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Japan as a Reactive State?: Analyzing Japan's Relations with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

By Keiko Hirata

As Japan has risen to become a world economic power, its foreign policy has come under increasing scrutiny. The dominant view of Japan's international behavior is that it is essentially reactivist. Japan is portrayed as passive, risk-avoiding, and ineffective in conducting foreign policy. Only when Japan faces international pressure, it is suggested, does Tokyo change its diplomatic course.[1]

This paper analyzes Japanese foreign policy toward the Social Republic of Vietnam (SRV) since its establishment in the 1970s. In doing so, the paper reveals the limitations of the reactivist model. It argues that since the early 1970s, when US influence began to decline in Indochina, Japan has searched for an active role in the region and has attempted to strengthen its relations with Vietnam, a country that Tokyo thought would help bridge the gap between capitalist Southeast Asia and communist Indochina. This paper will describe how Japan took a proactive role toward Vietnam in the 1970s and 1990s, at the times of relaxed US pressure, while adopting a reactive

[1] See for example, Kent Calder, "Japanese Foreign Economic Policy Formation: Explaining the Reactive State," *World Politics*, 40 (July 1988); Edward J. Lincoln, *Japan's New Global Role* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1993); Donald Hellmann, "Japanese politics and Foreign Policy: Elitist Democracy Within An American Green House," in Takashi Inoguchi and Daniel I. Okimoto (eds.), *The Political Economy of Japan: vol. 2: The Changing International Context*, (Berkeley, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988); Donald Hellmann, "The Confrontation with Realpolitik," in James Morley (ed.), *Forecast for Japan: Security in the 1970s* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972); Michael Blaker, "Evaluating Japan's diplomatic performance," in Gerald L. Curtis (ed.), *Japan's Foreign Policy After the Cold War: Coping with Change* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1993).

stance in the 1980s due to intense US pressure. Japanese foreign policy toward Hanoi thus has alternated between reactivism and proactivism, depending on the intensity of foreign pressure (*gaiatsu*), especially from the United States.

The paper first discusses the notion and applicability of the reactivist model to contemporary Japanese policy toward Vietnam. Next, it clarifies how and when proactivism takes place in Japanese policy toward Vietnam and modifies the reactivist model by proposing a hybrid analytic model combining reactivism and proactivism. Finally, it illustrates Japan's reactive-proactive diplomacy by analyzing recent Hanoi-Tokyo relations in three periods: (1) the early 1970s-1978 (initial proactivism following US withdrawal from Vietnam and the end of the Vietnam War), (2) 1979-1989 (reactivism during the years of Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia), and (3) 1989-present (renewed proactivism after the end of the Cold War). While the focus of the paper is on Japan's relations with the SRV, it will also examine Japan's policy toward Hanoi under the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) in the early 1970s. Tokyo's approach toward the SRV developed from its earlier contact with the DRV before the liberation of Saigon in 1975.

Through this discussion, the paper seeks to remedy the shortage of analysis on Japanese proactive foreign policy by proposing the hybrid analytic model of reactivism and proactivism. It does not, however, attempt to apply this hybrid model to Japanese foreign policy in general; further research is needed to see in what situations and issue areas this reactive/proactive model holds true.

Reactivism

The main focus of the reactivist perspective is on the role of *gaiatsu* in Japanese policymaking. The reactivist school argues that *gaiatsu* provides a powerful stimulus to the Japanese domestic policymaking process—frequently characterized as immobile—and that *gaiatsu* is the foremost factor determining the direction of Japan's diplomacy. According to this school of thought, changes in Japanese foreign policy occur as responses to the international community rather than to domestic needs.[2]

Another main theme of the reactivist view is the centrality of the United States in affecting Japan's foreign policy. The reactivist school assumes that the external pressure on Japan usually comes from Washington.[3] Lincoln explains why Tokyo has so often yielded to US *gaiatsu*::

> The U.S. government has been the principal source of the outside pressure, a role that has come about as a result of historical legacy (the war and occupation), a vague sense of international hierarchy (the Japanese still view the United States as more prestigious and powerful than their own country), and overwhelming focus on maintaining access to American markets for goods and investment (given the large shares of exports and investment destined to the United States), and a concern for maintaining the U.S.-Japan mutual security treaty as the cornerstone of Japanese foreign policy.[4]

Many reactivists distinguish Japan's behavior in economics from that in the political/strategic arena and argue that Japan is an aggressor in low politics but a dwarf in high politics. Some attribute Japan's reactiveness to the "Yoshida Doctrine" of the 1950s, which emphasized post-World War II economic reconstruction and development,

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[2] See Dennis Yasutomo, *The New Multilateralism in Japan's Foreign Policy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), chapter 2. Yasutomo discusses four main tenets of the reactivist approach: (1) the external origin of reactivity, (2) the United States as the primary locus of reactivity, (3) the immobile domestic policymaking process as the fundamental causes of reactivity, and (4) the scope of reactiveness as both foreign economic policy and political-strategic diplomacy.

[3] See Donald Hellmann, "The Confrontation with Realpolitik"; Michael Blaker, "Evaluating Japan's diplomatic performance."

[4] Edward J. Lincoln, *Japan's New Global Role*.

minimum defense, and reliance on the US-Japan Security Alliance that guaranteed American military protection of Japan. According to Hellmann, the Yoshida Doctrine has been kept intact by an international "greenhouse" created by the United States in the early Cold War era. In his view, the Yoshida Doctrine under the protection of the international greenhouse has made Japan an economic superpower while allowing it to remain a dwarf in world politics. Hellmann asserts that because of Japan's special "incubator" conditions under the greenhouse provided by the United States, Tokyo has never faced an urgent need to develop long-term strategic security planning.[5] According to him, "Japan was and still remains essentially a passive actor on the world political state, more a trading company than a nation-state, a nation without a foreign policy in the usual sense of the word."[6] Similarly, Funabashi argues that Japan has eschewed political involvement in international affairs while focusing on economic gains since the end of World War II. He claims that for the last four decades "all the nation's (Japan's) energy and resources were mobilized exclusively for economic reconstruction and expansion" and that security issues were placed on the back burner.[7]

In contrast, other reactivists do not draw a line between politics and economics and maintain that Japan is reactivist even in the economic sphere. According to Calder, Japan is a typical "reactive state" in economic policymaking, partaking the following "essential characteristics " of the reactivist state:

> (1) the state fails to undertake major independent foreign economic policy initiatives when it has the power and national incentives to do so; and (2) it responds to outside pressures for change, albeit erratically, unsystematically, and often incompletely.[8]

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[5]Donald Hellmann, "Japanese politics and Foreign Policy: Elitist Democracy Within An American Green House."
[6]Ibid., p. 358.
[7] Yoichi Funabashi, "Japan and the New World Order," *Foreign Affairs* (winter 1991-92), vol. 70, no. 5, p. 61.
[8] Kent Calder, "Japanese Foreign Economic Policy Formation: Explaining the Reactive State," p. 519.

From Calder's point of view, Japan avoids taking independent economic policy initiatives despite the country's "manifest economic and geostrategic resources and its demonstrated ability to operate strategically within its national boundaries."[9] Calder wonders why, despite its enhanced national capacity, Japan has been reactive to international events and has been more deferential to US *gaiatsu* than have most middle-range powers such as major European states.[10]

While divergence exists over whether Japan is reactive only in high politics or whether it is reactive even in low politics, there is consensus among reactivists over the manner in which Tokyo conducts foreign policy. The unanimous view is that Tokyo's reactive policymaking involves minimalist, passive, and risk-avoiding diplomacy. Blaker describes the essence of Japan's foreign policy as "coping." In his view, Japan just copes with situations created by others; Japan's foreign policymaking involves "carefully assessing the international situation, methodically weighing each alternative, sorting out various options to see what is really serious, waiting for the dust to settle on some contentious issue, piecing together a consensus view about the situation faced, and then performing the existing situation with the fewest risk."[11]

Another view on Japan's foreign policy shared by the reactivists is that Japanese strategy is extremely ineffective. As Calder claims in the above statement that Japan responds to foreign pressure "erratically, unsystematically, and often incompletely,"[12] many scholars argue that Tokyo unsuccessfully implements a new policy after an impetus of *gaiatsu*. According to Blaker, Japan's "minimalist, coping approach has become jarringly inappropriate to Japan's vastly expanded, international presence today."[13]

A well-cited example of Tokyo's ineffective reactivist policy is the country's role in the Gulf War in 1990-91. Lincoln claims that Japan failed to find appropriate means to

[9] Ibid., p. 520.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Michael Blaker, "Evaluating Japan's diplomatic performance", p. 3.
[12] Calder, "Japanese Foreign Economic Policy Formation," p. 519.
[13] Michael Blaker, "Evaluating Japan's diplomatic performance", p. 4.

actively and swiftly participate in the war effort and defensively reacted to US pressure without taking any clear stance on the crisis. He points out that Japan's tardy response to the war invited severe criticism from the United States and other countries despite Tokyo's contribution totaling $13 billion in the end, approximately 20 percent of the total cost of Desert Storm.[14]

The reactivist perspective is useful in explaining the importance of *gaiatsu,* particularly US pressure, in Japanese foreign policymaking. The proponents of the reactivist approach are correct in their assessment that US-Japan relations are the foremost factor influencing Japan's foreign policy and that these relations should be a focal point of analysis of Japan's foreign policy. Their description of the manner of Japanese foreign policymaking—minimalist, slow, risk-avoiding—is also useful in understanding Japan's behavior, especially during international crises.

This reactivist model, however, by itself is insufficient to adequately explain Japan's foreign policy in many regions in the world, such as Southeast Asia, a region where Japan has taken important diplomatic and economic policy initiatives. The main problem with the reactivist model is its premise that changes in Japanese foreign policy occur only as a result of *gaiatsu*. This model neglects proactive policy initiatives by Japan and instead postulates that the reactive, passive, minimalist style prevails at all times any places. Previous studies, however, prove that Japan does indeed take indigenous initiative to pursue its interests. One well-cited example of Japan's proactivism is its Middle Eastern policy during the oil crisis in 1973. Kuroda argues that to secure the supply of oil for its rapidly expanding economy, Japan pursued a genuinely proactive policy in the region which was independent from the United States.[15] Also,

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[14] Edward Lincoln, *Japan's New Global Role*. Failing to recognize how serious the crisis was, Japan was initially unwilling to make financial contributions for the allied forces. In August 1990 Tokyo pledged merely $1 billion. In September of the same year, Japan reluctantly announced that it would provide additional $3 as a result of US gaiatsu. It was only in March 1992, well after the actual end of the war, that the Japanese Diet passed a bill of $9 billion contribution for the Desert Storm Operations.

[15] Yasumasa Kuroda, "Japan and the Arabs: The Economic Dimension," *Journal of Arab Affairs* (Spring 1984).

many observers of Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA) point out the active nature of Japan's recent aid policy, demonstrated by such initiatives as aid doubling plans and four debt relief plans for debt-plagued developing countries in the 1980s.[16] In his analysis on Japan's role at multilateral financial institutions, Yasutomo finds growing Japanese proactivism while at the same time recognizing the lingering nature of reactivism in Japanese foreign policy: "Japan's recent diplomatic behavior reveals considerable reactivity and equivocation, but there are also concurrent indications of greater activism and even hints of leadership, especially since the last half of the 1980s."[17]

Another significant problem of the reactivist model is its failure to clearly delineate Japanese foreign policy at times when Japan does not face *gaiatsu*, particularly from the United States. The reactivist model implies that Japan always faces a constant flood of *gaiatsu* from the United States and that Tokyo incessantly adjusts itself to American demands. But the United States does not necessarily make demands on Japan when there are no high stakes for Washington. For example, Washington did not exert much pressure on Tokyo over Japanese policy toward Vietnam in either the 1970s or the 1990s. An oversimplified image of US-Japan relations—that the United States constantly pressures Japan and Japan grudgingly accommodates US demand—obscures the more complex reality of US-Japan relations. This paper argues that while United States sometimes exerts strong pressure on Japan regarding issues of critical importance to Washington, at other times the United States remains sanguine or at least tolerant of Japan's foreign policy role, as seen for example in Vietnam.

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[16] See for example, Dennis Yasutomo, *The Manner of Giving: Strategic Aid and Japanese Foreign Policy* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1986.

[17] Yasutomo, *The New Multilateralism in Japan's Foreign Policy*, p. 34.

Japan's Policy toward Vietnam: Reactivism and Proactivism

Japan-Vietnam relations in the post-Vietnam War era cannot be explained solely by the reactivist model. This paper proposes a hybrid model of reactivism and proactivism for the analysis of Japan-Vietnam relations. A close examination of the bilateral relations reveals that Japan has consistently hoped to take political and economic proactive policies toward the SRV since the 1970s and that Japan has succeeded at certain times but has also failed at another time. This means that Tokyo has taken both reactive and proactive policies toward the SRV throughout these years and that Tokyo has switched its *modes operandi* from reactivism to proactivism and vise versa. During the reactive time, Japan has reacted to *gaiatsu*, particularly from the United States, and has followed American policies toward Hanoi. During the proactive periods, Japan has searched for greater political and economic influence in the SRV by formulating new doctrines, taking aid initiatives, and promoting regional integration policies. Here proactivism means that "Japan has its own ideas, interests, and policy objectives... Its policies are not based solely on the expectations foreign countries nor in response to direct foreign pressure."[18]

The hybrid model of reactivism and proactivism does not discount the characteristics of the reactivist model such as the prominent role of *gaiatsu* in Japanese policymaking, the centrality of the United States in Japanese foreign policy, or the "coping" manner of diplomacy. Rather, this model clarifies the definition of Japan's reactiveness and amends the reactivist model with several propositions. First, US pressure on Japan influences not only Tokyo's bilateral relations with the United States but also its trilateral/multilateral relations. Japan often yields to American pressure targeted at Japan's policy toward another state (or states). This was exemplified by US pressure on Japan during the Gulf War in the early 1990s. It was also seen by American

[18] Yasutomo, *The New Multilateralism in Japan's Foreign Policy*, p. 57.

gaiatsu on Tokyo following the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in 1979. Due to American pressure, Tokyo shifted its focus on the Vietnamese invasion from Japan-Vietnam relations to US-Japan relations; Tokyo responded to the incident based on neither Tokyo's moral outrage over Hanoi's aggression nor concern for the fundamental issue of solving the crisis. Rather, Japan responded to the crisis in order to comply with US demands that Tokyo give support for Washington's efforts in isolating the SRV from the capitalist countries of Southeast Asia.

Second, this paper argues that there are two faces of *gaiatsu*: one pressuring Japan to *act* and the other pressuring it *not to act*. As we have seen, the example of the Gulf War illustrates a case in which the United States pressures a passive Japan to act when it does not want to. If we argue that Japan has all along hoped to take a proactive policy toward Vietnam since the end of the Vietnam War, we can also perceive US pressure on proactive Japan not to act when it in fact wants to. Since Japan has persistently wanted to conduct a proactive policy toward Vietnam throughout the years since the early 1970s, we can presume that Tokyo has switched its *modus operandi* to reactivism unwillingly and has converted to proactivism voluntarily.

Third, reduced US *gaiatsu* on Japan can contribute to Japan's increased foreign policy activism. For example, in the 1970s and 1990s, when the US pressure again Japan-Vietnam relations eased, Japan adapted a more proactive stance toward Vietnam. Thus the key to understanding Japan's shifts between reactivism and proactivism in its policy toward Hanoi is US-Japan relations, with Japan taking a reactive stance during periods of intense US *gaiatsu* and taking a proactive stance when US *gaiatsu* eases.

Fourth, Japan is susceptible to a *synergistic linkage* strategy. According to Schoppa, linkage refers to "cases where a nation seeks to take advantage of its power advantage in one area by linking it to an issue area in which it has fewer power

resources."[19] The United States, for example, sought to influence Japan's SRV policy in the 1980s by linking it to American security interests in Southeast Asia and to US-Japan bilateral trade relations. Given America's advantageous position over Japan in security (i.e., Japan's need for a US security umbrella) and trade (i.e., Japan's need for an open US market), Tokyo became vulnerable to American *gaiatsu* to isolate communist Vietnam in the 1980s.

Fifth, *gaiatsu* can affect Japan when the foreign government succeeds in changing the perceptions of various Japanese actors about the cost of no compliance. For example, during the 1980s, when the United States exerted a great deal of pressure on Japan to comply with the US containment policy toward Hanoi, Japanese policy leaders—politicians, bureaucrats, and business leaders—unanimously resented American pressure and would have preferred to strengthen economic and political ties with Hanoi. Yet, they eventually yielded to the *gaiatsu* because they came to realize that the cost of non-compliance would be higher than that of compliance. Here, Schoppa's synergistic linkage applies. Japanese policy-makers reluctantly accepted the American demand in the end because they linked it to Japan's other relations with the United States. Specifically, Japanese bureaucrats (particularly MOFA officials) and politicians yielded to the US demand because they did not want to risk overall US-Japan security and economic relations in the future; the Japanese business leaders stopped opposing *gaiatsu* because they did not want to lose open American market for Japanese goods.[20] In this way, *gaiatsu* works in combination with Japanese domestic politics. Unlike the reactivist model that simply singles out the role of *gaiatsu* in moving Japan, this paper argues that foreign pressure works well when it can change the perspectives of policymakers by relating a given issue to their concerns and interests.

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[19] Leonard J. Schoppa, *Bargaining with Japan: What American Pressure Can and Cannot Do* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 36.
[20] See Hisashi Nakatomi, *Jikkan Bieronamu Keizai* (Tokyo. Nihon-hyoronsha, 1995); and Mitsunobu Nakahara, *Betonamu e no Michi* (Tokyo, Shakai-shisosha, 1995).

Sixth, this paper proposes that Japan's proactivism does not necessarily mean that Japan aggressively or high-handedly imposes its proactive policies on other countries, such as Vietnam. Japan's proactivism is constrained by the anti-Japanese sentiment shared by many Asian countries. Their antipathy toward Japan's military aggression during World War II has been a formidable challenge to Japan's leadership role in Asia, as they continue to see Tokyo as not having come to proper terms with its past. While anti-Japanese feelings have recently subdued in some areas in Asia and increasing number of Asian leaders have begun to positively see Japan's economic activities and even its military presence in their region,[21] Japan still has to take its World War II legacy into consideration in conducting its foreign policy. Thus even during proactive periods, as in a reactive time, Tokyo takes a cautious approach, carefully calculating the international situation to its advantage and minimizing risks.

Seventh, Japan's restricted military capacity and its continued reliance on US military protection have greatly affected Tokyo's diplomatic course, confining it to resort to mostly "economic statecraft" under Baldwin's definition,[22] or more specifically, what Wan calls "spending strategies" such as ODA.[23] While economic statecraft or spending strategies can be quite effective when the international environment is peaceful and stable, they are by themselves often limited during a time of crisis, for example, war.[24]

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[21] Charles Morrison, "Southeast Asia and U.S.-Japan Relations," in Gerald Curtis (ed.), *The United States, Japan, and Asia: Challenges for U.S. Policy* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994).

[22] David A. Baldwin, *Economic Statecraft* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985). Baldwin explains that statecraft refers to the selection of means for the pursuit of foreign policy. Economic statecraft has negative and positive sanctions. The negative sanctions include embargo, boycott and tariff increase. The positive sanctions include tariff reduction and granting "most-favored-nation" treatment. Economic strategies can be used to pursue various goals of a state. They can be used to pursue only economic ends, or for other purposes such as political, psychological, and military goals.

[23] Ming Wan, *Spending Strategies in World Politics: How Japan Used Its Economic Power 1952-1992*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, 1993. Wan distinguishes spending from earning strategies. He defines that spending is a means to influence other nations with wealth, whereas earning aims at accumulating wealth.

[24] See for example, Lincoln, *Japan's New Global Role*, chapter 6. Lincoln points out the limits of Japan's economic power particularly at a time of crises. "[N]ot all of the world's problems are economic, and the nation (Japan) still faces a major question: how to participate more fully in solving international political problems or crises" (p. 201).

Japan thus places extraordinary emphasis on maintaining peace and stability in the international order as it would lose its leverage in situations of conflict and crisis. Although in recent years Japan has begun to develop the military means to increase its presence in the world, with Tokyo now sending its Self Defense Forces (SDF) to conflict regions, Tokyo's use of military means has still been an anomaly, rather than a regularity. In terms of Japan-Vietnam relations, Japan has mostly relied on economic means to gain both economic and political influence during the proactive period.

In short, this paper proposed the reactive-proactive model with the seven propositions: (1) Japan's reactivism takes place in not only bilateral but also trilateral/ multilateral relations; (2) there are two types of *gaiatsu* on Japan, one pressuring Japan to *act* and the other pressuring it *not to act*; (3) Japan's proactivism and reduced US *gaiatsu* often go hand in hand; (4) *gaiatsu* works well through a synergistic linkage; (5) *gaiatsu* is intertwined with domestic politics *and* is effective when it changes the perspectives of Japanese domestic actors; (6) Japan's manner of proactivism is not aggressive but cautious; and (7) Japan relies on spending strategies to implement its proactive policies.

The remainder of this paper will closely examine how this model applies to Japan-Vietnam relations since the end of the Vietnam War.

Historical Development of Japanese Policy to the SRV

Phase I: Initial Proactivism (the early 1970s-1979)

The initial proactivism of Japan's Vietnam policy surfaced in the early 1970s as US influence in Southeast Asia declined. The weakening of US influence in the region was signaled by the 1969 announcement of the Nixon Doctrine, which stated that the United States would expect its allies to take the primary burden of defense in dealing with international insurgencies. The withdrawal of American forces from Indochina following the 1973 Paris Peace Accord further weakened US commitment to the region.

This is also evidenced by the collapse of US-led anti-Communist organizations in Asia. For example, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), established in 1954 at American initiative, stopped its military functions in 1973 and dissolved in 1975. Similarly, the Asia and Pacific Council (ASPAC), established by South Korean initiatives, died out in 1973. The fall of Saigon in 1975 was the final blow effectively ending US dominance in Indochina.

The US withdrawal from Southeast Asia brought mixed reactions from Japanese leaders. On the one hand, they were worried that Japan could no longer depend on US political-strategic leadership in the region. On the other hand, they saw opportunities to have a freer hand to implement an independent policy in Southeast Asia for the first time since the beginning of the Vietnam War.[25]

The 1970s saw the emergence of new thinking among Japanese foreign policymakers. Gaining confidence from Japan's own rapid economic development in the 1960s and early 1970s, Japanese leaders came to believe that Tokyo should and could play an independent role in Indochina. In their thinking, anti-Communist ideology mattered little, particularly after the announcement of the 1972 Sino-US Shanghai Communiqué, followed by the diplomatic normalization between Japan and China in the same year. Japan was eager to engage with Communist Indochina. With a policy often characterized as "omni-directional diplomacy" (*zenhoi gaiko),* Tokyo tried to improve relations with Hanoi while maintaining the alliance with the United States and other Western countries.

Vietnam offered both political and economic opportunities to the Japanese leadership. Japan's main political goal was to induce Vietnam to loosen its ties with the communist bloc and become "a Socialist country of the Yugoslav type, open to the Western world."[26] Japan was particularly interested in contributing to the creation of a

[25] Seki Tomoda, *Nyumon Gendai Nihon Gaiko: Nichu Kokko Seijoka Igo* (Tokyo: Chuoshinsho, 1988).
[26] Shiraishi, *Japanese Relations with Vietnam* (New York, Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 72.

new equilibrium between ASEAN and Vietnam to promote peace and stability in Southeast Asia.

Tokyo's economic goal was to help bring about the reconstruction of Vietnam's war-damaged economy and promote the incorporation of Indochina into the market economies of Asia. Japanese leaders were convinced that when integrated into the capitalist economies, Vietnam would provide impressive economic opportunities for Japanese firms seeking to expand trade and investment, extract natural resources, and establish offshore manufacturing in Indochina.

Japan began taking independent initiative to reach these goals well before the liberation of Saigon in 1975 and the establishment of the SRV in the following year. In 1970, the Director General of the First Southeast Asia Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kazusuke Miyake, contacted North Vietnamese officials in France to explore possibilities of rapprochement with Hanoi. In 1971, the Japanese embassy in Paris continued these discussions and offered to send Miyake to Hanoi in order to negotiate normalization between Japan and Vietnam. In February 1972, Miyake first visited Hanoi to advance the negotiation toward normalization.[27] In May 1973, four months after the signing of the Paris Peace Accord, Miyake made another visit to Vietnam to finalize normalization, which led to the official signing of the diplomatic normalization between Japan and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) in September 1973.[28]

After the 1973 Paris Accord, diplomatic rapprochement accelerated between Japan and the DRV.[29] Communications between the two countries increased and even Japanese Diet members—traditionally non-participants in foreign policymaking—started contacting elected officials in Hanoi. In 1974, Japanese and Vietnamese politicians established the League for Japan-Vietnam Friendship to promote mutual understanding

[27] Seki Tomoda, "Tai-etsu Enjo Saikai no Keii to Haikei," *Asia University Asia Research Project Report* (March 1997).
[28] Shiraishi, *Japanese Relations with Vietnam.*
[29] Between 1973 and 1975, Japan had diplomatic relations with two Vietnams: DRV in the North and the Republic of Vietnam (ROV) in the South.

and friendship. The Japanese members included Diet members not only from the pro-Hanoi Socialist and Communist parties, but also from traditionally anti-communist parties, such as the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP). The LDP Secretary General, Yoshio Sakurauchi, was appointed as chairman.[30] Thus even before the establishment of the SRV, Japanese policymakers had initiated communications with Hanoi. Japan's active outreach toward the SRV stems from this earlier contact with the DRV.

The fall of Saigon in April 1975 further encouraged Japanese leaders to take initiative in Indochina. In June 1975, Japanese Foreign Minister Kiichi Miyazawa indicated Japan's readiness to play an active political role in Southeast Asia:

> Japan is now a huge economic power and is politically stabilized. It is very necessary that Japan should keep a relationship of mutual understanding with all of the countries in Southeast Asia, in order to maintain peace and stability in Asia, where there exist various unstable factors and a fluctuating situation. Japan can contribute to the stabilization of the area by promoting mutual understanding and keeping friendly relations with all the countries, even though some of them have a different political system from ours."[31]

Miyazawa's statement confirmed Japan's omni-directional diplomacy and showed its strong interest in keeping regional stability and peace, necessary conditions for Japan's exercise of economic power in the region.

Japan's main means for gaining influence in Vietnam was through spending, particularly through the disbursement of ODA. Without waiting for the United States to start its own relief program, Tokyo provided the newly unified Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) with $28 million in grant aid for FY 1975 and $17 million in grant aid for FY 1976. Japan did not agree to any further assistance in FY 1977 due to a

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[30] Ibid.

[31] Kiichi Miyazawa, "Saikin no Kokusai-josei to Nihon no Gaiko: Indoshina-hanto no Kyuhen o Chushin ni," *Asia Jiho* (September 1975), p. 7, translated and cited in Shiraishi, *Japanese Relations with Vietnam*, pp. 70-71.

disagreement over the debt incurred by the Saigon government; Japan claimed the SRV should assume responsibility for the debts of about $50 million the Saigon government had owed to Japan. In December 1978, Japan resolved the dispute by announcing that it would provide $55 million in grant for FY 1979 in exchange for Hanoi's payment of the South Vietnamese government's leftover debts.[32]

The beginning of ODA to Hanoi had an important impact on the Japanese private sector. Japanese exports increased rapidly and Tokyo immediately became Vietnam's second largest trading partner after the Soviet Union. Japanese goods such as steel, machinery, and fertilizers were exported to Vietnam for its urgent postwar reconstruction. In return Japan imported maize and petroleum from Hanoi. In 1976, Japan's exports to Vietnam reached $167 million while Japanese imports from Vietnam totaled $49 million.[33] The Japanese private sector was so eager to do business in Vietnam that it came up with a solution to Vietnam's mounting trade deficit with Tokyo; Japanese city banks provided commercial loans to the Vietnamese government in 1977 and 1978 so that Hanoi could continue to purchase Japanese goods.[34]

The zenith of Japanese proactivism in the 1970s was Prime Minister Fukuda's speech in Manila in August 1977, only two years after the fall of Saigon and merely one year after the unification of Vietnam. The speech indicated that for the first time in the post-World War II era the Japanese government was willing to play an active role in Southeast Asian affairs, "without depending on military imperatives and in such a way as to make military considerations less prominent."[35] The speech had three key elements: (1) rejection of the role of a military power; (2) consolidation of the relationship of

[32] Shiraishi, *Japanese Relations with Vietnam*, p. 55.
[33] Ibid., p. 53.
[34] Ibid., p. 55.
[35] Soeya, "Vietnam in Japan's Regional Policy," in James W. Morley and Masashi Nishihara (eds.), *Vietnam Joins the World* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), p. 179.

mutual confidence and trust, or "heart-to- heart" diplomacy; and (3) equal partnership with ASEAN for building peace and prosperity throughout Southeast Asia.[36]

The most significant point of Fukuda's speech was the third element, in which he indicated that the Japanese government was willing to act as a political mediator between ASEAN and Indochina to bring about a peaceful co-existence between the two blocs.[37] It was the first statement in the post-World War II era that explicitly expressed Tokyo's political intentions in Indochina. In Tokyo's strategic thinking, Vietnam was the focal point; the ultimate goal for Japan was to play a role in neutralizing Vietnam so that all Indochina would become open to the Western world.

The first and second points of Fukuda's speech were also of some import. They indicated Japan's attempt to improve the prevalent image of Japan as being a potential military threat and an economic aggressor in Southeast Asia. In particular, these two points were designed to reduce resentment which had arisen toward Japanese business activities in the region due to the rapid penetration of Japanese goods into Southeast Asia since World War II. The 1974 anti-Japanese riots occasioned by Prime Minister Tanaka's trip to Jakarta and Bangkok had alarmed Japanese leaders that they would need to articulate Japan's policy stance toward the region in order to soften opposition to the Japanese economic presence. Fukuda's speech, an attempt to forge friendly relations with Southeast Asian countries, reveals Japan's caution in taking initiative in the region, due to the historical legacy of Japanese military aggression and the emerging fear of Japanese economic activities.

Another important point is that Japanese officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) took independent initiative in developing the Fukuda doctrine without consulting the United States prior to the Manila announcement. Fukuda's speech was

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[36] Sueo Sudo, *The Fukuda Doctrine and ASEAN: New Dimensions in Japanese Foreign Policy* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1992).
[37] *Japan Times*, August 19, 1977 p. 14.

primarily the brainchild of an informally organized MOFA group consisting of four policy coordinators in the Asian Affairs Bureau.[38]

Soeya observes that Fukuda's speech "reflected Japan's aspiration for a larger role in areas where there was no major conflict of interest with the United States."[39] Since Washington did not oppose the Fukuda Doctrine, Tokyo was able to proceed with it immediately after the Manila announcement.[40]

It was good timing for Tokyo to launch a proactive policy in Indochina because at the time the US stance toward Vietnam had temporarily softened under the Carter administration. In March 1977, the United States lifted restrictions on travel by US nationals to Vietnam. In the same month, Carter and Fukuda announced a joint communiqué expressing hope for peace and stability in Indochina. In the summer of 1977, the United States started negotiations on diplomatic normalization with Vietnam.[41]

While trying to "neutralize" Vietnam and assisting it to become integrated into the rest of Southeast Asia, Japan also hoped that Hanoi would improve relations with the United States, the country which had the greatest influence over Japanese foreign policy. For example, Foreign Minister Sonoda attempted to accelerate dialogue between Washington and Hanoi for normalization. In July 1978, when Vice-minister of Foreign Affairs Pham Hien expressed to Sonoda that Vietnam was willing to negotiate with the United States for diplomatic normalization without demanding US war reparations, Sonoda immediately informed the US Ambassador to Japan of the vice-minister's remarks. When Sonoda went to New York in the fall of 1978, he participated in a series US-Japan discussions on the normalization of Washington- Hanoi relations.[42]

In summary, most of the 1970s saw the rise of independent initiative in Japan's foreign policy toward Vietnam. Japan tried to use economic strategies to exercise its

[38] Sudo, *The Fukuda Doctrine and ASEAN*.
[39] Soeya, "Vietnam in Japan's Regional Policy," p. 180.
[40] Tomoda, *Nyumon Gendai Nihon Gaiko*.
[41] Ibid., p. 178.
[42] Shiraishi, *Japanese Relations with Vietnam*, p. 77.

proactivism. At the same time, the manner in which Japan conducted its diplomacy was cautious, due to anti-Japanese antagonism in Southeast Asia. The highlight of Tokyo's proactivism during this period was Fukuda's speech promoting Japan's role as a political mediator between ASEAN and Indochina.

Phase II: Reactivism (1979-1989)

Japan's proactive policy in Indochina did not last long. Cold War geopolitical struggle intensified in Indochina at the end of the 1970s and Japan could not resist international pressure, particularly from the United States, to act in concert with the West to isolate Soviet-backed Indochina. The third principle of the Fukuda Doctrine that stressed Japan's role as a mediator between ASEAN and Indochina was thus stalled, along with the more general notion of omni-directional diplomacy. The 1980s saw a retreat of Tokyo's independent, proactive policymaking in Indochina.

A series of events triggered Cold War conflicts in Indochina in the late 1970s, polarizing the region into Soviet and China/US blocs. First, Pol Pot's Democratic Kampuchea (DK) and the SRV began intensive fighting on their border, which became intertwined with Cold-War conflicts at the global level: the DK strengthened ties with China while the SRV drew closer to the Soviet Union. As tensions intensified in the region, Vietnam broke its formal equidistance between the USSR and the People's Republic of China (PRC) by joining the Soviet-led Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) in June 1978. A month later, the PRC completely stopped aid to Vietnam, and in November of the same year, Hanoi signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Moscow. A month later, the United States and China officially normalized diplomatic relations. The US-PRC rapprochement effectively severed US-

Vietnam relations as Washington stopped negotiating with Hanoi for diplomatic normalization in order to complete the normalization with China.[43]

Tokyo did not want to sacrifice its improved ties with Hanoi but the signing of a Sino-Japanese Peace and Friendship Treaty in August 1978 aggravated Japan-SRV relations. The conclusion of the treaty caused serious contention between Japan and the Soviet bloc as it included an "anti-hegemony" clause seemingly targeted at Moscow. Japan-Vietnam relations further worsened as a result of the establishment of the Soviet-Vietnam friendship treaty that clarified Hanoi's stance on the Sino-Soviet conflict.

Tensions reached a peak in December 1978-January 1979, when the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) entered Cambodia and forced out of power Pol Pot's DK, installing Heng Samrin's People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK). With the Khmer Rouge escaping to rural areas, a proxy war developed as the PRC, the ASEAN, and the United States backed the deposed Pol Pot regime, while the Soviet Union and Vietnam supported the Heng Samrin government.

When Vietnam occupied Cambodia in January 1979, Japanese foreign policymakers were initially hopeful that the PAVN would soon withdraw from Cambodia. Tokyo responded ambiguously to the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia. At first, Tokyo avoided using the term "invasion" to refer to the entry of Vietnamese forces into Cambodia. And while Japan officially postponed the disbursement of promised FY 1979 ODA to Vietnam, Tokyo avoided making an official decision as to whether aid should be continued or ended.[44]

Tokyo had various reasons for not wanting to terminate its aid agreement with the SRV. First, Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) hoped to maintain lines of communication with the SRV to pursue the Fukuda Doctrine and to maintain its influence

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[43] Tomoda, *Nyumon Gendai Nihon Gaiko*. For a detailed account of US decisionmaking of the normalization with the SRV under the Carter administration, see Nayan Chanda, *Brother Enemy: The War After the War* (New York: Collier Books, 1986). Chanda delineates conflicts between the State Department and the National Security Council over Vietnam policy.

[44] Tomoda, "Tai-etsu Enjo Saikai no Keii to Haikei."

in the country and in Indochina as a whole. MOFA officials believed that Japan should continue to offer a carrot (i.e., ODA) to Hanoi rather than a stick (i.e., the suspension of ODA). Foreign Minister Sunao Sonoda explained why Japan's ODA to Hanoi should not be stopped:

> Our country is one of very few (non-Communist) countries which can communicate with Vietnam....I believe that it was not wise to discontinue the aid. The reason was that we had to maintain a communication channel with Vietnam. In order to invite Vietnam's self-restraint, I judged it much more effective in the long run to tell Vietnam what we should require through this communication route than to suspend our economic assistance of 14 billion yen per year.[45]

Second, MOFA wanted to avoid public acknowledgment of its failure to assess Vietnam's intention in Cambodia in the end of 1978.[46] The occupation of Phnom Penh by the PAVN took place only two weeks after Tokyo and Hanoi had signed a $55 million grant aid agreement for FY 1979. Rather than admit to the Japanese public that it had misjudged Vietnam's intentions in Cambodia, MOFA laid its hopes on the chance that the SRV would soon withdraw its troops from Cambodia.[47]

Third, many members of the Japanese Diet, particularly those in the League for Japan-Vietnam Friendship such as Yoshio Sakurauchi and Takeo Kimura, were adamantly opposed to the suspension of the aid to the SRV. In 1979, the League sent a delegation consisting of two LDP (Sakurauchi and Kimura), three Socialist, and two Communist members to Hanoi to improve Japan-Vietnam relations. Upon his return to Tokyo, Kimura issued a statement that the SRV hoped for a peaceful environment for its

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[45] Sunao Sonoda, "Nihon Gaiko no Tenkan o Kokoromite," *Chuokoron Keiei Mondai* (March 1980), translated and cited in Shiraishi, *Japanese Relations with Vietnam*, p. 71.
[46] Some MOFA officials felt they had been betrayed by Vietnamese officials. In December 1978 they had asked Vietnamese officials for a peaceful resolution of the Cambodian conflict because there was a rumor that Vietnamese forces were planning an attack on Cambodia. In reply Vietnamese officials had promised the Japanese government that Vietnamese forces would not enter Cambodia. Two weeks later their "promise" was broken. See Tomoda, " Tai-etsu Enjo Saikai no Keii to Haikei."
[47] Tomoda, *Nyumon Gendai Nihon Gaiko*.

post-Vietnam War economic reconstruction and thus that the Japanese government should keep open communications channels with Hanoi by providing aid.[48]

Fourth, Japanese business leaders opposed the suspension of Japanese ODA to Vietnam as they stood to lose from it. The suspension of Japanese ODA was accompanied by termination of government loan guarantees, export insurance, and funds from the Japan Import-Export Bank for Japanese companies. Thus Japanese companies who chose to remain in Vietnam would have to operate without government guarantees or support. Bilateral trade relations between Japan and Vietnam had improved since the early 1970s and the Japanese business sector hoped to continue to expand trade with Hanoi. Thus Japanese companies with vested interests in Vietnam lobbied for liberalizing bilateral relations and demanded that the Japanese government not suspend the ODA.

As the Cambodian conflict prolonged, *gaiatsu* on the Japanese government to suspend the aid package to Vietnam mounted, particularly from the United States but also from the PRC and the ASEAN members. For example, at the ASEAN Ministerial Conference in Bali in July 1979, the United States and ASEAN exerted strong pressure on the Japanese government to freeze ODA to Vietnam. Japan tried to turn aside the *gaiatsu*, defending its position by saying that Tokyo could maintain more influence over Vietnam by keeping open communication channels with Hanoi rather than cutting off aid.[49]

Of all the *gaiatsu* on the Japanese government from a number of allies, US pressure had the most significant impact. While Japanese policymakers—MOFA officials, politicians, and business leaders—wanted to continue the ODA, they were concerned that they would be seen by Washington as having legitimized the Vietnamese

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[48] *The Asahi Shimbun*, August 2, 16, 17, 22, 23, 1979, cited in Shiraishi, *Japanese Relations with Vietnam*, p. 86.
[49] Tomoda, " Tai-etsu Enjo Saikai no Keii to Haikei."

invasion of Cambodia and that security and economic relations between the United States and Japan would deteriorate as a result.

Furthermore, the Japanese aid decision was not an isolated issue that could be arbitrarily separated from other issues of US-Japan relations around the globe. The US-Japan relationship underwent a serious test in November 1979 when the Iran hostage crisis broke out. In retaliation against the taking of more than 50 American hostages by Iranian militants in Tehran, the US asked its allies to support US economic sanctions against Iran. Defying the US call for united economic sanctions, Japanese general trading firms (*sogo-shosha)* covertly bought large amounts of Iranian oil at escalated prices. US policymakers learned of these purchases and were outraged. Immediately after hearing of the Japanese purchase of petroleum, US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance expressed his strong criticism to Japanese Foreign Minister Saburo Okita. Following this incident, the Japanese government realized that it would have to regain the trust of the Carter administration or else risk serious deterioration of bilateral relations. Similarly, Japanese business leaders came to realize how serious a rift was occurring in US-Japan relations; they feared that if they were oppose American policy in Southeast Asia, they would risk losing the entire American market for Japanese products. [50]

When US-Soviet Cold War rivalry reached its peak following the deployment of Soviet troops to Afghanistan in late December 1979, Japan could no longer refrain from taking a clear stance on its aid to Hanoi. Tokyo was compelled to follow the lead of the United States in working to isolate Soviet-backed Indochina from the rest of Asia. Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Tokyo officially suspended the aid to Hanoi, announcing that Japanese ODA would not be released until the PAVN withdrew from Cambodia.[51] This announcement of Japan's aid decision finally proved Tokyo's allegiance to the United States and demonstrated Japanese support for the American

[50] Tomoda, *Nyumon Gendai Nihon Gaiko*.
[51] Shiraishi, *Japanese Relations with Vietnam*, p. 86.

effort to deter Soviet influence in Southeast Asia. The official aid postponement also indicated that Tokyo would not hesitate to sacrifice its relations with other countries if the United States pressured Tokyo to do so. As illustrated by Tokyo's aid decision following the Soviet invasion into Afghanistan, Japan's main concern was with how its reaction to the Afghan crisis would affect future US-Japan relations.

Japan's compliance with US *gaiatsu* over Vietnam throughout the 1980s was also related to bilateral trade disputes between the United States and Japan over Tokyo's swelling trade surplus. Anti-Japanese sentiment heightened in the United States in the late 1980s, particularly in 1987 when it was revealed that Toshiba Machine Co. had sold sophisticated milling equipment for submarines to USSR in violation on the CoCom (Coordinating Committee for Export Control) restrictions.[52] After the incident, the Japanese government and business community had to heed the rising anti-Japanese sentiment over Japanese business practices in the United States as well as other parts of the world, such as in Vietnam.

During most of the 1980s all major Japanese *sogo-shosha* established dummy firms in Vietnam to carry out business activities under disguised names to keep a low profile in the country. These trading firms were afraid that if they openly engaged in trade with Vietnam, their business activities in the United States would be adversely affected by possible retaliatory measures by the US Congress. For example, Mitsui Co., one of the largest Japanese *sogo-shosha*, created a shadow company named Shinwa Co. to continue trade in Vietnam.[53] Japanese trading houses' fear of US retaliation reached the peak in September 1987, when the Kasten Resolution by the US Senate condemned Japanese economic activities in Vietnam and urged the Japanese government to persuade

[52] Tomoda, *Nyumon Gendai Nihon Gaiko*.
[53] These trading houses quietly conducted business activities in Vietnam via the Japan-Vietnam Trade Association (JVTA), which had close ties with the SRV. The JVTA was established in 1955 by Mitsunobu Nakahara and his associates, who had fought in World War II as Japanese soldiers in Vietnam, and then remained in Vietnam and fought in the First Indochina War as Viet Minh soldiers. Interview, General Manager of Representative in Hanoi, May 1997; Mitsunobu Nakahara, *Betonamu e no Michi: Nichietsu-boeki no Rekishi to Tenbo* (Tokyo: Shakaishisosha, 1995).

Japanese private firms to refrain from trading with Vietnam. The Kasten Resolution singled out Japanese business activities in Vietnam and ignored those of other countries, such as France, Malaysia, and Thailand, thus creating resentment among the Japanese business community which perceived the resolution arising more from America's "Japan-bashing" than its genuine concerns over the presence of Vietnamese forces in Cambodia.[54] Japanese firms, however, could not ignore this resolution. Honda Motors, for example, voluntarily abandoned its plan for a motorcycle assembly plant in Ho Chi Minh City for fear of risking its US market.

For the ten years following the 1979 Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, Japan reacted passively to political developments in Indochina. While Japan never abandoned the idea of taking a leadership role in Indochina throughout the 1980s,[55] there was little Tokyo could do other than adjust itself to the rapidly changing international environment. Political developments in the world, and specifically in Indochina, were beyond Japan's control. Despite the lack of legal restrictions on Japanese firms, Japan never openly sought an economic role in Indochina. American pressure kept Japan self-refrained politically and economically in the region.

Phase III: Second Proactivism (1989-present)

The next turning point in Japanese policy toward Vietnam was the collapse of the Soviet bloc in the late 1980s, which effectively ended the Cold War geopolitical rivalries between the United States, the Soviet Union, and China. The thawing of Cold War tensions in Indochina resulted in a complete withdrawal of the PAVN troops from

[54] Susumu Awanohara and Charles Morrison, "Looking Beyond Cambodia: Japan and Vietnam," *Indochina Issues* (August 1989).

[55] Though unsuccessful, Japan attempted from time to time to solicit political concessions from Vietnam by offering economic assistance. For example, Tokyo began to provide small-scale humanitarian aid to Hanoi in 1982, while withholding the promised ODA loans for 1979.

Cambodia in 1989 and intensified peace negotiations among the four warring Cambodian factions.

The end of the Cold War also had a profound impact on Japanese policy toward Vietnam and Indochina. The most important factor directly shaping Japanese policy toward Indochina in the late 1980s and the early 1990s was the declining American interest in the Cambodian conflict. The Cambodian problem had little meaning to Washington as the Cold War ended. The new US attitude toward the Cambodian conflict in the post-Cold War era set Tokyo free for the first time in ten years from the previous constraints on Japan-Vietnam relations. Japanese policy makers began to seek ways to act independently of the United States in pursuit of Tokyo's own political and economic interests. Given the declining US influence in Indochina in the post-Cold War era, Japanese leaders started to see that Washington could no longer be counted on as the sole hegemonic power maintaining the regional order.

Described as the revival of the Fukuda Doctrine, the second Japanese proactive policy toward Vietnam has much resemblance to the first in the 1970s.[56] Japan's policy goals of the second proactivism are generally similar to those of the first. As before, Japan now hopes to maintain regional peace and stability and to increase its economic and political influence in the region predominantly by means of spending strategies.

The 1992 resumption of ODA to Hanoi illustrates how Japan has used this spending strategy to achieve its diplomatic goals in the second proactive period. Tokyo restarted full-scale bilateral ODA to Hanoi for the first time in 13 years with 45.5 billion-yen ($275.81 million).[57] The amount of the 1992 ODA disbursement was roughly equivalent to the debts Tokyo claimed that the South Vietnamese government had owed to it prior to the unification of Vietnam in 1975. This financial aid was given in exchange

[56] Soeya, "Vietnam in Japan's Regional Policy."
[57] The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Japan's ODA Annual Report: 1995* (Tokyo: The Association for the Promotion of International Cooperation, 1996), p. 42.

for Hanoi's payment of South Vietnam's leftover debts. The aid resumption was highly political and a significant step toward proactivism because it indicated that Tokyo would improve bilateral relations with Hanoi at the time that the United States, Japan's strongest ally, still had an economic embargo against Vietnam. At the same time, the resumption sent a strong signal to the Japanese private sector to move forward with trade and investment in Vietnam.

The 1992 ODA resumption was conducted after a series of negotiations between Japan and the United States. Due to the unresolved MIA (Missing in Action) problems between Washington and Hanoi, the United States had originally opposed Japanese aid resumption. It was only after Japanese Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe intervened in the bureaucracy-led US-Japan negotiations and also persuaded Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Manh Cam to move forward with the MIA issue that the United States finally gave tacit approval to the Japanese government to restart aid. As it was, the United States requested Japan to announce its ODA resumption plan after the 1992 US presidential election; Japan did so within a week after the election.[58] This case illustrates how Japan-Vietnam relations were influenced by US-Japan relations, particularly by US *gaiatsu* on Japan. Again, as soon as the American *gaiatsu* declined, Japan moved rapidly toward proactivism.

Since the 1992 resumption of ODA, Tokyo has become the largest among the aid donors to Vietnam. In FY 1995, for example, Tokyo provided $170.2 million ($144.36 in grant and $ 25,83) to Vietnam. Japan's economic strategy has also been extended to multilateral arrangements in which Japan has wielded its spending power not only for narrow economic aims but also for wider political goals, such as gaining international prestige and recognition. In 1992-1993 Japan provided the world's largest financial contribution for the operations of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia

[58] Tomoda, " Tai-etsu Enjo Saikai no Keii to Haikei."

(UNTAC). In April 1993, both Japan and France proposed granting Vietnam access to the IMF loans; the two countries eventually paid off Hanoi's debts to IMF in order to restart loans to Hanoi. In addition, Japan took the initiative in organizing the Forum for Comprehensive Development of Indochina (known as "the Indochina Forum"). At the 1993 preparatory meeting of the Indochina Forum, donors decided that they would assist the three nations in Indochina—Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos—to move towards market-oriented economies, which would accelerate the integration of Southeast Asia as a whole.[59]

At the same time, Japan's second proactivism has more clear political goals than its first in the 1970s. In the 1990s, Japan has been trying to gain a higher status in international politics commensurate with its economic strength, for example by gaining a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. Japan views an active role in political affairs in Indochina as a stepping-stone for a greater leadership role in international political affairs.

To achieve these broader goals, Japan has supplemented its spending strategies with efforts to increase its human and military involvement in Indochina. Tokyo's search for new non-economic strategies is based on the lesson it learned from the 1990-1991 Person Gulf crisis when Japan was criticized for relying on "checkbook diplomacy" rather than more direct involvement.

The Cambodian peace negotiations from the late 1980s to the early 1990s became Tokyo's first litmus test for more political and military activism in Indochina. During this time Tokyo tried to establish itself as a legitimate participant in the Cambodian peace process along with the ASEAN countries, Australia, and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.[60] Besides making the largest financial contribution to the

[59] Yoshihide Soeya, "Jishu Gaiko in Action: Japanese Diplomacy and Vietnam," *The Woodrow Wilson Center Asia Program Occasional Paper*, no. 64, 1994.

[60] Tomoda, *Nyumon Gendai Nihon Gaiko*. Japan first indicated its interest in the Cambodian peace process in 1988, when it invited Prince Sihanouk to Tokyo as a national guest. At the Paris Peace Conference in 1989, the Japanese delegation lobbied for a greater role for Japan and accepted co-chairmanship of the

UNTAC among the donor countries, Japan searched for an active role in the Cambodian cease-fire by (1) co-hosting a conference with Thailand for the four rival Cambodian factions in 1990, (2) offering a new proposal to the Cambodian factions in 1991 to complement the comprehensive peace plan developed the previous year by the five Permanent Members (Perm Five) of the Security Council, and (3) sending the Self Defense Forces (SDF) in the peace-keeping operation (PKO) of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in 1992-1993.

Of the three achievements at the UNTAC, the dispatch of the SDF was the most significant event for Tokyo, as it marked the first overseas deployment of Japanese military forces in the post-World War II era. The SDF's participation in UNTAC became an important precedent for further military participation by Tokyo in international conflicts. However, the Japanese use of military forces is still limited because of the strict application of the Peace Keeping Operations (PKO) Bill, which was passed by the Japanese Diet in June 1992. This bill limits the SDF missions to traditional peace keeping operations (e.g., use of weapons only for self-defense) and humanitarian assistance. These limitations on military deployment indicated that military strategies are not replacing Japan's spending strategies.

While Japan started testing the international waters in search of its appropriate role in the Cambodian peace process, Tokyo acted cautiously rather than taking abrupt or bold steps to overturn the current established state of affairs in Indochina. According to Cronin, "After years of avoiding the political limelight, Japan is moving cautiously but steadily to play a political and diplomatic role more commensurate with its economic strength."[61] This cautious approach is reflected in Japan's care not to seek hegemony in the region or take over the US role. Tokyo wants Washington to remain engaged in

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Standing Commission on Cambodian Reconstruction and Refugees.

[61] Richard P. Cronin, *Japan, the United States, and Prospects for the Asia-Pacific Century: Three Scenarios for the Future* (New York: St. Martin's Press), p. 57.

Southeast Asian affairs because, as Japanese former and present prime ministers Kiichi Miyazawa and Ryutaro Hashimoto emphasized in the "Miyazawa Doctrine" of 1993 and the "Hashimoto Doctrine" of 1997, the US-Japan alliance remains the core of Japanese foreign policy and the United States is still considered the most significant stabilizing factor in Asia in the post-Cold War era.[62]

Japan needs to conduct a balancing act between its own desire to play an independent role in Asia and its obligation to maintain the fundamental framework of US-Japan cooperation in Asia.[63] The balancing act becomes difficult when the US-Japan relationship poses constraints on Japan's foreign policy. If the constraints are insurmountable, Japan gives up its own desire in order to accommodate US needs. The balancing act becomes easier when US *gaiatsu* is at a minimum.

Conclusion

This analysis of Japan-Vietnam relations shows the difference between reactivist perspectives and hybrid reactivist/proactivist perspectives. What reactivist and hybrid approaches share in common is the recognition of the key role of US *gaiatsu* in influencing Japanese foreign policy; indeed, the focus on the impact of US *gaiatsu* is the main strength of the reactivist perspective.

Yet where these two views differ is in their analysis of what happens during periods of limited US *gaiatsu*.. The reactivist school would have us believe that in the absence of *gaiatsu* Japan takes no initiatives on its own. Yet an analysis of Japan-Vietnam relations shows that this is not the case. Japan has consistently sought to take a proactive policy toward Vietnam, making definite efforts, albeit cautious to pursue its

[62] Chiyo Kato, "Nichibei-ampo-taisei o Chushi," *The Asahi Shimbun*, April 30, 1997.
[63] Soeya, "Jishu Gaiko in Action."

economic and political interests through foreign policy during periods of limited *gaiatsu*.. It is only during periods of intense US *gaiatsu* that Japan has reverted to a reactive stance. Japanese foreign policy toward Vietnam is thus characterized by an alternation between reactivism and proactivism rather than a simple reactivism.

This hybrid approach toward understanding Japan-Vietnam relations still leaves many questions unanswered—for example, the relationship between the intended policies, implemented policies, and impact of Japanese proactivism toward Vietnam—but recognizing the coexistence of reactivism and proactivism is a necessary first step toward addressing these broader questions. Also of significance will be further studies which indicate other regions and issue areas of Japanese foreign policy in which this hybrid approach may apply.