



Peacebuilding as a U.S.-Japan Alliance Mission
Developing a Complementary “Whole-of-Alliance” Approach
April 29, 2011
Workshop Summary

Introduction

On April 29, 2011, the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis (IFPA), in conjunction with the Osaka School of International Public Policy (OSIPP), held a one-day workshop in Washington, D.C. entitled “Peacebuilding as a U.S.-Japan Alliance Mission: Developing a Complementary ‘Whole-of-Alliance’ Approach.” The purpose of this event was to convene a group of experts and practitioners to discuss ways to enhance cooperation between the United States and Japan in international peacebuilding operations. The workshop discussions were led by seven core research members representing U.S., Japanese, and UN perspectives on peacebuilding approaches, using Afghanistan and Sudan as case studies. Other participants were drawn from the government and NGO sectors and contributed to an open exchange of ideas about how Japan and the United States can best cooperate and work synergistically in a “whole-of-alliance” approach to peacebuilding operations in vulnerable or failing states.¹

Since the end of the Cold War, failed states have multiplied at an alarming rate, requiring increased attention and action from the international community. Today, struggling or failed states, many of which suffer from post-conflict devastation, range from Afghanistan to Somalia and from Haiti to Sudan. As the internal power structures of these states collapse and leave behind political vacuums, their polities become vulnerable to criminal networks, paramilitary groups, and terrorist organizations that can find safe havens and threaten the livelihood of civilians as well as efforts to promote stability and sustainable development. Failed states also maintain little practical control over their own territory, and are therefore unable to protect their citizens from disease, hunger, land disputes, religious and ethnic persecution, environmental hazards, and internal displacement. Furthermore, the problems of failed states do not stop at their borders, but rather spill over into neighboring regions, causing severe problems for global welfare and security.

Over the past two decades, the United States, Japan, and the international community have tried to respond to this multifaceted challenge by addressing the root causes of state violence and by taking action to protect civilians from conflict through peacebuilding operations. Although many

¹ Note that this summary does not represent the opinions of all workshop participants or their organizations. It is not a consensus document, nor has it been reviewed by participants prior to publication. IFPA has drawn its own conclusions from this workshop.

definitions exist, the term “peacebuilding” is most closely associated with activities undertaken by the United Nations, and was first introduced in former U.N. Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali’s 1992 report “An Agenda for Peace,” which defined peacebuilding as “action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict.”² Yet after nearly a decade of encountering the immense challenges posed by crisis states such as Rwanda, Bosnia, and Somalia, the UN revised its approach in the 2000 Brahimi Report by expanding the scope of peacebuilding to include not only “reintegrating former combatants into civilian society” but also “improving respect” for human rights, education, technical assistance, democratic development, and conflict resolution and reconciliation techniques.³

As two of the largest donors to the United Nations, both the United States and Japan have been at the forefront of the peacebuilding agenda since its inception, although their approaches have differed significantly. The United States initially viewed failed states as humanitarian crises, but in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, it has come to recognize that these states pose a direct threat to U.S. national security interests, and has subsequently developed stabilization and reconstruction initiatives to cope with those challenges. However, Japan’s efforts have more heavily stressed economic development and human security measures that focus on targeting livelihood assistance to individuals in host nations. Given these differences in approach, there could be opportunities to synergize the respective strengths of U.S. and Japanese initiatives into a “whole-of-alliance” approach that can fill in existing gaps and improve the effectiveness of peacebuilding operations in the field.

Afghanistan and Sudan are currently high-priority peacebuilding cases for the international community and are therefore ideal areas where expanded U.S.-Japan cooperation might be of assistance. In Afghanistan, a deteriorating security situation has increased the difficulty of conducting effective operations, as a resurgent Taliban has challenged the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and diverted international attention away from local development and towards expanded counter-terrorism operations. In Sudan, the North-South Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed in January 2005 and followed by a referendum in January 2011, is expected to lead to south Sudan’s establishment as an independent country in July. But many peacebuilding challenges still exist, such as how the international community will respond after the implementation of the CPA, how it will settle debt issues, and how ongoing problems in Darfur will affect the region as a whole. If the United States and Japan can coordinate their interventions in Afghanistan and Sudan, then these allies can achieve a “whole-of-alliance” approach to peacebuilding that can help them avoid redundancy and achieve maximum impact in their joint operations.

²United Nations, “An Agenda for Peace,” Paragraph 21, June 17, 1992, <<http://www.un.org/Docs/SG/agpeace.html>>.

³ United Nations, “Report on the Panel on United Nations Peacekeeping” [Brahimi Report], Paragraph 13, October 2000, <http://www.un.org/peace/reports/peace_operations/>.

Workshop Overview

Workshop participants began the day by pointing out that there are important conceptual differences between peacebuilding and peacekeeping. One expert noted that the goal in peacekeeping operations is to provide a service to two or more parties by acting as an intermediary, and the actor is therefore supposed to observe principles of independence and impartiality. Peacebuilding, in contrast, is a much more political process, as actors are often forced to choose a side in the conflict and the actions themselves become more heavily politicized as a result.

Participants also emphasized the importance of sequencing, and debated whether peacebuilding should follow peacekeeping or whether the two should happen simultaneously. As in the case of Afghanistan and Sudan, it was mentioned that peacebuilding often occurs in areas where there is no established peace and where conflict or potential conflict still threaten the viability of weak central governments. The possible resurgence of violence can also have a great impact on the capability of the United States and Japan to effectively plan joint operations with shared strategic goals in mind.

As for U.S.-Japan cooperation in the field of peacebuilding, participants acknowledged that joint operations should not be undertaken purely for the aim of strengthening the U.S.-Japan alliance. Instead, bilateral peacebuilding exercises should be directed with concerted effort toward areas where greater cooperation makes the most sense given the on-the-ground political conditions of the host nation. Cooperation should not be done for cooperation's sake, but rather in instances where it can fundamentally improve the effectiveness of operations in the field and more efficiently bring about an environment conducive to durable peace.

Participants from the United States and Japan also thought that the two governments could do more to create opportunities for broader and deeper engagement by civilians in overseas peacebuilding operations. One expert pointed to the formation of *Peace Winds America* as a sister organization to *Peace Winds Japan* and their subsequent cooperation in disaster relief activities, while another participant praised the innovative approach adopted by the Hiroshima Peacebuilding Center (HPC), which trains not only Japanese nationals but also the civil society capabilities of citizens from the targeted host nations.

While most of the discussion focused on establishing new modes of cooperation, a few workshop participants questioned Japan's capacity to contribute to peacebuilding operations in the near future given the tremendous devastation of the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami, citing the Japanese government's decision to reduce the ODA budget by 50.1 billion yen (or nine percent) for the coming fiscal year. Despite the challenges posed by the disaster, participants agreed that Japan should not fall into the trap of only looking inward, but instead seek greater cooperation with allies to lessen the financial burden of playing an activist role in peacebuilding missions. As for whether the Japan Self-Defense Forces' contributions to disaster relief in the wake of the disaster have changed public perception about their role in overseas activities, participants agreed that it was too early to tell.

Finally, participants from the United States and Japan both criticized their respective governments for the lack of a “whole-of-government” approach that fully coordinates existing resources across agencies. However, participants also acknowledged that implementing such an approach is exceptionally complicated given the difficulty of coordinating within a single agency, or between agencies, let alone between different governments. Still, participants argued that those who are charged with a whole-of-government approach in both countries should be aware of opportunities where bilateral missions can help practitioners overcome the limitations of under-developed domestic inter-agency institutions.

Afghanistan

Participants acknowledged that greater strategic discussion between the United States and Japan is necessary if the two allies hope to overcome the inherent challenges posed by conducting peacebuilding operations in non-permissive environments such as Afghanistan. On this point, participants contended that the United States and Japan first need to justify why Afghanistan could benefit from U.S.-Japan bilateral cooperation specifically as opposed to existing multilateral approaches. Many participants also mentioned that a past obstacle to coordination was that Afghanistan seemed to pose so complicated and huge a problem for peacebuilding that any action might be perceived as “complementary” in one way or another despite the absence of real, “whole-of-alliance” coordination. Workshop participants therefore challenged both governments to go beyond the norm and discover concrete areas for potential bilateral cooperation.

In attempting to find common ground for peacebuilding operations, participants stressed that the United States and Japan should not try to imitate each other but rather search for areas where they both have potential comparative advantages. One expert noted skeptically that Japan has too often played the role of follower, and that Japan should instead seize the opportunity provided by Afghanistan to reorganize itself as a complementary partner to the United States. While the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan has also made it more difficult for Japan to participate in peacebuilding missions, participants encouraged Japan to bring its resources and expertise in economic development to the table to play a more active role in the decision-making process.

Experts also agreed that without a division of labor and a shared strategic vision to best implement each ally’s respective area of strength, U.S. and Japanese peacebuilding operations might inadvertently hinder each other’s progress in the field. One participant noted that Japan has played a leading role in Afghanistan in some areas of security sector reform (SSR) such as the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants as well as the disbandment of illegal armed groups (DIAG), but by not coordinating these efforts better with their U.S. counterparts’ focus on COIN (counter-insurgency) operations the two allies have missed strategic opportunities. For example, although the “Afghan New Beginnings Program” successfully demobilized 63,000 ex-combatants, the mission suffered from the challenge of integrating program participants into either the Afghan military forces or back into civilian life.

Greater bilateral cooperation in the future could mitigate some of these shortcomings and ensure that participants do not rearm after programs have completed their mission and returned home.

Apart from DDR and DIAG, participants suggested that the two allies could cooperate in other areas of security sector reform (SSR) such as police reform. Workshop participants agreed that both the United States and Japan share an understanding that capacity building of the police is vital if ISAF is going to gradually transfer greater responsibility for state security to local forces. Joint bilateral training of Afghan police officers could therefore form a tangible area of coordination, but participants warned that such operations could only prove successful if both allies could agree on a shared strategic framework for the role the police should play in society. For instance, participants acknowledged that the United States is currently focused on counter-insurgency training while Japan emphasizes law enforcement, community building, and governance.

Sudan

Participants pointed out that Sudan could serve as an ideal opportunity for Japan and the United States to cooperate more extensively in peacebuilding exercises, as the two allies share a common objective in ensuring the peaceful secession of south Sudan and its establishment as an independent country this coming July. At the same time, participants warned that too narrow a focus on the implementation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) runs the risk of ignoring other challenges in Sudan where U.S.-Japan bilateral cooperation could prove useful, such as supporting basic human needs (BHN), peacebuilding in Darfur, helping to resolve disputes over oil-rich Abyei, and instituting greater economic reform and debt relief.

One participant recognized that although Japan held firm to its principles on human rights by suspending aid to Sudan after 1993, this strategy also led to a missed opportunity for Japan to become an official witness to the CPA. Japan has attempted to complement CPA efforts by instituting DDR programs in south Sudan, but participants noted that these initiatives have suffered from many of the same problems (i.e. limited sustainability and strategic impact) as their Afghanistan counterparts. Nevertheless, participants urged Japan not to be discouraged by its initial challenges with DDR, and to continue to engage more politically and not just financially in the process.

By comparison, participants acknowledged that many U.S. government officials have experience in Sudan and have benefited over the years from a consistent relationship. One expert pointed to the leadership taken by the U.S. National Security Council (NSC), which has served as a guiding force to help coordinate the efforts of the Department of the Treasury, Department of State, and the Agency for International Development (USAID). Such leadership is a promising example of nascent “whole-of-government” approaches to peacebuilding, but participants agreed that the United States could do more with allies such as Japan to develop bilateral mechanisms and institutions to make sure that solutions for Sudan’s vast array of problems are found and implemented.

Another key question for the United States and Japan will be how their policies for Sudan will change in the aftermath of the CPA. Sudan has benefited from increased international and celebrity attention to causes such as south Sudan's independence movement and the genocide in Darfur, but participants worried that not enough international consideration is paid to other pressing issues such as the long-term impact on northern Sudan once south Sudan secedes. The fate of north Sudan may not be as popular an issue domestically in either the United States or Japan, but it still threatens to pose a major challenge for the region and the international community if peacebuilding activities cannot ensure its viability in the post-CPA period. As an example, participants highlighted debt relief as one potential area for concrete bilateral cooperation that could help with stability as Sudan's current debt is a staggering \$37 billion.

Finally, participants acknowledged that any discussions regarding joint peacebuilding operations in Sudan cannot ignore the role that international oil interests play in the decision-making process. One participant stressed that oil is Sudan's main source of revenue and is therefore a major area of contention between the two CPA parties, noting for example continued disagreement about how to split oil revenues, whether the oil-rich border area Abyei should be incorporated into the North or the South, and that roughly 67% of Sudan's oil currently goes to China while another 16% heads to Japan. Although the United States may not have as large a stake in Sudanese resources, participants recognized that any U.S.-Japan joint policy discussions on Sudan cannot happen in isolation of this fact. Furthermore, given that Sudan's oil reserves are on track to deplete within a decade, one expert urged the two allies to work together to create two viable states before the oil runs out.

Conclusions: Toward "Whole-of-Alliance" Peacebuilding

While existing institutional cooperation might be limited, one participant did discuss his involvement in a promising new initiative spearheaded by U.S. and Japanese alliance managers known as the U.S.-Japan Peace Operations Working Group (POWG). Recognizing that there was not a very useful existing mechanism to identify and grow new ideas for cooperation under the U.S.-Japan alliance, members of the POWG, including participants from the Ministry of Defense (MOD), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) and their U.S. counterparts, began discussions last December. At their second meeting in March, 2011, focused on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) operations, group members discovered that even small reforms in the decision-making process in each respective country could yield huge improvements in coordination at relatively low cost. Although the POWG is still in its early stages, the next meeting will focus on peacekeeping and could therefore open the door for discussions on how to better integrate a "whole-of-alliance" approach into U.S. and Japanese peacebuilding operations.

Another participant mentioned his experience with the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) Senior Mission Leaders (SML) course which was jointly conducted by the United States and Japan in 2009. The impetus for the course originated from a realization on the U.S. side that it could benefit from greater coordination with allies in peacebuilding operations in order to

avoid redundancies, share costs, and increase effectiveness. By jointly holding the course with Japan and bringing together thirty leaders of UN peacekeeping operations (UNPKO) from twelve countries, Japan and the United States could make a concrete contribution to peacebuilding development while also putting a good face on the U.S.-Japan alliance. Workshop participants praised the initiative of the GPOI SML, but also noted that the course has yet to receive funding for another round. Furthermore, participants urged any future GPOI SML to work with the UN to institute better evaluation mechanisms to determine whether practitioners found training in the course to be useful in the field.

After the day's discussions on U.S. and Japanese approaches to Afghanistan and Sudan, participants acknowledged that greater discussion would be necessary in order to form a more coherent joint vision for peacebuilding and to establish a unity of purpose in bilateral missions. One participant suggested that the two allies could better operationalize their priorities in collaboration with leaders of the host countries to ensure that effectiveness is maximized. Another expert expressed his belief that the two sides should at the very least be conscious of each other's contributions, as regular meetings could create mutual accountability and in turn become a stimulant to greater peacebuilding cooperation.

Finally, at the end of the day, one participant raised the question of whether implementing a "whole-of-alliance" peacebuilding framework was really worth the effort of overcoming the many structural challenges to that approach. The room was unanimous in its agreement that there were areas for the two allies to complement each other in the field of peacebuilding, but that further dialogue was necessary to uncover specific areas (such as SSR) where the two could work together to cultivate a shared strategic vision and implement a more coordinated approach to peacebuilding in post-conflict states.

In summary, the key workshop points for the day were as follows:

- Participants roundly agreed that cooperation between the United States and Japan in post-conflict peacebuilding is a useful and important contribution to multilateral peace and stability operations and should be further enhanced. Such cooperation expands the scope of bilateral alliance activities, in sync with broader multilateral initiatives, and maximizes the effectiveness of stabilization and reconstruction efforts in failed and failing states.
- That said, U.S.-Japan peacebuilding cooperation is at a nascent stage, with relatively modest bilateral initiatives and mechanisms established between the two allies to date. The most formal mechanism is the U.S.-Japan Peace Operations Working Group (POWG), spearheaded by U.S. and Japanese alliance managers. The POWG has focused on peacekeeping cooperation, maritime security, and humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) operations. Another bilateral initiative, held in 2009, was a Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) Senior Mission Leaders (SML) course aimed at training multinational leaders of UN peacekeeping operations (UNPKO). The POWG meets on an ad hoc basis, while the GPOI SML course has not received additional funding and a new round of courses is apparently not planned.

- Both the United States and Japan struggle to implement a whole-of-government approach to peacebuilding, which fully integrates military and civilian resources across multiple agencies, but there are opportunities to harmonize their efforts and complement each other's contributions in a "whole-of-alliance" approach to international peacebuilding. The USG's effort to balance its stabilization efforts with development initiatives in post-conflict states, for instance, provides opportunities for Japan to complement U.S. approaches through Human Security measures such as economic empowerment and capacity-building. Synergizing U.S. stabilization initiatives with Japanese development initiatives could improve the effectiveness of joint peacebuilding operations in the field.
- In the meantime, the lack of fully coordinated peacebuilding initiatives has led to redundancies and missed opportunities to maximize stabilization and reconstruction efforts in post-conflict states. For instance, experts said that Japan's cooperation with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants in Afghanistan was successfully completed, but that the mission was not well coordinated with U.S.-led counter-terrorism operations, leading to shortcomings in the overall effort by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to disarm and stabilize Afghanistan.
- Both allies could apply lessons learned from previous missions to improve joint operations in the future, such as potential bilateral peacebuilding operations in Sudan. In many ways, Sudan represents an ideal opportunity for Japan and the United States to fine-tune their peacebuilding cooperation, as both allies share common interests in ensuring that the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) is fully implemented and leads to a peaceful and viable separation between north and south Sudan.