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Japan's Role in Southeast Asian Security in the 1990s

Chaiwat Khamchoo

Introduction

As we move into the closing decade of the twentieth century, the Southeast Asian security environment appears to be entering a transitional period. Recent regional and global developments -- notably East-West detente, the improvement and normalization of Sino-Soviet relations, and Vietnam's partial withdrawal from Cambodia -- have reduced tension in the Southeast Asian regional order.

Despite the current easing of tensions in the region, there is no guarantee that the future of Southeast Asia will be either more stable or more peaceful. Moreover, while the economic dimension of security has increasingly gained in significance, it is premature to think that the military factor has left the international relations realm of Southeast Asia or elsewhere. The war in Cambodia has not yet ended. Elsewhere the
contest for position, power and influence continues, although not always in an openly antagonistic manner.

Japan has vital interests in the stability and security of Southeast Asia. Indeed, in view of its economic power, Japan's interests are worldwide. Yet, Tokyo continues to view Southeast Asia as one of the pillars of its foreign relations in a rapidly changing world. Japanese leaders have long recognized the importance of Southeast Asia. Southeast Asia is seen to possess a large number of essential raw materials and in addition, a substantial market for Japanese manufactured goods. The non-Communist ASEAN nations supply 99% of Japan's imports of natural rubber, 99% of its tin, 99% of its nickel, 42% of its wood, 35% of its copper, 31% of its liquefied gas, and 18% of its crude oil imports.\(^1\) Clearly, the interruption of import flows such as these would pose immense difficulties for Japan's industries and would have rapid, deleterious effects on Japan's economy.

At present, ASEAN accounts for about 10% of Japan's total trade. Although Japanese investment in the ASEAN countries actually declined in the first half of 1980s, a combination of factors such as the appreciation of the yen, rising domestic labor costs, and an improvement of infrastructure in ASEAN led to an increase in Japanese investment after 1985. It should be noted, too, that the waterways of Southeast Asia are increasingly vital for Japan's international transport system. About 60% of Japan's oil imports (from the Middle East) and 40% of its foreign trade are transported via the Straits of Malacca (claimed as a territorial sea by Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore) and the Lombok Straits.

Southeast Asia continues to figure prominently not only in Japan's geopolitical-economic considerations but also in non-economic

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considerations -- those closely related to the perception of its role as an Asian power. In terms of its geography, culture, and history, Japan is undeniably part of Asia. It follows that "there is a strong psychological attraction to Asia as the area in which Japan has a special role and where its international destiny will be defined."\textsuperscript{2}

Southeast Asia is so important to Japan, economically, geographically, and psychologically that Japan takes considerable interest in maintaining stability and security in this region. Since World War II, Japan has played a predominantly economic role in this region, avoiding political and military entanglements. Thus questions which arise are: What kind of role is Japan likely to play in the shifting security environment of Southeast Asia in order to meet its economic needs and goals? With the recent waning Soviet posture and with the US seeking to reduce its presence in this region, will Japan feel obliged to play a larger - or different - political or military role? And how might Japan contribute to the creation of a regional order of peace and stability in the 1990s and beyond? This paper represents a modest attempt to address these questions. Before doing so, it may be helpful to examine the evolution of postwar Japan's role in Southeast Asia.

**Japan's Evolving Regional Role**

Since the end of World War II, Japan has had little choice but to pursue a foreign policy, particularly in Southeast Asia, within the framework of U.S. Asian diplomacy. Initially, Japan was tied politically, economically, and strategically to the Western bloc, regaining national independence as a close ally of the US. During the cold war the global confrontation between the U.S. and the Soviet Union was the controlling aspect of international politics. This limited Japan's options since the U.S. pursued an active cold war strategy in the region. The

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rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union and the consolidation of communist power in China encouraged the U.S. government to promote the recovery of the Japanese economy and to make Japan an anti-communist bulwark in Asia. The United States viewed Southeast Asia as a vital source of food and raw materials that Japan desperately needed as well as providing a new outlet for Japanese products, replacing the markets in China and Manchuria, to which Japan had access in the prewar years. Seeing the economic importance of Southeast Asia the United States encouraged Japanese economic integration with the region. In late 1950, a U.S. official introduced the idea of "U.S.-Japan economic cooperation," which envisaged that the Japanese economy would be firmly integrated into the economies of the United States and Southeast Asia.3

During the Korean War (1950-53), Japan’s economy recovered to the level it had attained before World War II. This was due, in part, to the advantage derived from the war spending of U.S. troops in Japan and of United Nations forces in Korea. With the end of the Korean War boom came the need for markets for a rapidly growing and expanding economy. Japan became enthusiastic about the prospect of doing business with Southeast Asia, especially in view of the limited opportunities for trade with Communist China.

Japan, then, began vigorously to pursue what its Foreign Minister Shigemitsu Mamoru identified as "economic diplomacy" (keizai gaiko). Japan agreed to pay reparations to the countries of Southeast Asia for war damages resulting from its invasions and occupations between 1940-45.

The reparations and subsequent economic aid gave Japan access to domestic markets thereby leading the way for Japan’s economic expansion in Southeast Asia. By the late 1960s, Japan was the primary

trading partner of most of the Southeast Asia states -- displacing the former colonial powers of Europe and surpassing the United States -- despite political and economic instability, wars, and the residue of wartime anti-Japanese sentiment in the different parts of the region.\(^4\)

Also in the late 1960s, a combination of factors encouraged Japanese private investments to pour into Southeast Asia with government approval, for such expansion was deemed necessary to further economic development. The factors included Japan's great prosperity, the influx of capital, an increased demand for raw materials, the massive foreign exchange surplus, the pressure to relocate industries creating environmental hazards, and the search for cheaper labor.\(^5\)

As long as business was lucrative, Japan made a conscious effort to refrain from entanglement in regional conflicts. Japanese leaders emphasized that Japan’s role in the region would be restricted to the realm of economics, an indirect way of expressing reluctance to become involved in the politics of cold war.\(^6\) Unlike the United States, Japan avoided direct involvement in the Vietnam War, which began to escalate in mid-1960s. It was afraid that even limited military cooperation with the United States might lead to major involvement in a war which was highly unpopular in Japan. Many Japanese believed the United


\(^{5}\) Ibid., p. 95. Also see Frank Langdon, “‘Japan’s Policy Toward Southeast Asia,’” in M.W. Zacher and R.S. Milne, eds., *Conflict and Stability in Southeast Asia* (New York: Anchor and Doubleday, 1974), p. 335. During the 1950s and throughout most of the 1960s, Japanese investment in the region had been relatively small, confined as it were to the financing of minerals and timber extraction to ensure future supplies of these resources. Ibid., p. 334.

\(^{6}\) For example, Prime Minister Ikeda Hayato stated in 1962 that “our cooperation with and assistance to Southeast Asia countries, rather than being guided by the cold war motive of checking the inroad of communism, are animated by our desire as fellow Asians to share with them the experience we gained in the process of modernizing our nation.” Quoted in Dennis Yasutomo, *Japan and Asian Development Bank* (New York : Praeger Publishers, 1983), p. 27.
States was making mistakes similar to those made by Japan in the 1930s, mistakes which would have disastrous consequences.  

As had been the case with Korea, Japan profited from American involvement in a war in Asia. As the Vietnam war intensified, Japan’s economic and political relations with the non-communist countries of Southeast Asia expanded. Indeed, by the end of the 1960’s, many of the economic objectives of the wartime Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere were achieved without the costs inherent in an imperial conquest. Coincidentally, the unpopularity of the protracted conflict in Vietnam among US voters triggered a major shift in US foreign policy towards Asia. In 1969 President Richard M. Nixon announced the Guam Doctrine, popularly known as the Nixon Doctrine. According to this doctrine, the United States would gradually disengage militarily from Asia and ask its Asian allies to assume a larger share of the burden for assuring their own, and regional security. It was anticipated that Japan, regarded by president Nixon as one of four “major powers” of Asia (along with the United States, the Soviet Union and China), would play an active and stabilizing security role in the region, although the nature and extent of that role remained unspecified.  

Japan’s response to the Nixon Doctrine was ambiguous. On the one hand, its extensive economic ties with the region continued to develop, making Japan the preeminent investor and trading partner in Southeast Asia. On the other hand, neither the basic direction of Japanese policy nor its security role had been clearly defined, despite


Prime Minister Sato Eisaku's assurance in 1969 that Japan would play "a leading role" (shuyaku) in Asia.9

By the end of the Sato regime in 1971, it was becoming increasingly obvious that Japanese economic diplomacy toward Southeast Asia was driven by commercial motives and was chiefly concerned with securing profits from trade and natural resources for industry. Successive Japanese governments behaved little better than private businesses. Spurred by the postwar fear that Japan might never again be an economically viable nation, and by concentrating on the purely economic aspect of profit making, Japanese activities abroad more closely resembled those of "a trading company rather than a nation".10 Japan was characterized as "an economic animal". It is not surprising then that as Japan expanded its economic activities into Southeast Asia in the early 1970s, anti-Japanese feeling and criticism began to surface. When Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei made a goodwill trip to the region in mid-January of 1974, he was greeted everywhere with virulent anti-Japanese demonstrations.

Against this backdrop, it is a small wonder that Japan's postwar diplomacy toward Southeast Asia, as elsewhere, has been dismissed as "traders' diplomacy". It was, in the words of one prominent Japanese scholar, "a diplomacy of the economy, by the economy and for the economy."11 A traders' diplomacy was sustainable into the mid-1970's


largely because the United States had been willing to play an extensive political and military role to contain communism in the region, thereby leaving little room for Japanese action.

Since the end of the Vietnam War, however, the politico-military environment in Southeast Asia has evolved dramatically. The three Indochinese nations are now under communist control, and while U.S. influence has declined in Southeast Asia, China and the Soviet Union continue to compete for influence in the region. Moreover, less than four years after the defeat of the Saigon government, military conflict erupted once again in Indochina. In the post-Vietnam period, Southeast Asian regional politics remain in turmoil while the US no longer plays its traditional hegemonial role.

The changing regional environment has made it necessary for Japan to formulate a foreign policy toward Southeast Asia. As noted earlier, Japan had generally followed the U.S. led policy in Asia. As the United States withdrew militarily from mainland Southeast Asia and became less active in regional affairs amid intensification of Sino-Soviet competition for influence, Japan was called upon to exert efforts which would contribute to the stability of the region. The non-communist Southeast Asian countries, in particular, have come to expect Japan to play a greater role, not only in economic development, but also in political-security fields.

The Fukuda Doctrine and After: Plus ca change; plus c’est la meme chose

In an attempt to clarify Japan’s intentions and role in post-Vietnam war Southeast Asia, Prime Minister Fukuda Takeo in Manila announced the so-called "Fukuda Doctrine" in mid-August 1977 during the last stop of his tour of ASEAN countries and following the second ASEAN summit Conference in Kuala Lumpur. Prime Minister Fukuda’s doctrine was expressed in the form of three principles which would guide Japan’s Southeast Asian policy. First, Japan would not become a
military power. Second, Japan would promote closer economic, social, political, and cultural ties with ASEAN members. And third, Japan would pursue constructive relations with the three communist regimes in Indochina, particularly Vietnam, as well as encourage co-existence rather than conflict between ASEAN and Indochina.

The announcement of the Fukuda Doctrine raised the interesting question of whether or not the much heralded doctrine signaled anything new in Japanese policy towards Southeast Asia.

Some Japanese government leaders have insisted that Fukuda’s visit to Southeast Asia and the announcement of the so called “Fukuda Doctrine” represented as serious effort to articulate explicitly novel and important political policies beyond its traditional economic relationship with Southeast Asia. Watanabe Koji, one of the policy planners concerned with Southeast Asian affairs in the Foreign Ministry (Gaimusho) said that, “The visit of Prime Minister Fukuda marked a new departure in Japan’s ASEAN policy. It marked a new era in expanding the political horizon for Japanese foreign policy interests in Southeast Asia.”

Ushiba Nobukiko, a Gaimusho counselor, cited Fukuda’s promise that “the government and people of Japan would never be skeptical bystanders in regard to ASEAN’s efforts to achieve increased resilience and greater regional solidarity” as an indication of “transformation in Japan’s foreign policy.”

Nevertheless, many analysts view the Fukuda Doctrine as merely a reaffirmation of Japan’s past Southeast Asian policy. Donald C. Hellmann has argued that the Fukuda Doctrine was “little more than

a restatement of themes central to past Japanese policy."  

In a similar vein, Alan Rix has written that the Fukuda Doctrine "marked no new direction in Japanese policy; while it restated Japan's Southeast Asian diplomacy, it encapsulated 20 years of Japanese experience in the region." 

In this regard, a comment by yet another Gaimusho counselor is revealing. When asked by Soviet Ambassador Polyansky about how Japan planned to implement the Fukuda Doctrine, counselor Yoshino replied: "It |Fukuda Doctrine| has been talked about in various ways. However, it has nothing new, as far as content is concerned. It is a consensus which has emerged in the 30 years since the war." 

His remark implies that the Fukuda Doctrine was a change of style rather than substance. He further emphasized that there would be no change in basic Japanese diplomacy. "Japan has always favored extending aid to the ASEAN and Indochina groups when they have difficulties. We have just stated it clearly this time," he explained.

Regardless of how one chooses to interpret the doctrine, it is clearly a declaration of enlightened self-interest. It recognizes that Japan's growing economic stake in ASEAN countries could be shaken by internal disturbances or by external conflict, for example with Indochina, and that it is therefore necessary for Japan to bolster the Southeast Asian economies and to act as a bridge between ASEAN and Communist Indochina. 

Indeed, as Tsurutani Taketsugu has argued, the Fukuda Doctrine was...

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17. Ibid.
intended to link Southeast Asian development and the economic security and growth of Japan by means of an expansion of assistance and technical cooperation, thereby assuring that any "modernization" in this area remained dependent on Japan's economic power.\textsuperscript{19}

In essence, the Japanese believe that to maintain security and stability in Southeast Asia, they must play a two-fold role, helping to promote economic development on the one hand, and contributing to the strengthening of ties between ASEAN and the communist Indochinese countries on the other, all the while avoiding the role of a military Power. In other words, Japan hopes to enhance stability in the region by economic means, and by pursuing an omnidirectional foreign policy \textit{(zenhoi gaiko seisaku)} -- a simplistic policy which separates economics from politics, if this is to Japan's advantage, by maintaining friendly relations with all.

This economics-oriented and all-directional foreign policy proved increasingly difficult to maintain, however, after the resumption of armed conflict in Indochina in December 1978. ASEAN has regularly urged Japan to help resolve the Indochina conflict.

\textbf{Japan's Role in the Indochina Conflict}

Japan has an exceptionally great interest in the Indochina conflict since it has potentially worrying implications for the future economic development of Southeast Asia and therefore for Japan's own "economic" security. The third Indochina war also exposed other dangers to the stability and security of the area. It not only heightened tensions between the non-communist ASEAN states and Vietnam-dominated Indochina, it exacerbated Sino-Soviet rivalry in the region. Japan responded to the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia by supporting the actions of the ASEAN states. It endorsed the ASEAN stand on the

Cambodia issue and supported the ASEAN-sponsored UN resolution calling for Vietnam to withdraw all of its forces from Cambodia.

Japan also suspended economic aid to Vietnam, although somewhat reluctantly. From the Japanese perspective, continuing contacts with Vietnam through economic cooperation would ultimately benefit Japan’s national interests. In May 1979, a former Japanese ambassador to Vietnam stated: "One important reason for continuing economic cooperation would be its efficacy in helping to separate Vietnam from the Soviet Union. Such cooperation would be in Japan’s national interest, and a part of its diplomatic policy."20

From a strategic standpoint, we must note that the Japanese vessels returning from the Middle East must pass the coast of Vietnam on their way through the South China Sea. This important sea lane could be threatened by Vietnam, acting in conjunction with the Soviet Union. Politically, maintaining good relations with Vietnam would enlarge the scope of Japan’s Asian policy, which tends to lean towards China, South Korea, and ASEAN. From an economic point of view, Vietnam is endowed with considerable stores of natural resources such as tin, bauxite, manganese, iron ore, timber, coal, and offshore oil. It also offers a market of 65 million people. It is an open secret that Japanese trading companies have taken a great interest in Vietnam’s economy and have shown a desire to play a larger role in its economic development.

Dissatisfied with Japan’s lack of firm resolve in the Cambodia crisis, various ASEAN nations have urged Tokyo to use its considerable economic power to dissuade Vietnam from aggression. Japan gradually took a clear stand: it would not resume economic aid to Vietnam until the latter withdrew its troops from Cambodia.

It should be noted that many Japanese disagreed with their government’s support of ASEAN’s stance on the Cambodia issue at the

expense of Vietnam. The ruling Liberal Democratic Party's Afro-Asian Study Group (Ajia -Afurika Mondai Kenkyukai) argued in favour of continuing to grant economic aid to Vietnam, in the belief that economic aid would provide "the political opportunity for Japan to hold a dialogue with Vietnam and make it possible for Japan...to find a clue to a solution of the Indochina problem." It therefore proposed that Japan work out some measures for supporting Vietnam, including the lifting of embargoes on economic aid. The Japan-Vietnam Friendship Dietmen's League, a cross-party group of parliamentarians favoring the promotion of Japan-Vietnam relations, made a similar proposal.

For purely economic interests, the Japan-Vietnam Trade Association (Nichietsu Boeki Kai), formed in 1955 by Japanese traders, bankers, and manufacturers involved in trade with Vietnam, also requested the government to review the issue of economic cooperation with Hanoi. The association presented a petition to the Japanese prime minister asking for a resumption of economic aid as soon as possible.

Even some officials at Gaimusho questioned the wisdom of Japan's diplomatic tilt toward ASEAN, arguing that such a policy was

21. The late Kimura Toshio, the then Chairman of the LDP Afro Asia Study Group, expressed this view at the Second Japan-ASEAN symposium in mid-August 1979. Asia Quarterly, Special Number (April 1980), pp. 27-28; 52.

22. Ibid.


not conducive to the restoration of stability in Southeast Asia. However, since Japan’s Asian policy had been aimed at strengthening relations with ASEAN, Japan had no choice but to support that body on the Cambodia issue or run the risk of alienating itself from ASEAN. Thus, the Cambodia problem made it difficult for Japan to continue to pursue an omnidirectional policy. Also, the Japanese began to realize that failure to adjust their image as a self-serving, economic-oriented, and all-directional foreign policy might leave them in a position of political and diplomatic isolation. For example, the 1982 and 1983 *Diplomatic Bluebook*, the annual government report on diplomacy, stated that Japan should develop economic relations with Eastern-bloc nations in a way that conformed to the security interests of the West, instead of following the “unprincipled policy of separating political and economic aspects,” and also that “it should bear in mind that a country without a firm standpoint is doomed to lose the trust of other nations” and, as a result, become “isolated from the international community.”

Ito Kenichi, a former *Gaimusho* official who once had responsibility for relations with Hanoi, has argued that politics and economics have become inseparable and that Japan should promote a more positive diplomacy. Positive diplomacy meant, among other things, “diplomacy in the sense of making discriminating choices (sentaku toshite no gaiko).” In his view, multi-directional diplomacy, such as that Japan had practiced, would not work as diplomatic policy. It was therefore necessary for Japan to resign itself to the need to make certain sacrifices in order to be

25. Interview with a Foreign Ministry official, February 10, 1984. Some Japanese journalists also held this view. See, for example, Kondo Koichi, “ASEAN hencho gaiko no otoshiana” [The pitfalls of overemphasizing diplomatic relations with ASEAN] *Voice* 67 (July 1982), pp. 150-161.

more discriminating in its diplomacy. This type of diplomacy, Ito believed, would become necessary whether Japan desired it or not.\(^{27}\)

It was, in any case, not difficult for Japan to decide whether to support ASEAN or Vietnam in the Indochina conflict. ASEAN was more important to Japan than Vietnam, both economically and politically. Economically, ASEAN is Japan's second or third largest trading partner while Vietnam, together with the other two communist Indochina states, constitutes less than one percent of Japan's total trade. Politically, as one Southeast Asia scholar has perceptively commented:

\[...\text{The ASEAN countries are important to Japan mainly in the larger context of the Asia-Pacific region and global strategy. With their basically anti-communist governments and with economies well integrated with the non-communist nations, the five ASEAN countries are likely allies of Japan in the regional balance of power. Their support and cooperation would definitely enhance Japan's position in the international community while their political stability and friendly disposition would guarantee Japan the accessibility to its most vital lifeline, the Straits of Malacca.}\]

While suspending aid to Vietnam and providing diplomatic support for ASEAN's stance on the Cambodia conflict, Japan increased its economic aid to Thailand. Thailand suffered from the Indochina conflict because of the influx of Cambodian refugees and the deployment of Vietnamese forces along the Thai-Cambodia border.

\(^{27}\) Ito Kenichi, "\textit{Maihomu gaiko no jidai wa owatta: waga taikenteki nihon gaikoron}" Age of my home diplomacy has ended: my empirical theory of Japanese diplomacy \textit{Asahi janaru}, February 15, 1980, p. 18.

These elements had the potential to affect the political stability of Thailand, whose geopolitical position is crucial to the security and stability of ASEAN countries on either side of the Malacca Straits, the vital passage for Japan's trade with the Middle East and Europe. Therefore, as stated by Ogiso Moto, a former Japanese ambassador to Thailand, support for the ASEAN stand against Vietnam was "absolutely necessary and indispensable for the strengthening of the national resiliency of Thailand."  

Since 1980, Japan has been under international pressure, particularly from the United States, to increase its aid to countries adjacent to areas of international conflict (funso shuhen koku enjo) and deemed strategically important to the West. The one country within ASEAN that meets these criteria is Thailand which is the site of the world's third largest Japanese embassy. Japan decided to expand its economic aid to Thailand following the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia and the ensuing stream of Indochinese refugees into Thailand, so as to strengthen the local economy and ensure social stability. Foreign Minister Abe said during his visit to Thailand in July 1984 that the Japanese government regards Thailand as a country with top priority in Japan's economic and technical cooperation program. Thailand was the seventh largest recipient of Japanese ODA in 1960-79, but became the second largest

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recipient of Japanese ODA, in cumulative terms, between 1979 and 1986 (see Table 1).

**Table 1. The Top Ten recipients of Japanese Bilateral ODA**
(Net-Disbursement-Amount-Basis; Unit: %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Nation</th>
<th>Total Share for 1960-79 (%)</th>
<th>Nation for 1980-86 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Republic of Korea</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>India*</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>Burma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>Republic of Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*India was not one of the top ten recipients between 1980 and 1982, but was ranked fifth in 1983

**Source:** Computations based on the Japanese Foreign Ministry publication *Waga gaiko no kinkyo* |The Recent State of Japanese Diplomacy| (Tokyo: Okurasho Insatsukyoku), various years.

In addition, Japan has worked with ASEAN to help resolve the Cambodia issue, in order to demonstrate its willingness to play an active role in promoting peace and stability in the region, thereby hoping to mitigate the criticism often leveled against it for its tendency to remain on the sidelines of international conflicts, Tokyo has made several proposals regarding a peaceful solution to the conflict in Cambodia, all closely linked with ASEAN positions. During his visit to the ASEAN region in May 1989, Prime Minister Takeshita Noboru stated that Japan stood ready to strengthen its cooperation with ASEAN countries in its efforts to settle the decade-long conflict in Cambodia, and would
consider offering financial help, contributing personnel to a peacekeeping force and providing non-military material to help the peace process.32

Despite Vietnam's claimed unilateral troop withdrawal from Cambodia in September 1989, the Japanese government firmly insisted that Tokyo would not resume aid to Hanoi until a comprehensive political settlement in Cambodia is agreed.

It must be pointed out, however, that while Japan has cooperated with ASEAN, opposing Vietnam with regard to the Cambodian problem, it has also attempted to remain on good terms with Vietnam. Thus, while Japan has frozen its aid to Vietnam, it has also conveyed to the Vietnamese that what Japan opposes is the Vietnamese military invasion of Cambodia, and that its longterm desire to maintain dialogue and friendship remains unchanged. Both semi-official and official Japanese representatives have visited Vietnam and Laos to lay the groundwork for future expansion of relations. Private contacts have already been underway in all three Indochinese states.

The role of Japan in the Indochina conflict discussed above suggests that Japan could not have pursued an omnidirectional policy -- at least openly -- and that enlightened self-interest inexorably led Japan to align itself with ASEAN and Thailand, thereby assuming a political role.

Security Relations with ASEAN

For about 12 years, there have been some contacts between the Japanese defense establishment and its ASEAN counterparts, but in spite of these Japan has steadfastly refused to enter into formal military cooperation agreements with these countries. Some ASEAN countries, especially Indonesia and Thailand, have shown an interest in receiving arms and military technology from Japan in order to bolster their own

defense capabilities and to enhance regional security. Indonesian President Suharto asked Prime Minister Nakasone during his visit to ASEAN in May 1983 for the transfer of industrial technology to help Indonesia's military industry. The Japanese Prime Minister refused the request.\textsuperscript{33} During his trip to Japan in August 1984 General Arthit Kamlang-ek, then the Thai army commander, likewise expressed a keen interest in purchasing military equipment used by the Japanese Self Defense Forces, but the Japanese foreign minister informed him that Japan could not sell such equipment because of its longstanding ban on the export of arms.\textsuperscript{34}

Although Japan has been unable to supply arms and other hardware, it has complied with requests for education and training for officers from the region. Of the 128 foreigners who attended Japan's military school between 1975 and 1985, 80, or over half, came from Singapore and Thailand.\textsuperscript{35} In early July 1988, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore told Tsutomu Kawara, then Japan's Self-Defense Director General, that his country appreciated Japan's acceptance of its students at the Japanese Defense Academy, and expressed the view that it was important for Japan and ASEAN to strengthen defense cooperation through the exchange of personnel.\textsuperscript{36} Kawara's visit to Southeast Asia was widely regarded as the beginning of a thaw between Japan and ASEAN in defense matters. The visit was the first by a Japanese defense minister since the war. On that occasion, Kawara said in Jakarta that greater understanding on defense matters between

\textsuperscript{33} See Dennis Yasutomo, \textit{The Manner of Giving: Strategic Aid and Japan's Foreign Policy} (Lexington: D.C. Heath, 1986), p. 64

\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Mainichi Daily News}, July 24, 1984. Malaysia and Indonesia also expressed interests in receiving weapons from Japan, see \textit{Sankei Shim bun}, October 31, 1981.


\textsuperscript{36} \textit{Nihon Keizai Shim bun}, July 3, 1989.
ASEAN and Japan "would be useful." He was nevertheless vague about the possibility of closer defense cooperation in areas such as exchange of military personnel and the transfer of military technology.  

Important, too, is the fact that some Japanese strategic analysts have called for the abandonment of "The unrealistic policy of 'armed forces' separated from other areas," and the promotion of "all-round linkages of politics, economics and the military." Writing in the Liberal Star, the ruling LDP official newspaper, Makoto Momoi commented that "as long as we are afraid of such linkages, contradictions in technical transfer policy will arise due to the change in de facto policy. Indeed, if the ability of Asian countries to defend their territorial waters improves thanks to Japanese technical help, Japan can spend less money defending itself."  

Hozumi Toshihiko, former Japanese Marine Self Defense Forces officer and currently Director of the Japanese Center for Strategic Studies recommended in 1984 that Japan "improve the policies which have limited the deployment of its forces exclusively for defense purposes" and prevent a more realistic collective defense with other countries which would allow Japan to assume direct defense of the Sea Line of Communication in collaboration with the Southeast Asian nations.  

Successive Japanese governments have nevertheless insisted that Japan engage in "security-related cooperation" with ASEAN countries only in the economic field. They have repeatedly emphasized the importance of Japan's contribution to stability in Southeast Asia through its economic role, rather than by means of direct military assistance.


It might be argued that Japan’s economic aid has the same effect as military aid since such assistance would allow recipient states to allocate greater proportions of their own resources for military purposes. Japan can thereby play a significant, albeit indirect, role in regional security without pledging direct military support.  

A senior Japanese defense official has in fact agreed that Japanese policy might be assessed in this way, but he also maintained that this did not reflect Japan’s intention. The House of Representatives’ Foreign Affairs Committee, adopted a Resolution on Economic Cooperation in 1978 and again in 1981, which stipulated that Japan must abstain from granting economic aid which might be used for military purposes.

Japan’s refusal to assume a military role does not, of course, mean that it has not been concerned about military security in the region. Indeed, since 1980, every White Paper on defense has mentioned the military situation in Southeast Asia with serious concern. A typical statement notes that “the ASEAN countries occupy important geopolitical positions along routes used for the supply of raw materials to Japan and have strong economic ties with Japan. Therefore, the security of the ASEAN countries is essential to the security of Japan, and, Japan is watching developments there with great concern.” This is the primary


reason why Japan wants the United States to remain involved in the region. It is hardly surprising, then, that Japan felt gratified when U.S. leaders and officials reaffirmed US commitment to East and Southeast Asian security, after 1975 when it appeared that the United States might have made a strategic withdrawal from Asia in the wake of the Vietnamese debacle. Commenting on Japan's role in the Cambodia conflict, Watanabe Koji, a senior official at Gaimusho, wrote that "among the encouraging factors in the regional scene is the revival of U.S. interest in Southeast Asia." Perceiving a continued U.S. military presence in the region as a deterrent power, he added that Japan hoped the U.S., the country which wielded the greatest influence in the region, would reinforce over the years the credibility of U.S. political commitments, and more importantly, its strategic commitment, bearing in mind the increased Soviet military presence in the region.44 The Japanese are concerned in particular about any erosion of U.S. influence in the Philippines, which would have immediate implications for the preservation of the U.S. bases in that country. Kiuchi Akitane, then Japanese ambassador to Thailand, argued that ASEAN countries should persuade the Philippines that the presence of U.S. bases is crucial to deterring a Soviet threat and maintaining stability and security in the region.45 Japan, in the words of one American critic, "was (and is) ready, willing, and able to root for the strategic team as long as all the game players were Americans."46

It should be stressed here that Japan desires continued US involvement in the region not only for strategic reasons, but for economic reasons as well. The idea and hope is that U.S. economic presence will reduce the appearance of the "overpresence" of Japan's economic

44. Watanabe, op.cit., p. 86.
activities in the area. As the Japanese Ambassador to Malaysia said in an interview with *Mainichi Shimbun* in 1983: "Since about 1980, the United States began once again to approach ASEAN. It is certain the United States is once again attaching importance to Southeast Asia. It is also beneficial for Japan if the relations between Southeast Asia and the United States are good. It makes things easier for Japan in Southeast Asia, whether in regard to the problem of 'overpresence' or the problem of the defense of sealanes." 47

Accordingly, Japanese leaders have enthusiastically conveyed to their U.S. counterparts ASEAN's desires for a continuing U.S. military presence in the region. During his May 1983 visit to the United States, Prime Minister Nakasone informed President Reagan: "The leaders of the various ASEAN nations have a strong interest in the moves of the Soviet Union, China, and Vietnam, and they also desire that the U.S. retain its presence in Asia." 48 Similarly, the Director-General of Japan's Defense Agency advised Defense Secretary Weinberger that "the American defense pledge in the Western Pacific... will give the countries of Southeast Asia a greater feeling of security." 49

While attempting to encourage the United States to provide a continuing military deterrent, successive Japanese governments, as noted, helping to stabilize Southeast Asia. Prime Minister Suzuki said during his January 1981 visit to Southeast Asia:

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I do not believe that military power is the only solution to peace and stability. It is necessary for a country to prosper economically so that the people’s living standards improve and the society stabilizes. That will both reduce the seeds of conflict in the society and the possibility of invasion or domestic upheaval. Japan intends to contribute to the goal of peace and stability through economic cooperation.

He added that “it would be completely mistaken either to hope that Japan would play a military role in the international community or to be worried that Japan might once again become a military giant.” Several representatives of the ruling Liberal Democrat Party Dietmen who accompanied Suzuki reinforced these officials views in their talks with ASEAN leaders. For example, they stressed, “Do not expect Japan to play a military role. Instead, we will push ahead with economic cooperation to help your countries achieve prosperity. This is the way we intend to approach the problem of achieving peace and stability in Asia.”

The Japanese economic approach to regional security is based on the assumption that the promotion of economic and technological cooperation will create the basis for political and economic stability in the whole of Southeast Asia. Hence, in Japan’s perspective, the best it can do to enhance regional peace and security is to further its economic development by means of aid, trade, and investment. It is further assumed that there is less chance of domestic or international disturbance if each country achieves economic progress. Hosomi Takashi, president of the Overseas Economic Cooperation, an organization for the promotion of economic cooperation between Japan and


developing countries, has argued that unchecked economic instability in the region would promote political upheaval and ultimately, military involvement by communist countries in the area. Therefore, Japan’s aid in alleviating economic pressures could effectively “help maintain a resilient government in office.” Non-military aid to ASEAN countries “would solidify internal political bases and stabilize both the political and the military balance in the area.” Such aid, it was felt, would serve to alleviate “regional tensions and establish a cohesive, viable political stability.”

It is interesting to note that these official views are often shared by leading Japanese experts on Southeast Asia, including Ichimura Shinichi, Yano Toru, Okabe Tatsumi, Nishihara Masahi, Imagawa Eiichi, and Shibusawa Masahi.

These experts generally agree that Japan, playing only an economic role, can strengthen ASEAN governments thereby leading ultimately to regional stability. They believe that Japan must not exert any military pressure in regional conflicts, as in Cambodia, and that Japan’s influence should be restricted to the economic and diplomatic


arenas, avoiding direct participation in the Southeast Asian balance of power. They believe other countries should maintain the balance of power in the region, lending support to the idea that the United States and Japan should engage in a division of labour in maintaining peace in Southeast Asia, economics handled by Japan and military defense by the United States. There is a general consensus that it would be "a most unwise, most incredible, and most irrational approach" for Japan to resort to military means to secure its national interests. These would be better served by the continued development of strong, sustained, mutually beneficial trade relations with the countries of the region. In short, they believe continued emphasis on a purely economic role is more consistent with Japan's real interests as well as its self-perception. "After all, one can contribute best by doing what one is most experienced at and has an aptitude for," wrote Shibusawa Masahide.55

The prevailing attitude of the Japanese people both within and outside government seems to be: "Our present policy works so well, why change it?" The past policy of maintaining a dichotomy between economics on the one hand and politics on the other appears to have been extraordinarily successful. The policy of political and military non-involvement in line with the tenets of the postwar "Peace Constitution" have certainly facilitated Japanese penetration of both developed and developing world markets. Since the 1960s, in fact, it could be argued that Japan began its drive to become the world's premier economic power.

Japan's Military Security Posture

One should not, however, infer from the preceding discussion that Japan is not awakening to security concerns or does not currently perceive a need to re-evaluate its defense and security policies. Changes in Japan's external environment, especially since the U.S. retreat from Vietnam in 1975, have forced a reassessment of the security situation. The factors which have had the greatest impact on the rethinking of

55. Shibusawa, op.cit., p. 117.
policy include the relative decline in U.S. military superiority vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, the signs of retrenchment in U.S. Asian and global security policies, and the related apprehension that US commitments as laid out in the Japanese-U.S. Security Treaty structure may not be maintained. The relative decline of U.S. military power affects the very premise on which Japan's defense and security has rested. In the past, the assumption was that Japan could almost totally depend on the United States for its defense. This has now been called into question. The rapid growth of Soviet military power and the relative decline in U.S. military strength has thus raised more concern in Japan than elsewhere. During the 1960s, Japan's supplies of raw materials and its sea lanes were secure under the Pax Americana--its territorial security was guaranteed by the U.S. Only in the mid-1970s, did Japan begin to doubt both America's capability and its political will to fulfill commitments to the security of East Asia.

Alongside this decline in confidence has been rising concern about growing Soviet military power. Of greatest concern to the Japanese is the rapid expansion of Soviet military capability in the Pacific region and the steady increase in Soviet military activities near Japan, especially the deployment of Soviet military bases and the stationing of ground combat forces on the Soviet occupied, but Japanese-claimed, northern islands of Etorofu, Kunashiri, and Shikotan. The July 1980 report of the Comprehensive National Security Study Group reflects the general decline in Japanese confidence in American strength and leadership, both globally and regionally.

In considering the question of Japan's security, the most fundamental change in the international situation that took place in the 1970s is the termination of clear American supremacy in both the military and the economic spheres.

The military balance between the U.S. and the Soviet Union has changed globally and regionally as the United States has held back on strengthening its military arsenals since the mid 1960s while the Soviet Union has continued to build up its military force. As a result, the U.S. military is no longer able to provide its allies and friends with nearly full security.

In light of these fundamental changes in its external security environment and U.S. demands for larger contributions to defense efforts, Japanese governments have slowly, but steadily, increased defense spending. Over the past five years, Japan has increased military spending by six percent per annum on average. And between 1982 and 1989, the annual rate of increase in defense spending - alongside that of official development assistance spending - has exceeded the rate of growth in total budget spending. In terms of GNP, however, Japanese defense spending remains small: its GNP ratio of about one percent is among the lowest in the world. But, bearing in mind that Japan’s GNP is second only to that of the US, Japan’s defense outlay still ranks fifth in the world (or the third largest in the world if personnel and pension costs are included).

Despite the recent dramatic improvements in East-West relations, Japan plans to continue to boost its military capability. In testimony before the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Upper House in early December 1989 Foreign Minister Nakayame Taro said the politico-security environment in the Asian region makes it unlikely that Japan will reduce the size of its military forces. To justify this, he cited continuing tension on the Korea Peninsula, the conflict in Cambodia and the undiminished Soviet threat in Asia.\footnote{Japan Times Weekly, December 23, 1989.}
According to Gerald Curtis, a prominent specialist on Japan at Columbia University, "With the completion of the 1986-1990 midterm defense plan, Japan will have a total of 300 tactical fighters, about the same number the US Air Force has for defending the continental United States. There will be 60 destroyer type surface ships, almost three times as many as in the US Seventh Fleet which has responsibilities for the entire western Pacific and Indian Oceans. And it will have 100 P-3 C antisubmarine warfare aircraft, about four times as many as the US has in the Seventh Fleet. In addition Japan is increasing spending for support items such as missiles, torpedoes, and other kinds of ammunition." All these military strengths are however to defend "the home islands and sea lanes of communication one thousand miles southeast and southwest of the home islands."  

Japanese government leaders have vowed that Japan will maintain an exclusively defensive military and that Japan would abide by its constitutional proscriptions against playing a military role in assuming responsibilities for playing a greater role in international security. As Nagai S., a high ranking official at Gaimusho stated, "whatever situation may develop in the Southeast Asian region and from whatever direction pressure may come, Japan will never play a military role."  

Even if the U.S. bases in the Philippines were to be closed, Prime Minister Kaifu Toshiki has said in an interview that Japan would not attempt to develop an offensive capability. In this respect, a Japanese


diplomat has remarked. "Bitter experience has taught us not to fill any superpower vacuum." 61

It is noteworthy that since the end of the Vietnam War, and particularly after the Soviet-supported Vietnamese invasion and occupation of Cambodia, the non-communist ASEAN countries have no longer opposed the gradual military buildup of Japan and its enlarged security role within the framework of the U.S. - Japanese security arrangement. Given the lingering memory of Japan's past military aggression, no countries in the region expect Japan to step into the military shoes of the Americans to ensure the security of Southeast Asia. ASEAN hopes instead that Japan will be inclined "to take up some of the slack in the American presence in Asia," 62 and that a "strong" Japan will serve as a deterrent against Soviet "expansionism". Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mahathir Mahamed was reported to have said that Japan was a frontline island bastion for the defense of ASEAN against Soviet power. 63 This implied that ASEAN had no objection to a strengthening of Japan's military capability as long as a stronger Japan would directly contribute to ASEAN regional security.

Some ASEAN leaders initially expressed concern about U.S. pressures on Japan to expand its navy so that it would be capable of defending sea lanes of up to 1,000 miles. After the Soviet Union began to use Vietnam's air and naval bases, ASEAN countries began to perceive that an expanded Japanese navy which would share defense tasks with the U.S. would be necessary in order to help prolong the U.S. naval presence in the region. Each of the ASEAN countries finally came to approve of the plan, as their leaders told Prime Minister Nakasone during the latter's April-May 1983 tour of Southeast Asia. 64

63. Asahi Shimbun, January 1, 1983.
Thus, ASEAN was not unconditionally opposed to Japan’s wider security role in the region. Some ASEAN leaders believe that if amiable relations between ASEAN and Japan are established, Japan’s enlarged security role in the region would not pose a threat. As General Suryohadiprojo Sayidiman, Indonesia’s Ambassador to Japan, has said, "As long as relations with ASEAN are smooth, ASEAN would not be threatened even if Japan’s Self Defense Forces advance into sea areas close to Southeast Asia and even if they undertake escort operations for U.S. aircraft carriers. Whether or not the strengthening of Japan’s self defense power will pose a threat to ASEAN depends ultimately upon whether or not relations between Japan and ASEAN are stable".65

However, and more recently, with the lessening of the Soviet threat and new U.S. plans to reduce its military personnel, ASEAN has become wary of the possibility of Japan taking on an expanded military role. The views expressed by Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew probably reflect sentiments common to all these countries. He openly supports the U.S. military presence in Asia as a means to restrain not only Soviet power but also Japanese power.66

**Prospects for Japan’s Regional Role in the 1990s**

Our review of the postwar Japanese role in Southeast Asia over the past four decades suggests that in spite of “systemic change”67 in the international environment of Southeast Asia since 1975, there has been very little change in Japan’s toward the area. The focus of Japanese

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65. An interview with *Mainichi Shimbun* in April 9, 1983.
67. This term is used by Robert Gilpin in his *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) to refer to “a change in the governance of an international system.” It is “a change within the system rather than a change of the system itself,” and it focuses on “the rise and decline of the dominant states of empires that govern the particular international system.” (p. 42). The term as used here simply refers to the relative decline of U.S. power and the U.S. role in the world.
policy towards the region remains overwhelmingly economic. This continuity has restricted Japan’s contribution to Southeast Asia’s security and stability to trade, investment and aid, and discouraged the export of military goods or the deployment abroad of Japanese military forces.

Japan also has been obliged to play a modest political role in the region resulting from international pressure, especially from the U.S. and ASEAN. This has been evident, for example, in the decision to lend political support to ASEAN following Vietnam’s invasion and occupation of Cambodia and the provision of greater economic aid to Thailand, the 'front line' state of non-communist Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, Japan’s economic self-interest remains the prime determinant of what Japan choses to do in the region. There has been no strong internal pressure to alter this policy. Whether for reasons of self-interest, caution, lack of willingness or foresight, Japan has found it unnecessary to abandon its present restricted security policy.

While maintaining a low political and military profile, the Japanese managed to rebuild their country from the ruins of national disaster. Japan has become the world’s foremost trading power and has achieved unprecedented levels of economic affluence, currently enjoying the second largest GNP in the non-communist world. Thus, the economic approach to the outside world has produced enviable results, and the Japanese see little reason to alter the framework of peacetime trade and prosperity under American protection.

Whether Japan will continue to maintain its present passive and non-military posture through the 1990s and beyond depends on two closely related factors: specifically, how the Japanese public views the country’s security role and how Japanese leaders perceive the changing security environment.

Public opinion polls invariably reveal that Japanese citizens accept the Self-Defense Force (SDF) as a necessary instrument for security but at the same time they also oppose any significant change in the status
quo regarding the size of this SDF and defense spending (see diagram 1, 2).

Diagram 1: Japanese attitudes toward the Defense Budget*

Diagram 2: Japanese attitudes toward Size of the SDF*

*Note: These diagrams present the results of public opinion polls, conducted every three years by the Prime Minister’s Office.

Source: Defense of Japan 1988, p. 196
The most recent public opinion poll, conducted by the Prime Minister’s Office in January 1989, again shows that more than half (about 58-64%) of all Japanese preferred to keep both the military capability of the SDF and the national defense expenditure at their current levels. Only 10-11% favoured an increase. Nearly half of the people polled (47%) opposed sending SDF troops abroad even to help the UN maintain peace and stability in the world. In fact, only 22% were in favour of using the SDF to aid UN peacekeeping efforts. It is clearly obvious from these polls that the Japanese public does not want Japan to expand its military power into Southeast Asia.

Most Japanese are aware that their country has become a world power and, that as such, it should be playing a broader role in international affairs. They, however, did not favour greater military responsibilities as a way of fulfilling global obligations. According to Okita Saburo, a former Japanese Foreign Minister, “... even if the rest of the world were willing to tolerate a greater military role for Japan, a clear majority of the Japanese people support the determination to have their country contribute to a better world in non-military ways -- by employing its economic and technological capabilities to solve global environmental problems, improve health care, advance science, educate foreign students, and foster growth in less developed regions.” He further noted that most Japanese want Japan to continue to use its economic power without becoming a military power. As he explains, “...military power may very well become a less important ‘component’ of international influence in the 21st century ...Japan’s postwar decision to be an exclusively defensive power and to base its security on non-nuclear principles may be a forerunner of global trends. As such, Japanese public opinion most likely will continue to favor building a Japan whose contribution to a


better world is made peacefully and largely through economic strengths."  

This "pacifist" public attitude has imposed practical limitations on policy makers, inhibiting attempts to broaden the Japanese security role. There is therefore little prospect of any domestically induced change in Japan's security role, the continuing debate among the Japanese with regard to their future in the global arena notwithstanding.

Despite the "pacifist" sentiments of the Japanese public, drastic changes in Japan's international environment might trigger a reorientation of Japan's security policy. If essential elements of the wealth and security of Japan are affected by such possible events as an adverse shift in the U.S.-Soviet military balance in East Asia and the Western Pacific or by the United States turning its back on Southeast Asia, Japan would be compelled to adopt a stronger military posture. In the words of Asao Shinichiro, former director general of the Foreign Ministry's North American Affairs Bureau, "...there is one important element that may galvanize Japan's public perception in support of Japan's substantially expanded military role in the Asia-Pacific region, which in itself would be viewed with apprehension by Japan's Asian neighbors. And that would be a radical and visible decline in American military strength and commitment, and the consequent deterioration of American credibility..."  

Asao's remark clearly indicates that should international circumstances demand it, the Japanese government might be able to count on the support of its people on the issue of an expanded military role but this is by no means certain. Moreover, the likelihood of a total or even a major withdrawal of the U.S. from the Asia-Pacific region is remote, as the Japanese know well. Japan believes that the latest U.S. troop-cut proposal is a measure designed mainly to reduce the US

70. Ibid., p. 145.
fiscal deficit, not a response to changes in the international arena; that there would be no decline in U.S. combat reliability, and that US’s "forward deployment strategy" would remain intact. In spite of the decline of U.S. hegemony and its recent military cutbacks in Asia, there is doubt that the Americans remain committed to and are prepared to assume the primary responsibility for the security of the non-Communist states in Southeast Asia. U.S. Defense Secretary Dick Cheney told Japanese Defense Agency Chief Juro Matsumoto during his February 20-24, 1990 visit to Japan that the US plans to cut some of its forces in Asia but that this will not affect Washington’s commitment to security arrangements with its regional allies, including Japan, and that U.S. military strategy in the Far East remains unchanged. Thus, the continuity of American security policy toward the region will continue to be the basis for Japan’s strategic outlook on its future security role in the Asia-Pacific region.

Barring the breakdown of the existing international system or the collapse of U.S.-Japanese alliance, it seems inevitable that Japan will continue to be preoccupied with the economic aspects of its Southeast Asian policy. Neither the prevailing regional order in Southeast Asia nor Japan’s interests in this area are under obvious threat at the present time. Japan will avoid taking any direct military action far removed from its territory. Although Japan’s armed forces are capable of striking far and deep into Southeast Asia, it is clear that it has no intention to do so. Understanding well that an enlarged military role would have negative repercussions on Japan’s economic and political relations with its neighbors, Japanese leaders have steadily resisted policies which would undermine national economic pursuits.

In view of the progress it has made, Japan seeks to extend its policy and ideology of peaceful progress to the whole of Southeast Asia.

Few nations have been fortunate enough to be able to acquire by peaceful means (and subsidies!) what they could not attain militarily. Undoubtedly, Japan has had a good thing going, relying on other nations to pull the chestnuts out of the fire. There is little sign that Japan wants any change in the present regional military set-up. It has no desire at all to assume the role played by the U.S. in safeguarding peace and stability in Southeast Asia.

Any repetition of Japanese military aggression is absolutely out of question. There is no thought given to it in Japan by any segment of society. The rewards to economic progress via peaceful growth and expansion have far surpassed those envisaged or achieved in military conquest. The "pacifist" spirit in Japan today is based solidly on the knowledge that the ultimate battle would be nuclear war with no winners and a horrible aftermath. Although Japan insists that its territory be defended, it resists the idea of war in almost every way. War is seen as the ultimate holocaust. Even its defense measures may be understood as an effort to avoid getting involved in a war by being too obviously a target. The imperialist days are gone. Japan today has no incentive nor the capacity to capture and occupy its former colonies. Both politically and militarily, all states in Southeast Asia are stronger than they were during the 1930s and 1940s.

Concluding Remark

Japan's indirect contribution to the military security of Southeast Asia should be welcomed. There is also considerable scope for Japan to assume a more active role in promoting regional security without resorting to any direct military involvement.

Japan is the principal beneficiary of the postwar international order created essentially by the U.S. It is only fair perhaps that Japan should shoulder a larger burden to support the American security role in the Asia-Pacific region. For example, Japan could contribute directly and indirectly to the costs of maintaining US personnel and bases in the region. Specifically, Japan might consider providing a substantial
package of economic assistance to the Philippines in an effort to promote greater political stability in that country and to ensure the continued presence of US military installation.74 In addition:

- Japan should continue to supplement U.S. military power in Asia in order to help maintain a stable balance of power in this part of the world. Japan should also engage in greater security cooperation with ASEAN by exchanging technical data and intelligence information to cope with particular security problems.

- Japan should continue to coordinate its diplomatic efforts with those of ASEAN in the continuing search for peace in Cambodia. Once a comprehensive political settlement is reached, Japan should cooperate with the international community to help reconstruct and to develop the economies of Cambodia and of Vietnam as agreed at the Paris International Conference on Cambodia.75 Working within the Paris Conference framework would allow Japan to avoid possible national resentments which might arise if a dominant Japanese role was seen to be unilateral.

- In a wider economic context, it should be stressed that Japan possesses a huge capital surplus, a large market and exceptional technological capacity. Japan can therefore do much more to extend financial and technical cooperation to the efforts of ASEAN to promote economic growth through development of private industry. Closely related to this, Japan should improve the quality of its aid. Unlike other major powers, Japan places emphasis on loans rather than grants. The quality of its aid lags far behind those of Western European donor countries. Finally,
Japan should widen access to its markets and reduce trade protectionism to a minimum.

In summation, Japan should help other countries' economies in order to promote peace and stability in the world, thereby winning the respect of other nations and earning its position as one of the world's major powers. Southeast Asia is the area where its economic leadership would be most appropriate, most appreciated and very effective. □