

## FOCUS

## Japan's Security Perceptions

by Yukio Sato

**S**INCE the end of Cold War, the way Japan sees international security has been changing slowly but significantly. The change is taking place primarily in two totally separate contexts: the one in response to the changing security circumstances surrounding Japan, and the other in recognition of a growing need to protect people in many parts of the world from threats to their life and dignity.

Here, I would like to discuss the latter case first, for it relates directly to what I am engaged in as Japanese Ambassador to the United Nations. Indeed, during the last twelve months, I have been preoccupied, as have many of my colleagues at the United Nations, with Kosovo, East Timor as well as Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), although Japan is not a member of the Security Council.

With regard to Iraq, practically no action has been taken place outside the Security Council during this period, for the Permanent Members of the Council have been engaged in quiet negotiations to create a new mechanism for monitoring, verification and inspection, which is now called UNMOVIC.

On Kosovo, the Japanese Government has so far made available \$237 million, which includes \$177 million for humanitarian aid and assistance for reconstruction in Kosovo and \$60 million over two years to Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which were experiencing pressures due to the influx of refugees from Kosovo. In addition, several Japanese are now working at the United Nations' office for civil administration, known as UNMIK, and at one time 40 to 50 Japanese NGO staff members were working in the field. And, with the aim of making further contributions, Japan hosted the High Level Conference on Southeastern Europe in May.

On East Timor, the Japanese Government contributed \$154 million to UN-related activities, of which \$100 million was paid to the UN Trust Fund to support the Multi-National Force deployed in East Timor, which was sent there to stop the violence before the UN peacekeeping force was deployed.

Japan's contribution to the Fund was made with the aim of making it possible for Asian and other developing countries to send their contingents to the troubled territory.

Australia's leading role in sending more than half of the troops required was highly commendable. But, to ensure an internationally more balanced composition of the force was a primary political requirement.

And, given that many Asian and other developing countries were prepared to send their troops if supported financially, the Trust Fund was critically important.

Japan's contribution of \$100 million was indeed the mainstay of the Trust Fund, for only two other countries, Portugal and Switzerland, contributed to the Fund, their contributions totalling approximately \$5.3 million.

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The Japanese Government also hosted the first international donors' conference for East Timor last December and made another commitment to contribute \$100 million over the next three years for the purposes of reconstruction and development of East Timor. Needless to say, a number of Japanese are now working in East Timor as officials of the UN transitional administration and also as volunteers.

In Africa, Japan has been supporting the OAU's activities in Sierra Leone. And on the DRC (Democratic Republic of the Congo), the Japanese Government has made available \$300,000 in order to support the activities of the so-called "dialogue facilitator", the former President of Botswana, Sir Kofi Annan, whose role was designed to promote the peace process launched in Lusaka (Zambia) last July and given political momentum in New York last January under the strong leadership of the United States.

The amount of the Japanese financial contribution to this part of the peace process in the DRC is small as compared with those for Kosovo and East Timor. But, Japan is the only country that has so far extended actual financial support to the critically important effort.

Now that the United Nations peacekeeping forces are deployed in Kosovo, East Timor and Sierra Leone, Japan pays 20 per cent of their cost. As a matter of fact, the United States and Japan are together to pay over 50 per cent of the cost of all UN peacekeeping operations and 45 per cent of the regular budget. All the figures I mentioned earlier are additional voluntary financial contributions Japan has made in addition to its assessed contributions.

By the way, there are voices of resentment in Japan, particularly among the members of parliament, over the fact that while the financial burdens Japan has to bear for the United Nations are increasing, there has been very little progress on Security Council reform.

We all know that there is no linkage between the two issues, and the Japanese Government does not claim permanent membership on the Security Council because of the size of its financial contributions to its "understanding".

While we understood the urgent need for "humanitarian intervention", we were of the view that such use of force should be authorised by the Security Council.

Yet, the Japanese Government responded to calls for help not only in the area of refugee relief but also in the areas of post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction and, most importantly, in the creation of administrative capacity in Kosovo. We did so because we could not ignore the threats to human security that were witnessed throughout Kosovo.

Japan's efforts with regard to East Timor have been motivated by similar concerns, but they also reflect a sense of responsibility Japan has with regard to the solution of problems in the Asia-Pacific region.

Japan, for example, was a European security issue; and with regard to NATO's bombing, the Japanese Government did not go beyond expressing its "understanding".

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Here, I have to admit that Japanese participation in peacekeeping activities has so far been very limited in scope. Presently, we have only a small transport unit of the Japanese Ground Self-Defence Forces (SDF) stationed at the Golan Heights. Although the Japanese Self-Defence Forces participated earlier in the UN peace-

keeping activities in Cambodia on a much larger scale and also in Mozambique, their engagement was limited by Japanese law to such activities that would not entail engagement in combat operations.

To revise the law in order to expand the scope of peacekeeping activities in which the Self-Defence Forces may be engaged is now being politically debated in Japan. I will, therefore, refrain from speculating how far and how fast the law will be revised. I will rather point out that the gist of political debates in Japan is in support of expanding the Self-Defence Forces' engagement in UN peacekeeping activities.

Having said that, I would like to come back to the issue of Japan's financial contributions to Kosovo, East Timor and Africa, for I believe that the thinking behind these contributions suggests a new trend in Japanese security perceptions: one influenced more than ever by concerns about the security of human beings, their survival and the protection of their dignity and, therefore, having a global reach.

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