

Karol Zakowski · Beata Bochorodycz
Marcin Socha

Japan's Foreign Policy Making

Central Government Reforms, Decision-
Making Processes, and Diplomacy

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Note on Conventions

The authors use the modified Hepburn transcription for Japanese and *pinyin* for Chinese terms and titles. The original order of Japanese, Chinese, and Korean names is preserved with family names preceding given names. In case of English-language sources published by Asian authors, the version that appeared in the referred title is used.

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List of Abbreviations

AFP	Arc of Freedom and Prosperity
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CASC	Central Asia and South Caucasus
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CCS	Chief cabinet secretary
COP	Conference of the Parties
DP	Democratic Party
DPJ	Democratic Party of Japan
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
DSP	Democratic Socialist Party
EA	Environment Agency
EAC	East Asian Community
EU	European Union
FRF	Futenma Replacement Facility
GHG	Greenhouse gases
GUAM	Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova
JDA	Japan Defense Agency
JSP	Japan Socialist Party
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
METI	Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry
MEXT	Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
MITI	Ministry of International Trade and Industry
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MOE	Ministry of the Environment
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ODA	Official Development Assistance

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PARC	Policy Affairs Research Council
PKO	Peacekeeping operations
PNP	People's New Party
PRC	People's Republic of China
ROK	Republic of Korea
SDF	Self-Defense Forces
SDP	Social Democratic Party
SOFA	Status of Forces Agreement
SACO	Special Action Committee on Okinawa
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
TPSEP	Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement
UN	United Nations
US	United States
WTO	World Trade Organization

Chapter 1

Structures and Actors in Foreign Policy Making in Japan

1.1 Introduction

The aim of this volume is to evaluate the impact of the institutional changes introduced by the central government reforms on foreign policy making in Japan. The administrative reform was conceived and drafted by Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryūtarō in 1996–1998, passed by the Diet under Prime Minister Obuchi Keizō in July 1999, and implemented under the Mori Yoshirō administration in January 2001. It was the first significant overhaul of the structure of the central government since the enactment of the National Administration Organization Law in 1948. Hashimoto's aim was to strengthen the position of the prime minister vis-à-vis the bureaucrats and enhance his or her control over separate ministries.

The book examines the evolution of the role played by the prime minister and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) both in defining and implementing long-term diplomatic strategies as well as formulating ad hoc policies towards sudden problems and international crises. Particular emphasis is placed on diplomacy towards two countries that have been crucial in Japan's foreign policy—the United States and People's Republic of China (PRC). Through nine case studies it is investigated whether, and under what conditions, the central government reforms have strengthened the actual abilities of prime ministers and their closest entourages to independently formulate and implement foreign policies.

1.2 Theoretical Approaches to Foreign Policy Making

The salience of domestic-level factors in foreign policy making has been one of the most divisive issues in international relations theory. Political realism treats sovereign states as “black boxes” whose foreign policies are driven by objectively definable national interests. As emphasized by Morgenthau (2006: 5):

A realist theory of international politics (...) will guard against two popular fallacies: the concern with motives and the concern with ideological preferences.

To search for the clue to foreign policy exclusively in the motives of statesmen is both futile and deceptive. It is futile because motives are the most illusive of psychological data, distorted as they are, frequently beyond recognition, by the interests and emotions of actor and observer alike. Do we really know what our own motives are? And what do we know of the motives of others?

According to this approach, instead of pursuing distinct ideologies, statespersons are, or should be, motivated by national interests that are defined in terms of power (Morgenthau 2006: 5–11).

Neorealism develops this concept by emphasizing that national interests result directly from a relative power and position of a given country in the international structure which “emerges from the interaction of states and then constrains them from taking certain actions while propelling them toward others” (Waltz 1990: 29). Just as in classical realism, domestic factors are not considered sufficiently salient to constitute an object of theoretical analysis. As stressed by Waltz (1990: 31), “Considerations of power dominate considerations of ideology. In a structural theory, states are differently placed by their power and differences in placement help to explain both their behavior and their fates.”

Neorealism’s inherent weakness lies in its excessively deterministic character. To be sure, classical realists and neorealists are aware of the existence of ideational and domestic pressures on foreign policy making, but they tend to underestimate their importance or simply purge them from analysis for the sake of maintaining theoretical parsimony. As admitted by Morgenthau (2006: 7):

The contingent elements of personality, prejudice, and subjective preference, and of all the weaknesses of intellect and will which flesh is heir to, are bound to deflect foreign policies from their rational course. (...) Yet a theory of foreign policy which aims at rationality must for the time being, as it were, abstract from these irrational elements and seek to paint a picture of foreign policy which presents the rational essence to be found in experience, without the contingent deviations from rationality which are also found in experience.

Analogically, Waltz (2001: 175–179) thinks of states as unitary actors who make rational decisions, at least on the systemic level that is of interest for neorealists. According to him, this simplification is possible thanks to the “centripetal force of nationalism” and the unanimity that is usually achieved domestically in moments of international crises. Aberrations exist, but they do not last long, and thus they can be omitted from a general theory. As stressed by Waltz (2001: 178–179), “some questions of foreign policy call for single choices; some of these choices must be supported by the state as a whole or the state disappears—and with it the problem of state unity.”

While realism/neorealism leaves little space to the analysis of domestic determinants of foreign policy, the liberal school of international relations is situated on the opposite pole of that debate. According to liberal theorists, foreign policy is deeply embedded in the domestic situation of a given country. State preferences are defined by the officials representing various individuals and organized groups who “promote differentiated interests under constraints imposed by material scarcity,

conflicting values, and variations in societal influence” (Moravcsik 1997: 516). The biggest weakness of liberalism is its overemphasis on domestic-level variables without paying enough consideration to systemic constraints. This deficiency has been to some extent addressed by the concept of a two-level game, a popular analytical framework for reconciling international and domestic factors from the liberal perspective. According to Putnam (1988), while international negotiations over an agreement are conducted on the first level, decision-makers conduct simultaneous bargaining over its ratification with various domestic groups on the second level. Entering into an agreement depends on finding winsets that are domestically acceptable for all countries involved in the talks. The weakest point of the two-level game model is that it treats both domestic and external factors as process-based variables, “takes the attempt at cooperation as a given,” and “leaves largely unexplored the reasons why negotiators would be interested in cooperation in the first place” (Sterling-Folker 1997: 20). Moreover, it is directly applicable solely for analysis of the cases involving international negotiations, which constitute only a part of foreign policy decisions.

The neoliberal school of international relations continues the liberal traditions, but it places more emphasis on structural factors stemming from the international system. Such theorists as Nye (1976) or Keohane (1998) indicate that the processes of economic integration, codification of international rules, globalization, and technological development have led to the blurring of distinction between foreign and domestic policy, as well as to the relative erosion of significance of military power. As a result, neoliberalism stresses the mitigating impact of the strengthened international institutions and economic interdependence on diplomatic crises. The greatest limitation of this approach is its overfocus on systemic and economic determinants of foreign policy.

While neorealists and neoliberals tend to oversimplify reality for the sake of building a uniform structural theory, liberals tend to place an excessive emphasis on domestic sources of foreign policy without paying enough attention to external determinants. One of the theories that tries to overcome this dichotomy is constructivism. Constructivists place emphasis on ideational factors, both on domestic and international level, that influence foreign policy of one country towards another. Such determinants as history of mutual interactions, culture, norms, and values lead to the creation of intersubjective identities that define mutual perceptions between nations (Wendt 1999). However, constructivism fails to clearly demonstrate in what way, under what circumstances, and to what extent the ideational determinants actually influence decision-making processes. Moreover, it is prone to the fallacy of subsuming diversity of ideological stances represented by individual decision-makers into excessively simplified national myths, values, or cultures.

This volume advocates a balanced stance between the aforementioned schools, represented by neoclassical realism. While classical realists and neorealists reject any significance of the deviations from their core theory, neoclassical realists try to analyze these aberrations. They contend that the structure of the international system is indeed the most important factor that shapes foreign policy, but external inputs do not automatically translate into diplomatic outputs. As stressed by Rose

(1998: 158), there is no “smoothly functioning mechanical transmission belt” and “the translation of capabilities into national behavior is often rough and capricious over the short and medium term.” For that reason, apart from systemic incentives that constitute an independent variable, neoclassical realists identify various kinds of unit-level intervening variables. Such domestic factors as decision-makers’ perceptions, political culture, public opinion, relationship between legislative and executive branches, government types, bureaucratic politics, pressure from interest groups, and strength of the state apparatus act as filters or prisms that distort and modify external stimuli (Rose 1998: 157–165; Sterling-Folker 1997: 2). Simply speaking, while the international environment provides a general framework for foreign policy, it is not insignificant who the main decision-makers are, what groups they represent, what powers they possess, which values they embrace, and, finally, through what institutional lenses they perceive and define the national interests.

That said, neoclassical realism is complementary to classical realism and neorealism. Neoclassical realism agrees with the core assumption of classical realism that states generally pursue their interests defined in terms of power. On the other hand, its analysis focuses on the intervening factors that distort the realization of national interests rather than on national interests themselves. Neorealism and neoclassical realism, in turn, seek explanation of different phenomena. While the former is a theory of international politics, the latter is a theory of foreign policy. While the former analyzes international outcomes, the latter traces the processes that lead to particular foreign policy decisions. While the former puts emphasis on interaction between great powers in the international system, the latter examines strategies and agendas of individual states (Taliaferro 2000–2001: 131–134). As admitted by a leading neorealist Kenneth Waltz (2010: 71), “Structurally we can describe and understand the pressures states are subject to. We cannot predict how they will react to the pressures without knowledge of their internal dispositions.” Neoclassical realism tries to fill this gap.

Japan is a good example of a country whose foreign policy was strongly influenced by contextual domestic-level factors. Undoubtedly, the general contour of Tokyo’s behavior on the international scene was delineated by external incentives, such as the bipolar nature of the international system during the Cold War, Sino-American rapprochement in the 1970s, or power shifts after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, these systemic pressures translated into concrete decisions in Japan’s foreign and security policies only after having been filtered through the biased perceptions of statespersons, ideological and factional cleavages in the ruling parties, bureaucracy-led administrative structures, or constraints stemming from the “pacifist” Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution.

All the abovementioned intervening variables have been extensively used to explain the idiosyncrasies of Japan’s behavior on the international scene. The complexity of decision-making mechanisms, weak position of the prime minister vis-à-vis fragmented subgovernments, or the nexus between politicians, bureaucrats, and businesspeople were cited by some authors as the causes of the passive, inward-oriented character of Tokyo’s foreign policy (Calder 1988; Van Wolferen 1986/1987). Antimilitary social norms and culture, stemming from the traumatic

history of the country, in turn, were considered by constructivists as dominant domestic factors behind Tokyo's pacifist security policy (Berger 1993; Katzenstein 1996). These intervening variables, both institutional and ideational, help to explain the lag in Japan's transition after the collapse of the Soviet Union from Calder's (1988) "reactive state" to the "adaptive state" described by Berger (2007). While the former seemed to lack the ambition or abilities to play a leading role in the international community, the latter gradually started exhibiting a more assertive security policy as a reaction to new threats appearing in the post-Cold War era. Without trying to falsify any of the abovementioned explanations, this book develops and supplements them with neoclassical realist analysis.

1.3 Foreign Policy Making in Japan as a Contentious Process

The scope of this study encompasses the institutional dimension of domestic factors influencing Japan's foreign policy. Japan's behavior vis-à-vis other states has been often depicted as largely affected by institutional constraints. Numerous formal and informal limitations of power stemming from the existence of powerful veto players put into question the prime ministers' and foreign ministers' abilities to exert leadership in a top-down manner. As defined by Tsebelis (1995: 293), a veto player is "an individual or collective actor whose agreement is required for a policy decision." Both bureaucracy and ruling party backbenchers possessed many traits of veto players. The power of MOFA bureaucrats and their unwillingness to change the status quo have been cited as one of the reasons for the exceptional stability of Japan's foreign policy in the postwar period (Kawabe 2002; Yakushiji 2003). Additionally, since the 1970s and 1980s a discourse on the role of interest groups and business circles acting through specialized Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) backbenchers gained in prominence (Inoguchi and Iwai 1987). Representing the interests of different ministries, pressure groups, and business circles, parliamentary tribes competed for influence on domestic policies. They mainly focused on the areas of agriculture, construction, commerce, and industry, but in the era of globalization their activities quickly entered a collision course with the government's diplomatic endeavors. Under these circumstances, unceasing power struggles between three key actors: the Kantei (prime minister and his or her closest entourage), MOFA officials and, indirectly, ruling party backbenchers, can be treated as a significant factor behind foreign policy making in Japan.

In fact, this volume argues that the contentious nature of Japan's foreign policy was rooted much deeper than on the Kantei-MOFA-ruling party level. Superficially, the Kantei appeared to be a coherent actor, but in reality most of its administrative staff recruited from and represented the interests of separate ministries. Furthermore, it was not uncommon for prime ministers to assign high-ranking posts in the Cabinet Secretariat and the Cabinet Office to politicians with strong

personalities and divergent convictions who did not necessarily value team play. MOFA was an even less homogenous institution, with distinct regional bureaus and divisions pursuing their own sectional goals. The ruling party constituted the least coherent of the three actors. Parliamentary tribes not only promoted contradictory interests of the industrial sectors and ministries they represented, but they also actively countered those of the initiatives of other tribes that could infringe upon the privileges of their clients. In addition, major parties were composed of divergent ideological wings and policy groups. As a result, each of these actors could use the internal frictions in other actors in order to weaken the competitors' influence on foreign policy.

The salience of the contentious nature of the decision-making processes in foreign policy formation is consistent with prior research on elite policy cohesion. According to Zakaria (1997: 33–39), high cohesion of such central institutions as the civil bureaucracy helps to produce strong states with easy access to resources, which leads to ambitious foreign policies. In his seminal work on underbalancing, Schweller (2006: 127–130) described four domestic-level intervening variables that exert impact on states' reaction to external threats: (1) elite consensus on the nature of the problem and ways of dealing with it; (2) government vulnerability to removal from political office; (3) social cohesion regarding legitimacy of state institutions; and (4) elite cohesion or fragmentation by persistent internal divisions. The more states are polarized and unstable, both on the elite and social levels, the less probable it is that they will adequately answer to external incentives. As pointed out by Tsebelis (2002: 2) in turn: “significant departures from the status quo are impossible when the winset is small—that is, when veto players are many—when they have significant ideological distances among them, and when they are internally cohesive.” This implies that it is easier to overcome institutional constraints if competitive power centers are internally divided over specific policy decisions.

The main objective of the central government reforms in Japan was to provide more power to the Kantei in order to overcome sectional frictions. A range of studies have shown that the prime minister indeed has gained in influence. Machidori (2012: 113–126) indicated that since the reforms the number of contacts between the head of government and his or her direct entourage increased at the expense of contacts with other actors. Nonaka and Aoki (2016: 22–85) noticed that the institutional changes enabled the Kantei to channel decision-making in advisory councils under its own direct control. Surveys among the bureaucrats proved that in the eyes of civil servants the influence of the prime minister and ministers on policy formation increased considerably (Ryū 2006: 236–243). According to Shinoda (2005), the administrative reforms enabled the emergence of the Cabinet Secretariat as a core executive that acted as an arbiter in interministerial conflicts. Krauss and Nyblade (2005), in turn, noticed that the “presidentialization” of Japanese politics was additionally supported by the longer term trend of increased media coverage of the head of government. This study supplements the above findings with neoclassical realist foreign policy making analysis.

In recent years, scholars have occasionally taken advantage of the conceptual framework of neoclassical realism to interpret various aspects of Japan's foreign

policy. Such domestic-level factors as nationalism (Lai 2014), domestic politics (Terada and Ong 2011), elite division and social obstacles (Yoo 2012), or decision-makers' threat perception and resource extraction potential (Saltzman 2015) were used to explain complex interdependencies between the structural incentives and the idiosyncrasies of Tokyo's response to external pressures. Yet, this study is innovative in treating the evolution of elite cohesion after the central government reforms as one of the main intervening variables that filtered systemic stimuli. It supplements the conventional wisdom by analyzing the dynamics of institutional reforms as a significant factor behind the change in the balance of power in foreign policy making.

This book argues that while the central government reforms did little to eliminate sectional struggles within MOFA and internal divisions in ruling parties, they did, under certain conditions, facilitate overcoming the Kantei's policy incoherence. Institutional changes improved the prime minister's relative position vis-à-vis competitive foreign policy making venues, which resulted in a more independent Kantei-led diplomacy.

1.4 Methodology

This study takes advantage of methodological instruments characteristic of neo-classical realism: “theoretically informed narratives (...) that trace the ways different factors combine to yield particular foreign policies” (Rose 1998: 153). The aim of the nine case studies presented in the monograph is to examine to what extent and under what conditions the prime minister's enhanced position in the government after the administrative reform changed the balance of power in foreign policy making. The case studies are focused on a limited time period after the central government reforms of 2001, with only flashbacks to the situation before the institutional changes.

While the international situation serves as independent variable, domestic politics and institutional factors are treated as intervening variables. Particular attention is paid to policy cohesions of three foreign policy making actors—the Kantei, MOFA, and ruling party. Authors take advantage of primary and secondary sources, such as ministerial documents, politicians' and bureaucrats' memoirs, research monographs, or interviews with decision-makers, to trace political interests, ideological leanings, personal motives, and perceptions of the international environment by individual and institutional agents involved in a respective decision-making process. In light of these cleavages, each case study analyzes which institutional resources were used by the Kantei vis-à-vis competing power centers before and after the administrative reform. In particular, the Kantei's policy cohesion is compared with homogeneity of MOFA and ruling parties regarding the issues in question. It is argued that the more the prime minister and his or her closest entourage were coherent on what policy to adapt, and the less cohesive were

competing foreign policy making agents, the easier it was for the Kantei to use new institutional instruments to overcome the opposition from veto players.

That said, the authors do not ignore or underestimate the impact of external incentives on foreign policy making in Japan. In the vein of neoclassical realist theory, systemic parameters are treated as independent variables that severely constrained the scope of Tokyo's possible decisions at a given time. International determinants include strength of external pressures, US grand strategy, Japan's economic interdependence, as well as relative military potential (or rather self-defense potential) vis-à-vis the countries in question. Among these factors it is perhaps US national interests and foreign policy agenda that exerted the strongest impact on Tokyo's behavior on the international scene. Washington frequently used the argument of Japan's reliance on the US security umbrella to gain leverage over Tokyo in bilateral negotiations or discourage Japan from participating in any multilateral initiatives that could infringe upon US interests. This influence has been so immense that the word *gaiatsu*, which means "external pressure" in Japanese, came to be attributed almost exclusively to American pressure. The authors do not challenge this conventional wisdom, but they claim that Tokyo's reaction to Washington's grand strategy was never automatic, and after central government reforms Japanese prime ministers became better equipped to assertively respond to US demands.

The complex nature of Japan's foreign policy making processes is illustrated in Fig. 1.1. Instead of directly determining Japan's behavior, the external factors were filtered by institutional arrangements in the analyzed power centers. In addition, domestic societal pressures are treated as an auxiliary intervening variable. Public support alone was insufficient to significantly influence the direction of Japan's foreign policy. Nevertheless, high popularity of the prime minister's policy could be instrumental in overcoming opposition from within the government or the ruling party, while unfavorable opinion polls could strengthen veto players' opposition against the Kantei's initiatives. Each case study assesses the level of public support for the foreign policy decision in question and analyzes its potential exploitation by the prime minister or competing power centers.

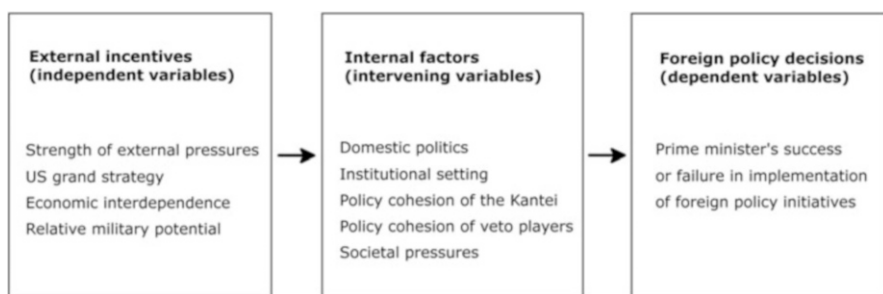


Fig. 1.1 External and internal determinants of Japan's foreign policy. Source: By the author based on Rose (1998: 154)

1.5 Overview of Chapters

Chapters 1, 2, 4–6, and 12 were written by Karol Zakowski, Chaps. 3, 8, and 11 by Beata Bochorodycz, and Chaps. 7, 9, and 10 by Marcin Socha. The first chapter briefly describes the institutional setting of separate foreign policy making venues—the Kantei, MOFA, and ruling parties representing the interests of remaining ministries and pressure groups—before and after the central government reforms. It analyzes to what extent the three agents were prone to internal frictions, and how this deficiency was amended by the institutional changes in 2001.

The remaining chapters are devoted to nine case studies that test the central government reforms' impact on foreign policy making. They were selected to provide a wide array of security (e.g., the War on Terrorism in 2001–2006), economic (e.g., TPP accession), and mainly diplomatic (e.g., rapprochement with China in 2006–2008) problems that emerged during the 15 years after the reforms. Some of the analyzed issues attracted strong international and domestic attention (e.g., history problems under the Koizumi administration), while others were less related to external or societal pressures (e.g., Arc of Freedom and Prosperity). In most of the cases, the examined policy remained high on the prime minister's agenda, but in some cases the prime minister's attitude towards the decision in question changed in successive cabinets (e.g., East Asian Community concept).

Each chapter starts from a brief description of Japan's foreign policy on a given issue before the reforms. Subsequently, interests and ideological leanings of all institutional actors involved in decision-making process in the post-reform period are analyzed. In particular, foreign policy making patterns are examined in the light of policy cohesion of separate policy venues. While the Kantei was usually relatively homogenous and supportive of the prime minister's decisions, MOFA in some cases was decisively unsupportive (Futenma relocation, assertive stance on history problems) or generally opposed, yet internally divided (flexible posture regarding the abduction issue, creation of the East Asian Community). The ruling party backbenchers exerted stronger influence on foreign policy making only if the decision in question endangered economic interests of the ministries and pressure groups they represented (TPP accession, high CO₂ emission reduction goal) or attracted high public attention (abduction issue). Nevertheless, being composed of various groups with divergent interests, backbenchers representing the interests of separate ministries rarely could form a united front against the controversial decision.

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Chapter 2

Central Government Reforms and Foreign Policy Making in Japan

2.1 Introduction

A series of corruption scandals in Japan at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s created a popular demand for wide-scale political reform.¹ Eventually, in 1994 the electoral system was overhauled from middle-sized constituencies to a mixture of single-seat districts and proportional representation. Moreover, state subsidies for political parties were introduced and private donations to individual politicians severely limited. The effect of these revolutionary changes was not immediate, but over the long run the new system contributed to the weakening of factions and “parliamentary tribes” in the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), strengthening of the party’s central organs, as well as increase in the influence of the party president’s image among the general public on electoral results (Shinoda 2013: 118–130; Takenaka 2006: 37–43; Kaihara 2007: 749–765).

In the second half of the 1990s, public discourse shifted to the reform of governmental institutions. It was Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryūtarō (1996–1998) who undertook the initiative of significantly revising the National Administration Organization Law for the first time since 1948. Several factors were responsible for this sudden change in the LDP’s policy. Firstly, the close relationship between LDP politicians and ministerial bureaucrats was exacerbated by the historic alternation of power in August 1993. Despite the fact that the multiparty coalition under the Hosokawa and Hata cabinets survived only until June 1994, after returning to power the LDP felt “betrayed” by ministerial officials who had cooperated with the non-LDP government. Secondly, in the mid-1990s numerous corruption scandals with bureaucrats were revealed. These incidents, which were particularly shocking

¹In 1988, it was revealed that a number of influential Japanese politicians, including Prime Minister Takeshita Noboru, had been offered shares of Recruit Cosmos (a real estate development company) through insider trading. Moreover, in 1992 the media reported that LDP Vice President Kanemaru Shin had received bribes from Sagawa Kyūbin (a transportation company).

in the period of economic austerity, irreversibly harmed the civil servants' high authority among the general public. As a result, by channeling pro-reform moods against Kasumigaseki (metonym for Japanese bureaucracy) under the slogan of "political leadership" (*seiji shudō*), the politicians could hope for both limiting the power of an influential veto player and bolstering their own popularity, which became even more important under the new electoral system. In fact, the LDP's main competitor in the October 1996 general election, the New Frontier Party, announced a plan of reducing the number of ministries. The LDP answered with an even more ambitious promise to conduct a large-scale administrative reform, which contributed to its electoral victory (Iio 2008a: 163–172; Takenaka 2006: 52–53).

Prime Minister Hashimoto was not only determined to reorganize the central government, but he also possessed the necessary experience to achieve this aim. As a former chairperson of the LDP Administrative and Financial Policy Research Commission, he boasted a detailed knowledge of governmental structures. In November 1996, he established the Administrative Reform Council (Gyōsei Kaikaku Kaigi) that was composed of politicians, academics, businesspersons, journalists, and trade union representatives. What is rare is that the prime minister himself became the council's chair while also nominating a retired politician, not a bureaucrat, as the new body's secretary. Additionally, the prime minister recruited half of the secretariat's employees from the private sector, and only half from various ministries (Iio 2008a: 173–174). Moreover, none of the bureaucrats in the council secretariat was charged with planning a reorganization of his or her home ministry. The reform gained full support from Administrative Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary (CCS) Furukawa Teijirō who appealed to all administrative vice ministers to cooperate regardless of their sectional interests (Furukawa 2015: 94–95).

During the first meeting of the Administrative Reform Council, Prime Minister Hashimoto emphasized that the goal of the reform was to prepare Japan for the challenges of the twenty-first century. In order to achieve this aim, he proposed a reorganization of the ministries, elimination of the "malady of sectionalism," as well as enhancement of the Kantei's functions (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 1996). In the final report published in December 1997, the council proposed to vest more power in the prime minister and the bodies under his or her direct control, adopt majority voting rule during cabinet meetings, separate "the policy-drafting function from the policy-execution function," create "a new system of coordination based on new ideas that shall contribute towards greater vitality and transparency in the policy-making process of the whole government," transfer part of the administrative functions to local governments and the private sector, reduce the number of administrative staff, as well as unify the civil service personnel management system (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 1997). It is worth noting that while the reform was not aimed directly at changing foreign policy making mechanisms, one of its goals was to make Japan "carry out positively an independently-initiated role as a member of the international society with a view to forming and developing a free and fair international society" (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 1997).

Not all of the envisaged reforms were realized due to opposition from veto players. When the Hashimoto cabinet started losing popular support at the end of 1997, the bureaucrats and LDP “parliamentary tribes” redoubled their efforts to protect the interests of separate ministries. For example, veto players managed to force the prime minister to renounce the plan of dividing the functions of the Ministry of Construction and the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications among over ministries. Nevertheless, most of the proposals of the Administrative Reform Council were reflected in new laws prepared at the end of Hashimoto’s term in office (Fig. 2.1). In particular, after renaming from the Ministry of the Treasury (Ōkurashō, often translated even before the reform as the Ministry of Finance), the Ministry of Finance (MOF, Zaimushō) had to share its extensive powers with the Bank of Japan, Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy, as well as Financial

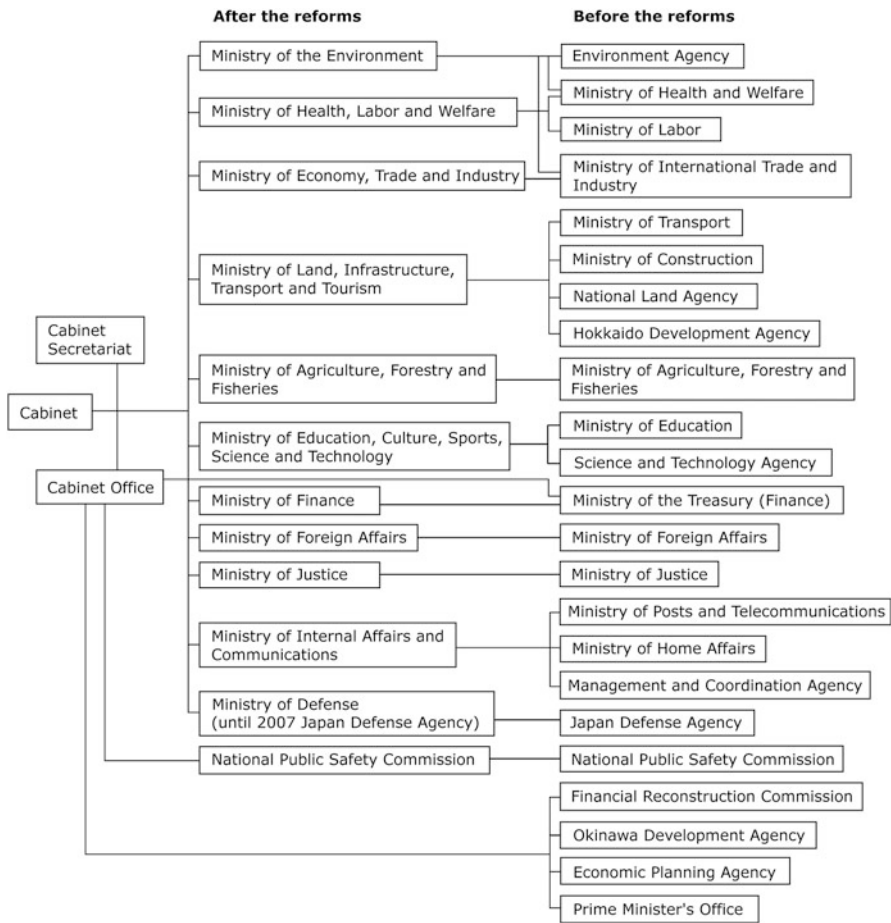


Fig. 2.1 Reform of Central Government Structure. Source: By the author based on many sources, mainly Neary (2002: 125)

Services Agency attached to the Cabinet Office (Naikakufu) (Takenaka 2006: 64–76; Pempel 2010: 243). The bills on central government reform were eventually passed in the Diet in July 1999 and entered into force in January 2001. They strengthened the prime minister's position vis-à-vis the bureaucrats and enhanced his or her control over separate ministries. This chapter describes to what extent the reforms affected the balance of power between the three main foreign policy making centers: the Kantei, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), and ruling parties.

2.2 The Kantei

“Kantei” is a term commonly used in Japan when referring to the prime minister and his or her closest entourage. It is an abbreviated form of the “Prime Minister's Residence” (Naikaku Sōri Daijin Kantei)—a building near the Diet in central Tokyo that houses the prime minister's personal office and the Cabinet Secretariat (Naikaku Kanbō). The current five-storied building with a heliport on the roof was completed in April 2002, which symbolically almost coincided with the entry into force of the administrative reform one year earlier. The new residence provided much more floor space than the old building for the heads of government and their staff to efficiently perform their duties (Eda and Ryūzaki 2002: 173–176).

In the postwar period, the prime minister enjoyed relatively broad formal powers that were, however, subject to numerous informal constraints. The head of government presided over the cabinet whose members he or she could freely appoint or dismiss. Moreover, prime ministers had the right to dissolve the House of Representatives, which gave them some leverage over the opposition parties and ruling party backbenchers. In addition, on behalf of the emperor they nominated various high-ranking state officials, such as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. They could also appoint the chairpersons of crucial advisory councils (Nearby 2002: 111). However, while superficially the Japanese political system resembled the Westminster model, in reality the head of government in Japan was limited in his or her endeavors by powerful veto players. Influential senior members of the ruling party only waited for an opportunity to challenge the prime minister's leadership, while ministerial bureaucrats inhibited any reforms that could endanger their sectional interests. As a result, bold policy initiatives by the head of government were not only difficult to implement, but also often accompanied by considerable political risk. Prime ministers had to constantly maintain a fragile balance, both between ideologically diversified factions in the ruling party and between ministries who represented divergent interest groups.

Furthermore, the Cabinet Law was based on the rule of dispersed management (*buntan kanri gensoku*), which meant that neither the prime minister nor the Cabinet Secretariat could initiate policies within the domains that fell under jurisdiction of separate ministers (Makihara 2009: 65). As pointed out by Van Wolferen (1986/1987: 289), because the head of government played a ritualistic role, there

was no central ruling body that could bind together the efforts of semiautonomous groups of bureaucrats and politicians. According to Hayao (1993: 184–210), the leadership of prime ministers tended to be reactive, as they generally did not set forth policy agendas or determine concrete solutions to problems. In other words, they were expected to supervise the enactment of issues that had been submitted to them by subgovernments, not to rule in a top-down fashion. George Mulgan (2003: 91) called Japan’s political system “un-Westminster,” because the cabinet failed to function as “an authoritative decision-making body for government policy.”

In foreign and security issues, which were not directly related to the distribution of public goods, prime ministers enjoyed relatively more freedom than in other policy arenas (Krauss and Pekkanen 2011: 217; Tatebayashi 2006: 76). By employing extreme determination they were even able to occasionally influence the direction of Japanese diplomacy though only by strategically conforming with, rather than overtly challenging, external pressures. Such heads of government as Yoshida Shigeru (signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951), Hatoyama Ichirō (normalization of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in 1956), Kishi Nobusuke (revision of the US–Japan security treaty in 1960), Satō Eisaku (convincing the United States to return Okinawa in 1972), or Tanaka Kakuei (normalization of diplomatic relations with Mainland China in 1972) managed to overcome strong domestic political resistance and realize the goals that “were often seen by bureaucrats as too ambitious, if not impossible” (Hosoya 2015: 32–34). In addition, Japanese prime ministers’ policy visions and strategies played some role in shaping multilateral diplomacy, for instance, during G7 summits (Envall 2015). Nevertheless, due to institutional constraints, the heads of government rarely were powerful enough to impose their will on MOFA and the ruling party on a regular basis. Moreover, out of the abovementioned examples, Hatoyama and Kishi had to *de facto* sacrifice their premierships to achieve their foreign policy goals (Fig. 2.1).

One of the reasons of this “leadership deficit” was a very weak institutional backing to the prime minister. The Prime Minister’s Office (Sōrifu) and the Cabinet Secretariat possessed limited staff. The head of government was assisted by nearly 200 staffers, but they could be hardly treated as loyal executors of his or her will. As the bureaucrats were only temporarily dispatched to the Cabinet Secretariat, they considered themselves as the representatives of their home ministries rather than as officials of the entire government. They even informed their ministries about the plans of the Kantei in order to block any initiatives that could infringe upon their privileges (Makihara 2009: 60).

The closest entourage of the prime minister was composed of the CCS, three deputy CCS, and prime minister’s secretaries. The CCS (*naikaku kanbō chōkan*) was usually nominated from among the most trusted associates of the head of government. His or her role was to act as a spokesperson of the government, supervise a general policy coordination between the ministries and between the government and the ruling party, as well as, occasionally, handle distinct policies entrusted to him or her by the prime minister. The CCS’s significance rose in the 1980s, when the Kantei had to cope with problems caused by increasing budgetary constraints and accelerating globalization processes. It is the CCS who played a key

role in interministerial coordination on such foreign policies as the liberalization of trade or relaxation of military technology export ban towards the United States (Hoshi 2014: 18–19). One of the sources of power of CCS was a special fund (1.46 billion yen in 2014) that could be used at their discretion. While the government took advantage of this money to secretly assuage protests against controversial bills by opposition parties, it is presumed that the fund was also used for conducting backstage diplomacy (until 2002 a large part of the fund was even provided by MOFA) (Hoshi 2014: 139–145). Despite a huge amount of responsibilities, the CCS could count on direct administrative support from only four staffers—three bureaucrats dispatched from MOFA, MOF, and National Police Agency, as well as one private secretary (Eda and Ryūzaki 2002: 86–90). Moreover, in contrast to the prime minister’s administrative secretaries who were recruited each time the head of government changed, CCS’s administrative staffers were sent to the Kantei for fixed 2-year-long terms (Hoshi 2014: 132). As a result, they rarely served under one CCS long enough to establish ties of loyalty with their superior.

Initially, there were two deputy CCS—one administrative (*jimu kanbō fukuchōkan*) and one politically nominated (*seimu kanbō fukuchōkan*). Their number was raised to three in 1998, when a second post of political deputy CCS was established. The responsibilities of the administrative and political deputy CCS were quite different. The former was considered as the highest ranking bureaucratic post and was usually nominated from among former administrative vice ministers of one of the institutions that originated from the prewar Ministry of Home Affairs, that is, the National Police Agency, Ministry of Construction, Interior Ministry, Ministry of Labor, or Ministry of Health and Welfare. His or her role was to act as a pivot linking the prime minister with the bureaucracy. Administrative deputy CCS presided over the administrative vice ministers’ council (*jimujikantō kaigi*)—an important organ that gathered each Monday and Thursday in order to authorize the decisions that were to be submitted for the cabinet’s approval on the following day. Political deputy CCS, in turn, were selected from among third- or fourth-term lawmakers—one from the House of Representatives, and one from the House of Councilors. Their role was to coordinate the Kantei’s policies with the ruling parties and Diet. Additionally, while during prime minister’s visits abroad the CCS stayed in Japan, the political deputy CCS accompanied the head of government and acted as his or her on-the-spot spokesperson (Eda and Ryūzaki 2002: 90–94). Apart from the three deputy CCS, a post of deputy CCS for crisis management (*naikaku kiki kanrikan*) was established in 1998.

Moreover, the prime minister was assisted by five secretaries (*naikaku sōri daijin hishokan*)—one political and four administrative. The former, often dubbed “senior” or “executive” secretary, was usually nominated from among trusted private secretaries who had worked with the head of government since the beginning of his or her parliamentary career. As emphasized by Eda Kenji, the political secretary to Hashimoto Ryūtarō, the political secretary’s responsibilities often exceeded such formal functions as preparing daily schedules for the prime minister. By the mere fact that they accompanied the head of government almost everywhere, political secretaries often became quite influential figures and advisors to the prime

minister. The offices of four administrative secretaries, in turn, were always assumed by the representatives of MOFA, MOF, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), and the National Police Agency. Thanks to them, the sending ministries gained access to information on the prime minister's plans on a daily basis though a skillful head of government could also use the secretaries to transmit instructions to the ministries. While detailed functions of administrative secretaries varied from one cabinet to another, the secretary from MOFA generally was in charge of arranging schedules for the prime minister's participation in international summits, conferences, and bilateral meetings (Eda and Ryūzaki 2002: 106–109).

In the 1980s, Gotōda Masaharu—the powerful CCS in the Nakasone cabinet—reorganized the structure of the Cabinet Secretariat by creating five offices that dealt with information and research, public relations, internal affairs, security affairs, and external affairs. Gotōda's aim was to enable a more active policy coordination by the Kantei. The Cabinet Office on External Affairs (Gaisei Shingishitsu) was staffed by the officials dispatched from MOFA. Despite that, MOFA was opposed to the establishment of this organ, as it perceived the new institution as a potential back channel for diplomacy (Shinoda 2007: 33–36). While the Nakasone–Gotōda duo were able to use the new institutional tools to push ahead some of their long-term policies, under the administrations of their successors the five cabinet offices completely came under control of the bureaucrats and fell to the same sectional struggles as all governmental institutions. Instead of cooperating with other office directors, the director of the Cabinet Office on External Affairs not only did not want to share with them information received from MOFA, but also often clashed with them over individual policies (Eda and Ryūzaki 2002: 98–99).

The central government reforms from 2001 considerably strengthened the prime minister's institutional backing and enabled him or her to exert stronger influence on policy making, including the sphere of foreign affairs. The Cabinet Office, staffed by a larger number of civil servants, was established instead of the Prime Minister's Office and several other agencies. What is important, the Cabinet Office gained a status superior to all ministries and was accorded the power to order them to provide the head of government with information (Nearby 2002: 127; Woodall 2014: 176). The number of personnel in the Cabinet Secretariat was increased as well—from 186 in 2000 to 648 in 2005 (Makihara 2009: 56). Moreover, the prime minister and CCS gained new powers. Article 4 of the revised Cabinet Law clarified that the head of government had the right to propose new policies during cabinet meetings, while Article 12 enabled the Cabinet Secretariat to take the lead in preparing and coordinating “important policies” (*jūyō seisaku*) (e-Gov 1947). This revolutionary change significantly weakened the rule of dispersed management. As a result, it became much easier for the head of government to conduct foreign policy even without full support from the foreign minister.

In addition, new offices were established both in the Cabinet Secretariat and the Cabinet Office. The prime minister was allowed to hire more than five secretaries through an executive order and to establish ad hoc offices in charge of specific policy areas (Shinoda 2007: 70–76). The post of the prime minister's special

advisor (*naikaku sōri daijin hosakan*) had been already created in 1996, but in 2001 their maximum number was raised from three to five. The role of these special advisors was to support the prime minister in policy making efforts, including security policy and foreign affairs. The initial version of administrative reform envisaged raising their number to as many as 10, which would cover most of the legislative fields, but these plans met with strong opposition from the bureaucrats (Eda and Ryūzaki 2002: 103–106). Despite the lack of clear specification of their responsibilities, the prime minister's special advisors could be potentially used in diplomacy, for example, as special envoys of the head of government, able to conduct secret negotiations with decision-makers of other countries.

Furthermore, the system of five cabinet offices created by Nakasone was overhauled. As office directors had not cooperated with each other, the offices of internal affairs, security affairs, and external affairs were abolished and replaced with a more flexible structure. Three posts of assistant CCS (*naikaku kanbō fukuchōkanhō*) were created, including the assistant CCS for external affairs. Placement of all assistant CCS in a single office staffed with approximately 100 bureaucrats to some extent weakened turf battles. On the other hand, sectional divisions were not eliminated completely because some of the staff of the former three offices still operated in separate sections on different floors of the Cabinet Office building (Shinoda 2007: 70–74).

Moreover, new posts of ministers of state for special missions (*tokumei tantō daijin*) were established in the Cabinet Office. Their role was to deal with the problems that were arbitrarily specified by each prime minister as requiring interministerial coordination. They included such domestic issues as economic and fiscal policy or gender equality, but also problems that were to some extent connected with international cooperation, for example, space policy, disaster management, or Okinawan and Northern Territories affairs. As the ministers of state for special missions functioned outside of rigid ministerial divisions, they were less prone to pressure from bureaucrats or interest groups, and thus potentially more loyal to the head of government.

Some of the institutional changes introduced by the reform were seemingly unrelated to foreign policy making, but they nonetheless indirectly enhanced the Kantei's position vis-à-vis MOFA. New advisory councils operating under direct jurisdiction of the prime minister and dealing with crucial legislative fields enabled the head of government to circumvent bureaucratic procedures and, under certain conditions, made top-down leadership possible. The most important was the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy (Keizai Zaisei Shimon Kaigi), which took over a large part of budget compilation tasks from the hands of MOF officials. It meant that the Kantei gained more control over the budgetary spending of all ministries, including MOFA.

While the reforms strengthened the position of the prime minister and his or her closest entourage, the politicians in the government were far from given a free hand in conducting diplomacy in a top-down manner. As was already mentioned, turf battles between the former five offices in the Cabinet Secretariat were somewhat weakened, but not eliminated. While the number of administrative staff in the

Cabinet Secretariat and Cabinet Office was considerably increased, they still recruited from separate ministries, to which they were bound to return after having served their duties. Only a minor part of Kantei officials originated from the private sector. As a result, a majority of civil servants who assisted the prime minister still placed their loyalty in their home ministries. In addition, bureaucrats from the powerful Cabinet Legislation Bureau that screened all bill proposals enjoyed a considerable autonomy in interpreting the constitution (Iio 2008b: 61–62). Furthermore, occasionally even political appointees in the Kantei acted as a centrifugal force. After all, they not always shared the prime minister's foreign policy vision in its entirety. As a result, the policy cohesion of the Kantei still depended on whether the prime ministers were successful in taking advantage of their new powers to overcome potential frictions among the bureaucrats and politicians in their closest entourage.

2.3 The Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Keeping in mind the stability of Japanese foreign policy, MOFA officials were reluctant to share their power with other governmental bodies and politicians. Just as all ministries, MOFA was characterized by a strong sectionalism and jealously protected its privileges against any external interference. Recruitment for the civil service was conducted once per year among fresh graduates from the University of Tokyo and other top universities. After passing exams, successful candidates were directed to individual ministries, in which they usually stayed until retirement. While there was an elite and a non-elite track, a typical career of a MOFA bureaucrat unfolded according to fixed stages. As a result, the civil servants remained loyal to their home ministries rather than to the government as a whole. In addition, in comparison to other ministries, MOFA officials were characterized by a high self-esteem, stemming from their proficiency in foreign languages and access to prestigious diplomatic posts abroad.

A particular feature of MOFA were informal divisions among bureaucrats into schools representing different countries that were crucial for Japanese diplomacy. In order to conduct negotiations with states of divergent cultural, political, or economic systems, MOFA was much more diversified in terms of the political convictions of its officials than other ministries (Kawabe 2002: 42–43). Traditionally, the most influential was the American school. Many young officials from MOFA were sent to the United States to learn the language, culture, and political system of that country. Gradually, pro-American bureaucrats became the backbone of the Japan–US alliance. Another powerful group, the China school, gathered civil servants who spoke Mandarin and specialized in problems relating to China. During the Cold War, there had also been an influential Soviet/Russian school, whose power, however, waned after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The schools in MOFA were often criticized for growing overly attached to the countries they specialized in. It was caused by the fact that the ultimate goal of the members of

each school was to become an ambassador in Washington, Beijing, or Moscow, respectively. As a result, in order to be considered as suitable candidates for these prestigious posts in the future, they did not want to cause frictions in relations with their chosen country.

In most ministries, the decision-making process was based on a bottom-up mechanism known as *ringi*. A preliminary draft of each new law was usually created by low- or mid-level bureaucrats and subsequently approved by higher ranking civil servants before it reached bureau chiefs and administrative vice ministers. Concurrently, the circulars were sent to the related divisions in other ministries, which ensured horizontal coordination. The fact that the decision-making process was usually initiated on a relatively low level resulted in the aversion to any radical changes in status quo. After all, low-ranking bureaucrats felt they were unauthorized to make any alterations in the prior policy of their ministry. Moreover, the fact that all proposals passed so many stages caused their watering down to please all of the involved parties (Nishimura 2002: 254). As all the decisions were approved in a collective manner, the responsibility for undertaken policies was largely blurred (Iio 2008b: 52–54).

The decision-making system in MOFA put even more emphasis on vertical communication than the traditional *ringi*, as many decisions were made by the minister and administrative vice minister in cooperation with a related bureau or division. In fact, important decisions were often initiated in a bottom-up manner on a bureau level—starting from special advisors to the division director (*kachō hosakan*), through division directors (*kachō*), up to bureau directors-general (*kyokuchō*) and only reported to deputy ministers (*gaimu shingikan*), administrative vice ministers (*jinujikan*), and ministers. In case of particularly contentious political matters, the ministry's stance could also be hammered out at a meeting of all bureau directors-general and higher ranking officials. Just as in other ministries, great importance was attached to following the ministry's prior policy. For example, daily press releases on current diplomatic issues or answers to Diet interpellations were prepared by low-ranking MOFA officials and subsequently checked by their superiors up to the post of division directors. As the drafts were exclusively based on former MOFA statements, since the beginning of their careers the bureaucrats learnt to apply rigid precedents to new international problems. While this practice helped to maintain the coherence of Japanese diplomacy, it also inhibited any policy changes and was often countereffective in the dynamically evolving global environment (Yakushiji 2003: 125–146).

What enabled MOFA bureaucrats to exert significant control over their political superiors was the fact that ministers in Japan rarely had any ambition to make decisions in a top-down fashion. The politicians usually just focused on their political interests, such as the situation in their constituencies, leaving daily matters to their administrative staff. A tradition of frequent, often annual, government reshuffles further undermined the position of ministers who did not have time to formulate long-term policies before stepping down from office (Kohno 1997: 110). Only a few foreign ministers, such as Ōhira Masayoshi in 1962–1964 and 1972–1974, Abe Shintarō in 1982–1986, Kōno Yōhei in 1994–1996 and

1999–2001, or Kishida Fumio since 2012, served long enough to really gain experience in the affairs of MOFA. The ministers did not have much assistance from political vice ministers (*seimu jikan*) either. Not only were they not numerous (one until 1998 and two afterwards), but also much less experienced than the minister (in the LDP it was a custom to gain a ministerial post during one's sixth term in the Diet, while the office of political vice minister was usually assumed during the third term).

The Administrative Reform Council under the Hashimoto cabinet only superficially discussed the reorganization of MOFA. Such problems were mentioned during deliberations as enhancing MOFA's capacity to plan comprehensive diplomatic strategies, to gather, analyze, and report intelligence data, or to participate in drafting global rules. In addition, council members suggested to strengthen MOFA's cooperation with other ministries on Official Development Assistance (ODA) or security issues, as well as to envisage integration of MOFA entry exams with the overall bureaucratic examination system (Gyōsei Kaikaku Kaigi Jimukyoku OB Kai 1998: 625–626). Eventually, the administrative reform reduced the number of ministries and agencies from 22 to 12, but the internal structure of MOFA was only scarcely affected. For example, the names of a couple of offices were modified, and the Oceania Division was moved from the European Affairs Bureau to the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau (Chūō Shōchō Kaikaku Kenkyūkai 2001: 254–255). This institutional stability of MOFA was caused by the fact that the discourse on central government reforms focused on the more urgent domestic issues and almost omitted foreign affairs (Kawabe 2002: 13–17). Just as before the reforms, five regional bureaus dealt with the affairs of: Asia and Oceania, North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, as well as the Middle East and Africa. Besides, as of December 2016, there were the Foreign Policy Bureau (Sōgō Gaikō Seisaku Kyoku), Economic Affairs Bureau, International Cooperation Bureau, International Legal Affairs Bureau (formerly the Treaties Bureau), Consular Affairs Bureau, as well as Intelligence and Analysis Service (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2016) (Fig. 2.2).

As a result, the reform did not eliminate sectionalism in MOFA. Various bureaus (*kyoku*) and divisions (*ka*) still competed with each other over distinct policy initiatives, and some of them continued hosting separate schools. One of the reasons of strong intra-ministerial sectionalism was the fact that since the abolition of the Policy Affairs Bureau (Seimu Kyoku) in 1951 there was no bureau that could bind together the efforts of the whole ministry. In the Cold War period, the Treaties Bureau (Jōyaku Kyoku) and North American Affairs Bureau (Hokubei Kyoku) exerted the strongest influence on MOFA's policy. The former owed its position to the fact that it was responsible for the normalization of diplomatic relations with many countries after the World War II and for the interpretation of international treaties. The latter, obviously, was due to the gravity of Japan's alliance with the United States. After the end of Cold War, the lack of coherence in the activities of different bureaus and divisions became more pronounced, which led to the creation of the Foreign Policy Bureau in 1993. Nevertheless, this reform did little to overcome sectionalism in MOFA. Instead of drafting long- and mid-term strategies

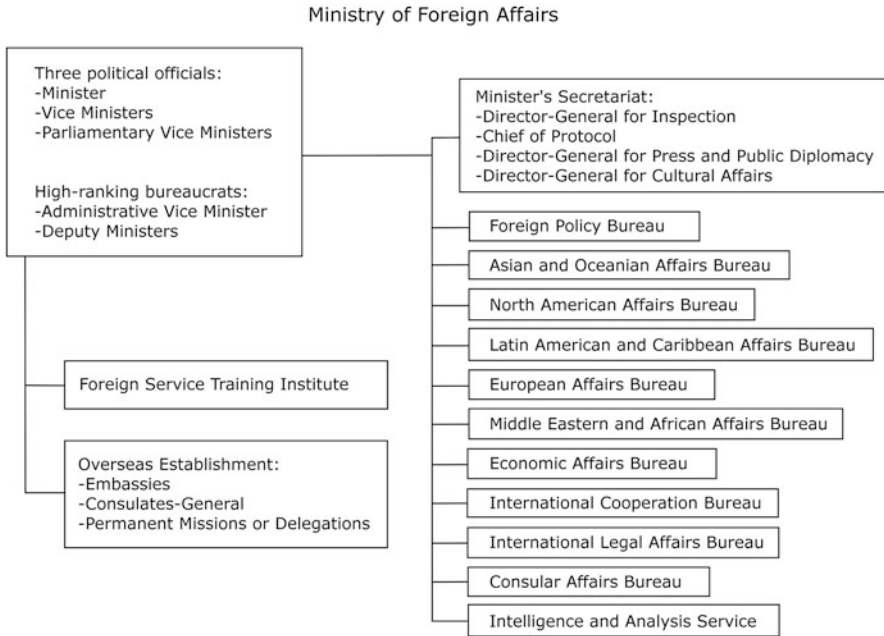


Fig. 2.2 Structure of MOFA. Source: By the author based on many sources, mainly Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2016)

from a broad point of view, the new bureau was overwhelmed with routine administrative work and emergency response activities (Yakushiji 2003: 74–86).

Just as in all ministries, as a result of the central government reforms the post of political vice minister was abolished in MOFA and new politically nominated offices were created instead—two posts of vice ministers (*fukudaijin*) and three posts of parliamentary vice ministers (*daijin seimukan*). While parliamentary vice ministers were recruited from among junior politicians, just as political vice ministers before the reform, the posts of vice ministers were usually assumed by more experienced lawmakers, which helped to limit the workload of the ministers (Nishimura 2002: 164–165). Ministers, vice ministers, and parliamentary vice ministers were to work hand in hand as more coherent teams of “three political officials” (*seimu san'yaku*). As the government commissioner system that allowed the bureaucrats to answer interpellations in the Diet instead of the cabinet members was abolished in 1999, the “three political officials,” theoretically, were expected to possess sufficient knowledge of foreign affairs not to make gaffes during parliamentary proceedings. In reality, however, they often relied on drafts prepared by the bureaucrats (Yakushiji 2003: 174–178). On the other hand, some foreign vice ministers, such as former Japan Defense Agency Director-General Etō Seishirō in 2001, former House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee Chairperson Aisawa Ichirō in 2003–2005, or former Minister of the Environment Suzuki

Shun'ichi in 2012–2013, were high-profile politicians who boasted considerable experience in policy making or foreign affairs.

What facilitated politicians to gain leverage over MOFA officials was the fact that soon after the implementation of central government reforms a series of scandals with civil servants from that ministry were disclosed by the media. At the beginning of 2001, *Yomiuri Shinbun* reported that one MOFA bureaucrat used public funds amounting to 500 million yen for purchasing a mansion, gaining a membership in a golf club, or horse racing bets. Similar embezzlements turned out to be a common practice among MOFA officials. Despite this severe blow to the image of that prestigious ministry, politicians' interference in MOFA personnel affairs was still treated as a taboo. The efforts of Foreign Minister Tanaka Makiko, who announced a crusade against corruption practices in her ministry, were sabotaged by MOFA bureaucrats. The civil servants leaked to the media information on confidential conversations between Tanaka and foreign politicians, which compromised her lack of experience in foreign policy making. This strategy proved to be effective and Tanaka had to step down from office in January 2002 (Yakushiji 2003: 87–103). It showed that a foreign minister's efforts could still be easily rendered useless if he or she did not cooperate with the administrative staff.

2.4 Ruling Party Backbenchers Representing Other Ministries and Interest Groups

While the Kantei and MOFA were the formal institutions entitled to conduct the foreign policy of Japan, the remaining actors were only unofficially or indirectly involved in foreign policy making. Despite this fact, the parliamentary tribes representing the interests of various ministries and pressure groups occasionally constituted a powerful force that constrained the activities of the government on the international scene. They owned their position to a set of unwritten rules of decision-making in the LDP that ruled Japan almost unceasingly since 1955.

Parliamentary tribes (*zoku giin*) signified informal groups of politicians who had gained much experience in a single legislative field and who represented the interests of the corresponding ministry and industry sector under its jurisdiction (Yuasa 1986: 10–16). The main source of power of *zoku* was the tradition of advance screening (*jizen shinsa*) all bill projects by the ruling party decision-making bodies. The decision-making process followed two tracks—it was concurrently conducted in the government and in the LDP. Any new law could be authorized as a cabinet decision and submitted to the Diet only if it had first gained the approval by the LDP Policy Affairs Research Council (PARC, Seimu Chōsakai) and General Council (Sōmukai). Each PARC policy division (*bukai*) was responsible for a different legislative field and hosted its own parliamentary tribe. Based on an unwritten rule, all decisions in policy divisions and in the General Council were made unanimously. Initially, one LDP parliamentarian was allowed to belong

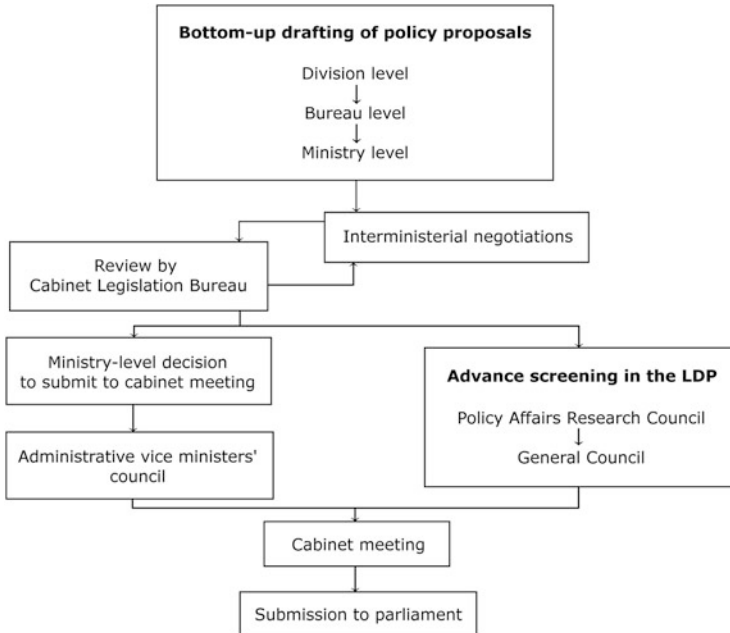


Fig. 2.3 Two-track Decision-Making Process in the Government and LDP. Source: By the author based on many sources, mainly Neary (2002: 133)

to a maximum of three PARC divisions. In 1998, however, LDP lawmakers were permitted to attend the meetings of any division they pleased. This change was caused by the introduction of single-seat constituencies, in which the candidates were expected to possess a broad knowledge in all legislative fields. As a result, it became less clear what was the exact composition of a particular *zoku*, but the tribes themselves survived (Nishimura 2002: 178–183; Krauss and Pekkanen 2011: 154–202) (Fig. 2.3).

Besides policy divisions, the LDP PARC was composed of research commissions (*chōsakai*) that formulated general policies, special committees (*tokubetsu iinkai*) that dealt with separate problems, as well as subcommittees (*shōiinkai*) and project teams (*purojekuto chīmu*) for discussions on detailed issues (Satō and Matsuzaki 1985: 85). For that reason, apart from the Foreign Affairs Division (Gaikō Bukai), there occasionally also existed other bodies that dealt with foreign policy making, such as the Research Commission on International Cooperation (Kokusai Kyōryoku Chōsakai). Also the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), which ruled from 2009 to 2012, possessed similar decision-making organs for foreign policy in the Policy Research Committee (Seisaku Chōsakai)—its version of the LDP PARC.²

²Excluding the period from September 2009 to June 2010, when the Policy Research Committee was abolished.

Among 17 parliamentary tribes in the LDP the most popular were those of construction (*kensetsu zoku*), agriculture and forestry (*nōrin zoku*), and commerce and industry (*shōkō zoku*), commonly dubbed as “three venerable houses” (*gosanke*). The number of their members usually amounted to almost half of all lawmakers of the ruling party. It is not surprising, taking into account the fact that membership in these groups enabled politicians to most effectively provide assistance to their electorate—by developing infrastructure in distinct constituencies, providing subventions for farmers, or protecting the interests of the largest employers (Inoguchi and Iwai 1987: 132–133). While these three *zoku* were generally involved in domestic policies, their activity occasionally constrained or facilitated Japan’s diplomatic endeavors. For example, the agricultural tribe was adamantly opposed to the reduction of tariffs on trade in rice, while the commerce and industry *zoku* supported liberalization of trade.

Unlike the “three venerable houses,” the *zoku* of defense or education were not overly popular, as they did not have much to do with pork-barrel politics. For that reason, they were dominated by ideologically motivated lawmakers (Yuasa 1986: 147–166; Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha 1983: 88). The meetings of the defense tribe (*kokubō zoku*) were usually attended both by right-wing politicians who worked hand in hand with the bureaucrats of the Ministry of Defense (MOD, until 2007 the Japan Defense Agency) in order to promote the remilitarization of Japan, and by pacifists who felt their mission was to halt such nationalistic initiatives. Analogically, the education tribe (*bunkyō zoku*) comprised both a right wing, which insisted on whitewashing the memory about the atrocities committed by Japan until 1945, and a left wing that opposed any distortions of history. Just as in case of human lungs, however, the left side in the two *zoku* was usually smaller than the right side. Taking into account the fact that both the problem of the remilitarization of Japan and the history issues were extremely contentious on the international scene, the balance of power between the nationalists and the moderates in these tribes indirectly affected foreign policy making.

As dealing with diplomacy could hardly help politicians in gaining votes in their constituencies, a coherent parliamentary tribe of foreign affairs has never existed (author’s interview with Chairperson of Foreign Affairs Committee, LDP Member of House of Representatives Kōno Tarō, March 10, 2009). It does not mean, however, that there were no politicians who specialized in international affairs and who even as backbenchers were able to exert a strong influence on the Kantei and MOFA. One of the most exemplary figures in this field was Suzuki Muneo. Thanks to the fact that in the 1990s he served as foreign political vice minister, Hokkaido and Okinawa Development Agency director, and deputy CCS, he gained much experience in foreign policy making. Suzuki specialized in contacts with Moscow, which enabled him to promote the interests of his constituency in Hokkaido—an island that borders Russia. Suzuki’s influence on MOFA was so immense that even when he became a backbencher, in addition to ODA spending or policy towards Russia, MOFA bureaucrats consulted him on all important personnel decisions in their ministry (Yakushiji 2003: 104–108). Eventually, Suzuki was

arrested in 2002 in connection with a corruption scandal over the construction of the Japanese–Russian Friendship House on Kunashiri Island.

Not only politicians, but also bureaucrats were prone to the demands from interest groups. Civil servants interacted with their clients through a dense network of advisory councils (*shingikai*) attached to separate ministries. Personal connections between the bureaucracy and big businesses were sustained by the practice of the so-called descent from heaven (*amakudari*). Whenever civil servants retired, usually at a young age, their ministries helped them to find well-paid jobs in public corporations or even in private firms (Neary 2002: 114–117). By employing former bureaucrats, the companies reciprocated the protection of the interests of their industry sector by the ministry. At the same time, they could count on experience and personal connections of the retired civil servants whose colleagues still served as high-ranking officials. The shady nexus between the politicians, bureaucrats, and big businesses was often described as an “iron triangle” (Kerbo and McKinstry 1995: 1–16).

As was already mentioned, it was the political reforms of the 1990s rather than the administrative reform that enabled the ruling party president to more effectively control backbenchers. After all, the elimination of competing candidates from one party in the same constituency as well as the introduction of state subsidies for political parties contributed to the centralization of the process of drafting electoral lists and distributing electoral funds. While the central government reforms did not change the two-track nature of decision-making and did not eliminate the “iron triangle,” they nonetheless indirectly further improved the prime minister’s position vis-à-vis the ruling party. Provided with new institutional tools, the head of government was able to more efficiently put pressure on members of separate tribes, bypass some of the stages of the intraparty decision-making process, or even, under certain conditions, ignore chosen unwritten rules of policy making. For example, the already mentioned Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy enabled prime ministers to take the initiative in budget compilation from the hands of LDP *zoku* and MOF.

On the other hand, the reorganization of the central government’s structure only to a little extent weakened the relationship between the parliamentary tribes, pressure groups, and separate ministries. The number of secretariats in different ministries was reduced from 128 to 96, offices from 1200 to 1000, and advisory councils from approximately 160 to merely 29. These changes, however, had minimal impact on the decision-making process within various bureaus that were mostly shifted round, intact, into larger ministries (Neary 2002: 116–124). Among the “three venerable houses,” the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) was left almost intact, MITI was simply renamed the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), and the Ministry of Construction was merged with the Ministry of Transport, National Land Agency, as well as the Hokkaido Development Agency into the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT). These institutional changes hardly influenced the sectional interests of separate ministries and their respective *zoku*. For example, MAFF still worked hand in hand with the LDP agricultural tribe to oppose free trade

agreements, while METI cooperated with the commerce and industry tribe to promote the further liberalization of trade. Among the most significant changes was the elevation of the Environment Agency to the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) as well as, six years later, reorganization of the Japan Defense Agency into MOD. Gaining ministerial status to some degree strengthened the authority of the MOE/environmental *zoku* and MOD/defense *zoku* in their endeavors for combating global warming and promoting remilitarization, respectively.

Apart from reorganizing several standing committees to fit the new ministerial structure, abolishing the government commissioner system, or introducing Question Time, the administrative reform left intact the way the Japanese Diet functioned.³ As a result, ruling party backbenchers and even opposition party lawmakers were still equipped with powerful instruments of pressure on the government. In Japan, it is the steering committees and speakers of both houses, not the cabinet, who exercise control over the timetables and agendas of the plenary sessions. Moreover, standing committees enjoy independence in setting the schedule for deliberation on separate bills. As a result, backbenchers can potentially delay or even freeze proceedings on controversial laws (Takenaka 2015: 52–53). Due to the strong position and autonomy of the Diet, the prime minister and government members are often required to personally answer interpellations in parliamentary committees in both houses. They are especially held captives of the Diet whenever the ruling parties lose the majority of seats in the Upper House. Under these circumstances, the prime minister's participation in the proceedings is often considered by the opposition as a condition of cooperation in the legislative process. As a result, the amount of time the heads of government and foreign ministers can spend on general coordination of foreign policy, not to mention visits abroad, is severely limited (Eda and Ryūzaki 2002: 65–67).

2.5 Conclusion

It is impossible to clearly separate the influence of the central government reforms on the decision-making process from the impact of earlier political reforms on the strengthening of the ruling party president's position vis-à-vis backbenchers. To some extent, the former was a natural continuation of the latter. Nevertheless, central government reforms helped to change the balance of power between the Kantei, MOFA, and ruling parties. The powers of the prime minister, CCS, Cabinet Secretariat, and newly established Cabinet Office were significantly strengthened. By contrast, apart from introducing the system of "three political officials," MOFA's internal structure remained almost unaffected by the reform. Moreover,

³During Question Time, since 2000 held weekly when the Diet is in session, opposition party leaders have the opportunity to directly confront prime ministers on their policies. See: Kabashima and Steel (2010: 107) and Neary (2002: 127).

no significant institutional changes were implemented in the Diet and LDP decision-making bodies. As a result, the Kantei's position vis-à-vis veto players improved considerably.

However, some constraints on the Kantei's leadership remained untouched or were only indirectly influenced by the central government reforms. Among the obstacles to top-down decision-making in the post-reform period the most significant were such factors as the relative easiness of taking control over the House of Councilors by the opposition parties, shortness of parliamentary sessions, lack of the government's full control over the legislative process, fluidity in public support for the cabinet, high frequency of ruling party presidential elections, or political culture that petrified the strength of bureaucrats and LDP backbenchers. As indicated by Shinoda (2013: 229), to successfully utilize the new instruments of power, the prime minister still had "to balance between centralized institutions and bureaucratic support." The same applied to foreign policy making. The following chapters will demonstrate that it is the policy cohesion of the Kantei and usage of internal divisions among veto players that facilitated prime ministers to take full advantage of the new institutional instruments at their disposal.

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Chapter 3

War on Terrorism Under the Koizumi Cabinet

3.1 Introduction

Prime Minister Koizumi succeeded in adopting several policies related to anti-terrorism and defense policies, which a decade earlier could have been easily stigmatized as taboo, politically too dangerous to tackle, and blocked by the opposition as unconstitutional, infringing upon Article 9. All of the new policies were related to the Japan–US security alliance, which is not coincidental, taking into account that one of the main policy slogans for Koizumi was strengthening the alliance. Koizumi undoubtedly achieved this goal, as commented by Michael J. Green, security specialist advising the US government on Japan for several years: “By any account, Koizumi steps down in September 2006 having built the strongest personal ties ever seen between Japanese and U.S. leaders, as well as the tightest security cooperation of the Washington–Tokyo alliance’s five-decade history” (Green 2006: 101).

As almost univocally accepted by many researchers, commentators, politicians, and general public, during his long term in office (2001–2006) Prime Minister Koizumi managed to exercise strong leadership and effectively push with his policy priorities (Kiyomizu 2005: 314–404; Iijima 2006: 5–8; Gaunder 2007: 120; Shinoda 2007: 6).¹ After all, Koizumi has been well known for decisiveness and

¹Gannon and Sahashi (Gannon and Sahashi, 2015: 21) point out, based on a statement by Furukawa Motohisa, a DPJ minister for the national strategy, that Koizumi was not perceived as a strong leader for the first 2 years, and it was only after it had become apparent for the bureaucracy that he would stay in power longer that they became supportive in implementing his policies, thus pointing to the importance of the bureaucracy in the policy making. However, the analysis of reasons behind support for Koizumi cabinet conducted by Hiram (2004) shows that it was exactly the perception of Koizumi as a strong leader by general public that made him popular.

the “Kantei” politics.² Others argued, however (Uchiyama 2007: 131–132), that although in the case of domestic policies (postal privatization, privatization of Japan Highway Public Corporation, fiscal and medical system reforms, etc.) his vision and strategy plans were clearly articulated, in the case of foreign policy, with the general slogan of “enhancing the alliance,” the decisions were in fact “reactive,” formulated in response to external contingencies, such as the 9/11 attacks, Iraq War, or North Korea missile tests. The initiation of policies was in fact, as the case studies below will show, a reaction to external contingencies, but the international pressure was not directly translated into policy output.

This chapter analyzes the decision-making process on the anti-terrorism and related defense policies adopted under Prime Minister Koizumi, arguing that although the external situation (treated as an independent variable in this monograph) played a decisive role in the policy initiative, its final form was the result of several intervening factors. Among those factors, the prime minister’s leadership and usage of administrative tools, as well as the lack of cohesion of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and other veto players, constituted essential parts. Furthermore, in order to put Koizumi’s undertaking into perspective, the chapter compares it with the policy process of the Peace Keeping Operation (PKO) Cooperation Law, which was initiated by Prime Minister Kaifu Toshiki and adopted by Miyazawa Kiichi’s cabinet in June 1992.

3.2 Decision-Making on the PKO Cooperation Law Before the Central Government Reforms

The adoption of the PKO Cooperation Law marked a radical change in Japanese defense policy since the end of the Asia-Pacific War (Ito 2007: 75). As a result, the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) were dispatched abroad although the purpose of it was limited to PKO under the jurisdiction of the United Nations (UN). Interestingly, in Japanese public discourse, the response to the Gulf crisis and adoption of the PKO Law has been associated with a policy failure (“too little, too late”), and a traumatic experience for the entire nation. The policy process of the PKO bill was fairly long and complicated, particularly in comparison to policy making under Prime Minister Koizumi. The process can be divided into two stages, each characterized by different decision-making patterns and actors.

The first stage of the process lasted between the outbreak of the Gulf War, instigated by invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in August 1990, and the PKO Cooperation Bill’s withdrawal in November of that year. The process was led by MOFA, as was the routine pattern for foreign and defense policies in the decades following the Asia-Pacific War. The Japan Defense Agency (JDA) at that time was considered a

²Shinoda (2007: 11–12) defines Kantei politics as “a phenomenon in which the Cabinet Secretariat offers institutional support as a core executive for political decisions and policy-making coordination that MOFA cannot provide.”

“management agency” of the SDF rather than a “policy agency” (Blais 2010: loc. 369), while MOFA functioned in fact as the “real” ministry of national defense (Fukuyama 2013: loc. 498–511).³ At that stage of the war, all major actors in Japan, including Prime Minister Kaifu and the MOFA top bureaucrats, such as Administrative Vice Minister Kuriyama Takakazu, the ministry’s most senior official, were against the dispatch of SDF personnel or minesweepers due to constitutional restrictions (Mikuriya and Watanabe 1997: 74; Orita 2013: 129). MOFA as well as the Cabinet Legislation Bureau were generally averse to any radical deviations from the established course of policy although some young bureaucrats from MOFA argued for the SDF dispatch at the early stage of discussions (Orita 2013: 129). The bill proposal prepared by MOFA was so problematic that after the incoherent statements of cabinet members in response to questioning by the opposition parties, which created a united front in the Diet, the bill was withdrawn in November 1990. The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Kōmeitō, and Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) agreed at that time to prepare a new legislation for international contribution, which would enable the creation of a new organizational structure instead of the SDF (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 1990, November 10). Instead, Japan offered a generous financial contribution of 13 billion USD in total, more than any other ally. One has to remember that Prime Minister Kaifu had a weak power base within the ruling LDP. Coming from a small Kōmoto faction, he became prime minister with the support of the powerful Takeshita faction only after the Recruit scandal erupted, in order to improve the image of the corruption-torn LDP. The party was in fact managed by powerful veto players, including Secretary-General Ozawa Ichirō (August 1989–April 1991), Takeshita faction leader Kanemaru Shin, and Finance Minister Hashimoto Ryūtarō (August 1989–October 1991). In case of the PKO bill, Ozawa in particular played an important role (Mikuriya and Watanabe 1997: 62).

The second stage of the bill formulation lasted between the beginning of 1991 and June 1992. By that time the external situation changed substantially. Kuwait was freed due to a prompt military action carried out by the allied forces between January 17 and February 28, 1991. What is more important, Japan was not included in the thank you list, published by Kuwait’s government in March that year in the American major dailies. In spite of Japan’s general contribution, Tokyo was criticized for “checkbox diplomacy,” which reverberated strongly among political elites in Japan. Prime Minister Kaifu committed to a decision to dispatch the minesweepers to the Gulf in April that year although it was done under pressure from powerful LDP veto players: Watanabe Michio and other defense tribe members (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 1991a, March 14). Its successful mission enhanced the public support for Japan’s more active participation in international efforts.

The policy making process of the second bill proposal on the PKO had an entirely different character from the first one. Under the advice from Finance Minister Hashimoto Ryūtarō, a powerful LDP member, Prime Minister Kaifu decided to place the policy process under Kantei control (Mikuriya and Watanabe

³Loc. (abbreviation of “location”) refers to a location in the Kindle electronic edition.

1997: 77; Arima 2015: 525). Hashimoto was in fact to become prime minister who would formulate and adopt administrative reforms implemented from 2001. Hashimoto did not benefit from the reforms himself, but already at the beginning of the 1990s, he was fully aware of the necessity to enhance the position of the prime minister in policy formulation. Following Hashimoto's advice, Prime Minister Kaifu placed the process under the control of the Cabinet Office on External Affairs, with Director Arima Tatsuo, a bureaucrat on loan from MOFA, in charge. The Cabinet Office on External Affairs coordinated the efforts of various ministries and agencies, including MOFA, JDA, the Ministry of Transport (the Japan Coast Guard), Ministry of Finance (MOF), Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), and other. Interestingly, the idea of placing the decision outside MOFA control was initially opposed by various officials, including Administrative Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary (CCS) Ishihara Nobuo or even North American Affairs Bureau Director-General Arima Tatsuo (to become Cabinet Office on External Affairs Director) due to an unwritten rule of dispersed management between various governmental bodies. Ishihara consented to the idea after obtaining approval from Foreign Minister Nakayama Tarō (Mikuriya and Watanabe 1997: 77–78; Arima 2015: 525–527). The process was placed under Kantei control, but it required the consent of the major veto players. The situation was to become much easier for prime ministers in this regard after the introduction of administrative reforms in 2001.

The bill proposal, which became the base of PKO legislation, included the so-called five PKO principles, and was prepared in fact by Foreign Administrative Vice Minister Kuriyama (GRIPS 2005: 114; *Yomiuri Shinbun* 1991b, August 1). The SDF participation in peacekeeping forces was agreed under the following conditions, which constitute the core of the PKO law until present: (1) a cease-fire must be in place; (2) the parties in the conflict must have consented to the operation; (3) the activities must be conducted in a strictly impartial manner; (4) participation may be suspended or terminated if any of the above conditions ceases to be satisfied; and (5) the use of weapons shall be limited to the minimum necessary to protect the lives or bodies of personnel (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 1997).

Under such arrangements, the proposal was adopted by the LDP internal organs and party top officials, and furthermore approved by Kōmeitō and the DSP (under the condition of Diet approval of the dispatch). On September 19, 1991, the cabinet adopted the bill and sent it to the Diet. In result of Kaifu's resignation on September 30, after one of the bills on political reform was killed by withdrawal of support by the Takeshita faction on which Kaifu strongly depended, the PKO bill was shelved for a few months. The new cabinet of Miyazawa Kiichi, established on November 5, supported the bill and pushed for the speedy passage through both houses. Miyazawa made the adoption of the bill one of his electoral vows (*Asahi Shinbun* 1991b, November 28). However, on December 3, after passing the Lower House, the bill was stalled in the Upper House. After rough questioning, Miyazawa gave up on passing the bill in the 1991 Diet session. The new deliberations began in April 1992 in the Upper House. The revised PKO bill was fiercely opposed by the Communist Party and Japan Socialist Party (JSP), which employed the filibusters

in the Upper House to block the legislation, such as nonconfidence resolutions against the Diet committee chairperson and cabinet members, or the “cow-walk” strategy.⁴ After a 3-day long voting process in the Upper House, the bill was passed on June 9 and again approved by the Lower House on June 15, 1992.

Public support for the PKO legislation and related governmental decisions showed great fluctuations. Initially, in November 1990, the majority of Japanese (54%) were against SDF dispatch, and 58% disapproved of the PKO bill (*Asahi Shinbun* 1990, November 11, 1991a, June 19). At the early stage, Administrative Vice Minister Kuriyama cited lack of public support, along with the consideration for feelings of the neighboring countries, as one of the reasons for avoiding SDF dispatch (GRIPS 2005: 62). In April 1991, after freeing Kuwait and international criticism of Japan’s checkbook diplomacy, the approval of SDF participation in the UN PKO reached 50% (with 40% against), while 65% positively evaluated the minesweeping action by Japanese vessels (*Asahi Shinbun* 1991a, June 19). In May 1992, 47% expressed support for and 41% opposition to the PKO bill. Although many people remained cautious about the constitutionality of the SDF dispatch, nevertheless the general trend of public support showed a shift from a strong opposition to agreement under certain conditions, which ultimately legitimized the governmental action (*Asahi Shinbun* 1992, May 1).

In the end, the Kaifu–Miyazawa cabinets succeeded in adopting a very controversial policy of the PKO Cooperation Law, and the decision-making process in the second stage could be labeled as a Kantei-led pattern. The decision was, however, the result of an interplay of influences of powerful veto players from the LDP (Ozawa, Hashimoto, Watanabe, etc.) and MOFA officials, and not a standard procedure easily employed by prime ministers. Moreover, due to the rule of dispersed management, the closest associates of prime minister, who should generally support his or her undertakings, as well as MOFA officials, objected to the idea of removing the policy process out of the direct control of MOFA and placing it under the Kantei.

3.3 Main Actors in the Koizumi Cabinet

Koizumi assumed office on April 24, 2001, a few months after the introduction of the administrative reforms, of which he took full advantage. He carefully chose his closest assistants: five private secretaries headed over his entire premiership by Iijima Isao, who began his career together with Koizumi in 1972, a total of thirteen cabinet councilors (*naikaku sanjikan*) during the entire period, and a few special

⁴A cow-walk strategy refers to a parliamentary procedure (comparable to the filibuster), used by opposition parties in order to obstruct voting on a controversial bill. In Japan’s parliamentary history, it has been used on several occasions, in regard, for instance, to a bill on temporary measures for university management in 1969, to a bill on the consumption tax in 1988, or more recently, to a bill on the TPP agreement in 2016.

advisors (*sōridaijin hosakan*), all working directly for the prime minister (Iijima 2006: 28–32, 334). Koizumi and his secretary Iijima made sure that the bureaucrats stayed loyal, each being appointed after a personal interview with Iijima. The appointments and further management were conducted with support of Furukawa Teijirō, the “Kasumigaseki Don,” administrative deputy CCS (2010: 27). The closest entourage was to serve not only as contact persons with their home ministries, but also, and predominantly, to prepare policy proposals for the prime minister. In spite of annual cabinet reshuffles, five private secretaries stayed in office during the entirety of Koizumi’s term in office (with one exception), while during that time there were four foreign ministers, four defense directors-general, and three CCS.⁵ Organizationally, Koizumi was well prepared for engaging in policy initiatives, although interestingly, he had no prior experience in foreign policy or international affairs.

The main security and defense policy achievements under the Koizumi cabinet included the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law (hereafter referred to as the Anti-Terrorism Law) enacted on October 2001, the Emergency Law passed on June 13, 2003, and the Law Concerning the Special Measures for Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq (hereafter the Iraq Special Measures Law), adopted on August 1, 2003.⁶ The first allowed sending the SDF to the Indian Ocean to support US forces in Afghanistan, the second, using the SDF in case of attack on Japanese territory, and the third, dispatching the SDF to Iraq for reconstruction assistance in January 2004. In the context of Japan’s postwar politics and constitutional restrictions, the policies were revolutionary, radically changing the course of foreign and defense policy. Since the chronology of policies have been described in numerous publications (Shinoda 2007: 86–98, 113–132; Uchiyama 2007: 118–130; Ōmori 2009: 152–167, 190–234; Iijima 2006: 121–141, 171–182), the chapter will only outline the chronology of events very briefly, while focusing on the analysis of the institutions and dynamics between intervening factors.

3.4 Anti-Terrorism Law of 2001

A few months after taking office, Prime Minister Koizumi was faced with a great challenge, posed by terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. A staunch proponent of the Japan–US alliance, Koizumi took very prompt action, which gained him later gratitude and a legendary-to-become personal friendship

⁵There were four consecutive directors-general of the JDA and at the same time members of the LDP defense tribe: Nakatani Gen (April 2001–September 2002), Ishiba Shigeru (September 2002–September 2004), Ono Yoshinori (September 2004–October 2005), Nukaga Fukushima (October 2005–September 2006).

⁶The law was accompanied by several other bills: the Law to Protect People’s Rights, the Law to Facilitate US Military Actions, and the Law on the Use of Public Facilities, all passed on June 18, 2004.

with US President George W. Bush. The speed of his actions and the bill passage clearly attest his personal commitment. It is important to note that the response of Koizumi to the events of 9/11 was not *as such* the result of the US pressure (*gaiatsu*), but rather of the political leanings and convictions of the prime minister. Furthermore, during the deliberation process within the ruling coalition, emphasis was placed on the fact that Japan's SDF would "not cooperate in America's military operations, but would participate in cooperation efforts as a member of international community" (Ōmori 2009: 156). As for decades during the Cold War era, *gaiatsu* was an important factor for foreign policy initiation, but it was not directly translated in the policy output.

On September 11, following the attacks, Koizumi set the liaison office at the Emergency Operation Center (Kiki Kanri Sentā) of the Cabinet to gather information, and later when the severity of the situation became clear, the Kantei Countermeasures Office (Kantei Taisakushitsu). On September 12, Koizumi conveyed an emergency meeting of the Security Council of Japan, the first such meeting in 3 years, on September 19—declaring War on Terrorism. On September 25, Koizumi flew to the United States to meet President Bush in Washington, the second time since taking the office (the first meeting was on June 30, 2001). During the press conference a few days earlier on September 19, Koizumi presented the government's policy to strongly support the United States, emphasizing that the fight with terrorism was in fact a matter of Japan's own national security, thereby framing the issue in terms of national interest (Koizumi 2001). Moreover, claiming to respect Article 9, the prime minister stated that he wanted Japan to assume an "honorable position (*meiyo no aru chii*) in the international community," by preparing a cooperation and support system for the United States and other states engaged in the War on Terrorism (Koizumi 2001). The "honorable position" was clearly to counterbalance the "shameful position" that Japan took during the Gulf War at the beginning of the 1990s. Japan was not to repeat the same mistake and become again "a target of international derision" (Penn 2014: 33). Koizumi repeated his strong commitment to the War on Terrorism during his general policy speech in parliament on September 27. At the same time, the prime minister made clear that the policy would be based on two assumptions: formulation of a new legislation for the SDF dispatch and observation of constitutional constraint on the usage of military force (*buryoku kōshi*) (Ōmori 2009: 155).

Strong determination for the speedy implementation of the promise can be observed in the decision-making process on what was to become the Anti-Terrorism Law. It was to be a special legal framework, which would enable rear-area support of the United States and other forces far away from Japanese territory, and thus extending the scope of the 1999 Law on a Situation in Areas Surrounding Japan (*Shūhen Jitaihō*). The time span of the bill was 2 years (with one extension possible). It took just 8 days for Koizumi, after the general policy speech, to prepare the bill proposal, have it adopted by the cabinet and sent to the Diet (on October 5). The prime minister reversed the usual bottom-up pattern of policy making, securing first the general agreement with the coalition partners, Kōmeitō and the Conservative Party, on September 25, then the LDP intraparty organs, the General Council

on September 27, and policy subcommittees related to the subject matter of the bill, such as Cabinet, National Defense and the Foreign Policy subcommittees, on September 28. In case of the party organs, the adoption of the proposal was basically pushed through, which caused much opposition and resentment, especially among the defense tribe members (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 2001a, September 30).

The Diet approved the bill 24 days later, on October 29 (together with the revision of the Self-Defense Forces Law), after just seven days of parliamentary deliberations. The bill was supported by the ruling parties: the LDP, Kōmeitō and the Conservative Party, as well as the twenty-first Century Club, while Ozawa Ichirō's Liberal Party, the Communist Party, and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) voted against it.⁷ During the parliamentary deliberations, the discussion focused on several issues, including the Diet approval of the SDF dispatch, which in the final version became *ex post facto* approval, and, second, on the transportation of ammunition and weapons, which was excluded under pressure from the coalition partner, Kōmeitō (Miyazaki 2016: 54–55; *Yomiuri Shinbun* 2001b, October 17). During the Diet deliberation in the Lower House, there was also a chance of agreement with the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), which insisted on the inclusion of a clause of the prior Diet approval for SDF dispatch, but the negotiations ultimately failed (Yamasaki 2016: 233–234), mostly due to Kōmeitō. The party feared the loss of influence in the coalition in case of LDP–DPJ agreement (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 2001c, October 17). The Lower House passed the bill on October 18, with support of few DPJ members, and the Upper House on October 29. On November 25, 2001, three Japanese Maritime SDF vessels departed for the Indian Ocean.

3.4.1 *Kantei Leadership*

During the entire process, the Kantei played a decisive role. Koizumi's strong response and initiative in regard to the events of 9/11 was highly influenced by his special advisor Okamoto Yukio, who was a director of the MOFA First North American Affairs Bureau during the Gulf War. Okamoto was “outraged and frustrated” by Japan's response to the Gulf War, claiming that even the memory of those events made him flush with strong emotions (Penn 2014: 32–33). One month before the attacks, Okamoto published an article in *Gaiko Forum*—one of the major magazines on foreign policy in Japan, which caught the eye of the prime minister. Koizumi appointed Okamoto special advisor for foreign affairs a few days after the attacks, on September 20, 2001.⁸ The trauma of the Gulf War, or

⁷Two important LDP Diet members, Nonaka Hiromu and Koga Makoto, voted against, while one DPJ member voted in favor.

⁸Okamoto served in fact as special advisor to the prime minister (*naikaku sōri daijin hosakan*) on the Okinawa problem under Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryūtarō between November 1996 and July

“humiliation of the Gulf War,” as phrased by Okamoto Yukio (Iokibe et al. 2009: 163), was to play an important role in shaping the new policy (Fujita 2005: 7–8; Handa 2009: 46–53).⁹

The policy preparation was from the beginning under the control of the Kantei, in the hands of Administrative Deputy CCS Furukawa Teijirō, who formed the Study Team (Kentō Chīmu) with two Assistant CCSs, Ōmori Keiji from the JDA, and Urabe Kazuyoshi from MOFA. The policy formulation and the consultations with relevant ministries were handled on a daily basis by Assistant CCS Ōmori (Ōmori 2009: 152–234). Other Study Team members included Defense Administrative Vice Minister Satō Ken and representatives of the most important bodies for foreign and defense policy making from the JDA, Defense Policy Bureau Director-General Shutō Shingo, while from MOFA: Foreign Policy Bureau Director-General Yachi Shotarō and North American Affairs Bureau Director-General Fujisaki Ichirō. In addition, to speed up the process Deputy CCS Furukawa decided to include the Deputy Director-General of Cabinet Legislation Bureau Akiyama Osamu (Director-General from 2002 to 2004). Traditionally, the Cabinet Legislation Bureau had taken a very conservative stance, referred to as precedence-orientation (*zenreishugi*), as was the case regarding the interpretation of constitutional constraints imposed on defense and security policy (author’s interview with MOFA official, October 20, 2016). Strategically, the inclusion of a bureaucrat from the Cabinet Legislation Bureau into the drafting process signaled a strong determination of the prime minister. The secretariat of the Study Team was placed in the Task Force on Emergency Legislation, which was established already in May 2001 to prepare a proposal for the Emergency Law, but due to the 9/11 attacks, it was diverted to work on the anti-terrorism legislation.

3.4.2 MOFA’s Internal Problems

The bill was steered through the parliamentary deliberation by CCS Fukuda Yasuo, including questions from the opposition, and not Foreign Minister Tanaka Makiko, as was common, because of the scandals involving both MOFA and Tanaka at that time. MOFA was involved in corruption scandals before Tanaka’s appointment, details of which started coming to light in January 2001 with the publication of MOFA’s report on the embezzlement of secret government funds. It was followed by news of the misuse of public funds during the 1995 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum in Osaka, the Okinawa Summit in 2000, and on many other occasions (Uchiyama 2010: 80). Tanaka Makiko, a daughter of the former

1998. Under Koizumi, Okamoto became first a special advisor to the cabinet (*naikaku kanbō sanyo*) in September 2001 (until March 2003), then a special advisor to the prime minister (until April 2004).

⁹Midford (2011: 107) argues that the trauma was more a phenomenon of political elites rather than public opinion.

Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei, was hugely popular, and it was her support that helped Koizumi to win the election for the LDP presidency. Outspoken and direct, Tanaka was rewarded for her assistance, but also expected to fix the problem-ridden MOFA (Uchiyama 2007: 113). She took office in April 2001, but after constant confrontations with MOFA bureaucrats, as well as various gaffes and slips, including disclosure of secret US information after September 11, Koizumi dismissed her at the end of January 2002. Internal disputes and the lack of cohesion of MOFA during that time were used by the prime minister and his closest entourage to their advantage, taking control over the policy making process.

3.4.3 Public Opinion

Throughout the entire term in office, Koizumi enjoyed exceptionally high public support ratings on average, although there were some major fluctuations in between, caused by Koizumi's political decisions, such as Tanaka's dismissal in January 2002—large drop from 77.8% to 46.9% (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 2002a, February 2), or his visit to North Korea in September 2002—high rise to 66.1% (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 2002b, September 25). Some researchers (Midford 2011: 123–124) even argued that it was in fact public opinion that influenced and shaped the foreign and defense policies under Koizumi. This is, however, a problematic claim, when we consider the fact that Koizumi was able to adopt controversial policies, such as the Anti-Terrorism Law and the Iraq Special Measures Law, with different levels of public support for the cabinet and for particular policies. In the first instance, Koizumi enjoyed very strong support—77.4%, according to *Yomiuri Shinbun* (2001d, October 23) and 71% according to *Asahi Shinbun* (2001, October 16), while in the second case, his ratings were lower—52.2% (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 2003a, July 15). At the same time, public support for policies was very different. In case of the Anti-Terrorist Law, 51% declared support for it (and 29% criticism) in October 2001 (*Asahi Shinbun* 2001, October 16), while in the case of the Iraq Special Measures Law a majority of 43.2 % expressed opposition to it (and 30.5% support) (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 2003a, July 15). That is not to say that public opinion did not play any role in the decision-making process, but rather that it constituted one of the intervening factors used by Koizumi and his administration whenever it was considered necessary and useful. More importantly, lack of public support did not prevent Koizumi from enforcing his policies.

3.5 Iraq Special Measures Law of 2003

Two years after taking office, Koizumi was faced with another challenge in foreign policy. On March 19, 2003, US and British forces attacked the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq. The military operations lasted only a few weeks, and on May 1, US

President George W. Bush declared the end of major combat operations in the famous “mission accomplished” speech. Unlike Afghanistan in 2001, however, this time the military actions had no UN sanction, with the general public in Japan strongly opposing them. Prime Minister Koizumi promptly announced support for the United States, and in spite of the public opposition, managed to adopt the Iraq Special Measures Law within 3 months. The speed of the process was slower than in case of the Anti-Terrorism Law, but the domestic circumstance was also more complicated. The dispatch of the SDF to Iraq was not only opposed by the general public and opposition parties, but also by the major veto players inside the LDP and Kōmeitō (Miyazaki 2016: 155).

3.5.1 *Kantei Leadership*

The policy process for the formulation of a law enabling Japan’s contribution to the reconstruction of Iraq followed the Kantei-led pattern set up by the previous Anti-Terrorism Law. After the Security Council and the cabinet meetings on March 20, 2003, during which the main action plan and the establishment of special units for policy coordination were agreed upon,¹⁰ the Cabinet Secretariat began preparations of the bill. It was again CCS Fukuda Yasuo who ordered Deputy CCS Furukawa Teijirō to supervise the process, put under Assistant CCS Ōmori Keiji. Ōmori managed the Study Team, consisting of representatives from MOFA and the JDA, although unofficially the JDA and MOFA had been working on a plan of Japan’s contribution to Iraq for half a year (Ōmori 2009: 193, 197–199). The Study Team was supported by Assistant CCS Urabe Kazuyoshi, Foreign Policy Bureau Director-General Yachi Shōtarō and North American Affairs Bureau Director-General Fujisaki Ichirō from MOFA, Administrative Vice Minister Satō Ken and Defense Bureau Director Shutō Shingo from the JDA, and Deputy Director-General Akiyama Osamu from Cabinet Legislation Bureau (Miyazaki 2016: 40).

On June 4, 2003, the Study Team handed down a proposal, which was agreed on by the coalition partners during the secretaries-general meeting, attended by Koizumi and CCS Fukuda, on June 7. Already on May 23, Koizumi made a pledge to the US president during his visit to Bush’s private residence in Crawford, Texas, for Japan to positively engage in the Iraq reconstruction efforts and to use the SDF, possibly under a new legal arrangement. The prime minister made thereby an international pledge before forming a consensus among domestic actors. The activities stipulated by the bill proposal were to be legally based on UN Security

¹⁰It was the Cabinet Countermeasure Headquarters on the Problem of Iraq (Iraku Mondai Taisaku Honbu) and Coordination Council on the Problem of Iraq (Iraku Mondai Chōsei Renraku Kaigi). The first was a political body chaired by the prime minister and attended by CCS and relevant ministers. The latter was an administrative organ composed of bureaucrats and chaired by administrative vice minister, vice-chaired by Cabinet Office councilor and director of the Cabinet Secretariat.

Council resolution (1483, and later 1546), limited to the noncombat area, and to a 4-year period, while the restriction standards on arms use for SDF officials were to remain unchanged. The SDF personnel and civilian activities included humanitarian and reconstruction assistance, support of the US and other forces, and dismantling of weapons of mass destruction. The last point was ultimately dropped under pressure from Koizumi's party members. The coalition parties decided to submit the proposal together with the revision of the Anti-Terrorism Law, extending it for another 2 years. Prime Minister Koizumi and CCS Fukuda managed to submit the bill to the Diet on June 13, 2003, but the entire process proved to be more difficult than expected due to opposition from the major veto players, in addition to opposition parties.

3.5.2 *The Veto Players*

The passage of the Iraq Special Measures Law viewed from perspective seems speedy. Between the presentation of the proposal on June 4, 2003, and the bill final adoption on July 26 by the Upper House, only one month and half passed. More time was necessary for the preparation of basic plan for actual dispatch of the SDF, and its approval by the Upper House, which took place on February 9, 2004.¹¹ The dispatch order of the main ground unit was issued by JDA Director-General Ishiba already on January 26, 2004. In the meantime, however, Koizumi faced opposition on different fronts.

The first major obstacle came from the LDP intraparty organs. The coalition partners, via the Government Parties Council for Problems on Iraq and North Korea (Yotō Iraku, Kita Chōsen Mondai Renraku Kaigi), established in March 2003 and chaired by the LDP Secretary-General Yamasaki Taku, approved the bill proposal without much problems on June 9, 2003. Inside the LDP, the objections came from the anti-Koizumi camp, especially members of the biggest faction, the Hashimoto faction, including former LDP Secretary-General Nonaka Hiromu and former JDA Director-General Norota Hōsei, as well as former LDP Secretary-General Koga Makoto, among others.¹² The LDP members opposed the top-down manner of the decision-making process (Musashi 2005: 111). Koizumi's opponents tried to take advantage of the situation before the LDP presidential election scheduled for September 2003, playing on the public anti-war sentiments. In the end, the joint meeting of the LDP's Cabinet, National Defense and Foreign Policy subcommittees approved the bill on June 12, 2003, after some amendments. One of which was that the basic plan was to be submitted for Diet approval specifying the SDF area of

¹¹On December 26, 2003, the Japan Air SDF was sent as the advance troops.

¹²Nonaka, Koga, and Nishima Mamoru, former minister of home affairs, were absent during the voting on the bill in Lower House on July 4, 2003. Another LDP member Inada Yamato voted against the bill.

operation preceded by the examination of the actual situation on the site. The LDP General Council gave its consent on the same day in the afternoon only after the clause of weapons of mass destruction was removed from the proposal (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 2003b, June 14). On June 13, the cabinet approved the bill and sent it for Diet deliberations. Yet another problem awaited Koizumi in the Upper House—again from his own party members, who demanded the separation of the bill on Iraq from the revision of the Anti-Terrorism Law (passed later on October 10), to which the government had to yield.

Another obstacle in the bill passage came from the opposition parties in both houses, although fortunately for Koizumi, they did not unite the front against the bill. In anticipation of necessity to negotiate the bill with the opposition, CCS Fukuda and party officials prepared some room for amendments (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 2003b, June 14) though in the end it was the LDP veto players that shaped the content of the bill proposal, and not the opposition parties who took an unyielding stance. First of all, the opposition parties on June 17, 2003, disapproved the extension of the Diet session necessary for deliberations and later refused to negotiate on the bill. The opposition parties tried to obstruct deliberation by submitting the nonconfidence motions and censure motion against Foreign Minister Kawaguchi, but both were rejected. The Lower House approved the bill on July 4, and Upper House on July 26. The next stage of the process moved to the preparation of the basic plan.

In the meantime, Koizumi was reelected as LDP president on September 20, 2003, winning 399 votes against 139 gained by his main rival Kamei Shizuka. As a result of the November 9 general election, the LDP decreased its number of seats from 247 to 237, while its coalition partner, the Conservative Party, reduced its seats number to 4, merging later with the LDP. Kōmeitō increased its seats from 31 to 34. The ruling coalition maintained absolute majority with 275 out of a total of 480 seats in the Lower House. The opposition DPJ gained in power, becoming the major opposition party, increasing the number of Diet members from 137 to 177.

3.5.3 *Basic Plan*

The Basic Plan, allowing the actual dispatch of the SDF, was originally planned to be approved by the cabinet in mid-November 2003, but due to the domestic and international situation it was postponed. In Iraq the situation remained very unstable, more people died after May 1, the day of Bush's declaration of the end of major combat, than before. Furthermore, on November 29, two Japanese diplomats, Oku Katsuhiko and Inoue Masamori, were killed on the way to the conference on Iraq reconstruction, which showed the volatility of the situation. Both of those events shocked the public, enhancing the negative stance towards the war. Koizumi did not waver, strongly insisting on the necessity to fight terrorism and carry on with the reconstruction of Iraq (Okamoto 2004: 31). On December 8, 2003, Koizumi disclosed the Basic Plan proposal, which was prepared in secrecy by the Kantei

under the supervision of CCS Fukuda, Administrative Deputy CCS Futahashi Masahiro (who replaced Furukawa in September 2003), Assistant CCS Ōmori Keiji and Masuda Kōhei.¹³ The plan stipulated that the SDF, consisting of up to 600 personnel, would be sent for a 1-year period for humanitarian and reconstruction activities mainly in the southern part of the al-Muthanna province in Iraq. During the press conference following the cabinet decision on December 9, - Koizumi emphasized the fact that the SDF dispatch was consistent with constitutional principles and was not meant as the usage of military force (*buryoku kōshi*), but humanitarian and reconstruction assistance (Koizumi 2003).

The approval procedure both within the coalition partners and LDP organs went fairly smoothly although there were also some dissenting voices, such as Kōno Tarō, a lawmaker from the LDP, who questioned mainly the legitimacy of the definition of a “noncombat area,” while Hirose Katsuei criticized the secrecy of the process and lack of information (author’s interview with Kōno Tarō, October 20, 2016; *Yomiuri Shinbun* 2003c, December 9). On December 8, 2003, the Government–Ruling Parties Liaison Council (Seifu–Yotō Renraku Kaigi), attended by the LDP party leaders, Foreign Minister Kawaguchi Yoriko, JDA Director-General Ishiba Shigeru, Kōmeitō President Kanzaki Takenori, and Kōmeitō Secretary-General Fuyushiba Tetsuzō, was held to build up consensus and speed up the process. On the same day, the plan was approved by the Government Parties Council for Problems on Iraq and North Korea and the joint session of the LDP’s Cabinet, National Defense and Foreign Policy subcommittees. On the following day, Kōmeitō gave official approval although it requested an investigation of the situation on the site before the actual SDF dispatch.

The opposition parties were once again split over their stance on the plan. The Communist Party and the SDP objected to the plan, but the DPJ declared that it would give consent to the SDF dispatch, if the reconstruction efforts were led by the UN and the Iraqi government was established by the Iraqis (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 2003d, December 10). The DPJ, preparing for the 2004 July election to Upper House, tried to create an image of a responsible party in order to become a realistic alternative for the LDP. The lack of cohesion between the opposition parties resulted in the lack of influence over policy outcomes.

On December 18, 2003, JDA Director-General Ishiba Shigeru, and then Prime Minister Koizumi, approved the detailed implementation guideline (*jisshi yōko*), which defined SDF activities in Iraq. Based on this, on the following day, Ishiba issued the dispatch order for the air force contingent, which was to be sent first on December 26. Dispatch of the ground forces was more problematic, and in the end Koizumi had to compromise under the coalition partner, Kōmeitō. The party president, Kanzaki, gave his consent to Koizumi for the dispatch of the Ground SDF on December 22, only after he personally had visited the destination site of

¹³The policy formulation was put under the Iraq Reconstruction Support Promotion Office (Iraku Fukkō Shien Suishinshitsu), which was established on August 1, following the enforcement of the Iraq Special Measures Law.

Samawah in Iraq, confirming the stability of the situation. Kōmeitō was very conscious, paying attention to the sentiments of its electorate and the main supporting Buddhist organization Sōka Gakkai (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 2003f, December 22). Nevertheless, Kanzaki also demanded a coalition party consultation before every dispatch. On January 8, 2004, a consultation meeting with Kōmeitō Secretary-General Fuyushiba and LDP Secretary-General Abe Shinzō was held, during which Kōmeitō confirmed its approval. The following day, JDA Director-General Ishiba issued an order, and on January 16, the troops left Japan. On January 23, some personnel of the SDF returned to Japan with a report confirming the stability of the Samawah region. Based on the report, the secretaries-general of the LDP and Kōmeitō approved the dispatch of the main Ground SDF, and so did party leaders. JDA Director-General Ishiba issued an order, which was carried out on February 8. In the meantime, the ruling parties forced the passage of the legislation through the Lower House on February 2, while the Upper House approved it on February 9. In the Lower House, a few important LDP Lawmakers opposed the bill by leaving the room (Katō Kōichi, Koga Makoto—former secretaries-general of LDP) or by absence (Kamei Shizuka), which resulted in a formal reprimand as a form of punishment (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 2004, February 13).

3.5.4 Public Opinion

The Iraq Special Measures Law was pushed by Prime Minister Koizumi against public opinion, who generally opposed the war and the bill. When we look into the fluctuations of the public support in more detail, the picture gets somehow less clear (Ōishi 2005). Koizumi's decision to support the war in Iraq in March 2003 was disapproved by a majority of 59%, and with 31% support (*Asahi Shinbun* 2003a, March 22). At the same time, the cabinet's support went down only few points to 42%, although the rate of disapproval for the government exceeded for the first time the supporters, rising to 45% (*Asahi Shinbun* 2003a, March 22).

The forced passage of the Iraq Special Measures Law in the Diet in June 2003 had no negative effect on public support. The cabinet approval in the end of June remained practically the same: 47% (down from 48%), while disapproval lowered to 34% (from 37%) (*Asahi Shinbun* 2003b, June 30). Similar trends were reported by *Yomiuri Shinbun* (2003a, July 15) although with slightly higher numbers: 52.2% in support (down from 53.4%) and 36.8% disapproving (up from 35.5%). Furthermore, the opinion poll reported by *Asahi Shinbun* (2003c, July 1) showed that support for the SDF dispatch was even higher (46%) than opposition (43%).

The approval of the basic plan on December 9, 2003, by the cabinet caused a decline in public support for the cabinet from 54.1% to 46.5% (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 2003e, December 16) due to the lack of proper explanation by the prime minister: 85.7% expected a greater explanation from Koizumi, with only 10.7% being satisfied. The actual dispatch of the advance Ground SDF on January 16, 2004, was supported by 40% and opposed by 48% (*Asahi Shinbun* 2004, January 20), with

a support rate higher than in December 2003 (34%). Furthermore, according to the same poll, the Koizumi cabinet's approval rate rose by two points to 43% and disapproval declined to 38% (from 41%).

In the end, Koizumi succeeded in passing the Iraq Special Measures Law in a fairly short period of time, making full use of the tools provided by the administrative reform of 2001 (ability to formulate policies under the Kantei, special advisors, and other staffers such as assistant CCS). Koizumi exercised a strong leadership both on the initiative and further stages of decision-making. Moreover, with the strong policy process management center located in the Kantei, and headed by CCS Fukuda Yasuo, Deputy CCS Furukawa Teijirō, and Assistant CCS Ōmori Keiji, Koizumi was able to negotiate the content of the bill with the coalition partner, Kōmeitō, and also with the LDP's powerful lawmakers who in anticipation of the LDP presidential election tried to weaken Koizumi's position. On the other hand, due to the lack of cohesion and refusal of negotiations, the opposition parties did not yield any substantial influence on the content of the bill. Furthermore, in case of the basic plan for the SDF dispatch, Koizumi limited influence on the policy process of different actors by entrusting the preparation of the proposal to CCS Fukuda, who carried out the process in secrecy. Interestingly, although public support for the bill and Koizumi's particular decisions showed great fluctuations, it did not influence the policy process directly. Koizumi and his entourage used public support whenever necessary to legitimate their stance. On the other hand, in the face of a drop in public support Koizumi did not waver, insisting on his decisions, which enhanced his image as a strong leader. That in result led to rebound of the public support for his cabinet.

3.6 Conclusion

The three case studies of policy making on the PKO Law, Anti-Terrorist Law, and Iraq Special Measures Law present ample examples of the Kantei-led policy process before and after the administrative reforms of 2001. What was essential for the processes was the prime minister's determination and leadership to use institutional tools. This is especially conspicuous in case of the PKO Law at the first stage, when Prime Minister Kaifu or, in fact, all top governmental officials, did not support any radical course of action, such as the dispatch of the minesweepers or the SDF. At the second stage of the PKO Law, the policy process was placed under the Kantei, but only after such arrangements were consented to by the major veto players. Prime Minister Koizumi, on the other hand, could and did use the institutional arrangements for the Kantei-led policy process without the necessity of having to go through such time-consuming negotiations. The details of particular policy, especially the Iraq Special Measures Law, had to be negotiated with various actors, but not the mechanism for the policy making itself.

The coherence of the Kantei greatly enhanced the position of the prime minister vis-à-vis other veto players. The coherence was achieved through organizational

arrangements, such as the creation of a special unit for policy making in the Kantei under the supervision of the prime minister's closest entourage (CCS, administrative deputy CCS, assistant CCS), and secondly, by very careful personnel appointments. The latter was conducted by Koizumi's secretary (Iijima) with assistance of the administrative deputy CCS (Furukawa) to ensure loyalty of the closest staffers in the Kantei. In case of the cabinet or party members, Koizumi decisively punished disobedience or perturbations (e.g., dismissal of Foreign Minister Tanaka Makiko, expulsion from the party, and other punishments), thereby enforcing policy unity.¹⁴

Furthermore, Koizumi and his entourage took advantage of the lack of cohesion of important veto players. MOFA was in great disarray due to corruption scandals and conflict between Foreign Minister Tanaka and the bureaucracy, in result of which CCS Fukuda led the policy process even during Diet deliberations. All the other veto players presented various claims, which had to be negotiated. They did not, however, form a united block that would be influential enough to prevent policy adoption. In other words, the intervening factors, such as the veto players, were important for shaping the final policy outcome, but not policy initiation or adoption. In case of the Anti-Terrorism Law, the policy content changed under pressure from the LDP's coalition partner, Kōmeitō (exclusion of the transportation of ammunition and weapons by the SDF). The Iraq Special Measures Law was more problematic and required more intense consultations with a variety of actors: the LDP intraparty organs (the LDP's Cabinet, National Defense and Foreign Policy subcommittees, the General Council), the Upper House LDP members, and again the coalition partner, Kōmeitō. On the other hand, the opposition parties did not form a united front, refused to cooperate on the bill and on the Basic Plan, having ultimately no influence on the policy outcome.

The impact of other domestic factors, such as societal pressures, was subtler, and served rather as an argument for the policy makers whenever deemed necessary. Prime Minister Koizumi pushed forward with his policy proposals both with public support (Anti-Terrorism Law), as well as against it (Iraq Special Measures Law). At the same time, public support for Koizumi's cabinet, although showing fluctuations, remained at a very high level, giving prime minister leverage over veto players. Public opinion, in other words, was not directly reflected in the decision-making process, but rather, in case of lack of public support for given policy, indirectly in the policy outcome through the veto players (Iraq Special Measures Law).

Finally, an interesting result of the administrative reforms can be observed in the shift of power between various ministries and agencies. To put it simply, whoever gains support of the Kantei, can lead the decision-making process on policies which traditionally are outside its jurisdiction or influence. In the case of the Anti-Terrorist Law and Iraq Special Measures Law, the assistant CCS originally from the JDA (Ōmori and Masuda) were in charge of the formulation of defense and security policies dominated until then by MOFA. Assistant CCS Ōmori, who initially was

¹⁴In the most famous case, Koizumi removed from the LDP many politicians who voted against the Postal Privatization Bill in 2005.

not overly happy to work in the Kantei, by the time of his retirement concluded with great satisfaction on his own contribution to the adopted policies, and added that the JDA (upgraded to ministry in 2007) “should use Cabinet Secretariat” in order to improve and develop national security policy (Ōmori 2009: 246–253). Similar opinions were expressed by other officials (author’s interview with MOFA official, October 20, 2016).

Summing up, the three cases certify to the contentious nature of the decision-making process on foreign and defense policies, in which various intervening factors (the prime minister, Kantei, LDP, coalition parties, MOFA, JDA, etc.) greatly influence the outcomes. The reforms strengthened the position of the Kantei vis-à-vis veto players. Furthermore, although the Kantei-led policy process was possible before the 2001 administrative reform, as observed in the second stage of the PKO Law, it was much more difficult for the prime minister to employ this policy mechanism and maintain coherency.

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Chapter 4

History Problems Under the Koizumi Administration

4.1 Introduction

Under the Koizumi administration, history problems caused a dramatic deterioration in Japan's relations with China and South Korea. The Japanese prime minister not only obstinately visited the Yasukuni Shrine on a yearly basis, but he also failed to mitigate East Asian countries' concerns over Japanese history textbooks. Taking into account the delicacy of history issues, it is understandable that they aroused anti-Japanese sentiments in the states that until 1945 had been victims of Japanese territorial expansionism.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) bureaucrats, weary of the impact of history problems on diplomacy, tried to convince the prime minister to stop visiting Yasukuni. Even some of the closest associates of Koizumi in the Kantei, such as Chief Cabinet Secretary (CCS) Fukuda Yasuo, insisted on displaying a more accommodative stance towards the neighboring countries. The prime minister, however, did not want to abandon his personal convictions. His unyielding posture could be only partly explained on rational grounds. On the one hand, through his nationalistic endeavors, Koizumi Jun'ichirō approached Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) right-wing politicians, but on the other hand, he became antagonized with the equally influential group of moderate lawmakers in the ruling party.¹ As such, history problems revealed the contentious nature of Japanese diplomacy both in the Kantei–MOFA–ruling party triangle and within at least two of the three actors. The

¹There have been some attempts to rationalize Koizumi's behavior on the grounds of domestic political survival strategy. For example, Mong (2017: 96–103) indicated that through the continuous homage to the shrine Koizumi sought support from such influential politicians as Nihon Izokukai Chair Koga Makoto. While this interpretation has some explanatory value until 2005, it fails to acknowledge that since 2005 it was Koga who became one of the leaders of the anti-Koizumi movement. As described later in this chapter, Koga was in fact criticizing Koizumi for not displaying sufficient flexibility towards their neighboring countries.

institutional tools provided by the central government reforms to a certain extent helped Koizumi to resist pressure from the LDP and MOFA bureaucrats.

4.2 Decision-Making on History Problems Before the Central Government Reforms

The Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo was constructed in the nineteenth century as a central place for the cult of the emperor. As it was devoted to the spirits of all the Japanese who had died in the service of their country, it quickly became one of the main symbols for the nationalists. Prime ministers' visits to the shrine did not become a subject of international dispute until the 1980s. In 1978, class-A war criminals sentenced to death by the Tokyo Tribunal were enshrined in Yasukuni. As a result, when in 1985 Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro announced his intention to institutionalize yearly visits to the shrine by all cabinet members on August 15—the anniversary of Japan's surrender in 1945—South Korea and China accused Tokyo of whitewashing the history of territorial expansionism. Startled by protests in the neighboring countries and discouraged by CCS Gotōda Masaharu, Nakasone withdrew his plans and never again visited Yasukuni until the end of his term in office. Since then, paying homage to the shrine became almost taboo for the heads of government. Until 2001 only two prime ministers—Miyazawa Kiichi in 1993 and Hashimoto Ryūtarō in 1996—visited Yasukuni. The former did it secretly, and the latter backed away just as Nakasone had done.

Similar self-restraint was visible regarding the history textbook problem. The first diplomatic crisis on this issue occurred in 1982, when the media reported that the Japanese Ministry of Education recommended to change the description of Japanese invasions during World War II in history textbooks to a milder version.² Answering protests from China and South Korea, in August 1982 Prime Minister Suzuki Zenkō authorized CCS Miyazawa Kiichi to issue a statement containing a promise that during the authorization of textbooks Japan would take into consideration the stance of the neighboring countries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 1982). Respecting this clause, Prime Minister Nakasone and CCS Gotōda nipped the second crisis of this kind in the bud in 1986 by ordering the elimination of all distortions of history in a controversial nationalistic textbook (Tanaka 1996: 150–151).

Various factors contributed to this relatively accommodative posture by the Kantei. The structure of the international system certainly defined the range of decisions that seemed reasonable at the given time. As usual, the US grand strategy played an important role. The gravity of maintaining friendly relations with an

²The recommendations were not compulsory, which was not sufficiently explained to China and South Korea. For a comprehensive analysis of external and domestic determinants of the decision-making process on the 1982 textbook crisis, see: Rose (1998).

American ally, South Korea, and pleasing a strategic partner against the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China (PRC), discouraged LDP conservatives from maintaining an overly assertive attitude regarding history issues during the Cold War. The growing importance of economic exchange with the neighboring countries, in turn, inhibited distortion of history by Japanese heads of government throughout the 1990s.

On the other hand, domestic-level intervening variables provide more detailed context of Japan's reaction to the abovementioned external stimuli. Power shifts inside separate LDP parliamentary tribes³ or nationalistic credentials and political calculations by individual prime ministers explain why the textbook and Yasukuni problems emerged in the first place.⁴ They are also instrumental in understanding why despite the imminence of international repercussions some heads of government decided to break the unofficial "ban" on visits to Yasukuni since 1985.⁵ In addition, unit-level determinants help to deepen the knowledge on the circumstances of complying with external pressures by individual decision-makers.⁶ Institutional factors were significant as well. Even right-wing Japanese prime ministers could not ignore the voice of MOFA bureaucrats as well as pro-Beijing and pro-Seoul groups in the LDP. Until 1993 the pro-China camp was particularly powerful, as it comprised the Tanaka/Takeshita faction—the largest group in the LDP.⁷

As we can see, in the pre-reform period the heads of government and CCS usually acted as the guardians of stable relations with China and South Korea, sometimes even at the expense of their own ideological beliefs. While the circumstances of each diplomatic incident related to history issues were different, the

³For example, change in the composition of the LDP educational tribe was one of the reasons for the modification of the directives regarding authorization of history textbooks at the beginning of the 1980s. In 1976, a group of liberal members of that *zoku* defected from the LDP and established a separate party: the New Liberal Club. In their absence, the educational tribe was dominated by the "hawks" who steered the textbook screening directives to the right, thus provoking the diplomatic crisis in 1982. See: Yuasa (1986: 155–157), Uchida et al. (1981: 191–193).

⁴Apart from Nakasone's right-wing inclinations, also his political calculations explain the visit to Yasukuni in 1985. Due to hospitalization of former Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei—a powerful faction boss who supported the government—Nakasone tried to strengthen his power base in the party by appealing to right-wing politicians. See: Mong (2017: 56–59).

⁵For instance, Miyazawa Kiichi promised to visit Yasukuni during the LDP presidential election in 1991. Due to his moderate convictions and out of fear that the visit would endanger Emperor Akihito's journey to China in 1992, however, he waited almost 2 years to secretly fulfill the vow. See: Mong (2017: 36).

⁶For example, Prime Minister Nakasone revealed that he ceased visiting Yasukuni out of concern that this problem could be used against CCP Secretary-General Hu Yaobang, with whom he had established a strong interpersonal relationship. See: Nakasone (2004: 137).

⁷In the 1980s, the Tanaka/Takeshita faction created a "general mainstream" in the LDP and its leaders—Tanaka Kakuei and subsequently Takeshita Noboru—acted as "shadow shoguns" behind prime ministers.

Kantei's compliance with external pressures seems to confirm the reactive character of Japan's foreign policy stemming from the existence of strong veto players.

4.3 Interests, Ideological Leanings, and Cohesion of Main Actors

Koizumi Jun'ichirō did not necessarily share the zeal of the nationalists regarding Yasukuni. In reality, he belonged to the financial parliamentary tribe and did not display much interest in foreign or security affairs. During his first two attempts at running in the LDP presidential elections in the 1990s, Koizumi made no comments regarding the controversial shrine. Nevertheless, in April 2001 he changed his strategy. In order to gain the votes of LDP members who belonged to Nihon Izokukai—an organization that represented the bereaved families of former soldiers—Koizumi promised that if he became prime minister, regardless of protests abroad, he would pay homage to the controversial shrine annually on August 15 (Uchiyama 2007: 135). Thanks to this vow he managed to differentiate himself from his main contender, Hashimoto Ryūtarō, who had renounced further visits to Yasukuni after one attempt in 1996. Nevertheless, pressure from the Nihon Izokukai seems to be an insufficient factor to fully explain Koizumi's motives. After all, the influence of this group weakened over time, which was natural for an organization whose core members were widows of fallen soldiers. Nihon Izokukai provided the LDP with 920,000 votes in the Upper House election in 1980, but in 2004 this number diminished to 170,000 (Li 2010: 230). It also seems that Koizumi's assertive stance on history issues strengthened his position only to a limited degree, even among right-wing LDP members.⁸ Probably, the character traits of the new prime minister rather than strictly rational calculation of costs and benefits decided about his unyielding posture on the Yasukuni issue.⁹

While Koizumi was determined to fulfill his electoral promise, his stance on the controversial shrine was not shared by all of his closest associates in the Kantei. Most significantly, CCS Fukuda Yasuo was strongly opposed to jeopardizing relations with East Asian countries. Being a son of Prime Minister Fukuda Takeo, who in 1978 undertook the decision to sign the Treaty of Peace and Friendship with China, Fukuda Yasuo was considered as a pro-Beijing politician. Additionally, he

⁸Despite praising Koizumi for his visits to Yasukuni, such influential “hawks” in the LDP as Kamei Shizuka or Hiranuma Takeo were still very critical of his economic policies or “despotic” leadership style. Other right-wing politicians, such as former Prime Ministers Mori Yoshirō (Koizumi's factional boss) and Nakasone Yasuhiro explicitly suggested that Koizumi should behave more responsibly and avoid further deterioration of relations with China. See: Hiranuma (2005: 59–184), Kamei and Namikawa (2003: 28–158), Ikibe et al. (2007: 281–282), and Nakasone et al. (2005: 126–127).

⁹Uchiyama (2007: 176–182) called Koizumi a “prime minister full of pathos” who never abandoned his beliefs, even if they were against his political interests.

boasted considerable experience in foreign policy making, stemming from the fact that he had served as secretary to the prime minister (his father) in the 1970s, and as a foreign political vice minister, House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee chair, and LDP Policy Affairs Research Council (PARC) diplomatic policy division chair after starting his parliamentary career in the 1990s. Fukuda was a balance-seeking style politician who understood that diplomatic breakthroughs were impossible without displaying sensitivity to the counterpart's needs and interests. Thanks to this reasonable, mild attitude he was highly esteemed among the bureaucrats (Hoshi 2014: 113). As CCS, whenever a problem appeared in the relations with the PRC, Fukuda remained in constant mobile phone contact with the Chinese ambassador (author's interview with former Japanese Ambassador to China Miyamoto Yūji, July 12, 2013). Only when Fukuda stepped down from office in 2004 did the Kantei become more coherent with regard to history problems. In 2004, the post of CCS was assumed by Hosoda Hiroyuki who was known for his loyalty towards the prime minister, and in 2005 by Abe Shinzō who held even more nationalistic convictions than Koizumi.

While at least until 2004 the Kantei was divided over the Yasukuni issue, MOFA represented a much more coherent stance in this regard. On the bureaucratic level, virtually all divisions (though not necessarily all officials) felt uncomfortable about Koizumi's visits to the shrine. Obviously, the Yasukuni problem constituted a serious obstacle for the diplomats from the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, as it undermined their efforts to promote cooperation with China and South Korea. It does not mean, however, that the bureaucrats specializing in other regions simply announced disinterest in history problems. After all, whitewashing Japan's territorial expansionism during the World War II was criticized in the United States as well, which raised concerns among the civil servants from the North American Affairs Bureau.¹⁰ Moreover, Tanaka Makiko, who served as foreign minister from 2001 to 2002, was known as a pro-Beijing politician. She owed this status to the fact that she was the daughter of Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei who normalized Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations in 1972. Tanaka's successor as foreign minister, Kawaguchi Yoriko (2002–2004), was a former MOFA bureaucrat, and thus she shared a moderate stance on history issues with her ministerial colleagues. Nevertheless, some political appointees in MOFA were less coherent with regard to the Yasukuni issue. In particular, the last two foreign ministers under the Koizumi administration, Machimura Nobutaka (2004–2005) and Asō Tarō (2005–2007), represented the right wing of the LDP and supported Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni.

It is the ruling party that was perhaps the most divided over history issues. While a coherent foreign policy tribe in the LDP never existed, the ruling party comprised many ideological camps and factions led by influential politicians. Koizumi Jun'ichirō belonged to the Mori faction, which together with the faction chaired by Etō Takami and Kamei Shizuka was considered as one of the most rightist

¹⁰The Bush administration became more vocal on expressing its dissatisfaction regarding Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni since 2005. See: Lai (2014: 129).

intraparty groups. On the other pole of the ideological axis, there were such moderate factions as those led by Hashimoto Ryūtarō (Tsushima Yūji since 2006), Horiuchi Mitsuo (Koga Makoto and Niwa Yūya since 2005), Katō Kōichi (Ozato Sadatoshi since 2002, Tanigaki Sadakazu since 2005), and Kōno Yōhei. Katō Kōichi, Kōno Yōhei, and Koga Makoto (the last one despite being chair of Nihon Izokukai) were leading members of the pro-Beijing camp, together with such figures as Nonaka Hiromu from the Hashimoto faction. While factional bosses lost much of their power due to the electoral reform from 1994, the pro-Beijing camp comprised many prominent backbenchers who were eager to temper Koizumi's nationalistic endeavors. Paradoxically, the moderate politicians in the LDP also acted as valuable promoters of Japanese interests in China when the official communication channels were severed due to prolonged diplomatic crisis. The same could be said about the pro-Korean lawmakers in the LDP, though they were characterized by a more right-wing leaning, and thus felt less inclined to mediate on history issues with Seoul.

4.4 Japan's Initial Reaction to Pressure from China and South Korea

As soon as Koizumi Jun'ichirō assumed office, he had to deal with two problems related to history issues. In April 2001, just before the election of Koizumi as LDP leader, China and South Korea voiced their serious concerns regarding the screening of Japanese history textbooks. The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) approved the *New History Textbook* (*Atarashii Rekishi Ryōkasho*) that displayed a distorted version of history. South Korea decisively protested this attempt at beautifying Japan's history of territorial expansionism. Seoul not only recalled its ambassador from Tokyo, but also suspended the import of cultural products from Japan. While China did not employ equally radical measures, it cancelled National People's Congress Chairperson Li Peng's visit to Japan and requested corrections in the controversial textbook (Rose 2005: 63).

There was a difference of opinions between the Kantei and MOFA on how to react to the demands from Seoul and Beijing. While emphasizing that the *New History Textbook* did not reflect Japan's official view of history, Prime Minister Koizumi was unwilling to interfere in the screening process. Foreign Minister Tanaka, in turn, displayed a more accommodating posture towards the neighboring countries. During a telephone conversation with Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan in May 2001, she reiterated the importance of Japan's relations with China, and she even promised that Japan would not issue a visa to former Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui (Yachi and Takahashi 2009: 176). In the same month, Tanaka reassured Seoul that she took the textbook issue seriously, closely studied South Korea's demands and faced the past squarely (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of

Japan 2001a). In an interview to *Asahi Shinbun* Tanaka admitted that she was concerned with the distortions of history in the *New History Textbook* and that she would not spare her efforts to redress this situation. Her statement met with negative comments from Deputy CCS Abe Shinzō who accused Tanaka of carelessly accusing the authors of the textbook without even reading its contents, and thus reigniting the diplomatic dispute (Abe and Okazaki 2004: 138–139).

Eventually, the controversial textbook was published in the summer of 2001 with only minor corrections implemented to meet some of the South Korean demands. In early July 2001, the Japanese government announced it would refrain from further revisions because the book did not clearly deviate from historic facts and opinions among historians on the disputed issues were divided (Rose 2005: 64–65). This assertive posture contrasted with Japan's conciliatory reaction to the first and second history textbook crises in the 1980s.

An even more serious problem was Koizumi's intention to pay regular homage at the Yasukuni Shrine. In May 2001, Foreign Administrative Vice Minister Kawashima Yutaka expressed his concern over this issue by saying that a visit to the shrine would create an impression of glorification of the past war by Japan (Mong 2017: 68). In July 2001, Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan confirmed during a conversation with Japanese Foreign Minister Tanaka that Koizumi's visit to Yasukuni would meet with a decisive reaction from the Chinese people (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 226). Both Tanaka and her administrative staff did not support the prime minister's right-wing policy and were determined to nip the diplomatic crisis in the bud. On the other hand, strong personal conflict between the foreign minister and MOFA bureaucrats caused organizational disorder in the ministry. Tanaka Makiko accused Kawashima Yutaka of covering up embezzlement scandals in the ministry that had been just revealed by the media. In return, in June 2001 MOFA bureaucrats presumably leaked information on confidential talks between Tanaka and foreign officials. For example, the media reported that in order to assuage China's fears, Tanaka tried to convince Italian and Canadian foreign ministers to discourage US President George Bush from building an antimissile defense system. The aim of this leakage was probably to present Tanaka as an irresponsible pro-Beijing politician, and thus undermine her position in the government (Yomiuri Shinbun Shakaibu 2001: 178–192). Obviously, this intra-ministerial conflict, which lasted until August 2001, made it more difficult for MOFA to institute a coherent strategy to convince Koizumi to abandon his electoral pledge.

Instead of MOFA, the key players were individual actors in the Kantei and the ruling party that handled the Yasukuni problem. Prime Minister's Secretary Iijima Isao insisted on fulfilling the electoral promise to the point that he submitted his resignation, not accepted by the prime minister, when Koizumi told him he would change the date of his visit to the shrine (Mong 2017: 69–70). Also Deputy CCS Abe Shinzō claimed that even if the homage to Yasukuni temporarily disturbed relations with the neighboring countries, Japan should not bend to external pressure (Abe and Okazaki 2004: 16–161). Nevertheless, Abe's direct superior held a different stance on this problem. In order to make a backstage deal with Beijing,

CCS Fukuda Yasuo used his personal connections with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Having consulted on the issue with former Japanese Ambassador to China Tanino Sakutarō, Fukuda came to believe that visiting Yasukuni on a different day than August 15 would suffice to mitigate China's reaction to some extent. The prime minister presumably showed understanding to this proposal. The intention to visit Yasukuni on August 17 was communicated to Foreign Administrative Vice Minister Kawashima Yutaka and Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Director-General Makita Kunihiko, as well as secretly transmitted to Beijing (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 227–230).

Concurrently, however, another influential member of the pro-Beijing camp, Katō Kōichi, contacted Chinese Ambassador to Japan Wu Dawei in order to examine ways of mitigating China's protest. Wu presumably gave four conditions: (1) avoid visiting on the anniversary of Japan's surrender, (2) pay homage in a private capacity, (3) issue a statement containing remorse for the war, and (4) send a special envoy to China who would clarify that the pilgrimage to Yasukuni was not aimed at glorifying class-A war criminals. Together with LDP Secretary-General Yamasaki Taku, Katō tried to convince Koizumi to this concession on August 11, but the prime minister seemed to be still determined to fulfill his electoral pledge. On the following day, Yamasaki contacted Ambassador Wu to examine whether China would accept visit to Yasukuni before August 15. At that point, LDP secretary-general became aware that CCS Fukuda promoted visit to the shrine on August 17. Yamasaki, however, claimed that postponing the pilgrimage after the anniversary of Japan's surrender would magnify an impression that Koizumi bent to Chinese pressure. Yamasaki asked Watanabe Tsuneo, editor-in-chief of *Yomiuri Shinbun*, to reassure Koizumi that his newspaper would publish favorable comments on avoiding homage at Yasukuni on August 15, provided the visit took place before this date. Eventually, the prime minister was convinced by this reasoning (Yamasaki 2016: 225–227). This indicates that while Koizumi was ready to sacrifice part of his popularity in order to visit the controversial shrine, he nonetheless paid attention to minimizing the damage to his image.

The public was increasingly opposed to the visit. According to an opinion poll conducted by *Asahi Shinbun* (2001, August 4), while in July 42% of respondents expected the prime minister to display prudence in paying homage to the shrine compared to 41% who supported the visit, one month later this ratio changed to 65% and 26%, respectively. Moreover, as many as 55% of respondents admitted that it was understandable that China and South Korea objected to Koizumi's behavior (35% thought otherwise). The government enjoyed a high support rate of 69%, which was, however, eight percentage points lower than in July.

Despite the unfavorable societal moods, Koizumi paid homage to the controversial shrine during the Bon Festival on August 13, 2001. He avoided specifying whether he did it in a private or official capacity. The date of his visit was kept in complete secrecy and even Koizumi's administrative secretaries were not informed about the prime minister's real intentions until the last moment. It was Fukuda, not the MOFA bureaucrats, who with the help from Administrative CCS Furukawa Teijirō prepared the prime minister's speech (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006:

229–231). Koizumi expressed “feelings of profound remorse and sincere mourning to all the victims of the war” and said “that Japan must never again proceed a path to war” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2001b). Additionally, CCS Fukuda, who read Koizumi’s statement, implied that the government planned to examine a possibility of building an alternative place for worshipping the war dead. This announcement was aimed at mitigating protests against the Yasukuni visit by the neighboring countries, but Beijing and Seoul nonetheless strongly condemned Koizumi’s behavior. On the other hand, thanks to avoiding August 15, Koizumi left a window open for reconciliation with both countries (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 232–233).

Tanaka Hitoshi emphasized that as soon as he assumed the post of Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau director-general in September 2001, he started preparing the ground for the amelioration of relations with Beijing and Seoul. He was supported in his endeavors both by Foreign Administrative Vice Minister Kawashima Yutaka and CCS Fukuda Yasuo. Tanaka, as a bureaucrat previously involved in dealing with the “comfort women” issue and drafting the 1995 Murayama Statement, possessed significant experience in history problems.¹¹ He stressed that thanks to holding as many as ten meetings on this matter with Koizumi, he became convinced that the prime minister did not want to challenge the Murayama Statement. The problem was to reassure China about Koizumi’s intentions. According to Tanaka, it was Ambassador to China Anami Koreshige who used his connections with Chinese decision-makers to arrange Koizumi’s visit to China. At the beginning of October 2001, only several weeks after the September 11 terrorist attacks in New York, the Japanese prime minister paid a visit to the Marco Polo Bridge near Beijing—the place where the Sino-Japanese war broke out in 1937. During the press conference, Koizumi repeated apologies to China, thus reconfirming the Murayama Statement (Tanaka 2009: 149–150).

Prime Minister’s Secretary Iijima Isao, who boasted certain influence on the decision-making process, admitted that he was rather discontent with the visit’s schedule that was set by MOFA. Iijima claimed that traveling directly to the places related to Japanese expansionism was improper for the first visit, and that it would have been better to first gain understanding between the leaders of both countries on the basic issues in bilateral relations. As Iijima found MOFA’s policy overly leaning to the Chinese stance, he ordered a liaison office counselor from MEXT to accompany the prime minister during the visit in order to counterbalance MOFA’s expertise on the history textbook issue (Iijima 2007: 35–38). It is interesting to note that the prime minister tried not to rely on the memo prepared by MOFA and frankly explained his stance on history issues. This sincere posture seemed to be positively evaluated by the CCP leadership. Only two weeks later Koizumi visited China once more to participate in the Asia-Pacific Economic

¹¹In 1993, CCS Kōno Yōhei apologized to the former “comfort women,” mainly Koreans, who had been forced to serve as sexual slaves for the Imperial Army. In 1995, in turn, Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi issued a statement that contained explicit apologies for the war of aggression.

Cooperation (APEC) summit in Shanghai, where he agreed with President Jiang Zemin to intensify bilateral exchange in 2002 on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of normalization of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 234–238).

Between the two visits to China, Koizumi went to South Korea as well. He not only laid a wreath at the National Cemetery in Seoul, but also visited the Seodaemun Prison History Hall that commemorated the anti-Japanese independence movement. Just as in the case of China, Iijima was discontent that MOFA agreed to include such places in the schedule of Koizumi's first visit to South Korea. At a press conference Koizumi repeated his apology and remorse for the atrocities caused by Japan to Korea during the colonial period. President Kim Dae-jung requested Japan to eliminate all distortions of history in their textbooks, but the Japanese prime minister only proposed to form a group of historians from both countries who would conduct joint research. Just as in China, Koizumi was accompanied by a MEXT bureaucrat who screened the memo prepared by MOFA. As emphasized by Iijima, the initial version of the draft contained a phrase "we seriously consider as an objective truth the low adoption level of the textbooks questioned by South Korea," but having the support from MEXT, Koizumi decided to arbitrarily omit this point in his speech (Iijima 2007: 39–42). It is clearly visible that the Kantei was unwilling to blindly follow the policy line maintained by MOFA bureaucrats.

Koizumi paid another visit to South Korea in March 2002 and to China in mid-April 2002. They seemed to indicate that relations between Japan and both countries remained relatively cordial. During the visit to China, the Japanese prime minister took part in the Boao Asia Forum on Hainan Island. Koizumi even stressed that despite the tendency to perceive Chinese economic growth as a threat, for Japan it was rather an opportunity. Prime Minister Zhu Rongji liked this remark so much that he invited Koizumi to pay a visit to Beijing for the ceremonies of the 30th anniversary of the normalization of bilateral relations in September 2002. The Sino-Japanese detente ended suddenly on April 21, 2002, when Koizumi visited Yasukuni for the second time since assuming office. He did it by surprise, without having consulted his plans with MOFA nor even with CCS Fukuda. By keeping his intentions secret, the prime minister probably wanted to limit protests abroad. Nevertheless, this new approach to homage brought much harm to Japanese diplomacy. Prime Minister Zhu Rongji lost face as he was blamed in the CCP that he had not warned Koizumi on the repercussions of continuing visits to Yasukuni during the Hainan meeting (Shimizu 2006: 93; Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 237–244). As emphasized by MOFA China school bureaucrat Miyamoto Yūji, in contacts with Beijing it was extremely important to directly inform top leaders about one's plans, even if they ran contrary to Chinese interests. Because Koizumi's visit to the controversial shrine was a complete surprise for Beijing, this incident affected Sino-Japanese relations to a much greater extent than it would have if the Japanese prime minister had communicated his true intentions to Zhu Rongji during the summit. China immediately suspended mutual visits of navy

ships and cancelled Japan Defense Agency director-general's visit to Beijing (Miyamoto 2011: 117–118).

Having lost confidence in Koizumi, the Chinese withdrew his invitation to the September 2002 anniversary ceremonies in Beijing. Until the end of his term in office, Koizumi would not pay another visit to China. Instead, he had to rely on meetings with Chinese leaders during the summits in third countries. At the end of October 2002, Koizumi met Jiang Zemin during an APEC summit in Los Cabos in Mexico. The Chinese president mentioned the Japanese territorial expansionism and implied that Sino-Japanese rapprochement would not be possible if Koizumi continued his visits to the controversial shrine. Koizumi, however, only repeated that he was praying in Yasukuni for the world peace (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 247).

In December 2002, a special advisory committee established at the Cabinet Secretariat one year earlier issued a recommendation to build a new nonreligious national facility for commemorating those who had died during wars. However, Koizumi denied the possibility that any other place could substitute for Yasukuni (Mong 2017: 74). Moreover, CCS Fukuda's idea to find a replacement for the shrine met strong opposition from LDP right wing and Nihon Izokukai (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 248). Prime Minister Koizumi paid his third visit to Yasukuni in mid-January 2003. It seemed that he wanted to pay homage to Yasukuni before Hu Jintao's inauguration as the new president of the PRC, which was scheduled for March 2003. Nevertheless, both Beijing and Seoul decisively condemned Koizumi for an attempt at whitewashing the war of aggression (Uchiyama 2007: 140–141). In contrast to China, however, South Korea did not suspend mutual exchange with Japan at the highest level. After the second visit to Yasukuni, Koizumi visited South Korea five times: in May 2002, February 2003, July 2004, June 2005, and November 2005.

4.5 Attempt at Rapprochement with China Under the Hu Jintao Administration

The transition of power in the CCP became an opportunity for Japan to ameliorate relations with China. Hu Jintao seemed to display a more pro-Japanese posture than Jiang Zemin. Koizumi met the new president of China for the first time at the end of May 2003, at a summit in Saint Petersburg. During his conversation with the Japanese prime minister, Hu Jintao did not mention the Yasukuni issue, and he seemed to be focused on the prospects for cooperation with Japan rather than on history problems. The Chinese leader even proposed to establish the New Sino-Japanese Committee for Friendship in the twenty-first century. By doing so, he revived an initiative of Nakasone Yasuhiro and Hu Yaobang from 1983, which was discontinued after the Tiananmen crackdown in 1989 (Shimizu 2006: 101–106).

Another sign of the Sino-Japanese detente were the ceremonies of the 25th anniversary of signing the Peace and Friendship Treaty from 1978. In August 2003, two former prime ministers, Hashimoto Ryūtarō and Murayama Tomiichi, visited Beijing together with CCS Fukuda Yasuo and lawmaker Sonoda Hiroyuki—sons of Prime Minister Fukuda Takeo and Sonoda Sunao who had signed the treaty 25 years earlier (*Nihon Keizai Shinbun* 2003, August 10). In official speeches, Chinese decision-makers avoided referring to history problems, but during a conversation with Fukuda, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao criticized Koizumi's unyielding attitude towards the Yasukuni issue. The Chinese side seemed to be eager to promote rapprochement with Japan, but anti-Japanese feelings in China had already escalated to the point where it was impossible to ignore popular demands. On October 7, 2003, Wen Jiabao met Koizumi Jun'ichirō at the Sino-Japanese-South Korean summit in Bali, Indonesia. The three leaders signed a declaration on the promotion of trilateral cooperation. The Japanese side was positively surprised by the fact that instead of stressing the gravity of the Yasukuni problem, the Chinese premier expressed his hope for restoring Sino-Japanese exchange at the highest level (*Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu* 2006: 252–253).

Nevertheless, Sino-Japanese relations could not be improved in the long run unless Koizumi renounced his visits to Yasukuni. One day after Wen Jiabao's reconciliatory statement, on October 8, 2003, the Japanese prime minister mentioned to journalists that he would continue paying homage to the controversial shrine. Moreover, he added that his posture had been understood and did no longer hinder development of Sino-Japanese relations. China immediately denied Koizumi's words, emphasizing that Beijing had not changed its stance on the Yasukuni issue (*Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu* 2006: 254). For the CCP, Koizumi's slip of the tongue was a sinister *déjà vu*. The Japanese prime minister exposed another Chinese head of government to allegations about being too soft towards Japan. It is not surprising that after this incident the Hu administration started displaying less and less flexibility in dealing with history issues (Mōri 2006: 189–190; Shimizu 2006: 118–222).

Koizumi visited Yasukuni for the fourth time during the New Year in 2004, which met with decisive protests from China and South Korea (Uchiyama 2007: 142). Beijing and Seoul came to treat homage to Yasukuni as an intentional provocation. In order to force Koizumi to abandon his nationalistic agenda, China tried to use economic pressure. The Hu administration had been planning a purchase of fast train (*shinkansen*) technology from Japan to build a new railway route linking Beijing with Shanghai. Nevertheless, in 2003 Chinese nationalists launched a campaign of gathering signatures under an internet petition against the Japanese investment. As a result, the CCP authorities started implying that the abandonment of visits to Yasukuni would be a precondition for choosing the Japanese bid (Shimizu 2006: 113). Japanese entrepreneurs represented in the Japan Business Federation intensified their efforts to convince Koizumi to be reasonable on this matter, but the Japanese prime minister was unwilling to change his mind on the Yasukuni issue (*Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu* 2006: 255–258).

4.6 Suspension of Contacts with China at the End of the Koizumi Administration

At the end of 2004, Beijing and moderate politicians in the LDP increased their efforts to convince Koizumi to abandon his plans of visiting Yasukuni in 2005—the year of the 60th anniversary of Japan’s surrender in World War II. In September 2004, Speaker of the House of Representatives Kōno Yōhei visited Beijing. During a conversation with him, Hu Jintao for the first time clearly conveyed his concerns regarding Yasukuni to a Japanese politician (Shimizu 2006: 167). In October 2004, Kōno tried to convince Koizumi to a concession on this matter by arguing that the Yasukuni issue was the only serious obstacle in developing mutually fruitful cooperation with China. The Japanese prime minister, however, refused to listen to this advice (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 259–260).

Equally ineffective was the persuasion by MOFA bureaucrats. Even former Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Director-General, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Tanaka Hitoshi, who as the main negotiator on the abduction issue with North Korea had gained the trust of Koizumi, could not convince the prime minister to display a more flexible posture. Tanaka presumed that Koizumi was so dogmatic about paying homage to the controversial shrine because he felt that the institutionalization of visits would eventually force Beijing to abandon using history issues as an instrument of pressuring Tokyo. Moreover, through the full realization of his electoral promises the prime minister wanted to show that he treated all of his vows seriously, including the most important one—the privatization of the Japan Post. In addition, in the second half of his term in office Koizumi most likely simply concluded that he would not be able to ameliorate relations with China even if he renounced his visits to Yasukuni. Tanaka strongly disagreed with this stance by arguing that paying tribute to the shrine deprived Japan of many diplomatic opportunities. For example, such behavior harmed Japan’s position in regional economic integration negotiations and gave a convenient pretext for China and South Korea to oppose Japan’s bid for a permanent seat in the United Nations (UN) Security Council (Tanaka 2009: 151–153).

In November 2004, Koizumi Jun’ichirō met Hu Jintao at the APEC summit in Santiago de Chile. Due to a tense atmosphere in relations between both countries, it was unclear until the last moment whether Beijing would even agree to arrange this appointment. The CCP authorities were afraid that the Japanese prime minister could cause a misunderstanding similar to the one in Bali in 2003. In order to assuage Chinese concerns, Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Director-General Yabunaka Mitoji persuaded Koizumi to promise the Chinese side that he would not make any statement on future visits to Yasukuni immediately after the meeting. During the summit, Hu Jintao told the Japanese prime minister that despite the fact that bilateral economic exchange was thriving, the Yasukuni issue kept hindering political relations. The Chinese president emphasized that due to the 60th anniversary of victory over fascism, 2005 would be especially “delicate” with regard to

Sino-Japanese contacts (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 261–268). As promised, when during press conference Koizumi was asked about his future visits to Yasukuni, he only answered that he would make an “appropriate decision” (Tokoi 2016: 70).

Changes in the Japanese government, however, did not favor displaying a flexible posture on history issues. In May 2004, Fukuda Yasuo stepped down from office due to the missing pension annuities scandal. Hosoda Hiroyuki, who became the new CCS, did not possess connections with Chinese decision-makers and displayed a much less pro-Beijing posture than his predecessor. Moreover, in September 2004 Kawaguchi Yoriko was replaced with Machimura Nobutaka as foreign minister. Contrary to Kawaguchi who was a former MOFA bureaucrat and thus tried to mitigate diplomatic crises over history issues, Machimura was known as one of the leading members of the Mori faction—a powerful group that represented the right wing of the LDP. Machimura belonged to the educational parliamentary tribe, and he promoted a vision of history “so that you can be proud of the achievements of the ancestors” (Machimura 2005: 113).

The Hosoda/Machimura tandem turned out to be even less effective than their predecessors in mitigating the neighboring countries’ concerns about the history problems. This time, the spark that lit the fire was the textbook issue. In March 2005, Japanese media reported that just as in 2001 MEXT was planning to once more authorize the controversial *New History Textbook* for use in schools (Mōri 2006: 186–187; Xu 2006: 92). This news coincided with the announcement by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan that Japan had strong chances to win a bid for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council, which mobilized Chinese nationalists to denounce Japan as a country inappropriate for such a responsible function. Until April 2005, right-wing groups in China collected as many as 41 million signatures under an internet petition against Japan’s bid (Liu 2005: 125–126). Meanwhile, a wave of violent anti-Japanese demonstrations spread over the whole country. In all major Chinese cities, furious mobs assaulted Japanese tourists and ravaged Japanese shops and restaurants. The relative tolerance of Chinese authorities towards demonstrations indicated that Beijing gave a tacit approval for this radical movement (Zakowski 2012: 55).

Instead of forcing Japan to concessions on the history issues, anti-Japanese riots only stiffened Japan’s position. In March 2005, when the demonstrations were at their peak, Foreign Minister Machimura communicated that Japan would finish yen loans to China within the framework of Official Development Assistance (ODA) by the opening of the Beijing Olympics in 2008 (Sekiyama 2008: 109–128). The decision on this matter was not unanimous, but the China school in MOFA was unable to change the minister’s mind.

In mid-zApril 2005, Machimura Nobutaka visited Beijing, where he requested apologies and compensation for the acts of violence against Japanese citizens. China, however, refused to meet this demand and emphasized that the main problem lay in Koizumi’s approach to history. Chinese diplomats once again criticized the visits to Yasukuni and the contents of Japanese history textbooks. A

meeting between Koizumi Jun'ichirō and Hu Jintao at the Asian and African leaders' summit in Jakarta in the second half of April 2005 did not bring any agreement on this matter either. In his speech during the summit, Koizumi repeated Prime Minister Murayama's apologies for Japanese expansionism during the colonial period, but this gesture did not suffice to please Chinese diplomats. At the beginning of May 2005, Koizumi sent Prime Minister's Special Advisor Yamasaki Taku as his emissary to Beijing. Yamasaki attempted to persuade Beijing to accept Japan's permanent membership in the UN Security Council, but the Chinese side linked the progress on this matter with the Yasukuni issue (*Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu* 2006: 282–288). Escalation of animosity between both nations hindered undertaking any constructive dialogue. In fact, the Jakarta summit was the last time that Chinese decision-makers agreed to hold a meeting with Koizumi. When in May 2005 Chinese Vice Premier Wu Yi visited Japan to attend the Expo in Aichi, she abruptly cancelled an appointment with Koizumi when he repeated that he did not intend to renounce paying homage to Yasukuni. This incident was widely commented as an offense towards the Japanese prime minister and contributed to the further deterioration of bilateral contacts (*Uchiyama* 2007: 144–145; *Sawa* 2006: 77–98).

While South Korea was as vocal as China in condemning Koizumi's stance on history issues, unlike Beijing, Seoul did not cease diplomatic dialogue at the highest level with Japan. President Roh Moo-hyun held a “no necktie” summit with the Japanese prime minister in Kagoshima Prefecture in December 2004, and Koizumi revisited Seoul in June 2005 to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between both countries. Before Koizumi's visit to Seoul, MOFA conducted difficult negotiations on history problems with the Republic of Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Under pressure from South Korea, MOFA bureaucrats agreed to include in the Japanese prime minister's speech a point on examining the possibility of constructing a new nonreligious mourning facility for the war dead. Nevertheless, before traveling to Seoul Koizumi repeated his opinion that no new facility could ever substitute for the Yasukuni Shrine. As a result, the MOFA bureaucrats' plan to find a common understanding on history issues with South Korea ended in a failure (*Mainichi Shinbun* 2005a, June 21). Moreover, Roh Moo-hyun mentioned the bureaucratic-level agreement during a press conference, which was met with astonishment from Koizumi and his closest entourage. Prime Minister's Secretary Iijima (2007: 238–240) severely reprimanded MOFA officials for not having consulted on such an important issue with the Kantei.

Soon after the escalation of anti-Japanese violence in China, House of Representatives Speaker Kōno Yōhei made another attempt at persuading Koizumi to display more flexibility on the Yasukuni issue. At the beginning of June 2005, Kōno invited to his residence five former prime ministers (Kaifu Toshiki, Miyazawa Kiichi, Murayama Tomiichi, Hashimoto Ryūtarō, and Mori Yoshirō), and he consulted by phone three others (Nakasone Yasuhiro, Hosokawa Morihiro, and Hata Tsutomu). While each of them represented a slightly different approach to the

problem of the controversial shrine, they all agreed that visits to Yasukuni should be treated with utmost prudence. However, when Kōno conveyed this joint opinion to the prime minister, he was reprimanded by Abe Shinzō, who claimed that the House of Representatives speaker's initiative violated the rule of the separation of legislative and executive powers (Kōno 2015: 169–170). Kōno (author's interview, June 20, 2013) emphasized that while he hoped that his initiative would change Koizumi's mind on the Yasukuni issue, he wanted even more to convey to the US and European public that not all Japanese politicians shared the prime minister's view on this controversial problem. To counterweigh the opinion by senior LDP politicians, at the end of June 2005 Abe managed to attract 116 junior lawmakers to the newly created Association of Young Parliamentarians Who Support Homage to Yasukuni in Order to Pray for Peace and Ponder True National Interest (*Heiwa o Negai Shin no Kokueki o Kangae Yasukuni Sanpai o Shiji Suru Wakate Kokkai Giin no Kai*) (*Mainichi Shinbun* 2005b, June 29).

Meanwhile, the left wing of the LDP started distancing themselves from Koizumi. It seems that moderate politicians became aware of the fact that further attempts at convincing the prime minister to abandon his rightist initiatives would be futile and that making headway in relations with China would necessitate ousting him from office. In June 2005, Koga Makoto announced at the *Nihon Izokukai* congress that Koizumi should take into consideration the stance of neighboring countries on the Yasukuni issue. Several days later, he emphasized that under the Koizumi administration the balance between the left and right wings of the LDP was shaken and that it was time to bring it back to equilibrium (*Asahi Shinbun* 2005c, July 11). The intention of moderate politicians was to promote the candidature of Fukuda Yasuo as Koizumi's successor (Ōshita 2007: 384). The anti-Koizumi camp included politicians from the Horiuchi, Hashimoto, Ozato, and Kōno factions who displayed a pro-Beijing posture. In June 2005, Katō Kōichi and Hashimoto Ryūtarō visited China together with several lawmakers from the Ozato, Horiuchi, and Hashimoto groups. Their intention was to strengthen connections with the CCP on the parliamentary level (*Asahi Shinbun* 2005b, June 9). Besides them, also Sino-Japanese Friendship Parliamentary League Chairperson Kōmura Masahiko, as well as LDP's coalition partner, Kōmeitō, criticized the prime minister's uncompromising stance on the Yasukuni issue (*Asahi Shinbun* 2005a, May 27).

Nevertheless, due to Koizumi's popularity among the public, faction leaders were powerless in their struggle against the government's policy. Instead of history issues, it is the privatization of the Japan Post that became the main topic for electoral campaign in September 2005. The election to the House of Representatives ended in a landslide victory of the LDP, which strengthened Koizumi's position in the ruling party even further. Under these circumstances, the backbenchers had little way to influence the Kantei's policies. In mid-October 2005, Koizumi paid his fifth visit to Yasukuni as prime minister. This time he slightly simplified rituals in the shrine, but this minor concession did not suffice to mitigate

China or South Korea's protests.¹² Beijing not only cancelled Foreign Minister Machimura's visit to China, but also suspended the bureaucratic-level talks with Japan on the joint development of the resources in the East China Sea. Just as before his previous tribute at Yasukuni, Koizumi kept his decision secret until the last moment and did not consult on the date of the visit with MOFA bureaucrats who warned that paying homage to the shrine before the APEC summit in November and East Asia Summit in December 2005 would complicate contacts with the neighboring countries (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 290–292). In fact, the Japanese prime minister visited Yasukuni exactly on the day when Administrative Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Yachi Shōtarō was conducting general policy negotiations with Chinese diplomats in Beijing. Obviously, Koizumi's sudden tribute at the shrine placed Yachi in a very awkward position and caused a suspension of talks. This indicated how little regard the Japanese prime minister had to MOFA officials' efforts to remain credible in the eyes of their Chinese counterparts (Shimizu 2008: 70; Miyamoto 2011: 125).

In the second half of 2005, Sino-Japanese dialogue at the top level was completely frozen. The cabinet reshuffle in October 2005 strengthened the right-wing image of the government. CCS Hosoda Hiroyuki was replaced with Abe Shinzō who was known as one of the leaders of the next generation of nationalists in the LDP. Foreign Minister Machimura Nobutaka, in turn, ceded his post to Asō Tarō who held as rightist views on history as his predecessor and additionally belonged to the pro-Taiwan camp. Beijing refused to arrange a meeting with Koizumi both during the APEC summit in Busan in November 2005 and during the first East Asia Summit in Kuala Lumpur in December 2005. Chinese diplomats also avoided conversations with Foreign Minister Asō whose controversial statements kept annoying Beijing. In December 2005, Asō stated that due to the constant increase in military spending the PRC was a threat for Japan (Jin 2007: 405). In February 2006, in turn, he said that Taiwan had become a country of high education standards thanks to the policy of the Imperial Japan. His words were immediately criticized by China for distorting history as well for calling Taiwan a “country” (Nagayama 2008: 227–228).

One month before stepping down from office, on August 15, 2006, Koizumi finally fully realized his electoral pledge from 2001 and visited Yasukuni on the anniversary of Japan's surrender. At a press conference, he stressed that he supported the development of friendship between Japan and East Asian countries and for that reason he had avoided paying homage to Yasukuni on August 15. Despite this fact, he kept being criticized and for that reason he finally decided it would make no difference whether he visited the controversial shrine on the anniversary of the end of World War II or not (Iijima 2006: 316–317).

¹²Koizumi did not sign under donation to the shrine as prime minister, and he did not enter the main building. One of the reasons for the simplification of rituals was the fact that the Osaka Court ruled in September 2005 that the head of government could not emphasize his official status when participating in religious activities. See: Shimizu (2006: 14–15), Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu (2006: 291).

4.7 Conclusion

The handling of history problems was the most peculiar of all case studies analyzed in this volume. The extraordinarily strong, though direct and unintended, influence of the prime minister on Japan's foreign policy could be to a great extent attributed to the idiosyncratic character of Koizumi, but it is the institutional factors that explain why the head of government was in a position to maintain this aberration from the realist theory over several years. Besides sending his Special Advisor Yamasaki Taku to Beijing, the prime minister did not directly use any new instruments of power in actually shaping the stance towards China and South Korea. Nevertheless, the central government reforms facilitated the enhancement of Koizumi's position in the government to the extent that in most cases he could resist pressure from veto players.

The Kantei was divided over history issues. "Dovish" CCS Fukuda Yasuo was to some extent counterweighed by Deputy CCS Abe Shinzō and Prime Minister's Secretary Iijima Isao, both of whom supported an assertive stance towards neighboring countries. Apart from the first pilgrimage to Yasukuni, the prime minister did not consult on the dates of his visits with his closest entourage, nor did he try to inform Beijing and Seoul on his exact plans. Perhaps this secrecy prevented the Kantei's incoherence from hindering Koizumi's right-wing endeavors. Furthermore, the prime minister was skillful in using to his advantage internal divisions among veto players. In order to display a more assertive stance on history issues, he played MEXT off against MOFA and LDP right-wing politicians against the pro-Beijing camp. The surprisingly strong position held by Iijima vis-à-vis MOFA during preparation of Koizumi's visits to China and South Korea symbolized the Kantei's enhanced power towards elite bureaucrats.

Unfriendly moods in relations with the neighboring countries constituted a side-effect of Koizumi's personal approach to visits to Yasukuni, not a result of any intentional diplomatic strategy. Societal pressures do not shed much light on the underlying causes of the prime minister's behavior. As evidenced by *Yomiuri Shinbun* editor-in-chief's role in persuading the prime minister to change the date of his first visit to Yasukuni, Koizumi attached some importance to opinion polls. However, as his controversial approach to history issues did not seem to overly harm the high popular support for the cabinet, the prime minister felt secure in continuing homage to the shrine.

Additionally, external pressures only to a limited degree influenced Koizumi's behavior. The crisis in relations with the neighboring countries illustrates the salience of such intervening variables as the prime minister's personality, ideological leaning, and domestic political calculations that heavily distorted Japan's reaction to incentives stemming from the international community. While these unit-level factors had been present in the pre-reform period, until the 1990s the prime ministers quickly conformed with external pressures whenever their ideologically motivated initiatives encountered strong resistance abroad. It is the new

institutional setting that facilitated Koizumi to display a more assertive posture regarding history issues throughout his whole term in office.

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Chapter 5

Prime Minister Koizumi's Policy Towards North Korea

5.1 Introduction

Koizumi Jun'ichirō, as the first and so far only Japanese prime minister, paid two historic visits to Pyongyang in 2002 and 2004. Japan had numerous problems to cope with in policy towards North Korea at the beginning of the twenty-first century: unsettled issues of apologies and reparations for the period of colonial rule, plans of normalization of diplomatic relations, or the controversies over Kim Jong-il's regime's nuclear program. However, it is the problem of the numerous abductions of Japanese citizens that dominated and hindered bilateral negotiations in all the fields.

Prime Minister Koizumi insisted on flexible talks with Pyongyang aimed at returning abducted citizens to Japan. However, he had to take into account strong opposition from the majority of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) bureaucrats. Especially, the North American Affairs Bureau and the Treaties Bureau insisted on formulating policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in conformity with the United States who at that time decided to intensify sanctions against Pyongyang. Koizumi, however, found an ally in MOFA in the person of Tanaka Hitoshi, head of the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau. By skillfully exploiting intra-ministerial divisions, the prime minister was able to use his new powers to play a proactive role in leading Japan's diplomatic endeavors towards North Korea.

5.2 Japan's Policy Towards North Korea Before the Central Government Reforms

Korea used to be a Japanese colony from 1910 to 1945. The unstable geopolitical situation on the Korean Peninsula after the Korean War (1950–1953) as well as the dispute over the legacy of the colonial period prolonged the process of normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and both Korean countries. The Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea was finally signed in 1965. In return for the funds provided by Japan in the form of free products and services as well as low-interest loans amounting to approximately 500 million USD, the Park Chung-hee regime renounced demanding explicit written apologies for the colonial occupation (Takasaki 1996: 116–204). Despite several attempts at initiating normalization talks, as a US ally Tokyo was unable to negotiate a similar agreement with Pyongyang. During the Cold War, Japan's exchange with the Kim Il-sung regime was maintained mainly by the Japan Socialist Party (JSP).

What additionally hindered contacts between Japan and North Korea was Pyongyang's state-sponsored terrorism and the nuclear armaments program. In 1983, Japan froze any exchange with North Korea after an assassination attempt against South Korean President Chun Doo-hwan during his visit to Rangoon. Another wave of sanctions against Pyongyang was introduced in 1987, when North Korean agents put a bomb on Korean Air Flight 858 from Baghdad to Seoul causing 115 casualties (Shigemura 2000: 64–71). In 1993, in turn, North Korea conducted Nodong-1 missile tests over the Sea of Japan and announced its plans to withdraw from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The crisis was overcome in 1994, when Pyongyang agreed to renounce its nuclear weapon program in exchange for construction of two light-water reactor power plants financed mainly by South Korea, Japan, and the United States. Nevertheless, the Kim Jong-il regime still constituted a potential threat for stability in the region, as evidenced by the Taepodong-1 missile test in 1998.

Concurrently, another grave problem emerged in bilateral relations. It was revealed that at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s North Korean agents had abducted a number of Japanese citizens to use them as Japanese-language teachers for spies or as spouses for foreign terrorists who had fled to North Korea. For years their fate remained unknown. Nevertheless, at the end of the 1980s Kim Hyon-hui, a North Korean agent responsible for the bombing of Korean Air Flight 858, admitted that she had been trained by one of the abducted Japanese, known to her under a Korean name of Lee Un-hae. In 1991, the Japanese police confirmed Lee's true identity as Taguchi Yaeko from Saitama Prefecture. In 1997, in turn, a police representative admitted during hearings in the House of Councilors that there was a strong probability that the DPRK had abducted ten Japanese, including one child—a thirteen-year-old schoolgirl Yokota Megumi from Niigata Prefecture. Pyongyang vehemently denied these accusations (Shigemura 2000: 67–72). Nevertheless, the evidence seemed to be sound. The information on the kidnapping of Yokota Megumi was disclosed by a former North Korean spy who fled to South Korea in

1994. In 1997, the families of the abducted established the Association of Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea (Kitachōsen ni yoru Rachi Higaisha Kazoku Renrakukai) presided over by Megumi's father, Yokota Shigeru (Hasuike et al. 2010: 34–54).

Due to a lack of official diplomatic relations, negotiations with North Korea were initially conducted through semiofficial party-to-party channels. At the end of the 1980s, Pyongyang changed its strategy from relying on ties with the JSP to putting more emphasis on establishing connections with the most influential figures in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). The main result of these endeavors was a visit to North Korea by former Vice Premier Kanemaru Shin in 1990. Kanemaru, who was a heavy-weight politician from the Takeshita faction, a dominant group in the LDP at that time, during a private conversation with Kim Il-sung agreed to start bilateral normalization talks and expressed his opinion that Japan would be ready to pay about 8 billion USD to North Korea as a compensation for the colonial rule. Eight rounds of negotiations on that issue were indeed held in 1991–1992. During the first meeting, Japanese diplomats focused on the legal aspects of the plans to normalize bilateral relations, and they failed to clearly address the abduction problem and the nuclear armaments issue. As a result, Pyongyang refused to discuss these two grave problems during subsequent rounds of negotiations. The Japanese side requested information on the identity of Lee Un-hae, but North Korea claimed that such a person had never existed. When Tokyo continued insisting on commencing investigation on that matter, Pyongyang simply withdrew from negotiations (Shigemura 2000: 104–122).

After the demise of Kanemaru Shin due to the Sagawa Kyūbin scandal in 1992, North Korea tried to establish connections with other influential LDP politicians, such as Katō Kōichi, Mori Yoshirō, Nonaka Hiromu, Nakayama Masaaki, or Yamasaki Taku.¹ Under the Murayama government (1994–1996), Japan responded to North Korea's requests for humanitarian help in the face of famine. MOFA bureaucrats tried to use this opportunity to retract Kanemaru's declaration on compensation for colonial rule, but the JSP, who was LDP's coalition partner at that time, objected. Eventually, instead of commencing negotiations from scratch, Japan agreed to simply reopen another round of the talks that had been suspended in 1992. In the mid-1990s, Tokyo provided 500,000 t of rice to Pyongyang, but the negotiations were not resumed immediately. It was caused by the fact that the new Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryūtarō (1996–1998) displayed a lack of confidence in party-to-party communication channels (Shigemura 2000: 160–171).

Meanwhile, Japanese media became more interested in the abduction problem after the disclosure of the results of a police investigation on that matter. In 1997, Pyongyang was visited by a group of Japanese politicians led by LDP General Council Chair Mori Yoshirō. Responding to Japan's demands on the abduction issue, North Korea promised to examine the problem of kidnappings through the

¹In 1992 it was revealed that the transportation company Sagawa Kyūbin had provided massive bribes to Kanemaru, who was charged with evading taxes and arrested in 1993.

North Korean Red Cross, but it insisted on using a word “missing,” not “abducted.” Pyongyang later informed Japan that it had not found any trace of the Japanese citizens in question. Also a Socialist, former Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi, who visited North Korea in 1999, was unable to convince Pyongyang to any concession on the abduction issue. Despite a lack of progress in this field, Japan agreed to hold the ninth round of normalization negotiations in April 2000. Because the talks followed a basic framework from 1991 to 1992, Pyongyang managed to avoid official inclusion of the abduction issue in the meeting agenda (Nonaka 2005: 310–322; Shigemura 2000: 172–185). Nevertheless, Tokyo continued to demand information about the abducted. In July 2000, Kōno Yōhei, as the first Japanese foreign minister ever, held a meeting with his North Korean counterpart, Paek Nam-sun, in Bangkok. Both sides confirmed their will to solve all problems in bilateral relations through the succeeding rounds of talks. In October 2000, in turn, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright urged Pyongyang to commence negotiations with Tokyo on the abduction issue (Kōno 2015: 153–154).

As we can see, the general framework of relations between Japan and North Korea was dictated by the structural constraints of the international system. As an American ally, Tokyo could not start an official dialogue with Pyongyang during the Cold War. The US foreign policy agenda continued influencing Japan's policy towards North Korea during the 1990s. Tokyo's position on North Korean nuclear armaments was generally consistent with Washington's grand strategy, though it does not mean that Japan fully supported all US initiatives. For instance, Tokyo negatively reacted to American plans of a preventive attack on North Korea during the 1993/1994 crisis. Japan was also reluctant to bear the costs of financing the construction of light-water reactors in 1994, but it eventually complied. During the 1998 missile crisis, in turn, Tokyo took a firmer stance towards Pyongyang than Washington (Hagström 2008: 145–147). Nevertheless, unable to independently put pressure on Pyongyang, Japanese decision-makers had to ask US diplomats for assistance even in demanding the commencement of talks on the abduction issue.

The abovementioned external incentives, however, were translated into concrete foreign policy decisions only through domestic-level intervening variables. Due to the lack of diplomatic relations, contacts between Japan and North Korea in the 1990s were maintained mainly on the semiofficial party-to-party level. For that reason, foreign policy was prone to aberrations resulting from biased perceptions, political calculations, and ideological leanings of the politicians who visited Pyongyang. Neither MOFA nor the Kantei had direct control over this backchannel diplomacy, which led to such incidents as Kanemaru's premature declaration on the compensation for colonial rule. Another potent domestic-level factor were societal pressures stemming from gradually increasing public interest in the abduction issue. Under these circumstances, in the pre-reform period Japanese prime ministers failed to display strong leadership regarding policy towards North Korea.

5.3 Interests, Ideological Leanings, and Cohesion of Main Actors

Both the world of Japanese politics and bureaucracy were not unanimous on what policy to apply towards the Pyongyang regime. The supporters of soft-power-based measures treated the normalization of relations with North Korea as a crucial goal that would enable progress in the other contentious fields. Those who opted for hard-power-like instruments, in turn, considered full resolution of the abduction issue and other bilateral problems as a prerequisite for the normalization of diplomatic relations. While the former stance was represented by Chief Cabinet Secretary (CCS) Fukuda Yasuo and MOFA Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Director-General Tanaka Hitoshi, the latter was represented by Deputy CCS Abe Shinzō as well as MOFA bureaucrats from the Treaties (International Legal Affairs) Bureau and the North American Affairs Bureau. Prime Minister Koizumi sympathized with the supporters of a flexible posture towards Pyongyang, but he had to balance between both camps.

As was already mentioned in the previous chapter, CCS Fukuda Yasuo was considered as a “dove” in the LDP. Contrary to Fukuda, his deputy Abe Shinzō supported a more assertive policy towards the Kim Jong-il regime. In fact, Abe had become involved in solving the abduction issue long before the formation of the Koizumi government. In his book *Towards a Beautiful Country*, published in 2006, he admitted that as early as 1988, when as personal secretary he assisted his father, LDP Secretary-General Abe Shintarō, Abe’s office was visited by the parents of one of the abducted, Arimoto Keiko. They revealed that their daughter, who had been missing since 1983, was allegedly living in Pyongyang. They knew that thanks to a letter entrusted in North Korea by one of the abductees to a Polish visitor. Since that moment, Abe Shinzō started investigating the abduction problem and he continued his endeavors after gaining a seat in the Diet in 1993. In 1997, Abe became one of the founding members of the Parliamentary League for the Rescue of the Japanese Abducted by North Korea (Kita Chōsen Rachi Giwaku Nihonjin Kyūen Giin Renmei). Throughout the 1990s, he was frustrated that the mass media and majority of Japanese politicians lacked interest in the abduction problem and MOFA bureaucrats displayed an excessively accommodating posture towards North Korea’s demands. According to Abe (2006: 44–59), Japan should not hesitate in using economic sanctions in order to force Pyongyang to return the abductees. After all, as he argued, only hard-power-like measures compelled Iran to release the hostages from the US Embassy in 1981 or forced the South African government to renounce their apartheid policy at the beginning of the 1990s.

Just as Koizumi’s closest entourage, MOFA was also not unanimous on what policy should be employed towards North Korea. While a lot of officials from the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau put emphasis on the necessity of normalizing diplomatic relations with Pyongyang, the North American Affairs Bureau insisted on following the US hardline policy regarding the nuclear armaments problem, and the Treaties Bureau resented any attempts at secretly negotiating an international

agreement with North Korea without a comprehensive screening of its conformity with the hitherto policy of the ministry (Yakushiji 2003: 22–24). What united MOFA bureaucrats was the conviction that Japan needed to establish a reliable channel of communication with the Kim Jong-il regime to avoid any uncoordinated multiple-channel diplomacy conducted by separate LDP politicians.

Initially, the abduction issue did not meet with much interest from LDP backbenchers, which favored moderate politicians who displayed flexibility in negotiations with Pyongyang. As the topic of the kidnapped Japanese dominated mainstream media, however, a lot of conservative lawmakers decided to exploit it politically. As a consequence, the strengthening of the Parliamentary League for the Rescue of the Japanese Abducted by North Korea posed a major obstacle in instituting a detente with North Korea by the Kantei. Moreover, the pressure for normalization of diplomatic relations with Pyongyang from Japanese economic circles was negligible, as trade with North Korea never accounted for more than 0.1% of Japan's total trade volume (Okano-Heijmans 2010: 380). This partly explains why moderate LDP politicians could not sufficiently counterbalance right-wing hardliners in the second half of Koizumi's term in office.

5.4 Secret Negotiations with North Korea

Due to the complex character of negotiations with North Korea and highly emotional nature of the abduction problem, Prime Minister Koizumi chose to keep the initial talks with the Kim Jong-il regime in complete secrecy. Contrary to the situation in the 1990s, he decided to renounce using high-profile LDP politicians as his envoys to Pyongyang. Instead of relying on not fully controllable party-to-party communication channels, Koizumi entrusted the negotiations to a MOFA bureaucrat, Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Director-General Tanaka Hitoshi. Thanks to the full backing from the prime minister, Tanaka gained sufficient authority in the ministry to overcome the institutional obstacles against rapprochement with Pyongyang.

Tanaka Hitoshi was a rare example of a reformist MOFA official. He frankly admitted that while changes in the international situation often necessitated displaying proactive posture and flexibility in negotiations with other countries, bureaucracy was overcome by the "diseases" of excessive legalism, elitism, as well as relying on precedents and procedures (Tanaka 2015: 182–183). Despite the fact that Tanaka did not speak Korean and thus could not be considered as a Korea specialist in a stricter sense, he boasted considerable experience in Korean affairs. As North East Asian Affairs Division Director in 1987–1989, he had dealt with the Korean Air Flight 858 bombing incident, as Director for Policy Coordination in the newly created Foreign Policy Bureau in 1993–1996 he had conducted interministerial coordination over the Japanese contribution to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), and as Director for North American Affairs in 1996–1998 he had been responsible for drafting new defense

guidelines with the United States, including a scenario of a crisis situation on the Korean Peninsula. Based on this experience, Tanaka (2009: 42–103) formulated seven “iron principles” for the talks with North Korea: (1) employ a broad perspective, (2) unify the communication channel, (3) trust the counterparts only according to their deeds, (4) always leave a written record and never negotiate alone, (5) refrain from entering into secret agreements, (6) keep the talks in complete secrecy, (7) consult decisions within the government.

On the one hand, Tanaka wanted to avoid leaks to the press that could hinder the negotiation process, but on the other hand he was prudent to thoroughly consult a small group of crucial decision-makers on all decisions. He obviously did not want a repeat of the 1990 situation, when Kanemaru’s unplanned declaration on reparations for colonial rule came to constrain Japan’s position in the talks with North Korea for years. Tanaka stressed that Koizumi was very strict in his instructions regarding the secrecy of the negotiations. Besides the prime minister, only four of Tanaka’s superiors were to be informed about the talks: CCS, administrative deputy CCS, foreign minister, and foreign administrative vice minister. Starting in autumn 2001, Tanaka held more than 20 secret meetings with North Korean diplomats, usually on the weekends. All the time, he kept in touch with Koizumi and Fukuda by consulting them on Thursdays or Fridays before each negotiation round and reporting back the results immediately after returning to Japan on Mondays or Tuesdays. In total, Tanaka held as many as 88 conversations with Koizumi within 1 year of negotiations. Concurrently, he respected the chain of command by not concealing any information from his superiors in MOFA (Tanaka 2009: 102–103). Apart from the officials mentioned by Koizumi, only North East Asian Affairs Division Director Hiramatsu Kenji and a translator who accompanied Tanaka in secret meetings knew about the negotiations (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 18).

It is worth emphasizing that none of the decision-makers who were consulted by Tanaka on the negotiations represented the right wing of the LDP. As was already mentioned, CCS Fukuda Yasuo was a moderate politician. Ministers of foreign affairs (Tanaka Makiko until January 2002 and Kawaguchi Yoriko since February 2002) displayed an understanding towards Tanaka’s efforts as well. By contrast, such hawkish politicians as Deputy CCS Abe Shinzō, who could have constrained Tanaka’s endeavors, were kept out of the inner circle of decision-makers. Thanks to that, the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau director-general could display more flexibility in these delicate talks.

As revealed by Tanaka, since the first round of negotiations in a hotel room in Chinese Dalian, his initial goal was to examine the credibility of his counterpart whose real name or position he did not even know. Tanaka demanded a release of a former *Nihon Keizai Shinbun* journalist, Sugishima Takashi, who had been detained in North Korea for espionage. Sugishima was indeed released in February 2002. Thanks to the realization of this and several other requests, Tanaka gradually became convinced that the mysterious North Korean diplomat truly was a trusted subordinate of Kim Jong-il. Answering similar concerns from “Mister X” about access to top decision-makers in Japan, Tanaka showed to him daily schedules of the prime minister published by major Japanese newspapers. They proved that the

Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau director-general met Koizumi on a regular basis, though, of course, they did not reveal the topics discussed during those meetings. Such “tests” and the confidential character of negotiations were necessary preconditions before proceeding to more serious matters (Tanaka 2009: 104–107).

Tanaka emphasized that Japan's interests lay not in solving the abduction problem alone, but rather in seeking a comprehensive settlement for all issues in bilateral relations, including Pyongyang's nuclear armaments, missile tests, history problems, and diplomatic normalization. Regarding the difficult past of the colonial period, North Korea insisted on the fulfillment of Kanemaru's promise regarding official apologies and compensation, but Tanaka unyieldingly defended MOFA's stance on that matter. He stressed that Japan may apologize, but only to the Korean people, not to the North Korean government. More importantly, he argued that as Japan had not fought a war against Korea, it was impossible to pay any official indemnities. Instead, he opted for a solution similar to the one applied in the 1965 treaty with South Korea, that is, mutual renouncement of any financial claims in return for economic assistance from Japan after the normalization of relations. While North Korean diplomats several times suspended negotiations due to disagreement over this point, they eventually conceded (Tanaka 2009: 108–111). Moreover, despite strong pressure from Pyongyang, Tanaka followed strict instructions from Koizumi, and he refused to specify the exact amount of economic assistance that would be provided by Japan after the normalization of relations (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 21–22).

It was even more difficult to convince Pyongyang to admit responsibility for the abduction problem. Gradually, by observing the behavior of North Korean diplomats, Tanaka came to believe that such a delicate issue could be resolved only during a summit between the leaders of both countries. In fact, Tanaka hoped that there was a way to use the authority of Kim Jong-il to find a complex solution to all the problems in bilateral contacts. As a result, both sides commenced preparations for a historic visit of Koizumi to Pyongyang. Tanaka pressed for gaining a clear declaration on the abduction issue before the summit, but his interlocutor insisted that only Kim Jong-il could reveal the truth. Tanaka suspected that North Korea was afraid that admitting its responsibility for the abductions would harden Japanese public opinion, and thus force Koizumi to cancel his visit to Pyongyang. Understanding the North Korean negotiator's delicate position, Tanaka was willing to give his counterpart the benefit of the doubt (Tanaka 2009: 108–111).

As emphasized by Tanaka (2009: 111–113), forcing North Korea to concessions on the compensation issue and abduction problem would not have been possible without a favorable international situation. The US Afghanistan offensive in October 2001 and President George Bush's State of the Union Address in January 2002 that included North Korea in the “axis of evil” together with Iraq and Iran provided Tanaka with a convenient tool that allowed one to put pressure on Pyongyang. On the one hand, he warned that the Kim Jong-il regime might become the next target of the US War on Terror, while on the other hand he explained that thanks to the long history of alliance and personal friendship between Bush and

Koizumi, Japan could assuage America's anti-North Korean sentiments. Tanaka intentionally visited the United States on a regular basis to strengthen the impression that his position was backed by Washington (Tanaka 2015: 135).

When most of contentious issues had been overcome through secret talks, in the summer of 2002 both sides started preparing the ground for more formal bilateral negotiations. At the end of July 2002, Foreign Minister Kawaguchi Yoriko met her North Korean counterpart Paek Nam-sun during an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum in Brunei. Contrary to the conversation with Kōno Yōhei 2 years earlier, Paek agreed to mention the abduction problem in the joint declaration as a "pending humanitarian issue." The meeting was a result of Tanaka's insistence that "Mister X," who presumably represented the National Defense Commission, should involve also the North Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the negotiations. In August 2002, in turn, Tanaka revealed a draft of the Pyongyang Declaration to the directors-general of other bureaus in MOFA, most significantly to Yachi Shōtarō (Foreign Policy Bureau), Fujisaki Ichirō (North American Affairs Bureau), and Ebihara Shin (Treaties Bureau). Hearing explanations that Tanaka acted by strict instructions from the prime minister, MOFA bureaucrats were in no position to criticize the secrecy of the negotiations. Nevertheless, severe concerns were raised on whether such an important agreement had been sufficiently consulted with the United States (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 23–27). These concerns were well grounded, as in the same month the United States shared with Japan its suspicion that Pyongyang was secretly operating a nuclear armaments program (Samuels 2007: 175).

Tanaka (2009: 112–121) underscored that thanks to the fact that he had spent as many as 6 years as a diplomat in the United States, he understood American situation well. He was aware of the importance of Japan–American alliance, but he was also convinced that instead of simply following Washington's global strategy, Tokyo should act independently on the international scene. Knowing that the Bush administration itself was not unanimous on its approach towards North Korea, instead of neoconservatists, such as Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld or Vice President Dick Cheney, Tanaka remained in touch with politicians who preferred diplomatic solutions, such as Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage or Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James Kelly. Thanks to the fact that Japan finally consulted the Bush administration on the Pyongyang agreement and owing to the cordial relationship between the Japanese prime minister and American president, Washington displayed an understanding towards Koizumi's plans to visit North Korea. Obviously, the United States was most interested in solving the nuclear problem, but North Korea was unwilling to discuss this issue in detail with Japan, claiming that only the United States, as a country possessing nuclear weapons, was suitable for such talks.

5.5 Koizumi's First Visit to North Korea and the Return of the Abductees

While Tanaka's 1-year-long secret negotiations prepared the ground for rapprochement between Japan and North Korea, the ultimate decision on this matter belonged to Koizumi. Finally, after informing the leaders of the United States, South Korea, China, and Russia on his decision, on August 30, 2002, the Japanese prime minister publicly revealed his intention to hold a summit with Kim Jong-il. Koizumi visited North Korea on September 17, 2002. Contrary to the expectations of the host government, he chose to limit himself to a 1-day trip and refused to participate in an official banquet. Tanaka, who accompanied the prime minister, until the last moment was unsure whether North Korea would admit its responsibility and apologize for the abduction issue, and he treated this gesture as a precondition to signing the previously negotiated agreement (Tanaka 2009: 124–128).

Eventually, immediately before the summit, Pyongyang informed the Japanese side that five of the abducted were still alive, while eight of them had died. As stressed by Prime Minister's Secretary Iijima (2007: 107–109), this news was a great shock to the whole delegation. During the meeting with Koizumi, Kim Jong-il officially admitted North Korea's responsibility for the abductions, while stressing that these acts had been unauthorized initiatives by separate agents who had been already punished for their carelessness. He confirmed that the abducted had been used as Japanese-language instructors for spies as well as providers of fake identities for the agents who infiltrated South Korea. Kim apologized for this fact and promised that such incidents would not be repeated in the future. In addition, he disclosed the results of an investigation on an unidentified spy ship that had been sunk by the Japanese Coast Guard in 2001. Kim confirmed the ship's North Korean origin, but he also stressed that its appearance in Japanese waters had been a spontaneous initiative by the involved agents and promised to refrain from such actions in the future.

While Deputy CCS Abe Shinzō accompanied Koizumi in Pyongyang, CCS Fukuda Yasuo shouldered the task of informing the families of the abducted about the fate of the missing. Some of the family members of the abducted later accused the government of intentionally delaying the news on their loved ones until the signing of the Pyongyang Declaration, not to hinder the plans of normalization of relations with North Korea. Among the passed away was Yokota Megumi who presumably had committed suicide in the 1990s (Hasuike et al. 2010: 11–43). Meanwhile, one MOFA bureaucrat was allowed to meet with the abducted and their families in Pyongyang, though he did not manage to arrange a meeting between them and Koizumi (Iijima 2007: 109).

Thanks to the breakthrough in the abduction issue, Koizumi signed the Pyongyang Declaration. Japan and North Korea promised to “make every possible effort for an early normalization of the relations” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2002). Moreover, Tokyo admitted that it regarded “in a spirit of humility, the facts of history that Japan caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of

Korea through its colonial rule in the past, and expressed deep remorse and heartfelt apology” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2002). Just as had been negotiated by Tanaka, both sides mutually waived property and financial claims, and in return Japan promised to provide economic cooperation, “including grant aids, long-term loans with low interest rates and such assistances as humanitarian assistance through international organizations, over a period of time deemed appropriate by both sides, and providing other loans and credits by such financial institutions as the Japan Bank for International Co-operation with a view to supporting private economic activities” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2002). The scale and contents of the economic aid were to be determined during normalization talks. While the declaration did not contain explicit apologies for the abductions, it mentioned “the outstanding issues of concern related to the lives and security of Japanese nationals” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2002). North Korea “confirmed that it would take appropriate measures so that these regrettable incidents, that took place under the abnormal bilateral relationship, would never happen in the future” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2002). In addition, both sides promised “they would comply with international law and would not commit conducts threatening the security of the other side” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2002).

The last point of the Pyongyang Declaration concerned regional issues. Both sides emphasized their will “to maintain and strengthen the peace and stability of North East Asia” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2002). More importantly, they expressed their wish to establish a framework for strengthening “co-operative relationships based upon mutual trust” and to enhance confidence-building in the region (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2002). In addition,

Both sides confirmed that, for an overall resolution of the nuclear issues on the Korean Peninsula, they would comply with all related international agreements. Both sides also confirmed the necessity of resolving security problems including nuclear and missile issues by promoting dialogues among countries concerned. The DPRK side expressed its intention that, pursuant to the spirit of this Declaration, it would further maintain the moratorium on missile launching in and after 2003. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2002)

While the Pyongyang Declaration did not bring a final solution to the nuclear armaments problem, Tanaka (2009: 122) emphasized that it gave an incentive for US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James Kelly to visit Pyongyang in October 2002, and thus prepared the ground for the Six-Party Talks in the following year.

Koizumi's diplomatic success met with an overwhelming applause in Japan. According to an opinion poll by *Asahi Shinbun* (2002b, September 20), as many as 81% of respondents positively evaluated the prime minister's visit to Pyongyang, and the cabinet's approval rate instantly jumped from 51% to 61%. At the same time, 58% of respondents acknowledged the need for reopening normalization negotiations with North Korea and 59% agreed that it would be beneficial to establish an official diplomatic relationship with that country. However, merely 15% were satisfied with Pyongyang's posture regarding the abduction problem and only 22% claimed that the visit contributed to progress in the talks on nuclear

armaments. In the face of popular support for the prime minister, LDP backbenchers refrained from criticizing Koizumi for not having consulted the ruling party on the visit to North Korea. Nevertheless, the LDP Policy Affairs Research Council (PARC) foreign policy division issued a recommendation to the head of government that the uttermost attention should be paid to public opinion during further talks with the DPRK and that progress in the abduction problem should be treated as a precondition to achieving agreements in other areas (*Asahi Shinbun* 2002a, September 19).

Obviously, after knowing the fate of the abducted, Prime Minister Koizumi immediately demanded the return to Japan of the five persons who survived as well as comprehensive investigation on the circumstances of the deaths of the remaining eight. North Korea, however, was reluctant to accept these terms. Pyongyang claimed that the five abducted had no will of returning to Japan and that it is their family members who should instead visit them in the DPRK. Nevertheless, the Association of Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea decisively refused such solution. Eventually, Pyongyang agreed to allow the abductees to visit their homeland upon the condition that after two weeks they would return to North Korea. Having no other choice, the Japanese government conceded. The five abductees finally came to Tokyo on October 15, 2002 (Abe 2006: 46–47).

At that time, Deputy CCS Abe Shinzō, who until the signing of the Pyongyang Declaration had not participated in negotiations with North Korea, together with Special Advisor to the Cabinet Nakayama Kyōko became key persons in charge of solving the abduction problem. Abe revealed that the five abductees, persuaded by their families, expressed their will to remain in Japan permanently. The main problem was the fact that their children and spouses still lived in North Korea. Eventually, it was Abe Shinzō who advised the prime minister not only to refuse the return of the abductees to the DPRK, but also to take full responsibility for this decision by the government. As he explained, while part of the Japanese media criticized the breaking of the agreement with the Kim Jong-il regime, Tokyo could not reveal that in fact the decision was made by the abductees themselves. Otherwise, Pyongyang could take revenge upon their families (Abe 2006: 47–48).

Tanaka Hitoshi was in no position to deny the abducted the right to stay in their homeland, but he warned that breaking the agreement would deprive Tokyo of credibility in the eyes of North Korea, and thus hamper future efforts for also bringing the abductees' families to Japan. Indeed, after this incident Tanaka's communication channel with "Mister X" stopped functioning as efficiently as before (Tanaka 2009: 132–135). In addition, Tokyo's controversial decision endangered normalization talks with North Korea, which according to the Pyongyang Declaration were scheduled for the end of October 2002. While the 12th round of negotiations was relaunched in Kuala Lumpur after 2 years of suspension, no progress was made due to the controversies over the abduction issue. North Korea accused Japan of breaking the agreement and treated the return of the five abductees to Pyongyang as a prerequisite to talks on other topics. Understandably, Japan was unwilling to comply (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 45). At the verge of 2002 and 2003, North Korean state-controlled media started accusing Tokyo of lack

of good will and insisting that the abduction problem was insignificant from the point of view of a general state of bilateral relations (Kan 2003: 155). Such posture reignited anti-North Korean emotions among the Japanese public, which further hindered dialogue between both countries.

5.6 Six-Party Talks and Koizumi's Second Visit to North Korea

Meanwhile, the international situation over the North Korean nuclear problem grew more tense. In October 2002, Pyongyang admitted that it was continuing its uranium enrichment program, and in January 2003 the Kim Jong-il regime announced its decision to withdraw from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. As a result, the United States, who was involved in operations in Afghanistan and planning an intervention in Iraq at that time, increased its efforts to solve the North Korean nuclear armaments problem through diplomatic channels.

Tanaka Hitoshi, who in December 2002 became deputy minister for foreign affairs, continued coordinating contacts with the DPRK, but he no longer enjoyed the position of sole negotiator with the Kim Jong-il regime. Before Koizumi's visit to the United States in May 2003, key decision-makers in the Kantei and MOFA held divergent opinions over what policy to apply towards Pyongyang. CCS Fukuda Yasuo, Foreign Minister Kawaguchi Yoriko, and Foreign Administrative Vice Minister Takeuchi Yukio displayed understanding towards Tanaka who claimed that Japan should not provoke escalation of the dispute with North Korea. Tanaka insisted that during a conversation with Bush, Koizumi should not mention that "dialogue and pressure" were necessary for achieving a peaceful solution of the North Korean controversies, and he instead proposed using a softer expression of "dialogue and deterrence." By contrast, Tanaka's successor as Director-General of Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, Yabunaka Mitoji, as well as North American Affairs Bureau Director-General Ebihara Shin and Foreign Policy Bureau Director-General Nishida Tsuneo shared Deputy CCS Abe Shinzō's stance to include "pressure" in the joint statement. Eventually, a compromise was struck that the prime minister would refer to "pressure" during the summit, but this issue would be "treated carefully" in the official declaration. Indeed, while Koizumi, reminded by Abe, mentioned "pressure" when conversing with Bush, the final version of the document for the press omitted this controversial expression. Nevertheless Abe, who was in charge of the press conference, ignored the MOFA briefing and repeated the word "pressure" in the post-summit public statement (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 45–48).

Motegi Toshimitsu, who became foreign vice minister in October 2002, represented a balanced stance on policy towards North Korea. He stressed that the word "pressure" meant diplomatic persuasion rather than military activities. According to Motegi (2003: 40–108), over time the pressure on Pyongyang would

gradually increase through the mere fact that North Korea would not receive sufficient food and energy provisions from the international community. He emphasized that MOFA had to begin a “post-Tanaka North Korea diplomacy” by both overcoming the internal struggles characteristic of former Foreign Minister Tanaka Makiko, and ending bilateral talks with Pyongyang conducted by Tanaka Hitoshi. As he argued, the future of relations between Japan and the DPRK lay in multilateral negotiations rather than secret diplomacy.

Eventually, in August 2003 the first round of the Six-Party Talks was held with the participation of both Koreas, the United States, China, Japan, and Russia. The Japanese stance in these multilateral negotiations kept being severely constrained by the abduction problem. Director-General of Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Yabunaka (2010: 139–141) revealed that he was placed in a difficult position as Japan's representative during the first round of talks in Beijing. He was asked by the Chinese hosts not to refer to the abduction problem in order to not hinder the negotiations on nuclear armaments. Nevertheless, throughout succeeding rounds, Yabunaka stressed that the full investigation on the kidnappings of Japanese citizens was an equally important precondition to the normalization of diplomatic relations with North Korea as a resolution of the nuclear issue. Yabunaka claimed that by consistently adhering to this policy he not only gained support from the United States, but also understanding from other parties of the negotiations.

One of the reasons why Japan showed no flexibility in the abduction issue was the fact that after Koizumi's visit to Pyongyang this problem attracted enormous attention from the Japanese media. In the face of the tragedy of the victims, the public demanded more decisive action to force North Korea to a comprehensive investigation on the kidnappings. Public pressure was accompanied by a violent campaign against “North Korea sympathizers” initiated by right-wing newspapers, magazines, and activists. For example, former LDP Secretary-General Nonaka Hiromu was harassed by sound trucks circulating near his house, and Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Tanaka Hitoshi found a time bomb in his garage (Hagström and Hanssen 2015: 76–77).

Under these circumstances, it is easy to comprehend why many LDP politicians started envisaging employment of economic sanctions against the Kim Jong-il regime. A group of lawmakers of the ruling party prepared a project of a bill that would enable halting trade and financial transactions with North Korea. Nevertheless, both Ministry of Finance (MOF) and MOFA were skeptical about the need for passing a special law dealing with this problem, and the bill was not submitted to the Diet. The situation changed when Abe Shinzō became LDP secretary-general in September 2003. Abe actively used his new position to promote an assertive posture towards Pyongyang. In October 2003, he established and became the chairperson of the LDP Headquarters for Countermeasures against the Problem of Abductions by North Korea (*Kitachōsen ni yoru Rachi Mondai Taisaku Honbu*). Moreover, Abe ensured that the return to Japan of the families of the five abducted was included in the LDP electoral manifesto and promised to accelerate legislative procedures on the bill introducing economic sanctions against the Kim Jong-il regime (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 48–50). The LDP performed relatively well in the November

2003 parliamentary election, receiving only four seats short of a majority in the House of Representatives. While Abe improved his image thanks to the exploitation of the abduction problem, Social Democratic Party (SDP) leader Doi Takako, who used to defend North Korea, lost in her single-seat constituency and entered the Diet only thanks to proportional votes (Kitaoka 2004: 230–234).

Concerned with Japan's growing assertiveness, Pyongyang started searching for new communication channels with Tokyo. In December 2003, North Korean diplomats met in Beijing with LDP lawmaker Hirasawa Katsuei. They warned that employment of economic sanctions would mean a declaration of war against their country, but also proposed a compromise solution to the abduction problem. They promised that if the five abducted agreed to travel to Pyongyang, they would be allowed to immediately return to Japan together with their families. Hirasawa transmitted this proposal to the government, but both the Kantei and MOFA resented relying on semiofficial contacts with North Korea through politicians of the ruling party. Instead, Tanaka Hitoshi revived his connection with "Mister X." MOFA expected that in order to stop introduction of economic sanctions North Korea would be more willing to concede on the abduction problem. Contrary to Tanaka's expectations, however, thanks to an unexpected support from the opposition parties, the bill blocking financial transactions with North Korea was passed extraordinarily swiftly on February 9, 2004, just 2 days before Tanaka's and Yabunaka's visit to Pyongyang. For that reason, the two MOFA bureaucrats lost credibility in the eyes of their North Korean counterparts and could not persuade them to any concession on the abduction issue. Tanaka proposed that a high-ranking Japanese governmental official could visit Pyongyang if only the eight family members of the abducted were released, but it did not suffice to please the Kim Jong-il regime (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 51–56).

After failing to revive contacts with MOFA diplomats, North Korea intensified its efforts to establish a reliable communication channel with the Japanese prime minister through one influential LDP politician. Eventually, it was Yamasaki Taku, leader of a middle-sized LDP faction and close associate of Koizumi, who shouldered this role. At the beginning of April 2004, Yamasaki together with Hirasawa met in Chinese Dalian with North Korean diplomats. The Japanese politicians repeated the proposal to send a governmental representative for the families of the abducted, but Pyongyang was most concerned about Koizumi's readiness to relaunch normalization talks in accordance with the 2002 agreement. Meanwhile, Koizumi sought yet another communication channel with North Korea. Without coordinating with Tanaka Hitoshi nor Yamasaki Taku, Prime Minister's Secretary Iijima Isao had been conducting since January 2004 secret negotiations with the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (Zai-Nihon Chōsenjin Sōrengōkai, often abbreviated to Chōsen Sōren) that represented Koreans living in Japan who sympathized with Pyongyang (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 56–61).

Eventually, Koizumi chose Iijima's channel as the one he would use to achieve progress on the abduction issue. At the end of April 2004, he suddenly informed CCS Fukuda Yasuo and Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Tanaka Hitoshi that he

decided to pay a second visit to Pyongyang in order to bring back with him the families of the abductees. In return for this concession, North Korea demanded 1 million tons of rice, but Japan managed to negotiate this amount down to 250,000 t. Koizumi's plan to visit the DPRK was publicly announced on May 14, 2004. It is worth noting that on the same day there were two other important pieces of news: that Ozawa Ichirō agreed to assume the post of Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) leader after Kan Naoto's resignation due to the unpaid annuities scandal, and that Koizumi had also not paid his annuities in the past.² Under these circumstances, the opposition parties accused Koizumi of intentionally hastening the visit to Pyongyang to manipulate agenda-setting by the media (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 61–73).

Regardless of Koizumi's true motives, it was his strong determination to bring the families of the abducted to Japan that decided about his second visit to the DPRK on May 22, 2004. During a brief meeting with Kim Jong-il, both leaders reconfirmed the contents of the Pyongyang Declaration and agreed to continue discussions towards the resumption of normalization talks. Chairman Kim repeated his promise to maintain a moratorium on missile tests and stated that the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula was his primary goal. Prime Minister Koizumi, in turn, announced his decision to provide pharmaceutical supplies and food to North Korea through international organizations. As for the abduction problem, five family members of the abductees were immediately released, and Pyongyang agreed to commence “a full-scale reinvestigation with the participation of Japan on those abductees whose whereabouts are unknown” (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 2004).

While Koizumi's second visit to North Korea was not as highly appreciated by the Japanese public as the first one, it nonetheless improved the prime minister's image as a strong leader. According to an opinion poll by *Asahi Shinbun* (2004, May 24), 67% of respondents positively evaluated the summit with Kim Jong-il, and the cabinet support rate rose from 45% to 54%. At the same time, however, 61% of respondents disagreed with the policy of providing humanitarian aid to the Pyongyang regime. CCS Hosoda Hiroyuki and Foreign Minister Kawaguchi Yoriko immediately communicated the results of the summit to the Association of Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea. As admitted by Iijima (2007: 174–177), many activists of this organization were frustrated with Koizumi, accusing him of excessive concessions towards the DPRK. Moreover, the Japanese prime minister was unable to convince Charles Robert Jenkins, a spouse of one of the abducted Japanese, and their two daughters, to return to Japan. Jenkins, as an American soldier who had defected to North Korea in the 1960s, was afraid that he would be extradited to the United States by the Japanese authorities. Eventually, however, an evaluation of Koizumi's visit to Pyongyang turned more positive when

²Ozawa Ichirō had to later withdraw his decision when it was revealed that he had also not paid his annuities.

after 2 months Jenkins managed to reunite with his wife in Indonesia and return to Japan together with their children.

Meanwhile, Japan waited for the results of the promised investigation on the abduction issue. In August 2004, Tokyo officially confirmed the provision of 125,000 t of food to North Korea, while implying that the second half of the humanitarian aid would be transmitted upon the condition of progress in the investigation on the whereabouts of the abducted. During a governmental reshuffle in September 2004 Nakayama Kyōko, who strongly supported economic sanctions against Pyongyang, resigned from the office of special advisor to the cabinet, while Yamasaki Taku and former Foreign Minister Kawaguchi Yoriko, who displayed more flexibility towards North Korea, were employed as special advisors to the prime minister. This seemed to indicate that Koizumi was ready to continue normalization talks with Pyongyang. Nevertheless, the Kim Jong-il regime was very reluctant to reveal any new data on the kidnappings. North Korean diplomats kept insisting that the eight abductees had died, and two additional persons who were suspected to have been abducted never crossed North Korean borders. Moreover, Pyongyang twice changed the date of Yokota Megumi's alleged suicide in the 1990s, which did not inspire confidence from the Japanese negotiators. Only after pressure from Yabunaka and other MOFA bureaucrats in November 2004, did North Korea agree to return Yokota's remains to Japan. However, three weeks later DNA tests showed that the examined bones belonged to two different persons, none of whom was Yokota Megumi. This information shocked Japanese public and forced Tokyo to suspend the provision of the second half of humanitarian aid to North Korea in December 2004 (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 90–101).

From that moment on, bilateral negotiations virtually halted and the hitherto communication channels once again stopped functioning. Throughout 2005, North Korean representatives avoided contacts with Director-General of the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Sasae Ken'ichirō during succeeding meetings within the framework of the Six-Party Talks (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 101–104). In September 2005, Pyongyang agreed to abandon its nuclear program and return to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in exchange for the provision of energy from the United States, China, Japan, South Korea, and Russia. MOFA bureaucrats were unable to force North Korea to any concessions on the abduction issue, but they at least managed to include in the Joint Statement of the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks a declaration that both sides would "take steps to normalize their relations in accordance with the Pyongyang Declaration, on the basis of the settlement of unfortunate past and the outstanding issues of concern" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2005). The "outstanding issues" indirectly pointed to the problem of kidnappings of Japanese citizens.

5.7 Conclusion

The relative success of Koizumi's policy towards North Korea was facilitated by the enhancement of the prime minister's powers. The relaxation of the rule of dispersed management, manifested by direct reliance on Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Director-General Tanaka Hitoshi, turned out to be instrumental in gaining leverage over the entirety of MOFA. While the negotiations were conducted through the bureaucratic channel, it was Koizumi's decision to shoulder the risk of visiting Pyongyang that decided about the breakthrough in the abduction problem.

As long as cohesion of the Kantei was maintained, the prime minister was sufficiently powerful to formulate foreign policy independently of MOFA. Thanks to keeping the 1-year long talks with North Korea secret, it is the "dovish" CCS Fukuda Yasuo who dominated the Kantei's diplomacy without being constrained by the stance of such "hawkish" politicians as Deputy CCS Abe Shinzō. For the same reason, the powerful North American Affairs Bureau could not undermine Tanaka's position in MOFA. Problems started when divisions in the Kantei and MOFA surfaced after Koizumi's first visit to Pyongyang. The prime minister, who initially displayed a flexible posture towards North Korea, gradually started balancing between the Tanaka and Abe camps. In 2004, he maintained as many as three separate communication channels with Pyongyang—through MOFA bureaucrats, Hirasawa and Yamasaki, as well as Iijima. Eventually, Koizumi chose to arrange his second visit to North Korea through secret negotiations by his senior secretary, thus excluding Tanaka from decision-making.

The prime minister's foreign policy options were to some extent constrained by societal pressure. Anti-North Korean sentiments in Japan increased over time due to the highly emotional nature of the abduction problem. Even provided with new instruments of power, the prime minister was not powerful enough to ignore popular moods that were exploited and amplified by the LDP right-wing politicians. It is probable that Koizumi himself took advantage of his visits to Pyongyang to bolster his image as a strong decision-maker, but there were limits to the concessions towards North Korea acceptable to public opinion.

The less and less favorable domestic factors were accompanied by rising tension over Pyongyang's nuclear armaments program. Just as during the Cold War, the US anti-North Korean foreign policy agenda constituted a grave obstacle for Japan's rapprochement with Pyongyang. Opposite to the situation in the pre-reform period, however, Koizumi and Tanaka initially managed to overcome American pressure. The contents of the Pyongyang Declaration were negotiated independently by Tokyo and only subsequently consulted with Washington. Nevertheless, once the Kantei's cohesion weakened and veto players in the ruling party gained in prominence, it became more difficult for the prime minister to push his policy forward without taking into account the US grand strategy. As a result, at the end of Koizumi's term in office the negotiations with Pyongyang entered into a stalemate.

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Chapter 6

Rapprochement with China Under the Abe and Fukuda Cabinets

6.1 Introduction

After stepping down from office by Koizumi in September 2006, the amelioration of relations with China became one of the most important tasks for Japanese diplomacy. Despite his right-wing inclinations, Prime Minister Abe Shinzō acknowledged the concept of mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests that had been coined by Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) bureaucrats, and he employed a “strategy of ambiguity” regarding visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. This flexible posture sufficed to persuade China to accept Abe’s “ice-breaking” visit to Beijing. The culmination of atmosphere of friendship in Sino-Japanese relations occurred during the term of Prime Minister Fukuda Yasuo (2007–2008).

The rapprochement with China was conducted under highly favorable international and domestic societal circumstances and was fully supported by MOFA. In fact, it is MOFA bureaucrats, not the Kantei, who initially led the negotiations with China and played an important role in convincing Abe to employ a more accommodating stance towards Beijing. As such, this chapter provides an interesting example of the prime minister complying with external and domestic pressures. Gradually, however, policy towards China came to a greater extent under the Kantei’s control, especially during the Fukuda administration. Due to an overwhelmingly positive feedback on the rapprochement with China, at least initially, right-wing politicians in the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) were in no position to object this policy.

6.2 Japan's Policy Towards China Before the Central Government Reforms

In the postwar period, Japan's China policy was constrained by the structure of the international system, in particular by the Washington's grand strategy. It is due to pressure from the United States that Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru in 1952 established official diplomatic relations with the Republic of China instead of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Despite commencing semiofficial trade with the continental China, Japan strictly followed the American anticommunist agenda. All major changes in Tokyo's policy towards Beijing can be attributed to the evolution of Washington's Cold War strategy.

Nevertheless, Japan's China policy was also strongly influenced by such domestic-level intervening variables as factional dynamics in the ruling party, electoral strategies in LDP presidential races, or top decision-makers' leadership skills. After all, while the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations in 1972 was enabled by the 1971 Nixon shock, it is a favorable composition of the intraparty mainstream, Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei's power resources and Foreign Minister Ōhira Masayoshi's determination that considerably accelerated negotiations with Beijing. Tanaka used his extensive influences among the bureaucrats and assistance from China Division Director-General Hashimoto Hiroshi to overcome opposition from the majority of MOFA diplomats who defended the status quo of supporting the Guomindang regime. At the ruling-party level, the prime minister took advantage of various frustration-venting techniques and backstage persuasion to ease protests from pro-Taiwan politicians (Hayasaka 1993: 401–420; Tamura et al. 2000; Huang 2006: 74–75). Analogically, while Sino-American anti-Soviet cooperation favored generally cordial relations between the PRC and Japan in the 1980s, external stimuli were insufficient to explain the lag between the end of Cold War and the gradual increase in Tokyo's assertiveness towards Beijing in the 1990s. It is such intervening variables as the demise of the pro-China Tanaka/Takeshita and Ōhira/Miyazawa factions in the LDP or the generational change and rise of nationalism in Japan that help to comprehend why external pressures did not automatically translate into concrete foreign policy decisions.

History also teaches us that under certain conditions Japanese prime ministers were ready to bend or sacrifice their ideological beliefs in order to politically exploit rapprochement with China. Abe Shinzō's great-uncle, Satō Eisaku, astonished his competitors in the LDP presidential race in 1964 by abandoning his anticommunist stance and implying a need for strengthening semiofficial economic ties with the PRC. This unexpected behavior was a part of a carefully planned electoral campaign. Through displaying flexibility towards China, Satō probably wanted to draw to his camp some pro-Beijing politicians in the LDP (Zang 2000: 51–55; Yamada 1988: 433; Senda 1987: 97–114). Analogically, Tanaka's promotion of normalizing diplomatic relations with the PRC in 1972 was not a result of his pro-China convictions, but rather a fruit of Tanaka's calculations to use the mood present after the Nixon shock. Thanks to this strategy, Tanaka entered into an alliance with

three faction leaders (Ōhira Masayoshi, Miki Takeo, and Nakasone Yasuhiro) who supported normalization, thus isolating his main competitor in the LDP presidential election—the pro-Taiwanese Fukuda Takeo (Hayasaka 1993: 400–403; Tamura et al. 2000: 145–149; Nakasone 2007: 550–551). Ironically, in 1978 it was Prime Minister Fukuda who tried to politically exploit a breakthrough in relations with Beijing against the Tanaka/Ōhira camp. While it is the international situation that enabled Foreign Minister Sonoda Sunao to sign the Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship, this diplomatic achievement served Fukuda as an instrument to efface his “hawkish” image before the first ever LDP presidential primaries among rank-and-file party members (Kōno 1978: 114; Itō 1983: 396).

As we can see, even before the central government reforms it was not uncommon for prime ministers to become personally involved in China policy, and under favorable international circumstances even influence the direction of diplomacy in a top-down manner. However, only such powerful faction leaders as Tanaka Kakuei were able to successfully use their unofficial power resources to overcome the opposition to their initiatives by MOFA bureaucrats and ruling party backbenchers.

6.3 Interests, Ideological Leanings, and Cohesion of Main Actors

As was already mentioned in previous chapters, Abe Shinzō belonged to the right wing of the LDP and wholeheartedly supported prime ministers’ visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. Being a grandson of Kishi Nobusuke, prime minister in 1957–1960 who advocated the remilitarization of Japan, Abe promoted a revision of the “pacifist” Article 9 of the Constitution and a reform of the educational system (Yamagiwa 2003: 53). Moreover, he was closely related to the pro-Taiwan group in the ruling party (Honzawa 1998: 149–150). All these factors alienated Abe from the PRC. In his bestseller *Towards a Beautiful Country*, published before assuming office in 2006, by emphasizing that Japan had apologized as many as 20 times for the war, Abe implied that he would not bend to further pressure from China on history issues. On the other hand, he was aware of the importance of the PRC for Japan as their largest trading partner since 2004. In order to avoid the political exploitation of anti-Japanese feelings by Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders, Abe acknowledged the need for a “division of economy from politics” in bilateral relations (Abe 2006: 150–155).

While Abe eventually supported rapprochement with Beijing due to political calculations, his successor, Prime Minister Fukuda Yasuo, from the very beginning of his political career was a declared member of the pro-Beijing camp. As was described in previous chapters, as chief cabinet secretary (CCS) under the Koizumi administration Fukuda used his extensive diplomatic experience and actively participated in foreign policy making. He lobbied against paying homage to the Yasukuni Shrine, visited China many times, and boasted strong connections with

CCP leaders. In addition, Fukuda supported *détente* with North Korea, which indicated that he maintained a flexible posture towards communist regimes. Interestingly, he did not inherit his father's connections with Taiwan. Instead, he warned Taipei against declaring independence so as to not provoke the PRC (Fukuda and Etō 2007: 67–68). This background explains why Fukuda not only continued rapprochement with Beijing, but also elevated it to a higher level.

Both under the Abe and Fukuda administrations the Kantei remained relatively cohesive regarding policy towards China. Shiozaki Yasuhisa, CCS in 2006–2007, despite originating from a different faction than the prime minister, was a close associate of Abe. Because in 2005–2006 Shiozaki had served as foreign vice minister, he was aware of the significance of maintaining stable contacts with the PRC. In fact, it is Shiozaki who wrote together with MOFA bureaucrats Abe's speech at the Beijing–Tokyo Forum in August 2006, in which Abe called Sino-Japanese relations one of the most important bilateral relationships for Japan (Shimizu 2008: 71–72). Machimura Nobutaka, who succeeded Shiozaki during the Fukuda administration, held right-wing convictions, but he was also vice president of the Sino-Japanese Friendship Parliamentary League (Nitchū Yūkō Giin Renmei) and a member of the Parliamentarians' Association Supporting the Beijing Olympics (Pekin Orinpicqu o Shien Suru Giin no Kai). Under these circumstances, it was unlikely that CCS would question the policy of *détente* with Beijing. Besides, the role played by Kantei staff in China policy formation was secondary to MOFAs. In fact, thanks to fully relying on the foreign administrative vice minister as the key person in charge of contacts with the PRC, Abe avoided competence overlapping between politicians from his closest entourage, which hindered his efforts in other policy areas.¹

MOFA was cohesively supportive regarding the rapprochement with China. It is Yachi Shōtarō, foreign administrative vice minister in 2005–2008, who played a pivotal role in initial negotiations. Before assuming the highest bureaucratic post in the ministry, Yachi had served for 3 years as assistant CCS. While he remained outside of the decision-making core in the Kantei under the Koizumi administration, at that time he established strong personal connection with Deputy CCS Abe Shinzō, with whom he shared a tough stance towards North Korea (Shimizu 2008: 70). Despite his rather right-wing inclinations as a promoter of the values-oriented diplomacy, Yachi was determined to put an end to the stalemate in relations with China. Miyamoto Yūji, who in April 2006 assumed the office of ambassador to China, before leaving for Beijing was told by Yachi that resolution of the China problem constituted a key to making a breakthrough in the whole foreign policy of Japan. Yachi compared Japan's situation to an Othello game, in which skillfully

¹Abe appointed as many as five special advisors to the prime minister. Most of them were high-profile politicians who did not value team play. For example, a dispute between Special Advisor on National Security Koike Yuriko and CCS Shiozaki Yasuhisa contributed to the prolongation of the decision-making process on establishment of the National Security Council. See: Kakizaki and Hisae (2007: 116–138).

placing one disk on the board may change the color of all disks. It was the PRC that was this crucial pawn (Miyamoto 2011: 128–129).

Yachi's efforts were supported by virtually all MOFA bureaus and divisions. Not only the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau was eager to ameliorate relations with the PRC. The North American Affairs Bureau was increasingly concerned with voices of dissatisfaction regarding visits to Yasukuni from high-ranking US diplomats. In fact, the rapprochement with China in 2006 was largely driven by the representatives of the American school. Yachi himself originated from that group, and in August 2006 he nominated Akiba Takeo from the American school as director-general of the China and Mongolia Division, thus breaking the China school diplomats' monopoly on this post. This extraordinary appointment proves that through close relationship with Yachi, Abe managed to maintain certain control over the entirety of MOFA (Pugliese 2017; Shimizu 2008: 71).

As usually in the case of ideologically sensitive issues, the ruling party was the least coherent regarding China policy. While a lot of LDP backbenchers hoped for amelioration of Sino-Japanese relations, there was a difference of opinions as to the extent Abe should concede to Chinese demands. As was mentioned in the chapter on history issues, at the end of Koizumi's term in office the Horiuchi (Koga/Niwa), Hashimoto (Tsushima), Ozato (Tanigaki), and Kōno factions unsuccessfully tried to create a united front against Abe by stressing the need for improving relations with the PRC at the expense of paying homage to Yasukuni. On the opposite pole were right-wing politicians who supported visits to the controversial shrine regardless of international repercussions. Many of them were Abe's close associates. It is worth emphasizing, however, that the China policy was not directly related to the economic interests of the LDP electorate, and as such it did not put much domestic pressure on the government.

6.4 Initial Negotiations on Sino-Japanese *Détente*

At the end of Koizumi's term in office, external and internal stimuli against visits to Yasukuni increased significantly. Preoccupied with the unstable situation in Iraq, the Bush administration hoped for gaining China's diplomatic support on such urgent matters as North Korea's nuclear armaments. Exacerbation of Sino-Japanese tensions run counter US interests, which explains why since autumn 2005 Washington started discouraging Tokyo from continuing homage to the controversial shrine (Shimizu 2008: 67; Lai 2014: 129). In addition, while diplomacy met with much lesser public interest than the issues of economy or pension system, Japanese society seemed to be expecting a policy change regarding the Yasukuni problem. According to the *Asahi Shinbun* (2006b, August 23) opinion poll conducted after Koizumi's visit to the shrine on August 15, 2006, 49% of respondents favorably evaluated the prime minister's behavior, but only 31% claimed that the ritual should be continued by the next head of government. Moreover, as many as 64% of respondents admitted that the visits exerted a negative impact on Japan's

Asia diplomacy. Taking into account these moods, the diplomatic crisis in Sino-Japanese relations became an ideal opportunity for opposition parties to gain political capital before the 2007 House of Councilors election. In July 2006, Ozawa Ichirō, leader of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), visited Beijing where he agreed with President Hu Jintao to establish an Organization of Exchange and Consultation (Kōryū Kyōgi Kikō) between the DPJ and the CCP. Contrasting himself with Koizumi and Abe, Ozawa emphasized that true Sino-Japanese relations had to be built on ties of trust between the nations and leaders of both countries, not solely on economic interests (*Asahi Shinbun* 2006a, July 5). As was already mentioned, anti-mainstream factions in the LDP tried to exploit the China policy as well in order to undermine the Koizumi/Abe camp's position before the upcoming LDP presidential election.

In response to the abovementioned external and domestic pressures, various foreign policy making actors in Japan started preparing the ground for improving relations with the PRC after the anticipated change of prime minister. These efforts were conducted in parallel by two groups—MOFA bureaucrats and Japanese politicians. While the former perceived the problem mostly from the perspective of national interests, the latter were additionally motivated by their political calculations.

In May 2005, Foreign Administrative Vice Minister Yachi Shōtarō visited Beijing to test conditions for a breakthrough in bilateral contacts after Koizumi's anticipated stepping down from office. Yachi took part in the first round of meetings on the level of high-ranking foreign ministry officials from both countries, which were called a "general policy dialogue" (*sōgō seisaku taiwa*) by the Japanese and a "strategic dialogue" (*zhanlüe duihua*) by the Chinese side. While the talks did not immediately bring any significant results, they enabled Yachi to establish a link of trust and understanding with Chinese Foreign Vice Minister Dai Bingguo. In February 2006, Yachi invited the Chinese delegation to the Tsukioka warm spring resort in Niigata Prefecture, and Dai reciprocated by arranging the next round of talks in his home village in Guizhou Province. Thanks to this mutual exchange, both parties could frankly share their views on bilateral problems. Yachi became convinced that the future of Sino-Japanese relations would depend on the approach of the next prime minister to the Yasukuni problem (Yachi and Takahashi 2009: 30–39).

While MOFA officials were conducting negotiations on the bureaucratic level, ruling party executives tried to maintain high-level dialogue with CCP representatives. In January 2004, the LDP and Kōmeitō initiated the Sino-Japanese Conference of Exchange Between the Ruling Parties (Nitchū Yotō Kōryū Kyōgikai) with the CCP. As emphasized by LDP Policy Affairs Research Council (PARC) Chairperson Nukaga Fukushirō, a series of meetings between the politicians of both countries was supposed to enable a frank exchange of opinions on difficult topics to find common interests for the construction of win-win relations (Nukaga 2010: 101–102). Due to Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni, however, the first meeting of the conference took place as late as February 2006. During discussions with Chinese politicians, Abe's close associate, LDP PARC Chairperson Nakagawa Hidenao,

stressed that Sino-Japanese rapprochement required bearing the risk by decision-makers of both countries, which was futile through bureaucratic-level negotiations alone (Nakagawa 2008: 164–165). In March 2006, representatives of seven Sino-Japanese friendship associations gathered in Beijing.² During a conversation with the chairperson of the Japanese delegation, former Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryūtarō, President Hu Jintao emphasized that Sino-Japanese cooperation would be beneficial for both sides, while mutual frictions were counterproductive. As the gravest problem, Hu once again indicated the Japanese prime minister's visits to Yasukuni (Miyamoto 2011: 130–133).

Both the bureaucratic and political-level contacts with China convinced CCS Abe Shinzō to apply a pragmatic approach towards Beijing. Abe knew that his right-wing credentials could be used against him during the LDP presidential race in September 2006 and the House of Councilors election in July 2007. He was also aware of the fact that Chinese assistance would be instrumental in Six-Party Talks and negotiations on the abduction issue with North Korea. From the beginning of 2006 the PRC itself started actively testing Abe's stance on the Yasukuni issue. In February 2006, Foreign Vice Minister Dai Bingguo had an opportunity to briefly talk to Abe when visiting Japan for negotiations with Yachi Shōtarō, and in July 2006 Nakagawa Hidenao arranged Abe's meeting with Ambassador Wang Yi. In response to external and domestic pressures, Abe gradually toned down his discourse on the Yasukuni problem. At the beginning of June 2006, he refrained from saying in a television program whether he would visit the controversial shrine as prime minister or not (Mong 2017: 83–108). In subsequent statements Abe maintained an equivocal stance on the issue. As a part of this strategy, at the beginning of August 2006 Abe's secretary Inoue Yoshiyuki leaked to the media information that his superior had secretly visited Yasukuni in mid-April 2006. During a press conference, Abe avoided explicit confirmation of this fact. He explained that he did not intend to make any comments on his past or future visits to Yasukuni, as this problem had been instrumentalized diplomatically and politically. It seems that Abe accurately measured the timing of the leakage. The media's attention quickly shifted from the presumed past homage at the shrine by the CCS to Prime Minister Koizumi's upcoming visit to Yasukuni on August 15 (Uesugi 2011: 60–63).

On September 20, 2006, Abe won the LDP presidential election and 6 days later formed a new government. Meanwhile, from September 23 to 26, the sixth round of Sino-Japanese general policy dialogue took place in Tokyo. During a 3-day long stay in Japan, Chinese Foreign Vice Minister Dai Bingguo searched for contact with such high-profile politicians as LDP Secretary-General Nakagawa Hidenao, former

²The seven Japan–China friendship organizations included: Japan–China Friendship Association (Nihon–Chūgoku Yūkō Kyōkai), Japan–China Association (Nitchū Kyōkai), Japanese Association for the Promotion of International Trade (Nihon Kokusai Bōeki Sokushin Kyōkai), Japan–China Friendship Parliamentary League (Nitchū Yūkō Giin Renmei), Japan–China Friendship Hall (Nitchū Yūkō Kaikan), Japan–China Economic Association (Nitchū Keizai Kyōkai), and Japan–China Cultural Exchange Association (Nihon–Chūgoku Bunka Kōryū Kyōkai).

Foreign Minister Machimura Nobutaka, who was Abe's factional boss, or incumbent Foreign Minister Asō Tarō. However, out of fear that opening too many channels of communication with China would hinder the talks, Abe ordered to streamline negotiations through the foreign administrative vice minister. The other parties were to be only subsequently informed about the results (Uesugi 2011: 86–87). During successive meetings, Yachi Shōtarō explained to Chinese diplomats that in fact the new prime minister's "strategy of ambiguity" (*aimai senryaku*) meant that Abe would refrain from paying homage to the controversial shrine if only China allowed him to visit Beijing. This also implied that unless China invited Abe, the prime minister would visit Yasukuni instead (Yachi and Takahashi 2009: 40–41). When Dai Bingguo was leaving Tokyo, however, he was reluctant to accept the *détente* policy without a clear promise on refraining from homage to the shrine. Interestingly, only 2 days after the negotiations, Dai secretly returned to Japan to communicate a sudden shift in Chinese stance. President Hu Jintao was ready not only to unconditionally invite Abe to Beijing, but also to greet him as an official state guest.³

In response to this gesture, the new Japanese prime minister assuaged Chinese concerns regarding his view on history. During a plenary session of Diet on October 2, 2006, Abe assured that he upheld the statements on war responsibility issued by Murayama in 1995 and by Koizumi in 2005. On the following day, he said that his administration continued the previous stance on "comfort women" as contained in the 1993 Kōno Statement. These sudden announcements, which contradicted Abe's earlier declarations, met with strong dissatisfaction from conservative politicians from the prime minister's closest entourage (Uesugi 2011: 87–88). Eventually, just as predicted by Nakagawa Hidenao, Sino-Japanese rapprochement was achieved thanks to shouldering the risk by top leaders of both countries. As expected by Yachi Shōtarō, in turn, this first step paved the way for a major breakthrough in Japan's foreign policy.

6.5 Decision-Making Process on the Mutually Beneficial Relationship Based on Common Strategic Interests

On October 8–9, 2006, only 2 weeks after assuming office, Abe Shinzō paid a visit to Beijing, which was dubbed an "ice-breaking trip" (*pobing zhi lǚ*) by the Chinese media. Welcoming him, Hu Jintao emphasized that common interests and friendship between both countries contributed not only to the development of the PRC

³The sudden change of mind by the Chinese leadership was probably caused by a shift in the balance of power in the CCP. On September 24, 2006, Shanghai's CCP Secretary Chen Liangyu was arrested under the suspicion of corruption. Chen was a prominent member of the "Shanghai clique" in the CCP led by former Chinese President Jiang Zemin. As this faction advocated a tougher stance towards Japan, thanks to its weakening President Hu Jintao gained a free hand in accepting Abe's visit. See: Shimizu (2008: 73), Kokubun et al. (2013: 225).

and Japan, but also to the peace, stability, and well-being of Asia and the entire world. The Japanese prime minister, in turn, reassured the Chinese president that Japan had abandoned militarism, pursued peaceful development, and did not intend to beautify class-A war criminals (Yan 2009: 279). In a joint press statement, Abe and Hu agreed to “elevate the Japan–China relations to a higher dimension,” “strive to build a mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests,” “accelerate the process of consultation on the issue of the East China Sea,” “promote exchange and cooperation in areas such as politics, economy, security, society, and culture,” as well as “strengthen coordination and cooperation on international and regional issues” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2006).

The *détente* with China was highly appreciated by the Japanese public. According to an opinion poll published by *Asahi Shinbun* (2006c, October 11), as many as 83% of respondents positively evaluated Abe’s visits to the PRC and South Korea (from Beijing Abe went directly to Seoul), 52% expressed their support for the “strategy of ambiguity” regarding visits to Yasukuni, and 57% estimated that Sino-Japanese relations would further improve over time. The newly formed cabinet maintained a high support rate of 63%.

After Abe’s visit to China, diplomats from both countries continued negotiations on regulating more formally the framework for bilateral cooperation. Just as previously, from the Japanese side the talks were supervised by Foreign Administrative Vice Minister Yachi. It is worth emphasizing that Abe and his closest entourage favored top-down decision-making and were suspicious of the bureaucrats, especially after the Social Insurance Agency presumably leaked to the press and opposition parties information on missing pension records.⁴ Secretary to the Prime Minister Inoue Yoshiyuki, who was in charge of preparing Abe’s daily schedule, greatly limited access to the head of government by high-ranking ministerial officials. However, Yachi Shōtarō was treated exceptionally. He enjoyed Abe’s full trust and regularly met the prime minister (*Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu* 2008: 43). Foreign Minister Asō Tarō, who at that time focused on promoting values-oriented diplomacy, seemed to play a secondary role in China policy formation.

During vice-ministerial negotiations, the Chinese side proposed a concept of “win–win relations,” which led to the elaboration of the idea of mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests (Japanese *senryakuteki gokei kankei*, Chinese *zhanlüe de huhui guanxi*) that was first mentioned in the Abe/Hu joint press release. As characteristic of the *ringi* system, the first version of the concept was prepared by relatively young bureaucrats from MOFA China Division (author’s interview with Miyamoto Yūji, July 12, 2013). Yachi Shōtarō explained that both sides promised to focus on finding mutually beneficial solutions to

⁴In spring 2007, the media revealed that the accounts of millions of Japanese were not correctly recorded in the Social Insurance Agency’s computer system. The scandal contributed to the LDP’s defeat in the House of Councilors election in July 2007. It was widely presumed that bureaucrats from the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare intentionally leaked information on the missing records to punish Prime Minister Abe for the plans of prohibiting *amakudari*.

concrete problems, such as the dispute over the delimitation of exclusive economic zones in the East China Sea, pollution of natural environment, or disposal of chemical weapons abandoned by the Japanese Imperial Army after the World War II (Yachi and Takahashi 2009: 41–42). Japanese Ambassador to Beijing Miyamoto (2011: 162–163), in turn, emphasized that the new concept was to embed Sino-Japanese relations in a broader context. Cooperation between both powers would exceed simple bilateral relations and was to contribute to the resolution of regional and global problems, such as security issues in East Asia, pandemics, or climate changes.

As stressed by Shimizu (2008: 74), however, for Abe the most important thing was to substitute the concept of mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests for the notion of “friendship” that had dominated previous treaties with China, thus inhibiting Japan from taking an assertive stance in bilateral disputes. Abe’s later comments confirm this opinion. In his book *Towards a New Country* published in 2013, Abe expressed his frustration with the fact that Sino-Japanese relations had been characterized by a “priority of friendship” at the expense of the national interests of Japan. According to him, “Despite the fact that friendship should be a method for achieving a goal, which is *raison d’état*, it has become a goal in itself” (Abe 2013: 249–250). In Abe’s mind, putting emphasis on the strategic dimension of relations with China was to redress this distortion. After all, pursuing the *détente* policy with the PRC did not discourage the Abe administration from promoting the concept of Arc of Freedom and Prosperity (AFP, described in the next chapter) that could be interpreted as an attempt at containing China.⁵

In mid-April 2007, Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao visited Tokyo, which came to be known as an “ice-melting journey” (*rongbing zhi lü*) (Yan 2009: 279). Abe and Wen issued a joint press statement that contained a definition of mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests as “the solemn responsibility of both countries in the new era to contribute constructively to the peace, stability and development of Asia and the world” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2007a). In order to achieve this aim, China and Japan were to reinforce contacts at summits, foreign ministries and defense ministries levels, launch Japan–China High-Level Economic Dialogue, as well as expand personnel and cultural exchange. Both sides agreed to strengthen cooperation in such crucial fields as energy, environmental protection, agriculture, intellectual property rights, information and telecommunication technology, finance, or criminal justice. In addition, the two governments promised to intensify cooperation and dialogue on delicate security and diplomatic matters, including the East China Sea dispute, Six-Party

⁵Yachi Shōtarō intentionally did not include Russia into the AFP not to turn it into a circle surrounding China. This strategy proved effective, and Beijing did not voice strong objections against the idea of values-oriented diplomacy during bureaucratic-level negotiations with Japan. See: Yachi and Takahashi (2009: 144–145).

Talks, abduction issue, United Nations (UN) reform, or realization of mutual navy port calls (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2007a).

What is significant, during his address to the Japanese Diet, Wen appreciated Japan's apologies for the atrocities committed during the World War II and thanked Japan for its contribution to the economic development and modernization of China.⁶ Moreover, the Chinese prime minister indicated five principles necessary for attaining "cooperation of mutual benefit for common development": (1) "increase mutual trust and honor commitment," (2) "seek common ground while shelving differences and uphold the larger interests of the two countries," (3) "promote common development based on equality and mutual benefit," (4) "strengthen exchanges with an eye on the future," (5) "respond to challenges through close consultation" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China 2007). These points were largely consistent with Japanese expectations.

6.6 Development of Sino-Japanese Cooperation Under the Fukuda Administration

While the rapprochement with China resulted from Abe's pragmatic posture and political calculations, under the administration of his successor the *détente* policy was elevated to higher levels. In September 2007, Abe Shinzō stepped down from office due to health problems and responsibility for the LDP's defeat in the House of Councilors election 2 months earlier. The foreign minister's post in the newly formed Fukuda Yasuo's government was passed from Machimura Nobutaka, who became CCS, to Sino-Japanese Friendship Parliamentary League Chair Kōmura Masahiko.⁷ Furthermore, in January 2008 Yachi Shōtarō ceded the post of administrative vice minister of foreign affairs to former Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Director-General Yabunaka Mitoji.⁸ Under these circumstances, it was easier for Fukuda to shape China policy to his personal liking, without the interference from the main authors of Sino-Japanese rapprochement under the Abe cabinet.

Contrary to his predecessor, the new prime minister clearly adhered to a policy of three "no's": no to visits to Yasukuni, no to further engagement in values-oriented diplomacy (at least as a geopolitical strategy), and no to treating China

⁶On the other hand, Wen skipped, presumably unintentionally, one sentence on appreciation of the peaceful development of postwar Japan as an economic power. See: Shimizu (2008: 24–25).

⁷After the Abe cabinet reshuffle in August 2007, Machimura Nobutaka briefly replaced Asō Tarō as foreign minister.

⁸Under the Koizumi administration Yabunaka had represented Japan in the Six-Party Talks, and he understood the importance of China for the resolution of the abduction and North Korean nuclear armaments issues. Moreover, since 1997 he had been responsible for negotiations on the fishery agreement and joint exploitation of East China Sea resources with the PRC, and thus had considerable experience in dealing with Chinese diplomats. See: Yabunaka (2010: 122–146).

as a threat (Gao 2008: 39). This moderate posture resulted both from Fukuda's personal convictions as a "dove" and his interpretation of Tokyo's national interests. During a lecture at the Keio University in June 2006, Fukuda emphasized that in the face of a probable strengthening of Sino-American relations, a Japan conflicted with the PRC would become a burden for the United States. For that reason, he advocated a balanced stance towards both powers, which would contribute to the stability of the whole region. This middle-of-the-road attitude was reflected in Fukuda's initial actions and statements as prime minister. Two days after assuming office, on September 28, 2007, he conducted the first ever Sino-Japanese prime-ministerial telephone conversation with Wen Jiabao. Fukuda's first visit abroad in November 2007, however, was to the United States, where he appealed for "synergy" between the Japan-US alliance and Asian diplomacy (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2008: 322–323).

It was evident that the new prime minister interpreted mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests differently than his predecessor. Fukuda conveyed his vision of relations with China during his "spring-welcoming trip" (*yingchun zhi lü*) to the PRC in December 2007. Delivering a speech at Peking University, the Japanese prime minister emphasized that both countries were tied not only by "benefits and interests," but also by "a long history of exchange with each other," as well as common "cultures and traditions" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2007b). According to Fukuda, even the roots of the Meiji Restoration of 1868 could be found "in ancient Chinese texts" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2007b). Only through reference to this "common foundation and values that deeply underlies both Japan and China," he mentioned the necessity for seeking common understanding of "human rights, the rule of law, and democracy" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2007b). While Abe's visit to China in 2006 had been cordial, yet business-like, Fukuda managed to gain extraordinary sympathy from Chinese decision-makers. For the first time in 21 years, it was the Chinese president who hosted a welcome dinner for the Japanese prime minister. Hu Jintao astonished the Japanese delegation by personally escorting Fukuda to his car. Moreover, the Chinese media paid an exceptional attention to the visit and broadcasted Fukuda's speech at Peking University live. By paying homage to Qufu, the birthplace of Confucius, the Japanese prime minister put emphasis on the cultural similarities between both countries (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2008: 323). At the same time, he skillfully embedded the universal values in Asian traditions. Paradoxically, the very same values that had been strategically employed by Abe to counterbalance China within the framework of the AFP now served Fukuda to seek common ground for constructive dialogue.

While for Abe the concept of mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests served as a way of effacing the notion of "friendship" from Sino-Japanese treaties, Fukuda skillfully based the new strategic dimension of bilateral relationship on the traditional framework of "friendly relations." This posture was highly praised by MOFA China school diplomats. As emphasized by Japanese Ambassador to China Miyamoto Yūji, cordial relations and sincere understanding between the leaders of both countries were necessary prerequisites for the mutually

beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests to function properly. According to Miyamoto, it was the ties of trust on the highest level that could lead to overcoming bilateral problems that would have been otherwise impossible to resolve (Miyamoto 2011: 143–144).

While closely cooperating with MOFA bureaucrats, Fukuda himself took charge of directly shaping Japan's policy towards the PRC. The Japanese prime minister used his extensive connections with China's top leaders to overcome two main obstacles to the institutionalization of mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests that appeared at the beginning of 2008: the Chinese food poisoning problem and the Tibetan issue. In January 2008, several cases of intoxication by frozen dumplings imported from the PRC were revealed in Chiba Prefecture. While Japan suspected that the food had been tainted with insecticide in Hebei Province, Chinese authorities for months refused to take responsibility for the incident. In addition, in March 2008 riots in Lhasa led to more than ten civilian victims, which prompted Tibetan independence activists to attack the Beijing Olympic Torch relay in many cities all over the world, including Nagano. Both issues exacerbated Sino-Japanese tensions, thus threatening Hu Jintao's planned visit to Japan. In this delicate moment, Fukuda took the initiative in assuaging the tense situation. In mid-April 2008, LDP Secretary-General Ibuki Bunmei transmitted to Hu a letter from the Japanese prime minister, in which Fukuda personally asked Hu to start a dialogue with the Dalai Lama, Tibet's leader. Concerned with the reaction of the international community before the Beijing Olympics, Hu Jintao immediately answered this request and commenced talks with the Tibetan side (Shiroyama 2009: 30–31; Shimizu 2009: 50–68).

Meanwhile, LDP conservative politicians started voicing their concerns regarding the government's pro-China policy. Until that moment, it was the moderate camp that had gained in prominence on the wave of the Sino-Japanese *détente*. In 2007, as many as 250 lawmakers established a supra-party Parliamentarians' Association Supporting the Beijing Olympics chaired by House of Representatives Speaker Kōno Yōhei (*Mainichi Shinbun* 2007, April 17). Moreover, at the beginning of 2008 two liberal factions led by Koga Makoto and Tanigaki Sadakazu reunited, thus strengthening the left wing of the LDP (*Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu* 2008: 367–368). However, when public support for the Fukuda cabinet started declining due to political quarrels with opposition parties in the Diet, the conservatives commenced preparations for challenging the prime minister's leadership.⁹ The food poisoning and Tibetan issues provided them with new arguments against Fukuda. At the end of 2007, about 80 right-wing LDP lawmakers established the Genuine Conservative Policy Workshop (Shin Hoshu Seisaku Kenkyūkai) chaired by Nakagawa Shōichi. On April 30, 2008, the new group organized a symposium in Tokyo on the state of human rights in China, with a lecture by a former member of the Tibetan government in exile. The meeting was attended by former Prime

⁹The DPJ exploited the fact that after the election in July 2007 the LDP lost control over the House of Councilors and prolonged legislative processes by opposing all bills.

Minister Abe Shinzō and Asō Tarō, considered as one of the most prominent candidates for premiership. The conservatives criticized Fukuda's "weak-kneed" policy towards the PRC and voiced their doubts about the appropriateness of hosting the Olympic Games in Beijing (*Mainichi Shinbun* 2008, May 8).

Eventually, it was the mutual trust between the leaders of both countries that paved the way for Hu Jintao's "trip of warm spring" (*nuanchun zhi lü*) to Tokyo from May 6 to 10, 2008. Referring to an invitation of three thousand Japanese youth by CCP Secretary-General Hu Yaobang in the 1980s, the Chinese president agreed with Prime Minister Fukuda to organize in the following 4 years, on an annual basis, mutual visits of four thousand young Chinese and Japanese (Yan 2009: 279–283). As in the mid-1980s Hu Jintao had been the first secretary of the Communist Youth League of China, he remembered well Hu Yaobang's initiative. In fact, during his visit to Japan in 2008 Hu Jintao asked for a meeting with three former members of the youth group he had made acquaintance with during their visit to Beijing in 1984. Moreover, 1 year earlier, in June 2007, he had invited to Beijing 200 former members of that group together with their children (Shiroyama 2009: 84–87). Hu's insistence on reviving closer cultural exchange with Japan was fully consistent with Fukuda's reliance on the notion of "friendly relations."

In the Joint Statement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Comprehensive Promotion of a "Mutually Beneficial Relationship Based on Common Strategic Interests," both leaders repeated their intent to strengthen and expand mutual exchange and cooperation at all levels and in all fields. They specifically indicated five pillars of bilateral dialogue and cooperation: (1) "Enhancement of mutual trust in the political area," (2) "Promotion of people-to-people and cultural exchange as well as sentiments of friendship between the people of Japan and China," (3) "Enhancement of mutually beneficial cooperation," (4) "Contribution to the Asia-Pacific region," (5) "Contribution to the resolution of global issues" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2008).

Yachi Shōtarō, who after stepping down from office of foreign administrative vice minister served as MOFA's advisor, admitted that initially Japanese diplomats treated with suspicion the Chinese proposal to sign a fourth Sino-Japanese basic agreement (following the 1972 Joint Communiqué, 1978 Treaty of Peace and Friendship, and 1998 Joint Declaration on Building a Partnership of Friendship and Cooperation for Peace and Development). Tokyo feared that Beijing would include in the text of the new treaty an assertion that Japanese politicians should not visit the Yasukuni Shrine or that Japan supported China in the dispute over the status of Taiwan. Nevertheless, these concerns proved to be groundless. MOFA bureaucrats highly evaluated China's readiness to assume, together with Japan, responsibility for peace, stability, and development of East Asia and to stop insisting to the same degree as before on mentioning history problems (Yachi and Takahashi 2009: 42–43). Moreover, within the framework of the first pillar both sides agreed:

To engage in close cooperation to develop greater understanding and pursuit of basic and universal values that are commonly accepted by the international community and to deepen once again understanding of culture that Japan and China have cultivated and shared together over their long history of exchange. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2008)

Yachi emphasized that it was the first time that China acknowledged the importance of universal values in an official treaty with Japan. Up till that moment, Beijing had been reluctant to mention universal values in a treaty, as it considered it improper to meddle ideology with diplomacy. This time, however, China showed more flexibility, which was welcomed by Japan as considerable progress (Yachi and Takahashi 2009: 43).

The PRC's conciliatory posture towards Japan was continued after Hu's visit to Tokyo. In mid-May 2008, the Chinese government for the first time accepted a Japanese rescue team that provided humanitarian aid for the victims of a large-scale earthquake in Sichuan Province. While the situation was not yet ripe for the participation of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (SDF) in disaster relief activities, it was a symbolic step towards reconciliation between both nations (Shiroyama 2009: 43–45). Moreover, in June 2008 the Japanese convoy Sazanami became the first ever Japanese Maritime SDF vessel to visit the PRC. The ship brought blankets, food, and other supplies for earthquake victims to Zhanjiang in Guangdong Province (Hirose 2011: 122–123).

Even greater success was convincing the PRC to a concession on the joint exploitation of natural resources in the East China Sea. The Chinese side agreed that the joint development zone ought to stretch both east and west of the median line, thus encompassing both the contentious region and a part of the undisputed Chinese exclusive economic zone (Manicom 2008: 466–469). Administrative Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Yabunaka (2010: 147–148) revealed that Fukuda Yasuo's personal connections with Chinese top leaders played a crucial role in convincing Beijing to this concession. In fact, the first step towards final agreement was made during the Japanese prime minister's successful visit to China at the end of 2007. Also according to Japanese Ambassador to China Miyamoto Yūji (author's interview, July 12, 2013), it was Beijing's full trust with Fukuda that enabled this historic breakthrough.

Nevertheless, President Hu Jintao was aware that his conciliatory posture towards Japan was not shared by the whole Chinese society. Although joint development of East China Sea resources had already been agreed upon before the PRC president's visit to Japan, Beijing insisted this fact not to be announced publicly until mid-June 2008. Hu probably did not want this concession to be linked directly with his person (Shiroyama 2009: 248). The course of events showed that these concerns were well grounded. Chinese "weak-kneed diplomacy" met with violent protests from Chinese nationalists who organized demonstrations in front of the Japanese embassy in Beijing. Yielding to popular demands, Chinese authorities eventually postponed negotiations with Japan on the details of Japanese companies' participation in the exploitation of the Chunxiao/Shirakaba gas field in the East China Sea (Shimizu 2009: 74–75). This event showed that it was much easier to achieve "friendly relations" on the level of decision-makers than whole nations.

Yabunaka (2010: 149) lamented that Prime Minister Fukuda's sudden resignation in September 2008, among other factors, hindered the implementation of the agreement and prevented turning the East China Sea into the sea of peace, friendship, and cooperation.

Before stepping down from office, however, Fukuda continued high-level exchanges with China. In July 2008, Hu Jintao once more came to Japan to participate in the G8+5 conference in Hokkaido's Tōyako. One month later, despite protests from right-wing LDP lawmakers, Fukuda attended the opening ceremony of Beijing Olympic Games. It is impossible to predict whether Fukuda would have been more successful than his successors in maintaining friendly relations with China over a longer period, but his determination and diplomatic experience evidently were important factors that enabled refining the concept of mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests and initial breakthrough in the East China Sea dispute.

6.7 Conclusion

Superficially, the effects of central government reforms played a secondary role in shaping China policy by Abe and Fukuda, who seemed to simply respond to external pressures. Nevertheless, the Kantei's enhanced institutional position facilitated the diplomatic breakthrough. The weakening of the principle of dispersed management was of particular importance. It is symptomatic that rapprochement with China in 2006 was negotiated by a high-ranking MOFA bureaucrat who remained in contact with the CCS and prospective Prime Minister Abe Shinzō above the head of Foreign Minister Asō Tarō. In a striking contrast to Ōhira Masayoshi's role in negotiating the normalization of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations in 1972 or Sonoda Sunao's contribution to the signing of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1978, Foreign Minister Asō's part in preparing the ground for the *détente* in 2006 was marginal. This change symbolizes the enhanced position of the prime minister vis-à-vis the members of his or her cabinet.

Both under the Abe and Fukuda administrations the Kantei remained relatively cohesive on policy towards China. Moreover, in 2006–2008 there were no internal splits in MOFA regarding the necessity of putting an end to the abnormal relations with Beijing. In addition, the Abe/Yachi tandem effectively took control over the entire ministry. While there existed a disagreement on the ruling-party level, China policy was not directly linked with the vital interests of the LDP electorate, and thus any voices of discontent from right-wing politicians could be safely ignored.

Individual factors and societal pressures were of importance. Instead of entrusting negotiations with Beijing to one diplomat, Prime Minister Fukuda actively used his experience as CCS and pro-Beijing credentials to communicate directly with Chinese leaders. It was the link of trust between Fukuda Yasuo and Hu Jintao that enabled signing the unprecedented East China Sea resources joint exploitation agreement in 2008. Abe held opposite ideological convictions to

Fukuda's, but he orchestrated the “strategy of ambiguity” to prevent his political rivals from taking advantage of his anti-Chinese credentials during the LDP presidential race. In addition, societal moods favored rapprochement with the PRC.

Even before the central government reforms it was not uncommon for Japanese top politicians to exploit rapprochement with the PRC for their political ends. Under these circumstances, Abe's “strategy of ambiguity” can be perceived as bending to external pressure accompanied by domestic political calculations, much in the vein of Japanese prime ministers' behavior in the pre-reform period. Nevertheless, as was outlined above, the new institutional tools facilitated and streamlined this process by allowing heads of government to more strategically utilize their bureaucratic and political subordinates.

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Chapter 7

New Pillar of Japan's Foreign Policy: Arc of Freedom and Prosperity and Values-Oriented Diplomacy

7.1 Introduction

When Prime Minister Abe Shinzō assumed office in 2006 with a blessing of his mentor Koizumi Jun'ichirō and high support ratings, most of the Japanese and foreign journalists heralded the nationalistic shift in country's foreign policy. Unexpectedly, following the concept of mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests and refraining from visiting the Yasukuni Shrine, the prime minister and his closest advisors maintained good relations with China. At the same time Foreign Minister Asō Tarō, with useful guidance from Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) officials Yachi Shōtarō and Kanehara Nobukatsu, introduced an alternative pillar of Japanese foreign policy based on promoting universal values and building closer relations with like-minded countries. The Arc of Freedom and Prosperity (AFP) was a rare example of a strategic approach that could be used as a tool of strengthening relations with various partners and extending Japan's diplomatic reach to further regions.

The idea was not met with strong international opposition. The attitude of the United States, as well as other strategic allies, was rather favorable. Both foreign and domestic parties perceived the concept as a tool of containing China and Russia that could not be included in the group of countries prioritizing freedom and democracy. The AFP attracted support from a group of conservative members of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), but was abandoned by the next administration led by Fukuda Yasuo. Since then, the idea was not discussed further. It was not a negative response from Beijing and Moscow that buried the initiative, but rather strong domestic opposition from pro-Chinese MOFA bureaucrats and LDP members. This chapter provides an example of the prime minister sticking to established foreign policy priorities despite falling public support and growing opposition from veto players.

7.2 Values-Oriented Diplomacy Before the Central Government Reforms

In the past Japan did not put much attention to universal ideals in its foreign policy. Kanehara Nobukatsu who was one of the architects of the AFP initiative stated that “in the rhetoric of Japan’s diplomacy and national security in the postwar era, other than pacifism, no particular value-system-related issue ever arose” and that in the last century, “Japan’s diplomacy was silent on values” (Kanehara 2015: 12–13). Nevertheless, some references to universal standards appeared among the principles of Japan’s foreign policy after it joined the United Nations (UN). The 1957 Diplomatic Blue Book names three pillars which are still valid: UN-centered diplomacy, cooperation with the free world, and membership in the Asian community (Yuasa 2007: 67). Common values were introduced by Prime Minister Kishi Nobosuke who put a priority on cooperation with “the free countries” (*jiyū shokoku*) (Edström 2007: 39). Japan’s attempts to engage in multilateral initiatives both regionally and globally were limited by the realities of the Cold War system, restrictions resulting from the Article 9 of Constitution, and the Yoshida Doctrine which prioritized the alliance with the United States.

The AFP was one of the few strategies aimed at creating proactive Japanese diplomacy. The similarly broad concept relating to universal values was advocated by Abe Shintarō, the father of Prime Minister Abe Shinzō. Abe Shintarō served as a minister of foreign affairs from November 1982 to July 1986 before being appointed as the chairperson of the LDP General Council. His diplomatic endeavors focused on resuming Japanese–Soviet negotiations on signing a peace treaty that had been suspended in 1978. In 1986, he managed to resume high-level talks with the Soviet Union by promoting a more strategic vision aimed at increasing Japan’s political influence called “creative diplomacy” (*sōzōteki gaikō*). Abe Shintarō’s approach stemmed from Japan’s global responsibilities to the international community, such as protection of free trade, peace, and democracy. Creative diplomacy was based on five principles:

1. Increasing cooperation with the Western Block by promoting common values
2. Building relations and mutual trust in the Asia-Pacific region
3. Building relations and mutual trust with the Eastern Block
4. Assisting developing countries through economic exchange
5. Promoting the policy of disarmament and nonproliferation (Abe 1984: 280–283)

The idea of “peaceful and creative foreign policy” based on “cooperation and solidarity with free countries” strongly resembles the latter concept of the AFP presented by Asō Tarō. Abe Shintarō was an example of a foreign minister serving for a long time who was able to develop and introduce his own diplomatic vision. Although Japan–Soviet relations were frozen at that time, Abe used the moment of change of leadership in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and managed to resume the negotiations in 1986 (Isomura 1995: 85). He also developed close relations with the new Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze. Although

international constraints and internal opposition from MOFA bureaucrats prevented Abe from making a breakthrough, he continued the policy after leaving the ministry. One of his objectives was initiating a more diversified dialogue with the Soviet Union, which would not be limited to the territorial dispute. On the road of establishing stronger political contacts, Abe had to fight with negative responses from MOFA bureaucrats who expressed general distrust with visits of politicians to the Soviet Union. Only after becoming a chairperson of the LDP General Council was Abe able to “free himself from the constraints” of bureaucratic influence and act more independently (Isomura 1995: 87). During his meeting with President Mikhail Gorbachev in January 1990, the territorial dispute was for the first time not the central point of the negotiations. Instead, the agenda focused on developing cooperation towards solving problems in the Asia-Pacific region and economic reforms in both countries. Abe presented a program of economic, intellectual, and cultural cooperation with the Soviet Union. During his first visit to Japan in 1991, President Gorbachev met directly with Abe Shintarō. The visit was considered a success on the road of building mutual trust between Japan and the Soviet Union (Isomura 1995: 83).

The end of Cold War brought a visible shift in Japan’s diplomatic strategy. Promoting universal values globally was one of the answers to the question of Japan’s role in the changed international system, and a new rationale for maintaining the US–Japan alliance (Soeya 2013). Soeya (2013) identified another wave of Japanese values diplomacy which occurred in the late 1990s after Taiwan stepped upon the road of democratization led by President Lee Deng-hui. His policy caused backlash from Beijing, which resulted in the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis. From that time pro-Taipei bureaucrats from MOFA and the ruling party lawmakers started to emphasize common values and democracy in their foreign policy speeches with the aim of criticizing China. Such a policy was supported by the political groups attached to the vision of Japan as a global player. The opposing camp underlined the importance of protecting Article 9 of the Constitution and promoting the image of Japan as a peaceful nation, which suggested a more passive diplomatic stance (Soeya 2013).

In 1997, Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryūtarō engaged in multilateral dialogue aimed at increasing Japan’s presence and visibility in Eurasia, the region which to a large extent overlapped with the latter AFP policy. The concept of “Eurasian Diplomacy viewed from the Pacific” focused on improving relations with Russia and China and introducing Japan to the Central Asia and South Caucasus (CASC) region. Japan was supposed to provide support for the countries on their road to shifting to a market economy and democratization through cooperation on economic, cultural, energy, educational, and human resource issues (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 1997). Hashimoto’s speech had been preceded by bilateral talks conducted by Ministry of Finance (MOF) and MOFA officials with partners such as Uzbekistan and Russia since 1991. In 1997, Foreign Minister Obuchi Keizō led the Mission for Dialogue with Russia and Central Asia consisting of 61 Japanese Diet members and businesspersons (Yuasa 2007: 68–70). The necessity of increasing Japan’s visibility in the region was an answer to changes in the security

environment and enlargement of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (Yuasa 2008: 49–50). The results of this multilateral approach were minimal because of unfavorable independent variables. Hashimoto's approach towards Eurasia was hampered by negative responses from the Russian government which "expressed irritation over outside penetration into its sphere of influence" (Shahhuseynli 2013). As the next prime minister, Obuchi Keizō continued efforts aimed at establishing stronger relations and promoting the activity of Japanese companies in CASC countries (Dadabaev 2016: 21).

As one can observe, there was a very little political will to engage in broader strategic diplomatic discourse based on universal standards before the weakening of the Cold War conflict. The majority of Japan's MOFA and ruling party politicians followed the mainstream strategic thought of prioritizing economic growth and limited international engagement under the Yoshida Doctrine. Japanese prime ministers, with the exception of Kishi, were not eager to promote universal values in their foreign policy and could not take advantage of changes in the international system due to a set of domestic-level intervening variables. The attempts to diversify negotiations with the Soviet Union and China were rejected by the majority of MOFA. The case of creative diplomacy presented by Abe Shintarō is an interesting example of the important role of agency in the foreign policy formulation process. Given enough time, Foreign Minister Abe was able to develop his own diplomatic vision which later became a pillar of his political manifesto. Similarly to the AFP presented by his son's administration, creative diplomacy was a concept created by the ministry official, who at the same time had to fight sectional constraints within MOFA. Only after leaving the ministry was Abe able to apply his strategy in practice. Discourse on common values increased in the 1990s as a result of changes in the international order.

It is interesting that before and after the central government reforms, the idea of promoting freedom and democracy was usually picked up by the pro-Taiwan faction and those MOFA divisions that tried to use it as a tool of feeding anti-Chinese sentiments. This aspect of values-oriented diplomacy seemed to be especially attractive for the North American Affairs Bureau which "emphasized cooperation with the United States and other Western countries" (Murata 2006: 38). On the other hand, Washington's global strategy as well as the central position of the US–Japan security alliance suppressed the need to develop an independent foreign policy approach which would allow Japan to expand its influence outside the region of Southeast Asia. The attempts to broaden Japan's strategic outreach to Eurasia were blocked by negative responses from Moscow. In the 1990s, the foreign policy formulation process regarding Russia and its surroundings was dominated by MOFA bureaucrats from the European and Oceanian Affairs Bureau and conservative LDP lawmakers. They opposed any further attempts at developing a broader strategic dialogue with Russia (similar to the ideas presented by Abe Shintarō) in fear of affecting the Northern Territories negotiations (Hirata 2008: 83–86).

7.3 Interests, Ideological Leanings, and Cohesion of Main Actors

Abe Shinzō represented the right wing of the LDP and some commentators expected him to present an even more hawkish image than his mentor Koizumi Jun'ichirō. Abe's main political goals were constitutional revision, educational reform, strengthening the alliance with the United States, and changing Japan's security laws (Yamagiwa 2003: 53). He was more interested in foreign policy than his predecessor. During the LDP presidential campaign, Abe advocated developing assertive dialogue with "like-minded actors such as the United States, Europe and Australia" (Edström 2007: 9). Although some media commentators described Abe as an inexperienced politician, he was able to present a pragmatic approach towards foreign policy, as one can see in the chapter on rapprochement with China. He was aware of the potential gains that could come from engaging in soft-power politics and introducing a broader scale of tools in diplomatic outreach. This approach shows strong resemblance to Abe Shintarō's creative diplomacy concept. Compared with his father's situation, Abe Shinzō had more institutional tools at his disposal introduced by central government reforms. The most important change was probably abolishing the rule of dispersed management, which gave the prime minister the right to initiate policies within the domains that fell under the jurisdiction of separate ministers. The Cabinet Office led by the chief cabinet secretary (CCS) became the central body responsible for coordinating and managing bureaucratic conflicts between previously semiautonomous groups of bureaucrats and politicians. What was more, increasing the number of staff and creating new offices within the Kantei, as well as creating the posts of the assistant CCS, provided the prime minister with stronger political control over MOFA.

The Kantei remained relatively cohesive in promoting the concept of the AFP. CCS Shiozaki Yasuhisa numerously expressed his support towards promoting democratic values among Japan's allies. In one of his speeches given before assuming the post, Shiozaki described cooperation on the front of democracy as one of the tools of increasing security and fighting terrorism. He underlined Japan's role in Asia as an experienced democracy which greatly contributed to international security (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2006a). In the Koizumi administration Shiozaki belonged to the group of politicians with a strong interest in foreign policy along with Abe, Asō Tarō, and Kōno Tarō (Takamine 2006: 84–85). However, the role played by Kantei staff in the formulation of the AFP concept was minimal. The driving force behind promoting the idea were political advisors to the prime minister and a small group of MOFA bureaucrats. Although Asō Tarō conveyed the AFP concept to the public, its main architects were Yachi Shōtarō and Kanehara Nobukatsu, who can be described as pragmatics in terms of foreign policy leanings (Yasutomo 2014: 162). Yachi, who served as administrative vice minister for foreign affairs, to a large extent guided Asō on the path of values-oriented diplomacy. Not only did he ask the foreign minister to constantly include the approach in his speeches, but he also hired a professional journalist to redact

them to be more broadly understood, both domestically and internationally (Taniguchi 2010: 1). Yachi was also associated with right-wing groups during the Koizumi administration. Due to the influence of Kanehara Nobukatsu, he became deeply interested in the idea of promoting universal principles as a way of changing Japan's overall international image. It was actually Kanehara who originally developed the concept of the Arc as a tool of presenting diverse strategic approaches to key regions. In his book titled *A Grand Strategy of Japan for the 21st Century*, he underlined the importance of increasing strategic diplomacy towards Russia and China, as well as maintaining close cooperation with Western allies (Kanehara 2011: 446–471).

MOFA remained highly divided over the idea of the AFP. The new policy direction attracted criticism from diplomats from the China school. One of the most vivid examples was former Ambassador to the People's Republic of China (PRC) Tanino Sakutarō who tried to discredit the AFP as an obvious tool of containing China. Soon after the initiative was presented, a group of former diplomats called it “too provocative for Beijing” (Taniguchi 2010: 2). Although Tanino and the pro-Beijing group within MOFA continuously worked to discredit the values-oriented diplomacy, Prime Minister Abe managed to maintain control over the ministry thanks to the help of Administrative Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Yachi Shōtarō. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, Yachi managed to weaken the position of the pro-Beijing camp on the decision-making process by appointing diplomats from the American school to influential posts within the China and Mongolia Division. The situation changed when Fukuda Yasuo assumed office. Tanino took advantage of his personal ties with the prime minister, which resulted in abandoning the AFP concept (Taniguchi 2010: 2).

In the case of values-oriented diplomacy, the ruling party remained one of the least cohesive players in the foreign policy formulation process. Differences on the subject became more visible with the plummeting support for the Abe administration. Lawmakers from the Koga, Tanigaki, and Nikai factions formed a parliamentary league placing priority on Asia. The AFP concept attracted early criticism from the Asia Diplomacy and Security Vision Study Group and the Asia Strategy Study Group led by Aisawa Ichirō and former LDP Secretary-General Katō Kōichi. Those pro-Chinese camps gradually attracted more followers critical of the prime minister's diplomacy (WikiLeaks 2007d). At the same time, the concept of promoting common values was picked up by conservative groups within the LDP closely associated with the prime minister. It seems that right-wing politicians embraced values-oriented diplomacy as a tool of expressing their distrust towards China and frustration over Abe's reluctance to visit the Yasukuni Shrine. In March 2007, junior and mid-level LDP lawmakers supporting Prime Minister Abe's “assertive diplomacy” decided to form a parliamentary league called the Group of Lawmakers to Promote Values-Oriented Diplomacy. The group was led by Furuya Keiji who represented “postal rebels” that were accepted back into the LDP by Abe in December 2006. He and other members of the group closely cooperated with Prime Minister Abe on the abduction and school textbook issues. Other members of the group were Nishikawa Kyōko, Mizuno Ken'ichi, Deputy CCS Shimomura

Hakubun, and LDP Policy Affairs Research Council (PARC) Chairperson Nakagawa Shōichi who acted as an advisor (WikiLeaks 2007e).

7.4 New Direction in Japanese Foreign Policy

The term AFP was introduced by Minister of Foreign Affairs Asō Tarō on November 30, 2006, as a new direction in Japan's foreign policy along with values-oriented diplomacy. Both policies were described as a new pillar that was supposed to go beyond the fundamentals of Japanese political strategy: the alliance with the United States and developing peaceful relations with neighboring countries, such as China, South Korea, and Russia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2006c). In terms of geographic reach, the range of the AFP was quite extensive. Minister Asō aimed the initiative at “the successfully budding democracies that line the outer rim of the Eurasian continent, forming an arc” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2006c). The Arc started from Northern Europe and went through the Baltic states, Central and Southeastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus, the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, then crossed Southeast Asia, finally reaching Northeast Asia.

According to MOFA Deputy Press Secretary Taniguchi (2010: 1), who was involved in drafting speeches for Japanese administration during the first Abe cabinet, the central aim of the AFP was to “establish Japan's democratic identity and cement its credentials as a reliable partner for the United States and other peer democracies, thereby widening its strategic position.” The Japanese government tried to use this concept to attract other partners like Australia and India which were attractive from the perspective of Japan's national interests (Taniguchi 2010: 1). Conservative bureaucrats and LDP politicians perceived strategic relations based on universal values as a tool for containing China. Contrary to this way of interpreting the purpose of the Arc, Kanehara Nobukatsu, the creator of the initiative, claimed that it was not aimed at Beijing but at the Kremlin. According to Asō Tarō, the broad territorial range of the Arc was designed to show Russia that Japan could exert pressure in its close area of interest. The new policy could not only increase Japan's visibility among its allies in Europe and the Asia-Pacific, but also at the same time enable Prime Minister Abe to open a dialogue on the disputed Northern Territories (Taniguchi 2010: 2).

Another angle of the strategy was the intent of harvesting support from countries not directly involved in Japan's regional security, such as members of the European Union (EU) and NATO. One of the aims of promoting the AFP was changing the negative international reception of Japan's checkbook diplomacy and creating an alternative image of an active participation in global affairs. This new portrait was supposed to help in achieving concrete policy goals, such as gaining a permanent seat in the UN Security Council and understanding of Japan's policy towards North Korea. The other purpose of this direction was strengthening relations with the United States through closer cooperation with NATO. Asō (2007: 19) believed that

the alliance would be more durable if Japan engaged the United States through its European allies.

The third dimension was presenting Japan as an “escort runner,” supporting young democratic states in their transition period. According to MOFA bureaucrats involved in developing the AFP and values-oriented democracy concepts, this direction served as justification for shifting the flow of Official Development Assistance (ODA) from Asian countries that suffered from Japan's aggression in World War II to other regions like the Middle East, Eastern Europe, or Central and Southeast Asia (Jimbo 2009).

Prime Minister Abe expressed his view on the new policy in his January 2007 speech to the Japanese Diet. Abe talked about focusing on proactive diplomacy founded on “strengthening partnerships with countries that share the fundamental values of freedom, democracy, basic human rights and rule of law” (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 2007b, January 26). He specifically mentioned ASEAN, Australia, India, and European states as examples of countries that shared those democratic ideals. Other areas of diplomatic focus for his administration were strengthening the alliance with the United States, managing the threat of North Korea, and improving relations with China and the Republic of Korea (ROK). In order to achieve his goals, the LDP leader stated that he would try to “establish structures to strengthen the functions of the Prime Minister's Office as headquarters” and “enhance the intelligence capability of the Cabinet” (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 2007b). Asō Tarō further explained the term proactive diplomacy as increasing capabilities of MOFA to gather intelligence and “induce other countries to listen to Japan” through the appeal of Japanese culture (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2007c). The minister also referred to the idea of strengthening the role of the ministry by changing organizational arrangements and increasing the number of its staff, which is considerably interesting as the main trend during the Abe administration was reducing the number of government officials.

7.5 The AFP and Relations with European States and NATO

One of the first opportunities for promoting values-oriented diplomacy presented itself during Abe's first visit to Europe in January 2007. Soon after the prime minister's Western European tour, Foreign Minister Asō traveled to Central and Eastern European countries in February 2007. Asō Tarō visited Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Slovakia as part of promoting his AFP vision. By underscoring the importance of sharing common values with European partners, Prime Minister Abe and Foreign Minister Asō tried to gain support on the issues like Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) nuclear disarmament, maintaining the EU arms embargo on China, and Japan's ambition of gaining a permanent seat on the

UN Security Council. Although the prime minister claimed that he was “able to build a relationship of trust with each of the European leaders” (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 2007a), the results of his visit were mixed. Even though Japan managed to receive satisfactory statements on the North Korean nuclear program, Western European leaders were divided over the issue of maintaining the arms embargo against China. According to MOFA Western Europe Division Director Kōno Akira, Abe obtained his primary goal of underlining the importance of universal values and promoting the AFP, which was favorably received by Eastern European states (WikiLeaks 2007b). MOFA Deputy Press Secretary Taniguchi Tomohiko called the visit a remarkable success as Japan “sent a clear message to the people of the central and eastern parts of Europe that Japan will be there beside them” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2007b).

Apart from gathering support for Japan’s diplomatic initiatives, the focal point of Abe’s trip to Europe was his speech in front of the North Atlantic Council. Washington actively supported the idea of strengthening Japan’s cooperation with NATO as well as other areas of values-oriented diplomacy. Just a few days before Abe’s visit, US officials working on the Japan–US Security Consultative Committee insisted on including the passage on “bolstering of relations with NATO and such countries as Australia and New Zealand that the US thinks share common values” (*Mainichi Shinbun* 2007, January 8). Both Abe Shinzō and Asō Tarō understood the importance of forging closer relations with NATO, especially with Eastern European states that entered the organization after the end of the Cold War. In May 2006, Asō visited NATO headquarters where he spoke about the possibility of future operational cooperation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2006b).

Asō’s proposal stood in line with the new direction of expanding the territorial range of NATO’s operation. The US government tried to convince NATO members to engage in global cooperation, including countries such as Japan and Australia. The idea of “Global Partnership” was opposed by France during the NATO summit in Riga in November 2006. Possibly because of that change, Prime Minister Abe did not include the passage on operational cooperation in his January 2007 speech in Brussels addressed to the North Atlantic Council (Yuasa 2008: 51). Instead, he stressed the importance of common values of freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in facing global challenges (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2007a). Nevertheless, Abe’s speech was received as a declaration of strong commitment to Japan–NATO strategic cooperation. During a meeting with US embassy officials, MOFA National Security Policy Division Director Shimmi Jun expressed his surprise over the particularly strong promises that Prime Minister Abe made regarding enhancing security cooperation with NATO. He claimed that such a policy was not coordinated within the government, and MOD would be responsible for fulfilling Abe’s pledges (WikiLeaks 2007b). Attempts to develop a stronger security dialogue with NATO was another example of the prime minister’s direct involvement in the foreign policy formulation process without consultations with cabinet members and ministry officials. After the European visit, Foreign Minister Asō continued to underline the necessity of developing cooperation with NATO,

but the force behind the policy gradually weakened after the decisions made at the Riga summit (Yuasa 2008: 52).

7.6 Approach Towards Russia

Another reason for including Eastern European and Central Asian states in the AFP concept was attracting attention of Russia and showing the increased reach of Japan's diplomacy. Such pressure could be used during negotiations regarding the Northern Territories. According to Taniguchi Tomohiko, Yachi Shōtarō realized the severity of Russian influence in Eastern Europe after his visit to GUAM countries (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova), which was the beginning of the idea of aiming the AFP concept at Russia (Tuke 2011: 370). Asō Tarō had been director-general of the Economic Planning Agency during Hashimoto's administration, and he also made a visit to Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan in September 1997. According to Yuasa (2008: 50), he and Prime Minister Hashimoto shared an understanding on the necessity of increasing Japan's presence in Eurasia. From the perspective of the US administration, initiatives towards Central Asia were received favorably. During the meeting between US officials and the MOFA delegation in December 2006, both parties agreed that Tokyo and Washington shared the same goals in Central Asia and agreed to develop complementary policies in the region (WikiLeaks 2006b). Asō also included GUAM countries in his November speech which started the discussion on the AFP concept. In June 2007, MOFA launched an official dialogue with GUAM nations.

Apart from exerting pressure on countries in Russia's closest vicinity, Yachi Shōtarō and Asō Tarō continued to develop direct contacts and attempted to revive talks on territorial issues. Although there were no signs of strong pressure, the international setting and signals from Russia were not favorable towards developing the dialogue on signing a peace treaty. As one of the experts stated, because of the soaring prices of oil and natural gas, Russia was so strong that prospects of developing economic cooperation with Japan were no longer attractive. Moreover, Vladimir Putin was following the policy of nationalism expressed in the slogan "Strong Russia" (WikiLeaks 2007c).

The Abe administration had to constantly deal with a set of domestic-level intervening variables, the strongest of which was an attitude of the conservative and nationalistic part of the LDP and MOFA. When Asō Tarō attended a meeting of the Lower House Committee on Foreign Affairs in December 2006, he made a comment that the Japanese government might be considering resolving the Northern Territories problem by equally splitting the four disputed northern islands between Japan and Russia. He also stated that it was high time to break the stalemate on this issue. Asō's comment immediately attracted a lot of criticism from LDP politicians and Japanese media (WikiLeaks 2007c). Because of those unfavorable circumstances, the Abe administration was unable to achieve any substantial breakthrough in bilateral talks with Russia. Yachi Shōtarō represented

Japan during a strategic dialogue meeting held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in January 2007, but the talks did not bring satisfactory results. Throughout Abe's and Aso's terms in office, the Japanese government did not receive negative feedback from Moscow regarding the AFP initiative. It was only after Abe's resignation when Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov expressed his doubts about the values-oriented diplomacy in Central Asia during a meeting with Asō's successor, Kōmura Masahiko, in Moscow on April 14, 2008. Kōmura, who did not support the AFP concept, ensured Lavrov that Japan had no intention of imposing its values on other countries and was going to follow its traditional policy based on noninterference (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2008).

7.7 The AFP as a Tool for Strengthening Strategic Relations in the Asia-Pacific

While the idea of strengthening the US–Japan alliance by raising the level of cooperation with NATO was slowly losing momentum, the Abe administration focused on another area of the AFP which was enhancing cooperation with strategic regional partners through the values-oriented approach. The move was a part of a broader strategy aimed at increasing Japan's presence in Asia. Soon after introduction of the AFP in November 2006, the concept was quickly picked up by Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh who expressed his desire to “build a strong contemporary relationship, one involving strategic and global partnership that will have a great significance for Asia” (Singh 2006). On the occasion of his visit to Tokyo in December 2006, Singh broadly referred to democratic ideals in bilateral relations with Japan. Singh also mentioned the creation of an “arc of advantage and prosperity” across Asia and the development of an Asian Economic Community. The summit resulted in raising Japan–India cooperation to a strategic partnership level which was approved by the majority of MOFA, but was treated suspiciously by a group of officials from the China school. Tanino Sakutarō, who served as an ambassador to New Delhi and Beijing, expressed his caution towards closer cooperation with India within the Arc, pointing out that Japan had a much longer history of bilateral relations with China (Taniguchi 2010: 4). In fact, a number of ministry officials in Tokyo and New Delhi commented on the success of the Indian prime minister's visit from the perspective of counterbalancing Chinese influence in the region. India Desk official Aoshima Naoshige confirmed that the majority of MOFA officials positively evaluated the effects of Prime Minister Singh's visit as it was “more substantive and significant than Chinese President Hu Jintao's November visit to New Delhi” (WikiLeaks 2006a).

The Bush administration was genuinely interested in the concept of democratic cooperation and supported closer ties between Japan and India. The idea of using democracy as a common ground for building strategic cooperation in Asia appeared

after Japan, India, the United States, Australia, and Singapore joined efforts to address the *tsunami* of 2004 (Tuke 2011: 88). Japan's values-oriented approach was soon followed by similar discourse in Washington. According to the second Armitage–Nye report published in February 2007, democratic standards are one of the elements that connects the United States, Japan, and Australia in their political security-building efforts (Armitage and Nye 2007: 13–15).

The idea of raising strategic cooperation with India appealed to Prime Minister Abe. In his work *Towards a Beautiful Country*, he placed India among one of the most important allies. He even claimed that in the next 10 years the relationship with India might become more important than relations with the United States or China (Abe 2006, 158: 160). Since Prime Minister Singh's official visit in December 2006, Yachi Shōtarō advocated the idea of including New Delhi in the Trilateral Security Dialogue with Australia and the United States. He presented India as a key element forming a borderline of AFP area (Tuke 2011: 98). As it was mentioned in the chapter on rapprochement with China, Yachi was a pragmatic who put a lot of effort into maintaining steady contacts with Beijing. Nevertheless, he expressed the opinion that Japan should follow a more direct foreign policy in the Asia-Pacific. He stated that the risk of antagonizing China "might be a price worth paying for more equal relations" (Tuke 2011: 98). The US diplomats supported this way of thinking and advocated taking the trilateral dialogue between Tokyo, New Delhi, and Washington to a higher level. Including India might lead to forming a framework of cooperation between democratic countries which could become an alternative model of regional security to the one offered by China (Tuke 2011: 98). In April 2007, Foreign Minister Asō declared that India was "the central pillar" of Japan's ambition to construct the AFP across Asia. Looking beyond Japan's bilateral engagement, he observed: "It will also be useful to promote cooperation among Japan, India, and the U.S. since the three countries which share the same universal values will contribute to peace and prosperity in the region" (Kliman and Twining 2014: 15).

Prospects for including Australia in raising the security dialogue to a higher level were also good. In March 2007, Abe Shinzō and Australian Prime Minister John Howard signed the Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation, according to which they committed to strengthen the trilateral cooperation with the United States. The document affirmed that the strategic partnership between the two countries was based on the same ideals as those promoted in the AFP concept. It included nine areas of security cooperation by the means of personnel exchange, joint exercises, and coordinated activities including peace operations and regional capacity building (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2007d). One of the immediate results of the declaration was establishing regular ministerial consultations on security, the first of which were organized in June 2007 in Tokyo (Ministry of Defense of Japan 2007). With the support of the United States, Abe proposed the idea of developing an official Quadrilateral Security Dialogue between the four Indo-Pacific democracies. Values like liberty, democracy, human rights, and respect for the rule of law formed the basis for the Quad alliance. Cooperation between like-minded states was mentioned in the joint statement on security alliance transformation made by US

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, Japanese Foreign Minister Asō Tarō and Defense Minister Kyūma Fumio at the beginning of May 2007 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2007e). The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue was formally launched at a ministerial-level meeting on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum in Manila in the same month. Senior Japanese and US diplomats identified the initiative as part of a design to advance the formation of new alliances in Asia that could counterbalance China's power (Kliman and Twining 2014: 16).

Unfortunately for the Abe administration, the idea of enhancing strategic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region was not received favorably by China and Russia. The meeting between the four countries on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum attracted attention from PRC diplomats who expressed concerns that the new security dialogue may be pointed against China. Russia was also offended by the idea of being excluded from the regional talks on increasing regional cooperation (Kliman and Twining 2014: 16). Despite convictions of the most important officials in Abe's cabinet, the concept of developing a strategic dialogue without China spurred a lot of criticism coming from other potential partners of the Quad. The impact of Chinese influence was immediately evident. When Abe made a bid to include India in the Japan–Australia–US Trilateral Strategic Dialogue, it was met with a negative reaction from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Indian business community who were clearly concerned about the impact on the rapidly expanding economic relations with China (Jimbo 2009).

7.8 Falling Support and Growing Domestic Opposition to the Kantei

Despite the fact that initially the AFP concept received a relatively favorable international reception, from the middle of February 2007 Abe had to cope with plummeting public support resulting from a series of controversial remarks by some cabinet members. The Abe administration was also accused of being obsessed with the idea of a Kantei-led government. The prime minister tried to destroy the sectionalism within particular ministries including MOFA (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 2007, February 22). One example of such a policy was appointing a diplomat from the American school as a head of the Chinese division within MOFA. Another example was denying senior officials' access to the prime minister by the CCS. Shiozaki Yasuhisa tried to prevent the most influential bureaucrats from exerting pressure over the prime minister. A survey conducted by *Yomiuri Shinbun* (2007, February 22) showed that the prime minister met only with bureaucrats from five ministries: MOFA (18 times), MOF (six times), MOD (four times), Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI, one time), as well as the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (one time). Numerous meetings with MOFA point to the direct involvement of the prime minister in the foreign policy decision-making process.

The policy of restricting officials' access to the head of government resulted in problems with policy coordination process. The only person deciding who had access to the prime minister was the CCS. He received the strongest criticism from veto players who called for his dismissal. Shiozaki was solely responsible for receiving reports from all government agencies and deciding policy priorities (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 2007, February 22). According to some Kantei staff members, Shiozaki devoted too much of his time and energy to serving as a link between Kasumigaseki and the Prime Minister's Office. Because of that, he had to sacrifice other responsibilities of coordinating the work of the cabinet and maintaining dialogue with coalition partners (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 2007, February 22). Shiozaki was unable to protect Prime Minister Abe from frequent meetings with his aides and other cabinet members. As Zakowski (2015: 55–56) pointed out, “political appointees in the government lacked teamwork spirit. Instead of communicating each other their plans, various ministers, vice ministers, or prime minister's aides preferred to visit Abe directly, forcing him to unnecessarily micromanage various matters. Moreover, they quickly became antagonized with the bureaucrats.” The case of CCS Shiozaki's argument with Kasumigaseki and lack of cooperation between political appointees clearly shows that Prime Minister Abe was unable to take full advantage of the tools provided by the central government reforms.

Despite favorable reception in India and Europe, the efforts to make the AFP concept transparent to both public and officials were not an easy task. Recognition and understanding of the initiative was relatively low. Therefore, one can hardly find public opinion polls with questions specifically relating to the AFP or values-oriented diplomacy. According to Taniguchi (2010: 3), the slogans became strongly associated with Foreign Minister Asō. Once his popularity started to disappear, the same thing happened to the concept of AFP. Overall influence of public opinion on developing this soft dimension of foreign policy was minimal. Gradually, values-oriented diplomacy received stronger criticism from MOFA bureaucrats. Some of them stated that the concept of targeting countries like China and Russia behind the veil of mutual democratic values was “too obvious.” Some MOFA officials were afraid of the idea of imposing Japanese values on countries which suffered from Japan's occupation during World War II. One senior official from the Policy Planning and International Security Division “hoped that the idea would die quickly” (Tuke 2011: 371).

The most important factors which undermined both the AFP and values-oriented diplomacy concept were falling public support for the administration and opposition from MOFA and the LDP. Veto players as well as the international press pointed out that Prime Minister Abe was not putting the same amount of attention towards democratic standards during negotiations with strategically important partners. During his official tour in the Middle East in May 2007, he presented a rather pragmatic approach. In order to secure oil shipments, the prime minister signed economic cooperation deals with countries like Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi, and other oil producers without mentioning the ideas of freedom and democracy (*The Economist* 2007, May 3).

7.9 Last Months of the Abe Cabinet and New Direction of the Fukuda Administration

Despite growing domestic criticism and first signs of international opposition coming from China and Russia, these faint external stimuli did not manage to derail the AFP policy. The US remained supportive to Abe's diplomatic vision. Washington, Tokyo, and other partners agreed to hold combined military exercises in the Western Pacific in September 2007 as a part of the Quad initiative (Yuasa 2008: 62). From September 2007 President George W. Bush tried to move values-oriented cooperation even further and proposed establishing the Asia-Pacific Democracy Partnership which was aimed at containing Chinese influence in the region. According to materials published by Wikileaks (2007a), the idea of the Asia-Pacific Democracy Partnership was discussed between the leaders of Japan, ROK, and the United States since the beginning of the year and gained support from the Japanese side. As for activities of Prime Minister Abe and Yachi Shōtarō, they did not show any signs of changing the course of foreign policy. In August 2007, Abe made his last trip to New Delhi during which he stated that India and Japan remained "natural partners as the largest and most developed democracies in Asia" and "share universal values of democracy, open society, human rights, rule of law and market economy" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2007f). However, differing from the cooperation between Japan and Australia, this statement and speech did not reflect any mention of trilateral cooperation with the United States (Yuasa 2008: 56). Changes of government in Australia and Japan buried both Quad and AFP initiatives. When Kevin Rudd, who openly expressed his pro-Chinese leanings, became the new Australian prime minister, he decided to withdraw from the India–Japan–Australia–US Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Chellaney 2009).

Criticism towards the Abe administration became even stronger after the LDP's defeat in the Upper House election in July 2007. In August 2007, Abe reshuffled his cabinet on the basis of the election result. Asō Tarō left the cabinet and assumed office of LDP secretary-general. Machimura Nobutaka who became the next foreign minister came from different faction and decided not to implement the AFP initiative. In one of his first interviews after assuming office, he claimed that he was not familiar with the concept of the AFP and did not like to use lofty terms in foreign policy (*Asahi Shinbun* 2007, August 30). Even the banner of the AFP was removed from MOFA's website (Yuasa 2008: 60). Among other things, the Arc became a target of criticism from Asō's political rivals before the upcoming LDP presidential election. The policy was associated to a great extent with the foreign minister himself. Asō, who was the official face of the initiative, published his most important speeches in June 2007 and later promoted his diplomatic course while gathering support within the LDP. His main opponent Fukuda Yasuo presented a completely different vision. When Asō lost the race for the position of prime minister, the AFP concept also lost its supporters (Taniguchi 2010: 2–3).

The successor of Prime Minister Abe, Fukuda Yasuo, as well as the new Foreign Minister Kōmura Masahiko did not pay much attention towards geopolitically

using common values and decided to discontinue the AFP initiative. Soon after assuming office, the new prime minister gave an interview to the *Washington Post* in which he stated that “the heaviest responsibility for Japan is to see to it that there is stability and prosperity in Asia” (Harden 2007). During a meeting with the US Secretary of State Robert M. Gates, who tried to convince the Japanese government to stronger engagement in peacekeeping operations, the prime minister claimed that such actions were limited by the constitution (Harden 2007). Fukuda Yasuo clearly stated that priorities of his foreign policy were oriented towards improving relations with regional partners like China and South Korea instead of engaging in broader concepts based on common values (Webster 2007).

This evident shift in the new government's stance can be explained by changes in the international and domestic environment. Fukuda was aware of the growing position of China in the Asia-Pacific (Webster 2007). Another shift resulted from destabilizing Japanese–US ties. The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), which gained control in the House of Councilors, refused to renew Japan's refueling mission in Afghanistan. Japan lost one of its main tools of contributing to the US alliance; therefore, it was natural to pursue alternative diplomatic directions (Webster 2007). Apart from representing a “dovish” stance towards Japan's diplomacy, Fukuda was associated with politicians and bureaucrats from the China school. He was influenced by MOFA officials who opposed the AFP concept from the very beginning. Tanino Sakutarō, the strongest challenger of values-oriented diplomacy, took advantage of his personal ties with the prime minister and convinced him to abandon the AFP concept (Taniguchi 2010: 2).

The pro-Chinese shift of the Fukuda administration was a temporary challenge to the dominant position of the United States in Japanese foreign policy. The realities of the regional security as well as domestic pro-American forces within the bureaucracy and the ruling party quickly brought Japan away from the orbit of Chinese influence. In 2008, Fukuda Yasuo was replaced by Asō Tarō who once again tried to follow the path of values-oriented diplomacy favored by Washington. Prime Minister Asō, however, did not manage to prevent the historic victory of the DPJ in 2009 which was a result of strong disenchantment with prolonged LDP rule. After another failed attempt to forge closer ties with Beijing and limit dependence on the United States undertaken by Hatoyama Yukio's administration, DPJ leaders were also forced to conform with the prevailing pressures of the international environment. In 2012, Abe Shinzō assisted by Asō Tarō came back to power and brought Japan back on the road of close alliance with Washington, at the same time expressing an assertive stance towards Beijing. It proves that the influence of the United States remains the crucial factor in the process of making strategic choices on Japan's foreign policy.

7.10 Conclusion

Although the concept of AFP was mostly associated with Asō Tarō, it was actually forged by the members of public administration working closely with Prime Minister Abe. Thanks to the relaxation of the rule of dispersed management and strategic use of Yachi Shōtarō, the head of government had a clear control over the development of the initiative. Although CCS Shiozaki had significant problems coordinating the work of cabinet members, he was successful in denying senior bureaucrats access to the prime minister and limiting their influence on the decision-making process. By securing his position within MOFA through Yachi and distancing himself from the struggle among public servants and lawmakers, Abe Shinzō was able to maintain a steady course of values-oriented diplomacy and AFP.

While most of the activities connected with promoting the AFP and values-oriented diplomacy were conducted by MOFA, the Kantei expressed its constant support for these initiatives. Abe's closest entourage remained relatively cohesive towards both projects. The CCS engaged in the discourse of advancing relations with like-minded allies. By enabling Foreign Minister Asō to act as a face of the AFP and relying on his closest advisor, Yachi Shōtarō, to monitor the initiative, the prime minister was able to manage the political discussion on foreign policy.

Abe maintained a strong grip over discourse among veto players. By distancing the Kantei from the domestic argument, the prime minister avoided being dragged into the conflict within the LDP and MOFA. By appointing diplomats from the American school to influential posts within the China and Mongolia Division, Abe weakened the influence of veto players. He employed a similar strategy in managing conflict within the LDP. When growing parliamentary opposition to the AFP and values-oriented diplomacy started to form, Furuya Keiji, one of the closest supporters of the prime minister, formed the Group of Lawmakers to Promote Values-Oriented Diplomacy. Other politicians faithful to Abe followed suit and expressed support for the initiative, thus creating a counterbalance against the growing pro-China camp.

The success of the initiatives was limited by the falling popularity of Abe's administration which was a result of problems with managing controversial statements made by cabinet members. Although the Kantei and MOFA worked closely to communicate the benefits of the AFP concept to the public in an accessible and understandable way, the recognition of the initiative remained low. Therefore, one can hardly find evidence of direct influence of public opinion on the policy development process. At the same time, the Kantei was unable to translate the effects of its international activities into measurable support.

The AFP concept and values-oriented diplomacy are interesting examples of the prime minister navigating between domestic-level intervening variables and preventing them from derailing foreign policy direction. This situation was only possible with a relatively favorable international environment and a lack of considerable pressure from external actors. The development of the policy proceeded

without obstacles thanks to the encouraging stance of the US administration. AFP concept was approved by the President George W. Bush who was simultaneously introducing similar initiatives. The prime minister was able to take advantage of this common ground and advocated for stronger regional cooperation on security issues. At the same time, first signs of opposition from Beijing and Moscow were not able to significantly change the course of both initiatives before the end of the first Abe administration.

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Chapter 8

The Issue of Futenma Under the Koizumi and Hatoyama Cabinets

8.1 Introduction

The issue of the US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, which symbolizes a broader problem of the US military bases in Okinawa, has been a source of potential conflict in Japanese foreign and domestic politics over a long period of time. Since the end of the Cold War, it took a new turn with eruptions of public interest and protests emerging cyclically, triggered by particular events. For instance, in September 1995 it was the rape of a 12-year-old schoolgirl by three US servicemen, while in 2009, an electoral vow to transfer the base outside the Okinawa Prefecture by Prime Minister Hatoyama Yukio, which sparked public outcry. In the meantime, the issue, although less visible for the broader public, was discussed and contested on various levels, between the local and central governments, between and within ministries—the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Japan Defense Agency/Ministry of Defense (JDA/MOD), the Kantei, and other veto players from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), not to mention the US government.

This chapter analyzes the decision-making process on the Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF), primarily under Prime Minister Hatoyama Yukio, focusing on the impact brought up by the administrative reforms of 2001. In order to put it in the comparative perspective, the decision-making process on Futenma is also briefly discussed under the cabinets of Murayama and Hashimoto, that is prior to the introduction of the reforms, as well as under Prime Minister Koizumi, who took office soon after their implementation.

The issue of the US military bases in Okinawa has evolved over the years, being subjected to several factors, among which the international and regional security environment, such as the Cold War, North Korea's nuclear program, and a rising China, has played a major role. Nevertheless, during the period under investigation, that is the cabinets of Murayama/Hashimoto, Koizumi, and Hatoyama, it was precisely the domestic politics (intervening factors) that gave some stimuli to policy

initiation and shaped policy outcome. The international pressure (*gaiatsu*), particularly from the United States, piled more pressure on the prime minister, limited his choices, and ultimately led to policy failure. The three cases attest to the importance of institutional tools available to the prime minister for effective policy making, but also point out to the significance of agency, particularly to the prime minister's ability and skills to use those tools.

8.2 The Outline of the Issue of US Military Bases in Okinawa

The presence of the US military forces in Okinawa has been contested for several reasons. Historically, the bases were established after the Battle of Okinawa in 1945 and enlarged during the consecutive occupation which lasted for Okinawa Prefecture till May 1972, seven years longer than for the rest of the country. That in itself was perceived by Okinawans as a sign of Okinawa's discrimination done on prefecture by both governments of Japan and the United States. The security alliance with the United States, formalized by Japan during the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951 and then in 1960, created a legal basis for the continuous presence of US forces and facilities in Japan right up until the present moment. Moreover, despite large reductions of US forces and installations in Japan on the main islands, in Okinawa the changes were minimal (Bochorodycz 2005). Okinawa still hosts approximately 74% of all exclusive-use US military installations although it constitutes less than 2% of Japan's total territory. The installations and their personnel have caused numerous accidents and incidents. In addition, one third of the land used by the bases is owned by private people, among which many have been refusing to lease it voluntarily. The central government had to enact a special legal framework for Okinawa, which allows the authorities to use their land forcibly (Bochorodycz 2005). In result of that situation, there has been a strong resentment and opposition to military bases in Okinawa, represented by anti-base, anti-war, peace, environmental, human rights, and other civic groups, as well as progressive parties (Bochorodycz 2013; Inoue 2007). On the other hand, Okinawa, as the poorest Japanese prefecture and the host of military bases, has received substantial financial support from the central government, which over the years created a group of benefit-recipients (business circles, conservatives, the LDP), thus splitting the local community into two confronting camps.

8.3 Decision-Making on Futenma Before Central Government Reforms

During the Murayama and Hashimoto cabinets, the issue of the US military bases surfaced after the rape of a 12-year-old schoolgirl in September 1995, followed by mass protests in Okinawa, the biggest since the reversion of the prefecture to Japan in 1972. Both prime ministers actively responded to the problem, exercising strong leadership with the purpose of solving the issue. Since the decision-making process has been discussed somewhere else in detail (Bochorodycz 2017), the following will only briefly refer to the points relevant for the present discussion.

Both prime ministers, Murayama and Hashimoto, were personally committed to the issue of Okinawa military bases although both perceived the solution differently. Murayama, the first Socialist prime minister since 1948, formed a coalition government with the LDP, despite having relatively few seats in the Diet, 70 against the LDP's 223. With a weak position in the coalition, lack of experience and personal interest in foreign policy (Yakushiji 2012: 248–249), Murayama ultimately left the Okinawa issue to Foreign Minister Kōno Yōhei. Kōno was the LDP president at that time as well as a strong supporter of the Japan–US alliance. As a result, the foreign minister concentrated his efforts on limiting the adverse effects of the mass protests, which over time took the form of calls for the revision of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), and for base reductions and closures.¹ All major governmental actors, Foreign Minister Kōno and MOFA bureaucrats, the JDA, the US Department of State, and Pentagon were strongly against SOFA revision, which was ultimately handled as a question of implementation (Funabashi 1999: 304–306).

The second issue of base reduction was more complex. Personally, Prime Minister Murayama was deeply concerned about Okinawa, and even before the rape incident requested the US government for the realignment and reduction of the bases, which resulted in the establishment of the Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO) in November 1995.

The position of governmental agencies towards local demands for base reductions was divided along departmental lines, rather than national ones: MOFA and the US Department of State refused to tackle the issue, while the JDA and US Department of Defense saw it as a chance for solving the pending problem. The Pentagon began transforming US forces at the end of the Cold War, with the so-called Nye initiative announced in January 1995. During negotiations carried out after the rape, the initiative in regard to the bases was taken in fact by officials from the JDA (Moriya Takemasa, Akiyama Masahiro), who saw it as a chance to solve the problem under their leadership. As mentioned before, the issue of the US military bases in Japan traditionally fell under jurisdiction of MOFA, who jealously guarded its turf, and even more importantly, did not see any reasons for a major

¹SOFA is the main document regulating the conditions of US forces stationing in Japan.

policy diversion. On the other hand, bureaucrats from the JDA were frustrated with MOFA's lack of expertise in security affairs and their inability to see a need for change. Akiyama and Moriya worked out the details of the proposal for base reductions in cooperation with their US counterparts, including Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Curt Campbell and others, who were supported by Defense Secretary William Perry (Funabashi 1999: 308–309). The specific solutions were deliberated and summarized in the SACO mid-term, and final proposals announced in April and December 1996, respectively.

In the meantime, in January 1996, the post of prime minister went from Murayama to Hashimoto, the LDP president. Prime Minister Hashimoto on several occasions explicitly committed his cabinet, and even the entire party, to the solution of the Okinawa problem with great determination (Tamura 1998: 118–119). Hashimoto was regarded a strong leader, with a firm power base within the LDP as a head of the biggest faction. He also possessed comprehensive experience at most important ministerial posts, including Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and Ministry of Finance (MOF) (Tamura 1998; Takenaka 2006: 45–46). As an adroit player and manager, Hashimoto established several institutional frameworks for deliberation on the base issue, and also on the development policies that were to compensate Okinawa for the “excessive burden” of the bases.² Millions of yen in subsidies were poured into Okinawa, particularly into the northern region of the main island where the transfer of the Futenma airbase was planned. The return of Futenma, announced in April 1996 by Prime Minister Hashimoto and the US Ambassador to Japan, Walter Mondale, became the landmark achievement of the Hashimoto cabinet. In fact, Hashimoto's initiative set up the general course of actions for consecutive cabinets. The transfer was agreed under the condition of constructing an FRF in the northern part of the main island, on Camp Schwab, near Henoko Cape.

Furthermore, prefectural governor, Ōta Masahide, who was elected by the progressive and anti-bases camp, after months of negotiations and collaboration eventually announced opposition to the construction of the FRF in Henoko in February 1998.³ Ōta's objection became the first in a series of refusals declared

²Institutions established in 1996 by Hashimoto included: (a) Countermeasures Headquarter for All Futenma Air Station Return (Futenma Hikōjō Zenmen Henkan Tō Mondai Taisaku Honbu) in JDA on May 1, (b) Task Force for Resolution of Issues Related to Futenma Air Base Return (Futenma Hikōjō Tō no Henkan ni Kakawaru Shomondai no Kaiketsu no Tame no Sagyō Iinkai), known as the Task Force for the deliberations on Futenma between the government and the prefecture on May 8, (c) Special Investigative Committee on Comprehensive Development Countermeasures for Okinawa Prefecture (Okinawa Ken Sōgō Shinkō Taisaku ni Kan Suru Tokubetsu Chōsa Kai) in the LDP chaired by Katō Kōichi on June 18, (d) Discussion Group on Okinawa Municipalities with US Military Bases (Okinawa Beigun Kichi Shozai ni Kan Suru Kondankai) under the CCS (Kajiyama Seiroku) on August 19, (e) Okinawa Policy Council (Okinawa Seisaku Kyōgikai) on September 17.

³Ōta's late decision is subjected to various interpretations, but it seems that the governor played a political game, trying to gain maximum benefits and funding for the implementation of economic plans, which were to make the prefecture, the poorest among the 47 administrative units in Japan,

by representatives of local governments (preceded only by the Nago city referendum),⁴ which have been obstructing implementation of the SACO agreement since then. Prime Minister Hashimoto eventually resigned in 1998 after the LDP's defeat in the Upper House election, but his decision to return Futenma and other bases, securing the necessary budgets for the transfer and the developmental policies, set up the course of action for consecutive cabinets.

Prime Minister Hashimoto was also the initiator of administrative reforms aimed at strengthening the position of prime ministers vis-à-vis bureaucrats, although they were implemented years after his term ended, in 2001. In the negotiation process between central and local governments, Hashimoto strongly relied on several institutional tools, such as special advisors to the prime minister, private secretaries, Cabinet Secretary staff, and others to establish communication channels with local representatives. All of those institutional arrangements were to become part of the reforms. Special advisors included, informally, Shimokōbe Atsushi, a former high-ranking bureaucrat from the National Land Agency, and, formally, Okamoto Yukio, an ex-bureaucrat from MOFA. Both of the advisors carried out negotiations with local representatives behind the scenes, Shimokōbe on the prefectural and Okamoto on the municipal levels (Shimokōbe *Ākaibusu* 2014; Okamoto 2004: 280–291). Organizationally, Hashimoto was also able to make the most of the Prime Minister Office's staff, still much less numerous than after the administrative reform, establishing cooperative relations with top bureaucratic officials like Furukawa Teijirō, the Deputy Administrative Chief Cabinet Secretary (CCS). CCS Kajiyama Seiroku (Muraoka Kenzō from September 1997) and other close assistants served as communication channels with relevant ministries and agencies, keeping the process firmly under the control of the Kantei. In addition, CCS Kajiyama took hold over personnel appointment, which was in the future to influence also CCS Suga Yoshihide's mode of operation under the second Abe cabinet (Matsuda 2016: 261–262).

Ultimately, with a strong political will and determination to solve the Okinawa problem, political resources (strong power base in the party and LDPs in the Diet), extended connections, skills and experience in managing bureaucrats, as well as the ability to use formal and informal institutional tools, Prime Minister Hashimoto succeeded in keeping the Okinawa problem on the governmental and intergovernmental agenda, and in adopting several special measures for the prefecture. Whether those efforts led to the solution of the Okinawa problem is another question. Hashimoto never seriously considered the alternative of moving the US bases outside the prefecture—as demanded by the anti-base camp, and hence the potential for the outburst of new discontent in Okinawa has not been eradicated.

financially independent from the central government and autonomous (Bochorodycz 2010: 93–97, 155–158, 159–182).

⁴In December 1997, the majority of citizens voted against the construction of a new base in Henoko.

Nevertheless, Prime Minister Hashimoto was capable of putting the policy process under the Kantei and effectively implementing his policy initiatives.

8.4 Futenma Issue After Administrative Reforms: Koizumi Cabinet

During the term of Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichirō, the Futenma relocation issue entered the final stage of decision-making on the intergovernmental level. In May 2006, the US–Japan Roadmap for Realignment Implementation (Roadmap) was signed by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Foreign Minister Asō Tarō, and Defense Director-General Nukaga Fukushirō. The Roadmap, which stipulated plans for FRF construction, relocation of 8000 marines from Okinawa to Guam, and other land returns, has been perceived since then as a binding document by consecutive governments.

It is not coincidental that the adoption of the plan took place under Koizumi who was a strong proponent of strengthening the alliance with the United States (Green 2006, 2011; Shinoda 2007: 6; Uchiyama 2007: 111–149). Moreover, as mentioned in previous chapters, Prime Minister Koizumi skillfully used the tools provided by the 2001 administrative reforms, carefully choosing both his closest assistants and specialists for chosen tasks (Iijima 2006: 28–32). Koizumi appointed four ministers of state for Okinawa and Northern Territories, which were directly responsible to him: Omi Kōji, Hosoda Hiroyuki, Motegi Toshimitsu, and Koike Yuriko. There were also four consecutive defense ministers and at the same time members of the LDP defense tribe: Nakatani Gen (April 2001–September 2002), Ishiba Shigeru (until September 2004), Ono Yoshinori (until October 2005), and Nukaga Fukushirō (until September 2006). All of them strongly supported the US–Japan alliance and in regard to Futenma functioned predominantly as a communication channel with local authorities and business circles (rather than as policy initiators).

The US military bases in Okinawa became part of Koizumi's policy priority because of their importance for the US–Japan alliance. It is interesting to note that the particular initiative in regard to FRF came from JDA. Administrative Vice Minister of Defense Moriya Takemasa had been involved in the issue on various posts since the Hashimoto cabinet and afterwards published detailed accounts of those negotiations (Moriya 2010). Moriya convinced the prime minister to his idea of solving the Futenma problem and took a lead with support of Prime Minister's Secretary Iijima (Moriya 2010: 23–28, 41–46, 81–83; Fukuyama 2013: loc. 940–1017⁵; Satō 2007: 3).⁶ The consecutive negotiations were carried out along those lines on a political level by JDA directors-general, first Ono Yoshinori and then Nukaga Fukushirō. One of the main objectives was to transfer the Futenma

⁵Loc. (abbreviation of “location”) refers to a location in the Kindle electronic edition.

⁶Moriya was nicknamed “Tennō” or *Emperor* for his influence among politicians (Satō 2007: 3).

airbase to Camp Schwab, near Henoko Cape (along Hashimoto's policy line). With the terrorist attacks and the Iraq War, the United States began a transformation of its forces. Moriya (2010: 26) saw it as a chance for solving the Okinawa problem by bringing in talks on the US bases in Okinawa.⁷ The final V-shaped proposal incorporated in the Roadmap was a compromise between the JDA's proposal and demands of the Okinawan representatives (business circle).⁸ The Okinawa governors, Inamine Keiichi (1998–2006) and Nakaima Hirokazu (2006–2014), backed up by local business elites, pushed for a plan, which, although less environmentally friendly, would avoid flight trajectory crossing over small settlements, while also bringing the biggest revenues for local construction companies and other local business (Moriya 2010: 215–220).⁹

The positions of local authorities, prefectural and Nago city, towards the FRF have been changing over time. Between the anti-base governors Ōta Masahide (1990–1998) and Onaga Takeshi (2014–), two other governors: Inamine Keiichi (1998–2006) and Nakaima Hirokazu (2006–2014), who were elected with support of the LDP and local business, inclined towards acceptance of the FRF under certain conditions although avoiding explicit declarations on the matter. However, once in office they began wavering, prolonging procedures, changing opinions, and demands towards the central government. For any politician from Okinawa to openly accept military bases equaled “political suicide,” and therefore the emphasis was mostly put on economic development realized through governmental subsidies. Two local politicians who openly accepted plans for FRF construction resigned or ended their terms soon after their public declaration.¹⁰

As for the national level, MOFA and the US side opposed the FRF proposal presented by the JDA because traditionally MOFA regarded security issues as its own field of responsibility (Moriya 2010: 57–58, 199; Funabashi 1999: 101–102; Blais 2010: loc. 369; Fukuyama 2013: loc. 498–511). To protect its turf, MOFA went as far as to spread negative news about Defense Administrative Vice Minister Moriya both to the US side as well as to the media (Moriya 2010: 98, 100, 118, 126), a method employed equally skillfully during the Hatoyama cabinet. It was only due to the strong support of prime minister and his closest entourage

⁷The negotiations, between the JDA and Okinawa and between the JDA and US counterparts, conducted between 2004 and 2006, focused, first, on specifics of the new construction (place and shape of runways: on the land, on the sea, shaped L, X, or V), and, second, on the distribution of costs related to the transfer of 8000 marines to Guam (Moriya 2010).

⁸The negotiations did not include the issue of SOFA. It was only at the final stage of talks between Tokyo and Okinawa that the Okinawan side insisted on the inclusion of the clause in the agreement, which was phrased in general terms as that “the government will investigate ways to improve implementation of SOFA” (Moriya 2010: 208–213).

⁹The runways on the shallows of Henoko Bay, as well as X- and V-shape constructions would affect a wider area.

¹⁰The first being Nago City Mayor Higa Tetsuya in 1998 and the second Governor Nakaima in 2014.

(Prime Minister's Secretary Iijima Isao and former LDP Secretary-General Yamasaki Taku) that the JDA was able to negotiate its proposal.

Summing up, the US military bases in Okinawa were not as such a policy priority for Prime Minister Koizumi, constituting a part of the US–Japan alliance. The prime minister strongly supported the JDA's proposal, which strengthened the ministry's position versus MOFA in the negotiations about the FRF, while the final outcome was a compromise between the JDA and Okinawan business circles.

8.5 FRF Under the Hatoyama Cabinet

The Hatoyama cabinet, formed in September 2009 in coalition with the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and People's New Party (PNP, Kokumin Shintō), was the first non-LDP government since 1955 (with a short break in 1993–1994), so the expectations were high and electoral promises radical. One of the flagship policies of Prime Minister Hatoyama was the transfer of the US military bases in Okinawa, and particularly Futenma “at least outside the prefecture,” which afterwards became also a symbol of his political failure. Within less than a year Hatoyama was forced to resign because of his inability to fulfill the electoral vow, although a money scandal involving one of the top party leaders, Secretary-General Ozawa Ichirō, and the upcoming election to the Upper House in July 2010 with the cabinet's popularity hitting a low, were not without significance.

Hatoyama took a strong initiative in regard to the US military bases in Okinawa before national election, promising to handle the issue of the bases, taking into consideration the local perspective, that is, reduction of the US bases in the prefecture. During the electoral campaign in Okinawa in July 2009, he stated that “the feelings of the Okinawans are one in regard to the transfer [of the bases] off the prefecture, and so we have to take active steps at least toward the direction of [moving them] outside the prefecture” (*Ryūkyū Shinpō* 2009, July 20). The promise echoed very strongly among Okinawans who earlier that year in an opinion poll expressed, by great majority (68%), opposition to Futenma's relocation to Henoko (with only 18% in support), and even more (78%) declared a desire for base reductions in the prefecture (*Asahi Shinbun* 2009a, May 14). Unlike Hashimoto and Koizumi, Hatoyama was, however, poorly prepared for policy formulation and implementation although institutionally the tools were there for his use.

The DPJ in its electoral campaign and the manifesto of 2009 included a general statement of a necessity to revise SOFA and the situation of the US military bases in Japan. The past party declarations indicated that even more radical changes regarding the US military bases in Okinawa might be expected. In July 1999, the party published “Democratic Party of Japan's Okinawa Policy” (*Minshutō Okinawa Seisaku*); in 2000, it submitted two legislation bills: in February, the Revision Proposal for the Special Measures Law on Military Land Return (*Gunyōchi Henkan Tokubetsu Sochi Hō [Guntenhō] Kaisei'an*) and in May the Proposal for Revision of the Japan–US Status of Forces Agreement (*Nichibeī Chii Kyōtei no*

Minaoshi'an). In 2001, the DPJ sent several study groups to Okinawa; in May 2002, they established the Okinawa Vision Council, consisting of 17 members, who after a series of meetings and consultations announced in August 2002 the “DPJ 21 Century Okinawa Vision” (*Minshutō 21 Seiki Okinawa Bijon*). All of those documents confirmed the excessive burden of Okinawa and promised the removal of the military bases outside the prefecture (Minshutō 2005). The DPJ stance on Japan–US relations and the Futenma relocation issue were so radically different from the ruling LDP, and their position in mid-2009 rose to such political importance that the US Deputy Under Secretary Michèle Flournoy decided to meet the DPJ secretary-general at that time, Okada Katsuya, during her official visit to Japan. Flournoy strongly emphasized President Obama’s commitment to the intergovernmental agreement on Futenma relocation and warned about the potential damage to the alliance in case of any change to that plan. Okada for his part pointed out the concentration of military bases in Okinawa since the occupation period and the inequality of SOFA (*Asahi Shinbun* 2009b, June 26).

For Hatoyama Yukio, his engagement in the Okinawa issue dated back to even earlier days. At the end of 1995 and the beginning of 1996, Hatoyama, still the secretary-general of the New Party Sakigake at that time, repeated on various occasions that Okinawa bore the excessive burden of the US military bases, some of which, including Futenma, could be moved to mainland Japan (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 1996, February 18). It was amid the prefectural upheaval against the rape of a schoolgirl by three US servicemen under the Murayama cabinet. For Hatoyama, the issue was not therefore new when he picked it up again in Okinawa in July 2009 during the electoral campaign, promising to transfer the bases off the prefecture and revise the main intergovernmental agreement in this regard, that is, the Roadmap (*Ryūkyū Shinpō* 2009, July 20). Hatoyama repeated the same vow in August during an electoral debate between six party leaders (Fukushima 2011: 33).

Once in office, Hatoyama began implementing his promise, although he had no former experience with ministerial posts, nor was he able to manage the bureaucratic apparatus, which was criticized and acclaimed by the DPJ as the root of country’s problems. Moreover, many of his cabinet members either had more experience or more influence in the party than Hatoyama himself. In addition, the newly created National Strategy Unit (Kokka Senryaku Kyoku), which was to become the main decision-making organ under the DPJ, did not possess enough authority nor legal status to lead the negotiations (Zakowski 2015: 119).¹¹ In addition, Hatoyama and his party antagonized the bureaucratic elites. The prime minister entrusted the issue of Okinawa to CCS Hirano Hirofumi, a member of the Hatoyama faction, who did not exercise a strong position within the party and was in fact overloaded with other tasks, since the DPJ did not want to rely on bureaucrats. Hatoyama did not use formal or informal tools to solve the problem, trying to handle the issue by himself or by a very limited number of people. According to

¹¹The National Strategy Unit together with the Government Revitalization Unit were to function as new policy making institutions instead of the abolished administrative vice ministers’ council.

Takahashi Yōichi, a former bureaucrat from MOF, lack of entrusted staff sharing the prime minister's vision in the Cabinet Secretariat became one of the reasons of his failure (Takahashi in Zakowski 2015: 121; Brooks 2011: iv). Hatoyama, in other words, did not manage to build a coherent team, which could carry out his policy initiatives.

The cabinet members, Foreign Minister Okada Katsuya, Minister of State for Okinawa and Northern Territories Affairs Maehara Seiji, Minister of State for National Strategy Kan Naoto succeeded later by Sengoku Yoshito, or Defense Minister Kitazawa Toshimi not only had more experience and influence in the party, but also, and more importantly, took a different stance towards the Okinawa issue. Furthermore, they publicly shared their opposing views, undermining the prime minister's reputation and position. Hatoyama did not ultimately manage to convince the cabinet members to his policy and build a coherent stance. This in itself was a major obstacle in the implementation of any policy, but also led to confusion among the general public: different cabinet members presented varying, and often contradictory, opinions. In October 2009, for instance, Foreign Minister Okada expressed support for merger of Futenma with the biggest US base in Okinawa, Kadena (Taniguchi 2009: 70; *Asahi Shinbun* 2009e, October 29). On the other hand, the Defense Minister Kitazawa Toshimi, one of the very few cabinet members who closely cooperated with bureaucrats from his ministry, supported the MOD's position of transferring Futenma to Henoko, according to the Roadmap (Taniguchi 2009: 70). The ministers in charge of the Futenma issue, Foreign Minister Okada, Defense Minister Kitazawa, Minister of State for Okinawa and Northern Territories Affairs Maehara, or CCS Hirano, all tried to tackle the issue according to their experience and skills, but ultimately did not create a coherent team (Morimoto 2010: 410–424).

The confusing signals sent by Hatoyama and his cabinet were met with perplexity by the general public, which was reflected in the results of opinion polls. Hatoyama began his term in office with exceptionally high ratings, over 70%, which in December that year declined to 48% (*Asahi Shinbun* 2009c, f, October 21, December 21). The Hatoyama cabinet hit the lowest of 17% at the end of May 2010. During that poll, the Futenma issue and the prime minister's lack of leadership were given as major reasons for disapproval (*Asahi Shinbun* 2010d, May 31).

Faced with active and passive opposition within the government, Hatoyama began gradually shifting his position. In October 2009, after the visit by the US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates who insisted on honoring the existing agreement (*Asahi Shinbun* 2009d, October 21), Hatoyama still maintained that both governments should be flexible and reasonable while looking for a solution. Hatoyama hoped that President Obama, who won the election under the slogan of "Change," would show an understanding for Japan and the Okinawa problem (Itō et al. 2009: 3). With time the prime minister appeared less confident, stating that a change of position in regard to Okinawa might be necessary. In December 2009, Hatoyama announced to solve the problem by the end of May of the following year (Hatoyama 2009), which was a self-imposed deadline, repeated in the Policy Speech in the Lower House in January 2010 (Hatoyama 2010). At the beginning of May 2010,

Hatoyama visited Okinawa to ask the governor and citizens for understanding that it would be “difficult” to relocate Futenma functions outside the prefecture (*Asahi Shinbun* 2010a, May 5). Few weeks later, on May 23, he returned to Okinawa to officially announce the decision to maintain the previous policy of relocating Futenma to Henoko, in Camp Schwab, which was confirmed on May 29 in the Japan–US joint statement. And finally, on June 6, 2010, Hatoyama announced the resignation of his cabinet.

Prime Minister Hatoyama, while critical of relations between MOFA, LDP members, and the United States, did not manage to establish new communication channels, refusing to use the previously established routes. As phrased by William Brooks (2011: 17), a head of the US Embassy’s Tokyo Office of Media Analysis and Translation: “If the party had a fatal flaw from the beginning, it was overconfidence of being able to almost totally reset the policy agenda, throwing out anything that seemed to reflect the old ways of the LDP.” It was only in October 2009 that Hatoyama sent his private envoy to Washington, DPJ Diet member Tanioka Kuniko, who had no diplomatic experience. She was to discuss the possibility of Futenma relocation outside the prefecture, but the proposal was met with flat refusal from the Pentagon and Department of State (Rogin 2010a). Similarly, the US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, who visited Tokyo in October 2009, denied possibility of any concessions concerning the relocation of Futenma in exchange for the Japan’s logistical support for US activities in Afghanistan, which was an important issue at the time (*Asahi Shinbun* 2009d, October 21). Foreign Minister Okada managed to organize two meetings of the ministerial working group with the US counterparts in November and December 2009, but because Japan insisted on renegotiating the relocation on entirely new conditions, the US side terminated the meetings (Sasamoto & Kaji 2010: 26). Furthermore, the personal relations between the two leaders, Prime Minister Hatoyama and President Obama, were rather cold to say the least. Obama’s requests, first during his November visit in Tokyo for a swift decision on Futenma, and then again in April 2010 to follow through on his promise to resolve the issue by May, added pressure, contributing to the escalation of criticism of Hatoyama domestically (Rogin 2010b). Hatoyama’s response to the US president, “Trust me,” during the first meeting became a target of media criticism who blamed Hatoyama for contributing to further misunderstanding and mistrust between the allies (Sasamoto & Kaji 2010: 25–26; Brooks 2012: ii).

In the end, the US firm stance in regard to the FRF has been pointed out as one of the major factors that led to policy failure under the Hatoyama cabinet. Whether that was the case is difficult to prove *post factum*, nevertheless the records show that at the initial stage there might have been some room for negotiations, if only the communication between two governments was handled more skillfully. In the beginning, the US officials carefully observed the situation in Japan, awaiting clear signs from the new government. As the chairperson of the Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment of the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the US House of Representatives stated in March 2010:

[...] the Democratic Party of Japan pledged to review the base issue. And since the Social Democratic Party, one of the Democratic Party's coalition partners, adamantly opposes the existing relocation plans and insists that the base be moved outside of Japan. The decision by the Prime Minister to put the realignment process on hold after taking office should not have come as a surprise. (US Congress 2010: 3)

Thus, the top US officials were clearly aware of political situation in Japan. At the same time, many of them probably shared the conviction that “[...] we must not lose sight of the strategic importance of United States–Japan alliance or allow the Futenma issue to define the bilateral relationship. Japan remains America's most important ally in the Asia-Pacific” (US Congress 2010: 3). There seemed to be space for maneuvers and negotiations, but Prime Minister Hatoyama missed the moment, and then it was in many ways too late. The MOFA bureaucrats grew frustrated over time.

The role of the bureaucrats in Hatoyama's failure to find a relocation site seems to be very substantial, and the prime minister himself blamed the bureaucrats for blocking negotiations on the Futenma on several occasions (Hatoyama et al. 2013: 6, 37; Hatoyama 2014a, 2014b). In fact, Hatoyama pointed to bureaucratic sabotage, along with the lack of policy unity within the cabinet, as the main obstacles. A similar position was expressed by the SDP party leader, Fukushima Mizuho (Fukushima 2011: 71). The WikiLeaks materials published in May 2011 confirm the antagonistic position of the MOFA bureaucrats and their behind-the-door maneuvers. The comment made in December 2009 by the US diplomat after secret talks with the MOFA officials, referred to as “Alliance hands,” who sought out the meeting on their own initiative to share their views with the American counter partners, seems almost unreal:

All three MOFA officials expressed, in varying degrees, their displeasure towards the Hatoyama government's handling and politicization of the Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF). Arima [Yutaka, Japanese Permanent Mission to the UN Political Counselor] lamented that the issue had essentially tied both governments' hands to the point where other important, strategic bilateral initiatives for strengthening the Alliance have slowed or are not moving forward. They stressed that the USG ought not to be overly accommodating to the DPJ government on FRF or risk being misunderstood and appear willing to make concessions to the agreed roadmap. Ariyoshi [Takashi, Japan–US SOFA Division Principal Deputy Director]¹² asserted that the USG ought to, in some form, express its discontent toward the GOJ publicly. [...]. (WikiLeaks 2009a)

The “US–Japan Alliance managers from MOFA” objected to the Hatoyama decision on the grounds of “the importance to Japan's security of moving forward with FRF” (WikiLeaks 2009a).

The position of the MOD officials was similar. Already in October 2009, Director-General of Defense Policy Bureau Takamizawa Nobushige, in a private discussion with US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell, criticized not only the Hatoyama cabinet for handling the Futenma issue, but also his own superior, Parliamentary Vice Minister of Defense

¹²Names of the positions quoted as in the original text (WikiLeaks 2009a).

Nagashima Akihisa, and warned against showing flexibility on the US's part. Takamizawa also confirmed that the MOD officials were uncooperative in finding a new site for the FRF as proposed by Hatoyama, and that the MOD bureaucrats were strongly in support of the US–Japan alliance, which in their opinion served the national interest of Japan best (WikiLeaks 2009b).

To enhance their position, MOFA and MOD bureaucrats used the media to influence public support for the government, which at the beginning of Hatoyama's term in office reached over 70%, while at the end dropped to a level below 20%. MOFA and MOD bureaucrats intentionally spread negative images of the prime minister, emphasizing Hatoyama's lack of skills and experience, leaking at times secret information to reporters (Hatoyama et al. 2013: 37–38). The officials were also well aware of the results of the opinion polls showing high public support for the US–Japan alliance (65%), and the popularity of President Obama among Japanese. The Hatoyama cabinet was, in their opinion, undermining the alliance (WikiLeaks 2009c). On the other side of the Pacific, the US media reported top US officials describing Hatoyama in negative terms, portraying him as “wavering,” “dithering,” “indecisive,” “amateurish,” or “loopy” (O'Shea 2014: 450), which was picked up by the Japanese domestic media. In Japan, the press and TV stations often quoted well-known American security specialists, such as Michael Green, Richard Armitage, Kurt Campbell, and among others, criticizing Hatoyama for destabilizing the alliance, with possible adverse consequences for regional security, while praising LDP politicians for strengthening the alliance (O'Shea 2014: 451).

In addition to the antagonistic relations with the United States and the bureaucracy, the prime minister's lack of knowledge and experience seemed at times astounding. In a conversation with a nonfiction writer, Yabe Kōji, which took place years after his resignation, Hatoyama admitted that while in office he did not even know about the existence of the US–Japan Joint Committee, the highest decision-making body in regard to the US bases:

Hatoyama: it is embarrassing, but I did not know about it. [I did not know that] twice a month in the US or Japan the top officials from the US army and Japanese MOFA, Ministry of Justice, MOF and others, hold secret discussions, more secret even than those in the government! And moreover, the content basically did not come out [to the public]. [...]

Yabe: the US–Japan Joint Committee has been a discussion forum, basically since the occupation, for the exercise of special rights of the US army in Japan, or in other words, for the rights “to freely use the entirety of Japanese territory by the US army.” During the 60 years of that organization, the situation became such that once something is decided by them, no one can put in a word about it. (Hatoyama 2014b)

Hatoyama's lack of grasp of reality and at times basic knowledge, not denying his academic intelligence, contributed to him gaining the nickname “Alien [UFO] Prime Minister” (*Uchūjin Shushō*) (*Shūkan Asahi* 2009, November 20). Hatoyama as a politician was an idealist who proposed several goals (e.g., Futenma relocation outside Okinawa, East Asia Community) which were close to his ideals, but far away from political reality.

Furthermore, the DPJ coalition partners, the SDP and PNP piled on more pressure on the Hatoyama cabinet. The SDP leader, Fukushima Mizuho, who insisted on the inclusion of the Okinawa clause in the coalition agreement, hinted already at the beginning of December 2009 about “grave consequences” in case of relocating Futenma to Henoko (Fukushima 2011: 44). In mid-December 2009, the coalition partners established the Deliberative Committee on Okinawa Bases Problem (Okinawa Kichi Mondai Kentō Inkai), presided over by the CCS Hirano under the Basic Policy Cabinet Committee (Kihon Seisaku Kakuryō Inkai), the main decision-making organ of coalition partners, to coordinate the decision-making on the Futenma issue (Nakaima 2010; Fukushima 2011: 45). In the proposal announced in March 2010, the SDP, represented in the committee by Abe Tomoko and Hattori Ryōichi, was in favor of relocating Futenma outside Japan to Guam, Saipan, or Tinian in the Northern Mariana Islands, while for the PNP, represented by Shimoji Mikio, the relocation within the prefecture was acceptable (Nakaima 2010). The SDP, with relatively few seats in the Diet, was necessary for DPJ to secure the majority of seats in the Upper House. In the end, Fukushima refused to sign the cabinet decision on the relocation to Henoko on May 28, 2010. As a result, she was dismissed from the ministerial post, and the SDP left the coalition.

Between Hatoyama’s declaration to move the “bases at least outside the prefecture” and his resignation, the prime minister ordered to search for other alternatives for the Futenma relocation, which was met with resistance on various fronts. Several options were considered, including Tokunoshima in Kagoshima Prefecture announced in January 2010, Ōmura or Sasebo cities in Nagasaki Prefecture, Shimoji Island in the Miyako Archipelago in Okinawa Prefecture in February 2010 (*Asahi Shinbun* 2010b, January 27; Fukushima 2011: 54). As a last attempt, Hatoyama even appealed to the All Japan Governors Associations (Zenkoku Chijikai) in May 2010 for support in finding a relocation site, but without success (*Asahi Shinbun* 2010c, May 28). With time running out, Hatoyama eventually gave up.¹³

In consequence, Prime Minister Hatoyama, although having showed strong determination in regard to the issue of the Okinawa military bases, failed to fulfill his promise. Several factors were responsible for that situation: Hatoyama lacked personal skills and experience in ministerial posts, showing ignorance in regard to institutional arrangements on the decision-making process; he could not form a coherency among his cabinet members; contributed to antagonizing relations with the US counterparts, MOFA, MOD, and other officials; and additionally, Hatoyama was under pressure from coalition partners as well as the high expectations of Okinawan citizens. In other words, the political will of Prime Minister Hatoyama, supported by the coalition partner and local community, was not translated into a political decision due to the prime minister’s inability to use the existing institutional tools and actors for the implementation of his policy.

¹³On May 28, 2010, during the US–Japan 2+2 meeting, both governments jointly declared decision of implementing the Futenma transfer to Henoko.

8.6 Conclusion

The three cases do not allow for easy comparisons, since the circumstances under which the decision-making processes on the Futenma issue unfolded, differed substantially. Nevertheless, in regard to central government reforms, it can be said that the Kantei-led policy process, and in fact the usage of tools formally provided by the reforms, was possible before their actual implementation in 2001. Nevertheless, placing the process under the Kantei before the reforms was much more difficult and time-consuming since it required strong determination and skills on behalf of the prime minister. Politicians like Prime Minister Hashimoto were capable of taking control over the decision-making process without antagonizing the bureaucrats, but that required strength and experience.

After the introduction of the administrative reform, the Kantei gained a formal right for policy formulation and the necessary tools to carry it out. Prime Minister Koizumi adroitly exploited new possibilities, swiftly implementing several important policies. At the other end of the spectrum, Prime Minister Hatoyama showed that the mere existence of the tools does not guarantee their proper usage. It is fairly clear that political leadership and personal skills of a prime minister do seem, at least in the three cases under investigation, essential for policy initiation and decision-making. The new administrative tools enabled a swift and integrated policy making process, but their actual usage requires a skillful leader.

Furthermore, the case of the policy process under Prime Minister Koizumi unraveled yet another interesting aspect of administrative reforms and their consequences. As mentioned, Koizumi adroitly employed new institutional tools to carry out the policy on Futenma, which was actually initiated by officials from the JDA (Moriya Takemasa). The JDA, sidelined for years by MOFA regarding policy making on defense and security issues, was able to influence the process by winning the approval of the prime minister. Because of the administrative reform, therefore, the position of the Kantei was strengthened vis-à-vis other ministries and agencies, which furthermore weakened their position vis-à-vis each other. The ministries (and bureaus) can step outside their traditional area of competence, breaking thereby the rule of dispersed management, by winning the support of the Kantei, which equipped by the administrative reform, now formally can initiate and formulate new policies.

Prime Minister Hatoyama lacked the experience and ability not only to use the administrative apparatus for policy introduction and implementation, but also to build a coherent team of close associates in the Kantei. Incoherent statements by his cabinet members contributed to undermining Hatoyama's position and public image. The initial high expectations and support for the new cabinet, as reflected in the opinion polls, turned into deep disappointment and very low ratings within a few months.

In that context it is very difficult to estimate the influence of US pressure on policy outcome. Interestingly, in the case of Hatoyama, *gaiatsu* had no role in the policy initiation on Futenma relocation since it was Hatoyama's own idea

expressed during the election campaign. The question whether Hatoyama could have succeeded with relocating Futenma outside Okinawa, if he had been a skillful and effective leader in the domestic arena, will have to remain unanswered. But the fact remains that in addition to a lack of leadership and skills, US *gaiatsu* did add to the pressure on Prime Minister Hatoyama during the decision-making process. As a result, Hatoyama was caught in between the US pressure for maintaining the *status quo* on the one hand, and the pressure of public support, especially in Okinawa, and the coalition partners, on the other hand, for keeping up his promise of Futenma relocation outside the prefecture. This ultimately contributed to his policy failure and resignation from the office.

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Chapter 9

Hatoyama Administration's East Asian Community Initiative

9.1 Introduction

After a landslide victory in the Lower House election in 2009, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) came to power, thanks to promises of introducing major changes in the governing process employed by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). One of the most vivid pledges in the DPJ election manifesto regarding Japan's foreign policy was ending overdependence on the United States and shifting to a more Asia-focused diplomacy. It was a very difficult step seeing as the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and Ministry of Defense (MOD) were dominated by the pro-US bureaucrats. A number of LDP and DPJ lawmakers perceived the idea of refocusing on Asia as a threat to the Japanese–US alliance which has been considered a tenet of Japan's security policy. The external stimuli were also against the initiative. The new US administration led by President Barack Obama was unlikely to support the proposal of shifting Japan's policy towards China. It also seemed unlikely that Beijing would be interested in joining multilateral cooperation mechanisms led by Japan. The very idea of stronger integration among Asian states divided by deep historical issues, unresolved territorial disputes, differences in the level of development and political regimes seemed unrealistic from the very beginning. Despite opposition from MOFA bureaucrats, unfavorable attitude of some party leaders, and the lack of international support, the East Asian Community (EAC) was announced as one of the flagship foreign policy projects of the new administration.

Nevertheless, when Hatoyama Yukio assumed office it appeared that he held all the necessary tools to follow new diplomatic directions. Central government reforms introduced a variety of institutional mechanisms enabling the prime minister to maintain stronger control over the decision-making process. The revised Cabinet Law gave him the privilege of initiating important policies, and the process of drafting them was controlled by the Cabinet Secretariat. The head of the government could arbitrarily decide which policy directions required his or her

direct intervention. Setting up broad diplomatic cooperation platforms, such as the EAC was naturally placed under the supervision of the Kantei. What was more, the prime minister was entitled to channel the foreign policy making process through the Cabinet Secretariat by establishing advisory councils, ad hoc offices, or special work teams under his or her direct control. Hatoyama Yukio appointed Hirano Hirofumi, one of his closest political aides, as a new chief cabinet secretary (CCS) which was supposed to eliminate the threat of opposition within the Kantei.

The DPJ took power in the atmosphere of disenchantment with the LDP's prolonged time in power. The party had the majority in both houses of the parliament as well as high public support for introducing major changes in domestic and foreign policy. A large part of Japanese voters shared the idea of limiting bureaucratic power presented by the DPJ. According to Sahashi (2015: 134), this strong support encouraged Hatoyama's government to "pursue overarching reforms" which would distinguish the DPJ from previous administrations giving little consideration to the impact those policies would have on overall domestic and international environment. Unfortunately, unfavorable international reception, lack of policy coordination as well as problems with defining a clear picture of EAC prompted Kan Naoto's administration to abandon the idea. The ambiguous description of the initiative as well as misleading comments on revising the US alliance undermined the credibility of the DPJ government as a reliable partner from the perspective of Washington, Beijing, and other Asian governments. The chapter shows that the bold initiative of the prime minister could not be successful without international traction, careful execution, and maintaining control over the veto players.

9.2 Policy Towards Asian Integration Before the Central Government Reforms

The EAC project presented by the Hatoyama administration was based on two fundamental goals. One was the idea of creating a more equal alliance with the United States. The other was presenting a stronger focus on Asia and China in particular. As it has been already mentioned in the chapter on rapprochement with China, Japan's policy towards this country depended heavily on international surroundings and was influenced by the number of intervening variables like factional dynamics in the LDP, perception of political leaders, and leadership skills of particular heads of the government. Although some LDP prime ministers were interested in pursuing a pro-Chinese foreign policy, not many of them were able to overcome the attitude of veto players within the party and MOFA. As it has already been mentioned in the chapter on rapprochement with China, the normalization of Sino-Japanese contacts in 1972 was only possible after the United States had decided to do the same one year earlier. Even after the change of the international setting, the pro-Beijing shift was opposed by the majority of MOFA and a large

group of pro-Taipei lawmakers in the LDP. Only close cooperation between Foreign Minister Ōhira Masayoshi and Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei as well as his extensive influence on the bureaucracy and the ruling party initiated a fruitful dialogue with continental China in the 1970s and 1980s.

In the case of Japan's approach towards regional integration, it was difficult to alter the nationalistic image promoted by the conservative groups within the LDP. In 1974 after the series of anti-Japanese demonstrations following Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei's visit to Indonesia, the government had to present a more proactive strategy towards the region. Prime Minister Fukuda Takeo was an example of a politician who managed to go beyond domestic constraints on foreign policy. He reached out to Southeast Asian states and announced that Japan would reject its militaristic history in favor of more open and positive image. The Fukuda Doctrine introduced in 1977 to a great extent increased Tokyo's economic performance in the region. The end of the Cold War pushed Japan to the forefront of initiatives aimed at building closer integration of Asian states. Tokyo supported negotiations which led to the establishment of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). The Hashimoto Doctrine introduced in 1997 opted for stronger economic exchange and regional cooperation on crucial issues (Howe and Campbell 2013: 108). Market disturbances created a background for stronger integration. The Asian Financial Crisis of 1997 resulted in creating the Asian Monetary Fund and temporary currency swap systems. Japan and China often competed in terms of exerting economic influence in Asia and presented different views on the shape of regional integration. In the case of the ASEAN+3 forum, Beijing usually opted for pursuing exclusive Asian integration, while Tokyo encouraged inviting other allies including the United States, Australia, and India in order to counter China's growing regional influence (Howe and Campbell 2013: 108). The very idea of joining the Asian integration framework without the United States did not look viable for the majority of MOFA. The perspective of forging closer ties with Asia was another policy direction affected by the attachment to the US-centered diplomacy. The weakening of pro-Beijing factions in the LDP and abating influence of China school bureaucrats in MOFA only strengthened Washington's influence on Japan's foreign policy agenda in the 1990s.

9.3 Interests, Ideological Leanings, and Cohesion of Main Actors

Since the DPJ based its electoral success on distancing itself from the LDP, it is necessary to start with presenting the position of intraparty groups which were at the same time the least cohesive actors in the decision-making process on foreign policy. The DPJ was assembled from smaller political parties that in time formed organized opposition towards the LDP. The core of the group were former LDP and Japan Socialist Party (JSP) lawmakers who were later joined by the politicians

originating from the New Frontier Party and Liberal Party of Ozawa Ichirō. Because of the diversity of their political views, it is difficult to categorize particular members of the DPJ. Konishi (2012: 16–20) divided the DPJ into four groups based on different approaches towards directions of Japan's foreign policy.

The first group, the realists, were defenders of a strong alliance with the United States, perceiving it as the centerpiece of Japanese international security framework. One of their priorities was revising Article 9 of the Constitution in order to “normalize” defense and security policy. They perceived China and North Korea as one of the most imminent threats to the country and were highly skeptical towards multilateral security and economic institutions like the United Nations (UN) and mechanisms of regional cooperation (Konishi 2012: 16). It made them natural opponents to the idea of “fraternity” and stronger economic ties with other Asian partners. The realist camp, represented by Noda Yoshihiko and Maehara Seiji, was relatively small and constituted of the younger generation of lawmakers. During the Hatoyama administration, Noda's faction was almost left without important governmental positions. Despite that, the realists were able to increase their influence by forming temporary alliances with the centrist DPJ camp and LDP politicians. They also managed to take advantage of the problems within other groups by undermining the position of Prime Minister Hatoyama and DPJ Secretary-General Ozawa Ichirō.

The second group, the pacifists, supported maintaining the Article 9 of the Constitution and constraining Japan's defense policy. They feared potential conflicts which could result from stronger involvement in the security alliance with the United States. The pacifist camp shared enthusiasm towards developing Asian institutions (Konishi 2012: 17). They promoted stronger economic integration as a tool for building stability. This group was one of the advocates of regional initiatives like the EAC. The liberal camp was formed of the members of the old guard within the DPJ who protected ideological foundations and traditions of the party. The most prominent members of the group were Yokomichi Takahiro, Hiraoka Hideo, and Saitō Tsuyoshi.

The third camp, the centrists, consisted of lawmakers who were not attached to any foreign policy vision. Part of the group tilted towards the realist school of international relations, especially when dealing with security issues (Konishi 2012: 18). They opted for maintaining the *status quo* and to some degree resembled the LDP's style of policy making. A large part of the group were pragmatics whose opinion on various diplomatic issues changed after coming to power in 2009. The camp was represented by Vice Premier Kan Naoto, Defense Minister Kitazawa Toshimi, Edano Yukio, Sengoku Yoshito, and Matsumoto Takeaki. The group did not play a major role in the intraparty discussion on the EAC concept.

The next group, neo-autonomists, opposed increasing Japan's dependence on Washington and promoted a more independent and autonomous vision of foreign policy. They perceived the United States as a declining power in the changing security environment. They also recognized a growing influence of China on the regional and global scale. They advocated independent and autonomous foreign policy by increasing Japan's economic and security performance. According to

members of the neo-autonomist camp, one of the best tools for building a stable and secure environment was promoting regional institutions and trade agreements regulated by international law (Konishi 2012: 20). They were one of the strongest advocates of multilateral institutions. Neo-autonomists had a relatively small number of lawmakers in their ranks but were supported by powerful leaders who exerted influence on other party members. The camp was represented by Hatoyama Yukio, former diplomat Yamaguchi Tsuyoshi (parliamentary vice minister of foreign affairs from 2011 to 2012), as well as Minister of Foreign Affairs Okada Katsuya.

Konishi (2012: 20) also refers to a large group of Diet members indifferent towards a discussion on diplomacy. Their position resulted from the fact that foreign policy was not very popular topic among most of the Japanese lawmakers as it was difficult to translate into direct benefits for local communities. Within the DPJ this group was to a large extent occupied by the “Ozawa children,” relatively new members of the party, recruited by former DPJ leader Ozawa Ichirō who offered them quicker prospects of getting more influential positions in politics instead of following a traditional course in the LDP. Despite declaring relative indifference towards foreign policy issues, those young DPJ members had a significant political debt to pay; therefore, they were willing to support Ozawa’s stance on particular policy issues. Ozawa Ichirō was perceived as a conservative nationalist who advocated stronger military buildup. He continuously voiced his support for increasing Japan’s presence in UN peacekeeping operations (PKO) (Sneider 2013: 377). When Ozawa took leadership over the DPJ, the party’s foreign policy stance included keeping a strong and equal alliance with the United States, ending the dispatch of Japanese troops to Iraq, active participation in UN PKO, and developing relations with China, South Korea, and other Asian countries (Sneider 2013: 378). Although Ozawa from a realist point of view understood the importance of protecting the strong alliance with the United States, similarly to Hatoyama and other DPJ core leaders he promoted reducing foreign military presence in Japan. In February 2009, he suggested that Japan was able to manage its own security without US forces stationed in Okinawa, using only the support of US 7th fleet (Sneider 2013: 378).

As one can observe in terms of foreign policy issues, the DPJ was divided into various groups representing sometimes contradicting ideas. There were, however, some directions which distinguished the new ruling party from the LDP. The first was a necessity to limit dependence on the United States and reduce the number of troops stationing in Japan. This policy line was shared by many core members of the DPJ like former lawmakers of the JSP including Takano Hajime and other DPJ leaders such as Hatoyama Yukio, Kan Naoto, Kaieda Banri, and Ozawa Ichirō (Sneider 2013: 372). The other direction which surfaced over foreign policy ideas was the necessity to build up Japan’s influence in Asia. Sneider (2013: 379) describes this path with the term “New Asianism.” According to him, it was the most distinguishable element which made the DPJ stand apart from former LDP administrations. The DPJ voiced the necessity to address historical issues with neighboring countries in order to normalize its foreign relations in Northeast Asia (Sneider 2013: 380). Of course, not all leaders favored this course of action. Noda

Yoshihiko expressed a completely different attitude towards Japanese aggression during World War II, which stemmed from his personal views as a son of a former Self-Defense Forces (SDF) officer (Sneider 2013: 380).

The idea of the EAC presented by Hatoyama Yukio to a large extent corresponded with his neo-autonomous views on rebalancing Japan's position between the United States and China. It also followed the other directions mentioned above. Although many party leaders expressed their support for the EAC initiative, very few of them were able to provide specific details of the new regional institution as it was mostly the prime minister who developed the concept (Konishi 2012: 21). Hatoyama remained under the influence of his grandfather Hatoyama Ichirō, who presented the project of fraternity (*yūai*) with Asian countries as an opposition to the Yoshida Doctrine. As it was mentioned in previous chapters, in order to take full advantage of the new institutional tools, the prime minister had to carefully select his or her closest entourage. The newly elected head of the cabinet followed the safest method for ensuring cohesion of the Kantei and appointed Hirano Hirofumi, one of his closest aides, to the post of CCS. Hirano represented the same ideological wing as the head of government and shared Hatoyama's policy vision. One could not observe significant frictions within the Kantei over the EAC. Okada Katsuya who was chosen as the new minister of foreign affairs shared the same neo-autonomous views as the prime minister. Therefore, it seemed that all the most important political figures responsible for the decision-making on foreign policy were working together.

The problem was that Prime Minister Hatoyama himself turned out to be inconsistent in his views. Although he supported the initiative through his entire time in office, his outlook on the shape of EAC changed as a result of international and internal pressures. EAC, which originally was supposed to serve as a counterbalance to American influence in the region by increasing cooperation with Asian countries, was later presented as a multilayered platform open for participants from outside the region, including the United States and Russia. Lack of a unified vision, as well as troubles with statement coordination between the prime minister and cabinet members, exemplify cracks in Kantei's cohesion on the EAC initiative. The situation was aggravated by difficulties in passing the flagship legislations. Hatoyama became so occupied that most of the commentaries on the EAC came from other members of the government, which led to numerous misunderstandings. The CCS seemed unable to take charge of the decision-making process in the prime minister's absence.

When Hatoyama assumed office, the DPJ made an attempt to distinguish itself from the LDP not only in terms of the political program but also by reforming the manner of governing. Apart from the politician-led government slogan, one of the most important goals was limiting the influence of the bureaucracy. For that reason, the prime minister set up the National Strategy Unit which was tasked with policy coordination across departments. Unfortunately, the creation of the Unit was not followed by introducing the necessary laws and regulations legitimizing its authority and position in policy formulation process (Rathus 2009). The result was that the

National Strategy Unit headed by Kan Naoto was not able to take the responsibility of policy coordination within the government.

Quickly after the 2009 election, Japanese decision-making process was in a state of disorder. Foreign policy was taken out of the hands of MOFA and MOD bureaucrats. The DPJ also attempted to limit contacts of public administration with the media (Harris 2009c). Furthermore, the 2009 election brought to power many lawmakers who did not have experience in governmental positions, which made it nearly impossible to prepare a large number of bills and coordinate new policy directions without the cooperation of the ministries. The situation was especially difficult in regard to the relations with the United States since most of the communication channels were dominated by the officials from the North American Affairs Bureau. Although the EAC concept focused on creating cooperation mechanisms in Asia, the initial project presented by Hatoyama had clearly an anti-US stance and was not supported by MOFA. The ministry was kept outside the decision-making process, but part of the bureaucrats made active attempts to bury the initiative.

The anti-US image of the EAC was fueled by public servants from MOFA and MOD associated with former LDP administration. McCormack (2011: 5) claims that the Hatoyama government was betrayed by the bureaucrats. According to cable transmissions published by Wikileaks in May 2011, senior officials with strong connections to Washington advised members of the Obama administration to present a tough stance towards the issue of the Futenma base relocation as well as discussion on creating a more balanced alliance. They portrayed the new prime minister as a weak leader “with personality shortcomings.” Former Administrative Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Yabunaka Mitoji suggested that the new head of the government had to be reminded of the fundamentals of security issues (McCormack 2011: 5). The policies run by the DPJ were described as chaotic and his cabinet was still in the process of organizing itself. The dialogue with Washington at that time was largely dominated by the issue of Futenma base relocation. Saiki Akitaka, a senior Foreign Ministry official, expressed his skepticism towards the effort of revising the alliance (Sneider 2013: 395). According to him, the DPJ wanted to present a bold diplomatic initiative that could challenge the United States. The bureaucrats were willing to protect their connections with Washington and wait for the LDP to come back to power (Sneider 2013: 395).

Japanese bureaucrats expressed their opposition not only in the dialogue on Futenma but also criticized the DPJ’s shift towards China. When Ozawa Ichirō visited Beijing accompanied by a large group of DPJ lawmakers, most MOFA officials expressed their opinion that such a big delegation was “simply unheard of” (WikiLeaks 2009h). The majority of ministry officials heavily criticized the DPJ’s parliamentary exchange program with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and accused the new administration of sacrificing relations with Washington for the prospect of forming stronger ties with Beijing. Of course within the ministry one could find groups that supported ameliorating relations with China. The Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau promoted rapprochement with East Asian states, but Prime Minister Hatoyama was not able to take advantage of this potential rift.

After stepping down from the office, he confessed that during the foreign policy formulation process he had to constantly struggle with strong pressure from bureaucrats and diplomats. Eventually, he had no choice but to submit to it (McCormack 2011).

9.4 Initiating the Discussion on East Asian Community

The concept of the EAC was included in the DPJ manifesto which consisted of general statements aimed at attracting support from voters. Most of those promises lacked a detailed explanation and action plan. Not many citizens were overly interested in the foreign policy ideas presented in the electoral campaign. This does not change the fact that Japan had to cope with major developments in the international situation. Although an influential part of DPJ leaders, including Hatoyama Yukio, perceived the United States as a declining power, the DPJ manifesto underlined the importance of maintaining the close alliance with Washington. One of the crucial issues was re-examining the status of the US military forces in Japan and the function of the military bases. The 2009 election manifesto placed an importance on equality within the alliance and the ability to present autonomous foreign policy by Japan. The main area of developing independent foreign policy was expressed in the Article 52 of the document which described the project of establishing the EAC. The aim of the DPJ government was to forge strong relations with Asian countries, in particular China and South Korea. The project would lead to establishing intra-regional cooperative mechanisms in the Asia-Pacific region in the areas identified as priorities for Japan, such as trade, finance, energy, the environment, disaster relief, and measures to control infectious diseases. The foundations of economic cooperation were economic partnership agreements (EPA) and free trade agreements (FTA) with Asian economies (Democratic Party of Japan 2009: 28).

Hatoyama launched a more detailed discussion on his concept of the EAC by publishing an article titled "My Political Philosophy" in September 2009. In the editorial, he focused on the dangers of "unrestrained market fundamentalism and financial capitalism" (Hatoyama 2009a). The answer to that threat was returning to the idea of fraternity which Hatoyama took from the views of his grandfather. The DPJ leader wanted to apply the *yūai* concept both to domestic and foreign policy. According to him, market fundamentalism in a globalization process led by Washington created a world where "people are treated not as an end but as a means." Globalization destroyed traditional industries and damaged the economic position of smaller states (Hatoyama 2009b). In terms of Japan's foreign policy, the article introduced the project of regional integration based on the principles of independence and peaceful coexistence. Hatoyama pointed out that "the Japan-U.S. Security Pact will continue to be the cornerstone of Japanese diplomacy." In the next sentence, however, he underlined that Japan cannot forget its Asian identity. He believed that the "East Asian region, which is showing increasing

vitality in its economic growth and even closer mutual ties, must be recognized as Japan's basic sphere of being" (Hatoyama 2009b).

The concept of the EAC proposed by the prime minister was an answer to the new challenges resulting from changes in the global order. In his essay, Hatoyama (2009b) directly mentioned that the future international environment did not look favorable for Japan and other "small and medium-sized nations in Asia." Washington's withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan seemed to herald the end of the unipolar world led by the United States. All of those signs strengthened the position of neo-autonomist camp within the DPJ led by Hatoyama. His views regarding the need of rebalancing Japan's position between the United States and China gained stronger support from the younger generation of DPJ lawmakers and other party leaders in the process of selecting policy priorities before the election.

The central point of the EAC was a growing insecurity towards the US-led capitalist world and the necessity to counterbalance Washington's influence in Japan and Asia (Sahashi 2015: 142). This goal could be achieved by establishing economic and political integration mechanism similar to the European Union (EU). In Hatoyama's essay, the EAC was presented as a counterweight to Washington's dominance in the region (Sahashi 2015, 142). The DPJ leader did not discard the importance of the United States for the stability of the region as well as Japan's security, but at the same time he proposed moves aimed at reducing US influence. One of the main tools was the introduction of a "common Asian currency" which would enable Asian economies to gain some dose of independence from economic crises originating outside the region (Hatoyama 2009a).

According to Hatoyama (2009b), building multilateral integration mechanisms was an answer not only to economic challenges, but also to "the problems of increased militarization and territorial disputes" which could not be resolved by bilateral talks. From the security perspective, participating in a multilateral mechanism was "the appropriate path for protecting Japan's political and economic independence and pursuing our national interest from our position between two of the world's great powers, the United States and China" (Hatoyama 2009a).

International reception of Hatoyama's essay was by no means positive. One of the biggest differences of the EAC compared with the previous Japan-led models of economic integration in Asia was the fact that the initiative did not include the participation of the United States. Moreover, it was not based on the idea of open regionalism and the pursuit of universal values (Sahashi 2015: 143). DPJ leadership did not realize at that time that the anti-US tone presented in "My Political Philosophy" would overshadow other aspects of the initiative included in the text. According to Ikeda Nobuo (cited in Harris 2009a), after the English translation of Hatoyama's article was published in the *Voice* magazine, parts of it were translated and published by a number of western journals including *The New York Times* and *Huffington Post* without the acceptance of the government. The Kantei did not expect it to have such a large international impact. Hatoyama's office commented that foreign translations of his essay presented the prime minister's opinions out of context (Harris 2009a). The DPJ leader himself was forced to declare that the essay expressed his personal views, not the views of his party (Scalise and Stewart 2009).

9.5 Domestic and International Reception of DPJ's Initiative

Soon after August 30, 2009, brought news of DPJ's victory in the Lower House election, Hatoyama Yukio quickly moved to selecting people for chief positions in his cabinet. Ozawa Ichirō was appointed DPJ secretary-general which was considered a risky move because of an overly strong influence he had on a large number of newly elected DPJ backbenchers. According to Harris (2009b), looking at his actions in 1993–1994 it was more than possible that Ozawa would try to affect policy formulation, “using his control of the party apparatus to exercise a veto over cabinet decisions.” The next important move was the appointment of Hirano Hirofumi as a CCS. Okada Katsuya, in turn, assumed the post of the minister of foreign affairs, which was commented as a very good decision. Okada was one of the best choices from the perspective of media communication. Looking at public opinion polls conducted in the first weeks of September, Hatoyama's nominations, as well as his main policy directions, were positively received by the public. According to *Asahi Shinbun*, 71% of Japanese citizens supported the new government and more than half approved of the ministerial choices. *Mainichi Shinbun* reported even stronger 77% support for the government, while 68% approved cabinet nominations (Harris 2009d). It seemed that appointing the right people to the positions of foreign minister and CCS should help in streamlining the decision-making process and enable Hatoyama's administration to take advantage of the tools provided by the central government reforms.

Soon after the cabinet was assembled, Hatoyama decided to present his new foreign policy vision to the international community. He did it without prior consultations with other DPJ leaders and foreign policy advisors. The concept of the EAC was mentioned during a meeting with President Hu Jintao on the sidelines of the UN climate summit on September 21, 2009, in New York. Although the Chinese leader did not directly relate to the EAC, he expressed his hope that “China–Japan relations will show a new state of more active growth and usher in a greater prospect” (Li Tao 2009). MOFA bureaucrats who were part of the delegation did not play an active part in the summit. They were also not informed of Hatoyama's intentions before the meeting with the Chinese leader.¹ The Japanese prime minister officially presented the pillars of his new diplomatic vision to the UN General Assembly. Hatoyama started from referring to the concept of fraternity saying that Japan would become a “bridge for the world between the Orient and the Occident, between developed and developing countries” (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 2009a). He included the EAC among five challenges for his administration, next to measures to respond to the global economic crisis, addressing climate change, nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation, and peace-building. The new initiative was supposed to be based on “open

¹A more detailed description of the circumstances behind Hatoyama's meeting with Chinese leader can be found in the chapter on climate change negotiations.

regionalism” understood by sharing security and economic risks (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 2009a). In his speech, he specified the areas of potential cooperation which were: FTA, finance, currency, energy, environment, and disaster relief. Hatoyama made an effort to persuade neighboring countries to participate in the new framework. He said that up to that point, Japan had failed to take the proactive role because of “mistaken actions in the past” (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 2009a). According to him, Japan could overcome history problems, which was a clear signal of the DPJ's willingness to attract China and South Korea. At the G20 Summit in Pittsburgh which started on September 24, 2009, the new prime minister conducted talks with leaders of China, Republic of Korea (ROK), Vietnam, the United Kingdom, Australia, India, Indonesia, and Russia, during which he signaled changes in Japanese diplomacy (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 2009b). According to the conservative *Sankei Shinbun*, the Obama administration felt affronted by the way in which Hatoyama presented his new policy. The prime minister did not mention the concept during his conversation with the US president the day before the summit. Because of that, “a high-ranking USG official relayed Washington's opposition to the initiative” soon after the summit was concluded (WikiLeaks 2009a).

Hatoyama administration made further attempts to convince the most important partners to the idea of the EAC on the occasion of the second Japan–China–ROK Trilateral Summit in Beijing. During a preparatory meeting on September 28, 2009, representatives from Japan, China, and South Korea agreed to cooperate within Hatoyama's framework (Iida 2013: 180). Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi said that “China had been one of the earliest countries supporting the creation of EAC and had been actively involved in the process of East Asian integration and cooperation” (Li Xiaokun 2009). At the joint press conference before the summit, ROK President Lee Myung-bak stated that the “large East Asian Community is an initiative which is quite right to pursue.” Nevertheless, before that could happen Japan and South Korea had to address a number of unresolved issues (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 2009c). At the summit, Prime Minister Hatoyama announced that Japan, China, and ROK would “form a core” of the EAC (Iida 2013: 180). Apart from that, the initiative was not broadly discussed, yet in the joint declaration, the three countries agreed to promote the process of East Asia's regional integration.

Unfortunately, Hatoyama's focus on convincing China and ROK to participate was negatively received by the ASEAN countries. During the meeting with Hatoyama on October 6, 2009, Prime Minister of Singapore Lee Hsien Loong stated that EAC might stand in conflict with existing regional cooperation frameworks like Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), East Asia Summit, and ASEAN Plus Three (WikiLeaks 2009c). After the Trilateral Summit, more Southeast Asian nations started to look at the initiative as a counterproposal to the ASEAN-centered integration process and a potential threat to their regional interests. Nevertheless, the result of the Trilateral Summit seemed favorable for Hatoyama's concept. The proof of that was a successful business meeting held the same day in Beijing which launched talks on creating an FTA between Japan,

China, and ROK that was supposed to form a foundation for the future cooperation (Iida 2013: 181).

Despite warm declarations, some experts claimed that Beijing was not convinced to the idea proposed by Hatoyama. When the DPJ gained power in 2009, Chinese experts believed that the new government would try to put more attention on relations with Beijing than previous LDP administrations. The idea of creating the EAC and common currency was met with approval, but Chinese leaders did not react overenthusiastically towards the change in Japanese government (Cheng 2015: 375). One of the issues threatening further cooperation on the EAC was the question of who would lead the initiative. Axel Berkofsky (2010: 138) expressed his strong doubts to the suggestion that China would be interested in transferring part of its sovereignty to a Japan-led institution. According to some Chinese specialists, Tokyo would have to abandon the idea of acting as a leader in order to ensure Beijing's cooperation (Hirano 2009). The DPJ, on the other hand, did not want to turn the EAC into a China-led regional organization (Mulgan 2009). Therefore, one can draw a conclusion that Hatoyama's integration project did not have much chance of being a success from the very beginning.

The next crucial question referred to the countries which would be included in the initiative. China wanted to limit the EAC to ASEAN Plus Three group. According to Zhou Yongsheng (cited in Li Xiaokun 2009), an expert from China Foreign Affairs University, it did not mean that Beijing tried to exclude other countries. "The top priority of the plan was to develop local economies." This vision of the EAC was similar to the initial neo-autonomous ideas presented by Hatoyama and Okada, which excluded the United States. Not all DPJ leaders supported this idea. Maehara Seiji, a representative of a realist camp, expressed doubts about the integration project. According to him, Japan should stick to promoting regional dialogue through proven forums like ASEAN Plus Three instead of creating new institutions. His other opinion was that cooperation mechanisms should be open to other countries like the United States and India. He also supported the idea of developing multiple dialogue mechanisms between Japan, China, and ROK, as well as between Japan, China, and the United States (Sneider 2013: 382). Another DPJ politician Sengoku Yoshito, who later became CCS in Kan Naoto's cabinet, came up with the plan of establishing a larger forum including the United States, China, Japan, and ROK while focusing on particular regional cooperation issues like energy or the environment (Sneider 2013: 382). Murata Renhō in her comments related to the EAC pointed out that the initiative should focus on taking advantage of economic and technological cooperation (Sneider 2013: 382). Noda Yoshihiko, in turn, stated that the Japanese government did not need such a grand vision of regional integration (*Akahata Shinbun* 2011, September 11).

The question of the future shape of the EAC and whether it would be open to the United States or not was also very important for the Obama administration. On September 27, 2009, when the Japanese prime minister participated in his first UN summit in New York, he and Foreign Minister Okada discussed the idea of rebalancing Japan's position towards the United States by "going beyond the security issues" in bilateral cooperation (Harris 2009e). The first step was putting

an end to the refueling mission in the Indian Ocean for US warships in Afghanistan. The second one was an attempt to focus on global issues in the alliance, such as the previously mentioned climate change, nuclear disarmament, and nonproliferation. The US representatives expressed concern that those statements moved the new DPJ government closer to China. Okada tried to alleviate those fears by underlining that Washington remained Japan's most important ally while Beijing was its strongest economic partner. From the perspective of the new government, it was impossible to choose between the two (Harris 2009e). Unfortunately, his statements did not reassure the Obama administration. The political dialogue during the Barack Obama's visit to Japan at the beginning of October 2009 was clearly dominated by the issues of Futenma relocation and withdrawal from the refueling mission. The Hatoyama administration failed to engage the US president with substitute topics like climate change or nuclear proliferation cooperation.

9.6 Hatoyama's Change of Narrative Regarding EAC

The question of the future shape of the EAC illustrated the lack of cohesion not only within the ruling party, but also within the Kantei and the MOFA. Hatoyama's administration quickly realized that promoting an integration initiative without the presence of the United States was a serious mistake which could not only create a rift in the alliance, but also make the entire project ineffective. Some Japanese officials, wary of the negative responses that Hatoyama's "My Political Philosophy" article had received, tried to avoid giving definite answers regarding the shape of the EAC. In preparation for the Trilateral Summit in Beijing MOFA press secretary, Kodama Kazuo, stated that "the community can involve India, Australia, and New Zealand, and there is no reason to exclude the United States" (Li Xiaokun 2009). Prime Minister Hatoyama reflected on his mistake and announced that he would not support any regional initiative which excluded Japan's closest allies. Unfortunately, his speech was followed by the statement of Foreign Minister Okada, who said that Washington would not be included in the group, but "Japan can serve as a connector between the US and the envisaged 16-member community" (Hirano 2009). The shape of the EAC was also discussed by Japanese media which expressed deep concern over the problem of how the EAC initiative would affect the US alliance. At the beginning of October 2009, *Mainichi Shinbun* urged the prime minister to present a "specific and complete picture of his idea of an East Asian Community" (WikiLeaks 2009b). *Yomiuri Shinbun* reporters asked a question whether "Hatoyama's foreign policy is seen as an effort to leave the U.S. behind and instead build stronger ties with Asian nations?" They also underlined that the "U.S.–Japan alliance should remain the cornerstone of Japan's foreign policy" (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 2009a, October 11).

Soon after the Trilateral Summit, US officials expressed their anxiety over the EAC. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell said that "any important organization related to security, economy, or trade [in East

Asia] should not exclude Washington. The U.S. will participate in these types of organizations” (WikiLeaks 2009e). At the same time, Maehara Seiji assured the US ambassador that Washington's participation was crucial for developing the EAC. He claimed that statements made by Hatoyama and Okada were misinterpreted by the Chinese and Korean media (WikiLeaks 2009d). By the end of the month, the dialogue on the Futenma issue intensified. On October 22, 2009, US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates made a visit to Japan and stated that the US government was unwilling to renegotiate the bilateral agreement on the realignment of the US forces in Japan signed with the previous LDP administration (Harris 2009f). The EAC project seemed to fuel US distrust with the new DPJ leadership. As government officials were reluctant to provide a clear description of the initiative, it was perceived as anti-American.

In the following weeks, one could observe a significant change in governmental statements concerning the EAC. During his speech to the Diet at the end of October 2009, the prime minister presented the idea as a platform open for other regions and talked about developing multilateral cooperation with the United States (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 2009d). The issue of the US participation in the EAC was picked up by the Chinese media that tried to further antagonize Washington to the idea. The Beijing News claimed that the EAC should go beyond economic integration. Unfortunately, it would not be possible as long as “U.S. is trying to maintain its supremacy and prevent the appearance of any single superpower in the region” (WikiLeaks 2009f).

The deliberations on the future shape of the integration also caused a lot of puzzlement in the Japanese Diet. During the interpellation on foreign policy issues at the Upper House Budget Committee, Prime Minister Hatoyama and Foreign Minister Okada were asked about a long-term process for the development of the EAC. Okada answered that a “concrete picture should not be determined” at that time and “it is actually better not to have a long-term plan.” Instead, the government focused on identifying possible cooperation areas such as the economy, energy, environment, and personnel exchanges (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 2009b, November 10). On the question of maintaining a secure environment in Asia, Okada underlined the importance of the alliance with Washington (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 2009b, November 10). Those answers clearly pointed to the fact that the Japanese administration perceived the discussion on the future shape of the EAC as a secondary issue. The Kantei wanted to develop a dialogue by focusing on neutral areas of cooperation with Beijing.

Despite this ambiguous strategy and some efforts to appease Washington, the media informed that US–Japanese relations were in the worst state in years. Of course, the biggest cause of discontent was the issue of Futenma relocation. The state of confusion in the US–Japan alliance attracted attention from Beijing. In an interview for *Nikkei Shinbun*, Shi Yinhong, director of Research Center of American Affairs, expressed his worries that the crisis in US–Japanese relations undermined the position of Prime Minister Hatoyama and the DPJ. From the Chinese perspective, this conflict was not beneficial as it drew Japan's attention from promoting multilateral integration in Asia and strengthening bilateral ties with

Beijing (WikiLeaks 2009g). Regarding the concept of the EAC, he claimed that China was not interested in taking a leadership role in Asia. From Beijing's perspective, the United States should not become a full member of the EAC but rather an observer (WikiLeaks 2009g).

After Obama's official visit to Tokyo on November 14, 2009, the Kantei's attitude towards the US participation in the EAC changed even more. The US president talked about increasing military and economic presence in Asia, focusing on the alliance with Japan (The White House 2009). Before the meeting with Obama, Hatoyama decided to comment on the future shape of Asian integration. In an interview on November 13, 2009, the prime minister "expressed hope for the United States to participate in the framework of his East Asian Community initiative" at least in the security area (*Asahi Shinbun* 2009, November 13). Two days later, during the APEC summit in Singapore, Hatoyama delivered a long speech about the details of his initiative. He called the EAC a "multi-layered network of functional communities" which would be based on the principle of "open regional cooperation" (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 2009e). He also welcomed Obama's remarks and his policy of increasing US presence in the Asia-Pacific region. According to the DPJ leader, the EAC should be one of the pillars of this strategy. He claimed that the US presence played an important role in maintaining peace and prosperity in the region (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 2009e).

Another issue that fueled US distrust towards the concept of the EAC was the DPJ's numerous attempts to improve relations with Beijing. This task was undertaken by Ozawa Ichirō who acted as an ambassador to Beijing. When Prime Minister Hatoyama tried to improve relations with the United States before Obama's visit to Tokyo in November 2009, a group of DPJ politicians prepared to hold a meeting with Chinese diplomats at the People's Republic of China (PRC) embassy in Tokyo (WikiLeaks 2009g). Simultaneously, the ruling party organized meetings of the Organization of Exchange and Consultation (a body for regular consultations with the DPJ and CCP established during Ozawa's visit to Beijing in 2006). The steady development of parliamentary dialogue between the DPJ and CCP did not escape the attention of Washington.

One of the most vivid attempts at shifting from a US-centered foreign policy was Ozawa's visit to China with an entourage of nearly 600 Japanese Diet members, officials, and business representatives. On December 10, 2009, the DPJ secretary-general met with Chinese President Hu Jintao who said that dialogue between the two countries deepened after the 2009 elections. He also praised Hatoyama administration's shift to Asia (WikiLeaks 2009i). Ozawa responded that bilateral relations would become even more intensive after the upcoming Upper House election in Japan (WikiLeaks 2009i). The visit caused a lot of turmoil in MOFA before it even happened. At the beginning of December, as a result of a growing frustration over the Futenma relocation issue, a large group of Japanese bureaucrats and some US officials openly accused the Hatoyama administration of attaching greater importance to China than to the US alliance (WikiLeaks 2009h). An editorial in *Sankei Shinbun* cited comments of "one of the top political appointees of a certain

ministry" who claimed that "China is a constant factor" which explained the foreign policy formulation process by Hatoyama and Ozawa (WikiLeaks 2009h). The delegation to China was also criticized by a group of DPJ backbenchers who claimed that apart from Ozawa's meeting with Hu, the rest of the visit had no greater purpose (WikiLeaks 2009h). The expedition organized by the DPJ secretary-general caused a lot of puzzlement among the US officials and led to further misunderstandings in bilateral dialogue (Sahashi 2015: 142). Politicians in Washington connected the talks on the EAC with a series of events pointing to establishing a closer Japan–China dialogue. Ozawa's visit, as well as his attempts to arrange audience of the Japanese Emperor for Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping, fueled the atmosphere of distrust. On the safe side, experts in Washington remained conscious of unresolved issues which could prevent Japan from getting closer to Beijing (Chanlett-Avery et al. 2010: 6).

Hatoyama continued to link his EAC vision with deepening alliance with Washington in such areas as disaster prevention, medical care, education, and the environment, during a series of meetings with US officials as well as international conferences (WikiLeaks 2009h). Advisors to the prime minister believed that the Obama administration shared DPJ's view on key policies such as nuclear disarmament, climate change, and building multilateral institutions (Sneider 2013: 394). They did not expect that Futenma issue would create so many obstacles. The US administration openly refused to launch talks on deepening the alliance in other areas as long as the issue was not resolved (WikiLeaks 2009h). The decision-making process under the DPJ became more prone to the influence of domestic public opinion. As was already mentioned, after assuming office the Hatoyama administration received very high public support. Unfortunately, the mishandling of the Okinawa bases relocation talks was presented by the Japanese media as a national disaster and international fiasco (Sneider 2013: 393). It quickly led to a downfall in the government's popularity. Polls conducted in the middle of December 2009 showed that support for the government had fallen below 50% (Harris 2009g). Opinion polls on the idea of the EAC could be hardly found, which indicates a marginal role of this problem in shaping the general level of cabinet support.

At the beginning of January 2010, both domestic and international media were complaining about the lack of information on the functioning of EAC concept. This state of confusion was a result of the fact that the Hatoyama administration did not take advantage of the valuable input coming from the bureaucracy in the initial stage of discussion on the initiative. An analysis of Hatoyama's daily schedules shows very limited contacts with government officials (Tanaka 2010). The prime minister did not even give orders to MOFA for creating an outline of the integration mechanisms (Konishi 2012: 21). At the same time, CCS Hirano Hirofumi failed in his task of streamlining the decision-making process and focused on the role of the prime minister's spokesperson (Tanaka 2010). Tanaka (2010) illustrates the lack of control on Hirano's part with the fact that the CCS did not meet with a number of "high-ranking government officials" during his entire term in office.

It was as late as December 2009 when Hatoyama ordered a group of administrative members to outline more specific measures for the EAC initiative. On January 6, 2010, the same task was given to State Minister for Government Revitalization Sengoku Yoshito (WikiLeaks 2009j). According to one of Hatoyama's aides, the prime minister was not giving up on the EAC as a tool of increasing regional security. Hatoyama was pursuing the path of "multilateral foreign policy" expressed during his last visit to India, Okada's visit to Australia, and opening the security dialogue with Russia (WikiLeaks 2009j). This direction became also evident when the prime minister appointed members of Council on Security and Defense Capabilities for the New Era, which was responsible for revising the National Defense Program Guidelines before the end of 2010. According to Ishimatsu (2010: 4), the Council was also tasked with providing a theoretical background for Hatoyama's foreign policy vision including the EAC. New members of the Council invited by the Cabinet Secretariat were reformist specialists with a focus on Asia. It indirectly expressed the shift towards closer integration with the region advocated by the Kantei. The head of the advisory council was elected because of his connection with CCS Hirano, but he did not provide a significant input to the proceedings (author's interview with Council member, Soeya Yoshihide, October 13, 2016). Although the discussion focused on the security issues and not specifically on the EAC, one can observe a change of approach towards Japan's presence in the region. Soeya Yoshihide who was a member of the advisory council points to the fact that next to traditional elements of security dialogue like the US–Japan alliance, the final report drafted by the specialists put more attention to the area of security cooperation between Asian countries (author's interview with Soeya Yoshihide, October 13, 2016).

Giving Sengoku a task to specify the measures of the EAC and choosing specialist on Asia policy for security and defense show that Prime Minister Hatoyama wanted to clarify his foreign policy vision to the interested parties as quickly as possible. In March 2010, he instructed members of the cabinet to prepare specific plans for creating the EAC by the end of May 2010. According to CCS Hirano, by the end of June, the government was about to provide answers to the most imminent questions regarding the EAC, such as: which countries would be included in the framework and what would be the role of the United States in it. He also stated that the task of compiling a long-term plan would be entrusted either to the National Strategy Unit or the Cabinet Secretariat (*Kyodo News* 2010, March 19).

Apart from specifying the vague concept of the EAC, Hatoyama continued to prepare the international background for introducing it. According to the article published in *Nikkei Shinbun* at the end of January 2010, the government wanted to address historical issues with South Korea in order to move forward with the initiative. On the occasion of 100th anniversary of Japan's annexation of Korea, Hatoyama was preparing a new statement of apology that was supposed to replace the one issued in 1995 by Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi (WikiLeaks 2009j). Japanese media also commented on the evident lack of Beijing's support for Hatoyama's initiative. Since the idea was introduced to President Hu Jintao in

October 2009, there was not much progress in political dialogue on developing cooperation in the area of integration. *Nikkei Shinbun* cited a commentary of Xi Jinping who said that China was looking at this proposal from a long-term perspective. According to anonymous Chinese government official, Beijing was trying to determine whether the concept of the EAC would outlive the Hatoyama administration (WikiLeaks 2009k). According to Soeya Yoshihide (author's interview, October 13, 2016), the Chinese administration was not prepared for Hatoyama's integration proposals, which could be a result of a lack of preparatory consultations done by MOFA diplomats. The US administration was closely monitoring China's attitude towards further integration. Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell informed the DPJ administration that China was likely to use the EAC to "drive a wedge between Japan and the United States" (WikiLeaks 2009j). In the following months, one could observe that Hatoyama continued to promote a broader vision of Asian integration. In June 2010, the Japanese administration published a paper on the EAC compiled by the Prime Minister's Office calling for open and transparent regional integration including the United States. In his speeches, Hatoyama no longer mentioned the unfavorable international environment which was presented in his first essay published in *New York Times* (Sahashi 2015: 143).

9.7 Kan's Administration and the End of EAC

Hatoyama Yukio resigned on June 2, 2010, and was replaced a week later by Kan Naoto. Soon before the resignation, the Cabinet Secretariat published a report on the "future measures to be taken in connection with the East Asian Community initiative" (Shiraishi 2010). The action plan was centered around five areas:

- (1) promotion of economic partnerships;
- (2) regional steps to counter climate change and other environmental issues;
- (3) cooperation aimed at saving lives, such as disaster-prevention cooperation, and disaster response;
- (4) cooperative work in antipiracy, maritime rescue, and other fields to create "oceans of fraternity";
- and (5) enhanced cultural exchange activities including human exchange programs. (Shiraishi 2010)

On June 18, 2010, the cabinet presented a document called "Blueprint for Revitalizing Japan." The new economic strategy included some of the plans designed for the realization of the EAC like creating an FTA in the Asia-Pacific and increasing Japan's cooperation with Asian states (Shiraishi 2010).

When Kan assumed office, he decided not to pursue the initiative any further. The idea of reducing Japan's dependence on US alliance lost its support after the ROK warship Cheonan was sunk by North Korea at the end of March 2010. Part of the reasoning behind Kan's decision could come from the fact that he did not belong to the neo-autonomist camp of Hatoyama. He was associated with the group of centrist DPJ lawmakers who were swayed by the more realist point of view after the DPJ gained power in 2009. The shift back towards repairing the alliance with the United States was evident after appointing Maehara Seiji as a new foreign minister.

Maehara was one of the advocates of strong US presence in Japan and one of the leaders from the realist camp within the DPJ. After the change of the government, it was only natural that the idea of the EAC, which ran against international current and did not attract much international attention, was abandoned.

9.8 Conclusion

The Hatoyama administration and a majority of DPJ leaders were distrustful towards institutional changes introduced by the previous LDP governments. Instead of taking advantage of the resources created with the aim of increasing the role of the Kantei vis-à-vis other veto players, the DPJ followed their own vision of a politician-led government, which turned out to be ineffective. Institutional reforms enabled the prime minister to initiate discussion on the EAC, despite the fact that it was considered unrealistic by the majority of MOFA bureaucrats and the ruling party lawmakers. One can also find attempts of influencing foreign policy discussion by appointing pro-Asian experts to the advisory bodies on Japan's security strategy. Unfortunately, the Hatoyama administration did not take advantage of the valuable input coming from the bureaucracy. CCS Hirano Hirofumi was unable to take control of the decision-making process as he was preoccupied with the duties as the prime minister's spokesperson.

The crucial factor which was decisive in the failure of the entire initiative were signs of losing cohesion by the Kantei and lack of clear vision of foreign policy by the prime minister himself. Appointing one of his closest aides as a CCS was not enough to present a unified front on the process of Asian integration. Without a clear message from the Kantei, the EAC project could not gain the necessary domestic and international momentum. Cabinet members and other DPJ lawmakers often made their different preferences on the EAC known publicly.

Although one could find visible rifts within veto players including MOFA and ruling party members, the prime minister was not able to use them to his advantage. DPJ lawmakers, in particular, turned out to be the least cohesive group of interest with relation to the issue of the EAC. According to Sahashi (2015: 155), the DPJ "was unable to muster even the slightest degree of consensus" on the future of Asian integration. One of the reasons for that was a lack of the ability to gain expertise on foreign policy issues by using the party structure and employing skilled and experienced politicians. The confusion over the shape of the initiative was so strong that until March 2010 Hatoyama did not give orders to his cabinet members to draft a background for introducing it. Rather than exerting control over the policy coordination process, he only floated the idea to the international community without prior consultations and waited for cabinet members and party leaders to discuss it among themselves. Although some DPJ lawmakers were supportive towards the EAC, not a single one of them (Hatoyama included) had a comprehensive proposal on how it should be implemented and how it should work.

Although one could hardly find signals of strong interest of public opinion towards the concept of the EAC, contradicting statements of government officials gave the public a sense that there was no coherent policy on the issue and that each of the ministers was acting independently. After losing control of the statements on the EAC made by cabinet members, DPJ lawmakers, and bureaucrats, Hatoyama could not prevent the media from portraying him as a weak leader with a limited understanding of security policy and a restricted control over his government.

The EAC initiative was an interesting example of an unrealistic foreign policy vision which ran against international stimuli. The new US administration led by President Barack Obama from the very beginning was distrustful towards the idea of shifting Japan's policy towards China. Although the initial signals coming from Beijing looked promising, it seemed unlikely that the country would be interested in joining a multilateral integration mechanism led by Japan. The differences and a number of historical issues dividing East Asian states seriously undermined the possibility of institutionalized cooperation. The adamant posture of the US administration triggered by the mishandling of the Futenma issue and a contrasting stance to the idea of advancing regional integration without the United States visibly affected the decision-making process of the Hatoyama administration and fueled opposition from the domestic veto players to the initiative.

Due to outside pressure and a number of domestic intervening variables, the EAC concept which was supposed to revolutionize Japan's perspective on foreign policy and regional security was changed into a vague idea similar to the LDP's proposals for regional cooperation. This shift in approach and introducing changes to the original concept of the EAC shows the weakness of Hatoyama's administration as well as the limited control of the Kantei over one of its main foreign policy initiatives. Despite the prime minister's change of narrative on the US participation in the EAC, he was unable to alter the anti-US image which led to a strong opposition from Washington.

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Chapter 10

Climate Change Negotiations Under the DPJ Government

10.1 Introduction

Before ascending to power in September 2009, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) heralded major changes in foreign policy direction as well as reforming the bureaucratic-led decision-making process. Part of the election campaign concentrated on environmental legislations and promoting a more ambitious climate policy. Those DPJ politicians who had connections with environmental groups managed to include a number of climate- and energy-related promises in the election manifesto. Prime Minister Hatoyama Yukio also shared a vision of taking a lead in negotiations on cutting greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions. He made one of the most ambitious declarations in the history of Japan's participation in the United Nations (UN) climate talks.

This environmental shift in foreign and domestic policy appeared under rather favorable international circumstances. The Conference of the Parties (COP) in Copenhagen was expected to be a major step in the global warming mitigation process. Since 2005, the dialogue within the UN and G8 focused on drafting a new mid-term reduction deal which was supposed to replace the Kyoto Protocol. The international atmosphere became even more encouraging after Barack Obama took office as the new president of the United States. In his election campaign, he frequently criticized the previous administration for withdrawing from the core of climate talks and not contributing to the efforts aimed at reducing CO₂ emissions. His electoral program showed promises of bringing the United States back to the anti-global warming campaign advocated by the UN.

Although the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) was rather supportive of ambitious international contributions to climate negotiations, the negative attitude of the DPJ towards bureaucracy discouraged administrative officials from playing an active role in the decision-making process. Even though one could not identify strong veto players among the groups usually engaged in Japan's foreign policy formulation, opposition from other ministries and business circles had a

significant influence on the perception of the DPJ's climate program. This chapter shows how a lack of leadership skills, weak policy execution, and defective coordination prevented the prime minister and the Kantei from making progress even in a relatively favorable international setting.

10.2 Approach to Climate Change Negotiations Before the Central Government Reforms

Compared to other developed economies, Japan became interested in international actions on reducing GHG emissions relatively late. Climate change policy discourse was stimulated by the stronger international commitment of other important global players. It was also affected by such domestic-level intervening variables as the influence of Japanese business circles on the energy policy debate, the antagonistic attitude of bureaucrats from the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), and top decision-makers' interest in global affairs. Japanese politicians actively engaged in climate negotiations in the late 1980s for two reasons. One was to avoid environmental criticism coming from other Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) members. A report prepared by European non-governmental organizations (NGOs) placed Japan among the top countries uninvolved in solving global environmental problems (Wu 2009: 277). The other reason became visible after the 1992 UN Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. The conference created waves of global enthusiasm towards environmental issues. A large part of the international community was convinced that it was possible to solve the problem of man-made emissions similarly to the success of the Montreal Protocol on ozone layer depletion (Rowlands 1995: 145). Japanese politicians were also influenced by the growing interest in climate mitigation. Prime Minister Takeshita Noboru who participated in the meeting on climate change in Toronto in 1990 was surprised to hear that the majority of politicians were discussing the issues related to global warming (Kameyama 2003: 138). This event convinced leaders in Tokyo to express their support for anti-global warming initiatives at the Rio Summit (Oshitani 2006: 92).

In the early 1990s, interest in the climate change issue was quickly spreading among lawmakers and a significant part of the society (Wu 2009: 268). During early UN climate summits, one could observe that Japanese diplomacy was not prepared to play an active part in the negotiations. Bureaucrats from MOFA lacked experience and expert knowledge to discuss possible mitigation mechanisms. The ministry was absent from domestic discussion on national reduction measures and targets. It was dominated by officials from the Environment Agency (EA), MITI, and the Natural Resources and Energy Agency (Kameyama 2003: 139). As a result, at the time of the first COP in 1995 in Berlin, Japan was represented by a member of the Meteorological Agency (Kameyama 2010: 189). One of the unexpected outcomes of the first negotiation round was a decision to hold the third COP in Japan in

1997. Thanks to the global enthusiasm in the early stage of the talks, the climate summit in Kyoto resulted in signing of the first binding CO₂ reduction agreement accepted by most of the participants. The initial success of the Kyoto Protocol and prestige associated with hosting one of the most important climate conferences became a driving force for the LDP's involvement in the subsequent GHG reduction dialogue. The Protocol became a focal point of Japanese climate policy regardless of the fact that at COP3 Japan belonged to a group of developed countries (JUSCANZ group formed by Japan, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) who opposed binding reduction targets, and the economic burden resulting from climate commitments was negatively assessed by the majority of domestic business circles.

Preparations for the third COP as well as performance of Tokyo diplomats during the summit demonstrated the key problems of leading a successful climate debate. The first obstacle which Japan had to face as a hosting country was the ambiguous negotiating position of the United States. Initially, Washington refused to join the CO₂ reduction framework which did not involve commitments from developing countries and growing economies such as China, India, and Brazil. This position had come under heavy criticism from most of the developing world as well as the European Union (EU). Although Japanese officials were prepared to go to great lengths to ensure the success of the conference, they had to take into account the position of their strategic ally. According to MOFA, the participation of the United States in the Kyoto Protocol, as well as future climate change mitigation mechanisms, was crucial for the overall success of the negotiations (Kameyama 2003: 141). The idea of aligning with the United States was further strengthened by the economic factors. Japan was ready to participate in the reduction mechanisms to the same extent as Washington. Accepting costly emission cuts alone could result in a loss of competitiveness of Japanese exports (Kameyama 2003: 141). Although Tokyo tried to act as a neutral mediator between the conflicted sides, it often became entangled in the argument. The struggle between the EU, the strongest advocate of binding CO₂ reduction, the United States that rejected the agreement without the contribution from growing economies, and a group of developing countries led by China and India who refused to take responsibility for climate change issue blocked the prospects of reaching a compromise.

Apart from the difficult negotiation environment, the Japanese administration had to address issues resulting from the intensive interministerial struggle which preceded every important climate conference. As a result of growing international criticism in the early 1990s, one could observe a general agreement among most of the ministries, political leaders, and business circles that Japan ought to play a more active part in combating global warming. The problem appeared when the cabinet had to prepare binding reduction targets which would affect domestic business. Internal talks before the Kyoto summit clearly demonstrated divisions within political circles regarding the process of addressing GHG emissions. The bodies most engaged in the dispute were usually MITI and the EA. The Agency was one of the most devoted supporters of combating global warming. In the process of preparing for COP3, it tried to convince other parties that Japan was able to achieve

a 6–8% CO₂ reduction compared with 1990 levels (Schreurs 2002: 187). MITI on the other hand, owing to its strong connections with the business circles, acted as a guardian of economic growth, arguing that Japan should not propose more ambitious targets than emission stabilization. The conflict between MITI and EA was usually one-sided since MITI had much stronger political influence as well as higher organizational status. Before important climate summits, like COP3 in Kyoto, the EA received support from MOFA. The ministry lacked sufficient staff and experience, therefore was usually not involved in the internal struggle over energy-related and environmental issues.

The conflict between MITI on one side and EA and MOFA on the other was so intense that it usually brought internal negotiations to a stalemate. That was why another important role in the global warming discourse was played by Japanese prime ministers. Usually, each chief of the government had his own stance on climate change. From the late 1980s, most of the political leaders voiced their support for the anti-global warming campaign. Takeshita Noboru and his successor Kaifu Toshiki were responsible for the pro-environmental shift within the ruling LDP (Kameyama 2010: 192). Prime Minister Takeshita supported the birth of a strong environmental tribe within the LDP (*kankyō zoku*). This group of politicians quickly developed into one of the major forces supporting climate initiatives among reluctant administrative bodies like MITI (Pajon 2010: 24).

At the time of the Takeshita and Kaifu administrations, Tokyo became more active in international climate talks and started to introduce the first domestic legislations on CO₂ levels. In 1990, despite heavy criticism from MITI, the government in Tokyo approved the Action Plan to Address Global Warming, which was the first strategy of stabilizing Japanese GHG emissions. After the initial engagement in negotiations, the climate issue disappeared from the agenda until the Kyoto summit in 1997. In the situation of strong interministerial conflict which could not be solved, Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryūtarō had to personally participate in the dispute and act as a mediator between the conflicted sides. Japanese lawmakers had to deal with significant pressure from the EU members to take more decisive steps as a hosting nation of COP3. With the support of environmental politicians within the LDP, the prime minister convinced MITI to accept a more ambitious 5% reduction target. In the end, Japanese commitment at the Kyoto conference was decided in the heat of finalizing the deal. After President Bill Clinton announced that the United States would curb emissions by 7% and EU agreed to a 8% reduction (Schreurs 2002: 187–190), Prime Minister Hashimoto increased the contribution to 6% in order to speed up the negotiation process (Schreurs 2005: 151). A number of specialists from MITI regarded this target as a serious burden for the economy and exports.

Preparing ground for the Kyoto summit as well as changing position at the negotiating table illustrated some characteristic features of the attitude of Japanese political leaders and decision-making bodies towards the issue of global warming. They usually had to intervene in cases of conflict between other domestic players like bureaucracy and LDP lawmakers. One should also note the relatively weak position of MOFA and the domination of MITI. Many of those features did not

change after the administrative reform of 2001. It was only after the process of climate talks intensified and moved outside the UN forum that MOFA started to play a more active part in the decision-making process.

As one can observe, before the central government reforms LDP leaders engaged in the discussion on climate change not only because of their personal beliefs, but rather as a response to the signals from the international community. Although climate change negotiations rarely went beyond the area of soft-power diplomacy and one can hardly find examples of pressure from the United States, Japanese bureaucrats had to constantly take into account the changing stance of Washington on the issue. Only after President Clinton submitted a more ambitious reduction target was Japan's delegation willing to do the same. After the reform, the prime minister seemed to become more assertive towards pro-US veto players. For example, when President George W. Bush announced his decision to abandon the Kyoto Protocol in 2001, bureaucrats and business circles associated with Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), pressured Koizumi to do the same. Eventually, the prime minister decided to follow his own course which ran against *gaiatsu* and ratified the Protocol in 2005.

10.3 Interests, Ideological Leanings, and Cohesion of Main Actors

As has been already mentioned in the chapter on the East Asian Community, Hatoyama Yukio, and other DPJ leaders were eager to promote policies which would distinguish their administration from the LDP. Previous Prime Minister Asō Tarō declared a 15% GHG reduction from 2005 levels. Taking into account the constant growth of Japan's emissions since the beginning of COP negotiations, changing the baseline from the year 1990 meant that the last LDP plan was not very impressive. The failure to play a more visible role during previous climate summits convinced the new administration to step forward with a more ambitious target. Hatoyama tried to put climate change policies into the broad framework of his grandfather's diplomatic vision of "fraternity." In one of his speeches before taking office, he stated that he was eager to "demonstrate international leadership" on climate change. He also claimed that following stricter reduction targets was a responsibility and an act of solidarity with other nations (Dickie 2009). The Kantei remained cohesive towards the climate change politics although Chief Cabinet Secretary (CCS) Hirano Hirofumi and other Kantei representatives did not play a decisive role in the policy formulation process. The task was given to the cabinet members, especially Environment Minister Ozawa Sakihito and Foreign Minister Okada Katsuya, but one can also note the direct involvement of the prime minister. According to Kondō Shōichi, who served as vice minister of the environment in Kan Naoto's administration, Prime Minister Hatoyama presented a strong desire of introducing the 25% reduction, and the issue did not go through the usual process of

intraparty consultations, which actually sped up the decision-making process (author's interview with Kondō Shōichi, October 12, 2016). Throughout the entire term, Hatoyama continuously stressed his support for climate policies included in the DPJ election manifesto. He believed that advancing more ambitious CO₂ reduction measures would not only enable Japan to show international leadership, but also put the country on the track of economic growth supported by the development of green technologies and export. Similar references could be found in Barack Obama's climate declarations.

MOFA, which lacked sufficient staff and experience, was usually not involved in an internal struggle over energy-related and environmental issues. Global warming was an exception. Before the important climate summits, MOFA officials usually became active and tried to convince other parties to support ambitious reduction targets, which in turn would enable diplomats to play a more visible role in international talks. Previous negotiation rounds showed that Japan had to often navigate between the position of the United States, which withdrew from the core of climate talks since 2001, and the EU, which was the strongest advocate of ambitious CO₂ reduction. As a result, the North American Affairs Bureau was wary of not conflicting itself with the United States. The main task of MOFA was coordinating different opinions in order to present a unified voice at the COP. As the ministry tried to demonstrate visible and ambitious reduction measures, it became one of the driving forces for Japanese engagement in climate negotiations, providing occasional support for the Ministry of the Environment (MOE). During Hatoyama's administration, MOFA remained silent, most likely because of the negative attitude of the new government towards the bureaucracy. Conflicts between divisions of MOFA regarding climate negotiations could hardly be observed. In the case of CO₂ reduction and changes in energy policy, the usual rivalry among MOFA bureaus was substituted with the even more difficult argument between the MOE and METI.

The EA, established in 1971, was understaffed and could not compete with more influential ministries, such as MITI. The main role of the EA was pollution control, monitoring environmental issues, and providing technical and information gathering support for other governmental bodies (Barrett 2005: 35). The agency had problems with passing successful environmental regulations since some of the crucial areas of pollution control and monitoring were outside its jurisdiction (Schreurs 2002: 46). Another factor that inhibited the role of the EA was its internal structure. Most of the bureaucrats working in the Agency came from different ministries, mostly from the Ministry of Health and Welfare or Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, but also from MITI (Kagawa-Fox 2012: 72). A large part of those bureaucrats retained strong connections with their previous workplaces. Despite the limited scope of operation and the weaker position than other ministries, over time the EA managed to gain a certain degree of independence. Central government reforms upgraded the Agency to ministry status, which visibly improved its position in negotiations with other actors. The change, however, did not solve all the problems mentioned above, and the MOE remained relatively weaker than METI.

METI was one of the main opponents of establishing binding CO₂ reduction targets for the Japanese economy and approached the climate change issue from the perspective of business circles, energy security, and technological development. GHG reduction commitments could cause a heavy burden for already highly energy-efficient industrial sectors. One has to note that the ministry only opposed those initiatives which collided with the interest of Japanese industry. Apart from that, in the late 1990s, MITI (later transformed into METI) expressed a considerable interest in climate-friendly technologies as a new export opportunity (Barrett 2005: 36). The main motivators for METI's involvement in this sector were prospects of receiving governmental subsidies for research in industry, creating an environment-friendly image of companies, and securing international tariff reliefs for energy-efficient technologies (Barrett 2005: 38). METI utilized its own extensive network of advisory bodies which made it probably the best-prepared actor in internal climate disputes. One can notice that the ministry had also not been free from internal frictions. Although the majority of Japanese business and ministry divisions were against participating in CO₂ reduction framework, some companies, like nuclear operators as well as part of the financial sector, saw those policies as prospects of future income.

As one can observe, the bureaucrats remained highly divided in terms of climate negotiations. MOFA and MOE usually formed alliances before important climate summits and competed with METI for the support of ruling party members. Strong interministerial conflict usually prevented the government from introducing major changes in domestic emission-related and energy consumption regulations. The result of such a situation was a continuous growth of Japan's CO₂ emissions from the 1990 level and ineffectiveness of GHG reduction mechanisms. It encouraged criticism from the international community which accused Japanese governments of inaction despite ambitious international declarations.

The DPJ, as well as the LDP previously, remained the least cohesive actors in terms of climate policy. The ruling party tried to present a consistent climate and environment-friendly image standing in opposition to the previous LDP actions. A group of DPJ lawmakers had strong connections with environmental groups (Tiberghien and Shreurs 2010: 143). For example, both Foreign Minister Okada Katsuya and Foreign Vice Minister Fukuyama Tetsurō, who previously cooperated with environmental NGOs, frequently stressed commitment to combating global warming. Part of the new approach was a strategy of distancing politics from business circles and an attempt to limit the influence of METI on the energy-related decision-making process. According to Kondō Shōichi (author's interview, October 12, 2016), the majority of DPJ lawmakers shared the enthusiasm for introducing the climate-friendly policy. Unfortunately, a large number of DPJ members had connections with Japanese business circles, METI, and other groups of interests such as the Japanese Trade Union Confederation that stood in opposition to emission cuts. Owing to those connections, veto players from industry representatives and METI managed to interfere in passing climate legislations.

10.4 Hatoyama Yukio's Climate Change Declarations

In preparation for the 2009 parliamentary election, part of the DPJ leadership expressed their decisive support to the idea of increasing Japan's presence in international climate negotiations. The party's Secretary-General Okada Katsuya pledged that the "embarrassing reduction targets" offered by previous LDP administrations should be revised from scratch. Kan Naoto promised to deny bureaucrats from METI access to the decision-making process on climate and environmental policy (DeWit and Iida 2011: 6). The DPJ electoral manifesto contained some ambitious declarations, including:

- lowering the carbon dioxide emissions by 25% (from 1990 levels) before 2020 and by more than 60% before 2050
- playing a leading role in international climate negotiations with the aim of ensuring participation of major emitting economies, such as the United States and China
- establishing an effective domestic emission trading market
- looking into the possibility of introducing global warming taxes and their effects on the Japanese economy
- introducing a fixed-price purchase system for renewable energy generated from all power sources
- increasing the ratio of renewable energy production to 10% of total energy supply (Democratic Party of Japan 2009: 23–25)

One can easily observe that apart from ambitious CO₂ reduction targets and promises of increasing efforts in the international arena, the new administration planned to implement serious changes in Japan's domestic energy policy. These transformations were supposed to improve competitiveness on the global energy and technology markets. Hatoyama and a group of DPJ lawmakers underlined that investing in renewable energy and efficient technologies was one of the ways of coping with Japan's energy security issues and boosting economic growth and exports (DeWit and Iida 2011: 7). Most of the climate declarations from the DPJ's manifesto were perceived as unrealistic by the representatives of industrial and power generating sectors. According to DeWit and Iida (2009: 3), the new climate platform was also opposed by the majority of the bureaucracy. At the time of the election campaign, Kasumigaseki attacked DPJ promises by publishing contradicting statements on Japan's climate performance. For example, just a couple of days before the election METI informed that by following the GHG reduction path presented by the opposition, Japanese consumers would be forced to pay an additional 190 trillion yen (DeWit and Iida 2009: 4). The abovementioned estimations did not bear much influence on public opinion.

In one of the polls conducted in October 2009, 63% of respondents stated that Japan should play an important part in climate negotiations. A similar survey published in November 2009 confirmed that 75% of respondents supported DPJ's ambitious climate policy (Aburaki 2010: 8). Such extensive support was rather

surprising when one takes a closer look at earlier opinion polls on CO₂ reduction. The previous LDP administration launched thorough research into citizens' motivation in financial contribution to combating global warming. Results of the survey demonstrated that 70% of respondents supported the 4% reduction from 2005 CO₂ levels (Aburaki 2010: 7). The majority was of the opinion that Japan should not bear higher costs of GHG reduction than the United States and EU (Aburaki 2010: 7). The significantly higher approval rate for DPJ climate goals before and after the election was a result of the fact that the Hatoyama administration did not provide information about the costs of the more ambitious mitigation policies. Instead, DPJ lawmakers underlined the benefits for the economy and exports (Aburaki 2010: 10). The result of such a communication strategy was relatively high public support for climate mitigation before the COP in Copenhagen.

Just 1 week after the electoral victory, Hatoyama Yukio made an official statement in which he confirmed the 25% reduction target. Once the declaration was released to the public, one could observe diverse responses from the ministerial officials. The MOE declared its full support and willingness to implement the new target. Administrative Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Yabunaka Mitoji expressed hopes that the ambitious reduction pledge would enable Japan to take lead in the Copenhagen negotiations (WikiLeaks 2009a). Administrative Vice Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Mochizuki Harufumi, in turn, warned the new government of "a very tough road ahead for the Japanese people and economy." Several representatives of Kasumigaseki expressed their surprise and pointed out that the new policy direction had not been presented for consultation (WikiLeaks 2009a).

Prime Minister Hatoyama decided to officially announce the bold climate policy on his first official trip overseas to New York where he participated in a high-level meeting on climate change organized by the UN on September 22, 2009. His declaration included the 25% reduction target as well as introducing a domestic carbon tax. Apart from the ambitious mid-term goal, the prime minister mentioned concrete domestic measures, probably with the aim of underlining the new government's commitment to fighting global warming. Previous administrations were accused of taking limited domestic actions despite ambitious international declarations. Such a state had seriously undermined Japan's international position at the climate summits. Hatoyama's speech was followed by applause by the participants. The EU and US representatives approved of Japan stepping forward with such ambitious declarations. One could not observe a significant international opposition towards the new policy. Some domestic commentators like Sawa (2009: 5) from METI claimed that the prime minister's declarations compromised Tokyo's position as Japan was the only country which was entering the negotiations with all cards on the table.

Participation in the New York UN summit was a clear sign of breaking with former decision-making process conducted by the LDP. Japanese bureaucrats took no part in drafting the prime minister's speeches on climate policy. Texts were prepared by the DPJ politicians engaged in prior discourse on global warming like the newly appointed Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Fukuyama Tetsurō

(WikiLeaks 2009b). A very limited number of public administration officials participated in a preparatory cabinet meeting on September 20, 2009. The position had also not been previously consulted with Japanese business circles and other interest groups opposing the initiative. Senior MOFA official and an Ambassador to the UN Takasu Yukio had to directly ask Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon to include the prime minister's speech in the agenda (WikiLeaks 2009b). What was even more interesting, despite previous assurances made by the DPJ, the mid-term reduction target had not been discussed with coalition partners. Serious emission cuts would require increasing the number of nuclear reactors, which was opposed by the Social Democratic Party (WikiLeaks 2009b).

A lack of previous consultations confirmed the conflicting attitude of the new government towards Kasumigaseki. It also indicated that the new policy direction was a result of talks between Hatoyama and a limited number of DPJ politicians. One of the main goals of presenting such an ambitious reduction target was preparing the background for the Copenhagen climate summit in December 2009. The DPJ administration believed that a higher reduction level should give its representatives an upper hand in negotiating specific mitigation policies. Declarations from the New York meeting also demonstrated a particular decision-making style of the new administration, which was evident in other foreign policy areas as well. Prime Minister Hatoyama preferred to announce decisions first and then encouraged cabinet members to come up with particular policy measures (WikiLeaks 2009b).

An editorial published in *Sankei Shimbun* soon after the conclusion of the talks stated that Japanese bureaucrats were "baffled by Hatoyama-style diplomacy" (WikiLeaks 2009c). In accordance with his foreign policy vision of moving closer to Asia, the prime minister met with Chinese President Hu Jintao on the sidelines of the New York summit. Hatoyama preferred to conduct talks without the assistance of the accompanying MOFA bureaucrats. It was a clear break from the LDP tradition of consulting details with foreign deputy ministers and bureau directors-general (WikiLeaks 2009c). The new DPJ government probably tried to avoid bureaucratic interference in the prime minister's agenda. Hatoyama's second unofficial meeting, which was noted by the US administration, was reserved for President Barack Obama who also voiced his support for advancing environmental negotiations. The two leaders agreed to cooperate on climate-related issues as well as to coordinate positions at the upcoming summit in Copenhagen. It quickly became evident that taking part in international talks without the assistance of experienced MOFA officials can give rise to misunderstandings. A new Deputy CCS Matsuno Yori-hisa failed to provide a clear summary and explanation of the prime minister's meeting with the Chinese leader, which confused the Japanese press (WikiLeaks 2009c). During the LDP administration, the deputy CCS was assisted by a senior MOFA official who would provide additional explanation. According to Japanese media, the bureaucrats who participated in the press conference "were uncertain whether they should support Matsuno or not" (WikiLeaks 2009c). One of them explained that he did not know how to work with the new DPJ-led government (WikiLeaks 2009c). Lack of cooperation with MOFA was

mostly the result of the anti-bureaucratic stance of the DPJ. It also pointed to the lack of will of cooperation among key ministry officials, in spite of MOFA's favorable attitude towards advancing the ambitious climate policy.

After the initial announcements, Prime Minister Hatoyama continued his efforts to move climate change policy higher in the agenda of bilateral talks with the United States. On the occasion of Barack Obama's visit to Japan in November, the leaders agreed to cut emissions by 80% before 2050 (WikiLeaks 2009d). Tokyo and Washington were to maintain close contacts in preparation for the next climate summit in order to assure its success (WikiLeaks 2009d). Unfortunately, by the end of the year dialogue with Washington was dominated by the Futenma negotiations, and the issue of global warming almost disappeared from the official statements. The Obama administration refused to discuss further areas before the resolution of the relocation problem. Prime Minister Hatoyama proposed a meeting on the sidelines of Copenhagen summit in December 2009 to clarify contested issues, but was refused by the US administration (WikiLeaks 2009e). Lack of coordination with the strategic ally clearly undermined Japan's position at the conference.

10.5 Results of the Copenhagen Summit

Preparations for the UN summit in Copenhagen were made in an enthusiastic atmosphere accompanied by the high expectations of signing a new binding GHG reduction agreement. The conference was attended by 10,500 delegates from 120 countries accompanied by more than 3000 media representatives (UNFCCC 2009a). The Japanese declarations were one of the most ambitious. Prime Minister Hatoyama pledged a 25% GHG cut before the year 2020, compared with 1990 emission levels. Japan would proceed with the reduction plan on the assumption that other major economies would also participate in the future climate cooperation framework (UNFCCC 2009b). Unfortunately for Japan's leading ambitions, the summit did not become a success comparable to the 1997 COP3 in Kyoto. The talks were stalled by the group of developing countries unofficially supported by Beijing. After a series of consultations between the United States and China, the parties signed a document called the Copenhagen Accord (Christoff 2010: 639). International NGOs quickly passed judgment on the new climate deal and called it ineffective and insufficient for reaching desirable long-term reduction goals, since it did not assign binding CO₂ reduction targets nor emission caps.

Nevertheless, OECD members came up with some promising mid-term reduction declarations. The United States put forward a 17% reduction plan compared with 2005 emission levels. The EU agreed to cut emissions from 20 to 30% compared to 1990 levels. Negotiators also managed to secure declarations from members of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa). China agreed to a 40% reduction of CO₂ emissions per GDP unit by 2020 and increasing renewable energy production up to 15% of the country's total energy supply (UNFCCC 2009c). India promised a 25% reduction per GDP unit by 2020 (UNFCCC

2009d). Brazil pledged a 36–39% cut, and South Africa 34%, provided that both countries could benefit from financial and technological support (den Elzen et al. 2009: 30). International climate NGOs noted that all declarations were not legally binding. Therefore, the potential effect they could have on global emission levels was questionable (Morgan 2009). Apart from the impressive reduction plan, Prime Minister Hatoyama pledged to participate in establishing a 30 billion USD fund for GHG reduction projects in developing countries. He declared that Japan would provide 11 billion USD in international development assistance. Although it was one of the most generous declarations in the history of climate negotiations, developing countries were not satisfied with the amount of financial aid (Vidal 2010). In comparison, the EU countries promised 10.6 billion USD and the US 3.6 billion USD (Michaelowa 2010: 2).

Apart from the impressive reduction declarations and a substantive amount of international aid, the outcome of COP15 in Copenhagen was not perceived as a success. Negotiating countries did not reach an agreement on implementing goals included in the 2007 Bali Action Plan and creating a binding framework that would replace the Kyoto Protocol. Although members of the Japanese cabinet tried to present the results of the summit in a positive light, the DPJ's ambitions of taking a lead in climate negotiations did not come to fruition. Minister of the Environment Ozawa Sakihito underlined the importance of the Copenhagen Accord as it had been “noticed” by the biggest GHG emitters. During the conference, he actively tried to convince the United States and China to present more ambitious targets. At one point, he even threatened to drop the 25% reduction pledge, but it did not create the desirable results (Fujioka 2009). Despite stepping forward with one of the most ambitious reduction plans, Japanese diplomats were not included in the core group responsible for the final shape of the Accord. They were not able to influence the negotiating positions of the United States and China who presented lower contributions than initially expected. Japan's proposition of a long-term reduction target in the year 2050 was also not included in the final deal (Rogelj et al. 2010: 2).

The outcome of the Copenhagen summit showed that Japan was unable to exert considerable pressure on other negotiating parties. The government also failed to establish a closer climate cooperation with Washington which was responsible for finalizing the talks. Prime Minister Hatoyama received a considerable amount of criticism from the Japanese media who accused him of a lack of political foresight. COP15 was a crash of the new DPJ administration with the reality of international climate negotiations. According to Lam (2010: 70), the approach of Prime Minister Hatoyama turned out to be another failed attempt to take leadership. The Japanese government acted under the false impression that ambitious declarations should convince the United States and members of BRICS to a stronger commitment. Minister of the Environment Ozawa Sakihito was forced to admit that the UN summits were difficult places for reaching a consensus. He summed up the conference as a “confrontation between developed and emerging [market] countries” (Aburaki 2010: 16). The negative experience from Copenhagen quickly brought a sense of disillusionment with the idea of Japan acting as a leader in global climate talks and GHG reduction initiatives. It encouraged other DPJ members to express

their different opinions on climate change policy. One example was Tarutoko Shinji, chairperson of the Parliamentary Environment Committee, who strongly advocated focusing on bilateral GHG reduction projects instead of trying to play a more important role in multilateral mechanisms (Aburaki 2010: 16).

10.6 Opposition to Hatoyama's Declarations

Despite the evident lack of opposition coming from the international community which remained generally supportive towards Hatoyama's climate initiatives, the process of announcing changes was by no means free from discontent. Both domestic and international plans of the new DPJ administration were met with astonishment from most of the actors involved in formulating Japanese energy policy. The initial declarations from September 2009 were followed by a wave of criticism from the representatives of Nippon Keidanren, trade unions, and a large part of academic circles associated with METI. One METI official, Sawa Akihiro (Sawa 2009: 1–9), accused the newly elected government of establishing overly ambitious reduction targets without previous consultations with ministries and independent experts. According to him, aiming for a 25% GHG cut was unrealistic, as the Japanese economy had already experienced difficulties with reaching much lower targets. He also summed up the DPJ CO₂ reduction policy as breaking up with the bottom-up approach to the climate mitigation process which had been promoted by Japan during previous climate summits (Sawa 2009: 1). Hatoyama's initiatives were also criticized by the majority of business associations which warned that a 25% reduction would result in slowing down the Japanese economy, already struggling with the effects of a long-term stagnation (Sawa 2009: 2). Sawa (2009: 2) also blamed DPJ politicians of “wasting opportunities,” since the ambitious announcements in New York were not followed by immediate talks with the EU which could strengthen Japan's position and secure favorable decisions. He predicted that the upcoming climate deal would be a result of bilateral negotiations between the United States and China, and that the Hatoyama administration would have to put a lot of attention towards monitoring those talks in order to stay prepared for the COP15 negotiations (Sawa 2009: 3). The results of the Copenhagen summit proved later that the shortage of the bureaucratic assistance, deteriorating relations with the Obama administration over the Futenma issue, and a lack of effective communication channels between the DPJ and United States prevented Hatoyama's government from obtaining this valuable insight.

Because of the top-down manner of the decision-making process regarding the climate policy and the new prime minister's style of making important announcements first and then looking into concrete measures of implementing them, veto players within the bureaucracy and other interest groups did not have many opportunities to undermine the DPJ's GHG reduction initiatives. The only way of challenging the Copenhagen declaration was by using the provision of equal participation of the international community. Japan would have to fulfill reduction

pledges as long as other countries with large CO₂ emissions, such as China, the United States, and India, also contributed at a comparable level. Nippon Keidanren representatives warned that Japanese citizens would have to pay the highest price for meeting targets in Copenhagen Accord. The Japan Business Federation asked the government to conduct a thorough investigation into the effects of the prime minister's promises on the economy before introducing concrete reduction measures. Representatives of business circles demanded an open public debate on the issue of sharing an equal climate protection burden by developed countries (Aburaki 2010: 12). This postulate received support from the Japanese Trade Union Confederation, which was one of the main backing forces for the DPJ in the 2009 election (Aburaki 2010: 13).

The ripples of diplomatic failure at Copenhagen were enhanced by growing domestic opposition towards the new prime minister. One of the main reasons for the falling popularity was a negative reception of Hatoyama's policy towards the United States and mishandling the Futenma relocation issue. In December 2009, the Japanese press informed about improperly reported donations and Hatoyama's mother's contribution to her son's election campaign. Weaker public support fueled the opposition to policies presented by the new administration.

10.7 Changes in Internal Energy and Climate Policy

As was already mentioned, it was difficult to challenge the prime minister's declaration on the international forum. The magnitude of domestic opposition, as well as the depth of divisions within decision-making bodies, becomes evident only after looking closer into the failed attempts at introducing permanent changes to internal energy and emission regulations. GHG reduction declarations were followed by mobilization among the DPJ lawmakers in order to come up with concrete climate mitigation measures. Initial interest in the policy was evident in the fact that one of the first two cabinet committees established by the new administration concentrated on the environmental and energy issues (DeWit and Iida 2011: 7). As it was already mentioned in other chapters describing foreign policies under the DPJ, the new party tried to follow its own vision of the politician-led government. From the very beginning, the bureaucrats were being isolated from the decision-making process. The task of interministerial coordination and managing the work of Kasumigaseki was entrusted to three political officials: the ministers, vice ministers, and parliamentary vice ministers. In the Hatoyama administration, it was the minister, not the prime minister, who nominated his political coworkers (Zakowski 2015: 69). It provided politicians with stricter control over the work of particular ministries but at the same time limited the Kantei's involvement in the work of the bureaucracy. As Zakowski (2015: 70) points out, the lack of uniform regulations and giving the cabinet members freedom to organize the work of the political officials' councils resulted in different standards of the functioning of these organs. In the case of MOFA, MOE, and METI,

council meetings were organized one to three times a week and rarely (only in the case of METI) involved the participation of the bureaucrats (Zakowski 2015: 70). It gave rise to problems with intra-ministerial coordination.

As for the contacts between the ministries, which used to be essential in the decision-making process on climate change during the LDP administration, the situation looked even worse. Traditionally, discussion on particular climate-related policies or emission targets was usually obstructed by the conflict between METI bureaucrats on one side and a coalition of MOFA and EA on the other. Central government reforms raised the status of the EA which tilted the scales in favor of the pro-climate camp. Theoretically, it should have provided the prime minister with additional support. Unfortunately, one can hardly find any evidence of using the conflict within the bureaucracy by Kantei officials or Prime Minister Hatoyama himself. Meetings of cabinet committees (*kakuryō iinkai*) were responsible for interministerial coordination, while subcommittee meetings (*fukudaijin kaigi*) were responsible for managing the less important work of the bureaucrats. Cabinet committees on a budget compilation or the issues of global warming initially played an important role in policy making process (Zakowski 2015: 71). During Hatoyama's term in office, the committee on climate change met eight times, while the most important budget compilation committee nine times (Tanaka 2017: 65). Unfortunately, the lack of support from administrative staff hindered their effectiveness and only three months after assembling the new government the number of all cabinet committee meetings plummeted (Zakowski 2015: 72). It later manifested as serious problems with interministerial coordination. The limited control exerted by the three political officials and growing irrelevance of the cabinet committee meetings prevented the government from taking advantage of bureaucratic expertise, which was not part of the idea of stricter control of the Kantei over Kasumigaseki, advocated by the central government reforms. Instead of managing the work of the bureaucrats, the ministers and vice ministers had to take part of their responsibilities on themselves. Since parliamentary vice ministers were also tasked with managing communication with DPJ backbenchers, they quickly became overworked, which as a result deprived the Kantei of another important tool of controlling the decision-making process.

Soon after coming to power, DPJ leaders involved in the discourse on global warming tried to implement revisions to Japanese energy policy. Initial actions focused on abating the influence of bureaucrats (especially the influence of METI) and business circles on the decision-making process. Problems with intra- and interministerial coordination mentioned above made it obvious that introducing effective changes using the limited staff resources of DPJ lawmakers and isolating the public officials would be an extremely difficult task. Divisions within the ruling party that became more evident over time only worsened the situation. The DPJ consisted of politicians associated with Japanese trade unions, former LDP members, and numerous lawmakers who maintained some connections with business circles and bureaucracy. Initially, the policy of denying the backbenchers access to the decision-making process limited the influence of potential veto players within the party, but opinions of the party leaders could not be overlooked. What was more

interesting, groups opposing stronger engagement in climate mitigation managed to use their personal connections, institutional resources, and policy making limitations to slow down or even prevent introducing major legislations (DeWit and Iida 2011: 8).

Facing the accusations regarding the negative effects of the top-down decision-making process and growing opposition from METI and business circles, Prime Minister Hatoyama decided to launch a national debate on the best means to achieve a 25% emission reduction. Key components of the new system of regulations were the cap and trade system and global warming tax, both of which attracted a lot of criticism.¹ The Japan Iron and Steel Association claimed that Japan's steel industry was one of the most energy efficient globally and the possibilities of introducing further emission cuts were limited. Similar situations in other economic sectors meant that the majority of reductions would have to be obtained through buying emission permits from developing countries (Aburaki 2010: 14). Representatives of the Japan Business Federation stated that implementing a climate tax could be disastrous for the economy. Representatives of opposing groups who participated in the debate attempted to convince public opinion that Japan did not need to introduce additional reduction mechanisms since it had managed to meet Kyoto Protocol targets using voluntary initiatives and increasing international contribution (Aburaki 2010: 14).

The consultation stage of the decision-making process showed signs of heavy opposition from veto players. A shortage of experienced staff within the DPJ as well as the lack of sufficient supervision in the process of selecting members to the advisory committees and other governmental institutions prevented the Hatoyama administration from initiating a smooth legislation process. In order to ensure easier interministerial coordination and avoid potential conflict between the agencies, the government created a committee of cabinet members responsible for the new GHG reduction framework. From October 2009, the new cabinet body decided to launch a special advisory body responsible for identifying the best mechanisms for reducing CO₂ levels (DeWit and Iida 2011: 8). A group of specialists invited to the new task force had connections with METI. Instead of starting climate discussion from scratch, which was one of the promises made by Foreign Minister Okada Katsuya before the election, the experts preferred to use the same projections and calculations on GHG emissions as those prepared by the specialists appointed by METI during the previous administration of Asō Tarō. According to DeWit and Iida (2011: 8), the data prepared by the LDP did not take into account economic changes and rapid development of a climate-friendly technology market that took place in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Furthermore, they accused the former administration of implementing statistical models which put emphasis on the large costs of GHG reduction. It also became evident that distrust towards the

¹Cap and trade is a flexible approach to emission reduction which places emission limits on particular companies or sectors. The companies can choose between cutting CO₂ levels or buying additional emission permits from entities that did not use their full allowance.

bureaucracy was to some extent well grounded. Prime Minister Hatoyama could not count on the bureaucrats working for the Kantei. A group of public officials associated with METI, who worked in the Office of the Deputy CCS, managed to find their way to the new advisory council. This office, which was supposed to provide support for the cabinet members, survived the change of power. A large part of Kantei officials working in this body belonged to the bureaucratic camp who opposed the Kyoto Protocol and other policies aimed at reducing GHG emissions (DeWit and Iida 2011: 8).

The lack of consensus among key DPJ politicians and groups of interest became clear after Prime Minister Hatoyama tried to pass the Global Warming Bill in 2010. The legislation was aimed at implementing the key GHG reduction mechanisms like emission trading system, climate tax, and other supplementary measures. Since the special advisory council responsible for drafting the best 25% reduction roadmap had been compromised by the bureaucrats associated with METI and could not produce desirable results, the task was given to the Central Environment Council within the MOE (DeWit and Iida 2011: 9). It was a clear break from the usual decision-making process which used to involve the input from the Advisory Committee for Natural Resources and Energy and Industrial Structure Council (both advisory committees working for METI). Charging MOE with the crucial task of drafting the most important climate legislation could not be accepted by the veto players associated with industrial circles. METI bureaucrats prepared their own draft of the climate bill. Both documents were presented to the cabinet in June 2010.

Among all the reduction mechanisms included in the final draft of the bill, the cap and trade system caused the strongest opposition from METI and industrial circles. In the survey conducted among Japanese business representatives, 61 out of 64 companies voiced their concerns and claimed that the system would harm their competitiveness (DeWit and Iida 2011: 10). Another important instrument that was supposed to be included in the bill was a comprehensive feed-in tariff mechanism.² Bureaucrats associated with METI managed to influence the committee working on the feed-in tariff revision and slowed down the process of consultations on the mechanism. Opposition from industrial circles represented by METI and trade unions supported by DPJ lawmakers interrupted the process of drafting the final version of the bill. At the concluding stage, a group DPJ lawmakers substantially changed the draft and delayed the introduction of its key elements.

The final version of the climate bill presented to the Diet received strong criticism from the opposition parties since it did not include the estimation of costs for the economy nor a detailed roadmap of introducing the new mitigation instruments. Prime Minister Hatoyama described the bill as a confirmation of his

²System of payment for households and companies generating electricity from renewable sources. A limited feed-in tariff mechanism had been launched by the previous LDP administration, but was limited to solar power producers. The DPJ promised to introduce a comprehensive feed-in tariff system which would promote all renewable energy sources.

pledges from the Copenhagen summit. Industrial circles joined the LDP in criticism of the government and accused the DPJ of acting against Japan's economic interests, without sufficient justification. Once again they underlined disadvantages for Japanese exporters who would be forced to bear bigger costs than their competition in China and the United States (Aburaki 2010: 18). At the beginning of June 2010, Hatoyama Yukio stepped down from office and was replaced by Kan Naoto. Hatoyama's climate policy turned out to be another example of impressive international declaration which was not followed by introducing effective reduction measures.

10.8 Kan Naoto and Revision of Course on Climate Change

The change of declarations of the Japanese government from 2010 clearly showed that the DPJ's attachment to climate change was not as strong as initially believed. Failure to take leadership at COP15 despite ambitious commitment resulted in a more careful approach of Japanese diplomacy towards further climate cooperation. Most of the decision-making bodies were under the impression that high reduction pledges developed so far did not bring the expected results. The first sign of this new approach could be observed during the next COP in Mexico, where Arima Jun from METI stated that Japan would no longer support actions aimed at prolonging the life span of Kyoto Protocol (Feldman 2010). For a very long time, this agreement remained a cornerstone of Japanese climate policy. DPJ politicians made it clear that the only acceptable form of future cooperation should be based on the equal participation of major global economies. This move was a decisive signal that Japan would no longer promote solutions which might interfere with its economic growth. Even the strong pressure from Mexico and a coalition of 20 countries advocating the extension of the Kyoto Protocol was not enough to change Japan's stance (DeWit and Iida 2011: 1).

When Kan Naoto assumed the position of prime minister, he clearly stated that one of the main aims of his administration was fighting Japanese economic stagnation. Despite ambitious climate declarations in the DPJ election manifesto, actions following COP15 clearly illustrated a growing lack of interest of his cabinet towards further cooperation. DeWit and Iida (2011: 2) conclude that the anti-environmental turn within the DPJ was by no means surprising when one examines the position of particular groups of interest within the party. According to them, in 2010 the DPJ not only announced that it would no longer participate in international climate initiatives, but also stopped working on emission trading mechanisms and regulations increasing the share of renewable energy sources in the national energy mix and abandoned the electoral promise of introducing a comprehensive feed-in tariff system. They also proved that the turn in Japanese climate policy was not a result of a failure in international negotiations, but rather the effect of a conflict of interests between decision-making bodies in the ruling party (DeWit and Iida 2011: 2).

A large part of business circles, supported by DPJ politicians, opposed introducing any kind of CO₂ reduction mechanisms. The move to end Japanese involvement in climate policy “has not been driven by objective loss and gain analysis but rather by protecting the interests of particular groups” (DeWit and Iida 2011: 3). Despite the fact that one of the main electoral promises of the DPJ was reducing the influence of the bureaucracy on the decision-making process, it quickly turned out that it was impossible to create effective policy changes without the support of administrative staff. The DPJ consisted of many members of trade unions and business representatives associated with METI. Thanks to those connections some influential positions in the new ministries and advisory bodies associated with energy policy were awarded to the officials supporting the *status quo* (DeWit and Iida 2011: 4). Eventually, the decision-making process on climate policy during the DPJ administration was not so different from the one presented by the LDP.

10.9 Conclusion

Engagement in a more ambitious climate policy by the Hatoyama administration was an example of using the privilege of initiating important changes by the prime minister despite heavy interministerial struggles and active opposition from domestic interest groups. Thanks to the relaxation of the rule of dispersed management, but also as a result of the DPJ’s attempt at introducing the politician-led government, Prime Minister Hatoyama was able to present a different stance on climate policy soon after assuming office. The change of direction was an outcome of consultations within a closed circle of DPJ leaders without the interference of Kasumigaseki. Institutional reforms also gave the EA ministerial status which to some extent increased the strength of the pro-climate camp in opposition to veto players led by METI.

Although the Kantei remained cohesive on climate change policy, this unified stance did not transfer into stronger control of the Cabinet Secretariat over the decision-making process. Apart from the prime minister’s direct involvement in establishing the new policy direction, the Kantei did not play a major part in shaping international, and later domestic, climate policy. Although in the past some LDP leaders decided to personally engage in climate discourse, before the central government reforms the Kantei rarely interfered in the bureaucratic-led discussion on the shape of environmental and energy policy. As for the Hatoyama administration, the responsibility for implementing the policy change was entrusted to the cabinet members who shared the prime minister’s vision and did not attempt to contradict Kantei officials. Although the new administration managed to isolate Kasumigaseki from the process of drafting speeches and interfering in talks at the most important political summits, the lack of bureaucratic insight and not following the advice of more experienced officials resulted in creating an ineffective approach to climate policy. One should also note the failure to exert control by the three

political officials and the growing irrelevance of the cabinet committee meetings which resulted in serious problems with interministerial coordination.

Even more interesting was the fact that in the case of introducing changes in internal energy policy, the interests of business circles represented by METI were so strong that they managed to find ways of interfering in the decision-making process. The risky environmental policy resulted in an immediate backlash from big business, trade unions, and their representatives in the ruling party as well as the bureaucracy. The climate policy of the Hatoyama administration was one of the most evident examples of a strong economic conflict of interests. On the other hand, one can hardly find any evidence of situations where the Kantei was able to use interministerial conflict to its advantage. Hatoyama could have used the support of MOFA and strengthened MOE to counterbalance the influence of METI as well as the commerce and industry tribe. Unfortunately, because of the deepening conflict between the prime minister and MOFA over the Futenma issue, the Kantei was unable to establish constructive cooperation with the civil servants from this ministry. Weak political leadership skills and an inapt execution process rendered the new institutional tools at the prime minister's disposal ineffective.

Although Hatoyama's climate policy received unusually high public support, the Kantei was subject to serious criticism coming from pressure groups like Nippon Keidanren, the Japanese Trade Union Confederation, and a number of LDP and DPJ lawmakers who actively opposed more ambitious CO₂ reduction measures. Deeper cracks started to appear when ambitious international declarations did not bring the desired results at the Copenhagen summit. The even stronger criticism that resulted from the deteriorating relations with the United States over the Futenma relocation and accusations of improperly reported donations completely undermined Hatoyama's credibility. The Kantei was unable to address the problem of falling public support, which eventually prevented the prime minister from introducing the promised changes in domestic energy policy.

One also has to take into account the lack of strong international opposition towards the DPJ's climate initiatives. The most important partners, including the United States, were either supportive or did not exert significant pressure before the Copenhagen negotiations. Voluntary GHG reduction mechanisms are usually an example of soft-power diplomacy, and thus do not directly influence the national interests of negotiating countries. Although in the case of Japan one can observe multiple examples of shifting position after taking into account actions of other players like the United States and EU, stronger negotiating partners did not exert pressure on the Hatoyama administration. On the other hand, neither did they show signs of interest in engaging in more ambitious cooperation advocated by Japan. Because of other contested foreign policy issues, Hatoyama Yukio did not manage to form stronger cooperation mechanisms with Barack Obama at the Copenhagen summit. He was also unable to influence the stance of other stronger negotiators such as China and the EU. The case study of climate change policy under the Hatoyama administration is another example of a prime minister's failure to take advantage of the tools provided by the central government reforms, which resulted in weak control of the Kantei over the decision-making process.

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Chapter 11

Abe Cabinet and the TPP Negotiations on “Trade Sensitivities”

11.1 Introduction

One of the biggest policy achievements in the area of trade and economy for the second Abe Shinzō cabinet was the conclusion and ratification of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in 2016. Whether and to what extent the agreement in fact will be implemented remains unclear, especially after the electoral victory of Donald Trump, who in the end of 2016 announced US withdrawal from the agreement. The fact remains, nevertheless, that Prime Minister Abe was able to conclude the procedures within Japan in spite of the contentious nature of the issue and strong domestic opposition.

The achievement was remarkable if one considers the fact that for years most of Japan’s cabinets had been hesitant to strongly promote a comprehensive policy of trade liberalization through economic partnership agreements (EPAs), free trade agreements (FTAs), or other, due to opposition from the agricultural lobby (Mulgan 2015b: 3). All trade agreements signed by Japan excluded the most “sensitive items,” such as rice, meat, and dairy products. Farmers, in spite of their fairly small numbers, have been an important part of the vote-gathering machine for the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), mostly through agricultural cooperatives (Nōkyō). Virtually all farmers belong to such bodies, which are united under National Federation of Agricultural Cooperative Associations (Zennō or Zen-Noh) and its political body, the powerful Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives (known in Japanese as JA Zenchū). Interestingly, even the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) could not ignore the influence of the agricultural sector. Hatoyama Yukio cabinet introduced, for instance, the Income Security Program for Farmers’ Households (*Nōgyōsha Kobetsu Shotoku Hoshō Seido*) in 2010, in order to counterbalance the effects of trade liberalization on agriculture.¹ The idea was

¹The system was proposed by the DPJ in the electoral manifesto for the 2009 Lower House election, which partially might have contributed to the party’s success in agricultural districts

pushed by a powerful lawmaker, Ozawa Ichirō, a strong supporter of liberalization policy as a means to gain support from local constituencies.²

On the other hand, by December 2016, Japan has in fact signed 16 agreements on free trade and economic partnership, while six other were under negotiations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2016). That in itself certifies to the importance of trade liberalization policy. Moreover, Japan’s national economic plans, Revitalization Strategy of 2014 and 2016, included, as one of the main vehicles for stimulating the economy and strengthening the global competitiveness of Japanese companies, acceleration of trade and economic agreements on the liberalization of the movement of goods, services, and investment. Not only the government seems to be committed to such trade policy, but also strong pro-liberalization advocacy groups, including big business, academia, and media, have been lobbying for such undertakings for years.

The TPP constitutes a comprehensive trade agreement that covers much broader range of topics than only agriculture (automobile, textile, services, investment, insurance, intellectual property, etc.). Nevertheless, the agricultural products have been one of the major sources of conflict over the years, obstructing Japan’s negotiations on trade liberalization. How was Prime Minister Abe able to overcome the difficulties in this regard? The chapter tries to tackle this question, giving special attention to institutional tools, introduced by administrative reform of 2001, which were employed by Prime Minister Abe in order to shape the decision-making process on the TPP. The main argument is, in short, that it was precisely those tools that enabled Abe to establish control over the policy process on TPP, coordinate conflicting interests of various domestic actors, and reach the final compromise. Moreover, taken from the perspective of neoclassical realism, the case study of the TPP certifies to the importance of intervening factors of domestic politics, which account for the final outcome of the TPP policy.

11.2 Trade Policies Before the Central Government Reforms

Japan’s trade policy belongs to a subfield of foreign policy which has been very strongly effected by international pressure (*gaiatsu*), particularly from the United States. From the 1960s, the United States pressed Japan for market liberalization of specific products—textiles in the 1960s, color TVs in the 1970s, automobile parts and semiconductors, beef, and citruses in the 1980s, the latter resulting in accepting import quotas by Japan. Since 1989, Japan and the United States have held regular

(Moriguchi 2013). Many farmers were dissatisfied at that time with the program introduced by the LDP, which compensated only big farms.

²Ozawa has strongly advocated trade liberalization policy since the early 1990s, explicated in his widely read and translated into English book, *Blueprint for a New Japan* (Ozawa 1994: 122–127).

talks on structural problems, which contributed to external balances in trade in the so-called Structural Impediments Initiative. One of the results of the negotiations was a reform of the Large Store Law, which allowed American retailers to move into Japan and begin operation. Nevertheless, in spite of the importance of high foreign pressure, many researchers have pointed out to the limits of *gaiatsu* on the policy outputs, including complete failures of such pressures, emphasizing the crucial role of domestic factors for policy output (Pempel 1993: 106–107; Schoppa 1997: 6–8). The findings of this chapter comply with the conclusion that “raw power has little to do with the outcome of negotiations” for the foreign economic policy (Schoppa 1997: 292).

Traditionally, the economic and trade policy in Japan has been under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), although depending on issues, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), in charge of diplomacy and particularly US–Japan relations has also exercised strong influence. In case of agricultural products, it was the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) that dominated the field. Japan joined World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1955, and since then has been participating in various multilateral and bilateral trade agreements, gradually lowering its tariffs and nontariff barriers. With one exception, agriculture.

MAFF together with agriculture and forestry *zoku* Diet members (*nōrin zoku*) from the LDP, and the agricultural lobby, including the most powerful JA Zenchū, Nōkyō, Zennō, etc., effectively prevented all attempts at liberalizing tariffs on agricultural products until TPP (Honma 2015; Urata 2015; Yamashita 2015). During the WTO Uruguay Round (1986–1994), Japan successfully opposed comprehensive tariffication in order to protect domestic agriculture, while during the Doha Round (from 2001), the concept of “sensitive products” was introduced in 2004, which allowed Japan to keep high tariffs on selected commodities. As a result, although the overall liberalization level of tariffs on Japanese agricultural products has been fairly high, a small number of products has been extremely protected, which the economist Urata (2015: 63) from Waseda University points out as being one of Japan’s trade policy characteristics. As a result of the Uruguay Round, instead of comprehensive tariffication Japan accepted other measures, which proved costly. The government had to spend 6 trillion yen in support of Japanese agriculture (*Asahi Shinbun* 2010j, October 23). Over time, the “Uruguay Round” became a symbol of very expensive special measures, which put a burden on public finances, benefited certain interest groups (JA Zenchū), but had no positive impact on the overall situation of agriculture. During the TPP negotiations, the argument of a negative “Uruguay effect” was to be seen (Nishikawa 2017: 379–380).

11.3 Outline of the TPP Negotiations

The TPP agreement was drafted in October 2015 and signed in February 2016 by twelve states of the Pacific Rim, including the United States, and notably not China. In Autumn 2016, newly elected US President Donald Trump decided to withdraw from the agreement, which might have fundamental consequences for its implementation.³ The TPP began in 2005 as the Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement (TPSEP or P4) between four states of Brunei, Chile, New Zealand, and Singapore. In 2010, the negotiations were joined by another five members, including the United States, Australia, Vietnam, Peru, and Malaysia, which dramatically changed the nature of the agreement. US participation in the framework increased its significance, but also put the process in fact under the US leadership. In 2012, two more countries (Canada and Mexico) decided to join negotiations. Due to the contentious nature of various issues (agriculture, intellectual property, investment), the deadline for negotiations was postponed a few times, and the agreement finally concluded in spring of 2016.

The agreement, formulated into 30 chapters, each referring to different field and issues (textiles, financial services, agriculture, environment, dispute settlement, etc.), sets forth a broad range of aims, not only economic ones, as stated in the Preamble. The agreement is to promote “economic integration to liberalize trade and investment, bring economic growth and social benefits, create new opportunities for workers and businesses, contribute to raising living standards, benefit consumers, reduce poverty and promote sustainable growth” (TPP Seifu Taisaku Honbu 2015: 1). This type of framing, with references to social and environmental targets was also necessary in order to overcome widespread protests and opposition, which emerged globally during negotiations, partly due to their secretive nature.

Japan formally announced its decision to join the negotiations in March 2013 during Abe’s second cabinet although different undertakings began much earlier. Japan was invited to join the talks already in November 2008 by Australia during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting in Peru. The METI Minister at that time, Nikai Toshihiro from the LDP, quickly distanced himself by pointing to “a lack of consensus” on the matter in Japan. In fact, the perspective of abolition of all tariffs at that time seemed out of reach for Japan. All the major players inside the government, METI, MAAF, and MOFA, pursued a different agenda. METI promoted the idea of multilateral economic and trade expansion in East Asia, MAAF kept its protectionist stance over Japan’s heavily subsidized agriculture, while MOFA, very sensitive to the United States, who at that time was excluded from the project, decided to keep its distance (*Asahi Shinbun* 2008, November 25). Furthermore, politicians from major parties avoided open declarations on the TPP, not to antagonize farmers and other potential voters.

³For the TPP to come to effect, at least six countries accounting 85% of GDP have to ratify it within two years from signing the agreement. Due to the scale of GDP, the ratification by the United States and Japan is necessary for the agreement.

11.4 DPJ's Cabinets and TPP

The TPP, as stated above, became one of the flagship policies for the Abe cabinet, but it was actually the DPJ governments of Hatoyama Yukio, Kan Naoto, and Noda Yoshihiko, who took initiative and first steps in this regard. The DPJ in their 2009 electoral manifest mentioned “acceleration of negotiations on FTA with the USA” along with “liberalization of trade and investment” as one of the key policies in the area of foreign affairs (Democratic Party of Japan 2009: 22).⁴ The issues, strategies, and cleavages surfaced therefore during the DPJ cabinets, framing the discussion on the TPP, and also preparing the ground for Abe’s decisions.

The question of the TPP and Japan’s involvement surfaced again in November 2009, during the visit of the US President Barack Obama, who declared America’s plan to join the negotiations. The situation changed therefore and the TPP became a US-led project. Prime Minister Hatoyama responded positively by establishing a meeting comprising representatives of MOFA, MAFF, METI, and the Ministry of Finance (MOF), which after Hatoyama’s resignation was continued by Prime Minister Kan. Hatoyama, as described in other chapters, was mostly preoccupied with the problems of the Futenma relocation and the East Asia Community concept, having little time and resources to tackle the issue of the TPP.

Prime Minister Kan was committed to the idea of trade liberalization and after his reelection as the party leader in mid-September 2010 declared that joining TPP was in fact a great event for Japan comparable to “the third opening of the country” (after the Meiji Renovation and postwar period after the Asia-Pacific War). The prime minister requested Minister of State for National Policy Genba Kōichirō to create a working team together with Hirano Takeo, parliamentary vice minister of the Cabinet Office (*Asahi Shinbun* 2010e, October 14), which was formed on October 19, 2010. Officially, Kan declared the possibility of Japan’s involvement in the negotiations on TPP for the first time in the prime minister policy speech in the Lower House on November 1, 2010, which strongly reverberated in the following days and weeks.

One of the first to express objections to the prime minister’s statement were his cabinet members. On October 7, 2010, Shinohara Takashi, a MAFF vice minister, criticized Kan for his remark on the TPP (*Asahi Shinbun* 2010b, October 8). On the same day, in the Upper House, Gunji Akira, also a MAFF vice minister, objected to the TPP, using the often-quoted arguments that joining the agreement would lead to a loss of jobs and income in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, and ultimately to the destruction not only of local economies, but also of local communities (*Asahi Shinbun* 2010e, October 14). Strong opposition, as expected, came from the Japanese agriculture groups, including the most powerful JA Zenchū. Soon after Kan’s statement in the Diet, on October 19, 2010, JA Zenchū adopted a resolution against the TPP, which stated that without any exceptions, the TPP would destroy Japanese

⁴The DPJ made references to trade liberalization policy much earlier, already in their manifesto of 2007.

agriculture and food security (*Asahi Shinbun* 2010g, October 20). JA Zenchū presented itself as a defender of Japan’s national interest and looked for alliance with other civic groups.

Prime Minister Kan tried to bring the opposing forces for a discussion in the Kantei. On October 21, 2010, the Council on the Realization of the New Growth Strategy held a meeting in the prime minister’s residence, which was attended by free trade advocates represented by Keidanren Chairperson Yonekura Hiromasa, and by protectionist farmers, the JA Zenchū leader Shigeki Mamoru, and in addition by officials from METI, MAFF, and other ministries. METI and Keidanren emphasized the necessity of joining the TPP, while MAFF and JA Zenchū stressed that without securing some exceptions, the TPP would destroy Japanese agriculture (*Asahi Shinbun* 2010i, October 22b). On the following day, October 22, 2010, Hirano Tatsuo, vice minister of the Cabinet Office, held a meeting with vice ministers from MAFF, METI, and other related ministries in order to work out a consensus with the bureaucratic agencies (*Asahi Shinbun* 2010j, October 23). On November 1, 2010, Kan decided to establish a Headquarters for the Promotion of Agriculture Reform in the National Strategy Unit—the main policy making organ in DPJ—to prepare plans for reforms in the problem-ridden sector.

Prime Minister Kan strived to form a consensus among domestic actors before the APEC meeting, scheduled for November 2010, which was to take place in Yokohama. After the US–Japan conflict over Futenma Replacement Facility during Hatoyama’s cabinet, Kan planned to improve relations with the United States by declaring Japan’s accession to negotiations on the TPP, for which the American government had been strongly pushing by that time (Sakuyama 2015: 149; *Asahi Shinbun* 2010i, October 22b). In the end, Kan succeeded only partially. After various negotiations, on November 6, 2010, his cabinet announced a Basic Policy On Comprehensive Economic Cooperation, which carefully phrased the decision in regard to the TPP that Japan would “commence consultations” (*kyōgi o kaishi suru*) with other countries, avoiding the term “negotiations” (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 2010: 1–2). The policy was formally passed as a cabinet decision on November 9, 2010.⁵

Prime Minister Kan was not able to build cohesion among his cabinet members. Foreign Minister Maehara Seiji expressed his support for the TPP, and so did Chief Cabinet Secretary (CCS) Sengoku Yoshito, while MAFF Minister Kano Michihiko strongly objected to the idea. To complicate the situation, METI Minister Ohata Akihiro changed his stance, expressing in the end “necessity of careful consideration,” which in practical terms meant staying out of negotiations, after the United States pressed also for liberalization on beef (*Asahi Shinbun* 2010k, October 27). At

⁵The policy included also a statement about the establishment of the Headquarters for the Promotion of Agriculture Structural Reforms (Nōgyō Kōzō Kaikaku Sokushin Honbu). The Headquarters, presided by the prime minister and vice-chaired by the minister of state for national policy and agriculture minister, was to prepare a proposal by June 2011, and an Action Plan by October 2011.

one point, Kano even threatened to resign from his ministerial post, if Japan was to join negotiations (*Asahi Shinbun* 2010l, October 28).

Furthermore, the members of the ruling party, DPJ, were also divided on the issue. Diet members, who feared a loss of votes in the upcoming local election in 2011, expressed their opposition. Already on October 21, 2010, the DPJ formed a study group for the TPP, which was attended by approximately 110 Diet members, including former MAFF ministers Yamada Masahiko and Akamatsu Hirotaka, former Prime Minister Hatoyama Yukio, and also Kamei Shizuka from the People's New Party (Kokumin Shintō) (*Asahi Shinbun* 2010f, October 19, October 22). The decision to attend the study groups was partly motivated politically. The majority of those DPJ Diet members came from the anti-Kan Ozawa group, which is quite ironic, regarding Ozawa's pro-liberal ideas on trade. The study group criticized the prime minister's decision of joining the negotiations right away and decided on creating a cross-party group for further discussions. The Association to Carefully Consider the TPP (TPP o Shinchō ni Kangaeru Kai), chaired by former Agriculture Minister Yamada Masahiko, managed to gather over 150 Diet members from various parties (*Asahi Shinbun* 2010m, November 2), and adopt a resolution against the TPP.

Furthermore, on November 4, 2010, the DPJ Project Team to Investigate APEC, EPA, and FTA, chaired by Yamaguchi Tsuyoshi, handed down a recommendation on the TPP, which was phrased in very vague terms, in spite of initial expectations. It read that the government should first "begin deliberation on information collecting" and only then make a decision on joining the TPP (*Asahi Shinbun* 2010n, November 5). Lacking support from some of his cabinet members and the party, Prime Minister Kan managed to pass the aforementioned cabinet decision, which included a circumspect phrase of "starting deliberations" on the TPP.

Kan tried to bring the process under Kantei control, but ultimately failed to overcome the conflicting interests. The issue itself was highly controversial, but in addition, having antagonized the bureaucracy and undermined the previous decision-making system established by the LDP, the DPJ organizationally was poorly prepared to manage the state and policy making process (Zakowski 2015; Mulgan 2014). The triple disaster that occurred on March 11, 2011, complicated the situation even more, and postponed Japan's decision on the TPP.

The next cabinet, the Noda cabinet, tried to take further steps in regard to the TPP agreement. Noda announced in November 2011 that the government decided to enter preliminary talks on the TPP, which were followed by numerous symposiums organized around the country to build understanding and support among the public. Noda, however, ran out of time. In December 2012, the LDP took over from the DPJ which was completely crushed in the election.

The next cabinet of Abe Shinzō picked up and continued the TPP policy. It is important to note that by the time Abe came to office, the political landscape of advocates and opponents in regard to TPP had been formed, the axis of conflict defined, and the arguments articulated. Abe knew, in other words, what to expect and whom to confederate with or against.

11.5 Actors and Interests

The actors and interests in regard to the TPP can be fairly clearly defined into proponents and opponents although the division did not necessarily follow partisan or ministerial affiliation. There was also a large group of the “undecided” who became a target of mobilization for each of the conflicting sites. The first group of free trade advocates included the prime minister and the Cabinet Office, some ministries (METI, MOFA), big business circles, especially export-oriented large corporations, mass media, as well as some economic and public commentators. The opponents—the protectionist camp—part of the LDP veto players, on the other hand included the agriculture and forestry *zoku* Diet members, MAFF, opposition parties, agriculture interest groups (small-scale farmers, Nōkyō, JA Zenchū), small-scale business, medical associations, some academics, and various civic groups.⁶ The general public, as shown in the opinion polls, was not overly interested in the TPP, as will be discussed in detail in the following sections, although Prime Minister Abe paid attention to fluctuations in public support, as expressed by him on several occasions.

11.5.1 *The Ruling Parties*

The LDP was very strongly divided over the TPP issue already under the DPJ cabinets. The intraparty opponents dominated the LDP Research Commission on Comprehensive Agricultural Policy and Trade (Sōgō Nōsei Bōeki Chōsakai) under Policy Affairs Research Council (PARC) that was chaired by Katō Kōichi. The Research Commission adopted in fact a Resolution Against TPP Accession on October 25, 2011, which declared opposition to trade liberalization that would not guarantee exceptions for Japan’s five “sensitive items” (rice, beef and pork, dairy products, sugar, and starch). In addition to Katō Kōichi, the commission was joined by such influential LDP members as Takamura Masahiko, Onodera Itsunori, Machimura Nobutaka, Nishida Shōji, Ōshima Tadanori (MAFF minister under Koizumi, between September 2001 and April 2002), Inada Tomomi, Etō Taku, and others.

The position of LDP members changed, however, over time, which was, for instance, reflected also in the name of the deliberating bodies. The LDP Association Demanding Prompt Withdrawal from TPP Accession (TPP Sanka no Sokuji Tettaio Motomeru Kai) established in November 2010 under the Research Commission on Comprehensive Agricultural Policy and Trade and chaired by Moriyama Hiroshi, which gathered over half of the LDP Diet members at that time, that is 240 politicians, evolved by 2013 into the Association to Protect National Interest

⁶Mulgan (2015a: 128–129) makes a list of business and agricultural organizations who declared their stance on the TPP, dividing them into supporting, opposing, and cautious.

During TPP Negotiations (TPP Kōshō ni Okeru Kokueki o Mamorinuku Kai). The latter agreed to TPP accession under certain conditions (Tettai o Motomeru Kai 2013).

The LDP was in fact in a difficult position because the party ran the 2012 election under the anti-TPP slogan propagated on posters across the country as: “No lies. Strong opposition to the TPP. Steadfast. LDP” (*Uso tsukanai. TPP danko hantai. Burenai. Jimintō*), and it won in a landslide victory. In the electoral manifesto, the phrase was tuned up into “Opposition to joining negotiations [on the TPP under condition] of all tariff abolition and no sanctuary.” The condition was added just in case the LDP was to win the election by pro-TPP party members (Kujiraoka 2016: 88). The LDP could not therefore agree on the TPP unconditionally. The electoral vow was one of the reasons that during the long negotiations on the TPP with the US, LDP Secretary-General Ishiba Shigeru repeatedly warned CCS Suga Yoshihide that too easy concessions to the United States would have severe consequences for the ruling party (Ōshima and Watanabe 2014: 2). Ishiba himself was among those who previously had expressed opposition to the TPP. The LDP stance shifted therefore from the anti-TPP to a TPP-under conditions one. The conditions included, among others, protection of Japan’s sensitive agricultural products.

Once in office, Prime Minister Abe managed to build a cohesive team around the Kantei by bringing in TPP advocates, including CCS Suga, cabinet members, such as Amari Akira (TPP minister), or a young and popular politician Koizumi Shinjirō, among others. CCS Suga, who has been Abe’s closest and trusted associate, thoroughly carried out the idea of a firm power base stemming from control over the personnel appointment, particularly in regard to the bureaucratic apparatus (Matsuda 2016: 261–262).⁷ The main intraparty organ for discussions and coordination of opinions on TPP became the Research Council (later changed to Headquarters) for Regional Diplomatic and Economic Partnership (Gaikō, Keizai Renkei Chōsakai/Honbu), established at the beginning of 2013. It was chaired by Etō Seishirō and attended by many influential party members, LDP Secretary-General Ishiba Shigeru, LDP Acting Secretary-General Nakatani Gen, PARC Acting Chairperson Shiyozaaki Yasuhisa, Hayashi Yoshimasa (later MAFF minister), and Motegi Toshimitsu (later METI minister) although the Headquarters included also anti-TPP or TPP-skeptics such as Nishikawa Kōya or Iwaya Takeshi.

Under the Headquarters for Regional Diplomatic and Economic Partnership, the party established the Committee for TPP Measures (TPP Taisaku Iinkai), along with several project teams for different issues to be negotiated under the TPP agreement, in order to work out the intraparty consensus. Interestingly, the post of the chairperson went to a well-known agriculture and forestry *zoku* Diet member, Nishikawa Kōya, who ran in the 2012 election campaign under the anti-TPP slogan. His appointment was, however, strategic and proved in the end effective. Prime

⁷Suga shared this idea with his “teacher,” Kajiyama Seiroku, who served as CCS under the Hashimoto administration (Matsuda 2016: 261–262).

Minister Abe nominated Nishikawa for the post in order to control the LDP *zoku* Diet members. It was a strategy, as phrased by *Asahi Shinbun* journalist, Ōtsu Tomoyoshi, *similia similibus curantur (doku o motte doku o seisu)* (Ōtsu 2014: 4). Abe calculated that Nishikawa would behave the way that he did during the Koizumi administration, when Abe was the LDP acting secretary-general. At that time, upon appointment to a post of Cabinet Office vice minister in support of Takenaka Heizō (a key member of the Koizumi cabinet who was the minister of finance and state minister for postal privatization), Nishikawa radically changed his anti-postal privatization stance. Knowing that Nishikawa aspired for the ministerial position at MAFF, suffering from the so-called ministerial disease or *daijinbyō*, Abe used Nishikawa to bring the TPP opponents under his control.⁸ As the LDP Committee for TPP Measures chairperson, Nishikawa was very active and proved effective. He participated in negotiations on the TPP on several occasions, interestingly not as a member of the negotiation team, but a representative of the LDP, although always upon receiving prior approval from CCS Suga and LDP Secretary-General Ishiba (Nishikawa 2017: 143–144). Nishikawa greatly contributed, for instance, to reaching agreement on agricultural products (mainly beef) with Australia.⁹ For his role in the TPP negotiations, Abe eventually appointed Nishikawa to a post of MAFF minister in September 2014 although Nishikawa stayed there only for few months due to a corruption scandal. Another tactic employed by Abe and the pro-TPP camp against the LDP *zoku* was to put the blame on *zoku* for the results of the Uruguay Round negotiations, during which the LDP *zoku* members and Nōkyō exercised great influence, staging even sit-in protests. As a result of their pressure, the government introduced protective measures for Japanese agriculture, spending over 6 trillion yen on various subsidies, which did not lead to reform or improvement in that sector. On the contrary, the agriculture sector was suffering from multiple problems, and the blame for them were attributed in great part to the “pork-and-barrel policy” (*baramaki seisaku*) shaped by the *zoku* Diet members (Ōhata 2015: 4; Nishikawa 2017: 379–380).

Abe’s strategy to carefully allocate and control key posts can also be exemplified by his decision to appoint Koizumi Shinjirō to an important function of a chairperson of the LDP PARC Agriculture and Forestry Policy Division (Nōrin Bukai). Koizumi Shinjirō, a young and popular politician, and in addition a son of the hugely popular former Prime Minister Koizumi Jun’ichirō, assumed the office in October 2015 after a cabinet reshuffle to work out a proposal on agriculture reforms. The reforms were expected to be controversial, as in fact they were, and

⁸What is even more interesting, Nishikawa was fully aware of this strategy. Nishikawa (2017) discussed it in his book *TPP Shinjitsu* [Truth about the TPP], which caused much controversy in the Diet in April 2016, leading to the postponing of deliberations on the TPP bills to the next extraordinary session. Nishikawa uses the exact term that Abe was trying to control *zoku* parliamentarians by *zoku* parliamentarians.

⁹It was during the negotiations in Singapore in February 2014, during which Nishikawa met informally with the Australian Minister for Trade and Investment, Andrew Lobb, and prepared the ground for the agreement on beef and automobile parts (Ōtsu 2014: 4).

Abe needed a popular politician to sell them to the agricultural lobby and the general public. After signing the TPP agreement in October 2015 and partial disclosure of the content, the LDP promptly organized 15 explanation meetings in seven prefectures which had strong agriculture advocacy groups. The meetings were attended by Koizumi Shinjirō, MAFF Minister Nishikawa Kōya, and other important party figures, which partly helped to calm the anxiety of farmers (Ishimatsu and Ōhata 2015: 4).

The LDP coalition partner Kōmeitō in general supported the Abe cabinet on the TPP. The proposal of special measures to be adopted to protect Japanese farmers, which the party disclosed on the same day as the proposal of the LDP Agriculture and Forestry Division, on November 17, 2015, closely resembled the LDP version.

11.5.2 Ministries

The question of the TPP became a controversial and contested issue also for the administrative organs. As early as 2010, when Prime Minister Kan expressed his willingness to consider possibility of joining negotiations on the TPP, METI officials referred to the TPP as a chance for Japan to promote negotiations on free trade, while MAFF tried to ignore the issue, arguing that the prime minister used the word “investigation” and not “joining” the negotiations (*Asahi Shinbun* 2010a, October 2). The cleavage remained thereafter. METI generally sided with Japanese big business, pushing for TPP accession, while MAFF together with the most powerful agricultural interest groups (Nōkyō, JA Zenchū) and *zoku* Diet members strongly opposed it, demanding various concessions. METI wanted to promote liberalization in order to help Japanese industries oriented on export, while MAFF aimed at protecting Japanese agriculture. MOFA’s position varied depending on the stance of the United States, advocating accession to the TPP after it became a US-led project. Furthermore, MOF, traditionally averse to excessive spending, sided with the pro-TPP camp, emphasizing the necessity of agricultural reforms and downsizing of subsidies for that sector (*Asahi Shinbun* 2015, November 27).

11.5.3 Business

The Japanese big business community represented by the three biggest and most powerful associations: Keidanren, Japan Association of Corporate Executives (Keizai Doyūkai), and Japan Chamber of Commerce, strongly supported the idea of Japan’s accession to the TPP, which they expressed on several occasions during public conferences, or via petitions and recommendations submitted to the cabinet and other government offices. A few days after Prime Minister Kan made a speech in the Diet in 2010, Yonekura Hiromasa, chairperson of Keidanren, expressed the

business community’s support for Japan’s accession to the TPP, bringing in another argument that through the agreement “Japan could function as a bridge between the USA and Asia” (*Asahi Shinbun* 2010c, October 9). Similar statements and recommendations were handed down to the prime minister on several other occasions thereafter, usually before important events for the TPP. On October 14, 2010, for instance, before the APEC meeting, when Prime Minister Kan was to clarify Japan’s position on TPP accession, the business community via the APEC Business Advisory Council, handed a recommendation to the prime minister, in which the Council voiced its strong support for such a decision (*Asahi Shinbun* 2010d, October 15). On February 10, 2014, when Prime Minister Abe was to make decision on TPP accession, Keidanren Chairperson Yonekura on behalf of the Japanese business circle handed an Opinion to Prime Minister, in which they demanded early settlement on the TPP and narrowing down the number of issues to be defended and protected by Japan in negotiations with other countries (*Asahi Shinbun* 2014a, February 10). Again, during the Diet deliberation in November 2016, when opposition parties tried to block the passage of the bill, the Japan–US Business Council called for the prompt adoption of the bills (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 2016a, November 4). The small and medium-size companies were more divided over the issue, depending on the sector, but their power and influence over the government was much weaker.

11.5.4 Agricultural Lobby

Agricultural cooperatives, which associate virtually all of Japanese farmers (2.5 million households in 2010 and 2.16 million in 2015), and their political body, JA Zenchū, were staunch opponents of the TPP, utilizing their organizational and personal resources to protest the TPP agreement and influence the final policy. Farmers staged protests and meetings, submitted petitions and demands, exercised pressure on Diet members from their home districts, and mobilized Nōkyō members during elections to vote for the anti-TPP candidates. During the campaign against TPP accession in September 2011, JA Zenchū collected approximately 11.7 million signatures (with over half a million of them in Hokkaidō), which were submitted to Prime Minister Noda at that time. JA Zenchū allied also with local governments, especially those that depend on agriculture for revenues (Hokkaido, Tohoku region, Saga, Kagoshima and Miyazaki in Kyushu, and other from Shikoku). In addition, JA Zenchū reached out to other groups to be affected by the liberalization of trade, including medical associations, consumer cooperatives (Consumers’ Cooperative Union, Japan’s Consumers Union), but also the anti-globalization activists, or even the construction industry, professional associations (the Japan Medical Association, Japan Pharmaceutical Association, Japan Dental Association), and other civic groups.

One of the biggest achievements of the agriculture lobby on the initial stage of discussion on TPP was the adoption of the resolutions by the Standing Committee

on Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries in both houses of the Diet in April 2013, which demanded from the Japanese government protection of Japanese sensitive products. The document became the point of reference for the anti-TPP camp during the entire process, putting pressure on the government to adhere to the policy. Ultimately, under the agriculture lobby's influence, Prime Minister Abe had to deviate from his non-exceptional approach and agree to the exclusion of some farm products from the TPP negotiations.

Throughout the negotiation process, the government and the LDP were very sensitive to the agriculture lobby, attending all the important meetings organized by JA Zenchū. In February 2014, for instance, during the intense negotiations between Japan and the United States, when Minister for TPP Amari and LDP Secretary-General Ishiba publicly hinted at the possibility of some compromise, JA Zenchū organized an emergency meeting in Tokyo, attended by approximately 800 people. LDP Secretary-General Ishiba and Chairperson of the LDP Committee for TPP Measures Nishikawa Kōya both attended the meeting, promising to adhere to the Diet resolutions (*Asahi Shinbun* 2014c, February 21).

On the other hand, in return for the government's consideration for the sensitive products, JA Zenchū and the agriculture lobby had to accept in the end a compromise in regard to chosen products, and more importantly, agree to sweeping reforms both of the agricultural sector, and also of the agriculture cooperatives, Zennō, and their political body, JA Zenchū. The reforms were part of the proposals prepared by the Deregulation Reform Council (Kisei Kaikaku Kaigi), an advisory panel to Prime Minister Abe, the first of which was handed down in May 2014, as well as other plans prepared by the party organs and other governmental bodies. The reform was to make local and regional agricultural cooperatives more independent from the centralist organization, change the ownership structure of farming land to allow special private companies to enter the sector, and thereby increase its efficiency and competitiveness. JA Zenchū's initial reaction to the proposal was negative. The Central Union had much to lose, and for that very reason objected to any attempts at trade liberalization of agricultural products (Yamashita 2015: 84–92). After months of talks and negotiations, in February 2015, JA Zenchū under its president, Akira Banzai, accepted the government's reform proposal: the organizational transformation of JA Zenchū and the abolishment of the rice acreage reduction (*gentan*) system by 2018.¹⁰ The great winner of the reforms, as pointed out by Ishihara Kenji from Rikkyo University, was Japanese big business, which pushed for reforms, and which would gain access to farming land (Ishihara 2015: 66).

¹⁰It is a system regulating the rice production output in order to keep the price of rice. Farmers switching to other crops are subsidized by the state.

11.6 Discussion on TPP

The framing of the discussion on the TPP was formed already during the premiership of Kan Naoto, when the national debate began. Although some arguments and narratives evolved with time, the basic structure remained intact. Opponents emphasized the influence of the United States on shaping the agreement and lack of such power by Japan, which would lead to Japan’s acceptance of the US conditions; that the economic benefits were greatly exaggerated and difficult to estimate in a short span; that liberalization of governmental procurement would endanger the quality of services, including school meals. Most importantly, in regard to agriculture, which became one of the most contested parts, the argument ran that the influx of cheap (and implicitly of worse quality) products from abroad would destroy Japanese farms and related industries, local economies, and communities. That in consequence would lead to lowering Japan’s self-sufficiency, and thereby to undermining Japan’s food security. The TPP would lead to destruction of Japan, as some of the publications at that time declared (Nakano 2011; Hiromiya 2011).

Proponents on the other hand argued that the TPP would have, first of all, great economic benefits for Japan, but also, positive social and political effects. The agreement would benefit the Japanese economy mostly due to an increase in Japanese exports; it would deepen the alliance with the United States; and, internationally, would help to counterbalance the growing power of China in the region. On the other hand, the consequences of not joining the TPP would be grave for Japan, as expressed in the Resolution on the TPP Measures adopted by the LDP Headquarters for Regional Diplomatic and Economic Partnership in March 2013. The LDP document argued that, facing problems of a declining population and aging society, Japan would miss the opportunity to integrate into the Asian region of growth created by the TPP and ultimately would not be able to maintain its current level of lifestyle. Moreover, if Japan, as the number three economy in the world, stayed out of the process of rule-making in regard to trade, investment, and economy in the Asia-Pacific, the country would not be able to exercise economic or political leadership in the region. Moreover, since the alliance with the United States had constituted the axis of Japan’s foreign policy since 1945, joining the TPP would lead to further deepening and enhancing the alliance in the field of economy. Finally, the Resolution pointed out that Japan should not only try to defend its national interest, but also to build a more offensive strategy in the negotiation process. The slogan of “agriculture in offensive” (*seme no nōgyō*) became one of the often-quoted phrases.

Furthermore, in regard to agriculture, the TPP proponents emphasized deep structural problems of the sector. Low efficiency, low profit (3.3% of GDP), high cost, high subsidies, small acreage of fields (1.99 ha on average excluding Hokkaido), shrinking population of rural regions, aging—almost 65% of farmers are over 65 years old (MAFF 2017: 1–2), lack of successors, fossilized structure of farmers’ organizations (Nōkyō, JA Zenchū, etc.)—these were just few of the

problems haunting Japanese agriculture (Honma 2015: 103–107). In that context, the TPP proponents advocated the idea of sweeping agricultural reform, which would transform the sector into a competitive and attractive industry (author's interview with LDP lawmaker Kōno Tarō, October 20, 2016), and importantly, with the assistance of the state funding. One of the methods was branding and international expansion of farm products. The awareness of the problems in agriculture, and at the same time the promise of governmental support in reforming the sector, greatly enhanced the arguments of the TPP advocates.

In the discussion on the TPP, all sides supported their stance with hardcore data, statistics. The results of simulations of the economic impact of the TPP on the economy were, however, very divergent, stemming from different approaches. On October 23, 2010, the government published the first simulation of economic benefits for Japan from joining the TPP. It showed that in result of lowering tariffs and liberalization of investment, Japan's GDP would grow by 2.5 up to 3.4 trillion yen in comparison to 2009. On the other hand, if Japan stayed outside the agreement, it would suffer from adverse effects, shrinking export and production output, and consequently, shrinking of its GDP (*Asahi Shinbun* 2010h, October 22a). Along the same lines, METI provided data showing that Japan's export (8.6 trillion yen) and GDP (2.7 trillion yen) would decrease substantially if Japan stayed out of the framework, while South Korea, the United States, EU, and China joined the FTA (*Asahi Shinbun* 2010i, October 22b). Different estimates were provided by MAFF. According to the ministry, in case of tariff liberation, the domestic production in agriculture would shrink by 40%, in result of which food self-sufficiency would dramatically fall from 40% to 12%. To support the income of farmers, the government would have to spend an additional 2.5 trillion yen a year (*Asahi Shinbun* 2010i, October 22b).

Between the first economic simulations in 2010 and final agreement, all sides, including the Kantei, ministries, agencies, local governments, agricultural lobby, etc., presented various estimates, which took into account different assumptions and premises. On December 24, 2015, the Abe government presented a new simulation. According to the report, Japan's GDP would grow by 13.6 trillion yen, or 2.5%, in comparison to 2014. The agricultural production would decrease by 130–210 million yen as a result of tariff abolition on 80% of 2,328 products and import of cheap foreign products. The number of jobs would grow almost by 800,000 (Kujiraoka, et al. 2015: 11). The overall effect was to be positive. The report triggered a wave of discussion, particularly by the agriculture-dominated prefectures (e.g., Hokkaido, Amori, Fukui, Kumamoto, Nagasaki, Kagoshima), which demonstrated that in fact the consequences for those regions would be dramatic (Amano 2016: 3). During the negotiation process each side adhered to its own data, partially ignoring the opponent's. At the same time, for the majority of general public, as seen in the opinion polls, the discussion seemed unintelligible.

11.7 Enter Abe

By the time Prime Minister Abe took up the office, the discussion on TPP, as mentioned, was framed, and interests clarified. Abe, who was strongly committed to the idea of Japan joining the TPP, from the beginning exercised strong leadership in this regard, bringing the entire policy process under the control of the Kantei. The Council for Industrial Competitiveness (Sangyō Kyōsōryoku Kaigi), established by Abe to prepare policy recommendations, included accession to the TPP as a part of the economic strategy for growth and so did other plans formulated under the flag of Abenomics. For Abe, the TPP became an essential mechanism for Japan to regain economic strength and vitality.

The first public statement by Abe on the TPP in Japan came in mid-March 2013, but prior to that, on February 22, 2013, during a meeting with President Barack Obama in Washington, both leaders agreed on a very important aspect of the TPP, namely, that the abolition of all tariffs was not a premise for the agreement. In Japanese, it was translated as “no abolition of tariffs without sanctuary” (*seiki naki kanzei teppai ga zentei de wa nai*), or in other words, that, while negotiating the abolition of tariffs, there was a possibility of keeping some areas (products) out of the agreement. That brought a major shift in discussion on the TPP, allowing for negotiations and compromise. The statement read as following:

Recognizing that both countries have bilateral trade sensitivities, such as certain agricultural products for Japan and certain manufactured products for the United States, the two Governments confirm that, as the final outcome will be determined during the negotiations, it is not required to make a prior commitment to unilaterally eliminate all tariffs upon joining the TPP negotiations. (The White House 2013)

Officially, Prime Minister Abe announced the decision to start official negotiations on TPP accession on March 15, 2013, at a press conference during which Abe repeated many of the often-quoted arguments. Abe stressed first of all the economic benefits for Japan, along with the strengthening of economic alliance with the United States (Abe 2015), but also assured that some measures were to be taken to protect Japanese “special sensitive products” (*sensitibu hinmoku*). Moreover, the prime minister strongly emphasized other economic aspects, the same way he was to do in the US Congress two years later. The new economic zone, created by Japan together with its ally, the United States, would allow other countries, upon joining it, to share such universal values as freedom, democracy, basic human rights, and the rule of law. Abe also brought up another popular argument for politicians that it was very important for Japan’s national interest to join the process at that stage in order to participate in the new rule-making for the Asia-Pacific region (author’s interview with Kōno Tarō, October 20, 2016).

The protectionist camp reacted quickly. Japan’s Upper House Standing Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries adopted in April 2013 the aforementioned resolution, in which it demanded special consideration for certain agricultural products. The resolution read as follows:

Sensitive agriculture, forestry and fisheries products—including rice, wheat and barley, beef and pork, dairy products, sugar and starch crops—are either to be excluded from the negotiations or to be subject to renegotiation in order to maintain sustainable domestic production. Even the gradual elimination of tariffs over a period of more than ten years is unacceptable (UHSCAFF 2013).

The resolution represented the voice not only of the Diet members, but of the entire protectionist camp which had lobbied for such measures for years. Similar resolutions were adopted by both houses and also by the LDP organs, becoming a central point of reference in discussions on the TPP, and particularly in the evaluation of achievements of the Abe cabinet during negotiations with the United States. Japan joined negotiation tables in July 2013, during the 18th round of talks. It took almost three years to negotiate the final deal. In the end, the five products mentioned in the resolution were indeed treated as sensitive items in the final agreement on the TPP although there were some alterations and conditions added.

11.8 Kantei-led Politics of Abe

Declaration of policy initiative was followed by concrete organizational decisions that placed the policy making process under the control of the Kantei. In order to proceed smoothly, Abe removed MAFF bureaucrats, as described by a former MAFF official, Sakuyama Takumi (2015: ii) and other insiders (Kujiraoka 2016: 163–164), from the decision-making process on the TPP. By the end of March 2013, the new organizational structure for the TPP negotiations and decisions under the Kantei was established.

At the top, the Ministerial Meeting for the TPP (TPP ni Kansuru Shuyō Kakuryō Kaigi) became the highest decision-making body for politicians. It consisted of CCS, ministers in charge of economic revitalization, MOFA, MOF, MAFF, METI, and other relevant ministry representatives, with the prime minister attending the meetings when necessary. The Ministerial Meeting was to cooperate with ruling parties, Headquarters for Japan's Economic Revitalization, and one of the Headquarters bodies, the Council for Industrial Competitiveness. Both institutions were established by Abe with the aim of preparing policy recommendations for his government.

The main administrative organ for the TPP, established on March 22, 2013, was the Government Headquarters for TPP Measures (TPP Seifu Taisaku Honbu), which was chaired by the minister in charge of economic revitalization (commonly referred to as the state minister for the TPP or TPP minister), Amari Akira (March 2013 till January 2016) and then Ishihara Nobuteru (since January 2016). The Government TPP Measures Headquarters supervised negotiations on two different levels:

- the domestic level under the chief of staff for domestic coordination (*kokunai chōsei sōkatsukan*) who was in charge of teams consisting of approximately

30 individuals, specializing in different issues. The position of chief of staff for domestic coordination went in April 2013 to Sasaki Toyonari, originally a bureaucrat from MOF, who was appointed assistant CCS in 2010.

- the international level led by the head of negotiation delegation (*shuseki kōshōkan*) who supervised teams negotiating with their foreign counterparts. The number of people in charge of international negotiations totaled 70. The position of the head went to Tsuraoaka Kōji who concurrently held the position of Cabinet Office councilor (*naikaku kanbō shingikan*). Tsuraoaka was originally a bureaucrat from MOFA, and after finalization of the TPP in 2016 became Japan’s ambassador to the United Kingdom. The agriculture negotiations on the international level were carried out by Acting Representative of Negotiation Delegation (*shuseki kōshō dairi*) Ōe Hiroshi, Cabinet Office councilor, a bureaucrat originally from MOFA who replaced Tsuraoaka in January 2016.

The Headquarters was also in charge of the Executive Committee (Kanjikai), chaired by Deputy CCS Katō Katsunobu, LDP politician and ex-bureaucrat from MOF, and composed of assistant CCS (in charge of domestic and foreign affairs), administrative vice ministers and/or bureau directors from MOFA, MOF, MAFF, METI, and other relevant bodies. In addition, the Headquarter for Revitalization of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, and Regions was established in May 2013, which was chaired by the prime minister and vice-chaired by the ministers of MAFF and CCS, although in fact managed by the assistant CCS with the purpose of deliberation and negotiations on special measures for agriculture and related issues.

The TPP negotiations were carried out by the abovementioned bodies, which upon the conclusion of the agreement in October 2015 were replaced by new ones for the policy implementation, placed also under Kantei control. On October 9, 2015, the government established, by a cabinet decision, the Headquarters for TPP Comprehensive Measures (TPP Sōgō Taisaku Honbu), chaired by the prime minister and vice-chaired by the state minister for reconstruction and CCS. The Headquarters was to formulate a comprehensive policy for the implementation of the TPP agreement. Its secretariat was placed in the Cabinet Secretariat, which with cooperation of relevant administrative organs was to manage the process.

Under these arrangements, the Abe cabinet negotiated the TPP agreement on the domestic and international levels. The TPP was a multilateral agreement, but the actual conditions were to be settled down through bilateral talks between each member states. For Japan, the most challenging partner was the United States. The talks were carried out on the Japan’s side by TPP Minister Amari Akira, a close associate of Abe who loyally followed his instructions, and on the American side, by US Trade Representative Michael Froman. On the administrative level, Tsuraoaka Kōji and Wendi Cutler, the US trade representative acting deputy, discussed the details, although the agricultural negotiations were managed, as mentioned, by Ōe Hiroshi, the Cabinet Office councilor.

The negotiations continued throughout 2014 without much success, each side not willing to give in, fearing its electorate. In the field of agriculture, Japan set forth a list of 586 items as “sanctuary” that were to be excluded from liberalization,

while the United States argued for the complete abolition of all tariffs. In reality however, some of those products were to be sacrificed during negotiations. As early as February 2014, LDP Secretary-General Ishiba hinted at the possibility of compromise on some of the products (e.g., processed food) and discussed those issues with TPP Minister Amari and Japanese representative of negotiation delegation, Ōe Hiroshi (*Asahi Shinbun* 2014b, February 20). The negotiations intensified before the visit of President Obama to Japan in April 2014, but in the end none of the sides again wanted to give in. Both leaders declared only commitment to the continuation of negotiations with the aim of reaching a “general agreement” (*ōsuji gōi*) (*Asahi Shinbun* 2014e, April 24). The talks continued for over a year.

The negotiations were finalized on October 5, 2015, by 12 member states. During the process, all chiefs of the actual negotiations were Kantei staff, and often met with the prime minister and CCS to report on and consult on the TPP. A few days after the agreement, on October 9, the Headquarters for TPP Comprehensive Measures announced the Basic Policy. The document presented the TPP as an attempt at establishing a vast economic zone in the Asia-Pacific, and also at creating just rules for freedom of the twenty-first century type (*21 seiki gata no jiyū*) in various fields related to service, investment, and reform of state-owned enterprises—not only tariffs in other words. It is important to note that among the three main objectives set forth in the document (opening of the market, promotion of innovation, and industry revitalization), the third one referred to a necessity of dealing with the citizens’ anxiety about the effects of the TPP (on food security and safety, subsidies for agriculture, universal medical coverage system, ISDS, etc.). Furthermore, the document emphasized that in regard to key items (rice, wheat, beef and pork, dairy, sugars), all possible measures would be taken to establish a strong and sustainable sector of agriculture, forest, and fisheries (TPP Sōgō Taisaku Honbu 2015). Those special measures were to be discussed at the Headquarters for Revitalization of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, and Regions.

By that time, the TPP became a symbol of a comprehensive policy that was to cure all ills and problems facing the states, and a new ideology of the free world. In a speech given in the US Congress on April 29, 2015, Abe declared that the TPP would bring a prosperity, which

[...] is nothing less than the seedbed for peace. Involving countries in Asia-Pacific whose backgrounds vary, the United States and Japan must take the lead. We must take the lead to build a market that is fair, dynamic, sustainable, and is also free from the arbitrary intentions of any nation. In the Pacific market, we cannot overlook sweat shops or burdens on the environment. Nor can we simply allow free riders on intellectual property. No. Instead, we can spread our shared values around the world and have them take root: the rule of law, democracy, and freedom. That is exactly what the TPP is all about. Furthermore, the TPP goes far beyond just economic benefits. It is also about our security. Long-term, its strategic value is awesome. (Abe 2015)

The TPP signing ceremony took place on February 4, 2016, in New Zealand. Japan was represented by Cabinet Vice Minister Takatori Shūichi who replaced TPP Minister Amari Akira. Amari resigned in January that year due to a corruption

scandal. The next stage of the TPP policy process moved into the Diet in April 2016.

11.9 Diet Deliberation

Deliberation in the Diet on the TPP and related bills proved to be more complicated than expected by Prime Minister Abe, and ultimately the ratification procedures were postponed to the extraordinary session conveyed in autumn 2016. The deliberations began in April 2016, but the opposition parties were already angered by Abe and the LDP when they refused to convene the extraordinary Diet session to hold discussion on the TPP soon after it was signed in October 2015. The government justified the decision at that time by the prime minister’s busy diplomatic schedule.

The cabinet adopted the TPP-related bills (a total of 11 bills) and sent them to the parliament on March 2016. The LDP Diet Steering Committee Chairperson Satō Tsutomu stated that the party planned to finalize the procedures in the Lower House after the Golden Week (first week of May), although some LDP members voiced concern about Diet deliberations without TPP Minister Amari, who resigned in January due to the corruption scandal and was replaced by Ishihara Nobuteru. At the cabinet meeting during which the TPP bills were approved, Abe emphasized the importance of the TPP for his economic policies (Abenomics), and also asked the cabinet members for cooperation in propagating and explaining TPP to general public in order to win support and understanding (*Asahi Shinbun* 2016b, March 9).

Five opposition parties (DPJ, Communist Party, Social Democratic Party, People’s Life Party, Japan Innovation Party) formed a cohesive block against the LDP in regard to Peace and Security Legislation (Heiwa Anzen Hōsei) and exercise of the right for the collective self-defense—one of the most contested bills under Abe—and also for the electoral campaign to Upper House in July 2016. The TPP-related bills proved, however, to be a challenge, and in the end the parties did not manage to form a united front. The DPJ, which merged with the Japan Innovation Party (Ishin no Tō) and changed its Japanese name in March 2016 to Minshintō (and the English name to the Democratic Party, DP), was against the TPP. The LDP took the cooperation of the opposition parties seriously and staged a negative campaign against their alliance calling it the “unprincipled coalition” (*yagō*). The LDP decided even to prepare posters emphasizing their policy differences and send them to local branches of the party (*Asahi Shinbun* 2016a, March 5).

In March 2016, Special Committees on TPP Agreement were established in the Lower and Upper House, and deliberations began on April 5, 2016. The coalition parties argued that the TPP was the main vehicle of the growth strategy, while the opposition parties criticized the LDP for violating its campaign vows (“opposition to the TPP with abolition of all tariffs and without sanctuary”) and Diet resolutions, because in the final TPP agreement, tariffs on approximately 30% of products under the “five sensitive items” were removed. The discussion on the number of products

that were in fact “defended” from tariffs continued afterwards between the LDP and opposition parties.

The second point of conflict revolved around the disclosure of information on the negotiations, which was demanded by the DP. The LDP decided to disclose some of the documents, but they were basically illegible. The government blackened almost all the text, justifying its decision by the obligation of secrecy. The DP representative, Eda Kenji, a former MOFA bureaucrat, criticized the ministries for treating information as sensitive and secret in excess. The blackening of documents and lack of disclosure on negotiations became one of the most contentious issues during the Diet deliberation. In the meantime, the DP was able to get a copy of the unpublished book written by the former LDP Committee chairperson, Nishikawa Kōya, who disclosed in the book behind-the-scenes information on the TPP. The LDP refused to comment on the book, which led to the withdrawal of the opposition parties from the room (*Asahi Shinbun* 2016c, April 8). The opposition parties demanded also questioning of TPP Minister Amari who resigned over the corruption scandal, but he was excused due to health problems.

The deliberations were postponed for few days after the strong earthquake in Kumamoto on April 14, 2016. They were resumed on April 18, but the fight over the Nishikawa’s book and other issues continued. Abe planned to pass the bills by the end of the Diet session, scheduled for June 1, but eventually he failed. The LDP worried about the effect of the TPP deliberation on several local elections (by-election in Hokkaido on April 24) and the general election to the Upper House in July. Japan was also the organizer of a G7 Summit held in Ise-Shima in May. On April 19, 2016, the government announced its decision to give up on the idea of passing the TPP bills in the current Diet session, and postponed it to the extraordinary Diet session in autumn. Abe and the LDP were trying to keep the image of the party positive, and avoid despotic and forcible decisions before the upcoming election in July.¹¹ It paid off. As a result of the election, the LDP increased its number of seats in the Upper House by six, which gave it a total of 121 seats. Together with its coalition partner Kōmeitō, which gained five more seats (totaling 25), the ruling parties secured the majority (136) out of the total 242 seats. In the Lower House, the LDP had 291 seats, and together with Kōmeitō (35) held more than half of the total 475 seats. The situation was fairly stable for the ruling coalition.

Under such circumstances, the TPP-related bills were passed during the extraordinary session in autumn 2016 although the opposition parties tried to block the procedures. The DP on several occasions refused passage of the TPP bills in the Upper House special committee, arguing that the bills were not discussed adequately (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 2016e, November 1). When MAFF Minister Yamamoto Yūji mentioned a possibility of “forceful adoption” of the bills, the DP and other opposition parties tried to use it as a leverage, submitting even the nonconfidence

¹¹Abe also gave up the idea of holding general election for both houses due to the Kumamoto earthquake.

motion against the minister, although it was rejected. In the end, it did not prevent the passage of the bills, but Yamamoto was strongly reprimanded by CCS Suga and other party officials (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 2016f, November 2).

The TPP bills were finally passed by the Lower House Special Committee on November 4, 2016, and at the plenary session of the Lower House on November 10, with support of the Nihon Ishin no Kai (successor of Initiatives from Osaka), while the Communist Party voted against, and three other opposition parties (DP, Liberal Party, and Social Democrats) left the room (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 2016g, h, November 5, November 11). The adoption of the bills by the Upper House on December 9, 2016, finalized the procedures in the Diet. The opposition parties did not manage to create a united front, which weakened their position. The ruling parties passed the bills with the majority approval in both houses.

11.10 Public Opinion

The general public, as mentioned before, showed fairly weak interest in the TPP although there were some regional differences. In March and April 2014, during the period of very intensive negotiations between Japan and the United States on agricultural items, which was medially highlighted, the support for the Japan’s participation in the agreement was surprisingly high, and so was cabinet support. In the opinion poll conducted by *Asahi Shinbun* in April 2014, 52% expressed support for the agreement, while only 25% declared opposition to it. At the same time, Abe cabinet approval stood at 48% (down from 50% in March 2014), with 29% voicing criticism towards Abe (no change from March 2014) (*Asahi Shinbun* 2014d, April 22). The results of the biggest daily, *Yomiuri Shinbun*, showed similar trends over a year later. In November 2015, 57% positively evaluated reaching the agreement on the TPP in October that year, while 27%—negatively. Abe cabinet support remained high at 51% against 38% of negative evaluation (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 2015, November 10).

An interesting opinion poll was carried out by *Asahi Shinbun* in February 2016, which showed regional differences. In response to the first question, whether TPP was necessary for Japan, the majority of Japanese from all prefectures (64.5%), and majority of citizens from the Tohoku area (59.0%) answered positively, while only a small number of people gave a negative answer (9.7% and 11.2 %, respectively). Quite a large portion of respondents replied “I do not know” (25.8% nationally and 29.7% in Tohoku). In response to the second question, whether the TPP was necessary for one’s own business or company, only 29.7% answered positively on average in all prefectures, and 25.1% in Tohoku. As many as 39.6% nationally and 42% in Tohoku could not make up their minds, while 30.6% and 32.8%, respectively, replied that the TPP was not necessary (*Asahi Shinbun* 2016d, February 4). Most Japanese perceived the TPP as beneficial for Japan, but not necessarily for their own prosperity. Still, a very big portion of the society could not decide, which probably reflected to some extent the contradictory information that

was presented by different sides in the debate on the TPP. Or simply, perhaps the majority of Japanese assumed, as shown in the results of the *Yomiuri Shinbun* poll, that the TPP would have both positive and negative effects equally (52%), depending on the issue and perspective (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 2016b, February 26).

Even during the election campaign to the Upper House in July 2016, the TPP did not become the point of contest.¹² Among twelve different policies which were given to choose as important for evaluating the Abe cabinet, the TPP was selected by only 13%, far behind the economic situation and employment (67%), social welfare (65%), education and childcare (49%), and diplomacy and national security (36%) (*Asahi Shinbun* 2016e, May 3).¹³ The reason for such “low” interest might have been also partially a result of the LDP strategy. Prime Minister Abe and the party members stayed alert in regard to public opinion and intentionally tried to shape a positive image of the agreement, emphasizing at the same time special measures for farmers. Furthermore, under the Abe cabinet, there were many other policies that were much more controversial (e.g., security bills, collective self-defense). As a result, for many Japanese, the TPP became less urgent and unimportant.

11.11 Conclusion

While dealing with the TPP issue, Prime Minister Abe exercised strong leadership very consciously in order to bring the agreement to conclusion (Masumitsu et al. 2014: 1; Jamitzky 2015: 87). The determination was undoubtedly necessary, but not enough in itself, as the case of Prime Minister Hatoyama in regard to Futenma relocation issue shows. What Abe did differently from Hatoyama was the skillful usage of institutional tools provided by the administrative reforms of 2001. First of all, Abe used the right to initiate and formulate the policy by the Cabinet Secretariat, and, second of all, placed the entire decision-making and policy formulation under Kantei control. The main deliberative bodies for the formulation and negotiation on the policy (Ministerial Meeting for TPP, Government Headquarter for TPP Measures, Executive Committee, Headquarter for TPP Comprehensive

¹²LDP won also seats in local and other elections. In April 27, 2014, in the by-election to Lower House from one of the districts of Kagoshima, which is a agriculture-based prefecture known for pork and sugar cane, the LDP-backed candidate won. It was interpreted as a sign of support for the Abe cabinet (*Asahi Shinbun* 2014f, April 28).

¹³*Yomiuri Shinbun* published results of opinion polls before election to the Upper House separately for all major prefectures. The highest percentage of voters who mentioned the TPP as important policy was in Yamagata Prefecture and reached only 4%. In Akita it was 3%, and in Niigata 2% (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 2016c, June 25a). There were differences of opinion depending on profession, and, as expected, substantially more farmers expressed interests in the TPP although they did not constitute a majority. In Kumamoto Prefecture, for instance, over 20% expressed interest in the TPP (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 2016d, June 25b).

Measures, etc.) were established under the Cabinet Secretariat and management of CCS Suga (Nishikawa 2017: 104). The chief negotiators: Tsuruoka Kōji, the head of negotiation delegation; Sasaki Toyonari, chief of staff for domestic coordination; and Ōe Hiroshi, acting representative of negotiation delegation were all working for the prime minister directly in the Cabinet Secretariat (as Cabinet Office councilor, assistant CCS, and Cabinet Office councilor, respectively), meeting with the prime minister on a daily basis. Furthermore, Abe appointed to key posts trusted and loyal bureaucrats and politicians, such as State Minister for TPP Amari Akira. Prime Minister Abe was able, in other words, to build a cohesive team in the Kantei, which supported him during the process.

On the other hand, Abe exploited the lack of cohesion among veto players who were divided over the TPP issue. The prime minister allied with the pro-TPP Diet members who occupied important party organs, such as the LDP Headquarters for Regional Diplomatic and Economic Partnership (Etō Seishirō), or Agriculture and Forestry Division (Koizumi Shinjirō). In regard to agriculture *zoku* Diet members, instead of open confrontation, Abe chose an indirect tactic of controlling *zoku* by another *zoku* in the person of Nishikawa Kōya, who was appointed by Abe as the chairperson of the LDP Committee for TPP Measures. As a reward, Nishikawa was given the post of MAFF minister. Similar cleavages between pro-TPP ministries of METI, MOFA, MOF, and anti-TPP MAFF were used by Abe to work out a compromise.

In the decision-making process, in order to gain support of veto players and reach a consensus, Abe avoided direct confrontations, opting instead for a softer approach. Under pressure from his own party, Abe accepted the necessity of such measures as protection of the five “sensitive items.” Nevertheless, the actual content of the final agreement on the TPP was a compromise between demands for protectionist measures for all products under the five items and the demand for the abolition of all tariffs. As a result, the agricultural lobby (Nōkyō, JA Zenchū) suffered probably the biggest losses in the negotiation process, while the pro-TPP lobby of big business gained the most. The reforms, if implemented, will dramatically change the structure and functioning of Japanese agriculture, which was shaped after the Asia-Pacific War. The TPP was perceived by Abe and other political and administrative officials, as well as big business, as a chance to reform the problem of agriculture, which politically had been untouchable for decades (Ōshita 2014: 431).

As for the other domestic factors, the opposition parties or public opinion did not have much influence on the policy output. The opposition parties did not manage to create a cohesive block, and in the end failed to prevent ratification of the TPP. They contributed to the postponement of procedures because the LDP tried to avoid the image of an authoritarian rule before the July election to the Upper House in 2016, but after the election the TPP bills were passed by the majority with cooperation from the Nihon Ishin no Kai. Furthermore, public support, as expressed in opinion polls, did not play a major role in the decision-making on the TPP, although both the prime minister with his entourage and the ruling parties showed high consideration for public sentiments. A variety of explanation meetings,

seminars, and lectures were organized in order to gain support for governmental policy, especially in rural areas.

Finally, it is important to note that although the TPP policy was initiated under international pressure, such as invitation from Japan's political and economic partners, Singapore, Australia, the United States, or the geopolitical and economic situation of neighboring states (South Korea and China)—the policy outcome was ultimately shaped by the intervening factors of domestic politics. Without analyzing the pressure from the agricultural lobby, *zoku* Diet members, and other actors, the final output of the TPP policy would be difficult to comprehend.

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Chapter 12

Summary and Conclusions

12.1 Introduction

The central government reforms improved the Kantei's position vis-à-vis veto players, that is, the bureaucracy and ruling party backbenchers. While the reforms were not aimed specifically at modifying foreign policy making patterns, they changed the balance of power between the prime minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), and other subgovernmental actors. Thanks to new institutional tools the Kantei gained more independence in initiating and executing diplomatic endeavors, especially in the areas that necessitated extensive interministerial coordination.

This book argues, however, that the institutional changes introduced by the central government reforms were insufficient to enable top-down decision-making in foreign policy on a regular basis. The coherence of the Kantei varied from one administration to another, and the actual power of the prime ministers was greatly dependent on their leadership skills. Sectional struggles within MOFA and between parliamentary tribes were not eliminated at all. As a result, each of these actors could use internal frictions in the other institutions in order to weaken the competitors and promote their own goals. Under these circumstances, the foreign policy of Japan was still hammered out in unceasing turf battles between the Kantei, MOFA, and ruling party backbenchers. On the other hand, after the reforms it was the Kantei who became better equipped to exploit internal divisions in the veto players, not vice versa.

12.2 Utilizing New Institutional Tools in Foreign Policy Making

The central government reforms introduced a range of institutional innovations that helped the prime minister to independently shape foreign policy. The revised Cabinet Law explicitly vested the privilege of initiating important policies in the prime minister and the responsibility for drafting them in the Cabinet Secretariat. Moreover, the Prime Minister's Office was merged with several other agencies into the Cabinet Office, which was placed above all other ministries. These changes significantly enhanced the authority and administrative backing of the prime ministers and their closest entourage.

As the Cabinet Law did not clearly define "important policies," the head of government was allowed to arbitrarily decide which matters required his or her intervention in a top-down manner. Formulation of broad diplomatic visions, such as the idea of establishing the East Asian Community (EAC), response to sudden international crises, such as the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, as well as decision-making on the issues that required extensive interministerial coordination, such as the ambitious CO₂ emissions reduction goal or Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) accession, naturally fell within the scope of this term. In all of these cases, the prime ministers channeled foreign policy making through the Kantei by forming advisory councils, ad hoc offices, study teams, headquarters, or special work groups under their direct control.

In addition, the creation of the posts of ministers of state for special missions and an increase in the number of prime minister's special advisors enabled the head of government to shape foreign policy more flexibly than before. The prime minister could take advantage of the political appointees in his closest entourage in dealing with some international issues of the utmost importance, such as negotiations on TPP accession or the abduction problem. Moreover, special advisors occasionally served as the head of government's special emissaries to different countries. For example, Koizumi Jun'ichirō entrusted to Yamasaki Taku personal letters to the Chinese president hoping, in futility, for a breakthrough in their problems mired in history.

The reforms redefined the role of some of preexisting officials in the prime minister's closest entourage as well. Most significantly, the prime minister's secretaries gained in prominence as coordinators of the head of government's increased activities on the international scene. In particular, Iijima Isao was considered as an influential figure and a "gatekeeper" to Prime Minister Koizumi. He not only had an influence on who accompanied the prime minister during his visits abroad, but Koizumi also occasionally entrusted to him such delicate matters as negotiations on the abduction issue.

12.3 Maintaining the Kantei's Policy Cohesion

In order to take full advantage of the new institutional tools, the prime minister had to carefully select his closest entourage. After all, administrative reforms empowered not only the head of government, but also the Cabinet Secretariat, Cabinet Office, and, potentially, individual ministers of state for special missions, prime minister's special advisors, or prime minister's senior secretaries.

The most obvious method for ensuring cohesion of the Kantei was recruiting associates from among people who represented the same ideological wing as the head of government, or at least shared his or her basic policy vision. For instance, Prime Minister's Secretary Iijima Isao conducted a series of interviews in order to make sure that the bureaucrats recruited to the Cabinet Secretariat remained loyal to the Koizumi cabinet rather than to their home ministries. It is the administrative backing from this closest staff that facilitated the Kantei to play a leading role in the swift reaction to the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, or preparing the Iraq Special Measures Law in 2003.

It was equally difficult to control the behavior of heavy-weight politicians in the prime minister's closest entourage. Even the members of the same Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) faction, while agreeing on the general direction of Japanese diplomacy, did not necessarily share all the same convictions with the head of government. For example, while Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichirō, Chief Cabinet Secretary (CCS) Fukuda Yasuo, and Deputy CCS Abe Shinzō all belonged to the Mori faction, they disagreed on the details of policy towards North Korea or reaction to pressure from China and South Korea on history issues.

The prime minister could limit the impact of policy incoherence of the Kantei by strategically removing the discontents from decision-making process. The best example was maintaining for one year in complete secrecy the negotiations with North Korea conducted by Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Director-General Tanaka Hitoshi. Prime Minister Koizumi intentionally informed about these delicate talks only such politicians as CCS Fukuda Yasuo who shared the head of government's determination to display a flexible posture towards Pyongyang. By keeping Deputy CCS Abe Shinzō or Prime Minister's Secretary Iijima Isao, who favored a more assertive policy towards North Korea, out of the inner circle of decision-makers, Koizumi managed to realize a historic visit to Pyongyang in 2002. Analogically, he did not consult anyone on the date of most of his visits to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine.

By maintaining relative policy cohesion of his entourage, the prime minister ensured that none of veto players would use frictions among his or her closest associates to prevent the Kantei from using its increased powers. Whenever a difference of opinions in the Kantei did emerge, it was more difficult to maintain a consistent diplomatic line. For example, after Koizumi's first visit to Pyongyang, Deputy CCS Abe started questioning the hitherto flexible approach towards North Korea, which made it more difficult for the prime minister to fully control negotiations on the abduction problem.

12.4 Exploiting Internal Divisions Within Veto Players

Maintaining policy cohesion in the Kantei significantly strengthened the prime minister's ability to use the new instruments of power, but it was the internal divisions within veto players that provided windows of opportunity to actually shape foreign policy to the prime minister's liking. Paradoxically, as the administrative reform left the organizational structures of MOFA, the Diet, and major parties virtually intact, sectional frictions continued to prevent these institutions from forming a united front against the Kantei's initiatives.

MOFA was spared from serious institutional changes. As a result, various schools and regional bureaus still represented divergent stances on the policies that involved contrasting interests of the countries from different geographical zones. For instance, while the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau tended to promote rapprochement with East Asian states, the North American Affairs Bureau acted as the main advocate of US interests. These divisions became prominent in the cases involving negotiations on the abduction issue under the Koizumi administration and the plans of establishing the EAC under the Hatoyama government. However, while Koizumi was able to exploit MOFA's policy incoherence in the former case, Hatoyama did not display sufficient managerial skills to take strategic advantage of the situation in the latter.

What the administrative reform did change was weakening the rule of dispersed management. As the new Cabinet Law clarified that the prime minister had the right to independently initiate important policies, it became possible for him or her to rely on influential MOFA bureaucrats, even over the heads of foreign ministers. Tanaka Hitoshi and Yachi Shotarō were two high-ranking diplomats who remained in closer contact with key decision-makers in the Kantei than with their direct superiors. While Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Director-General Tanaka informed the foreign minister and foreign administrative vice minister about his secret talks with North Korea, in fact he received direct instructions from Prime Minister Koizumi and CCS Fukuda. Analogically, Foreign Administrative Vice Minister Yachi consulted CCS and later Prime Minister Abe rather than Foreign Minister Asō on the general policy dialogue with China and "strategy of ambiguity" regarding visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. While tactical use of individual MOFA officials by the Kantei had been possible even in the twentieth century, the reforms removed a potential pretext for foreign ministers or high-ranking bureaucrats to oppose such behavior.

Much like with MOFA, the other subgovernments' interests were barely influenced by the central government reforms. Although connections between "parliamentary tribes," pressure groups, and their respective ministries were somewhat relaxed after the loss of power by the LDP in 1993 and the revision of the electoral system in 1994, it did not weaken the competition for financial resources and power between various economic sectors and groups representing different legislative fields. As a result, the strengthened Kantei could potentially play one *zoku* or ministry off against another.

Among the analyzed cases, the gravest conflicts of interests concerned economic policies, such as the formulation of an ambitious greenhouse gases reduction goal or negotiations on TPP accession. By announcing his bold environmental policy, Prime Minister Hatoyama Yukio conflicted himself with big business, trade unions, as well as their representatives in the ruling party and bureaucracy. Hatoyama could have used MOFA and Ministry of the Environment (MOE) to counterbalance the influence of Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), and the commerce and industry tribe. However, antagonized with MOFA over the Futenma issue, the Kantei proved unable to establish a constructive cooperation with civil servants from this ministry. Moreover, while the Environment Agency gained a ministerial status in 2001, it did not translate into more numerous administrative staff necessary to compete with the powerful METI. Eventually, weak political leadership rendered the new institutional instruments at the prime minister's disposal ineffective.

By contrast, Prime Minister Abe Shinzō managed to achieve his goal. Accession to the TPP was supported by the commerce and industry tribe, big business, METI and MOFA, but vehemently opposed by Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), and the agricultural tribe in the LDP and Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ). Abe not only skillfully used the former camp against the latter, but he also appealed to personal ambitions of separate members of the agriculture and forestry *zoku* to weaken its solidarity. In parallel, in order to appease veto players, he made a range of promises to protect Japanese farmers. Eventually, Japan ratified the TPP accession treaty in December 2016, though its entry into force remains uncertain due to the sudden shift in US policy under the Trump administration.

Occasionally, turf battles between various ministries were also exploited in ideological disputes. For example, to counterbalance MOFA's stance on history issues, which the Kantei found overly accommodative to the neighboring countries, Prime Minister Koizumi and his closest entourage took advantage of Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) bureaucrats who were unwilling to sacrifice the autonomy of their ministry for the sake of maintaining harmonious relations with China and South Korea. Such an interministerial "divide and rule" approach had been possible in the pre-reform period as well, but it is the strengthened position in the government that enabled prime ministers to more regularly play the role of power broker rather than mere coordinator.

12.5 Prevailing over Institutional Constraints on Leadership

While being an important prerequisite for an effective decision-making process, elite cohesion cannot fully explain all foreign policy making patterns. The central government reforms to some extent empowered the prime ministers and their

closest entourage, but they did not eliminate all the institutional constraints on political leadership. High risk of losing control over the House of Councilors, shortness of parliamentary sessions, the Diet's relative independence in managing legislative process, fluidity in public support for the government, high frequency of ruling party presidential elections, or difficulty in revising the political culture based on strong position of bureaucrats and LDP backbenchers still posed a grave challenge for every head of government who wanted to rule in a top-down fashion. As a result, the actual use of new institutional tools was greatly dependent on each prime minister's managerial skills and popularity among the public. In addition, Japanese politicians' personal connections with foreign statespersons could contribute to the mitigation of external reaction to controversial foreign policies, while a lack of reliable semiofficial communication channels increased the risk of cognitive dissonance between Tokyo and other governments.

After the political reforms of 1994, the image of the prime ministers among the general public became an important factor that could harm or improve electoral chances of the ruling party. As a result, the high popularity of the cabinet turned into one of the most effective sources of power. Some case studies from this book confirm that prime ministers took public opinion into account when they made decisions on foreign policy. For example, it seems that both Koizumi in 2002 and 2004 as well as Abe in 2006 took advantage of their visits to North Korea and China, respectively, to bolster their own popularity. Heads of government were punished dearly by the general public, in turn, if they failed to fulfill their promises. The higher the popular expectation, the greater the disappointment. In particular, Hatoyama's failure in convincing the United States to relocate Futenma outside of Okinawa Prefecture caused a massive drop in the cabinet's popularity, which eventually led to the prime minister's resignation. On the other hand, on several occasions heads of government persevered in their endeavors against general moods. For instance, Prime Minister Koizumi did not abandon annual visits to the Yasukuni Shrine despite domestic concerns about international repercussions of this gesture, and he decided to send Self Defense Forces (SDF) to Iraq regardless of unfavorable opinion polls. This indicates that sometimes strong leaders were willing to sacrifice part of their popularity to implement the policies to which they attached particular importance.

Thanks to the high popularity of his cabinet, Prime Minister Koizumi remained in power for more than five years. It is this prolonged tenure of office, in turn, that facilitated nurturing ties of loyalty between the head of government and his administrative staff. After all, due to the fact that the bureaucrats in the expanded Cabinet Secretariat and the newly created Cabinet Office were still dispatched from various ministries, central government reforms did not automatically make them forget sectional interests. However, when the new institutional setting was backed by a stable working environment, the administrative staff could start acting as servants to the head of government rather than employees of their home ministries. Lack of such stability in 2006–2012, when the position of prime minister changed hands on an annual basis, explains why Koizumi's successors until the second Abe

administration were less successful than Koizumi in imposing bold foreign policy initiatives on veto players.

Another circumstantial factor were personal connections with foreign statespersons. In the analyzed cases, it is the personal relationship between Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichirō and US President George Bush that to the greatest extent affected foreign policy making. The ties of trust between both leaders, built during bilateral summits, were strengthened by Koizumi's swift support for the US interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. This cordial relationship facilitated several foreign policy initiatives by Japanese prime minister. Most significantly, it assuaged US concerns regarding Tokyo's flexible posture towards Pyongyang in the period when Washington treated North Korea as a "rogue state." Analogically, Prime Minister Fukuda Yasuo's link of trust with Chinese President Hu Jintao enabled overcoming mutual prejudices and signing the unprecedented East China Sea recourse joint exploitation agreement in 2008.

It is all of the abovementioned unit-level determinants that enabled taking full advantage of the instruments of power introduced by the central government reforms. The strong position of the prime minister stemming from his or her leadership skills, popularity among the public, and prolonged term in office, prevented the "three political officials" in different ministries, who were also empowered by the institutional changes, from turning into additional veto players. In fact, none of the cases analyzed in this book provided an example of ministers, vice ministers, or parliamentary vice ministers in MOFA explicitly criticizing the prime minister or significantly influencing policy decisions. Some foreign policy concepts, such as Asō Tarō's Arc of Freedom and Prosperity (AFP), originated from foreign minister's entourage rather than from the Kantei, but they fit the prime minister's broad policy. Even though sometimes foreign ministers voiced their concerns about the Kantei's diplomatic initiatives, such as the relocation of Futenma outside Okinawa Prefecture (Okada Katsuya) or visits to the Yasukuni Shrine (Tanaka Makiko), they did not dare overtly oppose the head of government.

12.6 Overcoming External Pressures

As predicted by the neoclassical realist theory, Japanese foreign policy did not result directly from external pressures. Instead, international stimuli were heavily filtered by domestic conditions. While the scope of rational decisions in foreign policy was limited by external constraints, the decisions themselves were not automatically predetermined by Japan's position in the international system. The case studies analyzed in this book provided examples of foreign policies that were generally consistent with international stimuli, attempts at overcoming external pressures for the sake of realizing the subjectively interpreted national interest, as well as policies that were not overly controversial on the international level.

In some cases, decision-makers behaved consistently with external pressures. Participation in the Bush administration's War on Terrorism, rapprochement with

China under the Abe and Fukuda cabinets, and plans of TPP accession can be perceived as responses to persuasion from the United States, pressure from neighboring countries, or incentives from the broader international community. In all of these cases, however, domestic factors facilitated or hindered the prime minister's initiatives. While it is the significance of the alliance with the United States for Japan's security that prompted Tokyo to support the intervention in Afghanistan, the swiftness of Japan's reaction after September 11, 2001 can be attributed to Prime Minister Koizumi's skills in taking advantage of the institutional resources at his disposal. Analogically, the initial success of the Sino-Japanese mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests stemmed both from a rational calculation on the gravity of bilateral economic exchange and from Prime Minister Abe's readiness to rely on the experience of senior MOFA bureaucrats in foreign policy making. Additionally, the case of TPP accession showed that external stimuli easily translate into concrete actions in foreign policy only if they are coupled with favorable domestic conditions. Participation in this regional block was aimed at reaping the benefits of globalization and strengthening ties with the United States. Due to opposition from the agricultural tribe, however, negotiations were postponed endlessly under the DPJ administration. Only by displaying extensive interministerial coordination skills and investing a lot of political resources in negotiations both on domestic and international levels was Prime Minister Abe able to impose ratification of the accession treaty on veto players.

In several cases, interpretation of national interests was heavily dependent on the subjective perception of external circumstances by individual decision-makers. Koizumi's stance on history problems and policy towards North Korea, as well as Hatoyama's proposal of forming the EAC and renegotiation of Futenma relocation agreement were the policies that ran counter to the dominant international stimuli. Both Koizumi's successes and Hatoyama's failures in overcoming external pressures were connected with the gravity of the issues in question, but also with the prime ministers' leadership skills. Thanks to his strong position in the government, Koizumi was able to ignore the pressure from neighboring countries and continue his annual visits to Yasukuni. Analogically, he used his vast power resources and personal relationship with President Bush to assuage US concerns regarding visits to Pyongyang. Nevertheless, as predicted by the neoclassical realist theory, unconformity with external stimuli did not last long. Despite his right-wing convictions, Koizumi's successor, Abe Shinzō, avoided visiting the Yasukuni Shrine in 2006–2007, and Koizumi himself had to become more assertive towards North Korea after Pyongyang's withdrawal from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 2003. Hatoyama's diplomatic goals posed a much greater challenge than Koizumi's. Due to the divergence in political regimes and economic interests, as well as numerous territorial disputes and historical animosities between the countries in the region, establishment of the EAC seemed impossible even if Hatoyama had used all the institutional instruments at his disposal. The renegotiation of the Futenma relocation agreement was a daring task as well. Nevertheless, lack of sufficient coordination among ministers and lack of cooperation between the "three political officials" and bureaucrats in MOFA and Ministry of Defense

(MOD) exposed the weaknesses of Japanese negotiators, which even further undermined Hatoyama's ambitious plans. By rejecting the LDP-like decision-making patterns in their entirety, the Kantei was unable to effectively use any of the instruments of power introduced by administrative reform.

Not all foreign policy decisions were accompanied by clear external pressures. The announcement of the concept of AFP by the first Abe administration and formulation of the high CO₂ emissions reduction goal by Prime Minister Hatoyama did not exceed the framework of soft-power-based diplomacy, and thus were not directly related to the immediate national interests of any country. The idea of the AFP, developed by MOFA officials Kanehara Nobukatsu and Yachi Shōtarō, constituted a rare example of strategic thinking on global scale by Japanese foreign policy makers. Potentially, it could arouse suspicions from Beijing and Moscow as an attempt at containing China and Russia by the use of Western values, but it was abandoned too early to meet with any decisive reaction from these two powers. As such, the first Abe administration did not feel any significant external pressure against promoting values-based diplomacy in the developing countries on the outer rim of Eurasia. Analogically, Hatoyama's insistence on implementing ambitious environmental standards could have potentially evolved into an initiative endangering the interests of the heaviest polluters, but it was never realized due to concerns from big business in Japan. Because of the lack of discernible international stimuli, the fate of both initiatives depended mostly on the prime ministers' skills in taking advantage of their increased powers to overcome domestic opposition. As a result of premature resignations by Abe in 2007 and Hatoyama in 2010, both policies eventually fell victim to ideological cleavages in the LDP in the former case and economic interests of Japanese transnational corporations in the latter.

Just as during the Cold War, it is American pressure that was one of the most important external stimuli shaping Japan's foreign policy in the period of investigation. Tokyo's participation in the War on Terrorism, formulation of values-oriented diplomacy, or joining the TPP agreement were, apart from realizing Japan's national interests, ways of strengthening the US–Japanese alliance. The eventual abandonment by the DPJ government of an assertive posture towards Washington on the relocation of Futenma and EAC initiatives, in turn, showed how difficult it was for Tokyo to implement policies that ran counter to the US's grand strategy. However, these failures were not automatically caused by Washington's overarching international position. Domestic factors in Japan heavily filtered Tokyo's response to *gaiatsu*. Hatoyama's weak leadership skills and refusal to use all the institutional instruments at his disposal contributed to the magnitude of the diplomatic fiasco. On the other hand, Koizumi's secret negotiations with North Korea or his assertive position on history issues showed that the empowered prime minister could remain largely independent from Washington, provided that US core interests were not excessively infringed.

Even before the central government reforms it was not uncommon for prime ministers to exploit or react to international stimuli in order to make revolutionary changes in foreign policy. This is evidenced by Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei's

swift normalization of diplomatic relations with China in 1972 after the Nixon shock, or by the passage of the PKO bill in 1992 after the trauma caused by Operation Desert Storm. The case studies in this book have shown, however, that thanks to the newly acquired powers Japanese prime ministers are now able not only to strategically respond to international stimuli, but also to more boldly promote their own diplomatic visions or even temporarily prevail over external pressures. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of such proactive posture is still deeply dependent on the decision-makers' ability to form cohesive teams under their direct command, skillfully exploit frictions among the weakened veto players, and select institutional tools at their disposal adequately to the dynamically evolving domestic and international circumstances.