



Programa de Estudios de
ASIA PACÍFICO

International Conference
Japan's foreign policy paths:
past, present and future

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**Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México ITAM
Academic Department of International Studies
Asia Pacific Studies Program PEAP**

Under the Auspice of the Embassy of Japan to Mexico

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
Japan's Foreign Policy Paths: Past, Present and
Future**

**Campus Rio Hondo, 17 November 2015
Mexico City, Mexico**

PEAP Working Paper No. 10

Presentation

The Academic Department of International Studies is the principal center at the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México ITAM where students and faculty engage in producing knowledge on International Relations for the benefit of the Mexican society, contributing and proposing new ideas to the public sector involving in the interaction of Mexico with the world, and promoting closer contacts with the private sector over such matters.

Among its several activities, the Department organizes symposia, conferences, roundtables and keynote lectures from distinguished scholars whereby our academic community - by creating synergies with external specialists, policy makers and the civil society overall - develop deep, creative dialogues over pressing topics in international relations shaping and affecting Mexico. Here, the Asia Pacific Studies Program (PEAP) is devoted to deepen the understanding of this dynamic region and to understanding how Mexico may increase its presence there. With these goals in mind, the PEAP Working Paper Series has been devised as a vehicle to present relevant contributions to the field.

The issue 10 of our Working Paper Series 2015 commemorates the 70 anniversary of the end of the Second World War, and compiles three

speeches presented during the International Conference “Japan’s Foreign Policy paths: Past, Present and Future”, a project organized with the generous auspice of the Embassy of Japan in Mexico City. The conference was held in the “Sala de Maestros”, Campus Rio Hondo, on 17 November 2015 and comprises three keynote speeches, followed by an engaging session of Q&A from the public. Dr. Brett McCormick, professor of New Haven University, Connecticut, delivered a paper titled “The Asia-Pacific Security Architecture, from the last 70 years to the next 70 – Will Technology Trump Geography?” Next, Dr. Yuichi Hosoya, professor at Keio University, presented a paper titled “Challenges to the Peace and Stability and the Role of Japan - Japan’s Security Policy under the Abe Administration”. Finally, Dr. Ulises Granados, PEAP Coordinator and professor at our Institution, presented the paper untitled “Japan-China Political Dialogue and its Implications in the Western Hemisphere: the Case of Mexico”.

These three presentations included in this volume, explore into the past and present areas of interest and directions of Japan's foreign and security policy, as well as future trends and challenges posed by both globalization and Japan’s interactions with major regional and global powers. ITAM hopes this analysis will contribute to a better understanding among our academic community of this Asian country that, even though distant by geography, is nonetheless very close to Mexico

by reason of history and coincidence of several interests in the international arena.

Asia Pacific Studies Program PEAP

Welcome remarks

Dr. Stephan Sberro

Head, Department of International Studies

Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México ITAM

Good afternoon, my name is Stephan Sberro, Head of the Department of International Studies. The Honorable Akira Yamada, Ambassador of Japan to Mexico, welcome to ITAM once again, you have been a frequent guest in many of our events, which highlights your personal interest and the interest of Japan on our activities here at the Department focused on East Asia and Japan in particular. To our invited guests, Dr. Yuichi Hosoya, professor at Keio University in Tokyo; and Dr. Brett McCormick, professor at the University of New Haven in Connecticut, we wish you the best during your visit to Mexico and to our Institution. Ladies and gentleman, welcome to our campus.

ITAM has been promoting for almost 10 years with our students, faculty and the Office of Academic Exchange closer contacts with Asia, as we recognize the importance of the Asia Pacific region as one of the most dynamic in the world, not only for being the main engine of economic growth, but as an area that has been defining new trends in international

politics and possess a huge potential for political, cultural, and social development. Our institution has among its aims to focus our attention to this region, and Japan has been central in our internationalization programs. In our academic department we receive students through academic exchanges with several universities including Nanzan University, Chuo University and Yokohama National University, while we are about to conclude another exchange agreement with Sophia University. We also have the Asia Pacific Studies Program –PEAP- and receive every year the generous sponsorship of the Japan Foundation in Mexico for our several programs, including the Shigeru Yoshida Chair of Japanese Studies, which in 2009 started with Dr. Shinichi Kitaoka as our first Chair. Needless to say, we receive the Auspice and Support of the Japanese Embassy to Mexico, for which we are deeply grateful.

We have organized this International Conference “Japan’s Foreign Policy Paths: Past, Present and Future” to deepen Mexico’s understanding of Japan and its new political paths taken in the twenty first century. Knowing that relevant dynamics are currently at play among Japan, China, the United States and South Korea in crucial international issues - such as global governance, the new roles of the United Nations, regional economic agreements, or the Korean Peninsula - ITAM underscores its commitment to its students, the next generation of leaders in Mexico, by providing them with analytical tools to understand

and propose fresh ideas in foreign policy to our country. I am sure that this conference, like other events we have organized on Asia, will contribute to a deeper understanding of the overall region in general and the bilateral relationship between Mexico and relevant actors, such as Japan, that are shaping the present and future of international politics.

We invite all of you to listen and interact with our speakers so as to make this event a starting point of debate over the role of Japan in the international community, its challenges and opportunities for the future, and the paths that the bilateral relationship should take us to strengthen the Global Strategic Partnership for the Twenty First Century.

Welcome again to the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México! Thank you.

The Asia-Pacific Security Architecture, from the last 70 years to the next 70 – Will Technology Trump Geography?

Dr. Brett McCormick
New Haven University

Introduction

Ever since conflict transcended hand to hand, the technological means of crossing the space between combatants has shaped conceptions of security and strategy. The interplay between technology and geography are fundamental to the evolving geostrategic logics of American and Japanese national security strategies.

Throughout my presentation we'll see geography considered in multiple ways. Pay particular attention to how shifts in geographical concepts give rise to shifts in strategic concepts. What does it mean, for example, when a nation comes to believe that distinctions between “core” and “periphery” have become strategically obsolete?

We'll also see technological innovation considered in multiple ways. Pay particular attention to how these shifts also affect strategic thinking. For example, is it possible to falsely conflate the access and mobility of the online consumer and global tourist with fundamentally different

issues of strategic access and power projection?

Over the course of my historical review we'll witness three profound transitions in security thinking.

1. The geographic dimensions of national security affairs will expand from local, to regional, to global, and finally to a deterritorialized concept without limits.
2. The strategy will extend from defense, to deterrence, to preemption, and finally to offense.
3. The mission will evolve from defending a territory, to defending an ideologically determined community, and finally to pro-actively promoting supposed universal values.

In a follow-on discussion I'll be happy to get into the details of how Washington is investing billions of dollars into new weapons systems specifically designed to overcome geographic challenges. But for now I'll just mention one – the “Conventional Prompt Global Strike” mission. When that's discussed in the US we sometimes hear arguments that boil down to this:

“We face an invisible enemy who could be lurking anywhere, and thus is lurking everywhere. Who could strike against us anytime, thus we're vulnerable to them all the time. Therefore, our only defense is an

offense that can strike anywhere, anytime, instantly, without relying on forward-based forces.”

When one gets to the point that they’re reconsidering entire regional security architectures based on such extreme demands, it’s possible, just possible, that they may have gone astray.

History

Decisions to revise national security strategies occur in a context, and are deeply influenced by historically shaped perceptions. So, for the US at least, I’ll actually have to go back more than just 70 years.

Just as a side note, some historians see parallels between America’s early phases of national security strategies, and those of China in recent times.

Stage One – Security Through Local Defense

In 1796, George Washington, proposed that as a militarily limited country, America’s security was dependent on continuing rivalries between the great powers of Europe. A geographical advantage (“our detached and distant situation”), combined with a defensive posture, would enable the US window of opportunity to develop without interruption. Biding our time, as Deng Xiaoping might have said. Territorial expansion was

central to the overall American mission; but the security concept was one of defense, within local limits. However, as a result of successful expansion, the imperative for the Europeans to leave the region became increasingly appealing.

Stage Two – Security Through Regional Hegemony

By 1823 President Monroe's new doctrine was not so much about driving the Europeans out of the Western Hemisphere as it was defending against their expansion on what was now our side of the Atlantic. He identified "any attempt to extend their political system to any portion of the western hemisphere" as "dangerous to our peace and safety." This was quickly paired with the more aggressive concept of "Manifest Destiny." Mexico's destiny was to lose nearly half of its northern territory to this US expansion. If it will help you to imagine that geographic area in terms of square miles, it's comparable to the area as the South China Sea. Here was a case of a national security agenda being little more than conceptual cover for imperial ambitions.

In any case, this was the US national security thinking at the time we first engaged Japan. In 1851 President Fillmore wrote a letter to the Emperor of Japan, delivered around the world by Commodore Matthew Perry aboard a squadron of warships. It identified the US as a Pacific nation, and made explicit mention that our steam-powered warships

could cross from California to Japan in only 18 days. I mark this as the first great shock to Asia-Pacific security thinking, driven by the intersection of technology and geography. With the advent of the steamship, the great barrier of the Pacific Ocean protecting Japan had been transformed into a highway for foreign aggressors.

Stage Three – Security Through Active Defense, Protecting Overseas Interests, and the “Open Door”

Expanding manifest destiny into the Pacific Ocean from the West Coast, and acquiring Pacific territories after the Spanish-American War, led to the “Open Door” policy. The US could no longer rely on a passive, hemispheric, defensive posture to protect its expanding interests abroad. The Pacific was no longer a moat behind which America might hide, but now a great highway for America to promote and protect its overseas possessions and ever-expanding interests.

Technology can shrink physical space in some ways, but it does not inherently shrink “strategic space.”

During the Russo-Japanese War for example, in 1904-05, the Japanese learned that despite the wonder of the Trans-Siberian railroad, transporting troops all the way across Eurasia on a wartime time table was not an easy matter for the Russians, especially in winter. And despite Russia’s steam-powered fleet being able to transit from the Baltic

Sea all the way to the Tsushima strait, did not guarantee victory in Japan's local waters.

Stage Four – Offshore Balancer (1917-1945)

By the time of WWI, US national security strategy was becoming truly global in scope. Imperial Germany's rise, and later Japan's, was disrupting the balances of power across Eurasia, and the Americans became an off-shore balancer from 1917 through 1945.

The strategic defenses of the US needed to extend across the oceans, to any lands from which an attack could be launched. America's security domain was expanded all the way to the coastlines of Europe, and Asia.

In addition to expanding the geographical scope of the US national security concept, we also added a broader ideological dimension – not simply to maintain a geographic balance of power, but to ensure that the balance leaned against authoritarian powers considered the breeding ground of future aggressors.

I mark December 7, 1941 as the second great shock to Asia-Pacific security thinking, again driven by the intersection of technology and geography. This time, with Japanese aircraft carriers, the Pacific Ocean was once again shrunk from a broad moat to a strategic

vulnerability. More than just that – the concept of the “battlespace” became entirely global, and thus transcended any geographically determined limits. To quote President Roosevelt, just 2 days after Pearl Harbor: “all of the continents of the world, and all the oceans, are now considered...as one gigantic battlefield...our ocean-girt hemisphere is not immune from severe attack...we cannot measure our safety in terms of miles on any map anymore.”

Stage Five – Containment in an Ever “Globalizing” World

The 1945 occupation of Japan (as well as South Korea and return to the Philippines) allowed for a dramatically increased entrenchment of America’s forward presence along the East Asian rimland. And as the Soviet Union threatened domination of the Eurasian heartland the model of advanced bases and forward deployed forces became the centerpiece of the post-war Asia-Pacific security architecture.

The growth of America’s power enlarged Americans’ sense of their interests, and therefore their fears. It enabled a new vision of pursuing security by reordering the international system.

Once the concept of a “global battlespace” was articulated in the guidelines for national security strategy, the idea took on a power of its own and became seen as a given, rather than a choice.

National security displaced the more limited concept of defense, resulting in the formation of the Unified Command Plan of 1946. Seen as a single domain, the globe was divided into geographically based military commands. Once continental and hemispheric, America's conception of its outer defenses became permanently extra-regional. In time, the distinction between core heartland and peripheral advanced forces began to fade.

The 1947 Truman Doctrine began transforming geographically determined interests into ideologically determined ones – wherever the defense against communist aggression was needed.

Once again America's growing strength enabled its officials to further enlarge the scope of US interests, and in turn the scope of US vulnerabilities.

US National Security Council Report #68 (NSC-68), in April 1950 reimagined communism as a unified actor on this single global stage, and in fact laid the foundation for post-Cold War global liberalism when it wrote – “In a shrinking world...the absence of order among nations is becoming less and less tolerable. This fact imposes on us...the responsibility of world leadership.”

The third great shock to Asia-Pacific security thinking was the November 1950 Chinese intervention in the Korean War, proving that manpower alone could hold a line on a map despite America's technological advantage in airpower, and even atomic weapons. A regional security architecture designed for sustained containment thus froze into place for decades.

This is when Japan's place in the arrangement began to change. The 1951 security agreement, in addition to more or less permanently making all of Japan a potential forward base for US forces, like an unsinkable aircraft carrier, also quietly added in "that Japan will itself increasingly assume responsibilities for its own defense," though "always avoiding any armament which could...serve other than to promote peace and security..." In just the last few months though, I've started to see how easy it is to redefine intrinsically offensive capabilities as being necessary to "promote peace and security"!

As communism had to be resisted everywhere the geographical boundaries of the Cold War further dissolved. Expanded deployment in Japan, new commitments to the defense of South Korea and Taiwan, and bilateral security arrangements with the Philippines, Thailand,

Australia and New Zealand marked the “hub and spokes” alliance system which has since characterized the Asia-Pacific security architecture.

America’s purpose in committing itself to indefinite forward-deployment was initially to preclude the forceful expansion of communism. However, a powerful association between the stabilizing effect of the US military presence, and East Asia’s economic success quickly expanded the official US justifications for their forward presence in Asia to sustain growth and development.

When the US married its continually growing power with an expansive, liberal conception of its security interests, there emerged an ideology that was anti-geographic.

With enemies unconstrained by geography, the obsolete concept of “defense” further gave way to a norm of “national security” dependent on the projection of power without limits.

By deterritorializing the concept of a national security domain, and pursuing absolute security, the US began to dismiss distance as a shaping force in world politics. US strategy followed suit, and as such language and logic was normalized, allies such as Japan became

increasingly drawn into the paradigm.

President Reagan's 1987 National Security Strategy paved the way for replacing the Soviets with the Chinese. It began with a reminiscing of the "inescapable responsibility for world affairs," reminded Americans they were "no longer protected by nearly perfect fortresses of oceans, and reasserted the need for forward deployment along "the East Asia rimland" as essential to preventing Eurasia's domination by any hostile power. Predicting specifically that "in the security area, Japan's...redefinition of its self-defense goals is of particular importance...Japanese forces are developing capabilities that can make a significant contribution..."

The 1997 Revised US-Japan defense cooperation guidelines expanded the mandate beyond territorial defense into "situations in areas surrounding Japan." The language and logic of America's steady deterritorialization of national security concepts was becoming manifest.

And rather than simply defense, the new mission didn't even require any imminent threat. Rather than a posture of defense, forward deployment committed us to an indefinite mission to "continue playing a role in broadening regional confidence, promoting democratic values and

enhancing common security...”

Stage Six -- Preemption

The terrorist attacks against the US on September 11, 2001 mark the fourth great shock to Asia-Pacific security thinking, again emerging from a terrifying intersection of technology and geography. From the heart of the old “Great Game” itself, in Afghanistan, an underappreciated threat used the technology of the tourists to penetrate America’s mental moat, and was all too easily framed in the old code of Pearl Harbor. A resulting national security strategy of “Preemption,” justified in the dubious language of globalization, imagined a new type of enemy, fully unconstrained by geography. This paved the way for the new Asia-Pacific guidelines emerging today.

Some key excerpts from President Bush’s 2002 National Security Strategy are strikingly consistent with the language of 2015. In 2002, it described the “new world” – “today’s globalized world” – where shadowy enemies could reach “our shores” by “turning the power of modern technologies against us.” The “distinction between domestic and foreign” was diminishing. “Based on a distinctly American internationalism that reflects the union of our values and our national interests,” “as a matter of common sense and self-defense,” the only path to peace is “the path of action...our best defense is a good offense.”

We've come from the local, to the regional, to the global, to now finally the non-territorial; and we've come from a limited defensive posture to a limitless offensive mission.

So what is the 21st Century's "globalist" perspective on the world, and what in turn must be done in the interest of national security? I will summarize, first the American, and then the Japanese answers, using the very words of their national security architects. The following words are not mine – they are excerpts more or less directly from the actual, relevant government documents. These are the words of Presidents, Secretaries of Defense, Admirals and Generals.

Globalist Perspective, Characteristics of Today, What must be done

I. How Many in the US Characterize the Globalized World Hyper-connected

In today's world, we are experiencing an unprecedented condition of vulnerability, and increased connectedness is making us increasingly open to violent threats. In a hyper-connected world, regional instability threatens global stability.

At the mercy of technology

In today's world, a revolution in technology has shrunken the world's vast distances. Terrorists can turn the power of modern technologies against us to penetrate open societies.

Small and Flat

In today's world, distance is not a protective force; geography offers little protection. We're no longer protected by nearly perfect fortresses of oceans. If threats of violence to our homeland can occur from anywhere, then the barrier conception of geographical space was finally shown to be thoroughly obsolete on September 11th."

Intrinsically dangerous

Today's world is more dangerous than it has ever been. It's the most uncertain, chaotic and confused international environment since WWII. Today's world is an intrinsically dangerous place, with persistent risk of attacks on America and our allies.

A new kind of enemy, unconstrained by geography

In today's world, the process of globalization breeds a new kind of enemy, unconstrained by geography.

Enemies in the past needed great armies and great industrial capabilities to endanger America. Now, shadowy networks of individuals can bring

great chaos and suffering to our shores for less than the costs to purchase a single tank.

II. What the US Security Community Believes Should be Done to be Secure in the New World

America must lead

For today's world, the distinction between domestic and foreign affairs is diminishing. In a globalized world, any successful strategy to ensure the safety of the American people must begin with an undeniable truth – America must lead. We have an almost inescapable responsibility for world affairs. Therefore we must be able to be wherever we are needed, when we are needed, without having to ask anyone's permission. This means access to the global commons is critical; we must have the ability to sail where we want, when we want.

Assured all-domain access

For today's world, global mobility for rapid power projection requires assured access to the global commons – domains outside any country's national jurisdiction. We must begin to treat the global commons as areas to be seized for conducting follow-on power-projection operations.

Offensive imperative

For today's world, a shift is now underway within the surface force. The

surface force is taking the offensive. It's an offensive imperative to control the seas. Our best defense is a good offense. To retain influence and to exercise global leadership, we must become more comprehensive in our offensive capability.

Path of action begins in peacetime

For today's world, as a matter of common sense and self-defense, America will act against threats before they are fully formed. In the new world we have entered, the only path to peace and security is the path of action...which begins in peacetime.

III. How Some in Japan Increasingly Characterize the Globalized World

Dark Side of Globalization

In today's world, the security environment we face is completely different from the one which existed fifty years ago. In a world where globalization continues, Japan is surrounded by a security environment becoming ever more severe. New challenges such as cyberspace, outer space, and terrorism have emerged. Simply put, the security environment is more acute, complex, and fluid than ever, and we have to address non-traditional, transnational or post-modern agenda such as international terrorism and cyber warfare – the “dark side of globalization.” In this new security environment, the global commons

are the new frontiers of the world, where the future of global peace will be determined.

Dangers of Technological Innovation

In today's world, the global community is not as it was 50 years ago; it is now connected by the internet. Rapid advancement of globalization and technological innovations has deepened interdependence among states and brought about a complex impact on the global security environment. The advancement of globalization and technological innovation generates a new kind of security threat.

Threats Coming from Anywhere and Everywhere

In today's world, the advancement of globalization has made it easier for terrorists to secure geographical access. These threats do not recognize any national borders and they spread wherever deterrence is inadequate. Irrespective of where they originate in the world, they could instantly have a direct influence on the security of Japan.

IV. What Japan is Coming to Believe Should be Done

Proactive strategy

For today's world, Japan should play an even more proactive role as a major global player in the international community, and take a leading role in cooperating to provide a foundation for peace, security, stability,

and economic prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

Expand the security domain globally

For today's world, we are working closely together to ensure a peaceful and prosperous future for the region and the world. The security and prosperity of our two countries is not defined solely by national borders. The Alliance will respond to situations that will have an important influence on Japan's peace and security. Such situations cannot be defined geographically; therefore defense cooperation will emphasize the global nature of the Japan-US alliance. The new Guidelines for US-Japan Defense Cooperation will transform the Alliance and enable Japan to expand its contributions to regional and global security. It is an Alliance that has become global in reach. We need to broaden our scope; we need to expand our geographical horizons of cooperation far beyond Japan's territory and to include all new strategic domains.

Conclusion

The US is one of the most secure states in history, and is arguably enjoying one of its most secure eras to date. But as the recent National Security Strategies depict matters, we're less secure than ever. When reviewed across history it seems that our growing power has tended to cause growing insecurity.

Established powers tend to depict the global strategic order as somehow the natural order of things, preordained and independent of politics. As such, fundamental understandings of the conditions for global order tend to be accepted axiomatically as givens rather than choices. The Chinese are very sensitive this historical fact, but ironically are buying into the same myths as they seek a return to an imagined “natural” China-centric regional order.

When it comes to security affairs, I find the “globalist” perspective to be more myth than reality. It’s a perspective born from an elitist experience of the world. Travelling by jet plane and shopping over the internet lets me imagine that the world is smaller, but in reality about 95% of the people in the world have never set foot on a plane. And remember those 18 days it took an American warship to cross the Pacific Ocean back in the 1850s...160 years later it still takes about 18 days. When it comes to security issues we’re seeing a false conflation of one form of access and mobility with another.

Technology does not necessarily shrink strategic space, the ability to project power across the earth affordably, and against resistance. While technology can compress, many of the same technological innovations can be used to enlarge strategic space. Relative advantages of either offense or defense vacillate over time, both unifying

and interrupting space. Geography is not simply a one-dimensional physical dimension onto which inescapable forces such as globalization impose themselves, but rather a contested and dynamic field that widens and shrinks through the interplay of geography, technology, and political choices.

My review of the historical evolution of security concepts and frameworks has exposed that the “globalist” perspective underlying the revisions of today’s security architecture are more deeply rooted than just an overestimation of technology’s ability to trump geography. They are rooted in a uniquely American, and uniquely hegemonic tradition of security thinking, fundamentally hostile to the notion of geographical limitations.

America’s national security mission regards itself as uniquely nonterritorial, as a liberal order of values and institutions that are universal and that, with enough support, can succeed anywhere, anytime.

America, supposedly, can only be secure in a world that it orders. Far from being an innocently objective account of geostrategic truths, in practice it’s all too often functioning as a conceptual cover for a fearful superpower to throw its weight around. Not only is it an approach that

can, by definition, only be practiced by a single player, but it in fact prescribes an order that can only be tolerated by a single hegemon.

Because of its absolutist predispositions, this perspective is at odds with the principle of geographic limitation. Fear of disruptive new technologies only strengthens this tendency. Nothing and nowhere is strategically marginal. Globalization appears to trump the divided and interrupted world of geography, thus demanding a state of absolute security. Its logic favors eradicating threats, or even potential threats, rather than constraining them. Its concept of security is deterritorialized, limitless, and ideologically extreme.

If we accept this logic as fundamentally valid, rather than an outgrowth of America's unique position as a superpower, it only follows that it's equally appropriate for Japan. And China. And South Korea. And North Korea. But if every state feels it can only be secure through an offense-based guarantee of assured all domain access, and if, as the American national security strategy declares – “the only path to peace and security is the path of action” – then we are not in fact building an Asia-Pacific security architecture for peace, but rather for war.

Challenges to the Peace and Stability and the Role of Japan Japan's Security Policy under the Abe Administration

**Dr. Yuichi Hosoya
Keio University**

Introduction

At the 70 years anniversary of the end of the Second World War, two political issues ignited heated debates in the summer of 2015. One is on the Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's historical statement which was issued on August 14. The other one is on the security legislation under the Abe's administration based on the concept of "Proactive Contribution to Peace". While Abe's historical statement was largely welcomed by both domestic and international public opinion, the debate on this security legislation reminds us of the deep ideological division between the liberal-left and the conservative-right.

To put it simple, the liberal-left has been arguing that Japanese political leaders should more steadfastly apologize for Japan's aggression and colonialism before 1945. On the other hand, the conservative-right argues that Japan should not be exceedingly apologetic, and the Japanese people should have pride in our own history.

Likewise, the conservative-right generally argues that the security legislation which Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has been promoting is both necessary and desirable to respond to the rise of Chinese military power. The liberal-left, on the other hand, considers that the security bills are both unconstitutional and undesirable which would inevitably damage Japanese peaceful path after the end of the war.

Although these two issues are usually dealt with separately, we need to be aware of that both of these them relate to the question of how we think of Japan's place in international society. Japanese people are now search for its new role in international politics. The question is two-fold. First, to what extent should Japan contribute to international peace and stability? Second, how can we learn lessons from Japan's path in the twentieth century?

Japan's national identity as peace-loving country has now become a national consensus which both the liberal-left and the conservative-right can uphold. Japanese security policy has to start from this point. In his historical statement, Abe said, "on the 70th anniversary of the end of the war, I bow my head deeply before the souls of all those who perished both at home and abroad."¹ Then he continued that "I express my

¹ Statement by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, August 14, 2015.

feeling of profound grief and my eternal, sincere condolences.” Based upon this “profound grief” and the “eternal, sincere condolences”, Japan decided to pave the peaceful path when the war ended in 1945, and has become a peace-loving country since then. As Japan has the article 9 of the Japanese Constitution which prohibits Japan to exercise military forces to solve international disputes, Japan needs to rely principally on non-military means to bring peace and stability.

Yoichi Funabashi, a leading Japanese journalist, wrote soon after the end of the Cold War that “emergence of a more internationalist and actively engaged Japanese pacifism could play a constructive role in making Japan a global civilian power”.² Japan has been, and remains still, “a global civilian power” unlike other major powers that have both nuclear missiles and striking capabilities. Japanese constitution only allows Japan to have only defensive weapons.

Likewise, Prime Minister Abe told in his historical statement as following;

“We will engrave in our hearts the past, when Japan ended up becoming a challenger to the international order. Upon this reflection, Japan will firmly uphold basic values such as freedom, democracy, and

http://japan.kantei.go.jp/97_abe/statement/201508/0814statement.html

² Yoichi Funabashi, “Japan and the New World Order,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.70, No.5, 1991, p.65.

human rights as unyielding values and, by working hand in hand with countries that share values, hoist the flag of 'Proactive Contribution to Peace,' and contribute to the peace and prosperity of the world more than ever before."³

Japan's pacifist ideology remains very strong. Prime Minister Abe's shares this ideology and has the same goal as he indicated in his historical statement. Even conservative right-wing politicians cannot deviate from this path. His historical statement surely upholds this national consensus. Therefore, according to The Nikkei Shimbun opinion poll, 42% of respondents supported Abe's statement, while 33% did not.⁴ After Prime Minister Abe issued this historical statement, the Cabinet supporting rate was increased by 8%.

The important point is that even the most conservative Japanese prime minister after the World War II, Shinzo Abe, shares the Murayama statement which was issued by most leftist Prime Minister, Tomiichi Murayama. In 1995, at the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, Murayama issued the most comprehensive historical statement by Japanese prime minister on August 15. The most famous paragraph of Murayama's statement is as following.

³ Statement by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, August 14, 2015.

⁴ *The Nikkei Shimbun*, August 30, 2015.

“During a certain period in the not too distant past, Japan, following a mistaken national policy, advanced along the road to war, only to ensnare the Japanese people in a fateful crisis, and, through its colonial rule and aggression, caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of many countries, particularly to those of Asian nations. In the hope that no such mistake be made in the future, I regard, in a spirit of humility, these irrefutable facts of history, and express here once again my feelings of deep remorse and state my heartfelt apology. Allow me also to express my feelings of profound mourning for all victims, both at home and abroad, of that history.”⁵

The key question during the drafting process of the Abe’s historical statement was whether Abe would uphold some of key words of the Murayama statement such as “colonial rule”, “aggression”, deep remorse” and “apology”.

The debate on the security legislation was link to the debate on Abe’s historical statement, as Japan’s public opinion had uncertainty on the direction of Japan’s path in the future. Abe answered to this question both in his historical statement and in the security bills. This article

⁵ Statement by Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama “on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the war’s end”, 15 August 1995.
<http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/press/pm/murayama/9508.html>

attempts to examine the link between the two political debates in the summer of 2015 in order to understand the future trajectory of Japan's foreign policy.

From War to Peace and Prosperity

The postwar Japanese security policy has been always linked with Japan's historical memories. 74 years ago, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, and the war broke out between Japan and the United States. Japan also invaded British territories in the Southeast Asia. During the four years of war, huge numbers of human lives were lost both in Japan and beyond.

Reminding of the loss of human lives in the war years, Prime Minister Abe said at the 70th anniversary of the end of the war that; "in countries that fought against Japan, countless lives were lost among young people with promising futures. In China, Southeast Asia, the Pacific islands and elsewhere that became the battle fields, numerous innocent citizens suffered and fell victim to battles as well as hardships such as severe deprivation of food".⁶

Based upon this historical reflection, Abe stated as following;

"With deep repentance for the war, Japan made the pledge.

⁶ Statement by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, August 14, 2015.

Upon it, we have created a free and democratic country, abide by the rule of law, and consistently upheld that pledge never to wage again. While taking silent pride in the path we have walked as a peace-loving nation for as long as seventy years, we remain determined never to deviate from this steadfast course”.

Abe was fully aware of the fact that “deep repentance for the war” was the basis of Japan’s postwar security policy. The basic foundation of postwar Japan’s security strategy is often called as the “Yoshida doctrine”. Shinichi Kitaoka, a leading historian of Japanese political history, wrote that “the main aim of states is to promote economic interests based upon trade, and also to deepen association with other developed economic power”.⁷

Thus, during the Cold War years, the “Yoshida doctrine” had become the foundational security strategy of pacifist Japan. By containing the right-wing nationalist sentiment, economic growth become the main goal of Japan’s postwar foreign policy.⁸

⁷ Shinichi Kitaoka, “Yoshida Shigeru ni okeru senzen to sengo”, Kindai Nihon Kenkyukai (ed.), *Sengo Gaiko no keisei* (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1994) p.127.

⁸ Yuichi Hosoya, “Japan’s National Identity in Postwar Diplomacy: The Three Basic Principles” in Gilbert Rozman (ed.), *East Asian National Identities: Common Roots and Chinese Exceptionalism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012) pp.171-172.

Japan's Security Strategy of the "Human Security"

Since the end of the Second World War, Japan has maintained its passive and restrained security policy for seven decades. Under the article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, Japan had presented a low profile security policy during the Cold War years. When the Cold War ended a quarter century ago, however, Japan was often criticized by international community as Japan was regarded as a "free rider" that did not sufficiently contribute to international peace and stability. Japanese government has been responding to these criticisms by launching a new diplomatic initiative to spread both peace and prosperity.

In 1998, Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi launched a new diplomatic initiative in the middle of the Asian financial crisis with the concept of "Human Security". Obuchi talked in his opening remarks on the importance of a new concept, "Human Security", at a conference, "An Intellectual Dialogue on Building Asia's Tomorrow", on December 2, 1998;

"To support Asian countries in this economic crisis, we have pledged and steadily implemented contributions on the largest scale in the world. With Human Security in mind, we have given, as one of the most important pillars of our support, assistance to the poor, the aged, the

disabled, women and children, and other socially vulnerable segments of population on whom economic difficulties have the heaviest impacts”.⁹

Then, in his speech in Hanoi, Vietnam, in December 1998, Obuchi announced that a Trust Fund for Human Security would be established in the United Nations with US\$ 4.2million contributions from Japan. Obuchi defined “Human Security” as “a concept that takes a comprehensive view of all threats to human survival, life and dignity and stresses the need to respond to such threats.”¹⁰ This “Human Security” initiative has become one of the central pillars of Japanese foreign policy since then.

By launching this new concept, Japan had developed its security policy, and broadened its contribution to international peace and security. However, it was still difficult then to use military force to attain Japan’s security goals other than its own national defense. Japan’s security policy had to be principally relied upon non-military measures, and the

⁹ Opening Remarks by Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi, “An Intellectual Dialogue on Building Asia’s Tomorrow”, December 2, 1998, Tokyo.

<http://www.jcie.or.jp/thinknet/tomorrow/1obuchi.html>

¹⁰ Policy speech by Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi at the lecture program hosted by the Institute for International Relations, Hanoi, Vietnam, December 16, 1998, “Toward the Creation of A Bright Future for Asia”.

<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/asean/pmv9812/policyspeech.html>

“Human Security” policy was within that boundary.

“Proactive Contribution to Peace”: What Does This Mean?

When he became prime minister in September 2006, Shinzo Abe attempted to transform Japan’s security policy by reforming the legal basis for security. For this purpose, Abe established a new advisory group, named as the “Advisory Panel for the Legal Basis for Security” in May 2007. Japan needed to broaden and deepen its security contribution to international peace and stability in a more significant way. Abe thought that it was then necessary to combine military and non-military means to more proactively contribute to international peace. However, when Abe resigned his prime ministerial post, the next prime minister did not show his interest in the security legislation.

In December 2012, when Abe returned to the Prime Ministerial Office, he decided to resume the discussion in the Advisory Panel for the Legal Basis for Security. After the successful victory in the Upper House election in July 2013, Prime Minister Abe announced that he intended to publish Japan’s first National Security Strategy along with the establishment of Japan’s National Security Council. Abe began to use the phrase “Proactive Contribution to Peace based on international cooperation” to appeal his more proactive security policy to the Japanese public opinion.

In the National Security Strategy document which was published in December 2013, it is written that;

“Surrounding by an increasingly severe security environment and confronted by complex and grave national security challenges, it has become indispensable for Japan to make more proactive efforts in line with the principle of international cooperation. Japan cannot secure its own peace and security by itself, and the international community expects Japan to play a more proactive role for peace and stability in the world, in a way commensurate with its national capabilities”.¹¹

For this reason, Japan has been enhancing its security cooperation with countries which share values and interests. While the U.S.-Japan alliance is at the center of Japanese national security strategy, Abe’s government emphasizes the importance of Japan’s security cooperation with countries globally. Then, “Proactive Contribution to Peace” becomes Japan’s central aim in its security policy. It is written in National Security Strategy that;

“Against this backdrop, under the evolving security environment, Japan

¹¹ National Security Council, *National Security Strategy*, December 17, 2013.

will continue to adhere to the course that it has taken to date as a peace-loving nation, and as a major player in world politics and economy, contribute even more proactively in securing peace, stability, and prosperity of the international community, while achieving its own security as well as peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region, as a “Proactive Contributor to Peace” based on the principle of international cooperation. This as the fundamental principle of national security that Japan should stand to hold”.¹²

However, to implement these new policy initiatives, it was necessary to partly reinterpret the article 9 of Japanese Constitution and to draft new security bills. Therefore, Abe’s Cabinet first made a Cabinet Decision on July 1, 2014, and then drafted new security bills.

The Incrementalism in Japan’s Security Policy

On July 1, 2014, the Abe’s Cabinet agreed on “Cabinet Decision on Development of Seamless Security Legislation to Ensure Japan’s Survival and Protect its People”. Since then, the National Security Secretariat together with Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Foreign Affairs began the drafting of the Security Bills which would revise Japan’s legal basis for security.

¹² Ibid.

The government showed two different kinds of attitude on this attempt. On one hand, the government says that there is no change in Japan's basic posture and orientation for the past 70 years, including a peace-loving nation. However, the government at the same time says that this will considerably transform Japan's security policy for enabling the Self-Defense Forces (SDFs) to contribute more to international peace and stability.

Even though Japanese and international media exclusively focused on the change in the collective self-defense right, this will not radically transform Japan's option to join in collective defense or dispatching the SDFs to foreign countries to fight wars. The new security bills indicate that only when "an armed attack against a foreign country resulting in threatening Japan's survival", the use of force is permitted under the "three new conditions". "Three New Conditions" for the use of force are as follows; (i) when an armed attack against Japan occurs or when an armed attack against a foreign country that is in a close relationship with Japan occurs and as a result threatens Japan's survival and poses a clear danger to fundamentally overturn people's right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, (ii) when there is no other appropriate means available to repel the attack and ensure Japan's survival and protect its people, (iii) use of force limited to the minimum extent necessary.¹³

¹³ Ministry of Defense, *Defense of Japan 2015* (Annual White Paper),

It is easily understood that this “three new conditions” are the most severe conditions for any countries to exercise the collective self-defense right. In other words, it would be extremely difficult to foresee any situation in which Japan needs to exercise it under the “three new conditions”. Even though Japan can theoretically exercise the collective self-defense right in this extremely limited occasion thanks to the new security bill, it would be more appropriate to argue that Japan can exercise the use of force only for the purpose of defending Japan.

It was written in an article regarding with this security bill in *The Guardian* that “Japanese soldiers could fight abroad again after security bill passed”.¹⁴ This is quite misleading. Japanese SDFs were already dispatched to Iraq, the Indian Ocean, and South Sudan among others. If they are attacked under certain circumstances, they are permitted to use weapons to defend themselves. On the other hand, “the use of force” is not permitted if an attack to foreign country will not “threaten Japan’s survival”. No other country has such a high hurdle to use military force.

There are two other significant new areas where the SDFs can expand

2015.

http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/pdf/2015/H27DOJ_Digest_EN_web.pdf

¹⁴ *The Guardian*, September 18, 2015.

its activities. These are Japan's more proactive participation to peacekeeping operations (PKOs), and support activities. Previously, Japan's SDF had very strict limits in its activities in the PKOs. The new security bill enable the SDF to engage in; (i) additional roles by Japanese Corps in operation such (e.g. protection of civilian), and (ii) adoption of ROE (rules of engagement) for use of weapons (small arms) to better align with current U.N. standard.¹⁵ As of support activities, the security bill introduced a new concept of "situations that will have an important influence on Japan's peace and security". In that case, Japan's SDFs can engage in "support activities to armed forces of foreign countries". These activities could not be done under the previous security legislation.

These new areas of security activities are related to Japan's much proactive participation in PKO activities based on international standards. On the other hand, it is still extremely difficult for Japanese government to decide to use military force to support a foreign country under attack, if it does not result in "threatening Japan's survival".

Therefore, Jennifer Lind is right in saying that "it represents more continuity than change in Japan's national security policy". Lind continues that; "Even if this legislation moves forward, Japan remains

¹⁵ Ministry of Defense, *Defense of Japan 2015*.

the most dovish of the world's great powers. It spends 1% of its gross domestic product on defense (in contrast to triple that rate in China). Its government is preoccupied with internal problems such as reinvigorating the economy and responding to enervating demographic change. Its "hawks" advocates a national security policy to the let of Canada's. And, as the crowds protesting the security legislation in front of the Japanese Diet attest, its people remain deeply apprehensive about even the most restrained use of force."

This is because of our historical memory of the war experience. Anti-militarism ideology remains the strongest among Japanese people.

Conclusion

The past and the present are interlinked very closely. Japan is resolved to maintain its national identity as a peace-loving nation, based upon a proper reflection of historical past. At the same time, Japan needs to play a larger role in bringing both peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. Japan still needs to rely mainly upon non-military means to attain it.

It seems that Japan's approach to peace and stability is more necessary than before because major countries are now realizing the difficulty of dispatching their forces overseas. Besides, the War in Afghanistan and

also the War in Iraq have shown the limits of bringing peace and stability by simply dropping bombs upon countries where people long for a safe and prosperous life.

Japan can contribute to international peace and prosperity by combining Japan's "Human Security" strategy with its more proactive security policy based on the new security bill. To do it, however, Japan needs friends and partners. The greatest value of the current security bill is to enable Japan to cooperate with its friends and partners.

Japan-China Political Dialogue and its Implications in the Western Hemisphere: the Case of Mexico

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Introduction

During the year 2008, coinciding with the Summer Olympic Games held in Beijing, most of the Official Development Assistance by Japan to China ended. The year was indeed a turning point in the bilateral relationship marked by the Japanese perception that in East Asia a new more mature relationship between the powers was emerging. Since then, Japan has confronted a new security scenario in Northeast Asia with new levels of tension with China. Several issues have almost monopolized the bilateral agenda, including prominently Chinese incursions in waters and airspace of the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, visits paid to the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, and the long quest of how to understand and remember the past and war. Fortunately, starting with the November 2014 joint communique, a possible new environment of understanding between two of the most important economies in the world seems in the making, an environment that, nonetheless, still lacks of a clear roadmap and proper security architecture to anchor it.

The following argument offers what I rather prefer to call it as a “new

reality” in the Sino-Japanese relationship, which many observers hope might open avenues for dialogue and deeper mutual understanding facing the future. It is a relationship that not only should involve China and Japan, but in some aspects – including the economic - South Korea. It is likely to produce a better regional environment in the quest of how to reinitiate the Six-party Talks on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula with the fresh mediation of China, in case it is possible.

In the next section, it is argued that the bilateral Sino-Japanese relationship can only be properly understood when taking into account the role, priorities and policies of the U.S. in Northeast Asia in particular, and in Asia Pacific in general. Here, the debate over the nature, benefits and obstacles of this triangular relationship oscillates across the Pacific from East Asia to the Western Hemisphere and back.

Next, by China and Japan recognizing that in a globalized era most regions in the world can serve national and global interests, the analysis moves to the role played by Latin America as a geopolitical arena for these two countries. It seems hardly a coincidence the rather similar timing of recent Japanese and Chinese leaders’ visits to the Western Hemisphere. Important questions dealt here include what are the concrete objectives of such visits, and to what extent Latin America serves for their own national, regional and global agenda.

The next section is devoted to Mexico mainly as an opportunity for Japan and China, highlighting first and foremost the long history of friendship,

some similarities, and in particular, relevant differences between the way Mexico has dealt with China in the last decades and the nature, opportunities and the future perspectives of Mexico's engagement with Japan.

Concluding remarks include some proposals over how Mexico can contribute, directly or indirectly, to a better Japan-China relationship and to a more stable and prosperous Asia Pacific region within existing frameworks at both sides of the Pacific.

The new reality in the bilateral relationship

China's economic power during the recent decade, its increasing capabilities in the realm of diplomacy and the military, and its projection of soft power in the world, has led to a new era in Japan-China relationship. Also, maritime incidents have been more frequent since 2006 in the East China Sea, including a dangerous collision in 2010, as well as reactions since the Japanese government made a decision to purchase three islands in the Senkaku/Diaoyu group in 2012. All this has resulted in a recent tense bilateral relationship. Pending issues, including history, maritime irredentism as well as a more proactive attitude by China in pursuing its national interests, have shaped current relations between Tokyo and Beijing.

Japan, meanwhile, has been a nation in transition in several areas. The economy of the country is trying to keep technological leadership and

has inserted itself in next generation regional agreements, such as the TPP, while at the same time is deepening structural reforms. By searching answers over how to emerge again as a normal country with full capabilities in the international community, Japan has started an important debate of how to refresh the US-Japan alliance, and how to participate on a more equal basis in solutions concerning regional and international peace and security. Here, while Japan tries to look into the future of the bilateral relationship with China, several questions related to their shared history, as well as the protection of national, regional and global interests, continue to shape a complex Japan-China relationship for the twenty first century.

Recently, however, some signs of a more constructive relationship have become evident. First is the November 7, 2014 joint communique *Regarding Discussions toward Improving Japan-China Relations*. This agreement was successfully reached between Chinese State Counsellor Yang Jiechi and Japanese National Security Chief Shotaro Yachi, sharing consensus on the following four points:

1. Observing the principles and spirit of the four basic documents (namely, the 1972 Joint Statement, the 1978 Treaty of Friendship, the 1998 Joint Declaration, and a 2008 Joint Statement) between Japan and China in order to develop a beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests;
2. Following the spirit of squarely facing history and advancing toward

the future so as to overcome political difficulties;

3. Recognizing the different views over the tense situation in the East China Sea, while sharing the view that, through dialogue and consultation, they would prevent the deterioration of the situation, establish a crisis management mechanism and avert the rise of unforeseen circumstances; and

4. Using multilateral and bilateral channels to gradually resume dialogue in political, diplomatic and security fields and make an effort to build a political relationship of mutual trust.¹⁶

In fact, this joint declaration was followed days later by the meeting between Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and President Xi Jinping during the APEC summit in Beijing, adding momentum to the new political environment. Five months later, in April 2015, both leaders met in Indonesia where Prime Minister Abe told reporters after the meeting that the two leaders agreed to work towards better relations and contribute to regional stability by promoting "mutually beneficial strategic ties".

And not only in the political realm, but also in the economic area, some signs of improvement have become manifest. China and Japan, together with South Korea, are closely interdependent economies and share plenty of common concerns. Accordingly, on 1 November 2015, Prime Minister Abe met in Seoul with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, and South

¹⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Regarding Discussions toward Improving Japan-China Relations, November 7, 2014, http://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/c_m1/cn/page4e_000150.html

Korean President Park Gyeun-hee, paving the way for annual meetings that will enhance the atmosphere leading to the restart of negotiations for a trilateral Free Trade Agreement.¹⁷

Thus, a new reality seems to be in the making in East Asia, a reality in which bilateral cooperation is already perceived as urgently needed for peace and stability and the best alternative to any further deterioration of the China-Japan relationship.

From East Asia to the Western Hemisphere

The current political dialogue in East Asia between Tokyo and Beijing cannot be properly understood without taking into account the role played by the U.S. in Asia Pacific. Washington's decision to rebalance to the region –with all its implications- as well as those objectives pursued by China and Japan in the whole Western Hemisphere. While the U.S. has always considered the alliance with Japan as the cornerstone of peace and security in the region, and views Tokyo as the strongest trade partner in the TPP, Washington has important economic and strategic interest with China, including investment, cyber security and military transparency. In other words, the bilateral relationship in East Asia seems to develop along a geopolitical triangle, having one of these

¹⁷ “Park, Abe, Li Pledge Cooperation at Trilateral Talks”, *Bloomberg*, 1 November 2015, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/videos/2015-11-02/park-abe-li-pledge-cooperation-at-summit>

angles in Washington. Considering trade and investment opportunities, Japan and China look towards the U.S. market for their own interests, while in the strategic realm both countries have their own objectives when engaging the U.S. in a deeper partnership. As John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi pointed out in a recent book, this is a troubled triangle, a triangle with huge implications in the Western Hemisphere.¹⁸

For Japan and China, this strategic triangle involving East Asia and North America, mainly the U.S., is so important, that current Japanese Embassy to the U.S. is headed by a skilled diplomat deeply involved in Northeast Asia past and current affairs (Ambassador Kenichiro Sasae since 2013), while the Chinese Embassy in Washington is also headed by a diplomat well versed in Japanese affairs, a former Ambassador to Tokyo (Ambassador Cui Tiankai since 2013). And this geopolitical triangle has huge implications for the whole Western Hemisphere, mainly Latin American countries.

Latin America as a geopolitical arena for Japan and China

Within the Western Hemisphere, it is rather obvious that the relationship with the U.S. is of paramount importance. However, besides the U.S., Latin America has become a geopolitical arena for Japan and China in pursuing their own global agendas in the political and diplomatic fields,

¹⁸ Takashi Inoguchi & G. John Ikenberry, *The Troubled Triangle: Economic and Security Concerns for the United States, Japan, and China* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

as well as in trade. Particular attention should be paid to the state visits paid by top leaders to key trade partners in the region.

In June 2013 Chinese president Xi Jinping visited Trinidad and Tobago, Costa Rica and Mexico prior to his visit to the U.S., pledging more economic assistance to Caribbean nations including Antigua and Barbuda, Suriname and Barbados.¹⁹ One year later, Japanese Prime Minister Abe also visited Mexico, Trinidad & Tobago, Colombia, Chile and Brazil during July-August in order to promote overall cooperation schemes with Latin America and the Caribbean countries (including meeting with Caricom, Antigua and Barbuda, and Jamaica leaders).²⁰ It also cemented the Global Strategic Partnership with Mexico, and fostered diplomatic and economic links with a region increasingly important as raw material supplier and with a huge potential consumer market. Among the diplomatic objectives were requests for backing Japan's bid for a non-permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council.²¹

The crucial question is that those recent inroads by Japan and China to

¹⁹ President Xi paid visits in 2014 to Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina and Cuba.

²⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Prime Minister Abe's Visit to Latin America and the Caribbean, July 25 - August 2, 2014, http://www.mofa.go.jp/la_c/sa/page3e_000199.html

²¹ "Abe seeks votes from Caribbean nations to join U.N. Security Council", *The Asahi Shimbun*, July 29, 2014, http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind_news/politics/AJ201407290039

the region during these few years have occurred amid competing efforts to secure trade partners and political allies in the Hemisphere, a behavior rather logical for two nations with mutually exclusive interests. Now that initial steps to reconnect political dialogues for the sake of peace and stability –mainly in East Asia - the question is whether Japan and China will continue promoting a mutually opposing foreign policy in the region that promote their own national and worldwide interests at the expense of the other. Here, will Latin America be a geopolitical arena where the three most advanced economies in the world are consolidating their own interests? Or it might be a perceived lack of U.S. interests in hemispherical affairs south of its border until recently that has prompted both China and Japan to a more active diplomacy in Latin America? Will this continue in the future? World Powers competition sometimes seems beneficial in the global South. Here in our Hemisphere, Mexico plays a crucial role in this political equation.

Mexico as an opportunity for Japan and China

Mexico has a long and mature relationship with Japan, starting with the Hasekura Tsunenaga Mission in 1613. Later the relationship strengthened with the conclusion of the Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation in 1888, and after the WWII with a vibrant economic and political relationship based on several agreements. Mexico has been an economic opportunity for Japanese companies since the sixties, while in

2004 concluded negotiations for the Economic Partnership Agreement which resulted in a sustained growth in the overall bilateral trade. By 2014, more than 800 Japanese companies have invested in Mexico.

For China, Mexico also represents trade and -to a lesser extent- an investment opportunity. Starting with the Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation in 1899, the opening of embassies in 1904 and the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1972, the bilateral relationship has been nonetheless marked by an intense export rivalry over the U.S. market. And yet, with the steady institutionalization of the bilateral relation through the Standing Binational Commission, the bilateral Comprehensive Strategic Partnership seems to be progressing. Chinese IT companies are currently positioning themselves in the Mexican market, as well as an increasing number of Mexican products that has entered into that Asian market.

Mexico has been, in the Washington-Tokyo-Beijing triangle, a door of opportunities, including Mexico's participation in the TPP, and a platform for Japanese and Chinese industrial production oriented to the U.S. market. The three countries have also engaged in deep structural reforms. Mexico has been engaged in 11 of these structural reforms, including the Energy sector reform, which might present real opportunities for Japanese and Chinese companies. China, meanwhile, is pursuing the fifth generation of structural reforms, including reforms in banking, monetary and overall trade sectors, while Japan's own

structural reforms - the *Abenomics* (in particular the projection of private sector in the international markets)- should bring Mexico and Japanese economic forces closer in cooperation schemes in the near future.

As for the political coincidences, Mexico needs to successfully strengthen trilateral political dialogues with both nations and find commonalities in international fora and international organizations. Japan and China also recognized that vibrant bilateral relations with our country should cover a wide range of opportunities, from people-to-people exchanges, academic agreements, searching for common ground in problems that affect the international community, to global governance, as well as friendly military communication, including goodwill trips by respective naval forces. Recently in September 2015 Maritime Self Defense Forces Rear Admiral Yasuki Nakahata headed a visit call to the port of Manzanillo and delivered a keynote speech in Mexico City, while in November a Chinese naval flotilla, including a medical ship -returning from Havana in a naval tour- offered free basic medical services aboard in Acapulco port as a goodwill gesture to Mexico.²²

²² Abel Salgado, “Llega a Acapulco el buque médico militar Arco de La Paz, de China; sólo ofrecerá consultas médicas”, *Sur Acapulco*, November 13, 2015, <http://suracapulco.mx/4/llega-a-acapulco-el-buque-medico-militar-arco-de-la-paz-de-china-solo-ofrecera-consultas-medicas/>

Final remarks

What should Mexico expect amid the Japan-China political dialogue for the foreseeable future? Mexico's current administration, through its National Development Plan 2013-2018, defines the country both as an emerging economy as well as an actor with global responsibility in the international arena. This global responsibility should include promotion of understanding, consensus and identification of common interests not only with friends of Mexico, but also between them. Mexico has acquired enough political capital and international leverage to encourage friendly, stable relations in the world. Mexico needs to capitalize the geopolitical value and economically privileged position in both bilateral relationships with Japan and China so as to promote closer cooperation. Mexico, as a member of the Pacific Alliance, should promote the inclusion of these two nations into the regional bloc, not only as observers, but as a full members or at least observer candidates to membership, It should also promote common interest and objectives with China and Japan in the future projected APEC's Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific, as a study of its feasibility is likely to begin soon.

In the political arena, Mexico should continue to jointly underline (as it was the case in 2014 during the Prime Minister Abe visit to Mexico) the importance of strengthening an international order based in the international law and the principles of the United Nations; it should also

devise innovative schemes to indirectly coordinate with China and Japan in their common strategic efforts for a non-nuclear Korean Peninsula. Finally, years after Mexico's request during past administrations it was politely refused, Japan and China should now invite Mexico to be a member of the Asean Regional Forum ARF and to fully participate in the IISS Shangri La Dialogue in Singapore, two fora for confidence-building and preventive diplomacy where important security issues between Tokyo and Beijing are to be constructively discussed.²³ Here in Mexico, not only through academic dialogues at the Instituto Matias Romero from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but also profiting from our active parliamentary diplomacy, namely the Commission of Foreign Affairs Asia Pacific at the Senate, I am sure the country can help to promote closer relations with these two millenary cultures linked to us by the past, present and future.

²³ In 2015 Mexican Senator Gabriela Cuevas attended the forum *IISS Cartagena Dialogue: The Trans-Pacific Summit 2015*.