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Japan's position in the overall security arrangements for the Asia-Pacific region in 2013: current situation and prospects

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EDITORIAL

In September 2012, following the violent anti-Japanese demonstrations which whipped up Chinese public opinion, the rest of the world came to realise how much Sino-Japanese relations had deteriorated since 2000. At the heart of this escalation lies the question of Japanese sovereignty over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, claimed by both China and Taiwan, but in the background emerges a readjustment of the balance of power in the Asia-Pacific area. Economic rivalries and political conflicts linked to memories of the Second World War were exacerbated on the one hand by the provocations and intemperance of revisionist politicians like the governor of Tokyo Ishihara Shintarō¹, and on the other by unabated anti-Japanese rhetoric from the Chinese and South Korean governments. This explains why the Noda government's

decision to nationalise the Senkaku islands led to a series of informal spontaneous boycotts of Japanese products by a section of the Chinese population. These were unprecedented in their scope, and as were the acts of violence that surrounded them, and were followed by frequent incursions into Japanese waters and air-space by the Chinese fleet and air force².

There has been some concern in Europe and the United States over the repercussions of these tensions on the balance of power in Asia-Pacific, and on global economic recovery, which partly depends on the trade links between China and Japan. This deterioration in Sino-Japanese relations has also been interpreted as marking a shift in the balance of power between the second and third world powers, amid an

¹ We need to remember that it was the attempt by this ultra-nationalist anti-Chinese figure, who was then at the head of the government of metropolitan Tokyo, to buy back the Senkaku islands from their owners (the Kurihara family) which led the Noda government into “nationalising” the islands.

² For a more detailed analysis of the consequences of the tensions re-awakened by the opposing claims over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, see Kratz A., Favennec Y. and Puig E. “Les tensions sino-japnaises autour des îles Senkaku/Diaoyutai, *Note de l'Observatoire Chine*, Asia Centre, p. 4, February 2013.

economic, military, diplomatic and cultural strengthening of China, and a structural weakening of Japan due to demographic factors and the 2011 disasters.

Given this situation, there were strong grounds for fears that Abe Shinzō's return to power would lead to worsening relations with China and Korea. Nonetheless, the August 2013 commemorations of the end of the Second World War in the Asia-Pacific region were not marked by violent official or unofficial reactions, as was the case in 2012. However, this superficial calm does not mean that China's relations with Japan and Korea are becoming more peaceful. This was made very clear when Beijing did not congratulate Tokyo for being awarded the 2020 Olympic Games. Rather, the current situation seems to indicate a greater restraint on the part of the Xi Jinping government, at a time when Japan may take on a leading role in the Asia-Pacific by leveraging growing fears among ASEAN countries over China's naval ambitions and the strengthening of the US' strategic presence in the region.

But, as was already noted by Michael J. Green in 2007³ – at the time of Abe Shinzō's first term –, the Japanese government's room for manoeuvre is now far smaller than it was when Japan was unquestionably the world's second largest economy. The positive effects of the strengthened alliance with the United States as the basis of "Japan's return" to Asia have been met by some hostility, particularly on the part of the inhabitants of Okinawa towards the continuing presence of American forces on the Ryūkyū Islands. Still, "Japan's return" onto the regional scene, which the Abe government is fostering at the

present moment, is relatively well received by Japan's Southeast Asian partners. However, it relies on a proposed increase of Japan's military capabilities which, together with the current attempts to revise article 9 of the 1946 Constitution, will be unwelcome not only to China and South Korea but also to a large section of the US' public opinion, which is very critical of neo-nationalist trends in Japan.

In order to reach a fuller assessment of Japan's evolving position in the region, this issue n° 31 of *Japan Analysis* explores several of the ins and outs of the strategic goals pursued by the Abe government in 2013. The first analysis, by Anton Francesch, sets out the broader context for the Japanese government's efforts to take part in the establishment of a new security structure in the Asia-Pacific. The article by Yoshimi Yoshiaki, translated by Amélie Corbel, revisits the issue of the burden of memories, which overshadow relations between Japan and South Korea. It gives us a critical analysis of the polemical pronouncements of the mayor of Osaka, Hashimoto Toru. Finally, a recent essay by Kitaoka Shinichi, translated by Sophie Buhnik, discusses the role Japan might play in the rivalry between the United States and China in the Asia-Pacific area.

Starting with this issue, the editorial arrangements of *Japan Analysis* will be slightly modified, with the introduction of a joint editorship between Sophie Buhnik and an associate editor appointed according to the specific topic covered by each issue. Thus, to launch this new format, Raphaël Languillon has participated in producing this issue, which focuses on the relations between Japan and its neighbours.

Sophie Buhnik and Raphaël Languillon

³ Michael J. Green, "Japan is Back : Why Tokyo's New Assertiveness is Good for Washington", *Foreign Affairs* 86 (2), March/April 2007.

ANALYSIS OF CURRENT AFFAIRS

1. Japan's moves towards creating a new Asia-Pacific security architecture

- *Antonin Francesch*

Following the elections to the upper chamber on July 21st, Prime Minister Abe Shinzō visited Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines, raising to seven the number of ASEAN countries⁴ which he has visited since taking office. In the same period, the Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, undertook a six-day tour of Southeast Asia, visiting Thailand (where the China-ASEAN forum was held), Malaysia, Laos, and Vietnam, which represented a total of seven bilateral talks with his foreign

counterparts since he was appointed in April. This “rivalry over ASEAN”⁵ is becoming more and more acute and is partly due to the growing economic weight of the countries in the area, which are showing growth rates among the highest in the world. However, these economic interests should not conceal the fact that this struggle for influence may favour regional integration. That is why, as soon as Abe took office, his government wanted to announce that, through its “return”⁶, Japan had a strategic vision for the whole region and was willing to take on a greater share of responsibility for peace and security, thereby taking full account of the current disturbance in the balance of power in the Asia-Pacific region.

⁴ The Association of South-East Asian Nations has ten member states: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. Whereas the priority when it was first created, was the anti-communist struggle, ASEAN is now a promising organisation for regional integration (with prospects for an ASEAN community by 2015) and a pivot for security discussions. It operates as an intergovernmental organisation founded on the respect for national sovereignty and non-interference.

⁵ “*Nicchū ‘Asean sōdatsu’ gekika = Ōgaishō, mata tōnanajia hōmon*” (intensification of the ‘rivalry over ASEAN’: Foreign Minister Wang on a further visit to South-East Asia), Jiji Press Agency, August 1st 2013, <http://www.jiji.com/jc/zc?k=201308/2013080100683>.

⁶ Prime Minister Abe’s address on February 22nd 2013, “*Nihonwa modotte kimashita*” (Japan is on the way back), http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/press/enzetsu/25/abe_us_0222.html.

Prime Minister Abe's diplomacy : between continuity and innovation

Determined to bring about adjustments “probably motivated by the rebalancing of American influence towards Asia and China's expansionist policies”⁷, the Abe government has been careful to highlight its foreign policy by greatly expanding the number of its ministerial visits⁸. Certain factors suggest that these visits are part of an ongoing long-term strategy. Since the announcement of the Fukuda doctrine in 1977⁹, Japan has continually supported ASEAN's regional openness and has actively participated in regional discussion forums, notably the East Asia Summit (EAS), where political and security matters are debated, and the ASEAN Defence Ministerial Plus Meeting (ADMM+), which brings together under the ASEAN+8 rubric all ASEAN Defence Ministers, plus eight others¹⁰. In addition, since the early 2000s Japan has contributed in strengthening Southeast Asian countries' maritime surveillance capabilities, for

instance by equipping the coast-guards of Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia via the Japanese International Co-operation Agency (JICA)¹¹. Negotiations of a China-Japan-Korea (CJK) free trade agreement, and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)¹² launched in the autumn of 2012 with Japanese support, have also reinforced mutual relations between these States.

However, the influence of China, most obvious under the Cambodian chairmanship of ASEAN (particularly at the EAS summit in November 2012 when the question of the South China Sea was widely debated but did not appear in the final report)¹³, is bound to disturb ASEAN's political role. In his proposal published on January 18th¹⁴, Prime Minister Abe insisted on implementing a new kind of diplomacy based on five main principles, including the promotion of universal values (democracy and human rights), and the respect for international law to defend the equal rights of States within the regional order. For Abe, safe maritime passage in the Pacific, which is essential for foreign trade, could also be ensured by the establishment of a “diamond-

⁷ Iwami Takao, “*Kishi to Abe - gaikōrosen no keishō to danzetsu*” (Kishi and Abe – both succession and breaks in foreign policy), *Gaikō*, no. 18, March 2013, p. 26

⁸ In early January especially, vice-Premier Asō Tarō's visit to recognise Myanmar, and the first visits by the Minister of foreign affairs, Kisshida Fumio, to the Philippines, Singapore, Brunei, and Australia ; in addition, Abe went to Vietnam, Thailand, and Indonesia in mid-January, followed by Myanmar in May.

⁹ Following the anti-Japanese riots which marked Tanaka Kakuei's visits to Bangkok and Jakarta in 1974, the Prime Minister, Fukuda Takeo, made a speech on August 18th 1977 to the Philippine parliament, declaring Japan's wish to open “heart to heart” relations with the ASEAN countries, and to mobilise not only its economic resources but also its political, social, and cultural ones, to achieve that goal.

¹⁰ ASEAN, plus Australia, China, South Korea, the United States, India, Japan, New Zealand, and Russia.

¹¹ “*Ajia no umi no chiano mamoru (mare-shia, filipin)*” (Ensuring stability in the Asian seas – Malaysia, and the Philippines), *Jica*, 5 October 2010, http://www.jica.go.jp/topics/2010/20101005_01.html.

¹² ASEAN, Australia, China, South Korea, India, Japan.

¹³ “*Higashi ajia shunōkaigi heimaku 'minamishinakai' shinten nashi*” (East Asian ministerial summit ends : no steps forward on the “South China Sea question”), News 24 press agency, November 21st 2012 ; <http://www.news24.jp/articles/2012/11/21/10218048.html>.

¹⁴ This speech was initially intended for presentation in Jakarta, but that occasion was cancelled after the Prime Minister's hasty return to Japan, in order to handle the In Amenas hostage crisis in Algeria.

shaped” security architecture (linking Japan, Hawaii, India, and Australia)¹⁵, which would necessitate Japan’s right to exercise its collective self-defence¹⁶.

Facing geopolitical realities

On the whole, Japan’s “return” was welcomed by its South-East Asian partners, embroiled in territorial disputes in the South China Sea. Vietnam and the Philippines also look favourably upon the strengthening of Japan’s role. The Philippine Foreign Minister even declared, in an interview with the Financial Times in December 2012, that he supported a reform of article 9 of the Constitution¹⁷, and on July 27th 2013 President Benigno Aquino was offered ten Japanese patrol boats (partly financed by Japanese developmental aid)¹⁸. Vietnam is openly expressing its disagreement with the nine-dotted line (also

called nine-dash or “ox-tongue”) used by the Chinese authorities to outline the areas under their sovereignty. Indonesia approves of the position taken by Japan, even though the prospect of a US rebalancing makes it fearful of finding itself encircled by US and Chinese military forces. It is undeniable that, depending on circumstances, Japan can be quite flexible in applying the principles underlying its diplomacy. For example, while the question of human rights was absent from discussions during Prime Minister Abe’s visit to Myanmar, Japan, faced with Cambodia’s alignment on Chinese interests, was ready to uphold a more intransigent line, along with Cambodia. Japan even went so far as to reallocate part of her Official Development Assistance from Cambodia to Myanmar, which is Japan’s new economic target¹⁹, in accordance with the priorities spelt out in the APD white paper for 2012.

The practical implementation of this policy is also revealing underlying pragmatic choices. Abe’s first foreign visit, which was not to the United States but to Southeast Asia for purely fortuitous timetabling reasons²⁰, was presented as a tactical choice by Abe to resume the foreign policy course set by Kishi Nobusuke. This enabled Japan to visit the United States as a “representative of Asia”²¹ and to avoid appearing to be without support. The objective of this charm offensive aimed at Southeast Asia is

¹⁵ On December 27th 2012, Abe published a similar article in English entitled “Asia’s Democratic Security Diamond” on the website of Project Syndicate, a non-profit association based in Prague.

¹⁶ “*Abeseiken, gōshū jūshi kukkiri anpokyōryokakudai mezasu*” (The Abe government openly recognises the importance of Australia, and seeks to expand co-operative security arrangements) *Sankei shimbun*, January 13th 2013, <http://sankei.jp.msn.com/politics/news/130113/plc13011323230008-n1.htm>.

¹⁷ “*Nihon no saigunbi ‘ tsuyoku kangei’ filipin gaishō, chūgoku o ishiki*” (The Philippines Foreign Minister expresses his support for the re-armament of Japan, being fully aware of the weighty influence of China), *Asahi shimbun*, December 11th 2012, <http://www.asahi.com/international/update/1211/TKY201212110302.html>.

¹⁸ “*Kaijōkeibi kyōka de junshitei 10 seki o kyōyo – nichihī shunōkaidan chūgoku kensei nerai*” (Gift of ten patrol boats to strengthen maritime surveillance – a meeting between the leaders of Japan and the Philippines in order to counter the power of China), *Nikkei shimbun*, July 27th 2013, http://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXNASFS27009_X20C13A7MM0000/.

¹⁹ “*Myanma- heno ODA baizō he shushō, shunōkaidan de shien hyōmei*” (Steps towards increasing the Aid for Public Development funds for Myanmar : the Prime Minister announces his support in bilateral talks), *Asahi shimbun*, May 26th 2013, <http://www.asahi.com/politics/update/0526/TKY201305260187.html>.

²⁰ January 21st 2013 was the date for the second oath of office by the President of the United States.

²¹ Iwami Takao, “*Kishi to Abe – gaikōrosen no keishō to danzetsu*” (Kishi and Abe – continuity and breaks in foreign policy), *Gaikō*, n° 18, March 2013, p. 25.

certainly to nurture the Japanese-American alliance and to strengthen further the US presence in the region. The risk involved in such a strategy is that it may isolate China instead of encouraging it to participate in the regional order²².

Conclusion

Next December, Prime Minister Abe will host a summit meeting of the ten ASEAN leaders in Tokyo to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the establishment of relations between the association and Japan. Abe Shinzō will certainly seize this opportunity to defend his “value-based” diplomacy, and his interlocutors are equally likely to pay careful attention to his explanations of Japan’s new strategic position.

²² Press conference held by the vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tanaka Hinoshi, on July 26th 2013, and available on the *Videonews* website, <http://www.Videonews.com/press-club/0804/002883.php>.

POINTS OF NEWS

2. YOSHIMI Yoshiaki,

“How are Hashimoto’s statements to be interpreted? Further considerations on the problem of the Japanese army’s ‘comfort women’.” [Hashimoto hatsugen wo dō miru ka ? Nihongun « ianfu » mondai saikō] – Sekai, August 2013, pp. 44-53. Translated from the Japanese source by Amélie Corbel.

Yoshimi Yoshiaki is a professor of modern history at the University of Chūō. His field of research is war crimes committed by the Japanese Imperial Army during the Second World War. He is the first Japanese historian to have provided proof of the direct role played by the army in setting up and managing the comfort stations. He is also one of the founding members of the Centre for Research and Documentation on the responsibility of Japan for acts committed in the war. Here he comments on the statements by Hashimoto Tōru, the mayor of Ōsaka, on the subject of comfort women. Back in June 2012, Hashimoto expressed his opinions on the matter. Yoshimi then went to Ōsaka, accompanied by five lawyers, to submit an open letter demanding that the mayor withdraw his statements and make a public apology.

Hashimoto Tōru’s main arguments

Hashimoto Tōru presents seven main arguments. Firstly, as illustrated by the following statement : “*basically everyone knows that the “comfort women” system was necessary*” (May 13th 2013), he holds that the system was necessary. Subsequently Hashimoto has said that his statement was misinterpreted by the media, but in fact he has never recanted.

Secondly, the mayor of Ōsaka in fact suggests that the American navy should engage in the purchase of sexual favours on the island of Okinawa, as is implied by the following statement from him : “*the US navy will not manage to control the sexual energy of its men if it does not make full use of this*

kind of establishment [brothel]". Although he has since withdrawn this statement and offered his apologies to the American government and people, he has made no apology to the inhabitants of Okinawa.

Thirdly, not only does he deny the fact that the system of "comfort women" was systematically organised sexual slavery, he has even gone so far as to deny the forced nature of their presence in the comfort stations.

His fourth argument reduces the issue to one of whether in fact the women were taken away under threats from the army or the administration. This completely ignores the real substance of the matter. His position is echoed by Prime Minister Abe Shinzō, as well as by a large section of the Japanese media.

Fifthly, once he could no longer deny the direct involvement of the army and the Japanese authorities in the abduction of women, Hashimoto Tōru threw the responsibility for these acts onto individual soldiers, thereby avoiding the need to acknowledge the role of the Japanese State in organising this system of seizing and trafficking in human beings (on May 27th). The document distributed during his press conference at the Foreign Correspondents' Club contains the following wording : "In making use of the 'comfort women', Japanese soldiers violated the dignity and the rights of the women. It goes without saying that it was inexcusable." The omission of the words "the Japanese army" in favour of the term "Japanese soldiers" is significant in this context.

His sixth argument consists in relativizing the problem of the use of "comfort women" by the Japanese army, by pointing to the fact that this kind of conduct also exists within other Western armies.

Finally Hashimoto considers it dishonest that Japan alone should be accused of being a "rape State".

A Japanese debate centred solely on the question of coercion

Right up to the present moment, I have always insisted that the system of "comfort women" was a system of sexual slavery. The basis of my assertion is set out below.

First of all, "comfort women" did not have the freedom to choose where to live. Leaving aside the issue of the army temporarily requisitioning "private" pleasure houses to turn them into places reserved exclusively for soldiers, the "comfort women" in the comfort stations managed directly by the army had to live on the premises in cramped rooms. Moreover, their movements outside were strictly limited, and sometimes completely forbidden. The freedom to quit "the profession" was likewise non-existent. I am always amazed to learn that some people confuse the freedom to quit the profession with the freedom to leave it once the "advances on earnings" are fully paid off. If there was no chance of leaving before the "advance" (or *debt*) had been paid off, and if one adds to that the impossibility for these women to refuse their services to any soldier presenting himself, the nature of the system is beyond all doubt : this was nothing but a system of sexual slavery.

The 1993 declaration by Kōno recognises that "*the living conditions [of these women] in the comfort stations were wretched [...] amid an atmosphere of coercion. This activity, in which the military authorities of the time took part, has deeply wounded the honour and dignity of a large number of women*"²³.

²³ Kōno Yohei, *Statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono on the Result of the Study on the Issue of "Comfort Women"* (unofficial translation

But Prime Minister Abe Shinzō and the mayor of Ōsaka are both in favour of rewording this declaration. On the contrary, it must be protected at all costs, and in no way could any reversal be acceptable. Actually, it would even be desirable to go further than Kōno's declaration by acknowledging that the "comfort women" system was a system of sexual slavery, and by naming the Japanese Army and clearly identifying its responsibility for the "deep wound inflicted on the honour and dignity of a large number of women".

In June 2007 the United States' House of Representatives passed a unanimous resolution expressing "the sense of the House of Representatives that the Government of Japan should formally acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner for its Imperial Armed Forces' coercion of young women into sexual slavery, known to the world as "comfort women" ²⁴.

As is made quite clear, American society's understanding of this issue is not reduced to knowing whether the was an organized abduction of the young women by the Japanese army or its government. In his comments on Prime Minister Abe Shinzō's declarations of 2007, Michael Green, head of Asian Affairs in the National Security Council under the Bush administration, said that *"It [the comfort women issue] has nothing to do with the issue of whether they were forcibly abducted or not. Nobody outside of Japan is interested in this aspect. The point is those comfort women had to bear a terrible time, and yet politicians (...) are totally oblivious of this fundamental fact"*.

available on the Foreign Ministry website), August 4th 1993 : URL: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/women/fund/state9308.html>

²⁴ Source : <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110:H.Res121>.

The former diplomat, Tōgō Kazuhiko, reports the following opinion of an American woman whom he heard at a symposium on historical issues held in the United States in 2007: *"The debate in Japan over whether force was or was not used in the 'recruitment' and transportation of comfort women is empty and even absurd, given the real nature of the issue. Most people in the world are uninterested in that question, and the only thing which bothers them when they hear the story of the comfort women is 'What if that happened to my daughter ?'. In some cases the young women were taken in by fine words and were completely deceived. In what way does recruitment by force differ from recruitment by deception ?"*

In concrete terms, what are the issues for which the Japanese State must take responsibility ?

I would like to list the points involving the responsibility of the Japanese State. Firstly, there is the issue of coercion inside comfort stations run by the army. The Japanese State is responsible for having participated in creating, maintaining, and extending a system of sexual slavery for its army.

Secondly, the Japanese State is responsible for transporting underage girls. This charge cannot be set aside, because at the time Japan was a signatory to international conventions for the suppression of trafficking in women and children (i.e. the conventions of 1904, 1910, and 1921). It therefore had a duty to protect those young women and could not exploit them in the way it did.

Thirdly, the Japanese State must answer for the abductions carried out by the Japanese army and government in the combat zones, whether they were conducted by force, abuse of power, or through local officials acting as intermediaries, in which case the

Japanese army demanded that local officials provide them with a certain number of local women (who were in no position to resist).

The fourth point concerns the traffic in women conducted by intermediaries appointed by the Japanese army and government, both in its colonies and in Japan itself. I am repeating myself here, but seizure and abduction with the intention of transporting the victims out of the country constitutes a crime in contravention of article 226 of the Penal Code.

If one compares these four points with Kōno's declaration, it appears that the first charge was fully acknowledged by the general secretary to the Cabinet, coercion being defined by him as "that which goes against the will of the person concerned". His declaration does not address the second point. As for the third and fourth points, which deal more directly with the abduction and trafficking of women, they are more or less acknowledged, as shown by the following extract : "As for the recruitment of comfort women (...) there are many cases in which the women were gathered together against their will by means of coercion as well as deception. The direct involvement of Japanese authorities has also been proven".

An abundance of proofs²⁵

The proofs that have been gathered over more than two decades permit an easy refutation of the revisionist theses from Hashimoto Tōru, who refuses to admit that

²⁵ Note : The article translated here focuses on the general structure of Yoshimi's arguments rather than on the factual proofs of the Japanese army's involvement in the system of the "comfort women". For a more lengthy treatment of this subject, see Christine Lévy, " 'Femmes de réconfort' de l'armée impériale japonaise : enjeux politiques et genre de la mémoire", *Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence*.

the comfort women system had all the characteristics of sexual slavery.

The direct involvement of the Japanese army and authorities in the abductions of young women has been confirmed by the testimony of the several hundred victims who have been willing to testify openly. These are backed by official Japanese documents, and the evidence gathered for the Far Eastern international military trials (more often known as the "Tokyo trials"). Finally, Japanese courts have also been able to verify the involvement of the Japanese army and authorities in specific cases.

There are likewise numerous proofs showing that intermediaries appointed by the Japanese army and authorities conducted the trafficking in women. This form of "recruitment" was particularly widespread in Korea. Testimonies by former military officials in charge of managing the comfort stations (like that of Yamada Seikichi) confirm this, as do official American documents.

Finally, there are many proofs of the central role played by the Japanese army in setting up, maintaining, and expanding this methodical system of sexual slavery. There are documents that testify to the participation of the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Governor Generals of Korea and Taiwan. Instructions from the government and the Japanese army have been found, specifying the methods for gathering the women together and transporting them. In the light of these proofs, it is time to recognise unequivocally the direct involvement of the army and the Japanese State in the establishment of this system of sexual slavery. It was the military authorities of the time who set up the comfort stations, administered them, and took charge of the transportation of comfort women.

Did every army possess comfort stations ?

On this question I would like to emphasise two points. First, the question itself is a dubious one. Can one justify an act on the grounds that “everyone does it”? No. This rhetorical manoeuvre, which tries to downplay the responsibility of the Japanese army, has no justification. Second, a direct answer to the question is “no”: most armies did not possess a system of “comfort women” like the one developed by the Japanese army [...].

The specific nature of the system of comfort women is that it was an integral part of the Japanese army, which makes it an intentionally military organisation. It was the army which decided the location of the comfort stations, and exercised surveillance and control over them. It was also the army which supplied the buildings, equipment, and merchandise, and which also set the prices and the rules to be followed in the stations. It also took charge of rooting out venereal diseases.

[...] It may be that certain front-line American units officially authorised the use of “private” brothels by soldiers, but that is a far cry from the Japanese comfort stations directly controlled by the army. It is also completely unthinkable that the American army would have herded young girls together [to make them sexual slaves].

Does the whole world really see us as an outstanding example of a “rape State”?

Hashimoto Tōru, by invoking certain accusations by foreigners that Japan is outstanding for being a “rape State”, demands that these unfounded and unjust accusations be rebutted. But does Japan really stand accused of being a “rapist State”?

If you look at the resolutions passed by the parliaments of different countries, as well as the one passed by the European parliament, it is clear that not one of them calls Japan “an outstanding example of rapist State”. There is simply no example of such terminology. Mr. Hashimoto’s fears are therefore groundless.

Conclusion

The declarations by the mayor of Ōsaka have been severely criticised by the whole world. Among those criticisms, several points are worth emphasising again. Firstly, the Japanese government must recognize clearly and unequivocally that the Japanese army played a fundamental role in setting up a system of sexual slavery in the form of the “comfort women” system. Next, it has a duty to spell [this new position] out in the education provided for the younger generations. In addition, it must refute all the lies [put about in the public sphere] on the topic of the “comfort women”. Lastly, the Japanese State has a duty to offer its clear apologies to the victims and to compensate them. What is demanded of us could not be clearer ; the question is how the State will respond.



3. KITAOKA Shinichi,

“Japan’s role in East Asia in 2032: the unshakeable dominance of the United States” [2032 nen no higashiajia to Nihon no yakuwari. Yurugane beikoku no yūi] – Gaikō, vol. 17, January 2013, pp. 20-25. Translated from the Japanese source by Sophie Buhnik.

Kitaoka Shinichi was born in 1948 and completed his law studies at Tokyo University in 1971. In the course of his career he has been a professor of law at Rikkyō University, and later at Tokyo University, before he was appointed as Japanese ambassador to the United Nations. His academic work has won him several awards, notably the Suntory book prize, the Yomiuri prize for a work of non-fiction, and the Yoshino Sakuzō prize. His most recent works, entitled “The collapse of Japanese political life : how to avoid a third defeat”, and “The Japanese land forces as a bureaucracy” were published respectively by Chūō Kōron Shinsha and Chikuma Shobō in 2012. In 2011 he received a Purple Ribbon medal (Shi-ju Hōshō) for his “contribution to the development of the sciences and arts”.

I specialise in historical studies. The work of the historian consists in analysing the past, not in predicting the future. But there is one thing that the historian knows about the future, which is precisely that it is unknowable.

In 1945, the year of Japan’s defeat, who could have foreseen that it was about to embark on a period of rapid economic

growth lasting for more than ten years ? Or that it would successfully host the Olympic Games in 1964 and the Universal Exhibition in 1970 ?

In 1868, the year of the Meiji restoration, did anyone foresee the abolition of the feudal domains (*han*) and their replacement by departmental constituencies in 1871, followed by the disappearance of the warrior class (*bushi*), which was deprived of its pay and its right to bear arms in 1876 ? Who could have predicted the victorious outcome of the Sino-Japanese war 26 years later (1895) and of the Russo-Japanese war 36 years later (1905) ? The future is indeed difficult to predict.

The differences between China and the United States

Today, everywhere in the world, there is an active search for reliable medium- and long-term forecasts. Those are all centred on the decline of the United States and the rising power of China.

On December 11th 2012, the National Intelligence Council (NIC) of the United States,

which collects information gathered by seventeen intelligence services from several different ministries, and sets the guidelines for public policies on the basis of its expertise, published a report entitled *Global Trends 2030*. This report attempts to anticipate the global geopolitical changes that will occur in the next fifteen to twenty years according to several predicted scenarios : in the event of China becoming the leading global economic power, but with the United States continuing to exercise the greatest influence among the countries of an equivalent level, the latter will lose their super-power status in the face of the development of China and India, but no country will exercise hegemony, including China and the United States.

In China too there are differences of opinion. Thus, Wang Jisi, the director of the Beijing University graduate school of international relations, who is widely known for his dispassionate realism, believes that it will take several decades, perhaps even a century, for China to catch up with the United States ; but he is critical of the United States, which, because it believes in the superiority of democratic systems, treats China unfairly (*Asahi Shimbun*, October 5th 2012). In addition, Yan Xuetong, the director of the Qinhua University's research centre for contemporary international relations, defends the superiority of the concept of "virtuous man" (*toku no kata*), which set out the rules for human behaviour in ancient China, over the American idea of democracy (according to an extract of an interview with *Asahi Shimbun*, December 12th 2012).

My views on the development of relations between the United States and China are as follows :

1. Firstly, China and the United States have roughly the same landmass ; but whereas 80 % of that mass in North

America is arable or inhabitable land, in China the proportion amounts to hardly 15 %, because China's territory is mostly mountainous or arid. Therefore, in this respect, America is five times larger than China.

2. Secondly, the Chinese population of working or childbearing age (15 to 60) will reach its peak in a few years from now, before going into decline. According to the statistical averages calculated by the UN Council for Economic and Social Affairs, after 2030, China's total population will also begin to fall. Not only is it difficult to sustain economic growth in a situation of declining growth of the working or childbearing population, but sustaining such growth in the context of a absolute decline is even more complicated. On the other hand, the US population will approach 400 million by 2030, and will continue to grow into the 2050s.
3. Thirdly, in terms of military strength, American superiority is indisputable [...]. China's overall military capabilities are unlikely to overtake those of the United States for several decades. While China may be able to sustain a regional confrontation with the United States, it certainly cannot supplant it globally.
4. Furthermore, economic and military power nowadays depends on continuous technological progress, which is why the position occupied by the US on the global scale will become even more dominant. American universities invest enormous amounts in their vast campuses, which attract talent from all over the world to support scientific output, and I do not think that there is today any country that can match that.

5. Finally, political systems must be taken into account. America used to be a country of WASPS (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants). People believed that a Catholic could never become President, until the election of Kennedy in 1960 proved them wrong. The election of President Carter, a Baptist from the deep South, was part of this growing religious diversity, in contrast with the traditional image of the US President. Then in 2008, an African-American was elected to that office. And in 2012, the Mormon Mitt Romney was a strong opponent to this very President, who was running for a second term. The strength of American institutions is displayed at such moments when it integrates its minorities [...].

On the other hand, the Chinese government is strong and capable of managing its problems in the short run but, as social discontent grows, the country might well find itself in an explosive situation. For how long can the single-party dictatorship hold onto power ? The fact is that political conditions are increasingly difficult.

Up until this point I have made a comparative assessment of the respective capabilities of the two countries, but what about their international influence ?

In the modern world the principle of the equality of sovereign states is considered fundamental (in international relations). And the search for a peaceful resolution of conflicts between nations has been the accepted norm since the end of the Second World War.

In the pre-modern period, China was for a long time paramount in East Asia. The other East-Asian countries recognised its supremacy and swore oaths of allegiance

to it, in exchange for its protection. These satellite countries brought their tribute to China, in exchange for goods several times more valuable, which were thus a source of benefit to them.

It seems that this hierarchical vision of international relations tends to persist in contemporary China. In the 1950s, Beijing invoked the reciprocity of equals and non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries ; but nowadays the fact is that China wishes to be treated as a leading global power, and that is quite obvious in the assertions of the two professors whom I have quoted above.

Moreover, the idea of a “State based on the rule of law” still has very little sway in China. Traditionally there was no law to constrain the Emperor. And now, in the East China and South China Seas, the incursion of China’s fishing vessels into territorial waters or economic exclusion zones of neighbouring countries - which China considers its own - is protected by Chinese civilian vessels converted into warships. This enables China’s *de facto* seizure of those zones. In fact, this treatment of economic exclusion zones violates all of the principles that mandate a peaceful and open resolution of disputes arising in such areas. [...].

Of course the resolution of conflicts by force rather than law, which is illegal, is often a course of action taken by more powerful countries. The United States, like China, has not ratified the convention on peaceful maritime passage, and is known to be reluctant to abide by international laws. It uses international conventions arbitrarily, and often imposes its own views at the expense of its partners (or interlocutors).

Nonetheless, on principle, the United States stands by the ideas of equality between

nations and peaceful resolution of conflicts. We should add that there is a yawning gap between not always observing such principles in practice, and the fundamental absence of respect for them. That, in my view, is the measure of the difference between the United States and China.

The Warring Kingdoms²⁶ of the 21st century

In the middle of all this, what should Japan's position be?

Mr. Yan Xuetong maintains that Japan must clearly assert that it is an Asian nation and must abandon its dependence on the United States. If it does so, he says, China will not behave reprehensibly. I too think that it is a hierarchical relationship, within an order that favours the stronger state.

Nonetheless, what could it mean to affirm a country's identity as an Asian nation? Japan has long been a country which says "no" to Chinese superiority. It is almost the only country in East Asia which has not found Chinese dominance over the region self-evident.

In addition, Japan nowadays adheres to the tradition of the rule of law. In Japan, where absolute power was distinguished from effective authority, neither the Emperor nor the *shogun* was all-powerful for a very long time. The law evolved in order to arbitrate on the relations between the various political actors, and respect for norms became an established convention. As for international

law, although Japan turned away from it in the 1930s, since then it has been among those countries most faithful to the peaceful resolution of conflicts [...].

According to the research carried out by Angus Maddison, a specialist in macro-economic history, the first global economic power was China, followed by India, and that is the order to which the modern world seems to be returning. But I believe that view to be mistaken. The history of the 19th and 20th centuries was certainly one of Western superiority, European and American (as well as Japanese), but that was not its only aspect. It was also a history of the establishment and dissemination of the ideas of liberty, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. As for international law, the outcome of the two world wars saw the historical establishment of peaceful conflict resolution. Even if the international order of the 21st century is to be marked by the growing power of many countries in Asia, it cannot do without grounding on those principles.

It appears that Myanmar, which until very recently was considered a Chinese protectorate, is seeking to free itself from that tutelage. As a country that has achieved its independence once already [Note : in 1948, after having been a province of British India since 1868, followed by temporary occupation by the Japanese Imperial Army from 1942 to 1945], it has no wish to find itself once again subjected to a major power. The same applies to Laos and Cambodia, two neighbours of China with populations of several millions. Their situation is equally complicated. However, for Myanmar, with a population of 65 million, and Vietnam with over 80 million, and even for Indonesia whose population is over 200 million, Chinese domination is not so easily accepted. The same goes for the Philippines.

²⁶ Here the author uses the expression (*gasshō renkō*) which refers to the Warring Kingdoms period (from 453 to 211 BC), when China was divided into seven kingdoms, leading to the final victory of the Qin State over its six rivals. That period of great political confusion was also marked by major technical and economic progress, as well as by the birth of Confucianism and Taoism.

In Thailand, there is a strong Chinese influence. But taken as a whole, the above-mentioned Southeast Asian countries will have a combined population of over 500 million by 2030, which is equivalent to half of that of China. Moreover, in South Asia, the population of India is forecast to reach 1.5 billion, overtaking that of China, and India is also a country that respects the rule of law.

In early Chinese history, the end of the Springs and Autumns period [Note : from 771 to 481 or 453 BC] was characterised by a very rapid increase in the number of conflicts between rival States. By forming alliances between themselves, the six States of Han, Wei, Zhao, Yan, Chu, and Qi tried to oppose the hegemony of the Qin, as it expanded its power beyond its base in the Western part of China. In response, the Qin kingdom approached each of the above States separately to propose close co-operation agreements (*renkō* : alliances agreed individually), undermining the relations between the six kingdoms, and consequently uniting them under its tight control. These recorded events marked the Warring Kingdoms period.

At first sight what is happening in East Asia nowadays resembles the events of those times. Great trading privileges are granted to countries that submit to China, and those that do not are at a commercial disadvantage. The methods used are many and varied. If the customs formalities prior to the import of Philippine bananas into China are delayed, the fruits decay and become unsellable. The slightest alteration in such formal procedures can deliver a heavy blow to other countries. Such methods are not good, and they show that there is no real acceptance of the idea that politics and economics are areas to be handled separately.

Even relations between Australia and Japan are not free of conflicts, as for example in the dispute over whale hunting. But that does not mean that Australia plans to react by limiting iron ore exports to Japan [...].

Looming in the background of current international alliances stands the American super-power. To the north is Russia, which still has the strength of a military super-power. Further away to the Southeast is Australia, and to the South is India, which is set to become the largest demographic power internationally. In terms of power balance, China is unlikely to reach the level achieved by the Qin kingdom in former times.

[...]. Respect for the rule of law by sovereign nations, even those in competition under the influence of liberalism on an international scale, is an alternative and more viable system than the hegemony exercised by a powerful State which curbs its neighbours through the granting of favours. That is why a hierarchical international order with China at its centre, as in pre-modern East Asia, will not actually be established, unless there is an extraordinary change in the situation.

However, this new scenario is subject to certain conditions. The efforts to build respect for a liberal international order seem to be a prerequisite, so that each State may develop within its relationship with others.

A particularly important point is that Japan is one of the biggest economic and military powers in this regional alliance. Therefore it is essential that Japan further modernises its economy, strengthens its defence capabilities, and concentrates on co-operating with its neighbouring countries. At the very least, Japan must

exit from deflation and speed up its growth strategy, while trying to reduce its public indebtedness through increased taxation and cuts in social security spending. It must also organise a conference on national security, change the wording of the Constitution in order to enable itself to exercise the right of collective self-defence, make its policies based on non-aggression more flexible, renegotiate the share of its responsibilities with the United States in order to take on an ever-increasing load, and increase its level of military spending while improving the efficient modernisation of its hardware.

Giving greater attention to these necessary changes also implies a clear conceptual distinction between such realism and a shift to the extreme right. In any other country in the world, the organisation of a security conference, either for non-aggression policies or for increasing defence expenditure, and actions such as the removal or revision of section 2 of the Constitution's article 9, would be accepted as quite normal (...). Commentators who criticise these new policy directions by calling them a shift to the right are mistaken, whether they are foreigners or Japanese.

To assert either that Japan has not invaded other countries in the past, or else that it is superior to other countries in the region, not only raises problems but also disrupts the solidarity between Japan and its neighbours, a solidarity which is obvious. These mental shifts to the right must be avoided, for the good of both Japan and the rest of the world.

Closely linked to these policies, and until the power of China begins to decline from 2030 onwards, it is essential to seek to maintain an international order in East Asia. This does not at all mean acting in a hostile

manner towards China. [...] An alliance would in any event provide a basis for China to understand this point, and to become a major power that shoulders its responsibilities.

At the beginning of this article I brought up the Meiji restoration and the post-war reconstruction. The conditions enabling Japan to grow faster than foreseen at those times were twofold : population growth and high quality leadership.

Japan needs to face its demographic problem. As the presence of Japan and the Japanese on the international scene diminishes, the country's demographic challenge creates a risk of being ignored by the rest of the world. There is no miracle cure for this ; it is a hard task to reverse a demographic curve. Even so, a birth rate rising from 1.25 to 1.8 would make a very significant difference [...].

As for the political situation, it goes without saying that stability is necessary. In the Meiji era, there was a remarkable leadership built up around Ōkubo Toshimichi²⁷ and Itō Hirobumi²⁸.

²⁷ A former member of the Satsuma clan (1830-1878), he was one of the three leaders of the provisional government set up after the proclamation of the Meiji restoration (January 1868). As Minister of Finance he was particularly renowned for his reform of property taxes (1871), and then for his efforts to revise the unequal treaties imposed on Japan after the forcible entry by foreign powers in 1854.

²⁸ A former samurai from the Chōshū domain (1841-1909), he played an active role alongside the supporters of the Sonnō Jōi doctrine ("Let us worship the Emperor and chase out the barbarians"), and was one of the five members of the Chōshū clan sent to the United Kingdom in 1863-1864, before becoming one of the leading politicians of the Meiji era. He was Prime Minister on four occasions between 1885 and 1901, and took part in drawing up the Constitution of 1889,

After the war, Japan was led by such prime ministers as Yoshida Shigeru²⁹, Kishi Nobusuke³⁰, Ikeda Hayato³¹, and Satō Eisaku³².

To restore the quality of Japanese politics, major reforms must be undertaken, similar to those of the Meiji restoration or following the defeat of 1945. To paraphrase Schumpeter, we should say that in politics there is a need for creative destruction. Whether it takes place or not, the consequences will be felt by the international order which we wish to introduce by 2032.

the year in which he also founded one of the first Japanese political parties, the Seiyūkai.

²⁹ Yoshida Shigeru (1878-1967) was a Japanese diplomat and Prime Minister from 1946 to 1947, and then from 1948 to 1954. In foreign policy he launched the so-called Yoshida doctrine.

³⁰ Kishi Nobusuke (1896-1987), a member of the government of Tōjō Hideki from 1941 to 1945, was imprisoned as a suspected class A war criminal, and then freed. He returned to politics in 1952 and became Prime Minister from 1957 to 1960. He is the elder brother of Satō Eisaku and grandfather of Shinzō Abe.

³¹ Ikeda Hayato (1899-1965) was Prime Minister from 1960 to 1964 and supported the Yoshida doctrine. His term in office is largely associated with the economic boom of the 1960s, and especially with the doubling of incomes.

³² Satō Eisaku (1901-1975) began his career as an official in the Ministry of Railways, before becoming Chief Cabinet Secretary under the administration of Yoshida Shigeru, and then Prime Minister from 1964 to 1972. His name is particularly associated with the years of high growth rates and a foreign policy which was pro-American (strongly opposed by the student movements of the late 1960s) and pro-Taiwanese.

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