

Future Outlook of Japan-US Strategic Alliance

A group of Japanese experts on relations between Tokyo and Washington has drawn up a set of recommendations on bilateral and global issues in a project commissioned by the Japan Economic Foundation. The “Panel to Propose Building of New Japan-US Relationship under New US Administration” published a two-part report on the proposals in April 2009. The following is Part I dealing with political issues, focused on the future outlook of the Japan-US strategic alliance. Part II, concerned with economic issues, will be carried in the next issue of *Japan SPOTLIGHT*. Listed below are members of the group responsible for Part I.

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Introduction

Top diplomatic priorities of US President Barack Obama's administration are: (1) promotion of financial and economic diplomacy; (2) prevention of terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD); and (3) commitment to global challenges including climate change, the development of Africa, disarmament, poverty, infectious diseases, human rights, and the reform of the United Nations. Japan's diplomatic and security agenda is: (1) maintaining the Japan-US alliance; (2) retaining defense capabilities; and (3) making diplomatic efforts for stability and prosperity of the global community in general and Asia in particular. This panel came up with a list of proposals as to how the two countries should seek coordinated solutions to their challenges.

Diplomatic & Security Policies

(1) Perception of Current State

The Obama administration's Middle East policy essentially boils down to (i) Afghanistan and Pakistan policies; (ii) Iran policy; and (iii) the Middle East peace process. For the United States, this is a policy for the Middle East and at the same time a priority issue on the country's diplomatic and national security agenda. As it stands now, the Afghanistan and Pakistan policies are high on the agenda. A challenge for Japan is how it can cooperate and coordinate with the United States in this area in the framework of the Japan-US alliance.

Antiterrorism measures are still the most important security challenge for the United States. In particular, an act of terrorism using a nuclear weapon or a “dirty bomb” is recognized as the most serious threat to a free society. Japan shares such US concern. The antiterrorist operation in Afghanistan is a concerted international activity based on a U.N. Security Council resolution, which requires U.N. members to share as much cooperation and support as possible.

The Obama administration takes it very seriously that US global

leadership was undermined as a result of the Bush administration's antiterrorism war launched in Afghanistan and the subsequent war in Iraq, which not only caused wear and tear in US military strength and national wealth but also gave birth to worldwide anti-American sentiment. The Obama administration is poised to bring a responsible end to the war in Iraq and put more troops and resources in Afghanistan to cope with the Taliban and al-Qaida terrorist forces. Japan will have to appreciate the US efforts and put its antiterrorism policy into practice, including cooperation and support to the maximum extent possible.

(2) Near-term Response

(i) United States

In pursuing its antiterrorist policy, the United States is concerned the Taliban (Islamic fundamentalists) and al-Qaida (an international terrorist network) are using the border belt of Afghanistan and Pakistan as a safe haven. In an effort to help the Afghan government stand on its own, the United States is training Afghan security and police forces.

While increasing its troop numbers in Afghanistan, the United States is also calling on its allies to step up cooperation and support to efficiently conduct military operations in Afghanistan.

Furthermore, considering that military operations alone will not do the job, US special envoy Richard Holbrooke is expected to take the initiative in consulting the Afghan and Pakistani governments to develop a joint antiterrorist strategy with the United States, and he is likely to call on other allies to help stabilize the civilian sector. In addition to military operations, the Obama administration places emphasis on policy implementation in the civilian sector of the two countries such as support for the rehabilitation and stabilization of people's livelihood.

Moreover, the Obama administration is seeking to forge cooperative and partner relationships for stability in the Middle East gulf area through dialogue and consultation with Syria, Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and other regional countries, and at the same time regain its leadership in the Middle East.



A soldier from Headquarters & Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment (Airborne), watches cattle run for their lives while a CH-47 helicopter prepares to land on Landing Zone Shetland during "Operation Saray Has" near Forward Operating Base Naray, Afghanistan, on July 19.

(ii) Japan

Japan has been providing human and financial assistance to Afghanistan in areas such as (1) public security; (2) infrastructure construction; (3) livelihood support; and (4) agriculture and village development. It has also announced financial aid exceeding 30 billion yen.

Moreover, Japan is planning to cooperate with the United States to host a meeting of Pakistan-supporting countries to prevent social unrest there. Japan needs to pursue close coordination with the United States in Middle East policies.

Japan has yet to decide if it will send the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) to Afghanistan. How Japan can cooperate in Afghanistan will determine the quality of the Japan-US alliance under the Obama administration and Japan's standing and recognition in the international community. One of the options for Japan is to send SDF troops to Afghanistan with a two-year time limit, showing a clear exit strategy. Another option is to convince the United States and other allies of limitations to Japan's support for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan and Pakistan, and also show them a clearly defined framework of assistance.

Japan and the United States will have to make efforts to help rebuild Iraq, consulting with each other on areas where they can cooperate and on details of what they can do together.

(3) Long-term Response

The Obama administration will likely focus its antiterrorist activities in Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, in a clear departure from the Bush administration heavily dependent on military means, the Obama administration is showing a different policy approach. As an ally, Japan needs to help the Obama administration's Afghan policy in such a way that the United States can restore international confidence and leadership.

East Asia/Pacific Policies

(Policies toward China, Korean Peninsula, Asia/Pacific)

(1) Perception of Current State

It is the Sino-US relationship that is most important as a factor influencing the international environment encompassing Japanese diplomacy and the Japan-US relationship.

The United States and China are expected to continue their strategic coexistence ("sharing the same bed and having different dreams") in the foreseeable future. The gravest "different dream" is essential confrontation between China's medium- and long-term military strategy (including modernization, nuclear strategy and space use, and its military approach to Taiwan) and the US Asia-Pacific strategy. Furthermore, China's seemingly innate desire to reduce American influence and presence in its medium- and long-term East Asia policy is another important "different dream" the United States does not share. In dreaming yet another "different dream," China is beginning to play an active role in the US-centric world order on one hand and at times showing signs of resistance to the "Washington Consensus" on the other hand. The bilateral relationship harbors confrontation of fundamental values as shown over human rights, democracy and the Tibet issue.

However, the importance of bilateral cooperation is growing for

the two countries to solve the difficult problems they have. (Areas of cooperation include US diplomacy in Iraq and Iran, North Korea's nuclear development and change in its regime, the Sino-US relationship in the six-party talks – a system of controlling Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions –, global issues such as the world economy and global warming, and unification of the two Koreas.)

Seen from a wider perspective, the Obama administration appears to be eager to participate in multipartite cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. (At issue here will likely be economic cooperation, Islamic movements in Southeast Asia, terrorism, the Myanmar problem, and possible US participation in the East Asia Summit.)

(2) Long-term Response

What is most important for Japan is a long-term response appropriately combining Japan's own diplomatic initiative and the Japan-US relationship. To be more specific, Japan will need to strengthen its partnerships with countries positioned in between the US-China strategic relationship. For example, on the premise that the United States and China maintain their strategic coexistence, Japan, South Korea and Australia can deepen dialogue about their relationships with the United States and China and at the same time can deepen their own relationships in middle areas between the US-China strategic relationship. If the three allies can do so, what it entails will be a kind of platform for their respective independent strategies, creating a sort of important infrastructure for the order of East Asia that neither the United States nor China can ignore.

ASEAN has become an important partner for new attempts in East Asia. Japan's stable relationship with ASEAN is an important asset for the country in dealing with such attempts. This particular relationship will be an important foundation to forge a multilateral and profound strategy toward with China, which is the most important factor influencing the course of international politics and the world economy.

In light of possible regime change in North Korea and unification of the Korean Peninsula, the relationship with South Korea is critically important for Japan. Making the Japan-South Korea relationship strong and substantial will give increased diplomatic options to both

countries, providing a breath of fresh air to the framework of trilateral cooperation among Japan, the United States and South Korea and to the six-party talks over the North Korean nuclear program.

It is also important to take a fresh look at the Japan-Russia relationship. Whenever there is a major change in international politics in Northeast Asia, Russia will try to compete with the United States and China "on an equal footing." It is also important for Japan to rebuild its relationship with Russia by taking that prospect into consideration.

The "East Asia Summit" has become a useful forum for implementing cooperation in the Asia-Pacific and East Asian regions within a multilateral framework in a medium- and long-term strategic manner while preventing fears of China dominating East Asia from growing into confrontation with China. Japan and other East Asian countries are required to employ multifaceted and multilayered diplomatic policies toward China. As seen in the perspective of the Japan-US relationship, it may not be necessary to accept the United States as a full-fledged member of the East Asia Summit. The point of compromise perhaps lies in cautiously eliminating any attempt to completely exclude the United States from it.

As stated above, if Japan can break new ground for its own independent strategy coordinated with its relationship with the United States in a medium- and long-term perspective, the bilateral relationship will benefit from better communication. If it becomes more evident that Japan is a trustworthy US ally at a critical moment, then it will become possible to a greater extent for Japan to push ahead with its own efforts to establish what it considers a desirable East Asian order, even at the risk of partially contradicting the United States on less important matters in day-to-day bilateral scenes.

(3) Short-term Response

It is extremely important that the short-term response be synchronized with the prospect of a medium- and long-term trend seen from a macro and international viewpoint.

An improved dialogue and closer cooperation among Japan, the United States and South Korea are necessary concerning the US military presence. For example, regarding the use of SDF troops for the rescue of Japanese nationals in an emergency on the Korean Peninsula, there is a pressing need for Japan to set up a mechanism to dispel South Korea's anxiety to avoid the sort of talking at cross-purposes seen in the 1990s. Back then, when Japan contacted South Korea to broach the prospect of Japanese rescue missions in a future crisis on the peninsula, a senior South Korean official commented to the effect that if SDF planes came flying over the peninsula, the country would temporarily turn from fighting North Korea and start firing at the Japanese aircraft.

It is also important to actively work on deepening Japan-Australia cooperation and developing the Japan-South Korea relationship as important cores of Japan's independent strategy in East Asia founded on the Japan-US alliance. When it comes to the Japan-Australia relationship, it is necessary to follow up on the bilateral security cooperation declaration of 2007. It is preferable to develop cooperation between Japan and South Korea in untraditional security areas similar to the one between Japan and Australia. A trilateral framework among

Japan, South Korea and Australia can be expected to materialize as an extension of the bilateral efforts. (It is preferable that the subject is reviewed by the private sector or an informal Track II group.)

It should be noted that Japan's diplomatic policy based on rivalry with China, which may be called a sort of "anti-China fundamentalism," isolates none but Japan in East Asia. It is also almost meaningless to ask which of the two countries, Japan or China, carries more weight in the Obama administration.

Policies for WMD Nonproliferation & Disarmament

(1) Perception of Current State

The Obama administration has made a commitment to take steps toward the reduction of strategic nuclear arms. In early February, the administration announced it will negotiate with Russia a treaty succeeding the First Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START-I), due to expire at the end of 2009. On the other hand, US nuclear capabilities are becoming obsolete, with nuclear warheads downgraded in reliability in terms of actual performance against design specifications and in functional accuracy. In other words, the United States is required to maintain the credibility of its weapons' deterrence on one hand and take specific steps to disarm on the other hand.

With nuclear proliferation becoming more serious, as is the case with Iran and North Korea moving to develop nuclear arms, high hopes are pinned on the Democratic Party's ascent to the reins of government given the party's track record since the Clinton administration of attaching great importance to nuclear nonproliferation and anti-proliferation policies.

Japan has no option but to seek the ultimate abolition of nuclear arms while depending on US policy to stop nuclear proliferation for the present. As the United States carries out policy measures on nuclear disarmament, nuclear arms modernization and nuclear nonproliferation, it is extremely important that the US nuclear deterrence continues to cover its allies, with the deterrent power kept credible. Meanwhile, North Korea has tested nuclear explosions and launched ballistic missiles, proliferating nuclear arms and means of delivery in Northeast Asia and intensifying the seriousness of nuclear proliferation in a global sense. The North Korean nuclear arms directly threaten the security of Japan and it is a challenge to be addressed urgently by Japan and the United States.

(2) Short-term Response

To sustain a posture of deterrence in Northeast Asia, Japan and the United States should clarify the roles they need to share between them. In so doing, it will be important to discuss the pros and cons of Japan taking over some of the "sword" role played exclusively by the United States, making use of conventional weapons Japan has.

As for specific nonproliferation measures such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), it is desirable for these measures to have the effect of directly preventing the proliferation of WMD and their delivery. It is therefore important that Japan and the United States coordinate their policies and closely cooperate in specific activities.

On its part, the United States has a seemingly contradictory but

nonetheless urgent mission to take specific steps for disarmament and at the same time modernize its nuclear weapons to maintain the credibility of its nuclear deterrence, thus trying to harmonize both policies. Especially in Northeast Asia, it is vitally important for the US military to maintain its nuclear and conventional deterrence in a clearly visible shape, not only as deterrence against potential adversaries but also as reassurance for allies.

As for Japan, it is an important mission to continue commitment to nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation; carry out the realignment of US forces in Japan without delay to uphold the US deterrence in Northeast Asia; and build up Japanese defense capabilities, including missile defense, to play mutually complementing roles with the US forces.

(3) Long-term Response

Japan and the United States need to show the nuclear-armed members of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) a vision portraying the reduction of nuclear warheads in the long run, while maintaining the function of restricting the use of nuclear weapons. In so doing, it is important to effectively combine multiple policies – one for enhancing the international framework for nuclear armament control and nuclear nonproliferation, one for building defense capabilities, including missile defense, and one for maintaining deterrence with (offensive) weapons, including conventional arms. The United States and Russia possess thousands of warheads each, creating a kind of stability that dissuades the holders of fewer warheads from even thinking of challenging them. It is imperative that a future process for reducing the number of warheads does not in any way lead to an abrupt disruption in stability that may motivate nuclear powers other than the United States and Russia to beef up their nuclear capabilities.

In the meantime, a framework for preventing further proliferation of nuclear weapons should be built as part of long-term nonproliferation efforts through the maintenance and enhancement of the NPT. It is also necessary to enhance the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), an unenforceable organization with a limited number of participants, and develop it into an effective framework for preventing proliferation of missiles as a means of delivering nuclear weapons.

To guarantee the effectiveness of the above policy measures, it is important to strengthen the verification function of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and to institutionalize nonproliferation policies such as the PSI on a global basis.

Japan-US Security Cooperation

(1) Perception of Current State

While the United States faces the prospect of an unavoidable relative decline in national power, 10 to 20 countries, such as China, Russia and India, compete with one another in the international community, raising a strong possibility that the world will be heading for a nonpolar one without a superpower.

Partly to respond to the changing times and partly to cope with the economic crisis, the United States has to shift its military's strategic gravity from China to Afghanistan. As a result, the Obama adminis-



Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso (left) and US President Barack Obama shake hands during their talks at the White House in Washington on Feb. 24. Aso and Obama agreed in their first meeting to strengthen the bilateral alliance and do their utmost to spur the world economy's recovery.

tration will have to focus its Asia policy on Afghanistan, leaving the rest of the region as it is.

The Obama administration has no choice but to adopt a policy of engagement vis-a-vis China. The country, like Japan, has purchased a huge amount of US treasury bonds, putting itself in a state of economic mutual assured destruction (MAD). As a result, the Obama administration upgraded the Sino-US Strategic Economic Dialogue to the Strategic Dialogue. The United States, unable to confine China to the economic sphere, will have to build a cooperative relationship in the military field as well.

However, this does not mean that the Sino-US relationship and the Japan-US relationship run counter to each other. The United States does not try to develop a bilateral relationship of a zero-sum nature with Japan and China, but tries to develop a multilateral relationship of a plus-some nature that is favorable to US national interests. Japan will have to respond to the US move by mobilizing strategic and tactical diplomacy, making sure that Japan does not get buried between the United States and China.

(2) Short-term Response

Japan needs to adopt policies aimed at convincing the United States that the use of the Japan-US alliance is beneficial to Washington's national interests, be it pursued globally or regionally.

To strengthen the Japan-US alliance, what comes first is the Defense Policy Review Initiative (DPRI). In that sense, it was significant that an agreement to relocate US marines from Okinawa to Guam, previously reached under the Bush administration, was signed on Feb. 17 during Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's visit to Japan. Early conclusion of the DPRI process is the most pressing and greatest mission imposed on the Japanese government.

For the Obama administration, the greatest challenge is the fight with terrorists in Afghanistan. It was significant that Japan's further contribution to Afghanistan was called for during a meeting between President Obama and Prime Minister Taro Aso, engaging Japan in the new Afghan strategy of the Obama administration. SDF participation in the Afghan Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) is an important task to be reviewed from the viewpoint of the Japan-US alliance.

The Maritime Self-Defense Force's (MSDF) refueling operation in the Indian Ocean and the dispatch of MSDF destroyers for an anti-piracy operation off the coast of Somalia are important steps for the very purpose of the defense of Japan. It is important for Japan to defend the sea lane from the Middle East to the Sea of Japan. It is essential to secure the safety of waters surrounding the sea lane, which is a public property belonging to the international community. Engaging in the protection of the sea lane, in cooperation with the United States, India and China, will deepen Japan's relationship with the countries involved, serving at the same time as a good confidence-building measure (CBM).

Only with its international contributions can Japan strengthen its regional alliance with the United States. The Obama administration may have notched the US-China relationship up into a comprehensive one, but a military hedge in the Asia theater against China or North Korea is indispensable to the United States. But Washington will have to concentrate military resources into Afghanistan and Pakistan, leaving other areas thinly covered. It is important for Japan to fill the void as a US ally. It is for this reason that Japan is requested to assume a larger share of US military expenditure in Japan, including spending as host-nation support (HNS), and to do more in terms of the roles, missions, and capabilities (RMC). In future, Japan will be required to jointly decide operation plans and rules of engagement common to the US and Japanese forces.

Enhancement of extended deterrence and of deterrence by denial will be matters to be discussed from the standpoint of Japan's homeland defense.

(3) Long-term Response

The Japan-US alliance will become an equal and mutually trustworthy relationship, as is the US-Britain alliance, only when Japan and the United States build up cooperative relationships in areas where their national interests dovetail and undertake power sharing for the improvement of Japan-US security cooperation.

It is imperative for Japan to discuss the advisability of using the right of collective defense to enable the country to contribute to world order and stability as a member of the international community.

On the other hand, it will be indispensable for Japan's long-term security to try to build, on the basis of the Japan-US alliance, a multi-layered national security system combining cooperative security, regional security and collective security.

Poverty in Africa, Peace-building & Infectious Diseases

(1) Perception of Current State

Called the Bottom Billion, the world's 1.2 billion poorest people live on less than \$1 a day, with 73% of them having experienced civil wars and 70% living in Africa. They have been unable to benefit from globalization, and they are further suffering from the global financial and monetary crisis started in the last half of 2008. The situation, if left uncorrected, will eventually grow into a serious destabilizing factor against peace and security not only in the countries

involved and their neighbors but also in the international community as a whole. Some of the poorest countries are beginning to malfunction, showing signs of a failed or fragile state, broadening room to maneuver for international terrorist organizations and international crime networks, including pirates, and at the same time increasing the danger of a pandemic of infectious diseases.

(2) Short-term Response

(i) Poverty in Africa

In May 2008, Japan hosted the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) under the official theme "*Towards a Vibrant Africa: Continent of Hope and Opportunity.*" Participating countries agreed on quantitative expansion of ODA (Japan pledging to double its ODA by 2012); increased investment (including south-south cooperation); and promotion of industrial development strategies and policies. Despite its severe financial condition, the new US administration also indicated a doubling of its overseas assistance, currently \$25 billion, and expressed its willingness to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

It is important to extend assistance to Africa in such a way that it helps develop a local trade and investment environment, enabling the development of the private sector, in addition to the conventional ODA assistance such as grant aid, repayable aid and technical assistance.

Poverty in Africa requires not only economic and monetary aid but also combining it with political, administrative and judicial assistance because many African countries have gone through civil wars and have governance problems. It is useful for Japan and the United States to take the initiative in expediting the achievement of the MDGs, the common goals set by the United Nations, and, on top of that, provide assistance in peace-building and governance in combination with MDG aid.

(ii) Peace-building

In failed or fragile states, with a government structure devastated or weakened by civil war, it is important to provide assistance in reconstruction and peace-building for prevention of another civil war as well as domestic rehabilitation and stability. It is necessary to help them strengthen governance and shift to a peaceful state, paying due respect to their ownership. Assistance for that end should not be overly dependent on military power but take a comprehensive and strategic approach, effectively combining military assets and civilian personnel helping people's livelihood, and collectively offering seamless support ranging from peace mediation, peacekeeping and peace-building to sustainable development. Such an approach will help efficiently use U.N. peacekeeping operations (PKO), which have grown into a mission of more than 100,000 personnel and more than \$7 billion and, after the PKO end, it will contribute to sustained efforts for peace, rehabilitation and development.

Also, the U.N. Security Council and the U.N. Peacebuilding Commission, founded in December 2005, should be able to play useful roles in strategically grappling with rehabilitation and peace-building in failed or fragile states.

When political conditions deteriorate or a serious situation from a

humanitarian viewpoint breaks out, the international community should respond with political and diplomatic measures to find a solution, but it should be noted that decisive intervention, supported by a U.N. Security Council resolution or other legitimate means, might eventually be required.

Fast response is necessary for natural disasters, in addition to manmade crises. Japan and the United States should try to expand their cooperative relationship, including enhanced cooperation between the SDF and the US military to deal with natural disasters.

Developed countries should take the initiative in banning exports of conventional weapons to civil war-torn countries in Africa and other regions.

(iii) Infectious Diseases

The so-called three major infectious diseases – AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria – claim five million lives a year. Japan, which has been emphasizing cooperation in the area, announced the “Okinawa Infectious Diseases Initiative” during the G-8 summit in Okinawa and Kyushu in 2000, a move that led to the foundation of the “Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.” Assistance to battle infectious diseases is expected to be expanded by enhancing the global fund and by boosting support through ingenious measures such as mosquito nets for malaria.

To deal with a pandemic of infectious diseases caused by malicious intent, it is essential for Japan and the United States to treat it as an act of terrorism and exchange information and hold consultation for crisis and consequence management, including discussion on measures to stop and prevent a pandemic, and produce, store and distribute vaccines.

(3) Long-term Response

(i) Poverty in Africa

For the development of Africa, it is essential to help strengthen people’s abilities in addition to material assistance. Advance investment should be made not only in the expansion of elementary education but also in efforts to develop potential abilities of people who may in future play leading roles in the government and private sectors. This will contribute to the goals of TICAD IV to turn Africa into a “Continent of Hope and Opportunity.”

It is necessary to accurately assess China’s intentions as it is making significant inroads into Africa and exerting its influence.

On its part, Japan is officially planning to double its ODA to Africa. However, after a 38% decline in total ODA in 2007 as compared with the peak spending in 1997, Japan will have to make a major policy shift. The United States is also expected to act on the new administration’s promise to double its ODA despite its tough financial situation at home.

(ii) Peace-building

It is important for the international community to have a pool of support personnel, supplies and equipment readily available for prompt entry into and use in a failed or fragile state when required. It is desirable for Japan and the United States to cooperate in enhancing a pooling system.

(iii) Infectious Diseases

Acting on issues of health and hygiene, including measures to fight infectious diseases, is extremely important in practicing the “human security” idea, which calls for all human beings to live in good health and safety and be able to improve themselves. It is necessary for Japan and the United States to take the initiative in strengthening cooperation with the WHO, other U.N. organizations, and NGOs for an international health partnership in addition to enhancing the global fund.

U.N. Reform

(1) Perception of Current State

The Obama administration’s pledged effective use of the United Nations and other international organizations is one of major changes from the previous administration. On the other hand, it is well known that Japan’s foreign policy attaches great importance to the world body and other international organizations. These facts indicate that Japan and the United States can broaden their cooperation in the United Nations and other organizations, which are forums for multi-lateral diplomacy. Japan-US cooperation in the United Nations is important for the two countries to act with the backing of international legitimacy because it is the most universal international intergovernmental organization in the world today. But, at the same time, the United Nations obviously needs reform in its structure and functions.

(2) Short-term Response

It is necessary to reform the Security Council, which plays the central role in maintaining international peace and security. While the organization’s effectiveness and efficiency must be maintained, it is indispensable to have the number of its permanent and nonpermanent members increased to some extent to enhance its legitimacy. Incidentally, intergovernmental negotiations for the reform of the Security Council started on the basis of a U.N. General Assembly resolution in September 2008. Japan should seize this opportunity to endeavor in earnest to make the reform a reality. Above all, Japan’s permanent membership in the Security Council would transform the United Nations, characterized as the war victors’ organization responsible for maintaining the postwar international order, into a more universal organization, paving the way for Japan-US cooperation in the pivotal U.N. organ. Therefore, it is the mission of Japan and the United States to jointly seek to accomplish the reform at the earliest possible time.

(3) Long-term Response

The United Nations continues to play a major role in discussing cross-border issues, and in planning and executing policy measures for international cooperation. But it has a lot of challenges to face for reform, including securing consistency in the U.N. system and improving efficiency in its management. Japan and the United States should take the initiative in jointly promoting reform for a “slim, but efficient” United Nations.

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(To be continued)