

No more tax money to U.S.

By KIROKU HANAI

<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/print/eo20060327kh.html>

The administration of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has played down Japanese public sentiment against the U.S. military presence, believing that most people approve of it in general but object when their own community is affected.

However, strong anti-U.S. military sentiment in various communities -- exemplified by the opposition shown by Iwakuni (Yamaguchi Prefecture) residents in a March 12 referendum to a plan to host carrier-based warplanes at the U.S. Marine Corps air station there -- could change the generally favorable public opinion. The government should closely watch public opinion on this issue.

As for the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan, many Japanese are irked by reports that Washington is asking Tokyo to pay 75 percent of the estimated \$ 10 billion cost to relocate 8,000 marines from Okinawa to Guam.

It is hard to understand why Japan must help pay the cost of building a new base on territory where Japan has no sovereignty. The spending is unwarranted, even if it is interpreted as part of host-nation support for the U.S. military.

Under Article 24 of the Japan-U.S. status-of-forces agreement (SOFA), Japan is required to defray only the cost of leasing facilities, related areas and rights of way. However, in 1978, then Defense Agency Director General Shin Kanemaru tentatively decided to make an exception for the Japanese government's contribution of 6.2 billion yen a year to help pay part of the salaries of Japanese workers on U.S. military bases. The decision was made in light of increasing U.S. difficulties in paying the cost of maintaining military bases in Japan due to Washington's growing budget deficits and the appreciation of the yen.

In 1987 Japan and the United States signed a special agreement, subject to review every five years, on host-nation support, which has expanded to cover repair and maintenance costs for military housing, most salaries for Japanese workers, on-base utility bills, and the cost of moving U.S. troops on drills. Under the 2006 government budget, host-nation support amounts to 232.6 billion yen.

Japan has been troubled by a sharp increase in budget deficits while trying to tame deflation since the economic bubble burst. The proportion of deficit to gross domestic product has increased to the highest level among industrial countries. According to statistics compiled by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Japan's outstanding debt in 2005 skyrocketed to 161.1 percent of GDP, the highest among the seven leading industrialized countries and almost triple

the comparable U.S. rate of 66.4 percent. The Japan-U.S. gap continues to widen, after the Japanese rate exceeded the U.S. figure in 1994.

The U.S., far from showing some sympathy for Japan's fiscal problems, is moving to demand more exceptions -- that is, increases -- in host-nation support under SOFA. The U.S. should not use Japan as its pocketbook.

In a speech to the Foreign Correspondents Club of Japan last Nov. 30, U.S. Ambassador to Japan J. **Thomas Schieffer** said the U.S. has borne a "heavy burden" since forging a security alliance with Japan: "**The American taxpayer will spend more than 3.7 percent of gross domestic product on defense this year while the Japanese spend less than 1 percent. In real dollars, the U.S. will spend more than 10 times as much as Japan on defense.**" The envoy implicitly urged Japan to contribute more to defense.

Schieffer's argument may seem right in terms of figures, but it is meaningless when Japan's postwar history is taken into consideration. Since its defeat in World War II, Japan has revived itself as a pacifist nation under the war-renouncing Constitution. After the Korean War, Japan rearmed itself under U.S. pressure. This nation's governments, however, have limited the nation's defense spending to 1 percent of GDP almost every year since 1976. Japan should be proud of this limit, and the U.S. should not interfere with it.

Since Shigeru Yoshida ruled Japan as prime minister in the immediate postwar years, Japan has upheld the policy of maintaining light armaments. **The Japanese are not ashamed of the nation's small military spending, only one-tenth of the comparable U.S. figure.**

Japan has no aircraft carriers or long-range bombers -- to say nothing of nuclear arms -- so as not to arouse international suspicion of its ambitions. It is only natural that Japan spends much less on defense than the U.S. Japan has a totally different defense policy from that of the U.S., which has served as the "policeman of the world," deploying armed forces worldwide and developing new weapons even after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The Japanese government has expressed reservations about the U.S. request to pay 75 percent of the cost of transferring marines from Okinawa, although officials are reportedly considering sharing the cost, perhaps in the form of loans. Even the existing host-nation support is an excessive burden beyond Japan's financial means, and it is out of the question for the U.S. to demand new exceptions under SOFA.

In announcing new national security strategies recently, U.S. President George W. Bush expressed his intention to retain U.S. preemptive strike capabilities against adversaries, despite strong international criticism of that policy in connection with the Iraq war.

I oppose spending more Japanese tax money to support the Bush administration's dangerous strategies. Instead, the Japanese government should try to solve its fiscal

problems.

It was reported recently that in the 1971 Japan-U.S. agreement on the reversion of Okinawa, the then director general of the North American Affairs Bureau at the Foreign Ministry disclosed that Japan secretly paid \$ 4 million to restore U.S.-occupied land to its original condition -- a cost the U.S. should have paid.

Transferring U.S. marines from Okinawa will cost a lot more. No secret deals should be made on this issue.

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The Japan Times: Monday, March 27, 2006

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# Taiwan Security Research

## Cheap Ride on U.S. Security

By Robyn Lim

Japan Times, Jan. 29, 2006

<http://taiwansecurity.org/News/2006/JT-290106.htm>

As a "rising" China presses on its maritime frontiers in the East and South China Seas, tensions with Japan are increasing rapidly because of the maritime basis of Japanese security. **Yet Japan thinks it can reduce defense spending, continue to rely on the United States for its strategic security, and poke China in the eye while expecting America to keep China on a leash. A jumble of contradictions.**

U.S.-Japan base realignment talks are going badly, with America insisting that the agreement reached last November is final, while Japan is saying it is provisional. Yet Japan has no regional friends. To the contrary, it has territorial disputes with all of its neighbors. That reduces Japan's leverage in its only

alliance.

Worse, Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso misses few opportunities to provoke China and South Korea. He may now be intending to allow Taiwanese former President Lee Teng-hui visit Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, where Lee's elder brother is enshrined.

Because China sees Lee as a Japan-loving traitor intent on splitting Taiwan from the motherland, such a move would be tantamount to throwing a flame into an empty fuel tank.

The U.S. does not want Japan kowtowing to a China that is clearly intent on pushing the U.S. out of East Asia if it can. But neither does America want to see Sino-Japanese tensions escalate into a clash in the East China Sea over natural gas reserves and competing maritime claims -- a clash in which Japan would probably expect American support. If America starts to think that this alliance is becoming more a source of danger than security, it will begin seriously to reassess the risks and benefits of remaining forward deployed in Japan.

True, even the U.S. military would find it hard to contend with vast reaches of the Pacific Ocean. Without access to bases in Japan, it would be much harder for U.S. forces to project power onto the East Asian mainland. The loss of bases in the Philippines stretched U.S. maritime mobility.

If America withdrew to Guam, there would be large costs, not least because it would mean reduced U.S. ability to influence events in East Asia. Moreover, such a withdrawal would be irreversible. But Japan seems intent on making America think harder about this option.

True, U.S.-Japan cooperation in missile defense is going well. Japan has also agreed that the U.S. can replace the conventionally powered aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk, home-ported at Yokosuka, with a nuclear-powered carrier (because the U.S. has run out of operational conventional carriers.)

But Japan has also said it intends to cut the budget for host-nation support by about 10 percent. Yet host-nation support is only about 8 percent of the 1 percent of gross national product that Japan spends on defense. Japan is also proposing cuts in its defense budget. Many in America will see that as near-free riding.

In relation to Okinawa, politicians in Tokyo have been passing the buck for years. They have never accepted Okinawa as fully part of Japan, and it remains the poorest province because of a lack of investment, especially in education. Of course, the Okinawans know they are second-class Japanese, so they exact a price in the form of the subsidies for hosting the U.S. bases -- welfare to which many are now addicted.

But if American forces moved out, the Japanese military would have to move

in because of the growing threat from China. That is the last thing the Japanese government really wants to do. So Tokyo finds it convenient to have the U.S. provide security for Okinawa and take the heat from those Okinawans antagonistic to the continued U.S. presence.

That does not impress the U.S. Marine Corps, not least since Japan expects the marines to be in the front line if China were to attack Japanese territory or Japan's vital interests. To reduce the U.S. "footprint" on Okinawa, America has agreed to remove the headquarters of the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force to Guam. But once the withdrawal from Okinawa starts, it might be hard to stop.

Guam has the huge advantage of being American territory where an increased military presence is welcome. Moreover, the recent U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have tested advanced military technology that is rapidly shrinking distance, for example armed unmanned aerial vehicles. The "tyranny of distance" in the Pacific will not be forever immune from these improvements in technology.

Thus if Japan assumes that it is indispensable, it will increase the risk that the U.S. will move to Guam, force Japan to balance growing Chinese power as best it can, and refuse to intervene until both parties have kicked each other rather hard in the shins.

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