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JAPANESE ENERGY SECURITY AND CHANGING GLOBAL ENERGY MARKETS:
*AN ANALYSIS OF NORTHEAST ASIAN ENERGY COOPERATION AND JAPAN'S EVOLVING
LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE REGION*

THE U.S.-JAPAN ALLIANCE: ODD, UNEASY, LIKELY TO LAST

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THE U.S.-JAPAN RELATIONSHIP: UNHAPPY BUT ENDURING

THE LAST TWENTY YEARS HAVE BEEN A PERIOD OF IMMENSE, IF LARGELY UNACKNOWLEDGED, INTELLECTUAL EMBARRASSMENT FOR THE AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY COMMUNITY. MOST PROMINENTLY, OF COURSE, CAME THE NEAR-UNIVERSAL FAILURE BY EXPERTS, INSIDE AND OUTSIDE GOVERNMENT, TO FORESEE THE SPEED AND SCOPE OF THE SOVIET EMPIRE'S COLLAPSE. PERHAPS LESS EGREGIOUS – IF ONLY IN COMPARISON TO MISSING THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT GEOPOLITICAL EVENT SINCE WORLD WAR II – WAS THE BELIEF, ASTONISHING IN RETROSPECT, BUT COMMON IN INTELLECTUAL CIRCLES DURING THE 1980S, THAT JAPAN WAS RAPIDLY EMERGING AS AN ECONOMIC AND EVEN STRATEGIC RIVAL OF THE UNITED STATES. JAPAN'S ROBUST ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE, PARTICULARLY IN ITS EXPORT SECTOR, WAS SEEN AS SIGNALING NOT JUST TOKYO'S RISE BUT WASHINGTON'S DECLINE; NOTHING LESS THAN AMERICAN GLOBAL LEADERSHIP WAS AT STAKE.¹ THIS CONCERN WAS NOT, IT SHOULD BE NOTED, LIMITED TO THE AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY ELITE. A SERIES OF HIGH-PROFILE JAPANESE INVESTMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES, MOST NOTABLY THE PURCHASE OF ROCKEFELLER CENTER, LED TO A POPULAR UNEASE THAT, UNSURPRISINGLY, FOUND POLITICAL EXPRESSION IN ANTI-JAPANESE SENTIMENTS.

WHAT A DIFFERENCE FIFTEEN YEARS HAVE MADE. AFTER A FULL DECADE OF RECESSION, TOKYO IS VERY MUCH THE “WEAK MAN” AMONG THE MAJOR INDUSTRIAL ECONOMIES. THE JAPANESE ECONOMIC MODEL, SO ADMIRERD IN THE 1980S, HAS BECOME A BYWORD FOR RIGIDITY AND STAGNATION, AN OBJECT OF NEAR-CONTEMPT EVEN FOR THOSE MOST SYMPATHETIC TO JAPAN. IF AMERICAN ANALYSTS WORRY ABOUT THE JAPANESE ECONOMY IT IS NOT BECAUSE IT IS TOO STRONG, BUT TOO WEAK. DURING THE EAST ASIAN FINANCIAL CRISIS OF 1997-9, FOR INSTANCE, THERE WAS A GENERAL SENSE IN WASHINGTON AND OTHER MAJOR CAPITALS THAT TOKYO WAS EITHER UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO SUSTAIN THE ECONOMIC GROWTH NECESSARY TO HELP PULL ITS NEIGHBORS OUT OF RECESSION. GIVEN THE EXTRAORDINARY HEALTH OF OUR OWN ECONOMY, A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF CONDESCENSION BEGAN TO TINGE AMERICAN VIEWS OF JAPAN. THE TABLES, IN SHORT, HAD BEEN TURNED.

YET, DESPITE THIS *VOLTE FACE*, THE U.S.-JAPAN RELATIONSHIP ABIDES. AND, IF THIS ESSAY HAS ANY SINGLE THESIS, IT IS THAT THE RELATIONSHIP WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO.

THE ALLIANCE BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND TOKYO IS TRULY REMARKABLE. IT IS, BY ANY REASONABLE STANDARD, ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCES OF THE LAST

50 YEARS. THE BITTEREST OF ENEMIES IN WORLD WAR II, THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN HAVE MANAGED, OVER THE COURSE OF HALF A CENTURY, TO CREATE AND SUSTAIN A LEVEL OF ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE AND DIPLOMATIC COOPERATION THAT HAS PROVEN TO BE OF REMARKABLE DEPTH AND DURABILITY. BOTH COUNTRIES CONTINUE TO SEE THEIR ALLIANCE AS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT BULWARK OF SECURITY AND PROSPERITY IN THE PACIFIC – A PERCEPTION, IT MUST BE ADDED, SHARED BY MANY OTHERS IN THE REGION. DESPITE PREDICTIONS TO THE CONTRARY, THERE ARE FEW SIGNS THAT THE RELATIONSHIP IS WEAKENING IN ANY SUBSTANTIAL WAY. INDEED, WITH THE 1996 CLINTON-HASHIMOTO SECURITY DECLARATION, THE TWO COUNTRIES COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO A LEVEL OF MILITARY COOPERATION THAT, THOUGH FALLING WELL SHORT OF THAT ENJOYED BY THE UNITED STATES AND ITS NATO ALLIES FOR DECADES, IS UNPRECEDENTED IN THE U.S.-JAPANESE RELATIONSHIP.²

THE DECLARATION NOT ONLY MARKED A HISTORIC MILESTONE IN U.S.-JAPANESE RELATIONS; IT ALSO REPRESENTED AN IMPORTANT PIECE OF EVIDENCE IN AN ONGOING INTELLECTUAL DEBATE ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE POST-COLD WAR INTERNATIONAL ORDER. WITH THE DEMISE OF THE SOVIET UNION, MANY OBSERVERS, PARTICULARLY OF THE “REALIST” SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, HAD PREDICTED A WEAKENING OF THE AMERICAN ALLIANCES WITH WESTERN EUROPE AND JAPAN. IN THE CASE OF JAPAN, ONE MUCH-COMMENTED UPON WORK ACTUALLY SUGGESTED THE POSSIBILITY OF MILITARY CONFLICT BETWEEN TOKYO AND WASHINGTON.³ A DECADE INTO THE POST-COLD WAR ERA, SUCH PROPHECIES HAVE PROVEN TO BE AT VERY BEST PATENTLY PREMATURE AND AT WORSE EMBARRASSINGLY INACCURATE, NOT LEAST WHEN IT COMES TO THE U.S.-JAPANESE RELATIONSHIP.

YET STRONG AS THE TOKYO-WASHINGTON RELATIONSHIP MAY BE, IT IS ALSO PROBLEMATIC. THE CONTRAST WITH THE U.S.-EUROPEAN RELATIONSHIP IS INFORMATIVE. DURING THE COLD WAR ERA AND, INDEED, SINCE, THERE HAS BEEN NO SHORTAGE OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND ITS EUROPEAN ALLIES ON MATTERS RANGING FROM TRADE DISPUTES TO STRATEGIC DOCTRINE – DIFFERENCES OFTEN AS ACUTE AND SOMETIMES SHARPER THAN THOSE THAT HAVE, ON OCCASION, DIVIDED WASHINGTON AND TOKYO. THE NATO ALLIES, NO LESS THAN THE JAPANESE, HAVE FREQUENTLY BRIDLED AT TREATMENT BY THE UNITED STATES

¹ SEE PRESTOWITZ FOR A REPRESENTATIVE AND HIGHLY INFLUENTIAL EXPRESSION OF THIS THESIS.

² SEE S. SMITH AND GIARRA AND NAGASHIMA FOR A DETAILED DISCUSSION OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE U.S.-JAPAN MILITARY RELATIONSHIP.

³ THE PROVOCATIVELY TITLED *THE COMING WAR WITH JAPAN* BY FREIDMAN AND LEBARD.

THAT THEY PERCEIVE – SOMETIMES RIGHTLY, IN ALL HONESTY – TO BE MORE APPROPRIATE FOR AN IMPERIAL VASSAL THAN A TREATY ALLY. YET THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE U.S.-EUROPEAN RELATIONSHIP IS AT SOME LEVEL A MORE COMFORTABLE ONE, MARKED BY A LEVEL OF OPENNESS AND UNDERSTANDING THAT, THOUGH FAR FROM PERFECT, IS OFTEN MISSING IN THE U.S.-JAPANESE RELATIONS.

THIS WAS REVEALED, AND SHARPLY, DURING THE GULF CRISIS, WHEN EXTREME JAPANESE HESITATION OVER THE TYPE AND SCOPE OF ITS INVOLVEMENT – IN THE END, ESSENTIALLY A LARGE CASH SUBSIDY – LED TO MUCH IRRITATION AMONG AMERICAN POLICY-MAKERS AND PUBLIC ALIKE. EVEN GERMANY, WHOSE FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION WAS SMALLER THAN JAPAN’S AND WHOSE MILITARY INVOLVEMENT WAS TOKEN, WAS INCLUDED IN THE ROUND OF POST-WAR DIPLOMATIC FUNCTIONS CELEBRATING THE VICTORY OVER SADDAM HUSSEIN; JAPAN WAS POINTEDLY EXCLUDED.⁴

IT IS ADMITTEDLY DANGEROUS TO ASCRIBE PERSONALITY TRAITS TO STATES; IT IS MORE DANGEROUS STILL TO CAST RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STATES IN HUMAN TERMS. BUT IN THE CASE OF THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN, THE TEMPTATION IS ALMOST IRRESISTIBLE. THERE IS SOMETHING UNMISTAKABLY *NEUROTIC* ABOUT THAT RELATIONSHIP – A STRANGE MIX OF DEPENDENCY AND RESENTMENT, INTIMACY AND ESTRANGEMENT. FOR DECADES, UNITED STATES POLICY-MAKERS HAVE SOLEMNLY DECLARED THE CENTRALITY OF THE TOKYO-WASHINGTON RELATIONSHIP TO AMERICAN NATIONAL INTERESTS. AND, FOR DECADES – FROM DOUGLAS MACARTHUR’S COMPARISON OF JAPAN TO A 12 YEAR-OLD BOY, TO THE NIXON “SHOKKUS” AND CLINTON’S DECISION NOT TO STOP IN TOKYO BEFORE OR AFTER HIS STATE VISIT TO CHINA IN 1998 – SENIOR AMERICAN OFFICIALS HAVE TREATED JAPAN WITH A CASUALNESS THAT STRIKES JAPANESE AS INSENSITIVE AT BEST AND INSULTING AT WORST. AT THE SAME TIME, JAPAN HAS OFTEN PROVED INFURIATING TO AMERICAN POLICY-MAKERS, OBDURATE AND OBTUSE IN CONTENTIOUS TRADE NEGOTIATIONS, QUIBBLING AND PUSILLANIMOUS AT TIMES OF INTERNATIONAL CRISIS. TO READ THE VIEWS OF JAPANESE LEADERS AT THE TIME OF THE GULF CRISIS, FOR INSTANCE, IS, FOR THE AMERICAN READER, TO PLUNGE INTO A MINDSET OF NEARLY INCOMPREHENSIBLE INTELLECTUAL HAIR-SPLITTING OVER THE PRECISE LEVEL OF JAPAN’S ABILITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE ALLIED EFFORT.⁵

⁴ PURRINGTON.

⁵ TAHARA.

CULTURE CLEARLY PLAYS A PART IN THIS UNEASY RELATIONSHIP. DESPITE ITS MUCH-VAUNTED MULTICULTURALISM, THE UNITED STATES REMAINS PROFOUNDLY EUROPEAN IN ETHOS AND ORIENTATION. FEW AMERICAN STUDENTS LEARN JAPANESE. FEW AMERICAN TOURISTS VISIT JAPAN. TRUE, THE AMERICAN POPULATION HAS GROWN INCREASINGLY ASIAN IN RECENT DECADES – BUT JAPANESE-AMERICANS ARE A SHRINKING PORTION OF THAT MINORITY AND, MOREOVER, AMONG ITS MOST FULLY ASSIMILATED MEMBERS. THERE HAS BEEN SOME JAPANESE CULTURAL PENETRATION AT THE MARGINS – CUISINE, CINEMA AND CHILDREN’S ENTERTAINMENT COME IMMEDIATELY TO MIND – BUT IT HAS BEEN MODEST AND, INDEED, TRIVIAL IN COMPARISON TO THE AMERICAN CULTURAL PENETRATION OF JAPAN. DESPITE THEIR HONDAS AND SONYS, JAPAN REMAINS, FOR MOST AMERICANS, AN ALIEN CULTURE.

UNSURPRISINGLY, AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINIONS POLLS SHOW A DEEP RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF JAPAN TO THE UNITED STATES BUT VERY MODEST PERSONAL WARMTH TOWARDS IT.⁶ EUROPEANS – AND PARTICULARLY WESTERN EUROPEANS – ARE SIMPLY MORE LIKE US. THIS RELATIVE LACK OF UNDERSTANDING AND EMPATHY MAY EXPLAIN THE VOLATILITY OF GENERAL AND, INDEED, ELITE AMERICAN PERCEPTIONS OF JAPAN – PERCEPTIONS WHICH, AS NOTED, MOVED IN THE COURSE OF ONE DECADE FROM NEAR-HYSTERIA ABOUT JAPANESE FINANCIAL DOMINANCE TO BARELY CONCEALED CONTEMPT FOR ITS ECONOMIC HARD TIMES. IN RETROSPECT, THE FORMER WAS CLEARLY EXAGGERATED; SO, ONE CANNOT BUT SUSPECT, IS THE LATTER.

A STUDY IN ASYMMETRY

NONETHELESS, THERE IS MORE TO THE PROBLEMATIC NATURE OF U.S.-JAPANESE RELATIONSHIP THAN CULTURAL DIFFERENCE, IMPORTANT AS IT IS. THERE IS, ABOVE ALL, THE STARKLY ASYMMETRIC QUALITY OF THE RELATIONSHIP, WITH JAPAN VERY MUCH PLAYING THE SUBORDINATE ROLE. OF COURSE, INEQUALITY IS A FACT OF LIFE IN A WORLD OF STATES POSSESSING VASTLY DISPARATE POPULATIONS, ECONOMIES AND MILITARIES. BUT JAPAN IS AN UNUSUAL, EVEN STRANGE CASE. IT IS A COUNTRY THAT, BY ANY CONVENTIONAL, OBJECTIVE MEASURE, SHOULD BE A GREAT POWER IN ITS OWN RIGHT, WITH ALL THE INDEPENDENCE OF INTERNATIONAL ACTION THAT SUCH STATUS IMPLIES. RATHER, IT REMAINS, FIFTY YEARS AFTER WORLD WAR II, ONLY SEMI-SOVEREIGN. IT CONTINUES TO REPUDIATE WAR AS AN INSTRUMENT OF

⁶ REILLY.

FOREIGN POLICY. AMERICAN TROOPS ARE STILL STATIONED ON ITS SOIL. IT STILL FINDS PROTECTION UNDER THE U.S. NUCLEAR UMBRELLA. A TRADING NATION HIGHLY DEPENDENT UPON IMPORTED OIL, IT IS DEPENDENT UPON AMERICAN MILITARY MIGHT TO SECURE INTERNATIONAL SEA-LANES AND ENSURE SECURITY IN MAJOR ENERGY-EXPORTING AREAS LIKE THE PERSIAN GULF. EVEN AT THE HEIGHT OF ITS RELATIVE ECONOMIC POWER IN THE MID- TO LATE-1980S, JAPAN STILL PLAYED A MODEST ROLE IN THE BROADER GEOSTRATEGIC ARENA. IMPORTANT AREAS OF ITS FOREIGN RELATIONS – ABOVE ALL, IN THE REALM OF SECURITY – REMAIN DEFERENTIAL TO THE WISHES OF WASHINGTON. IN SHORT, JAPAN IS NOT A “NORMAL” COUNTRY, MUCH LESS A NORMAL GREAT POWER.

THE SOURCES OF THIS PECULIARITY, EVEN PERVERSITY, LIE IN JAPAN’S DEFEAT AND OCCUPATION BY THE UNITED STATES IN THE 1940S.⁷ BUT THAT DEFEAT AND OCCUPATION ARE, IN AND OF THEMSELVES, INSUFFICIENT TO EXPLAIN THE PRECISE AND PROBLEMATIC QUALITY OF THE U.S.-JAPANESE RELATIONSHIP. AFTER ALL, GERMANY ALSO SUFFERED SUCH DEFEAT AND OCCUPATION. YET THE U.S.-GERMAN RELATIONSHIP, FOR ALL ITS DIFFICULTIES, LACKS THE FREQUENT RESENTMENT AND OCCASIONAL RANCOR THAT HAS CHARACTERIZED THE TIES BETWEEN TOKYO AND THE UNITED STATES. AND GERMANY IS, TODAY, A COUNTRY THAT HAS BEEN CALLED “WELL-ROUNDED” – MORE NORMAL, IF YOU WILL – IN COMPARISON TO JAPAN.⁸

THE REASONS FOR THIS DIFFERENCE CAN BE TRACED TO THE SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES OF OCCUPATION AND THE DECADES THAT FOLLOWED. FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, FOR INSTANCE, THE AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP WITH GERMANY WAS SHAPED BY A BROADER EUROPEAN CONTEXT. WHILE VERY MUCH THE SENIOR PARTNER, THE UNITED STATES SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES FOR OCCUPATION OF WESTERN GERMANY WITH BOTH FRANCE AND THE UNITED KINGDOM. THE CREATION OF NATO, AND GERMANY’S INCLUSION IN IT, FURTHER “EUROPEANIZED” THE U.S.-GERMAN RELATIONSHIP AND RAISED BONN, IN TIME, TO A NOMINAL EQUAL IN ALLIANCE DECISION-MAKING. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EC AND LATER EU, FURTHER INTENSIFIED THIS TREND, MAKING THE U.S.-GERMAN RELATIONSHIP, INCREASINGLY, A SUBSET OF BROADER U.S.-EUROPEAN RELATIONS.

IN SHORT, THE ASYMMETRY IN THE U.S.-GERMAN RELATIONSHIP WAS MEDIATED BY IMPORTANT INSTITUTIONS – FIRST THE MULTI-POWER OCCUPATION, THEN THROUGH NATO, AND,

⁷ SEE DOWER FOR AN ALREADY CLASSIC ANALYSIS OF THE U.S. OCCUPATION OF JAPAN.

⁸ GARTEN QUOTED IN KATZENSTEIN.

OVER TIME, THROUGH THE EC AND EU. THE U.S. RELATIONSHIP WITH JAPAN HAS ENJOYED NO SIMILAR BUFFERS; FROM THE BEGINNING, ITS ASYMMETRY WAS NAKEDLY ON DISPLAY. WHILE NOMINALLY UNDER JOINT ALLIED OCCUPATION, JAPAN WAS FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES A PURELY AMERICAN PROTECTORATE FROM 1945-52 – ONE, MOREOVER, WITH A FIGURE, MACARTHUR, MORE THAN WILLING AND ABLE TO PLAY THE PART OF A REGENT. UNLIKE GERMANY, JAPAN HAS NOT ENJOYED MEMBERSHIP IN REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS THAT HELP FOSTER A PERCEPTION OF EQUALITY WITH THE UNITED STATE. TRUE, BOTH TOKYO AND WASHINGTON BELONG TO ASIA PACIFIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION (APEC) AND TO THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORM. BUT NEITHER ORGANIZATION, DATING FROM 1989 AND 1991 RESPECTIVELY, POSSESSES THE INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OR TESTED SUCCESS OF NATO OR THE EC/EU.

MORE, HOWEVER, THAN DIFFERENCES OF PERCEPTION ARE AT ISSUE. BY INTEGRATING GERMANY INTO NATO AND THE EC, GERMANY'S WESTERN EUROPEAN NEIGHBORS AND FORMER ENEMIES ACHIEVED IMPORTANT SUBSTANTIVE RESULTS: ABOVE ALL, INSTITUTIONALIZED CONSTRAINTS ON GERMANY'S ABILITY TO PURSUE AN INDEPENDENT FOREIGN POLICY. IT IS NO COINCIDENCE, THAT AS LATE AS 1989-90, WESTERN EUROPEAN SUPPORT FOR GERMAN REUNIFICATION WAS CONTINGENT ON BONN'S COMMITMENT TO ACCELERATE EUROPEAN MONETARY UNION. JAPAN'S NEIGHBORS ENJOY NO SUCH EXTERNAL CONSTRAINTS ON JAPANESE BEHAVIOR, EXCEPT THE U.S.-JAPANESE RELATIONSHIP ITSELF.

ONE FURTHER DIFFERENCE IN THE POST-WAR HISTORY OF GERMANY AND JAPAN HAS ALSO SHAPED THE U.S.-JAPANESE RELATIONSHIP. IT IS JAPAN'S RELUCTANCE, TO THIS DAY, TO ACCEPT FULLY ITS RESPONSIBILITY FOR WORLD WAR II. APOLOGIES DURING THE 1998 VISITS OF KOREAN AND CHINESE LEADERS MARKED AN IMPORTANT BUT ONLY PRELIMINARY STEP BY JAPAN IN ADDRESSING ITS PAST AND ASSURING ITS NEIGHBORS. BUT THERE REMAINS WHAT HAS BEEN CALLED A "BURDEN OF HISTORY" THAT CONTINUES TO WEIGH ON JAPAN'S RELATIONS WITH HER ASIAN NEIGHBORS⁹. THE COMPARISON WITH GERMANY IS, AGAIN, STRIKING: HOWEVER FITFULLY AND IMPERFECTLY, GERMANY'S PUBLIC AND ELITE ALIKE HAVE BEEN FAR MORE FORTHCOMING THAN THEIR JAPANESE COUNTERPARTS IN MAKING APOLOGIES FOR THE COUNTRY'S MILITARIST PAST. PART OF THIS MAY BE DUE TO THE PARTICULAR NATURE OF THE HOLOCAUST, THE MATERIAL MAGNITUDE AND MORAL HORROR OF WHICH MADE IMPOSSIBLE ANY EFFORT BY GERMANS TO

FORGET, MUCH LESS EXCUSE, THEIR COUNTRY'S NAZI REGIME. BUT, IRONICALLY, THE UNITED STATES ITSELF PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN FOSTERING JAPAN'S TROUBLESOME REFUSAL TO ACCEPT ITS PART IN THE DEATHS OF MILLIONS WHO DIED BECAUSE OF ITS AGGRESSION IN THE 1930S AND 40S. BY MAINTAINING THE EMPEROR IN POWER AFTER WORLD WAR II, THE UNITED STATES MADE EASIER THE TASK OF THOSE UNWILLING OR UNABLE TO ACCEPT JAPAN'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WAR; IF HE COULD NOT BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE, HOW COULD THE STATE HE LED OR THE PEOPLE HE RULED?¹⁰ JAPAN'S HESITANCE TO ACCEPT WAR RESPONSIBILITY, IT SHOULD BE NOTED, PLAYS LITTLE PART IN DIRECT U.S.-JAPANESE RELATIONS. ANNUAL AMERICAN COMMEMORATIONS OF THE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR, WHEN THEY VENTURE BEYOND THE MERELY CEREMONIAL, TEND TO FOCUS LESS ON THE SPECIFICS OF JAPANESE AGGRESSION THAN ON A GENERAL LESSON ABOUT THE NEED FOR MILITARY PREPAREDNESS. BUT JAPAN'S HESITANCE TO COME TO GRIPS WITH HER PAST NONETHELESS SHAPES THE WASHINGTON-TOKYO RELATIONSHIP. BY WEAKENING JAPAN'S ABILITY TO REACH OUT TO ITS ASIAN NEIGHBORS, IT MAKES JAPAN'S DEPENDENCE ON THE UNITED STATES ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT, OBVIOUS AND, INsofar AS ITS SUGGESTS THAT JAPAN CANNOT BE TRUSTED BECAUSE OF ITS PAST, INSULTING.

A LAST AREA WHERE THE EXPERIENCES OF GERMANY AND JAPAN HAVE DIFFERED IS IN THE EMERGENCE IN THE LATTER OF WHAT MAY A "CULTURE OF ANTIMILITARISM." THIS IS A DEEP ABIDING MISTRUST OF WAR AS AN INSTRUMENT OF FOREIGN POLICY IN GENERAL AND OF JAPAN'S ABILITY TO CONSTRAIN ITS MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT IN SPECIFIC. BORN OF THE EXPERIENCE OF WORLD WAR II – WHAT THOMAS BERGER CALLS A SENSE OF "DUAL VICTIMIZATION" AT THE HANDS OF BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND ITS OWN MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT – ANTIMILITARISM IS ENSHRINED BY CONSTITUTION, EMBODIED IN LAW, AND, PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANTLY OF ALL, EXPRESSED IN BROADLY SHARED NORMS BY MOST JAPANESE.¹¹ GERMANY TOO HAS ITS OWN POWERFUL PACIFIST POST-WAR TRADITION; ITS GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO BEEN LEGALLY CONSTRAINED IN ITS USE OF FORCE ABROAD. BUT IT HAS NONETHELESS REARMED AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, REHABILITATED ITS MILITARY: A DEVELOPMENT DUE, AGAIN, IN GREAT PART TO ITS MEMBERSHIP IN THE CONFINING STRUCTURE OF NATO – YEARS THAT ALLOWED NOT JUST GERMANY'S NEIGHBORS BUT GERMANS THEMSELVES TO DEVELOP TRUST IN THEIR OWN MILITARY. JAPAN HAS HAD NO SUCH EXPERIENCES.

⁹ MANNING.

¹⁰ SEE DOWER FOR AN EXTENDED DISCUSSION OF THE WAR GUILT ISSUE.

THEORETICIANS WHO STRESS THIS UNIQUENESS – CALL THEM CULTURAL, CONSTRUCTIVIST OR INSTITUTIONAL – ARE SURELY RIGHT TO DISMISS REALISTS WHO ARGUE THAT JAPANESE ANTI-MILITARISM IS A MERE EXPRESSION OF, OR EVEN EXCUSE FOR, TOKYO’S ABILITY TO “FREE-RIDE” ON WASHINGTON SECURITY GUARANTEES IN THE DECADES FOLLOWING WORLD WAR II.¹² HISTORY MATTERS, INSTITUTIONS MATTER, NORMS MATTER. IN JAPAN, ALL THREE HAVE DEVELOPED IN WAYS THAT HELP DETERMINE THE FORM OF TOKYO’S FOREIGN POLICY. BUT THE REALISTS DO HAVE A POINT, IF A LESSER ONE. THE U.S. SECURITY GUARANTEE, PALPABLY EMBODIED BY THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF AMERICAN FORCES ON JAPANESE SOIL, PERMITTED JAPAN’S CULTURE OF ANTI-MILITARISM TO TAKE ROOT AND FLOURISH. WHATEVER DOMESTIC DIVISIONS THE U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE MAY HAVE CAUSED – AND THEY HAVE BEEN, FROM TIME TO TIME, QUITE SEVERE, FROM THE 1960 CRISIS OVER THE U.S.-JAPAN DEFENSE TREATY TO THE FUROR OVER THE RAPE OF AN OKINAWAN GIRL BY U.S. SERVICEMEN IN 1995¹³ – THEY WERE ASSUREDLY MORE MODEST THAN THOSE WHICH WOULD HAVE ARISEN HAD JAPAN BEEN FORCED TO CHOOSE BETWEEN MAINTAINING ITS CULTURE OF ANTI-MILITARISM OR ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITS OWN DEFENSE. IT WAS A CHOICE LARGELY REMOVED FROM THE JAPANESE DOMESTIC TABLE BY THE U.S. SECURITY GUARANTEE. AND IT IS A CHOICE THAT CONTINUES TO BE FORECLOSED – BUT AT THE PRICE OF A PAINFULLY ASYMMETRIC RELATIONSHIP.

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE...

WHAT ARE THE PROSPECTS FOR MAJOR CHANGES IN THE U.S.-JAPANESE RELATIONSHIP – A RELATIONSHIP THAT IS BOTH UNIQUE AND UNEASY? IN A WORD, SLIM – AT LEAST IN THE SHORT TO MEDIUM-TERM. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TOKYO AND WASHINGTON IS, TO LAPSE INTO THE JARGON OF SOCIAL SCIENCE, “OVER-DETERMINED,” SO DECISIVELY SHAPED BY MULTIPLE FORCES THAT EVEN A DEVELOPMENT OF SUCH HISTORICAL PROPORTIONS AS THE END OF THE COLD WAR CANNOT, IN AND OF ITSELF, PROFOUNDLY ALTER IT. AT A VERY MINIMUM, A PRIMITIVE “REALIST” READING OF THE RELATIONSHIP – THAT THE DEMISE OF THE SOVIET THREAT MUST LEAD TO A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN IT – FAILS EVEN TO BEGIN TO CAPTURE THE COMPLEX OF FACTORS BINDING TOKYO AND THE WASHINGTON TOGETHER.

¹¹ BERGER (2000).

¹² KATZENSTEIN AND BERGER (1999 AND 2000) ARE ELOQUENT REPRESENTATIVES OF THIS POINT OF VIEW.

¹³ P. SMITH.

FIRST OF ALL, THERE IS THE EXTENT TO WHICH, FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, THE U.S.-JAPANESE RELATIONSHIP TRANSCENDED PURELY MILITARY CONSIDERATIONS. TRUE, THE COLD WAR SHAPED U.S.-JAPANESE RELATIONS IN DECISIVE WAYS. BUT SO DID A CONCERTED EFFORT, BEGUN BY WASHINGTON BUT EMBRACED BY MOST JAPANESE, BOTH TO CREATE LIBERAL DOMESTIC INSTITUTIONS IN JAPAN AND TO IMBED HER IN A SIMILARLY LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM; WHATEVER THE MIXED MOTIVES OF AMERICAN POLICIES DURING OUR OCCUPATION OF JAPAN, THE EARLY YEARS, AT LEAST, WERE MARKED BY UNABASHEDLY REFORMIST ZEAL. LET IT BE STIPULATED HERE THAT JAPAN'S DOMESTIC INSTITUTIONS, BOTH ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL, DIVERGE IN IMPORTANT WAYS FROM ANGLO-AMERICAN LIBERAL IDEALS. THOSE DIFFERENCES – A STRONGLY MERCANTILIST ECONOMIC BENT AND A ELECTORAL SYSTEM DOMINATED FOR DECADES BY AN OFTEN CORRUPT POLITICAL CARTEL – HAVE GIVEN BIRTH TO SHARP CONFLICTS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. BUT IT ALSO MUST BE NOTED THAT THE TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF A NUMBER OF AMERICA'S CONTINENTAL EUROPEAN ALLIES, NOTABLY FRANCE AND GERMANY ALSO DIVERGE FROM THE ANGLO-AMERICAN MODEL. A TOP-DOWN APPROACH TO ECONOMIC POLICY OR A STRONG BIAS TOWARDS DECISION-MAKING BY CONSENSUS ARE NOT UNIQUELY JAPANESE QUALITIES – THOUGH, AS NOTED, THEIR PARTICULAR MANIFESTATIONS IN JAPAN HAVE PROVEN ESPECIALLY IRKSOME FROM WASHINGTON'S POINT OF VIEW.

NEVERTHELESS, JAPAN, THE WESTERN EUROPEAN DEMOCRACIES AND THE UNITED STATES DO SHARE A BUNDLE OF VALUES, WHICH, HOWEVER IMPERFECTLY HELD OR PURSUED, STAMP THEM AS LIBERAL IN A WAY THAT THE FORMER SOVIET UNION, FOR INSTANCE, OR CONTEMPORARY CHINA ARE MOST DISTINCTLY NOT. IN THE ECONOMIC REALM ALONE, THE LEVEL OF INTEGRATION AMONG THE MAJOR LIBERAL DEMOCRACIES, INCLUDING JAPAN, HAS REACHED LEVELS TRULY UNIMAGINABLE FIFTY YEARS AGO. THIS IS A TREND, IT MUST BE NOTED, THAT SHOWS EVERY SIGN OF INCREASING, NOT DECREASING, AS GLOBALIZATION INTENSIFIES. ONE NEED NOT BE A DOCTRINAIRE LIBERAL – OR A TRUE BELIEVER IN THE THESIS THAT DEMOCRACIES NEVER GO TO WAR WITH EACH OTHER – TO UNDERSTAND THAT FIFTY YEARS OF COOPERATION HAVE BOTH RAISED THE STAKES OF CONFLICT AND CREATED POWERFUL FORCES FOR CONCILIATION. WAR BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN MAY OR MAY NOT BE CONCEIVABLE BUT IT IS SURELY IMAGINABLE ONLY AS AN INTELLECTUAL EXERCISE OF THE MOST EXOTIC, IF PROVOCATIVE, SORT.

IN ADDITION, THERE IS THE REALITY – OFTEN UNSPOKEN BUT ALWAYS IMPLICITLY UNDERSTOOD ON BOTH SIDES OF THE PACIFIC – THAT THE AMERICAN SECURITY GUARANTEE FOR

JAPAN HAS SERVED TWO PURPOSES. THE MOST OBVIOUS ONE WAS COMMON DEFENSE AGAINST THE SOVIET THREAT – MOST FAMOUSLY ELUCIDATED, FROM THE AMERICAN POINT OF VIEW, BY GEORGE KENNAN, WHEN HE DESCRIBED JAPAN AS A “STATIONARY AIRCRAFT CARRIER” POISED OFF THE SOVIET FAR EAST. BUT THERE WAS ALSO ANOTHER, INDEED EARLIER OBJECTIVE: TO ENSURE THAT JAPAN NEVER AGAIN BECAME A FORCE FOR INSTABILITY IN THE PACIFIC. BY ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITY FOR JAPAN’S SECURITY, THE UNITED STATES HELPED ENSURE THAT TOKYO WOULD NOT HAVE THE WHEREWITHAL, IF SO INCLINED, TO SEEK EAST ASIAN DOMINANCE AS IT HAD IN THE 1930S AND 1940S. ARTICLE NINE OF THE JAPANESE CONSTITUTION – THAT CONSTANT SOURCE OF IRRITATION TO U.S. POLICY-MAKERS SEEKING TO PROD JAPAN INTO A SHARING A GREATER SECURITY BURDEN – WAS ITSELF DRAFTED BY JAPAN’S AMERICAN OCCUPIERS. TRUE, THE OBJECTIVE OF LIMITING JAPAN’S ABILITY TO MAKE WAR CAME INTO CONFLICT WITH OUR DESIRE TO FIELD AS MUCH FORCE AS POSSIBLE AGAINST THE SOVIET THREAT. INDEED, AS EARLY AS 1950, WITH THE OUTBREAK OF THE KOREAN WAR, WE WERE SECRETLY URGING THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT TO EMBARK ON A SIGNIFICANT REARMAMENT EFFORT. IN THE DECADES THAT FOLLOWED, DEPENDING ON THE WAXING AND WANING OF THE COLD WAR, THE UNITED STATES WOULD CONTINUE TO PRESS A USUALLY RECALCITRANT JAPAN TO ASSUME A GREATER DEFENSE BURDEN.

BUT THAT PRESSURE STOPPED WELL SHORT OF AN INVITATION FOR JAPAN TO ASSUME FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITS OWN DEFENSE, MUCH LESS REGIONAL SECURITY. INDEED, EVERY PERCEIVED REVIVAL OF “NATIONALIST” SENTIMENT IN JAPAN CONTINUED TO BE GREETED WITH CONCERN BY AMERICAN OBSERVERS.¹⁴ THIS CONTRADICTORY AMERICAN ATTITUDE COULD AND HAS BEEN CRUDELY DESCRIBED AS AN EFFORT TO EXTRACT AS MUCH SUPPORT FROM JAPAN WHILE STILL KEEPING IT IN A DISTINCTLY SUBORDINATE POSITION. BUT IT IS BETTER UNDERSTOOD AS AN UNEASY COMPROMISE DRIVEN BY COMPETING OBJECTIVES – ONLY ONE OF WHICH, IT SHOULD BE NOTED, DISAPPEARED WITH THE DEMISE OF THE SOVIET UNION. THE OTHER – THE NEED TO RESTRAIN JAPAN FROM BECOMING A THREAT TO REGIONAL STABILITY – MAY ACTUALLY HAVE INCREASED IN IMPORTANCE WITH THE END OF THE COLD WAR AND THE RISE OF AN AMBITIOUS AND SUSPICIOUS CHINA ON THE ASIAN MAINLAND. TRUE, AS NOTED, THE PROSPECT OF DIRECT U.S.-JAPANESE CONFLICT REMAINS REMOTE. BUT ANY MAJOR JAPANESE EFFORT TO REARM COULD

¹⁴ BERGER (2000) REFERS TO THIS, AMUSINGLY BUT ACCURATELY, AS THE “GODZILLA” THEORY OF JAPANESE NATIONALISM.

NONETHELESS PROMPT A RESPONSE BY ITS NEIGHBORS – NOTABLY BEIJING – WITH UNPREDICTABLE CONSEQUENCES FOR REGIONAL STABILITY.

MOREOVER, THE COLD WAR MAY BE OVER BUT IN EAST ASIA ITS CONSEQUENCES REPRESENT DIRECT AND DIRE THREATS TO SECURITY. THE DIVISION OF THE KOREAN PENINSULA AND THE CONTESTED STATUS OF TAIWAN – BOTH LEGACIES OF EAST-WEST CONFLICT – REMAIN POTENTIAL SOURCES OF OUTRIGHT CONFLICT. FROM JAPAN’S PERSPECTIVE, THE POSSIBILITY OF WAR IN THE KOREAS IS OF PARTICULARLY ACUTE CONCERN. PYONGYANG’S POSSIBLE POSSESSION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, COMBINED WITH ITS 1998 TEST OF A BALLISTIC MISSILE IN JAPANESE AIRSPACE, RAISE TOKYO’S STAKE IN ANY WAR ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA. THIS CONCERN HAS SURELY BEEN A MAJOR FACTOR DRIVING INCREASED JAPANESE SECURITY COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED STATES AND SOUTH KOREA. CONFLICT OVER TAIWAN IS ALSO A MAJOR POTENTIAL SOURCE OF REGIONAL INSTABILITY – ONE, IN FACT, THAT PROMPTED A NEAR-CRISIS IN 1996. ADMITTEDLY, IT IS ONE – GIVEN TOKYO’S DESIRE NOT TO PROVOKE BEIJING – WHERE JAPAN MUST TREAD CAREFULLY. BUT THE POSSIBILITY OF WAR IN THE TAIWAN STRAITS HAS ALSO CLEARLY PLAYED A ROLE IN INCREASED JAPANESE INTEREST IN CLOSER COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED STATES. IN FACT, SOME HAVE GONE SO FAR AS TO ARGUE THAT JAPAN IS TODAY MORE DEPENDENT ON THE UNITED STATES FOR SECURITY THAN IT WAS IN THE COLD WAR.¹⁵

IN SHORT, DESPITE THE END OF THE COLD WAR, JAPAN CONTINUES TO FACE VERY REAL STRATEGIC DILEMMAS. GIVEN THIS STARK REALITY, WITHDRAWAL INTO NEUTRALITY IS SIMPLY NOT AN OPTION. AND ALLIANCE WITH THE UNITED STATES – UNCOMFORTABLE AS IT MAY BE – IS, GIVEN THE LONG HISTORY OF THE U.S.-JAPANESE RELATIONSHIP, THE OPTION LEAST FRAUGHT WITH UNCERTAINTY.

IT IS ALSO, IMPORTANTLY, THE LEAST EXPENSIVE. AS MENTIONED EARLIER, JAPAN HAS ALL THE PREREQUISITES REQUIRED OF A GREAT POWER. DESPITE A DECADE OF RECESSION, JAPAN REMAINS IMMENSELY RICH AND TECHNOLOGICALLY ADEPT. SHOULD IT CHOOSE TO DO SO, THERE IS NOTHING TO STOP JAPAN FROM BECOMING A MAJOR MILITARY POWER WITH AN INDEPENDENT NUCLEAR DETERRENT AND AN IMPRESSIVE BLUE WATER NAVY. EVEN ITS MODEST MILITARY EXPENDITURES AS A SHARE OF GDP – ROUGHLY ONE PERCENT – GIVE JAPAN ONE OF THE LARGEST DEFENSE BUDGETS IN THE WORLD, RANKING SECOND OR THIRD AFTER THE UNITED STATES,

¹⁵ MANNING AND PRYZYSTUP.

DEPENDING ON WHICH ESTIMATE OF CHINA'S DEFENSE EXPENDITURES ONE ACCEPTS.¹⁶ BUT THE COSTS OF ANY BUILD-UP WOULD STILL BE HUGE – PARTICULARLY GIVEN THE COUNTRY'S CRIPPLING CURRENT FISCAL DEFICIT AND LOOMING DEMOGRAPHIC CRISIS.¹⁷ ANY EFFORT TO BUILD UP A NAVY CAPABLE NOT JUST OF PROTECTING MAJOR PACIFIC SEA-LANES BUT OF PROJECTING FORCE, SAY, INTO, THE PERSIAN GULF WOULD BE SIMPLY STUPENDOUS. IN OTHER WORDS, THERE IS STILL A REAL MATERIAL BENEFIT – MEASURED IN HUNDREDS OF BILLIONS OF DOLLARS OVER THE COURSE OF A DECADE – OF CONTINUING TO FREE-RIDE ON THE AMERICAN SECURITY GUARANTEE. BECOMING A “NORMAL COUNTRY,” IN SHORT, ENTAILS A PROHIBITIVELY EXPENSIVE COST, AT LEAST FOR NOW.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST, MAINTENANCE OF THE U.S.-JAPAN RELATIONSHIP IN ITS ROUGHLY CURRENT FORM ALLOWS TOKYO TO RETAIN ITS UNIQUE CULTURE OF ANTI-MILITARISM. IT MAY WELL BE THAT JAPANESE ANTI-MILITARISM IS AT ONCE TOO NAÏVE AND TOO CYNICAL – TOO NAÏVE IN THE BELIEF THAT WAR IS SOMEHOW DISPENSABLE IN WHAT REMAINS, AFTER ALL, A DANGEROUS WORLD; TOO CYNICAL ABOUT JAPANESE DEMOCRACY'S ABILITY TO DEPLOY A LARGE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT WITHOUT RISK TO ITSELF. BUT FOR NOW, THERE APPEARS TO BE LITTLE URGENCY IN JAPAN TO PUT EITHER BELIEF TO THE TEST. AT A MINIMUM, A SHARP JAPANESE BREAK WITH THE *STATUS QUO* WOULD PROMPT HUGE DOMESTIC DISCORD; AT A MAXIMUM, IT MIGHT EMBARK JAPAN ON AN UNCERTAIN AND PERHAPS DANGEROUS STRATEGIC COURSE. EVEN CALLS WITHIN JAPAN FOR IT TO BECOME A “NORMAL COUNTRY,” WITH THEIR STRESS ON INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL PEACE-KEEPING, FALL FAR SHORT OF CALLING FOR SUCH A BREAK; YET THEY NONETHELESS REMAIN CONTROVERSIAL.

GIVEN THESE REALITIES – PERHAPS NOT IMMUTABLE BUT SURELY STUBBORN – THERE IS VERY LITTLE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE U.S.-JAPANESE RELATIONSHIP WILL DRAMATICALLY ALTER IN THE YEARS AHEAD. BOTH TOKYO AND WASHINGTON HAVE SIMPLY TOO MUCH TO LOSE BY FORGOING THE ADVANTAGES – REAL, VARIED AND MUTUAL – OF THE CURRENT RELATIONSHIP.

EVEN WITHIN THE GENERAL PARAMETERS OF THE U.S.-JAPANESE RELATIONSHIP CHANGE IS LIKELY TO BE BOTH PIECEMEAL AND SLOW. THIS HAS CERTAINLY BEEN TRUE IN THE PAST – OFTEN, IT MUST BE ADDED, TO THE EXTREME IRRITATION OF WASHINGTON. PART OF THIS REFLECTS THE EXTREME POLITICAL SENSITIVITY IN JAPAN OF AN INCREASED MILITARY POSTURE. BUT IT ALSO

¹⁶ CIA.

REFLECTS BROADER GEOSTRATEGIC REALITIES WITHIN THE REGION. A MAJOR SHIFT OF MILITARY BURDEN WITHIN THE U.S.-JAPANESE RELATIONSHIP, FOR INSTANCE, WOULD CERTAINLY ALARM CHINA AND, PERHAPS, THE COUNTRIES OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. TRUE, SUSPICION OF JAPAN HAS EBBED AMONG THE LATTER OVER RECENT DECADES, AS THE TRAGIC EXPERIENCES OF THE 1940S RECEDE.¹⁸ BUT, PARTICULARLY IF COMBINED WITH A CONTINUED JAPANESE RECALCITRANCE TO ACCEPT WAR BLAME, ANY MAJOR JAPANESE BUILD-UP, EVEN WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF A U.S.-JAPANESE ALLIANCE, WOULD PROMPT UNEASE AT A MINIMUM AND EVEN ALARM AMONG SOME OF ITS NEIGHBORS.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE U.S.-JAPANESE RELATIONSHIP – BY INCLUDING SOUTH KOREA AND ASEAN COUNTRIES – INTO A SORT OF EAST ASIAN NATO IS LESS PROBLEMATIC. BY INCLUDING OTHER STATES WITHIN ITS DECISION-MAKING APPARATUS, SUCH AN ALLIANCE WOULD PRESUMABLY EASE CONCERNS ABOUT JAPANESE REARMAMENT. BUT THIS WOULD CERTAINLY NOT BE TRUE OF BEIJING. ALREADY HIGH SUSPICIOUS OF INCREASED U.S.-JAPANESE MILITARY COOPERATION, BEIJING WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY SEE THE CREATION OF A MULTILATERAL MILITARY ALLIANCE AS AN EFFORT TO CONTAIN CHINA, JUST AS NATO CONTAINED THE SOVIET UNION. THE DAY MIGHT WELL ARRIVE WHEN SUCH AN ALLIANCE MIGHT BE NECESSARY – SHOULD, INSTANCE, FOR CHINA FURTHER ACCELERATE ITS MILITARY BUILDUP OR GROW MORE BELLICOSE IN ITS ATTITUDES TOWARDS ITS NEIGHBORS. BUT FOR NOW, THERE WOULD APPEAR MUCH TO LOSE AND LITTLE TO GAIN FROM FORMING SUCH AN ALLIANCE, EVEN ASSUMING THAT JAPANESE PUBLIC OPINION WOULD COUNTENANCE IT. TODAY, CHINA SIMPLY DOES NOT REPRESENT A THREAT SUFFICIENT TO WARRANT SUCH A RESPONSE.¹⁹

THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT THERE ARE NOT POTENTIAL AREAS FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION THAT, WOULD, ON THE MARGIN, IMPROVE TRUST AMONG THE COUNTRIES OF EAST ASIA. JAPAN, CHINA AND SOUTH KOREA ALL STAND TO BENEFIT FROM CLOSER COOPERATION IN SUCH AREAS AS ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT. IN TIME, THERE MAY BE THE NEED FOR MULTIPARTY TALKS ON THE FUTURE OF THE KOREAS – THOUGH, GIVEN THE IMPONDERABLES OF DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH KOREA, THAT TIME HAS CLEARLY NOT YET COME. ALSO ATTRACTIVE IS THE IDEA OF SETTING APEC ON A PATH TOWARDS A TRUE FREE TRADE ZONE – ALREADY A FORMAL GOAL OF THE UNITED

¹⁷ SEE LINCOLN, EZRATI AND FUNABASHI ON THE ON THE ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC CRISES CONFRONTING JAPAN.

¹⁸ VON DER MEHDEN.

¹⁹ CRONIN AND GREEN.

STATES. ANY AND ALL OF SUCH DEVELOPMENTS COULD EASILY BE ACCOMMODATED WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE CURRENT U.S.-JAPANESE ALLIANCE; ALL ARE WORTH GOALS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE DIPLOMACY; BUT NONE, IT SHOULD ALSO BE ADDED, WOULD MUCH DIMINISH, EXCEPT AT THE MOST SUPERFICIAL LEVEL, THE FUNDAMENTAL ASYMMETRY OF THE U.S.-JAPANESE RELATIONSHIP.

ENERGY COOPERATION IN THE REGION IS A CASE IN POINT. USEFUL AS IT MAY BE ON THE MARGIN, IT WILL NOT ALTER THE FACT THAT EAST ASIA IN GENERAL, AND JAPAN IN SPECIFIC, WILL REMAIN ENERGY IMPORTERS, HIGHLY DEPENDENT ON THE STABILITY OF A SINGLE REGION – THE MIDDLE EAST – AND ON THE SECURITY OF SEA-LANES LEADING FROM IT. TODAY, AND FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, ONLY THE UNITED STATES IS ABLE TO ENSURE SUCH STABILITY AND PROVIDE SUCH SECURITY. WHETHER WE ARE SPEAKING OF THE JOINT DEVELOPMENT OF THE GAS RESERVES OF THE RUSSIAN FAR EAST OR CLOSER COORDINATION OF EMERGENCY STOCKPILES, THE STRATEGIC EFFECT OF EAST ASIAN ENERGY COOPERATION WILL BE NEAR ZERO.

TWO CAVEATS

THERE ARE TWO IMPORTANT PROVISOS TO THIS ESSAY'S BENIGN CONCLUSION. FIRST, MILITARY CONFLICT IN THE REGION – ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA OR IN THE TAIWAN STRAITS – COULD DRAMATICALLY ALTER THE U.S.-JAPANESE RELATIONSHIP IN WAYS IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT. WAR, WE SHOULD RECALL, IS NOT JUST UNDESIRABLE FOR ITS DIRECT COSTS, POTENTIALLY HORRIFYING AS THEY ARE, BUT FOR ITS ABILITY UTTERLY AND INALTERABLY TO TRANSFORM INTERNATIONAL SYSTEMS AND THE STATES WITHIN THEM. THE CONSEQUENCES OF WAR ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA OR OVER TAIWAN MAY BE LESS CATAclySMIC THAN THOSE FLOWING FROM THE EVENTS OF 1914 OR 1939. BUT THEY ARE NO LESS UNPREDICTABLE.

SECOND, ANY SIGNIFICANT U.S. WITHDRAWAL FROM THE REGION WOULD, BY DEFINITION, ALTER THE U.S.-JAPAN RELATIONSHIP IN UNPREDICTABLE AND PERHAPS DRAMATIC WAYS. THIS VERY UNCERTAINTY ARGUES STRONGLY THAT WE MAINTAIN A STRONG PRESENCE IN EAST ASIA; THE UNITED STATES IS, AFTER ALL, GIVEN OUR CURRENT PREEMINENCE IN THE REGION AND INDEED GLOBALLY, A QUINTESSENTIALLY *STATUS QUO* POWER. TO WITHDRAW FROM EAST ASIA WOULD BE, QUITE LITERALLY, TO OPEN A PANDORA'S BOX – CREATING, AT BEST, AN UNCERTAIN BALANCE AMONG MAJOR REGIONAL POWERS, AT WORSE AN ARMED STRUGGLE AMONG COMPETING BLOCS OR BY SINGLE POWERS SEEKING DOMINANCE. AT A VERY SIMPLE LEVEL, THE

OVERWHELMING NATURE OF AMERICAN MILITARY PREDOMINANCE IN EAST ASIA DISCOURAGES COMPETITION; WHY ENTER A RACE YOU CANNOT WIN OR WIN ONLY AT EXCESSIVE COST? CHINA AND JAPAN, IN CONTRAST, ARE FAR MORE EVENLY BALANCED. ABSENT AN AMERICAN MILITARY PRESENCE, IT IS ALL TOO EASY TO IMAGINE A DEBILITATING AND DANGEROUS ARMS RACE DEVELOPING BETWEEN TOKYO AND BEIJING.

TO DATE, TRUE, THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE PUBLIC CLAMOR IN AMERICA TO REDUCE OUR ROLE IN EAST ASIA. BUT, AS THE ILL FEELING TOWARDS JAPAN AT THE TIME OF THE GULF CRISIS SHOWS, BURDEN-SHARING REMAINS AN ISSUE OF POTENTIAL POLITICAL SALIENCE. IT MAY BE HERE, ON THE AMERICAN DOMESTIC SCENE, THAT THE END OF THE COLD WAR IRONICALLY MAY HAVE ITS MOST DECISIVE EFFECT ON THE U.S.-JAPANESE RELATIONSHIP. AS DISCUSSED AT LENGTH, THERE ARE GOOD, EVEN COMPELLING REASONS TO RETAIN THAT RELATIONSHIP IN ITS ROUGHLY CURRENT FORM. BUT THEY LACK THE POWERFUL SIMPLICITY AND EMOTIONAL HEFT OF A WORLD-WIDE CRUSADE AGAINST COMMUNIST DOMINATION. IN PARTICULAR, A KEY ELEMENT OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JAPAN – THE CONSTRAINT IT PLACES UPON TOKYO ITSELF BECOMING A FORCE FOR INSTABILITY IN THE REGION – IS ONE BEST LEFT UNSPOKEN. AMBIGUITY MAY WELL BE AN ADVANTAGE, EVEN A NECESSITY, IN THE WORLD OF DIPLOMACY. BUT IT DOES NOT SELL WELL – OR SELL AT ALL – IN THE POLITICAL ARENA.

CONCLUSION

THE IDEA THAT U.S.-JAPANESE RELATIONS WILL LIKELY REMAIN LARGELY UNCHANGED IS ADMITTEDLY LESS THAN DRAMATIC. BUT THIS REFLECTS A BROADER AND, IN MANY WAY, SURPRISING TRUTH. THE END OF THE COLD WAR MAY HAVE HAD LESS GEOSTRATEGIC CONSEQUENCE THAN MANY WOULD HAVE IMAGINED; SURELY, A FULL TEN YEARS INTO THE POST-COLD WAR ERA WE HAVE SEEN LITTLE OR NOTHING OF A MAJOR INTERNATIONAL REALIGNMENT THAT MANY PREDICTED. THERE HAVE BEEN DEVELOPMENTS OF DRAMATIC, EVEN ALARMING IMPORT: CHAOS IN THE BALKANS, COLLAPSE IN RUSSIA, THE ADVENT OF TWO NEW NUCLEAR POWERS IN INDIA AND PAKISTAN, THE MENACING SPECTER OF PROLIFERATION ELSEWHERE, NOT TO MENTION INCREASED TENSIONS OVER TAIWAN AND THE KOREAS. BUT, DESPITE SUCH HISTORIC EVENTS AS ONGOING EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND, IN JAPAN, THE DEMISE OF THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S THIRTY-YEAR LOCK ON RULE, THE U.S.-WESTERN EUROPEAN-JAPANESE AXIS REMAINS INTACT. THE WORLD HAS NOT DESCENDED INTO COMPETING TRADING ZONES, MUCH

LESS HOSTILE MILITARY BLOCS. THE WASHINGTON BASED SYSTEM THAT FOUGHT AND WON THE COLD WAR REMAINS VERY MUCH ALIVE – AND THE U.S.-JAPANESE ALLIANCE CONTINUES TO BE A VITAL PART OF IT.²⁰

GIVEN THE ASYMMETRY OF THAT RELATIONSHIP, IT WILL REMAIN UNCOMFORTABLE – EVEN, TO RETURN TO AN EARLIER METAPHOR, NEUROTIC. THE TRADITIONAL TENSIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIP WILL REMAIN IN A FESTERING SOURCE OF DISCONTENT AND OCCASIONAL DISPUTE. THE UNITED STATES WILL CONTINUE TO BE TORN BETWEEN PRESSING JAPAN FOR A GREATER SHARE IN REGIONAL SECURITY AND ENSURING THAT, EVEN AS JAPAN DOES SO, IT DOES NOT BECOME A SOURCE OF INSTABILITY. JAPAN WILL CONTINUE TO BE DRIVEN BY A DESIRE TO BECOME A “NORMAL COUNTRY” WHILE ACCOMMODATING, SOMEHOW, ITS ANTI-MILITARIST CULTURE. THESE TENSIONS MAY NOT BE, IN ANY INTELLECTUAL SENSE, RESOLVABLE; THEY ARE HOWEVER, IN THE WORLD OF PRACTICAL POLICY, SURMOUNTABLE THROUGH UNEASY COMPROMISE AND CREATIVE AMBIGUITY – A DIFFERENCE THAT SUMS UP NICELY, IT MUST BE ADDED, THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE THEORETICAL AND ACTUAL PRACTICE OF FOREIGN POLICY.

²⁰ IKENBERRY.

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