

Ampo Revisited

By Yuji Masuda

The nationwide campaign against the revision and renewal of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty in 1960 started with a small core of political activists and quickly developed into mass demonstrations and media debates. With the Kishi administration having rammed approval through the House of Representatives, all that remained was for a month to pass without any action by the House of Councilors, and the treaty would be considered ratified. This constitutional deadline fell at midnight on June 18. For days, the area around the Diet was crowded with demonstrators, including one (Michiko Kamba) who died in the struggle. This was the 1960 *Ampo-toso* (Security Treaty fight), and it has left a major imprint on postwar Japanese history.

There is a tendency in the spate of documentaries and journalistic assessments that have marked this 30th anniversary to discuss history in the context of the present without doing sufficient research or analysis on the historical background and the context that prevailed when the history was being made. For example, many of these articles and programs have looked at the social ferment of that time and commented unfavorably that by comparison the present is an age of apathy and uninvolvedness.

Change to cordiality

While history has much to teach us, it is dangerous to make a superficial comparison and use that as the basis for action. Each era has its own psychology and circumstances, and these tend to change radically over time. The recent economic reforms in the Soviet Union, reversal of the standoff between the United States and the Soviet Union, the moves for democratic autonomy in the East European and Baltic countries, and German unification were unthinkable as recently as two or three years ago. The entire structure of the international economy and politics is undergoing fundamental



A scene from the 1960 demonstration in front of the Diet building opposing the revision and renewal of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty.

change from Cold War to warm cordiality.

The United States and the Soviet Union have moved to end the Cold War and from confrontation to cooperation. This turnabout signals the arrival of a period in which Japan will have to make independent decisions and take its own initiatives. It also negates the original significance of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, which was essentially a product of the Cold War and was intended to create an anti-Soviet military alliance, including the nuclear deterrent. Yet today the Soviet threat is rapidly fading, removing the treaty's military *raison d'être*. The need for the alliance is becoming even more questionable with the scheduled reductions of American forces in Asia.

One high-ranking American military officer in Japan has said that U.S. forces are in Japan to prevent it from becoming a major military power, while others try to justify the treaty by pointing to its economic clauses and pretending that this tail is more important than the military dog. Both of these approaches reflect the confused scramble to justify the treaty now that the Soviet Union can no longer be posited as the common enemy.

Notwithstanding Japanese foreign policy and defense authorities' statements that the situations in Asia and Europe are different, the relaxation of tensions has

rippled its way to the Asian theater as well—and where it has not, one of the reasons is that Japan refuses to alter its military policies and is hence fueling tensions and delaying the process of disarmament and peace. Asians are much more fearful than most Japanese recognize that Japan may abandon its 1%-of-GNP limit on defense spending and continue beefing up its military capability.

With the upheavals in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, it is imperative that Japan rethink the nature of its security policies and, more specifically, the security arrangements with the United States. This 30th anniversary is an excellent opportunity for such a reassessment. While it has been the norm until now to equate security with military defense, it is now necessary to take a broader perspective on security and to examine economic security and the broader "comprehensive security."

West German Social Democratic Party Vice President Oscar Lafontaine's proposal for common security guarantees is one of the new ideas attracting attention in the political arena. This concept envisions a European security system for the post-Cold War period that is based on cooperation rather than confrontation and replaces NATO's forward defense, flexible response strategy with the so-called

Photo: Kyodo News Service



Joint drills of U.S. military forces and Japan's Self-Defense Forces.



"spider web theory" that defines security as a system that renders an attack impossible. Clearly influenced by this, Japan's second-biggest opposition party, Komeito, has recently been arguing in favor of the spider web theory of defense.

As a defense policy, the spider web theory is akin to the behavior of a spider that waits until an enemy has disturbed the strands of its web before attacking and does not strike first. In other words, the spider defends against an attack but never initiates one. In defense terms, this means having a strategic system that is prepared to fight only when attacked.

If this theory was applied to Japan's Self-Defense Forces (SDF), the Outline of National Defense would have to be fundamentally revised to cut down the size of the SDF and to make a number of deployment changes: strengthening the radar network, setting up more anti-aircraft missile sites in strategic locations, increasing the emphasis on surface-to-ship missiles, anti-tank gunnery and helicopters, and bolstering important defense positions along the coastlines. Specifically, this means (i) shifting the SDF's weaponry from its present focus on tanks, destroyers and fighter aircraft to systems that can fend off enemies at the water's edge, and (ii) establishing a joint command system that unifies the leadership of the Ground, Maritime and Air Self-Defense Forces to mount a total response. This would be one answer to the current debate over Japanese security.

The July *Sekai*, a monthly magazine of political commentary, had a special cover section entitled "Ampo's Dilemma at 30" including two dialogues, one titled "Questioning the Rules of the Postwar System" between the economist Mitsu-haru Ito and the political commentator

Takeshi Sasaki and the other titled "Domestic Issues in U.S.-Japan Relations" between Dietmen Yohei Kono and Masao Kunihiro. Common to both of these debates was the idea that Japan has to look at the world anew and develop policies that are responsive to domestic and international changes.

In the same issue was an article on the security arrangements by James Auer, special assistant for Japan in the Office of the U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense in the 1970s and 1980s. Entitled "The U.S. and Japan that Both Should Say 'Yes,'" Auer's article stressed the importance of cooperation.

Economic uncertainty

The most interesting article, however, was Professor Motofumi Asai's "A Perspective to Replace the U.S.-Japan Security System." His main point is that the most important and most urgent issue for Japan's security is not the military threat but the economic uncertainty and the threat of a global recession. Having said this, he goes on to argue that this anxiety is closely linked to fears concerning America's international strategy and predictions of a slowdown in the market economies, and that there will be increasing uncertainty over Japan's political and economic future unless this situation is met with the development and implementation of effective strategies.

According to Asai, the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty is an indispensable link in America's global strategy and, so long as it condones the treaty's continued existence, Japan has little grounds for questioning this global strategy and can only seek to prop up the American economy with enhanced burden-sharing. Yet Am-

erica is now much weaker relative to Europe and Japan than it was 30 years ago, and this decline is expected to continue.

As a result, the global strategy and military deployment decided on when U.S. economic dominance was unquestioned is now fraying at the edges and falling apart. Built to sustain the grand economic edifice that was America, this military strategy is now dragging it down, and it will be impossible to solve America's serious economic ills unless this khaki albatross is cut loose. This is the modern American dilemma.

Once this is recognized, Asai argues, the case is persuasive for mutual treaty abrogation and the structuring of a new U.S.-Japan relationship. Treaties are like contracts between countries, and it is only right that they should be flexible in the face of policy changes and changes in the international climate. What is needed now is to drop the emphasis on military security and to adopt a new architecture of common security for Japan and the United States.

There are many non-military issues impinging on our security—including the persistent North-South disparities of wealth, the economic friction among trading partners, the need to conserve and restore the global environment, and the advisability of support for the reforms in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe—and it is hoped that joint efforts to deal with these issues will result in the forging of a new relationship of trust and common interests between Japan and the United States.

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