The Recent Developments and Future Directions of International Relations Theory in Japan: Focusing on Security Studies

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to give an overall view of the current situation of theory-oriented security studies in Japan. First I will introduce some of the relevant articles in this area published in the last 10 years mainly in Kokusai-Seiji (International Relations), which is the journal of Nihon Kokusai Seiji Gakkai (the Japan Association of International Relations[see Appendix 1&2]), and then conclude with some remarks on the implications of alternative international relations theory on security studies.

2. Realists vs. Idealists

Are international conflicts likely to remain violent in the future as they have been in the past? This is one of the most profound questions students of international politics try to answer. After the events of 11 September 2001, many would say 'yes', sharing the pessimistic view that realism is still the best approach to think about international security; nevertheless a few may reply 'no' or 'yes, but ......', based on a belief that new communitarian values and transnational identities at regional and global levels will bring greater cooperation among individuals and various human collectivities, including nations. This debate between realists and idealists is reflected in the current theoretical discourses on security in Japan as well.

3. Structural Realism

The article written by Kamiya Matake in 1997 represents typically the idea of structural realism combined with some elements of liberalism, whose impacts one cannot ignore in Japan (KAMIYA 1997). He proposed to build a multi-layered security system in the Asia-Pacific region. His arguments are as follows;

(1) Multilateral security cooperation is still at an embryonic stage in the Asia-Pacific Region. Among the three types of multilateral security cooperation, common, collective, and cooperative securities, only cooperative security is expected to develop in this region in the foreseeable future.
(2) A cooperative security system will not be able to maintain regional peace by itself even in a fully
developed form; because it cannot cope with military conflicts by itself once it fails. A cooperative
security system, therefore, must be complemented by another mechanism that can deal with military
conflicts by military means.

(3) Theoretically, there are at least seven candidates for such mechanism. They are: hegemony; a collective
security system; a NATO-type collective defense system (multilateral alliance); a concert of great
powers; self-help; a bilateral alliance other than the one between the US and Japan; and the US-Japan
Alliance. Except for the US-Japan Alliance, however, none of these options are feasible in the Asia-Pacific
Region.

(4) The most desirable way to maintain peace in the Asia-Pacific in the foreseeable future is, therefore, to
build a multi-layered security system which will consist mainly of two components that complement
each other, i.e., the ASEAN Regional Forum (AFR) as a cooperative security system which will promote
mutual understanding, mutual trust and mutual reassurance among the regional states, and the US-
Japan Alliance as a mechanism which will cope with military conflicts if the ARF fails to prevent them.
In this multi-layered system, the cooperative security system and the alliance system will be mutually

4. Liberal-institutionalism

Next to Kamiya as a structural realist, there are liberal-institutionalists like Yamamoto Yoshinobu.
Liberal-institutionalists emphasize the role of multilateralism in stabilizing international relations
as a form of institutionalization. Yamamoto examines the types and functions of security regime
(a set of norms, rules and institutions in security spheres), skillfully using the theoretical tools of
structural realism and liberal-institutionalism (YAMAMOTO 1998). He writes;

Four types of international political systems are deduced by utilizing the two dimensions of the nature of
the security threats to a group of nations. Security threats lie either outside the group or inside. Security
threats are either specific or unspecific (or uncertain). If a specific threat exists outside the group, the
international system is adversarial and the structure of interests tends to be zero-sum in nature. In such a
situation there will be no chance for security regime to form (except for possible regimes within alliances).
If a group of nations "internalize" threats and if the threats are specific, then the international system will
be characterized as a regulated balance of power. In such a situation, security regimes will form in specific
areas and their functions will be to avoid an unbearable and/or inadvertent war (YAMAMOTO 1998:
Summary in English, 6).

5. East Asian Community

In a similar line of reasoning, liberals like Takahara Akio and Lee Jong Won give priority to
multilateral security frameworks over "hub-and-spokes" type bilateral alliances. They try to find
ways of instilling as many liberal concerns and ideas as possible into games of power and interests,
while paying attention to the logic of interstate politics which causes frequently mutual distrusts
and fears among nations. Lee examines the visions of "East Asian community" that ASEAN+3
has advanced since 2001 with increasing regional exchanges and interdependence among the three
Northeast Asian countries, namely China, Japan, and South Korea (LEE 2004). Takahara, in turn,
comments on this proposal;

The success of East Asian regionalism depends largely on the future relationship of Japan and China. The two nations, which now seem to be competing in their promotion of regional frameworks, share the task of overcoming narrow nationalism and materializing a dialectical development between multilateralism and bilateral relations (Takahara 2003: Summary in English, 9).

6. Human Security

On the other hand, the article of Kurasu Kaoru shows another concept of security (Kurusu 1998). "What is exactly meant by the word of 'security'?", she asks. She tries to clarify the concept of human security by focusing on the debate which security to come first, either the military security closely identified with national survival or the societal security related to the emerging global civil society. According to her, although "the human rights and development approach which places individuals at the center of security studies" deserves consideration, "the role of states and of national security for individual human beings should be clarified and incorporated into the theory of human security" (Kurusu 1998: Summary in English, 11).

7. Critical Security Studies

Kurusu's arguments may be placed on the axis of liberalism-idealism which has a possibility to develop critical security studies, in contrast with Yamamoto's arguments which are classified as a synthesis of realism and liberalism. Minamiyama Atsushi also insists on the importance of the critical security studies which have been developed as a human-centered security studies after the Cold War (Minamiyama 1999). His article, dealing with the US-Japan Alliance, examines from this perspective a strained and conflicting relationship between a national security concept and individual/human security concept concerning Okinawa: we should consider seriously to whose security the US military bases in Okinawa are contributing, US citizens, the Japanese, people living in East Asia, or the inhabitants in Okinawa?

8. Alternative International Relations Theory and its Implications on Security Studies

Finally, there exist a few insightful arguments which situate critical security studies mentioned above in the broader contexts of alternative international relations theory. Yamazaki Nozomu explores the perspective of 'Empire', conceptualized by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, who tried to clarify the nature of the Post-Westpharian order which is replacing the Westpharian order identified frequently with the existing anarchic system of states (Yamazaki 2004). He states;

If we compare the Westphalian order with 'Empire', the former can be characterized as (1) a system comprised of territorially demarcated sovereign states, (2) nation states, (3) the denial of universalism and (4) wars between sovereign states as the only legitimate form of violence within this order. On the other hand, 'Empire' can be characterized as (1) a decentralized and de-territorial system, (2) formed by 'multitude', (3) universalism (the denial of particularism), and (4) endless 'global civil wars' (a chains of intervention and 'terrorism'). (Yamazaki 2004: Summary in English, 15)

-- 163 --
Tosa Hiroyuki also attempts to clarify the viewpoints of alternative international relations theory by distinguishing three kinds of idealism (TOSA 2003). He summarized his arguments like this:

There have been two kinds of idealism related to grand designs for world peace and global justice. According to one stream of "idealism", it is possible to create a world state through empire or Dante's monarchy. According to another stream of "idealism", this can be reached through multilateralism or global governance. At the beginning of the 21st century, super-hegemony based on the logic of preponderance of power suggests the first path toward peace. This entails a "perpetual war for perpetual peace" to expand the sphere of the political. During this crisis, it is necessary to contain the sphere of the political to promote multilateralism and to rebuild the mechanisms of institutional restraint. However there are also serious problems with the second path. It assumes that the sphere of the technical will expand, but might play a complementary role to make the political invisible and institutionalize structural violence or inequality. In order to avoid such a trap and to counter the unjust rule of power, we need to keep on with deconstructive justice which will be the third stream of "idealism" (TOSA 2003: Summary in English, 201-202).

It goes without saying that the arguments of Professor Tosa are based on the writings of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida who are both late French philosophers.

9. Conclusion

Globalization is affecting security in a number of important ways, as Yamazaki and Tosa suggested. The process of globalization urges us to think again what is meant by 'security'. I returned to the question I asked in the beginning of the paper, namely, "Are international conflicts likely to remain violent in the future as they have been in the past?" Now, we have to restate and reexamine this kind of question in the broader contexts of the complicated relationships between international politics and world economy which the process of globalization has created.

We need to study thoroughly the relationships between international politics and global economy in order to consider the continuing tension between national, international, and global security. In other words, globalization requires the linkage between Security and International Political Economy (IPE) studies. So concluding remarks as follows;

There is no doubt that national security is being challenged by the forces of globalization, some of which have a positive effect, bringing states into greater contact with each other. At the same time, however, globalization also appears to be having negative effects on international security. It is often associated with rapid social change, increased economic inequality and challenges to cultural identity which contribute to conflicts within, and between, states. This ambivalent effect of globalization, in turn, reinforces the search for national security, and at the same time leads states to seek greater multilateral and global solutions as they are less able to provide security for their citizens (BAYLIS 2001:272).
Acknowledgements
This paper was prepared for the international workshop on “Current International Relations Studies in Northeast Asia”, School of International Studies, Peking University (collaborated with Asian Political and International Studies Association), 27th-28th November 2004. I am most grateful to Professor Wang Zhengyi, Department of International Political Economy, School of International Studies, Peking University for inviting me to the workshop. The outline of the workshop was as follows;

Current International Relations Studies in Northeast Asia
November 27
Panel 1: International Relations Theory Studies and Issues
Co-chair: Jia Qingguo, Peking University, China
Hari Singh, National University of Malaysia, Malaysia
Presentation by
Qin Yaqing, College of Foreign Affairs, China
Okabe Tatsumi, 21st Century Committee for Japan-China Friendship, Japan
Jinwoo Choi, Hanyang University, Korea
D. Shurkhuu, Mongolian Academy of Sciences, Mongolia
Discussion by
Zhang Xiaoming, Peking University, China
Yu Tiejun, Peking University, China
Zhang Haibin, Peking University, China

Panel 2: Foreign Policy and Area Studies
Co-chair: Chu Shulong, Tsinghua University, China
M. Ramesh, National University of Singapore, Singapore
Presentation by
Jia Qingguo, Peking University, China
Jae Cheol Kim, Catholic University of Korea, Korea
Weixing Hu, University of Hong Kong, China Hong Kong
Masui Yasuki, Niigata University, Japan
Discussion by
Setihiro Takagi, Aoyama Gakuin University, Japan
Lee Lai To, National University of Singapore, Singapore
Ding Dou, Peking University, China

November 28
Panel 3: Security and IPE Studies
Co-chair: Qin Yaqing, College of Foreign Affairs, China
Lee Lai To, National University of Singapore, Singapore
Presentation by
Chu Shulong, Tsinghua University, China
James T.H. Tang, University of Hong Kong, China Hong Kong
Mashbat Otgonbayar, Institute of Strategic Studies of Mongolia, Mongolia
Kuroda Toshiro, Niigata Women's College, Japan
Wang Zhengyi, Peking University, China
I was inspired that the main topic of the workshop was Asianization of IR Theory, that is, the necessity to create an Asian school of IR studies and the search for original theory-building in Asia.

Notes

1) "For critical security theorists states should not be the centre of analysis because they are not only extremely diverse in character but they are also often part of the problem of insecurity in the international system. They can be providers of security, but they can also be a source of threat to their own people. According to this view, therefore, attention should be focused on the individual rather than the state. With this as their main referent, writers like Booth and Wyn Jones, argue that security can best be assured through human emancipation, defined in terms of 'freeing people, as individuals and groups, from the social, physical, economic, political, and other constraints that stop them from carrying out what they would freely choose to do. This focus on emancipation is designed to provide 'a theory of progress', 'a politics of hope' and a guide to 'a politics of resistance'" (BAYLIS 2001:266).

2) The name of Hardt and Negri has a high popularity among students with a radical way of thinking in Japan (HARDT and NEGRI 2000, 2004).

References


HARDT, Micael and Antonio NEGRI, 2000, Empire, Harvard University Press.


*The articles of Kokusai-Seiji and Heiwa-Kenkyu were written in Japanese. But each volume of the journal contained summaries in English of the articles which I used as citation in this paper. International Relations and Peace Studies are their English name.
APPENDIX 1

The Main Topics of Kokusai-Seiji\textit{(International Relations); 1995-2004}

\*Kokusai-Seiji = The Journal of Nihon Kokusai Seiji Gakkai (The Japan Association of International Relations)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vol.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>Mar-95</td>
<td>Arms Transfers in the Post-Cold War World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>May-95</td>
<td>Japan’s Wartime Diplomacy and the Postwar Visions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>Oct-95</td>
<td>Ethnicity and European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>Feb-96</td>
<td>The Transformation of the Global System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>May-96</td>
<td>China after Reforms and Opening-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113</td>
<td>Dec-96</td>
<td>The Turn of International Relations Study in the Advent of Multimedia Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114</td>
<td>Mar-97</td>
<td>Globalism, Regionalism, and Nationalism: Asia in Search of its Role in the 21st Century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>May-97</td>
<td>The US-Japan Security: Continuity and Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>116</td>
<td>Oct-97</td>
<td>ASEAN at 30: Between Myth and Reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>117</td>
<td>Mar-98</td>
<td>Security: Theory and Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>118</td>
<td>May-98</td>
<td>The History of Sino-U.S. Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>Oct-98</td>
<td>A Re-examination of Actors in International Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>Feb-99</td>
<td>International Relations in Okinawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>May-99</td>
<td>Religion and International Politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122</td>
<td>Sep-99</td>
<td>International History in the Interwar Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123</td>
<td>Jan-00</td>
<td>Africa: Towards the 21st Century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124</td>
<td>May-00</td>
<td>Reconstructing International Relations Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>Oct-00</td>
<td>Democratization and International Politics / Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126</td>
<td>Feb-01</td>
<td>The End of the Cold War and World Politics in the 1960s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127</td>
<td>May-01</td>
<td>The “Nation-States” and International Politics in South Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128</td>
<td>Oct-01</td>
<td>Between Comparative Politics and International Politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129</td>
<td>Feb-02</td>
<td>Cultural Perspectives and International Relations Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130</td>
<td>May-02</td>
<td>The Vietnam War as Contemporary History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>131</td>
<td>Nov-02</td>
<td>Latin American Politics after “Democratization”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>132</td>
<td>Feb-03</td>
<td>Institutionalization of International Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133</td>
<td>Aug-03</td>
<td>Multilateralism and Regionalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>134</td>
<td>Nov-03</td>
<td>Reviewing the Cold War History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135</td>
<td>Mar-04</td>
<td>Regional Cooperation and Security in East Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>136</td>
<td>Mar-04</td>
<td>The Frontier of International Relations 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137</td>
<td>Jun-04</td>
<td>Towards Theory-building of Global Public Order: the UN, the State and Civil Society</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 2

The Contents of Kokusai-Seiji (International Relations)

* Volumes number 115, 117 and 135 of the Kokusai-Seiji are especially dedicated to the security studies, focusing respectively on the US-Japan security system, the concept of security, and the regional security problems in East Asia.

Vol.115 May-97 The US-Japan Security: Continuity and Change

HARA Yoshihisa The US-Japan Security System: Continuity and Change
GABE Masaaki The Status of Forces Agreement and Okinawa
KAN Hideki The Vietnam War and the US-Japan Security Treaty System
MUROYAMA Yoshimasa Japan-US Security Structure after the Cold War: from the Cold War System to the Redefinition System
TSUCHIYAMA Jitsuo International Relations Theories of the US-Japan Alliance: Views from Realism, Liberal-Institutionalism, and Constructivism


TSUCHIYAMA Jitsuo The End of Security?: Politics of Fear and Safety
YAMAMOTO Yoshinobu Security Regimes
INOYAMA Takashi Global Security System as History: Westphalian, Philadelphian and Anti-Utopian
The Recent Developments and Future Directions of International Relations Theory in Japan: Focusing on Security Studies

**ISHIDA Atsushi**
- Anarchy as an Equilibrium: a Theoretical Analysis

**OHTA Hiroshi**
- The Concept of Security and Environmental Problems

**KURUSU Kaoru**
- Human Security

**UMEMOTO Tetsuya**
- Advocacy of Total Nuclear Disarmament: Background of its Rise and Hurdles to Clear

**SAKAI Tetsuya**
- The Emergence of Discourses on International Politics in Post-War Japan

**NAKANISHI Hiroshi**
- Japanese Security Experience: from the Notion of the “Right of National Survival” to the “Comprehensive Security Strategy”

**FUKUSHIMA Hiroyuki**
- An Essay on Alliance Structures and Stability in the International System

**UETA Takako**
- The Transformation of the Military Alliance in Europe and Cooperative Security Structures

Vol.135 Mar-04 *Regional Cooperation and Security in East Asia*

**LEE Jong Won**
- Introduction: Recent Developments in Theories and Practices of East Asian Regionalism

**ITO Go**
- From Containment towards Regional Security: Multiple Functions of the U.S.-Japan Security Framework

**OBA Mie**
- The Evolution of Cooperation on Food Security in East Asia

**GABE Masaaki**
- An Origin of Japan-U.S. Alliance: Roles and Missions in Political Contexts

**MATSUDA Yasuhiro**
- The PRC-Taiwan Relations and International Security: Deterrence, Non-proliferation, and Multilateral Security Cooperation

**NAKAI Yoshifumi**
- Chinese Policy Towards DPRK: a Case of the Yang Bin Affair

**KIM Sung-ho**
- Soviet Decision Making in the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the USSR and South Korea

**KIM Kyungmook**
- NGO’s Activity and its Dilemmas on North Korea’s Food Crisis: Case Studies of NGO Networks on Humanitarian / Human Rights Issues

**LIM Chuan-Tiong**
- Peripheral East Asia: a New Concept of East Asian Studies

---

169