

Japan and America: A Quest for a Unified Seapower

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Thank you.

This is an important gathering. Important, because now is the time for the Japan-America alliance to look far beyond the horizon. Ahead of us, we see uncharted waters. Uncharted, because in the sea, we see old problems combining with new ones. The mingling of piracy and proliferation, for example. Trafficking and terrorism. Over-fishing and global warming, and the list goes on, and on, and on.

That's not the end of the story. It was only after a gas field was discovered in the waters off Japan's Senkaku, that the Chinese suddenly became interested in the islands. Such quests to secure marine resources of all kinds are increasingly common. Barring landlocked countries, all nations claim jurisdictions in the sea. Some are building naval presence, and doing so quite in earnest. In sum, the post-war maritime status quo is gradually being lost. In its stead, a great game seems to be emerging.

That is why we have gathered here, my friends and colleagues. Together, Japan and America must work hard to keep the ocean pacific. That is what I want to stress at the outset.

I have argued that Japan is a stabilizer built in the Asian order. I say this, because Japan is the most seasoned democracy in Asia to remind the world that China has little transparency in its defence policy, and yet it is rapidly building a navy. I say this also because Japan is bound to the US by a shared set of values. And I say now, that Japan and America CAN, indeed MUST, work jointly as a stabilizing force.

Since the war, it is the US that's controlled the waves. To the great benefit of my country, I must say. Despite our scarce natural resources, Japan has come a long way. Now, Japan's economy is as big as China, India and Russia combined. Only by trading over the horizon, has Japan come all this way. With her sea lanes of commerce kept safe, I shouldn't forget to mention, by the US naval presence.

But look, Japan is no longer the nation you may have known. Today, even as I speak, Japanese sailors are on active duty in the middle of the Arabian Sea. Operating under the tropical sun, burned but not burned out, they are providing fuel and water to the ships joining Operation Enduring Freedom, of the US, UK, France, Germany, other NATO member countries and Pakistan. For the longest time, and in the remotest area in its entire history, Japan has maintained a maritime presence. Those men and women on the aegis destroyers and the tankers... They are the proud sons and daughters of the Japanese.

I know, this is long overdue. Nonetheless I say this to you, ladies and gentlemen. Day in and day out, Japan is proving its capability as a seapower. Every day, the world is learning afresh that together, Japan and America can pacify the sea, and stabilize the world to the benefit of everyone, and to the detriment of none.

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Looking back, Japan and America acted together to check the ambition of the Soviet navy. For the Soviets, the Sea of Japan became like a pond, with its gateways to the ocean practically blocked by the unified presence of Japan and America. It was at that time when Japan introduced P3C patrol aircraft, and decided to introduce aegis ships under the concept of 1,000-mile sea lane defence.

Thus enhanced, were the US-Japan joint capabilities of all sorts, from constant drills to surveillances. As a result, the US-Japan alliance came of age. Only when Japan and America formed a powerful naval alliance to check the Soviet expansion, did the overall alliance come to true maturity. Japan grew, also in that period, to build its own seapower. The naval alliance, therefore, has become public goods. We have the Soviets to thank most for that - history is not without irony.

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Today, I call upon the members of this important gathering to face up to a new challenge. That is to redefine the great naval alliance between the biggest seapowers in the Pacific in order to adapt to a new calling in a new century.

Take, for instance, the Straits of Malacca, where 250 ships pass each and every day. We must first note that in Japan, The Nippon Foundation has done a great deal over the last 40 years to help keep the Straits safe and peaceful. I pay tribute for that to Mr. Sasakawa.

Lately the US, for its part, gave 15 high-speed patrol boats to Indonesia. Japan also gave aid totalling 18 million dollars, during my watch as Foreign Minister. This was to help Indonesia to build three coastguard ships.

Both Japan and America have contributed greatly to the world's biggest Muslim nation. Both countries have also played a large part in helping build the human capital necessary for Indonesia to develop its governance. A police-box system, called koban, came into being in Indonesia, with the help of Japanese police officers. That's what I call a Kochikame factor. Google k-o-c-h-i-k-a-m-e, and you will see what I mean. All this bears importance because the situation at sea can never be isolated, but is an extension of what happens on land.

And now, Indonesia is making steady progress toward democratic governance. Japan has always maintained a peer-to-peer, non-condescending attitude toward Asian nations. With countries like Indonesia becoming far more democratic, I think Japan and the US should continue to act as peers.

On the part of Japan, I will say the following. The Nippon Foundation as well as the Japanese government have made considerable efforts to help develop coastguards both in Indonesia and in Malaysia, to help build their capacities, to conduct joint exercises against terror and piracy, and to hold a series of international conferences involving Asian maritime nations, and develop an information sharing mechanism.

One way to redefine seapower, my friends and colleagues, is to view it in light of the intellectual leadership Japan and America can provide. When Alfred Thayer Mahan discussed seapower, he focused on the military aspect. But needless to say, he also meant it in broad terms. He even considered national character, that is, how much a nation desires money, basically, as a component to build seapower, not to mention commerce and shipping.

Let us also be broad in redefining seapower in this age of growing maritime uncertainty. For now, I will call your attention to the following three points.

First, it must be a combined effort. The US should take a leading role, with Japan as its closest running mate. But it should involve other democratic seapowers, notably Australia and India in the Asia-Pacific region, and NATO partners like Britain more globally.

Second, the knowledge we have amassed matters. The kind of leadership we seek ought to be based as much on knowledge and experience as on might. Oceanic science, research and development in Japan

stand tall in the world. They must be taller still in the future. I know you can say the same for the US.

Japan and America must join forces to set the agendas for the better and sustainable management of such issues as: commerce and shipping, maritime resource development and environmental conservation, competing nationalism, and indeed the strengthening of free, open, and democratic world order. Japan and America must be makers of any emerging international framework, not its objectives.

Of special note here, is the fact that we can make much more use of oceanic resources. Last August, I flew by chopper off the Brazilian coast to land on a drilling platform. It was a site where they were drilling oil from the seabed that was very deep indeed. Japan and America should be able to do the same. Our seabed can be a hotbed for future resources. Japan and America must work together to explore, and then exploit such resources. If successful, we will be rewarded handsomely. Yet it goes without saying that we must also remain most responsible in taking care of the good health of mother nature.

Third, the Public Private Partnership, or PPP framework should be the norm, not the exception. I am reminded that The Nippon Foundation is calling upon such private companies as are benefiting from the peaceful passage in the Malacca Straits to contribute to a fund, that the littoral states will set up. We must encourage more such efforts. Navies, law enforcement organizations, and private corporations must all work together.

But in the end, to steer them in that direction calls for strong leadership. I would argue that a joint seapower between Japan and America must be that leader.

In sum, ladies and gentlemen, Japan and America must maintain their hard seapower. Yet equally, we should use our softer power, knowledge, as much as possible to pursue these objectives.

There is no better time than now, for in Japan there is growing bipartisan support for a new law under which trouble spots could call upon the JSDF together with likeminded democracies like America, the ROK and Australia. There is continued momentum for a revision to the Constitution, enabling Japan to exercise collective defence with its allies.

Also in my country, the Basic Ocean Law has just been enacted through tremendous bipartisan support. Under the new framework, more attention will be paid to scientific marine research and the like, involving the government, private sector, and academia.

And I know, as you will indeed be learning throughout this seminar, the US is busy taking a fresh look at its naval and maritime policies.

In conclusion, what I have said so far is conducive to realizing the Arc of Freedom and Prosperity called for by the Japanese Foreign Ministry under my guidance. I will not elaborate further as I have done so already in my book, published last year, touching upon the fact that the arc should further cement Japan's alliance with America.

True, we may be faced with challenges, many of which are yet unknown. However, nothing should worry us, provided Japan and America, two of the greatest maritime democracies, can continue acting as a joint seapower. And that, my friends and colleagues, is the reason we are all here.

Thank you very much.