

# Now for the Hard Part

By Takeshi Sasaki

Most of the Japanese media attention in March and April was focused on Japan's role in the aftermath of the Gulf war. Among the comprehensive overviews here were Taichi Sakaiya's "Lessons from the Gulf for a New World Order" in the April *Chuo Koron*. In this, Sakaiya contends that Saddam Hussein's entire strategy was based on Cold War assumptions and that the factors that led to his undoing—the swiftness of the American military response, the strength of the anti-Iraqi coalition within the Arab world, and the Soviet Union's willingness to cooperate with the United States—were all symptomatic of the collapse of the Cold War geopolitical structure. Not having realized that the world had changed, Hussein backed himself into a corner and got run over.

Sakaiya concludes by stating that the U.S.-led new world order in this post-Gulf war era will be characterized by the global spread of Western institutions. By this, he means the creation of a new grand coalition attuned politically to the spread of democratic institutions, economically to the enforcement of free-trading market regimes, and militarily to burden-sharing among the Western allies.

Yet Sakaiya says that the United States, although the coalition leader, will not be loved—this because the post-Cold War international structures will replace East-West discord with increasing North-South acrimony. As Sakaiya sees it, the Cold War was a war in which the U.S. and the Soviet Union both sought to be loved in order to garner more allies for themselves; but now that neither side has any need to gain more allies in the South, it is likely that the gap between the rich North and the impoverished South will continue to widen.

At the risk of exaggeration, the world that U.S. President George Bush means when he speaks of a new world order is a world of 800 million people growing progressively richer while 6,400 million other

people grow progressively poorer, and it will prove a Herculean task for the United States, as the world's policeman, to maintain this world order in the face of this widening wealth gap. Although weak, the South is still able to respond with a fearsome outflow of refugees, and new responses will be needed by the industrial North if we are to avert greater animosity between North and South. Given this outlook, Sakaiya calls for a strategic Japanese initiative for world peace, free trade and population stabilization, with special emphasis on the last two.

The Houston Summit Declaration that proclaimed the end of the Cold War last July was premised on a massive international shift of power as East-West relations gave way to North-South relations. Sakaiya not only discusses the Cold War in legal terms as a "fight for right and justice" but looks at the international structure with its underpinnings of tension and seeks to identify long-term Japanese national interests.

## New world order

While Sakaiya seems very close to the Japanese mainstream when he says that a full-fledged Japanese military contribution would require amending the Constitution and that Japan should therefore work to develop policy initiatives in the free-trade and population-stabilization areas, the fact is that Japanese politics is abuzz with talk of the Self-Defense Forces' possible role and virtually silent on the rice issue and the furor that arose when the United States exhibited rice at Makuhari. Not just Japan but every country should now be concerned with developing comprehensive policies founded on a multidimensional model of the new world order.

The Gulf war restored America's international credibility and sparked renewed talk of a Pax Americana. At the same time, it is widely seen as having diminished Soviet, German and Japanese au-

thority. Looking at the Gulf war from this power politics perspective, Hisako Matsubara's "The War America Wanted" in the April *Bungei Shunju* argues that the Gulf war was actually part of a well-executed plan to ensure Bush's reelection and revive American hegemony.

As Matsubara tells it, there are a lot of naive Japanese who believe that America went to war for the cause of international justice, but these people have totally lost sight of the international political realities. In a follow-up article entitled "Be Not Proud, Oh Victorious America" in the May *Bungei Shunju*, she lashes out at the blind faith that many Japanese have in the United States.

While there are those (e.g. Charles Krauthammer's "How the War Can Change America" in the January 28 *Time*) who feel that this famous victory can free America from the Vietnam Syndrome, give the United States confidence that its economic ills are also curable if it just has the will, and be an unprecedented opportunity for the United States to transform itself, there are very few Japanese who believe that victory in the Gulf will lead to an economic recovery in the United States.

Masaru Yoshitomi pointed out in "Not Even War Can Arrest the Decline" (May *Voice*) that victory in the Gulf has not solved America's supply-side problems, has not improved labor morale or discipline, has not upgraded the quality of U.S. automobile parts, and has not solved the drug problem or the many other serious ills that beset American society. He has even gone so far as to declare that the post-Cold War era will be an era of economic power, which means it will be a Japanese era. Building on these premises, Yoshitomi states that Japan's real national interest lies in ensuring that the GATT Uruguay Round is a success and that the economic fences come down around the world.

He is thus rightly critical of the fact that Japanese discussion of the Uruguay

Round has seemed to focus almost exclusively on whether or not to open the Japanese market to rice imports. In many ways, this is consistent with the hope expressed by the U.S. Council of Economic Advisers this year for export-led growth. At the same time, Japanese commentators are expressing concern about a serious liquidity crunch in the 1990s unless there is close cooperation among Japan, the United States and the EC.

The "new world order" that has gained such currency of late must not be a purely military order but must also have firm economic support. Yet there is a very real concern among many people that, far from being corrected, the global economic fragility is actually becoming more pronounced. Given the North-South animosity that Sakaiya notes, it is frightening to think that the United States, with its own prominent economic vulnerabilities, will stand astride a new world order built on the dichotomy between North and South. The structural framework alone indicates that the new world order's economic fragility might translate into political and military vulnerability as well.

## Hidden loser

The Japanese consensus seems to be that Japanese politics was the hidden loser in the Gulf war. This, says Naoki Tanaka in "Japanese Politics Grounded by the Gulf War" (April *Asahi Monthly*) is not so much a Constitutional issue as it is a problem with the basic structure of the way Japanese parliamentary democracy works.

While almost all of the debate about new security policies for Japan has talked about participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations (PKO), Kiichi Miyazawa has taken an even broader outlook and widened the discussion with his "For a Permanent U.N. Force Plus Total Disarmament" in the May *Asahi Monthly*. Miyazawa flatly pronounces that the era in which peace could be maintained with nuclear deterrence and the balance of power is dead, and he says that the world must work to agree on new international structures to build and maintain lasting

world peace. From this start, he argues for the establishment of a permanent U.N. Force and deep disarmament among the world's military powers so as to create a new world security order.

The main thrust of this proposal is that, since military activities by the United Nations would be essentially different from a single state's exercising its sovereign right, it would be possible for Japan to take part in such a standing force without amending the Constitution and that this would be fully consistent with the pacifist ideals embodied in the Constitution.

While the possibility of using Japanese forces as part of a U.N. Force is by no means the whole of Miyazawa's security initiative, Takashi Tachibana tackles the Constitutional issue head-on in his "Why a U.N. Force Would Be Constitutional" in the May *Asahi Monthly*, where he contends that the only way to resolve the many Constitutional issues involved in any overseas military role for Japan would be to limit the SDF purely to actions undertaken as part of a U.N. Force. And, Tachibana adds, if this U.N.-centered framework proved itself effective, it would also lead logically to the abrogation of the Security Treaty with the U.S. These articles are worth noting as being expressive of Japanese thinking about the Constitution and the United Nations.

As was also evident during Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu's tour of Southeast Asia, the question of how to forge and maintain good relations with the other countries of Asia is becoming an increasingly important aspect of Japanese security policy. Relations with the Soviet Union are basically part and parcel of the same question. The time is past when Japanese security could be debated purely in terms of whether it is better to maintain the treaty with the United States or to go it alone. Today, more and more consideration has to be paid to Japan's political—and possibly even military—role in Asia.

In "From Asia to Asia" in a special issue of *Sekai*, for example, Yuji Suzuki argues that a concerted effort should be made not just to escape Cold War thinking on specific issues but to end the Cold War in this region, and that there are a



Children in Uganda waiting for food provided by UNICEF. Many are concerned that the new world order will be built on the dichotomy between North and South.

Photo: Kyodo News Service

number of crucial regional issues that need to be addressed as starting points for peace in the region, such as convening an Asian disarmament conference, establishing a committee on security and confidence-building in Asia including the United States and the Soviet Union, and developing intercooperative relations for economic development.

Yotaro Kobayashi's "An Advocacy of Re-Asianization" in the April *Foresight* is a straightforward argument that Japan should recognize that its home is not in America or in Europe but in Asia. Once this is recognized, he says, there should be a re-Asianization. By re-Asianization, he does not mean that Japan should hunker down within Asia and try to exercise hegemony over the region à la the Greater East Asia Coprosperity Sphere. Rather, he is arguing that the political imperatives demand that Japan, even as it remains economically open to the rest of the world, do more to develop relations of true friendship with the other countries of Asia.

There is no question but that Japan is politically committed to Asia. The only question is what to do about relations with China and the United States within this Asian-oriented stance. Japan cannot truly be said to have shaken off the trauma of wartime defeat until it is able to deal openly and directly with this crucial issue of re-Asianization. ■

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