

Japan's Foreign Policymaking Process and Power Shift

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Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War era, Japan has experienced four political regime shifts between different parties. The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) first ceased its 38-year long reign in August 1993 with the establishment of the non-LDP coalition government led by Morihiro Hosokawa. This coalition lasted only ten months until June 1994 when the LDP regained power with the partnership with the Socialist Party and Sakigake. In September 2009, as a result of the landslide victory in the general election, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) took over the government. Another landslide election victory, however, brought the LDP back in power in December 2012.

Political regime changes between different parties in a variety of nations often provoke foreign and national security policy restructurings, as challenging parties run election campaigns usually by criticizing the incumbent's policies. For example, changes at the time of regime shift have been dominant feature of United States foreign policy. As John Gaddis described, the containment strategy in the Cold War era transformed administration by administration.¹ In the post-Cold War era, the presidents constantly criticized the foreign policy strategies of their predecessors. Bill Clinton criticized George W.H. Bush's foreign policy orientation, and tried to pursue "America First" policy. George W. Bush condemned Clinton's ad-hoc approach, and put more emphasis on alliance. Obama initially attempted an ABB (Anything But Bush) policy by abandoning "Global War on Terror and pulling out U.S. military from Iraq.

In the case of Japan's political regime change, the DPJ described their foreign policy goals in the 2009 manifesto in order to show their differences from the LDP governments. The DPJ intended to "develop an autonomous foreign policy strategy," "build a close and equal Japan-U.S. relationship," and "strengthen Japan's foreign relations in Asia with the aim of building an East Asian Community."² The DPJ portrayed the LDP's foreign policy as overreliance on the United States, and wanted to establish closer ties with Asian nations.

On the other hand, a nation's foreign policy needs a high degree of coherence and continuation. Some academic literatures emphasize that the structure of governmental organizations and the nature of political leadership normally resist to change foreign policy. For example, Kjell

¹ John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategy of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

² The Democratic Party of Japan, "2009 Change of Government: The Democratic Party of Japan's platform for Government," June 28, 2009, <http://www.dpj.or.jp/english/manifesto/manifesto2009.pdf> (accessed on October 2, 2014)

Goldman argues that consensus, issue salience, and the institutionalization of policy serves as political “stabilizers” to maintain the direction of government’s policy once established.³ K.J. Holsti points out that political opposition or “fractionalization” in the government party serves as pressures against foreign policy change.⁴ Lloyd S. Etheredge analyzes a series of American foreign policy toward Central America, and found the difficulty to change the course even with the lessons from the past experience.⁵

Other studies indicate the strong possibility of foreign policy change while they also recognize the obstacles. Joe D. Hagan presents a framework of comparative analysis on the relations between the domestic political regime change and foreign policy restructuring. While political opposition, polarization on foreign policy issues, regime vulnerability, and political system structure serve as obstacle, foreign policy can be changed in three dimensions: accommodation/confrontation, independence/interdependence, and level of commitment. Thomas J. Volgy and John E. Schwarz conducted an empirical analysis of foreign policy change in Great Britain, France and West Germany in 1960-80. They identified the availability of resources, possible bureaucratic constraints, and political risk for incumbents as the impediment for change, but concluded that foreign policy change appeared when certain electoral conditions were met.⁶

Charles F. Hermann presents a useful analytical framework for foreign policy restructuring. He introduces four primary agents of change which cause political dynamics in the decision making process to alter foreign policy. The four agents are 1) leader driven, 2) bureaucratic advocacy, 3) domestic restructuring, and 4) external shock. They help governments change their foreign policy through a decision process, either change in their program, goal/problem or international orientation. Hermann emphasizes the importance of political institution, and argues that to effect a change in governmental foreign policy it is important to act on the process as “the decision process itself can obstruct or facilitate change.”⁷

This study is designed to illustrate the changes of the foreign and national security policy

³ Kjell Goldman, *Change and Stability in Foreign Policy: The Problems and Possibilities of Détente* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

⁴ K.J. Holsti, “Restructuring Foreign Policy: A Neglected Phenomenon in Foreign Policy Theory,” in K.J. Holsti, ed., *Change in International System: Essays on the Theory and Practice of International Relations* (Brookfield: Edward Elgar, 1991).

⁵ Lloyd S. Etheredge, *Can Government Learn?: American Foreign Policy and Central American Revolutions* (New York: Pergamon, 1985).

⁶ They found the foreign policy change appeared that the election victory was narrow, the size of the majority in parliament was solid, and mounting problems faced the government on the domestic front. Thomas J. Volgy and John E. Schwarz, “Does Politics Stop at the Water’s Edge? Domestic Political Factors and Foreign Policy Restructuring in the Cases of Great Britain, France, and West Germany,” *The Journal of Politics* 53:3, 1991.

⁷ Charles F. Hermann, “Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy,” *International Studies Quarterly*, 34:1 (March 1990).

process and outputs due to political regime shift.⁸ First, the traditional policy making process under the LDP government is explained. Second, the process change in the 1993 Hosokawa government will be analyzed. Third, the DPJ's attempt to change the policy process and its results under the leadership of three different prime ministers will be explored. Fourth, the second Abe administration's pursuit for more active national security policy will be examined. In the end, this study concludes with the evaluation of the changes in the policy process and outcomes.

The Traditional Decision Making under the LDP

Many scholars have described Japan's policymaking system under the traditional LDP government as one in which the non-elected civil service played an influential role. Each section of the bureaucracy worked for its own interests and the industry sectors it oversaw administratively. Since the prime minister's authority to initiate policy was not clearly defined in the old Cabinet Law, he rarely initiated policies or closely controlled the approval process. When the national leader initiated policy, he usually instructed the related cabinet minister, who in turn gave instructions to the bureaucratic officials. As a result, the policy process followed the usual pattern of the bottom-up process.

In this process, policies were assigned to a specific division (*ka*) of the bureaucracy, and main working-level officers were deputy directors.⁹ Their original proposals were discussed within the division, and the approved decisions were brought to the working-level meeting with other divisions within the bureau. If the other divisions approve the proposal, it was finalized as a bureau decision with the approval of all the directors at "the bureau meetings" (*kyokugi*). Nobuo Ishihara, who saw the actual government decision making as deputy administrative chief cabinet secretary for seven and half years, states, "The bureau meetings are the actual decision making organ within the bureaucracy." According to Ishihara, the higher level meetings within the government, such as ministry meetings, sub-cabinet meetings, and cabinet meetings were really nothing more than confirmation.¹⁰

A gradual structural change took place during the LDP's long-reign, creating another bottom-up policy process within the ruling party. Some LDP Diet members accumulated knowledge and experience in specific policy areas and became identified as *zoku*, or policy tribes. *Zoku* members became the ultimate arbiters of political power over specific policy issues, and expanded their influence over the bureaucracy.¹¹ As a result, the members of the LDP's Policy Affairs Research

⁸ This paper is based on the author's work, "Nihon no Naisei to Gaiko," in *Kokusai Chiseigaku no Tenkai*, ed. Takashi Inoguchi et al. (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2015), 191-205.

⁹ Nobuo Ishihara, *Kengen no Daiido* (Tokyo: Kanki Shuppan, 2001), 82.

¹⁰ Ishihara, *Kengen no Daiido*, 90-91.

¹¹ Akira Nakamura, "Jiyuminshuto no Yottsu no Kao" [The four faces of LDP], in *Nihon no seisakukettei: Jiminto, yato, kanryo*, ed. Akira Nakamura and Yuzuru Takeshita (Tokyo: Azusa Shuppan), 3-63.

Council (PARC or *Seichokai*) and its subcommittees (*bukai*) became instrumental in the policy process. Ishihara testifies, “Since the LDP controlled the government for a long time after the war, an approval at the subcommittee level virtually the same to bureaucrats as a de-facto approval in the Diet.”¹²

The power shift from the bureaucracy to the LDP policy committees became more apparent after the two oil shocks in the 1970s. During the high growth era in the 1950s and 1960s, government revenue grew significantly every year, a majority of policy decisions involved the allocation of extra revenues to a variety of program. However, with the slowdown of Japan’s economic growth, bureaucratic officials became more dependent on the mediation and political decisions of the ruling party members. It became part of the official process for bureaucrats to seek approval from the relevant *zoku* members before submitting budget proposals and other policy initiatives to the cabinet.

Once the subcommittee approved a policy, it was brought to the full Policy Affairs Research Council, and finally to the LDP General Council, where the decision had to be unanimous. But when there is no major controversies, the process after the subcommittee. Ishihara testifies, “We only needed to seek approval from the powerful figures within the subcommittees and the party. The deliberation at the Diet was close to a ceremony.”¹³

While the bottom-up decision making within the government and the ruling party was quite normal under the LDP government, the prime ministers showed strong leadership in the important foreign policy. Their political leadership, however, was also backed by the bureaucratic bottom-up policy process.

Foreign Policy Process under the Coalition Governments in the 1990s

The traditional, bottom-up policy making system was totally revamped with the end of LDP’s one-party dominance in 1993. In June 1993, the House of Representatives passed a no-confidence vote against the Kiichi Miyazawa Cabinet, leading to the August establishment of a non-LDP coalition government led by Morihiro Hosokawa of the Japan New Party. This government was formed by the negotiation among the political parties after the July general election in order to put an end to the LDP’s long-reign and to achieve electoral system reform. Basic foreign policy positions were not different from the LDP government.

The first foreign policy issue that Prime Minister Hosokawa had to face was the conclusion of GATT Uruguay Round of trade negotiations. While maintaining a vulnerable coalition of eight political groups with a wide range of conflicting political ideas, Hosokawa introduced a new centralized decision-making mechanism outside of the Cabinet: the Council of Representatives of

¹² Ishihara, *Kengen no Daiido*, 84-85.

¹³ Ibid.

Coalition Parties (*Yoto Daihyosha Kaigi*). The Council was composed of the secretaries-general (second in command after the presidents) of the coalition's five main parties.¹⁴ All the politically important policy issues, such as GATT, were brought up to the Council. There were no issue-specific subcommittees where *zoku* members played active roles. In an interview with the author, Hosokawa testified about the difficult situation: "Under the coalition government with eight different political parties, the centralization of the policy making was the only choice. It was impossible to have issue-specific committees."¹⁵

Prime Minister Hosokawa personally placed the highest priority on the conclusion of the GATT Uruguay Round.¹⁶ In order to bring about the successful conclusion of the multilateral trade agreement, Japan needed to open up its rice market against the politically powerful agricultural interest groups and politicians who represented rural areas. Consensus for opening the rice market had been building in the last couple of years under the LDP government. Hosokawa, who happened to take office during the final round of the agricultural negotiations, had to make a politically risky decision.

After an agreement was reached between Europe and the United States, Hosokawa announced that his government was ready to accept a compromise on the issue of opening rice market. As expected strong opposition came from the agricultural interests as well as LDP politicians who took advantage of being in the opposition to blame Hosokawa for damaging Japan's agriculture. Even within the coalition, the Socialist Party, the biggest among the eight parties, threatened to leave the coalition.

But Prime Minister Hosokawa persuaded the members of the Council of Representatives on this issue, backed by public support. Ichiro Ozawa (Secretary General of the Renewal Party) was not supportive of providing the minimum access of rice market, and asked Hosokawa who would be in charge of political persuasion. The prime minister replied, "I will do the dirty job."¹⁷ Every national poll taken in the months just prior to his announcement showed that most Japanese agreed that the time had come to import at least some rice.

While the centralized decision making mechanism helped Hosokawa's leadership in opening rice market, it did not work well in his attempt to raise the consumption tax. The tax raise issue was deeply connected to negotiations on the U.S.-Japan Economic Framework Talk, which focused on

¹⁴ Above this council, there existed the Executive Council of the Government and the Coalition Party (Seifu Yoto Shuno Kaigi). But it was always "a half organization, neither a formal government body, nor a formal body of the ruling parties." Minoru Nakano, "Changing Legislative Process in the Transitional Period," *Japanese Politics Today: Beyond Karaoke Democracy?*, ed. Purnendra Jain and Takashi Inoguchi (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 49-51.

¹⁵ Morihiro Hosokawa, interview by author, November 15, 1996.

¹⁶ Hosokawa told the author, "Japan is in the world system, and I thought that we must show leadership by contributing to the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round." Ibid.

¹⁷ Morihiro Hosokawa, *Naishoroku: Hosokawa Morihiro Sori Daijin Nikki* [The diary of Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa], (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shinbun Shuppansha, 2010), 111.

Japan's macro-economic adjustment. Japan was requested to present an economic stimulus package in order to increase its imports. Japan's Ministry of Finance (MOF) officials thought that it was possible for Japan to introduce the large-scale tax cut that the U.S. government requested, only if an increase in the consumption tax would follow in a few years to make up the revenue shortage. Under the leadership of Ichiro Ozawa, the Council of Representative except the Socialist representative, decided that they delegated the decision to the prime minister to raise the consumption tax from 3 to 7 percent.¹⁸

Prime Minister Hosokawa, who previously used public support to open rice market, did not make much effort to persuade the public over the tax issue. At 0:50am on February 3, 1994, Hosokawa held an unusual midnight press conference to announce tax hike. When he asked the reason to raise the tax rate to 7%, the prime minister answered that it was "a ball park figure." This irresponsible remark showed that Hosokawa was not deeply involved in decision making. In fact, he was informed by the MOF officials just several hours before.¹⁹ Hosokawa described the press conference in his memoir, "I was under a barrage of tough questions [from the journalists]."²⁰ The prime minister regretted that he did not spend enough time on the tax issue, which resulted the strong control by MOF officials.²¹

The public was disappointed to see Hosokawa acting like a puppet totally controlled by the Ministry of Finance officials who pursued fiscal reconstruction. With no public support and the opposition from the coalition parties, the prime minister had to retreat on the tax plan the very next day. After this incident, Hosokawa did not have a chance to recover his popular support, leading to his resignation in April 1994.

Tsutomu Hata of the Renewal Party succeeded Hosokawa to lead the coalition government. In order to maintain control over the fragile coalition, Ozawa merged four of the eight parties to gain political advantages, including the chairmanship of Diet committees that previously would have gone to the Socialist Party. Upset by this treatment, the Socialists left the coalition, making the government in a minority status. As a result, the Hata cabinet lasted only two months, and a new three-party coalition government was established by the LDP, the Socialist Party and Sakigake, headed by a Socialist prime minister. This marked the second regime shift in the post Cold War era.

The new prime minister Tomiichi Murayama, who had opposed the undemocratic, centralized decision-making under the Hosokawa government, introduced a decentralized, issue-specific policymaking system in which the three coalition parties could exchange their views and find

¹⁸ Norihiko Narita, "Kokumin Fukushizei Koso no Keii," speech at the Japan National Press Club, August 19, 2010.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Hosokawa, *Naishoroku*, 343.

²¹ Hosokawa stated in his memoir, "I was too busy with rice and political reform, and did not have enough energy to handle this issue and delegated it to the coalition parties. As a result, the MOF's intention went through, and caused such a problem." Ibid., 353.

agreeable solutions. Murayama told the author, “Clearly, policy differences existed among the three parties. In many cases, we could not reach an agreement. But through serious discussion, we developed mutual understanding and trust that we could not build under the Hosokawa government.”²² The Murayama government established 18 policy project teams, and a policy coordination committee (Seisaku Chosei Kaigi) with 19 subcommittees.

These subcommittees were composed of 3 LDP, 2 Socialist, and 1 Sakigake members, in proportion to the members of Diet members affiliated with each party. They were formed in line with the jurisdiction of each ministry, and almost identical to the LDP policy subcommittees. The LDP *zoku* members started exerting their political influence in the budget-making process in the summer of 1994. For example, the agricultural *zoku* members successfully pressured the government to raise the compensation for rice market opening from 3.5 to 6.1 trillion yen.

This decentralized, three-party policymaking system was continued after Ryutaro Hashimoto took over the premiership in January 1996. In the October 1996 general election, the LDP’s coalition partners lost badly. The Socialist seats fell from 30 to 15 seats, and Sakigake won only two seats, losing seven. They no longer could maintain the 17 project teams, and 19 subcommittees. In 1997, the Hashimoto government reduced the three-party forums to five project teams and 11 policy committees. But the center of the decision making shifted to the LDP, and the three-party forum became a mere ceremony. The LDP policy subcommittees and their *zoku* members regained their power as ultimate arbiters.

Foreign Policymaking under the DPJ Government

The third regime shift took place in 2009, when the Democratic Party of Japan defeated the LDP. Prime Minister Hatoyama found a great opportunity to alter a decision process in order to establish political leadership. On the day he assumed the office, he announced “the Basic Policy” to outline the relationship between politicians and bureaucrats.²³ One of the principles of the basic policy was to establish political leadership within the ministries by establishing “three-political-appointees” meeting. This meeting would be held by the minister, the senior vice minister and the parliamentary secretaries, and excluded bureaucratic officials of the ministries in order to “plan and coordinate policies from a people’s point of view.” Hatoyama also introduced a document titled “How the politico-bureaucratic relations should be,” to clearly define the roles of politicians and bureaucrats.²⁴ In this document, he virtually prohibited bureaucrats from any policy decisions.

Another principle was political leadership on policy coordination. The Hatoyama government abolished the administrative vice-ministerial meeting which had 123 years of history. Kan was a

²² Tomiichi Murayama, interview by author, September 13, 1996.

²³ Cabinet decision, September 15, 2009.

²⁴ Cabinet decision, September 15, 2009.

leading critic of this meeting, and portrayed it as a symbol of the government's bureaucratic supremacy as virtually all the administrative policy decisions needed to be approved by it before submitting to the cabinet meeting. Hatoyama stated in the Basic Policy that his government would not "delegate governmental decisions to prior consultations solely by bureaucrats, such as vice ministers." Hatoyama and his cabinet would organize British-style cabinet committees to coordinate important policy matters by cabinet ministers.

With these institutional changes, Hatoyama hoped to introduce a top-down decision making in the relocation of the Futenma air base in Okinawa. Hatoyama made an election promise to change the existing plan signed under the LDP government, and to relocate the American marine corps base outside of the prefecture. While his government avoided the bureaucratic support, different cabinet members sought alternative plans. At the end, Hatoyama found no plan better than the existing plan that the bureaucrats recommended following. This led to his resignation.

Upon assuming the prime ministership, Hatoyama's successor, Naoto Kan, introduced his basic policy and announced that his cabinet would abandon the anti-bureaucratic stance that the Hatoyama government had. He encouraged close information sharing between the political leaders and the bureaucrats in order to "together run the government under true political leadership."²⁵ Kan believed the Hatoyama government had failed to take advantage of the expertise of the bureaucrats in the decision making, when it emphasized political leadership. The Kan government began inviting active involvements of the bureaucrats in policy making to more effectively run the government.

On September 7, 2010, when the Chinese boat collided with Japan's coast guard vessel, the Japanese government decided to officially arrest the captain of the fishing boat and charge him with obstruction of the execution of official duties. The Chinese authority saw this event as Japan's departure from the past low-key practice and reacted strongly. In the past, Chinese citizens who attempted to land the Senkaku Islands, were promptly expelled rather than being placed in Japan's legal process. In that morning, the Chinese embassy filed complaints to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo.

On September 19, the Ishigaki Court announced that the detention of the boat captain would be extended. This meant that the Japanese court was preparing to bring the captain to trial. In protest to this decision, the Chinese government suspended cabinet-level exchanges with Japan, and withdrew an invitation to one thousand Japanese students and children to attend the Shanghai Expo. On September 21, Tokyo proposed high-level talks on the issue, but Beijing rejected the proposal. On the same day, it was revealed that the Chinese government had ordered to suspend exports of rare earth materials to Japanese companies.

On September 24, the Naha District Public Prosecutor's Office announced that it would release the Chinese captain taking into account "the future of Japan's relationship with China." It was quite

²⁵ Cabinet decision, June 8, 2010.

unusual for a prosecutor's office to reach a decision giving diplomatic considerations. Two days earlier, the prosecutor's office requested the Ministry of Justice to arrange the dispatch of a MOFA official, believing that diplomatic knowledge was necessary for their final decision. The following day, a MOFA official arrived at Okinawa, and explained the historical background of the Senkaku Islands issue.²⁶ The decision was made based on his advice.

Domestically, however, strong criticism rose against the Kan government for bowing to Chinese pressure and running away from its obligation to explain things clearly to the public. Many saw the government's poor handling of the issue as proof of a lack of strategic thinking on how to deal with diplomatic crises, and a lack of a foreign policy strategy. The DPJ government's principle to avoid bureaucratic control was seriously questioned.

There was another Senkaku incident which took place under the government under Kan's successor, Yoshito Noda. On April 17, 2012 at a Washington think tank, Governor Shintaro Ishihara announced the Tokyo Metropolitan government's plan to purchase the Senkaku Islands.²⁷ Following this statement, Ishihara also introduced a series of new plans for the development of the islands, including the construction of a harbor and the placement of guards. His statements irritated the Chinese government. Ishihara's announcement was a surprise to the Noda cabinet as the national government also had a plan of the island purchase. Although an official of the Cabinet Office had contacted the island's owner, the owner was inclined to sell to the metropolitan government.²⁸

The Tokyo Metropolitan government began a fundraising campaign for the purchase of the islands in end-April, and in a month more than one billion yen was donated by Japanese citizens – by end-September it amounted nearly one and a half billion yen. With the donation gathered, Governor Ishihara continued to announce his provocative plan to develop the islands. On July 7, Prime Minister Noda announced its plan to nationalize the islands in order to “control the Senkaku peacefully and stably.” The spokesperson of the Chinese foreign ministry, Liu Weimin, stated “Nobody is ever allowed to trade in China's sacred territory. The Chinese Government will continue to take necessary measures to resolutely safeguard its sovereignty over the Diaoyu Island and its affiliated islands.”²⁹

In mid-August, the Noda cabinet decided to purchase the three islands of the Senkaku. The MOFA officials informed Beijing through diplomatic channel about the purchase. According to a

²⁶ Disclosure of the Executive Organization Information, No. 139, 2012.

²⁷ Shintaro Ishihara, “The U.S.-Japan Alliance and the Debate over Japan's Role in Asia,” Heritage Foundation, April 16, 2012.

²⁸ The owner's brother states in his book: It made more sense [to the Tokyo Metropolitan government]. Not only because of the relationship with Governor Ishihara, we did not think the light-weighted government, which had already pledged to dissolve the lower house, was not a partner we could entrust the Senkaku Islands. Kurihara Hiroyuki, *Senkaku Shoto Urimasu* [We sell the Senkaku Islands] (Tokyo: Kozaido, 2012), p.107.

²⁹ “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Weimin's Remarks on the Japanese Government's plan to ‘Buy’ the Diaoyu Islands,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, July 8, 2012.

MOFA official, Chinese official showed understanding to the Japanese government's explanation that the purchase by the national government would be less problematic than that by the Tokyo metropolitan government.³⁰

In early September, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Zhijun visited Tokyo. The MOFA told the national government purchase of the islands and the transfer of the ownership on September 11. Receiving this information, the Chinese government requested to set an opportunity for Chinese President Hu Jintao to personally complain to Prime Minister Noda. Tokyo reluctantly agreed to set a brief meeting between the two top leaders at the APEC Vladivostok meeting on September 9.³¹ At the 15-minute meeting, President Hu told Noda Chinese opposition, and Noda simply responded that the islands belonged to Japan.

On the following day, the cabinet committee made an official decision of the islands purchase, and the ownership was transferred on September 11. Some experts explained that it was Japan's intended insult to the Chinese leader as Tokyo decided on the very next day of President Hu's claim. But the fact was – China was previously informed, and it was Beijing's request to set up an “unofficial” meeting for Hu to complain to Noda.

This announcement of the purchase was unacceptable to the Chinese public. On September 15, a large number of Chinese citizens participated protest marches and called for boycott of Japanese products. In some cities, demonstration became out of control to become fire vandalism and other criminal acts. On September 18, the 81st anniversary of the Mukuden Incident, people over 180 cities of China attended protests. On the following day, Chinese national authority deployed riot police to suppress existing protests and to prevent their reoccurrence.

Foreign Policy Process under the Abe administration

As a result of the landslide victory of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in the December 2012 general election, Shinzo Abe became the prime minister for the second time. In his policy speech on January 22, 2013, Abe outlined the policies that the LDP members had nurtured over the past three years when acting as an opposition party. On the foreign policy front, Abe declared to make “a drastic reshaping.” Above all, the highest priority was given to reinforcing the Japan-U.S. alliance, and Abe stressed the importance of developing “a strategic diplomacy” and “viewing the world as a whole, as if looking at a globe rather than looking only at bilateral relations with neighboring countries.” As a part of this strategy, he promised to make contributions taking a leading role in the Asia-Pacific region (Cabinet Secretariat, 2013). For this purpose, Abe sought participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiation. The TPP agreement would cover

³⁰ A MOFA official, interview by author, November 6, 2012.

³¹ Nagashima Akihisa, “*Katsubei*” *toiu Ryugi* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2013), 16-17.

not only trade rules but also the fields of intellectual property rights, government procurement, investment, labor and environment, it would shape a high standard, broad based regional pact in the Asia Pacific. The Abe government did not want to miss out on an opportunity to take the initiative to architect a wide range of new economic standards for the region.

Prime Minister Abe from the beginning of his second term in December 2012 carefully planned his strategy for the TPP negotiations. He appointed competent LDP leaders to key cabinet positions. While Abe appointed Akira Amari with his trust to the minister in charge of TPP, and in order to tackle with sensitive agricultural issue he carefully picked an agricultural expert Koya Nishikawa to chair the LDP TPP policy committee, and an internationalist, former METI officer Ken Saito chair the LDP agricultural committee. He also selected Koji Tsuruoka who was widely known as a hard negotiator in the diplomatic community to be the chief negotiator, and MOF official Toyonari Sasaki to be the chief domestic policy coordinator. Under Tsuruoka, a hundred hard-working officials were seconded from the central bureaucracy.

With these arrangement, the Japanese team successfully helped TPP Minister Amari to reach an agreement on the original TPP. Chief Negotiator Tsuruoka pointed out three reasons for Japan's diplomatic success and effective leadership. First, the decision-making authority was centralized to TPP Minister Amari who was able to make difficult political decision, and his decisions were fully supported by Prime Minister Abe. Second, the Japanese negotiation team was far superior to their counterparts in terms of negotiation experience and legal and policy expertise. Third, the Japanese negotiators were willing to share their knowledge with their counterparts, which helped to gain support in the difficult negotiations over agricultural products (Tsuruoka, 2016b). The Japanese team demonstrated transactional leadership through their expertise in trade negotiations to reach an agreement.

After the withdrawal of the United States in January 2017, Prime Minister Abe decided to renegotiate with the ten other TPP partners as Prime Minister Turnbull described. With strong support from Abe, the Japanese negotiation team showed their leadership and played an instrumental role as a mediator in concluding the TPP 11 negotiations.

Conclusion

When Hosokawa became the prime minister under the non-LDP coalition government, he introduced a new centralized decision-making mechanism, the Council of Representatives of Coalition Parties. While the centralized decision making mechanism helped Hosokawa's leadership in opening rice market, it did not work well in his attempt to raise the consumption tax. Tomiichi Murayama, who had opposed the undemocratic, centralized decision-making under the Hosokawa government, introduced a decentralized, issue-specific policymaking system in which the three

coalition parties could exchange their views and find agreeable solutions. This decentralized, three-party policymaking system was continued even after Ryutaro Hashimoto took over the premiership.

When the DPJ government was established, Prime Minister Hatoyama set a new decision process in order to emphasize political leadership by avoiding bureaucratic influence. When Kan took over the premiership, he tried to reestablish relationship with bureaucrats. However, in the case of the Senkaku incident, his cabinet failed to take advantage of their policy expertise. In the case of the 2012 Senkaku incidents, Prime Minister Noda fully took advantage of bureaucratic expertise.

After the two cases of the regime shift, from the LDP to the Hosokawa to the LDP governments in 1990s and from the LDP to the DPJ to the LDP. There seemed to exist a similar pattern. The Hosokawa and Hatoyama governments introduced a drastically different decision making mechanism. The following administrations, after having seen the excessive shift to the centralized (Hosokawa) and the anti-bureaucratic (Hatoyama) policy making, changed back to the traditional policy making mechanism.