



# Muddled Dawn

## The Implications of the New Administration in Japan

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Photograph © 2011, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

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ART: *Battle of Manila, May 1, 1898, As Seen by a Japanese Eye-witness, Matsuki Heikichi, Japanese, Meiji era, 1898 (Meiji 31), September, Woodblock print (nishiki-e): ink and color on paper, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The Spanish-American War led to an expansion of American influence and power in East Asia and set Japan and the United States on a collision course.*

ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2009, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) won a landslide victory in national parliamentary elections. For the first time since its founding in 1996, the DPJ was asked to form a government, having displaced the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) as the governing party for only the second time since the LDP was formed in 1955 (the first time, in 1993, the LDP was out of power for only nine months). After the DPJ's victory, much ink was spilled proclaiming, or at least musing about, imminent, significant, even strategic changes to the U.S.-Japan relationship.

Much of the controversy surrounded an agreement between the United States and Japan to remove Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma from its current location in the middle of a crowded urban area in the southern part of the island of Okinawa. In 2006, after years of negotiations, the United States and Japanese governments agreed to replace the MCAS with a new and smaller facility on Camp Schwab, another Marine Corps facility in the northern, less crowded part of Okinawa. Nine months after the DPJ's landslide, the party's first prime minister, Hatoyama Yukio, resigned, largely over a contretemps surrounding the Futenma issue. Japan ushered in its fifth prime minister in less than four years. Soon the ink was spilled again, this time declaring Japan ungovernable. Has there indeed been a new dawn for the Rising Sun? Should Americans be worried, as some pundits seem to be, about the alliance, or more recently, Japan's reliability? Probably the questions most Americans would ask are: Why should we care? Why do we still have troops in peaceful Japan more than 60 years after World War II? Why is Japan important, and why is it unique?

### Politics and the Bilateral Alliance

The formation of a DPJ government in September 2009 was a new dawn for Japan, but the anticipated contrasts from previous administrations have



America's long relationship with Japan began when Commodore Matthew C. Perry's fleet visited Tokugawa Japan, in 1854. This visit alarmed the Japanese and helped fuel the subsequent Meiji Restoration and modernization of Japan. The country's sudden leap into the industrial age was aimed at saving the country from the same fate other East Asian nations suffered under Western colonial exploitation.

not really materialized. Hatoyama Yukio was the fourth prime minister in three years. Of the four—three—including Hatoyama—are the grandsons of former prime ministers and the remaining one was the son of a former premier. Thus, in terms of pedigree, Hatoyama was typical of Japan's political blue bloods, which should have been a clue to what the implications for the future would be. Further, the individual most often credited with engineering the DPJ's landslide victory was political strongman Ozawa Ichiro. Ozawa engineered the first breakup of the LDP, in 1993, when he led a group of lawmakers out of the party. This, in turn, led to the LDP's first loss of power and to several years of political tumult as politicians formed, departed, and reformed new political alliances (one result being the formation of the DPJ itself).

**Shadow Shogun.** The archetypal backroom political fixer in Japan, Ozawa had been the president of the DPJ, and thus in line to become prime minister himself, but he had been forced to resign due to a misuse-of-funds scandal. Such scandals are an all too typical feature of Japanese politics (Hatoyama himself was under investigation for possibly misreporting campaign contributions, while Ozawa was being investigated for other suspected abuses). Widely considered the real power behind the prime minister, Ozawa belongs to a long tradition of what some have called the "shadow shoguns." This appellation remains another status quo feature of the DPJ's ostensibly "revolutionary" administration, though the shadow shogun stepped into the light and ran against the current prime minister, Kan Naoto, to try to regain the presidency of the DPJ. Had Ozawa won, he would have replaced Kan as premier.

Aside from the appearances of traditional political features, the DPJ's policies would likewise hardly suggest a revolutionary stance. Since its founding in 1996, the party has had little if anything in the way of an ideology. Its constituent politicians run the gamut from fairly conservative, former LDP members to leftist, unreconstructed refugees from the defunct Socialist Party. The only thing in the past that has held this diverse set of political actors together is opposition to the LDP. Whatever the LDP stood for, or was perceived to stand for, the DPJ stood against. Salient among these oppositions was that the LDP was seen as too subservient to American interests. By leaning too much toward the United States and the West in general, the LDP helped define the DPJ's platform. The DPJ promised a more independent security stance and a greater focus on Asia in diplomacy and trade, a posture that appeared to suggest movement toward normalization. The LDP had begun supplying fuel to coalition ships early in the global struggle against terrorism and had continued to push through two-year renewals of the mission. The DPJ promised to end the mission and did in January 2010. Rather than revolutionary changes, these positions and actions represent the slow, inexorable process of Japan's postwar identity crisis working itself out.

**Form and substance.** Even before its electoral victory, as preelection polls began to consistently indicate the DPJ would win, and win big, the DPJ had already begun to moderate its policy statements.



They began to stress that the U.S.-Japan alliance would remain a pillar of any DPJ-led governments policy, and they mentioned the possibility of continuing the fueling mission, or at least finding some other way to contribute to the antiterror struggle (in the end, they have fielded no alternative). This trend might have comforted some pundits had it not been for an editorial of Hatoyama's, translated and truncated for publication in the West, in which the author espoused the need for Japan to focus more on Asia in foreign affairs. Hatoyama was critical of the "unrestrained market fundamentalism and financial capitalism, that are void of morals or moderation."

This remark did not reflect a sudden change in Japanese attitudes, as some observers seemed to think. Many in group-oriented Japan have been critical of the individual-oriented brand of capitalism espoused in the United States for decades. While I have not made an empirical study, my impression, based on 15 years of living in Japan, and my experience as an academic and a retired foreign area officer focused on Japan, is that most Japanese consider U.S.-style capitalism to be an outgrowth

of Western, and particularly American, "me-first" selfishness. Japan's social history has treated such egoistic approaches to economics as poor form, morally and pragmatically oafish and uncultured. This is not a political stance, but a deep cultural one associated with the form and substance of their values. Again, this attitude is as old as Japan's association with the United States—not new.

This is further reinforced by the fact that many in Japan were and are critical of former Prime Minister Koizumi's attempts to enact market-oriented reforms in the Japanese economy, the world's second largest until mid-2010. Now Japan's economy is in third place behind China. Critics of Koizumi's reforms feared they would not only create economic winners, but also losers. They angrily wondered who would take care of the losers as they eyed the example of economic disparity in the United States.

**More autonomy.** As aforementioned, Hatoyama also espoused the need for Japan to be more autonomous in its foreign relations, to focus more of its attention on an Asia that shared more of Japan's regional interests and cultural outlook. To facilitate



P.F. Collier & Son

Diplomats from Russia and Japan attending peace talks in Portsmouth, PA, 5 September 1905. The Russo-Japanese War, which ended in 1905, revealed Japan as a new world-class power. At Mukden in Manchuria they defeated the Russian empire in the largest land battle in history. Subsequently, the Imperial Japanese Navy crushed a Russian fleet for the second time at the battle of Tsushima. These losses resulted in Russian internal destabilization, forcing the czar to concentrate on fending off a revolution in 1905. The negotiated peace was brokered by President Theodore Roosevelt. His support of the Russians was interpreted in Japan as an effort to undermine Japan's burgeoning influence in the region and fueled resentment against the United States.

the latter point, he floated a vague idea about forming an East Asian community. The U.S. has rightly stated that, as a Pacific nation too, it does not want to be excluded from an organization which could play an important international role in the Asia-Pacific community. However, the notion that Japan should have a more independent foreign policy is a common one in Japan and also not a new idea. The impulse to greater autonomy is common among other U.S. allies as well (e.g., Japan's attitude is reminiscent of the criticism in Great Britain about Prime Minister Blair's role as an American poodle).

Hatoyama, like all previous postwar prime ministers, continued his frank denunciation of American capitalism by writing, "Of course, the Japan-U.S. security pact will continue to be the cornerstone of Japanese diplomatic policy." This pragmatism is a bow to the ongoing need for American power to steward the legacy of tensions in the area, and it would behoove the United States to keep this in mind regarding the bilateral alliance. American presence is useful to Japan, in time and in measure with evolving expectations—and other countries in the western Pacific implicitly have a voice in the situation. Clearly, Hatoyama turned out not to be the radical some seemed to fear, and this need for pragmatism in the region certainly played a part in that outcome.

What actually changed was more form than substance. The DPJ had produced a coalition with two smaller parties, the Democratic Socialist Party, a rump of the former Socialist Party, and the New People's Party, a party that stands against the kind of market-oriented reforms former Prime Minister Koizumi championed. The inclusion of these parties constrained the DPJ's options and drove their administration relatively to the left, at least on the surface of things. While, the DPJ did discontinue fueling coalition ships in the Arabian Sea in January, that action has to be seen in context. Japan had taken on this fueling mission soon after 9/11, supplying fuel to coalition ships patrolling the Arabian Sea as part of Operation Enduring Freedom to prevent the travel of or support of terrorists. At first, Japan provided the free fuel to only U.S. ships, but it soon expanded the fuel support to all coalition ships. Up until the time it ceased operations, it had provided nearly half of the fuel the coalition used; again, all at no charge to the coalition. The DPJ has said it will explore ways

to provide more civilian support on the ground in Afghanistan in place of this fueling mission and has pledged more financial support to Afghanistan.

**New roles in security cooperation.** During U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates' meeting with Japanese Defense Minister Kitazawa in October 2009, the defense minister said Japan would also look at a role for its Self-Defense Forces (SDF) on the ground in Afghanistan. Such a role would be a big change in policy, but the Japanese have talked about it before, and caution has always prevailed. Even with the DSP no longer in the coalition—they left the coalition when Hatoyama flip-flopped on the promise to move the replacement facility for Marine Corps Air Station Futenma out of Okinawa—it is unlikely the DPJ will order Japan SDF boots on the ground in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, talk of it is significant as a benchmark in the evolving form of the alliance. Such a move, like that of Japan's earlier cooperation, represents an incremental step in Japan's (perhaps yet distant) normalization on security affairs.

The DPJ, under Hatoyama, had also said it would like to talk to the United States about the Status of Forces Agreement, and about the U.S.-Japan agreement to realign forces in Japan. It particularly wanted to readdress the aforementioned agreement to move Marine Corps Air Station Futenma. The final point proved the most contentious, and led to Hatoyama's resignation. Hatoyama and his administration repeatedly sent mixed signals. Before the election, he had said he favored removing the Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF) from Okinawa completely. These mixed signals should be understood in a cultural context as well as in the political one Americans see naturally.

Hatoyama's foreign minister, Katsuya Okada, originally favored scrapping the agreed plan to make the FRF part of the already-existing Camp Schwab in the less crowded, northern areas of Okinawa. He instead recommended consolidating Futenma's facilities and airframes on Kadena Air Base, just a few kilometers north of Futenma's current site. Later, Okada said this consolidation would be unworkable (something American and Japanese negotiators said years ago). The defense minister, Toshimi Kitazawa, came out in favor of abiding by the then-current agreement, signed by the United States and Japan in 2006.





American battleships in the Philadelphia Naval Yard in 1923 being dismantled in accordance with the Washington Naval Treaty. The five major naval powers—England, the United States, Japan, France, and Italy—concluded a treaty in 1922 to limit the ongoing arms race for increasing naval inventories. At the time, battleships were the arbiter of national power and status. The treaty led to the scrapping of major new weapons systems and the imposition of size constraints on battleship tonnage. The treaty established a 5:5:3 ratio among England, America, and Japan as the three superpowers. Although the treaty limited American production more in terms of capacity, this arrangement led to intense resentment in Japan, particularly in the military establishment, and it helped lead to animosity between the United States and Japan.

Meanwhile, Hatoyama kept shifting his position. The press reported he might give a decision to President Obama when the two leaders met in December 2009. However, when the President reportedly asked the prime minister to stick to the original government-to-government agreement, the prime minister reportedly replied simply, “Trust me.” In subsequent weeks, there were additional reports of the DPJ administration looking at moving the FRF to somewhere in Japan other than Okinawa, or asking that it be moved out of Japan entirely. The Hatoyama administration said it would make a final decision in May. After more delays, when Hatoyama finally said it would be best to stick to the original agreement and build the FRF on Camp Schwab, he resigned, just

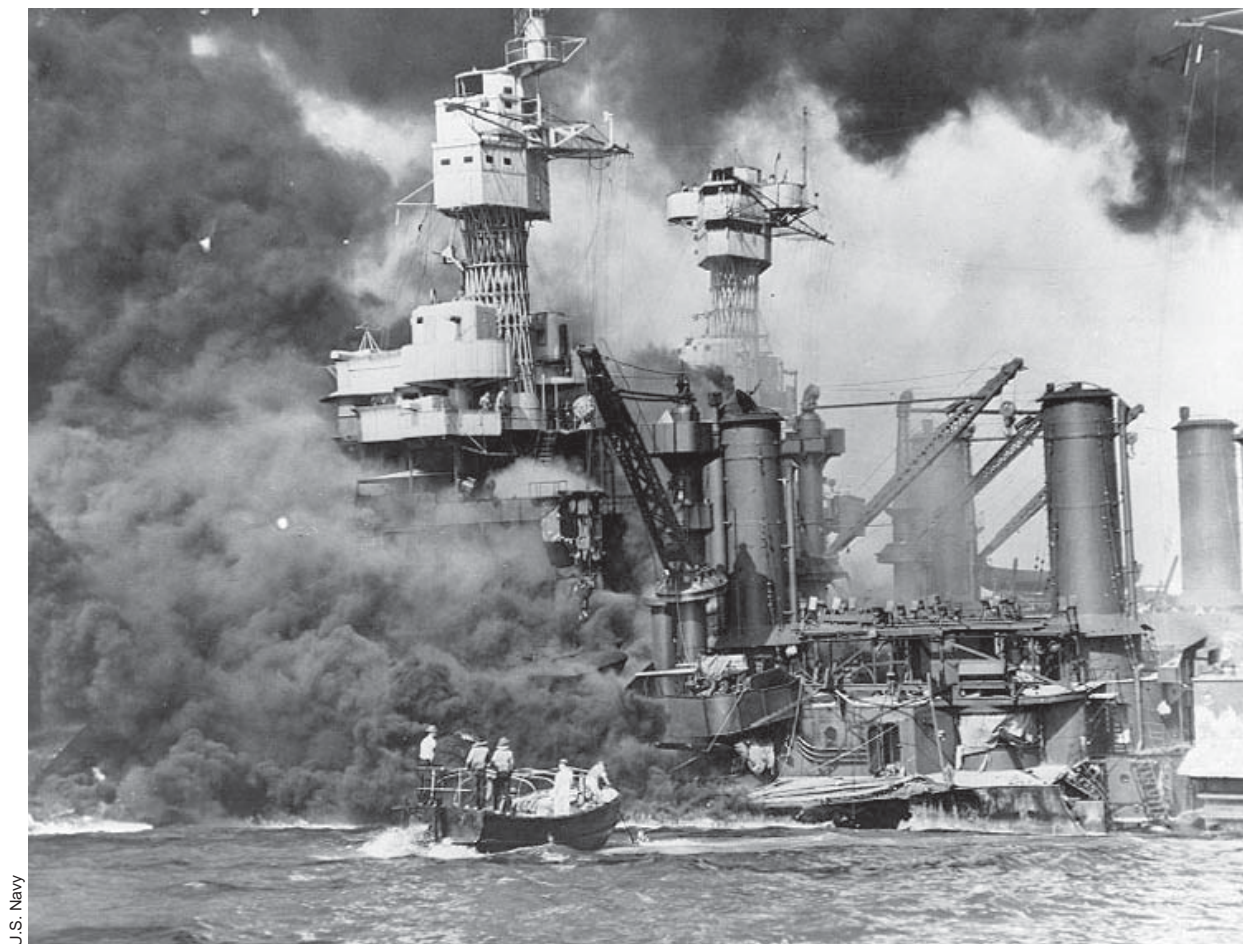
nine months into his tenure. Again, the cultural context here is important to understand, as this resignation would be expected as part of the form that delivered the substance of keeping the FRF where it needed to be.

**Hidden policy changes.** Part of the dissonance presented by these key players in the DPJ and their mixed messages came from a policy the administration actually did put into effect: the idea that politicians, not bureaucrats, should be in charge of formulating government policies. Message discipline, for the most part, was very strong under LDP administrations, but most policies were created and managed by professional bureaucrats in the various ministries. A big part of the annual budget preparations, for instance,

always involved the bureaucrats coming up with detailed questions and answers to present to politicians who would have to defend policies, and thus budgetary priorities, in the Japanese Diet (parliament). The bureaucrats wrote the scripts, and the politicians faithfully followed, but the government policy the politicians were purportedly debating had been set by a council of vice ministers, the highest-ranking bureaucrats in their respective ministries. The DPJ ushered in genuine change by disallowing this weekly meeting of vice ministers.

Hatoyama also encouraged his subordinates to offer their views. While transferring policymaking power from bureaucrats to the people's elected representatives is laudable (though, again, not a new idea—politicians have discussed making this change for years), one large obstacle has been and will be the minimal staffs of individual

politicians. Politicians in Japan do not have the large staffs politicians in the United States have. Most politicians only have a secretary, if that, who does little more than correspondence and administration. Japan has the most rapidly aging society in the developed world, the highest per capita national debt, and a deeper recessionary trough than most of the rest of the advanced world. Expecting politicians, who, like politicians everywhere, have to spend significant face time with their constituents in order to get reelected, to master the complexities of these daunting issues without professional staffs is unlikely to work well. Given the scale of the problems Japan faces, changes once thought undoable must occur. Certainly, Japan's handling of these problems will have ramifications for its security posture and the bilateral alliance with the United States.



U.S. Navy

Sailors rescue survivors alongside the sunken USS *West Virginia* (BB-48) shortly after the Japanese air raid on Pearl Harbor. The 7 December 1941 attack was the defining historical moment in 20th century U.S.-Japan relationships. This single, carefully planned, and well-executed maneuver effectively removed the U.S. Navy as a potential restraint to the Japanese Empire's southward expansion.



## Harbingers of Change

The fact that the public wranglings of the DPJ cabinet were about Futenma, an issue that has known more ups, downs, and unexpected high-speed curves than the most daunting diplomatic roller coaster, is particularly troubling. The United States and Japan have been trying to solve this problem for over 14 years, and the latest troubles will only confirm for many observers what they have pessimistically proposed all along, that the issue will never be satisfactorily resolved.

So, the DPJ cabinet of Hatoyama looked in many ways like its LDP predecessors, except for the party symbols the cabinet members wear on their lapels. As is typical in electoral democracies, the DPJ in power moderated the views it had espoused in the run-up to the election. The DPJ has introduced a major change by curtailing the power of bureaucrats. Whether that is sustainable is yet to be seen. In addition to the issues mentioned above, the party has already submitted a record budget woefully deficient in details—particularly the details of how to pay for the massive spending. Without the bureaucrats, and without extensive staffs, one wonders who will work out these highly technical, yet absolutely necessary, details.

The Hatoyama cabinet enjoyed extremely high levels of public support immediately after the election, but support began to wane almost immediately, sliding from over 80 percent to the 20s by the time Hatoyama resigned. Prime Minister Kan Naoto, Hatoyama's replacement, seemed to have a surer hand on the rudder, quietly letting the Americans know, for instance, that his administration would abide by the 2006 agreement to move the FRF to northern Okinawa (albeit with some adjustments to details). However, to his fellow citizens he then raised the possibility of a higher consumption tax to begin to tackle Japan's public debt, at 200 percent of GDP, the largest in the developed world. This move was not well received, and along with lingering disaffection for the Hatoyama administration, led to the DPJ not gaining a majority in the upper house of the Diet during the July 2010 elections. (They maintain the majority in the more powerful lower house which brought them to power in the first place.)

Given Japan's daunting challenges, the sidelining of bureaucratic expertise without the creation of a viable alternative, and internal differences among

DPJ members, disillusionment seems likely to continue and deepen. Kan is popular in the DPJ, but his position has been weakened, making it even more difficult for his administration to achieve the lofty populist goals the DPJ ran on last year. If the disillusion and disappointment are significant enough, another round of defections and realignments in Japan's party system could be on the horizon, with one possible result being a realignment into more ideologically cohesive center-right and center-left parties.

This result is what Ozawa—considered the Oz behind the curtain of the DPJ's victory last year—has been aiming for all along, a two-party system in Japan that he sees as more stable and productive. Though Ozawa lost in his bid to retake the presidency of the DPJ and become prime minister himself this past September, dissatisfaction with the current system may still lead to widespread dissolution and realignment in the current parties. If a two-party system does eventuate, because of or despite Ozawa's wily manipulation, Japan really will have a new dawn.

Meanwhile, Japan continues to muddle along. In the United States, we have to remember Japan is not a majoritarian democracy, but a consensual one. One has only to look at the history of the expansion of Tokyo's international airport, Narita, which was held up for literally decades because a few farmers refused to give up miniscule parcels of land. In the United States in such a situation, after a reasonable time for negotiation, the government would have declared eminent domain and the work on the airport expansion would have continued. The Japanese government, which already had eminent domain legislation on the books, instead worked for years to get the farmers to voluntarily sell their land.

In the municipality of Naha, Okinawa, the local government for the area taken up by Camp Schwab, where the U.S. and Japan agreed to build the FRF in 2006, public opinion is split almost evenly on the desirability of building the FRF. This is going to make the eventual realization of the original agreement extremely difficult for any Japanese administration, despite the fact that Kan has said the Japanese government will abide by the agreement with some adjustments, and U.S. and Japanese officials have made progress in ironing out those adjustments.



U.S. Army

Wreckage of the Mitsubishi Ordnance Plant near the hypocenter of the bomb blast at Nagasaki, Japan, 6 December 1946. World War II fundamentally changed the character of military and political alliances worldwide.

## Costs versus Benefits of the Bilateral Alliance

In the end the benefits of the alliance for both parties still outweigh costs and annoyances. The alliance gives the United States strategic leverage it would not have otherwise. The exact location of troops—and to a lesser degree the mix of those troops—is less important than the fact U.S. troops are in Japan. A balanced force gives the alliance more options, and the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force is the only U.S. ground combat force in Japan, other than a Special Forces battalion and a Patriot Missile battalion. For Japan, U.S. presence has helped ensure more than 60 years of peace with its neighbors. Japan has only had to spend an average of less than one percent of its GDP since 1960, the lowest average cost of any industrialized country in GDP terms. If the Marines, or the air wing, leave Okinawa completely, and especially if the aircraft do not redeploy somewhere else in Japan, Japan will likely have to increase its own forces on the island, at a higher cost.

Okinawa first came under the suzerainty of an important samurai family in 1604 precisely because

the island acts as the gateway between Japan and China. Okinawa still sits astride one of the most important trade corridors in the world. China is increasingly brazen in patrolling near or even through those waters. Okinawa will always have military forces; it cannot escape its geography. For now, in the big picture, it is better for both Japan and the United States that a significant portion of those forces remain American, as Hatoyama realized only too late. This latest round of diplomatic tension on Okinawa has mostly short-term implications. In the short run, Japan has damaged its trust with the Obama administration. At a time when the rise of China is changing not only the regional but the global international system, Japan is in danger of making itself less relevant in the long run.

I have always thought of Japan as America's "and" ally, because of all the proclamations that say America will work with "Europe *and* Japan," or "NATO *and* Japan" to accomplish some mutual goal. Japan, extremely sensitive and even allergic to domestic military capabilities and action, has, for the most part, preferred to contribute economically to these endeavors (though the Japanese Self-Defense Force,



since 1992, has participated in many peacekeeping and humanitarian operations, even sending air and ground troops to Iraq between 2004 and 2006). Yet Japan itself has bemoaned the tendency of other countries to see Japan as an ATM machine when it comes to international contributions. At a time when China has passed Japan in GDP to become the second-largest economy in the world, even this self-consciously less-than-desirable, less-than-honorable role of international bank teller may shrink in significance.

Japan can bounce back from these problems. In the 1970s and 1980s many thought Japan would continue to grow richer, overtaking America to have the largest GDP in the world. People were predicting this century would be the “Japanese century.” The term “competitive advantage,” as

opposed to “comparative advantage,” was coined to explain how a country like Japan, with basically no natural resources and thus no comparative advantage, could do so well in terms of generating wealth. What gave Japan this competitive advantage were things like the vaunted Japanese work ethic and Japan’s education system.

Japan still has these advantages, but the country has lacked leadership and vision. Gerald Curtis, in his book *The Logic of Japanese Politics*, proposed that Japan’s economic success may have tempered the desire of Japanese citizens to “throw out the bums” in the Diet and engender real change. Even with the long sclerotic economy dating from Japan’s speculative bubble bursting in the early 1990s, the older generation could remember steady improvement in its standard of living. An

amazing 90 percent of Japanese people still consider themselves middle class. Yet, dissatisfaction with the LDP finally grew to the point that people were ready for an alternative in the DPJ. So far the DPJ has not lived up to its promises (not that any party could have lived up to those particular electoral fantasies). A new political and economic direction in Japan seems inevitable—such change will also inevitably mean some revision of Japan’s military and security relationship with the United States. Japan still has one of the best-educated work forces in the world, and the Japanese have shown the capability to produce leaders when they need them. The consensual politics of Japan will always involve some muddling, but to take on Japan’s problems, the Japanese need decisiveness, vision, and real leadership. Otherwise, Japan, America’s “and” ally, may become less than an afterthought, as it muddles along, diminishing international trust and its own relevance to the system. **MR**



U.S. Army truck is loaded aboard a landing transport ship at Saebo Base, Kyushu, Japan, 10 July 1950. Japan has been a staunch ally of the United States since the Korean War.



T. Goto

A new Japanese Type 10 Main Battle Tank, part of Japan's formidable Self-Defense Forces arsenal. A security treaty between the United States and Japan was formalized in 1952 and then revised in 1960 as a bilateral military alliance for the defense of Japan. This alliance has strengthened and weakened over the decades but became strong again during the late 1990s and has remained so. Tension with North Korea and economic pressure from China have underscored the shared values and interests of the United States and Japan, helping to keep the relationship strong. Some have feared that the 2009 election would weaken the 50-year old alliance.

Change 1 to Army Capstone

## FM 3-0 Operations

U.S. Army  
Combined  
Arms Center  
Intellectual  
Center of the Army



Change 1 to FM 3-0 incorporates lessons from continued operations and maturing discussions on Army doctrine. Key changes include replacing Command and Control with Mission Command as both an activity and a warfighting function, and replacing the 5 Army Information Tasks with Inform and Influence and Cyber/Electromagnetic activities.

Several other changes are also readily apparent: Hybrid Threats, Security Force Assistance is described within stability operations, CBRNE Consequence Management becomes an additional task within Civil Support, Chapter 7 is updated to include design.

Refer to the CAC web site for other changes and a more in depth overview of the changes to US Army Operational Doctrine.

The proponent for FM 3-0, Change 1 is the Combined Arms Center:  
<http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/FM3-0/index.asp>

