

U.S.-Japan Relations: Calm amidst a 'C' of Troubles

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It has been another relatively calm quarter for U.S.-Japan relations. There was one potential calamity (the crash of a U.S. helicopter in Okinawa) and a few controversies, but, in the main, the alliance was on cruise control. The issues of note had Japanese domestic political consequences: the Upper House election, comments from U.S. officials about the Japanese constitution and, related to that, the Bush-Koizumi meeting at the United Nations that addressed, among other things, Tokyo's bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

In short, the alliance is functioning well and absorbing rather smoothly whatever complications arise: in addition to the helicopter crash, chessmaster and hatemeister Bobby Fischer's arrest and subsequent asylum request and the return from North Korea of alleged U.S. Army defector Charles Robert Jenkins are the two most significant this quarter. The best indication of the state of the relationship may be the fact that Japan has not come up in this year's election campaign. The solidity and stability of the alliance have allowed it to recede into the background.

'C' is for Councilors, House of

The third quarter began with the election for the House of Councilors, the upper house of Japan's Diet. With half the seats of the 242-member chamber up for grabs, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) won 49 seats and its coalition partner Komeito claimed 11, for a total of 60 – a wash, as the LDP lost a seat and Komeito picked up one. In total, the government still controls 139 seats in the Upper House. Psychologically, the big winner was the opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), which upped its seats by 12. Its 50 wins topped even the LDP, although it still ranks second with a total of 79 seats. This marks only the second time in the postwar era that the LDP did not “win” a parliamentary election.

Real power is in the Lower House, the stronger of the two legislative chambers. For that reason, upper house elections are often seen as an opportunity to register a protest vote. And this time, voters had plenty to protest. Topping the list was public-pension reform, a pressing concern that has been effectively torpedoed by reports that leading politicians, including Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro himself, had not made payments to the national pension fund. Economic worries, and the unevenness of the recovery, were a second concern. A final source of unease, and pertinent here, was Koizumi's announcement at the June G8 summit that Japan would continue to deploy Self-Defense

Forces in Iraq after the handover to a U.N.-approved interim government in Baghdad. Public disapproval focused not so much on the decision itself, but the fact that Koizumi told President George W. Bush of his decision before he informed the Japanese public.

The election's impact on the U.S.-Japan relationship is threefold. First, the DPJ is emerging as an increasingly credible alternative to the LDP. While Tokyo's relations with Washington will be critical to any Japanese government, DPJ foreign policy is likely to be more UN-centric. The shift will be a matter of degrees rather than in kind, but it will be noticeable. Koizumi has anticipated this development and tried to coopt voters who favor this approach with his own UNSC bid (discussed more below).

Second, there is the rising influence of Komei. It is emerging as a third force in Japanese politics, thanks to the 8 million Soka Gakkai (lay Buddhist) voters it can mobilize. That doesn't mean the government will become captive to religious sentiment, but it could shape Japan's diplomacy in a post-Koizumi era. Komeito's foreign-policy instincts are closer to that of the dovish wing of the LDP or the Democrats, who are far more cautious about deploying Japanese forces abroad. Komeito could put a limit on the future bounds of the U.S.-Japan relationship.

Finally, there is the prime minister's loss of rapport with voters. The magic is gone, and that means his leverage within the party is shrinking. He is still determined to shake up the LDP, and postal privatization is his big goal this term. It is unclear whether he has the support to pull it off or whether voters give that policy the priority Koizumi does.

The question is to what degree the prime minister's diminishing popularity will effect the alliance. It's unclear. There appears to be little chance that he will be overthrown in an internal LDP coup or defeated in a poll since no credible challenger has emerged either within the party or across the aisle. Nonetheless, it is time to start thinking about a post-Koizumi era in the alliance. One thing is certain: Few Japanese leaders will be able to replicate the relationship Koizumi has created with Bush.

'C' is for Constitution

A series of comments by high-ranking U.S. State Department officials roiled Japan shortly after the election. On July 21, Richard Armitage, the deputy secretary of state and a long-time supporter of the alliance, was quoted as telling Nakagawa Hideo, chairman of the LDP's Diet Affairs Committee, that Japan's claim to a permanent seat on the UN Security Council depends on revision of Article 9 – the famous “no war clause” – of the Japanese constitution. He is also reported to have said that the article is an obstacle in the bilateral relationship. Predictably, those remarks set off a firestorm of controversy in Japan. Nakagawa's comment that Armitage was providing a personal opinion and that he said the ultimate decision was that of the Japanese people did little to calm the waters.

A week later, Armitage met with Okada Katsuya, head of the DPJ, and others and clarified his remarks, saying that constitutional amendment is a matter for Japan to decide, that the U.S. fully supports Japan's permanent membership on the UNSC, and

there is no linkage between the two issues. Moreover, at a news conference Okada said Armitage stressed that Article 9 is no impediment to the U.S.-Japan relationship.

Soon after, Secretary of State Colin Powell weighed in. In August, he reiterated U.S. support for Japan's UNSC bid, but he noted that those responsibilities will require a reassessment of Article 9 and its limits on Japan's international behavior. "If Japan is going to play a full role on the world stage and become a full active participating member of the Security Council, and have the kind of obligations that it would pick up as a member of the Security Council, Article 9 would have to be examined in that light," Powell said. Of course, he added, the choice is entirely that of the Japanese people. "But whether or not Article 9 should be modified or changed is absolutely and entirely up to the Japanese people to decide, because the United States would not presume an opinion." Even that carefully articulated – and realistic – comment drew fire. Fujii Hirohisa, DPJ secretary general, was blunt: "He's wrong," he said, referring to Powell's comment about the relationship between Article 9 and UNSC responsibilities.

'C' is for contract

Japan's oil contract with Iran was another bilateral irritant this quarter. In its quest to secure energy supplies, Tokyo has gone to great lengths to court the government in Tehran. The two countries signed a contract to develop the Azadegan oil field, one of the world's largest, in February. Any financial support for a charter member of the "axis of evil" is suspect in Washington, but revelations about Iran's suspected nuclear arms programs have increased U.S. apprehensions.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has complained about the nature and scope of Iran's nuclear programs, and a deal with the UN agency that was brokered by Britain, France, and Germany to exact compliance with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) looks increasingly shaky. Iran has said that it will proceed with the enrichment of uranium, a critical step in the process of building a bomb.

In his August comments, Secretary Powell called on Tokyo to take into account the allegations against Iran. Later in the quarter, high-level U.S. officials were quoted as saying that if the charges against Iran are referred to the UNSC –which could happen if the IAEA board decides at its November meeting that Tehran is in breach of its NPT commitments – then "Japan should abrogate the Azadegan oilfield contract."

'C' is for Crash

The alliance's most serious test this quarter occurred when a U.S. military helicopter crashed Aug. 13 on a university campus in Okinawa. The CH-53 had departed from Futenma Air Station on a routine training flight when it crashed as a result of mechanical failure. According to news reports, the helicopter lost control, hit a school building and crashed into a parking lot. Fortunately, the accident occurred during the summer holiday and no students, university personnel, or other civilians were hurt; three U.S. service

personnel were injured. Cars and homes were damaged and debris was scattered hundreds of meters from the crash site.

Lt. Gen. Robert Blackman, head of the U.S. forces in Okinawa, visited the Okinawa Prefectural Government immediately afterward to apologize to Vice Gov. Makino Hirotaka. In addition to complaints about the crash itself, the U.S. military's refusal to allow Japanese police onto the crash site raised hackles, (again) prompting calls for revision of the status of forces agreement (SOFA) that governs the two governments' response to such incidents. Japanese irritations were compounded by the U.S. decision to resume flights three days after the accident; Japanese officials had requested that flights be suspended until after the cause of the crash had been determined. On Aug. 28, the U.S. said that it would not fly those helicopters until "appropriate" to do so. Two weeks later, 30,000 Okinawans protested the crash and the way it was handled.

This accident was inevitable. There have long been fears that an aircraft would crash near Futenma, a heavily populated area. Both the U.S. and Japan are fortunate that there were no civilian casualties and that no U.S. personnel were killed. The crash is a warning: relocation of the Marine Air Station is urgent and another accident could spark a crisis for the alliance that rivals that which followed the rape of an Okinawa schoolgirl by U.S. service personnel in 1995.

‘C’ is for Chess

Comic relief this quarter was provided by the arrest of former chess world champion Bobby Fischer in July. He was detained at Narita Airport July 13 as he attempted to fly to Manila. Japanese officials grabbed Fischer because the U.S. had revoked his passport. He is wanted by Washington for violating a trade embargo against Yugoslavia in 1992 when he went to Belgrade to play Boris Spassky, the Russian grandmaster he beat for the world championship in 1972. That rematch won him \$3.3 million and a U.S. arrest warrant. After his arrest, Fischer renounced his U.S. citizenship, requested asylum, and said that he was seeking German citizenship, a claim based on the German citizenship of his father. Unfortunately for Fischer, the anti-Semitic diatribes he has made with regularity over the past decade (many on a radio show he hosts) make that unlikely.

The soap opera continued with reports that Ms. Watai Hiroko, acting president of the Japan Chess Association, was going to marry Fisher. The timing of the announcement raised eyebrows: It was made after Fischer's detention, but she said the couple had met in 1973 when Fischer was playing exhibitions on a world tour. She joined him in Belgrade for the 1992 match and said that he moved to Tokyo to live with her in 2000. There are no plans for nuptials yet; it is unclear if stateless persons – which Fischer is after giving up his U.S. citizenship – can marry in Japan. Curiously, news reports had Fischer living in the Philippines, but after his arrest he said that he had made regular trips in and out of Japan, raising questions about just how much attention had been paid to his case since the offense occurred over a decade ago. At quarter's end, Fischer had won a stay of deportation as a Tokyo District Court ruled he could remain in Japan until the case against his deportation order was heard. That could take a year.

‘C’ is for Charles Robert Jenkins

Bobby Fischer wasn't the only individual on U.S. wanted lists to make news in Japan. On July 9, accused U.S. Army deserter Charles Robert Jenkins and his two daughters left North Korea to reunite with his wife, Soga Hitomi. Soga had been kidnapped by North Korean agents decades ago, and was allowed to return to Japan after Prime Minister Koizumi's 2002 summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong-il. The rest of her family – like those of the other four kidnapped victims allowed to return to Japan – remained in the North, prompting considerable anguish when the abductees refused to return to the North as originally agreed. The forced separation of the families dominated discussion of Japan's relations with North Korea.

Kim understood the need for a gesture toward Japanese public opinion and agreed to let the families go after his second summit with Koizumi in May 2004. He may have also hoped that the move would cause friction in the U.S.-Japan relationship because Jenkins, wanted as a deserter, was thought to be reluctant to return and subject himself to a court martial. Releasing him would then make the U.S. responsible for dividing the family.

Nevertheless, Jenkins agreed to meet his wife in Jakarta, a site chosen because Indonesia does not have an extradition agreement with the U.S. Once there, he agreed to travel on to Tokyo, where he was hospitalized for several medical ailments. He then agreed to surrender to U.S. military authorities to face the charges against him. In September, he returned to active duty at Camp Zama. He was billeted in base housing and assigned administrative duties pending his court martial. According to newspaper reports, he is being treated like any other sergeant, receiving a monthly paycheck and free to use all base facilities. He is not under arrest or confinement but he cannot leave the base without special permission.

Jenkins disappeared Jan. 5, 1965 while on patrol in the demilitarized zone in South Korea. The U.S. military has charged him with desertion, aiding the enemy, soliciting others to desert, and encouraging disloyalty. Jenkins' family (in the U.S.) says he was captured by North Korea. There has been speculation that the U.S. is reluctant to go easy on Jenkins because it would send the wrong signal to troops in Iraq and Afghanistan – especially when misbehavior by U.S. forces in Iraq has been so much in the news. As noted last quarter, Japanese officials have been pushing the U.S. to show leniency toward Jenkins. I'd anticipate some sort of deal in the months ahead.

‘C’ is for Cooperstown

Seattle's Ichiro Suzuki continued his march toward Cooperstown, and the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame, with another spectacular season. This quarter ended with him breaking the 84-year old record for hits in a single season, which had been set in 1920 by George Sisler of the St. Louis Browns. He topped Sisler's old mark of 257 on Oct. 1, and

closed the year with 262 hits. Earlier in the quarter, he claimed the record for hits in four seasons.

By regular season's end, Ichiro had won his second American League batting title in four years with a .372 average, set a record for singles in a season (225), hits in four years (924), and multi-hit games (80, topping the Yankees' Don Mattingly who had 79 in 1986).

Readers may think these regular digressions on baseball are an indulgence for a baseball fan. They aren't and I'm not. Sports have a powerful influence on international relations. Look at the positive effects on the Japan-ROK relationship that followed from cohosting the 2002 World Cup soccer final. Or look at the ill will generated in Japan and China after the ugly behavior of Chinese fans toward Japan's team and fans during the Asian Cup soccer games that China hosted in August.

Ichiro's success was huge news in Japan, dominating the headlines. U.S. commentary has been marked by superlatives describing Ichiro's study of the game, his determination to excel, and his incredible skill. In other words, he has been an extraordinary ambassador for Japan and has helped bring the two countries closer together. Not only in the abstract, either. Seattle games are broadcast in Japan and major Japanese travel agencies have organized tours of U.S. baseball games since Ichiro joined the Mariners in 2001. Last year, Japan Travel Bureau brought 5,000 fans to the U.S. on those tours and expects to bring 8,000 in 2004 (not bad for a team that has had a dismal season). Kinki Nippon Tours' U.S. baseball tours increased around 20 percent last year. All expect another jump next year.

With Seattle's season over, attention will shift to Hideki Matsui's post-season performance for the New York Yankees: for the second consecutive year, Matsui exceeded the century mark with 100-plus runs batted in.

'C' is for chonmage

Ichiro wasn't the only foreigner sports star to make a mark in his adopted country. Fiamalu Penitani, better known to the sumo world as Musashimaru, retired this quarter after 15 years in the ring. (At his retirement ceremony, the end of the wrestler's professional career is commemorated by cutting off his chonmage, or top-knot.) Musashimaru retired as yokuzuna, or grand champion, making him the 67th in the history of the sport. He attained the rank in 1999. he won 12 Emperor's Cups, awarded to the winner of each tournament, ranking him sixth on the all-time list and making him the more successful foreign wrestler in the sport.

Yokuzuna is the only permanent rank in sumo (all others are determined on the basis of the performance at the previous tournament), so becoming grand champion is a tremendous accomplishment. It takes more than mere victories to claim the title (although they are a necessary prerequisite). A yokozuna must have dignity and commitment; he is thought to embody the traditions of the sport and is seen as a permanent representative.

Musashimaru was only the second foreigner to achieve this ranking. His reign as grand champion did much to convey a positive image of Americans in Japan, portraying an image of discipline, solidarity and respect that was sometimes at odd with the more popular conception of America.

‘C’ is for Chat, as in summit

On Sept. 21, President Bush and Prime Minister Koizumi met in New York City on the fringe of the opening of the 59th Session of the UN General Assembly to assess the bilateral relationship. Their conversation covered a range of topics: the war on terror and Japanese efforts to aid the reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan, the two governments’ continued support for the six-party talks, “mad cow” disease in the U.S. and its impact on U.S. beef exports to Japan, and postal privatization in Japan.

Two big issues were also on the agenda. One is the global posture review (GPR) and the redeployment of U.S. military forces in Asia. Many of the details of the GPR are still uncertain, and that has encouraged endless speculation about what it entails. There have been reports that the U.S. wants to move the headquarters of 1st Army Corps from Fort Lewis, Washington to Camp Zama, and that the Fifth Air Force’s command functions at Yokota Air Base in Tokyo will be combined with the 13th Air Force’s headquarters and shifted to Guam. Any moves would require Japanese agreement, and the U.S. has insisted that relevant components of the GPR will only be determined after consultations with affected allies around the world. There have been reports of U.S. frustration with Tokyo resulting from Japanese unwillingness to engage in substantive discussions on this issue. Reportedly, at their summit Bush and Koizumi agreed to accelerate talks on force realignments.

Japanese concerns are twofold. Tokyo wants assurance that the GPR will not undermine the U.S. commitment to Japan’s security and that the burden on Okinawa will be lightened. The anticipated removal of some U.S. forces from Korea has raised eyebrows in Japan, but Washington has insisted that it remains committed to Asian security and stability on the Korean Peninsula. There have also been reports of future drawdowns of U.S. forces on Okinawa: according to “U.S. and Japanese sources,” 4,790 troops (27 percent of the Marine presence on the island) will be moved. This report says the United States plans to relocate 2,600 Marines in Okinawa to other parts of Japan starting in 2008; until then, the 3rd Marine Division will send 2,190 troops to South Korea, the Philippines and other parts of Asia for training and other purposes. Predictably, these reports were enough to create opposition from local governments that would host the troops.

Japanese newspapers took Koizumi to task for not going into detail on the GPR and its impact on Japan. That was unfair; this meeting was by its nature too brief for in-depth discussion of agenda items. At most, the two men could convey their primary concerns (which they should have already known). In some respects, the timing of the GPR is bad for Japan. Tokyo needs a strategic vision to fully participate in the GPR process. Yet, Japan is still writing the document that would provide that vision, the National Defense

Program Outline (NDPO), which is scheduled to be finished by the end of this year. Just after quarter's end, the Prime Minister's Council on Security and Defense Capabilities presented its report, which should have some impact on the NDPO, although the two processes proceeded in parallel. The report will get full treatment next quarter, as will the NDPO (if it is out in time).

'C' is for Council, as in United Nations Security Council

Japan's second big concern at the Bush-Koizumi summit was its bid for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. At their meeting, Koizumi emphasized the significance of that bid, noting the importance of the UN to Japanese foreign policy, the need for UN reform, Japan's contributions to the institution, and Japan's desire to play a larger international role. Bush was said to have "reaffirmed that the position of the U.S. had not changed" (in other words, Washington backed Tokyo) but the passivity of that description managed to upset domestic supporters of the Japanese bid who felt the president could have spoken more strongly.

Apart from the financial issues – as the second largest contributor to the UN, "no taxation without representation" has a certain appeal in Japan – there is longstanding public support for the UN in Japan. The world body holds a privileged place in Japanese thinking about international relations. As the embodiment of a rational and structured international order, it represents the same idealism as that which lies behind Article 9 (and is equally unrealistic, counter the skeptics). Indeed, one of the key debates in Japanese foreign policy (to the extent such debates exist) centers on U.S.-centered diplomacy vs. UN-centered diplomacy. Plainly, the current government has opted for the former, a decision that has considerably strengthened the appeal of the latter for those who oppose Koizumi and the war against Iraq.

The prime minister was thought to be skeptical about the UN. Yet he has embraced Japan's rejuvenated campaign for a permanent seat on the Security Council. That shift is easily explained. First, the prospects of UN reform are improving as a result of recent events. There is increasing frustration with the workings of the world body and the inequalities of its structure. The appointment of a High Level Panel by the secretary general is designed to drive the reform process.

Second, with his popularity dwindling and Japanese public opinion largely opposed to the Iraq war, supporting the UNSC bid is an easy way to coopt the issue and those who favor a more UN-centric policy. Support for the U.S. need not clash with support for the UN; the two are not mutually exclusive choices.

Seeing into the future

The U.S. election will dominate bilateral relations next quarter (although the scheduled release of the NDPO should also have an impact). There is fear in Japan that a Kerry election would be bad for the alliance. This is based on concerns that Kerry will be more labor/union oriented, and hence more ready to beat up on Japan for (perceived) economic

offenses, that he won't be as stalwart as Bush on defending Japanese national interests, in particular North Korea, and that he will punish Japan for supporting Bush in the war on terror and Iraq.

The logic escapes me. Japan hasn't been an election issue, and to the extent trade issues have entered the campaign, China has been the primary target. (Yet even China has been notable by its absence in the campaign.) There is little reason to charge Japan for any of the U.S. economic ills. In the first presidential debate, Kerry differentiated himself from Bush by declaring himself more willing to negotiate with North Korea directly. Contrary to administration charges, that is not a bad thing: it is, in fact, the official U.S. position (and some bilateral discussions have already occurred), the Chinese and the South Koreans have encouraged such discussions, and Kerry has said that bilateral talks will occur within the multilateral framework – not as a substitute for it. Tokyo doesn't have to worry that Kerry would cut a deal with Pyongyang that ignored its interests – if, for no other reason, than the fact that the administration would be subject to blistering criticism in Washington from conservatives that oppose any deal at all. Finally, the notion that a Kerry administration would “punish” Japan for supporting Bush makes no sense. The administration should be thankful the U.S. isn't more isolated. There were similar fears in London after Bush defeated Gore – that Britain would be punished for good Clinton-Blair relations – and instead the Anglo-American alliance is stronger than ever.

Underlying all these arguments seems to be the sense that Republicans manage the alliance better than Democrats. That looks too rosily at the Reagan and Bush I years and paints the Clinton era too darkly. After all, Clinton helped boost APEC – a Japanese pet project – and signed the 1996 joint declaration on security. There is strong bipartisan support for the U.S.-Japan alliance and that is part of the reason why the bilateral relationship is as strong as it is today. Japanese should remember that it was the “NYE-Armitage Report” that has been so instrumental in shaping the alliance.

U.S.-Japan Chronology* **July-September 2004**

July 1, 2004: 50th anniversary of the formation of Japan's Self Defence Forces (SDF).

July 1, 2004: Secretary of State Colin Powell and Japanese FM Kawaguchi Yoriko meet to discuss U.S.-Japan relations, North Korea, Iraq, and Afghanistan at the 11th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) meeting and various ministerials held June 29 – July 2 in Jakarta.

July 4, 2004: Fuyushiba Tetsuzo, secretary general of New Komeito, opposes PM Koizumi Junichiro's remarks that the pacifist Constitution should be revised so it can exercise the right to collective defense and carry out joint actions with U.S. forces.

* Compiled by Ronald Rodriguez and Lena Kay, Vasey Fellows, Pacific Forum CSIS.

July 7, 2004: U.S. National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice meets with PM Koizumi and FM Kawaguchi to discuss North Korea and tensions between China and Taiwan.

July 7, 2004: Defense Agency chief Ishiba Shigeru says in an annual agency report that the Self-Defense Forces troops deployed in Iraq have served Japan's national interests, strengthened the Japan-U.S. alliance and enabled the nation to carry out its responsibilities as a member of the international community.

July 9, 2004: U.S. Army defector to North Korea Charles Robert Jenkins is reunited with his Japanese wife in Jakarta, Indonesia.

July 11, 2004: Results of the House of Councilors elections in Japan: Liberal Democratic Party (114 seats), Democratic Party of Japan (79 seats), New Komeito Party (24 seats), Japanese Communist Party (9 seats), Social Democratic Party (0 seats).

July 15, 2004: Working level talks between U.S. and Japan begin in San Francisco to discuss moving some marines in Okinawa to Camp Fuji in Shizuoka Prefecture.

July 16, 2004: The U.S. government asks the Japanese government to review the 1996 Special Action Committee on Okinawa report on consolidation of U.S. military bases in Okinawa.

July 16, 2004: U.S.-Japan vice ministerial talks on Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), beef exports, and other agricultural issues in Tokyo.

July 16, 2004: Results of the 2004 Image of Japan Study in the U.S. show overall high favorability toward Japan as a dependable ally and positive evaluation of U.S.-Japan relations.

July 16, 2004: Former U.S. chess champion Bobby Fischer detained in Japan; awaits possible deportation to U.S. where he has been charged for playing 1992 chess match in Yugoslavia in violation of a U.S. ban.

July 18, 2004: Jenkins arrives in Tokyo from Indonesia with his Japanese wife, Hitomi Soga, and their two DPRK-born daughters, for medical treatment.

July 19, 2004: The Japan Business Federation (Nippon Keidanren) urges the Japanese government to review its three principles regulating the export of weapons to raise international competitiveness in the defense industry.

July 20, 2004: Michael Green, senior director for Asian affairs at the National Security Council, tells Nakagawa Hidenao, chairman of the LDP Diet Affairs Committee that Jenkins case will be dealt with in accordance with legal procedures while taking Japan-U.S. relations into account.

July 21, 2004: Japanese and U.S. officials begin two days of working-level talks on lifting Tokyo's import ban on U.S. beef.

July 21, 2004: Former world chess champion Bobby Fischer appeals Japanese plans to deport him to the U.S. and hopes to find political asylum in a third country.

July 21, 2004: Visiting LDP Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Nakagawa says Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage told him that war-renouncing Article 9 of Japan's Constitution is becoming an obstacle to strengthening the Japan-U.S. alliance and realizing Japan's bid for a permanent UN Security Council seat.

July 22, 2004: Chief Cabinet Secretary Hosoda Hiroyuki says Japan aims to become a permanent Security Council member under its current Constitution; Ishikawa Toru, chairman of the Joint Staff Council of the Self-Defense Forces, adds: "Military contribution is not a prerequisite to becoming a permanent Security Council member."

July 28, 2004: FM Kawaguchi urges U.S. Pacific Command Commander Adm. Thomas Fargo to reduce Japan's burden in hosting U.S. forces.

July 28, 2004: *Asahi Shimbun* reports that U.S. air base at Misawa has taken over command functions for naval patrol and reconnaissance for Asia as part of U.S. military's global repositioning.

July 29, 2004: Exchange of Notes concerning Modification of the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) between Japan and the U.S. They permit the SDF to provide supplies and services to U.S. forces engaged in disaster relief operations based on Japan's request, operations equivalent to transportation of Japanese overseas residents by the SDF, as well as training, liaison, coordination, and other daily operations.

July 30, 2004: Deputy Secretary Armitage denies linkage to Japan's constitutional revision and retracts remark on Japan's conditional membership on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

Aug. 6, 2004: Former chess champion Bobby Fischer says he wants to renounce U.S. citizenship.

Aug. 8, 2004: About 140 troops, the first elements of the Ground Self-Defense Force's third mission to Iraq, depart Aomori Airport for Kuwait.

Aug. 9, 2004: Two Japanese destroyers and a supply vessel leave for the Indian Ocean, where they will assist the U.S.-led antiterror campaign in Afghanistan.

Aug. 11, 2004: Lt. Gen. Thomas C. Waskow, commander U.S. Air Force Japan, says there never was, and never will be, a proposal to move the 374th Airlift Wing from Yokota Air Base to Guam.

Aug. 12, 2004: Secretary Powell says the U.S. will support Japan's bid for a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council, but thinks it should consider revising Article 9 of the Constitution if it wants to contribute to the good of the international community in a manner commensurate with that responsibility.

Aug. 12, 2004: Powell urges Japan to weigh the pros and cons of investing in Iran, which is under scrutiny for its nuclear program.

Aug. 13, 2004: A U.S. military transport helicopter crashes at a university campus in Ginowan, Okinawa, but there was no report of casualty from students.

Aug. 16, 2004: U.S. forces resume flight drills at Marine Corps Futenma Air Station in Ginowan, Okinawa Prefecture, despite protest by Ginowan Mayor Yoichi Iha following the helicopter crash.

Aug. 17, 2004: Japan's House of Representatives Speaker Kono Yohei suggests that Japan should maintain its war-renouncing Constitution rather than revising it in order to try and gain a permanent seat of the UN Security Council.

Aug. 22, 2004: The Japanese government calls resumption of U.S. helicopter flights "extremely regrettable," complaining that the U.S. military had not done enough to address the question of safety.

Aug. 23, 2004: *Kyodo* cites U.S. and Japanese sources in reporting that the U.S. plans to relocate 2,600 Marines in Okinawa to other parts of Japan starting in 2008. Until 2008, the 3rd Marine Division will reduce troops in Okinawa by sending 2,190 of them to South Korea, the Philippines, and other parts of Asia for training and other purposes.

Aug. 23, 2004: FM Kawaguchi and Secretary Powell discuss the Aug. 13 crash of a U.S. Marine Corps helicopter; Kawaguchi requests Powell to suspend the flight of helicopters of the same type until cause of crash is ascertained.

Aug. 24, 2004: Japan's Justice Ministry rejects Fischer's request for protection as a political refugee and issues an order to deport him.

Aug. 28, 2004: The U.S. government releases a statement saying the U.S. military in Japan will not fly *CH-53D* helicopters at the request of the Japanese government until it is "appropriate" to do so.

Aug. 29, 2004: Defense Agency chief Ishiba suggests that Japan consider revising the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) if bilateral discussions to prevent "arbitrary use" of the accord do not produce a solution in the handling of the recent helicopter crash in Okinawa.

Sept. 1, 2004: WTO authorizes Japan's retaliatory measures of up to \$78 million annually to counter U.S. payments to companies under the anti-dumping provisions of the Byrd Amendment.

Sept. 1, 2004: Japan and U.S. agree to set up a consultative body to improve implementation of the SOFA and how to facilitate cooperation between the U.S. military and Okinawa prefectural police.

Sept. 1, 2004: Japan's Defense Agency requests 4.933 trillion yen for FY 2005.

Sept. 9, 2004: Bobby Fischer wins case allowing delay in deportation to the U.S.

Sept. 11, 2004: Alleged deserter Sgt. Charles Robert Jenkins surrenders to U.S. military authorities in Japan.

Sept. 12, 2004: White House assures Japan that President Bush supports its bid to become a permanent U.N. Security Council member.

Sept. 13, 2004: 30,000 Okinawans rallied to protest the handling of the crash of U.S. military helicopter at a local university campus

Sept. 14, 2004: Japan-made parts found in Libyan nuke plant.

Sept. 15, 2004: Japan-U.S. Joint Committee on the SOFA agrees to set up a joint study group on bilateral cooperation in handling accidents involving U.S. military aircraft.

Sept. 16, 2004: A high-level U.S. administration official suggests that Japan abrogate the oil field development contract in Azadegan signed between Japan and Iran if Iran's nuclear suspicions are referred to the United Nations Security Council.

Sept. 21, 2004: Koizumi tells Iraqi interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi that Japan's Self-Defense Forces will stay in Iraq after Dec. 14 deadline.

Sept. 21, 2004: Bush and Koizumi hold meeting in New York City to discuss issues in the bilateral relationship.

Sept. 22, 2004: Koizumi says Japan will uphold its constitutional ban on using military force, even as a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council but continues supporting the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

Sept. 23, 2004: Koizumi urges UNGA to give Tokyo a permanent seat on the UNSC.

Sept. 27, 2004: Japan tells U.S. counterparts that relocation of the U.S. Army's I Corps headquarters to Camp Zama in Kanagawa is "politically difficult."

Sept. 27, 2004: Koizumi forms new Cabinet to push reforms; former education minister Machimura Nobutaka is named foreign minister.

Sept. 28, 2004: Japan lifts ban on U.S. poultry imports from the states of Rhode Island, Delaware and Maryland. (Japan imposed the ban on U.S. poultry imports on Feb. 7 following the discovery of chickens infected with avian flu in Delaware).

Sept. 28, 2004: New defense chief, Ono Yoshinori suggests Japan be allowed to engage in collective defense and make a more active contribution to international security.