

Japanese Thoughts on the Aftermath of September 11th

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I. Non-war commitment and the emergency legislation bills

In this paper, I would like to announce the results of a survey conducted on the current situation in Japan after September 11th. Young people have mixed emotions about the state of the world after the air strikes against Afghanistan. Being pacifists, they favor non-combat cooperation or non-war commitment⁽¹⁾ and they seem hesitant to take part in military activities. They stand against violent response and war, but they are less enterprising than other active young people who participate in the anti-war movement. Non-war commitment attitudes are based on the idea of unarmed neutrality, and it will enable Japan to remain as a peaceful society and provide a good example to Asia-Pacific countries.

On the other hand, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, a close friend of President George W. Bush, proposed a set of three emergency defense bills to prepare for foreign military attacks on Japan. This emergency legislation grants the government extraordinary powers to restrict people's freedom and rights in times of emergency. Some people are suspicious of the proposed legislation because war is a matter of becoming either an assailant or a victim. Mr. Koizumi has become more concerned with national security and Japan's military contribution to peacekeeping operations in conflict areas since the terrorist attack on September 11th and suspicious attack by a spy ship against the Japanese Coast Guard in December 2001.

After long deliberations in a Lower House special committee, the ruling coalition parties gave up on the emergency legislation bills during the spring Diet session in 2002 because opposition parties and a wary public were strongly against the bills. One critic says that the bill is a sort of military support law for the US military campaign. The Koizumi administration, however, again put forward the emergency legislation bills during the fall Diet session. After the government made several amendments the Lower House passed the three military emergency bills on May 15th, 2003.

There seems to be a large gap between what is discussed in the National Diet in Nagatacho and what young people think about the problems on campus. So I decided to make a survey on "The Terrorist Attacks on September 11th" in order to understand how students think of these trends.

II. The Result of the questionnaires

I gave the survey to my 109 students during their first lesson at the two universities in the middle of April in 2002. The questions were all multiple choice.

The main purpose of the survey was to learn how young people feel about the terrorist attacks and the air strikes against Afghanistan. The second point was to analyze their reaction toward Japanese countermeasures to meet the anti-terrorism campaign of the US. The third was to understand their attitudes and responses to the complicated conflicts or wars in an international society.

The questionnaire consisted of eleven questions and I examine the result of each question in order. On the first question, students were asked "what do you think of the terrorist attacks against the World Trade Center?" and they could mark more than one answer. Most students said it was 'an unexpected incident', (27%), it was 'a fear for terrorism' (26%) and it is 'a sorrowful incident' (22%). These figures show that most students were shocked and saddened by this tragedy and they may have seen the airplanes smash into the World Trade Center through television news coverage. Newspapers reported about 3,000 people were killed or missing, including 23 Japanese.

Many American commentators immediately drew an analogy between the terrorist attacks and the Pearl Harbor raid on December 7th in 1941. If we define terrorism as 'the practice of using violence to obtain political demands,'⁽²⁾ the Japanese Kamikaze attacks have some resemblance to the terrorist attacks in 2001. "Jihad" for Islam soldiers and "Holy war" for the emperor's soldiers caused a surge of patriotism in the US and triggered air strikes against Afghanistan and the dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima. However, many Japanese people think there are differences between the attacks so only 2% of the students think of 'the attack on Pearl Harbor.' One reason is that Japanese soldiers flew fighter-bombers that targeted warships and the navy base in Hawaii; they were not using commercial airliners or attacking commercial buildings. The American linguist Noam Chomsky pointed out another difference, that is, Hawaii was a colony of the US in 1941, not "the national territory".⁽³⁾ The statements "Remember Pearl Harbor" and "Remember September 11th" may be used to raise patriotism after this.

The second question is "what do you think of the air strikes against Afghanistan after September 11th?" President George W. Bush began retaliation bombing on Afghanistan to eliminate Islamic militants on October 7th, 2001. Just after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, 48% of Japanese people favored the attacks against Afghanistan and 38% opposed it, according to a nationwide telephone survey by the Mainichi Shimbun at the end of September.⁽⁴⁾ People's attitudes changed after 7 months. According to my survey, 47% of the students recognize the air strikes as 'unavoidable' but 40% of students are against it and only 6% agree with the air strikes. These figures show that most Japanese students do not think that air strikes are the best way to respond to terrorist attacks and they are comparatively oppose to President Bush's approach to solve the problem by military power. After the overthrow of the Taliban Regime at the beginning of December, there were reports pointing out that the bombing killed many Al-Qaida soldiers and many civilians in

Afghanistan. Noam Chomsky criticized in his interview that retaliation war was barred under international law⁽⁵⁾ and the US itself was a leading terrorist state. Japanese composer Ryuichi Sakamoto made comment on Mr. Bush before air strikes in New York, "I feel that to not retaliate may be the true valor here."⁽⁶⁾

The third question is "what do you think of the statement of 'axis of evil' by President Bush?" President Bush made a speech about an 'axis of evil' comprising Iraq, Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) in his State of the Union address on January 29th. When he spoke these words, the Bush administration planned to expand military action against Iraq. Mr. Bush visited Japan and reaffirmed the importance of the Japan-US alliance to the ongoing war against terrorism in February. Prime Minister Koizumi sympathetically said that the expression of 'axis of evil' reflected the firm resolve of President Bush and the US against terrorism.⁽⁷⁾ However, the original Axis Powers were Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Imperial Japan during World War II.

According to my survey, 50% of the Japanese students 'disagreed' with the remark and only 6% 'agreed'. Unlike the United States, Japan imports all its oil from the Middle East and has strong ties with Iran. Many Iranians came to Japan between 1990 and 1992 because of a visa exemption. Japan had a long bilateral relationship with the Korean Peninsula and started negotiations with North Korea to establish diplomatic relationships. There are more than 700,000 Japan-born-Koreans in Japan. It may be very difficult for Japanese students to refer to Iran and North Korea as "rogue states" or "axis of evil".

On the fourth question, students were asked "what are the main reasons of the terrorist attacks?" They picked out more than one reason from 6 topics but it may be very difficult to discover the real reasons for terrorism. 28% of the students say it is "militant Islamic ideology" and 22% say it is "religious conflict", next "the US's support for Israel" (16%), "poverty of people" (15%). Most students think that terrorist attacks are caused by the conflict between Islamic ideology and Western ideology, the religious conflict between Islam and Judaism, and a gap between rich people and poor people. Even if we could discover what drives people to acts of violence the solutions may be varied depending on the countries involved.

The main point is to find the way to end historical and religious hostility and to break the vicious circle of violence. However, this is easier said than done.

On the fifth question, students were asked "what do you think of when you hear of New York?" and were free to write as much as they liked. The most popular things were "the Statue of Liberty" (28%), "a big city" (15%), and an economic center" (14%). Most students recognized New York as a place where dreams come true, but only 5% responded by referring to New York as "a dangerous city". Some students see New York City as one of the most dangerous cities with the police officers and gangs fights in the streets.

The sixth question is "what do you think of the Japan-US Security Treaty?" This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Japan-US Security Treaty (the US-Japan Mutual Defense Treaty) and San Francisco Peace Treaty. After World War II, Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida signed a treaty in 1951 that permitted the continuation of American military bases in Okinawa (returned to Japanese rule from the US in 1972) and committed the United States to protect Japan in case of war.⁽⁸⁾ Even though Japan had "National Defense Force" with tanks, airplanes, and naval units by 1960, Japan has long been dependent upon US military forces. So, 26% of the students said that they agree with the treaty and 24% said it is unavoidable. Half of the students accept the present situation, that is, to remain under the American protective umbrella. Most Japanese people have become accustomed to viewing the world through a filter called the United States.⁽⁹⁾ However, 23% of the students said they disagree with the treaty.

Some students have doubts about the US leadership and Unitarianism and there is increasing debate on whether American soldiers should be based on Japanese soil, especially in Okinawa where 75% of the US military facility of Japan is based. Liberals, who support the pacifism of the Japanese Constitution, seek a way to divorce Japan from US control and the conservatives, who argue for a revised Constitution, seek a way to build up Japanese military forces and support the emergency legislation. Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara, who insisted that Yokota Air Base should be returned to Tokyo, is one of the most prominent conservatives.

The seventh question is "what do you think of the Middle East conflict between Israel and Palestine?" It is a very difficult problem for Japanese students to tell which side is responsible for the conflict, like a chicken-or-egg question. Japanese government is powerless to settle the Asia's outrageous dispute. To make the matters worse, the war against terrorism led by the US seems to encourage the Israeli army to invade the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as a retaliatory action. Palestinian suicide bombers attack the Israel in their turn. The media keeps reporting the low-tech attacks by the Palestinians and the high-tech responses by the Israelis of a nuclear-armed state. According to my survey, 40% of the students say "neither" and 10% blame Israel and 10% blame militant Palestine.

These figures show that both sides are responsible for the many civilian casualties in the Middle East for more than 80 years and the conflict is literally 'a chain of retaliation and violence.' We should think hard about what can be done to pacify the Israeli-Palestinian fighting instead of blaming the leaders.

The eighth question is "what do you think of sending Self-Defense Force vessels to the Indian Ocean?" There are heated debates in the Diet and among the general public about how Japan should cooperate with the US military campaign. On October 5th, the Koizumi administration submitted counterterrorism legislation bills to establish a legal base for a support of the US military campaign. This was triggered by the

remarks of Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage. Mr. Armitage had reportedly asked Japan for cooperation in the US campaign against terrorism by telling the Japanese Ambassador to the US Shunji Yanai to "show the flag."⁽¹⁰⁾ The Koizumi administration understood the literal meaning of "show the flag" and created the counterterrorism legislation bills to dispatch SDF troops overseas for two years. During the 1991 Persian Gulf War, Japan contributed \$13 billion to the US led multinational force and didn't "show the flag" at all. There was a heated debate on the meaning of "show the flag" in the Japanese Diet. Mr. Koizumi mentioned that he didn't understand the meaning and once expressed "show the frog" in stead of "show the flag" in the Diet. An opposition party lawmaker argued that "show the flag" meant "show your attitude", and the bills violated the idea of the Japanese Constitution.

These debates in the Diet and among the general public were reflected in the students' results. 37% of the students said they disagree with the dispatch of troops and 13% said they agreed with it. That 39% chose "unavoidable" shows the nature of Japanese people who tends to follow the prevailing mood. This is one of the moderate examples that the Japanese government makes its policies under the influence of foreign pressure.

The ninth question is "what do you think of the Koizumi administration?" According to a nationwide survey conducted by the Asahi Shimbun in April, non-supporters (44%) of Prime Minister Koizumi's Cabinet exceeded supporters (40%) for the first time.⁽¹¹⁾ Because there were the endless stream of political scandals; legislator Koichi Kato in a bribery case, Muneo Suzuki over projects for the Northern Territories, and Makiko Tanaka over the misuse of public secretary payments. Prime Minister Koizumi's popularity continued to decline through June. However, Koizumi's approval rating was rebounded in July after the World Cup Soccer Game⁽¹²⁾ and bounced back over 50% approval in September after he announced a visit to Pyongyang to meet Kim Jong Il in 2002.

According to my survey, 33% answered that they do not support the Koizumi administration, and 23% answered that they support it. 34% of the students said "neither." A distinctive feature of young people today is that they support Mr. Koizumi less than grown-ups and they have little interest in the Koizumi administration and politics. It is said that most voters prefer to consider themselves politically independent.⁽¹³⁾ According to a nationwide political approval survey conducted in June 2001, 31% of the voters support the Liberal Democratic Party, 9% of the voters support the Democratic Party (the main opposition party), and 44% of the respondents said they do not support any existing party.⁽¹⁴⁾

The tenth question is "what do you think of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution?" After Japan's defeat in World War II, the current Constitution came into effect in 1947 while General Douglas MacArthur was in command of the Occupation.

His main concern was the demilitarization and democratization of Japan, and he envisioned Japan as the Switzerland (militarized neutrality) of Asia.⁽¹⁵⁾ The Japanese leaders and American authorities agreed to an article in the new constitution that renounced war and the maintenance of any war potential. Article 9 mapped for peace for the first time in the world and proposed a non-war commitment. The article states that

aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.

The idea was universally accepted, and Barbara Lee, a member of the US Congress, who voted solely against the air strikes against Afghanistan, said "I have always had the greatest respect for the Japanese Peace Constitution."⁽¹⁶⁾ Japanese people have observed the Constitution for more than fifty years and the ideals of peace and democracy took root in Japan - not as a borrowed ideology or imposed vision.⁽¹⁷⁾ According to my survey, 70% of the students want to preserve Article 9 and 23% want to revise it. However, these figures do not reflect the general opinion because the results are very different from Diet member's political point of view. According to the Yomiuri Shimbun, 467 Diet members answered that 55% want to revise Article 9 in order to contribute to international Peace Keeping forces and 26% want to preserve it.⁽¹⁸⁾ Former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone urged the government to revise the Constitution and amend Article 9 so that the Self-Defense Forces can be called a military. This may be part of a prevalent trend that the numbers of nationalists and the right wing are increasing throughout the world after September 11th. Noam Chomsky says that every harsh and repressive force in the world is going to use the opportunity to pursue his own agenda.⁽¹⁹⁾

There seems to be a gap between the legislators in Nagatacho and the young people over the use of military power. If the Japanese people protest against and are enraged about the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, then we should oppose terrorism and war, "the practice of using violence to obtain political demands", and be proud of the renunciation of war in Article 9.

III. Conclusion

My conclusion is embodied in the result of the eleventh question, "what do you think of yourself?" 58% of the students say they are pacifists and 16% say they support non-violence. 15% of the students say they are egoists (materialists) and seem to be

indifferent to social and political problems. I am satisfied with the results because more than half of the students are pacifists and support the war-renouncing Constitution. Japan has not taken part in a war for close to 60 years with no military draft system, and young people have no interest in power games, and they pursue non-war commitment to settle international disputes. However, I have second thoughts on the definition of a pacifist ideology because everyone wants to live in peaceful and stable society. If students call themselves pacifists and their greatest concern is how to keep their easy lives, they are negative or parasitic pacifists. According to worldwide research published by Dentsu in 2000, Japanese people demonstrate ambivalent feeling concerning direct involvement in warfare. One question asked the respondents "are you willing to fight for your country when a war starts?" Only 15.6% of Japanese say that "yes, I'll fight" and it takes 59 place in 59 countries, the lowest position.⁽²⁰⁾ Japan seems to be the least aggressive nation. Japanese people are accustomed to the present situation where they are dependent upon US military forces and adopt policies that yield to US government pressure. So, they are not active pacifists. As a matter of fact, the Koizumi administration gradually watered down Article 9 and leads us to a militaristic nation under the threat of international terrorism.

My point is that Japan's ultimate goal in international society, as the only country to suffer an atomic bomb attack, is to stick to the peaceful Constitution and activate against war and violence, even though it may be impractical and a minority opinion in the 21st century. Costa Rica is another military-free society since 1949 in the Central America and President Luis Monge declared a policy of "perpetual, active, and unarmed neutrality" in 1983.⁽²¹⁾

When I read newspapers, magazines, books, and watched TV programs on September 11th, I came across brave pacifists, the members of a non-violent organization in the United States, called Peaceful Tomorrows. The organization (of which the name comes from "Wars are poor chisels for carving out peaceful tomorrows We must pursue peaceful ends through peaceful means" by Martin Luther King, Jr.) was introduced on a TV program and in a newspaper in Japan. The members of Peaceful Tomorrows are families of September 11th victims and they seek an effective, non-violent response to terrorism and to identify a commonality with all people similarly affected by violence throughout the world.⁽²²⁾ According to the newsletter, the members traveled to Afghanistan to meet "sister families" of Afghan victims and had joint talk with the members of the Hiroshima Alliance for Nuclear Weapons Abolition. The families of September 11th victims and atomic bomb survivors share their hopes for a world without violence. Peaceful Tomorrows members advocate the importance of forgiveness as an alternative to violence in the news media.⁽²³⁾ On the anniversary of the September 11 tragedies, they wrote a letter to Mr. Bush to pursue diplomatic, multi-lateral and non-violent action to protect the American people.⁽²⁴⁾

I will introduce their ideas and activities based on the philosophy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to my students and I believe that human beings are not fated to war to eliminate the enemies, but to live together with people of different backgrounds.

※ この論文はコロンビア大学での Asian and Pacific Americans in Higher Education Annual Conference (November 2, 2002) で発表した原稿に加筆したものである。

Note:

- (1) 朝日新聞 8.6, 2002
- (2) *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 1978
- (3) Noam Chomsky, *9-11*, Seven Stories Press, 2001, p.12
- (4) 毎日新聞 9.26, 2001
- (5) Noam Chomsky, *9-11*, Seven Stories Press, 2001, p.66
- (6) R. Sakamoto Web Site: <http://www.sitesakamoto.com/WTC911/20010922.html>
- (7) *The Asahi Shimbun*, February 19, 2002.
- (8) John Whitney Hall, *Japan: From Prehistory to Modern Times*, Charles E. Tuttle, 1990, p.354
- (9) Jitsuro Terashima, *The Asahi Shimbun*, May 30, 2002.
- (10) *Japan Times*, October 7, 2001
- (11) *The Asahi Shimbun*, April 3, 2002.
- (12) *The Asahi Shimbun*, July 22, 2002
- (13) Edwin O. Reischauer, *The Japanese Today*, Belknap Press, 1996, p.268
- (14) 日経 3,000 人電話調査 2002 年 6 月実施調査
- (15) Edwin O. Reischauer, *The Japanese Today*, Belknap Press, 1996, p.105
- (16) 坂本龍一監修 『非戦』(幻冬舎, 1.15, 2002) p.18
- (17) John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the wake of World War II*, W.W. Norton & Company, 1999, p.23
- (18) 読売新聞 3.22, 2002
- (19) Noam Chomsky, Palo Alto, California, March 22, 2002
- (20) 宮崎哲弥 「ナショナリズムを問い直す」 朝日新聞 8.14, 2003
- (21) 早乙女愛・足立力也 『平和をつくる教育: 「軍隊を捨てた国」 コスタリカのこどもたち』(岩波ブックレット No.575, 8.20, 2002)
- (22) <http://www.peacefultomorrow.org>
- (23) Dean Murphy, "Beyond Justice, the Eternal Struggle to Forgive", *The New York Times*, May 26, 2002
- (24) http://www.peacefultomorrow.org/letters/bush_iraq_letter.html

The Results of a Questionnaire on the Terrorist Attacks of Sept. 11

Freshmen at Akita Prefectural Univ., Faculty of Science and Technology (Apr.17)

Freshmen at Akita National Univ., Faculty of Education and Human Studies (Apr.15)

Total students 109: Male 70 , Female 39

1. What do you think of the terrorist attacks against the World Trade Center?
(more than 1 answer was OK)

1) a sorrowful incident	50	22%
2) an unexpected incident	60	27%
3) a fear for terrorism	58	26%
4) The attack against Pearl Harbor	4	2%
5) resistance against the U.S.	46	21%
6) indifferent	0	0%
7) other	5	2%

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2. What do you think of the air strikes against Afghanistan after Sept. 11?

1) agree	6	6%
2) unavoidable	51	47%
3) disagree	44	40%
4) neither	7	6%
5) indifferent	1	1%

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3. What do you think of the statement of "axis of evil" by President Bush?

1) agree	6	6%
2) unavoidable	26	24%
3) disagree	54	50%
4) neither	18	17%
5) indifferent	5	5%

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4. What are the main reasons of the terrorist attacks? (more than 1 was OK)

1) militant Islam ideology	55	28%
2) poverty of people	30	15%
3) economic globalization	8	4%
4) the U.S.'s support for Israel	31	16%
5) religious conflict	43	22%
6) political conflict	23	12%
7) other	5	3%

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5. What do you think of when you hear of New York? (free description)

1) the Stature of Liberty	29	28%
2) a big city	15	15%
3) an economic center	14	14%
4) terrorist attacks	12	12%
5) Yankees	5	5%
6) other	27	26%

6. What do you think of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty?		
1) agree	28	26%
2) unavoidable	26	24%
3) disagree	25	23%
4) neither	20	18%
5) indifferent	10	9%
	109	
7. What do you think of the Middle East conflict between Israel and Palestine?		
1) Israel's fault	11	10%
2) Palestinian's fault	2	2%
3) Jewish nationalism's fault	0	0%
4) militant Islam group's fault	11	10%
5) neither	44	40%
6) indifferent	6	6%
7) I don't know.	35	32%
	109	
8. What do you think of sending Self-defense Forces vessels to the Indian Ocean to refuel the U.S. and British ship?		
1) agree	14	13%
2) unavoidable	43	39%
3) disagree	40	37%
4) neither	8	7%
5) indifferent	4	4%
	109	
9. What do you think of Prime Minister Koizumi?		
1) support him	25	23%
2) not support him	36	33%
3) neither	37	34%
4) indifferent	11	10%
	109	
10. What do you think of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution (renunciation of war)?		
1) observe it	76	70%
2) revise it	25	23%
3) neither	6	6%
4) indifferent	2	2%
	109	
11. What do you think of yourself?		
1) nationalist	3	3%
2) militant nationalist	1	1%
3) pacifist	63	58%
4) non-violent	17	16%
5) communist	2	2%
6) egoist	16	15%
7) other	7	6%
	109	

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