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Historical Parameters of Japanese Foreign Policy

The basic objective of the foreign policy of Japan, like that of any other country, is to ensure the nation's security and prosperity. It can be concluded that Japan has succeeded in the pursuit of that objective for more than half a century. Since the end of World War II, Japan somehow has managed to ensure that the wars, revolutions, and other crises witnessed in East Asia throughout the period have not fatally damaged its own security. And Japan has benefited immensely from the international economic order imposed by the Bretton Woods system, without which its economic recovery and ensuing economic success would not have been possible.

Today, however, a sense of drift or uncertainty about the future course of foreign policy seems to prevail in Japan. In part, it reflects uncertainty about the international situation. More than a decade has passed since the end of the cold war, during which international affairs were much more predictable. And yet a clear-cut concept for a new international order in the twenty-first century has yet to emerge. Many Japanese, although they may fully support the U.S. antiterrorism campaign, have begun to wonder how President George W. Bush's preemptive strike doctrine

will affect the U.S.-Japanese alliance in the future. The stunning admission by North Korea of its abduction of numbers of innocent Japanese in the 1970s and 1980s and the announcement of its decision to restart its nuclear facilities have reminded the Japanese people of the urgent need to rethink how best to deal with the dangerous quagmire in the Korean Peninsula. Furthermore, as the Japanese watch the dynamic economic growth of China—in such contrast to the economic stagnation in Japan—many naturally wonder what East Asia will look like, say, twenty years from now.

Since today change is occurring everywhere at a truly exponential rate, some sense of uncertainty may be inevitable. Still, the main reasons for the sense of uncertainty evident in Japan today are indigenous. First, there is generational turnover. All the decisions that have defined the course of Japan's foreign policy were made long ago. With the passing of time, the heated debates and agonized decisionmaking of former political leaders are forgotten. Although today's younger generation is aware in an abstract sense of the importance of U.S.-Japanese relations, it seems to have difficulty grasping in any real sense the enormous stakes that Japan has in managing those relations. The domestic political tension that the leaders of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) had to deal with in opting to maintain security ties with the United States has become a dim memory of a bygone era. Today, the argument that the relationship between Japan and the United States is the cornerstone of Japan's foreign policy may sound like nothing but a cliché to many people. For that matter, in the 1970s and 1980s maintaining a friendly relationship with China was recognized as extremely important, and it evoked a certain sense of achievement among many Japanese who remembered the historical context and the difficulties that the two countries had to overcome to develop that relationship. But today, to a younger generation that does not share the memory, arguments of the importance of the friendship between Japan and China are hardly convincing. Moreover, today important policy statements, domestic and foreign, tend to be presented as "sound bites," and the complexity of the issues involved can easily be overlooked.

Second, in spite of the new culture of transparency and accountability in politics, the public seldom has access to the candid, in-depth analysis conducted by national decisionmakers of other countries' intentions, motives, and domestic power structure. Although such analysis is a prerequisite for successful decisionmaking, if countries began to disclose their assessments of each other publicly, the resolution of issues and prob-

lems would become much more complicated, and mutually embarrassing outcomes inevitable. Candid and even unkind assessments of adversaries may be made public if officials do not care about further negative impact on relations that already are in bad shape. However, with the end of the cold war, such cases of openly adversarial relations between countries have become rare.

Much of the art of diplomacy lies in nations' ability to assess and analyze one another continually and accurately. If the analysis or assessment shatters the conventional wisdom, it may be welcome. The process, however, cannot be made transparent. That constraint may be very frustrating for the general public. In the course of discussions among members of the so-called Committee to Change the Foreign Ministry, it was argued that the ministry should make public all analyses and conclusions regarding policy alternatives before making any foreign policy decisions. The growing demand for such transparency is bound to make it an increasingly daunting task for the government to obtain better understanding and broader support among the population for its foreign policy.

Finally, we are witnessing a crisis of legitimacy. The prolonged economic difficulties in Japan have gradually taken a toll on Japan's national psyche. The domestic mood has become more resentful. The public harbors animosity toward various things—the bureaucracy, the banking sector, the traditional political process, foreign countries. In the face of protracted difficulty, people tend to react in one of two ways: one is to reflect on what they themselves did wrong; the other is to find someone or something else to blame. The latter reaction may be seen in the actions of Islamic fundamentalist-terrorists, but it is common throughout the world. Another example is the anti-immigration fervor in various European countries, where some nationals blame foreign workers for all sorts of problems. In Japan, one gets the impression that the public has become much more supportive of a tough, hawkish, assertive, and occasionally confrontational posture in the conduct of foreign policy. Since the mid-1990s, domestic criticism of the Foreign Ministry for being subservient to the United States, subservient to China, and soft on South Korea, North Korea, and many other countries has tended to be far more frequent.

Furthermore, a series of scandals involving fraud that have erupted in the Foreign Ministry since 2001 have badly damaged its credibility and legitimacy—so much so that there is a genuine risk that much of Japan's basic foreign policy may also lose its credibility and come to be viewed with skepticism or disdain.

Japanese Foreign Policy since World War II

This chapter revisits past decisions that have constituted the basis of Japanese foreign policy since the end of World War II. Some key decisionmaking processes of the postwar era are reviewed first, and then some reflections about future options on key issues are presented. However, before embarking on a review, it is important to have a clearer idea about the key domestic parameters—constraints, identity issues, obsessions, and other factors—related to foreign policy decisionmaking. For easier understanding, these parameters are discussed to the extent possible in a dialectical manner.

Catching Up with the West versus Maintaining an Asian Identity

Ever since Japan embarked upon modernization, many Japanese leaders have been acutely aware of a dichotomy in the national identity. A famous essay by Chomin Nakae vividly describes a hypothetical discussion between two characters in which one fervently argues that Japan should “get out of Asia” and join the club of Western powers while the other insists that Japan should remain an Asian nation. After all, the modernization effort since the Meiji Restoration can be simply defined as a nationwide attempt to catch up with the West. There were two phases of this catch-up process. The first was from the Meiji Restoration in 1868 to World War II, in which the fruit of the first phase was utterly destroyed. The second phase was from 1945 to sometime in the 1970s, when Japan became a major industrial power. When Japan was invited to the first summit of major industrial democracies (the gathering of the “G-6,” as Canada was not invited to the first meeting), there was genuine sense of achievement in Japan, where many naturally thought that membership in that kind of forum signified the successful conclusion of the catch-up process. Since then, Japan’s identity as a responsible member of the major industrial democracies has become highly important, and it should be borne in mind in grappling with various foreign policy issues.

During the period from 1868 to 1945, there was not much conflict between the two approaches in terms of policy implications. To catch up with the West and perhaps to preempt any risk of colonization by Western powers, Japan vigorously participated in the game of imperialism in Asia. To “get out of Asia” was never an actual course of action. Instead, Japan’s Asian identity was stressed in terms of resentment toward

the hegemony of the Western powers, notably the United Kingdom until the early 1930s and the United States afterward. Fumimaro Konoe, who became prime minister in the late 1930s, published an essay in 1918 decrying the supremacy of the United Kingdom and the United States in international politics that had considerable resonance at the time among the elite class in Japan.

“Japan’s Asian identity” is almost a tautology. However, since World War II various arguments in favor of specific courses of action have been advanced on the basis of that identity. And often those arguments have tended to reflect Japanese psychological reservations about—or in some cases even revulsion toward—what the West embodies. A typical case in point is the issue of values, notably human rights.

The Japanese people today are thoroughly committed to universal values such as freedom and democracy. However, whenever it appears that Westerners are eager to press their human rights agenda on Asian countries, the Japanese often claim that Asian values are different. Japan, as an Asian country, should point out those differences, the argument goes—for example, by refusing to join Western efforts to impose sanctions on certain Asian countries because of human rights violations. Moreover, the theory used to be expounded that enlightened dictatorial regimes in various East Asian countries were the key to their successful economic development. And it has been frequently argued throughout East Asia that Asians attach more importance to and emphasis on group-oriented values, such as the importance of the family, and that those values have been the key to social cohesion and success in nation building. For example, in the early 1990s Singapore’s leaders often expressed the view that there was little doubt that a society with communitarian values, where the interest of society takes precedence over that of the individual, suits them better than the individualism of America. The very success of some East Asian countries in achieving dynamic economic development gave a certain degree of legitimacy to these arguments in defense of Asian values. However, treating what can be argued to be a universal value as a parochial value of the West to be contrasted with Asian values is of debatable validity. Nevertheless, when issues are discussed in the context of the differences between Western culture, values, or standards and those of Asia, the argument that, because of its Asian identity, Japan should act differently from the West can have considerable impact on popular opinion.

Another interesting case in point was the East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC) issue in the early 1990s. Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad

of Malaysia proposed forming the EAEC, whose membership was supposed to include all members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Japan, China, and the Republic of Korea (ROK). If this group had been a formal economic entity, something like a trade bloc, perhaps arguments about its pros and cons would have been clearer, because its economic advantages and disadvantages would have been easily identifiable. However, since Mahathir's proposal was to establish an informal forum with a very loosely defined agenda, the debate inside Japan centered solely on the identity question. The Asian identity school held that there was nothing wrong with the idea of East Asians getting together to talk about economic problems pertaining to East Asia and that Japan, as an Asian nation, should wholeheartedly support the scheme. The industrial democracy identity school held that the notion of excluding countries like the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand could be counterproductive at a time when APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum) was starting to do well; besides, the United States was adamantly opposed to such a group, claiming that it would undermine APEC. In any event, the EAEC became a non-issue in the late 1990s, when a new forum for dialogue between Asia and Europe was created at the joint initiative of Singapore and France. The participants from Asia were limited to ASEAN members, Japan, China, and the ROK, and European participants were limited to European Union (EU) members. Thus a precedent was established for forming a group, the membership of which was de facto EAEC, without much agonizing about the possible impact on Pacific unity.

Pacifists versus Realists on the Security Issue

The clash between pacifists and realists regarding the peace and security of Japan has persisted since the end of World War II. In view of the catastrophic casualties that Japan had suffered during the war, it is natural that the Japanese people came to have an extremely strong aversion to war and anything related to the military. And in the immediate aftermath of the war, the foremost concern of the United States was to eliminate any possibility of the reemergence of the military in Japan. Therefore, at the initiative of the United States, a new constitution was promulgated that included a provision, Article 9, that if read literally seemed to preclude any possibility of Japan's regaining its defense capability. As described in chapter 2 of this volume, many Japanese government officials in those days assumed that in the event of an attack on Japan, the United Nations

would take care of Japan's defense with its own forces, as envisioned in Chapter 7 of the UN Charter. However, the advent of the cold war at the end of the 1940s totally altered Japan's circumstances. Instead of ensuring the security of the United States against Japan, ensuring the security of Japan against the newly emerging threat from the communist bloc became the more urgent priority for the United States. In response to U.S. pressure to proceed with the rearmament of Japan, Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida eventually opted for forming what was described as a "lightly armed mercantile state." The gist of Japan's defense policy was the establishment of security ties with the United States and the eventual creation of the relatively small Japanese Self-Defense Force (JSDF).

In the past, the domestic debate between pacifists and realists over the peace and security of Japan quite often led to fierce political turmoil. Three notable features of the debate should be pointed out. First, it often takes the form not so much of a policy argument as of legalistic scrutiny focusing primarily on the constitutional constraint on military action. Second, the crux of the debate is whether the notion of deterrence is accepted or not. Third, at issue is whether and to what extent even the democratically elected government can be trusted never to return to the path toward militarism, which had led Japan into war, with tragic consequences.

LEGALISM. In the course of parliamentary debate, the opposition parties try to attack the government by taking up the legalistic aspects of the defense issue. From the pacifist viewpoint, "rearming" Japan by creating the JSDF—as well as maintaining security ties with the United States—is an unforgivable breach of the constitution. Also, the opposition has always been a minority in the Diet, so if the debate is about the policy options related to security, the opposition is bound to be numerically overwhelmed. However, as long as the debate is about the legality of the government's action, the opposition can proclaim what the government is doing to be unconstitutional and illegal.

Moreover, the assumption is that government agencies carry out their functions exactly as they are stipulated in the authorizing laws and regulations. Therefore, for example, the law related to the role and functions of the JSDF had to be amended so that JSDF aircraft could be used to evacuate Japanese nationals in foreign countries. In any other country, it would be inconceivable that aircraft of the national defense force could not be used for such purpose unless a specific clause was included in the law.

As to the constitutional constraint on military action, the debate often is related to the definition of “use of force.” The constitution permits the use of force—that is, military action by the JSDF—only for individual self-defense (to fight foreign forces that are engaged in armed attack on Japan) and not for collective self-defense (defense of allies, for example). However, things are not that simple. The legal question is always raised of whether the apparently noncombat logistical support activities of the JSDF, such as supplying matériel to U.S. forces (USF), facilitating refueling of U.S. combat aircraft and ships, and providing medical support to the USF can be considered to constitute the use of force. The government’s interpretation of the constitution is that they can, as long as they are part of combat operations. An often-quoted example is that to engage the JSDF in transporting matériel to the front line, where actual combat is going on, constitutes an integral part of the use of force and therefore is unconstitutional.

This is a serious question that requires a clear-cut response. Following the enactment in 1999 of a law paving the way for logistical support activities by the JSDF for the USF in the vicinity of Japan—and in 2001 of a law defining measures to deal with terrorism in the aftermath of 9/11—the government was authorized to engage the JSDF in various non-combat support activities for the USF. However, as Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi suggested, the opposition’s legal arguments against those laws sometimes were as relevant as medieval theological debates over how many angels could dance on the head of a pin. Thus far the issue has not been clearly sorted out. It has often been pointed out that if the standing interpretation of the constitution were revised to accept the constitutionality of the exercise of collective self-defense, then the need for elaborating on the definition of “use of force” in the context of logistical support by the JSDF for the USF would practically disappear.

Another unique aspect of the legal battle is that the government is expected to maintain the legal consistency of all the answers it has given in past parliamentary debates. If there are frequent changes of the governing parties, the new governing party can claim that it is not bound by the legal positions of the previous government. However, in Japan, because the LDP has stayed in power continuously for decades, the LDP government is required to maintain the continuity of its legal arguments. For example, in parliamentary debate about the interpretation of the security treaty between Japan and the United States, responses of government officials some forty years ago have to be quoted and adhered to.

THE NOTION OF DETERRENCE. In essence, the pacifist view is characterized by the rejection of the notion of deterrence. Maintaining deterrence by establishing security ties with the United States and forming the JSDF is viewed as a dangerous ploy that can entangle Japan in another war. This fear of entanglement had considerable resonance among the Japanese people throughout the postwar era. During the cold war era in particular, the Japanese had a strong psychological impulse to distance themselves from the prospect of the horrific devastation that could ensue if the hostility between the two sides erupted in a nuclear exchange.

It also should be noted that the implicit assumption was that as long as Japan refrained from engaging in military provocation, the risk of entanglement in warfare would be minimized, because the invasion of a harmless Japan by foreign powers was deemed unlikely. Many Japanese share the belief that the Mongolians' attempt to invade Japan in the twelfth century was the only instance of invasion by foreigners and that, with the exception of World War I, all the wars that Japan fought in the modern era were initiated by Japan. Of course, one may be tempted to call this view typical of an insular mentality. Still, the perception that unless Japan starts war, the country can avoid war and enjoy perpetual peace constitutes the basis of Japanese pacifism, inasmuch as it logically rejects the notion of deterrence. This perception is in marked contrast to the lessons of history learned by the Europeans, who harbor vivid memories of centuries of mutual invasion.

Ever since Prime Minister Yoshida opted to create a lightly armed mercantile state—a decision eventually designated the Yoshida Doctrine—the conservative Japanese polity, which can be described as “realist,” has adhered to the maintenance of effective deterrence for the security of Japan in spite of persistent opposition by pacifists. Whenever it has been necessary to take legislative action related to the maintenance of effective deterrence or to the role of the JSDF—such as the revision of the security treaty between Japan and the United States, the reversion of Okinawa to Japanese control, or more recently, peacekeeping operations (PKO) and measures related to the fight against terrorism—highly emotionally charged debate often has erupted between the LDP government and the opposition parties and some newspapers that are staunchly committed to the pacifist philosophy. However, over time public understanding and support of deterrence has become stronger. There has been a marked shift in the opinion polls in the degree of acceptance of the JSDF and the security ties between Japan and the United States. For example, according to

polls conducted since the end of the 1960s, the percentage of those who favored maintenance of security ties and the JSDF was 40.9 percent in 1969, 64.6 percent in 1981, and 71.2 percent in 2000. Meanwhile the percentage of those favoring the abrogation of the security ties and the abolition of the JSDF was 9.6 percent in 1969, 7.6 percent in 1981, and 5.8 percent in 2000.

Especially since the end of the cold war, a series of new legislative actions have been taken authorizing the government to engage the JSDF in various noncombat missions abroad, such as peacekeeping missions and logistical support activities for U.S. forces. Sending the JSDF abroad was a hardcore taboo during the cold war era, and the pacifists did their utmost to block proposed legislation to expand the JSDF's role. The very fact that the government could overcome the opposition and manage to enact the laws signifies that perhaps Japan is entering a new phase in terms of the age-old clash between pacifists and realists. The changes that have affected the role and mission of the JSDF are discussed in chapter 2. Meanwhile, it seems safe to assume that a majority of the Japanese people have come to understand that—within the basic constraint that the use of force is prohibited except for individual self-defense—the role and mission of the JSDF should be redefined in order to address newly emerging security challenges in the aftermath of the cold war.

Finally, one unique feature of the pacifist-realist clash should be pointed out. In the realm of international politics, the concepts of peace and security often are used in tandem and treated as virtually synonymous. However, in the clash between pacifist and realist in Japan, that is not quite the case. The notion of peace has become the exclusive property of the pacifists. The pacifists tend to view “security” as the opposite of “peace” and therefore pejorative, in that the notion of security is likely to be used as justification for the policy of deterrence, which the pacifists detest. In essence, the “peace-loving” opposition fiercely attacks the realists, who preach the importance of the “security” of Japan.

CONFIDENCE IN JAPAN'S DEMOCRACY. After World War II, the Japanese people felt strongly that they had been badly betrayed by the imperial government, which had led Japan into war and inflicted so much damage and suffering on ordinary citizens. They became very distrustful of the government's role in anything related to peace and security, and that distrust helped the pacifists greatly in their efforts to oppose the government's security policies. For the generation whose memory of the pre-war era was still fresh, claims that Japan was back on the slippery slope

to war or that once again citizens would be haunted by the intrusions of the military police were entirely credible, and cries such as “We will never again allow our sons to be slaughtered in war” had considerable resonance. Because they had suffered so much as a consequence of the militarism of the prewar era, many of them tended to assume that there was an inverse relation between the strength of the military and the degree of democracy—the stronger the military, the weaker the nation’s democratic values. That attitude is in marked contrast with that in many other democratic countries, such as the United States, where the country’s military generally is perceived to be the guarantor of the democratic values that its citizens cherish. The clash between pacifist and realist could be boiled down to one question: If a democratically elected government is responsible for all decisions pertaining to national security, is the democracy so fragile that it will be jeopardized if the nation is able to defend itself? That is precisely the question that *Yomiuri*, the newspaper with the largest circulation in Japan, raised in the mid-1980s in support of the assertive posture that Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone had taken on various defense issues. *Yomiuri* argued that almost four decades after the end of World War II, democracy in Japan was strong enough to dispel any possibility of the resurgence of militarism.

Clearly the clash between pacifists and realists and the difference in their perceptions regarding the relationship between defense and democracy is the product of their different historical memories. Things therefore cannot be settled simply by logical argument. Again, over time the significance that new generations attach to these issues will gradually change; still, these themes are bound to recur whenever Japan faces a new security agenda.

Realpolitik versus the Wilsonian Approach

The classic conflict between fundamental human values and the national interest—or idealism and realism—in the conduct of diplomacy has been amply discussed in many books on foreign policy. It certainly has affected Japan’s foreign policy as well. One often wonders whether the argument that a policy serves Japan’s national interest or the argument that it is Japan’s moral obligation has more appeal and therefore a better chance of gaining the support of the general public. In many cases, the principle of respecting human values and the principle of serving the national interest are not starkly different in their application. In late 1980s, the Japanese

government presented the concept of contributing to the maintenance of international order as the cornerstone of Japan's foreign policy. The idea was that in this way Japan would help to ensure the peace and prosperity of all mankind. Obviously such a policy orientation can be justified by either argument.

Still, there have been many instances in which Japan has had to agonize over the issue. But before proceeding to the discussion of those cases, some clarification is needed of the concepts of "national interest" and "human values" in Japan's foreign policy. When people talk about the pursuit of the national interest in the context of *realpolitik*, they commonly think of the maneuvers to maintain the balance of power in nineteenth-century Europe. Various arguments have been presented for applying the European model to Asia, bringing about an Asian balance of power by weaving a network of alliances, ententes, or so-called strategic relationships among major players, including the United States. Particularly notable is the emergence of a new school of thought in Japan that stresses the importance to Japan of having better relations with India or Russia as a counterforce to China. That strategy certainly is a product of the end of the cold war, and it reflects the sense of uncertainty and anxiety among the Japanese about China's future course, given the country's sheer size and robust economic growth, as well as the fact that a considerable portion of the fruit of that growth is allocated for defense.

During the cold war era, the rapprochement between the United States and China brought about by Henry Kissinger in 1971 was certainly a classical success of the *realpolitik* approach. However, from the standpoint of the realist school in Japan in those days, Asia was not yet prepared for the balance of power game, simply because the cold war persisted and the crucial issue was the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. The major concern of the realists in Japan was the maintenance of a credible alliance with the United States, as well as of the effective defense capability of the JSDF. As far as the domestic debate was concerned, it was not for the most part between realists and idealists, but between realists and pacifists. But because the pacifists monopolized the ideal of peace, the debate gave the impression of being a clash between realists and idealists.

Human values were not treated as the key parameter of Japan's foreign policy in the cold war era for a number of reasons. Today, there is virtual consensus in Japan that the communist regimes were undemocratic, dictatorial, and therefore, in terms of the basic principles of democracy and

freedom, failed systems. However, during the early phase of the cold war, the predominant tendency among Japanese intellectuals was to accept and endorse the legitimacy of the communist regimes in the Eastern bloc, although they were quite vociferous in denouncing dictatorial regimes that were part of what was called the free world. Not wanting to provoke the East unnecessarily, the government did not raise issues such as the undemocratic and tyrannical nature of the regimes in the communist bloc. Besides, as far as the values agenda was concerned, the leftists were in an advantageous position, monopolizing the idea of peace as the supreme value in Japan.

In the zero sum game of the cold war, in which the top priority of the West was to maintain the precarious balance between the two blocs so that the catastrophe of nuclear war could be averted, the West initially did not have much interest in pressing its values agenda on the East. The policy cliché in those days called for peaceful coexistence between East and West; obviously, differences in their values—“Your system is awful,” for example—were considered a non-issue.

It was the human rights diplomacy of President Jimmy Carter in the late 1970s that introduced the values agenda squarely in the foreign policy arena. When President Carter started to attach high priority to the human rights agenda in conducting his foreign policy, the Japanese government initially was perplexed. It was evident that if Japan rigorously pursued the human rights agenda in its dealings with neighboring countries, then its relations with them were destined to be disrupted, because at the time most of the countries in East Asia were ruled by totalitarian or dictatorial regimes. However, toward the end of the century, dynamic economic development in many countries in the region ushered in the emergence of a new middle class, which became the driving force for democratization. As a result, the sensitivity of the human rights agenda in relation to Japan’s neighbors was considerably attenuated.

It was argued toward the end of Carter’s presidency that his human rights policy had destabilized the regimes of many friendly countries whose support was vital to the West. In contrast to Carter, President Ronald Reagan took up the values agenda primarily in the context of the cold war. His epithet “evil empire” set the tone of the endgame of the cold war in the 1980s.

Today, the conflict in Japan between values and the national interest often is related to the use of economic sanctions against countries that perpetrate human rights abuses. Typically, “the idealist” advocates

imposing sanctions, such as the suspension of economic assistance, while “the realist” argues that penalizing the country in question would substantially disrupt existing relations and would not serve the strategic interests of Japan. Whenever Europeans or Americans are at the forefront in accusing an Asian country of human rights abuses, the Asian school of Japanese identity often expresses the dissenting view. A classical case involved Japan’s development assistance to China in the aftermath of the Tiananmen massacre in 1989. Japan agonized over whether to continue to suspend assistance to protest this terrible human rights abuse by Chinese authorities (the values-oriented approach) or to resume aid, defying the democratic countries of the West, because it was not in the interest of Japan to reverse its policy of economic engagement with China, which had led to a marked improvement in relations in the 1980s (the interest-oriented approach). A single standard cannot be applied to resolve this dilemma; it demands a case-by-case approach.

Apologists versus Nonapologists

In 1995, on the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II, the Japanese government issued a statement by Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama, clarifying the basic position of the Japanese government regarding the war: “During a certain period in the not-too-distant past, Japan, following a mistaken national policy, advanced along the road to war, only to ensnare the Japanese people in a fateful crisis, and, through its colonial rule and aggression, caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of many countries, particularly to those of Asian nations. In the hope that no such mistake be made in the future, I regard, in a spirit of humility, these irrefutable facts of history, and express here again my feeling of deep remorse and state my heartfelt apology.”

Seven years later, one gets the impression that polarization is occurring on the history issue. For the sake of simplicity, it can be described as a clash between apologists and nonapologists, although the debate is not so much about apology per se as about a way of looking at history.

The nonapologist school of thought is not monolithic. Moderates among the nonapologists take the position that although Japan admittedly inflicted terrible pain on its Asian neighbors, it already has apologized amply and therefore should not have to repeat the apology whenever its Asian neighbors or others demand it. Besides, there is a growing sense of frustration among the younger generation, which does not see

the rationale for apologizing for actions taken long before their birth. Those who take a more hardline stance contend that there was nothing morally wrong with what Japan did in the prewar era and that therefore there is no need for apology. The division between the two is defined by the question of whether and to what extent one should glorify the past. Apparently, there are more moderates than hardliners, although the latter have gotten more vociferous in recent years.

Apologists, who share the view that Japan committed terrible atrocities in the prewar era, naturally refuse to glorify the past. However, their views vary regarding the extent to which Japan should have to continue to express official apologies or offer monetary compensation to the victims of its actions.

The issue with Japan's neighbors is not about apology per se. They often stress that what they are most concerned about is whether the Japanese people have genuinely learned the lessons of history; they believe that only if the Japanese people do so can the resurgence of Japanese militarism be prevented. Whenever Japan's neighbors begin to suspect that Japan's prewar history is going to be officially glorified, for example, in the process of certifying a history textbook or when a prime minister makes an official visit to Yasukuni Shrine, a memorial to Japan's war dead, they express their strong resentment.

That the historical memory of victims of war does not easily fade was amply manifested throughout the 1990s in the former Yugoslavia, where atrocities committed by the Turks against Serbs in the fourteenth century became the driving force behind Serbian persecution of the Albanians in Kosovo. It would appear safe to assume that the much more recent memory of the atrocities committed by Japan against its neighbors in the prewar period is even less likely to fade anytime soon. Moreover, the very memory of humiliation often can become the basis of a fiercely emotional nationalism. Therefore the history issue is likely to be a truly difficult and sensitive parameter of Japan's foreign policy.

Nationalism versus Internationalism

If one is looking for a concept that can be dialectically contrasted with nationalism, perhaps "internationalism" is a candidate. In the 1980s the government of Japan adopted the notion of "internationalization" as the guiding principle of its foreign policy. The idea was to introduce systemic changes in the structure of the Japanese economy in order to facilitate the

entry of foreign players into Japanese markets. At the time, foreigners were increasingly exasperated by the difficulties that they encountered in their attempts to become active participants in different sectors of the Japanese economy—including trade in goods and services, which had been handled exclusively by Japanese nationals—and direct investment in those sectors that had been closed to foreigners. Because Japan was amassing a huge trade surplus with the rest of the world, it was imperative to initiate a systemic opening up of its economy to other countries. Internationalism was conceived primarily as an approach to managing Japan's economic relations with the rest of the world.

In contrast, nationalism is difficult to define. Practically all Japanese were seized with a strong sense of nationalism while they watched the Japanese national soccer team play in the World Cup in the summer of 2002. However, such nationalism is unlikely to be relevant in the domestic debate on foreign policy. Perhaps it might make more sense to distinguish between “healthy” and “unhealthy” nationalism. But again, things can be complicated further. It is worthwhile to list some typical issues that can contribute to manifestations of nationalism.

One issue is the resentment or frustration among the Japanese people toward foreign countries and specific aspects of Japanese foreign policy that are perceived to be soft on or subservient to foreign countries. Traditionally there were two sources of frustration. One was the pressure from foreign countries, in particular the United States, to open the Japanese market. In retrospect, the process of gradual opening did not damage the dynamism of Japan's economy. However, the opening of specific sectors was pushed through under pressure from foreign countries, often the United States, rather than through efforts to convince the people that it was in the overall interest of the Japanese economy. As a result, a victim mentality persists among the Japanese, who believe that Japan is always forced to succumb to foreign pressure.

The other source of frustration is the U.S.-Japanese security arrangement, which, as discussed, the pacifists have been at the forefront in denouncing since its inception. However, some people who have a right-of-center ideological orientation, unlike the pacifists, also oppose it because they believe that the arrangement—which was based on the protector-protégé relation between the United States and Japan in the immediate aftermath of Japan's defeat—obliges Japan to remain subservient to the United States. An extreme form of this type of frustration might logically lead to a political posture similar to Gaullism, although no such

trend has gathered strength thus far. Moreover, given U.S. global activism in the aftermath of 9/11, U.S. military predominance, and the U.S. proclivity to pursue a unilateralist foreign policy, the perception that Japan is subservient to the United States is likely to be exacerbated in Japan.

Serious crimes or mishaps involving American personnel stationed at U.S. military bases in Japan also contribute to the Japanese people's anger and resentment. The base issue often becomes a rallying point not only for pacifists but also for nationalists.

In a relatively new development, China also has become a focal point of frustrated or resentful nationalism, for various possible reasons: the emergence of China as a dynamic economic competitor of Japan; its sheer size, which suggests that China will become the dominant economic and military power in Asia; growing nationalism in China, which often manifests itself in anti-Japanese sentiment; the impression that China adamantly refuses to let the history issue rest; and the perception shared by many Japanese that China is eager to undermine Japan's interests. Japan's relations with China are discussed in some detail in chapter 5. Suffice it here to point out that avoiding the clash of nationalistic sentiments will remain difficult for both countries.

In any country, historical memory is a key feature of nationalism and the tendency to glorify national history is inevitable. The resentment of the nonapologists, therefore, can be described as a manifestation of nationalistic sentiment. To what extent frustrated or resentful nationalism may become a key parameter in foreign policy decisionmaking will have to be assessed carefully. Obviously, in the age of globalization any policy orientation that is averse to deepening and widening interaction with the rest of the world is bound to be a nonstarter. Therefore, dealing with the unhealthy type of nationalism, which sometimes borders on xenophobia, may become a serious priority on the national agenda. One hypothesis was that as long as unwavering confidence in the Japanese way of doing things predominated in Japan, there would not be much room for widespread nationalism of that type. But as Japan enters a historic transitional phase in which it appears that the familiar rules of the game will have to be discarded and seemingly more Darwinian "survival of the fittest" strategies accepted, it is understandable that anxiety or perhaps pessimism about the future may provide fertile ground for the growth of frustration and resentment. Of course, it is unlikely that the mood in Japan will easily swing back to the proud nationalism, bordering occasionally on hubris, of the 1980s, when the Japanese economy looked so

invincible. Still, it is extremely important that the Japanese people recover some degree of confidence in the future, more specifically about their collective capacity for making the dynamic adjustments that they have made in past crises.

Obsessions about Economic Vulnerability

Ever since Japan embarked on its quest to catch up with the West following the Meiji Restoration, an obsession about the scarcity of key natural resources in Japan seems to have been deeply embedded in the national psyche. The export of manufactured products from Japan was considered to be essential in order to secure key resources and materials from abroad. The corollary of this mercantilist orientation was imperialist expansion to secure areas in the vicinity of Japan that could serve not only as markets for Japan's products but also as suppliers of various resources. In the 1930s, while Shigeru Yoshida was Japanese ambassador in London, he emphasized to key British leaders that maintaining an economic sphere of influence in northeast Asia was essential to Japan's national survival. Obviously Yoshida reasoned that since the United Kingdom had been one of the great imperial powers, its understanding or at least acquiescence in regard to Japan's actions in Manchuria and China would be highly helpful. However, one commodity that northeast Asia could not supply was oil. Japan depended on the United States for its supply of oil, which was essential to the conduct of war. Today, to prepare for war against the United States when Japan was totally dependent on the United States for oil looks like an act of lunacy. Both Japan and the United States were aware that Japan's only alternative source of oil was the Dutch East Indies—now Indonesia—and Japan's readiness to launch a military advance into the Dutch colony made it obvious that war was inevitable.

In the postwar era, Japan has suffered from two types of obsession about economic vulnerability. One, as mentioned, relates to Japan's vulnerability with regard to its supply of natural resources, in particular, oil. The others relates to its access to the export market. In particular, Japan has been haunted by the possibility of other countries forming economic blocs from which Japan might be excluded and as a result restricted in international trade.

After the end of World War II, Japan's first priority was to get back into the world market so that exports could be resumed. The U.S. gov-

ernment, having been convinced in the early 1950s of the strategic desirability of supporting Japanese economic reconstruction, opened the U.S. market to cheap manufactured commodities from Japan. The United States also helped Japan to join the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), although it took many years to overcome the reluctance of other major trading countries to give Japan full-fledged member status. The loss of the Chinese market, which used to account for roughly one-third of Japanese external trade in the prewar era, meant tremendous damage to Japanese trade. Although Prime Minister Yoshida opted for joining the “free world,” one of his first actions was to attempt to resume trade with the People’s Republic of China (PRC), defying arguments by some American officials that expanding trade between Japan and PRC would not serve the strategic interests of the free world. Yoshida’s attitude toward China is discussed in chapter 5.

Joining GATT was important because it members accorded most-favored nation (MFN) status to one another across the board. As long as that principle was upheld, Japan did not have to worry about differential treatment by other countries that might be eager to restrict Japan’s market access. In those days, the memory of the bloc economies of the 1930s, which had accelerated the decline of Japanese world trade, was still vivid among the Japanese; Japan therefore found the formation of the European Common Market a worrisome development. If it had been possible, Japan would have been happy to block the endeavor. It should be pointed out that Japan did not have the option of forming a similar regional association in East Asia, simply because there was no country in the region with which Japan could undertake a viable attempt at economic integration.

In the case of Europe, there was a basis for the horizontal division of labor among the countries in the region. Even though they had to make huge efforts in the 1950s and 1960s to recover from the damage that they suffered during World War II, their national economies had reached the stage of advanced industrialization. The formation of a single market that makes it possible for European countries to benefit from economies of scale by trading manufactured commodities with each other has become the key factor in their economic growth since the 1960s. In contrast, Japan’s trade relations with its East Asian neighbors was characterized by the vertical division of labor: Japan exported manufactured goods to and imported primary commodities from its neighbors, because of the differences in their respective stages of economic development. No economies

of scale could be achieved by forming a single market among the countries in the region.

Eventually, perhaps inspired by the success of the European endeavor, the formation of free trade areas became the vogue in various parts of the world. Japan always watched this process with the uncomfortable feeling that the ideal trade order of GATT, which was based on the global application of MFN status, was being eroded by the regional free trade schemes, to the detriment of Japan. Of course it can be argued in hindsight that Japan's trade with Europe has expanded markedly as a result of the dynamic European economic growth that followed regional integration. Still, the fear that Japan might be left behind in the international trend toward regional integration remains a key parameter of its foreign policy.

Japan's other sense of vulnerability relates to the supply of oil. In the post-World War II era, Japan's dependence on oil from the Middle East remained extremely high, and Japanese companies attempted to exploit oil deposits in the Gulf area. However, Japan's tacit and optimistic assumption was that since the major U.S. oil companies were its main suppliers of oil, any possible disruption of supply would be effectively prevented by the United States and perhaps the United Kingdom. It was not until the embargo by oil-producing countries in the Gulf area in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War in 1973 that Japan suddenly awakened to its vulnerability in regard to its supply of oil. The oil embargo shattered the Japanese people's confidence and expectation that Japan would continue along the path toward unprecedented prosperity. Although the embargo was not effectively enforced, the huge hikes in the price of oil that ensued further intensified the Japanese sense of vulnerability. At the time, the sense of crisis was shared by all the democratic industrial countries, so much so that the first G-6 summit meeting, officially called the Summit of the Industrial Democracies, was convened at the initiative of France in the fall of 1975.

Following another round of oil shortages toward the end of the 1970s after the turmoil in Iran, issues related to the oil supply, such as the stability of the Persian Gulf region, came to top the national agenda not only in Japan but in practically all the major countries. However, as time passed it became evident, to the relief of many, that even in the case of oil the market mechanism worked and the likelihood of oil embargoes diminished markedly. Japan made a nationwide effort to reduce its dependence on oil from the Gulf throughout the latter half of the 1970s. (In

1970, oil accounted for 71.9 percent of total energy consumption in Japan, and 84.6 percent of that oil came from the Gulf. By 1985, those numbers had dropped to 56.3 percent and 68.8 percent, respectively.)

Still, the oil crisis—later called the “oil shock”—was the first instance since the end of World War II in which the Japanese acutely felt their vulnerability to dependence on foreign resources. Its imprint on the national psyche will not fade easily and may quickly reappear if another crisis affecting the oil supply should erupt.