

## Do Politicians Matter in Japan?

by

**Dr. Junko Kato**

**Junko Kato:** It is a great pleasure to be able to give a talk here; I'm reminded of and impressed by all the changes in Japanese politics over the past two decades.

When I was doing my Ph.D. at Yale, it was from the late 1980s to the early 1990s. It was the heyday of the Japanese economy and many observers of Japanese politics tried to characterize them as a very simple picture: One party dominance, one party rule of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and a strong bureaucracy. And then when I was completing my Ph.D. as a job candidate, I often gave a job talk in which I tried to convince many scholars that Japanese politics was not so simple; it was oversimplified by observers at the time.

But when I started to teach, actually, Japanese politics started to change. Now, the situation seems to be very complicated and very difficult to understand. So in this presentation, I'll try to give you a large picture of Japanese politics. Many changes are going on, so that is the reason why I will try to do a division of labor with Ellis. We thought it would be better for him not to just be a discussant for my talk, but to give additional information to you. So that is the reason why in my talk I will try to give you a much better understanding of party changes in Japan and he'll give you an understanding of the changes inside the governing LDP.

I would like to start my presentation with two questions: Do politicians matter in Japan? Do policies not matter in Japan?

Many observers of Japanese politics point out the importance of the personalities of politicians in Japan; personal bonding and boss-follower relationships among politicians have been regarded as dominating the Japanese politics.

This view is consistent with the conventional wisdom that policies and policy differences have little influence on political competition in Japan. The recent transformation from the predominance of the LDP to coalition politics underscores twin features of Japanese politics. The power balance of the LDP factions explains the alternation of leadership for 38 years without explicit policy differences among the factions. Since 1993, personal chemistry seems to explain a sequence of frequent break-ups, mergers, extinctions, and formation of parties, which are quite rare in a stable democracy.

### **Koizumi and Ozawa**

However, I think this characterization is based on an incorrect dichotomy. Politicians who are able to cultivate as well as capitalize on policy demands are at an advantage in party competition in Japan as well.

To demonstrate this point and argument, I will use the examples of Japanese politicians with whom most of you are familiar, Junichiro Koizumi, former LDP prime minister, and Ichiro Ozawa, a leader of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), now the major opposition.

Koizumi's popularity contributed to uplifting the public support for the LDP during his cabinet's tenure from 2000 to 2005, though he himself confronted the established mainstream inside his own party.

Ichiro Ozawa is now chairing the DPJ, which has survived to be the LDP's major challenger for office. However, again, Ozawa is not a typical DPJ leader. He triggered the LDP's breakup in 1993 by defecting from it and joined the DPJ in 2003, very recently, after he formed and broke up three different parties, one of which had even allied with the LDP.

So in this regard, both Koizumi and Ozawa appeared independent of their own parties, especially their party's dominant policy orientation.

### **Changing Balance of Power**

To explain the subtle interaction between personality and the structure of inter-party competition, I would like to outline the changing balance of power among the parties, especially focusing on the relationship between the LDP governing party and the DPJ as a major opposition.

So first, look at the two slides to follow a sequence of break-up, merger, formation, and extinction of parties. [see Appendix, Figure 1] So I would like to explain -- the picture is not very clear but I'd just like you to understand that it is very complicated. At first, the Japanese party system was very stable, but all of a sudden, in 1992, one conservative party was formed. But the major changes started in 1993 when the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) was broken up. So at that time, Ozawa defected from the LDP to form the Japan Renewal Party. And then, immediately after the

breakup of the LDP, Prime Minister Miyazawa at that time called the general election. In that election, actually, the LDP remained as a plural party, but not a majority party. All other parties refused to align with the LDP, so that is the reason why no LDP coalition was formed in 1993. In this regard, the LDP remained as the plural party especially in the House of Representatives even though it often fell short of a majority.

What about the second largest party? Under the 1955 system, the one-party predominance of the LDP from 1955 to 1993, it was the Japan Socialist Party, which later became the Social Democratic Party of Japan (SDP). And then the second largest party became the New Frontier Party, founded in 1994, it was not a LDP coalition partner. It was disbanded in 1997, and now the second largest party is the Democratic Party of Japan. So you all will find the LDP here as the plural party and not the majority party.

Okay, this is a very simple characterization of the party changes, even though many parties are formed and disappear. Almost the same picture is found in the House of Councillors, the LDP did not attain a majority throughout this period.

If I summarize the continuity and change among the parties, the changes have been rapid and extensive. Still, we can find some continuity and a pattern of change.

### **Continuity and Pattern of Change**

First of all, the LDP has experienced ups and downs since its breakup. The major one was in 1993 as I already explained, as well as the members' defections from and switching to it. However, it has remained the largest party.

And then, since 1993, we have observed three different second largest parties: First, Social Democratic Party, New Frontier Party, and finally, Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ).

The next figure [see Fig. 3] shows the transformation of the balance of power between the LDP and the second largest party. Here is the transformation of the number of seats of the Liberal Democratic Party from 1993 to 2005. And then, this line indicates the transformation of floor majorities. And this line indicates absolute majorities. This is a special concept in Japanese politics but it means the necessary number of seats by which the LDP controls all committees, not only the floor. The LDP remained as the plural party but often fell short of a majority, floor majority, and, also, more often, short of an absolute majority.

And this line follows the number of the seats of the second largest party. At the beginning, the second largest party was the Japan Socialist Party here. And then in 1994, the New Frontier Party was formed. The number of legislative seats of the New Frontier Party in the House of Representatives increased but it dropped rapidly. And then the NFP was disbanded in 1997. And then the Democratic Party of Japan started from a relatively small size as seen by the number of legislative seats. But the Democratic Party of Japan increased its seats very rapidly. It dropped once in the general election in 2005 but this was an exception in which the LDP enjoyed a very unexpected landslide.

### **The NFP and the DPJ**

So in this regard, if you follow the changing balance of power between the LDP and the second largest party, you will come up with

a natural question: Why was the New Frontier Party (NFP), which had originally been a larger and closer contender than the DPJ, short-lived? And why has the DPJ, which started as the third largest party at its beginning in 1996, competed relatively successfully with the LDP for so long? My argument is that not only elections, but party switching has influenced the survival or extinction of parties.

So we will compare and contrast the New Frontier Party and DPJ as the second largest party. For example, the New Frontier Party fared well in the 1996 general election but broke up within a year without waiting for the 2000 general election, though it was originally a larger and closer contender with the LDP.

By contrast, the DPJ was formed as the third largest party immediately before the 1996 general election. It fared well in the 1996, 2000, and 2003 general elections. In addition, it has increased its size by accepting party switchers. It has gained in size by accepting switchers from the disbanded New Frontier Party and its splinter parties as well as other splinter parties.

### **The Role of Policy in DPJ Attractiveness**

So in order to understand this contrast, I think that policies matter and policy positions matter. The DPJ outlived the NFP partially by paying attention to its policy positions. The DPJ has boasted a centrist position, whereas the LDP and NFP were equally conservative on the left-right spectrum. In addition, the DPJ has as widely spread position as the LDP across policies. So let me explain this using the expert survey data [see Fig. 4-7] this is an international survey on the policy positions of parties answered by each country's

experts. Political scientists scaled parties' positions from 1 to 20 in the left-right ideological dimension, as well as the policy dimension.

This survey was conducted in Japan four times immediately after the 1996, 2000, 2003, and 2005 general elections. The DPJ has been the second largest party since 1998. But immediately after the general election in 1996, the second largest party was the NFP. This was the LDP position on the left-right policy continuum. Obviously, the LDP was a conservative party but the NFP was also conservative.

Immediately after 2000 general election, the same survey was conducted. At that point, the DPJ was the second largest party; its position on left-to-right dimension was at the center. And then the LDP had a very conservative position. So in this regard, the NFP was as conservative as the LDP and the DPJ was the centrist party.

Then we checked the policy positions across policy dimensions. In the case of the LDP, you can easily find that the LDP's policy positions are spread out from center to right; in the case of the NFP, also from center to right. But in the case of the DPJ - this is the result of the 2000 survey - from moderate left to moderate right. So in this regard, clearly, the DPJ was the centrist party and it spread out its policy positions from moderate left to moderate right.

This was a clear difference from the NFP case. I also identified the policy positions after the general election in 2003 and 2005. but the result is almost the same as the one in 2000.

So I think this is a reason why the DPJ can attract a wide range of switchers from other parties. If you have taken the position at the

center, in the middle of many people, it is easier for you to attract the sympathy of others. But if you take a very extreme position, it is very difficult to gain the sympathy of others.

So this is a very intuitive understanding of this situation. But in political science, we have more technical concepts and the terms like the median voter theorem in which the advantage of the median position is proven by formal analysis. But anyway, the DPJ is in a better position than the NFP because of its centrist position, which helps it attract not only voters but switchers.

So generally speaking, politicians have many more incentives to change party affiliation under the newly introduced election system. They switch to a party that can increase their chance of re-election, for example, to enable them to get a nomination in their most preferred election district.

The inclusion of legislative members whose ideologies vary widely from center to right had been vastly to the advantage of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) under its predominance from 1955 to 1993. However, the centrist DPJ seems to exploit the same advantage much more effectively. The DPJ member can take a more leftist and a more conservative position from one policy to another because the party has the position from moderate left to moderate right. So in this regard, the politician-legislator inside the DPJ may be able to compromise with others in policymaking by trading less important issues for more important ones.

### **Why has the LDP Survived?**

So the DPJ seems to have a large advantage over the LDP in policy competition. But if

so, why has the LDP remained the key party in a governing coalition thus far? To answer this question, Junichiro Koizumi, former prime minister from 2000 to 2005, is worth paying attention to. Koizumi was popular among the public but was not among insiders in Japanese politics, including a majority of LDP politicians. Why could Koizumi, antagonizing the LDP, uplift the LDP's popularity? He was often called a populist in the sense that he was good at generating public support through his impressive words and actions.

While Koizumi may have been good at appealing directly to public opinion, his popularity is reasonably explained by his independence from his own party's policy orientation. Since he was not supported by the LDP's mainstream, he had no reluctance to go against the vested interests in society that were the organized support base of the LDP. His independence from his own party's policies enabled him to take a policy orientation that could attract more public support. Please remember that the DPJ had a hard time coping with Koizumi because sometimes Koizumi's position was closer to the DPJ. So ironically, Koizumi's going-his-own-way approach enabled the LDP to lift its own popularity.

It is worth remembering that Koizumi had lost in the LDP presidential election twice and had been far from an heir apparent to the LDP leadership before he became prime minister. The increasing disadvantage of the LDP in policy competition against the DPJ enabled Koizumi to hold the premiership for a long time.

So now the LDP, headed by the more mainstream Fukuda, is now running through their fortune inherited from Koizumi. So that is the reason why the

popularity rate of the LDP and the Fukuda cabinet shows signs of declining.

### **Status of the DPJ**

If we pay attention to the DPJ, the DPJ has exploited its advantage as a centrist party that can embrace heterogeneous policy positions. This advantage, thus far, has exceeded its weakness derived from unstable leadership and the persistent division of inter-party groups.

Last November, you may remember that Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda and DPJ leader Ichiro Ozawa were in talks to form a coalition, but it was in vain. In other words, Ozawa suddenly proposed an alliance with LDP only to be rejected by his own party. But he remained as the leader, though he once announced his resignation to take responsibility.

So why did the DPJ not oust their leader who tried to ally with the LDP against a majority of members' wishes? Why in the first place had a majority of members supported and elected Ozawa as the leader, despite his much more conservative orientation? Both answers are found in the DPJ's advantage in taking a more centrist approach in policy competition against the LDP. It is common knowledge among DPJ legislative members that the DPJ's policy positions are the reason for his or her advantages. Therefore, this fact enabled them to contain their own leader if he tried to shift party policy in a conservative direction. In other words, Ozawa can remain as head of the party so far as he refrains from doing something against the party's advantage.

So my conclusion is that politicians matter in Japanese politics, but are severely constrained by policy competition among

parties. This seems to be much more salient and illuminating because of the very extensive and rapid party changes now. But I believe that this kind of subtle interaction of politicians and institutional constraints illustrates very well the nature of party leadership in Japanese politics, in this case, the nature of leadership of the largest LDP and the second largest DPJ.

So this is my conclusion. I tried to summarize the changes in Japanese party politics and tried to clarify the party leadership question in Japan. Thank you very much.

**Ellis Krauss:** Thank you very much. First of all, I thought Professor Kato's presentation was extremely insightful. There was a lot of new information. She was kind enough to send me a couple of the papers upon which the presentation is based, and from a political scientist's point of view they are just a gold mine; they are really great.

She emphasizes the importance of policy and what some political scientists call policy seeking in determining inter-party politics in Japan, the LDP and DPJ. And I think the underlying tone as you could tell from her talk is the increasing capability of the DPJ, the Democratic Party, to compete with the long-ruling LDP, as well as the fact that Koizumi's independent position allowed him to sustain the LDP in power and, in fact, win one of its greatest electoral victories in 2005.

Although I do not know if she would say this, I think that she might also say that that does not necessarily mean the LDP is always going to be in power. And, in fact, the results of the last House of Councillors election, which the DPJ won rather handily and made huge inroads into the LDP's traditional base in rural areas, may indicate

that party alternation in government may be a possibility in the future.

So what I would like to do is complement her presentation by talking as much about the vote-seeking and office-seeking goals of a political party as policy-seeking goals, and pay some more attention to intra-party factors in addition to inter-party factors because there have been some tremendous changes in the LDP that I think journalists, particularly, and other commentators do not always give enough credit to. Journalists love to go back and say, "Oh, nothing has changed. LDP is just a collection of factions. The factions determine everything and the more things change, the more they remain the same."

### **Changes Since Electoral Reform**

The truth of the matter is, as Professor Kato essentially argued, the electoral reform of 1993 has changed a tremendous amount in Japan and in Japanese politics. This is not your father or grandfather's Japanese politics. And this change has given the LDP new possibilities and capabilities, as well as the DPJ, to also compete and, also, in the future either maintain or take back power, depending upon who its leader is and how well they recognize the new capabilities and adopt new strategies to take advantage of the changes that electoral reform has brought about. In other words, more leaders like Koizumi and fewer like Mr. Abe.

In this sense, politicians matter a lot but, of course, the key question is always which politicians matter more now and why. And I'm going to pay a little bit of attention to that by focusing most on who gets appointed to the cabinet these days and the increasing importance of the cabinet and policy making in Japan, as well as changes

in the importance of the prime minister and cabinet's image to voters, which has made a large difference in how Japanese politics operates post-1993.

The new electoral system gave the LDP and politicians many more incentives to appeal to people based on vote-seeking and policy-seeking expertise; in other words, to appoint people to the cabinet who would be popular with voters as well as have more policy expertise. This is based on research that I have done with a couple of colleagues on all LDP cabinet appointments from 1980 to 2006, comparing pre-reform and post-reform. The results show that you are much more likely to be appointed to the cabinet after electoral reform in '93 if you are a woman, if you are a hereditary Diet member, and if you are a policy expert, whether you are in the Diet or not. There are statistically significant differences in all of these categories in who gets appointed to the cabinet. I cannot remember the exact numbers but I will tell you right away that your chances, if you are a woman Diet member, of getting appointed to the cabinet are greater than if you are a man, and if you are a junior woman, your chances are much, much greater of going to the cabinet than if you are junior-level male in the LDP in the Diet. By the way, this took into account the proportion of women in the Diet, so it is not just because there are more women in the Diet.

Abe's problem, therefore, and why he got into trouble was not the proportion of these types of people he appointed -- it turned out that Abe's appointment of women, hereditary Diet members, and policy experts was really within the parameters of previous post-reform prime ministers; he was not that different. And, by the way, these results were true for all of the post-electoral reform prime ministers, not just

Koizumi. This is not just a Koizumi effect. The problem with Abe was that although he conformed to the post-reform pattern, he also appointed people who appeared, at least, to be his buddies, who ideologically agreed with him, and to whom he seemed to owe favors and, of course, who also turned out to be involved in corruption scandals, particularly his agricultural minister.

### **Increasing Importance of Cabinet Ministers**

By the way, cabinets are much more important – cabinet ministers are much more important in policy making now. These are the results of surveys by Muramatsu Michio at Gakushuin University, who is the only person I know of who has done longitudinal surveys across time of bureaucrats and politicians at three different points in time. The last two surveys he did were in 1987 and 2002 in which he asked bureaucrats, when there is a conflict in your agency between the opinions of the following, who decides the conflict? These were the choices: higher-level civil servants' advocacy, internal LDP party opinion, essentially, interest groups, or the cabinet ministers' own opinions and thoughts. And you can see a huge difference between 1987 pre-reform and post-reform. The cabinet minister himself is now seen as, definitely, the arbiter within the ministries. And other data of Muramatsu's surveys indicate the same thing. Much of the power has now shifted to the cabinet level as a result of electoral reform but, particularly, administrative reform in 2001 and, of course, Koizumi as well. Although, note this is 2002, early in Koizumi's tenure.

## **Presidentialization**

The second major factor, I think, that has changed things is what some people call the presidentialization of politics and elections. The image of the cabinet and the image of, particularly, the prime minister are much more important to voters these days than ever before. I have data from surveys across time, from 1970 to 2005, where voters were asked, "How useful was television in making your vote decision?" For the House of Representatives, you can see a large and steady increase in how television is used by voters. The same is true of the House of Councillors elections, even more so in many ways, partially, because the House of Councillors districts are bigger, and voters tend to need a greater guide to voting.

And then, electoral reform -- not only does television do this, but electoral reform in the House of Representatives reinforced this. The fact that you now have proportional representation in which people vote for parties, only one representative per district in the single member district, means that when people go to the polls they are much more likely to be guided by party and, particularly, the image of the party and the party leader in casting their vote.

The result of the combination of increasing television influence and party leader image importance has been the separation in the voters' minds between the prime minister's image and that of the LDP. You can see this very clearly in the results of Jiji Press surveys from Ikeda in 1960 to Koizumi early in Koizumi's term. And what these questions asked was "Do you support the cabinet," which was taken in Japan as a standard for supporting the prime minister, and "What party do you support?" Among LDP supporters, you can see that up until

the mid-'80s, support for the prime minister and support for the LDP were almost exactly coterminous. I mean, there was almost no difference, and there was a good reason why there was almost no difference: the prime minister was essentially a creature of the party and party factions.

However, something changes with Nakasone in the early '80s. You see the image of the prime minister diverged from the image of the party, in terms of support. And it never goes back. Now, they tend to move in the same direction, but there is now a difference in the voters' minds between the image of the prime minister and the image of the party. Until, of course, we get to Koizumi and the difference goes off the chart.

## **The Rise of Swing Voters**

Now, the point here is that even before the electoral reform, television was having an influence on the importance of the prime minister's image to voters and how they saw the prime minister. So all of these changes mean, and others mean, the possibility of wider swings from election to election because of the increasing number of floating voters in Japan. And this is true in both the House of Representatives and House of Councillors elections. The swings depend very much on party leader image and the policy issues in that election.

In part, this explains Koizumi's 2005 House of Representatives election -- and then two years later, you get a complete reversal in the House of Councillors with Ozawa's huge electoral victory for the Democratic Party. This does not seem to be consistent but, in fact, they are based upon the same facts: increasing number of floating voters and the increasing importance of party

leader image and policy issues in a particular election.

So I agree with Professor Kato: Structure matters a great deal. What I'm arguing is that electoral reform and television has changed the entire context of Japanese politics since before '93, the way cabinets are important and who gets appointed to those cabinets; the role of the prime minister and cabinet, and who is important in the way parties seek votes and seek policies. This means that politicians and parties who have the skill, strategy, and ability to respond and adapt, such as Koizumi, of either party can make a large difference between success and failure for their party. And, of course, the ultimate implication is we are in a much more competitive ballgame in Japanese politics in the future.

**Steven Clemons:** Thank you all very much. I think we have heard from two great empiricists. I think my role today is to provide some color, a narrative. It is sometimes difficult, following people who have all the data, to try and add something, but I will not let it stop me. It is great to be with Ellis; my first time meeting Dr. Kato. And I know this room is filled with many others who could just as easily be up here giving comments. So I would love to hear your own thoughts about all of this. But let me share just a few thoughts on some of the history.

I think there are different ways to look at the narratives of Japanese politics that emerge and, certainly, Dr. Kato and Ellis provide, I think, a very compelling way. But let me go back and look at it slightly differently.

## **Nixon and Ozawa**

In 1992 and in 1993, when I was at the Japan America Society of Southern California, I had an odd thing happen in my life: I got to know some people attached to former President Nixon. And what was not mentioned in my bio -- I eventually became the first executive director here of the Nixon Center in Washington. I came from California; I was never really a Nixon groupie but, nonetheless, President Nixon, when he was worried very much about the implosion of Yeltsin, wanted to find some way to get Japan to get over its northern islands problems with Russia and to kick out some aid and support; he wanted to line up some financial support from various parts of the international community and thought that Japan, which was getting ready to host the G7 meetings in Tokyo, might be persuaded to use that as a venue to do this. So he asked me to organize a trip to Japan for him and to Korea, which I did. And he went in early 1993 and the split had not yet happened. So we arranged meetings with Miyazawa and I put Ichiro Ozawa on his list of people to meet. And Nixon fought me on this; he had never heard of Ichiro Ozawa, did not know why he would just meet a lieutenant of the Tanaka faction. And, finally, he did go through with the meeting, came back, and then subsequently afterward, of course, Ichiro Ozawa defected, as Professor Kato said, from the LDP. And Nixon scribbled a note to me in his hand saying that his meeting with Ozawa was the most important meeting yet on this trip and it made the difference in Japan moving forward on aid, on a mostly symbolic basis, but nonetheless, that was the first provision of serious aid that got beyond the northern islands issue; orchestrated by Ozawa, in fact.

## Koizumi

Whether that was policy or politics or not, it was very interesting that the fault lines that you have outlined were there. And Ozawa turns out to be just an extraordinary political figure and so does Koizumi. And you may be dealing with two kinds of people that we are not going to see that sort of template of leadership in Japan too frequently. And so part of this is that we are looking at exceptions in the Japanese political order to try to tell a story and not necessarily the more average type of politicians.

I think Koizumi -- and I will just share my personal views and be somewhat heretical here about Koizumi. I find Koizumi's popularity really amazing and staggering in the sense that I think he did much of the opposite of what most people think he accomplished and achieved, for being such a lion, such a popular leader who moves so far out of the LDP, almost defying gravity in many senses. Koizumi in the long run proved not to be the populist or the soft nationalist or even the hard nationalist that people thought.

The Iraq actions of the United States and the step-away-from-the-UN process which I believe Japan was part of: Japan moved from a nation that had decided that its sovereignty was somehow going to be derived from multilateralism, international interconnectedness. It had some of the greatest leaders in the world, I think, heading up various international institutions. And to some degree, Koizumi wrecked that, moved Japan into being just another bland, normal nation playing realpolitik and basically doing something at the U.S.'s will.

And it would be interesting to see if revisionist history at some point comes along and looks at the fact that that was one of the great missed opportunities for Japan to really seal the deal of being an extraordinary sort of post-modern country in an interdependent world. And I think Koizumi gave that away.

But what the Japanese public thinks of Koizumi is really rather different, and I think he is held in high regard. He is very Reagan-like in one sense of the ability to have a lot of Teflon there.

But I found this question which Junko Kato got into -- in terms of the way in which political parties gather votes and place themselves in the political spectrum -- very interesting. I'm not sure what the causality there is, whether or not one came first, and this is not empirical, but the following is one of the things that always impressed me about the DPJ early on. Many of us have the opportunity to meet the policy staffs of the LDP, the DPJ, the working-level guys that come over to spend time in think tanks and whatnot. And sort of pound for pound, the DPJ policy people were extraordinarily good: small, under-resourced, huge responsibilities, but you could tell early on that there was a seriousness inside the policy apparatus of that party that you could not find in the LDP to some degree, which had a more well-resourced, flabby, and lazy policy apparatus. I think, in contrast, the DPJ was hungry and you could see it in the policy working papers done internally in the party. And that tracks to some degree with the policy matters argument.

But in terms of placing on the political spectrum, one of the other things about Koizumi whom I originally thought was still playing -- some of this is where I will differ from Ellis a little bit -- playing out

yet another act in the Kaku-Fuku War, the long running battle of, essentially, the derivatives of an old battle between Prime Ministers Fukuda and Tanaka that you could see -- you could tell the policy argument of what Koizumi was doing. You could just as easily tell the Kaku-Fuku War story and who his primary opposition was. You can even look at it today; in fact, when you saw the collapse of Abe, the rise of the new Fukuda, how you continue to see, maybe not the same robustness of factional rivalries, but, certainly, you have got fingerprints and DNA that have somehow been passed down into current rivalries just in how the parties are orienting themselves. And I think that is another narrative that deserves some attention.

But at the time that Koizumi came into government, people really did not know where he was going to go. He was a completely quirky prime minister. I have had the opportunity to meet most of the people who were seconded from their ministries to be his personal secretaries for various ministerial portfolios. Many of us know Mr. Tango and others that had some clout. Okada was one that was very frustrated in that role and felt completely ignored by the prime minister and they themselves did not know why. So predicting Koizumi's moves was difficult but what you do know is that, in my view, he moved the LDP in the national consciousness of the country somewhat to the right.

Now, why did he do that? Why was he trying to move that way that if the goal was basically to attract votes? I think he was pushed right by Ishihara, who in the early part of Koizumi's tenure was one of the most visible presidential-like aspiring politicians. You look at the presidentialization of political personalities in Japan, it

was Shintaro Ishihara in that sense that had some degree of international popularity, and was a bomb thrower engaged in all sorts of antics in Japan that I found to be very unusual.

And I sort of thought that what Koizumi did smartly was to talk the rhetoric of the right without necessarily really moving right -- but I think that Junko's correct, he moved the party to the right, but I think he moved there for very politically mercantile reasons and, basically, to steal away support where he saw the biggest threat at the time: not from the left but from the right.

### **A Two Party System Without the Left**

What I find interesting, another part of the narrative one could say, is that Ichiro Ozawa has single-handedly -- I mean, if you were to step back 30,000 feet, maybe, 40 years from now, you could look at how the LDP destroyed the socialists and how Ichiro Ozawa as an agent of the LDP or as an agent of that brand of conservatism where there is very little difference between Ozawa and the party, as you laid out, essentially, co-opted the left, destroyed them to some degree. And you will end up having two political parties in Japan but they look rather close and similar.

### **Parliamentary Evolution**

The other story -- it is unfair to sort of critique the party from this perspective but it would be really great to do another chapter in this discussion on comparing the evolution of Japan's parliamentary democracy to, say, England and Germany and look at the level of policy expertise and orientation of those legislators compared with Japan. My gut feeling is there has been a massive increase in the policy sophistication of Japanese legislators. But it

is so impressive because it was so lousy for so long and that you have in these European parliamentary democracies more of a tradition of policy expertise combined with rent-seeking and favors done for local constituencies, et cetera. And I think that what you see Japan finally doing is moving along that vector, not quite up with the sophistication of policy expertise in pursuit of policies and the differentiation of policies in politics as in these others, but it is definitely moving on a more normal track, thanks in part to Ozawa and Koizumi's quirkiness and their unusualness.

That is what I found very, very strong and compelling about today's discussion: it has taken kind of weird moments, weird leaders, to basically jiggle the status quo in Japan's political system to behave along lines that look a little bit more like -- I remember meeting Mancur Olson who said he did not want to ever talk about Japan because he was used to utility maximization of all players, and why did it not work in Japan? And I think now maybe that is beginning to happen a little bit more.

### **Koizumi**

Let me see if I have any other quick comments here. I will tell you one other thing, just to add a little bit of color in terms of the comparisons between Koizumi, Abe, and Fukuda. I do think, as I said, Koizumi deserves a little review in our political history of what he did to Japan's collective aspirations in being a very different kind of country in the world.

### **Abe**

Abe and Abe's course, which Ellis commented on -- I agree with everything Ellis said. However, I think it is not just Keystone Cops and paying off buddies. I

do think that to some degree, Abe felt, after having grown and matured somewhat, having become prominent because of the abductees issue, something that Koizumi helped patch, and seeing the rise of the right, looking at China, was making a bet that he would benefit from this battle of strident nationalism versus a kind of more soft or more liberal nationalism in Japan. And he made the wrong bet and I think that something that is very healthy for Japanese society is that he flew off and crashed within the Japanese political system. I think that is more important than people recognize today. It is not just that Abe failed; it is that he was firmly rejected within the Japanese political sphere.

### **Fukuda**

I do not know how many of you watched Fukuda's New Year's greetings on YouTube. Did any of you watch the English language YouTube's greetings? They were extraordinary; they were not flashy: very, very bland. But, nonetheless, what he articulated was about as anti-Koizumi and anti-Abe as you could get. And while it was in English, it nonetheless reflected, I think, that kind of brand of Japanese reverence for multilateralism and the old international institutions that we were talking about before, and I think that's a real sea change.

So if you were to look at Junko Kato's spectrum, I think he has just moved the LDP closer to the center. And that then raises a very interesting debate because if he does, in fact -- and his successors continue to do that, does that then cost them votes or does that create a more interesting grab for some of what the DPJ crowd has been able to accumulate in terms of support? And does the right wing in Japan have anywhere else to go? I'm not sure

they do. But with that, let me conclude. I enjoyed both presentations very much and I look forward to the questions and discussion.

**Kevin Doak:** Thank you, Mr. Clemons, for your comments. I thought I would ask if either Dr. Kato or Dr. Krauss had any response to Mr. Clemons' remarks. Would you like to -- some thoughts?

### **Office-Seeking**

**Kato:** The discussion is very stimulating. And so I'll try to answer as clearly as possible. First of all, Ellis' argument -- basically, I agree with him that inside the LDP, actually, the incentive is much more office-seeking. One important reason is that many LDP incumbents try to run in the single-member election district. So that's the reason why the LDP actually could not accept many switchers.

In the case of the DPJ, its original strength is in the proportional representation system. So that is the reason why the LDP incumbent politicians had more incentives for office seeking than the DPJ's. In this regard, there is a clear difference between the two parties and this characteristic, actually, has put the LDP at a disadvantage against the DPJ. That is one point.

### **Unusual Party Leadership**

Also, I am very much interested in the role of the personalities of politicians. I agree that Koizumi and Ozawa are kind of exceptional. During the years of LDP predominance, actually, the prime minister and party leader who went along with the party got the leadership roles and increased the popularity of the party, except Nakasone of the LDP. But the situation since 1993 has shown us two exceptions.

One exception is that, sometimes, the more unstable party, lacking party unity, may be able to capitalize on and exploit the opportunity. This is the case of the DPJ. Actually, many observers had predicted the break-up of the DPJ, I think, in the mid-1990s and also late-1990s. But the party has survived; not only has it survived but it has expanded. So in this regard, this is very much an exceptional situation.

Ozawa first joined the conservative Japan Renewal Party and then the Liberal Party. And then he joined the DPJ and tried to be a leader whose position was different from the majority of party members. So in this regard, Ozawa seems to have two different strategies of leadership -- fortifying or modulating a majority of members' ideology. I agree that he is very exceptional and very interesting.

In the case of Koizumi, I think he was consistently against his own party, but the situation changed. So that is the reason why he had an advantage. So in this regard, there is a clear difference between Koizumi and Ozawa. And in terms of the factional strife of the LDP, I tend to agree more with Ellis because I emphasize the importance of electoral system change. We are political scientists so we try to connect the politician's incentives to the electoral system. So in this regard, I think LDP factions will be weakening in the future under this system.

The last point -- it is a very interesting idea that the LDP has a strategy to shift its policy position toward the center. But I'm afraid it is very difficult because some LDP legislative members are really conservative; they are committed to conservative ideology. If the LDP tried to strategically shift its policy position to the center, the LDP will split up, I think.

In this regard, the DPJ, despite its lack of unity, could exploit this to its advantage. So that is my response. Thank you.

### **Japan's Basic Foreign Policy Debate**

**Krauss:** Just a couple of comments here toward Steven who, as usual, just takes the conversation to another level -- higher, by the way. I thought Steve's point about Koizumi and Fukuda and Japan's role in international relations and the role it will play is particularly important. And I do not think I'm saying anything different but I just want to reframe it a little bit.

I think what is going on in Japan now is sort of a conflict in the Japanese soul about what it wants to be now that it has grown up. And those are the two basic models: the multilateral UN-oriented, the kind of thing that Ozawa is essentially pushing today, versus the Koizumi -- more heavily involved in the U.S.-Japan alliance, putting more of the marbles there. And not that he was not a multilateralist but, rather, sacrificing that when the circumstances were right. And I do not think that battle has been played out yet and, in fact, it may take many years to see which one Japan chooses. And it may go back and forth between those as the circumstances require or depending on the leadership.

A lot of this is getting involved now in the whole discussion among political scientists in Japan and observers of Japanese foreign policy as to whether the Yoshida doctrine is actually dead, or just dying, or has come back. And those tend to be the terms in which a lot of people are talking about it now. But they are really talking about the same thing.

### **Koizumi as Maverick Reformer**

I do have a little different view of Koizumi than Steve does. I definitely think that the destruction of the former Tanaka faction, Takeshita faction was one of his aims; I think it was only one, however. I see Koizumi as a political reformer and not as an economic reformer, and I think his goal was to move Japan towards a normal Westminster system. And he saw the Tanaka faction as the heart of the problem, the belly of the beast, and that if he could destroy that faction and the kind of politics that had been playing out for so many years, he could change the Japanese political system itself.

I also do not particularly see Koizumi as that much of a right-wing nationalist; I think of him as much more of a maverick. If you look at the two issues on which he is seen as right wing, Yasukuni -- that apparently came from a very deep personal conviction, something about his grandfather owning the airfield from which Kamikaze pilots took off. And the other is, of course, his sending the Self Defense Forces to Iraq. I think that is perfectly explainable as a rational response designed to avoid alienating the Bush administration in the midst of the Six-Party Talks with North Korea when he definitely needed the U.S.'s backing. So I am not so sure -- I see Koizumi as very moderate, slightly to the right but by no means, I think, as far right as you do. But the question I think --

**Clemons:** I think he was not initially as far right as -- I mean, I largely agree but I think he created a veneer of rightness to compete with Ishihara that was not deeply felt.

**Krauss:** I do not think Ishihara was quite as much of a threat. First of all, he would have had to run for the Diet to become

prime minister. Given his age, would he have gotten support within the party? I do not necessarily think that Ishihara was that much of a threat. The question is whether Koizumi saw him as one. So I will just end there.

### **Abe's Nationalism**

**Doak:** Thank you. We have quite a few comments and questions and I want to get through them all. But let me take advantage, abuse my position as moderator to respond to one thought that just came up about Prime Minister Abe because I often hear in the media these characterizations of Abe as, I think, a strident nationalist versus a kind of softer nationalist. When I hear that I always want a little more specificity because I have -- I do not know how many people have read his book, *Utsukushii Kuni E*, where there is a whole chapter on what is nationalism. And it is a really amazing discussion. Now we could talk about whether he means it, but I think we can take what he says pretty much as what he means, or why would he write it?

But even if you set aside the question whether or not this was a cynical ploy, what he says about nationalism is really an effort to move Japan towards a multiethnic democracy. He explicitly rejects ethnic nationalism; he talks about his pride in Brazilians who have naturalized and joined, for example, the World Cup soccer team, Japan's national team. He talks about a variety of other ways in which he embraces anybody, regardless of ethnic or national origin, who is willing to be loyal to the Hinomaru and the Kimigayo.

And I think what he is really doing is challenging the rather softer ethnocultural nationalism, which is, by the way, shared not only among many people on the right

but by many people among the left in the post-war period. So whether or not that explains the reaction in the media among many people on both the Right and the Left who did not like what he is doing, I do not know; it is a hypothesis that I have posed in some of my writings.

But when we talk about Japan or certain politicians in Japan being nationalistic, I think it really helps if we pay attention to what they say about the nation, about nationalism, who is saying other kinds of things, so that we can understand this very difficult, rather amorphous political concept of the nation.

### **Questions & Answers (Submitted in Writing)**

#### **Defining "Conservative" and "Right"**

In fact, one of the questions I'm going to segue right into picks up a little bit on that note, and it says "To both Dr. Kato and Dr. Krauss, please define "conservative" and "right." Is it still about the U.S. Security Treaty?"

**Kato:** It is a good question. And, usually, we political scientists talk about ideology using the terms "left" and "right." But when we talk about parties in many cases, we use "left party" and "conservative party," not "right party." So it is a little bit confusing.

In the case of Japan, "right" corresponds with "conservative." But sometimes when we use the term "conservative," we imply that it is part of the rightist camp, but it could be more realistic or pragmatic. In my presentation, both terms have the same meaning. But in the case of Japan, if we call the LDP the right party, it is a little bit awkward because the LDP is known as very

pragmatic long-term dominant party. So we tend to use the word conservative.

**Krauss:** Yeah, I think traditionally there are four issues that have defined the right in Japan or conservatives in Japan. They are very different from the ones in the U.S. Defense, of course, a revived Japanese defense; close U.S.-Japan alliance; strong central government, particularly in things like education and intervention in the economy; and willingness to normalize national symbols, such as the emperor and the flag, et cetera, and Kimigayo. And that is traditionally it. I think those pretty much still hold.

What the problem is that when we start imposing American and Western left-right dimensions on these -- it just does not work. I mean, the Democratic Party in many ways is more neo-liberal in economic terms than the LDP, for example. These days especially, when the DPJ and the LDP are not that far apart on things like the U.S.-Japan alliance and defense, it gets even murkier. You are really dealing with left-of-center and right-of-center here in many cases. I think that is a lot of the problem in defining it in Japan. But I think those other distinctions are pretty much the ones we still use.

**Kato:** In the expert survey data, actually, the Democratic Party and the Republican Party of the U.S. are located very close to the center, just left-right. So in this regard, the ideological distance of U.S. politics is much narrower than in Japan and also in Western European countries. So that is the difference.

### **A Comeback for Aso?**

**Doak:** Thank you. This question, I think, is for all three of our panelists. "Abe's heir

apparent, former Foreign Minister Aso Taro, is still waiting in the wings. With Fukuda's recent drop in popular approval ratings, will Aso have a chance to stage a comeback?" Let's start with Mr. Clemons and come on down.

**Clemons:** The answer is yes.

**Krauss:** Yes, but I hope not.

**Kato:** I agree with them.

### **Civil Society**

**Doak:** Okay, moving on to other topics. "Do Japanese social movements and civil society not matter in Japanese politics, yet?" Followed up by "Are there no other political actors who make an impact on Japanese politics except politicians in Japan? What about social movement groups like NGOs and NPOs? Are they not important political actors, and will be in the future?"

**Clemons:** May I, quickly? I think that the most recent election shows that social movements or social consciousness of certain issues, particularly urban issues, pocket-book issues, matter enormously. I think one of the interesting frustrations, when you look at the complex political map that Kato-sensei showed us, that is not happening just from politicians trying to bounce around. It is happening because the Japanese public, to some degree, is, with its aspirations and hopes, trying to move those into the political order and it is a very frustrating and convulsive process. I think that is what is there. I think the latest election, the rise of the DPJ in the House of Councillors, showed that.

But on the NPO and NGOs, I will tell you about a kind of long-running friendly

argument I have had with Tadashi Yamamoto, whom many of you know, with the Japan Center for International Exchange, who wrote one of the books by JCIE and helped with the NPO Law in Japan. Until these organizations can sue for damages inside the Japanese court system in a credible way, it is a fake process of trying to create the veneer of NGOs in Japan that have political weight but, essentially, do not. So without a legal base and the ability of a small player in the Japanese political system to fell large, large participants, then what we see is a lot of sound and fury around NPOs. But in my view they do not matter.

**Krauss:** Let me just add to what Steve said. Obviously, they are more active now -- the NPOs, NGOs, and civil society -- than in the past, in part because it has been promoted by the Japanese government and that is a little bit of a contradiction here. But I'll just recommend, since I'm not an expert on this, but my co-author -- we are writing a book on the LDP -- Robert Pekkanen of the University of Washington has written an award-winning book on NGOs, civil society in Japan, and exactly the kind of obstacles that they face in becoming, really, a full-fledged civil society.

**Kato:** Actually, Robert is also a very good friend of mine, so I strongly recommend that you read that book if you are interested. Also, I think the sort of -- the social capital question -- the relationship between the people is important in democracy. This is now conventional wisdom in political science. Also, I have observed more influence of public opinion in politics in Japan. So the LDP and LDP politicians try to respond to public opinion. It means that politicians cannot ignore public opinion. So that is a reason why Japanese civil

society is changing, even though if we compare Japan with other countries, it is hard to tell that social movements are much more important than they used to be. But still, I think I am quite sure that Japanese society is changing to pay much more attention to the importance of social opinion.

### **Policy Issues in Elections**

**Doak:** Now, a deceptively simple question: "What policy issues have been important in elections since 2000, and which ones are likely to be most important and influential in future elections?"

**Kato:** I have a slightly different opinion, maybe, from many political scientists in Japan. I think the deregulation issue has been much more important. I think the 2005 general election was a very symbolic event. Many observers of Japanese politics interpret that election as the result of the ignorance of the Japanese public. That is, Koizumi, by his populist appeal, succeeded in attracting public opinion and uplifting the LDP's popularity. That is the reason why the LDP won.

However, I think it was quite impressive that the LDP Prime Minister fought and won in the election by promoting the issue of deregulation. It is a very symbolic phenomenon. I agree that many Japanese people may not have understood the details of privatization of the postal service. But still, they were sympathetic with the argument of Koizumi that we needed to change some part of the public sector.

So this is a very interesting phenomenon. I expect that, maybe, deregulation or shifting the power balance between the public and the private sectors will be a very important issue from now on.

**Krauss:** The first six that came to my mind, some of which accord with Junko's characterization of deregulation: obviously, postal privatization, postal reform by Koizumi. Pension reform has been a big issue for the last two or three years and is getting worse because of the millions of lost pension records of the Japanese government. Of course, this is also related to an issue that transcends specific issues, which is bureaucratic incompetence and corruption, which is under the surface of many of these issues. Decrease in pork barrel -- a lot due to Koizumi but a lot due to Japan's massive debt and, also, the urban residents becoming sick of paying for all those wasteful projects. And that has a lot of implications in politics. The issue of an aging society underlines a lot of issues. The final one which came out in 2007 House of Councillors election is agriculture. A lot of those small farmers voted for the DPJ for the first time in their lives, apparently, because they were dissatisfied with agrarian reform, the agricultural policy reforms that the LDP was carrying out to make agriculture more efficient and internationally competitive in anticipation of eventual -- some form of liberalization in the future through multilateral negotiations.

**Clemons:** I would agree with everything. The only thing I would add is that I do think that the national security portfolio of questions continues to matter; I mean, everything from the comfort women stridency and the comfort women issue to China to North Korea, the Six-Party Talks, and what is going on there. I think that there is a live wire there that divides politically in Japan, which matters.

**Krauss:** Yeah, and the one issue none of us mentioned, the abductee issue. The abductee issue is one of the most tragic but, also, artificial issues that has wound up, in

my opinion, undermining Japanese national interests internationally more than any other issue in the last five years, six years. And we can get into that, if you want.

**Doak:** Well, I guess we have to because some of you know that the pin I'm wearing here is actually a symbol of solidarity with those people who have been victimized by the abductee issue. I was fortunate to have been visited recently by Matsubara Jin of the DPJ when he was visiting here with some of the relatives. You sit and talk to him -- it is unbelievable; it is unspeakable, the kinds of pain and terrorism that have been inflicted not only on the immediate relatives but on the Japanese people. And my heart goes out to them. I'm not going to talk about the politics but I can tell you it is a very, very moving personal kind of issue that almost goes beyond definition.

### **The Shifting Center?**

Back to policies. This one is directed to Professor Kato: "Given the Democratic Party of Japan's definition as a centrist party able to absorb party defectors, does the general shift of the Japanese political center more to the right suggest a continued Japanese political shift? Or, will the Democratic Party of Japan act as a limiter on the magnitude of shifts and political leanings of the LDP?"

**Kato:** That is very interesting question because it is very hard to tell in which direction the DPJ is going. In my understanding, the DPJ seems to try to strike some balance by having more conservative leaders and more leftist intra-party groups. But are these a sign of an ideological shifting of Japanese politics toward the conservative direction? I do not agree with that kind of a position because, actually, here I didn't present it, but I'm

also doing a spatial analysis of policy competition. So left-right difference is important but, also, at the same time, different issues such as centralization and decentralization and deregulation and more regulation are also important. It partially overlaps with left to right differences but it also can be distinguished from it.

I think party competition is much more complicated and also policy competition, policy debate is much more complicated. So the party, then, and also individual political actors try to fight on a single dimension: left and right difference. But, still, we always find some other policies which cannot be reduced to left and right.

I think the DPJ has tried to be a catch-all party to embrace more heterogeneous supporters and voters and also, has tried to have legislative members with diversified policy positions. But this may not necessarily mean that the political center of Japan is shifting right. It is, I think, rather a sign that Japanese politics -- policy competition seems to be a little bit more complicated. It means that the policy space will have two different dimensions: left and right, but also some other dimensions such as deregulation-regulation, decentralization-centralization, or something like that.

### **The Komeito**

**Doak:** And a follow up question from the same person: “What about the Komeito? Will they influence and maintain a more rightward direction in politics?”

**Kato:** Actually, this is one of my favorite topics; when I was a graduate student in the early 1990s, when I gave a job talk at some university, I predicted that the Komeito would join the government or would enter office soon in the future. Many scholars just

did not believe me. But it was actually realized. The reason was quite simple: the Komeito was at the center under the 1955 system. However, under that, the LDP had enough seats and the median voter, i.e. enough numbers in the Diet to have the median voter in the legislature. The Komeito could not enjoy that advantage as a centrist party.

Then the New Komeito joined the government. The Komeito has been the partner of the LDP. I think Komeito's future is much more pessimistic than before because now we have another party at the center, the DPJ. It is much larger than the Komeito. So Komeito has enjoyed its advantage as a centrist party since 1993 -- while it was disbanded and reformed. But, anyway, Komeito politicians enjoyed that advantage. But from now on, I think the Komeito's -- their situation is getting harder and harder.

**Krauss:** Can I just add to that, though, that I think that one role for the Komeito in the future, depending upon what happens with the DPJ, is as kingmaker. I mean, it may very well play the role of -- depending upon how the LDP and DPJ strength works out. There has been no incentive for the Komeito to leave the LDP, even though its policy positions, in some cases, are much closer to the DPJ's, as long as the DPJ had no chance even if Komeito joined it, of taking power. But if the DPJ makes gains in the next House of Representatives election and comes close enough, the Komeito could, if it wants to - and that is the big key question - play the role of kingmaker. Whichever party it joins would have a majority.

I should say, by the way, in all shame and honesty, however, that the Komeito is the least studied, we have the least teaching

materials on the Komeito of any Japanese political phenomenon that I know. It is absolutely embarrassing that there has not been a major study of the Komeito. The last major study of Soka Gakkai was done by one of my classmates in graduate school, Jim White, back in the '60s. Since then, we have had no major book on it. There have not even been very many articles on the Komeito and I think that is scandalous in political science, frankly.

### **Political Leadership**

**Doak:** Let me put these two questions together. The first question is, "Why has party selection of leaders deviated so greatly from popular election priorities, i.e. the LDP seems to select non-telegenic, low-image leaders?" Another person asked in a similar vein: "Many commentators these days seem to be criticizing Fukuda for lacking vision and are playing up the idea that Japan or the LDP needs another leader with strong vision, as Koizumi supposedly had. But with the current reality of a divided Diet, is it possible that Fukuda's more understated conciliatory approach may be the best, even the only way, to actually get anything done? If Japan does need a strong leader with vision, whom might that be?"

**Clemons:** Well, I'm not one who believes that Japan always needs a strong leader with vision. I think Japan as a nation - and with all due respect - hits below its weight in many international issues and has for a long period of time. What I felt was changing until 9/11 was Japan's increasing focus on ways that sort of position itself internationally at the helm of international institutions and to sort of advocate and lay the groundwork for a new round of institution-building for 21<sup>st</sup> century political realities that I thought was rather unique

and might have meant something had that ever not been derailed. So the kind of leaders that you saw - Ogata, Koïchiro Matsuura at UNESCO, and others - were helping, I think, to move Japan in that direction. But those were primarily bureaucrats.

When it comes to political leadership, Japan, like many parliamentary democracies, produces people that are good at achieving consensus within a parliamentary format; it is not presidential. I'm very intrigued with what Ellis said because I think he is right that you not only see this presidentialization phenomenon in Japan; you see it everywhere.

I mean, one of the interesting things with people like Ahmadinejad in Iran is that we are perceiving Ahmadinejad's powers very much as we perceive the power of President Bush. We tend to see our image of executive leadership and authority and impose that kind of calculation on other countries, whether, in fact, it is empirically true or not. Ahmadinejad is incredibly constrained within his political order, but that story is not told here.

So I sometimes wonder: Is this presidentialization phenomenon that you have seen in Japan one that has somehow been influenced by the way the American media establishment is looking at these leaders abroad and they thus are somehow absorbing that? I do not know, but I do see this abroad.

So I think -- to just be very clear, I do not think that one is going to easily jump into a format where you have got lots of Koizumis. I think they are highly unusual political actors. So we are going to see the Taro Aso types or people who come in, achieve consensus and not be Nakasone-

like and be extraordinary. And we should not expect it. In fact, I think it is unhealthy for Japanese democracy on some levels.

**Krauss:** I think that we are not going to see, necessarily, Koizumis. I mean, I think the premise of the question in a way assumes that television or public image has played no role except for Koizumi, and I do not think that is true. I mean, let us face it, Abe was chosen exactly because he was popular with the public. And we tend to forget now, but Abe had a very good television image. In fact, ironically, he wound up using the same LDP media adviser as Koizumi who apparently did not do as good a job. I do not know if it was what he had to work with or he just did not understand the changing public mood.

But, in fact, I do not think you are going to see another Miyazawa in Japan. You are not going to see any more behind-the-scenes power brokers who have no public image in Japan. Even Fukuda, I think, just like Obuchi, intentionally cultivates the image that he wants because that is the image that he can project and become popular with on television. Do not expect, you know, McCain is not Obama, right?

So why we project some of these -- they all have to be Koizumis. I do not think that is true. I also do not think it is true that television, public expectations, and public popularity have played no role. In fact, I think they are playing an increasingly important role in the selection of prime ministers in Japan.

**Kato:** Japan has a parliamentary system, so it is just impossible institutionally to expect strong leadership like under a presidential system. That is the first point because the prime minister needs to rely on the Diet. So he or she has a very severe constraint.

Koizumi tried to go beyond that but, institutionally, I think I agree that it was problematic that he actually dissolved the Diet at that point. But, anyway, he took a risk and won so that is the reason why that turned out to be all right. But, still, institutionally, it is unusual.

I think in Japan we have an institutional constraint on strong leadership. And, also, if we look at the countries in Western Europe, it is also hard to find a strong leader. The U.S. has a presidential system, and also France, it has a mixture of presidential and parliamentary systems. So these countries are exceptional. I think Japan has its own limitation, institutionally.

### **Has Ozawa Changed?**

**Doak:** Okay, thank you. "Has Mr. Ozawa changed his political ideology and policy stance since he left the LDP? Particularly, since he became the head of the DPJ? And if yes, please show some examples and reasons for the change."

**Clemons:** I think he is exactly the same wherever he ends up. He is a political manipulator par excellence but he fundamentally believes the same thing he has always believed in.

**Doak:** And that saves you from having to give examples; the answer is no.

**Kato:** For me, I think that Ozawa has been able to adjust to any situation strategically. So in this regard, I think that he had not changed at all.

**Krauss:** In terms of specific examples, it seems to me the anti-terror law is a perfect example. He has always thought that Japan should play a stronger international role, but under the auspices of the U.N. And

tactically, why he chose that particular bill to express that at this particular point is another question we can argue about. I do not necessarily think it was a good idea but, yeah, I think he has been the same.

### **SMD Campaigns and PRD Rankings**

**Doak:** Okay. Now, a technical question: “How much of a difference in candidates’ campaigns in the SMD - I assume Single-Member Districts - is attributable to the differences and the policies of each party in regard to the PRD - Proportional Representation Districts list rankings?”

**Clemons:** My professor, Hans Baerwald, would love this question. He could go for hours. I have no idea.

**Kato:** I think in the single-member election district, of course, the candidates try to talk about policy. But in the single-member election, usually, the same party has only one candidate. So in this regard, in many cases the candidates are trying to promote their own party’s policy position against the other parties or candidates. However, in order to get the nomination from their own party, especially in the case of the LDP as Ellis illustrated, it is important to be influential inside the party.

I have observed a sort of mixture of personal votes, voters’ support because of the personality of the candidate, and also the influence of policy. Also, this balance will change from one election to another.

In the case of PRD, it is very interesting. The DPJ tried to focus on policy, but the LDP tried to pitch celebrity candidates to attract votes. So in this regard, it is very hard to tell. Actually, different parties have different strategies in proportional representation.

**Krauss:** I think the differences between the parties are decreasing in terms of how they use PRD and SMD candidacies because, if I’m not mistaken, all the parties, including, increasingly, the LDP and the DPJ, are now saying, “If you do not run in the single-member district, you do not run in PRD.” The number of actual pure PRD people is extremely small; I think it was six or something in the last election. Essentially both parties are saying, “you go out and compete in that single-member district and we will give you your insurance policy in the PRD system so that you can become a zombie if you lose in the single-member district, otherwise, we are not going to rank you in PRD.” Even Inoguchi Kuniko, who was ranked number one in the Tokyo District in 2005 and won a seat for the first time, a famous academic from Sophia University, now has to go out and compete in some single-member district; this was the recent ruling of the LDP.

So I think what both parties are doing is, essentially, trying to stimulate greater efforts on behalf of the single-member district candidates by giving them an insurance policy but not giving anybody a free ride on the party label.

### **Japan and the World, The World and Japan**

**Doak:** Well, we are almost out of time and I thought what I would do -- since the final two questions, actually, raise issues outside of Japan, I will just read them together and allow our panelists to respond as they wish. The first question is: “When will Japan allow foreigners to become involved in the political process, so that they can bring some new ideas to what is presently a very static system?”

The second one specifies not so much foreigners in Japan but the relationship to China. And it asks: "I find it amazing that we discussed Japanese politics for two hours without mentioning China. How does the looming threat of China to Japan's leadership position in Asia play out in Japan's party politics?"

I would also add, can you think of that question, both those questions, in the context of the postwar system, Japan's relationship with the United States, and, perhaps, what many people are describing as the end of that postwar order and hence, new geopolitical relationships emerging in the region and around the world - Japan and the world, the world and Japan?

**Clemons:** Foreigners have long been involved in Japan's political process, particularly Americans, certainly in the 1950s and 1960s, one of the fascinating things if you've got nothing to do one day is go over and look at the National Security Archives over at George Washington University; they have a Japan Section. You can see ample evidence of our involvement in Japan's politics.

But I think what the question was is more overt forms. There will not be -- I mean, we will have Americans working as secretaries to Diet members like we already have, people like Mike Green and others. But I do not think that foreigners should or will be any kind of an explicit part of Japan's political system. I do not think it is a good idea.

On China, recently Prime Minister Fukuda was in China right at the end of December. And in a vision that was reminiscent of Koizumi playing baseball at Camp David with President Bush, he played baseball with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao. They

played for 15 minutes at the Diaoyutai State Guest House and threw a ball around and hit the ball. I think Japan is trying to send a signal that it wants to play ball with China, and I get that. I think that Japan, obviously, is going to be in a somewhat schizophrenic situation in trying to figure out where its future lies. It has massive military capabilities and massive discretionary capital capabilities globally that are underestimated by Americans, Europeans, and others. It still stands as a Goliath in Asia and has tremendous capacity.

But as anyone who invests in the stock market knows, it is not what you have in hand that matters; it is what your growth rate in the future looks like. And when you look at China's growth rate, it is the promise of what China looks to be that scares everybody or attracts everyone. And to some degree, Japan is hedging its bets in Asia, I think, fairly smartly. But that means some distance at some point with the United States.

I am somewhat strident in this; I get a lot of push-back from some of my Japanese friends. But I think that Japan and -- I used to love the former political minister here at the embassy because he agreed with me and he used the word "lobotomy." But the United States gave Japan a lobotomy in the '50s and '60s and '70s, and Japan is coming out of that. And its emergent nationalism - we can discuss this another time - is one that, I think, is very important. Japan needs to find a nationalism with which it is comfortable but that process is going to be painful and convulsive. It is going to have something to do with reacting to those in its neighborhood; it is a tough neighborhood. But it is also going to require some distance from the United States and this is where, I think, the U.S. side of it is not getting the Japan-U.S. relationship right. Because it is

very easy to see a set of incidents occurring - I do not know what they would be - that will trigger a reaction in Japan where nationalism or the legitimacy of Japanese political leadership becomes a function of how anti-American one is in a reaction. I think that is something we have got a blind spot, too, in our own -- in the way we look at the future of U.S.-Japan relations, and we need to build in greater flexibility. It is a highly rigid relationship today. It is one that everyone salutes; it is almost holy, but it does not have a lot of flexibility in it, given the various choices Japan is going to have to make. So I do think China matters a lot, but I also think we need to find a creative way to put distance between the United States and Japan in ways that do not fundamentally undermine regional security or our own interests.

**Krauss:** Let me just say I agree with Steve. I'm not sure how foreigners would get involved in the Japanese political process. I do not exactly see a huge number of them involved in ours, except as funding contributors. I do disagree with the characterization of Japan as a static system. I think if there has been any theme underlying this panel today it is how much Japan is in the process of changing in the last several years and continuing to, both domestically and internationally.

Yeah, China -- I mean, personally, I found it a huge relief to go to a panel about Japan in which China had not been mentioned for a change -- always China, China, China, China. But since it has been brought up, Japan has -- very simply put, Japan has this massive economic investment in China, and yet it has a massive security investment in the United States. It is afraid of China potentially in the future militarily, but it wants to continue the opportunities and

benefits of the economic relationship -- and this is part of the whole schizophrenia.

The U.S. is -- and I think it will go back and forth, as we may see more shift toward the fear in some cases, and more shift toward -- as it is now we are in a reaction against that fear. On the part of Fukuda, trying to mend relationships and this may continue.

Historical memories issue -- a lot of it depends on how the historical memories issues play out in both countries. The nationalisms - Dr. Doak's field - in both countries -- because Chinese nationalism is also another huge topic we can talk about.

The U.S.-Japan relationship is very interesting as Steve said. I have an article I wrote with Chris Hughes at the University of Warwick when Abe came to power in which we essentially argued that - and here I am a little critical of Koizumi - the Koizumi-Abe combination essentially made it difficult for Japan to hedge in the future, we thought it was going to. And we asked the question, "Who is entrapping who?" Has Japan entrapped itself under Abe and Koizumi in this U.S.-Japan alliance in a way that will make it very difficult for it to say "no" in the future? But, also, has it entrapped the United States in potential conflicts in East Asia that the United States does not want any part of? And although Fukuda has now mended that and that does not seem to be on the table as much as previously, the real question is whether Koizumi and Abe moved the markers so far in terms of expectations both in the U.S. and in Japan about what Japan could do, that it is difficult for Japan to say no to the U.S. in the future as it did for many, many years under the Yoshida Doctrine. And we can argue about that, whether that is good or bad, but there is a lot going on now. I think the next few years will be very telling.

**Kato:** It is true that foreign policy issues have been very politicized, especially in Japanese electoral campaigns. Also, the lack of clear change in direction or clear orientation of diplomatic policy in Japan, I think, can be attributed to the legacy of the Japanese colonizations. Also, LDP leaders still very frequently make inappropriate remarks about Japanese colonization in the past. And also, many prime ministers and many conservative politicians still visit the Yasukuni Shrine without solving any diplomatic problems first.

So in this regard, it is very difficult to shift the focus to more substantial issues such as increasing regional ties and shaping a much clearer diplomatic orientation for Japan toward neighboring countries.

However, at the same time Japan has increased economic ties with China and there is much more interaction and exchanges at the social level. I think politics seems to be one step behind society in this regard.

Also, I am very interested now in the issue of nationalism. I do not think that nationalism is now increasing in Japan, but at the same time, we find much more frequently inside the conservative camp those with an anti-U.S. orientation. Traditionally in Japan, on the left side we often find an anti-U.S. orientation; on the right side, we normally found a more pro-U.S. orientation. But now we have found an anti-U.S. orientation equally on both sides, left and right. And pro-U.S. orientation has been found much more frequently in the moderate left to moderate right. So we may have a different policy space in terms of the security relationship with the U.S. in the future. More moderate conservative and leftist camps would support the U.S.-Japan relationship, and the

extreme right and left sides will go against the U.S. security relationship. So this is one observation.

**Doak:** Thank you very much. We are a little over time but before we adjourn I would like to simply thank the Sasakawa Peace Foundation and, especially, its Director, Mr. Keiji Iwatake and Mr. Matthew Wright for organizing this event. I would also like to thank all of you for coming on this cold, messy day to contribute your time, your questions, your thoughts, and engaging with us on this important question of “Do Politicians Matter in Japan?” Thank you very much.