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HOW JAPAN CAN DO MORE TO DEFEND ITSELF

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INTRODUCTION

The most serious security challenge facing the United States and its Asian friends and allies is the Soviet Union's military buildup in the Asia/Pacific region. In the past decade, the Soviets steadily have expanded their ground and naval forces in the Far East and developed an overseas military presence in Vietnam and North Korea, and they also have upgraded significantly their nuclear arsenal with weapons systems such as SS-20 Intermediate Range missiles and Backfire bombers.

In the event of a global conflict, the primary military objectives of the Soviet Union would be to constrain and immobilize U.S. regional forces and to secure access to the open ocean for the Soviet Pacific fleet. More important, perhaps, is the political purpose of this Soviet buildup: to intimidate Japan, the People's Republic of China (PRC), and other Asian states into a neutral or pro-Soviet stance.

Because of budgetary limitations and global military responsibilities, the U.S. cannot protect Asia on its own. Help must come increasingly from Asian countries, especially Japan. For several years the Reagan Administration has urged Tokyo to increase its contribution to regional defense. This Japan could afford easily; it is the world's second largest economy yet spends only about one percent of its gross national product (GNP) on defense. The U.S., by contrast, spends about 6 percent of GNP on defense, West Germany 3 percent, France 4 percent, and the Soviet Union 14 percent. Tokyo's

reluctance to increase defense spending has prompted American policy makers to criticize Japan as a "free rider."

Recently, however, Japan's attitude toward defense cooperation has been changing. Under the guidance of Zenko Suzuki, who was Prime Minister from 1980 to 1982, and Yasuhiro Nakasone, who became Prime Minister in 1982, Japan has pledged to increase its naval and air capabilities to monitor sea lines of communications (SLOCs) for a radius of 1,000 miles from Japan's main island of Honshu. Japan also has increased its defense budget 6 percent annually for the last five years, even though other Japanese national programs grew hardly at This year, the Japanese will spend \$22.5 billion on defense, giving Japan the seventh largest defense budget in the world. the first time, Japan will be breaching its informal but nearly sacrosanct ceiling that limited military outlays to one percent of GNP. Added to this is the more than \$1.5 billion that Japan spends to maintain U.S. military bases in Japan. Late last year, moreover, Tokyo announced that it will participate in the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI).

The Japanese thus seem more willing than at any time in the past four decades to assume a major role in regional defense. Whether this is enough is another question. Japan does not now have the capability to provide a credible, short-term deterrent against possible Soviet threats. Given the nature of those threats, Japan must:

- o strengthen its ground defense capabilities, particularly on the northern island of Hokkaido;
- o acquire Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft;
- o increase the number of F-15 squadrons in the Northern Air Defense Force beyond the 187 scheduled for acquisition by 1990; and
- o augment and modernize its maritime forces to protect regional SLOCs and control the crucial Soya, Tsushima, and Tsugaru straits through which the Soviet Pacific Fleet would have to sail in the event of war.

Boosting further its role in ensuring East Asian security is a matter that Tokyo must address with some urgency. A question facing both U.S. and Japanese policy makers is how best their combined forces can contribute to the security of East Asia. Greater cooperation and coordination between the respective armed forces is a necessity. For example, more frequent and combined field exercises, such as those held last October in Hokkaido, are indispensable. Similarly, more sharing with U.S. forces of Japanese underwater, surface, and airborne intelligence would enhance America's Seventh Fleet operations significantly. Finally, both sides must ensure that their trade disagreements do not obstruct the vital security cooperation that both countries need to counter the growing Soviet threat to Northeast Asia.

SOVIET MILITARY EXPANSION IN ASIA

Since the U.S. defeat in Vietnam in 1975, the Soviet Union has increased substantially its military presence in the Asia-Pacific region. Today, the Soviet Union deploys a quarter to a third of its entire military force in the region, and this deployment continues to be improved both quantitatively and qualitatively. It includes more than 160 SS-20 intermediate-range ballistic missiles; longer-range nuclear missiles; 85 supersonic Tu-22M Backfire bombers; approximately 41 divisions with some 370,000 troops east of Lake Baikal; and over 2,350 combat aircraft including MiG-23, MiG-27, Su-24, and MiG-31 fighters.

By far, the most dangerous Soviet force is its expanded Pacific fleet, which now has 840 vessels and is the largest of the four Soviet fleets. During the past ten years, the number of ships in the fleet has increased by about 85. There are 140 submarines, half of which are nuclear-powered and 25 to 30 of which carry ballistic missiles, plus 95 major surface combat ships. The Pacific fleet includes two of the USSR's three operational Kiev-class VSTOL (Vertical/Short Take-Off and Landing) aircraft carriers.

Vietnam's Cam Ranh Bay, meantime, has been transformed into Moscow's largest naval base outside Warsaw Pact countries. The USSR also has increased its influence over North Korea. Last year, a Kara-Class guided missile cruiser and two Krivak-Class guided missile frigates made port calls in North Korea--the first such by major Soviet naval combatants. A 1985 fishing-rights agreement with the Pacific island-state Kiribati and a more extensive agreement with Vanuatu signed early this year will surely pay Moscow military dividends.

The Soviet military buildup is well beyond levels necessary to defend the USSR. Moscow clearly wants to acquire the ability to launch and sustain offensive military operations in the region as well as to exercise political influence in regional affairs. The principal

^{1.} The White Paper, The Defense of Japan (Japan: Defense Agency, 1986).

^{2.} Rear Admiral Edward B. Baker, Jr., Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, East Asian and Pacific Affairs, testimony before the House Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, April 14, 1986, p. 118.

^{3.} Kiribati did not renew the treaty last year after the U.S., Europe, and Japan increased their economic assistance and fishing-rights fees. The Vanuatu agreement permits Soviet fishing ships landing rights on the island.

strategic objectives behind Moscow's military buildup appear to be:

- 1) To secure the Soviet Eastern flank in the event of a European war.
- 2) To enhance Soviet ability to interdict Western SLOCs through the Pacific and Indian Oceans.
- 3) To keep the People's Republic of China (PRC) neutral in any U.S.-Soviet conflict in Asia.
- 4) To enable the Soviet navy to "break out" of the confining Sea of Japan and Sea of Okhotsk.
- 5) To intimidate Asian states friendly to the U.S., particularly Japan, either into being politically neutral or leaning toward the USSR.

Last July, a more subtle, though equally disturbing, dimension was added to Soviet Far Eastern policy. General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, speaking in Vladivostok, signaled Moscow's intention to assume a larger political and economic role in the region. Among the many initiatives he proposed were: limitations on nuclear weapons in the region; reductions in both the Soviet and American Pacific fleets; cutbacks in regional conventional forces; and closer bilateral ties with all Asian nations, especially Japan.

Early in January last year, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze visited Japanese Foreign Minister Shintaro Abe in Tokyo and agreed to resume negotiations on a peace treaty neglected since World War II, increased trade and economic cooperation, and a possible summit meeting between Gorbachev and Nakasone.

Even though Moscow has not altered its stand of refusing to discuss the status of the four Soviet-occupied Japanese islands known as the "Northern Territories" and has not reduced the number of violations of Japanese airspace by Soviet bombers and fighters, the Foreign Minister's meeting significantly encouraged neutralist tendencies in Japanese public opinion.

ALLIED DEFENSE COOPERATION

Although the growth of Soviet naval forces has been significant, the U.S. Pacific Fleet retains a qualitative edge over the Soviet

^{4.} At least 900 times a year, Japanese interceptors scramble to track Soviet warplanes probing the country's air defenses. See <u>Newsweek</u>, May 20, 1985.

Pacific Fleet. There is little likelihood that the overall balance will be seriously disrupted in the near future, since the Reagan Administration shows no sign of renouncing America's longstanding role in the region. The drive toward a 600-ship navy, built around 15 carrier battle groups, will ensure U.S. naval dominance in the Pacific for years to come. (For a summary of the military balance in Northeast Asia, see the chart at the end of this study.)

U.S. superiority, however, cannot be sustained everywhere at all times. The need to shift naval forces in times of tension requires that U.S. friends and allies in the Pacific take a larger responsibility for regional security. In the crucial northern Pacific, only Japan has the human, financial, and technological resources to be the major U.S. military partner. Since Japan's surrender in 1945, however, and its adoption of the so-called peace constitution calling for the renunciation of war, Japan has been reluctant to rearm or to play any military role outside of Japan. In fact, until recently, it was taboo for politicians to discuss Japan's military buildup, since the issue was linked in the minds of many Japanese with a resurgence of militarism.

This dimension of the Japanese political mentality has been interpreted by many Americans as an unwillingness on the part of the Japanese to accept their fair share of the Western defense burden. These feelings have fed upon the recent economic imbalances between the two countries, resulting in an increasing number of bills before Congress aimed at "punishing" Japan. Last September, Vice President George Bush warned the head of the Japanese Defense Agency, Yuko Kurihara, that a worsening of economic friction between the two countries was unavoidable unless Japan made significant efforts in the area of defense. Attempts by Congress to punish Japan are in the interests of neither country, however. By linking low Japanese defense expenditures and trade deficits with the argument for protective trade legislation, Congressmen do themselves and U.S.-Japanese relations a disservice. On the other hand, Tokyo cannot claim that increasing Japan's defense responsibilities is an adequate response to U.S. trade concerns. Japan, after all, is the main beneficiary of the steps it takes to protect itself. And it is Japan that will suffer most from Soviet expansion in the East Pacific -- not the U.S.

JAPAN'S DEFENSE CONTRIBUTION

Japanese public opposition to increased defense spending dropped significantly in the late 1970s when the second oil crisis and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 demonstrated dramatically the challenges endangering Japan's security. In 1981 Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki declared that Japan would protect its sea lanes for 1,000 miles from Japan. Previously, Japanese responsibility for its sea lane

security extended only to a 200-mile territorial radius. When Yasuhiro Nakasone became Prime Minister in 1982, he promised the U.S. that Japan would do even more to help meet the common Soviet threat. He even declared that Japan would become an "unsinkable aircraft carrier" and recommended an annual increase in defense spending of 6 to 7 percent despite severe budgetary pressures and zero growth in domestic programs. Perhaps most significant, Nakasone's 1987 defense budget for the first time will break the one percent of GNP ceiling imposed on defense outlays by successive Tokyo governments since 1976.

There are a number of other indications that Japan is inclining more toward military cooperation with the U.S. These include:

- 1) <u>U.S.-Japan joint military exercises</u>. Although these exercises have been conducted on a modest scale in the past, they have grown much larger. Example: 13,000 men from Japanese and U.S. armed forces took part last October in the largest joint field training exercise ever held in Japan. It included U.S. troops from Hawaii and ground attack aircraft stationed in South Korea. Its purpose was to simulate a Soviet invasion of Hokkaido.⁵
- 2) Support for U.S. military bases in Japan. The U.S. today maintains 17 military bases in Japan. American forces in Japan total approximately 47,000. Of these, about 2,200 are in the Army, most of them assigned to the 9th Corps command headquarters. The Marine Corps contingent of 21,900 consists of the 3rd Marine Division and the 1st Marine Air Wing. The Air Force personnel number about 16,200, chiefly from the 5th Air Force. Navy personnel in Japan number about 7,300.

This large U.S. military presence has always upset some Japanese. In recent years, however, popular support has increased for the U.S. bases. Recent polls show that over 70 percent of the population find the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty and the U.S. presence helpful in maintaining Japan's security; only 54 percent favored the treaty in 1975. The Japanese government last year contributed nearly \$1.5 billion to maintain these bases. This amounts to \$31,250 per American serviceman.

3) Acceptance of U.S. military expansion in Japan. In a departure from past attitudes, the Japanese people tolerated Washington's deployment of an additional 48 F-16 fighter/bombers at the Misawa airbase in northern Honshu Island.

^{5.} Defense News (published weekly, Springfield, Virginia), November 24, 1986.

^{6.} White Paper op. cit.

^{7.} John M. Collins, <u>U.S.-Soviet Military Balance 1980-1985</u> (Washington, D.C.: Pergamon-Brassey's International Defense Publishers, 1985), p. 142.

- 4) Transfer of military-related technology to the U.S. In 1983 the Japanese government agreed for the first time to transfer high-technology information with military applications to the U.S. Last year, Tokyo agreed to participate in the research and development phase of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI).
- 5) Sharing military information. Well placed as a listening post for Soviet activities in Northwest Asia, Japan shares its intelligence with the U.S. It was Japanese electronic surveillance stations, for example, that picked up the vital information about the September 1, 1983, attack by Soviet warplanes that shot down the civilian Korean Air Lines Flight 007. This information allowed the U.S. to expose the Soviet action even as the Kremlin was denying that the event had taken place.
- 6) <u>Purchase of advanced U.S. weapons</u>. To protect the Pacific sea lanes, Tokyo has decided to increase the number of its F-15 fighters from 100 to 187 and its P-3C Orion maritime patrol aircraft from 45 to 100 by 1990. Tokyo has begun purchasing E-2C Hawkeye early-warning aircraft and plans to acquire the advanced Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft. Japan's Nike-J anti-aircraft missiles are being replaced with more sophisticated Patriot missiles. These soon will be supported by an advanced Over-The-Horizon radar system.
- 7) Increased defense budget. Although Japan's defense expenditure is still small in terms of its proportion of GNP, the total amount of its 1986 defense budget is \$21.5 billion, almost as much as West Germany's \$22 billion. If Japan, moreover, were to use NATO's method of calculating defense spending, which includes veteran benefits, its defense budget would amount to about \$32 billion, the third largest in the world after the USSR and the U.S.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF JAPAN

Japan has tremendous military potential. It is virtually self-sufficient in military production and manufactures almost all of its hardware. It is the most stable Pacific ally of the U.S. and the cornerstone of U.S. policy in Asia. Japan's cooperation with the U.S. is critical to the regional balance of power.

The Reagan Administration has concluded that a future superpower conflict would probably involve the European and Pacific theatres simultaneously. The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that East Asia and the Pacific play an important role in deterring a Soviet attack

against NATO. Prior to such an attack, Soviet planners would have to secure their flank in Asia.

Japan would play a crucial role in such a conflict because of its location. The Japanese archipelago forms an arc embracing the Sea of Japan. The southernmost island of Kyushu borders the Korean peninsula across the Tsushima strait, the only southern exit from the Sea of Japan. Northernmost Hokkaido almost touches Soviet-held Sakhalin, and the Soviet-occupied islands of Kunashiri and Etorofu enclose the Sea of Okhotsk.

Three Critical Straits

There are three main straits through which the Soviet Pacific fleet must sail to break out of the confines of the Sea of Japan and the Sea of Okhotsk to reach the open Pacific: Tsushima, Tsugaru, and Soya. The 40-mile wide Tsushima Strait is sandwiched between Japan and South Korea; ships passing through it are in range of U.S. forces in both countries. The ten-mile wide Tsugaru Strait separates Hokkaido from Honshu. Because of its size and location, Japanese forces could easily obstruct any attempted break out by the Soviet Fleet.

The 24-mile wide and relatively shallow Soya Strait is the water boundary between Hokkaido and Soviet-occupied Sakhalin Island, the southern half of which was ceded to the Soviets at Yalta in 1945. Soya is the only strait not controlled by U.S. allies on both sides. Control of the Soya Strait is indispensable for Moscow. It is the major route linking Vladivostok, home port of the Soviet Pacific Ocean fleet, with the naval base at Petropavlovsk, located on the Kamchatka Peninsula.

Petropavlovsk is the principal Soviet ballistic missile submarine base in the Pacific. Since the peninsula has no direct road or rail link with the mainland, control of the Soya Strait for resupply purposes is a military necessity. The Soya Strait is also the safest route linking the Soviet Union with its huge base at Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam. Furthermore, control of the strait is important to the Soviets for nuclear deterrence. Soviet ballistic missile submarines operating in the Sea of Okhotsk must reach the open Pacific if their missiles are to be within range of targets in the Midwest or Eastern seaboard of the U.S. These submarines must pass through Soya Straits.

In a global crisis, Tsushima, Tsugaru, and Soya straits would be crucial to Northeast Asia's balance of naval power. Japan would

^{8. &}lt;u>United States Military Posture FY 1984</u>, prepared by the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, p. 25. See also statement of Admiral William J. Crowe, Jr., USN, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to the Senate Armed Services Committee, January 21, 1987.

attempt to block these straits with mines, ships, and anti-ship weapons. To keep at least the Soya Strait open, the Soviet Union probably would attempt to seize northern Hokkaido. Explains Vice-Admiral M. Staser Holcomb, former commander of the U.S. Seventh Fleet: "There is a high degree of likelihood that Soviet contingency plans provide for trying to take over at least the northern tip of Hokkaido."

The Soviet Union in fact historically has been interested in gaining a foothold on Hokkaido. Soviet Dictator Josef Stalin, in a August 16, 1948, letter to President Harry Truman, demanded that Soviet troops occupy Hokkaido. When Truman refused, the Soviet Union invaded the four strategically located Japanese islands of Kunashiri, Etorofu, Habomai, and Shikotan just to the north of Hokkaido. To this day, the Soviets still occupy these islands, known as the "Northern Territories" to Japanese.

Kunashiri and Etorofu are now home to a 16,000-man Red Army division, equipped with long-range 130mm howitzers and Mi-24 HIND ground-attack helicopters. Some 40 MiG-23 jet fighters recently have been moved to Etorofu. Three Soviet naval installations and seven airfields have been built on nearby Sakhalin Island, only 26 miles from Hokkaido. In 1985, Soviet forces conducted a large-scale landing exercise that simulated an amphibious invasion of Hokkaido.

U.S. POLICY TOWARD JAPAN

Japan's importance to Free World security is growing. In recognition of this, the U.S. not only should continue urging gradual increases in Japan's defense spending, but also should work with Tokyo to define more clearly the proper role of each country in the defense of Northeast Asia. On Japan's part, this should include a balanced program ensuring an adequate ground and air defense of Hokkaido and protection of the numerous sea lines of communication, especially the three crucial Japanese straits.

More specifically, what is urgently needed is a greater capability to deal with airborne and seaborne invasion. Japan's self-defense ground forces, in particular, should accelerate modernization by acquiring 1) anti-ship capabilities such as surface-to-ship missiles (SSM); 2) more advanced field artillery and anti-tank helicopters; 3) combat support aircraft such as heavy- and light-lift helicopters; and 4) sustained logistic capabilities. It is vital that all three Japanese armed services be closely coordinated in their joint combat efforts and exercises. Heretofore this has been

^{9.} Christian Science Monitor, May 3, 1983.

difficult as there was no established mechanism for crisis management, a wartime leadership structure, joint operations of the three services, or combined Japan-U.S. operations. Similarly, the command and control structure of Japan's self-defense forces is too decentralized, resulting in conflicting lines of authority and communication.

There are additional steps that should be taken to improve U.S.-Japan defense cooperation:

- 1) Expanded joint military exercises, such as those conducted last October on Hokkaido, should become more frequent.
- 2) Japan should modernize and improve its command and communication system to ensure quick, accurate, and safe transmission of orders and intelligence between headquarters at all levels and front line units.
- 3) Japan should adopt an integrated defense digital network system, the use of communication satellites, improvement of telephone switching systems, and a data exchange system.
- 4) Japan should acquire Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft to supplement its E-2Cs HAWKEYEs.
- 5) Japan should steadily improve its facilities for blocking the three crucial straits through mining, shore-based anti-ship missiles, submarine activities, and aircraft operations. At the same time, the U.S. should authorize the sale or licensing to Japan of new systems being introduced into the U.S. Navy so that the Japanese maritime forces can effectively meet their sea-lane defense commitments.
- 6) The U.S. and Japan should cooperate to determine the most effective way to repel an attempted invasion of Hokkaido.

CONCLUSION

Slowly Japan is showing its willingness to increase its share of the Free World's defense burden and to contribute to U.S. efforts to defend Free World interests in Asia and the Pacific. But there are obstacles to Japan's assuming a substantially greater defense role. These include fiscal constraints due to Japan's large budget deficit, domestic political problems such as constitutional prohibitions on "collective defense" and "offensive" capabilities, and anti-military feelings among politically active groups such as the leftist parties, the press, and intellectuals. In addition, Japan's Asian neighbors are wary of a major expansion of its military capability, especially sea power. Japanese development of aircraft carriers or large

amphibious landing craft, for instance, would create a major foreign policy problem at this time since these would be seen as "offensive weapons."

In view of Japan's crucial role in the regional balance of power, Moscow will be the only winner if the U.S.-Japan defense relationship becomes strained. But to fulfill its responsibilities, Japan must necessarily increase its defense spending as a percent of GNP. Equally important, Japan must devise a more comprehensive military strategy and a better allocation of its defense resources with respect to the Soviet threat, especially for the defense of Hokkaido, the regional sea lanes, and the crucial straits. Quality, rather than quantity, should be the central determining factor in Japanese defense capabilities. The U.S. and Japan must not allow economic or political disputes to undermine the alliance itself. Defense issues should be dealt with on their own terms, as should trade issues. Yet it seems only reasonable for a nation as economically powerful as Japan to begin doing more to defend itself.

NORTHEAST ASIAN MILITARY BALANCE: 1986/87

*	USSK	×	JAPAN	U.S. (WEST PACIFIC)	U.S. (EAST PACIFIC)
		Ps.			
GROUND FORCES					
FIGNPOWER 50	500,000		155,000		18,900: Hawaii
	1000,000	Mongolla		ກໍ ເ	
Tanks	4,900		T'0/0'T		na
`~	10,000		855	89: S. Korea	na
F93	353:	FROG, SCUD,	50	na	
SAN	1,800:	3/5/10	430: NIKE, STINGER, HAWK	na	na
AIR FORCES					3
×	150,000		44,000	16,200; Japan 4,200: Guam	37,000: Hawaii
bombers	130:	Tu-22			na
Kecon	79:	Tu-95, Tu-22		na	na
Figlicers	1,125: MiG-2	1,125: MiG-21/23/25, MiG-27, Su-7/17	295: F-15J/DJ F-4EJ, F-104J	74: Japan F-15C/D. F-16	15: Hawaii F-4 ANG
			F-1	108: S. Korea F-4E. F-16. A-10	7 fighter wings
Recon/ECM	226:	MiG-21/25	16: E-2C BF-4 E1	Japan F-34	na
Helicopters	1,000:	Mi-8/24/28			na
NAVAL FORCES		07/0 111			
MANPOWER 15	150,000		44,000	7,750: Japan, S. Korea 4,900: Guam, Midway	ea na
				Afloat	
				1940	3
Ballistic Missile	32:	SSB	none	none 15ss	5: SSB 25. ss
Surface Combatants	82:	CVHG, CG, DD,	52: DD, FF		
Other	291:		110: Amph, MCMV,	6: Amph	2
NUCLEAR FORCES (INTERMEDIATE RANGE)	DIATE	RANGE)	FILIOI COMBACANCS	n	
Missil	171;	SS-20	none	none	none

Explanation of Abbreviations on Chart

Arty: Artillery

SSM: Surface-to-Surface Missile FROG: Free Rocket Over Ground (SSM)

SCUD: NATO designation for the SS-1, a short range SSM SAM: Surface-to-Air Missile (Anti-Aircraft Missile)

Recon: Reconnaisance

ANG: Air National Guard

ECM: Electronic Counter-Measures

SHIP TYPES:

SSB: Ballistic Missile Submarine

SS: Attack Submarine

SSG: Cruise Missile Submarine

CV: Aircraft Carrier

CVHG: Guided Missile Helicopter Carrier (VSTOL Carrier)

VSTOL: Vertical/Short Take-Off and Landing

CG: Guided-Missile Cruiser

DD: Destroyer (Includes Guided-Missile types in this chart)
FF: Frigate (Includes Guided-Missile types in this chart)

FFL: Corvette

Amph: Amphibious Ships and craft

MCMV: Minesweepers

INT. RNG: Intermediate Range

Source for Chart: The Military Balance 1986/87, International

Institute for Strategic Studies, London, England, 1986