alliance was based not only on common interests, but also on common values. In speeches to fellow Asian leaders, Koizumi argued that the region must follow the path of democracy, rule of law, and good governance. His successor, Shinzō Abe, emphasized that Japan would work for an “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity” in Asia. While some Japanese intellectuals argued that Japan was losing its traditional “Asian” values by emphasizing universal norms such as democracy, others countered that the rise of China, and Japan’s own economic reforms under Koizumi, made arguments about the uniqueness of Japanese or Asian capitalism obsolete.

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## THE NEXT ADJUSTMENT?

The personal relationship between Bush and Koizumi was so close that many experts in both countries worried that the alliance would drift apart again when new leaders took charge in Washington and Tokyo. When Prime Minister Abe suddenly resigned in September 2007, because the opposition Democratic Party (DPJ) of Japan had successfully blocked legislation keeping Japan’s maritime flotilla in the Indian Ocean as part of the coalition against terror, the political crisis raised real concerns about whether Japan would continue its more assertive role in international security policy. The DPJ is likely to control the Upper House of the Diet at least until 2010 and has a chance to unseat the ruling LDP-led coalition in elections for the more powerful Lower House of the Diet before that. Mr. Abe’s successor, the older, more prudent and pragmatic Yasuo Fukuda, seemed destined to lower the temperature of some of Abe’s more ambitious plans to change the Constitution and recognize Japan’s right of collective self-defense. Yet Fukuda was Koizumi’s lieutenant as Chief Cabinet Secretary when Japan first sent forces abroad after 9–11, and even though he is less ideological than Abe, he is a pro-US-Japan alliance realist. Moreover, while Ozawa may be throwing up obstacles to the government’s security policy and demanding UN mandates for any dispatch of Japanese forces abroad (meaning very few will go in the end), many of the younger DPJ members share Mr. Abe’s ambitious vision of Japan’s security policy. Even if there is a diversion of energy to domestic politics in Japan over the next few years, the overall trends that led to the Koizumi and Abe era seem strong.

The US-Japan alliance will remain the most important anchor for Japanese security. If Japan moves away from that alliance, it will be because America has failed as an ally.

Alliances—like marriages—grow hot and cold. Even America's special relationship with Britain has been plagued by controversies ranging from the Suez Canal to the war in Iraq. But the structure of the US-Japan alliance looks sound. While American and Japanese interests may not line up perfectly—Japan will always be more interested in the North

Korean threat than the war on terrorism, for example—the reality is that the United States and Japan need each other to solve their respective challenges. This is particularly true in the case of China, where both the United States and Japan hope for good relations, but cannot yet be confident that China will use its growing power as a force for peace and stability in the world. Moreover, the evidence is strong that this is now an alliance based on genuine trust between the Japanese and American people and a growing sense of shared values. This is a remarkable thing, given the hatred that colored America's war with Japan six decades ago.

At the same time, there are still questions that could also be raised about the durability of the US-Japan alliance. Some Americans are asking whether the alliance with Japan should be expanded, given China's fear of containment and encirclement. They warn of the risk of a "defense dilemma" where China would assume from US and Japanese actions that confrontation is inevitable. Others argue that Japan's difficulty coming to terms with its own history could isolate Japan in Asia and ultimately hurt the US by association. Still others warn that the assertive Japan of Koizumi was an illusion and that Japan will continue finding excuses to keep a low profile in international affairs.

The reality is complex on all of these issues. It is hard to argue that Japan is militarist when one considers that Japan still spends less than one percent of its GDP on defense, in contrast to China's massive increase of ten to twenty percent per year over the last decade. In addition, changes to Article Nine of the Japanese Constitution sound revolutionary, but the proposals on the table would retain the first clause renouncing war, and then update the second clause to acknowledge Japan's right to maintain its self defense forces and participate in collective defense with allies. Moreover, Japan's dispatch of forces to Iraq was unprecedented in terms of exposing Japanese troops to danger, but the Japanese troops were kept well away from actual combat and had a protective ring of British and Australian troops around them to deal with any contingencies. But, it would also be hard to argue that Japan has been reactive and passive the way it was in response to the first Gulf War in 1990–91. Koizumi's assertiveness in international affairs was popular in Japan and future leaders will build on that example.

It would also be wrong to argue that Japan is ignoring history, since the Japanese government has formally apologized

for its wartime activities on numerous occasions. The problem is that for every apology there is a countermove by Japanese politicians to declare their conviction that Japan was not the aggressor in the war—undercutting the original apology. But it would be inaccurate to say that Japan is isolated in Asia. BBC international polls in 2006 and 2007 showed that a majority of Koreans and Chinese distrust Japan, but apart from the immediate neighbors, Japan ranks highly around the world. In fact, in 2007 Japan tied with Canada as the most trusted country in the world. In South and Southeast Asia, polls show that around ninety percent of respondents have a positive view of Japan. Still, the difficulties over history with Korea and China do, undeniably, burden Japan's diplomatic efforts in Asia.

Taken together, this paints a picture of a Japan that will continue to make pragmatic adaptation to its security environment as it has in the past. The US-Japan alliance will remain the most important anchor for Japanese security. If Japan moves away from that alliance, it will be because America has failed as an ally. But that seems unlikely, given the shared interests both nations have in steering China to a more positive world role and preventing a North Korean nuclear breakout. Nor does the alliance depend on regional uncertainties or threats to Japanese interests alone. Japan and the US share a common interest in the strength of the neo-liberal international order, which has brought so much to Japanese democracy and economic growth. As a future American president focuses on bringing the nation through the difficult but important business in Iraq, America will need help from Japan and other like-minded nations to keep that neo-liberal order strong. In short, this is increasingly an alliance of mutual support. And those are the strongest alliances of all. ■

#### NOTES

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3. Ichiro Ozawa, *Nihon Kaizō Keikaku, Blueprint for a New Japan*, (Kodansha, 1993), 109.
4. See "[Nippon Shindansho] Dai 7-bu Hibaku Haruka ni / 1 Gaimushō 'Kaku Heiki Seizo Nouryoku Wo'" (in Japanese), *Mainichi Shimbun*, morning edition, August 1, 1994, 1.
5. See Eisuke Sakakibara, *Beyond Capitalism: The Japanese Model of Market Economics* (New York: United Press of America, 1993).

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