

The Tokyo Foundation

Policy Recommendations

Japan's Security: 10 Proposals for the Hatoyama Administration

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Foreword

Following a historic change of government, Japan's foreign and national security policies are set to be reevaluated by the new Democratic Party of Japan administration. In its election manifesto, the DPJ expressed its intention to "build a close and equal Japan-US alliance to serve as the foundation of Japan's foreign policy" and to develop "an autonomous foreign policy strategy for Japan." The party also pledged that it would "propose the revision of the Japan-US Status of Forces Agreement," and would "move in the direction of reexamining the realignment of US military forces in Japan and the role of US military bases in Japan."

Prior to the election, DPJ President Yukio Hatoyama suggested that his party would end the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean and have the US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma relocated outside Okinawa. Now that the party is in power, there is considerable interest in Japan and overseas in whether these plans will be carried through.

The Tokyo Foundation's National Security Policy project has compiled 10 proposals that we regard as essential to the new Hatoyama administration's rethink of Japan's foreign policy and national security strategy. It goes without saying that these are minimal guidelines addressing only the most urgent issues; they should not be taken to represent our vision for Japanese foreign policy or national security strategy in its entirety.

For a more comprehensive set of recommendations on Japan's national security strategy, see the "New Security Strategy of Japan: Multilayered and Cooperative Security Strategy" published by the Tokyo Foundation in October 2008. This presented proposals for a new security strategy, grounded in a national vision, in response to changes in the security environment since the National Defense Program Guidelines of 2004.

The change of government offers an ideal opportunity to revisit the fundamentals of Japan's domestic and foreign policies and reevaluate their significance and effectiveness, and to introduce new approaches suitable for dealing with a changing international environment. We hope that the new administration will change Japan's foreign and national security policies in ways that promote the national interest.

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The new administration of Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama marks a historic change after more than 50 years of Liberal Democratic Party domination. The new government's stance on foreign affairs has caused misgivings in some quarters, but the issues prioritized in the party's manifesto and in the prime minister's statements to date include many praiseworthy suggestions, among them close and equal Japan-US relations, stronger diplomatic ties with Asia, and advocacy of a role for Japan in peace building. It is to be hoped that the government will formulate systematic and concrete policies to realize these aims as a matter of urgency. Backed by solid public support, the Hatoyama administration has an excellent opportunity to move Japanese policy forward by fulfilling its pledge to scrap the bureaucrat-dependent system that has so far dominated national policymaking, in which too much emphasis is placed on precedent and protocol. As Japan enters a future in which genuine changes of government can take place, the Tokyo Foundation's National Security Policy project proposes the following policies to the Hatoyama administration.

The Japan-US Alliance

Proposal 1: The administration should not insist on the relocation of an air station outside Okinawa but should deal flexibly with the agreement regarding the realignment of US forces in Japan. Otherwise, the US bases in Okinawa might end up becoming fixed in their present locations.

Although it may not represent the ideal arrangement for any single party, the current US military realignment plan agreed between Japan and the United States was the result of lengthy negotiations aimed at finding the best compromise acceptable to both countries and to the people of Okinawa. Given the current political climate in the United States, the Obama administration does not have the option of undertaking a fundamental reevaluation of the plan. Insisting on revisions to the plan now might result in long delays in achieving the original aim of reducing the burden placed by the US military presence on the people of Okinawa. Changing the agreement would require substantial work, would consume a sizable chunk of the new administration's political assets, and would cause serious friction between the Japanese and US

governments. This could lead to a failure to deal with the dangers posed by the Futenma air station (currently located in the middle of a built-up area), could stall plans to relocate 8,000 marines from Okinawa to Guam and return all US military facilities in or south of Naha, and, further, could cause a sense of powerlessness among the US military negotiators who have worked so hard to resolve this issue. This, in turn, could result in the bases in Okinawa becoming fixed in their present locations.

Proposal 2: The administration should avoid rushing to alter the Japan-US Status of Forces Agreement, which should be raised as a long-term bilateral issue. The immediate aim should be to improve implementation of the agreement so as to reduce the burden on local residents.

Reexamination of the Japan-US Status of Forces Agreement has been regarded as a kind of taboo because of its potential to open a Pandora's Box for officials on both sides. The new Hatoyama administration should demonstrate its readiness to deal with the issue proactively. It needs to be clear about its purpose in reexamining the agreement and about the aspects of the agreement that it wants to prioritize and emphasize. It is important to narrow the focus of discussions and treat the problem as a medium- to long-term issue between the two countries, including the possibility of signing special agreements. At the same time, the government needs to engage positively with the problems faced by residents who live close to US bases. The reduction of noise pollution from the bases is an example of an issue on which Japan should press the United States to improve implementation of the Status of Forces Agreement. There have been cases, for example, in which voluntary measures such as restrictions on late-night take-off and landing exercises involving fighter planes have not been passed on accurately following the appointment of a new base commander. It is important to reduce the burden on local residents so that they have a tangible sense in their daily lives of an improvement in the way the agreement operates.

Challenges to Global Peace

Proposal 3: As part of its efforts to achieve global peace and prosperity, the administration should expand Japan's involvement in antipiracy activities off

the coast of Somalia to include refueling missions for other nations' naval vessels. At the same time, the administration should increase Japan's participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations with a long-term vision.

In order to achieve global peace and prosperity, it is important for Japan to play a visible role commensurate with its international standing. There is a growing need for efforts to assist development and stability in the world's poorest regions, which otherwise risk becoming hotbeds of international terrorism, piracy, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and disease pandemics. The international community expects Japan to make an active contribution to these efforts. Refueling the naval vessels of countries engaged in antipiracy activities off the coast of Somalia is one particular area where a latent need exists and where Japan can make a positive contribution. At present, however, the reality is that Japan has fewer than 50 personnel involved in United Nations peacekeeping operations. The DPJ made a commitment in its manifesto to expand Japan's involvement in UN peacekeeping operations; greater involvement would also dovetail with the Obama administration's stance of emphasizing the United Nations. Dealing with nontraditional threats of this kind was one of the "common strategic objectives" agreed at the Japan-US Security Consultative Committee (2+2 Meeting) in 2005, and the government should take the initiative in suggesting this to the Obama administration as a new area of cooperation between Japan and the United States.

Proposal 4: In the short term, Japan should support reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan by continuing its refueling operations in the Indian Ocean in some form or by pursuing suitable alternative cooperation. In the longer term, Japan should aim to contribute by training personnel for reconstruction work in Afghanistan and by building and running international training and support facilities for such personnel either in neighboring countries or Japan.

While it is to be hoped that Japan's refueling operations in the Indian Ocean will continue in one form or another as part of the Japanese contribution to reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, at the same time the Hatoyama administration should initiate proactive policies to help maintain law and order, improve infrastructure, and rebuild the Afghan economy. International policing

efforts led by Europe and the United States are making progress, but there is considerable scope for Japan to assist these efforts by expanding and enhancing auxiliary support functions. This might involve training the emergency medical teams that form part of policing and firefighting services outside the country and sending them back to Afghanistan along with rescue equipment, ambulances, and other necessary supplies. The effectiveness of this assistance could be further improved by offering post-provision services, such as maintaining and replenishing equipment and retraining personnel. In the medium to long term, Japan should also begin training professionals with expertise in agricultural production and product-processing technology, who will be essential for building Afghanistan's social and economic infrastructure.

Proposal 5: Japan should actively make and implement proposals to realize the ideal of a “world without nuclear weapons.” Nuclear disarmament is important, but it must not impair the reliability of the US nuclear umbrella.

It is not a contradiction for Japan to pursue the reduction or elimination of nuclear weapons while at the same time adhering to a policy of maintaining the US nuclear umbrella. President Obama declared in Prague that the United States would act to eliminate nuclear weapons but that, as long as such weapons existed, would acknowledge the role of nuclear weapons in global peace and security and would continue to possess such weapons to deter attacks against itself and its allies. The Hatoyama administration should align itself with this thinking. The recent increase in the impetus behind the push for global nuclear disarmament is an opportunity for Japan to disseminate again its ideas about disarmament to the world and to take the lead in developing practicable policies. At the same time, there remains the issue of how to secure the safety of Japan, which does not possess nuclear weapons, until the ideal of eliminating nuclear weapons is achieved. With Russia maintaining its massive nuclear arsenal even 20 years after the end of the Cold War, China stepping up the modernization and expansion of its nuclear capabilities, and North Korea conducting repeated nuclear tests and missile launches, the level of nuclear threat in the vicinity of Japan has, if anything, increased. The key to defending Japan from these threats is the deterrent effect of US nuclear weapons. Nuclear disarmament is important, but it must not diminish the reliability of the US nuclear umbrella, thereby exposing Japan to security risks. Japan's continued

adherence to a nonnuclear policy while trusting in the nuclear umbrella is itself a major contribution to global efforts to reduce and eliminate of nuclear weapons.

Proposal 6: To prevent further nuclear proliferation and compel North Korea to abandon its nuclear programs, Japan should strengthen both its diplomatic efforts through the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty regime and the military pressure it applies on North Korea principally through the Japan-US alliance.

Nuclear nonproliferation is an even more urgent challenge than nuclear disarmament. Japan's security would be directly threatened if North Korea's attempts to arm itself with nuclear weapons were to become a *fait accompli* or if international terrorists were to obtain a nuclear weapon. Diplomatic efforts through the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) are crucial to prevent such scenarios. The Hatoyama administration should comprehensively support the activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Nuclear nonproliferation cannot be achieved through diplomatic efforts alone, however. To prevent North Korea from possessing nuclear weapons, which would gravely impact on Japan's security, and from supplying such arms to other states or international terrorist organizations, it is essential to apply international pressure of every kind, including military pressure. It is especially crucial that the administration firmly maintain the Japan-US alliance. Besides securing protection through the US nuclear deterrent, Japan must maintain a stance of confronting the North Korean threat through conventional arms, missile defense, and other means, in close communication and cooperation between the Self-Defense Forces and the US military.

Proposal 7: Japan should dramatically strengthen its UN diplomacy and continue its efforts to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council, while boldly taking the lead in "human security," a field Japan itself proposed. First, the prime minister should attend without fail the General Debate of the UN General Assembly held every September, and the administration should also strive to exercise leadership in UN activities by dispatching more Japanese to serve in key UN posts, such as UN representatives for peacekeeping operations.

As seen by the positive global reaction to Prime Minister Hatoyama's visit to the United Nations and bold proposals on climate change, the United Nations, which is the only universal organization, is the most appropriate forum for transmitting Japan's message to the world and can also serve as a venue for bilateral meetings. It is important for Japanese people to play a more active role in the UN, to obtain more posts like under-secretary-general and assistant secretary-general, and to exercise leadership on the front line of conflict resolution, as Yasushi Akashi did when he served as special representative of the UN secretary-general to Cambodia and the former Yugoslavia. Japan should lead the UN in spreading the idea of "human security," which emphasizes human dignity and support for self-reliance, and should make particular efforts in such fields as the peaceful resolution of conflicts, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. To this end, steps must be taken to promote Security Council reform so that Japan can gain the status of a permanent member of the Security Council. Japan will assume the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April 2010, so either the prime minister or the foreign minister should begin preparing now to attend the council and spearhead its discussions. Such efforts to invigorate the UN would contribute to the stability of the world and the Asian region, as well as enhancing Japan's own security.

Relations with the Asia-Pacific Region

Proposal 8: To establish "intra-regional cooperative mechanisms in the Asia-Pacific region," as the new Hatoyama administration aims, it is essential to strengthen Japan's cooperation not only with its ally the United States but also with South Korea, Australia, ASEAN, and other partners while pursuing a strategic relationship with China. The administration should pursue regional stability by building multilayered cooperative relationships.

The Asia-Pacific region has no effective multilateral security framework, and there is mistrust among the nations of the region stemming from past wars, territorial issues, and differences in political systems. The new administration should improve and strengthen Japan's relations with its neighbors, China and South Korea, and at the same time build other frameworks for regional cooperation. Since it would be impossible to achieve regional stability without

the cooperation of the United States, it is important to establish organic coordination between the framework for regional security cooperation and the “close and equal Japan-US relationship” espoused by the DPJ in its election manifesto, and this will necessitate the simultaneous deepening of regional and Japan-US cooperation. The administration should forge and link multiple networks in the region, such as by strengthening cooperative relations with Australia, South Korea, and other US allies and collaborating with bodies like the ASEAN Regional Forum.

Building relations with China is one of the key challenges. While China’s development contributes to the global economy, its military buildup is a latent cause of regional instability. The difficulty in gaining an overall picture of China’s military strength and the lack of transparency in the country’s policymaking process are fomenting concern in other countries. China must be urged to ensure that its rise does not threaten regional or global stability. Specifically, the Hatoyama administration should establish a strategic cooperative relationship with China by resolving one by one the matters of concern in bilateral relations, such as the need for transparency regarding China’s military strength, the development of gas fields in the East China Sea, and food safety.

Guidelines and Policy Infrastructure to Defend a Peaceful Japan

Proposal 9: There is an urgent need to develop new National Defense Program Guidelines, setting out clear guiding principles for defense policy and, based on these, systematically establishing defensive capabilities. This is important because it will also serve to demonstrate clearly to those both in Japan and overseas the new administration’s national security and defense strategy.

Actively engaging in international security cooperation activities and pursuing closer and more equal Japan-US security cooperation in the aim of achieving global peace and prosperity can become the central concepts of new National Defense Program Guidelines. To realize these concepts, there is an urgent need to improve the organization and equipment of the Self-Defense Forces so that the SDF can serve in peacekeeping and similar operations while cooperating organically with the military forces and governmental and nongovernmental

organizations of other countries. Forging a system like this would also have the immediate benefit of reinforcing the SDF's cooperative relationship with US forces. In addition, efforts to control and reduce missiles and weapons of mass destruction are vital in terms of discouraging North Korea's nuclear ambitions. The administration should also counter existing threats by advancing missile defense and measures to protect residents. A further challenge is that since the Cold War the SDF's capabilities have been overly focused on hardware, such as military vessels, aircraft, and vehicles. The administration should enhance the effectiveness of the SDF by bolstering its nonhardware capabilities, such as information-technology-based surveillance/warning/reconnaissance and command and control functions, by networking these capabilities, and by improving SDF members' skills through education and training.

Proposal 10: To address global security issues effectively, the administration should both strengthen Japan's own intelligence capabilities and the system for Japan-US intelligence sharing. This is necessary to enable Japan to make independent judgments and to realize a more equal relationship with the United States.

Among the priority tasks for enhancing Japan's intelligence capabilities is the strengthening of detection functions for gathering satellite, human, and other forms of intelligence; of analysis and processing functions for compiling, processing, and distributing intelligence; and of information and communication functions for securely conveying the intelligence. The administration should place high priority on putting in place the legal foundations and infrastructure for this purpose. Such efforts are also vital in terms of Japanese policymaking and of maintaining a close Japan-US alliance, for they will enable Japan to reach appropriate decisions while making effective use of intelligence from the United States, which boasts the world's greatest intelligence capabilities. One of the urgent tasks in establishing legal foundations is to write Diet members' duty of confidentiality into law; for the Hatoyama administration, with its stated intention of establishing political leadership, this would also be an effective means of promoting the sharing of information between bureaucrats and politicians.

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