

# Global Security Challenges and Japan's National Security Thinking: Room to Cooperate with the EU?

by Akiko Fukushima

Do Japan and the European Union look at global security challenges in the same way? The advancement of information technology has certainly reduced geographical distance. We are one click away from observing several events simultaneously around the globe. Globalization has made our security more indivisible while technological advances, including in the military sector, have multiplied security threats, increasing tension but also interdependence and vulnerability.

Moreover, a growing propensity by certain states to breach international rules and norms, and the relatively muted reactions by others, is sending worrying signals to those who may be interested in disregarding them in the future, further weakening the international system.

While traditional security remains as important as ever, threats are increasingly expanding in scope from

localized challenges to global commons such as the oceans, cyber and outer space, climate and pandemic security. Japan and the EU both face these transnational challenges, confronting a global security landscape that has been changing at an unprecedented pace.

Intra- and inter-state conflicts, in particular the former, are affecting security through the mass exodus of refugees and fears of radicalization and terrorism. According to academic studies and UN statistics, countries emerging from civil war have approximately 44 per cent chance of relapsing into conflict within the first five years of a peace accord.<sup>1</sup> Moreover conflicts are often triggered by interlinked factors such as competition for power, lack of resources, income gaps, inequality, marginalization,

<sup>1</sup> Paul Collier et al., "Breaking the Conflict Trap. Civil War and Development Policy", in *World Bank Policy Research Reports*, 2003, p. 83, <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/13938>.

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exclusion and communitarian divides. It is therefore essential to prevent the occurrence (and recurrence) of conflicts through a combination of versatile policies.

For that purpose, Japan has promoted the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy" to create dynamism by combining two continents;<sup>2</sup> Asia that is rapidly growing and Africa that possess huge potential of growth, and two oceans; the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Originally conceived in 2007,<sup>3</sup> the strategy was officially announced in 2016.<sup>4</sup> Africa, particularly East Africa, is also included in the strategy.

Japan and EU have shared their interests in these domains. Surmounting geographical distance, Japan has assisted Africa over the years as exemplified in its Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), an ongoing initiative since 1993.<sup>5</sup> The last summit level meeting was held in Nairobi, Kenya and the next TICAD summit will be held in Yokohama, Japan, in 2019. TICAD is an inclusive and open forum including international institutions,

<sup>2</sup> Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Priority Policy for Development Cooperation FY 2017*, May 2017, [http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/page23e\\_000434.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/page23e_000434.html).

<sup>3</sup> Shinzo Abe, *Confluence of the Two Seas*, Speech at the Parliament of the Republic of India, 22 August 2007, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/pmv0708/speech-2.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Shinzo Abe, *Address at the Opening Session of the Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI)*, Nairobi, 27 August 2016, [http://www.mofa.go.jp/afr/af2/page4e\\_000496.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/afr/af2/page4e_000496.html).

<sup>5</sup> For more information, see the Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs website: *TICAD*, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/africa/ticad>.

donors, private companies and civil society. Japan is currently promoting "quality Africa", "resilient Africa" and "stable Africa",<sup>6</sup> concepts and strategies that leave much room for potential cooperation with the EU's own engagements with the continent.

Moreover, specific security challenges are numerous, some of which surface as combined threats and crisis that undermine global commons, and are becoming a reoccurring concern for Japan and the EU. Cyber-attacks are an illustration of how advanced information technology can seriously undermine national security, business activities, monetary systems and much more. Congestion of outer space has also increased and there are risks to the continuous and stable use of outer space from an increasing amount of space debris as well as the development of space weapons.

Beyond these phenomena, the balance of power is being transformed with the rise of new powers, which may shatter the post-war international order. Those who led the post-war international order are seemingly losing interest in maintaining such an order and new initiatives are being proposed and implemented. At times, these dynamics have created new international and regional systems that duplicate ones that had already been established. This phenomenon has compelled some states to wonder how parallel institutions will be reconciled and which side they should be on. Some

<sup>6</sup> Shinzo Abe, *Address at the Opening Session of the Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI)*, cit.

state and non-state actors seem to view this turbulence as an opportunity. Unless addressed in a timely manner, there might be a race over spheres-of-influence, adding further chaos to the international system.

Japan's 2013 National Security Strategy (NSS) provides a window into Japan's strategic thinking on global threats. Cognizant of the deteriorating security environment surrounding Japan, the Strategy launched a "'proactive contribution to peace' based on international cooperation".<sup>7</sup> This thrust is backed by the awareness that no nation can maintain its own peace and security alone. Included in the strategy are national, regional and global security dimensions.

As an illustration, Japan has been sending its peacekeepers to UN missions since 1992 starting with its dispatch to the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia and most recently to the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan. Japan has also been providing capacity building assistance to countries in Asia.

Turning to regional security, Japan needs to face its security environment squarely. Japan's next-door neighbour, the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK) under Kim Jong-un has stepped up its nuclear and missile programmes. The DPRK conducted three nuclear tests and 40 ballistic missile test-launches over the past

two years.<sup>8</sup> It is reported that once its development is complete then the Taepodong-2 variant intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) will be able to reach not only the US mainland but also Europe, with its range of 10,000 kilometres.

The NSS outlines three central policies to defend Japan's national security. Firstly, Japan reserves the right to respond forcibly to any threat that reaches its territory. Secondly, Japan should improve its regional security environment as a whole so as to reduce direct threats to Japan. Thirdly, Japan should also seek to improve and make contributions to the global security environment to build a peaceful, stable and prosperous international system, supporting human security for all.

In order to achieve these objectives, the NSS has outlined an encompassing strategy that combines diplomacy, defence and development cooperation. Through diplomacy, Japan aims to prevent conflicts and to assist peace building. For defence, the Japanese government has introduced a new peace and security legislation. Approved in September 2015, the legislation enables Japan to play additional roles, for example, in UN peacekeeping operation's (PKOs) such as protection of civilians and to participate in international peace cooperation activities outside of the UN framework, with regional organizations for instance.

<sup>7</sup> Japan's *National Security Strategy*, 17 December 2017, [http://japan.kantei.go.jp/96\\_abe/documents/2013/\\_\\_\\_icsFiles/afieldfile/2013/12/18/NSS.pdf](http://japan.kantei.go.jp/96_abe/documents/2013/___icsFiles/afieldfile/2013/12/18/NSS.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Cfr. Center for Nonproliferation Studies, *CNS North Korea Missile Test Database*, <http://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/cns-north-korea-missile-test-database>.

With regards to development, Japan has launched a new Development Cooperation Charter (formerly known as Official Development Assistance – ODA Charter) to assist fragile and conflict affected countries.<sup>9</sup> The Charter introduces human security as its guiding principle and defines ODA as an engine aimed at security, peace, stability and prosperity through quality growth and building peaceful and secure societies.

However, the Strategy notes that Japan's peaceful orientation is at the core of their policies. In addition, it emphasises the role of Japanese partnerships with like-minded countries such as the EU in achieving the Strategy's goals.

EU-Japan cooperation already exists, as evidenced by joint efforts to combat piracy in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia since March 2009. The Japan Self Defence Forces (JSDF) not only escort Japanese commercial vessels but also those of other countries. Japan's P-3C maritime patrol aircraft covers 60 per cent of all warning and surveillance flights over the Gulf of Aden and has provided information to countries participating in NATO's Operation Ocean Shield. Since 2015, the JSDF has twice commanded the Combined Task Force 151 (CTF-151), coordinating anti-piracy operations among the multilateral contributors to the mission.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Japan's Cabinet Decision on the Development Cooperation Charter, 10 February 2015, [http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/page\\_000138.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/page_000138.html).

<sup>10</sup> Wilhelm M. Vosse, "Learning Multilateral Military and Political Cooperation in the Counter-Piracy Missions: A Step Towards De-centering of Japan's Security Policy?", in *The Pacific Review*,

Through ODA, Japan has also assisted the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions in Mali and Niger. In Niger, the EU CSDP civilian mission conducted capacity building of the local police force through training and advice. In December 2014, Japan provided provincial governments with radio communication equipment and radio equipped patrol vehicles. In Mali, the EU's CSDP mission provided capacity building of local police force and Japan, in March 2015, provided funding of 492 million yen (3.67 million euro) to repair the National Police Academy and provide IT equipment.<sup>11</sup>

Japan's NSS and the EU's Global Strategy share common elements and provides some avenues for cooperation. Keywords such as human security, multilateralism and values stand out in both documents. In this context, Japan and the EU will soon conclude a Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) to follow the Joint Declaration of 1991 and the Plan of Action for 2001 and 2010.<sup>12</sup>

Such frameworks, one hope, will lead the EU and Japan to further strengthen their collaboration. SPA contains some differences compared to earlier agreements. It will be a legally binding agreement and, along with the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)

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<sup>11</sup> Akiko Fukushima, "Japan-Europe Cooperation for Peace and Stability: Pursuing Synergies on a Comprehensive Approach", in *GMFUS Asia Program Policy Briefs*, April 2015, p. 2, <http://www.gmfus.org/node/8595>.

<sup>12</sup> European Commission, *EU and Japan finalise Economic Partnership Agreement*, 8 December 2017, [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-17-5142\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-5142_en.htm).

signed last year, will therefore further open potential areas of cooperation between the EU and Japan.

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