U.S.-Japan Research Institute (USJI)
Commemorative Symposium for the 50th Anniversary of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty
"U.S.-Japan Relationship after Fifty Years"

Summary

Time: May 28, 2010
Venue: Okuma Auditorium, Waseda University (Tokyo)
Summary

Panel Discussion

Moderator: Akihiko Tanaka (Professor, Managing Director, Executive Vice President, The University of Tokyo)
Panelists: Michael Armacost (Shorenstein Distinguished Fellow, Stanford University, Former U.S. Ambassador to Japan)
Chikako Ueki (Professor, Waseda University)
Patrick Cronin (Senior Advisor & Senior Director of the Asia Program, Center for a New American Security)
Sheila A. Smith (Senior Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations)
Hiroshi Nakanishi (Professor, Kyoto University)
Akihisa Nagashima (Member, House of Representatives, Democratic Party of Japan, Parliamentary Secretary for Defense)
Yoshimasa Hayashi (Member, House of Councillors, Acting Chairman, Policy Research Council, Liberal Democratic Party, Former Defense Minister)
Shunji Yanai (Judge of the International Tribunal of the Law of the Sea, Former Japan Ambassador to the U.S.)

Tanaka: First off, let us hear a short presentation from each panelist.
(Presentation from each panelist)

Yanai:
Unlike the situation in Europe, an air of tension remains in Northeast Asia after the end of the Cold War. In the fifty years after WWII, the U.S.-Japan alliance has operated extraordinarily well, but the world of today is much more complicated than it was during the Cold War age. That being said, however, the U.S.-Japan alliance will continue to serve as an indispensable asset to both countries. Asian countries at the Nikkei-sponsored "The Future of Asia" symposium expressed such a conviction: "The U.S.-Japan alliance involves not only Japan and the U.S., but is an asset for the whole Asian region."

While there was neither the political environment nor the legal basis in Japan for personnel contribution during the 1990s, the decade that saw the Gulf War, we see the existence of SDF
dispatches and PKO missions today precisely because there was debate at that time. While the Futenma base relocation issue has been plagued with ups and downs, we gladly welcome the production of a joint declaration close in form to the original plan. The prime minister, however, should have spoken out only after covering the details of past negotiations. That one area was a bit of a disappointment.

Cronin:
The signing of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty was a historic reconciliation. I've even heard a USSR high official seeking asylum say, "the U.S.-Japan alliance was the greatest achievement for the United States during the period of the Cold War." However, a re-examination of this is now necessary. North Korea has become even more aggressive and the threat of China is becoming ever-more a reality. And amongst these circumstances, it is imperative that Japan and the U.S. work together, not relying solely upon corporeal guarantees of security, exemplified by their alliance, but also looking toward intangible alternatives as well, such as cooperation in the field of climate change.

In doing so, education in particular becomes an indispensable factor. Regular dialogue at all levels is necessary concerning the definition of deterrence and security issues surrounding Japan and the U.S., but in order to bring this to fruition, educational exchange becomes necessary. And in securing the understanding of Okinawa, local educational investments become a highly-effective means. Peace will not be realized through passivity. That needs to be recognized by each and every one of us. Japan's future, America's future, and the future of the U.S.-Japan alliance depend on education.

Nakanishi:
The U.S.-Japan relationship can be described as one of "strange love." This is what I thought after listening to Professor Monte's and Dr. Armacost's speech. This is from the title of Kubrick's satirical film, "Dr. Strangelove," which ranks alongside the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty as a product of the strange reality of the Cold War age. As this strange relationship is simply too comfortable, it seems as if perceptions of the outside world among the Japanese people have become a tad skewed. The issue of the secret agreements is not completely unrelated to this perception. The US-Japan security relationship entered a new phase after the end of the Cold War. However, the relationship, in some ways, overlaps with the US-Japan security relationship that prevailed at the time of the signing of the previous security treaty during the Korean War. Under such conditions, treating the U.S. forces in Okinawa as a simple burden without strategic inspection will absolutely not bring desirable results to the U.S.-Japan relationship.

Smith:
What is important is the reality of the U.S.-Japan relationship's inclusion in the security guarantee of Northeast Asia. The U.S.-Japan alliance has always evolved dynamically, responding to developments during the Cold War throughout Asia, and has responded flexibly to regional conditions even after the war ended. Today, however, a new examination of this is necessary. There are three main issues: 1) a strategic review of the U.S.-Japan alliance; 2) close-knit dialogue between Japan, America, and South Korea regarding the issue of North Korea; and 3) securing maritime security in response to China's rise to power. This includes examining such issues as piracy countermeasures and nuclear nonproliferation as well. The onus for uncertainty over the Futenma base relocation issue falls on both countries, but is also the result of a half-century of continued rule by a single party within Japan. After investigating past developments, a rebuilding of dynamic U.S.-Japan relations upon continuous mutual understanding is necessary.

Ueki:

Many seeds of tension are lying dormant in Northeast Asia. Nevertheless, it seems that the U.S.-Japan alliance has contributed to the over half-century span of peace in the region. While this region is seeing a fundamental move in a desirable direction, with strengthening mutual economic dependence, there are still various unstable factors that remain, including North Korea's continued insistence on displaying a provocative attitude. The largest issue to be tackled in the future is the question of how to stabilize China's rise to power.

Last year, Japan saw its first political changing of the guard in some tens of years. Amongst expectations of continued regime changes into the future, the need to disclose information to the public is ever-increasing. It is unfortunate that so much effort was exhausted by the Futenma base relocation issue, but seen from the perspective of disclosing information and making blatantly clear the problem, I do not believe it was a waste at all.

Hayashi:

Mutual exchange of Diet members from both political parties between Japan and the U.S. will become of increasing importance if administration change stabilizes. While a rear-facing approach was taken to address such time-consuming issues as Futenma, secret agreements, and SOFA, we must change gears and begin engaging in a number of future-oriented discussions, while working to solve these issues as efficiently as possible. One such example is a consideration of the right of collective self-defense. Another is a review of the three principles on arms exports. These should be returned to the three principles of Prime Minister Sato's tenure. Furthermore, the expansion of Maritime Self-Defense Forces' activities, applying not only to ship inspection, but also to the enabling of the rescue of Japanese residing abroad must be dealt with.
Nagashima:
Today is a great milestone for the U.S.-Japan alliance and for the Coalition Government. At 8:00 this morning, Prime Minister Hatoyama and President Obama held a teleconference. An hour later, there was a joint press release at the 2+2 Meeting. And this evening, it is believed that there will be a cabinet decision and Prime Minister Hatoyama will hold a press conference. Besides the purpose of lessening Okinawa's load, the perspective of the U.S.-Japan alliance's global role and the question of how it should be modified are also important.

There are certain areas that require reflection concerning the uncertain stance taken over the past eight months. First and foremost, coordination and exchange concerning the entire strategic picture should have been conducted before focusing on the issue of individual bases. The issue of Okinawa should have been considered only after stabilizing the direction of the defense capability maintenance of the U.S. armed forces and the Japan Self-Defense Forces, and jumping to Okinawa immediately from the start only worsened the confusion. Furthermore, too many mixed messages were sent out before U.S.-Japan strategic exchange was conducted, such as the suspension of supplying activities in the Indian Ocean and the visit of a legislative mission to China.

Cost during times of peace must always be considered based on its balance with risk during times of emergency. If costs are lowered, risks must be borne to a certain extent. In that regard, as long as Japan's role in international security is not expanded to a certain extent, for example, the right of collective self-defense, a stable environment of guaranteed security will not be materialized. I would like to incorporate such ideas into the new defense guidelines and into future U.S.-Japan interaction.

Armacost:
Regarding in particular the balance between cost during times of peace and risk during times of emergency, there seems to be quite a consensus. Nevertheless, it is highly regrettable that all were over-taken with the issue of the Futenma base relocation and even more important issues were overlooked. For example, issues surrounding China. We will never form an equilateral triangle with China. While Japan, the U.S., and China all share mutual interests concerning the reduction of risk on the Korean Peninsula, each approach to the problem of North Korea differs.

Although China is on its rise to prominence, it will never become a replacement for America. America's growth may be slowing down, but it is not declining. I hope that America, as an ally of Japan, will gain more of your trust.
Question and Answer Session with Audience

Tanaka: Over 100 questions were gathered from the audience. Representative questions will be raised and we will have members of the panel answer them.

Q. Is lessening Okinawa's burden truly feasible?

Nagashima: Not if it is according to the same old promotional strategies and manner of burden reduction. In this agreement, the term, "green alliance," is thrown about, but I, personally, believe that a bold measure such as making all of Okinawa into an "eco-island" is necessary.

Smith: First off, we need to recognize that the shutting down of the Futenma base following the 1995 rape incident was decided at the summit-level 13 years ago. Next, the perspective of equality is important. From such a standpoint, we welcome the moving of U.S. military exercises out from Okinawa. Furthermore, efforts are also necessary to reduce the number of bases through such measures as increasing interoperability between the JSDF and the U.S. military. Moreover, discussions concerning the issue of U.S. bases within Japan must not stop at the level of gubernatorial meetings, but must stretch down to debate that includes all people. Another important point is one that is often overlooked by the media: we must recognize the reality that half of the Marine Corps in Okinawa is being moved to Guam, in accordance with this agreement.

Tanaka: Supposing the LDP returns to power, what will be done first?

Hayashi: The major issues will be re-examining today's agreement and rebuilding the local trust relationship. This applies even to the Green Alliance; if the people do not desire it, then it will not see realization.

Armacost: The Green Alliance can expect big results, but more than anything else we want to see a structured implementation. Furthermore, 75% of U.S. military bases in Japan are located in Okinawa and this reality needs to face a resolution.

Q. Where is China headed?

Nakanishi: We recognize that China's military expansion is not for the purpose of attacking either Japan or the U.S. It's a natural result of economic development. However, speaking from the current state of affairs in Northeast Asia, confusion over security of some sort or another is bound to occur if China does embark on a course of action. There was intent in China's behavior in the Nansei
Islands-region to act against Japan's exclusive economic zone. Consequently, it does seem that there is a need to maintain a U.S. military and U.S.-Japan alliance presence in the area.

Q. Concerning America's power in the future.

Cronin: The 1990s was the decade when the U.S. was the one and only superpower. While its absolute superiority deteriorated in the 2000s, America has fulfilled its role as a superpower while undergoing hardships. And it will continue to execute this role into the future.

Ueki: America still maintains an overwhelming presence in regards to its absolute strength. Its GDP consistently claims 25~30% of the global total. Furthermore, its military expenditures make up over half of the world's total. However, what changed was that America no longer held sole claim over the command of the commons, including space. Another change seen was the complicating and obscuring of the presence of its military power. It was centered on major powers during the Cold War age, but it now exists in a diffused form. Challenges that cannot be solved through simple military force, such as terrorism that respects no national borders, are increasing.

Q. The Democratic Party's approach to the issue of an amendment to Article 9 of the Constitution.

Nagashima: Discussions to amend not only Article 9 but the whole Constitution have been raised for several years, but talks within the party have stagnated owing to the priority placed rather on administrative change over the past year. It's time to pay the price. We must reinvigorate inter-party discussion. Regarding Article 9, however, it seems that the issue of the right of collective self-defense can be handled satisfactorily through interpretation.

Yanai: People often say that Article 9 prohibits any and all uses of military force, but if you examine the original document carefully, you will notice that it says, "renounce the use of force as a means of settling international disputes." The same wording is included in the 1928 Pact of Paris. Therefore, it is rather those that read Article 9 as prohibiting all uses of military force who are stretching things. It is natural to interpret this as securing the right of self-defense. There is no particular need to amend the constitution. Even considered realistically, it is preferable to increase deterrence than to deal with the problems that arise during a time of emergency. Therefore, in that regard as well, the exercising of the right of collective self-defense is preferable.

Armacost: America has a history of swinging back and forth like a pendulum between the expansion and reduction of its commitment. We are currently in a stage of curtailment, as we were in the 1950s
under Eisenhower and in the 1960s as we were under Nixon. And this was touched upon often when
discussing China's rise, but we must also realize at the same time that China is currently in a state
where it must concentrate on domestic challenges. Furthermore, we must also take into consideration
the fact that it, unlike the former Soviet Union, touches borders with North Korea and is surrounded by
allies of the United States. As China must become even more sensitive than the former Soviet Union, a
careful approach is necessary.

Q. The current administration's plans for the East Asian Community?

Hayashi: It's not a particularly new idea. However, the issue of how to deal with America is an
extremely sensitive one and demands a careful approach. The commerce and security phases of this
discussion seem to be mixed up and an organization is necessary. Ideally, the necessary members need
to be gathered together to discuss such issues as the environment, nuclear safety, the debt market, and
currency. The EU, as well, originally experienced development from individual discussions.

Smith: During the fall of last year, a series of events troubled America. Among these were the
publishing of an article entitled, "My Political Philosophy," in the International Herald Tribune,
comments at the ASEAN+3 Summit, and the visit to China of Mr. Ozawa at the head of a group of
lawmakers. These events served to amplify America's concerns.

Q. Concerning security education, what is specifically necessary?

Cronin: In a recent article, I asserted that strategic education is necessary. In Japan, education
incorporating viewpoints from abroad into the curriculum of such classes as history is important.
Initiatives that stretch across the various ministries and government offices are necessary.

Conclusion

Tanaka: Let's hear one more word in closing from each of our panelists concerning the future of
U.S.-Japan relations.

Hayashi: China's stable growth is indispensable for the guarantee of security. In the long run, a
wide-cast security system like that of Europe is necessary.

Ueki: While the U.S.-Japan alliance is a wonderful arrangement, I get the sense that the price Japan
has had to pay for just how fortunate this relationship has been is that it has not been able to stand
face-to-face as seriously with its neighboring countries. From here onward, Japan must begin building
trust relationships with surrounding countries while maintaining its alliance with the United States. This will also contribute to the strengthening of the U.S.-Japan alliance.

Smith: Nothing is more important than open dialogue. Periodic or continuous dialogue must be held between both countries. And if the time comes, President Obama should visit Hiroshima.

Cronin: Discussion centering on the necessary role in the world of the U.S.-Japan alliance should be held.

Nakanishi: I feel that a visit to Hiroshima by President Obama would be premature. A bit more intellectual reorganization is necessary on the part of the Japanese in order to properly understand the war. This is an important element in considering the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty.

Yanai: There are universities that do not hold courses on safety issues. One should be held at each university.

Armacost: The relationship between Japanese and American government personnel is a congenial one, but exchange at the politician-level is weakening. The state of universities is also concerning. The number of Americans studying abroad in Japan and the number of Japanese studying abroad in America is shrinking.

(End)