

GRASPP “Japan’s Foreign Policy”

Session One: Introduction

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I Self introduction (brief)

II Objective of this course

A. Course on Japan’s foreign policy:

- **Instead of lectures, a different method, namely a seminar:**

**Active participation of students including occasional oral reports
(Refer syllabus for who makes reports when)
assuming roles of countries assigned in the spirit of role playing.
(Refer syllabus for the 12 countries/entities)
Mock diplomatic negotiations (in the final weeks).**

**A term paper will be required;
Theme being prediction of what might be happening by 2025.**

- **The reasons for this method:**

+ Ordinarily, a lecture on the subject will cover past issues in Japan’s foreign policy.

Such lectures tend to be mostly about interpretation of facts according to a certain perspective of the lecturer.

+ My conviction is that it would be more useful for you to learn not only about Japan’s foreign policy, but to acquire the basic approach, or “methodology,” for better understanding factors contributing to foreign policy formulation.

Through this method, you will have better appreciation of how the real world works, or to understand the defining factors of the international political economy.

B. Foreign policy is determined, on the one hand, by national interest (or domestic politics which defines a nation’s national interest) and, on the other, by the

international environment (or the strategic environment in which the nation exists).

Foreign policy for any country is the outcome of the dynamic interplay of strategic environment and domestic politics.

*** Then for you to understand Japan's foreign policy, you will need to understand the salient features of its strategic environment, and how this environment has been changing over the years.**

*** On Japan's domestic factors, look to Kawashima's book.**

*** Thus, Japan's strategic environment will be the focus of this course.**

III How to approach the strategic environment:

Ordinarily, in my class at its first session I stress the importance of 5 basic factors in understanding international relations; that is to say;

- 1) geography,**
- 2) history,**
- 3) people,**
- 4) economy, and**
- 5) military affairs.**

Today in the interest of brevity, I will not explain in detail why they are important, but only quick explanation by some examples.

You must keep these factors always in mind.

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- 1) Firstly, in discussing the international environment, geography has to be visualized.**

You have to have a good map in your mind, and also topography as well. Geography is important because it defines geopolitics, as well as "geo-economics".

And in the area of security or military affairs, geography is crucial.

Geopolitically, Japan is surrounded by major powers with global interests, in the order of proximity, Russia, China and the US, and also is adjacent to the two Koreas on the Korean Peninsula, which is one of the focal points of military tension.

It may be useful to take what I called the Quadrant approach.

N, W, S, E and see major forces present or emerging in all these quadrants. This can be applied to any capital. Put differently, when visualizing a map of the region, try doing it from “your” capital.

2) Secondly, history should be recalled. If you have not read history sufficiently, you should.

History will show, since the dawn of the modern age, Japan has struggled with the encroaching Western imperialist powers, and the foremost of such threats came from Russia. The US has also been a major factor for Japan, since the arrival of the black ships. And then Bakufu was aware of the British making inroads in China.

Such power relationship has been Japan’s strategic environment during the historical period until the end of the Second World War.

Normally, simple geographical notion of “East Asia” does not include Russian Far East, much less Siberia. Strategically Russia or the Soviet Union was physically present and projecting its power to enhance its interests.

Nor, does the notion of East Asia include the US, despite the strategic presence it has had.) since the latter half of the 19th century in the region. (Note, Katsura-Taft Agreement, signed July 1905

This is one of the reasons I would not want to use the notion of “East Asia” in describing the region under our review, because to the uninitiated, it will define out the most important players comprising the environment.

When some people talk about the East Asian Community”, the notion of East Asia has significance as a politically loaded term, not a simple geographical term as evidenced by the debate over membership.

So I will refer to East Eurasia / Western Pacific.

3) (strategic perspectives of others)

Thirdly unless you understand the strategic perspectives of those countries which have major stakes in the region and see how they interact with each other, you cannot appreciate the strategic environment for Japan

(In terms of methodology, once you master this approach, it can be used anywhere, for any country. It will be useful in your future endeavors whatever they may be.)

For you to understand the perspectives of these players, you have to put yourselves in the shoes of policy makers in Moscow, Beijing, Washington, Pyongyang and Seoul and see how they see this region and Japan within their global strategy.

We will also bring into our perspective Southeast Asian sub-region as well as Oceania because as you will see during the course that these sub-regions are important in shaping political dynamics in the region as a whole, and affecting Japan and the other major players.

(Role playing)

In order to place yourselves in the shoes of policy makers who have bearing on the environment, you will be assigned to one of the parties and there will 12 altogether, Japan and 6 affecting the immediate surroundings of Japan, as well as additional 5 players in Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific.

The task for you is, first, to learn about the country of assignment and, second, to “teach” your classmates on the perspectives from your assigned capitals.

This is important because all of you need to learn the overall strategic situation objectively.

All of you will have to learn and understand where each of the 12 stand at any given moment and on any given issue, so that you will be able to understand the environment not only from Japan’s perspective or of the country assigned but from a bird’s eye view, of the objective inter-relations of powers which create the dynamics.

(Predicting the future)

At the end of the course, you will write and submit a paper predicting, in your own view, how the region will look like in 2025. 2020 is too early, while 2030 is too far into the future, so I have picked 2025.

By then, all of you should be in mid- to late thirties and probably in mid level in your careers important enough to be instrumental in decision making for yourselves or for the organization you would be working for.

You will be interacting with the international environment of the time. Then you can pull out from your files, this old paper you would have written 15 years before, and see whether your predictions were accurate or you missed. By this, you will have another chance of learning the lesson by seeing why you were right or why you missed

Through this exercise, you will get two lessons, one this year, another 15years from now.

IV

Some examples; to show you why trying to understand other people's perspectives are important.

1)

There are some who try to explain why Japan went to war with the US in 1941 by saying it as a ruse by the US.

Objectively the US was most likely preparing itself for seemingly inevitable war with Japan in the late 30s and 1940 and 41.

To show evidence for this is not too difficult, but to claim such preparation was act of deliberate ruse requires considerable leap of imagination and has much more serious implications.

I would assume proponents of this view is arguing that it was the war US wanted and Japan was forced to defend itself, therefore it was a legitimate war in self-defense.

The greatest problem with this argument is the evident lack of appreciation of the

implicit criticism of the political leadership for not being aware of the American intentions.

If it was in fact a trap, it would have been the responsibility of the political and military leadership to see through this. To argue it was a trap, by extension means Japan fell for it, and thus infers a criticism of Japan's leadership as incompetent.

I don't think proponents of this view wanted to criticize the pre war leaders, but that is the inevitable implication.

As to the question of whether it can be called a trap, there is some lesson to be learned from the US history (it always helps to learn about other nation's history.)

Who shot the first shot in the American civil war?

Where, how, and what was President Lincoln's concern?

Had the Japan's pre-war leadership studied the American government and learned lessons from US history, it should not have been a surprise for them that the American leaders needed Japan to initiate the war.

Then why did the Japanese leadership so readily comply with the American wishes?

2)

The Cheonan incident:

Who did the sinking of this Korean naval vessel and why?

More importantly why are the parties reacting in the manner they are?

We know how Japan reacted, or you can easily find Japan's position on this.

You then have to contrast this with the positions of others and more importantly understand why each of them is playing the political, diplomatic game in the manner they are.

Who got the most out of this incident?

So the lesson is to always put one's self in the shoes of those policy makers on the other side

3)

Talk in Japan for more FTA:

Japan thinks it is important for Japan to have FTA with Korea and also with

China.

But it takes two to tango.

Would Korea or China give priority to FTA with Japan in the same degree Japan gives it? If not, why not?

Unless you know where the opponent puts priorities, then you don't know the feasibility of your ambition

It always helps to play hard to get in response to a suitor because just by being uncompromising you increase your bargaining power. To be the *demandeur*, you are weakening your position.

So when Japanese commentators call for FTA in chorus like unison, they are effectively undermining Japan's negotiating position.

You really have to know what the other side is thinking, and put the other people's priorities in to your calculations.

You always have to be attentive to what is happening elsewhere.

V.

What I expect from you at the second session:

(Need to seek your preference on the date of the makeup session, Oct 18 or 19?)

Introduce briefly the basic framework of your government concerning its strategic outlook, and describe the place of Japan in its strategic priorities

(5 min each)

Time frame or the period under review, is post 1945

(For the important features of post 1945 international system, read Ikenberry Chapter 6.)

Need to understand the international political history pre 45, particularly the history of the power struggle among the major powers after 1815.

The time for the course is limited, so you will study on your own but Ikenberry will help you grasp the big picture.

For Japan's foreign policy, you have to do reading for background knowledge, from the mid 1800s, or the final decades of Edo Bakufu till 1945, in the context of the global power struggle, and the place this region had in this struggle. It is also important to learn the manner Japan tried to respond to this pressure.

Post 1945 period will be broken into two major epochs, one till the end of the 80s, or till the end of the cold war.

Then the second epoch, until now, or the twenty years of relative peace after the Cold War, but within this relative calm, this region has been one of the exceptions.

Refer again to Ikenberry, particularly Chapter 7, where he states that the post 45 system is basically intact after the end of the Cold War. According to him, the international system had not reverted to the old power balance system which prevailed during the 19th century.

The question for you to keep in mind throughout the course is what will be your prognosis, whether the situation will continue for many decades into the future, or will there be a change in the system.

Reference materials

Aside from the required reading, you are more or less on your own to find the right resources to understand the perceptions for various capitals.

1. The difficulty about the US is that there are so many to choose from.
2. Japan is almost as difficult not only because there are so many, but also they are mostly in Japanese and not many in English.

For instance, there is an interesting book for the period and the region under our focus that I came across recently which is in Japanese. I will list it here and those who do not read Japanese may ask classmates to tell you at least what it is about.

「大日本帝国」崩壊 東アジアの1945 (roughly translated as "The Collapse of the 'Great Japanese Empire' -- East Asia in 1945")

By 加藤聖文 中公新書

3. For other capitals it gets even more difficult to find resources from the country's unique perspective in English (or not being an area specialist I am not aware of). You may have to rely more on works of foreign observers, most likely of the US, to fill in for the lack of indigenous materials in English.

Nevertheless here are some suggestions:

Korea:

The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History by Don Oberdorfer, Basic Books, a member of the Perseus Books Group 2001

SEA:

Forgotten Armies; Britain's Asian Empire & the War with Japan by Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper, Penguin Books 2005

Vietnam:

White House Years by Henry Kissinger, Little, Brown and Co.

The March of Folly Chapter Five "America Betrays Herself in Vietnam"

By Barbara Tuchman, Ballantine Books

Vietnam Triangle—Moscow / Peking / Hanoi

By Donald S. Zagoria, New York: Pegasus, 1967.

Global:

The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers, by Paul Kennedy, Random House New York 1987

There are other sources such as the materials of IISS such as the annually published *The Military Balance*.

Periodicals, such as the *Foreign Affairs* may also be a source for monographs on specific issues. (I have listed below some periodicals which may have relevant articles.)

Nonetheless, make best effort to find the materials from original sources of the country in question.

Examples of Journals of political analysis and commentary for references:

(US)



<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/>



<http://www.foreignpolicy.com/>

International Security

<http://www.mitpressjournals.org/loi/isec>

(UK)



[http://www](http://www.wiley.com/bw/journal.asp?ref=0020-5850)

[w.wiley.com/bw/journal.asp?ref=0020-5850](http://www.wiley.com/bw/journal.asp?ref=0020-5850)

(Japan)

International Relations of the Asia-Pacific

<http://irap.oxfordjournals.org/>