

Global Peacebuilding Association of Japan
Kyoto Peacebuilding Center and ACUNS Tokyo Liaison Office

present

Mr. Takehiro Kano

Director-General of the International Peace Cooperation Headquarters
Cabinet Office, Government of Japan

On

**Current Status and Future Direction of Japan's International
Peace Cooperation**

Saturday, 28 January 2023

20:00-21:30 (Tokyo); 12:00-13:30 (Geneva); 6:00-7:30 (New York)

Report compiled by Maciej Witek

Opening Remarks



Mr. Yasushi Akashi
Former Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations

In the opening remarks, Mr. Akashi stated that the main subject matter for discussion today is Japan's international peace cooperation concerning the UN in particular. He recalled 21 years ago, the important law was adopted by the Japanese diet, enabling the government to send self-defense forces and civilian volunteers to participate in the UN transitional authority in Cambodia. Subsequently, Japan has participated in several other activities in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Western Hemisphere. We have good reason to be proud of what Japan has done in all these activities. Japan is also a new non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the 12th time which is a record in the UN membership. We should try to think together about what those global bodies might do in the cause of international peace and security in the future.

Part I Keynote Presentation



Mr. Takehiro Kano
Director-General of the International Peace Cooperation
Headquarters Cabinet Office, Government of Japan

Mr. Kano after briefly introducing himself noted that last year marked the 30th anniversary of Japan's peacekeeping role, and during that time Japan has changed a lot. The country is now at a crossroads, and as many people as possible have to think about the way forward. When Mr. Kano joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1989, he was assigned to the UN Affairs Bureau, now called Foreign Policy Bureau, restructured after lessons learned from the Gulf Crisis. The section was in charge of the UN General Assembly, Security Council, and peacekeeping operations. Japan was sending civilian officers to UN mission in Iran/Iraq, or observers to Namibia election then, but dispatching SDF was out of the question. After the end of the Cold War, we saw some movement in Cambodia's peace process, where there was an active discussion on the government structure after the peace was reached and the possible Japan's involvement. Then in 1990-1993, many events took place, namely the Gulf Crisis/War, Japan's first-ever dispatching SDF minesweeping vessels after the conflict, and the passing of peacekeeping operation law. Mr. Kano was then in the UK as trainee student at the time and learned about the events in Japan only through the media. He noticed a huge perception gap between Japan and the outside world. In 1995 he served as the country officer covering Southeast Asia back in Tokyo, when the Japanese government tried to support Cambodia in conducting the next election, and economically through hosting donor consultative group, also helping Cambodia to join ASEAN as a new member. Last year, Mr. Kano came back to Cambodia twice, accompanying PM Kishida and FM Hayashi's visit. He admitted that there are still some shortcomings, but no doubt the country benefited from the peace efforts.

Mr. Kano noted that PM Hun Sen told PM Kishida that 30 years ago Cambodia was a beneficiary, receiving UNTAC, but now it is Cambodia's turn to help the other members of the community by dispatching servicemen to UNPKO. Cambodia sent troops to South Sudan, and became a co-sponsor for the UN General Assembly resolution with regard to Ukraine – it changed the position from 2014 when Cambodia abstained in the resolution for Crimea issues. When 9/11, Afghan and Iraq war happened in 2001-2003, Mr. Kano was in Embassy in Washington DC, being assigned to work with US on post-war reconstruction assistance. Taking account of lessons learned from the Gulf War 10 years before, the Japanese government took various measures, including sending vessels for refueling missions in the Indian Ocean as well as ground forces to southern Iraq for reconstruction activities by passing the special measurement law. It was based upon another legislation passed in the late 1990s – in the context of strengthening the US-Japan alliance, in which Mr. Kano was involved. In parallel with such self-defense forces activities, Japan implemented various Official Development Assistance (ODA) projects to support Afghanistan and Iraq. During the two decades in the aftermath of the Cold War from the early 1990s to the 2000s, Japan's international peace cooperation expanded a lot in accordance with PKO law or other specific laws. Japan sent forces to various parts of the world, including the Golan Heights, Timor-Leste, Mozambique, and Rwanda. The

legal framework, step by step relaxed the rule of engagement of the arms to be carried by the self-defense forces serviceman. In 2009 Japan sent naval SDF to Somalia for anti-piracy activities, and the mission continues up until now. SDF's continuous presence in the Middle East and Indian ocean was unthinkable 30 years ago.

Mr. Kano noted that there are a couple of factors that enabled IPKO of Japan in those 2 decades. The international community was relatively stable, there were not many big power rivalries. That allowed the reactivation of the UN Security Council. Largely there was confidence and euphoria in multilateralism. Despite the issues of North Korea and China's activities, the security situation surrounding Japan was relatively stable. The Japanese economy still maintained a big presence. In the 1990s Japan was top donor in ODA, and as of 2010 the country was still the 2nd largest economic power. There was also a general willingness in the Japanese public to be more actively engaged with the international community, a growing consensus on overseas activities. Based upon those achievements we have seen a comprehensive overhaul of the legal framework related to international security, done in 2015 under the late PM Shinzo Abe. It also included IPC related elements, such as more relaxing rule of engagement in PKO. Ironically after that overhaul, Japan's international peace cooperation became a bit stagnant in the 2010s.

Mr. Kano noted that currently, Japan is engaged in just 2 missions in accordance with the PKO Law. One is a couple of staff officers sent to UNMISS(South Sudan), another is 2 staff officers dispatched to MFO, or Multilateral Force and Observers in the Sinai Peninsula. Last year, Japan conducted a one-time operation immediately after the outbreak of the Ukrainian war, namely air self-defense forces carrying out the transport of humanitarian goods to surrounding countries of Ukraine. Right now, after the invasion by Russia, it is getting even more difficult to get a consensus on peace cooperation at UN Security Council. Also for other reasons in Japan there is not much momentum to resume sending troops to the UN missions. Japan does other type of contribution such as supporting regional peace process in the Philippines. Mr. Kano was involved in the peace process when he served in Manila a couple of years ago. Right now the Philippines government and the Islamic group called MILF reached an agreement, and the Philippine government passed a law that would grant much greater autonomous power to the region. The process was supposed to be completed last year, but due to COVID, it's been delayed 3 years. Japan dispatched a retired ground self-defense forces officer to the international framework called the Independent Decommissioning Body in charge of monitoring the DDR activities of MILF. However, the overall peace cooperation related activities of Japan is not very large now, compared with not just large scale troop-contributing countries, but also with European countries or Australia. Why did that change? Mr. Kano presented a couple of factors:

1. Russia and China are more aggressive in the 2010s and the current decade compared with the past. China started sending official vessels in large numbers into the territorial waters of Japan in 2012, and in South China Sea one specific issue(Scarborough Shoal) was raised between the Philippines and China in the same year. In 2014 Crimea was taken by Russia from Ukraine. In the latest document on national security Japan described both countries as either a threat(Russia) or challenge(China). Big contrast with the previous decade the 1990s and 2010s. At the time there was some sort of international cooperation with China and Russia, but it is no longer the case.

2. The international security situation around Japan is getting more severe and difficult. In 2010 China overtook Japan in terms of nominal GDP, now it is more than 3 times that of Japan. Its defense budget is also much bigger than Japan. Japan is now exposed to three difficult countries: North Korea, China, and Russia. Southeast Asia is traditionally key area of concern to Japan, thus good reason to help successes of Timor-Leste and Cambodia. Ironically that led to a decrease in demand for international peace cooperation in the region with the exception of Myanmar after the coup d'état in 2021. That country is not currently in a situation where the international community could consider any concrete peace cooperation actions.
3. The views of Japanese people towards peace cooperation has changed. Their attention is much more focused on the immediate concerns that are directly linked to Japan's national security. There is not much attention towards international peace cooperation. And alliance management has always been a big driving force. One of the key criteria of judgment on whether Japan should participate in international peace cooperation is whether the region is important for Japan, or whether G7 or Europe would show interest. Ukraine is the recent example, but that would not be the case in the Middle East or Africa.

Conceptually, Mr. Kano stated that IPKO tends to be taken as charitable activities, which we help only when we can afford it but not necessarily indispensable. He does not think that should be the case. IPKO should be an integral part of the activities that help Japan's own security. With such international peace cooperation and alliance or quasi alliance put together, Japan should ensure its own security. Coordination with the so-called Global South countries is important. The Ukrainian situation since last February allows us to recognize rule of law based on international order. The Japanese government said that what is happening in Ukraine could be happening in Asia tomorrow. We should not tolerate a unilateral change of status quo anywhere in the world. These are the messages that Japan has conveyed to Global South Countries such as India and Southeast Asian countries, in order to gain their support and understanding. We should not choose between alliance and the UN, but rather strengthen both.

Concluding Mr. Kano stated that we are now in a situation of a "security deficit". There are various challenges, so the demand is very high for security cooperation but the capacity to provide security is getting lower. We are no longer in the post-Cold War period, in which globalization is advancing to help realize peace and prosperity. That could be no longer the case. We should work together innovatively and creatively to restore and strengthen the rule-based international order. One possible way forward would be cooperation and collaboration with newly emerging security providers, mainly from the Global South.



Mr. Ahmed Abdel-Latif
Director-General of Cairo Center for Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping Activities, Cairo, Egypt

Mr. Abdel-Latif focused his presentation on suggestions regarding the role of Japan in terms of International Peace Cooperation. In terms of geographic scope, Japan must continue to actively engage in Africa on issues related to peace and security. Africa is back at the center stage of geopolitical dynamics. The situation requires urgent attention. We can see terrorism as a number 1 threat to many African

states. Recently there was a very interesting seminar with the Japanese Embassy in Cairo on security in the Red Sea region when some participants called on Japan to be more active on conflict resolution in the region and in the Indo-Pacific region. When it comes to thematic and substantive areas of focus of Japan, very important is the issue of building institutions and nationally owned efforts for advancing peace and security through capacity building and training. The partnership of Japan with the African PK Training Center was fundamental in strengthening the ability of African countries to be more strongly engaged on issues of peace security and peacekeeping. Mr. Abdel-Latif highlighted the importance to continue that partnership long-term. We need countries that are supportive of international peace and security, to work together more strongly. There is also a link between the contribution to peacekeeping and peacebuilding. We recognize the limitations of traditional peacekeeping and we need to strengthen the contribution that peacekeeping makes to peacebuilding. We think that peacebuilding is a cornerstone of efforts to advance sustained peace, address the root causes of conflict, and advance post-conflict reconstruction. Challenges that climate change brings to security and peace also have to be taken into account. Japan with technology and early warning capacities can make an important contribution to that, whether it is in peacebuilding or peacekeeping efforts. We want to make climate and peace work better together through the COP27 Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace initiative that will be implemented this year.

Mr. Abdel-Latif stated that we live in an era of decreasing resources, and limited abilities and no one alone can confront the challenges we are witnessing today. We share the same principles, and objectives that can leverage their respective strengths to work together in terms of regional positions, and capacities. This is the way to go for advancing peace and security. He expressed his deep appreciation to the government and the people of Japan. The support received was key to delivering training and capacity building in Africa, and he hopes to continue building and expanding the partnership.

Part II Discussion



Mr. Takahiro Shinyo

Former Ambassador to the UN and Germany, Professor at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

Mr. Shinyo stated that Japan's contribution was very well received by countries of the Global South, in terms of capacity building. That is a strength of the Japanese government, they have a lot of expertise on how to manage the engineering battalion, and how to give more knowledge of using machines, AI, or in the IT field. This is the time for Japan to nurture its ability. He proposed a couple of things. Countries like Japan need to propose and work more for peacemaking.

If we do not have that kind of process, we cannot send any peacekeeping operations or move towards peacebuilding. What we have to do is to put more emphasis on how to have the conflict peacefully resolved through diplomatic efforts. The primacy of political solutions is something that we have to do more. Japan has a very good chance, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. In the case of Ukraine, maybe one year or a half year from now, we would

be able to have some kind of peace resolution or ceasefire. This is the time to think of deploying a peacekeeping operation under the framework of the UN. We can also think of the preventive deployment of peacekeeping – it already had in Macedonia. We should work very hard together to give accurate information, especially in a situation when fake news and disinformation are prevailing. What Mr. Shinyo also suggested is a very new type of peacekeeping operation that preserves culture, cultural and historical heritage. How we can stop the destruction of heritage? Maybe we can deploy peacekeeping operations to preserve not only the people but heritage, historic sites, and culture.



Mr. Takaaki Mizuno
Professor of Kanda University of International Studies

Mr. Mizuno provided a suggestion on the way to promote Japan's peace contribution to the Indo-Pacific region and enhance its domestic support. As Mr. Kano strenuously explained, Japan has already deployed several peace activities in the region like anti-piracy operations by SDF in Djibouti, supporting the MFO (Multinational Force and Observers) in Sinai, and its troop contribution to UNMISS. The "laundry list" of their missions can be long, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, humanitarian security, development assistance, protecting refugees and forced migrations, and others. Despite its various activities with good records, these activities are not necessarily well publicized domestically partly because of its incremental and ad-hoc based approach in the past. As the saying goes, "Power creates interest." Conversely, a declining economic power like Japan may undervalue its vital interest in the region and lose its domestic support to sustain even the current level of commitment. There is another saying that goes, "Security is indivisible." Yes, it is no longer possible for Japan to make a futile dichotomy between its contribution to international peace and security and its efforts for a more robust national defense. We need to integrate these two goals as one conceptual policy package under the banner of Japan's new policy of "Proactive Peace Contribution for the Indo-Pacific region".



Mr. Tadamichi Yamamoto
Former SRSG to Afghanistan and Head of UNAMA

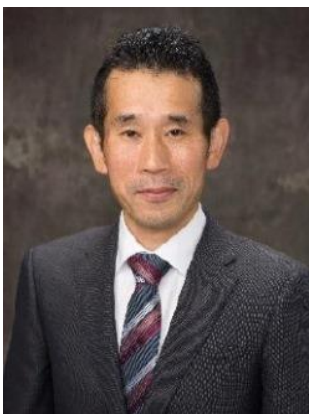
Mr. Yamamoto presented three points. First, given the realities that there are limitations of the big powers in addressing many conflicts which need to be addressed, for instance in Africa (the situation is exacerbated by their focus on Ukraine), countries like Japan and Egypt, the middle powers or regional powers should take initiatives in addressing them. This should be done systematically. One possibility is to utilize the Peace Building Commission and seek better coordination with the Security Council. Secondly, Japan should seek to make a further contribution through cooperation and coordination with other countries, this is a way to overcome constraints if Japan were to do things alone. Egypt, Nigeria, South Africa, Bangladesh, and India are examples of possible

candidates. Thirdly, Japan may wish to list its comparative advantages and prepare a menu of things that it can do or provide. There are many things that Japan can help with. For instance, when Mr. Yamamoto was the SRSG, he wanted better vehicles and computers. Japan has them both. These are just examples, but Japan can be really helpful in peace operations.



Mr. Takakazu Ito
Senior Programme Manager, Triangular Partnership,
Department of Operational Support, United Nations

Mr. Ito asked two questions concerning Japan's current and possible future role in international peace efforts and one comment/request in relation to possible future triangular partnerships. First, as Mr. Kano pointed out, there are no Japanese troop deployments to UN missions since 2017 except for a small number of staff officers in UNMISS. In the UN Triangular Partnership Programme (TPP) training, the number of Japanese Self-Defense Force trainers (SDF) with UN peacekeeping experience is decreasing as many are retiring. The question is whether the Japanese Government could consider including SDF retirees with UN peacekeeping experience as part of UN training teams so that the trainees of Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) can learn from trainers with actual UN peacekeeping experience. Second, Mr. Kano briefly touched on the possibility of the donation of defensive equipment to UN TCCs. Many TCCs have uniformed personnel that they can deploy to UN missions, but some struggle to secure the necessary equipment and/or learn how to operate and maintain them. Thus, a simple donation of equipment could quickly result in equipment breakdown. The question is whether Japan can provide a package to TCCs that includes equipment and a small number of personnel members who can provide training and maintain them. Finally, Mr. Ito shared that in addition to training in Kenya and Indonesia through our TPP, Japan also conducts training in peacekeeping training centers of several other countries. The TPP team is eager to partner and work together with countries with expertise and resources to strengthen UN peacekeeping and would appreciate an opportunity to discuss Egypt's possible participation in TPP separately.



Mr. Koji Sakane
Senior Director, Office for Peacebuilding, Japan International
Cooperation Agency (JICA)

Mr. Sakane agreed that currently, numerous conflicts occur throughout the world, and many conflicts are very difficult to be solved. Regarding UN Peace Operations, it becomes very difficult to make a consensus in UN Security Council, which causes difficulty for UN Peace Operations to take decisive roles. In Africa, competition between USA, Russia, and China is escalating, and VIPs in these countries are rushing into the Africa Continent. It is necessary to consider how we could make Peace Operations more effective. He also agreed with an idea that Mr. Mizuno mentioned. Accountability to Japanese taxpayers is important. In order to make our efforts more effective, among others, "Peace Making" is important. We should consider and make our efforts on how to make peace effectively.

In concluding the seminar, the moderator summarized three points made by the presenters and participants. The first is the partnership which is the key to successful peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts. The second is the importance of the institutional capacity building of the host countries. The third point is that the United Nations should be empowered to engage in resolving conflicts and in keeping, building, and sustaining peace.