How to Address Security Challenges: Perspective from Japan

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(Introduction)

At the outset, I would like to thank the Society for International Affairs (SOFIA) of Trinity College Dublin for inviting me to this occasion. This represents my third occasion to attend events organised by SOFIA. The first occasion was the 6th Annual Ambassadors Ball in February 2020. It was shortly before the outbreak of COVID-19 and our lives were normal at that time. The second occasion was the 7th Annual Ambassadors Ball held just last month. Thank you very much for your kind hospitality. Today, I am glad to see some familiar faces from that time. As there was such a disruption caused by the pandemic for the last two years, I would like to share with you my happiness to see the resumption of various activities, at my third occasion here today.

My topic today is "How to Address Security Challenges: Perspective from Japan." Believe it or not, I had planned to talk on this topic before the Russian aggression against Ukraine starting on February 24. It was because I recognised various security challenges currently facing both Ireland and Japan. For Ireland, let me mention several cases. Russian bombers entered into Irish-controlled airspace in February 2020. A Ryanair civil aircraft was forced to land in Belarus and an anti-regime journalist was arrested by their authorities in May last year. The HSE's computer system suffered a severe cyber-attack also in May last year. In February this year, Russia was about to conduct naval exercises in the Irish Exclusive Economic Zone.

However, it would be fair to say that the war in Ukraine changed the parameters to deal with security issues completely and requires us to rethink this issue afresh. Now many countries of the world, particularly European countries, have already shifted their traditional policy or are reported to be revisiting their policy. Germany, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, to name a few.

It should be emphasised that the decision of security policy is a choice

each country and people are to make, bearing in mind their individual circumstances including security threat, national identity and relations with key countries. It is not an area on which any other country is entitled to make a judgement. On the other hand, it is always beneficial to know how other countries address the same kind of issue. In that spirit, today I would like to share with you how Japan has tried to address its security challenges since the 1950s. Naturally, we have both commonalities and differences with Ireland.

(Three commonalities)

Now, allow me to start sharing with you three commonalities between Japan and Ireland to deal with security issues.

First, in the face of the Ukrainian crisis, support from Japan and Ireland has points in common. Both of us take a clear stance in supporting the Ukrainian forces, and both of us make a distinction between non-lethal support and lethal support, and opt for non-lethal support. Japan has provided the Ukrainian forces with bulletproof vests, helmets, winter battle dress uniform, tents, cameras, hygiene products, emergency rations, generators, binoculars, flashlights, medical equipment and other non-lethal defence equipment, rather than lethal arms.

As for Ireland, when the EU decided to support the Ukrainian Armed Forces, Ireland participated in the non-lethal support package amounting to 50 million EUR, but not in the lethal support scheme amounting to 450 million EUR. In the framework of non-lethal support, Ireland has provided 5,000 units of ready-to-eat meals (MREs) and 200 units of body armour.

The second area of commonality between Japan and Ireland is a cautious approach when dispatching defence forces outside the country. In Japan, we set up a legal mechanism to send Self-Defence Forces in the framework of the United Nations peacekeeping operations in 1992. Under this mechanism, we placed strict conditions for dispatching the Self-Defence Forces overseas in order to avoid the situation of "use of force." To be more specific, the act concerned provided for five principles, namely, 1) existence of a cease-fire agreement between the parties concerned; 2) agreement by them on Japan's participation; 3) neutral stance; 4) immediate withdrawal upon changes in these conditions; and 5) use of weapons

for self-defence purposes only.

You can compare this with the so-called Irish 'triple lock' mechanism requiring 1) the United Nations authorisation; 2) Government approval; and 3) Dáil approval, for the deployment of Defence Forces.

Third, I also witness a strong aspiration for peace in both countries. In Japan, it is clearly stated in our Constitution enacted in 1947. Article 9 of the Constitution reads as follows:

"Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.
In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized."

This provision of Article 9 of the Constitution has been the basis to avoid "use of force." Article 9 has been supported by Japanese people who deeply regretted the war Japan fought.

In Ireland, the policy of military neutrality seems to serve as one of the guiding principles. This policy involves, in my humble understanding, a strong desire not to be dragged into a military conflict.

(Japan's alliance policy)

I have listed three areas of commonalities between Ireland and Japan. But, we have to acknowledge that there are also differences. While the Irish policy of neutrality intends to avoid any military alliance, Japan has had an alliance with the U. S.. Now let me share with you how we forged our alliance with the U. S..

It was in 1951, six years after the end of the Second World War, that Japan concluded its first Security Treaty with the United States. Up until that time, Japan had been occupied by the Allied forces after its defeat in the Second World War.

After the war, the expectation of world peace underpinned by

cooperation and collaboration among major powers soon evaporated, as there was mounting antagonism and tension between the two camps. On the one hand, liberal democratic countries led by the U. S. and, on the other hand, communist countries led by the Soviet Union, as mentioned by Winston Churchill in his "Iron Curtain" speech in 1946.

This had a fundamental bearing on Japan's position. It was the period regarded as the beginning of the Cold War. However, in East Asia, the reality was not a cold war, but a hot war. In China, a fierce civil war had been fought between communist forces led by Mao Tse-Tung and the Kuomintang forces of Chiang Kai-Shek. To the deep disappointment of the Western countries, communist forces won this civil war, leading to the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Chiang Kai-Shek and his supporters fled to Taiwan, waiting for a chance to regain mainland China.

The Korean Peninsula was divided into two: the pro-Western Republic of Korea (ROK) in the South and the communist regime of North Korea. In June 1950, the Korean War broke out with the North's invasion of the South. The United Nations forces were formed under the leadership of the U.S. to push back. However, the war was an extremely difficult one for the U. S. and its allied forces.

It was against this background that the future course of Japan was discussed. There were several issues to be addressed.

First, the modality and timing of a peace treaty to end the war, in legal terms, and the occupation. Ideally, a "complete peace" was most desirable, where a peace agreement was made with all the belligerent states of the Second World War. However, given the reality of the Cold War, a "complete peace" seemed unrealistic. If Japan waited until the environment allowed a "complete peace", it would be a long, long way to go and occupation would continue for the foreseeable future. Another option was a "separate peace", where Japan was to conclude a peace treaty with only those who were ready to do so. Practically, this meant concluding a peace treaty with the U. S., western countries and others, leaving communist countries for future negotiations. This "separate peace" option would compromise the scope of countries, not covering all the countries concerned. However, this could be done in a reasonable time framework. If "complete peace"

was in the direction of "to be nice to everybody," "separate peace" was in the direction of "to be nice to good friends," with whom we shared fundamental values.

Second, if Japan was to regain sovereignty in ending the occupation, how to ensure the security of Japan, with its Constitution renouncing "war potential"? At that moment, Japan was surrounded by communist countries, namely the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China and North Korea. The ROK was the only pro-western country nearby. However, due to the Korean War, the very survival of the ROK was in danger at that time. In such a situation, without effective security measures, the survival of Japan would have been at risk. One option was a security alliance with the United States. The other option was what was called a "non-armed neutrality" policy, relying on the United Nations and good will of the countries concerned.

The option the Government of Japan took was the following. For the peace treaty, Japan opted for a "separate peace" in concluding the peace treaty with only those who were ready to do so, namely, the U. S., western countries and others, putting aside the communist countries. Given that the world situation did not allow us "to be nice to everybody", we opted "to be nice to good friends" with whom we shared fundamental values. For security measures, Japan decided to form an alliance with the U. S., allowing U. S. troops to be stationed in Japan so as to deter armed attack against Japan from foreign countries. In view of the reality of the security situations surrounding Japan, this option was judged as the only viable policy choice. Under this policy, the U. S. occupation forces would stay, but their legal status would change with the end of occupation and Japan's regaining sovereignty.

It was Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida, a former diplomat, who exhibited leadership in choosing such a course. In pre-war Japan, while dominant political circles became increasingly inclined to Nazi Germany, he continued to advocate a cordial relationship with the United States and the United Kingdom. For Yoshida, Japan's success in achieving a major development since the Meiji Restoration in the nineteenth century rested on international trade and cordial relationships with the United Kingdom and the United States. In his perspective, Japan's militarisation since the 1930s was rather a deviation from this good tradition.

What Japan should do, Yoshida felt, was to return to deepening its relationship with the U.S., introducing foreign investment and stimulating free economic activities. Faced with a stark confrontation between Western capitalist countries and Eastern communist countries, Japan should naturally take sides with the former. Since Japan could not resist the advance of the communist camp by itself alone, a security treaty with the U. S. was an absolute necessity.

(Evolution of Japan's security policy)

This is how Japan's alliance policy was forged and it has stayed for over seventy years. While security threats to Japan have changed over time, Japan has been trying to adapt to the evolving situation, underpinned by its alliance with the United States.

On the one hand, Japan has continued to strengthen its alliance with the United States. The two countries revised the security treaty in 1960. Japan requested to rectify some of the issues of the 1951 Security Treaty regarded by Tokyo as remnants of the occupation period. Under the new 1960 Security Treaty, the U.S. obligation to defend Japan was clearly stipulated. Furthermore, a mechanism of prior consultation in relation to U.S. forces in Japan was introduced. Under this mechanism, the U.S. needed prior consultation when they wanted the following: 1) the introduction of nuclear weapons; 2) major changes in the deployment into Japan of U.S. forces; and 3) use of bases for military combat operations other than for the defence of Japan.

Japan and the United States also intensified cooperation in a wide range of areas. The coordination mechanism has been enhanced in various channels and layers, ranging from policymaking bodies to the military, and from minister-level to working level. They cooperated in defence procurement. They formulated the guidelines for defence cooperation in 1978, and expanded joint exercises in various formats. The guidelines for defence cooperation were updated in 1997 and 2015. Japan expanded host-nation support for U. S. forces in Japan. Japan has, for its part, enhanced its Self-Defence Forces step-by-step.

The end of the Cold War necessitated much soul-searching on the meaning of the alliance for both Japan and the United States. The two countries

adopted the document named 'Joint Declaration on Security - Alliance for the Twenty-First Century' in April 1996. In this document, they reconfirmed that this security relationship 'remained the cornerstone for achieving common security objectives and for maintaining a stable and prosperous environment for the Asia-Pacific region' since 'instability and uncertainty' persisted in the region. This joint declaration made reference to three main regional challenges that required Japan-U.S. cooperation to tackle, namely, 1) the role of China in the region; 2) the normalisation of Japan-Russia relations; and 3) the stability of the Korean Peninsula.

While strengthening its alliance with the U. S. on the one hand, Japan was to devise security related mechanisms outside the Japan-U.S. security arrangements, particularly to deal with challenges beyond Japan's vicinity on the other hand. This was related to the change of the international situation. After the end of the Cold War, new types of conflicts emerged. Particularly, the Gulf War started by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, and the 'war on terror' after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 presented a serious challenge for Japan.

In these cases, Japan wanted to discharge its international responsibility to respond to such crises. However, we were faced with two serious issues in these cases. First, we lacked a mechanism to deal with these situations, since they were not within the purview of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. It was not a situation of 'armed attack against Japan,' mentioned in Article 5 of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. Nor was it a situation where 'international peace and security in the Far East,' mentioned in Article 6 of the same treaty, was threatened. As these were the key concepts of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, the mechanism of this treaty did not apply. Second, we had to forge a national consensus to get involved in these conflicts happening far away from Japan.

As for the policy tool issue, we had to devise new schemes. At the time of the Gulf War in 1990-1991, it was not easy for us to find out ways to support the multinational forces established under the authority of the United Nations Security Council resolution. We came up with a support package including both financial and logistical support. At that time, we did not have a legal mechanism to send personnel of the Self-Defence Forces overseas. Then, we set up a scheme

to send the Self-Defence Forces. Then, we set up such a mechanism in the framework of the United Nations peacekeeping operations in 1992. It was at this moment that we introduced the strict conditions mentioned earlier.

After the terrorist attacks against the U. S. on September 11, 2001, the U. S. led military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. In both cases, Japan adopted special measure acts to support such operations. To counter terrorism in Afghanistan and its surrounding areas, Japan dispatched naval Self-Defence Force vessels to provide logistical support of oil refuelling and water supply in the Indian Ocean for vessels participating in the operations, named *Operation Enduring Freedom*. To Iraq, Japan dispatched units of ground Self-Defence Forces to support the reconstruction of the country.

This is how we introduced new policy tools to deal with these situations far away from Japan. As for national consensus, it generated a considerable debate as to why we should take measures for these situations. In this context, the important keywords were principles and solidarity. It was a question of principles since we thought it was important to stand up against unjust aggression or attack. We thought we should never turn a blind eye to the breach of the principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations. It was also a question of solidarity because we wanted to side with those who were ready to fight against such aggression or attack. In doing so, Japan wanted to discharge its international responsibility to respond to such crises.

(Conclusion: Three things to bear in mind)

This is how Japan has tried to address the security challenges. As a matter of fact, it is an on-going process. In view of the war in Ukraine, there is also a discussion on how best we deal with the security challenges in Japan. I would like to conclude my presentation in referring to the three things which I suppose important to deal with today's security challenges.

First, security challenges are changing and we have to continue to address the new situation. A number of new issues are emerging. For Japan, the character of the threat of North Korea has changed a lot. While North Korea has existed since 1948 and the Korean War was fought from 1950 to 1953, it was in

2006 that North Korea conducted its first nuclear test. It is understood that North Korea has tried to strengthen its nuclear capability through six rounds of nuclear tests together with its missile capability. The issues of China are also imminent. Russia is another of Japan's neighbours. We have to take the Russian aggression against Ukraine fully into consideration in our security calculus. With the advancement of technology, new security concerns have emerged, such as cyber and space.

Second, security issues are more and more related to the question of which side you are on. It is often pointed out that the world is divided into two camps. On the one hand, liberal democratic countries, and on the other hand, authoritarian countries. Sadly, the democratic camp is in retreat, since we have witnessed the advance of the authoritarian camp. According to the most recent report of Freedom House, democracy in the world is in decline in the past 16 consecutive years. The new security challenge such as the Russian aggression towards Ukraine should be viewed from that standpoint as well. This is related to the factor of solidarity I mentioned earlier. I believe that it is important for us to be on the side of defending democratic values. As international tension mounts, this consideration becomes more and more important.

Third, the world is connected. Japan's security policy has responded not only to the situation in Japan's vicinity, but also the situation far away from Japan. As I explained, Japan's policy evolved in the face of the Gulf War in 1990 and the situation after "9.11" in 2001. It reflects our recognition that the world is connected. This is related to the question of principles I mentioned earlier. If the principles are broken in one part of the world, the same thing can more easily happen in another part of the world. In order to uphold the rules-based international order, we have to be watchful not only of our own vicinity but also of other parts of the world. That is the reason why Japan would like to react to the issue taking place on European soil.

I will stop here. Thank you very much for your kind attention. It would be nice if my presentation could be of some help for you to think about this issue.