

DIPLOMATIC ISSUES IN JAPAN-ASEAN RELATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

This article focuses upon the diplomatic of Japan-ASEAN bilateral relations. The writer, after careful consideration decided to focus on four major ones. These are the 1977 Fukuda Doctrine, which is often regarded as the turning point in the entire Japan-ASEAN relationship; the question of the expansion of Japanese military capabilities in the early 1980's; the Cambodian conflict, which led to the first military involvement (in the form of peacekeeping) by a Japanese force in the region since World War II, and the diplomacy surrounding ASEAN Regional Forum.

THE FUKUDA DOCTRINE

Between 1952-1977, in the wider context of American containment strategy, Japan-ASEAN relations were mainly economic in character. In the wake of the anti-Tanaka riots in 1974, one year before the fall of Saigon, a momentous event that seemed at the time to herald the collapse of American postwar Asian strategy, this economy based Japan-ASEAN relationship began to assume a new form. Suetō Sudo notes that "the existing Southeast Asian policy was not working" because

"First, the anti-Japanese movement in 1974 was a decisive Blow to Japan's resource diplomacy. Secondly, the end of the Vietnam war in 1975 and its consequential American withdrawal from the region necessitated Japan's reappraisal of its policy orientation, which had always followed the dictates of United States. In other words, the power vacuum in Southeast Asia required Japan's new role in the region. Thirdly, in relation to the second, ASEAN as a regional organization was becoming full-fledged actor in the region....and expected strong Japanese support, especially economically".¹

In 1977, the then Prime Minister of Japan Takeo Fukuda, in a speech made at Manila, during his tour of ASEAN, declared:

"Diplomacy toward Southeast Asia until now was contact through money and goods. It was not contact based on the policy of good friends acting for mutual benefit. Even when viewed from our country there was an impression of

economic aggression and arrogant manners, and it was a situation which was symbolized by the expression economic animal.”²

This speech, which was later elaborated into the so-called Fukuda Doctrine, played a significant part in defining the post Indochina War Japan-ASEAN relationship. The Fukuda Doctrine rested of three principles:

- Japan will not resume a military role in the region.
- Japan will do its best to consolidate relationships of mutual confidence and trust based on “heart to heart” understanding.
- Japan will be an equal partner of ASEAN while aiming to foster mutual understanding with the nations of Indochina.³

The doctrine explains that Japan would not take up the burden of containment of communism, for which it had long been groomed by the United States, that it would develop its relationship with the ASEAN powers on the basis of its own perceptions of mutual interest, and that it would also seek to maintain a balanced and non-confrontational relationship with the new socialist states of Indochina. By adopting a broad and comprehensive approach, the Fukuda Doctrine not only embraced the idea of economic cooperation, but also paved way for a quiet political involvement and a more vigorous cultural exchange with the region.

The announcement of the Fukuda Doctrine coincided with the beginning of a new era in Southeast Asian economic development. By 1976, a decade after its foundation, ASEAN was in the process of drawing up five major industrial projects in each of the member states. These projects included urea plants in Indonesia and Malaysia, a soda ash plant in Thailand, a superphosphate plant in the Philippines and a diesel plant in Singapore. Japanese aid was essential for the realization of these new schemes and Fukuda promised \$1 billion for their implementation.

For several years, the Japanese Government struggled hard to maintain the broad policies laid out in the Fukuda Doctrine, despite the deterioration of Sino-Vietnamese relations, the American tilt to China, the closer ties between Hanoi and Moscow, the exodus of Vietnamese refugees (especially those of Chinese origin) to neighboring countries, the genocidal policies of the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia, Vietnam’s forcible overthrow of the Phnom Penh Government and the Sino-Vietnamese border war of 1979. Eventually, however, the development of the international situation and strong pressure from both the United States and China persuaded the Japanese Government to abandon its attempt to maintain an equidistant policy between ASEAN and the Indochinese states, above all Vietnam. Japan refused, however, to budge from the position that its contributions to regional stability should be primarily economic. This approach was confirmed in the Fukuda-Carter meeting in March 1977 when it was made clear that the United States would maintain its military presence in the Western Pacific while Japan would contribute economic

assistance to ensure the stability of the Asia Pacific region.

Despite a widespread perception that Japan was aligning itself with the United States, China and the more hawkish ASEAN powers against the USSR and Vietnam, the grand design of the Fukuda Cabinet was really to put the five ASEAN countries, all of which suffered from instability, on the road to large scale industrial development, using the \$1 billion fund as a pump priming mechanism, as well as to have close economic relations with the three revolutionary Indochinese countries, especially Vietnam. In other words Fukuda's objective was to use Japan's economic power to build a bridge of coexistence between the non-socialist and socialist countries in Southeast Asia. Being the greatest economic powerhouse in Asia, Japan used its economic aid as a tool to both help ASEAN as well as nurture its own interests in the region. It was, as always, conscious of the importance of expanding its influence here since the region's sea-lanes remained vital both for Japan's economy and the region's security.

THE 1000 NAUTICAL MILES ISSUE

With the end of the Vietnam War, the consolidation of American-Soviet détente and the beginning of the process that led to Washington's normalization of ties with Peking, the United States began to scale down its military presence in the Western Pacific. The promise of a new era of peace and stability, however, was slowly eroded by the injection of Sino-Soviet rivalries into the region, against the background of Peking's attempts to impose its will on Hanoi and mounting tension along the Sino-Vietnamese border, culminating in the Vietnamese assault on Pol Pot's Cambodia, China's closest Southeast Asian ally. At the same time, the U.S.-Soviet détente negotiated by Nixon, Kissinger and Brezhnev in the early 1970s began to unravel. In both Washington and Moscow, powerful groups argued that détente was a one way street to nowhere. In the latter part of the Carter Administrations the United States began a tilt to China. The Soviet Union and Vietnam consolidated their relationship signing a treaty of friendship in 1978, an as a result of which Moscow provided Hanoi with some U.S.\$2 billion in military assistance, dispatched an estimated 2,500 military advisors and obtained access to naval facilities at Da Nang and Cam Ranh Bay.

When the USSR intervened in Afghanistan in 1979 the American -Soviet détente collapsed overnight and a new cold war began. The impact of these events on the Japanese policies towards ASEAN and the Indochina states will be discussed shortly. American pressure on Japan to assume a more active military -strategic role in the region, within the context of U.S. global strategy, increased dramatically after the inauguration of President Ronald Reagan in January 1981. There was already strong discontent among Congressman and American officials who believed that the Japanese were enjoying a 'free ride' under the U.S. security umbrella and insisted that they should contribute more in defense area.⁴ It was against this background, and in the context of both increasingly strained Japan-U.S. economic relations, and

domestic Japanese political instability, that the then Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki, during his visit to Washington in May 1980, made special reference to Japan's commitment to step up efforts to defend an expanded area covering 'several hundred' nautical miles off its shores and 1000 miles of sea lanes to the south of the country, generally speaking West of Guam and North of the Philippines. This would enable the U.S. to shift a greater part of its Seventh Fleet to the Indian Ocean. Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, Suzuki's successor, took up the issue of an expanded Japanese regional military role even more energetically.

This project, however, confronted Japan with a dilemma. The United States insisted the Japanese play a greater role in asserting a tighter control over contiguous straits and a vast area of surrounding waters. This scheme was not welcomed enthusiastically by many of Japan's Asian neighbors, by China, Korea, several key ASEAN powers or, indeed, by Australia and New Zealand. For this reason, as always in such situations, Japanese statements, and the policies they were intended to embody, became more and more clouded in ambiguity. As Chief Cabinet Secretary Miyazawa remarked:

"The problem is, for example for the Americans, the Japanese defense question is a matter of money - Japan should spend more money for defense. But it is a matter of acceptance for the Japanese matter of public support.

We cannot entirely ignore the national consensus on defense that has been formed over some 30 years after the defeat in World War Two.

It's impossible to change the people's feelings (about defense matters) so easily, just as a magician performs a trick.

Japan is doing what it can do. Will increase budget for Defense in 1982 by 7.754% from the current year to 2,586 billion yen in 1982. It is difficult for the U.S. to understand Japan's steady defense build up."⁵

Reaction in the ASEAN powers to Japan's projected new strategic role, as noted earlier, was mixed but generally unenthusiastic. The Thai Government, generally speaking, seemed to have no objections. The Malaysian Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir, a great admirer of Japan, was quoted as saying, "there is no problem".⁶ The Singaporean attitude was more ambiguous. During Suzuki's ASEAN trip, Singapore's Foreign Minister Dhanabalan expressed his support for Japan's projected increase in defense capabilities *within its limits of self-defense*.⁷ Otherwise, he said, the United States would have to bear an extra burden and its attention to the defense of ASEAN and the Indian Ocean would lessen.⁸ Singapore's main objective, however, was to anchor the U.S. in the region. This continued belief in the U.S. commitment was clear both from the offer to house U.S. naval bases removed from the Philippines and from the Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong's comment during his talks with his

Japanese counterpart Hashimoto in 1996. Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong said:

*"Japan can help sustain and strengthen peace and stability in the region....In this regard I commend your leadership and personal commitment to ensure a continued U.S. presence in the region."*⁹

Indonesia, the leading ASEAN power, together with the Philippines, had the strongest reservations about renewed Japanese strategic activism. President Soeharto expressed his concerns during his visit to Washington in October 1982. He also discussed the issue with other ASEAN countries and with Australia. However, after Japanese assurances that the plan was merely to protect their own sea-lanes within "several hundred miles in peace time," and "up to 1000 miles as measured from Tokyo and Osaka in case of emergency, and that this would not bring Japanese forces into ASEAN waters", Japan gained the "understanding" of these both countries. Soeharto is reported to have said, "Indonesia has no objection to Japan's plans *if it is purely for self-defense*".¹⁰ President Marcos of the Philippines, however, criticized Japan's defense buildup efforts as a revival of wartime military aspirations.

In March 1988 a confidential report submitted to ASEAN leaders and their Foreign Ministers, it should be noted, insisted that "the prospect of Japan's enhanced security role is a matter of concern to the region."¹¹

INDOCHINA PROBLEM

Throughout its long history Cambodia, once itself a great imperial power, has suffered much from hostile foreign interference and invasion. During the last century or so it was colonized by the French, occupied by the Japanese, then intensively bombed and invaded by the Americans and their South Vietnamese allies. With the defeat of the Americans, the Khmer Rouge, a Maoist inspired communist guerilla movement, came power and caused millions of deaths through the brutal implementation of radical policies. The Vietnamese invasion at the end of 1978 brought to power a more benign Communist government led by Heng Samrin.

The initial Japanese approach to post-1975 Vietnam had assumed that it would ultimately welcome assistance from the Western bloc for economic and political reasons. It was argued those economic contacts would help build bridges between Japan and the new socialist states in Southeast Asia, and that this would contribute steadily to regional peace, stability and prosperity. However, the Kampuchean affair quickly put an end to all such hopes. The United States, increasingly coordinating its global anti-Soviet strategies with those of China (see 2.2 above), took a strong line against Vietnamese intervention in Kampuchea. In February 1979, China opened hostilities against Vietnam along that country's northern borders. The reaction of the ASEAN countries must be seen partly within this context. As Grant Evans and

Kevin Rowley observe:

“China’s hardline stance was supported by the U.S.A. The objective of American policy in Indochina was to bring maximum pressure to bear on Hanoi, to escalate the Cambodian crisis rather than find a solution to it. In 1979, a ‘senior Western diplomat’ in Bangkok with ‘access to Washington’s thinking’ told Nayan Chanda that the USA was opposed to any attempt to reach an agreement with Vietnam because that would ‘only encourage Hanoi’s expansionism, not restrain it’. The Americans preferred to force a confrontation, which, they hoped, would enable them to ‘crack’ the will of the Hanoi leadership, even if it took five to ten years. Apart from a desire for vengeance, the Americans were also anxious to please the Chinese. Said one American source at the time of the U.N. conference: ‘If anybody thinks Democratic Kampuchea is an alternative (to the PRK), he’s crazy.... The only reason we’re supporting the DK’s credentials is that the Chinese want us to. This American stance left little scope for flexibility on ASEAN’s part.’”¹²

ASEAN opinion on the Kampuchean question was initially divided, with Singapore and Thailand adopting an extremely hawkish anti-Vietnamese position, Malaysia and the Philippines ambiguous or non-committal, and Indonesia rather sympathetic to Hanoi. These divisions in many ways remained latent. Isolation from the mainland of the Indochina subcontinent, the domestic political situation and economic difficulties kept Manila away from involving itself too much in the Cambodian conflict.¹³ Indonesia saw itself affected by the conflict but not as acutely as Thailand did. Jakarta was reluctant to accept the view that Vietnam was the main de-stabilizing element in the region. China, the Indonesian government considered (like the Vietnamese) was the main long term problem. The Thais, being inhabitant of a ‘front line state’, were in the most uncomfortable situation as the Vietnamese forces were already stationed along their borders from Chiang Saen in the north to Klong Yain in the southeast.¹⁴ The influx of refugees from Kampuchea also caused serious socio-economic problems. Singapore seems to have taken the most hard-line approach. The Singaporean view could be seen in Foreign Minister S.Rajaratnam’s remarks in January 1979 “the implications of what has happened in Cambodia is that we have moved into an era where imperialism is no longer associated with Western imperialism but with Communist imperialism”.¹⁵ As the situation developed, the ASEAN “hawks” strengthened their position. As Grant Evans and Kelvin Rowley observe:

When the foreign minister’s of the ASEAN countries conferred over the refugee crisis at Bali in June 1979, the meeting was dominated by the anti-Vietnamese hardliners. The

most outspoken was once again Singapore's Rajaratnam, who said that Vietnam was an expansionist power aiming at domination of all Southeast Asia, which had 'declared war' on ASEAN and was 'carrying out a policy of genocide'. Today it is the Chinese-Vietnamese. The Cambodians have already been added to the list of those who are going to die... Why not Thailand tomorrow, and Malaysia, Singapore and others who stand in the way of Vietnam's dreams?" In Rajaratnam's view, Vietnam was already menacing Thailand with 180,000 troops and was deliberately driving refugees out of Indochina in an attempt to de-stabilize non-Communist Southeast Asia. He said that ASEAN had reached the limits of its patience, urged a tough line on refugees, and advocated that ASEAN provide arms and material support to Cambodia's patriotic struggle against Vietnamese domination. He warned his fellow ASEAN members against any policy of accommodation with Hanoi, arguing that Vietnam could not be treated as "an essentially peace-loving neighbor."¹⁶

Subsequently, the ASEAN countries, with varying degrees of commitment, proceeded to adopt an anti-Vietnamese line, refusing to recognize the Vietnamese sponsored Heng Samrin government and demanding immediate withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia. Together with the United States and China, they urged Japan to cut all aid to Vietnam.

In the face of overwhelming and coordinated pressure from the United States, China and the ASEAN powers, Japanese interest in developing a relationship with Hanoi rapidly evaporated. Tokyo froze 14 billion Yen in 1978 in aid already promised to Hanoi, indicating that it would only resume the aid program after a satisfactory political situation has been reached in Cambodia.¹⁷ Nevertheless, Japan declared that it would be ready to offer assistance for the reconstruction of Indochina once peace had been restored. During his ASEAN tour in January 1981, Premier Suzuki stated in a press conference that Japan "would not unfreeze aid until a peaceful solution is achieved in Cambodia."¹⁸ Following that, Foreign Minister Ito stated that "when Japan takes any action in aid towards Vietnam, there will be a prior consultations with ASEAN."¹⁹

Both these statements clearly shows Japan's pro ASEAN stance. At the same time, various informal channels of communication to Vietnam were kept open. In the following years, Japan continued to maintain this policy, ambiguous at times, but generally supportive of the U.S.-China-ASEAN position. Japanese economic assistance to Thailand, a "front line" state, increased dramatically. Between 1976-1983, Japan's ODA to Thailand increased by 98 percent. This is shown in Table 1.

Japan also played an active role in the United Nations Conference on Cambodia in New York in 1981.²⁰ Against the background of the great changes that

Table 1: Japan's ODA to Thailand, (Hundred Million Yen)

Year	Oda to Thailand
1975	178.53
1976	10.31
1977	593.3
1978	140.3
1979	463.68
1980	607
1981	573.25
1982	838.46
1983	817.2
1984	853.2
1985	853.49
1986	127.18
1987	941.05
1988	858.01
1989	906.4
1990	66.66
1991	906.4
1992	1305.89
1993	1076.07

Source: "Waga Kuni no Seifu Kaihatsu Enjo" Taken from David.M.Potter, **Japan's Foreign Aid to Thailand and the Philippines**, St.Martin's Press, New York, 1996, p.25

accompanied the break up of the Cold War structures in the late 1980's and early 1990's, the Japanese role increased in both depth and complexity.

In June 1990, Japan sponsored the Tokyo Conference, a meeting of the four Cambodian factions. This can be seen as a reentry of Japan as an active player in regional politics following its long decades low profile after World War II.

The Japanese, too, actively organized the first meeting of the International Committee on the Reconstruction of Cambodia (ICORC).²¹ Japan was the Co-Chairman of the meeting. During the meeting \$U.S. 119 million was collected for the reconstruction of Cambodia and Japan itself donated twenty million.

Japan's bilateral aid to Cambodia also increased. Japan resumed aid to Cambodia in 1992. From U.S. \$1.97million in 1989 to U.S.\$0.15 million in 1990, the aid shot up to U.S.\$61.34million, U.S.\$64.52million, U.S.\$152.04million in 1993, 1994 and 1995 respectively.²² Since 1994, Japan has been the largest donor of aid to Cambodia.

Japan's cultural assistance to Cambodia, too, was significant. In 1993, Japan co-hosted with France the Intergovernmental Conference on the Safeguarding and Development of the Historic Site of Angkor in Tokyo in October 1993. One hundred and fifty officials from thirty-one countries attended and Japan pledged ten million to Angkor Wat restoration. On top of that, Japan had already donated U.S.\$1.37million to UNESCO's mission.

The 1991 Peace Agreement on Cambodia provided for the establishment of a United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). As the situation developed, the Cambodian issue became embroiled with the question of the overseas dispatch of the Self-Defense Force (SDF) and Japan's possible role in the United Nation (U.N.) peacekeeping efforts. In 1992, after three heated parliamentary sessions, the Japanese Diet adopted an International Peace Cooperation Law, which allowed Japan to participate in United Nations sponsored peacekeeping operations albeit with stringent formal restrictions on engagement in combat and use of weapons.²³ The outcome was Japan's dispatch of 1,300 of SDF personnel to participate in a 22,000 man United Nations peacekeeping force in Cambodia. This effort cost Japan a total of \$1.6billion.²⁴ The Japanese government was enthusiastic about participating in the peacekeeping operation. Hun Sen, during his visit to Tokyo welcomed Japan's participation in the international effort.²⁵ The inauguration Yasushi Akashi as the head of the peacekeeping mission was seen as recognition of Japan's regional role. The United Nations also saw this as a way to keep the Japanese involved in their programs.

As already noted, this was postwar Japan's first major regional politico-military involvement, and was intended to stress that Tokyo was, not only interested in economic matters but also in the issues of war and peace. The Japanese government took the view that the Cambodian crisis was one of the most serious and potentially destabilizing factors in Asia, along with Korean Peninsular and the Northern Territories.²⁶ If Japan did not participate in resolving the Indochina conflict, it was argued, the international community would be alienated and the view would grow

that the country was evading its natural responsibilities.

ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM (ARF)

During the 1991 ASEAN post ministerial conference, the then Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Nakayama, proposed the idea of including security talks in their annual meeting. His suggestion can be seen as another milestone in Japan's effort to enhance its relationship with members of the ASEAN region. The Japanese role in the formation of the ARF itself is obscure and the subject of much diplomatic and scholarly gossip. According to Lam Peng Er:

*"According to some ASEAN-ISIS insiders, a top Japanese Foreign Ministry official, Satoh Yukio, attended an ASEAN-ISIS meeting where nascent ideas about the formation of the ARF were articulated. Apparently Satoh informed his ministry about the discussion and it was refined and repackaged as "Nakayama's Initiative". Second, proposals from Tokyo about the ARF should be more accurately noted as "Satoh's Initiatives", Nakayama merely articulated ideas that have been already formulated by Satoh and his Ministry of Foreign Affairs."*²⁷

Whatever its background, Nakayama's idea, Japan caused a stir among ASEAN members, for two reasons. First, since the suggestion came from Japan questions about Japanese military ambitions were inevitable.²⁸ Second, ASEAN does not see any big powers like Japan, China or U.S. taking initiatives in Asian security. The long history of colonialism, and the bitter legacy of the Japanese occupation, make these sentiments understandable.

The ARF was conceived as a broadly based multilateral body formed to discuss post Cold War security issues in the Asia Pacific region. In contrast to Cold War collective defence groupings formed against a common enemy, the ARF is not directed against any one. The first meeting was held in Bangkok in July 1994 in accordance with the Singapore Declaration at the Fourth ASEAN Summit in 1993. The members in 1994 include Australia, Brunei, Canada, China, the European Union, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, New Zealand, PNG, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russia, Singapore, Thailand, USA and Vietnam. The Cambodians joined in 1995 while India and Burma joined in 1996.

The security dialogue through the ARF can be viewed from one angle, as a Japanese attempt to help solve some of its own, and the region's security dilemmas, in a complex inter-regnum, where the U.S. has remained as the sole, but by no means omnipotent superpower; where the future role of its erstwhile rival, Russia, much reduced in stature, is as yet unclear; where China is emerging as a very significant Asian, and potentially global power, where Japan itself, because of domestic

political complications and the deep suspicious harboured by its neighbors, still feels uncertain of its position; and where none of the ASEAN powers is willing or able to assume a regional hegemony.

In many ways the ARF is advantageous for both Japan and ASEAN. From the Japanese perspective, it helps safeguard her particular interests in the region in regard to transportation, access to natural resources, trade, and investment. Any instability in the region would undoubtedly damage the Japanese economy. A multilateral security dialogue endorses the Japanese public's support for a non-military regional role. According to Masashi Nishihara, the ARF is also an arena where Japan can explain and demonstrate its peaceful, non-militaristic approach to security related issues. He argues that "China often criticizes Japan's reemergence of militarism, but ARF can be used by Japan to show that claim by China is nonsense."²⁹

On the other hand, ASEAN needs regional stability for its own peace and prosperity. The ARF can help provide such regional stability by improving the relations between the ASEAN states and the great powers and promoting friendly relations among the great powers themselves.

At the same time for both ASEAN and Japan, the ARF provides a good way of keeping the U.S. engaged in regional security. Many ASEAN states, increasingly fearful of a potential threat from China are convinced that, a continued American military presence is needed as a stabilizing force in the region.³⁰ Tatsumi Okabe, Professor of International Relations from Tokyo Metropolitan University in his interview in the "Japan Times", argued that "If the U.S.-Japan security alliance collapses, it will be viewed in Asia as Japan's first step toward becoming a military power. ASEAN wants Japan to complement the U.S. role in Asian security but not to behave independently".³¹

The 1969 Guam Doctrine and the end of Cold War suggested to many that the U.S. may not stay in the region forever, regardless, what they might say. If the Americans pull out in an emergency or reduce their commitment to the region's security ASEAN fears of a potential power vacuum will have been realized.³² ASEAN may well have moved away from its 1971 idea of a Zone of Peace Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) to exclude "outsiders" from their waterways. According to Amitav Acharya ASEAN now views ZOPFAN as impractical because of the emergence of international economic interdependence. Southeast Asia's need for access to the global economy requires that the region be closely integrated with the rest of the world. It can no longer maintain an insular security policy,³³ but has come to believe in the importance of balance between major powers to maintain stability in the region.

The ARF also engages China in the multilateral dialogue. Ensuring China's participation is important to Japan and ASEAN. This policy is not simply a multilateral dialogue but also helps promote a number of bilateral developments. This is part of another strategy to gain China's acceptance of the U.S.-Japan security system. Although China supported the alliance structure in the Cold War era the recent redefinition of the alliance and the new guidelines have aroused much suspicion in

Peking. However the effectiveness of the ARF in this regard is still questionable, as China does not want to discuss major regional flashpoints such as the Spratleys issue and the Taiwan Straits issue. It prefers to conduct bilateral negotiations on the first issue and insists that the latter is an internal Chinese affair.³⁴

CONCLUSION

In the view of all Japanese Governments, the paramount Japanese interest is the bilateral relationship with the United States. Every move Japan makes is based as a careful consideration of U.S. opinion. Japan feels it has little freedom of maneuver. Because of this it does not want U.S. to leave the region completely. Japan also takes into consideration ASEAN's stance. At the same time Japan is conscious of the bitter historical memories of World War II and is aware that any issues concerning Japanese military expansion will cause alarm in Southeast Asia. This factor serves to limit the extent to which Japanese Government feel responsive to U.S. and other pressures to play a more active security role in the region. Although Japan sometimes pretends that it wants to play a more active political and security role in the region, and although individual politicians and groups might indeed wish for such a role, deep down economic considerations and the state of domestic opinion and regional realities combine to make such a role unlikely outside modest peacekeeping efforts such as those we have seen in Cambodia.

NOTAHUJUNG

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