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# Japan's Foreign Policy

- Kiichi Fujiwara

# The Problem

- Old Politics:
  - (1) LDP and tamed democracy
  - (2) Bureaucratic state
  - (3) Under America's shadow
- DPJ administration:

Long and painful transition from old LDP to to another LDP

Why? How so?

# The regime of 1955

- Conservative alliance:
  - LDP as a coalition of conservative parties
  - The bureaucratic taming of democracy
  - J-US alliance as a tool for political survival
  - Lack of pro-US liberals
- Opposition parties
  - Little chance for winning elections
  - Anti-US nationalism as a binding factor
  - Domestic consumption of alliance politics

# Two Pillars of Foreign Policy

## National Security

Policy aims: Security of Japan's homeland

Policy tools: Alliance and US military presence

Opponents: JSP / JCP

## Economic Development

Policy aims: Securing export markets

Policy tools: Development aids

Opponents: Extreme left.

# Foreign Policy: Security and Trade

- Security → US alliance
- Trade → the Asian market
  
- Trade > Security → loose alliance
- Security > Trade → tight alliance

# Post-Cold War Developments

- Decline of Trade Disputes
  - decline of Japanese economy
  - Globalization of US economy
- Primacy of Geopolitical Anxieties
  - Chinese nuclear experiments
  - Crisis in North Korea
- *Seiwakai*: Mori, Koizumi and the rest



Security > Trade

J-US alliance > Asia diplomacy

# The 2009 Elections

- Decline of the LDP
  - Neo-liberal policies
  - Demise of LDP local support
  - Demise of LDP factions
  - Aso and his reign of error
- The Rise of DPJ
  - From urban basis toward a nation-wide basis
  - Pensions and Health programs
  - Internal gap: Socialists and Conservatives

# The Hatoyama Fiasco

- Redefining US-J alliance
  - Search for an ‘equal’ alliance
  - Proposal for an East Asian community
  - Challenges from the diplomatic community
- Alliance adrift?
  - An equal alliance: Autonomy to the US
  - A close alliance: Status quo
  - Confusion and conflict

# Five levels of domestic politics

- (1) Coalition politics: Social Democrats
- (2) DPJ politics: Hatoyama or Ozawa?
- (3) Cabinet and ministries: MOFA
- (4) Okinawan politics: Two elections
- (5) Public opinion:

Focus on Hatoyama 's lack of leadership;  
General lack of attention in the mainland;  
Very little sign of anti-US nationalism or populism

Outcome: Back to the status quo

# The Kan Administration

- Conservatism in foreign policy
  - Larger role for foreign service
  - Turn around in alliance politics
  - Getting tough with China
- Preserving the welfare state
  - Preventing collapse of the pension system
  - From confrontation to collaboration with the Ministry of Finance
  - Consumption tax as the key agenda

# Kan's exit

- 2010 Upper house election
  - Consumption tax as key agenda
  - Decisive defeat for the DPJ
  - Room for third parties
- Return to old politics
  - Divided government
  - Cabinet ministers for sacrifice
  - LDP-DPJ coup coalition

311 as Kan's life saver?

# Noda Administration

- Financial reform
  - Consumption tax as the key agenda
  - The return of the bureaucratic state
- US-J relations
  - Trade: TPP
  - Defense: Alliance as top priority
- Grand coalition?
  - Policy conversion with the LDP
  - DPJ-LDP coalition in face of third parties

# Abe Administration

- Alliance
  - US alliance
  - Defense postures
- Networking
  - Developing nations
  - Containing China
- Weakness
  - War memories and Nationalism
  - Abenomics as a challenge

# Changeless land?

## Return of Old Politics

- DPJ-LDP
- Bureaucrats
- US-J alliance

## Challenges in Old Politics

- Volatility of voter preference
- Vulnerability in party organization
- The rise of third parties