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# policy REVIEW

Fall 1991

Number 58

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## Conservatism's Growing Pains

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### Why Communism Failed

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# UNCLE SAMURAI

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## America's Military Alliance with Japan

SETH CROPSEY

**T**here were no aftershocks of alarm in Tokyo when Iraq invaded Kuwait a year ago. The Japanese, who rely on Middle Eastern imports for two-thirds of their energy, figured that oil is oil, and that it would find its way to market whether or not Kuwait was a sovereign nation. The land of the rising sun lay low.

Bush administration requests for Japan's assistance in transporting troops to the Persian Gulf aboard chartered airplanes elicited no response from Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu's anxious cabinet, and polite refusals from both Japan Airlines and All-Nippon Air. By early September, however, the issue could not be avoided. U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Nicholas Brady arrived in Tokyo to ask Kaifu to provide frontline countries in the Gulf and the U.S.-led coalition with \$4 billion in assistance. Japan began to realize that the nations arrayed against Saddam Hussein were watching its response to the growing crisis very carefully.

Eventually, Japan contributed \$14 billion to Operation Desert Storm, and after the war was over, it sent four naval vessels to the Persian Gulf to help clear mines. Meanwhile, Japan's Asian neighbors shifted about uncomfortably at the thought of Japanese involvement once again in significant events beyond its borders. The political debate that occurred in Japan over what its role should be as a contributing member of the responsible international community continues today. As the preeminent Pacific power, as Japan's largest trading partner, and as its effective military protector, there is no nation with a keener interest in the outcome of that debate than the United States.

The United States and Japan have a common interest in maintaining the current military partnership. From it Japan derives the principal source of its security, the umbrella of U.S. military force deployed in the western Pacific. The United States, meanwhile, gets a base in Japan for protecting American influence in a region of the world whose importance will increase with time. America's superior, and Japan's subordinate, role in this security partnership are essential to the regional and global peace that both nations seek. As such, U.S. policymakers should resist isolationist and budget-driven pressures to diminish American influence in Asia. Japan's

leaders, meanwhile, should hold fast to the American military umbrella by contributing to its technological and financial support as actively and greatly as possible.

### The Scorch of the Rising Sun

The Asian solar system has a binary star for its center. China, the primary sun, has the greatest mass. It and the smaller Japanese star revolve around one another, affecting with their combined gravitational force the movement and rotation of all the lesser Asian planets. Beginning with the last quarter of the 19th century, Japan's pull has been so strong that it is impossible to discuss Asian security relationships without noting how the Japanese have altered everyone else's paths. This is especially true in Asia where, owing perhaps to the unusual antiquity of its recorded events or the deep animosity between its peoples, history is remembered in detail and called upon routinely as a lesson for the future. For its neighbors, Japan's obvious historical fact is its aggression.

Closer to Japan than any other neighbor, Korea was the first Asian country to encounter an aggressively hostile Japan. Intending to pass through and invade China, Hideyoshi Toyotomi, a 16th-century warlord attacked Korea in 1592 and again five years later.

As the 19th century drew to a close, Japan resumed its active interest in Korea. Japanese policy successfully edged out Chinese claims, and then by warfare in 1905, Russian control over the Korean Peninsula. When Japan decided soon after to bypass formalities and govern Korea directly, the subjugated people rose up. Japanese forces put their villages to the torch and killed 12,000 Koreans in a year.

Japan annexed Korea in 1910 and moved quickly to erase Koreans' sense of their nationhood. Newspapers were banned, schools closed, history rewritten, and Japanese treaties substituted for Korean ones. Occasional demonstrations against Japanese rule, such as the peaceful one that took place when the old Emperor Kojong

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SETH CROPSEY, *director of The Heritage Foundation's Asian Studies Center, was deputy undersecretary of the Navy from 1984 to 1989.*

died in 1919, were answered with club, bullet, and hand-cuff. In Seoul, 6,000 demonstrators were killed, 15,000 wounded, and 50,000 arrested.

For the next three-and-a-half decades until the end of World War II, Japan ruled Korea with increasing severity, enforcing worship of the Japanese Shinto religion, ending primary school instruction in the Korean language, and forcibly assigning nearly 5.5 million laborers to help support Japan's war effort.

### **"Bestial Machinery"**

In late summer 1931 Japan overwhelmed Manchuria, a province of China in which elements of the Japanese army had been stationed since defeating the Russians in 1905. Initiating their military campaign with a manufactured provocation, Japanese soldiers attacked Chinese troops in the city of Mukden. Japan's forces in China, known as the Kwantung Army, then conquered all of Manchuria and several thousand square miles of neighboring inner Mongolia before the year was out.

A skirmish between Chinese and Japanese forces near Beijing in July 1937 led immediately to general warfare. By August the fighting had reached Shanghai. In December the Kwantung Army advanced up the Yangtze river valley and captured Nanjing, the Chinese capital.

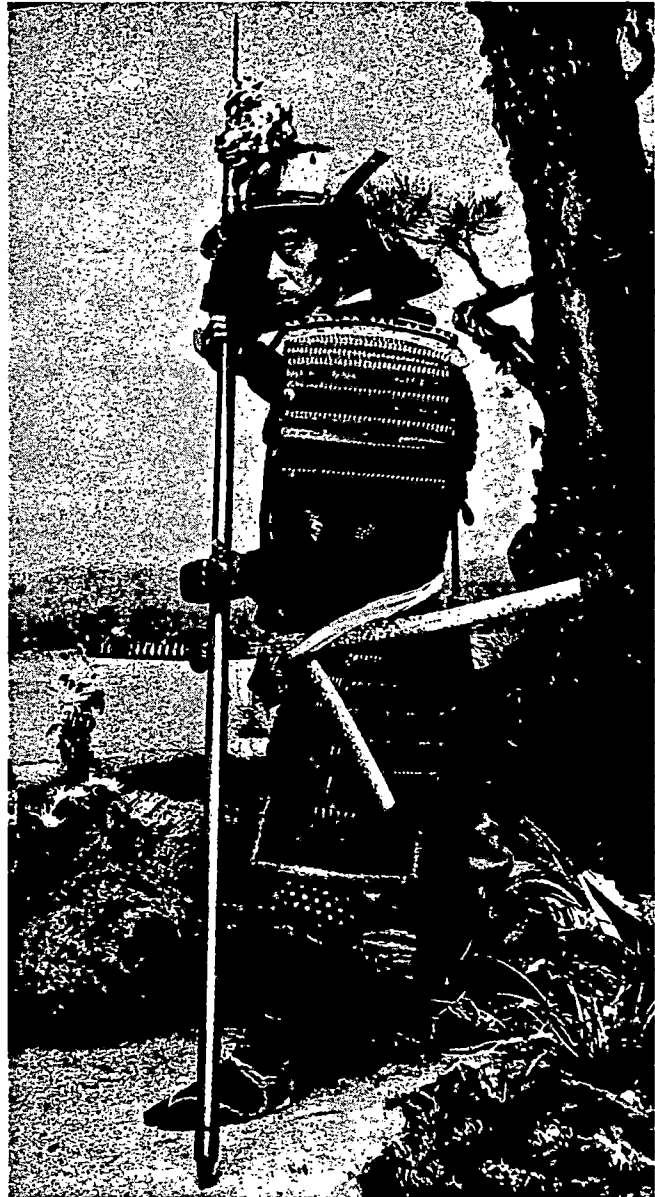
Japanese military commanders were determined to discourage military and civilian opponents alike from any thought of resistance. They turned Nanjing into a charnel house, killing 200,000 civilians and prisoners of war in the first six weeks of occupation. Japanese military authorities failed to discipline their forces who looted and burned what could not be raped or slaughtered. Nazi Germany's ambassador to China cabled home describing the Japanese army as "bestial machinery."

The sharp gears of this violent instrument were engaged again as Japan turned it upon the Philippines. Japanese aircraft operating from bases on Formosa struck at American military targets on Luzon within hours of the Imperial Navy's attack on Pearl Harbor. After General MacArthur was forced to leave Corregidor in early March 1942, Japanese occupation closed upon the Philippines like a fist. The conquerors' policy was direct: exploit the land for resources to aid Japan's overall war effort.

The Japanese military unleashed its characteristic ruthlessness. A special unit of the Imperial Army's military police known as the Kempei Tai was responsible for upholding law and order in the immediate vicinity of its bases. Individual accounts of those who survived the Kempei Tai tell of the random shooting (and burial alive) of children, incineration of live victims' sexual organs, beatings with baseball bats, the burning of prisoners lashed to a rotating spit, and other forms of torture that are unprintable.

When Manila fell in March 1945 the Japanese naval defense commander, Rear Admiral Sanji Iwabuchi, gave orders for retreat that resulted in the beheading, rape, and shooting of numerous Filipinos who had thus far survived.

Japan's armed forces stalked across Asia duplicating this record. Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaya—there is hardly a country in the region that escaped the harsh



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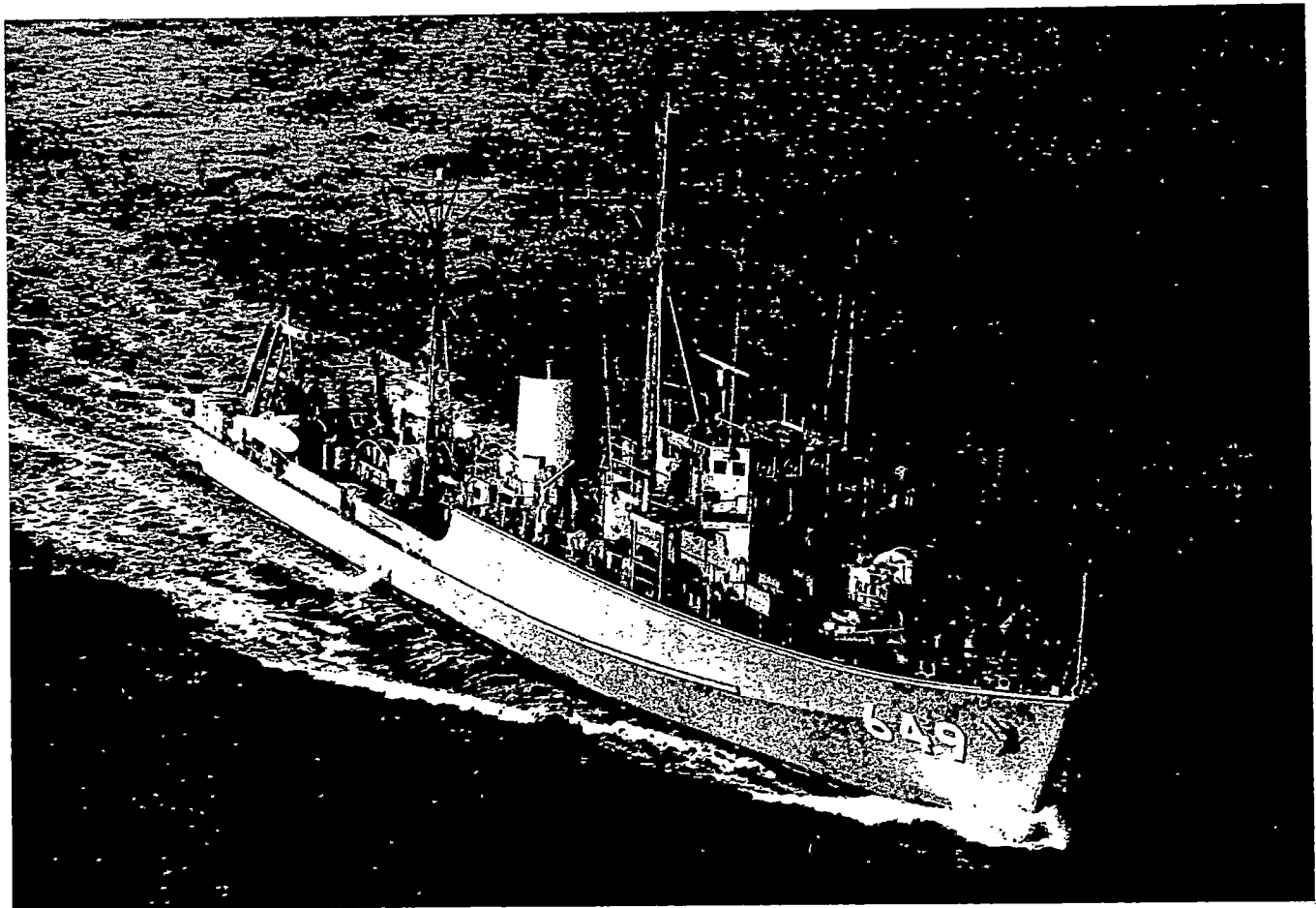
**Japan has been a bulwark against Soviet aggression in the Pacific.**

treatment. The collective effect of this memory forecloses any possibility in the immediate future that Japan could peacefully assume a significant military position in Asia.

### **Asian Powderkeg**

Japan's enormous national wealth, unsurpassed manufacturing capability, technological prowess, and personal industriousness would likely produce, if harnessed, an exceptionally well-organized military armed to the hilt with the most advanced equipment. Yet Japanese rearmament would cause such upheaval throughout the rest of Asia that it is almost certainly not in Japan's own interests.

Were Japan seriously to embark upon a major plan to rebuild their national defenses today, other Asian countries that have already been occupied in ambitious armament programs for the last decade would redouble their efforts. A hot market in weapons would be trans-



Ships of the World

**Japan's neighbors shifted uncomfortably as Japan sent four ships to the Persian Gulf to clear mines after Operation Desert Storm.**

formed into a furnace. The apprehension caused by a remilitarizing Japan would be further sharpened by the Bush administration's continuing reductions in American military strength, especially its intention announced in 1990 to decrease troop levels in Asia from 135,000 to 120,000 by 1993. Asia would become a powderkeg as Koreans, Chinese, and other Asians fear a resurgence of Japan as the region's preeminent military power.

Tempting as the prospect of a Japan wholly responsible for its own defense is to those in the United States who would slash the Defense Department or spend its budget on domestic priorities, it is not an option so long as a stable Asia that can go on creating wealth while it moves toward democracy remains, as it should, the U.S.'s overall policy goal for the region. Nor would rearmament be practical for the Japanese.

Because Japan also remembers. Since its absolute defeat at the end of World War II, Japan has eschewed arms as passionately as it once embraced them. Article Nine of Japan's constitution, enacted in November 1946, "forever renounce[s] war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes."

Successive Japanese governments have interpreted the article to allow national possession of only those weapons that are minimally necessary for self-defense. Excluded are such weapons as intercontinental ballistic

missiles (ICBMs) and aircraft carriers, which are deemed offensive. Under this strict interpretation Japan has not, until this past spring, deployed any armed forces outside its borders. It has forsworn the right of collective defense, *i.e.*, coming to the aid of allies under attack, and has steadfastly refused to export weapons—to anyone.

Japan's defense budget of \$30 billion is comparable to those of Britain, France, and Germany, but small relative to its GNP and its global economic importance and interests. It is also deliberately unassuming. Rejecting even the slightest appearance of military ostentation, the Japanese Self Defense Force (SDF) does not speak of its component parts as an army, navy, and air force, choosing instead to call them the ground, maritime, and air self defense forces (GSDF, MSDF, ASDF). Together they number about 249,000 active-duty troops, a little larger than the total active and reserve strength of the United States' smallest military service, the Marine Corps.

With 156,000 men, the GSDF is the largest component of Japan's military. It fields one armored and 12 infantry divisions, and would constitute the nation's final defense against a successful invasion of Japanese soil. The MSDF and ASDF divide the other 93,000 troops equally in carrying out their defensive missions. Roughly one-third of the ASDF's 365 combat aircraft are committed to the support of ground troops, with the balance assigned to defending Japanese airspace. The MSDF is built around

a core of surface warships and submarines. Its principal mission is to defend the sea-lanes through which Japan's vital commercial shipping passes up to 1,000 miles from the mainland.

Beyond the 1,000-mile boundary, the U.S. Seventh Fleet, which is homeported in Yokosuka, Japan, along with its premier capital ship, the aircraft carrier USS *Independence*, assumes responsibility for patrolling the vast waters of the North Pacific and keeping open the sea lines of communication that link Japan with much of the rest of the world.

### **Japan's Strategic Value**

Japan has benefited richly from the United States' defensive umbrella since the end of World War II. Released from the burden of acquiring a military commensurate with their dependence on the seas for delivery of raw materials and export of finished goods, the Japanese have stood out among the free nations in the relative puniness of their defense budgets. It was, for example, only in 1987 that Japan reversed a decision made 11 years earlier by Prime Minister Takeo Miki's cabinet to keep defense spending below 1 percent of gross national product. In terms of GNP, this is by far the smallest of the 20 top defense budgets in the world.

The yen saved may have contributed to the Japanese economy's position as the second largest in the world. But the use of Japan as an American base roughly 200 miles off the eastern coast of the Soviet Union has been of incalculable strategic value to the United States throughout the Cold War, and is certain to remain so unless some great event divides the two nations.

Since 1905, when the Russians were defeated in their war with Japan, Moscow has been unable to turn its complete attention to Europe, serene in the knowledge that its easternmost Asian approaches were secure. Over the years, Kremlin rulers may also have recalled that the Japanese troops who landed at Vladivostok in December 1917 were the first of many sent by foreign powers to crush the Bolshevik Revolution. Japan did not act out of a fear of Communism; the chance to seize territory at fire-sale prices was simply irresistible.

As tensions grew with China in the 1950s, Soviet anxiety heightened. By the 1980s the very low-technology threat of mainland China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) had tied up as many as 50 Soviet divisions at a time in Asia.

Qualitatively superior to that of the PLA, the U.S. presence in Japan has had a similar effect on Moscow. To keep the Soviets from concentrating their attention on Europe and to hold before them the daunting prospect of a two-front war, the United States could not have asked for a more favorable position than that offered by the main Japanese islands. They sit conveniently across the Sea of Japan from Vladivostok, which is the eastern terminus of the Trans-Siberian Railway, the Soviets' chief warm water port, and the logistical center of the Soviet Union's Far Eastern theater of military operations. The presence of major U.S. armed forces at the USSR's back door speaks to the Kremlin in a clear and powerful language that needs no translation.

Japan's security thus has been assured without the

self-effort that would have destabilized all of Asia, the United States has gained power and influence in the western Pacific while deterring war with the Soviets, and the world has been a safer place. The relationship has been mutually—and universally—beneficial.

### **Still a Bear Not to Cross**

It is extremely important to remember that while the climate between the United States and the Soviet Union is more temperate now than ever, Soviet capabilities in the Far East have kept expanding as though this sea-change had taken place in an undiscovered ocean. Both the intentions and capabilities of a potential opponent must be weighed when trying to peer into the future. Intentions can change over a night or two. Capabilities take years to develop. Since President Gorbachev assumed power the Soviets have continued to modernize their forces in their Far Eastern theater.

Although the Defense Department expects overall reductions in the number of Soviet tanks deployed in the Far Eastern theater, modern and more powerful models such as the T-80, T-72, and upgraded T-72 will replace many of the older ones. As a result, firepower will be retained. The same is true for tactical air forces. As older planes are withdrawn, new models such as the Su-24 Fencer-E and MIG-29 Fulcrum will preserve combat capabilities. The addition of some newer aircraft, like the Su-27 Flanker will provide Soviet commanders with a long-range escort role that will actually increase the threat to Japan and the U.S. forces based there.

Similarly, the fighting capability of Soviet Pacific Fleet surface forces is expected to grow significantly throughout the 1990s. The Defense Department estimates that surface-to-surface missile capacity aboard Soviet warships will increase by 100 percent, surface-to-air

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## **Japanese rearmament would cause such upheaval throughout the rest of Asia that it is almost certainly not in Japan's own interests.**

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missiles by 50 percent, and the number of ships with long-range anti-submarine warfare weapons by 40 percent. With the addition of the ability to project power ashore to this swelling armada, the Soviet Pacific Fleet is predicted to increase its capacity to transport amphibious troops from the current level of 50 percent of the naval infantry (marines) assigned to the fleet, to 80 percent by the year 2000.

Still, there have been cutbacks in the Soviets' Asia-based ground forces. Symbolic ones were announced in April 1991 when President Gorbachev visited Tokyo and declared his intention to reduce the military division

based on the contested Kurile Islands by one-third. The rest of the 325,000 troops in the Far Eastern theater, according to Soviet figures, who are focused on Japan and U.S. forces in Asia, remain where they were.

The real reductions in the Soviets' Asian forces have come from their army divisions facing China from which, since 1988, nearly 120,000 troops have been withdrawn. Leaving aside speculation about what opportunities Beijing thinks the Soviet withdrawal may have unearthed for them, practical-minded Japanese are wise to note, as one defense expert did this past June, that "If the Soviets say their Far Eastern forces are not focused on the Chinese, then there are only the Japanese and the U.S. left."

Signs that Moscow's interest in Japan and the Far East is not restricted to the old regime were plain last spring. Mikhail Gorbachev's rival, Russian Republic President Boris Yeltsin, and no friend of the Soviet Imperium, effectively claimed the Kurile Islands as Russian territory. On the eve of Gorbachev's historic trip to Japan, Yeltsin warned him not to cut any deal with the Japanese without first obtaining the Russian Republic's approval.

Japanese defense officials are appropriately wary. In their 1991 annual White Paper, Japan's Defense Agency called the situation in the Soviet Union "still unpredictable and untransparent." Their skepticism is justified both by the Soviets' continued arms buildup in the Far East, and by their response to the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) agreement Moscow signed with Washington last November. Required to decrease force levels in Europe, the Soviets simply transported an enormous quantity of weapons east of the Ural mountains. Those weapons can be shipped further east.

#### **Providing for Common Defense**

In fact, Japan's appreciation of the Soviet threat has long been sound. It is reflected not only by the efforts mentioned above at self-defense, and the gradually ac-

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## **Japan's defense budget of \$30 billion is comparable to those of Britain, France, and Germany, but small relative to GNP.**

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celerating percentage of GNP Japanese leaders have devoted to the military budget, but by Tokyo's record of growing financial support over the years for U.S. troops based in Japan, and by several other important but generally unknown facts.

Between 1985 and 1989, and under steady diplomatic pressure, Japanese payments for facilities and equipment on U.S. bases rose by 45 percent. During the same period Tokyo's annual payments for items such as water, electricity, construction, and a part of the salaries of

Japanese nationals employed on U.S. bases grew by 176 percent. Japan's level of support is today far greater than that of any other nation that is host to U.S. armed forces. By 1995 Japan has promised to pay 73 percent of the total cost of the U.S. military presence on Japanese soil, minus the salaries of U.S. armed forces personnel and civilian Defense Department employees.

Japan has also increased active defense cooperation with the United States. In 1983 at the request of the Reagan administration, Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone's government reexamined Japan's Three Principles on Arms Export, which, since their declaration in 1967, had effectively prevented the sale abroad of any equipment remotely connected with military technology. Nakasone waived the rules exclusively for the United States, allowing transfer of military technologies for naval and selected surface-to-air missile application.

Other gauges record similar progress. Among all nations, Japan is second only to Turkey in the amount by which its government increased total defense spending during the 1970s and '80s. From 1971 to 1989 Japan's defense budget grew by 165 percent (the United States by comparison increased its defense spending during the same period by 20.5 percent).

#### **Undesired Guest**

*Kokusai-koken* is shorthand for Japan's still-to-be-defined contribution to the emerging world order. The Gulf War helped concentrate the attention of Japanese leaders on the question. American policy-makers should anticipate and debate the issue seeking to guide its resolution.

For the United States the first principle is to maintain American influence in the western Pacific and Asia. The forward-based units of the American military are essential for U.S. leverage, and the bases Japan provides and helps to provision are still central to America's military presence in the region. So long as Moscow retains powerful armed forces capable of seriously threatening vital U.S. interests around the world, American sailors, marines, soldiers, and pilots should remain in Japan as a strategic reminder to Kremlin leaders of their vulnerability to a second front. Moreover, the Soviets are still modernizing their military capabilities in the Far East. U.S. forces in Japan offer the strongest bulwark in the region against that expanding threat.

The second reason for preserving the U.S. defense relationship with Tokyo is economic. Japan is the heart of the Asian market that holds the fastest-growing and most dynamic economies in the world, and to which the center of international trade is shifting from the North Atlantic. As America's commerce with Asia grows, so does its interest in Asian stability. U.S. forces based in Japan assure that stability, first by protecting Japan, and second, by saving Tokyo the military exertions that would agitate other nations in the region. The rotating presence of the Yokosuka-based Seventh Fleet throughout Asia offers genuine hope for that quarter of the world's continued prosperity and its eventual progress toward democracy.

The foundation on which U.S. military presence in Japan rests is sound. Both nations benefit greatly. The fact that Japan now recognizes the need to increase its

participation in shaping international events dovetails with American popular opinion that Japan should assume an even greater share of responsibility for its own defense. It should not be regarded as the first step in a reverse march of history.

Today, Japanese energies are absorbed commercially. Japan's military occupies a place in society much like the presence at a rich banquet of an unimportant and vaguely undesired guest. Recruiting is difficult. This year one-fifth of the National Defense Academy's graduating class turned down commissions, largely to accept more lucrative offers in business. Prestige is low; it was only after Noburu Takeshita became prime minister in November 1987 that military officers were once again allowed to wear their uniforms in the chief of government's office. And, the military's voice within the government carries little weight. In fact they are represented by the Finance Ministry, and have no direct control over budget decisions.

In short, while the chance of a relapse into the warrior-dominated society that precipitated Japan's behavior in the decades before and during World War II cannot be dismissed, signs of it are scant. *Kokusai-koken* should be welcomed by the United States as an opportunity to encourage Tokyo to expand its contribution to our mutual security.

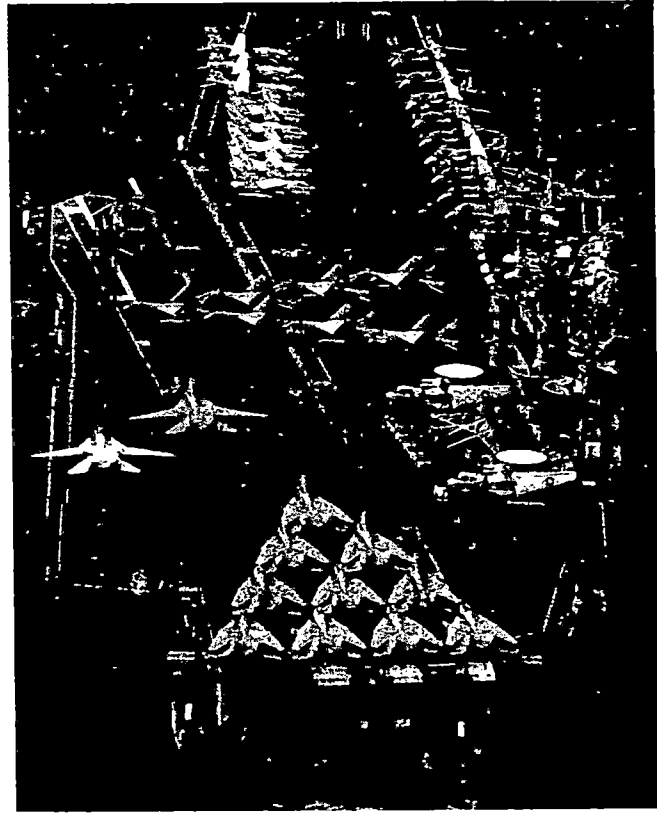
### Getting Japan to See It That Way

That will require persuasion. In a recent poll of Japanese corporate leaders, 75 percent believed that the Gulf War forced Japan to consider the extent of its cooperation with the United Nations. Only 35 percent thought that the issue raised had been the nature of the U.S.-Japan relationship. Japanese politicians and intellectuals have reacted similarly. Those who favor a more active role in the world have focused on measures such as mediating Third World disputes, using foreign aid as a more effective lever to advance peace, and stepping up participation in internationally sanctioned peace-keeping operations.

These initiatives can be useful, but they are bound to have a marginal effect on immediate dangers to peace: rulers such as Saddam Hussein or North Korea's Kim Il Sung. Nor can such economic or diplomatic measures protect Japan from the fallout of more distant international explosions: a possible cataclysmic splintering of the Soviet Union, major civil unrest in China, atomic exchanges in the sub-continent or the Middle East, or nuclear blackmail as powerful weapons and the means to deliver them proliferate.

As a great commercial power, Japan has to prevent the turmoil in marketplaces and unavoidable disruption in seagoing commerce that such upheavals would cause. Japan's clearest foreign policy interest is in continued international stability. The most dependable guarantor of that equilibrium is U.S. willingness to lead other nations in coalition efforts like Desert Storm or, if necessary, to act by itself. And that fact links the former basis of the U.S.-Japan security relationship with its future.

Where the foundation of the relationship was once the common need to guard against potential Soviet aggression, Japan in the future stands to gain just as



Reuters/Bettmann Newsphotos

**Aircraft carrier USS Enterprise off Okinawa. Japanese bases are central to America's military presence in Asia.**

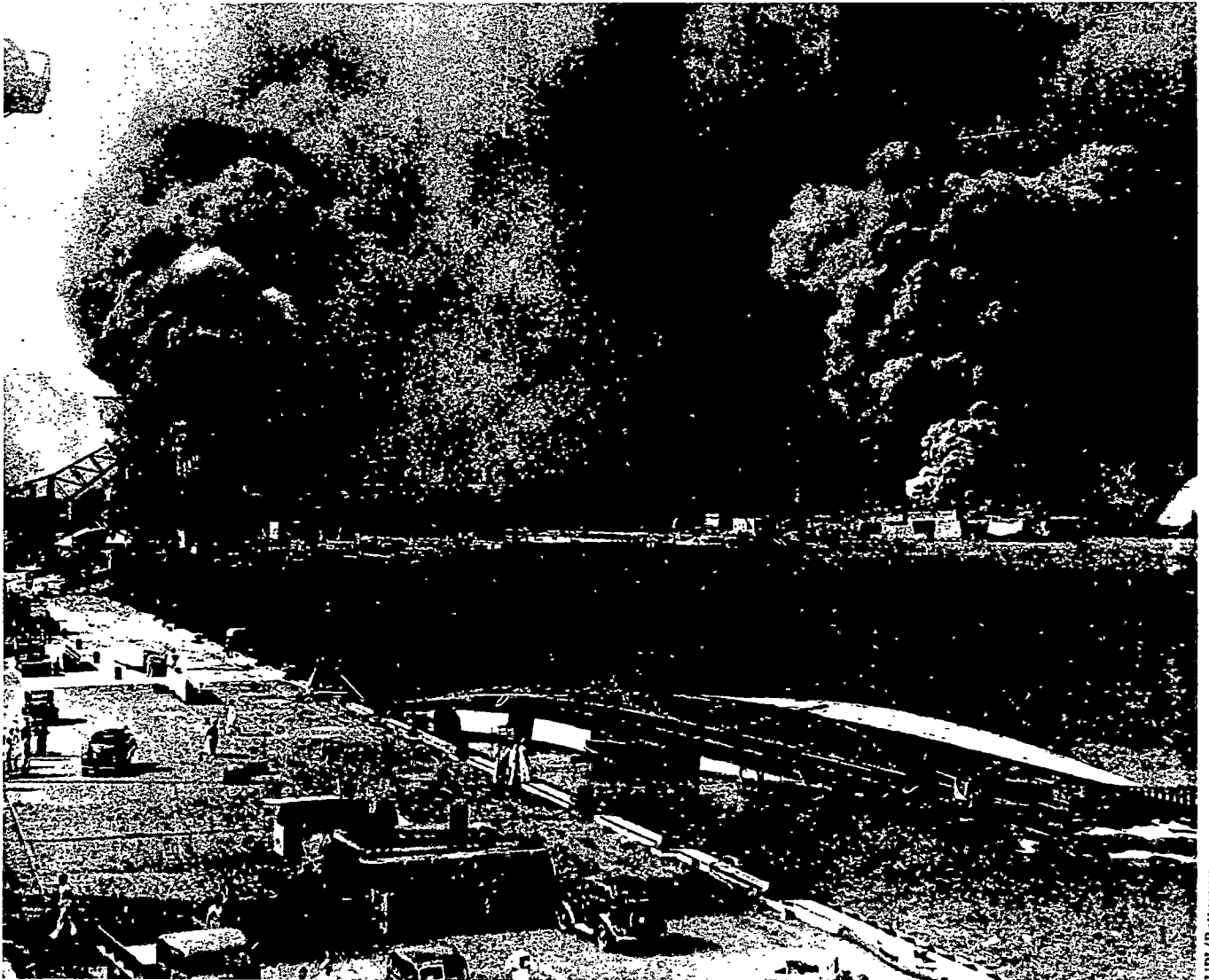
much, and perhaps more, from the U.S. ability to protect international order. For the United States, though, with Soviet aggressiveness in remission, Moscow is more likely to pose a regional than a global threat. The emphasis on Japan's strategic value has shifted from the geographic to a mixture of technological and economic. Japan's technology with military application, its industrial prowess, and its wealth will become the chief benefits to the United States of our mutual security relationship.

That shift alters slightly the balance of the security relationship between the two nations, giving a United States relieved of having to cope with the Soviets' most troublesome aggressiveness a slight edge over a Japan that must still face the localized reality of Moscow's well-armed forces. As much as Washington would like to draw upon Tokyo's know-how and wealth, Japan has a more urgent requirement for America's defensive umbrella.

U.S. policy-makers should remember that fact as debate over the future of the U.S.-Japan security relationship takes shape. The leverage it offers should not be wielded to threaten Japan with termination of U.S. defensive protection, but rather to build upon and strengthen the framework of the relationship that already exists between the two nations.

### Greater Burden-Sharing

One part of that structure that has already been improved almost as much as possible is Japan's direct financial support for U.S. forces based on its soil. Here and there a significant U.S. expense can still be identified



UPI/Bettmann

**Fifty years after Pearl Harbor, the United States and Japan are close friends with common defense interests.**

that the Japanese could reasonably be expected to pay. One such example is the 5.3 million barrels of ship fuel the Seventh Fleet burned last year and which cost American taxpayers roughly \$200 million.

The Japanese should divide that bill equally with the United States. But the list of military expenses Tokyo does not share with the United States is finite, and close to exhaustion. It cannot be lengthened without changing fundamentally the idea of burden-sharing, and that would have a negative effect. For the foreseeable future, the current of Japanese pacifism will run strong, not dictating the country's foreign and defense policies, but certainly influencing them. Any agreement Japan could make to recompense the United States for defense costs beyond those that clearly apply to Japan would inevitably foul and probably diminish the defense relationship between the two nations.

A small yet fertile and untilled field that offers more opportunities for Japan to increase its level of support is in operations alongside the U.S. military. To note a couple of examples, Japanese naval supply ships could help reprovision U.S. naval vessels, and Japanese command-and-control aircraft could work together with

Seventh Fleet aircraft carrier battle groups. Because it is likelier to produce results quickly, the Bush administration should step up its efforts quietly to persuade Japanese politicians to pass legislation that would allow the SDF to conduct joint operations with the United States.

A far more profitable area for cooperation, however, and one in which there are tremendous possibilities for growth is technology. The Japanese government's 1983 decision to allow the export of military technology to the United States creates the potential for increased availability of leading-edge technologies, significantly reduced production costs, and substantial decreases in the long intervals the Pentagon routinely experiences between the completion of research and development for weapons systems and their actual production.

There are today three committees, staffed by American and Japanese officials, that are working to reach agreements on the transfer of advanced Japanese military technologies to the United States, and another two that would move selected U.S. technologies in the opposite direction. Gaining access to Japanese excellence in technology that greatly improves a missile's

ability to locate and destroy its target, in certain areas of magnetic field research, and for ceramics used to strengthen and lighten internal combustion engines are the U.S. objectives in these discussions. In their dealings with Japanese officials, the Defense Department should elevate the importance of reaching timely agreements that produce meaningful, tangible results.

### **SDI Cooperation**

The United States should expand considerably the scope of this effort so that the entire spectrum of Japan's applicable manufacturing industry is brought to bear in support of the armed forces that protect both nations. Japanese commercial successes in micro-processing, electro-optics, and advanced steel technologies, to name a few, can and should be harnessed to serve the interests of both nations by improving the combat capabilities of the U.S. military.

More to the point, the United States should consolidate in one office of the Department of Defense responsibility for all government efforts to identify and then negotiate with Japan to obtain technologies that could substantially improve U.S. combat capabilities. Right now that effort is diffuse. In the Defense Department, for example, officials of the Defense Security Assistance Agency, the Defense Technology Security Administration, and in the undersecretary for Acquisition's office are all involved. At the Departments of State and Commerce efforts are also underway to draw upon Japan's technological skills. The issue is important today and will surely grow enough in the future to deserve the concentrated energies of the arm of government responsible for defense.

Finally, and most important, Japan's industry and wealth should become a primary engine in the effort to build an effective space-based defense against ballistic missiles. Then-Prime Minister Nakasone laid the groundwork for such cooperation with his 1986 agreement to participate in SDI research. Fleshing it out to produce real, practical results should be accomplished as soon as feasible.

Japan's ability to play a major role in the development and production of SDI is plain. The research laboratories of the nation's great manufacturing corporations labor smoothly and efficiently alongside the production facilities they support. Both respond speedily to decisions taken by the central government in Tokyo. Engineers,

the human building blocks of a massive technological project like SDI, abound in Japanese society. Their talents have already been indicated by the award of contracts let by the U.S. Defense Department's Strategic Defense Initiative Organization (SDIO) to Japanese corporations in areas such as superconductivity and magnetic field technology. And, of course, Japan has the wealth to shoulder a large portion of this burden.

Persuading Japan that it has the interest to do so should be the object of the Bush administration. Easing that task is the suitability of SDI, a defensive weapon, to Japan's constitutional limitations, its experienced aversion to nuclear attack, and its nearly total vulnerability to the ballistic missile-borne weapons of mass destruction

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## **SDI cooperation is suitable for Japan's constitutional limitations and its vulnerability to nuclear attack.**

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that will before long find their way into more and more hands.

Complicating the task of convincing the Japanese will be their urge to turn to the checkbook when threatened. Tokyo's recent discussions with the North Koreans over possible reparations from World War II are a good example. They come at a time when Pyongyang is probably trying to complete plans for the production of nuclear weapons. A fundamental issue in the U.S.-Japan security relationship's future is not whether Japan will remilitarize, but whether it chooses to become an active, influential participant in shaping world events. Can this powerful ally resist the temptation to employ the wealth that is the source of its power to solicit neutral nations and placate hostile ones? The United States must agree upon the means, and then persuade Japan to employ them in demonstrating its confidence that working together with friends is the straightest path to mutual security. ■