

Whither an Internationalist Japan: Global Activism and Democratic Deficit in Japanese Foreign Policy*

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Japanese foreign policy since the late 1980s has exhibited many signs of liberal internationalism: a generous development assistance package despite its economic malaise, an expanded presence in international peacekeeping and peace-building missions, and a multi-faceted, people-centered approach to international security. This article, however, draws attention to the (non)liberal character of Japanese activism by shedding light on Japan's entanglement in democracy assistance, a trademark liberal internationalist project. Two features stand out in this juxtaposition. First, democracy assistance has been seen as supplementary—rather than parallel—to the peace and development initiatives in Japan's diplomatic repertoire. Second, when democracy was indeed played up, the act nonetheless exposed the myriad innate contradictions between the liberal paradigm and Japan's nationalist impulses that transpired in its diplomatic offensives. Humanistic as it can be at times, Japan's global outreach is non-liberal at best because it is intellectually informed and motivated by a confluence of nationalist resurgence and realist power considerations.

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In just about 20 years since the end of the Cold War, Japan has shed much of its irrelevance in world politics and has transformed itself into a “global civilian power” and “a global power for justice”—ostensibly by attempting to fulfill its national goals through an increased acceptance of supranational authority and peaceful means.¹ Indeed, since the late 1980s, the idea of a well-intentioned Japan making its due *kokusai koken* (international contribution) has been a prevailing theme within domestic debates regarding its role in international affairs. In many respects, Japan has practiced what it preaches: besides maintaining one of the largest development assistance programs in spite of its economic malaise, Japan has expanded its peace-keeping and peace-building efforts without overthrowing its pacifist constitution,² has helped broker the critically important Kyoto Protocol,³ and is a fervent champion of human security worldwide.⁴ These actions and initiatives easily remind people of some middle-power nations such as Sweden and Canada, whose trademark international humanitarianism has earned them the befitting title of “good states.”⁵

¹Hans W. Maull, “Germany and Japan: The New Civilian Powers,” *Foreign Affairs* 69, no. 5 (Winter 1990): 91-106; Takashi Inoguchi, “The Evolving Dynamics of Japan’s National Identity and Foreign Policy Role,” in *Global Governance: Germany and Japan in the International System*, ed. Saori N. Katada, Hanns W. Maull, and Takashi Inoguchi (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 31-50.

²Peng Er Lam, *Japan’s Peace Building Diplomacy in Asia* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

³Takashi Hattori, “The Road to the Kyoto Conference: An Assessment of the Japanese Two-dimensional Negotiation,” *International Negotiation* 4, no. 2 (1999): 167-95.

⁴Tan Hsien-Li, “Not Just Global Rhetoric: Japan’s Substantive Actualization of Its Human Security Foreign Policy,” *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 10, no. 1 (January 2010): 159-87.

⁵See, for example, Alison Brysk, *Global Good Samaritans: Human Rights as Foreign Policy* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). The Japanese scholar Yoshihide Soeya has been known for championing the view of Japan as a “middle power”—a rung lower than the United States and China—in terms of its role in managing regional and global affairs, see: Yoshihide Soeya, *Nihon no “midoru pawa” gaiko* (Japan’s middle power

Is Japan indeed the new Canada or Sweden in Asia? Both Canada and Sweden have long been known to epitomize liberal internationalism, “a vision of an open, rule-based system” within which democracies are more prone to advance their interests through trade and multilateralism.⁶ A policy doctrine at times found wanting in the United States, liberal internationalism provides much of the theoretical underpinning for international peacekeeping and development assistance,⁷ both of which are also deemed to be pillars of post-Cold War Japanese diplomatic expansion. In fact, as early as 1987, the Japanese government led by Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, who jumpstarted the push for Japan’s deeper involvement in international affairs, raised the banner of liberal internationalism as an objective to achieve.⁸ Subsequent Japanese decisions to support multilateral mechanisms such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), it was argued, were enlightened by an analogous liberal thinking that injected a collaborative spirit into enhancing regional stability.⁹ And even as Japan gradually cast off the many pacifist constraints on the Japanese Self-Defense Forces, hope is still high that it will adopt a liberal internationalist security approach that lends support to its participation in peace-enhancing measures, humanitarian relief and counterterrorism operations.¹⁰ For many, Japan’s unbridled enthusiasm in promoting human security globally is an indelible testament to its metamorphosis from

diplomacy) (Tokyo: Chikuma-shinsho, 2005); Yoshihide Soeya, “Diplomacy for Japan as a Middle Power,” *Japan Echo* 35, no. 2 (2008).

⁶G. John Ikenberry, “Liberal Internationalism 3.0: America and the Dilemmas of Liberal World Order,” *Perspectives on Politics* 7, no. 1 (March 2009): 71-87.

⁷Roland Paris, “Peacebuilding and the Limits of Liberal Internationalism,” *International Security* 22, no. 2 (Fall 1997): 54-89; James M. Goldgeier and Michael McFaul, “A Tale of Two Worlds: Core and Periphery in the Post-Cold War Era,” *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 467-91.

⁸Mike M. Mochizuki, “Japan after the Cold War,” *SAIS Review* 10, no. 2 (Summer-Fall 1990): 121-37.

⁹Tsuyoshi Kawasaki, “Between Realism and Idealism in Japanese Security Policy: The Case of the ASEAN Regional Forum,” *Pacific Review* 10, no. 4 (1997): 480-503.

¹⁰Michael O’Hanlon, “A Defense Posture for Multilateral Security,” in *Japan in International Politics: The Foreign Policies of an Adaptive State*, ed. Thomas U. Berger, Mike M. Mochizuki, and Jitsuo Tsuchiyama (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 2007), 97-114.

“one-country pacifism” to liberal internationalism writ large.¹¹

I challenge head-on the myth of a liberal internationalist Japan by arguing that while it is without a doubt more internationally involved than ever, liberalism in Japan remains scarce and desired in both its foreign policy motivation and manifestations. So far the most evident counter-example of this liberal mirage is the Japanese state’s inability to rectify in a clean and humane manner the injustices of wartime comfort women and forced laborers, which have not only caused frequent flare-ups of tension with its Asian neighbor but have also made a mockery of its international benevolence. This article, however, documents and analyzes another missing but critical ingredient of liberal internationalism that separates Japan from other mature democracies, i.e., its great reluctance to embrace the US-led democracy assistance in general as well as the farcical contradictions between rhetoric and practice when it does talk up democracy, a fact long taken for granted by Japanese and international observers yet a valid puzzle on both theoretical and policy grounds. Being a liberal democracy, as Japan is, entails a constitutional power structure in which principles of liberalism are embedded. Freedom within the domestic realm aside, a liberal conception of liberty intrinsically dictates an activist agenda shaped by a universalist and self-reinforcing logic that in turn renders the global spread of democracy an imperative for democracies.¹² Even though variants of liberalism can be at odds with one another over the appropriate means toward liberal ends,¹³ liberal internationalism is of the belief that liberal values should be projected externally, and that international politics can be transformed and improved much like politi-

¹¹Yoshihide Soeya, “Japanese Security Policy in Transition: The Rise of International and Human Security,” *Asia Pacific Review* 12, no. 1 (2005): 103-16.

¹²Antonio Franceschet, “Sovereignty and Freedom: Immanuel Kant’s Liberal Internationalist ‘Legacy,’” *Review of International Studies* 27, no. 2 (April 2001): 209-28; Hans Agné, “Why Democracy Must Be Global: Self-Founding and Democratic Intervention,” *International Theory* 2, no. 3 (November 2010): 381-409.

¹³James L. Richardson, “Contending Liberalisms: Past and Present,” *European Journal of International Relations* 3, no. 1 (1997): 5-33; George Sorensen, *A Liberal World Order in Crisis: Choosing between Imposition and Restraint* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2011).

cal life internally.¹⁴ In short, a liberal internationalist program vis-à-vis the liberal zone of peace and democracy is about “preserving” it as much as “expanding” it.¹⁵ A liberal internationalist Japan would not have shied away from this dual task.

Policy-wise, it would be hard to imagine the Japanese not to have been urged, nudged and encouraged to follow suit by their American allies who have maintained incredible influence over Japanese foreign policy and security.¹⁶ This presumption evinces from the fervor with which Washington strives to foster democracy abroad. During the Bush administration, Americans invariably evoked the American success in instituting democracy in post-war Japan to justify the efficacy of nation-building and took the step to recruit India—a country much less dependent on the United States than Japan—to help spread democracy.¹⁷ Japan’s reticence is thus all the more surprising, especially considering the many carrots and sticks at its disposal. One likely scenario for Japan to learn the “trade” of promoting democracy is to leverage its large economic assistance package to induce positive political change in recipient countries of Japanese aid. Promoting democracy is “a world value,” claims one avid proponent,¹⁸ but somehow Japan, for all its enthusiasm in contributing to world peace and prosperity, remains very much lukewarm to the democracy cause.

A project with a progressive aspiration, democracy assistance is the core ethos for liberal internationalism even though both brands incurred much damage when the Bush administration used democracy, *ex post*,

¹⁴Michael Joseph Smith, “Liberalism and International Reform,” in *Traditions of International Ethics*, ed. Terry Nardin and David Mapel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 201-24.

¹⁵Michael W. Doyle, “A Liberal View: Preserving and Expanding the Liberal Pacific Union,” in *International Order and the Future of World Politics*, ed. T. V. Paul and John A. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

¹⁶The Washington-based National Endowment for Democracy, for one, worked hard to lobby Japan to create a sister institution as early as the late 1990s but failed to gain much attraction. Based on interview with Japanese scholars and officials, Tokyo, May 2008.

¹⁷C. Raja Mohan, “Balancing Interests and Values: India’s Struggle with Democracy Promotion,” *Washington Quarterly* 30, no. 3 (Summer-Fall 2007): 121-37.

¹⁸Michael McFaul, “Democracy Promotion as a World Value,” *Washington Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (Winter 2004-05): 147-63.

to justify the war in Iraq.¹⁹ This work thus analyzes Japan's ambivalent entanglement in the democracy promotion movement spearheaded by its American and European allies in light of Japan's endeavors to propagate its preferred policy programs abroad. Understandably, little ink has been spilled so far on this subject precisely because little has been done by Japan in democracy's name. In the text to follow I will take stock of three stages of the evolution of Japan's policy and normative discourse regarding democracy abroad: as a source of economic aid to buttress burgeoning "third wave" democracies, as human security's most enthusiastic promoter since the late 1990s, and finally as a half-hearted newcomer to democracy-based diplomacy. I will then situate democracy as a foreign policy agenda in the broader context of post-Cold War Japanese international relations and juxtapose it against the two favorite themes of Japanese diplomacy: peace-keeping and development assistance. The final section will be devoted to determining the *sui generis* motivation behind Japan's international activism, concentrating on its liberal or nonliberal quality. In so doing my goal is less to provide an overview of Japan's role in international society than to ascertain the basic ideational origin for its selective, lopsided internationalism that is decidedly in favor of peace and development at the expense of democracy. Counter to the depictions of a liberal internationalist Japan that both scholars and the Japanese government have made, implicitly or explicitly, I argue instead that Japan's selective internationalism is not driven by liberal principles, but is as *nationalist as realist* in essence.

Financing New Democracies (late 1980s—mid-1990s)

Throughout much of the Cold War era, democracy and human rights conditions abroad had little resonance for Japanese foreign policy. Entering

¹⁹Bruce M. Russett, "Bushwhacking the Democratic Peace," *International Studies Perspectives* 6, no. 4 (November 2005): 395-408.

the 1980s, Japan's conscientious shift for greater international leadership coincided with a new wave of democratization in Asia. In 1986 the non-violent People Power Revolution in the Philippines forced out President Ferdinand Marcos, a longtime military dictator. In response, the Japanese government decided—in order to keep up with Washington's new embrace of popular will in non-democracies—to extend a helping hand. The Southeast Asian nation was already a major recipient of Japanese ODA, but Tokyo increased its volume to help strengthen the newly-elected government of President Corazon Aquino.²⁰ Japan subsequently participated in the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).²¹

The dramatic end of the Cold War, and a little later the sudden dissolution of the once formidable Soviet Union, presented enormous challenges to leaders of the West, in particular France and West Germany, who saw a historical opportunity to shore up security and stability on Europe's eastern frontier in guiding struggling nations through economic and political transformation. But these free-market and political reforms could not possibly be carried through without a vast capital infusion from the West, and Japan's contribution was eagerly sought out by the allies in the name of safeguarding the hard-won fruits of the Cold War. Tokyo obliged by directing more aid to many East European countries, but rebuffed Gorbachev's initial requests for aid owing to his non-compromising stance on the disputed islands the Soviet Union took from Japan at the end of World War II. The principle is known as *seikei fukabun* (inseparability of politics and economics), i.e., no aid until the return of the disputed Northern Territory.

²⁰Juichi Inada, "ODA to nihon gaiko: tai filipin enjo- nituite no jiretsu kenkyu" (ODA and Japanese foreign policy: the case of Japan's aid to the Philippines), in *Nihon no ODA to kokusai chitsujo* (Japanese ODA and international order), ed. Kakeshi Igarashi (Tokyo: Japan Institute of International Affairs, 1990).

²¹The first meeting took place in 1988 in Manila and 5 subsequent meetings were held in 1994, 1997, 2000, 2004 and 2006 with the attendance of countries from Eastern Europe, Latin America and Africa, see: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/jinken/minshu/icnrd.html> (accessed July 3, 2011).

At the G7 summit of July 1990 in Houston, basking in the euphoria of “the renaissance of democracy” worldwide, Western leaders reaffirmed their commitment to supporting multiparty democracy, human rights, and economic reforms. Proclaiming their country as the “Japan of Asia,” Japanese leaders also took the opportunity to push for their Asian agenda that included Mongolia’s membership in the Asian Development Bank and yen loans to China.²² As a result, Japan’s inconsistent positions vis-à-vis the democratization of China and Russia at an awkward display: while Tokyo argued against further sanctions against Beijing for fear of jeopardizing China’s economic and political reforms and herein insisted on resuming its ODA loans worth of billions of US dollars that were suspended in the wake of the Tian’anmen tragedy, it was just as adamant in rejecting the idea of extending aid to the Soviet Union because of the lack of progress on the bilateral territorial dispute.²³

Following up on the Houston Summit, the Japanese cabinet approved its first ODA Charter. This had considerations on democracy, human rights practices and market-based economy as its fourth principle, along with the recipient country’s military expenditure, export and import of weaponry, and nuclear proliferation. The Japanese logic on democratization, often referred to as an “indirect approach” as opposed to the “direct approach” held by its American and European peers, purported to have the recipient country’s long-term progression toward democracy in mind, a conviction that even a recurrence of a Tian’anmen-like incident would not alter.²⁴ The first batches of Japanese ODA to Vietnam in 1992 and Myanmar in 1994 were carried out in this spirit.

However, the extraordinary case of aiding the USSR/Russia took much arm-twisting from Japan’s Western allies, primarily the United States. The Soviet coup d’état attempt in August 1991 made Washington

²²Hugo Dobson, *Japan and the G7/8: 1975 to 2002* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 85-87.

²³*Ibid.*, 87.

²⁴Juichi Inada, “Jinken, minshuka to enjo seisaku: Nichi Bei hikaku ron” (Human rights, democratization and policy of support: comparing Japan with the United States), *Kokusai Mondai* 422 (May 1995): 2-17.

more appreciative of having a reformist Gorbachev in power; this renewed the urgency to support his reform programs and increased pressure on Japan to cooperate.²⁵ At first, to avoid isolation in the G7 group, Japan agreed to participate in the West's assistance program, but only through multilateral institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. After the Soviet Union's dissolution, the West pinned their hope of a democratic Russia on Boris Yeltsin, and the new US president, Bill Clinton, made it abundantly clear that Russia's successful transition to a liberal democracy was of vital interest to the West. On the other hand, Japan's insistence on the resolution of the territorial problem as a precondition for economic assistance made the Russians believe that it was taking advantage of their weakness; and Yeltsin, mired in mounting political and economic upheaval and in desperate need of Western support, was irked by Japan's stiffness and no less resistant to Japan's demands.²⁶ Only after being repeatedly warned by its allies of the dangerous scenario Russia's failed transition would bring about, for which Japan would be to blame, did the Japanese government quietly drop its linkage strategy at the Tokyo G7 Summit in 1993 and commit to a multi-billion dollar pledge to Russia.

Beyond the former Soviet bloc, the United States began to push for democratization in Latin America, its backyard, as well. Political support to that region became a new focal point for the US-Japan Global Partnership as the Americans proposed a USD 1.5 billion Central and South America Support Fund within the Inter-American Development Bank, and the Japanese government followed up by hosting several multilateral forums attended by the Rio Group, the US, Canada, and the European Union. On his January 1992 visit to Tokyo when trade disputes occupied much of the media attention, President George Bush signed a Global

²⁵Akitoshi Miyashita, *Limits to Power: Asymmetric Dependence and Japanese Foreign Aid Policy* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2003), 105-10.

²⁶Alexander Panov, "The Policy of Russia toward Japan 1992-2005," in *Russian Strategic Thought toward Asia*, ed. Gilbert Rozman, Kazuhiko Togo, and Joseph P. Ferguson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

Partnership Agreement with Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa in which the two governments pledged to cooperate to “promote democracy and freedom” in Central and Eastern Europe, Asia and Latin America. These ideas were re-affirmed a year later by President Clinton and Miyazawa and evolved into what was called “A Common Agenda for Cooperation in Global Perspective.”²⁷ These initiatives involved mainly bilateral policy coordination on economic assistance to those newly democratized states.

At the G7 Summit in Lyon in 1996, Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) announced its first democracy-centered foreign policy program—the Partnership for Democratic Development (PDD)—with the explicit goal of helping young democracies strengthen their institutional mechanisms for democratic governance. Not unlike Japanese ODA, the PDD was carried out on the basis of self-help, consultations, and mutual agreement, and was meant to propagate Japanese know-how and experiences through technical assistance such as training seminars for NGOs and the police force, and electoral support, et cetera.²⁸ In the same vein, most of these activities were carried out by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)—indeed the same aid implementation agency whose involvement in foreign elections, for example, was limited to the provision of material supplies through grant aid and dispatches of election observers owing to its lack of experience.²⁹

In examining Japanese participation in global governance, one needs to keep in mind that throughout the 1990s Japanese debates on foreign policy were centered on the constitutionality of sending Self-Defense Forces on international peacekeeping missions. The flurry of controversy and reflections over Japan’s role in international society was triggered

²⁷“1992 U.S.-Japan Global Partnership Agreement,” <http://www.mac.doc.gov/japan-korea/market-opening/ta920109.htm> (accessed July 10, 2011).

²⁸Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Japan’s Support for Democratization,” <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/category/democratiz/1999/index.html> (accessed July 10, 2011).

²⁹Keiichi Hashimoto, “Kokusai shakai niyoru minshuka shi’en no shichi no kenkan” (A qualitative shift in international democratic support: consideration on the position of international support for domestic elections in developing countries), *Kokusai Kyoryoku Kenkyu* 22, no. 1 (2006): 32-39.

off by the diplomatic snubbing and under-appreciation that Tokyo received in spite of its substantial financial contribution to the Gulf War to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation. Even though the War itself was not a peacekeeping operation, many Japanese leaders saw UN peacekeeping as “a useful instrument with which to dispel some of this anxiety because it makes an uncertain world a little more certain”³⁰ as well as a means to legitimize Japan’s great power status in world politics.³¹ Thus in evaluating its potential international contribution in international society, Japan not only chose peace-keeping over democracy assistance, but kept the latter on the policy margins. The 1992 International Peace Co-operation (PKO) Law in June 1992 made it legally possible for the Self-Defense Forces to participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations overseas, and Tokyo subsequently sent its first-ever peacekeeping forces to work with the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). Other than that, Japan contributed a great amount of other diplomatic, financial, and human resources. JICA, for its part, assisted efforts to strengthen Cambodia’s legal infrastructure by helping draft its legal codes and training some lawyers in addition to its traditional development work.³² While the Cambodian peace process can be analyzed through the prism of democracy assistance, it was first and foremost a multilateral, multilayered enterprise to bring peace to this war-torn nation in Southeast Asia rather than a democracy-centered agenda. Similar to Cambodia, later dispatches of electoral experts by JICA to Indonesia (1999), East Timor (2001), Pakistan (2002), Afghanistan (2004) were all based on the PKO Law that has explicit reference to democratic governance. By then, these activities had all been subsumed under the name of human security.

³⁰Takashi Inoguchi, “Japan’s United Nations Peacekeeping and Other Operations,” *International Journal* 50, no. 2 (Spring 1995): 327.

³¹Shogo Suzuki, “Seeking ‘Legitimate’ Great Power Status in Post-Cold War International Society: China’s and Japan’s Participation in UNPKO,” *International Relations* 22, no. 1 (March 2008): 45-63.

³²Sorpong Peou, *International Democracy Assistance for Peacebuilding: Cambodia and Beyond* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

The Japanization of Human Security (since the late 1990s)

This concept of human security was widely attributed to the 1994 UNDP Human Development Report, which called for a reconceptualization of security from state-centric to individual-focused in order to cope with the new realities and international concerns following the end of the Cold War. In 1995, Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama endorsed the concept in his speech to the General Assembly by a call to “building a human-centered society.”³³ Stating that Japan as a leading donor country had long supported sustainable development and provided assistance for the promotion of democracy and economic reforms, he proclaimed that Japan would work to enhance international peace in such areas as humanitarian assistance, preventive diplomacy, peace-keeping operations, arms control and disarmament, and restrictions on the use of conventional weapons including anti-personnel land-mines. Although Murayama’s Socialist Party soon disintegrated, human security has been upheld by his successors as the centerpiece of Japanese discourse on global governance.³⁴ In 1998, as many Asian nations plunged into a financial crisis, Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi took note of the economic hardship people in Asia were suffering, and listed a multitude of problems—including the exodus of refugees, violations of human rights, infectious diseases like AIDS, terrorism, and anti-personnel land mines, as integral components of human security. The Japanese government subsequently donated 500 million yen (USD 4.2 million) to the United Nations to establish the “Human Security Fund” (later renamed the “Trust Fund for Human Security,” i.e., UNTFHS) to support pertinent projects around the world.

With its inclusion in the Diplomatic Bluebook (Gaikō seisho) in 1999, Human Security was formally pushed to the front and center of

³³“Statement by Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama at the Special Commemorative Meeting on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the U.N.,” http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/announce/archive_3/sp.html (accessed July 14, 2011).

³⁴Since the March 11 earthquake in 2011, the concept was expanded to encompass disaster relief within the domestic Japanese context.

Japanese diplomacy. Making use of the podium as the host of the G-8 summit in 2000, Japan started a coordinated campaign to promote the awareness of human security internationally and abroad. An additional 10 billion yen (about US\$ 100 million) was donated to the Human Security Fund. The same year, in response to U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan's call to advance both "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear," the Japanese government announced the creation of the Commission on Human Security (CHS) co-chaired by former UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata and Nobel Laureate Professor Amartya Sen.

Before the CHS was completed, the September 11 attacks occurred and terrorism took the center stage of international relations and global governance. Japanese rhetoric on human security was slightly toned down,³⁵ but officials quickly moved to incorporate terrorism into human security. In December, in his opening speech at the symposium entitled Human Security and Terrorism – Diversifying Threats under Globalization, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, while noting terrorism as a threat to democracy and freedom, declared that "armed conflicts, poverty and other socio-economic factors create 'hotbeds' for terrorism."³⁶ In this context, it is worthwhile to compare and contrast the outlooks of Koizumi and George H. W. Bush on terrorism. As has been widely documented, September 11 prompted the Bush administration to fervently embrace nation-building, a subject it was harshly critical of before. Enlarging democracy became central to America's global war on terror, as the view that democracy was the cure for terrorism firmly took hold. While "Bush the democracy-advocator" had to coexist with "Bush the realist" who cultivated good relations with "friendly tyrants," in many other regions,³⁷ Koizumi the faithful ally followed American strategic priorities but was

³⁵Bert Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security: The Founding of a New Policy 1995-2003* (Institute for Security and Development, 2008), 131-41.

³⁶"The International Symposium on Human Security Remark by Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, Prime Minister of Japan, Tokyo, December 15, 2001," http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/human_secu/sympo0112_pm.html (accessed July 10, 2011).

³⁷Thomas Carothers, "Promoting Democracy and Fighting Terror," *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 1 (January-February 2003): 84-97.

more convinced that socio-economic elements were the source of terrorism and that human security was the remedy.

In spring 2003, Ogata and Sen presented their findings to Koizumi and Annan in a report entitled *Human Security Now*. The report was much needed for the UNTFHS that had had no available conceptual framework to be based on until then.³⁸ Subsequently the Japanese government and the United Nations jointly created a separate unit for human security in the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which Ogata led for 10 years until 2001. With Ogata, an international civil servant close to the Japanese diplomatic establishment, and Sen, a development economist, it should not come as a surprise that the Commission's final report to a great extent echoed the developmentalist views of the Japanese government. For Japan, the way to attain greater human security is economic development and provision for basic human needs, a perspective summarized by "freedom from want" and close to the idea of human development. The corollary of this approach, therefore, is that the fundamental sources of myriad obstacles to human security are to be found more in the realm of economics and less in the political domain.

In January 2003, Koizumi declared that "ODA will be implemented strategically in human security areas."³⁹ Soon after Japan's ODA Charter was revised to incorporate the "protection" and "empowerment" components of the human security agenda. In substance, though, it hardly constituted a break with the past as poverty alleviation and sustainable growth remained the foremost priorities. In October, the 76-year-old Ogata was appointed president of JICA which, in accordance with the ODA Charter, took human security as one of its basic missions and principles. Joining hands to form a new academic-policy complex, universities and think-tanks followed up by publishing reports on human security in

³⁸"United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security," <http://ochaonline.un.org/TrustFund/tabid/2107/Default.aspx> (accessed July 10, 2011).

³⁹"General Policy Speech by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to the 156th Session of the Diet, January 31, 2003," <http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/pm/koizumi/speech030131.html> (accessed July 17, 2011).

the thousands and launching related academic programs, so much so that it became “a Japanese social science.”⁴⁰

Criticized for its conceptual fuzziness, human security is nonetheless “a handy label for a broad category of research” that serves the purpose of conveying a sense of urgency toward the many issues in global governance and a genuine re-centering of focus in research and policymaking.⁴¹ The Japanese approach to human security is nonetheless at odds in both scope and content with a rival perspective advocated by Canada and its European peers that puts a premium on “freedom from fear.” The latter view has the assumption that “human security can be guaranteed only by states that are liberal democracies, and in which the government and individuals can be held accountable,”⁴² and regards traditional development assistance and the empowerment of the individual as secondary. Instead, it foregrounds the taming of uncontrolled use of force through the imposition of international legal standards for both individuals and states, micro-disarmament, and the use of sanctions for military force when necessary.⁴³ Japan was initially not involved in the Canada-led Human Security Network due to differences of opinion, especially over the violation of national sovereignty and its opposition to the notion of humanitarian intervention and “responsibility to protect” that often entails the use of force. Bilateral venues such as the biennial Canada-Japan Symposium on Peace and Security Cooperation provided a platform for exchanges of ideas, but even as the two approaches to human security appear to be converging, significant differences in its operation remain.⁴⁴

⁴⁰Josuke Ikeda, “Creating the Human Security Discourse and the Role of the Academic-Policy Complex: International Relations as ‘Japanese Social Science’?” *Interdisciplinary Information Sciences* 15, no. 2 (2009): 197-209. The prestigious University of Tokyo, for example, created a Graduate Program on Human Security in 2004.

⁴¹Roland Paris, “Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?” *International Security* 26, no. 2 (Fall 2001): 87-102.

⁴²David Bosold and Sascha Werthes, “Human Security in Practice: Canadian and Japanese Experiences,” *International Politics and Society* 1 (2005): 97.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 98.

⁴⁴Akiko Fukushima, “East versus West? Debate and Convergence on Human Security,” in *Human Security in East Asia: Challenges for Collaborative Action*, ed. Sorpong Peou (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2009), 46-60.

Overall, the Japanese discourse on human security is more technical than political, which makes the rise of the “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity” concept all the more impressive and strident.

The Rise and Fall of the “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity” (2006-2009)

It also so happens that when the Bush administration’s unilateralism alienated many traditional US allies, Koizumi was spurned by Japan’s Asian neighbors—especially China and South Korea—resulting from his repeated visits to the Yasukuni Shrine in spite of their vociferous objections. Under the international spotlight for their revisionist narratives of history that aggravated the Chinese greatly, some Japanese officials reacted by drawing attention to the authoritarian nature of the communist regime in Beijing. Alluding to the phenomenon of what people called “hot economics, cold politics” in Sino-Japanese relations, then-ambassador to the U.S., Ryozi Kato, for instance, claimed that Japan shared only economic interests with China, but it shared “values” with the United States.⁴⁵

In September 2006, Koizumi was succeeded by Shinzo Abe, whose rise is said to be “probably the apex of postwar politics from the assertive conservative right’s point of view.”⁴⁶ Although Abe’s first major foreign venture was to mend fences with Chinese and Korean leaders, he also began to experiment democracy-based foreign policy with his foreign minister, Taro Aso. An outspoken conservative politician, Aso had argued for Japan to be the “Thought Leader of Asia” whereby Japan should pride itself for its democratic polity and economic success. He had also irked

⁴⁵Speech at Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, February 28, 2006, http://www.sais-jhu.edu/pressroom/multimedia/letter_k.html (accessed July 18, 2011).

⁴⁶Kazuhiko Togo, “The Assertive Conservative Right in Japan: Their Formation and Perspective,” *SAIS Review* 30, no. 1 (Winter-Spring 2010): 77-89.

Beijing by publicly calling for a “democratic China,”⁴⁷ a highly unusual move by a serving Japanese foreign minister. In November 2006, Aso formally launched the “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity” concept that was the closest Japanese policy ever to the Bush administration’s “freedom agenda.” In a speech given at the Japan Institute of International Affairs, Aso proposed with great fanfare that beyond strengthening its alliance with the United States and relations with Asian neighbors, Japanese foreign policy should add as a new pillar “value oriented diplomacy.”⁴⁸ A seemingly dramatic departure from Japanese diplomatic traditions, the initiative would use Japanese ODA and training programs to encourage the spread of “universal values” such as democracy, freedom, human rights, the rule of law, and the market economy, to build an “arc” of budding democracies at the outer rim of the Eurasian continent, where a series of “color revolutions” had recently toppled a few authoritarian regimes and scared many others.

During his 22-month term at MOFA, Aso went on a diplomatic blitz through Asia, the Middle East and Latin America to sell the Arc concept. This was widely perceived by many as a poorly crafted way of attacking and containing China, not to mention that the Japanese government also strengthened—under the aegis of the Americans—its security relations with Australia.⁴⁹ To promote the new brainchild of Abe and Aso, in February 2007, MOFA hosted a symposium entitled “New Developments in Japan’s Foreign Policy for the Promotion of Human Rights and Democracy” with attendees from academia and the NGO community within Japan. A

⁴⁷Taro Aso, “Japan Awaits a Democratic China,” *Asian Wall Street Journal*, March 13, 2006.

⁴⁸“Speech by Mr. Taro Aso, Minister for Foreign Affairs on the Occasion of the Japan Institute of International Affairs Seminar “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity: Japan’s Expanding Diplomatic Horizons,” <http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/fm/aso/speech0611.html> (accessed July 19, 2011). The underlying assumption of “value oriented diplomacy” is that Japan’s international relations had so far been value-neutral. This paper rejects this view. Japanese foreign policy has long been infused with rhetoric of peace and development, adding democracy and human rights into the mix only makes it more controversial.

⁴⁹Richard J. Samuels, *Securing Japan: Tokyo’s Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2007), x.

second symposium was held a year later with a keynote speech by the executive head of the U.N. Democracy Fund (UNDEF), an initiative created by Kofi Annan in 2005, to which the Abe government donated USD 10 million in 2007. A seminar on how to apply for UNDEF grants was held for Japanese NGOs. As Japan's foreign policy apparatus had no democracy-enhancing institutions, both symposia were implemented by MOFA's Human Rights Division.⁵⁰

The "Arc" idea was deemed "too extreme" for some MOFA bureaucrats,⁵¹ and was not applauded by the broader Japanese public. Washington, however, certainly welcomed usually value-shy Japan into the democracy promotion business. On his visit to Australia for the APEC summit in September 2007, President Bush proposed the creation of a new Asia-Pacific Democracy Partnership with Japan and Australia to "support democratic values, strengthen democratic institutions and assist those who are working to build and sustain free societies across the Asia-Pacific region."⁵² Then two weeks later Abe's tenure was abruptly over when he unexpectedly announced his resignation. In the ensuing campaign for the presidency of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, thus the post of prime minister, Aso's critics accused him of using the "Arc" initiative to aggrandize himself and unnecessarily provoke Beijing. The eventual winner of the election, Yasuo Fukuda, a political moderate, had no interest in continuing "value diplomacy." The "Arc" concept was therefore unceremoniously expunged from the *Diplomatic Bluebook* (Gaikō seisho) in April 2008.

Aso finally became prime minister in September 2008. Unsurprisingly he worked to resuscitate the Arc policy, but his tenure instead was consumed with saving the Japanese economy from the aftermath of the global financial crisis and reviving the fortunes of the LDP, which ulti-

⁵⁰Interview with MOFA officials, April 2008, Tokyo.

⁵¹Interview with MOFA officials, April 2008, Tokyo.

⁵²Alexandra Kirk, "Bush Launches 'Democracy Partnership'," *The World Today*, September 7, 2007, <http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2007/s2026609.htm> (accessed August 10, 2011).

mately lost to the Democratic Party (DPJ) in the lower house election in September 2009. Calling for a more equal partnership with the United States, the new DPJ government under Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama was far more keen on community building in Asia than ideological affinity with the West, but his cabinet was rocked by a tumultuous relationship with Washington over the Okinawa base relocation issue. Japan did participate in the annual Bali Democracy Forum, an Indonesian initiative attended by all East Asian nations that began in 2008. Hatoyama even co-chaired the second forum in 2009, where—as in the case of the US-initiated Asia-Pacific Development Partnership—his iteration of Japan's efforts to assist democratization related back to projects carried out by the JICA on human resource development, legal education, and election monitoring.⁵³

The Nonliberal Internationalist Japan

Humanistic but Hardly Liberal

The democracy deficit notwithstanding, by concentrating its diplomatic resources in one single basket called “human security,” Japan has not only charted its own course of idealpolitik but has also asserted itself to become a norm entrepreneur. Moreover, the concept well serves two broader security and diplomatic concerns facing Japan: on the one hand, it underscores the country's commitment to multilateral cooperation in a US-dominated unipolar world without weakening the US-Japan alliance as the basis of Japan's national security; on the other hand, branding and defining a still under-appreciated new concept with Japan's developmentalist worldview not only plays to Japan's strengths as a leading donor of economic aid to the developing world, but it is also integrated seamlessly with the multi-faceted efforts to raise Japan's international profile

⁵³“Bali Democracy Forum,” <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/indonesia/bdf/index.html> (accessed September 10, 2011).

as Tokyo has ratcheted up its campaign for a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council. In other words, championing human security provides the perfect rationale to both international and domestic audiences for Japan to transition from the so-called “one-country pacifism” to a “proactive pacifism,” which is now utilized to rationalize an enlarged overseas presence for the Japanese military in the name of safeguarding international peace.⁵⁴

The contrast between Japanese tepidness toward democracy assistance on the one hand and its enthusiastic embrace of peacekeeping, development aid and human security on the other is stark. This unevenness is best described in terms of selective internationalism, and raises meaningful questions about the fundamental motivation behind its self-conscious drive to be a more impactful player in international society. First and foremost, given that Japan’s expanding role in global governance including human security is perennially pivoted around its outsized development assistance program, various democracy-supporting partnerships from the PDD to the Arc and ADP have been overwhelmingly underpinned by a developmentalist logic and carried out by the JICA. While in recent years Japanese ODA has shifted gradually from an almost exclusive focus on infrastructure to many other social aspects of development assistance including social protection, education, rights of women and refugees,⁵⁵ the several programs on good governance touted by the Japanese officials as supporting democratization, electoral assistance and judicial reform are in actuality more aimed at strengthening extant state institutions than expanding the degree of political contestation and participation. Practices with the purpose of accelerating regime change in authoritarian countries, such as aiding civil society and pro-democracy parties, that are common ways of democracy promotion in the West are almost unheard of amongst all Japanese endeavors.

⁵⁴Soeya, “Japanese Security Policy in Transition.”

⁵⁵David Richard Leheny and Kay B. Warren, *Japanese Aid and the Construction of Global Development : Inescapable Solutions* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

A bulky ODA program alone with few strings attached to the political development and human rights conditions of recipient countries is a testament that in the Japanese foreign policy portfolio developmentalism is in abundance whereas liberalism is in short supply. However, economic development and political freedom as objectives are not necessarily at cross purposes with each other. To be sure, while economic development is critical for the betterment of individual freedoms and nurtures a democracy-friendly environment, it is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for democratic change. For do-good states to expand the zone of democracy and economic prosperity, there naturally is a balance to strike in terms of priority and proper means to deliver the desired outcome. Yet the developmental approach that conceptualizes democratic governance as part and parcel of a broad objective of greater social justice and equality, as exemplified by the European powers, does not run counter to the political approach the Americans are fond of, which puts greater emphasis on the “right” political system that ensures basic political and civil rights; they can go hand in hand with each other.⁵⁶ As far as Japan’s own trajectory is concerned, the democratic constitutional structure created under American occupation ensured domestic stability as well as contentious but healthy competition between the left and right, thus paving the way for its economic juggernaut. But as I noted, the Japanese are poignantly keener to export peace and development than democracy.

Since its inception as a euphemistic measure of war reparation to its former victim nations in the name of *keizai kyoryoku* (economic cooperation), Japanese foreign aid was known for being heavily parlayed for investment and trade opportunities instead of externalizing “the values of an electorate,” as domestic liberal voices were usually marginalized in the process.⁵⁷ While democracy was included as a factor for aid allocation in

⁵⁶Thomas Carothers, “Democracy Assistance: Political vs. Developmental?” *Journal of Democracy* 20, no. 1 (January 2009): 5-19.

⁵⁷This does not mean that other donors are not self-serving. But the specificity of interest does differ, as some have perspicuous political and ideological preferences; see, Peter J. Schraeder, Steven W. Hook, and Bruce Taylor, “Clarifying the Foreign Aid Puzzle: A Comparison of American, Japanese, French, and Swedish Aid Flows,” *World Politics* 50, no. 2 (January 1998): 294-323.

the 1992 ODA Charter, primarily as a result of peer pressure from Western allies, the new approach taking in political and social concerns was resisted by the powerful economic bureaucracies and business lobbies.⁵⁸ And to the extent that humanitarianism in Japanese ODA has been on the rise in recent decades,⁵⁹ not only does the “people-centered” recalibration have to compete with domestic consideration of economic returns at a time public support of foreign aid is waning, but the whole concept of human security is as amorphous and as broad, such that the development projects still congregate in conventional areas including infrastructure, disaster relief, public health, and poverty alleviation.

There is no denying that Japanese foreign policy at the aggregate level has become more sensitive to international exigencies and normative expectations. It often takes note of the plight of people living in nondemocratic regimes and was quick to extend economic assistance to countries undergoing political transformation, as in the aftermath of the Arab Spring and the recent top-down opening in Myanmar. The bottom line remains, however, that the Japanese government is yet to elevate in a consistent manner democracy promotion as a national strategy or international priority. A more internationally engaged Japan is more humanistic, but its brand of humanitarianism is not yet on a par with “Liberal Humanitarianism” characterized by “the liberal peace, globalization, and human rights.”⁶⁰ Globally, faced with the insurgency of autocratic great powers whose fortune was revived by a combination of state capitalism and authoritarianism,⁶¹ there were calls for a more institutionalized “league of democracies” that should brace themselves again for intensive ideo-

⁵⁸Steven W. Hook and Guang Zhang, “Japan’s Aid Policy since the Cold War: Rhetoric and Reality,” *Asian Survey* 38, no. 11 (November 1998): 1051-66.

⁵⁹Steve Chan, “Humanitarianism, Mercantilism, or Comprehensive Security? Disbursement Patterns of Japanese Foreign Aid,” *Asian Affairs* 19, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 3-17; Saori N. Katada, “Japan’s Two-Track Aid Approach: The Forces behind Competing Triads,” *Asian Survey* 42, no. 2 (March-April 2002): 320-42.

⁶⁰Michael N. Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2011), 9.

⁶¹Azar Gat, “The Return of Authoritarian Great Powers,” *Foreign Affairs* 86, no. 4 (July-August 2007): 59-69.

logical rivalry; Japan was again deemed a default member of this club⁶² but proponents may be well advised to temper their expectation of an avid democracy promoter in Japan.

Because it toyed with democracy's internationalization before, at least rhetorically, the ephemerality of the Arc of Freedom and Prosperity and the media blitz shows that it was an aberration rather than an objective shared by Japanese political elites. More importantly, this "test run" of Japan's copycat value diplomacy caused so much awkward unease and discomfort domestically and internationally that some feared that Japan's membership in any democracy-only consortium—an idea that received much attention during the 2008 presidential election in the United States—would be a "drag on the system rather than a dynamic contributor" to the overall enterprise.⁶³ The curious paradox is that those very Japanese elites brandishing the democracy flag tend to be right-wing conservatives whose display of illiberalism in whitewashing Japan's own past cannot be more farcical and self-contradictory to their professed democratic values. Japanese political heavyweights, such as Abe and Aso, had repeatedly made outrageous comments making light of Japan's war responsibility and denying the truthfulness of Comfort Women and the Nanjing Massacre. And they are not alone, as similar sentiment is shared across the broad spectrum of Japanese elites whose electoral future may be on the line.⁶⁴ Their apathetic amnesia and objectionable provocations, while casting genuine doubts about Japan's sincerity and commitment to practicing what it preaches internationally, have also deprived Japan of a great deal of credibility as a responsible great power.

⁶²Robert Kagan, "The Case for a League of Democracies," *Financial Times*, May 13, 2008.

⁶³Weston S. Konishi, "Will Japan Be Out of Tune with a Concert of Democracies?" *Asia Pacific Bulletin*, no. 19 (2008), <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/sites/default/files/private/apb019.pdf>.

⁶⁴Yongwook Ryu, "The Yasukuni Controversy: Divergent Perspectives from the Japanese Political Elite," *Asian Survey* 47, no. 5 (September-October 2007): 705-26; Mong Cheung, "Political Survival and the Yasukuni Controversy in Sino-Japanese Relations," *Pacific Review* 23, no. 4 (September 2010): 527-48.

Nationalism in Liberal Disguise

It is fitting to summarize Japan's global outreach in terms of "peace without justice."⁶⁵ Since liberalism is not the propelling force behind this wave of Japanese activism in global governance, what is it then? The answer, I argue, resides in the union between nationalism and realism. To be sure, Japanese nationalism has steered clear of the more repulsive and violent forms that contemporaneous Chinese nationalism took. Yet as shown in the dynamic contestations between two visions of Japan in international society—a conservative internationalist agenda vs. anti-conservative pacifist view emphasizing Japanese cultural uniqueness—neither internationalism nor pacifism is the diametric opposite of nationalism broadly defined, and they each can mesh well with it.⁶⁶ It is the former—state nationalism institutionally represented by the Liberal Democratic Party—that emerged the victor, whose dominance was further cemented by the dissolution of the opposition Socialist Party in the post-cold war era. In great measure thanks to persistent and successful agitations by rightwing firebrands such as Shintaro Ishihara, a popular novelist and politician, today nationalist sentiment in Japan has become a powerful mainstream force across all walks of life, even as there exist varying degrees of intensity.⁶⁷ Other contributing factors include generational change coupled with the fraying of the war stigma as well as a transformed international and regional landscape featuring a rising China and belligerent, hostile North Korea.

Nationalism by definition is a political force intricately linked to a country's self-perceived status in the hierarchical international society.

⁶⁵Brysk, *Global Good Samaritans*.

⁶⁶Shunichi Takekawa, "Forging Nationalism from Pacifism and Internationalism: A Study of Asahi and Yomiuri's New Year's Day Editorials, 1953-2005," *Social Science Japan Journal* 10, no. 1 (April 2007): 59-80.

⁶⁷Hironori Sasada, "Youth and Nationalism in Japan," *SAIS Review* 26, no. 2 (Summer-Fall 2006): 109-22; Eugene A. Matthews, "Japan's New Nationalism," *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 6 (November-December 2003): 74-90; Matthew Penney and Bryce Wakefield, "Right Angles: Examining Accounts of Japanese Neo-nationalism," *Pacific Affairs* 81, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 537-55.

Japanese nationalists long had difficulty coming to terms with the fact that their country's "license to participate in international politics was revoked as a result of the defeat in the Pacific War."⁶⁸ In the 1980s, the conservative prime minister with a long streak of nationalist credentials, Yasuhiro Nakasone, took it upon himself to refashion the role of the Japanese state in international relations in the name of *kokusai kokka* (international state) and *kokusai koken* (international contribution). A passionate critic of the mercantilist Yoshida Doctrine that had served as the bedrock national strategy for decades, Nakasone's grand vision was for Japan to become "a leader of a new phase of human progress" and "replace Western industrial society as the image of Japan's future with new goals that would be of Japan's own making."⁶⁹ He would become the first Japanese prime minister after the war to worship at the Yasukuni Shrine.

The notion of international contribution, it is said, "offers Japanese people a sort of ontological and epistemological basis through which they exist in international society."⁷⁰ With its military tied up by the pacifist constitution and its political clout in the international system dwarfed by its economic power, Japan's ability to "contribute" was limited to writing checks to fund its ODA projects and American adventures worldwide, its thankless 10 billion dollars to the Gulf War (1990-1991) being a prime example. Underscoring this dilemma was the subsequent ferocious debate centered on Japan's future as a *futsu no kuni* (normal country) set off by the moderately conservative politician Ichiro Ozawa. The underlying message, of course, is that Japan was being "abnormal." Normatively, abnormalcy is bound to be remedied, and no other task was more critical than unfreezing the Japanese military in order to "restore to the state the

⁶⁸Masaru Tamamoto, "Japan's Search for a World Role," *World Policy Journal* 7, no. 3 (Summer 1990): 493-520.

⁶⁹Kenneth B. Pyle, "In Pursuit of a Grand Design: Nakasone Betwixt the Past and the Future," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 13, no. 2 (Summer 1987): 254-56.

⁷⁰In-Sung Jang, "How the Japanese Understand International Responsibility and Contribution: Its Historical Nature as Featured in the International System" (working paper, 2005, Program on U.S.-Japan Relations).

license to play an active role in world politics.”⁷¹ Consequently, even as agreement remained illusive among conservatives over some major specifics in the blueprint, the consensus was that constitutional constraints on the military be loosened so that the Self-Defense Forces could participate in peacekeeping missions abroad.⁷²

The revisionist movement was aided by an international normative content that made states’ participation in UN-orchestrated peacekeeping in the post-Cold War world an honorable duty, providing a convenient political opening and a powerful rhetorical discourse for the conservatives to sway public opinion.⁷³ “Ideas do not flow freely,”⁷⁴ because they must percolate through the material structure and relate to state interests and preferences. Crucially, however, while Soviet new thinking on disarmament was derived from interactions within the Western epistemic community that spawned such liberal internationalist notions as “common security,” Japanese conservatives did not have to be enlightened because they had always known what they wanted. They only needed international norms and expectations to make an argument at home. Besides making a due international contribution, other rationales included burden-sharing and strengthening the rapport—depending on the circumstances—with the United Nations (so as to make the case for a seat on the Security Council) or the United States (so as to show the flag as an ally).

After much wrangling over the details, the Japanese Diet approved the Peacekeeping Law (PKO Law) in June 1992 under the condition of five principles including a prior ceasefire and consent by the parties in-

⁷¹Tamamoto, “Japan’s Search for a World Role.”

⁷²Cheol Hee Park, “Conservative Conceptions of Japan as a ‘Normal Country’: Comparing Ozawa, Nakasone, and Ishihara,” in *Japan as a “Normal Country”? A Nation in Search of Its Place in the World*, ed. Yoshihide Soeya, Masayuki Tadokoro, and David A. Welch (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011).

⁷³Bhubhindar Singh, “Peacekeeping in Japanese Security Policy: International-Domestic Contexts Interaction,” *European Journal of International Relations* 17, no. 3 (September 2011): 429-51.

⁷⁴Thomas Risse-Kappen, “Ideas Do Not Flow Freely: Transnational Coalitions, Domestic Structures, and the End of the Cold War,” *International Organization* 48, no. 2 (Spring 1994): 185-214.

volved in the conflict as well as the minimal use of force by Japanese personnel. Cautious as it was as the first step, subsequent peacekeeping missions overseas and Japanese responses to the post-9/11 anti-terror contingencies constituted “a larger process of redefining its security role in the Asia-Pacific.”⁷⁵ From then on, the scope of Japanese PKO participation has been consistently stretched to the point that SDF personnel were dispatched to South Sudan in 2012, where use of weapons may have been unavoidable even while domestic discussions were still ongoing to make it legally acceptable. In comparison, far more remarkable in the Japanese metamorphosis marked by incremental but significant changes, which some aptly depicted as “creeping realism,”⁷⁶ is the elevation of its military strengths in light of its technical sophistication and ability to respond to regional contingencies. Fortifying the US-Japan alliance through collaborations such as ballistic missile defense while “extending the ‘reach’ of Japanese naval and air forces,” Japan is “modifying old taboos,” if not having cast them aside entirely.⁷⁷

Astute scholars have also observed that “leaders who take clear ideological stands on foreign policy have difficulty building a broad enough coalition to govern” in Japan’s political climate that prizes consensus.⁷⁸ Nationalist and realist convictions are stronger and have clearer focus. At times, conservative politicians learned to practice the balance of power and use democratic enhancement as a camouflage, especially regarding a more assertive China. From Washington’s perspective, “building a regional consensus on neoliberal norms” is “an indispensable element in the strategy of encouraging China to itself become a responsible stakeholder”

⁷⁵Go Ito, “Participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations,” in *Japan in International Politics: The Foreign Policies of an Adaptive State*, ed. Thomas U. Berger, Mike M. Mochizuki, and Jitsuo Tsuchiyama (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 2007), 75.

⁷⁶Daniel M. Kliman, *Japan’s Security Strategy in the Post-9/11 World: Embracing a New Realpolitik* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2006).

⁷⁷Michael H. Armacost, “Foreword,” in *ibid.*

⁷⁸Michael J. Green, *Japan’s Reluctant Realism: Foreign Policy Challenges in an Era of Uncertain Power* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 5.

in an ever more important Asia.⁷⁹ Equally anxious about China's rise, Japan was *ipso facto* an American proxy for building a "democratic partnership in Asia"⁸⁰ without being forced to develop a genuine America-style democracy promotion franchise. Against this backdrop, Japan inked a security pact with a third country other than the United States for the first time (Australia), and the Asia-Pacific Democracy Partnership was in some way a value-imbuéd anchor to cement the trilateral relations among them and to facilitate coordination with like-minded countries such as India and New Zealand. Likewise, when Prime Ministers Abe and Hatoyama visited India to encourage trade and investment and deepen political and defense connections, they again trumpeted the democratic ideals they shared with their host.

Either way, the message was intended for Beijing, which the Japanese Defense Ministry described as "assertive" and "overbearing." Hardly is it a coincidence that these same people tend to be pro-US defense hawks wary of the rising presence in the region of China and Russia. They often used the democracy card as a velvet bludgeon to hit and embarrass Beijing and Moscow for purposes other than democracy per se. As insiders have recently confided, the architects of the idea of the Arc of Freedom and Prosperity initially intended to use it to strike a cord with Russian leaders in order to bring them around to the negotiating table on the territorial dispute.⁸¹ Nor did talking up democracy give them qualms in doing business with dictators elsewhere. Critics were therefore quick to point out that "[dressing] up in the value of humanitarianism, democracy and the rule of law" was just part of Japan's "great game" to compete with China and Russia, and beneath the "facade of Japan's talk of spread-

⁷⁹Michael J. Green and Daniel Twining, "Democracy and American Grand Strategy in Asia: The Realist Principles behind an Enduring Idealism," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 30, no. 1 (April 2008): 4.

⁸⁰Daniel Twining, "Democratic Partnership in Asia," *Policy Review*, no. 163 (October-November 2010): 55-70.

⁸¹Tomohiko Taniguchi, "Beyond 'the Arc of Freedom and Prosperity': Debating Universal Values in Japanese Grand Strategy," *Asia Paper Series 2010*, German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2010.

ing democracy,” it was “pragmatic” business as usual.⁸² To put it simply, Japan is no Canada, nor is it a Germany.

Conclusion

To the extent that “liberal internationalism has been an important security option for generations” in Japan,⁸³ it remains an option to be taken seriously and converted into actual policy. While it is hard to deny Japan the “internationalist” label considering its diplomatic activism in recent decades, the indispensable ingredient of liberal internationalism, “the projection of liberal thought and political principles to the international realm,” underpinned by “the assumption that one can apply reason to extend the possibilities for individual and collective self-rule,”⁸⁴ is scantily represented and simply not the intellectual force propelling the Japanese global outreach. This is by no means intended to reject the positive contribution that Japan has made in support of various humanitarian causes, but these do-good activities cannot be explained by a liberal impulse. In fact, some argue, insofar as Japan is a democracy, that such democracy is understood to be “an attribute of the state” rather than “a social contract” based on individual liberties.⁸⁵ Nor were revisionists and conservatives enamored with post-war Japanese democracy in the first place, as they tried to cultivate—with a fair amount of success—“a State-centered nationalism” that takes an obvious stand “as its ideological enemy.” With a statist ontological ethos in common, nationalism and realism instead have formed the intellectual platform that has supplied the impetus for Japan to reinvent itself. It is within this broader historical context that Japan’s

⁸²“Abe Blows Japan’s Trumpet, Cautiously,” *Economist*, May 3, 2007.

⁸³Richard J. Samuels, “Securing Japan: The Current Discourse,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 33, no. 1 (Winter 2007): 126.

⁸⁴John MacMillan, “Liberal Internationalism,” in *International Relations Theory for the 21st Century*, ed. Martin Griffiths (New York: Routledge, 2007), 21-34.

⁸⁵Tamamoto, “Japan’s Search for a World Role,” 501.

post-cold war international project needs to be fully understood and explained.

A final point concerns Japan transforming itself from a norm taker to a norm entrepreneur. By shifting the focus of its ODA “from things to people” while talking it up in all sorts of international arenas, Japan has become the most avid salesman of human security. In spite of its liberal-sounding content, it is not supported by a liberal internationalist Japanese state. After all, one act does not make one a saint. Rather, we ought to have a comprehensive view in order to assess the innate quality of the Japanese state. Most notably, the human security campaign was in sync with a nationalist project to brand itself as “an ‘intellectual leader’ within the United Nations and other relevant institutions.”⁸⁶ In this sense, nationalism, multifarious in its policy manifestations, is not necessarily a bad thing. Too often conflated with realism,⁸⁷ nationalism remains very much understudied even though in foreign policy analysis we frequently reference it on an ad hoc basis. Incorporating it remains a challenge for our study of Japanese foreign policy as much as for IR theory in general, and the way forward is to adopt an agent-centered approach that traces the causal mechanism between motivation and policy outcome.

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⁸⁶Kaoru Kurusu, “Japan as an Active Agent for Global Norms: The Political Dynamism Behind the Acceptance and Promotion of ‘Human Security’,” *Asia-Pacific Review* 18, no. 2 (2011): 115-37.

⁸⁷Yosef Lapid, “Nationalism and Realist Discourse of International Relations,” in *Post-Realism: The Rhetorical Turn in International Relations*, ed. Francis A. Beer and Robert Hariman (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1996).

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