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Koizumi's Japan in Bush's World: After 9/11

by Gavan McCormack

1. The "Trustworthy Ally"

Half a century ago, General Douglas MacArthur, proconsul in the US occupation, was acclaimed as a benevolent liberator even while patronizing the Japanese people, whom he described soon after leaving Japan as "12-year old children." Today, proconsuls from Washington fly regularly in to Tokyo to inspect and instruct, as if Japan were a peripheral dependency, even though its economy now is roughly equal in scale to those of Germany, France and Britain combined. Japan's leadership basks in the glow of such patronage, seemingly satisfied with the role of satrap, for all the world like the one-time leaders of East European satellite states in the Soviet empire.

At the first meeting, in June 2001, between Koizumi and US President George W. Bush, Koizumi could be seen grinning with delight from his seat on the presidential golf cart. In May 2003 he became only the fifth national leader (following Russia, Britain, Australia and Spain) to be honored with an overnight visit to the presidential ranch in Crawford, Texas, and at the 2004 Sea Island G8 summit he is to be seen standing at Bush's right hand. Japanese commentators remark that not since the days of "Ron-Yasu" familiarity between Ronald Reagan and Nakasone Yasuhiro has the relationship between the leaders of the two countries been so close. If one thing seems certain about Koizumi's politics it is that he would never risk offending Bush's Washington by taking a "French" or "German" stance on major issues. Yet neither does he seek or expect to be taken into Washington's councils in the manner of Blair. It may well be that nowhere in the world, including London, does Bush have so faithful a follower.

Although the relationship is close, that does not necessarily mean that Koizumi, or Japan, really wanted to go to war against Iraq or that it supports the US position on Palestine; for Japan under Koizumi North Korea is the key factor. In February 2004, he declared that it was of overwhelming importance for Japan to show that it was a "trustworthy ally," because (as he put it) if ever Japan were to come under attack it would be the US, not the UN or any other country, that would come to its aid.[1]. When he declared support for the US-led war on Iraq in March 2003, and when he sent Japanese forces to aid the occupation in January 2004, it was not Iraq that was in the Japanese sights so much as North Korea.[2]

In 2004, Spain, Honduras, the Dominican Republic and Kazakhstan announced their intention to withdraw from Iraq, South Korea canceled plans to send several thousand troops to the northern city of Kirkuk because of deteriorating security, and Poland's president expressed anger at the US and British deception on which the war was based and suggested an apology was in order. Even in the US and Britain society was turning against the war. In Japan, however, once Japanese troops were sent to occupy a tiny sliver of Iraqi territory support for them rose steadily. Alone of political leaders who supported the war, Koizumi's domestic support remained strong and it seemed he might escape without serious political consequences.

However, Koizumi is a paradoxical, unpredictable, sometimes cantankerous leader, whose political instincts pull him in different directions. While taking steps to lock Japan more firmly into dependence within a US-dominated global order, using hostility for North Korea as the fulcrum, he has also taken significant steps towards resolving that very North Korean issue. For him to accomplish that, or even to move significantly towards it, would be to shake the frame of US hegemony over Japan and by extension in East Asia generally. It is that contradiction that makes Koizumi, otherwise a showy but shallow politician with a proclivity for neo-nationalist gestures such as ritual visits to Yasukuni shrine, interesting. This paper analyses the circumstances surrounding the troop dispatch and the hostage crisis in Iraq and the recent moves between Tokyo and Pyongyang, in the context of the world's most important if least understood, relationship, that between its two greatest economic powers.

2. From "Showing the Flag" to "Boots on the Ground"

The US-Japan relationship is often described, especially on ceremonial occasions, as "second to none" in importance. America has "no closer ally" as George W. Bush put it in his message to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the opening of relations in July 2004.[3] Japan's level of integration with the United States on military and strategic and economic matters is probably greater than that of any other country except possibly Great Britain, and with even less pretence to equality in the relationship. The process of redrawing, and thereby tightening, the US-Japan relationship for the post-Cold War era was carried forward quietly under the Clinton presidency. The security "Guidelines" agreed in 1997 and given legislative effect in 1999 confirmed Japan's positive cooperation in the event of any future regional crisis (with the Korean peninsula especially in mind). After 9/11, however, US demands escalated steadily. Bluntly advised by Richard Armitage, Deputy US Secretary of State, to pull its head out of the sand and make sure the Rising Sun flag was visible in the Afghanistan war,[4] Japan adopted a Terror Special Measures Law and sent a substantial part of its Maritime Self Defense Forces (MSDF), including an Aegis-class destroyer, to the Indian Ocean to aid and refuel the allied forces.

In March 2003, Koizumi promised "unconditional" support for the coming war in Iraq, ignoring the lack of a UN warrant. Since then, he has repeatedly echoed the Washington-London line on weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and to this day (mid-2004) has yet to concede that he was misled and mistaken. Japan has scarcely begun to address the implications of the fact that the war might have been designed primarily to remove a troublesome independent-minded, secular despot who challenged Israeli domination and US plans for the future of the region, including its oil resources.

From early April 2003, once the war proper was over, Koizumi came under heavy pressure to make good his promise of unconditional support by putting Japanese "boots on the ground" in Iraq. Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz is believed to have been the source of the "boots" phrase, but the message was conveyed to Tokyo by multiple routes.[5] Richard Armitage, Deputy secretary of State and a very regular visitor to Tokyo, prefers baseball images and so put it this way: "It is about time that Japan should quit paying to see the game, and get down to the baseball diamond."[6]

At their tête-à-tête in Texas in May, Koizumi gave Bush his "heart to heart" (ishin denshin) promise to send the "boots" required. He also pledged to speed up the review of Missile Defense, a project dear to the hearts of Bush and his associates and likely to affect Japan's regional and global position profoundly in future years. In return, for the first time, Bush declared his own "unconditional" support for the Japanese position on the families of the North Korean abductees -- that North Korea would have to satisfy Japanese

demands before there could be any easing of sanctions. It was, as a senior Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) official admitted, a deal: Japanese forces to Iraq in exchange for US support for Japan's position on North Korean issues.[7] While formal diplomatic statements referred to weapons of mass destruction and, later, the cause of Iraqi democracy, in the Japanese domestic political context the key point was that troops had to be sent to Iraq because the US forces in Japan were essential to defence against North Korea.

Upon return to Japan, however, when Koizumi dithered in the face of domestic opposition, an anonymous Defense Department spokesman put the message bluntly to his Japanese counterpart: "Why don't you shape up?"[8] Japan's special ambassador to the Middle East, Arima Tatsuo, was admonished by Armitage: "Don't try to back off."[9] In due course, the Iraq Special Measures Law was adopted in July, and in December 2003 Koizumi issued orders for units of all three (Air, Sea, and Ground) of Japan's Self-Defense Forces to leave for Iraq. The advance guard, a 600-strong SDF unit flew out in mid-January.

Koizumi railroaded the troop dispatch through against a reluctant parliament and people. When the decision was ratified in the House of Representatives at the end of January, the government relied on a special investigative mission to Iraq that reported that security problems were minimal and the SDF could safely go to Samawah. It later transpired, however, that this report had been drafted by bureaucrats even before the group left Tokyo in mid-September, and that it had been further edited before being submitted to the Diet in January by the deletion of details that might have sounded negative.[10]

Still, the opposition in the parliament and the country was such that the vote had to be postponed till after midnight, when the chamber was boycotted en masse not only by the main opposition party, the Democratic Party of Japan, which protested that the law was unconstitutional, but even by some of the most influential members of the ruling LDP itself, including three of the top figures in the party, the former head of its policy planning committee, Kamei Shizuka and two former Secretaries-General, Kato Koichi and Koga Makoto. None of them accepted Koizumi's justification for the Iraq War. Former posts and telecommunications minister and parliamentary vice-defense minister, Minowa Noboru, on 28 January 2004 launched an action in the Sapporo District Court to have the troop dispatch declared unconstitutional.[11] He too insisted that that the SDF could not constitutionally or legally be sent to Iraq, and that reconstruction and humanitarian aid could only be undertaken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[12] The Japanese ambassador to Lebanon, Amaki Naoto, wrote to the Prime Minister protesting that the troop dispatch would breach both the Japanese constitution and international law; for his pains he was summoned to Tokyo and peremptorily sacked.[13]

When David Kay, the former senior investigator in the search for Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, concluded it was "highly unlikely" that there were any such weapons, Koizumi, unshaken, told the Diet (25 November 2003): "I believe President Bush is right and he is a good man."[14] A Foreign Ministry official, evidently accustomed to faithfully following the US line, remarked of the Kay Report: "It is like being betrayed and bitten by a pet dog you trusted."[15] In the world of the high diplomacy of the US-Japan relationship, the intervention of truth and independence of mind was tantamount to the ravings of a mad dog.

When he justified the dispatch by referring to Japan's reliance on the Middle East for 90 per cent of its oil supply and to Japan's responsibility to "international society" and Iraq's need for humanitarian assistance, Koizumi was redefining "international society" and placing a peculiarly narrow construction on "humanitarian assistance." Until 2002, "international society" for Japan meant primarily the UN. In relation to Iraq, however, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan had criticized the US preemptive strike as a "fundamental challenge" to UN principles, the Security Council refused to endorse it, and despite intensive lobbying Japan was one of less than forty of the General Assembly's 191 countries that offered support of any kind to the invasion and occupation. As for humanitarian assistance for Iraq, the need was indisputable, but the insistence that the appropriate way for Japan to meet it was by sending its army (Self-Defense Forces), was open to serious question, both because of Japan's constitutional strictures on anything to do with armed force and because of doubts over the appropriateness of sending a body of armed men to contribute to the national reconstruction of Iraq.

Japan in Iraq

Till its participation in the British-American force in Iraq, Japan had enjoyed respect throughout the Middle East as a non-Western power, neutral on the question of Israel and Palestine, and constitutionally opposed to the use of force to resolve international disputes. By joining the US-led coalition of the willing it squandered that resource, implicitly inviting the hostile attention of the enemies of the US throughout the region.

Koizumi defended the dispatch by saying that the intervention would be confined to humanitarian and reconstruction work, not using any force, and exclusively in "non-combat" areas. "I am sending the SDF," he said, "because there is no security problem ... The security situation in Samawah is completely safe and there is no risk."[16] His claim was questionable in point of fact, given that 10,000 or more Iraqi civilians and hundreds of US soldiers had been killed since hostilities were formally declared at an end in May 2003. For the US authorities under whom the SDF served, all of Iraq was a combat zone, and for Deputy Defense Secretary Wolfowitz, even in March 2004 the war was "not over yet."[17] In April 2004, at the time of the hostage crisis, Koizumi himself conceded that the situation was so dangerous that Japan should not entertain any other presence in Iraq than that of a well-armed military unit. As for Koizumi's argument that Samawah was a non-combat zone in the sense that there were no hostilities being conducted by "states or quasi-state organizations," this was simply a Japanese casuistry, worthy to rank with the lies and manipulations practiced in the US and elsewhere to justify the war.

Local Iraqi residents seemed generally welcoming of the Japanese troops, believing at least that Japanese occupation was preferable to American. However, while hoping the Japanese soldiers would bring in their train jobs, clean water, electricity, better medical facilities and better roads, they may well have suspected that such things were only likely to be delivered under an independent, national Iraqi plan for reconstruction. Japanese forces were playing a subordinate role in an occupation that had no plan to create such a body. The SDF was to function in a tiny area (roughly one per cent) of the country, with a numerically insignificant force (550 soldiers), two thirds of whom were devoted to security or administration. The troops were housed in "one of the most formidable military camps planet earth has ever seen," an isolated fortress, secure behind its own moat and barricades, that was also a luxury compound with its own karaoke bar, massage parlor and gymnasium.[18] They would supply 80 tons of fresh water daily to 16,000 people, and give assistance to local schools and hospitals. These highly localized and limited benefits would come at enormous cost, approximately 40 billion yen ($360 million) to mid-2004. The facilities themselves were of course enormously expensive, and the troops were being paid a "danger money" fee of 30,000 yen ($275) per day. By contrast, the French NGO Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) was providing services in gas, water, health and sanitation (including 550 tons of fresh water daily), to 100,000 people in Al-Muthanna Province for a cost of just over half a million dollars (approximately 60 million yen) per year. Where the NGO operation was low cost, low profile and high impact, the money going mostly on rental for tankers and virtually all the labor being provided by local Iraqis, the SDF operation was high cost, high profile and low impact.[19] It was certainly not a model that could be expanded or reproduced anywhere else but one in which political purpose trumped economic sense or humanitarianism.

From April, the SDF men were often confined to base, protected by a combination of Dutch forces, American mercenaries and local troops, their humanitarian mission drastically curtailed. It was possible to glimpse something of a behind-the-scenes bureaucratic struggle over these issues within the Japanese government when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that it would take over

the funding of the French NGO operation, i.e. it would provide about 7 times as much water for Iraq as the SDF had at a fraction the cost.

In June, when an Iraqi provisional administration was installed in accordance with UNSC 1546, Koizumi was unstinting in his praise for the US, describing the new resolution as "a victory for America's righteous cause." He was also quick to promise that the Japanese troop commitment would continue under the Multinational Force. He made the pledge, however, not to the new government but directly to President Bush, without consulting either his own or the new Iraqi government or the parliament in Tokyo. Strictly speaking participation in any multinational force was constitutionally forbidden, so Koizumi stressed that it was subject to four conditions, which, he said, had been accepted by US and British authorities (all that counted, he implied): non-use of force, confinement to non-combat areas, adherence to constitutional limits, and operation under Japanese command.[20] The words "unified command," clear in both the resolution itself and Secretary Colin Powell's accompanying letter to the Security Council, were rendered not by the precise Japanese equivalent but by a vague, unfamiliar and equivocal term, meaning something rather different, a joint command headquarters.[21]

Where official Japan supported war and occupation, NGOs and much of Japan's civil society opposed it and tried to address humanitarian concerns in a completely different way. As the 500-odd soldiers in their seemingly impregnable, five-star encampment maintained their supply of water to Samawah but otherwise remained mostly invisible, three young Japanese were taken hostage in April 2004, one a volunteer returning to Baghdad to resume work with abandoned street children, another a student investigating and publicizing the health effects of depleted uranium, and the third a journalist committed to photographing and making known to the world the struggle and sufferings of the Iraqi people. Held for a week, 7th to 15th April, they were in due course released through the good offices of the Islamic Clerics Association, and a second group, two journalists seized on 14th April, was released three days later.[22] These representatives of Japanese civil society, and their families, even before their release, became victims of a government and media campaign to legitimize the official SDF mission and to discredit them as reckless and irresponsible. Their detention may even have been prolonged by Koizumi's use of the term "terrorists" to describe their captors, or Foreign Minister Kawaguchi's television message (broadcast on Al Jazeera) which called for the release of the abductees but argued that they, and the SDF, were engaged in the same, humanitarian mission. Japan's official stance, and its civil society's stance, contrasted sharply. The families and support movement of the abducted desperately insisted on that difference even as the government sought to blur it in order to try to legitimize the SDF operation.

During the detention crisis, government and major media groups treated families and support groups coldly and with suspicion. Prime Minister Koizumi refused to meet them. As the national media, taking its cue from government ministers and spokespersons, took up the cry of "irresponsibility," "recklessness," and causing Japan trouble and expense, the telephones, faxes and home pages of the abductee families were filled with abusive and intimidating messages. Responsibility for their plight was shifted onto the victims, and attention directed away from the nature of the occupation that official Japan supported. By the time the first group of three abductees returned to Japan, the barrage of hostile criticism compounded, if it did not actually cause them to fall into, a state of shock, so that they arrived home apologetic, exhausted, humiliated, distraught, and, apart from mumbled words of apology, silent.

Although the idealistic NGO volunteers and journalists were pilloried, it was they who were striving to put into practice the principles of the constitution, specifically its rejection of the role of armed force in resolving international disputes, while Koizumi as Prime Minister was actively subverting it. NGO spokespersons since these incidents report their security diminished, and Japan's moral standing as a country of peace squandered, by the dispatch of the Japanese army (as Iraqis saw the SDF).[23]

Constitution, Common Sense, and International Contribution

Japan shares with Costa Rica an unusual constitutional commitment to pacifism. Its Article 9 renounces the threat or use of force as an instrument of settling international disputes and forbids the possession of "land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential." The ink had scarcely dried on this document, however, before the US government regretted it and began to press for it to be rescinded so that Japanese troops could be deployed in "free world" causes.[24] From its foundation in 1955, the ruling LDP committed itself to the American goal of deletion of this troublesome clause. Unable during the Cold War to muster sufficient political or popular support, it adopted a convoluted, extra-constitutional position: that Article 9 could not have been intended to cancel the country's inherent right of self-defense and therefore the Self-Defense Forces (SDF), established in 1954, were legitimate regardless of what the constitution said, as the minimum necessary force "to protect the peace and independence of Japan against direct or indirect threat."[25] The SDF therefore exists without constitutional warrant, on the basis of this higher principle, something akin to natural law. On this ground, and on this ground alone, the Japanese public slowly accepted the compatibility of the SDF with the constitution.

During the Cold War, even the most reactionary of Prime Ministers agreed it would be "absolutely impossible" for the SDF ever to function outside Japan.[26] In 1992, however, a Peace Keeping Organization Law was adopted, followed by a series of laws to justify SDF peacekeeping missions to post-conflict Cambodia, Mozambique, the Golan Heights, and East Timor. Although confined to road-building or the construction and running of hospitals and refugee camps, nevertheless these missions involved a steady widening and loosening of the official interpretation of Article 9 in the sense that a force whose only justification was the defense of Japan against direct or indirect threat was committed, however innocuously, to various global theatres. Following the September 11 attacks in the US, Japan sent a flotilla of 24 naval ships to the Indian Ocean, which in due course provided about one half of the fuel needs of the allied war force in the Afghanistan War. In 2004, however, when the SDF marched off with substantial armed force to a virtual war zone, it was entering uncharted constitutional waters. In taking this major step, the Japanese government was not only flouting its own hitherto-held interpretation of its constitution but also lacked legal justification (a Security Council resolution) or moral pretext (WMD). Koizumi's desire to prove "trustworthiness" outweighed constitution, law, and morality.

In insisting that the SDF must be sent to Iraq, Koizumi addressed the constitutional problem by offering a new and unique interpretation of the preamble's pledge to "occupy an honored place in an international society striving for the preservation of peace," suggesting that this vague sentiment should take precedence over the specific clauses in the body of the text. It was an interpretation that left constitutional scholars aghast.[27] On the other hand he also argued that, in any case, the matter was not important, since constitutional difficulties were so much "theological quibble".[28] What really mattered was "common sense", something which he, as Prime Minister, was uniquely qualified to offer. Koizumi's position is that "In the common sense terms of the people, the SDF is surely 'military force' ... if we talk in terms of principles rather than of pretence ... the fact is that the constitution itself is out of step with international common sense."[29] As he put it on another occasion, "The SDF is an army. ... It should be called the [Japanese] National Army [Nihon kokugun]."[30] When his own visit to Yasukuni Shrine was held by a Fukuoka District court in April 2004 to be unconstitutional, Koizumi simply shrugged it off, saying he found it inexplicable (and implying he would pay no attention).[31] With his brusque appeal to common sense, Koizumi dismisses a half-century of constitutional debate and rides roughshod over the basic principle of the rule of law, yet in Washington, Canberra, and London, that is seen as realism and evidence of positive engagement with the region and the world. This casual manipulation of the constitution by the Prime Minister of the world's No 2 economic power has occasioned scarcely a murmur in Washington and London.

The history of post-1947 Japanese constitutionalism is replete with examples of governments taking initiatives in the teeth of

hostile public opinion and the judgments of constitutional experts, creating and justifying the possession of armed force on an exclusively self-defense basis and then steadily expanding its role, winning over opposition simply through fait accompli, with each new step eroding the constitutional principle of Article Nine.[32] None, however, had been so swift and far-reaching as the transformation that occurred in Japan in 2003-4.

In Iraq, for the first time in 60 years Japan committed itself, albeit in a subordinate and non-combat role, to an illegal and aggressive war. The restraints that had blocked the SDF, first from existence, then from any role outside Japan, then from any role in hostilities outside Japan, were one-by-one swept aside, till only the finest of lines separated it from participation in hostilities. Preying on deep-seated fear of and hostility toward North Korea, Koizumi went far toward accomplishing what previous conservative leaders had only dreamed of doing: setting aside 40 years of constitutional principle and transforming the SDF into a de facto regular army.[33]

Koizumi's skill in managing public opinion was remarkable. The decision to send the SDF to Iraq was taken in the teeth of strong popular opposition, running in early to mid-2003 at 70 to 80 per cent, but by early 2004 he had successfully turned that around, so that a small but absolute majority was in favor.[34] Constitutional qualms seem to have been overcome by a flood of patriotic sentiment. Koizumi described the SDF men and women as the "pride of their families, the pride of Japan and the pride of the Japanese people," and the media cooperated enthusiastically in portraying the hometown boys (and some girls) in boots as heroes, lavishing attention on their every move: training in Hokkaido's snow for the Iraq desert, performing rituals of regimental colors, farewelling their tearful families and crowds of flag-waving supporters. Colonel Bansho Koichiro, the SDF commander, became a media favorite for his rough, homespun sincerity and was to be seen day after day giving friendly speeches in halting Arabic, discussing how to revive the local hospital, or presenting gift sheep to a local community. Koizumi's gamble, it seemed, had paid off, at least in the short run.

3. Billions

Since the end of the Cold War Japan has contributed a staggering sum in subsidies for the military activities of the US global empire. As the US economy strains under the burden of chronic deficits, military and empire-related spending, and huge tax cuts, and as other nations that bore substantial portions of the costs of the 1991 Gulf War decline to support the present wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Japanese aid grows in importance. Washington needs billions as well as boots.

In less than three years since September 11, Japan paid around $30 billion (3.3 trillion yen) in "support" costs for the US bases in Japan, including, in 2003 alone, almost $6 billion (638 billion yen) for the bases that most Okinawan people would dearly love to be rid of.[35] It was also paying huge sums as part of its so-called" "rear-support" for the anti-terror coalition, including meeting the oil needs of allied ships in the Persian Gulf.[36] In addition, the Japanese government subsidy for the 39,691 US troops stationed in Japan amounts to around $150,000 per head every year.[37] On top of that ongoing commitment it has also promised to build for the US Marines a brand-new base in waters of northern Okinawa likely to cost at least an additional one trillion yen ($9 billion). Washington has no other ally in this league of open-pocket generosity.

Asked for additional aid for rebuilding Iraq, and told that "billions" was the appropriate unit for consideration,[38] Koizumi promised $5 billion, far in excess of any contribution other than that of the US itself and about three times the sum levied from the whole of Europe.[39] Under further pressure from Washington the Japanese government agreed to forego recovery of a large part of the debt owed it by the government of Iraq.[40] Japan is by far the largest creditor, owed just over $4 billion.[41]

Both Washington and Tokyo insist that such generosity is spontaneous. There is certainly little evidence of any popular support for it, but it is fair to say that it is tolerated in grudging recognition that such "taxes" are the price of trustworthiness and the guarantee of US military backing in the event of a showdown with North Korea. On the US side, however, the denial by a "Senior White House official" that the US president would ever think of Japan as "just some ATM machine" was so bizarre as to suggest that perhaps that might be precisely how he saw it.[42]

The same Japanese cooperativeness is evident in interventions in currency markets and in the scramble to oblige Washington by agreeing to the purchase of the Missile Defense system. During 2003 the Bank of Japan poured 20 trillion yen (ca $180 billion) into the markets to try to prevent the dollar sliding or the yen appreciating.[43] In 2004, the process accelerated, with an infusion of half that sum just in the first two months of the year, the Bank of Japan was struggling mightily against an ebb-tide of weakening demand for U.S. Treasuries, bonds and stocks to keep the dollar up and the yen down.[44] The "benefit" in this is twofold: satisfying Washington's need to sustain a huge inflow of funds to offset its deficits (and maintain consumer demand) on the one hand, and keeping Japan's manufactured exports competitive on the other. Early in 2004 the IMF noted that, with its foreign debt levels heading towards 40 per cent of GDP, the US deficit was "a significant risk" for the world,[45] but nowhere was confidence in it higher, and readiness to support it stronger, than in Tokyo.

Japan is both the world's greatest debtor and the holder of about half of its foreign currency reserves. Those holdings, some $673 billion worth and held overwhelmingly in US dollars, multiplied seven times in the decade from 1993.[46] However, over the three years to 2004 roughly $70 billion (almost 8 trillion yen) was written off their yen value, and the eventual losses are likely to be much greater because they could not be liquidated without triggering a dollar collapse and few expect that the long-term trend for the dollar is anywhere but down. Other countries, notably China, have begun to balance their dollar holdings with Euros, but Japan shows no such inclination.

So far as missile defense is concerned, the "mature" alliance relationship requires of Japan that, apart from getting its boots on the ground and its billions into circulation in Washington, it should also install a "missile defense shield." The initial estimates called for 500 billion yen ($4.5 billion) over five years but within a matter of months that had almost doubled.[47] The Rand Corporation in 2001 estimated that a basic system, capable of intercepting "only a few North Korean missiles," would cost approximately $20 billion, and a full coverage system more than the national defense budget.[48] The Asahi recently put a price tag of around 2 trillion yen ($18.5 billion) on such a system.[49] It is bound anyway to be fabulously expensive, to integrate Japan ever more firmly under Pentagon control, to stir China's distrust, and possibly provoke a regional missile race. Whether it would work is unknown. The record of the PAC-2 missile system, now replaced by PAC-3, during the Gulf War in 1991 was not encouraging: the Pentagon initially claimed a success rate of 96 per cent for 198 missiles fired, but when challenged revised it down to 9 per cent.[50] The best scientific and military opinion seems to be that the present system is unproven, i.e. it might or might not work,[51] but even if it works the protection would be confined to places within 15 kilometers radius of the PAC-3 batteries. The capital and major (US) base complexes might be protected, but much of Japan would not be.[52]

Koizumi's Crawford ranch commitments -- the boots, the billions, and the Patriots -- was a high price to pay for his ride on the presidential golf cart and his en suite room at the presidential ranch.

The "global economic revival" is precariously poised atop towering twin peaks of Japanese and American debt. The seriously ill Japanese economy takes every possible step to prop up the equally ailing US economy, pouring Japanese savings into the black hole of American illiquidity in order to subsidize the US global empire under construction, fund the debt, and finance the over-

consumption.[53] The debt in the two countries is of similar size, approximately $7 to $8 trillion by most estimates (720 trillion yen for Japan, according to OECD, but estimated to be around one quadrillion yen, $9 trillion plus, if the debts of government instrumentalities are included).[54] The lower figure still amounts to around 150 per cent of GDP, highest in the OECD, if not in modern history.[55]

Even Japan's gross national debt owes much to the peculiarities of the relationship with the US. During the trade and exchange disputes of the 1980s, the US insisted that Japan prime its pump and expand domestic demand. This set off a fantastic boondoggle in debt-funded public works whose full details are only slowly coming to light. Early in 2004 it was revealed that the Ministry of Public Health and Welfare's welfare enterprise, "Greenpia," had invested public pension funds so recklessly, especially since the 1980s, in a proliferation of public and concert halls, sports and recreation facilities, etc, that losses were estimated at around 3 trillion yen ($27 billion).[56] A full-scale crisis erupted as the national Diet struggled simultaneously to cover up the scale of the disaster, reassure those with pension entitlements, and adjust to the prodigious losses of public wealth by adoption of a new Pension Law that would increase contributions and reduce benefits. Several key political figures, including the leader of the opposition, resigned when forced to admit that they had neglected to pay their premiums. Koizumi initially insisted that he had acted with perfect propriety, but in due course conceded that he too had not bothered paying the (compulsory) premiums for nearly three years. He dismissed it, however, as a trivial matter that happened a long time ago (around 1970). When pressed to explain his delinquency, while for nearly three years on the payroll of a company for which he did no work, he replied with the words of a popular song: "there are many different ways of living," adding "there are also many different kinds of companies, and different kinds of employees."[57] Responsibility for this disaster can scarcely be laid directly at the American door, but it was nevertheless the desperate attempts to prime the Japanese pump, taken at US insistence, that fed the corrupt, collusive public works system. Koizumi inherited the system and by his policies helped it cover up its criminality and shift the losses onto the public. He added substantially to Japan's debt mountain but his "reform" agenda offered no clue as to how he would ever reduce it.

Some commentators think that the worst of Japan's stagnant, post-bubble era might now be over, that the decline was temporary and is about to yield to a blaze of new growth, industrial refinement, and prosperity, buoyed in part by China's boom.[58] They point to the continuing, undimmed gloss and vibrancy of Japan's cities, the capacity to produce high-quality goods and to establish global trends in consumption, fashion and culture. Yet the country's bubble-era excess liquidity has long evaporated. Bad debt, chronic unemployment (and under-employment), bankruptcies, the virtual or actual nationalization of major banks,[59] social despair in the country's peripheries, gloom and anxiety for the future, especially for the public welfare and pension systems, even among the supposedly comfortably employed middle class, persist.[60] The 2004 Budget projects tax revenues of just under 42 trillion yen and expenditure of 82 trillion yen: in other words nearly 45 per cent is dependent on bonds, or borrowing.[61] The prospect is one of falling population, spending cuts and tax increases. Education, welfare and overseas aid costs are being shaved, small and medium-sized business cut loose to fend with "market forces."

While demonstrating "faithfulness" to Washington, Koizumi's policies amount to plundering the savings of past generations and the patrimony of unborn ones in the vain pursuit of growth at all cost, raising a Mt Fuji of debt over the land.[62] Elected in 2000 as a radical reformer prepared if necessary to destroy his party in order to revitalize the country, Koizumi in the event revitalized party rather than country. Some well-informed analysts accuse him of leading the country to destruction.[63]

4. Becoming a "Great Britain"

Even as the Bush regime faced declining support domestically and increasing isolation internationally,[64] Japan sent its armed forces to support US operations in an explosive part of the world in whose historic disputes it hitherto had no role and where it had no enemies. It was also paying generously to subsidize the US military presence in East Asia, to fund the wars and occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, and to support the dollar. These were merely installments, however, on the sort of comprehensive reorganization of the Japanese state that the restructured US-Japan relationship calls for. Japan is expected to revise its constitution, to expand its defense horizon in order to support "coalition" operations as a fully-fledged NATO-style partner, and to become the "Britain of the Far East."[65]

There was no question that Japan in the early 21st century possessed substantial military force. Its military expenditure was second only to the United States, its army bigger than either the British or French, its navy the 5th largest in the world (after the US, Russia, China and the UK), and its air force twelfth largest in the world and larger than Israel's. Its continual equipment upgrading, and its steady projection over more than a decade onto the international stage in UN operations, were such that it was plainly capable of playing a major regional or global military role if it so chose. Washington was now saying: it is time to make that choice.

The Japanese people are slow to grasp the way that the character of the US-Japan relationship has been transformed since the end of the Cold War and particularly since 9/11. Although the relationship is conventionally represented as one of Japan "benefiting" from shelter under a US umbrella, the US no longer just "protects" Japan (by which is meant maintaining a chain of bases centered on Okinawa through which American power is projected throughout Asia) but it insists that Japan must "continue to rely on US protection," and that any attempt to substitute for that reliance an entente with China (or, more broadly, any Asia in which the centrality of the US was not recognized) would "deal a fatal blow to U.S. political and military influence in East Asia."[66] The thought that Japan might one day become the "Japan of the Far East" rather than the "Britain of the Far East," is a nightmare comparable in the eyes of the Bush administration, if not worse than, 9/11.

American demands became steadily more importunate as the post 9/11 world order evolved. While the US would withdraw some of its regional East Asian-based forces (or send them directly to Iraq), the overall deployment pattern was being changed so that they could henceforth be deployed more readily not just in the "Far East" as prescribed in the Joint Security Treaty (Article 6) but throughout the "arc of instability" from Korea to Africa. Some command units, including the US Army's 1 Corps HQ, were designated for relocation from the US mainland to camps in Japan. Already de facto the Japan-based US forces were being deployed directly to the Indian Ocean and Iraq, but the Bush administration's demand meant that the Joint Security Law would have to be revised to give formal, legal recognition to the transformed character of the alliance. This would be the biggest revision of the entire post-war US-Japan security arrangements, and Koizumi was clearly reluctant to promote to the Japanese electorate what amounted to the active, comprehensive, and subordinate cooperation in the establishment of US Asian and global hegemony. Through 2004, the Japanese government procrastinated, to growing US irritation.[67] The crash of a US military helicopter onto a university building in Okinawa on 13 August also highlighted the fact that, eight years after the US-Japan agreement on return of the Futenma (Marine Corps) base facilities "within "five to seven years," the Japanese government had only just begun the survey of the designated relocation site. It would be up to a decade before any airport could be built and the base transferred to this coral reef site in northern Okinawa, and Okinawan opinion was, if anything, hardening against the idea.

Official Japan, and most of the media, concentrates its attention on Japan's role in the post-9/11 world around the Self Defense Force commitment, but is reluctant to address the question of Japanese responsibility for what happens in the totality of the system it thereby supports. As the first anniversary of the Iraq war passed in spring 2004, the American-led occupation of Iraq was increasingly mired in violence, its legitimacy in tatters. Casualties mounted, especially in the massacre of hundreds of civilians, many of them women and children, in Fallujah. Muslim holy places were attacked, the abuse and torture of prisoners became an international scandal, and as opposition began to coalesce into a national resistance, the unwieldy international coalition

unraveled. By the time the US Administrator, Paul Bremer, stepped aside on 28 June, leaving his hand-picked Iraqi provisional government comprised of favored American exiles with no indigenous base in place, the US-led occupation was unraveling in a series of scandals and atrocities. The unconditional alliance relationship meant commitment to a system responsible for torture and assassination, and for indiscriminate attacks on civilian and religious targets, especially as US tactics and strategy become gradually "Israeli-ized,"[68]and to preemptive war. The Japanese government has no comment on the US-led assault on Fallujah, but when the Israeli government assassinated the Palestinian Hamas leader Abdelaziz Rantissi on 18 April 2004, and the United States showed its understanding, even the Japanese Foreign Minister expressed polite dismay. Japan's own SDF must change in character too to belong to the same system. If the US has its way, Japan must learn to defy the collective will of humanity for the abolition of nuclear weapons because it is required to accept the maintenance of a nuclear weapon-based strategy of global hegemony and extension of that strategy to space. Collective security comes to mean for Japan, as for Britain, Japanese troops fighting shoulder-to shoulder with Americans and British in future Afghanistans and Iraqs in the service of American designs. It also implies the priority to the requirements of collective security over those of international law and institutions.

Watching the Koizumi administration apparently scrambling to comply with the various demands in 2003, Deputy Secretary Armitage remarked that the US government was "thrilled" that Japan was not "sitting in the stands any more" but had come out as "a player on the playing field."[69] While still pressing Japan to undertake outright constitutional revision, he suggested that, as a minimalist alternative it might be enough for the Cabinet Legislative Bureau to adopt a "flexible" interpretation of the existing words, i.e. revise it without going to the trouble of formal revision.[70] The situation was fluid, however, and the implications for Japan so immense that, less than a year later, he was profoundly pessimistic, seeing the dialogue over the US force restructuring as going nowhere and the relationship as resembling a train-wreck.[71]

If Japan were indeed to become what Armitage describes as a "player," there can be no mistake as to who would be the captain and coach of its team and no doubting the deadly seriousness of the game. The head of the LDP's Policy Research Council, Kyuma Fumio, asked in February 2003 about Japan's position as war with Iraq loomed, said, "I think it [Japan] has no choice. After all, it is like an American state."[72] In similar vein, the grand old man of the LDP, Gotoda Masaharu, in September 2004 referred to Japan as a "vassal state" of the US.[73] Koizumi may slowly be coming to understand that his own term "trustworthy ally" has similar import. The price of his commitments rises steadily. Armitage made clear in another context, talking to an Australian audience, that what he means by "alliance" is a relationship in which: "Australian sons and daughters ... would be willing to die to help defend the United States. That's what an alliance means."[74] Armitage, or for that matter Koizumi, has yet to spell out that "bottom line" for Japan.

5. North Korea: An Axis of Change?

With the Iraqi sector of the "Axis of Evil" disposed of, in a fashion, in 2003, the focus shifted to North Korea. Although Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction. North Korea, by most accounts including its own, either had or was in the process of gaining them. How to deal with it became a crucial, perhaps the crucial aspect of Japanese foreign policy and the US-Japan relationship.

North Korea exercises a powerful hold over the Japanese imagination. An astonishing 600 books about it have been published in the past decade, the overwhelming majority of them hostile. One comic-book account of Kim Jong Il as violent, bloodthirsty and depraved, published in August 2003, sold half a million copies in its first few months, probably more than all the other books in all languages ever written about North Korea. The peculiar wave of Japanese fear and hatred for North Korea not only underpinned the decisions on Iraq but also played, and continues to play, a large role in the transformation of Japan's security thinking in general. Without North Korea, it would most likely have been impossible to pass the raft of 13 bills aimed at preparing Japan for the contingency of war that was adopted in 2003-4. Such comprehensive "contingency" legislation had been on the wish list of conservative governments throughout the Cold War but was always blocked by socialist and communist opposition. Now it was able to pass, with little debate and the support of around 80 per cent of Diet members. Some of the new laws were explicitly designed with North Korea in mind: authorizing interdiction of suspect shipping or the blocking of foreign exchange transactions or exclusion of ships of a designated country from entering Japanese ports. Others spelled out special emergency powers, enabling the Prime Minister to impose a virtual martial law regime and compel compliance by local authorities and citizens if he deemed it necessary.[75] Japan was alone among industrial democracies in devoting this meticulous attention to the preparation for war. North Korea is very much on the Japanese mind.

Koizumi both benefits from and plays his part in feeding the national paranoia. His controversial Yasukuni visits and ambiguous statements about Japan's militaristic past confirm his nationalism, while his devotion to George Bush shows a reassuring (to Washington) alliance-orientation. However, this same Koizumi has also adopted the cause of normalization of relations with North Korea as his major political commitment, alone of world political leaders visiting Kim Jong Il twice, on his own initiative and with at best the reluctant consent of Washington. He could do this with impunity because his fidelity to Washington seemed beyond doubt and because (from January 2004) the boots of the Japanese troops were firmly planted on the ground in Iraq and multi-billion dollar Japanese financial support was propping up the Bush world. Yet on this issue Koizumi was plainly flying his own kite.

Alone among Western leaders, he has visited North Korean leader Kim Jong Il twice (2002 and 2004), after their second meeting declaring Kim mild-mannered and cheerful," "very smart," and "quick to make jokes"[76] -- in other words someone to do business with. Koizumi's pledge to restore trust between Japan and North Korea, so that "abnormal relations can be normalized, hostile relations turned to friendly relations, and confrontation to cooperation,"[77] and to strive to normalize relations within his remaining two years of office, if possible within a single year,[78] contrasted sharply with the view of George W. Bush, who has declared that he "loathes" Kim and finds him "evil," or of Vice-President Cheney, who says that "you do not negotiate with evil, you defeat it."[79] In his talks with Kim Jong Il Koizumi seems to have ignored the official US position of CVID (complete, verifiable, irreversible disarmament), indeed, afterwards he sounded rather like Kim Jong Il's messenger, pressing the Dear Leader's suit for direct talks with the US president. With Japan's voice added to the Chinese, Russian and South Korean calls for a realistic policy to try to solve the North Korean question, the US had no choice but to abandon its hard line stance and for the first time present elements of a "roadmap" for settlement. The alternative was unthinkable: the US either sitting in a minority of one at the six-sided Beijing table or launching an attack. Koizumi's absolute fidelity on Iraq and other fronts earned him the freedom of maneuver on North Korea.

At root, Japan faces the same unresolved identity crisis that has persisted throughout its modern history. Turning away from Asia in the late 19th century it has subsequently contemplated return only as quintessential and superior, imperial Asian in the first half of the 20th century or as the US-protected, ambiguous, "Western" state of its second half (and beyond). So long as it preserves its psychological distance from its continental and insular neighbors, Koizumi's Japan sees no option but to cling to the American embrace, and that embrace in turn tightens, further blocking it from reconciliation and cooperation with Asia. It is the attitude described by no less a figure than Sakakibara Eisuke, once known as "Mr. Yen" for his power over global currency markets, as "depraved ideological conservatism," under which Japan follows the US at all times and under any circumstances.[80] So long as Japan's "North Korea problem" remains unresolved, its dependence on the US will continue.

Put differently, however, this means that if the North Korean problem were resolved (and Koizumi is determined to resolve it), then relations between Japan and North Korea, and almost certainly likewise between North and South Korea, would be normalized. In other words, if peace broke out in East Asia the US military base presence in South Korea and Japan would be difficult to sustain.

With military tensions drained from the region, the comprehensive incorporation of Japan within the US's global hegemonic project would become difficult to justify. Japan could then turn its attention towards its Asian neighbors, and shift its policy priority from being a trustworthy ally for the US to attending to its own multiple problems and becoming a trustworthy member of a future Asian commonwealth. Koizumi may not formulate the options in quite this manner, but as a conservative Japanese politician, with a traditionalist heart, an eye to history and a desire to leave his mark on it, who could be surprised that he also hears and is swayed by the siren song of Asia?

Till now, Koizumi's nationalism has been more pose than substance. Faithful to Washington on almost all issues (with the important exception of North Korea), he has to disguise himself with strong Japanese national accents and posture: the more he serves foreign purposes, the more important it is that he seem and sound nationalist. Controversial gestures such as his visits to Yasukuni Shrine to pay his respects to the country's war dead -- most recently on New Year's Day 2004 -- are probably best seen, not as a sign of a reviving nationalism but as an empty gesture to compensate for an abandoned one; the affirmation at abstract and purely symbolic level of what has been repudiated in substance.[81] Political and military subordination (to the US) require the rhetoric and symbolism of nation.[82] The nationalist pose disguises a form of neo-nationalism, sometimes described, therefore, as "comprador" or "parasite" or "dependent." However, resolution of the North Korean issue would transform this equation.

Of course there are many obstacles to be overcome before Japan-North Korean relations can be normalized. Yet Koizumi's personal encounters with Kim Jong Il seem to have persuaded him that they can work together and overcome them.

6. Asianism vs. Americanism

The Japanese convention of serving the empire loyally and unquestioningly has been sanctified by a half-century of evolution as an affluent imperial dependency. In the 20th century, the benefits were large and the costs acceptable. However, the blueprints for the 21st century call for a new level of subjugation. On Iraq, Japan toes the line, but on North Korea, and on the fundamental reorganization of the joint security treaty, it wavers. In the "Pyongyang Declaration" of September 2002, for the first time since the ignominious collapse of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere in 1945, Japanese and North Korean leaders joined in announcing shared commitment to the building of a "North-East Asia" of peace and cooperation.[83] Koizumi may be perfectly sincere in his protestations of commitment to Washington on Iraq, but he is no less sincere in dreaming the traditionalist Asian dream of Japanese conservatism. How long he, or whoever might succeed him as Prime Minister, can contain the contradiction, pursuing simultaneously Asianism and Americanism, remains to be seen.

In September 2004 Prime Minister Koizumi, addressing the United Nations in New York, called for Japan to be given a seat as a permanent member of the Security Council. It was a curious spectacle. Before the same select representatives of the international community, Secretary General Kofi Annan had just declared "illegal" the US-led invasion of Iraq that Japan had supported. Weeks before that, US Secretary of State Colin Powell had declared that there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, negating the justification for the war and occupation on which Koizumi had long insisted. The crisis in the institution as the Secretary-General appealed for a return to the rule of law was plain. A US "vassal state," or an additional US vote in the Council, seemed unlikely to poiont towards resolving it. Japan as an independent, constitutional peace state might have played such a role, but Koizumi had spent his time as Prime Minister doing his best to negate any such identity. Under mounting pressure, however, facing the US demands for a transformed global security partnership, Koizumi's commitment was looking increasingly equivocal. A Security Council seated Japan might be even less amenable to US direction. Bush's response was therefore lukewarm.[84]

In the first half of the 20th century seven million Japanese soldiers marched off to distant battlefields, with shouts of "Banzai" ringing in their ears. Not one of them was ever sent, officially, on a mission of "aggression." Like Colonel Bansho, their task was always honorable: to resist the aggression of others (the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5), to fulfill duties to allies (the Boxer China war of 1900 and World War One), to help the people of a neighbor country (the Russian people against the Bolshevik revolution, 1918-1925), to defend Japanese lives and property against bandits, terrorists and warlords and help construct an order of justice, peace and prosperity (in China and later Southeast Asia from 1927 to 1945). Only long after the event did history render a different, much harsher judgment, one that many thoughtful Japanese, though not the ruling party, have come to accept in essentials. Many Japanese scholars today gloomily suspect that the same will be true of the Koizumi dispatch to Iraq.[85] One influential thinker describes the US operations in Iraq as an aggressive war comparable to Japan's invasion of China that started in 1931. Both, he argued, were characterized by defiance of international society and the belief that military superiority would be decisive. In his view, Iraq was America's Manchukuo, a base from which to try to transform the Middle East as Japan had once thought to transform the whole of China, and just as likely to mark the beginnings of imperial decline.[86]

However Japan addresses the dilemmas of regional and global policy, its foreign and security posture has already shifted greatly around the issue of North Korea. The constitution has steadily been emptied of content, the constraints of Article 9's pacifism dismissed, and the country pushed in the direction of becoming a great power, possessing and using force just like other great powers, albeit as what Gotoda calls a US "vassal state." Paradoxically, when Koizumi reorganized his cabinet in September 2004 he insisted the key problem the country would faced during his (probable) remaining two years of office was not the war in Iraq, the transformation of the alliance with the US, relations with North Korea, the growing Japanese fiscal crisis, global poverty, environmental degradation and climate change; instead, it was the task of privatizing the Japanese Post Office.

Notes

1. "'Kokuren wa sukutte kurenei' shusho ga domei jushi riyu shimesu," Asahi shimbun, 28 January 2004.

2. Gavan McCormack, Target North Korea, New York, Nation Books, 2004, chapter 6.

3. "Bush lauds strength of Japan-U.S. alliance," Japan Times, 4 July 2004.

4. Armitage to Japanese ambassador in Washington, Yanai Shunji, on 15 September, and ("head in sand") to Asahi shimbun on 5 October. ("Nihon no zenmen kanyo o motome, jirai tekkyo mo kitai Bei kokumu fukuchokan," Asahi shimbun, 6 October, and in Toshiaki Miura, "All or nothing, says U.S," Asahi shimbun, 9 October 2001.

5. "Iraq to jieitai, tokuso hoan wa tou," part 1, "Bei tsuiju to dokujisei no aida de," Asahi shimbun, 25 June 2003.

6. "New era in defense policy wins praise from U.S," Yomiuri shimbun, 11 June 2003.

7. "'Kokuren yori Bei' no meian," Asahi shimbun, 19 March 2004.

8. "US demands Japan send troops to Iraq early," Kyodo, 15 September 2003.

9. "Jiki, chiiki de niten santen, taibei kyoryoku o yusen -- rikujo jieitai no Iraq haken," Asahi shimbun, 9 October 2003.

10. Okamoto Susumu, "Donna kokkai ga haken o shonin shita ka," Sekai, April 2004, pp. 20-24, at p. 23.

11. Ex-posts minister sues over SDF dispatch to Iraq," JapanTimes,30 January 2004.

12. Minowa Noboru, "Koizumi-kun, jieitai ho o benkyo shinasai," Shukan kinyobi, 13 February 2004, p. 15.

13. Amaki Naoto, "Jieitai Iraq haken wa torikeshi no tsukanai ayamari da," Sekai, February 2004, pp. 60-65.

14. Quoted in Amaki, p. 64.

15. Reiji Yoshida, "Fukuda refuses to budge on WMD," Japan Times, 30 January 2004.

16. Quoted in Okamoto, p. 24.

17. "Online," PBS, 18 March 2004

18. J. Sean Curtin, "Japan's 'Fortress of Solitude' in Iraq -- plus karaoke," Asia Times, 19 February 2004.

19. Nao Shimoyachi, "SDF vs. NGO -- an Iraqi tale of cost effectiveness," Japan Times, 16 May 2004.

20. NHK television, 17 June 2004.

21. The UN term toitsu sareta shiki was rendered as togo sareta shireibu. "Kokusai koken ga yugande iru," editorial, Asahi shimbun, 18 June 2004.

22. On 28 May, however, two other Japanese journalists were attacked and killed in their car just south of Baghdad.

23. Kumaoka Michiya (of JOVC), "Hahei hantai messeji," Shukan kinyobi, 16 April 2004, p. 16.

24. For details: Glenn D. Hook and Gavan McCormack, Japan's Contested Constitution, London, Routledge, 2001.

25. Article 3 of the Self-Defense Law, 1954.

26. Kishi Nobusuke, Prime Minister 1957-1960, addressing the lower house of the national Diet on 30 September 1958. (Hayano Toru, "Kishi shusho mo idai na hato-ha datta!?" Asahi shimbun, 14 January 2004.)

27. "Critics slam Koizumi's take on constitution," Japan Times, 13 December 2003.

28. Quoted by Maeda Tetsuo, Maeda et al, "Tohoku Ajia no anzen hosho to kempo 9-jo," Sekai, October 2003, pp. 44-64, at p. 46.

29. Koizumi speaking on 23 October 2001, quoted in Amaki Naoto, "Jieitai hitei wa higenjitsuteki gomakashi wa genkai da," Ronza, February 2004, pp. 28-33, at p. 31.

30. Quoted in Asahi shimbun, 22 February 2004.

31. Quoted in "Horokobiru Koizumi seiji," Asahi shimbun, 17 July 2004.

32. Glenn D. Hook and Gavan McCormack, Japan's Contested Constitution, London and New York, Routledge, 2001.

33. "Shusho, TV bangumi de 'jieitai o kokugun to aratameta ho ga ii'," Yomiuri shimbun, 2 November 2003.

34. Asahi polls reported opposition falling to 55 per cent in December, 48 per cent in January when the SDF was dispatched, and 41 (vs 42 in favor) in March. Yomiuri found 53 per cent in favor of dispatch by January, and 58 by February. Mainichi found a low of 16 per cent pro-dispatch rising to a high of 50 per cent by March 2004. (Asahi shimbun, 23 February and 21 March, 2004; Yomiuri shimbun, 27 February 2004; Mainichi shimbun, 8 March 2004).

35. See table at Maeda Hisao, "2004 nendo boei yosanan o kiru," Gunshuku mondai shiryo, April 2004, pp. 40-47, at p. 47.

36. Terashima Jitsuro, "21 seiki Nihon ginko no kosoryoku Iraq senso o koete," Ronso, January 2004, pp. 20-27, at p. 24 puts the figure of 10 trillion (ca $90 billion) on Japan's post September 11 "rear support". However, the source of the figure is not clear.

37. Maeda, p. 47.

38. "Bei -- Iraq shiensaku ni shai," Asahi shimbun, 18 October 2003.

39. Berkofsky (op. cit.) refers to a recent World Bank estimate that Japan might end up paying up to 30 billion US dollars by 2010.

40. "Japan considers waiving half of Iraq's $7 billion debt," Kyodo, 5 March 2004.

41. "Iraku saimu, susumanu sakugen," Asahi shimbun, 11 June 2004.

42. Takao Hishinuma and Eiji Hirose, "US official says Japan 'not just some ATM'," Daily Yomiuri Online, 10 October 2003.

43. "Kawase shijo, doru-yasu tsuzuku mitoshi, nebukai 'futago no akaji'," Asahi shimbun, 31 December 2003.

44. "Kawase kainyu 3 cho 3420 oku en -- 2 gatsu," Asahi shimbun, 28 February 2004.

45. Matt Wade, "Global fears as US goes into the red," Sydney Morning Herald, 9 January 2004.

46. Fukuda Kunio, "Busshu no senso to keizai hatan," Gunshuku mondai shiryo, April 2004, pp. 22-27, at p. 27.

47. Handa Shigeru, "Misairu boei tonyu giman o abaku," Gendai, March 2004, pp. 70-79, at pp. 73, 77.

48. Michael Swaine, Rachel Swanger, Takashi Kawakami Japan and Ballistic Missile Defense, Rand Corporation, 2001, p. 67.

49. "Misairu boei e Nihon kasoku," Asahi shimbun, 18 September 2003 and "North Korean missile threat spurs missile defense action," Asahi shimbun, 20-21 December 2003.

50. Handa, p. 74.

51. Leo Sartori, "Bush's Missile Defense System: Does it Pass Muster?" Washington, Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, 3 December 2003.

52. Handa, p. 75.

53. Philip S. Golub, "US the world's deepest debtor," Le Monde Diplomatique, October 2003.

54. Asahi shimbun, 12 February 2004. Also Takashi Kitazume, "Diagnosing what really ails Japan, Germany," The Japan Times, 12 March 2004.

55. US national debt as of beginning of 2004: $7.58 trillion, or ca Y804 trillion (Fukuda, p. 26). Japanese central and local government debt as of beginning 2004: 719 trillion yen ($6.76 trillion at the same day's exchange rate). "Kokusai hakko, kako saidai ni," Asahi shimbun, evening, 20 December 2003.

56. Asahi shimbun, 29 February 2004.

57. Hayano Toru, "Koizumi kassai no toki wa sugita," Ronza, August 2004, pp. 24-29 at pp. 28-9.

58. See, for example, The Economist cover story for 14-20 February 2004: "At last, Japan is flying again."

59. The Long-Term Credit Bank, sold off to a foreign "vulture fund" in 2000, was then reborn as Shinsei Bank. It swallowed 8 trillion yen (ca $70 billion) of public funds in the process, half of it irrecoverably, and its reincarnated form was beyond the reach of Japanese tax authorities. ("Gaishi mokesaseta seifu," Asahi shimbun, 3 March 2004.) The Resona Bank was rescued by an infusion of two trillion yen in May and the Ashikaga banking group was nationalized at the end of November 2003.

60. Yanagida Kunio, "'Koizumi izen' to Koizumi igo'," Bungei Shunju, November 2003, pp. 94-107.

61. "Kokusai hakko, kako saidai ni," Asahi shimbun, (evening), 20 December 2003.

62. See my The Emptiness of Japanese Affluence, New York, ME Sharpe, 2nd revised edition, 2001, and "The End of Japan's Construction State?" New Left Review, 13, January-February 2002, pp. 1-19.

63. Konya Fumiko, "Buchikowashita no wa Nihon keizai da," Sekai, November 2003, pp. 85-91.

64. This point is well made by Abdel Bari Atwan, editor of the London-based Arab newspaper, al Quds, in an interview published in the Asahi shimbun, "Chuto seisaku, bei wa tenkan seyo," 18 March 2004.

65. Recommendation 3 of the Rand report of June 2001 reads, "Support efforts in Japan to revise its constitution, to expand its horizon beyond territorial defense, and to acquire capabilities for supporting coalition operations." (Zalmay Khalizad et al, "The United States and Asia: Toward a New U.S. Strategy and Force Posture," June 2001.The "Britain of the Far East" is from the "Armitage Report" of October 2000: Institute for National Strategic Studies, "The United States and Japan: Advancing toward a Mature Partnership," Washington, National Defense University, 11 October 2000.

66. Zalmay Khalilzad et al, p. 15.

67. "Political pulse: Govt missing boat on U.S. bases," Daily Yomiuri Online, 18 September 2004.

68. On "Israelization" of US combat doctrine, and the instruction of US armed forces in Gaza and West Bank techniques of urban suppression: Mike Davis, "The Pentagon as global slumlord," Tom Dispatch, 19 April 2004.

69. Yoichi Nishimura, "Armitage expects 'generous' Japanese assistance to rebuild Iraq," Asahi shimbun, 26 September 2003.

70. "'US will assist SDF in Iraq,' Armitage pledge to Ishiba," Japan Times, 3 February 2004.

71. Funabashi Yoichi, "Beigun seihen -- Nihon no 'domeiryoku' takameru koki," Asahi shimbun, 23 September 2004.

72. Asahi shimbun, 19 February 2003. Kyuma was appointed General Council Chairman of the LDP in the September 2004 cabinet reshuffle.

73. The word used was "zokkoku." Interview, Asahi shimbun, 21 September 2004.

74. Hamish McDonald, "Howard's blank cheque for Washington may come with a hefty surcharge," Sydney Morning Herald, 18 September 2001.

75. For a comprehensive list of the legislation: Richard Tanter "With eyes wide shut: Japan, Heisei Militarization and the Bush Doctrine," Peter Van Ness and Mel Gurtov eds, Confronting the Bush Doctrine: Critical Views From the Asia-Pacific, London, Routledge, forthcoming December 2004.

76. "Kin soshoki wa atama no tenkai hayai hito," Asahi shimbun, 28 May 2004.

77. On his departure for Pyongyang, 22 May 2004, NHK TV.

78. "Nicho no kokko seijoka, shusho 'ichinen inai ni'," Asahi shimbun, 3 July 2004.

79. Cheney in December 2003, quoted in Jim Lobe, "Realism takes root in Washington," Asia Times, 26 June 2004.

80. Sakakibara Eisuke, "Japanese nationalism: Conservatives have derailed," Japan Times, 2 May 2004.

81. For recent discussion on the theme of reviving nationalism: Eugene Matthews, "Japan's New Nationalism," Foreign Affairs,

November-December 2003, and Steven C. Clemons, "Nationalism -- Old News or New Worry?" Daily Yomiuri, 9 December 2003. For my recent assessment, Gavan McCormack, "New Tunes for an Old Song: Nationalism and Identity in Post-Cold War Japan', in Roy Starrs, ed, Nations Under Siege: Globalization and Nationalism in Asia, New York, Palgrave, 2002, pp. 137-167.

82. See Gavan McCormack, "'Introduction" to Second Revised edition, The Emptiness of Japanese Affluence, New York, ME Sharpe, 2001. Also Ishida Hidenari, Ukai Satoshi, Komori Yoichi, Takahashi Tetsuya, "21 seiki no manifesuto -- datsu 'parasaito nashonarizumu'," Sekai, August 2000, pp. 189-208.

83. Wada Haruki, Tohoku Ajia kyodo no ie, Heibonsha, 2003, p. 166.

84. "Nichibei shuno no 'gensoku kakunin' dake," Asahi shimbun, 23 September 2004.

85. See, for example, the analyses by the military affairs specialist Maeda Tetsuo, "Kyusoku ni rinsen josei totonoeru jieitai," Sekai, April 2004, pp. 20-24, at p. 24, and Kang Sangjung, in Kang Sangjung and Kato Shuichi, "Rekishi no bunkiten ni tatte," Ronza, April 2004, pp. 10-23, at p. 11.

86. Kang Sangjung, op. cit., p. 11.

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