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# Chapter 5

# Cautious Proactivism and Reluctant Reactivism: Analyzing Japan's Foreign Policy toward Indochina

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## Introduction

Japan's foreign policy behavior is an enigma. On the one hand, Japan is frequently portrayed as a reactivist state. According to this view, Japan has neither the will nor the capacity to conduct an independent foreign policy despite its enormous economic strength, and thus continually adapts its diplomatic course in response to foreign pressure (*gaiatsu*). On the other hand, Japan is also often characterized as a proactive, aggressive benefit-maximizer or opportunist, pursuing its own interest independent of others. In this view, Japan conducts its foreign policy without regard to *gaiatsu*. Which is the true Japan?

This chapter examines Japan's relations with Vietnam and Cambodia, countries that have attracted enormous attention from Japanese foreign policy makers since the early 1970s. It focuses on the dichotomy of Japan's two opposing images and examines the notion and applicability of the reactive and proactive models to Japanese foreign

policy in the region. The chapter argues that, although both models have some strengths, they also have serious weaknesses. In examining Japan's relations with Vietnam and Cambodia for the past twenty-five years, the study addresses the limitations of these models and proposes a hybrid model that combines the insights of the reactivist and proactivist models.

## Contending Models of Japanese Foreign Policy

### *Reactivist Model*

Since Calder articulated the reactive nature of Japan's foreign policy in his seminal 1988 article, "Japanese Foreign Economic Policy Formation: Explaining the Reactive State," there has been an ongoing debate about Japanese foreign policy behavior.[1] While there are various perspectives on Japan's reactivism, proponents of the Japan-as-a-reactive-state thesis have identified several key characteristics of Japan's reactivism. First, the central notion of the reactivist perspective lies with *gaiatsu*. According to reactivists, *gaiatsu* gives a powerful stimulus to the Japanese policy making process and *gaiatsu* is the most important factor determining the direction of Japanese foreign policy. In this view, changes in Japan's policy occur as a response to *gaiatsu* on the Japanese government rather than as a response to *naiatsu* (internal pressure) from domestic groups. In fact, domestic needs are seen to be sacrificed for the sake of foreign demands.

The main source of *gaiatsu* on Japan is the United States.[2] Lincoln explains why Tokyo has so often yielded to *gaiatsu* from Washington:

> 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), an 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.[3]

Proponents of the reactivist model point out alleged psychological characteristics of Japanese policy makers that, according to this model, contribute to Japan's reactivity. Blaker emphasizes the vulnerability of Japanese policy makers to *gaiatsu*, stressing that they are hampered by "hypersensitivity to any form of anti-Japanese sentiment abroad."[4] Islam argues that Japanese leaders have "a sense of acute vulnerability that [is] totally at odds" with their country's global position and influence.[5] According to Islam, this sense of vulnerability is explained by the fact that Japan became an economic power very quickly; Tokyo has developed so fast that the national mentality has not adjusted to the global reality.[6] At the same time, Pyle argues that this sense of vulnerability results from Japan's defeat in World War II, the subsequent U.S. occupation of the country, and the fact that postwar Japan was "reduced to the status of pariah in the international community."[7]

From the reactivists' point of view, because of the sensitivity to overseas criticism and *gaiatsu*, especially that of the United States, Japanese leaders always try to appease the international community. Reactivists claim that Japanese leaders regard foreign policy as merely *otsukiai gaiko* (foreign policy for the sake of friendship). For example, Islam asserts that even seemingly independent initiatives by Japan spring from the assumption that "we should do this either because the foreigners, in particular the Americans, will like it or because 'they' will attack us."[8]

Another main cause of reactivity supposedly lies in Japan's immobile, highly fragmented domestic policy making process, which lacks strong leadership. Hellmann argues that factionalism among Japanese policy makers impedes effective policy making.[9] Inoguchi maintains that for Japan to implement policy change, *gaiatsu* is needed in order to strike down vested interest cliques and reshape Japan into a country committed to contribute to the international community.[10] Pyle argues that even Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, an unusually assertive Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) politician, who, in the 1980s, tried to disrupt the traditional decision making mechanisms to exert more prime ministerial influence, needed to rely on *gaiatsu*, particularly American pressure, to promote his own ideas.[11]

At the same time, many reactivists separate Japan's international behavior in economics from that in the political arena and argue that Japan is a successful trading nation but a political dwarf.[12] The distinction in behavior between low and high politics is attributed to Japan's postwar policy, which emphasized economic reconstruction and development, minimum defense, and reliance on the U.S.-Japan Security Alliance for American military protection of Japan. Hellmann, for example, asserts that because of

Japan's special "incubator" situations,[13] which it experienced under the "greenhouse" provided by the security alliance, Tokyo has never developed effective strategic planning to defend itself.[14] He argues "Japan was and still remains essentially a passive actor on the world political stage, more a trading company than a nation-state, a nation without a foreign policy in the usual sense of the word."[15]

In contrast, some reactivists do not draw a line between high and low politics and claim that Japanese foreign policy performance is reactivist in both arenas. Calder asserts that Tokyo is a typical reactive state even in economic policy making, containing "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."[16] Calder maintains that 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."[17] Calder wonders why, despite its enhanced national capacity, Japan has been more deferential to American pressure than have most middle-range powers such as major European states.[18]

Whether Japan is seen as reactivist only in high politics or in both high and low politics, there is a convergent view that the style of Japanese foreign policy is minimalist and risk avoiding. According to Blaker, the essence of Tokyo's behavior consists of "coping."[19] Coping 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."[20] Pyle echoes Blaker's point, citing Kiichi Miyazawa, former minister of foreign affairs and later prime minister, as saying: "All we can do when we are hit on the head is to pull back. We watch the world situation and follow the trends."[21]

For reactivists, coping is a passive, timid, and minimalist strategy. In their view, coping is ineffective and doomed to fail. For example, Blaker claims that Japan's "minimalist coping approach has become jarringly inappropriate to Japan's vastly expanded international presence today."[22]

The reactivist approach has both strengths and weaknesses. Reactivists correctly point out that *gaiatsu* usually comes from the United States and that Washington is the most influential source in the shaping of Japanese foreign policy. Moreover, the reactivist school is correct in asserting that Japanese diplomacy is risk avoiding and cautious. The Japanese government rarely makes a bold, unexpected foreign policy move. The accurate identification of domestic factors affecting Japanese foreign policy (i.e., the psychology of policy makers and the highly decentralized domestic decision making-mechanisms) is another strength of the reactivist approach.

At the same time, the reactivist approach has serious limitations. The main drawback is the faulty premise that changes in Japanese foreign policy occur only as a result of *gaiatsu*. On the contrary, the Japanese government often takes proactive initiatives, without waiting for instructions or pressure from foreign governments. Moreover, the reactivist view suggests incorrectly that Japan faces an incessant barrage of *gaiatsu* from the United States and constantly adjusts itself to American demands. In fact, the U.S. government does not usually make demands on the Japanese government in

cases where there are no special stakes involved and no serious conflict of interest exists between the two countries. While Washington sometimes exerts strong pressure on Tokyo on issues crucial to American interests, at other times Washington remains tolerant of Japanese diplomacy. The view that Japan's reactivist, passive, and minimalist style prevails at any times undermines that nation's indigenous initiatives and exaggerates the frequency of *gaiatsu* on it.

Furthermore, the reactivist model is based on the false notion that *gaiatsu* always succeeds. In fact, *gaiatsu* sometimes fails. Japanese negotiators for trade and security arrangements with Washington often brush aside *gaiatsu* and refuse compromise. Standing up to foreign demands has become an important public relations issue for some Japanese politicians who attempt to promote Japan's independent power.[23] If Japan always yielded to *gaiatsu* and accepted American demands entirely, there would be no trade conflicts between the two countries. It is apparent that pressure works at some times and not others. Clearly determining when and how *gaiatsu* works is a challenging task.

*Proactive Model*

In contrast to the reactivist school is the proactivist school, which is divided into three main groups. The first is a group of "revisionists," who believe that Japan is far from being reactive or passive but rather is an aggressive, mercantilist nation following a grand design to take over the world. Focusing on Japan's behavior in low politics, revisionists perceive Tokyo as being distinct from the West, with a different culture and politico-economic system. They contend that Japan is so different that it does not abide by

Western economic rules. According to this view, the Japanese do not, and will not, embrace the values of free trade and liberalization, and it is thus a mistake to assume that the "Westernization" of Japan will bring the automatic liberalization of the Japanese economy and the harmonization of Western and Japanese global interests. In the revisionist view, Japan's unique mercantilism could eventually lead to a rupture with the West, and therefore Western governments need to "contain" Japan.[24] Some American revisionist writers, such as Tonelson and Morse, conclude that Japan is so assertive that any future efforts by the West to contain Japan are likely to fail.[25]

The second proactivist group perceives Japan as a defensive state in both the economic and political spheres. While this group agrees with reactivists that Japanese foreign policy is low cost and low risk, it disagrees on the effectiveness of this strategy. Proponents of the Japan-as-a-defensive-state thesis claim that the nation successfully pursues an active diplomacy, employing a benefit-maximizing strategy to serve Tokyo's national interest. In this view, Japan's low-risk diplomatic style is well planned; it is defensive in nature but beneficial to Tokyo. Proponents of this view argue that it is misleading to call Japanese diplomacy reactive; rather, it is active. For Pharr, "Japan, faced with a barrage of pressures from the United States and other industrial nations, has actively and successfully maneuvered to advantage among them while seeking to avoid risks of all kinds."[26] Pharr argues that despite *gaiatsu*, Japan can implement an effective foreign policy and, moreover, that it can actually take advantage of some *gaiatsu*. In her analysis of U.S.-Japan security relations, Pharr compares Japan's low-risk diplomacy to defensive driving: "For driving defensively is neither aggressive not passive, nor really 'reactive' since the driver is hardly changing basic direction as he adjusts to obstacles

before him. He is, after all, choosing a particular route even as he threads his way among the possible dangers before him."[27] The difference between defensive driving and Japan's foreign policy strategy, according to Pharr, is that the former takes place where routes are already there—available to the driver who chooses a route from existing roads but does not actually build them from scratch. In contrast, Japan's foreign policy is based on a design that has "emerged out of debate, discussion, and collective mood among successive generations of policy makers" in that nation.[28] Similarly, Wan finds Japan's economic strategy to be accommodating to the needs of other governments, but at the same time he concludes that it is also advantageous to Tokyo. He argues that Japan has wisely decided to support international regimes rather than challenge them in order to promote its national security and economic health. Wan claims that being passive (or, more precisely, appearing passive) is a choice that has benefited Tokyo.[29]

The third proactivist group claims that Japan used to be reactive under the shadow of the United States but is now taking more active foreign policy initiatives. In their view, Japan, as "a rising state" in world politics,[30] has pursued an active policy since the 1970s, spurred by various factors including the U.S. defeat in the Vietnam War, Japan's impressive economic development, and America's declining economic power.[31]

Like the reactivist model, the proactivist views have some strengths and some shortcomings. The "Japan-as-a-defensive-state" group's thesis that a low-risk, cautious approach is beneficial to Japan can explain some of Tokyo's diplomatic successes. For instance, as Pharr points out, during the 1950s U.S.-Japan negotiations for bilateral security arrangements, the United States, a military and economic superpower, made many concessions to Japan, which was still a developing country that had been

devastated by its defeat in World War II. Pharr credits Prime Minister Yoshida's maneuvering ability for successfully persuading Washington to provide Tokyo with military protection, a factor that allowed Japan to concentrate on economic development in the postwar era.[32]

In addition, the Japan-as-a-rising-state approach can explain Tokyo's past reactivism and present proactivism, as seen, for example, in its recent Official Development Assistance (ODA) policy.[33] In the 1950s Japan was a recipient of loans from the World Bank, and even in the 1970s Japan's financial contribution to the developing world was limited. Today, however, Japan is an important source of aid. Tokyo has been the world's largest aid donor since 1991 and has taken numerous initiatives in distributing aid in the developing world.

At the same time, there are several shortcomings with the proactivist perspectives. None of the proactivist groups can adequately explain the diplomatic blunders that the Japanese government occasionally makes, such as Japan's bungled handling of the Gulf War. Tokyo's tardy, ineffective response to the Gulf crisis hurt the nation's international standing, despite the fact that Tokyo's eventual financial contribution totaled $13 billion, approximately 20 percent of the overall cost of the Desert Storm campaign.[34]

In addition, each of the proactivist schools has its own particular weakness. The revisionists' view of Japan as an aggressive mercantilist state focuses on Japan's economic policy but fails to account for political and strategic aspects of its foreign policy. The view of Japan as a defensive state cannot adequately explain changes in Japanese diplomacy. Treating Japanese foreign policy as static and fixed, this view underestimates the impact of world affairs on Japanese diplomacy and ignores how the

nation adjusts its foreign policy behavior in response to the changing international environment. Finally, proponents of the Japan-as-a-rising-state thesis presume that Japanese foreign policy has followed a progressive evolution but fail to explain the occasional, temporary setback or retreat from activism.

*Hybrid Model*

To maximize the strengths of the proactivist and reactivist schools and minimize their weaknesses, I have proposed a hybrid model combining reactivism and proactivism.[35] I argue that Japan is reactive at times but becomes active at other times. I agree with Yasutomo, who, in his analysis on Japan's role at multilateral financial institutions, finds growing Japanese proactivism while at the same time recognizing the existence of reactivism in Japanese foreign policy.[36] According to Yasutomo, "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."[37] The coexistence of reactivism and activism is the fundamental nature of Japanese foreign policy today, along with a growing activism in Japanese foreign policy in general.

Japan's relations with Vietnam and Cambodia (hereafter, Japan-Indochina relations) are illustrative of this reactive-proactive hybrid. A close examination of these relations reveals clear shifts in foreign policy orientation between activism and reactivism over the last twenty-five years: (1) from reactivism to activism in the early 1970s, (2) the reverse in the late 1970s, and (3) from reactivism to activism again in the late 1980s. While supporters of the coexistence view may believe that Japan's reactivism and

proactivism take place *simultaneously* in the same region (e.g., reactivism in high politics and activism in low politics in the same region at the same time), the present case study finds that each period of the above is characterized by either *predominantly proactivist* behavior or *predominantly reactivist* behavior in both low and high politics. The alternating diplomatic style between reactivism and proactivism does not indicate that Japan is *exclusively* reactive or proactive in each period. Even during a proactive period, there are some elements of reactivity.[38]

This study argues that *gaiatsu*, especially from that from the United States, is the major factor contributing to these shifts. *Gaiatsu* significantly influences Japanese policymakers, especially those in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), who are keenly aware of the importance of Japan's cooperation with the United States in foreign policy areas and are sensitive to American pressure.

There are two faces of *gaiatsu*: one pressuring Japan *to act* and the other pressuring it *not to act*. The example of the Gulf War illustrates a case in which the United States pressured a passive Japan to act even though the latter was not interested in taking a proactive stance. In the case of Japan-Indochina relations, the second type of *gaiatsu* is at work. In this case, the United States pressured Japan not to act despite Tokyo's desire to pursue a proactive foreign policy.

Under what circumstances does the United States pressure Japan and when, on the other hand, does Washington relax its demands on Tokyo? The answers depend on the issues involved, but in general, U.S. pressure takes place in situations where its stakes are high and there is a serious conflict of interest between the two countries. When American stakes are low, *gaiatsu* may be reduced or nonexistent. In the case of Japan-

Indochina relations, two key factors have contributed to a rise and then a fall U.S. pressure on Japan: the intensification of the Cold War from the late 1970s to the early 1980s, followed by the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s. When U.S.-Soviet and U.S.-Vietnam relations worsened in the late 1970s and early 1980s, American pressure on Japan intensified (which led to Japan's reactivist policy); when the Cold War ended in the late 1980s, American *gaiatsu* was reduced (which resulted in Japan's increased proactivism).

Put another way, Japan's proactivism and reduced U.S. *gaiatsu* go hand-in-hand, as do Japan's reactivism and intense American *gaiatsu*. Since the early 1970s, Tokyo has preferred to play a proactive policy in Indochina, switching its modus operandi to reactivism reluctantly and willingly reconverting to proactivism when allowed a free hand to do so.

At the same time, *gaiatsu* is intertwined with domestic politics. In Japan-Indochina relations, *gaiatsu* worked because it succeeded in changing the perceptions of the cost of noncompliance among various Japanese actors. For example, during the late 1970s and the 1980s, when the United States exerted a great deal of pressure on Japan to comply with the U.S. containment policy toward Indochina, Japanese policy leaders—politicians, bureaucrats, and business leaders—unanimously resented American pressure and would have preferred to strengthen economic and political ties with Vietnam. However, Japanese leaders eventually yielded to the *gaiatsu*, having realized that the cost of noncompliance would be too high. They did finally become supporters of *gaiatsu*, but they did so reluctantly.

How then did the U.S. government succeed in changing the perspectives of Japanese actors? Here the concept of "synergistic linkage"[39] is useful. The United States sought in the 1980s to influence Japan's policy by linking it to American security interests in Southeast Asia and to U.S.-Japan bilateral trade relations. Given America's advantageous position over Japan in security (i.e., Japan's need for U.S. military protection) and trade (i.e., Japan's need for an open U.S. market),[40] Tokyo was vulnerable to American *gaiatsu* calling on it to isolate Communist Indochina in the late 1970s and 1980s. Japanese politicians and bureaucrats, particularly MOFA officials, succumbed to the U.S. demand because they did not want to risk damaging U.S.-Japan security and economic relations. Likewise, Japanese business leaders stopped opposing American *gaiatsu* because they did not want to lose the open U.S. markets for Japanese products.[41] Unlike the reactivist model, which simply singles out the role of *gaiatsu* in changing Japan's foreign policy, or the proactivist model, which fails to take into account the interplay between *gaiatsu* and domestic politics, this chapter argues that foreign pressure works well when it can change the perspectives of policy makers by relating a given issue to their own concerns and interests.

As the proponents of Japan-as-a-defensive-state thesis suggest, Japan's foreign policy is usually carefully planned and based on cautious calculation, particularly regarding those Asian neighbors who still harbor anti-Japanese sentiment and see Tokyo as not yet having come to proper terms with its past. While antipathy toward Japan's wartime aggression has recently subdued in some areas in Asia such as Thailand and Malaysia—where politico-economic leaders have begun to view Japan's economic activities and even its regional military presence in a positive light—Japan still has to

face its past in dealing with neighboring countries. Thus, during proactive periods as well as in reactive times, Tokyo is cautious, carefully calculating the international situation to its advantage and trying to minimize risks.

Japan's restricted military capacity and its continued reliance on U.S.-Japan Security Treaty have also greatly affected Tokyo's diplomatic strategy. Mostly it resorts to "economic statecraft"[42] or, more specifically, "spending strategies" such as ODA.[43] Although economic tools can be effective when the international environment is peaceful and stable, the same tools are, by themselves, often limited during a time of crisis or war.[44] Thus, Japan places extraordinary emphasis on maintaining peace and stability: its leverage is lost in situations of conflict and crisis. Although in recent years Japan has begun to expand its military role by sending its Self Defense Forces (SDF) to conflict regions, its use of military means is still an anomaly. Japan has principally relied on economic statecraft to gain both economic and political influence during the proactive periods.

In summary, I propose a reactive-proactive hybrid model to analyze Japan's relations with Indochina based on the following points:

- The coexistence of reactivism and activism is fundamental to Japanese foreign policy. (In the case of Japan-Indochina relations, Japan has alternated between the two positions.)
- *Gaiatsu*, especially that from the United States, is the major factor contributing to these shifts. (In Japan-Indochina relations, Japan was reactive during strong *gaiatsu* and proactive at a time of reduced *gaiatsu*.)

- *Gaiatsu* intertwines with domestic politics and is effective when it changes the perspectives of Japanese domestic actors through synergistic linkage politics.
- Japan's proactivism is not aggressive, but cautious.
- Japan relies on spending strategies to implement its proactive policies and even to achieve political goals.

The following section of this chapter examines Japan's relations with Vietnam and Cambodia since the 1970s and analyzes how the hybrid model accounts for Japan's diplomatic behavior in the region.

## Japan's Relations with Vietnam and Cambodia since the 1970s

### *Phase I: Initial Proactivism*

Japan's proactive policy toward Indochina first emerged in the early 1970s as the United States reduced its presence there. The 1969 announcement of the Nixon Doctrine signaled the weakening of American influence by stating 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 the U.S. commitment to this part of the world. U.S.-led anticommunist organizations in Asia, including the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO),[45] collapsed. The final blow was the communist takeover of Saigon in 1975, which effectively ended U.S. dominance in Indochina.

In the wake of the U.S. defeat in Vietnam, Japanese foreign policy makers worried that their nation might no longer be able to depend on American leadership in Indochina. At the same time, however, they welcomed reduced American constraints on Japan's policy in Southeast Asia and saw opportunities to have a freer hand to implement an independent policy in the region for the first time in Tokyo's postwar history.[46]

Meanwhile, the 1971 announcement by President Richard Nixon that he would visit the People's Republic of China (PRC) the following year, followed by the Sino-U.S. Shanghai Communiqué of 1972, prompted Tokyo to seek ways to improve its relations with Beijing. Japan's normalization of diplomatic relations with China in 1972 under Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka greatly expanded diplomatic options for Japan, creating a new environment wherein Tokyo could engage with this communist government without American pressure.

The 1970s witnessed a new era for Japanese policy makers due to the declining American influence in Southeast Asia, coupled with U.S.-China diplomatic normalization. Gaining confidence from Japan's own rapid economic growth in the 1960s and early 1970s as well as from the changing international environment, Japanese foreign policy leaders became convinced that Tokyo should, and could, play a proactive role in Asia independent of the United States. In their thinking, anticommunist ideology became less important, particularly after the announcement of the 1972 Sino-U.S. Shanghai Communiqué and the subsequent diplomatic normalization between Tokyo and Beijing in that year. Japanese leaders, especially those in MOFA, were also eager to engage with communist Indochina. With a policy often characterized as "omni-directional diplomacy" (*zenhoi gaiko),* they strove to improve relations with Indochina

while simultaneously maintaining an alliance with the United States and other Western countries. As Soeya puts it, "America's low profile convinced Japanese policymakers that it was time to formulate a somewhat autonomous policy toward Southeast Asia without necessarily contradicting the fundamentally cooperative relationship with the United States."[47]

Japan's initial proactivism principally targeted Vietnam. Tokyo was unable to pursue an active policy toward Cambodia following the rise of the Khmer Rouge in the early 1970s and its overthrow of the U.S.-backed Lon Nol government in 1975. Japanese foreign aid to Cambodia stopped in 1974 because of intensified civil war within the country between the Lon Nol government (in a coalition with Prince Norodom Sihanouk) and the Khmer Rouge. The newly established Pol Pot regime, the Democratic Kampuchea (DK), expelled most foreign embassy officials from Phnom Penh with the rare exception of those of a few communist governments such as Yugoslavia and China. Like most countries, Japan could not establish communications with the reclusive, autarkic Kampuchean government in the second half of the 1970s; consequently, its policy toward Cambodia in the mid-1970s was neither reactive nor proactive. In fact, during the Khmer Rouge rule, the relationship barely existed.

In contrast, Vietnam was open to Japan playing an active role. Japan was particularly interested in contributing to the creation of a new equilibrium between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Vietnam to promote peace and stability in Southeast Asia. Tokyo's main political goal in engaging Hanoi 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."[48] Its 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, once integrated into capitalist economies, Vietnam would provide impressive economic opportunities for Japanese firms seeking to expand trade and investment, extract natural resources, and establish offshore manufacturing. The absence of American economic activities in Vietnam, including U.S. aid, favored these firms. Thus, Japan became the major source of capital from the Western bloc.[49]

MOFA began actively pursuing its political and economic interests in Indochina well before the fall of Saigon in 1975. The First Southeast Asia Division of the Asian Affairs Bureau in MOFA made initial contacts with Hanoi as early as 1970, when the director of the division, Kazusuke Miyake, contacted North Vietnamese officials in France to explore possibilities for rapprochement. Then, in February 1972, Miyake visited Hanoi to negotiate for normalization.[50] In March 1973, four months after the signing of the Paris Peace Accord, Miyake returned to Hanoi to finalize normalization, which led to the official signing of diplomatic relations between Japan and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) in September 1973.[51] Japan was thus engaged with two Vietnamese governments: the DRV in the North and the Republic of Vietnam (ROV) in the South.

With the 1973 Paris Accord followed by Japan-DRV normalization, communications between the capitals increased and Japanese Diet members started contacting Hanoi's elected officials. In 1974, Japanese and Vietnamese politicians established the League for Japan-Vietnam Friendship to promote mutual understanding and friendship. Japanese members consisted of politicians from the pro-Hanoi Socialist

and Communist Parties as well as those from the traditionally anticommunist LDP, with LDP secretary-general Yoshio Sakurauchi as its first chairman.[52] Japan's active outreach toward the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) today stems from this earlier contact with DRV.

The fall of Saigon in April 1975 further accelerated Japanese activism in Indochina. In June 1975, Japanese Foreign Minister Kiichi Miyazawa expressed Japan's willingness to play an active 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.[53]

Miyazawa's statement confirmed Japan's strong interest in keeping regional stability and peace, conditions necessary for expanding Japanese economic activity in the region. His statement also showed Japan's omnidirectional diplomacy, by which Tokyo strengthened relations with the SRV.

Japan attempted to gain influence in Vietnam through spending strategies, particularly through the disbursement of ODA. Without waiting for the United States to

provide relief to Vietnam, Tokyo awarded grant aid to the newly unified SRV in fiscal year (FY) 1975 ($28 million) and in FY 1976 ($17 million). In FY 1977, however, Japan provided no further assistance because of a disagreement over the debt incurred by the Saigon government: Japan claimed the SRV should assume responsibility for the debts of about $50 million the South Vietnamese government owed Japan. In December 1978, Japan finally resolved the dispute by agreeing with Hanoi that Tokyo would provide grant aid ($55 million) in FY 1979 in exchange for Hanoi's payment of the South Vietnamese government's leftover debts.[54]

The provision of ODA to the SRV encouraged the Japanese private sector to increase trade with Hanoi. Tokyo immediately became Vietnam's second largest trading partner after the Soviet Union. Japan exported steel, machinery, and fertilizers to Vietnam for the latter's urgent postwar reconstruction and in return imported its maize and petroleum. In 1976, Japan's exports to Vietnam reached $167 million, while its imports from Vietnam totaled $49 million.[55] The Japanese private sector was so eager to do business with Vietnam that it contrived 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.[56]

The highlight of Japanese proactivism during the first period was Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda's speech in August 1977 in Manila, known as the "Fukuda doctrine." The speech indicated that for the first time in the post–World War II era, Japan was willing to play an active role in both economic and political affairs in Southeast Asia "without depending on military imperatives and in such a way as to make military considerations less prominent."[57] The doctrine consisted of three key points: (1) rejection of the role of

a military power; (2) promotion of the relationship of mutual confidence and trust, or "heart-to-heart" diplomacy; and (3) equal partnership with ASEAN for building peace and prosperity throughout Southeast Asia.[58]

The first and second points of the Fukuda doctrine were intended to erase the image of Japan as a potential military threat and economic aggressor and to create friendly relationships with Southeast Asian countries. With these two points, Fukuda sought to reduce resentment, which had arisen toward Japanese presence in the region due to the rapid penetration of Japanese goods. The 1974 anti-Japanese riots occasioned by Prime Minister Tanaka's trip to Jakarta and Bangkok had alarmed Japanese policy makers. Fukuda's speech to forge friendly relations with Southeast Asian countries reveals Japan's cautious approach in light of Japan's historical legacy of military aggression and the emerging fear of Japanese economic activities.

The most significant point of Fukuda's speech was the third point implying that Japan was willing to act as a political mediator between ASEAN and Communist Indochina to bring about peaceful coexistence.[59] This was the first time since the end of World War II that Tokyo explicitly expressed the intention of playing a political role in Southeast Asian affairs. Japan's ultimate goal was to neutralize Vietnam so that all Indochina would eventually become open to capitalist investment.

Tokyo's announcement of the Fukuda doctrine was timely. Under the Jimmy Carter administration, the U.S. stance toward Vietnam had temporarily softened. In March 1977, Washington lifted restrictions on U.S. travel to Vietnam. That same month, Carter and Fukuda issued a joint statement expressing hope for peace and stability in Indochina. In the summer of 1977, the United States began negotiations on diplomatic

normalization with the SRV.[60] As Soeya noted, 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."[61] Because the U.S. government did not oppose the content of Fukuda's speech, Japan was able to proceed with a proactive policy after his announcement in Manila.[62]

While trying to neutralize the SRV and assisting its integration into the capitalist bloc in Southeast Asia, the Japanese Foreign Ministry also hoped that Hanoi would normalize diplomatic relations with the United States, the country of the greatest influence over Japanese foreign policy. Foreign Minister Sunao Sonoda attempted to promote dialogue between Washington and Hanoi for normalization. In July 1978, when Vietnamese vice-minister of foreign affairs Pham Hien told Sonoda that Hanoi was willing to negotiate with Washington for diplomatic normalization without demanding U.S. war reparations, Sonoda immediately informed the U.S. 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 of U.S.-Japan discussions on U.S.-Vietnam normalization.[63]

In summary, most of the 1970s saw the rise of independent Japanese initiatives in foreign policy toward Vietnam. Japan used economic strategies to actively pursue its goals, but cautiously, so as not to stoke anti-Japanese antagonism. The zenith of Tokyo's proactivism during this period was the Fukuda doctrine promoting Japan's role as a political mediator between ASEAN and Indochina.

*Phase 2: Retreat to Reactivism*

Unhappily for Japanese policy makers, Japan's activism in Indochina was short-lived. In

the 1980s, Tokyo retreated from its proactive policy making independent of the United States due to the polarizing of Indochina into USSR and U.S.-PRC blocs in the late 1970s. Indochina became a central stage of Cold War geopolitical struggle involving U.S.-Soviet and China-Soviet rivalries. Unable to resist international pressure, particularly from the United States, Japan could not act in concert with the West to isolate Soviet-backed Indochina, thus stalling the third principle of the Fukuda doctrine—stressing Japan's role as a political mediator between ASEAN and Indochina—along with the more general policy of omnidirectional diplomacy for Japan.

A series of events intensified Cold War conflicts. First, intensive fighting between the SRV and Pol Pot's DK along their border caused global level geopolitical repercussions: the DK strengthened its ties with the PRC, while the SRV sided with the Soviet Union. As tensions escalated in Indochina, Vietnam broke its formal policy of equidistance between the USSR and the PRC by joining the Soviet-led Council for Mutual Economic Assistance in June 1978. A month later, the PRC stopped aid to Vietnam and in November of the same year the SRV signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union. In August 1978, the United States and the PRC established diplomatic relations, effectively severing U.S.-Vietnam relations as Washington suspended negotiations with Hanoi in order to complete normalization with the PRC.[64]

Although Japanese policy makers did not want to sacrifice their country's improved ties with Vietnam, they hurt Japan-SRV relations by signing a Sino-Japanese Peace and Friendship Treaty in August 1978, which included a controversial "antihegemony" clause implicitly targeting the Soviet Union. Japan-Vietnam relations

further deteriorated following the 1978 conclusion of the Soviet-Vietnam Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, which clarified Hanoi's stance in the Sino-Soviet conflict.

Tensions heightened in December 1978–January 1979, when the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) entered Kampuchea with Khmer dissidents, forced Pol Pot out of power, and installed the Heng Samrin–led People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK). With the Khmer Rouge escaping to rural areas in northern Cambodia, a proxy war developed between the forces of Pol Pot, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, and Son Sann (backed by the PRC, the United States, and ASEAN), on the one hand, and the forces of the PRK (backed by the Soviet Union and Vietnam), on the other.[65]

When Vietnam occupied Kampuchea in January 1979, Japanese foreign policy makers hoped that the PAVN would soon withdraw from Cambodia. MOFA responded ambiguously to the occupation and avoided the term "invasion." Moreover, while the Japanese government officially deferred the disbursement of promised FY 1979 aid to Vietnam, Tokyo postponed its decision to continue or to terminate aid until the Cambodian problem was solved.[66]

The Japanese government had several reasons for not wanting to terminate its ODA to Vietnam. First, MOFA did not want to abandon the Fukuda doctrine. Hoping to maintain lines of communication with the SRV to maintain Japan's influence in Indochina, MOFA officials wanted to offer a carrot (i.e., ODA) rather than a stick (i.e., termination of ODA). The ministry's position was reflected in Foreign Minister Sonoda's statement following the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia:

> 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.[67]

Second, MOFA wanted to avoid publicly acknowledging its failure to assess Vietnam's intention in Cambodia at the end of 1978, when the ministry decided to provide ODA to Hanoi.[68] The occupation of Phnom Penh by the PAVN took place only two weeks after the 1978 signing of a $55 million grant aid agreement between Japan and the SRV. Rather than admit to the Japanese public its error in judgment, MOFA hoped that the PAVN would soon withdraw from Cambodia.[69]

Third, many Japanese politicians, particularly those who belonged to the League for Japan-Vietnam Friendship, such as Sakurauchi and Takeo Kimura, adamantly opposed the suspension of ODA to the SRV. In 1979, the league sent a delegation consisting of two LDP (Sakurauchi and Kimura), three Socialist Party, and two Communist Party members to Hanoi to improve Japan-Vietnam relations. Upon his return to Tokyo, Kimura issued a statement that the SRV intended to create a peaceful environment in Southeast Asia to promote postwar economic reconstruction, and therefore the Japanese government should maintain open channels of communication with Hanoi by continuing aid.[70]

Fourth, the Japanese government supported Japanese businesses that opposed an ODA suspension on the grounds that they stood to lose from it. Bilateral trade between Japan and the SRV had increased since the early 1970s, and Japanese firms hoped to continue to expand trade with Hanoi. The suspension of aid indicated that Japanese government loan guarantees, export insurance, and funds from the Japan Export-Import Bank for conducting business in Vietnam would be completely terminated. Thus, if they chose to remain in Vietnam, Japanese firms would have to operate without government financial guarantees or support. Japanese firms with vested interests in Vietnam lobbied for continuation of the promised ODA to the SRV.

As the Cambodian conflict dragged on, *gaiatsu* on the Japanese government to suspend the aid package to Vietnam mounted, particularly from the United States, but also from the PRC and ASEAN. For example, at the ASEAN Ministerial Conference in Bali in July 1979, the United States and ASEAN exerted strong pressure on Japan to freeze its ODA to Vietnam. Tokyo tried to turn aside the *gaiatsu*, defending its position by saying that it would exert more influence over Vietnam by maintaining its channels of communication with Hanoi rather than by cutting off aid.[71]

Of all the *gaiatsu* on Japan from a number of countries, U.S. pressure had the most significant impact. While Japanese policy makers—MOFA officials, politicians, and business leaders—wanted to continue aid to Vietnam, they were concerned that they would be seen by Washington as having legitimized the Vietnamese 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 linked to other issues concerning U.S.-Japan relations around the globe. A serious test occurred in November 1979 in the form of the Iran hostage crisis, in which Iranian students took more than fifty American hostages at the U.S. embassy in Tehran. In retaliation, Washington asked its allies to support U.S. economic sanctions against Iran. Not wanting to offend the government of Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini and risk a cut-off of Iranian oil, Tokyo's initial response to the crisis was hesitant. However, what irritated American officials most was the defiance against the American call for united economic sanctions against Iran by Japanese general trading firms (*sogo-shosha)* and oil companies, which in November 1979 covertly purchased large amounts of Iranian oil at inflated prices. When the American government learned of these purchases, U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance expressed his strong criticism of Japan's "insensitivity" to Japanese Foreign Minister Saburo Okita at a meeting in Paris.[72] Following this incident, members of U.S. Congress tried to propose a bill to impose a 50 percent tariff on goods from countries that failed to cooperate with U.S. efforts in Iran; apparently, the Congress was targeting Japanese firms. Japanese government officials realized that they must regain the trust of the Carter administration or risk a serious deterioration of bilateral relations. Following the petroleum incident, MOFA expressed Japan's disapproval of the terrorist act in Tehran, and Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) official Naohiro Amaya visited Washington to apologize to the U.S. public for the purchase of petroleum by Japanese firms.[73] Similarly, Japanese business leaders came to realize the seriousness of the rift in U.S.-Japan relations; they feared that if they defied American policy in Southeast Asia, they would risk losing the entire American market for Japanese products.

When U.S.-Soviet tension reached its peak following the deployment of Soviet troops to Afghanistan in December 1979, Japan could no longer remain ambiguous about its aid policy toward Hanoi and was compelled to follow the U.S. lead to isolate Soviet-backed Indochina from the rest of Southeast Asia. In early 1980, Japan announced that its ODA would be withheld until the PAVN withdrew from Kampuchea,[74] a decision that finally proved its allegiance to the United States and demonstrated its support for the American effort to deter Soviet influence in Southeast Asia. The withdrawal of aid also indicated that the Japanese government would not hesitate to sacrifice its friendship with other countries if the United States pressured it to do so. As illustrated by Tokyo's aid decision following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Japan's main concern was how its reaction to the Afghan crisis would affect future U.S.-Japan relations.

Meanwhile, the Cambodian crisis intensified, which left no room for Japan to promote its Fukuda doctrine in order to bring about peaceful coexistence between ASEAN and Indochina. Refusing to recognize the newly established pro-Vietnam PRK, Japan and its allies continued to maintain diplomatic relations with the ousted Pol Pot regime. In 1982, when exiled anti-PRK factions—Prince Sihanouk's Front Uni National pour Cambodge Indépendent, Neutre, Pacifique et Coopératif (FUNCINPEC); Son Sann's Kampuchean People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF); and Pol Pot's Party of Democratic Kampuchea (PDK)—established a Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK), Tokyo followed its allies in supporting the coalition. Tokyo's refusal to recognize the PRK and its support for the CGDK undoubtedly contributed to the intensification of the Cambodian civil war as well as to the deterioration of Japan-Indochina relations.

Tokyo's continued compliance with U.S. policy toward Indochina in the 1980s was also related to bilateral trade disputes over Japan's mounting trade surplus. Anti-Japanese sentiment reached a peak in the United States in 1987 when it was revealed that a Toshiba subsidiary (Toshiba Machine Co.) had sold sophisticated milling equipment for submarines to the Soviet Union in violation of regulations of the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls (COCOM), an international organization that supervises various types of Western trade with the communist countries.[75] After the revelation of the Toshiba sale, the Japanese government and business community paid closer attention to criticisms of Japanese business practices in the United States in order to determine how their business activities could be affected in other parts of the world, such as in Vietnam.

Unlike the United States, Japan never imposed an embargo on private trade with the SRV, yet it kept a low profile in Indochina during most of the 1980s. Tokyo-SRV bilateral trade dropped sharply during the first half of the 1980s. To do business in Vietnam, major Japanese *sogo-shosha* established dummy firms to avoid possible retaliatory measures by the U.S. Congress for breaching the international isolation of Hanoi.[76] For example, Mitsui, one of the largest Japanese *sogo-shosha*, created a shadow company named Shinwa Co. to continue trade in Vietnam.[77] The fear of U.S. retaliation reached a peak in September 1987, when the U.S. Senate passed the "Kasten Resolution" condemning Japanese business activities in Vietnam and urging the Japanese government to persuade its nation's firms to refrain from trading with the SRV. The 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 American "Japan-

bashing" than from genuine concerns over the crisis in Cambodia.[78] Japanese firms, however, could not ignore this resolution, realizing that it could affect their performance in U.S. markets. Honda Motors, for example, voluntarily withdrew its plan for a motorcycle assembly plant in Ho Chi Minh City for fear of risking its large American market.

For the ten years following the 1979 PAVN occupation of Cambodia, *gaiatsu* restricted Japan's political and economic options in Indochina. Although it never abandoned the goals of the Fukuda doctrine,[79] Tokyo had little choice but to adjust itself to the rapidly changing international environment. Japan never openly sought a prominent economic role in Indochina, even though there were no legal restrictions on Japanese firms doing business in Vietnam. Japan's downsizing of relations with Vietnam and Cambodia was based on neither moral outrage over Hanoi's invasion of Cambodia nor concern for the fundamental issue of solving the Cambodian crisis, but rather was a response to the constraints of U.S.-Japan relations.

*Phase III: Second Proactivism*

In the late 1980s, Japan's Indochina policy changed following the collapse of the Soviet bloc, which effectively ended the geopolitical rivalries between the United States, the Soviet Union, and China of the Cold War era. With the thawing of Cold War tensions in Indochina, Vietnam no longer appeared as a threat to the capitalist bloc in Southeast Asia. As a result, ASEAN leaders began to express their willingness to work toward settling the Cambodian problem. As Thai Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan stated in August 1988, Indochina was to be transformed "from a battlefield to a trading market."[80]

In September 1988, at the initiative of the Indonesian government, peace negotiations began among Cambodia's four warring factions: Hun Sen's Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Party (KPRP), Sihanouk's FUNCINPEC, Son Sann's KPNLF, and Pol Pot's PDK. In 1989, Hanoi completely withdrew its soldiers from Cambodia and turned its attention to its economic policy of *doi moi* (renovation).

The end of the Cold War had a profound impact on Japan's Indochina policy. In addition to the softening ASEAN stance on the Cambodia conflict, the U.S. attitude toward Indochina also rapidly changed. With the demise of the Soviet Union, the United States became less concerned about possible communist expansion in Southeast Asia and lost interest in the Cambodian conflict. The declining American interest in the Cambodian problem led Japanese foreign policy makers to realize that Washington could not be counted on as the only hegemonic power to maintain the regional order. The lack of any serious American interest in Indochina freed Tokyo from its previous constraints on Japan-Indochina relations, and Japanese policy makers began to search for ways to pursue Tokyo's own political and economic interests in Southeast Asia.

The settlement of the Cambodian conflict was a necessary condition if Tokyo wished to improve relations with Vietnam and conduct active diplomacy in Indochina. From the late 1980s to the early 1990s, Tokyo tried to establish itself as a legitimate participant in the Cambodian peace process along with the five permanent members of the UN Security Council ("Perm Five"), the ASEAN countries, and Australia.[81] In August 1988, the Japanese government indicated its interest in the Cambodian peace process by inviting Prince Sihanouk to Tokyo as a national guest. In May 1989, Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita expressed Japan's interest in helping the Cambodian conflict.

In July 1989, the Japanese delegation to the Paris Peace Conference lobbied for a greater role for Japan and gained cochairmanship of the Standing Commission on Cambodian Reconstruction and Refugees. In February 1990, MOFA made its first unofficial contact with the Phnom Penh government through the dispatch of the ministry's First Southeast Asia Division Director Masaharu Kono. The Kono mission met with Hun Sen and other high-ranking officials in Phnom Penh, signaling that Japan was moving towards recognizing their regime as the de facto government of Cambodia. Soon after Kono's meeting with the Phnom Penh officials, Tokyo ended its support of the anti–Phnom Penh tripartite coalition, the CGDK.[82]

After these preliminary steps, the Japanese government sought a larger role in the Cambodian peace process. Japan's main efforts included (1) cohosting, with Thailand, a conference in Tokyo for the four Cambodian warring factions in June 1990, (2) offering Japan's own peace proposal to these factions in 1991 to complement the comprehensive peace plan developed the previous year by the Perm Five of the Security Council, (3) holding a Ministerial Conference on the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Cambodia in June 1992 to promote international coordination for economic assistance to the war-torn society, (4) providing the world's largest financial contribution for the operation of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in March 1992–May 1993, and (5) sending Japan's Self Defense Forces (SDF) into the peace-keeping operation (PKO) of UNTAC in September 1992–May 1993.

Of these five, the most significant was the dispatching armed forces to Cambodia. This, the first overseas deployment of Japanese military in the post–World War II era set an important precedent to allow for further military participation in international

conflicts. The Japanese Diet passed a Peace Keeping Operations (PKO) bill in June 1992 to allow SDF to offer logistical support to the UNTAC, which was currently headed by Japanese UN diplomat Yasushi Akashi. This deployment of the SDF broke the taboo in postwar Japan against participation in overseas conflicts. However, the bill also limited SDF missions to traditional peacekeeping operations (i.e., with the use of weapons only for self-defense) and humanitarian assistance, indicating that military strategies were not replacing Japan's spending power.[83]

While Japan's contribution toward settling the Cambodian problem was in general welcomed by the international community, Tokyo was not free from criticism. In particular, Japan's own 1991 peace proposal to the Cambodian factions raised concern among American delegates of the Perm Five, who regarded the proposal as interrupting the UN Security Council's effort to bring about peace in Cambodia.[84] Critics claimed that Japan had hastily joined the peace process to pursue its own self interest: to compensate for its diplomatic blunder in its response to the Gulf War and to gain support for its bid for a UN Security Council seat.[85]

Although the critics were right about Japan's diplomatic motives, Japan was not, however, trying to usurp the peace process but rather to complement the Perm Five and ASEAN. While Tokyo's peace proposal did irritate U.S. representatives, this was unintentional. MOFA's meetings with the Cambodian factions to offer Japan's informal proposal for a peace settlement in Cambodia were, to the regret of the ministry, misinterpreted as bypassing the UN mechanism.[86] Indeed, Tokyo very much desired to work with other governments in the peace process in a multilateral setting, especially within the framework of the UNTAC. Despite this mishap in 1991, Japan generally acted

cautiously, trying not to stir suspicion that Tokyo might become a regional hegemon in Southeast Asia.

The peace process paved the way for Tokyo's resumption of bilateral aid to Vietnam and Cambodia. In 1992, Japan resumed its ODA to Vietnam after a series of negotiations between Japan and the United States. In February 1992, MOFA's First Southeast Asia Division director, Tadamitsu Yamamoto, visited Washington to solicit American approval of Japan's aid resumption to Vietnam. Due to the unresolved Missing in Action (MIA) problems between Washington and Hanoi, the U.S. government urged Yamamoto not to restart Japanese aid immediately. Unable to win an American approval of Japanese aid resumption, Japanese Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe, a LDP politician with strong ties to Vietnamese officials, intervened in the bureaucrat-led negotiation process by persuading his Vietnamese counterpart, Foreign Minister Nguyen Manh Cam, to move forward on the MIA issue. After Hanoi responded positively to Watanabe's request, Washington gave tacit approval to Tokyo, in summer 1992, to resume ODA. As the U.S. presidential election campaign intensified, however, the George H. Bush administration, which was concerned that MIA issues would surface among groups of prisoners of war (POW) should Japan resume ODA to Hanoi, requested that Japan delay its announcement of ODA resumption until after the U.S. presidential election in November 1992. Japanese policy makers wanted to restart aid as soon as possible, but they complied with the American pressure, and the aid was resumed within a week after the election.[87] This case illustrates how Japan-Vietnam relations were entangled with U.S.-Japan relations. In other words, as soon as the American *gaiatsu* declined, Japan moved rapidly toward implementing its goals.

In 1992, the Japanese government resumed full-scale aid in Vietnam for the first time in thirteen years. Its use of ODA to Vietnam illustrates how Japan used spending to achieve its foreign policy goals. The 1992 disbursement—consisting of 45.5 billion yen ($275.81 million)[88]—roughly equaled the debts Tokyo claimed South Vietnam had owed it prior to the 1975 unification of Vietnam. Thus, it was given in exchange for Hanoi's payment of South Vietnam's leftover debts. This highly political and significant step indicated that Tokyo would improve bilateral relations with Hanoi at the time even while the United States, Japan's closest ally, still imposed an economic embargo on Hanoi. Simultaneously, the Japanese business community received an unmistakable signal that the time was ripe for Japanese firms to move forward with trade and investment in Vietnam. Since the resumption of its aid in 1992, Japan has been the world's largest donor to Vietnam. Tokyo's strong interest is exemplified by the "Miyazawa Initiative," an aid plan proposed by Finance Minister Kiichi Miyazawa to revitalize Southeast Asian economies affected by the crisis following the Asian financial crisis in 1997. Although the SRV was relatively unhurt by the crisis due to its undeveloped market system, Japan extended the Miyazawa Initiative to Vietnam and awarded Hanoi with approximately $160 million in loans—over and above its regular ODA.[89]

Japan has also become the largest donor in Cambodia. Japan's full-scale aid to Cambodia began in FY 1992, and in FY 1993 it jumped tenfold, to $61.34 million.[90] This sudden increase in FY 1993 reflected Japan's commitment to the newly established Royal government of Cambodia after the UNTAC-led Cambodian general election in May 1993. In July 1997, Tokyo's financial commitment to Cambodia was tested when Second Prime Minister Hun Sen ousted First Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh,

Prince Sihanouk's son. While many donor governments suspended their financial assistance to Phnom Penh, Tokyo, in the absence of strong pressure from the United States, continued with its aid (albeit with the usual caution), except for a short interval immediately following the coup. The Japanese government did not come under strong pressure from the United States, and it was able to proceed with the aid, though with the usual caution.

Japan wielded its spending power in multilateral economic arrangements, not only for narrow economic gains, but also for wider political goals, such as gaining international prestige. In Cambodia, Japan led in organizing a donor-coordinating committee, the International Committee on the Reconstruction of Cambodia (ICORC), which was established at the Ministerial Conference on the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Cambodia in June 1992. In Vietnam, Japan works closely with international financial organizations such as the World Bank to coordinate ODA to that country. In April 1993, both Japan and France proposed granting Vietnam access to International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans. The two countries eventually repaid Vietnam's debts to the IMF in order to restart IMF loans to Hanoi. Japan's interest in the reconstruction of Indochina was further demonstrated by MOFA's 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 toward market-oriented economies, which would accelerate the integration of Southeast Asia as a whole.[91] Furthermore, Japan has also played a key role in the Mekong River Commission (MRC), which was reestablished in 1995 from its

predecessor, the Mekong Committee. The MRC has promoted the development of the Mekong River region and was headed by Yasunobu Matoba, a Japanese official from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery. With its spending strategies, Japan has become the leading actor promoting the reconstruction and development of Indochina.

Described as the revival of the Fukuda doctrine, the second Japanese proactive involvement in Indochina is analogous to that of the 1970s.[92] In the 1990s, Japan is once again pursuing an active, independent role in Southeast Asia. As before, Tokyo hopes to maintain peace and stability in Southeast Asia, contribute to the integration of Indochina into the rest of Southeast Asia, and increase Japan's economic and political influence in the region. While pursuing these goals, Japan assures its Asian neighbors that Tokyo will not become a military threat.

The revival of the Fukuda doctrine was first indicated by Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu during his trip to the ASEAN countries in May 1991.[93] In his Singapore speech, Kaifu expressed Japan's intention of assuming an active role in Asia, not only in the economic but also in the political sphere. At the same time, Kaifu apologized to the ASEAN audience for Japan's aggression during World War II. According to a Singaporean diplomat, Kaifu's speech represented a cautious, incremental step toward gaining Asian support for Japan's larger political role.[94] Kaifu's successor, Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa, issued a similar statement in January 1993 during his tour of the ASEAN countries. Miyazawa expressed Japan's interest in promoting the integration of Indochina into the rest of Southeast Asia and proposed that Japan and ASEAN cooperate in the economic reconstruction of Indochina through the establishment of the Indochina Forum.[95] Furthermore, in January 1997, Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto

reinforced Japan's role in Asia during his trip to Southeast Asia. While emphasizing the "heart-to-heart" relationship between Japan and ASEAN,[96] Hashimoto expressed Japan's readiness to participate in a summit-level forum with ASEAN to discuss Asian security, trade, and investment issues. At the same time, Hashimoto did not fail to mention that the U.S.-Japan security alliance would remain the core of Japanese foreign policy in the post–Cold War era.[97] His statement confirmed Tokyo's long-standing aspiration of pursuing its own policy in Asia, on the one hand, and strengthening the foundation of cooperation with the United States, on the other.

Although its second period of proactivism resembles that of the 1970s, Japan now faces new situations and challenges. First, all of Indochina has become part of ASEAN: Vietnam joined in 1995, followed by Laos in 1997 and Cambodia in 1999. Japan now must develop a consistent policy toward both Indochina and the rest of Southeast Asia. Japan is also expected to provide financial assistance to lessen the economic disparity between the initial ASEAN countries and poverty-stricken Indochina. Second, as the world's second largest economy, Japan has more ambitious political goals in the 1990s than it had in the 1970s. Since the early 1990s Japan has been trying to gain status in international politics commensurate with its economic strength, for example, by gaining a permanent seat at the UN Security Council. Tokyo views an active role in political affairs in Indochina as a stepping-stone for a greater leadership role in international political affairs. Third, the 1990s witnessed a surge of international interest in issues of human rights and democracy. Tokyo has thus far kept a low profile in these issues and has not had serious disputes with the United States, the world's key promoter of human rights diplomacy, over Japan's stance on human rights abuses by Vietnam and

Cambodia.[98] However, Japan may have to take a clear stand on human rights violations in Indochina. Japan's approach to human rights differs from that of the United States: Washington regards the promotion of human rights and democracy as an important condition for sound economic development, whereas Japan holds the opposite view instead, contending that economic development must proceed democracy. These differing positions may pose a serious challenge to Tokyo's independent role in Indochina.

Japan is conducting a balancing act between its own desire to play an independent role in Asia and its obligation to maintain the fundamental framework of U.S.-Japan cooperation.[99] This balancing act (or, in Soeya's words, "two-track policy")[100] becomes difficult when the U.S.-Japan relationship poses serious constraints on Japan's own policies. If the constraints are insurmountable and *gaiatsu* can effectively change the perspectives of domestic actors, the Japanese government gives up its own desires in order to accommodate U.S. needs. Balancing becomes easier when US *gaiatsu* is at a minimum.

**Conclusion**

This analysis of Japan-Indochina relations compared three different perspectives on Japanese foreign policy: reactivism, proactivism, and a hybrid reactivism/proactivism. The reactivist and hybrid approaches recognize the crucial role of U.S. pressure in influencing Japanese foreign policy; indeed, this pressure is the main strength of the reactivist perspective. Where the proactivist and hybrid perspectives converge is in

recognizing that simply because Japan is cautious does not mean it is reactive, and that indeed, a cautious, low-risk approach can further Japan's proactive policy goals.

However, the hybrid model differs from both the reactivist and proactivist models. The hybrid view is distinguished from the reactivist view in analyzing what happens during periods of reduced U.S. *gaiatsu*. The reactivist model would have us believe that even in the absence of intense *gaiatsu*, Japan takes no initiatives on its own. However, this analysis of Japan-Indochina relations shows that this is not the case. Japan has consistently sought to pursue its own policies in Indochina, making definite efforts, albeit cautiously, to advance its economic and political interests via foreign policy measures during periods of limited *gaiatsu*.

The hybrid model is distinguished from the proactivist model with regard to the role of *gaiatsu*. The proactivist model dismisses the *gaiatsu* factor in Japanese foreign policy, presuming that Japan's activism can prevail over *gaiatsu* at any time. This does not hold true in the case of Japan-Indochina relations. During the period of intense U.S. pressure, Japan did revert to a reactive stance. Japanese foreign policy toward Indochina is thus characterized by an alternation between reactivism and proactivism rather than only one or the other.

The hybrid approach toward understanding Japan-Indochina relations does not, however, suggest that this model is applicable to Japan's foreign policy behavior in all situations or on all issues. It still leaves many questions unanswered, for example, the relationship between the intended policies, implemented policies, and impact of Japanese proactivism toward Indochina. However, recognizing the coexistence of reactivism and proactivism and their alteration is a necessary first step toward addressing these broader

questions. Also of significance will be further studies that indicate other regions and issue areas of Japanese foreign policy in which this hybrid approach may apply.

## Notes

This study is an expanded and revised version of my previous articles: Keiko Hirata, "Japan as a Reactive State? Analyzing Japan's Relations with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam," *Japanese Studies, 18*(2) (1998): 135-152; and Keiko Hirata, "Reaction and Action: Analyzing Japan's Relations with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam," in S. Y. Maswood, ed., *Regionalism and Japan: The Bases of Trust and Leadership* (London, Routledge, forthcoming).

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22. Blaker, "Evaluating Japan's Diplomatic Performance," 4.

23. Shintaro Ishihara and Akio Morita, *No to Ieru Nippon* (Tokyo: Kodansha Publishing, 1989).

24. See for example, James Fallows, *Looking at the Sun: The Rise of the New East Asian Economic and Political System* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1994).

25. See for example, Alan Tonelson and Ronald Morse, "Outdated Alliance Strategies," in Clyde Prestowitz, Ronald Morse, and Alan Tonelson, eds., *Powernomics: Economics and Strategy after the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: Economic Strategy Institute, 1991), 241-156.

26. Susan J. Pharr, "Japan's Defensive Foreign Policy and the Politics of Burden Sharing," in Gerald L. Curtis, ed., *Japan's Foreign Policy after the Cold War: Coping with Change* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1993), 236.

27. Pharr, "Japan's Defensive Foreign Policy," 236.

28. Pharr, "Japan's Defensive Foreign Policy," 236.

29. Ming Wan, "Spending Strategies in World Politics: How Japan Has Used Its Economic Power in the Past Decade," *International Studies Quarterly*, 39(1) (1995): 85-108.

30. Pharr, "Japan's Defensive Foreign Policy," 235.

31. See Ezra Vogel, "Pax Nipponica," *Foreign Affairs*, 64(4) (Spring 1986): 752-767; Pharr, "Japan's Defensive Foreign Policy."

32. Pharr, "Japan's Defensive Foreign Policy."

33. See for example, Dennis Yasutomo, *The Manner of Giving: Strategic Aid and Japanese Foreign Policy* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1986).

34. See Lincoln, *Japan's New Global Role*. Lincoln argues that Japan failed to recognize how serious the crisis was and thus initially was unwilling to make financial contributions for the U.S.-led forces. In August 1990, Tokyo pledged merely $1 billion. In the following month, Japan reluctantly pledged an additional $3 billion as a result of U.S. *gaiatsu*. It was only in March 1992, well after the actual end of the war, that the Japanese Diet passed a bill for a $9 billion contribution for the Desert Storm operation.

35. Keiko Hirata, "Japan as a Reactive State?"

36. Yasutomo, *The New Multilateralism*.

37. Yasutomo, *The New Multilateralism*, 34.

38. An example of Japan's reactivism during the proactive period (in the 1970s) is its Indochina refugee policy. See Thomas R. H. Havens, *Fire across the Sea: The Vietnam War and Japan 1965-1975* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987).

39. Leonard J. Schoppa, *Bargaining with Japan: What American Pressure Can and Cannot Do* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997). 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" (36).

40. See Akitoshi Miyashita, "*Gaiatsu* and Japan's Foreign Aid: Rethinking the Reactive-Proactive Debate," *International Studies Quarterly*, 43(4) (1999): 695-732. According to Miyashita, U.S.-Japan relations is characterized by "asymmetric interdependence" (697).

41. See Hisashi Nakatomi, *Jikkan Vietonamu Keizai* (Tokyo: Nihon-hyoronsha, 1995); and Mitsunobu Nakahara, *Betonamu e no Michi* (Tokyo: Shakai-shisosha, 1995).

42. See David A. Baldwin, *Economic Statecraft* (Princeton, N.J.: 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 for pursuing solely economic ends or for other purposes, such as for political, psychological, and military goals.

43. See Wan, "Spending Strategies in World Politics." Wan distinguishes spending from earning strategies. He defines spending as a means to influence other nations with wealth, whereas earning aims at accumulating wealth.

44. See for example, Lincoln, *Japan's New Global Role*, ch. 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" (201).

45. Michael Haas, *The Asian Way to Peace: A Story of Regional Cooperation* (New York: Praeger, 1989). SEATO was established in 1954 under an American initiative. It stopped its military functions in 1973 and completely dissolved in 1977.

46. Seki Tomoda, *Nyumon Gendai Nihon Gaiko: Nicchu Kokko Seijoka Igo* (Tokyo: Chukoshinsho, 1988).

47. 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), 176.

48. Masaya Shiraishi, *Japanese Relations with Vietnam* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), 72.

49. Soeya, "Vietnam in Japan's Regional Policy."

50. Seki Tomoda, "Tai-etsu Enjo Saikai no Keii to Haikei," Asia Research Project Report, Asia University, March 1997.

51. Shiraishi, *Japanese Relations with Vietnam*.

52. Shiraishi, *Japanese Relations with Vietnam*.

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

54. Shiraishi, *Japanese Relations with Vietnam*, 55.

55. Shiraishi, *Japanese Relations with Vietnam*, 55.

56. Shiraishi, *Japanese Relations with Vietnam*, 55.

57. Soeya, "Vietnam in Japan's Regional Policy," 179.

58. Sueo Sudo, *The Fukuda Doctrine and ASEAN: New Dimensions in Japanese Foreign Policy* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1992).

59. *Japan Times*, 19 August 1977, 14.

60. Sudo, *The Fukuda Doctrine and ASEAN*.

61. Soeya, "Vietnam in Japan's Regional Policy," 180.

62. Tomoda, *Nyumon Gendai Nihon Gaiko*. Another important aspect of the Fukuda doctrine is that MOFA officials took independent initiative in developing the speech for Fukuda without consulting the U.S. government prior to the Manila announcement. The Fukuda doctrine was primarily the brainchild of an informally organized MOFA group consisting of four officials in the Asian Affairs Bureau. See Sudo, *The Fukuda Doctrine and ASEAN*.

63. Shiraishi, *Japanese Relations with Vietnam*, 77.

64. Tomoda, *Nyumon Gendai Nihon Gaiko*. For a detailed account of U.S. decision making in the normalization with the SRV under the Jimmy 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.

65. Michael Haas, *Genocide by Proxy: Cambodian Pawn on a Superpower Chessboard* (New York: Praeger, 1991).

66. Tomoda, "Tai-etsu Enjo Saikai no Keii to Haikei."

67. Sunao Sonoda, "Nihon Gaiko no Tenkan o Kokoromite," *Chuokoron Keiei Mondai*, March 1980, translated and cited in Shiraishi, *Japanese Relations with Vietnam*, 71.

68. Some MOFA officials felt they had been betrayed by their Vietnamese counterparts. In December 1978 these MOFA officials had asked the Vietnamese officials for a peaceful resolution of the Cambodian conflict. In reply, the Vietnamese officials promised Japan that Vietnamese forces would not enter Cambodia. However, two weeks later, this promise was broken. See Tomoda, "Tai-etsu Enjo Saikai no Keii to Haikei."

69. Tomoda, *Nyumon Gendai Nihon Gaiko*.

70. *Asahi Shimbun*, 2, 16, 17, 22, and 23 August 1979, cited in Shiraishi, *Japanese Relations with Vietnam*, 86.

71. Tomoda, "Tai-etsu Enjo Saikai no Keii to Haikei."

72. Yoshihisa Komori, "Okoreru Amerika to 'Kiku to Katana,'" *Bungei Shunju*, February 1980, 114; Tomoda, *Nyumon Gendai Nihon Gaiko*, 76.

73. Yoshihisa Komori, "Okoreru Amerika to 'Kiku to Katana.'"

74. Shiraishi, *Japanese Relations with Vietnam*, 86.

75. Tomoda, *Nyumon Gendai Nihon Gaiko*.

76. Nissho Iwai was the only *sogo shosha* that opened an office under its own name in Vietnam in the 1980s. Its office was opened in 1987.

77. These trading houses quietly conducted business activities in Vietnam via the Japan-Vietnam Trade Association (JVTA), which maintained 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 North Vietnam and fought in the First Indochina War as Viet Minh soldiers. General Manager, JVTA, interview by author, Hanoi, May 1997; Mitsunobu Nakahara, *Betonamu e no Michi: Nichietsu-boeki no Rekishi to Tenbo*, Tokyo: Shakaishisosha, 1995.

78. Susumu Awanohara and Charles Morrison, "Looking Beyond Cambodia: Japan and Vietnam," *Indochina Issues*, August 1989: 25-29.

79. 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.

80. Quoted in Seki Tomoda, "Detaching from Cambodia," in James W. Morley and Masashi Nishihara, eds., *Vietnam Joins the World* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1997), 142.

81. Tomoda, *Nyumon Gendai Nihon Gaiko*.

82. Tadashi Ikeda, *Kanbojia Wakei e no Michi: Shogen Nihon Gaiko Shiren no 5-nen-kan* (Tokyo: Chuo Seiban, 1996).

83. The PKO law requires that the deployment of the SDF meet the following conditions: (1) a cease-fire is in place; (2) an SDF presence is agreed upon by all parties involved in conflict; (3) the SDF remains neutral; (4) the SDF can use force only for self-defense; and (5) the SDF retreats if it is fired upon.

84. Ikeda, "Kanbojia Wahei e no Michi."

85. Murray Hiebert and Loise de Rosario, "Japan Poised to Play Role in Reviving Indochina: Waiting in the Wings," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 30 May 1991: 68-69.

86. Ikeda, "Kanbojia Wahei e no Michi."

87. Tomoda, "Tai-etsu Enjo Saikai no Keii to Haikei."

88. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Japan's ODA Annual Report 1995* (Tokyo: Association for the Promotion of International Cooperation, 1996).

89. "Japan Includes Vietnam in Asian Aid Initiative," *Nikkei Weekly*, 24 May 1999, 21.

90. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Japan's ODA Annual Report 1994* (Tokyo: Association for Promotion of International Cooperation, 1995). Tokyo started small-scale aid to Cambodia in the late 1980s. This aid was used primarily for emergency relief.

91. Yoshihide Soeya, "Jishu Gaiko in Action: Japanese Diplomacy and Vietnam," Woodrow Wilson Center Asia Program Occasional Paper, No. 64, 1994.

92. Soeya, "Vietnam in Japan's Regional Policy"; Charles E. Morrison, "Southeast Asia and U.S.-Japan

Relations," in Gerald L. Curtis, ed., *The United States, Japan, and Asia: Challenges for U.S. Policy* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994).

93. Soeya, "Jishu Gaiko in Action."

94. Michael Vatikiotis, "Japan's Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu Clarifies His Country's Political Plans," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 16 May 1991, 11-12.

95. Robert Delfs and Michael Vatikiotis, "Low Key Diplomacy: Miyazawa Treads Delicate Path in Region," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 14 January 1993, 11-12.

96. "Heart to Heart: First Clean Your Own House," *Asia Times*, 14 January 1997, 8.

97. Chiyo Kato, "Nichibei Ampo Taisei o Chushi," *Asahi Shimbun*, 30 April 1997.

98. However, there have been some disagreements over human rights issues in Indochina. For example, Washington imposed aid sanctions on the Cambodian government following the 1997 coup by Prime Minister Hun Sen, but Tokyo maintained its aid to Cambodia in that year except for a short interval. This disagreement did not lead to a rupture between the United States and Japan.

99. Soeya, "Jishu Gaiko in Action."

100. Soeya, "Vietnam in Japan's Regional Policy."