

The US-Japan Alliance after 3/11

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Thank you very much, Ms. Yuki Tatsumi, for your kind introduction. It is my great honor to have an opportunity to talk to you at Stimson Center. I would also like to appreciate Ambassador Bloomfield, Mr Umminger, Ms.Yost, Ms.Golson, and Mr. Cislo, for inviting me to this meaningful event.

1. Gratitude to the U.S.

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the United States government and the people of the United States for their assistance to Japan after the unprecedented earthquake and tsunami on March 11th.

The Japanese people were overwhelmed by the outpouring of concern and support expressed by ordinary Americans, many of whom did not have any connection to Japan. For that we will always be grateful and will never forget our American friends.

2. Lessons Learned from the Disasters

We experienced three crises simultaneously: the earthquake, the tsunami and the nuclear disaster. With the extraordinary assistance from the US government and US forces, reconstruction has begun and we are striving to bring the situation under control. This is, by far, the biggest national crisis since World War II, and a new chapter for our alliance. This crisis has taught us many lessons, and it requires us to think about what the future holds for the Japan-US alliance.

The disaster has cruelly exposed Japan's vulnerabilities. The challenge for us is how do we reconcile our own capabilities with international support and

assistance, while keeping in the mind central role played by the US-Japan alliance? Some of these vulnerabilities are: 1) the fact that over 90% of the victims were killed by the tsunami, and that exposes the need for Japan to be better prepared for tsunamis; 2) we have no way of knowing the final impact of the nuclear disaster, and how that will fundamentally alter our national energy policy; and 3) how Japan can better protect itself from the effects of an “Economic Tsunami.” This disaster especially exposed our vulnerable supply chain, and our lack of forethought concerning geographical allocation of industries.

3. The New Frontier

- (1) “Operation Tomodachi” created and filled a new category for our alliance. This operation falls between “emergencies such as situations outlined under Security Treaty Article 5” and “times of peace.” What we learned and how both sides responded can definitely be applicable to other difficult cases in the future.

Due to “Operation Tomodachi”, the Japanese have come to view the US military in a more positive light. In addition to conducting official rescue, recovery, and clean up efforts, many US military personnel made personal donations of blankets, clothes, gloves, and even stuffed animals for the children affected by the disaster.

This crisis has allowed us to lay a new foundation for Japan and the US to actively participate together around the world, even in the field of disaster relief. This cooperative effort will help to further deepen our alliance.

- (2) We need to reform our political structure to handle this type of crisis. The Kan Administration has not been able to lead Japan through this difficult period. I would also point out that they have been slower to respond than 16 years ago when Japan faced the Kobe Earthquake despite having the assets of 100,000 Self-Defense Forces, and the strong cooperation of the US military and other resources at his disposal.

To rectify this problem, we proposed establishing a “Japanese NSC” in the Prime Minister’s Office during the Abe Administration. When the US was confronted with the Three Mile Island nuclear disaster, it was promptly dealt

with through the NSC. Furthermore, it is surprising that neither a Meeting of the Security Council nor the Central Disaster Prevention Council has been held thus far.

While the Kan Administration has not explicitly deemed this as a national security issue, it is something that should be discussed at either of the Council meetings.

Another important point is after the Gulf War, legislative changes were made expanding the role of the SDF. These changes allowed the SDF to gain valuable experience through their participation in overseas relief operations.

And with these new roles come new challenges. It is unfair to expect the SDF to conduct missions that are not specifically stipulated. It is time to once again expand the roles and missions of the SDF so they can legally assist during rescue, relief and disaster clean-up efforts. In fact, polling has shown a renewed appreciation of the SDF among the Japanese people.

Another area of reform is allowing for increased cooperation between military and civilian technology. Seeing the important role that American made robots (which were developed for military purposes) have played during the rescue and recovery effort is a perfect example of the need to relax limits on the usage of Japanese military technology by third party countries. This would require Japan to review its "Three Principles of Arms Exports." While this was under discussion before 3/11, we need to urgently pursue reforms related to this policy.

- (3) We are now facing one of the worst nuclear power plant incidents in history. Japan has learned three important lessons:
 - a. Nuclear power plants must consider multilayer defensive countermeasures against external events such as tsunamis, in the same manner as they consider countermeasures for internal events. In addition, potential terrorist attacks on nuclear plants are a challenge for both Japan and the US, and the two countries should work together on this matter. In this connection, I also believe that the restriction prohibiting the SDF from guarding nuclear power plants should be amended.
 - b. There is an inherent conflict asking METI to be both the regulatory agency in charge of nuclear plants and also asking them to promote nuclear energy.

Japan needs to create a totally independent agency staffed by professionals who can monitor and regulate the Japanese nuclear industry in a transparent manner. The so-called “iron triangle” of politics, bureaucracy, and business must be dismantled to restore confidence both domestically and internationally.

- c. Another proposal is to coordinate all nuclear related responsibilities from all across the government into one cohesive agency. That agency would unify regulations, cut down on duplications, and be the point of contact for countries and international organizations such as your NRC and the IAEA.

To implement these reforms, investigate accountability, and propose corrective measures, an independent review committee should be formed. To avoid the appearance of conflict, this committee should be formed outside of the Kan Administration, most likely in the Diet, so that committee members will be free to fully investigate this issue.

4. Economic Reconstruction

Although, most attention is focused on the affected areas in the eastern part of Japan, we need to expand the reconstruction discussion to encompass all of Japan. As I mentioned earlier, we need to have a serious discussion about preventing and recovering from our “Economic Tsunami,” the damage from which will be far greater than expected, and we need to urgently address.

Globalization and the subsequent rise of newly emerging economies has contributed to the deterioration of Japan’s competitive edge. It is obvious that we must keep introducing a proper “growth strategy” which includes green technology, nanotechnology, and promoting other high-tech industries.

About a year ago, I commissioned a report titled, The Japan Phoenix Strategy, which addressed the “growth strategy” issue. I won’t list all the points but some of the salient points included: recovering the sustainability and confidence of the social security system is vitally important for the people but it only becomes possible when the economy revives; and to achieve this goal, we must keep carrying out structural reforms and pursuing a higher value industrial structure so that the world will look at us and say, “Japan is a ‘good buy’ after all!”

As you know, Japan has a large debt and the reconstruction effort will add to that amount resulting in future generations bearing the brunt of this responsibility. The only solution to lessening this burden is to strengthen the competitiveness and profitability of businesses leading to a more robust economy.

Some tools to accomplish these goals include promoting innovation through educational reform, along with encouraging talented human resources from abroad to relocate to Japan. Furthermore, we must make the Japanese economy into the world standard through such measures as corporate governance reform, the internationalization of accounting standards, and financial and capital market reforms.

5. National Security

While the Kan Administration has been preoccupied with managing the disaster response, security challenges around the world are evolving and increasing. But due to the renewed cooperative spirit from “Operation Tomodachi” and other joint exercises, the Japan-US alliance is ready to meet these challenges.

(1) North Korea

Regarding North Korea, their uranium enrichment activities are a clear violation of the Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks and the UN Security Council Resolutions. And the UN Security Council inability to implement sanctions on North Korea affects their credibility. Japan and the US will work together to ensure the UNSC lives up to its responsibilities.

(2) China

As for China, there is no end in sight for its military expansion and it remains the only P5 nation to carry out the modernization and reinforcement of its nuclear arsenals. According to a recent IMF report, China will surpass the U.S. in terms of purchasing power parity in 2016. How should we deal with this Chinese superpower? With our nation struggling with economic and fiscal difficulties and post-earthquake recovery, and with the U.S. struggling with its national debt, there is no choice but for these two nations to intensify our cooperation to unprecedented levels on the global scale and to promote and

maintain an effective defense system.

(3) The Futenma Issue

One of the purposes of my delegation's visit to the U.S. this time is to explore the direction that the Futenma issue is headed. After meeting with current and former US government officials, my impression is the road ahead will be rocky. If the LDP returns to power through an election or if we form a "Grand Coalition," Governor Nakaima may approve the current plan, but otherwise, the current situation will last semi-permanently. Such an outcome will not be beneficial for the U.S., Japan or Okinawa. To alleviate this situation, Japan and the U.S. should pledge that the agreement could be implemented within three years, for example. If the agreement cannot be implemented, the parties should devise an alternative strategy so we can redirect the energy currently being wasted on the Futenma issue to other issues that would deepen our alliance.

In addition, Japan and the U.S. should not limit the topics of our discussion to North Korea and China but expand these topics to include India, Southeast Asia, as well as Iran, Afghanistan, and the Middle East at large. The time has come for Japan and the U.S. to expand our discussion on international problems that directly affect our two countries' economic and national security, build a mutual strategy, and propose a vision for a new Japan-U.S. alliance during these turbulent times.

6. Conclusion

Today, Japanese politicians are faced with the challenge of whether they possess the necessary leadership skills to lead us through the disasters and seize this moment as a new era of nation-building. Each Japanese politician is being asked whether he or she can, convince the Japanese people that carrying out the aforementioned policies are the only way for Japan to live on and actually deliver these policies. I am ready to give my body and soul to accomplish these goals.

Thank you.