U.S.-Japan Relations:
Past & Future through A Kyosei Approach

Shoji MITARAI *

日米関係の過去と未来
—共生アプローチ—
御手洗 昭治*

要 旨
東アジア政治研究の第一人者、ロバート A. スカラビーノは、恩師にあたる E.O. ライシャワー 教授とともに戦後の日米関係とアジアを見つめ続けてきた研究者である。スカラビーノによると、戦後の日本は、国際舞台で大国の位置を取り戻すのに苦労はしてきたが、今日までにその課題はほぼ果たされたと指摘する。また、日米同盟が日本外交の基軸であることには変わりないが、同盟関係をより対等なものにすべきであるという声は高まっている。過去60年の間に日本の国際地位は大きく向上した。しかし、今後の日本は国内の諸問題以外にも、中国やインドの台頭といった国際関係の大きな変化に直面し、難しい舵取りを迫られるという。以下では日米関係を2010年の沖縄の基地問題にも関連させ、今後日米が相互に協力できる分野で、いかにして紛争処理に取り組もうとしているのか等に関して共生アプローチの視点で若干の考察を試みてみたい。加えてアメリカ側から提唱のあった沖縄の普天間問題解決策の代替案とグリーン・パワー・パートナーシップも同様な視点で取り扱ってみたい。

Abstract
This article dealt briefly with U.S.-Japan relations and its alliance from 1945 to the present, and overviewed some features of the U.S.-Japan negotiation which took place in 2010 within a framework of Futenma’s U.S. Air base in Okinawa. New political factors which have exerted an influence upon on-going U.S.-Japan negotiations were described. In view of future US-Japan relations, one conflict resolution method for Futenma’s U.S. Air base was reviewed. And for future collaborative schemes between Japan and the United States, the Green Power Partnership program initiated by the United States was singled out and resentated.
1. U.S.-Japan Relations & Alliance Since 1945

Since the end of World War II, the U.S.-Japan alliance has long been an anchor of the U.S. security role in East Asia. The alliance deploys about 53,000 U.S. troops now and other U.S. military assets in the Asia-Pacific. It has undergirded U.S. national security strategy in the Asia Pacific region.

It holds true that the alliance, including the U.S. nuclear umbrella has provided Japan with a maneuvering room in dealing with its neighbors such as China and North Korea.

On the one hand, most of the left-of-center DPJ members have supported the U.S.-Japan alliance. On the other hand, the general thrust of Japanese foreign policy of DSP has questioned and voted against several features of the alliance, to say nothing of base realignment and Japan’s financial appropriations for U.S. forces stationed in Japan. The Party has initially also put forward a foreign policy vision that spells out more equality in Japan’s relations with the United States through deeper engagement with Asia and a more United Nations-oriented diplomacy.

But, bilateral tensions have come to the fore over the desire of some members of the DPJ like Ms. Mizuho Fukushima of Hatoyama’s Cabinet to convert the 2006 U.S.-Japan agreement to relocate the controversial Futenma Marine Air Station to a less populated and environmentally safe area or locations.

Meanwhile, the tripartite National Security Dialogue among Japan, the United States, and Russia once again got underway in spring, 2010 — the idea had been endorsed by the former Prime Minister Taro Aso in his talks with the Russian President in July 2009 at the Summit Talk held in Italy. The triple alliance was formed for security reasons in the Asia Pacific region in 1994 and lasted until 1998. A series of joint military operations and exercises have been conducted between Japan and Russia, and among the three nations. The revival of the triple alliance is a matter of great concern and interest to many political observers around the world. China and North Korea, however, may have mixed reactions towards the restart of the tripartite Dialogue and the Triple alliance.

Whether U.S-Japan relations will stay the same or strengthen is still open to discussion, and it can be speculated that Okinawa’s Futenma base issue remained unresolved into 2010. But one thing is crystal clear that both the United States and Japan will have to work out
together first to settle the current issues expeditiously while they may not be resolved in a short period of time.

As we may recall, U.S. Ambassador Mr. Roos urged that the relocation issue be resolved quickly and next year marks the 50th anniversary of the U.S.-Japan security treaty, so attention should be turned to broader topics. He also stressed that it is the United States’ full hope and expectation to work together to resolve the current base issue, and more important work is ahead of the two countries in 2010. (NHK News and see other major newspapers on December 5 and 6, 2009)

It is vitally important for Japan and the United States to focus on much broader issues for the next 50 years. There is more work to be done with the two countries working closely together in such fields as new technology, environment, business and economy, education, medicare and cross-cultural interchange. The United States needs Japan’s technology to create a sustainable society — even when constructing super railway systems. For the United States, Japan is the second largest trading partner.

The State of Oregon, for instance, has made a deal with Nissan to import Nissan’s electric cars to Oregon for environmental reasons. People in the State kicked off a “keeping Oregon No. 1 Greenest State in the United States” campaign. The Governor of Oregon and other state officials own Toyota’s hybrid automobiles. The Obama administration is in need of Japan’s technology for the construction of a new railway system for American style bullet trains on the American continent.

So new breakthroughs in many fields and areas can bring more jobs and economic and industrial viability on both sides of the Pacific. At the same time, people in the Asia Pacific region are looking not only for growth that is sustainable, but also global security — not political instability, environmental degradation, and nuclear threats.

2. President Obama’s Visit for APEC & U.S.-Japan Ties

As we recall, US President Barack Obama visited Japan on November 12, 2010 to take part in the APEC meeting which lasted until November 14. In his written response, he stressed “The peaceful resolution of outstanding differences and respect for international norms and law are central to the goal of ensuring security, stability and prosperity in Asia.” By the same token, he pointed out that “the United States looks to China to assume responsibilities for addressing regional and global problems.” (The Yomiuri Newspaper, November 12, 2010) His responses are construed as an expression of caution against recent hegemonic behavior by China in the South and East China seas. Obama also emphasized on NHK’s evening news on November 13 that China should abide by international norms and
laws. This statement could be interpreted as a rejection of China’s attempt to unilaterally change the status quo concerning the Senkaku Islands, which Japan controls and administers as part of Okinawa Prefecture -- a fact that has been recognized as legitimate under international law. Obama also stressed that the United States would continue its policy of engagement with China. At the same time, however, he reiterated the need for discussions with Japan and other Asian nations over what kind of approach should be adopted in dealing with the rising superpower. “We will work with our allies and partners to shape the context in which China’s rise is occurring; this is one of the pillars of my approach to China,” he said. (The Yomiuri Newspaper “China Must respect International Law,” Nov. 11, 2010)

When it comes to the Japan-U.S. alliance and his thoughts on this year’s 50th anniversary of the signing of the revised Japan-U.S. Security Treaty and the mainstay of the alliance, Obama sees the alliance as the cornerstone of American strategic engagement in the Asia Pacific. He said, “I work closely with Prime Minister Kan on the challenges of upgrading and modernizing the U.S.-Japan alliance and we fully understand how important this partnership is.”

Fifty years ago, American President Dwight Eisenhower described the U.S.-Japan relationship as an “indestructible partnership.” His words were true then, at the height of the Cold War, and are borne out today as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of our alliance. The partnership between our two countries has endured the test of time. Our partnership endures because it is based on deep friendship, mutual respect, and common goals and values. I am confident that our relationship will flourish over the coming fifty years. Here the author is reminded of a famous adage by Akio Morita, the former Chairman of Sony Cooperation in which he said “Being part of the solution to the problem is what partnership is all about.”

According to President Obama the U.S.-Japan alliance serves as the cornerstone of American strategic engagement in the Asia-Pacific. He also stressed that the United States would maintain a strong and effective nuclear deterrent that guarantees the defense of our allies, including Japan, and expressed confidence the relationship between Japan and the United States will flourish over the coming 50 years.

However, he did not address specific issues that have caused friction between Tokyo and Washington, most importantly the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps’ Futenma Air Base in Okinawa Prefecture. This is because the treatment of the relocation of the Futenma Air Station and other overall related bilateral issues such as the U.S. Guam base have already been discussed between Japan and the United States.
3. Alternative for Futenma Issue: A joint Statement

Here let us turn our attention to the Futenma’s U.S. Air base issue and see whether workable solutions between Japan and the United States can be worked out at negotiating tables. In an effort to keep track of what has been negotiated between Japan and America, especially, with regards to the Futenma base issue, it is essential to take a close look at a joint statement concluded between Japan and the United States on May 28, 2010. On that day, the members of the United States-Japan Security Consultative Committee (SCC) reconfirmed that in this 50th anniversary year of the signing of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, the U.S.-Japan Alliance remains indispensable not only to the defense of Japan, but also to the peace, security, and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region, that recent developments in the security environment of Northeast Asia reaffirmed the significance of the Alliance, and that the U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committees on (the SCC henceforth) made up of Secretary of State Clinton; Secretary of Defense Gates, Minister for Foreign Affairs Okada, and Minister of Defense Kitazawa gathered and discussed a wide range of issues regarding the Futenma issue.

Pertaining to recent developments in the security environment of Northeast Asia, reaffirming the significance of the Alliance, the United States stressed its unwavering commitment to Japan’s security. Japan reconfirmed its commitment to playing a positive role in contributing to the peace and stability of the region.

Furthermore, the SCC members recognized that a robust forward presence of U.S. military forces in Japan, including in Okinawa, provides the deterrence and capabilities necessary for the defense of Japan and for the maintenance of regional stability. The SCC members committed to promote and deepen security cooperation in wide-ranging areas to enable the Alliance to adapt to the evolving challenges of the 21st century. The Ministers reaffirmed the commitment to reduce the burden on the local communities, including in Okinawa, thereby preserving a sustainable U.S. military presence in Japan. In this context, the SCC members expressed their shared commitments to relocate Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) from Futenma and return the base to Japan as part of the Alliance transformation and realignment process.

The Ministers confirmed their commitment to implement steadily the realignment initiatives described in the May 1, 2006, SCC Document, “United States-Japan Roadmap for Realignment Implementation,” as supplemented by this SCC Statement.

The Ministers reaffirmed that, as provided for in the Guam Agreement of February 17, 2009, the relocation of approximately 8,000 III Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) personnel and their approximately 9,000 dependents from Okinawa to Guam is dependent
on tangible progress toward the completion of the replacement facility. The relocation to Guam will realize the consolidation and return of most of the facilities south of Kadena.

Bearing this in mind, the two sides intend to verify and validate that this Futenma relocation plan appropriately considers factors such as safety, operational requirements, noise impact, environmental concerns, and effects on the local community.

Both sides confirmed the intention to locate the replacement facility at the Camp Schwab Henoko-saki area and adjacent waters, with the runway portion(s) of the facility to be 1,800 meters long, inclusive of overruns, exclusive of seawalls.

In order to achieve the earliest possible return of MCAS Futenma, the Ministers decided that a study by experts regarding the replacement facility’s location, configuration and construction method would be completed promptly (in any event no later than the end of August, 2010), and that the verification and validation would be completed by the time of the next SCC. Both sides confirmed the intention to locate, configure, and construct the replacement facility in such a manner as to ensure that environmental impact assessment procedures and construction of the replacement facility can be completed without significant delay.

The Ministers recognized the importance of responding to the concerns of the people of Okinawa that they bear a disproportionate burden related to the presence of U.S. forces, and also recognized that the more equitable distribution of shared alliance responsibilities is essential for sustainable development of the Alliance. Based on the aforementioned recognition, the Ministers directed that, as progress is made toward installing the replacement facility, concrete measures should be taken expeditiously in the following areas:

1) **Training Relocation**

The two sides committed to expand the relocation of the U.S. forces activities, to include both bilateral and unilateral training, outside of Okinawa. In this regard, utilization of Tokunoshima will be considered, subject to development of appropriate facilities. Japan Self-Defense Forces (SDF) facilities and areas in mainland Japan may also be utilized. Both sides also committed to examine the relocation of training outside of Japan, such as to Guam.

2) **Environment**

In view of shared responsibilities on environmental stewardship, the Ministers instructed their staffs to discuss the potential for the United States and Japan to take a “Green Alliance” approach to our bases and the environment. U.S.-Japanese collaboration on a “Green Alliance” would consider ways to introduce renewable energy technology into U.S.
bases in Japan and under development in Guam, including as a component of Host Nation Support. The Ministers instructed their staffs to consider promptly and seriously an agreement on the environment, including reasonable access to U.S. facilities and areas in cases of environmental incidents, and reasonable access to U.S. facilities and areas for environmental surveys prior to land returns.

3) Shared Use of Facilities

The two sides intend to study opportunities to expand the shared use of facilities between U.S. forces and the SDF, which would contribute to closer bilateral operational coordination, improved interoperability, and stronger relations with local communities.

4) Training Areas

The two sides decided on the partial lift of restrictions on the use of the “Hotel/Hotel training area” and committed to continue to consult on other measures.

5) Guam Relocation

Guam Relocation issue to be treated later, it is necessary to touch on the following: the two sides confirmed that, in accordance with the Guam Agreement of February 17, 2009, the relocation of approximately 8,000 III MEF personnel and their approximately 9,000 dependents from Okinawa to Guam will be steadily implemented. The relocation to Guam is dependent on tangible progress made by the Government of Japan toward completion of the replacement facility. The U.S. side will examine the unit composition of III MEF personnel remaining on Okinawa in the context of overall theater security, including deterrence, while accounting for the concerns of local communities.

6) Facilitation of the Return of Facilities and Areas South of Kadena

The two sides confirmed that the return of facilities in that areas south of Kadena will be steadily implemented in accordance with the Realignment Roadmap. In addition, the two sides decided that the “Industrial Corridor” of Camp Zukeran (Camp Foster) and a part of Makiminato Service Area (Camp Kinser) are priority areas for early return.

7) Noise Reduction at Kadena Air Base

The two sides affirmed their commitment to further noise reduction at Kadena through such measures as expansion of both bilateral and unilateral training outside of Okinawa, including improvements to the aviation training relocation program, and steady implementation of the Special Action Committee on Okinawa Final Report.

8) Communication & Cooperation with Communities in Okinawa

The two sides affirmed their intention to intensify communication with communities in Okinawa on issues of concern related to the presence of U.S. forces. The two sides committed to explore cooperation in such areas as information technology initiatives,
cultural exchanges, education programs and research partnerships.

As part of the effort to deepen security cooperation, the SCC members emphasized the importance of ensuring a shared understanding of the regional security environment and the role of the U.S.-Japan Alliance in advancing common strategic objectives. Toward this end, the SCC members committed to intensify the ongoing bilateral security dialogue. This security dialogue will address traditional security threats, as well as focus on new areas for cooperation.

While the aforementioned joint statement regarding the Futenma base issue was concluded between Japan and the United States, it took more time than the general public thought. If the Hatoyama administration made a swift move and came up with more constructive negotiation strategies, the joint statement might have been produced and concluded much earlier. In contrast, the United States and India issued strategically oriented joint statement in a more congenial and productive way on November 8, 2010 while the author will not delve into this, the joint statement was referred to as Strategic Cooperation between US and India. For those who are interested in knowing the different types of joint statements, see “Navy Releases Record of Decision for Guam/Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands Military Relocation.”

Having reviewed the gist of joint statement vis-à-vis Futenma’s US Air base issue, our attention should be directed to a new political development, namely “American Decision for Guam Relocation” known as one of the conflicting and sticking points in U.S.-Japan negotiations.

4. Green Power Partnership Program

Some of the main parts listed below were taken from proceedings prepared for Reischauer Memorial Conference held at Sapporo University on October 16, 2010. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has named the 50 green power partners using the most renewable electricity. The Green Power Partnership’s top purchasers use more than 12 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) of green power annually, equivalent to the annual carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions from the electricity use of more than 1 million average American homes. Green Power helps to prevent emissions from conventional power sources that are linked to harmful air pollution and climate change.


Green power is generated from renewable resources such as solar, wind, geothermal,
biomass, biogas, and low-impact hydropower. Green power resources produce electricity with an environmental profile superior to conventional power technologies and produce no net increase to greenhouse gas emissions. Purchases of green power also help accelerate the development of new renewable energy capacity nationwide.

Intel Corporation remains the partnership’s largest single purchaser of green power, using more than 1.4 billion kWh, equivalent to the CO₂ emissions from the electricity use of nearly 125,000 average American homes. Washington, D.C. (No.14), TD Bank, N.A. (No.15), the state of Illinois (No.23), Pearson, Inc. (No.27), Chicago Public Schools (No.35), and Harris N.A. (No.42), are all making first-time appearances on the national list. BD (No.19), a global medical technology company, and the Port of Portland (No.49), both rose in the rankings by nearly doubling their green power purchases. Nearly a quarter of the top 50 partners have increased their green power purchases since April.

EPA’s Green Power Partnership works with more than 1,200 partner organizations to voluntarily purchase green power to reduce the environmental impacts of conventional electricity use. Overall, EPA’s green power partners are using more than 17 billion kWh of green power annually, equivalent to the CO₂ emissions from electricity use of more than 1.5 million average American homes. (Information on EPA’s Green Power Partnership)

5. Final Remarks

On December 17, 2010, Prime Minister Naoto Kan made a sudden visit to Okinawa to seek support for keeping U.S. Air base on the island and told governor Nakaima that the central government was preparing special funds to help develop Okinawa. Nakaima stood firm in opposing Kan’s offers. Futenma’s U.S·Air base issue has been threatening to preserve U.S.-Japan alliance, and in the meantime both Washington and Tokyo have tried to ease tensions as they have been working together to respond to regional political tensions and threats, including an unpredictable North Korea.

Both Japan and the United States condemned the North Korea’s November 23rd military attack on a South Korean island and share wariness and concern over a rising China’s military power in the Asia Pacific region. On the same day (December 17), the government sources also released a comment that U.S.-Japan alliance would remain unshakable and vital to secure the peace and safety of our country to update defense policies that refocus Japan’s presence to the southwest, where it shares a maritime border with China. The policy statement also emphasized that it was essential to reduce the burden on the part of people in Okinawa.

As President Obama mentioned during his visit in November in Tokyo last year, the
U.S.-Japan alliance will serve as the cornerstone of American strategic engagement in the Asia-Pacific, because it has helped both the United States and Japan prosper in peace. As the two countries are broadening cooperation to reflect the changing environment of this century, Japan and the United States are expanding partnership and cooperating on a wide range of global issues, including nuclear nonproliferation and climate change. The close bonds and unity of vision between Japan and the United States will continue to guide the two countries together as they move forward in promoting stability and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

References


News Release (8/2, 2010) WASHINGTON — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

NHK News and see other major newspapers on December 5 and 6, 2009.


The Yomiuri Newspaper, November 12, 2010.