

Japan's Security Policy and the U.S. Rebalance to the Asia Pacific

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Honorable Members of Congress, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. Good evening. Thank you Congressman McDermott for that generous introduction. I am honored to have this opportunity to speak before such a distinguished audience. And I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Dan Bob of Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA as well as to the Congressional Study Group on Japan and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation in Japan for making this event possible.

Yesterday marked the eleventh anniversary of the terrible 9/11 terrorist attacks. Since that dark day, the United States has focused much of its international security attention on fighting terrorism around the globe and prosecuting wars in both Afghanistan and Iraq. This year, with the end of the war in Iraq and the wind-down of the war in Afghanistan, the United States has begun to implement a new security strategy based on rebalancing its attention and resources toward the Asia-Pacific. As that strategy is more fully realized over coming years, coordination with Japan, America's most important and steadfast ally in the region, will become even more important than it is today. The strengthened U.S. commitment to the Asia-Pacific -- even in the face of greater budget austerity -- will contribute greatly to regional security, stability and shared prosperity. It is a development I personally welcome as does my party and my country.

One major factor underlying Japan's support for America's rebalancing effort is that even as the global economic center of gravity shifts to the region, Asia Pacific security dynamics have become increasingly complicated. Tonight I would like to give a few of my own thoughts on the situation in the Asia Pacific and on the future of the U.S.-Japan Alliance.

Let me begin by touching on China. Beijing's defense budget has grown annually by double digits, yielding a 30-fold increase in spending over the past 24 years -- according to public Chinese government sources, which if anything, tend to under-report the size of the country's military. Yet, even as China has constructed formidable armed forces, the country has steadfastly refused to tell the rest of the world what it intends to do with its growing military might.

The expanding range and often antagonistic nature of Chinese naval operations is a particular source of concern throughout the region. Most notably, China's actions in the South China Sea -- rooted in logic and claims inconsistent with established international maritime norms -- present a destabilizing element to the region. Such behavior suggests that China is far less concerned about the ramifications of challenging the current international order or accepted international values underlying that order than it used to be.

Since 2010, China has also sent law enforcement vessels to the area near the Senkaku Islands -- which are inherent territories of Japan -- about once per month. China's actions represent a clear attempt to defy accepted circumstances. Japan has responded in a calm but firm manner in order to prevent escalation, maintain the existing status of the area and protect the stability of the broader region. Yet last month, despite repeated warnings from Japan, activists from Hong Kong illegally landed on the Senkakus. And so, in accordance with domestic law, Japan deported the activists.

Japan's relationship with South Korea has also been tested recently. Like Japan, South Korea is a treaty ally of the United States. South Korea also happens to be an important partner of Japan. We share fundamental values, have important economic ties and both benefit from regional peace and stability. And while we place great value on Japan-ROK relations, President Lee Myung-bak's visit to Takeshima Island, and then his statement about the Japanese emperor, both crossed red lines for the Japanese people. Indeed, those two incidents have had an enormously negative impact on relations between Tokyo and Seoul, and on the Japanese public's views of South Korea. President Lee's highly regrettable actions, moreover, ultimately do not serve South Korea's interests.

For our part, Japan will deal with these issues in a peaceful but firm manner. Regarding Takeshima, we will file a complaint with the International Court of Justice. I strongly believe that it would also be helpful for all concerned if South Korea acknowledged the importance of its relationship with Japan -- and of the shared benefits that

Japan, South Korea as well as the United States will derive from enhanced trilateral cooperation.

While Japan is paying close attention to the U.S. response to the regional developments I have described, we plan to coordinate closely with Washington as it implements its strategic rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific. We also plan to strengthen the Japan-U.S. Alliance, and fulfill Japan's own regional and global role. To achieve these objectives, I believe we should focus on four important areas.

First, while deepening our understanding of U.S. extended deterrence, we should examine the respective roles, missions and capabilities of both Japan and the United States. We should accelerate defense cooperation in a wide range of areas including missile defense, maritime security, space and cyberspace. Japan-U.S. cooperation in cyberspace, a new domain for both countries, is especially important. As we deepen our technical cooperation to enhance cyber security and our operational cooperation in response to cyber-attacks, we should also work together toward establishing international norms and rules in this area.

In addition, we should enhance dynamic bilateral defense cooperation in such areas as joint training, joint surveillance and reconnaissance activity. Shared use of facilities should play a more important role as should shared training facilities in Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands – the latter now under construction through mutual efforts. The enhanced level of joint activities represents an important step toward ever-closer security cooperation.

A second area of focus should encompass the legal norms necessary for the security of the region. For Japan, the primary task is a review of the right of collective self-defense. I am not suggesting, by the way, that Japan should reflexively cooperate with the United States in each and every military operation. Yet, when Washington acts in response to a conflict near Japan, such as one that might possibly occur on the Korean Peninsula, and when such U.S. operations contribute to Japan's critical security interests, Japan should be able to act in cooperation with -- or in support of -- the United States.

If Japan cannot act in such situations due to current constitutional interpretations that run counter to globally-accepted norms regarding the exercise of the right of collective self-defense, Japan will suffer negative consequences -- and so too will the Japan-U.S. Alliance.

I believe that the time has come for Japan to move beyond largely academic debates over collective self-defense that ultimately lead us nowhere in terms of addressing real-world problems. The argument that Japan inherently possesses the right of collective self-defense, but our Constitution does not permit its exercise, or that only some logistical support activities can be deemed an integrated part of the use of force prohibited under the Constitution do not permit us to play the sort of role in promoting peace and stability that we should -- and that the current security environment in the Asia Pacific requires. We must now, at last, engage in more sophisticated and more realistic discussion of cases where the exercise of the right of collective self-defense is self-evident. In my view, many cases exist, including, for example, defending U.S. naval vessels on the high seas and carrying out refueling missions for U.S. forces engaged in areas surrounding Japan.

Already in Japan, there has been some movement toward reviewing the issue of collective self-defense. A report by the Frontier Subcommittee, a panel of experts established by the Japanese government proposed an assessment of the interpretation of the right of collective self-defense. The Democratic Party of Japan, as the ruling party, should seriously engage in a discussion of its view of this issue.

Third, we need to establish a firmer foundation for security and defense cooperation between Japan and the United States. Japan should enhance its information security systems because, until we do so, we cannot expand security and defense cooperation. Toward this end, my party aims to submit a new bill that will result in an enhanced government information security system because ultimately, Japanese lawmakers themselves must take the initiative. We must facilitate discussion on this matter with a view toward establishing new legal requirements to safeguard security information.

Close collaboration in the area of equipment and technology will also provide for stronger security and defense cooperation. Last year when I visited Washington I proposed a revision of Japan's Three Principles on Arms Exports. Shortly thereafter, the Government of Japan reviewed those principles and devised new guidelines for the overseas transfer of defense and other equipment designed to allow more robust joint development and production

projects with the United States. That was a welcome step forward. However, the guidelines have yet to be applied so that actual projects can move ahead.

Fourth, to strengthen confidence in the Japan-U.S Alliance and its layers of security and defense cooperation, we must mitigate the impact of U.S. forces on Okinawa. The Japan-U.S. Alliance will not function without the understanding of the people of Okinawa because that is where 74% of all facilities and areas designated for the exclusive use of U.S. Forces in Japan are concentrated. In the 2+2 Joint Statement of this past April, our governments decided to adjust the realignment plan for U.S. forces to moderate the impact on Okinawa as soon as possible, while at the same time maintaining deterrence. With this adjustment, we can begin to move forward with the realignment of U.S. Forces in Japan based on what is achievable. This will not only lessen the impact on Okinawa but also allow for a more optimal U.S. force posture and enhanced deterrence.

Meanwhile, it is important to understand that Marine Corps Air Station Futenma cannot be used indefinitely. I will continue to make my best efforts at gaining the understanding of the Okinawan people that the only viable solution is to relocate MCAS Futenma to Henoko in accordance with the Japan-U.S. agreement.

At the same time, the United States must resolve the issues associated with the relocation of U.S. Marines from Okinawa to Guam. Discussion in the U.S. Congress over the budget for the relocation to Guam is the key. In order to speed up Guam relocation, it is critical that the funds contributed by Japan are released and that necessary U.S. funds are secured.

Having spent some time this week with some key Members of the Senate and House, it is readily apparent that they understand the significance of the Japan-U.S. Alliance. And so I am confident that Congress will soon take appropriate measures to solidify the foundations of the Alliance, regardless of the outcome in November.

In the context of Okinawa, the deployment of the MV-22 Osprey aircraft constitutes a critical new development. I fully understand that the high-performance Osprey will contribute to the security of Japan and the Asia-Pacific region. But it is also the case that many Japanese feel anxious about the safety of the Osprey, especially after the accidents in Florida and Morocco earlier this year. Given the recent problems, if there were an Osprey accident in Okinawa, there no doubt will be serious damage done to the Japan-U.S. Alliance. Our two governments, therefore, must manage the associated risk as carefully as possible and make efforts to dispel the anxiety of the Japanese public. The Government of Japan needs to explain the significance and safety of the Osprey to the Japanese public, while the U.S. Government must employ each and every measure to ensure the safe operation of this aircraft.

If we can move forward in the four areas I have outlined, we will strengthen the Alliance and enhance security and stability through the region. Ultimately, though, our Alliance must be built on a foundation of trust and ties that go well beyond defense. And so it is critical that we cooperate not only in terms of security but also politically, diplomatically and economically. As members of APEC, both Japan and the United States support that organization's most important goal of building a region-wide free trade area. To achieve that goal, the Trans-Pacific Partnership is one of the most promising platforms, and in my view, Japan should join TPP as soon as possible.

For over fifty years, the Japan-U.S. Alliance built on shared value and mutual interests and nurtured by continuous care, has been the cornerstone of our bilateral relationship. Yesterday, on the anniversary of the 9-11 tragedy, I had the privilege of placing a wreath at the Pentagon memorial in recognition of the terrible losses we suffered that day.

It was a moving moment for me because it brought back memories of that horrific day when so many innocent Americans – as well as innocent people from all around the globe, including 24 of my countrymen from Japan – were senselessly lost in an attack perpetrated by a brutal, benighted band of terrorists.

It was a day that galvanized the world and one that brought the United States and Japan together as partners and allies as never before. I could not help but think also of the terrible events of 3-11 last year, when a natural disaster struck my own country, and how the United States responded and worked so closely with the people of Japan to help alleviate the suffering caused by the earthquake and tsunami and help the contain the dangers posed by the nuclear disaster at Fukushima.

In both instances, tragic in such different ways and posing such different challenges, the U.S.-Japan Alliance demonstrated its critical importance, and the Japan-U.S. relationship proved its vitality and strength. As a member of Japan's Diet, I am committed to further enhancing the Alliance and broadening and deepening our bilateral relations because the Japan-U.S partnership is indispensable not only for the security and stability of our two nations but also to the peace, stability and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

Thank you.