

Japan's Response to Terrorism*

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On September 19, 2001, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi announced his plan to actively support American reprisals for the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington. In his statement, Koizumi emphasized that Japan regards terrorism as "its own security issue." His plan included the dispatch of Self Defense Force's ships to help the United States in intelligence collection, shipment of supplies, medical services and humanitarian relief. He also pledged to strengthen protective measures for U.S. bases in Japan. As for non-military measures, Koizumi announced an offer of \$10 million to help fund the rescue and cleanup work from the attacks in the United States, a

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plan to provide emergency economic aid to Pakistan and India as part of efforts to solicit their cooperation, and economic measures to avoid confusion in the international economic system. Also, immediately after the first U.S. air attack against Afghanistan, Koizumi expressed full support for U.S. and British military action and said Japan would do everything it could within the framework of the Constitution to help.

These statements were a sharp break from Japan's pacifism and slow, unclear response in the past. The international community expressed its appreciation for Koizumi's plan. It was more than many experts in Japan and the United States had expected, and was presented in a timely manner. There are several factors that contributed to this quick response.

New Environment

One obvious factor was that Japan learned lessons from the Persian Gulf War in which Japan's financial contribution was criticized as "too little, too late." Although Japan provided as much as \$13 billion in financial help by raising taxes, it was not highly appreciated as all other major allies of the United States took part directly in one way or another. Koizumi recognized that financial contribution alone would not be

welcomed by the international community, and that due to Japan's current economic situation, a large tax hike to fund such monetary contributions would not be possible.

Another lesson Japan learned from the Gulf War was the importance of quickly labeling this situation as a crisis. Then-Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu failed to identify the Gulf Crisis of August 1990 as a "significant emergency." As a result, the issue was handled by the Foreign Ministry under normal diplomatic channels and not by the Cabinet Security Affairs Office (within the Cabinet Secretariat) which was designed to operate interagency coordination in an emergency. This significantly delayed Japan's crisis response. This time, Koizumi's action was quick. Forty-five minutes after the incident, he established a liaison office at the Crisis Management Center of the Prime Minister's Residence (later it was upgraded to the Emergency Anti-Terrorism Headquarters headed by the Prime Minister). By identifying this tragedy as an "emergency," he called upon a cabinet level meeting of the National Security Council the next morning for the first time since the 1998 Taepodon missile incident. At the press conference after the meeting, Koizumi announced the initial action plan of the government, and described the terrorist attacks as "grave challenges not only to the United States, but also to the entire democratic society."

The second important reason was a personnel factor. During the Gulf War, Japan's government was headed by a wishy-washy leader who complained that there was no textbook for the prime minister on how to handle a crisis. Although LDP's headquarter was headed by strong rightists, such as Ichiro Ozawa (Secretary General), Takeo Nishioka (Chairman of the Policy Affairs Council) and Mutsuki Kato (Chairman of the General Council), they were not familiar with details of national security issues. On the other hand, Koizumi is a very decisive leader. He quickly instructed LDP Secretary General Taku Yamazaki to seek a concrete plan to support U.S. efforts against terrorism, which was acceptable to the LDP. Koizumi believed that bureaucratic decision-making alone would not be able to deliver in a timely manner. Yamazaki is one of the leading experts on national security issues within the LDP.

It is further important to point out that Prime Minister Koizumi has competent assistants in his office. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda knows how the office works as he served as personal assistant to his father, Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda, in the mid-1970s. His deputy, Shinzo Abe also served as assistant to his father, Foreign Minister Shintaro Abe in the early 1980s, and is very familiar with foreign policy issues. These two politicians have provided necessary and political advice and made competent decisions when needed. Another deputy, Teiji Furukawa is one of the most powerful

bureaucrats in the government. He quickly organized a task force (headed by Assistant Cabinet Secretary Keiji Omori) to design Koizumi's plan.

The third factor was public support for strong leadership. The lack of leadership has been a focal point in Japanese politics. Specifically, leadership in crisis situations became a top priority in administrative reform efforts in the late 1990s after the Hanshin earthquake and the sarin gas terrorist attack on the Tokyo subway system in 1995, the hostage crisis in Peru in 1996-97, and the oil spill disaster in the Japan Sea in 1997. With the reforms, crisis management by the Cabinet Secretariat was reinforced to enable a quick response and strong display of leadership. Due to lack of discussion and consultation in a traditional manner, the swift announcement of the Koizumi plan was strongly criticized by the opposition parties and some LDP members. However, the public support of the Koizumi Cabinet after the announcement was even stronger. According to a Kyodo News poll (September 29-30), the approval rate increased to 82.8% up from 79.5% in August 2001.

Fourth, the new institutional arrangement of the Cabinet Secretariat enabled the smooth creation of the ad hoc task force. Along with the central government streamlining in January 2001, the Secretariat was reorganized with the formal abolition

of three policy offices (Internal Affairs, External Affairs, and National Security Affairs and Crisis Management), and the newly created position of three Assistant Cabinet Secretaries (vice-minister level) to oversee the policy areas. This new arrangement was designed to provide institutional flexibility by not separating policy issues, “thus enabling them to respond to situations in a timely manner,” according to the official explanation of the government. While Office on External Affairs headed by a foreign ministry official was totally removed, the element of the old Office of Security Affairs and Crisis Management still exists separately from the rest of the Cabinet’s policy unit. It is headed by Director for the Crisis Management (slightly above vice-minister level, currently served by Kazuhiro Sugita, a former Police Agency official who had served at Cabinet Information and Research Office) with the assistance of Assistant Cabinet Secretary Omori from the Japan Defense Agency. The room with some 30 staffers served as a central assisting body for the task force.

The fifth factor was that Koizumi was surrounded by a different legal environment from what Prime Minister Kaifu had to face. After the Gulf War, the Government of Japan sought to establish a legal framework under which Japan could make a human contribution in an international crisis. Step by step, Japan has showed its contribution. In the aftermath of the Gulf War in April 1991, Japan sent its SDF vessels for

minesweeping. In August 1992, the Diet passed the International Peace Cooperation Law (PKO Law). In October, Japan sent the first PKO unit to the United Nations Transition Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), including 600 combat engineers, 75 civilian policemen, 41 election monitors and eight cease-fire observers. Japan's participation in the successful Cambodia mission gave the Japanese government confidence that Japan could ably perform the role of an objective and non-combat participant, which would be helpful in Afghanistan as well. As Japanese participation in the operation was generally supported in Japan and applauded around the globe, in May 1993 Japan sent PKO unit to Mozambique expanding its activity areas outside of Asia.

North Korea's withdrawal from the International Atomic Energy Agency in June 1994 increased Japanese and American feeling of a threat and the need for a higher level of bilateral defense cooperation in the region. This notion eventually led to the Japan-U.S. Joint Declaration on Security, which initiated the revision of the guideline for bilateral defense cooperation. In September 1997, the two governments reached an agreement for the revised guideline, and in April 1998 the Diet passed guideline-related legislation. Especially the newly created "Law Concerning Measures to Ensure the Peace and Security in Situations Surrounding Japan (Regional Crisis Law)" allowed for

the provision of logistical and direct rear-area support to U.S. forces in times of crisis in the region. In the process of deliberation, Japanese policymakers explored what they were allowed to do within the constitutional framework.

Although Koizumi's plan required new legislation, it was an extension of the existing defense guidelines. This helped save deliberation time for enactment of the anti-terrorism legislation. It took only three weeks for the Diet passage. The total time for deliberation in the committees of both the houses was only 62 hours, compared with 179 hours for the 1992 PKO Law and 154 hours for the 1998 Regional Crisis Law.

Debates

The Koizumi government came up with three pieces of legislation. Revisions of the two existing laws were needed. One was to revise the Self Defense Force Law to authorize the SDF to defend U.S. bases in Japan against terrorist attacks. The existing law authorized the deployment of the SDF only when a situation has already happened and that could not be handled by the police. Another revision was needed for the Japan Coast Guard Law to allow the coast guard to open fire on suspicious ships in Japanese waters if they try to escape or resist the order to stop. With the exception of

self-defense, the existing law only permitted warning shots, and had allowed North Korean spy boats to escape off Niigata coast in March 1999.

A new law was needed to provide rear-end support for the U.S. Forces in the Indian Ocean area and humanitarian assistance to refugees. The 1999 Regional Crisis Law only allowed such support in “areas surrounding” Japan. As the government has officially interpreted that the areas are not geographically defined, it would have been technically possible to apply the existing law for this case. However, the Koizumi government chose a more legitimate way by passing new legislation in the Diet.

In order to avoid political turmoil and delay, the Koizumi government decided not to provoke constitutional arguments. Although the three pieces of legislation are closely related to the argument of collective self-defense which would require reinterpretation of the Constitution, Prime Minister Koizumi repeatedly stated that Japan’s measure would be limited within the constitutional framework. LDP Secretary General Yamazaki, who recently published a book on constitutional revisions, supported Koizumi that the right of collective defense must be authorized only by constitutional revision.

Japan's pacifism still exists. The Social Democratic Party denounced U.S. intentions of retaliation, and portrayed the Koizumi plan as a step toward Japan's remilitarization. Even the coalition partners of the LDP quickly stated that rear-end support should not include provision and transportation of arms and ammunitions. Former Ambassador to the U.S. Takakazu Kuriyama in a newspaper interview criticized this decision as "unacceptable to the international community." Kuriyama further stated, "The same logic of not allowing arms and munitions can be applied to food and oil. Everything should be allowed. We are still ambivalent because we have not identified Japan's pacifism." In order to secure more support in the Diet, the Koizumi government limited sea transportation of arms and munitions in the anti-terrorism legislation.

A more obvious political compromise was the role of the Diet. The first government draft presented to the LDP's Defense panel was to require approval by the Diet before dispatching the SDF. In the final draft, however, this was changed to allow for a report to the Diet after the SDF is dispatched. Democratic leader, Yukio Hatoyama, requested the condition of prior Diet approval for "stronger civilian control" in return for support of his party. This point was apparently reserved for political maneuvering to save face for the opposition parties. It was indicated that the

government would offer a compromise bill which would in normal cases require prior approval, but in emergency allow approval granted in the afterwards. However, Komeito strongly opposed to offer a compromise to the Democratic Party. As a result, the government's final proposal only required reporting of the basic plan and Diet approval within 20 days after the implementation of the plan.

On the rightist front, Ichiro Ozawa of the Liberal Party refused to cooperate with the Koizumi government. Ozawa did not even show up to the September 20th meeting of party leaders that Koizumi called upon to ask for their cooperation. On the same day, Ozawa's party announced their position paper which heavily criticized Koizumi's plan as "ad hoc, spur-of-the-moment half-measures." The Liberal Party maintains the position that the use of armed forces must be approved by the United Nations as in the case of the Gulf War in order for Japan to send its troop to participate in an international dispute. Ozawa also criticized Koizumi for avoiding discussions of collective self-defense and constitutional reinterpretation. But despite these voices of opposition, Koizumi and his government are ready to pass the new plan through the Diet.

After the cabinet approval of October 5, the three legislative bills were introduced to the Diet, and political negotiations continued even after the passage in the lower house on October 18. On October 29, the upper house passed the anti-terrorism bill

with majority support by the three-coalition parties of the LDP, Komeito and the Conservative Party. The revision of the SDF Law which would authorize the SDF to protect the U.S. bases was supported by the three parties plus the Democratic Party which wanted show their support to America's fight against terrorism. The Japan Coast Guard Law was revised with the support of the four parties plus the Liberal Party and the Communist Party. These two opposition parties did not support the SDF participation, but did support reinforcement of the police activities on ground and in the sea.

New Developments

The newly created Anti-terrorism Law was a major step for further contribution in security cooperation with the United States. First, the range of where Japan can be active was significantly expanded. The 1999 Regional Crisis Law strictly limited the area to Japan's territory and the high seas (and its airspace) surrounding Japan. The new law includes the territory of foreign countries if permission is given from their government. More concretely, the basic plan describes the activity areas as territories and sea areas between the Indian Ocean and Japan or Australia.

Second, the new law increased the possible measures that SDF can take. Under

the earlier Regional Crisis Law, many possible services were not clear if they would be excluded from combat-related activities. In an extreme case, some argued medical assistance for combatants should be considered combat-related as those receiving treatment would go back to the battle. After the debate within the government and the Diet, the government concluded that medical assistance as well as transportation of weapon and ammunitions to the rear-end areas should not be regarded as combat-related. The new law also clearly allows the SDF to initiate search and rescue activities upon the request of the U.S. or other forces. Further, assistance to refugees was newly added in this law. The SDF can provide humanitarian assistance to refugees in Japan, Pakistan and non-combat areas between the Indian Ocean and Japan.

Figure 1. Measures taken under the Anti-terrorism Law

1. Cooperation and Support Activities

- 1) Provision of water, fuel, food, other materials and service
- 2) Transportation of personnel and materials
- 3) Repair and maintenance
- 4) Medical services
- 5) Communications
- 6) Airport and seaport services
- 7) Base support

But excludes

- 1) the supply and ground transportation in foreign territories of weapons and ammunitions (Sea transportation is allowed.)
- 2) the supply of fuel or maintenance of aircraft preparing to take off on military sorties

2. Search and Rescue Activities

- 1) finding combatants in distress during other activities
- 2) upon request of U.S. or others

3. Assistance to Affected People

Humanitarian assistance in Japan, Pakistan, and non-combat areas between Indian Ocean and Japan

Third, restriction on use of weapons were significantly eased. The 1993 PKO Law only allowed the use for the defense of lives and bodies of SDF members and other members in the same mission. Members were not allowed to use weapons to protect their property. Under the law, they had to stand by and watch their weapons, ammunitions and vehicles being stolen without taking action. In the 1999 Regional Crisis Law, protection of their property was allowed, but the protection of lives was limited within the same mission. In other words, SDF could not protect with arms refugees or medical patients in their camps. The new law extended protection to

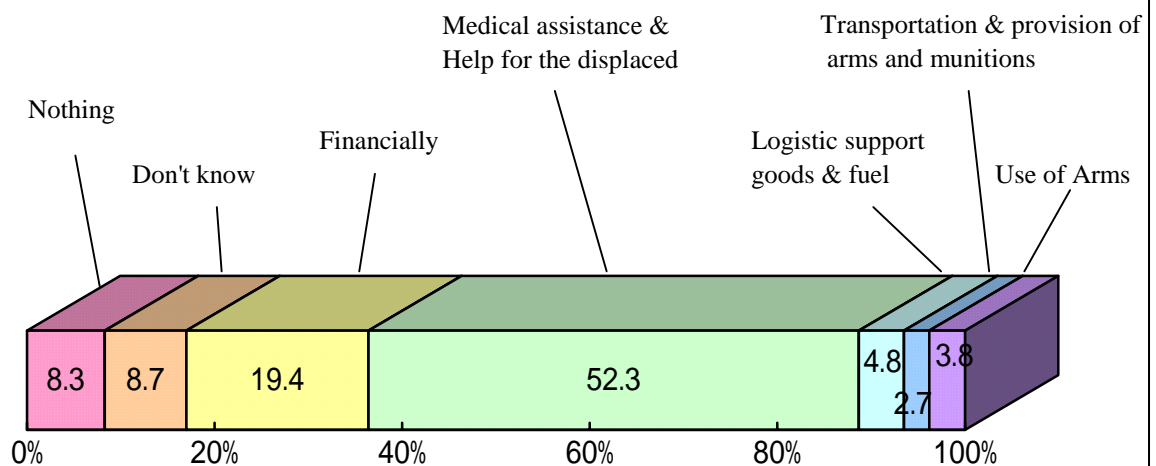
those under SDF's control.

Public Opinion

The Japanese public showed ambivalence to approve American military retaliation. According to a Yomiuri Shimbun poll (conducted on September 24-25), 44% of the Japanese approved U.S. military action, and 27% opposed it. In a poll by Asahi Shimbun (September 28-29), the approval rate was slightly lower than disapproval (42% and 45% respectively). Later, Kyodo News Service announced their polls (September 29-30) with approval rate for US military action as high as 66% with 23% opposing. On the other hand, there is a general consensus that Japan needs to cooperate with the U.S. in the case of military actions against terrorism. According to the Yomiuri poll, 87% of the Japanese supported such cooperation. Only 12% expressed their opposition (In the Asahi poll, 62% supported while 25% opposed).

Figure 2. Public Opinion on Japanese Contribution

(Kyodo News Poll, conducted on Sept.14-16, 2001)



But opinion were split on the degree and the measures of cooperation. In the same Kyodo poll, only 24.7% supported Japan to cooperate “actively” while 62.4 responded “to some extent.” Another poll conducted by Nippon Television on September 14-16 shows a split on Japan’s cooperation measures when requested by the United States. Only 8.0% supported Japan’s use of armed force, while 48.3% responded that it should be limited to rear-end support, 30.9% believed that financial contribution alone should be enough, and 5.5% refused any cooperation.

September 11th significantly influenced on Japan’s public opinion on security issues. In the October 20-21 poll by Yomiuri Shinbun, 42.9% of respondents regarded international terrorism as the most important security issue, the highest score among

other policy issues (environment as the close second with 42.8% and relations with Asian nations as third with 38.4%). In spite of the danger of terrorist attacks due to its security ties with the United States, the ratio of those who believe that security ties with America is beneficial increased to 66% compared with 57%. Increasingly people began to support a more active role for Japan as 44% of the Japanese responded that Japan should expand its Peace Keeping Operation activities to participate in U.N. Peace Keeping Forces, which had been temporarily frozen – 26% were opposed. Two years ago, the support rate was reverse. In the July 1999 Yomiuri poll, support for PKF was 26% compared with opposition at 42%. The change of public opinion enabled the smooth passage on December 7 of the revised PKO Law to allow PKF and to ease the restriction on use of weapons to the international standard.

There are many opinions expressed on television and newspaper against Japan's support for U.S. retaliation. First typical one is that "retaliation ends up with revenge of terrorism." (This is a defeatist notion which ignores that defeatist reaction also can invite another attack.) Second common opinion is that "Japan has its own Middle East policy, and needs to pursue diplomatic solution." (Yes, we have independent foreign policy, but it would be difficult to persuade terrorists.) Third one is that "Japan can pursue its unique role separately from the United States. (Those who state this kind of

message usually do not come up with realistic alternatives.) Fourth one is that “The root of the problem is U.S. policy toward Middle East. (Criticizing the victim would not provide any solution.) Fifth one is that “We need to feel sorry for Palestinians too.” (Yes, but again, no solution.) Some Japanese may share these views, largely influenced by Middle Eastern experts who appeared in the mass media to explain Islamic views on the event.

Danger of Asymmetric Expectations

Such a split of opinion reflects the lack of consensus on Japan’s pacifism as Ambassador Kuriyama suggests. More importantly, it comes from the lack of consensus on U.S.-Japan alliance and its asymmetrical nature. Many opinion polls suggest that an overwhelming majority of Japanese approve the current U.S.-Japan Security ties. However, there are various views on how our bilateral alliance should be. In 1952 when Japan was economically and politically weak, the two nations agreed to form a very asymmetrical alliance under which Japan provided bases and other facilities, and the United States manpower. Many Japanese argue that with the current economic and political power Japan needs to contribute more. On the other hand, there are some

who would argue that providing bases is enough burden sharing and sacrifice, especially for those in Okinawa.

My major concern is that this asymmetric nature creates “asymmetric expectations” from our alliance. In the past, Japan had the Anglo-Japanese and the Axis alliance. However, we did not fight wars together in a major way, and never had a bonding experience with our allies. Americans, who enjoyed bonding experience with their European allies in different international conflicts, naturally expect Japan to support its only ally as other major allies do. On the other hand, many Japanese do not realize that alliance is for helping each other when needed, especially in wartime. Without providing support Americans, can the Japanese expect U.S. support in the case of a possible terrorist attack on Japan? Those may still expect unconditional American support, and many of them probably never have thought about such a situation.

Implications to the Region

The public support for Japan’s participation in regional security and the experience of actual participation in the Indian Ocean has significant implications on the issue of regional security. First, Japan’s recent cooperation with the United States made the bilateral security relations stronger, scraping away the bad image of unwilling ally who

would not take a risk. The lessons learned from the Gulf War makes many policy makers in the Japanese government aware that another failure could deteriorate American public (and congressional) support for the security arrangement. Many policy makers and experts in Washington were impressed with the promptness and the degree of Japan's cooperation, and see Japan as a more reliable ally. The reinforced alliance would discourage Peking's usual attempt to create a gap between Tokyo and Washington.

Second, over the event Prime Minister Koizumi and President George W. Bush established strong personal ties. Good chemistry exchanged between the two is as strong as Nakasone-Reagan and Kaifu-Bush Sr. relationship. This would enable close and quick communications between the two national leaders in the case of emergency in the region.

Third, this set precedence for SDF's participation in regional security in the time of emergency. The fact that the public supported the dispatch of SDF to the Indian Ocean make it easier for the future administrations to cooperate with the United States in the Far East. Especially, the escort of U.S. aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines by SDF vessels off Yokosuka and Sasebo could have significant implication to the regional security. The operation was conducted under the Defense Agency

Establishment Law which allows Japan's forces to conduct security-related research activities. Without any new legislation, SDFs would be able to escort U.S. vessels in case of regional crisis. Even if Japan limits the escort activities within its territorial water, for example, Tokyo can dispatch Aegis and other vessels or P-3Cs to protect U.S. aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines along Okinawan islands in case of a crisis in Taiwan Strait. This would greatly deter Peking's military ambition over the Strait.

But the fact remains that Japan would not act independently, and that its action would be limited within the framework of U.S.-Japan security relations. Unless Washington decides to take action, these developments are meaningless to the situation. Nonetheless, U.S.-Japan security ties have become stronger than ever. Japan's response to the September 11th terrorist attack was a major step for Japan's involvement in the security environment in the region, and toward more symmetrical alliance in the future.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

Sept 11	45 minutes after WTC attack, Koizumi forms liaison office
Sept.12	National Security Council held by identifying as emergency
Sept.19	Koizumi announces his seven-point package
Sept 21	50 ships of JMSDF and JCG guards Kittyhawk off Yokosuka
Sept.25	Koizumi meets with President Bush
Oct. 1	JMSDF ships guards the dispatch of nuclear submarine Bremerton
Oct 6	C-130s depart for Pakistan to offer humanitarian aid
Oct 18	Anti-terrorism legislation passes in the lower house.
Oct. 29	Anti-terrorism legislation passes in the upper house.
Nov. 9	Two destroyers and a supply ship depart for the Indian Ocean based on the currently effective JDA Establishment law.
Nov. 16	The Basic Plan based on the new law approved by the cabinet.
Nov. 20	The Implementation Plan based on the BP approved by Koizumi. (approved by the lower house on 11/27, the upper house on 11/30)
Nov. 25	One destroyer and another supply ship depart for the Indian Ocean, and one minesweeper tender departs for Karachi
Nov. 29	C-130s transport supplies between U.S. bases in Japan
Dec. 2	JMSDF ships begins provision of fuel to U.S. vessels
Dec. 7	Revision of PKO Law enacted