

The Transformation of the U.S.-Japan Alliance and its Implications for East Asia

by

Dr. Murata Koji

Murata Koji: Thank you very much to the Sasakawa Peace Foundation for this wonderful arrangement. Talking about Japan's security policy and the U.S.-Japan security relationship, it is a very challenging time.

Koizumi's Foreign Policy

First of all, I would like to assess Prime Minister Koizumi's foreign policy. It is often said in Japan that Koizumi's policy toward the United States was successful, but his policy toward the rest of Asia was a failure. Generally speaking, I agree with this assessment, but looking more carefully I would say that in Koizumi's first two years, his policy toward the United States was very successful but in the latter three and a half years his policy toward the United States was not so successful. Let me tell you the reason. In the first two years, it was successful mainly because of the air of crisis, terrorism, and war. Prime Minister Koizumi was a leader who was very suitable for an air of crisis and was able to be very quick and decisive. Faced with the 9/11 crisis, Koizumi was able to pass the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Bill quite quickly in the National Diet. Faced with the beginning of the Iraq War, Koizumi quite quickly expressed his strong support to the United States, more specifically, to President Bush. He was able to pass the Iraq Special Measures Law and he sent the Japan Self-Defense Forces to Iraq. He was able to make several quick decisions. Just suppose that the Japanese

Prime Minister in those days had been Mr. Mori Yoshiro, do you think Prime Minister Mori could have made such quick decisions? I don't think so at all. Koizumi was able to make quick decisions when faced with several crises.

Time passed and the sense of crisis decreased. Then Koizumi's leadership style didn't match well with the situation. Even in the case of the U.S.-Japan relationship, Koizumi made several mistakes. One example is the BSE issue, the export of U.S. beef to Japan. We banned importing U.S. beef for a long time and Koizumi caused several difficulties in reopening to these imports. Koizumi could not sufficiently explain the safety considerations in this issue to the Japanese public. Another example is the U.S. military transformation in Japan. It was finally decided between the two governments last May that the troublesome Futenma base would be moved to the Henoko area. Some Marines are supposed to go to Guam and other places. Koizumi did not initiate any strong leadership on any of these issues; it was mainly taken care of by the bureaucracy of the Defense Agency. The Prime Minister did not show enough leadership on these important and complicated issues. I would say that in the first two years, Koizumi made several home runs in the U.S.-Japan relationship and scored many points, but in the latter three and a half years Koizumi made slight mistakes again and again. That is my basic understanding.

Koizumi's policy toward Asia. Mainly because of the Yasukuni Shrine issue, it was quite a fiasco. I would say that it was Koizumi who politicized this issue. In 2001, during the LDP's presidential election, Koizumi promised publicly that he would go to the shrine as Prime Minister. He made this promise mainly because he wanted to obtain votes from the LDP's supporters, many of them relatives of those who died in World War II. Koizumi's rival in the 2001 LDP presidential election was Hashimoto Ryutaro. Hashimoto, during his Prime Ministership, did not go to Yasukuni Shrine due to the opposition of China and other countries. So Koizumi intentionally made the promise that 'While Hashimoto could not go to Yasukuni Shrine during his term, I will go during mine.' He politicized this issue. Due to this issue, the relationships with China and Korea had a lot of difficulties, which I will mention later.

Abe's Foreign Policy

An extraordinary character, Mr. Koizumi stepped down in late September. Then the new Prime Minister, Abe Shinzo, came to power. Let me talk about Mr. Abe's foreign policies so far. Mr. Abe, soon after becoming Prime Minister, visited Beijing and Seoul and these visits were a non-surprise but a surprise at the same time. Non-surprise means that it was expected that Mr. Abe would try to visit to Beijing and Seoul because his predecessor so damaged the relationships with China and South Korea. It was quite logical for Abe to want to go to China and South Korea. Originally, Abe and his aides sought to visit Washington as his first visit as Prime Minister. However, Washington was so busy because of the midterm

elections, so the possibility of going to Washington was denied. Several other possibilities were considered, for example, visiting India. The reason was that India is the biggest democracy in the world and Prime Minister Abe emphasized diplomacy based on shared values such as democracy, human rights, and freedom of speech. He emphasized the importance of values in foreign policy, value diplomacy. This was why he considered visiting India. But this possibility was also denied because Koizumi had already visited India last year and at the end of this year, Prime Minister Singh is supposed to visit Tokyo. So it was impossible for Abe to visit India. The third possibility was visiting Thailand after the APEC summit meeting in order to emphasize the new Japanese administration's attention to Southeast Asian countries. But this possibility was also denied because of the coup d'état in Bangkok. Then, the logical consequence was to try to visit Beijing and Seoul. Beijing was very amenable to accepting the new Prime Minister's visit. Three reasons. One: This is a new Prime Minister who might redefine the Sino-Japanese relationship. Two: Chinese President Hu Jintao was dealing with large-scale corruption in Shanghai and gaining stronger control over the country, so this was a good time for Hu Jintao. Three: Once Abe was accepted by Beijing, there was no other choice for Seoul but to accept Abe as well. So he successfully visited Beijing and Seoul. This is a non-surprise, quite expected. The surprise was that he visited Beijing and Seoul so quickly.

Yasukuni

Abe was very lucky with this, but the whole of Japan was not so lucky; I'm

referring to the North Korean nuclear test issue. Because of this North Korean provocation, the Yasukuni issue was relativized in Beijing and Seoul. Yasukuni was not the major issue. So far, Prime Minister Abe's position is that he will not make clear whether or not he will visit Yasukuni Shrine. That is Abe's tactic—ambiguity about Yasukuni Shrine. My sense is that both Beijing and Seoul will accept this ambiguous tactic. If Beijing accepts this approach and keeps silent over the Yasukuni issue, it may be a kind of resolution to this issue. In my understanding, in Japan, many of those who supported Koizumi's visit to the shrine were not necessarily familiar with the complicated details and background of the Yasukuni Shrine issue. They supported Koizumi's visit because China was opposed to it. They thought that Chinese opposition was a kind of intervention in domestic affairs and this is why they supported the visit. If China keeps silent over this issue, many who initially supported Koizumi's visit will lose interest in this issue. If both sides keep silent then we may be able to find a compromise or solution. That is possible, diplomatically speaking.

However, I don't think Abe's ambiguous approach will ever be a final solution. Many conservative people, including Mr. Abe himself, say that the Yasukuni Shrine issue is not a diplomatic issue. I disagree with this argument. The Yasukuni Shrine issue is a diplomatic issue already, but I would agree with them that it is not a diplomatic issue alone; it is also a domestic affair. This is a religious, historical, and constitutional problem. Under the Japanese Constitution we have to maintain the separation of government power and

religion. Whether Prime Minister Abe's visit to Yasukuni Shrine would be against the constitution or not, this is still an open-ended question. It is a religious question, and also a historical question for the sovereign government of Japan—how to deal with those who died for our country during World War II. That is still open-ended. Even if this does not remain a problem diplomatically, the Yasukuni issue still remains. Still, frustrated nationalism may continue to erupt on other occasions, so Prime Minister Abe must find a final solution to this issue. For example, Koizumi's chief cabinet minister, Fukuda Yasuo, a rival of Abe's during the LDP presidential election, started a private commission and provided a report that recommended that the Japanese government establish another national facility to honor those who died during World War II which would be open to every religion, Christianity, Buddhism, and even Islam—not only Shinto. That is one possibility. I don't know whether Prime Minister Abe would accept this idea, but even if the Yasukuni Shrine issue does not become a diplomatic problem between Japan and China or Korea, the issue will not be solved. That is one thing I wanted to say today.

When Prime Minister Abe assumed that position in late September, his popularity was extremely high, about 70% support according to the Yomiuri Shimbun and slightly less according to the Asahi Shimbun. In postwar Japanese history, there have been only two Prime Ministers with approval ratings this high—Koizumi and Hosokawa. Carefully examine the popularity rate of Abe and one sees that it is based mostly on females, and that the men in their 40s and 50s—probably the most politically

oriented category—do not necessarily support Abe. What does it mean? That is the big question. My guess is that the high popularity rate for Abe is mainly based on image. He is a new leader, quite young, he must be fresh. Such an image creates a very high rate of support. If this is the case, then such a high rate is quite dangerous for Abe. You will remember that five years ago Prime Minister Koizumi's popularity rating was 85% or so, extremely high. However, once Koizumi fired the extremely popular Foreign Minister Tanaka Makiko, the Koizumi cabinet's popularity drastically decreased. So it is possible that Abe's extremely high popularity will drastically decrease. It's possible.

Okinawa

Mr. Abe will have a lot of difficulties in the future—let me explain them. One is Okinawa. This is directly related to the U.S.-Japan security relationship. Next Sunday we have a gubernatorial election in Okinawa; there are two main candidates. One is conservative and the other is extremely radical or leftist. The conservative candidate, Mr. Nakaima, is supported by the LDP and the New Komeito Party. Nakaima is a very experienced person, a graduate of Tokyo University Law School, a senior official in the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, the former President and Chairman of the Okinawa Electric Power Company, and former Lieutenant Governor of Okinawa. A wonderful, perfect career, but I am afraid nowadays people in Okinawa will not want such a typical establishment figure as governor. That is a big problem. Also, Nakaima is in his late sixties, which might be a handicap for him. The opposition

parties' unified candidate, Ms. Itokazu, was a member of the upper house and resigned in order to participate in the gubernatorial election. She is very popular among the Okinawans and her position is against the U.S. military transformation in Japan, which was agreed upon by the two governments last May. She denies the importance of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty and denies the legitimacy of the Self-Defense Forces. So, extremely leftist, and it seems that she might win. If Ms. Itokazu is elected governor, how to implement the U.S. transformation in Japan, which was politically and diplomatically already agreed upon by the two governments, will be a big problem. One possibility is that the Japanese government will try to pass a special measures law in the National Diet that could overcome the governor's sabotage and opposition in Okinawa. Even if the government tries to pass a special measures law, it cannot be made before next July, when there will be upper house elections. Implementation of the U.S. military transformation in Japan is open-ended. It might have a lot of difficulties. That is one big problem for Prime Minister Abe.

The North Korea Issue

Secondly, the North Korea issue. As I told you before, the North Korean provocation temporarily helped Abe because there is no other politician who has established a reputation as being tough against North Korea. It was very lucky that this happened in October, because Japan had the chair of the United Nations Security Council during that month. But now Japan's chairmanship is over and at the end of this year, Japan will no longer be a

member of the Security Council. The Security Council passed economic sanctions against North Korea, and Japan also initiated unilateral economic sanctions. Both of those are very good decisions. However, I don't think that economic sanctions will work soon since they take a long time to become effective. So as time passes, maybe Japanese public opinion will become more and more frustrated; even though we implemented economic sanctions against North Korea, nothing changed. Then Prime Minister Abe's high popularity rating might dramatically decrease. This is a big danger for Abe.

Furthermore, North Korean issues pose a serious challenge for the U.S.-Japan security alliance. After the midterm elections here in the United States, the Republicans lost their majority in both the lower and upper houses. The Bush administration may become more and more inward looking. In terms of foreign affairs, the only issue will be Iraq. North Korea's priority will be very low in this administration. Bush has only two more years, and I don't think, even Mr. Bush must not think, that within two years the North Korean issues will be completely solved. Such as possibility is extremely low, or almost zero. If this is the case, what can the Bush administration do on the North Korean issue to prevent the situation from getting worse, to prevent a second North Korean nuclear test, and to prevent the export and import of nuclear weapons-related materials? This is really all that the Bush administration can do. To contain North Korea might be enough for the Bush administration. So far, North Korea does not have a missile that can reach American soil. However, contained in its territory, North Korea can develop nuclear warheads and

missiles that can reach the Japanese islands. A contained North Korea that continuously develops nuclear warheads and short and mid-range missiles within its territory is a serious security challenge for Japan. Now, over North Korea, we have a perception or interest gap between Japan and the United States. How to shorten this gap between the U.S. and Japan is a very serious challenge for the alliance and Prime Minister Abe.

The Upper House Elections

Finally, in July, Japan will have an upper house election. Similar to the Senate in this country, half of them are elected every three years and they serve six-year terms. Those up for election next year were elected six years ago. What happened six years ago? Koizumi came to power and his popularity was extremely high, 85% or so. That is why so many LDP candidates were elected to be upper house members. Logically speaking, the LDP will surely lose seats. The LDP is in a coalition government with Komeito. If Komeito does not lose any seats and if the LDP loses more than thirteen seats, then the coalition government will lose its majority in the upper house. This would be a big problem for Prime Minister Abe. Even if the coalition government between the LDP and Komeito keeps a slight majority in the upper house, Komeito's influence will be larger in the coalition government. That would be another problem for Prime Minister Abe because Komeito has a very peace oriented constituency. Komeito is based on a religious group, Soka Gakkai, whose female members are very peace oriented. As Komeito's influence inside the coalition government increases, Mr. Abe

will have difficulty making decisions on security affairs. For example, Mr. Abe spoke recently with the foreign media and said that during his tenure as Prime Minister he would like to revise the constitution. However, to revise the constitution, Komeito's help is essential—without their help it would be impossible. If Mr. Abe wants to revise the constitution, especially Article 9 and the interpretation of collective self-defense, Abe must provide a *quid pro quo* to Komeito for their support. That might be the Yasukuni Shrine issue. So far it is not conceivable that Abe would accept the idea of establishing a new national facility open to every religion, because he was strongly opposed to such an idea when he was Chief Cabinet Secretary and Deputy Secretary General of the LDP. However, in order to make Komeito accept constitutional revision, especially of Article 9, Abe might accept this idea, which might satisfy Komeito's constituency. We'll see. Nobody knows, but it is a possibility.

In any case, while Mr. Abe currently enjoys very high popularity, in other areas Abe has many political difficulties: Okinawa, North Korea and the upper house elections. Ironically speaking, extremely high popularity might end up being an obstacle for Prime Minister Abe.

The U.S.-Japan Security Relationship

Furthermore, my last remark is that as far as the U.S.-Japan security relationship goes, Japan is more and more concerned about its own national security due to the North Korean provocations. In this context of Japan's national defense, the Japanese people clearly understand the importance of the

U.S.-Japan security relationship. But when it comes to global security issues such as antiterrorism and how to stabilize the Middle East, including Iraq, the Japanese people tend to feel that these issues are not directly related to Japan. As Japan cooperates with the United States, Japan might be entrapped by the global U.S. strategy, which might be dangerous for Japan. I would say that Japan feels two different fears. In the context of Japan's national defense, the Japanese people feel that the United States might not help Japan in the case of a real contingency. It is a fear of abandonment in the national defense dimension. In the global security dimension, the Japanese fear entrapment. So, Japanese feelings are quite complicated. How to shrink this gap is a quite important task for Prime Minister Abe and I am sure he will attempt to do it.

As you may know, Prime Minister Abe is supposed to meet Mr. Bush at the APEC Summit Meeting and interestingly enough Mrs. Abe and Mrs. Bush have a special meeting arranged. Mrs. Abe is quite popular in Japan; Mr. Abe is helped a lot by his wife. It's good to demonstrate a personal friendship and relationship between the President and Prime Minister and their families.

But things are not the same as during the Koizumi era—the first two years of which had an air of crisis with terrorism and war. Most Japanese people felt that the war in Iraq and the 9/11 attacks were very dangerous and serious, but not a direct security threat to Japan. That is why Koizumi could sell Japanese security cooperation with Washington, charging a very high price to Washington. These issues are not

directly related to Japan's security, but because we are friends we will cooperate with the United States. That is why the price was very high. But nowadays, Mr. Abe has no other choice but to cooperate with the United States because of North Korea. The North Korea issue is directly related to Japan's national security. Japan cannot sell positive cooperation to Washington at a high price, because it is our own business. That is the big difference between Koizumi and Abe. We can find many continuities and similarities between Koizumi and Abe: both of them tried to maintain a very close relationship with the United States, both of them enjoy a very high popularity rate, and both of them are quite conservative. However, the fundamental situations are different. Abe has to be as decisive as Koizumi was, but must also be more nuanced and balanced than Koizumi was. Thank you very much.

Kupchan: Thank you very much, Koji. You've gotten us off to a wonderful start. Now, let's turn it over to Balbina and Xinbo for commentary and then open it up for conversation. Balbina.

Balbina Hwang: Well, thank you very much, first to the Sasakawa Peace Foundation for putting together this great event, I'm very impressed with the size of the crowd. Before I begin my remarks, I should point out that I am not yet employed by the U.S. Government and that my remarks should in no way be construed as representing any portion of the U.S. Government. In fact this is probably one of my last opportunities to speak publicly and speak on my personal views. I will take the opportunity to provide a basis for provocative discussion. Having said that, first of all

Professor Murata, thank you for your wonderful presentation, it was extremely informative and really gave me so much to think about and I think all of you as well. You gave a really excellent picture of all the specific issues that Prime Minister Abe will have to face within Japan. There really isn't much to add to that, so I'll take this opportunity to take a step back and provide a strategic context for many of these challenges that Prime Minister Abe and Japan, and the United States, will face.

History Issues

I agree completely with all of your analysis and I think that perhaps you did not mean to imply this about Yasukuni and some of the other history issues—I think you were trying to provide the specific domestic context—but I would argue that Yasukuni in and of itself really is not the problem. It really is a symptom. Professor Murata carefully went through some of the possible ways in which this problem could be addressed, and possibly to alleviate the tensions with the neighbors of Japan. I would also point out that one could imagine the case that were Japan to take all of these proactive measures that it still would not satisfy China and Korea for a whole host of reasons. Even if Yasukuni were to be resolved, there would be a whole host of other issues that China and South Korea and even North Korea would happily bring up as problems and tensions. The list is numerous, and we're all familiar with them—textbooks, comfort women—the historical list goes on and on. My point here is that the problem essentially is not about Yasukuni or history or comfort women or Dokdo/Takeshima or any of these other issues. This in no way means

that I am trying to trivialize any of these sorts of issues or trying to argue that any of these points are small or trivial—they are not.

My argument, however, is that those issues are really the symptom of a much bigger strategic problem in Northeast Asia. That is that there are tensions between the belief or perception or even the desire by many countries in creating a very cooperative, peaceful Northeast Asia region. But in fact, I would argue that Northeast Asia is not even really a region at all. It's what some other scholars have called an "anti-region." What I mean by that is that the region continues to be pervaded by a zero-sum mentality and zero-sum calculations by each of the major players—that means China, Japan, South Korea, North Korea and Taiwan, if we include Taiwan.

Relic of the Cold War

This of course is nothing new. This is the strategic environment that is in essence a relic of the Cold War. In part it was established and encouraged, perhaps tacitly, by the United States and was systematized by the bilateral alliance structures that were established. But with the end of the Cold War there was the rise of the expectation that we should also have seen a shift in the zero-sum calculations and zero-sum strategic maneuvering by each of these states.

Of course, Europe is the perfect counterexample. One saw that in Europe, the shift away from this type of thinking began well before the end of the Cold War, in fact one could even argue that cooperative thinking in Western Europe was a function of the Cold War.

In Asia, there seem to be trends that many people point to that should logically follow. The most important example is this economic interdependence. We all know that China has now surpassed the United States as both South Korea and Japan's largest bilateral trading partner, and that economic "interdependence"—in quotes—is rapidly growing. If we were to assume that this interdependence therefore is promoting greater cooperation and a fundamental shift in strategic calculations, I would argue that is not the case. That is why I don't really like the term "interdependence." I think that we are seeing a rise in economic exchanges and interaction, which is not necessarily the same as interdependence in the sense that it implies increased cooperation. Classic liberal arguments tell us that with increased interdependence you see greater and greater cooperation. I don't think this is the case in Asia and this becomes a puzzle. The question is why. Well, in IR theory there is one view that is called the "status quo bias," which basically says that most states find the status quo far more satisfying and stabilizing than changes. In other words, any change to the status quo causes uncertainty, and in effect, insecurity. Why? Because uncertainty and the potential for changes create the inability to predict what will happen in the future. This is what in essence breeds competition. This is exactly what we have in Northeast Asia at the end of the Cold War. We have far greater insecurity despite the continuation of the U.S. alliance structure. So what we're seeing now is increased insecurity and competition for resources, over economic gains, where the concern in Japan and South Korea is very great indeed that China has become

such an important component of their economic future, and even along diplomatic lines. That, I believe, is why you see such vehement hostility when it comes to issues such as Yasukuni or textbooks or even territorial disputes.

The Regionalization of Northeast Asia

It's really only when the region can begin to develop a common identity, and really an understanding that cooperation breeds security and that this lack of a common identity will actually be less secure, that we can possibly begin to see far greater cooperation and a true regionalization of Northeast Asia.

Asians, and Koreans especially, perhaps even the Chinese as well, would love to believe that they alone are the victims of history, that they have this kind of burden where history and memory mean so much. I would argue that's the case all over the world. Europeans certainly have their historical animosity and bitterness that goes centuries back and it's hard to imagine that France and Germany would feel any less bitter than Japan and China might or Japan and South Korea might. The point is that in Europe, after World War II, a mere ten years later, Germany and France cooperated very specifically on an economic issue—the coal and steel agreement. Not because they thought they were friends or had forgiven each other and were able to get over history, I would gamble that if you asked a French or German in 1956, neither of them had put down any of their bitterness toward each other. It wasn't that at all, it was the common understanding that by binding together and cooperating economically they were far more secure. Without that cooperation they were, in fact, insecure.

I think that kind of understanding does not yet exist in Northeast Asia.

I think that we have to be very careful when we talk about the cultural boom that's occurring, the exchanges. People love to cite the numbers, that there are over 200,000 Korean students now studying in China, that the number of Japanese visitors and tourists to South Korea is doubling and increasing tenfold. Those are all very positive developments to be certain, but that does not take the place of creating a common security. I think that the future leadership of Japan faces many domestic challenges, but it should be considered within the strategic environment as well. Thank you very much.

Kupchan: Thank you, Balbina. Our final speaker before opening it up is Wu Xinbo.

Yasukuni

Wu Xinbo: Thank you, Charles. I am very glad to comment on this talk by my friend Koji Murata. I think we met ten or twelve years ago, so welcome back. I have three points to make on Koji's speech. The first one has to do with Yasukuni Shrine and my understanding of this issue. He has tried to present this issue in a more comprehensive manner, diplomatically, legally, and historically. From a Chinese perspective, we tend to believe this has to do with Japan's evolving domestic politics. That is, in the post-Cold War era, Japan's domestic politics became more conservative, and that somehow gives rise to the political need for senior leaders to visit the shrine. It also makes it possible for ambitious leaders to capitalize on this issue if they want. In that sense, nationalism has been

getting stronger, not only in Japan, but in South Korea and China as people have noted. The changing domestic context is an important clue to understanding the Yasukuni Shrine issue. The problem is that as the Prime Minister, how should one balance domestic political needs with overall foreign policy interests? This is a real challenge. A real leader would pursue long-term national interests rather than seek short-term political gains by going to Yasukuni Shrine and gaining the support of interest groups domestically. Whether Mr. Abe will change the course is a big question.

Nuclear Issues

The second comment is on the North Korean nuclear issue. I understand the concern on the part of Japan with regard to the geographical proximity between Japan and the Korean peninsula. If I can go a little bit further on what Koji talked about, does this mean that if we are to go back to the Six-Party Talks that Japan will take a tougher attitude on this issue than the United States does, given the security concerns and the strong domestic concerns on this issue? If that is the case, how will Japan convince its allies in Washington and others such as Beijing, Seoul and even Moscow to support its position on this issue? In October, Japan had the chair of the Security Council, so it was in the position to take more initiative. But as the Six-Party Talks return to the table, I don't know how much initiative Japan will be able to take. This is one question.

Related to that nuclear issue, I wonder whether Koji can shed some light on the ongoing and forthcoming debate within Japan on the possible nuclear option,

whether this is already a dead topic or is very much open. My hunch is that with the Pandora's box already open, you cannot force people to just think about it and never try it.

Regional Cooperation

To see this issue in a broader context, with the changing security environment in Northeast Asia and the U.S.-Japan alliance, we need to have a broader perspective on Northeast Asia. Dr. Hwang has already given her opinion about this region. I might take a somewhat different reading on trends in this region since the end of the Cold War. The very fact that these six countries now sit together and talk about the North Korean nuclear issue is a new phenomenon that we did not see ten years ago when we faced the first nuclear crisis. It was unthinkable during the Cold War, but why this is possible now is because of the changing strategic context among the major players, especially between China and the United States. I think that this is a very encouraging evolution within the regional strategic landscape and makes possible more cooperation where previously there were only rivalries.

In terms of interdependence, although Dr. Hwang has been very cautious in using that word, there has been progress. When I think about the handling of our relationship with Japan in the last couple of years, it has been quite difficult, but I think people in China—the leaders and foreign policy elite—all share the belief that we have got to have a sound relationship with Japan in the long term, partly because of growing economic interdependence. A heavy stake for both sides. That also explains why Beijing

has responded and reached out so quickly to the new Prime Minister to try to reshape bilateral relations when the opportunity presented itself. If we think about changing the regional strategic landscape, growing economic interdependence, and also the changing priority concerns on the part of the United States as Koji already mentioned, what does this mean for Japan's security policy in the future? Will Japan, as it did in the past, always stick to an alliance with the United States and view it as the only way to serve its own security concerns? Or will Japan be more open-minded in shaping its security policy in a way that will seek more cooperation with its neighbors and play a more positive role in trying to build a regional cooperation mechanism? This would be a very welcome gesture from a regional perspective, and I think this issue deserves more serious debate within Japan at both the policy and intellectual levels. I hope Koji will make his due contribution to that. Thank you.

Kupchan: We'll hear a brief response by Koji and then open it up for questions.

Murata: Thank you very much for your extremely insightful comments. First of all, Dr. Hwang pointed out that the East Asian strategic environment is very complex, and I would say that Japanese policy toward East Asia has a lot of problems. One example from last year is when Japan tried to seek a permanent seat on the Security Council and Japan, Germany, Brazil, and India jointly proposed an idea of how to revise the Security Council. In Europe, eleven countries supported the German proposal, including France, but in Asia, only three countries supported the

Japanese proposal: Bhutan, the Maldives, and Afghanistan. In the case of Afghanistan, it is only because Japan helps in its rehabilitation. In the case of Bhutan and the Maldives, they supported the proposal not because of Japan but because they are neighboring countries of India. We have to redefine our policy toward Asia.

Difference from European situations, as Dr. Hwang mentioned between France and Germany. The difficulty between Japan and China is not only because both of them are big powers. It is also because our political systems and values are so different. This is a big problem when considering the East Asian security environment. I'm not saying that China is not a democracy, but our political systems are still quite different. That is a big difficulty for us. I would also say that nowadays, history is a real diplomatic problem in East Asia.

Why is this? One reason is, ironically speaking, that we are living in the 21st century. If we were living in the 19th century and if we had a serious disagreement between the major powers we could just go to war. Yeah, it's easy. If you win, then your argument was right, and if you lose, your argument was wrong. However, in the 21st Century, in a quite complicated and interdependent world, we cannot easily have a war between Japan and China, Japan and South Korea, or even Japan and North Korea. That is why history is a problem; we cannot fight our wars in the present and that's why we have to fight over past wars and the implications of wars in the past.

That is, I guess, a basic background, and having said that I am somewhat

optimistic, and the reason is North Korea. Due to the North Korean provocations, we might have a reason for cooperation between Japan, China, and South Korea. North Korea now gives us a great opportunity. I wouldn't say it's probable, but it's possible. As Dr. Hwang pointed out, we have many other issues aside from Yasukuni Shrine such as the textbook issues, the comfort women issue, and territorial issues, but my sense is that the Yasukuni Shrine issue is qualitatively different from the others. This is because it is not only a history issue, but also a spiritual and religious one. That makes it extremely difficult. On the textbook issues (the allegations that Japanese history textbooks distort the past, especially World War II), I have never met an American or a Chinese or a Korean who argues that the Japanese textbooks are the problem. The adoption rate of the so-called problematic textbooks is 0.027% or something. Is that a serious problem? The textbook issue and other issues are very minor compared to the Yasukuni Shrine issue and qualitatively different.

Japan Going Nuclear

Dr. Wu Xinbo's question: I have to mention recent arguments about Japan's going nuclear. To tell you the truth, it was a joke, at least for me. The LDP Policy Research Council Chairman, Mr. Nakagawa, a very prominent politician, and even Foreign Minister Aso argue that at least we should have the possibility or chance to argue about Japan going nuclear, being faced with North Korean nuclear tests. My answer is, if I directly answer their question, of course yes, we have to have the possibility to talk about it because we live in a democracy with freedom of

speech and thought. However, their assumption is wrong that Japan has never publicly argued about going nuclear. We have already had many arguments about this, not just among scholars and commentators, but also among politicians and government officials. We have already argued enough—their assumption is wrong.

More practically speaking, if Japan goes nuclear, how will we obtain plutonium? Now, Japan gets materials and equipment from the United States under the U.S.-Japan Atomic Energy Agreement. According to this agreement, revised around 1988, if Japan uses its nuclear facilities for non-civilian purposes, the United States has the right to demand the return of all equipment and resources. So, under such an international treaty, how can we promote the production of nuclear weapons? Thirty percent of Japan's energy is generated by nuclear power. How can we fill this gap?

Also, if our conclusion is, "Let's go nuclear," then how many nuclear warheads should we have? Only one? Of course not. Ten or twenty? OK, twenty nuclear warheads. Where should we keep them? If we keep twenty nuclear warheads at one site, it would make a very good target for a preemptive attack by North Korea or other countries. How to diffuse these twenty nuclear warheads in such a small island country? We are different from North Korea in that we cannot make lots of tunnels inside our own territory. How about opposition from the people living around the nuclear facilities? The Self-Defense Forces are keeping three nuclear warheads next to your house. How about the reaction of Japanese public opinion?

Some may say that Japan needs nuclear submarines, but with twenty or thirty nuclear warheads, how many submarines should we have? How much would this all cost? Seriously, it is almost impossible for us to go nuclear. The answer is already crystal clear. We have already argued a lot. Their assumption is just wrong, that is my answer. Thank you very much.

Kupchan: Thank you very much to all of our panelists. Let me just get the conversation started with the following, and then we will open it up to broader participation by the audience.

Generational Shift and Populism

Koji, at the end of your talk, you focused on the strategic calculations that Abe and the Japanese government face today. You said that they face a threat of entrapment on the global agenda and abandonment on the local agenda; I think that is a very interesting way to put it. I want to put another dimension into play. This is the political threat to the status quo. This threat comes from what would be best described as a populist/nationalist rethinking of the U.S.-Japan relationship. I think it could have one of two sources. One is a generational shift. Obviously, Abe is the first post-World War II Prime Minister. Germany, a country I know much better than Japan, is in almost the same situation. Schroeder was the first post-World War II Chancellor and there you saw a quiet earthquake, the German-American alliance lost its sacred status. Part of this was the Iraq war, but even without the war, that would have happened. I'm wondering if a similar sort of thing might not happen in Japan, that the alliance will lose its sacred

status, that people will begin to say, "If we're going to be normal in terms of Article 9, then why can't we be normal as a nation-state, making our own decisions about defense and security?"

The other issue that I would be interested in hearing from you on is the populist trend that we feel here in the United States and in Europe, a kind of populist politics. Here and in Europe it's partly about immigration, here about Hispanics, in Europe about Muslims, but it's led to this populism. Part of it is also economic, and this is where I think in the Japanese case it is a valid political trend. Here, people are getting angry saying, "Where are our jobs going" and in the middle class wages are stagnating and you're getting this populist politics. That too could unsettle the Japanese-American relationship because populist countries are also nationalistic countries. So could you say a few things about the politics of this?

Strategic Differences Between Japan and Western Europe

Murata: Thank you, Charles, for the very good points. First of all, strategically speaking, the difference between Europe and Japan. After the Cold War, Western European allies of the United States, including Germany, lost the clear and present danger of the Soviet Union. Now, Japan is newly faced with a clear and present danger, North Korea. During the Cold War period, although Japan was an ally of the United States, it did not perceive any clear and present danger. Of course North Korea, China, and the Soviet Union were there, but during the Cold War period U.S. naval and air forces in East Asia were far superior to their

counterparts in the Soviet Union. Japan was quite safe, in contrast to the European countries that were faced with the continental military forces of the Soviet Union. Now, after the Cold War, we are faced with North Korean missiles and nuclear warheads, and thus we feel a clear and present danger. That's why security ties between the U.S. and Japan are becoming closer, especially since the end of the Cold War. That's a big difference between Europe and Japan. That's the strategic dimension.

Secondly, politically, the generational changes are very important. I would also say that pessimism about the future is present. If you see tomorrow as being better than today, then you can be relaxed, but if you see tomorrow as being worse, you will be narrow-minded. Under long-term economic stagnation and social confusion, the Japanese have tended to be somewhat nationalistic. But nowadays, the Japanese economy is slowly getting better; we have already passed the worst times.

Japan's Electoral Reform

Thirdly, which you didn't mention but is also related to nationalism, is electoral reform. More than ten years ago, the small district electoral reform was introduced. Before that, the LDP could run several candidates in one district. That's why factions became so important, because one candidate would be supported by faction A, like the Hashimoto faction, and another candidate would be supported by faction B, for example, the Mori faction. That's why, inside of the LDP, factions are so important. But nowadays, in one small electoral district, the LDP can put up

only one candidate. Thus the importance of factions has decreased. As a consequence, the influence of the Prime Minister, who is the party president, has been increased. Under the small district election system, the president of the party is extremely important, more so than the candidate. Voters are voting for the president of the party that the candidate belongs to. This causes populist politics and Koizumi maneuvered through this very well. The leader talks directly to the population and the voters expect to talk directly to the leader and such a system causes nationalistic sentiments.

Abe's Conservative Credentials as a Tool

Dr. Wu Xinbo says that Abe will have trouble changing the Yasukuni issue and other issues, but I don't think so. Abe might have a chance because Abe is considered a conservative, nationalistic politician and he might be able to drastically change his approach to the Yasukuni Shrine issue. If he were considered a liberal politician and he tried to change the approach to Yasukuni, he would be heavily criticized by the right wing. However, Abe is considered right wing enough that he might be able to change the issue dramatically—just as Nixon visited Beijing and Reagan concluded the INF Treaty with the Soviet Union. Thank you.

Generational Change in South Korea

Hwang: Charles, I think your observation is profoundly important because it's also reflected exactly what's happened between the United States and South Korea. The South Korean

president is of the post-war generation and has appealed to them. What's very interesting about this is that it may actually be a necessary shift in both Japan and South Korea. The reality is that the alliance structure is a relic of the Cold War, and while you make the very compelling argument that Japan may decide that the alliance is critical because of acute insecurity from North Korea, the alliance structure really is something that was sort of pushed onto both South Korea and Japan as a result of wars. In Japan's case because of defeat and in South Korea's case because they had no choice. For the future, if you're going to have a healthy alliance, you have to have that popular debate within the societies. In the short-term it might be quite unsettling and difficult, but if you can see your way through, it's almost a requirement for any future alliance.

Q&A

Kupchan: Let's get a question from the audience.

Questioner: Thank you for your excellent presentation. You said that Japanese people are more concerned about their own security policy, even if the U.S.-Japan alliance is strengthened. There was talk by Mr. Abe about preemptive strikes against the North Korean missile facilities after the missile launches in July. Do you think that Japan needs independent military measures to counter North Korean missiles or nuclear weapons outside of the U.S. alliance?

My second question is, imagine if Mr. Abe were to lose the next election in July, who would be the next Prime

Minister and what would his North Korea policy be? Or does Japan have no other option than the current North Korea policy?

Upper House Elections

Murata: Thank you very much for your questions. Let me answer the second question: who will be the next Prime Minister—not me, unfortunately. I would say that I guess the LDP will lose some seats in the next upper house election because it overwhelmingly won the last upper house election—they must lose some of the seats in the next one. Even if the LDP loses several seats in the upper house election, I don't think that Abe will step down. In post-war Japanese history, only two Prime Ministers have stepped down due to a defeat in an upper house election. The first was Prime Minister Uno in 1989 and the second was Prime Minister Hashimoto in 1998. In the case of Uno, it was the first time the LDP lost its majority in the upper house. In the case of Hashimoto, he said before the election that if the LDP were to lose its majority, he would resign. In the case of Abe, everybody knows that the LDP will lose some seats, so it is expected. Furthermore, if the LDP loses the upper house, in the lower house, the more important house, the LDP has over 300 seats, an overwhelming majority. With that many seats in the lower house, why should he resign over small losses in the upper house? Even if they lose some seats the upper house, I don't think Prime Minister Abe will step down. Only if he has a serious scandal or Abe's popularity drastically decreases would he resign.

To your first question, in terms of Japan's possible preemptive attack against North Korean missiles or nuclear facilities. As I remember, some politicians, not Abe himself, probably Defense Minister Ishiba or others, said this. What they said is that legally speaking Japan has the right to attack North Korean military facilities if it is clear enough that North Korea is going to attack Japan immediately. Then it is possible, legally speaking. They never said that this is a Japanese policy choice—and we do not have the necessary capabilities.

North Korean Missiles and Nuclear Tests

Questioner: Within the last several months, it seems to me that the security situation in Northeast Asia has changed rather dramatically. On the fifth of July, the fourth of July our time, North Korea fired seven ballistic missiles. One didn't work, the longer range one, the other six, as I understand it, were remarkably accurate, more so than anyone expected. Those six could reach Japan. On the ninth of October, they detonated a nuclear device for the first time. This is not talk. Up until recently it had been talk, but now there are facts that politicians maybe don't particularly want to recognize, but there it is. My question is, fundamentally, whether there is a Japanese response to this, or whether it is just business as usual in Japan? We hear a lot of talk about the North Koreans and the people they seized in the 1970s and so on and "we'll back up the United States." Is there a sense of some response? Or is it that no response is needed? Will Japan basically, whatever it says, accept North Korea,

because it has no alternative to accepting it as a nuclear power?

Murata: Thank you, that is a very important question. Some Japanese politicians talking about Japan's going nuclear is basically a reaction to the provocative nuclear tests. But practically speaking, what Japan alone can do is very limited. This is a nuclear issue, and Japan has decided to be a non-nuclear power. What a non-nuclear power can do on a nuclear problem is logically very limited. In the broader picture, I guess the Japanese government should do several things.

One is to keep and strengthen U.S.-Japan security ties in order to maintain America's extended nuclear deterrence. That is an extremely important thing. In order to do so, Japan must consider the expansion not of nuclear but of conventional defense capabilities. However, due to budget limitations, Japan's defense budget has been cut and cut and cut for a long time. But nowadays we must consider how to increase Japan's defense capabilities at home because Japan sent maritime forces to the Indian Ocean, air forces to Iraq, and is involved in a lot of PKOs. So the requirements are currently beyond Japanese capabilities. We must consider how to expand Japan's defense capabilities. North Korea's military strategy is not only nuclear. A North Korean terrorist group might land on Japanese territory and destroy Japanese nuclear facilities. The result is the same as nuclear weapons. These kind of issues should be addressed by the Coast Guard. Of course, we have to facilitate a missile defense system and this type of thing should be seriously promoted.

Secondly, the Bush administration, especially after losing the midterm election, is becoming more and more inward looking and only Iraq is a major foreign policy concern for this administration. So what should we, Japan, do to get Washington's attention on East Asian security issues? In order to do so we must help the United States, even in the Middle East, to the extent that we can. Although we have already withdrawn our ground troops from Iraq, we must provide assistance to rehabilitate the Iraq situation. This is not just other peoples' business, it is directly related to our own security affairs.

Taiwan and the U.S.-Japan Alliance

Questioner: Another issue I would like the panel to shed light on is the Taiwan issue. My first question goes to Dr. Murata. What could be the new strategy in Abe's administration? My second question goes to Professor Wu Xinbo. Would you like to comment on how a strengthened U.S.-Japan alliance might affect Chinese policymaking on the Taiwan issue? Thank you.

Murata: Excuse me, you mean the Abe's cabinet's strategy toward Taiwan? There is no strategy. Taiwan is not an issue with high priority. Taiwan's domestic political situation is so messy—it is a domestic problem, not a strategic problem for Japan.

Wu: From what I understand, over the last ten years there have been growing interactions between Japan and Taiwan even though Japan is mainly politically conservative. Japan used to keep a low profile on the Taiwan issue. However, over the last ten years because of changing domestic politics in Japan and

Taiwan and because of the evolution in China-Japan relations, some people in Japan did try to push for much closer ties between Japan and Taiwan. To some extent, in China we think the history and Yasukuni issues are the most important to China-Japan relations, but you get a sense from public opinion in China that the real concern for China's national security interests is the future orientation of Japan's policy toward Taiwan. We all remember the situation in February of 2005, coming out of a 2+2 U.S.-Japan security dialogue, there was a joint statement which for the first time specified Taiwan as a joint target for U.S.-Japan cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. Following that, we saw reports that the U.S. and Japan were making a joint plan for dealing with contingencies both on the Korean Peninsula and in the Taiwan Strait, which implies a growing interest on the part of Japan in the Taiwan issue. When we talk about the strengthening of the U.S.-Japan alliance, it is not just on the North Korean issue, I think it also has to do with a contingency in the Taiwan Strait and as a part of the U.S. hedging strategy in Asia against the background of a rising China. So, broadly speaking, we think that a strengthened U.S.-Japan alliance will have a negative impact on the Taiwan issue as Japan gets more actively involved in a situation that is already a tough headache.

North Korea Policy

Questioner: I wanted to get both Professors Hwang and Wu's insights on what might have recently brought North Korea back to the negotiating table. Was there pressure from the Chinese side to close down their bank accounts in the West?

Hwang: I don't have any insights I can share with you, I truly don't.

Wu: I think the decision made by Pyongyang to return to the table is just rhetoric so far. Maybe there is some optimism based on the elections here in the United States. I think the motivation is more complicated, and is not just the pressure from China. To deal with North Korea, you always need to use a mix of carrots and sticks. Think of North Korea in the last several decades in this kind of security environment. They are very sophisticated in terms of their calculations. It's not just that China can give a push and they will come back. I would caution everybody in this audience that even if they return to the negotiating table, if there is not more flexibility on the other sides, particularly on the side of the United States, I don't think that this negotiation will proceed either smoothly or quickly. I say this because Dr. Hwang is here and I understand she will play a role in the process.

Questioner: Over the last couple of months there has been a quite public revolt of U.S. foreign policy officials involved with North Korea, quite outspoken, over the fact that every single move toward establishing a sort of peaceful agreement which moves North Korea toward allowing the IAEA back and ultimately moving toward giving up their weapons capacity, has been sabotaged, as Ken Quinones said, by the Bush-Cheney administration—mostly Cheney. Had that not happened, and this is according to the other former ambassadors to Korea involved, this could have been solved relatively simply, had they maintained engagement and civility. I would like to know what

you think about that and whether you think there is a possibility of moving back toward that position as well as what sort of support you think there is in Japan.

Murata: I'm not a specialist on the Korean peninsula, but let me introduce my colleague's argument who is not here. I guess I can introduce his opinion here, Gordon Flake, the famous Korea specialist who is Executive Director of the Mansfield Foundation. According to him, the Bush administration's Korean policy is characterized by the three P's: pessimism, politics, and priority. Priority on Korean affairs is very low in the Bush administration. It is all going to Iraq, Iran, and the Palestinian conflict, so priority is very low. The second one is pessimism; nobody really believes that they will actually abandon their nuclear weapons. Politics, on the hill in Congress, the nuclear issue is not the most fascinating issue, they are more concerned with human rights violations and smuggling and drugs. Political attention is very low. According to his explanation, senior officials do not believe that North Korea coming back to the Six-Party Talks will make much difference, and I agree with his observation. From the Japanese point of view, what the Japanese can do is very limited. Unfortunately for Prime Minister Abe, due to the North Korean nuclear test, the kidnapping issue is becoming a lower and lower priority. That is a big problem for Abe's domestic popularity.

Wu: My limited observation of Bush's North Korea policy is that it has been divided from the beginning. Not just ignorance, but division. I think to North Koreans that means that there is a lack of

credibility to whatever stance Washington presents at the negotiating table. Sometimes you hear a reasonable voice, but on the second day you hear the opposite. That left the North Koreans very puzzled as to whether there was a real possibility of striking a deal with the United States. With the midterm election, I think they may just wait until the next administration to talk about this issue.

Hwang: I would like to point out that the credibility problem, the U.S. does not hold a monopoly on that, North Korea has a small credibility problem as well. I find it interesting that assertions are made about what goes on inside of the Bush administration by everybody outside of the Bush administration. I don't know who you were referring to when you said a "mass defection of foreign policy officials," I believe that none of them have ever worked for or currently work for the Bush administration. I would just caution you about making such assertions. This idea that North Korea has absolutely no priority is just false. Iraq, Iraq, Iraq, that might just be what the American people are interested in, what most of the world is interested in, and what the Washington Post, the New York Times, CNN, and Fox News are interested in, perhaps with good reason, but there are plenty of people in this administration whose job it is to prioritize and agonize about North Korea day after day.

Japan and the U.S. Democratic Party

Questioner: Professor Kupchan raised the issue of generational change as a factor that may change the character of the U.S.-Japan alliance. Let me raise another one, that is the recent election,

the sweep of the Congress by the Democrats and a shift toward the Democratic Party in American politics. If you look at the last fifteen years, which is about as long as people remember in political terms, U.S.-Japan relations were very difficult under a Democratic administration in Washington. If you talk to any Japanese government officials or big business people, they definitely prefer a Republican administration. There are already editorials in the Japanese economic newspapers about nervousness in the Japanese community about trade priorities and so on and so forth under the Democratic Congress. I'm wondering what the thinking of Japanese policymakers might be on the security front, how the alliance might differ, may change its character. The Japanese may have less trust in the Democratic Congress and perhaps the Democratic administration in the coming years. That could drive the Japanese to think about more independent security options or more cooperation with Asia, something like Professor Wu raised.

Murata: I don't think that even if a Democrat comes to power in the next presidential election that it will have a serious impact on U.S.-Japan security ties. In the past, Japanese officials and businessmen considered Democrats to be tougher than Republicans, but this was mainly because of U.S.-Japan trade friction, which is now over. Nowadays, Sino-U.S. trade friction is much more serious. In this sense, the situation is different. Even in the past, under a Democratic administration in Washington, the U.S.-Japan security relationship was well maintained. But what we have to intentionally do is cultivate not only the Republican Party,

but also the Democratic Party networks between Japan and the United States. After the Democrats came to power, it was too late to make those human networks. So we have to cultivate those networks before the next presidential election. In Japan we have the LDP, but we also have the opposition party, the Democratic Party of Japan. So our opposition party should be more eager to cultivate human networks with the American Democratic Party.

Questioner: I want to ask Mr. Murata to comment generally on Japan's foreign policy toward Southeast Asia.

Questioner: I'd like to ask you, Mr. Murata, for a remark about the Japanese National Security Council. It is said that Prime Minister Abe would like to establish a Japanese National Security Council, which is a magnificent dream. In my opinion it will be a J-League, the not-so-popular or powerful Japanese soccer league. I think that if Japan is able to create a National Security Council and make it work well, it will take over a century.

Kupchan: Let me put one other question on the table. This is the question of Iran, for both Koji and Xinbo. What are the likely responses of your two governments, the Chinese and Japanese governments, to the prospect of moving toward sanctions on Iran? It seems to be the direction in which we are moving relatively soon. Is the Chinese government going to be prepared to approve of a resolution in the Security Council? My own guess is no. And that then is likely to lead to action outside of the Security Council, the Europeans and Americans acting independently to impose sanctions. And if they do that

then they are likely to turn to the Abe government and ask Japan to join. What would Japan do, particularly in light of the investments they have in Iran and the degree to which it imports oil from Iran?

Murata: First of all, Japan's Southeast Asian policy. Well, as I mentioned at the beginning of my remarks, Prime Minister Abe is said to have considered making a visit to Bangkok his first as Prime Minister. Paying attention to Southeast Asia and sending the message that Japan is considering Southeast Asia to be important is the basic attitude of the Japanese government. Promoting FTA shall be an important task for this cabinet. Also, as I mentioned, in the U.N. Security Council reform, we couldn't get any support from Southeast Asian countries. So we have to redefine and cultivate sound relationships with Southeast Asian countries. But, having said that, the Northeast Asian security environment is so intense that I don't think Abe's cabinet will give first priority to Southeast Asian countries.

On the NSC, yes we could create an NSC. But you asked if we can make it work, that I don't know. This is quite complicated. Even in this country, the National Security Council was created in 1947 and it only started to work under the Kennedy administration, so it took a few decades, right? So even if we establish a system, we will just have to be patient and wait and see whether it works. In the context of Japanese politics this is quite complicated, because different from the United States, Japan is a parliamentary government and the relationship between the legislative and executive branches is kind of a Westminster or British style. The cabinet ministers, vice ministers, and deputy

vice ministers are all Diet members. So the cabinet tries to control the bureaucracies by appointing members of parliament to head the ministries. However, the Japanese bureaucracies are very strong, so this is kind of a continental European style or French style. So we already have a combination of Westminster and continental European style politics and now Abe is trying to add parts of the American style of government. So this is all very complicated and we will just have to see how it works.

To Charles' quite difficult question on how Japan would respond to the Iran issue. First of all, it is very important to Japan whether a decision is made in the Security Council within the year. If a resolution is passed, then Japan's responsibility as a Council member is very high. But if it is passed next year, then it falls on another member. If the resolution is proposed next year by the United States or another member, China will probably not cooperate, but Japan does not have to make its position clear. But if it is passed while Japan is a member of the Security Council, the Abe cabinet will probably cooperate on it.

Wu: I'll share with you my observations of Japan's foreign policy in Southeast Asia. Many people have pointed out in the last several years that Japan's policies in this subregion have been mainly driven by a concern with China reaching out to Southeast Asia, which actually is true. Originally, Japan was not prepared to sign the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, but China signed so Japan had no choice. Originally, Japan did not want to establish an FTA with Southeast Asia, but China announced a plan and Japan quickly moved ahead.

This has now created Sino-Japanese competition in Southeast Asia, which so far is good for Southeast Asia because they can have good relations with both major players. China has no problem with this because we will just pursue our policy in Southeast Asia anyway. My only concern is that Japan should have a broader perspective on relations with countries in this region and not just be concerned with China's geopolitical gains in this part of the world.

Moving to the Iran issue, I have two points to make. First, China would not necessarily oppose any actions taken by the U.N. Security Council, it would depend on what kind of actions and also how soon it would be. Given China's quick reaction to the North Korean nuclear test, it would be difficult for Beijing to be in the way of a strong U.N. Security Council reaction to Iran's nuclear program. I cannot say that China will endorse it, but my hunch is that we would not be in the way either.

My second point is, and this goes back to the United States, we have read some reports in the last couple of days that with the midterm elections, there could be a flip-flop on Iraq policy, and part of it would be seeking talks with Syria and Iran to put an end to this mess in Iraq. If that is the case, then how would that effect the U.S. approach to the Iran issue in terms of priority? Is the U.S. determined to push the nuclear issue in spite of the desire to seek some collaboration from Iran on the Iraq situation? I don't know. This is not certain for all sides.

Kupchan: Please join me in thanking the panel for an excellent discussion.