4 The Gulf War

The war in the Persian Gulf in 1990–91 was a defining moment in the evolution of U.S.-Japan relations. For the United States, the challenge was to organize a broad international coalition under UN auspices in order to reverse Iraq's brazen aggression against Kuwait; for Japan, it was whether the nation could transcend the policy reflexes of the Yoshida doctrine and participate in defining new rules for handling international security issues in the post–cold war world.

For the Bush administration, victory in the Gulf war was a triumph of crisis management and coalition diplomacy. The president's popularity surged, and the United States emerged with its reputation as the world's only remaining military superpower enhanced. By contrast, the Gulf war experience left most Japanese distressed, some embittered. Despite Japan's economic power, its political role in the anti-Iraqi coalition was marginal; its reluctance to dispatch noncombat support personnel to the Gulf exposed it to sharp criticism from Western and Arab countries alike, and even its financial contributions—which ultimately exceeded those of any country outside the Gulf region—earned Japan faint praise and little gratitude.

The conflict surfaced latent tensions in the relationship between Washington and Tokyo. It prompted some Americans to question Japan's reliability as an ally and reinforced doubts about Japan's willingness to play a global political role commensurate with its economic

power. In Japan, it heightened suspicions that the global partnership Washington urged would allow the United States to call the tune while leaving Japan to pay the bill and aroused in many Japanese a desire for a foreign policy less dependent on the United States and more focused on Asian regional concerns.

This outcome scarcely seemed foreordained. In many respects, the Gulf crisis appeared ideally suited for close U.S.-Japanese collaboration and a redefinition of Japan's international security role. Iraq's attack on Kuwait was an act of blatant aggression; Saddam Hussein, a reckless egomaniac who had devoted a decade and incalculable resources to military adventures against his neighbors, squandered billions to develop weapons of mass destruction and displayed open contempt for the international community by providing a haven for terrorists. By occupying Kuwait and threatening Saudi Arabia, Saddam appeared determined to acquire a hammerlock on the Middle East's oil—a matter of considerable consequence to Japan, 70 percent of whose petroleum was imported from the Gulf area. The multilateral effort to respond to Iraqi aggression was centered in the United Nations, an institution to which Japanese leaders had for decades expressed a special devotion. And the Gulf conflict erupted at a moment when Japan was groping for a larger and more ambitious international role in concert with the United States and Western Europe.

Tokyo's first reactions to Kuwait's invasion were encouraging. Prompted perhaps by a telephone call from President Bush on August 2, Prime Minister Kaifu immediately condemned Iraq's blatant aggression. The following day Tokyo froze Iraqi and Kuwaiti assets, and Prime Minister Kaifu expressed Japan's readiness to comply with sanctions imposed by the Security Council. Tokyo subsequently supported UN resolutions calling for the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait, the restoration of Kuwait's legitimate government, the safe release of all hostages, and the maintenance of security and stability in the Gulf.

After these initial steps, however, the going got considerably tougher. While this occasioned frustration, it came as no particular surprise to me. Japan's postwar history had left its government ill equipped to respond decisively to international security crises. Japan's involvement in UN peacekeeping was confined to the provision of financial support, and it had no tradition of expending political capital or assuming major political risks on behalf of general

principles. Confronted by external difficulties, Japanese leaders had become accustomed to react by keeping their heads down, minimizing risks, and leaving security responsibilities to others—mainly to the United States.

The Bush administration, outraged by Iraq's disregard for the UN charter, moved by the fate of a small nation whose territorial integrity was violated, alarmed by the strategic consequences of Saddam Hussein's increased influence over the international oil trade, and braced by the steely resolve of UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, was determined to respond. It consequently mounted a multilateral effort to protect Saudi Arabia and drive Iraq out of Kuwait. By contrast, the Japanese business community was not nearly as alarmed about Iraq's growing power. As they saw it, those who controlled oil could not eat the commodity; they had to sell it to realize any benefit from it. And as a huge customer with reasonably diversified sources, Japan, its leaders confidently assumed, could obtain the energy supplies it needed, even if it had to pay a higher price.

More fundamentally, Americans and Japanese tend to draw diverging lessons from twentieth-century history. For U.S. leaders, Munich provided the enduring lesson of history and a source of policy guidance: aggression must be promptly stopped; appeasement merely breeds greater dangers. For most Japanese, Hiroshima is a reminder that resorting to arms—at least by Japan—leads to disaster and defeat.

A reflection of these fundamental differences in our historic memories and policy reflexes was the absence in Japan of much public debate about the justice of the allied coalition's cause or, for that matter, about the policy choices facing Japan. Another was a lack of public clamor for action by the government—except to secure the release of Japanese hostages. For most Japanese, the conflict between Iraq and Kuwait was a "fire on the other side of the river": let those closer to the blaze risk getting burned trying to put it out. Naohiro Amaya, former vice minister of MITI, likened Japan's performance to that of an ostrich confronting a lion: despite its agility, the bird will panic and seek to avert danger by burying its head in the sand. In this context, it was not surprising that Tokyo's actions, when they came, appeared to be prompted more by the sting of external criticism or the fear of diplomatic isolation than by the pursuit of a clear-cut foreign policy design.

Sharing the Costs and Risks

I first learned of Iraq's invasion on CNN while vacationing with my wife, Bonny, in Sun Valley, Idaho. I returned to Tokyo promptly and immediately initiated informal soundings of senior government and party officials. I had no instructions, but experience prompted me to forewarn Vice Foreign Minister Takakazu Kuriyama, Deputy Foreign Minister Hisashi Owada, and LDP Secretary General Ichiro Ozawa about the likelihood of early U.S. burden-sharing requests. An administration that was preparing to deploy troops halfway around the world to defend oil regarded as more critical to European and Japanese prosperity than to its own would surely expect its allies to help with the costs and risks of that effort.

I believed that the U.S.-Japan alliance reflected a wealth of converging national interests. But in a democratic era, a durable alliance required strong emotional and psychological underpinnings as well. The crisis in the Gulf would have a powerful effect on these underpinnings, I felt, for when a nation risks its sons and daughters in combat, it discovers anew who its real friends are. The future of the alliance would depend importantly on whether Americans saw Japan standing shoulder to shoulder with them in this test of wills. I recognized, of course, that Japan had a unique history and constitution with respect to military engagement abroad, and I had no desire to see Japan dispatch combat troops overseas. But I urged Japanese leaders to think of ways in which Japan could perform noncombat duties in the Gulf region so that it would be seen as an active participant in the broad multilateral effort that was taking shape.

Kuriyama, Owada, and Ozawa all appeared to recognize the dangers this looming crisis posed for Japan. Regrettably, the press and general public continued to view the crisis as someone else's problem, and most key members of the political establishment did little to counter that complacent view.

The first hint of future difficulties came on August 12, when I accompanied Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yuetter to a Sunday morning call on Prime Minister Kaifu. The prime minister had been scheduled to embark on a previously planned visit to the Gulf region on August 14. Clayton and I urged him to go through with the trip, which now offered a timely opportunity to extend forthright political support to Egypt, Turkey, Jordan, Oman, and Saudi Arabia—nations

facing severe internal and external pressures. Kaifu was noncommittal. Senior Foreign Ministry officials were reluctant to see the prime minister travel into an area of tension. And they did not wish to expose him to Arab requests for help since he would be in no position to respond. Presuming that swift decisions regarding Japanese assistance were impossible, they opposed the trip, which hours later was abruptly postponed.

My first instruction to seek specific Japanese help arrived that week, and I discussed its contents with Vice Minister Kuriyama on August 15. The general outline of our desires were known, for the president had talked to the prime minister by phone two days before. Washington requested financial support for the coalition; economic assistance for Turkey, Egypt, and Jordan; additional host nation support; and Japanese personnel contributions to back up the coalition. I mentioned a variety of possible responses to this last request: medical volunteers, logistic support in transporting personnel and equipment to Saudi Arabia, Japanese help in managing the anticipated exodus of large numbers of refugees from Kuwait, and participation in the multinational naval force through the dispatch of minesweepers to help clear the Gulf and transport vessels to carry equipment from Egypt to Saudi Arabia. What Washington initially seemed to want most was the deployment of a Japanese ship manned by Japanese personnel and bearing a Japanese flag as a symbol of Tokyo's involvement in a common effort.

I had known "Kiki" Kuriyama for nearly twenty years and had the highest respect for his intellectual acuity and commitment to the U.S.-Japan alliance. Personal friends, we had consulted on many occasions during my tenure as under secretary and had always leveled with one another. His response to our request was mixed. He readily acknowledged the importance of a substantial Japanese contribution; while consultations within the government were clearly required before decisions could be announced, he hinted at Japan's readiness to offer support that went beyond financial subventions. But he emphatically noted the political and constitutional difficulties that would attend any involvement of Japanese Self-Defense Forces in an area of strife and clearly signaled that there was no likelihood that Japan would dispatch minesweepers.

His reaction came as no surprise to me; I had thought it extremely improbable that Japan would provide even nonlethal military support

to the coalition. True, the Japanese had quietly performed minesweeping tasks during the Korean War, but at the time, Japan was still under occupation, so that did not constitute a precedent for the voluntary contribution of such support. Beyond this, Tokyo had contemplated dispatching vessels to the Gulf in 1987 in support of U.S. and European efforts to provide protection for Kuwaiti-flagged tankers. Then–prime minister Nakasone was among those favoring the deployment, and, though the Japanese government eventually demurred, some of the arguments raised against the deployment of minesweepers in 1987 were now moot; for example, by contrast with the war between Iran and Iraq, Japan could not be neutral in this conflict since it supported the UN resolutions and Iraq did not, and this time the multilateral force in the Gulf would operate under explicit UN Security Council sanction.

Still, aside from the fact that I was instructed to do so, I felt no qualms in proposing the dispatch of minesweepers or transport vessels. Japan possessed these capabilities; the purpose was clearly defensive and related to Western commercial as well as security interests; there was an obvious need; and the vessels would be involved in a multilateral venture under UN auspices. If the Japanese were willing to provide such nonlethal support, all the better; if not, they might compensate by further sweetening their financial contribution or providing other forms of nonmilitary backup support.

I had numerous opportunities during the following weeks to echo the points I registered with Kuriyama in encounters with other Japanese leaders. In public remarks I concentrated on a few broad themes: the threat Saddam Hussein's aggression posed for the future viability of the United Nations; the danger to the world economy and Japan's prosperity of Iraq's controlling such a large share of the world's oil resources; the determination of the United States and its friends to mobilize a broad coalition to resist Iraq and to shoulder whatever costs and risks this entailed; and the importance of quick, substantial, and visible Japanese contributions if our bilateral relationship was to be maintained in good health.

Detailed conversations about what the coalition required and what other allies were planning to supply were held in Washington as well as in Tokyo. Bob Kimmitt, my successor as under secretary of state, was the point man in that effort. He spoke authoritatively, enjoyed full access to Secretary Baker, had a good feel for Japanese sensitivities, and

kept the embassy fully informed. Subsequently he dispatched an interagency team of State, Defense, and NSC professionals to Tokyo to encourage, influence, and accelerate Japanese decisions. This team—lead by Desaix Anderson, Karl Jackson, and Carl Ford, supplemented by uniformed officers from our armed forces—provided timely liaison with key Japanese officials who were pressing their government for more decisive action. But decisions did not come easily or quickly.

Throughout August, Japanese authorities struggled inconclusively to determine the appropriate forms and levels of their support. My advice—and that of my fellow ambassadors from the United Kingdom, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Turkey, with whom I consulted regularly—was simple: aim high! The biblical injunction "From those to whom much has been given, much will be asked" seemed pertinent. That notwithstanding, the request to send minesweepers was quietly dropped. Keeping the request alive would have invited journalists to criticize U.S. judgment rather than urge a prompt Japanese response.

The Japanese government seemed unable to approach decisions regarding its role in the Gulf crisis boldly or with a sense of urgency. All the usual constraints were evident: the Finance Ministry's reluctance to release funds, the political establishment's reticence to consider novel security measures, the "business as usual" inclination of industrial circles, the vulnerability of labor unions to leftist pressures for political correctness, and the sectionalism and parochialism of the bureaucracy. This is not to say that stronger political will could have overcome resistance. Even those eager to help were in a quandary as to what to do. No emergency legislation existed that could have been used to compel civilians to staff commercial vessels to carry out sea lifts. Such legislation could have been proposed; however, its passage would have been time consuming, and its fate uncertain. Such concerns reinforced the disposition of a weak leadership to delay hard choices. Delay, moreover, allowed various Japanese officials and special envoys—some self-appointed—to shop around in Washington in order better to judge U.S. officials' expectations of Japan.

I could not keep track of all these contacts, but I did worry about them. I knew that a number of midlevel Washington officials tended to express personal views to Japanese friends with a ring of authority greater than they deserved. I was aware that special Japanese representatives often heard only what they wanted to hear. The inevitable result was confusion. One senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs official later told

me that a well-placed Japanese visitor to Washington had been told in late August by a senior official—whom he would not identify—that the U.S. government would be satisfied, though scarcely thrilled, with a Japanese contribution of $1 billion by the end of the year, with increased monthly payments in 1991. This fictitious figure proved to be a substantial misjudgment, not least because by this time the Pentagon was projecting its own incremental spending at about $1 billion per month.

Japan announced its first official support package on August 29. It included unspecified loans and grants to Egypt, Turkey, and Jordan; one hundred medical specialists; a pledge to supply refrigeration equipment, water, and other goods to help coalition forces cope with the desert heat; and a commitment to transport various nonlethal items on civilian aircraft and ships, as well as to pay for military equipment to be flown to Saudi Arabia on planes chartered from other nations. The issue of additional Japanese host nation support was not addressed in the package because contingency funds were limited and some bureaucratic resistance had yet to be overcome. But we were assured by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the subject would be handled before the next fiscal year's budget came into effect.

Unfortunately, the announcement raised as many questions as it answered. It was difficult to judge the overall value of Japan's support, since many details were to be filled in later. The projected economic aid to the frontline states was to be released only after the conclusion of painstaking negotiations over specific projects. The Ministry of Finance insisted on channeling aid through a consortium that included the IMF, and since the IMF was already pressing Egypt for extremely tough austerity measures, Japan's pledge of assistance would scarcely serve the immediate political goal of bolstering the solidarity of Muslim countries confronting Iraq. The offer of medical support personnel was welcome, but press reports and other sources indicated that only a handful of individuals were likely to volunteer. In any event, Arab governments appeared interested in receiving medical personnel only if hostilities broke out.

Washington wanted logistic assistance, but many of our specific requests were parried or refused. We asked Japan to provide transport aircraft to carry military supplies. The request was denied on legal grounds. Requests for supply ships and military tankers evoked a similar response. When friends in the Foreign Ministry came up with their own offer to charter nonmilitary ships for supply runs, delays pre-

vented the finalization of arrangements until late September, when the heaviest demand for such logistic assistance had passed. In response to our request for the airlifting of troops and supplies to Saudi Arabia, prolonged consultations among the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Transportation, and Japan Airlines yielded a cumbersome and ultimately unworkable plan that would have required several transfers of equipment to different planes at stops en route. Only nonmilitary supplies were to be transported, and JAL insisted on reserving the right to inspect cargo. Ultimately the plan was dropped in favor of chartering U.S. planes.

Hopes that Japanese auto companies might fund or lease vehicle transporters came to naught. A proposal that Self-Defense Force aircraft might be used to transport refugees out of danger zones was dropped, after brief consideration, for fear of domestic criticism. And transportation services for which Japan paid the bill were limited to carrying food, medicines, and noncombat gear—a condition that seemed extremely fastidious to Americans, who would bear the burdens of combat if conflict erupted.

One of the episodes I found most irritating received little public notice back home. Japanese ship repair facilities at the Yokosuka naval base were among the most impressive in the world. During normal times, the efficient management of Seventh Fleet repairs was aided by dispatching key workers to Bahrain to assess the condition of ships returning to their home port in Japan, so that work schedules could be formulated in advance and implemented with greater efficiency. During Desert Shield, however, leftist unions resisted the dispatch of Japanese workers to the Gulf area on grounds that it would engage them too deeply in support of our operational requirements. The implication was perverse: Japanese unions would support the U.S.-Japanese alliance only when their help was not urgently needed.

I complained about this incident during an office call on Shin Kanemaru, whom I had first met when he was serving as director of Japan's Self-Defense Agency in the 1970s. He asked whether I had discussed the matter with Makoto Tanabe, a senior member of the Socialist Party who was reportedly close to the seamen's union. I said no. He immediately picked up the phone, called Tanabe, and requested that he make himself available to discuss the matter with me. I met Tanabe at my residence later that day. He offered to be helpful, but the problem remained unresolved.

During those weeks of August and early September 1990, Japan's conduct distressed its friends and angered its critics. While Washington's official response to Japan's August 29 package was politely affirmative, unofficial reactions were more telling. One unidentified U.S. official commented sarcastically to the press that we faced a demanding military challenge in the Middle East, and "there's a limited number of Girl Scout cookies that can be used there." Nor was the disappointment confined to Americans. Motoo Shiina, a respected defense expert in the Japanese Diet observed, "This was a time when Japan was really tested to see if it could bear its international responsibility. I am disappointed that Japan could not show the will and the courage to do something more."[1]

I became increasingly blunt about expressing to Japanese editorial writers and others my exasperation with the delays in Japan's announced plans, the uncertainties surrounding its promised assistance, and the detailed conditions that restricted the operational and political value of its support. I had numerous chances to discuss Japan's principled refusal to involve itself in military activities and to draw parallels with our own concept of conscientious objection to military service. I regularly noted that in our culture the concept of conscientious objection did not exempt its practitioners from sacrifice and risk; for example, those who opted for service in the Medical Corps often operated under conditions of maximum danger. COs merely shouldered such risks on terms compatible with their religious or moral principles. This pitch generally elicited pained or puzzled silence.

Washington's muted reaction to the announcement of the August 29 package prompted the Japanese to assess its value at $1 billion. That helped some, but with the costs of the coalition effort mounting, President Bush decided to send cabinet-level envoys around the world to dun key allies for augmented support. Secretary of the Treasury Nick Brady and Deputy Secretary of State Larry Eagleburger were designated to visit Japan. They arrived on September 7 with little advance notice. Though they were on the ground only a few hours, they managed to outline their requirements and hopes—$2 billion in aid for the frontline states, with $600 million of this available for quick disbursement, and an additional $1 billion to support the multilateral force—

1. Both quotations from the *New York Times*, August 30, 1990, p. A14.

in separate meetings with Prime Minister Kaifu, Foreign Minister Nakayama, and Finance Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto.

Many Japanese evinced surprise, even consternation, at the inflation in our requests. But, as I subsequently reminded key officials and politicians, we were not asking Tokyo for more help in order to shave our own contributions. Far from it. Aside from putting our military forces at risk, we were already contributing more than $2 billion annually in aid to Egypt, most of it in the form of grants, and we were now offering to write off $7 billion in FMS (Foreign Military Sales) debts. If we had not acted with dispatch in sending troops to Saudi Arabia, Japan would probably have seen a swift and dramatic increase in its oil bill.

Having just come from stops in London and Paris where Mrs. Thatcher and President Mitterand had enthusiastically volunteered increased support for the coalition, Brady and Eagleburger found the meetings in Tokyo—particularly the detailed and extended dinner discussion with Mr. Hashimoto—disappointing. Hashimoto possessed no authority to commit to a specific level of support; he represented a ministry whose traditional role in budgetary matters was to hold the line, and he conducted the meeting as if its principal purpose was to determine the strength of U.S. pressure. I guessed that Hashimoto was on the spot. He had pressed MOF bureaucrats to support the recently announced $1 billion package and wasn't pleased to be asked to go to the well again so soon. At the dinner with us, in the presence of his MOF associates, he chose to assert the tough line that no further contributions would be possible during the current fiscal year—a position that Brady and Eagleburger characterized firmly as a huge mistake. Overall, the discussion lacked a spirit of cooperation and impressed my Washington visitors as more akin to negotiating with a competitor than consulting with an ally. Brady and Eagleburger departed without making much visible effort to conceal their irritation. I shared their frustration but urged patience and reminded them that haste was not a noteworthy attribute of Japanese decision making. I could only hope that the strength of their representation would produce a worthy result. As it happened, they got some unsolicited help.

If the administration was irritable, the Congress was angry. My visitors had scarcely departed Tokyo when the House of Representatives voted 370 to 53 for an anti-Japanese amendment attached to a military spending bill sponsored by Congressman David Bonior. This bill provided that Japan pay all the expenses associated with our military pres-

ence in that country, including the salaries of U.S. personnel. If Japan refused to pay, our forces were to be withdrawn at a rate of five thousand a year. The amendment was silly; its logic contradictory. If implemented, its consequences would have been counterproductive for both countries. Still, it provided a fair barometer of sentiment on the Hill. For its part, the Senate unanimously passed a resolution warning of a serious downgrading of relations with allies that were deemed not to have made appropriate contributions to the Gulf coalition effort. Its ostensible targets were Bonn and Tokyo.

Within a week, Prime Minister Kaifu called President Bush to inform him that Japan would provide an additional $3 billion in support—$1 billion for the multilateral alliance and $2 billion for the frontline states with $600 million of the latter funds earmarked for rapid disbursement. The decision was announced formally on September 14. A marked improvement also appeared in other cooperative activities. Thanks to imaginative and energetic efforts by younger Foreign Ministry officials, led by Minoru Tamba and Yukio Okamoto, the Japanese shared with the Pentagon lists of equipment they could supply. This enabled Defense Department officials to check them against the coalition's requirements, thereby expediting deliveries. Eight hundred Toyota Landrovers were included in one major shipment to Saudi Arabia. The legal entity Japan needed to channel financial contributions to the Gulf coalition was formally established. And on September 14 Prime Minister Kaifu publicly announced plans to seek legislation to create the United Nations Cooperation Corps, a civilian agency that would enable Japan to perform support functions for UN peacekeeping forces

Just as the Japanese began to get their act together, I was reminded that Tokyo had no monopoly on nit-picking. Officials in Washington, noting that the Japanese government had pledged another billion dollars in support of the multilateral alliance, instructed me to seek confirmation that the full amount would be supplied exclusively to the United States.

Japan's first billion contribution had been committed to the coalition, although the lion's share was provided to Washington. This arrangement had been devised to allow Tokyo to demonstrate that it was participating in a multilateral undertaking. The Japanese were extremely unlikely to deviate from that precedent. Moreover, Sir John Whitehead, the UK's able ambassador, told me the British were already

anticipating a modest contribution to their forces from this second tranche, and I knew that the Japanese wished to extend at least some modest support to certain troop-contributing Arab governments in order to cover their flanks politically in the Middle East. These seemed reasonable concerns, and I expressed my misgivings to Bob Kimmitt and others about carrying out the requested demarche. Over my objections, the instructions were confirmed, and I took up the matter with Vice Minister Kuriyama. As expected, he reiterated that the bulk of Japan's support would go to Washington but maintained firmly that since Japan was contributing to a multilateral coalition, it could not ignore all claims except our own.

Personal Concerns

The quest for financial and other forms of support did not exhaust my concerns during the fall of 1990. One was a purely personal matter. *Bungei Shunju*, one of Japan's most prominent intellectual magazines, ran a major article on me in its October 1990 issue. Dubbing me "*Gaiatsu-san*"—"Mr. Foreign Pressure"—the article was laced with criticism of my allegedly blunt methods. In some respects the central theme of the article—that I had figured out the Japanese political system and knew where to apply pressure in order to achieve results—was a backhanded compliment. But I was uncomfortable with the direct criticisms it contained from senior LDP politicians like former chief cabinet secretary Masaharu Gotoda, for whom I had great respect.

Similar criticisms had been conveyed privately some months earlier. Bill Franklin, a good friend and former president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Tokyo, had come to me in the spring of 1990 to report complaints from two "very prominent members of the Japanese business establishment" to the effect that I was insufficiently solicitous of the interests of "my hosts," i.e., the Japanese government. I asked Bill who had passed on this observation, but he had promised them he would not disclose their identities. I told him I would be happy to discuss the situation with them but couldn't very well do that without knowing who they were. I suggested he go back and inform them that while I attempted to assure that Washington had a decent appreciation of the situation in Japan, the Japanese government had a very able ambassador in Washington whose job it was to safeguard

Tokyo's equities in the relationship. My legal obligation was to look after our interests. Fortunately, on many issues U.S. and Japanese interests converged. I heard nothing further about this from Bill.

Some of the commentary in the *Bungei Shunju* article—for example, that I had breached protocol by making my case outside usual bureaucratic channels—was galling. The Japanese ambassador in Washington routinely met with politicians on both sides of the aisle in Congress, and its embassy lobbied energetically on behalf of Japanese interests both directly and through a stable of lawyers and public relations specialists. I figured that what was sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander. Still, my concern about the article grew when other journals picked up the story and embroidered the critical commentary. Whether this was the herd instinct of Japanese journalism in action or a more calculated and orchestrated official effort to diminish my standing, I never knew.

I was especially apprehensive about rumors suggesting that former prime minister Takeshita, perhaps the single most powerful member of the LDP, had voiced some of these same criticisms and expressed questions as to whether I retained the confidence of the White House. A related but separate concern involved suggestions that my frequent calls on Secretary General Ozawa and various LDP faction leaders, juxtaposed against infrequent calls at the *kantei* (the prime minister's official residence), implied a lack of respect for Mr. Kaifu. I reported the rumors concerning Takeshita to Washington and later learned that Secretary Baker had sent him a private note not only affirming that I enjoyed his full confidence but urging Takeshita to use me as a channel for passing sensitive messages to the secretary. Evidently this had some effect, for all my subsequent meetings with Mr. Takeshita were thoroughly cordial.

The Japanese press displayed an unusual interest in my relationship with Ichiro Ozawa. The contents of confidential meetings that I had with him at my residence seemed to circulate informally among Japanese correspondents, and occasional references to them showed up in the papers. According to the conventional wisdom I exerted exorbitant influence over the Japanese government through Ozawa. In truth, my relationship with him was less intimate than the press often suggested. But I liked and respected him. I enjoyed our conversations, which were straightforward and direct. He had an interest in the big issues, and his focus was on fixing problems, not merely analyzing

them. He wanted to make things happen, and he knew that politics was the art of the possible. He was self-assured without being cocky. He understood the value of the U.S.-Japan relationship, and he was willing to utilize his considerable political skills to solve problems when they emerged.

Hostage Diplomacy

A more significant concern to Washington was the danger of diplomatic freelancing on the hostage issue. One hundred thirty-nine Japanese hostages were being held in Baghdad, and another one hundred sixty-six Japanese nationals, while not formally detained, were unable to secure exit visas from Iraq. It was clear that Saddam Hussein intended to use hostages as a lever not only to deter attacks but to divide his opponents. He was eager to lure countries into deals for the release of their nationals, and Japan may have appeared susceptible to blackmail or blandishment. The U.S. Government, on the basis of extensive and occasionally bitter experience, was convinced that the chances of securing hostage releases on terms compatible with other objectives would be increased if all countries stood united in their resistance to Saddam Hussein's ploys, forswearing any attempt to negotiate special deals.

In previous episodes, the Japanese government had displayed a readiness to negotiate for the release of hostages. Financial inducements were not excluded as a matter of principle. The Kaifu government was under intense domestic political pressure to demonstrate that it would leave no stone unturned in seeking the release of Japanese hostages. And certain LDP and opposition politicians were eager to get into the act.

One of these, former prime minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, utilizing contacts he had established with senior Iraqi leaders during his tenure as MITI minister in the 1970s, announced that he would visit Baghdad in early November to explore possibilities for accelerating the release of the hostages. Washington reacted nervously to this report. It came at a time when the efficacy of our sanctions policy was subject to growing doubts. Difficult decisions consequently loomed, and sensitivities to alliance solidarity were heightened. Washington's doubts about Japan's fortitude were rekindled at this time by reports that its consul general in New York, Ambassador Masamichi Hanabusa, was

publicly expressing doubts about the wisdom of U.S. policy in the Gulf. And the Japanese press and media were, as usual, full of commentary questioning Washington's inclination to confront Saddam Hussein.

Fortunately, Mr. Nakasone forewarned me about his plans before his trip was publicly announced, and he promised to brief me prior to his departure. In this meeting, which took place on October 29, Nakasone emphasized that he was going as a former prime minister invited by an Iraqi-Japanese friendship group, not as a representative of the LDP or the government. The meeting allowed me in turn to convey to the former prime minister the decided lack of enthusiasm his proposed trip had evoked in Washington and to emphasize the devastating effects a separate deal for the release of Japanese hostages would have on the alliance. I expressed concern about the procession of Western leaders beating a path to Baghdad. Such visits relieved Saddam's isolation, provoked speculation about cracks in alliance solidarity, and gave the Iraqi leader potential diplomatic leverage. I also expressed uneasiness about hints in an article Nakasone had recently published suggesting the possibility of a mediating role for Japan rather than highlighting Japan's firm adherence to all UN resolutions.

Whether Nakasone needed any reminders on this issue was an open question. He was an experienced politician who had cultivated close relations with the United States throughout his tenure as prime minister. Nonetheless, since his involvement in the scandal that resulted after the Recruit Corporation made improper political contributions to the LDP in return for help in working around government regulations, his influence had diminished, and there was the possibility that he might attempt some high-visibility diplomatic maneuvering to enhance his standing at home. Another source of inspiration may have come from former president Jimmy Carter, with whom Nakasone had met during Carter's visit to Tokyo a few weeks earlier. During our conversation, I noted that Carter's publicly expressed views were sharply at variance with the administration's and urged Nakasone to remind Saddam forcefully that settlement of the Persian Gulf crisis required his compliance with *all* UN resolutions. In any event, his trip did result in the release of seventy-four Japanese hostages but, as far as I could judge, he had done no major harm to allied solidarity nor gained much political mileage in Japan. His jaunt to the Middle East drew criticism, however, from the Bush administration's spokesperson,

Marlin Fitzwater, and from Vice President Quayle, who was visiting Tokyo for the enthronement of the emperor.

Nakasone made one further attempt in early January 1991 to mediate a compromise in the Persian Gulf. He sent a personal emissary, Bunsei Sato, to Baghdad to test reactions to a compromise proposal involving concessions—including a guarantee of access to international waterways for Iraq—that were opposed publicly by both the American and the Japanese governments. Nakasone defended his effort, saying that a solution required mediation and compromise. The initiative died of its own weight, however. Events had acquired a momentum of their own, and Nakasone's views were neither backed by his own government nor taken seriously by the parties concerned.

Peacekeeping Operations Bill

Pressure on Japan to contribute personnel as well as financial support to the coalition effort in the Gulf, as noted, prompted Tokyo to seek a new legal basis for supporting UN-sponsored peacekeeping activities. Theoretically, the government might have attempted to undertake such activities on the basis of a reinterpretation of what the constitution and Self-Defense Force Law permitted. But the prevailing consensus was that new legislation was required, and Prime Minister Kaifu announced in early September 1990 that a new law would be drafted and introduced within weeks.

The drama that unfolded over the next two months—and was to be replayed periodically for nearly two more years—involved the interplay of two considerations: international concerns encouraged the LDP to seek the swift passage of a peacekeeping operations bill, while domestic realities required it to secure the acquiescence of some opposition votes to put together the necessary majority in the Upper House. The desire for a quick result enhanced the leverage of opposition parties, thereby enabling them to impose a host of detailed conditions on Japan's participation in peacekeeping activities—not that the governing party sought a legislative carte blanche. But divisions within the LDP left it unable or unwilling to focus the public debate on broad foreign policy and constitutional guidelines and principles. The result was confusion and a series of compromises that managed, in Professor Takashi Inoguchi's subsequent comment, "to combine

absurdly detailed and limiting provisions with an astonishing overall vagueness."[2]

Prime Minister Kaifu initially proposed the creation of an unarmed, civilian, volunteer "UN Cooperation Corps." The idea was for this force to provide communications, surveillance, and medical support for UN peacekeepers while staying well away from the front lines. The proposal drew attacks from virtually all ends of the political spectrum. Socialists as well as moderate opposition groups saw it as a dangerous step down a slippery slope. The military establishment was offended by its exclusion from participation in peacekeeping activities. Within the LDP, members of the defense caucus contended that without the discipline of military training, such a force would be ineffective and potentially vulnerable. Poll results suggested that the public was skeptical.

Former prime minister Takeshita and Secretary General Ozawa proposed that instead of submitting brand-new legislation, the government seek a revision of the Self-Defense Force Law to permit military units to take part in peacekeeping activities in the Gulf. This was reportedly opposed by Prime Minister Kaifu and Foreign Minister Nakayama, among others, reportedly out of concern that such a move would trigger adverse reactions in neighboring Asian countries while providing new and unwelcome authority and prestige to the Defense Agency and Self-Defense Forces.

After several false starts, the cabinet finally approved a plan on October 14 that would allow soldiers to go to the Gulf area to perform tasks behind the lines but bar them from the threat or use of force. Specifically, the bill limited Japanese units to the surveillance of cease-fires and elections and the performance of telecommunications, maintenance, medical care, transportation, and disaster relief activities. Despite its modest scope, few political analysts thought much of the plan's prospects.

I was determined to keep the United States out of this political maelstrom. The Japanese would have to sort out for themselves the precise nature of their future security role in the world. We would only compound the confusion in Tokyo and complicate our relations with Japan if we intruded in this highly charged debate. I addressed the issue

2. Quoted in Kiyofuku Chuma, "The Debate over Japan's Participation in Peacekeeping Operations," *Japan Review of International Affairs* 6, no. 3 (fall 1992): 248.

in a speech to a large gathering of young LDP political leaders in Ito on September 9, 1990. As delicately as I could, I urged the audience to extend Japan's contribution to the multilateral alliance beyond mere financial support. As for its direct involvement, I said:

> I do not wish to take a position on the legal or constitutional issues the crisis in the Gulf poses for Japan. They are important issues. We know their sensitivity. They are properly yours to define and to resolve. Your friends abroad have a stake in the outcome, however, because your answers will indicate to others what role you are ready to play in future UN peacekeeping ventures and what share of the costs and risks you are prepared to shoulder. Naturally we would expect your response to reflect what your national interests and your stature in the international community require. Predictably, your American friends hope you will be generous and far-sighted.

On the golf course that afternoon, Tsutomu Hata, one of the hosts of the meeting, expressed some misgivings about my remarks. He suggested that if I wanted a better understanding of Japanese sensitivities on this issue, I should talk to Masaharu Gotoda. Gotoda, who had served as chief cabinet secretary to former prime minister Nakasone, was widely known as a man of probity, independence, and political courage. I had met him only at large functions and asked my political section to arrange a meeting. A lunch was set up in mid-October, and on the appointed day Gotoda arrived at my residence with two other LDP Diet members—Koji Kakizawa and Kazuo Aichi—at hand. Both were younger; both, it turned out, disagreed with Gotoda on the issue of Japan's participation in UN peacekeeping.

Gotoda expressed strong reservations about any Japanese involvement in peacekeeping because of his evident doubts about Japan's ability to sustain effective civilian control over a military force whose capabilities and responsibilities had grown substantially over the years. He recalled a Chinese proverb—"The dike crumbles from a single ant hole"—to emphasize the need for vigilance to prevent even a modest initiative from escalating into a decisive shift in the nation's direction. He implied that if Japan were to take one step toward deploying its military forces abroad—even for benign and internationally sanctioned purposes—other unanticipated steps might follow. Both Aichi and Kakizawa demurred, avowing that Japan's democratic institutions

were secure, its military forces professional, and its mechanisms for civilian control firmly in place.

The conversation reinforced my own disposition to keep the United States out of the debate. I thought Aichi and Kakizawa made an impressive case, but if an experienced and seasoned politician like Gotoda harbored such doubts, it was no wonder that other Asian countries remained apprehensive. Resistance to Japan's involvement in peacekeeping activities was most visible in China and Korea. Australia openly welcomed a Japanese role in the Gulf. The views within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) appeared mixed. The Thai seemed relaxed; the Singaporians nervous. Japanese authorities, of course, monitored their neighbors' reactions to the proposed legislation carefully.

Since the 1990 peacekeeping operations (PKO) legislation inspired divisions at home and ambivalence abroad, it is scarcely surprising that many observers regarded the LDP's effort to pass the UN Cooperation Bill as somewhat perfunctory—an effort destined to fail, designed more to deflect foreign criticism than to accomplish a legislative result. My own discussions of this issue with key LDP leaders such as Secretary General Ozawa and Executive Secretary Takeo Nishioka persuaded me that at least they gave the effort a good college try.

For example, when I called on Nishioka on October 22, he requested my help in dispelling an impression he said was circulating among LDP members; namely, that the United States was not genuinely supportive of the UN Cooperation Bill. He claimed that many Diet members were reluctant to work hard to pass a bill that was controversial at home and unappreciated in Washington. I emphasized that Washington eagerly sought allied support for the multinational coalition, but in the end each country had to determine for itself what kind of contribution was appropriate. I was reluctant, I said, to offer detailed advice on a sensitive national issue like this, and I noted that comments by U.S. officials on the pending legislation were likely to complicate the political debate further.

Nishioka characterized my position as "very prudent," adding with a smile, "perhaps too prudent." I was subsequently surprised to read in the afternoon newspapers that I had expressed "high expectations about passage of the UN Cooperation Bill" to senior LDP executives. Since the prime minister and other LDP leaders had been laboring to refute inaccurate but persistent opposition charges that the bill was

drafted under U.S. pressure, this rather imaginative characterization of my remarks appeared to reflect the growing apprehensions in LDP leadership circles about the bill's prospects in the Diet.

Those prospects did not improve, and Mr. Ozawa looked genuinely pained when he informed me in mid-November that the votes were not there to pass the bill and LDP leaders were consequently inclined to withdraw it from the Diet without submitting it for a vote. I expressed disappointment at this news. It came at a time when the release of French hostages, some increased resistance in the Security Council to the use of force against Iraq, and recent visits to Baghdad by Willy Brandt and Yasuhiro Nakasone suggested cracks were appearing in alliance solidarity. Yet I had to acknowledge that little purpose would be served by revealing the lack of support for the measure by pressing it to a vote. I added my hope that the party would persevere in its quest for legislation of this kind during the next session of the Diet.

The party leadership was somewhat noncommittal about its future plans for peacekeeping legislation. But I suspected that the effort would gather strength. Progress was being achieved in negotiating a peace agreement for Cambodia. While there was little enthusiasm in Japan about participating in peacekeeping ventures in remote regions such as the Middle East, such activities in Asia entailed a different foreign policy calculus. It seemed to me unlikely that the Japanese would allow legal impediments to bar them from a consequential role in resolving a major regional issue at just the moment when support for the so-called Asianization of Japanese foreign policy was gathering momentum.

Desert Storm

While Japan was prepared to support sanctions against Iraq, some feared it would lose its nerve in the event sanctions failed and force proved necessary. Henry Kissinger, who visited Tokyo in mid-October, questioned me closely on this point. My own soundings with senior officials and political leaders convinced me that the Japanese would support Desert Storm provided the policy of sanctions was given an honest try, the coalition exhausted all reasonable possibilities for resolving the conflict, and Saddam Hussein continued to respond with defiance. In this connection, the late November announcement that Iraq faced a deadline of January 15 to withdraw from Kuwait and

Secretary Baker's expressed readiness to go to Baghdad and meet Vice Premier Tariq Aziz in Washington helped prepare the political ground in Japan for governmental and public support of Desert Storm. The secretary's readiness to have face-to-face talks with the Iraqis was welcomed as a last-ditch effort to avoid war, though it heralded no substantive change of position: he offered no concessions, no political solutions, and no deviation from his past insistence that Iraq honor all UN resolutions.

As the January 15 deadline for Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait approached without any signs of conciliatory gestures from Saddam Hussein, I urged the Japanese government to prepare for new and substantial requests for additional financial support. Deploying troops for deterrent purposes was not cheap; employing them in combat would be truly expensive, for when many lives are at stake, money is no object. Though I had as yet no precise idea what Washington's expectations of Japan might be, I wanted to be sure that Tokyo did not shoot too low again. I consequently made my rounds to key government and party leaders, emphasizing to each the importance of being prepared to respond quickly to new and ambitious requests.

During meetings in January, while renewing my request for political and financial support for Desert Storm, I also urged prompt and forthcoming Japanese initiatives in tackling the refugee problems we all anticipated. I recommended that those who dwelt on the political problems Japan would face in coping with these issues should view their situation with some sense of proportion. The Bush administration was staring war in the face with Congress in the hands of the opposition. Authorization to use force had been supported by a thin majority on the Hill, and if casualties were high, criticism would be fierce. I observed that crises have a way of rearranging relationships. With war imminent, our people would be taking careful note of who our friends were. And I suggested that the Japanese offer whatever practical help they could, manage their politics with resolution, and announce their decisions expeditiously without awaiting pressure.

A particularly key figure was Finance Minister Hashimoto, for he would have to manage any specific requests for funding through the Ministry of Finance, whose bureaucracy was notoriously unreceptive to political direction. Nor was my relationship with Hashimoto an easy one. I had found him a somewhat prickly individual with whom I felt little personal rapport. I initially had expected to develop a com-

fortable relationship with him. We were virtually the same age, and he had a reputation as a strong and highly capable "take charge" guy. Yet in our first meeting—a courtesy call in the spring of 1989—he seemed to have a chip on his shoulder. I particularly recall his assertion, "The trouble with you Americans, Ambassador Armacost, is that you cannot forget that you won the war." (The evidence Hashimoto offered to support his proposition—e.g., our bilateral civil air agreement, one of the few that seemed to work to the United States' economic advantage, and U.S. pressure to open the Japanese cigarette market despite our domestic regulation requiring notices on each package that smoking was injurious to health—struck me as, at best, strained.) I assured Hashimoto that since I was only eight years old and lived on the East Coast in 1945, the war with Japan had exerted little influence on my outlook. I expressed the hope that, as members of a younger generation, we could overcome the unfortunate legacies of the past. But I left the meeting doubting we would become close. Subsequent events confirmed that intuition.

But Hashimoto was a key player. And I did not have the luxury of approaching him through his associates in the Ministry of Finance, for I did not enjoy the easy entree to senior officials there that I had developed in most other ministries. In general, MOF bureaucrats appeared ill-disposed toward taking up much substantive business with ambassadors, preferring to tackle macroeconomic and foreign exchange issues directly with their Treasury counterparts in Washington either by phone or by fax. Given the sensitivity of such issues on markets, this was neither surprising nor inappropriate.

Beyond these natural inclinations, I had perhaps burned some bridges with MOF officials during the SII talks. Though I had not set the agenda for those negotiations, I energetically pursued U.S. objectives, including the effort to alter the savings/investment imbalance in Japan by encouraging increases in its infrastructure spending. MOF professionals regarded almost any advice from foreigners on such issues as gratuitous and unwelcome. They undoubtedly found U.S. suggestions particularly offensive since they had little respect for Washington's management of public finances. Whatever their concerns, when I sought to arrange a meeting with the finance minister through the usual channels, unexplained difficulties frequently appeared.

Impatient with such delays, I asked my deputy, Bill Breer, to use his personal contacts with political associates of Hashimoto to arrange a

private meeting at my residence. In this fashion I met several times with Hashimoto in December 1990 and early January 1991 to review the landscape in Washington and obtain a better understanding of the political and budgetary realities Hashimoto would have to accommodate in formulating Japan's response to new aid requests. I cannot judge the value of these sessions to Minister Hashimoto or their effect on his thinking. But he headed for New York in mid-January briefed by more than just his own colleagues and subordinates and in a mood I judged to be constructive and helpful. On the margins of the G-7 ministerial meetings, he met privately on January 21 with Secretary Brady to discuss the multilateral coalition's financial requirements now that hostilities had commenced. The meeting was one-on-one, with only a Japanese interpreter present. Secretary Brady appealed for $9 billion in additional support—a figure I suspect was considerably higher than the Japanese anticipated and greater than Secretary Brady realistically expected Tokyo to provide. To Hashimoto's credit, he secured his government's official response in little more than forty-eight hours—an extremely rapid turnaround when so much money was involved. More astonishing yet was the fact that the answer was thoroughly positive. Indeed, the Japanese coupled their announcement with a pledge of an additional $38 million in refugee assistance and an offer to supply military aircraft for evacuating refugees from the war zone.

As usual, the devil was in the details. Compared to the generosity of the offer, the problems that subsequently surfaced were small potatoes. But they were sufficient to take some of the gloss off a notable display of alliance solidarity. Washington wanted Japan to eliminate its strings on aid during Desert Storm. Japan's contribution was to be financed through new taxes on cigarettes, gasoline, and corporations; treasury bonds were to be issued to supply funds until the government was reimbursed out of these new tax revenues. To secure passage of a supplemental budget to provide new funds, however, Tokyo needed the concurrence of the opposition-controlled Upper House. This gave the swing votes to the Komeito Party and the Democratic Socialists, who used them to force Prime Minister Kaifu to agree that Japan's financial contribution, which was provided for logistical purposes, would not be spent on arms, ammunition, or other lethal purposes. In the bargaining with the opposition, moreover, the proposal to utilize military aircraft to transport refugees was ultimately abandoned; it was also agreed that some of the funds would be obtained through expen-

diture reductions rather than tax increases, and the Komeito Party exacted a pound of flesh politically by securing Ozawa's promise that the LDP would support a mutually acceptable candidate for the Tokyo gubernatorial election later that spring. Despite these conditions, Tokyo's generosity, the timeliness of its decision on aid, and its steadfast political support helped dissipate criticism of Japan within the administration, the press, and Congress. Indeed, in late February 1991, before the ground war in Kuwait commenced, Moscow solicited Japan's support for a conditional Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait—a measure designed to help Saddam Hussein off the hook without requiring his full compliance with all UN resolutions—but found no daylight between Tokyo and Washington.

Unfortunately, the Brady-Hashimoto meeting left several loose ends that occasioned some trench warfare between our respective bureaucracies. Two unresolved issues in particular provoked friction. One was the old question of whether Japan's support would be allocated exclusively to the United States or shared with other members of the coalition. The other involved the exchange rate used to calculate the dollar value of Japan's contribution. The first issue surfaced immediately; the latter when the dollar appreciated rapidly in the wake of the coalition's decisive military victory.

In truth, these issues were discussed at least briefly by Assistant Secretary Dallara and Vice Minister Utsumi, following the Brady-Hashimoto meeting. No agreement was reached, however. Washington was obdurate on the first question, but it overreached. The Japanese, as noted above, had allocated their earlier contribution to the coalition. This served their political needs, and we, however reluctantly, had accommodated their wishes. There was no chance the Japanese would deviate from this precedent, and I saw no reason why we should challenge their judgment. Tokyo had been generous, and our demarche struck me as nit-picking. Nevertheless, I dutifully raised the matter, but with little conviction and no effect.

The exchange rate issue turned out to be more consequential financially, for the appreciation of the dollar against the yen diminished the value of Japan's contribution to us by roughly $500 million. A strapped Treasury Department was perhaps destined to raise the issue, but our position suffered from two defects: first, we had reached no clear-cut understanding on the exchange rate matter back in January; second, previous precedents worked against us.

The Ministry of Finance routinely calculated the dollar value of its assistance to foreign countries by averaging the dollar-yen exchange rate over the fifteen-day period prior to its submission of a supplemental budget bill to the Diet. Based on this procedure, the government calculated its contribution at 115 yen to the dollar. The Diet naturally appropriated the money in yen, and dollar payouts were subject to future currency fluctuations. The Japanese had followed precisely this procedure in the fall of 1990. At that time, the yen was appreciating against the dollar, and the United States earned a $40 million windfall on the exchange rate fluctuation. Treasury had expressed no complaint and offered no rebate. This time, however, with the dollar appreciating rapidly, Treasury cried foul. Predictably, the Finance Ministry reminded Washington of its normal procedures and rested its case. But the issue would not go away.

Congressional pressure for additional money was not particularly subtle. Pending supplemental amendments to the Gulf war provided that the United States would neither sell nor deliver weapons to any country that did not promptly pay its pledged assistance, and the Treasury had publicly expressed the view that as far as it was concerned, Japan's pledge was for $9 billion. Administration officials told the Japanese that they did not support this legislation but thought it would become law. Sure enough, the so-called Byrd Amendment was passed, but in signing the bill the president emphasized it was up to him to determine the timeliness of contributions.

Washington's pursuit of the matter led to some delicate public diplomacy challenges for the embassy by midspring 1991, since recurrent newspaper reports hinted that financial contributions from allied nations by then exceeded the Pentagon's total outlays during the surprisingly swift military campaign. Prime Minister Kaifu's scheduled meeting with President Bush at Kennebunkport in midsummer 1991 provided a convenient deadline for putting the issue behind us.

To the end the Japanese refused to recalculate their exchange rate. But before Kaifu's visit to Kennebunkport, which eventually took place in early August 1991, they did offer to provide $500 million—an amount roughly equivalent to the shortfall—to tackle postwar problems in the Gulf area, such as environmental issues, humanitarian assistance, maintenance of the UN embargo, destruction of mines, and the phasedown and redeployment of U.S. forces. The president highlighted the positive contributions Japan had made to the multilateral

effort in the Gulf and agreed to schedule a visit to Japan later in the year. An official visit would provide possibilities for accentuating the positive features of U.S.-Japan collaboration. And in fact these had multiplied in the wake of the Gulf war.

The Japanese took one unexpected step in tackling postwar problems when they dispatched four minesweepers to the Gulf in April 1991 to help clear that international waterway for commercial traffic. They took this initiative without prompting from us, although they did wait until after the April 1991 local elections, ostensibly to avoid putting the Komeito Party on the spot. Admiral Makoto Sakuma, chairman of the joint staff, had long urged the deployment of Japanese minesweepers to the Gulf; stung by international criticism, key Foreign Ministry officials were now more receptive to the request. In any case, the military risks had declined with the end of the war, and Japanese oil companies in Saudi Arabia, not to mention merchant shipping interests, had an obvious stake in clearing mines from the Gulf. And since Japanese crews on vessels transiting the Gulf were among those exposed to danger, the maritime unions no longer resisted. The government, moreover, could point to the precedent of a recent German decision to send minesweepers to the Gulf. Not the least of the ironies in this affair was the fact that Japan's deployments were undertaken without benefit either of PKO legislation—the UN Cooperation Bill having failed in the Diet—or a revision of the Self-Defense Force Law. As usual, the Japanese government demonstrated flexibility when it perceived compelling reasons to do so.

Tokyo was eager to assert a more active diplomacy in the Middle East and Gulf region in the postwar period. Promising opportunities included closer ties with Israel, political initiatives to limit destabilizing arms sales, a more visible role in the Middle East peace process, and support for the reconstruction needs of Kuwait and others. Washington welcomed such initiatives, and they helped salve some of the wounds the U.S.-Japan relationship had sustained during the Gulf conflict.

Postmortem

However frayed the relationship with Tokyo became at times, U.S.-Japanese collaboration during the Gulf war provided benefits to both nations. U.S. actions to protect Saudi oil fields, to force Iraq out of

Kuwait, to curb Saddam Hussein's nuclear weapons program, and to get the Arab-Israeli peace talks back on track served a variety of Japanese objectives. They kept the lid on oil prices, fostered stability in an area of acute Japanese commercial interest, and forestalled the spread of weapons of mass destruction. At the same time, Japan's support of the UN embargo, its generous financial support for the multilateral coalition, its assistance to frontline states and support for refugees, its help in repairing the damage done by the war, and its postwar agreement to participate in regional aspects of the Middle East peace talks helped advance a number of U.S. aims.

To be sure, the experience also left scars on both sides. The hesitancy of Japan's initial response, the multitude of conditions imposed on its financial contribution, its reluctance to share the risks as well as the costs of a major multilateral venture, and its tendency to reach tough decisions only under the most intense international pressure prompted questions among many Americans about its reliability as an ally and global diplomatic partner. At the same time, many Japanese were irritated by the intensity of U.S. criticism and resented the fact that their financial support for Desert Storm was all too often ignored in Western celebrations of the coalition's victory.

What, one might ask, brought the Japanese around and prompted them to provide such substantial financial and political support for Desert Shield and Desert Storm despite their initial, deep-seated reservations? The simple answer, I believe, is foreign pressure, principally from the United States. This pressure was sharply focused, and it was sustained. It was broadly based, embracing key elements of both the executive and legislative branches of the U.S. government. And it was fueled by strong emotional support from the American people. While the consequences of a lame response were difficult to calculate, Tokyo could not rule out profound changes in U.S. attitudes and policies toward Japan, including our future readiness to maintain the alliance. Nor was pressure confined to the United States. Some Europeans joined in the requests for substantial Japanese assistance. So, too, did the moderate Arabs, some of whom—most notably the Kuwaitis and Saudis—were important suppliers of oil to Japan.

Within the Japanese government, moreover, there were important players—particularly senior officials in the Foreign Ministry and powerful politicians in the LDP—who recognized the importance of demonstrating Japan's solidarity with the multilateral coalition, or

feared the consequences of ignoring U.S. requests, or saw opportunities to stake out a larger international role for their country. In any case, while the United States insistently demanded generous financial and political support from Tokyo, requests for personnel contributions were sufficiently lacking in specificity that Japan was able to find means of responding that required neither a revision of the constitution nor a fundamental reordering of the postwar political consensus. Thus they managed to defer a decision on PKO legislation, placed conditions on the uses of Japanese cash contributions, and were able to avoid direct involvement by Self-Defense Force units—e.g., minesweeping—until hostilities had ended.

One could argue that Japanese policy during the Gulf war was not a radical departure from long-established policy lines and was notably successful in traditional terms. After all, Japan placed no Japanese citizens in harm's way. Its contributions were mainly hortatory support and cash. It suffered no disruption of its oil supplies; indeed, the price of petroleum fell. Its hostages were returned unharmed. Its relationship with the United States survived. No irretrievable decisions to abandon the Yoshida tradition were reached. And while its $13 billion subvention to the multilateral coalition was far from trivial, it paled in significance to the price the Japanese government and industry would have paid had there been an disruption in the oil supply or a major price increase.

The coalition's triumph in the Gulf war brought few tributes to the solidarity of the U.S.-Japan alliance. But the prompt and decisive outcome did have a variety of salutary results. It tempered the tendency of many Japanese to ruminate darkly about the United States' decline. It generated in Japan renewed respect for U.S. military capabilities and the dexterity with which the Bush administration had integrated its military strategy and coalition diplomacy. It reminded Washington that, for all its military prowess, the coalition's victory was financed by others. No nation outside the Gulf area had contributed greater financial support than Japan, and Tokyo paid its bills fully and on time.

The Gulf crisis also precipitated much Japanese soul-searching about its international responsibilities. Gradually, foreign criticisms that Japan should not confine its contributions to financial support alone were taken over by the Japanese themselves. One result was the PKO bill, which eventually passed the Diet in June 1992, thereby creating a legal foundation for Japan's subsequent personnel contributions

to UN-sponsored peacekeeping in Cambodia, Mozambique, and Rwanda. Naturally, the effort to enlarge Japan's international role was accompanied by efforts to assure that new activities would be tailored to Japan's own definition of its interests. Thus postmortems of the Gulf crisis in Japan prompted self-criticism—and ultimately remedial measures—regarding the quality of the government's intelligence, the adequacy of its crisis management arrangements, and the sufficiency of its logistic capabilities to support disaster relief or peacekeeping activities far from Japan's shores.

Ultimately, the Gulf war—like the GATT negotiations—challenged Japan's readiness to participate fully in defining the rules for managing post–cold war international security and trade issues. The transition from consumer to provider of international security was not easy: as the Gulf war experience demonstrated, Japan was hardly poised to break into the ranks of the world's major military powers. In addition, the criticism Japan took from the U.S. media and Congress fueled resentment and even prompted some Japanese to express the concern that in a unipolar world the United States, unconstrained by the need to preserve its alliances to deter Moscow, might turn its ire on erstwhile allies like Japan and Germany. Thus the experience of the Gulf war cast some doubt on the efficacy of a global diplomatic partnership between Tokyo and Washington. Still, the host of novel challenges of the post–cold war world forced both capitals to persevere in the search for new patterns of diplomatic cooperation.