

CRS Report for Congress

Japan-U.S. Relations: Issues for Congress

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Summary

The post-World War II U.S.-Japan alliance has long been an anchor of the U.S. security role in East Asia. The alliance, with its access to bases in Japan, where about 53,000 U.S. troops are stationed, facilitates the forward deployment of U.S. military forces in the Asia-Pacific, thereby undergirding U.S. national security strategy. For Japan, the alliance and the U.S. nuclear umbrella provide maneuvering room in dealing with its neighbors, particularly China and North Korea.

The Bush Administration has made significant strides in its goals of broadening U.S.-Japan strategic cooperation and encouraging Japan to assume a more active international role. Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Japan made its first-ever military deployments in non-combat support of U.S. and allied forces in Afghanistan. In 2004 Tokyo sent non-combat troops to Iraq, despite considerable domestic opposition. In 2005 the United States and Japan announced a sweeping new agreement to strengthen military cooperation. The plan calls for U.S. forces to be realigned and Japan to take on a more active (non-combat) role in maintaining regional and global security. The ruling party has drafted a new constitution that would eliminate most of the clauses prohibiting participation in collective security arrangements, a move the United States has supported.

The ruling party's historic defeat in Upper House elections in July 2007 may slow some of this cooperation. As new leader Yasuo Fukuda attempts to restore his party's leadership, some of Koizumi and Abe's platform may be placed on hold. If political jockeying weakens Tokyo's focus on U.S.-Japan relations as an aging Japanese population demands more attention to domestic economic issues, the U.S.-Japan relationship may struggle to maintain its momentum of the past several years.

Japan is one of the United States' most important economic partners. Outside of North America, it is the United States' largest export market and second-largest source of imports. Japanese firms are the United States' second-largest source of foreign direct investment, and Japanese investors are by far the largest foreign holders of U.S. treasuries, helping to finance the U.S. deficit and reduce upward pressure on U.S. interest rates. Bilateral trade friction has decreased in recent years, partly because U.S. concern about the trade deficit with Japan has been replaced by concern about a much larger deficit with China. The exception was U.S. criticism over Japan's decision in 2003 to ban imports of U.S. beef, which have since resumed.

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Japan-U.S. Relations: Issues for Congress

Most Recent Developments

Fukuda's Position Strengthens. Recent developments in Japanese politics appear to have strengthened Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda's hand. Fukuda and his ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) have been bolstered by a series of apparent missteps by the opposition. In early November, Ichiro Ozawa, president of Japan's largest opposition party, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), shocked the country by announcing his intention to resign his post, only to reverse his decision days later. Ozawa's actions have transformed the political dynamic in Japan, damaging the DPJ's newfound image as a potentially responsible governing party and sapping the party of the momentum it had enjoyed since taking control of the Upper House of Japan's parliament (the Diet) following its victory in July 2007 elections. As a result, Fukuda is likely to retain his post longer than initially had been thought. If he calls early elections for the Diet's more powerful Lower House (the next election is not required until September 2009), he now may be able to do so on his terms rather than be forced into the decision by the DPJ.

Japan Ends Refueling Mission in Afghanistan. On November 1, a law authorizing Japan's participation in the U.S.-led Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan expired, sending the Japanese refueling tanker fleet home from the Indian Ocean. Despite Fukuda's support for extending the legislation, the LDP was unable to overcome procedural obstacles due to the DPJ's control of the Upper House chamber. On November 13, the LDP-controlled Lower House passed a law authorizing a new refueling mission that more closely limits the operations to assist exclusively in intercepting ships. Due to Fukuda's stronger position, the Lower House is likely to overrule any veto by the less-powerful Upper House.

Bush-Fukuda Summit. On November 15, Fukuda traveled to Washington for a brief visit, his first overseas trip since taking office in September. In his meeting with President Bush, both leaders tried to ease tensions that have emerged in the bilateral relationship in the past few months. Most prominent is Tokyo's opposition to the likely U.S. decision to remove North Korea from the list of state sponsors of terrorism without sufficient progress on the abductions issue (see "North Korea and the Six-Party Talks section). Bush promised to remember the abductees in negotiations with North Korea, and Fukuda pledged to work for passage of a bill to re-start the refueling mission in Afghanistan. Many observers predict somewhat of a downturn in U.S.-Japan relations over the next year: disagreements may arise over the level of Tokyo's contribution to the costs of stationing U.S. troops in Japan, Tokyo's partial ban on imports of U.S. beef, and the implementation of an agreement to realign U.S. forces and facilities in Japan.

Figure 1. Map of Japan



Source: Map Resources. Adapted by CRS.

The Role of Congress in U.S.-Japan Relations

Congressional powers, actions, and oversight form a backdrop against which both the Administration and the Japanese government must formulate their policies. In the 109th Congress, members showed a renewed interest in U.S.-Japan relations. After holding two Japan-specific public hearings from 2001 through 2004, Congress held four in 2005-2006. Members of Congress were particularly critical of Japan's two-year ban on imports of U.S. beef and of the Bush Administration's handling of the beef dispute. On security issues, members have expressed concern that steps taken by the Japanese government are harming U.S. interests in East Asia by

worsening Sino-Japanese and South Korean-Japanese relations. Former Chairman of the House International Relations Committee Henry Hyde suggested in an April 2006 letter to Speaker Dennis Hastert that Prime Minister Koizumi should not address a joint session of Congress unless he pledged to stop visiting Yasukuni Shrine, which enshrines the names of several Class A war criminals from World War II, and convened a hearing on Japan's "history problem" in September 2006.

The "comfort women" controversy in the 110th Congress reignited congressional concern about revisionist views of history in Japan. In September 2007, the House passed H.Res. 121, calling on the government of Japan to "formally acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner" for its treatment of women forced to serve as prostitutes for the Japanese military during its colonization and occupation of Asia in the 1930s and 1940s. The resolution passed by voice vote and attracted 167 co-sponsors, reportedly driven in part by a June 2007 *Washington Post* advertisement signed by several Japanese legislators and academics rejecting the historical basis of the resolution. A few days later, the House also passed H.Res. 508, which praised the U.S.-Japan alliance and Japan's contributions to the effort against international terrorism. The bill was seen as an attempt to blunt the negative diplomatic impact of the former resolution. The question of historical truth and memory has emerged as a prominent theme in congressional relations with Japan. (See the "Legislation" section.)

Major Diplomatic and Security Issues¹

Global Issues

Counterterrorism Cooperation.

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the Koizumi government initiated a series of unprecedented measures to protect American facilities in Japan and provide non-lethal, "rear area" logistical support to U.S. military operations against Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan. The latter mainly took the form of at-sea replenishment of fuel oil and water to U.S., British, French, and other allied warships operating in the Indian Ocean. The dispatch of Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Forces (MSDF) was the first such deployment since World War II. Until its termination in November 2007 (see "Recent Developments" section), a small flotilla of Japanese transport ships, oilers, and destroyers provided about 30% of the fuel used by U.S. and allied warships, and

Japan Country Data

Population: 127.5 million (July 2006 est.)
% of Population over 64: 20% (U.S. = 12.4%) (2006)
Area: 377,835 sq km (slightly smaller than California)
Life Expectancy: 81.2 years (2006)
Per Capita GDP: \$31,600 (2005 est.) purchasing power parity
Primary Export Partners: US 22.9%, China 13.4%, South Korea 7.8%, Taiwan 7.3% (2005)
Primary Import Partners: China 21%, US 12.7%, Saudi Arabia 5.5%, UAE 4.9%, Australia 4.7%, South Korea 4.7% (2005)
Yen:Dollar Exchange Rate: 110.2 (2005), 108.2 (2004), 115.9 (2003), 125.4 (2002)
Foreign Exchange Reserves: \$835.5 billion (2005 est.)

Source: CIA *World Factbook*, December 2006

¹ This section was written by Emma Chanlett-Avery.

Japan's Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) conducted hundreds of airlift support missions for U.S. forces. Although Fukuda has pledged to try to reinstate the mission, Japan's continued support for the U.S.-led war on terrorism appears to be somewhat uncertain.

Support for U.S. Policy Toward Iraq. While strongly preferring a clear United Nations role in resolving the U.S./British confrontation with Iraq, Japan nonetheless gave almost unqualified support to the Bush Administration's position. During an open debate in the U.N. Security Council, Japan was one of only two out of 27 participating countries (the other being Australia) to support the U.S. contention that even if the U.N. inspections were strengthened and expanded, they were unlikely to lead to the elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Since 2003, Japan has provided \$1.5 billion in grant assistance to Iraq, has pledged to provide \$3.5 billion in yen loans, and has agreed to a phased cancellation of 80% of the approximately \$7.5 billion in debt Iraq owed Japan. In addition, in January 2004, the Koizumi government deployed about 600 military personnel — mainly ground troops — to carry out humanitarian aid and reconstruction activities in Iraq. The ground troops were withdrawn from the southern area of Samawah in June-July 2006, but the air division of the Self Defense Forces (the official name of Japan's military) has expanded its mission of airlifting multinational troops and their supplies from Kuwait into Iraq. The Lower House of the Diet approved a two-year extension of the air force transport mission in May 2007.

North Korea and the Six-Party Talks. As the Bush Administration has moved aggressively to reach a deal on denuclearization with North Korea in the Six-Party Talks, distance has emerged between Washington and Tokyo. Former Prime Minister Abe rose to prominence based on his hardline position on Pyongyang's responsibility to disclose the fate and/or whereabouts of several Japanese citizens abducted by North Korean agents in the 1970s and 1980s. Japan pledged that it will not provide economic aid to North Korea without resolution of the abductees' issue. U.S. chief negotiator Christopher Hill and President Bush have given rhetorical support for Japan's position but appear determined to move ahead on the February 2007 agreement. Japan has argued against the removal of North Korea from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism on the basis of the lack of resolution of the abductees' fate, but many analysts believe that the decision to remove Pyongyang could come as early as December 2007, regardless of demonstrated progress on the kidnapping issue.

The abductee issue remains an emotional topic in Japan, and Tokyo likely will continue to insist that North Korea provide more clarity on the fate of the remaining abductees. Prime Minister Fukuda has indicated his intention to engage more actively in the negotiations and with Pyongyang directly to discuss normalization. Supporters of the negotiations see promise that Fukuda will help establish a "roadmap" that lays out how progress might unfold on the abductees issue.

Until the shift toward negotiation in Washington, Japan's policy toward North Korea aligned closely with the U.S. position in the Six-Party Talks. Japan has insisted on North Korea abandoning its nuclear weapons, has taken steps to squeeze North Korea economically, and participates in the U.S.-led Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). After North Korea test-fired several missiles in July 2006 and tested

a nuclear device in October 2006, Japan strongly supported punitive United Nations Security Council resolutions that condemn the actions and call for trade restrictions. In addition, Japan imposed unilateral sanctions more stringent than the UNSC resolutions, including a ban on all North Korean ships in Japanese ports, restrictions on imports and most North Korean nationals from entering Japan, and a freeze on bank remittances to North Korea from the ethnic Korean community in Japan.

United Nations Security Council Reform. In 2004, Japan accelerated its longstanding efforts to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council by forming a coalition with Germany, India, and Brazil (the so-called “G-4”) to achieve non-veto membership for all four countries. Though the Bush Administration has backed Japan’s bid, it did not support the G-4 proposal and opposed taking a vote on expanding the Security Council until a “broader consensus” on reforming the entire organization can be reached. To become a member, Japan must obtain support from two-thirds (128 countries) of all U.N. member countries. Japan is the second-largest contributor to the U.N. regular budget, paying more than 20% of the total, more than twice the percentage paid by the third-largest contributor.

Kyoto Protocol and Climate Change. Tokyo has sought to highlight Japan’s leadership on environmental issues. Ahead of the G-8 summit in May 2007, Abe proposed an international pact to halve the amount of emissions worldwide by 2050. Japan is the fourth-leading producer of greenhouse gases after the United States, the Russian Federation, and China. Under the Kyoto Protocol, which Tokyo ratified in 2002, Japan is obligated to reduce its emissions to 6% below its 1990 levels by 2010. Japanese industry shares many of the concerns of U.S. industry about the cost and feasibility of the plan, but the Japanese government has expressed dismay over the Bush Administration’s opposition to the protocol. In 2005, Japan joined with the United States, China, India, South Korea, and Australia in the non-binding Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate, which calls for cooperation on the development and diffusion of technology to combat climate change, reduce pollution, and promote energy security. Some environmentalists have criticized the arrangement for its absence of mandates — particularly on greenhouse gas emissions — and for being a part of a suspected U.S. strategy to prevent the Kyoto Protocol from being renewed after it expires in 2012.

Regional and Historical Issues

Relations between China and Japan have warmed considerably in the past year. Under Koizumi, Japan’s relations with China and South Korea suffered, largely because of the former leader’s annual visits to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine. The Shinto shrine honors Japanese soldiers who died in war, including fourteen Class A war criminals who were convicted by the International Military Tribunal for the Far East following Japan’s defeat in World War II. After Abe’s fence-mending visit to Beijing in October 2006 and a reciprocal April 2007 visit by Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, relations appeared to improve, in contrast to the political friction that characterized the previous several years. In concert with the leadership in Beijing, which has been keen to shore up its foreign relations before the 2008 Summer Olympics, the Sino-Japanese relationship has demonstrated a solid upward trajectory. Fukuda and DPJ politicians alike are likely to continue this trend; Fukuda has pledged not to visit the Yasukuni Shrine and has historically showed an inclination

to prioritize strong ties with Japan's Asian neighbors. In general, amiable relations among Northeast Asian states serve the U.S. interest by providing a stable security environment, advancing economic ties and trade flows, and increasing the chances for success of multilateral initiatives, such as the Six-Party Talks and any Northeast Asian security mechanism that may grow out of the negotiations.

Territorial Conflicts. South Korea and China have challenged Japan on a series of territorial disputes. Beijing and Tokyo have clashed over the territorial rights of areas in the East China Sea, which is potentially rich in oil and gas reserves. Japan considers the area surrounding the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands to be part of its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The Japanese Self Defense Force has detected periodic Chinese military activities in the area, including a submarine incursion in 2004 close to Okinawa and a fleet of warships near a disputed gas field. China began production at Pinghu field in November 2006, despite Japan's opposition. Officials have failed to reach agreement through multiple rounds of talks.

A long-standing dispute over ownership of two islets in the sea between Japan and South Korea reignited in 2005 after a local government celebrated "Takeshima Day," referring to the Japanese name for the islands (known as "Dokdo" in Korean). Tension flared again in 2006 when South Korea dispatched two armed vessels to respond to a Japanese team surveying the islands. A diplomatic compromise defused the standoff, but the fundamental question of ownership has not been resolved.

Military Issues²

Japan and the United States are military allies under a security treaty concluded in 1951 and revised in 1960. Under the treaty, Japan grants the United States military base rights on its territory in return for a U.S. pledge to protect Japan's security. In recent years Japan has edged closer to a more independent self-defense posture in both practice and in published security strategies. In December 2006, Japan's Defense Agency was formally upgraded to a ministry for the first time since World War II, giving the ministry more clout in budget and policy-making decisions.

Agreements to Deepen Cooperation. A series of Security Consultative Committee meetings (SCC, also known as the "2+2" meeting) of the Japanese and U.S. foreign and defense ministers have outlined plans to expand the alliance beyond its existing framework. As U.S. personnel and facilities in Japan are realigned as part of the broader Pentagon strategy of deploying a more streamlined and mobile force, Japan is slated to take a more active role in contributing to global stability, primarily through increased coordination with the U.S. military. Key features of the arrangement include a reduction in the number of U.S. Marines in Japan, the relocation of a problematic air base in Okinawa, the deployment of an X-Band radar system in Japan as part of a missile defense system, expanded bilateral cooperation in training and intelligence sharing, and Japan's acceptance of a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier in the Yokosuka Naval Base.

² For more information on the U.S.-Japan alliance, see CRS Report RL33740, "*The Changing U.S.-Japan Alliance: Implications for U.S. Interests*," by Emma Chanlett-Avery.

A statement from the latest “2+2” session in April 2007 reiterated many features of previous meetings, with an emphasis on intelligence sharing and ballistic missile defense cooperation. Implementation of the plan to relocate 8,000 Marines to Guam and to replace the controversial Futenma Marine Air Station in Okinawa remains slow. Many of the agreement’s most controversial elements are likely to face continued obstacles, particularly from local Japanese politicians in the areas identified to host new facilities and troops. U.S. officials say Japan will pay an estimated \$26 billion overall for the realignment initiative. Some military officials in Japan are concerned that the high cost of the realignment could result in decreased Japanese capabilities because of budgetary restraints.

Loss of Momentum? The recent political uncertainty in Japan may have slowed some of the of increased cooperation in the U.S.-Japan alliance. Although ties remain strong fundamentally, the Bush Administration shift on North Korean nuclear negotiations, the July 2007 House resolution criticizing the Japanese government for past “comfort women” policies, and the apparent decision not to consider exporting the F-22 to Japan may have undermined to some degree Japanese confidence in the robustness of the alliance. Koizumi and Abe’s platform of enhancing Japan’s role in global affairs had been encouraged by U.S. officials who saw Japan’s strategic interests aligning with their own. Implementation of the “2+2” agreements depends on Tokyo providing the necessary resources and political capital. Because the realignment and transformation initiatives involve elements that are unpopular in the localities affected, successful implementation depends on leadership from the central government. If the ruling party continues to struggle to re-establish itself, details of the hard-fought agreements designed to sustain the alliance politically may falter.

New International Security Partnerships. In early 2007, Japan signed a bilateral agreement with Australia that pledges cooperation on counterterrorism, maritime security, peace-keeping operations, and disaster relief. The pact, though short of a formal military alliance, may help to establish a framework of security cooperation among Japan, Australia, the United States, and, potentially, India. Such partnerships adhere to the stated goal of “values-based diplomacy,” in which Japan plans to strengthen ties with other democracies with similar political and economic freedoms. Continuing this trend, in September 2007 Japan joined a multinational naval exercise with the United States, Australia, Singapore, and India in the area west of the Malacca Straits. The exercise reinforced two interrelated trends in Asia-Pacific defense dynamics: the U.S.-led campaign of strengthening security ties among democratic allies and the strategic countering of Chinese military power. On the sidelines of the 2007 Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, Japan, Australia, and the United States held their first trilateral meeting.

Article 9 Restrictions. In general, Japan’s U.S.-drafted constitution remains an obstacle to closer U.S.-Japan defense cooperation because of a prevailing constitutional interpretation of Article 9 that forbids engaging in “collective self-defense”; that is, combat cooperation with the United States against a third country. Article 9 outlaws war as a “sovereign right” of Japan and prohibits “the right of belligerency.” Whereas in the past Japanese public opinion strongly supported the limitations placed on the Self-Defense Force (SDF), this opposition has softened considerably in recent years. Abe has indicated his intention to amend some of these restrictions by reinterpreting the right of collective self defense and, eventually,

amending the constitution itself. (See “Constitutional Revision.”) Since 1991, Japan has allowed the SDF to participate in non-combat roles in a number of United Nations peacekeeping missions and in the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq.

Proposed Command Structure Changes. Successive “2+2” statements have outlined major command changes agreed to by Japanese and U.S. officials. One would shift 300 soldiers from the 1st Army Corps headquarters from Washington State to Camp Zama to establish a deployable headquarters. The Ground Self Defense Forces would also base a rapid-response headquarters at Camp Zama. A bilateral and joint operations center is to be built at Yokota Air Base (about 23 miles northwest of Tokyo) to enhance coordination between the Japanese and U.S. air and missile defense command elements. The headquarters of the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force, meanwhile, would be moved from Okinawa to Guam, reducing the number of marines in Okinawa by about 8,000.

U.S. Bases on Okinawa. The reduction of marines on Okinawa seeks to quell the political controversy that has surrounded the presence of U.S. forces on the island for years. Public outcry against the bases has continued since the 1995 rape of a Japanese schoolgirl by American servicemen, which galvanized underlying resentments. Though constituting less than 1% of Japan’s land mass, Okinawa currently hosts 65% of the total U.S. forces in Japan. Okinawan politicians have called for a renegotiation of the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) and a reduction in U.S. troop strength. The U.S. and Japanese governments oppose revising the SOFA, but have acknowledged the political demand to alleviate the burden of military presence in Okinawa. As part of the realignment of U.S. bases, U.S. officials agreed to move most aircraft and crews constituting the marine air station at Futenma to expanded facilities at Camp Schwab, located in Nago, a less-congested area of Okinawa.

Burden-Sharing Issues. The United States has pressed Japan to increase its share of the costs of American troops and bases. According to Pentagon reports, Japan provides over \$4 billion annually in direct and indirect Host Nation Support (HNS), which is about 75% of the total cost of maintaining troops in Japan. In recent years, Japanese officials have reportedly suggested that HNS be reduced on grounds that Japan is now making a greater direct contribution to the alliance. In January 2006, Japan renewed its pledge to provide \$1.2 billion in direct support for each of the next two years to U.S. forces amid controversy over how much of the cost of relocating forces will be shouldered by Japan. In May 2006, Japan agreed to shoulder 59% (over \$6 billion) of the estimated cost of relocating forces from Okinawa to Guam. Renewal of the HNS agreement is anticipated to be contentious in the early 2008 Diet session.

Cooperation on Missile Defense. A U.S.-Japan program of cooperative research and development of anti-ballistic missiles began in 1999. The decision to acquire the ground-based U.S. Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) system and the ship-based U.S. Standard Missile-3 system was justified largely on the basis of North Korea’s missile program. In December 2005, Japan’s Defense Agency agreed that Japan will pay over \$1 billion for the project over nine years. Following North Korean missile tests in July 2006, officials announced that the deployment of the PAC-3 system to Okinawa would accelerate.

Figure 2. Map of Military Facilities in Japan



Source: Map Resources. Adapted by CRS.

Economic Issues³

Trade and other economic ties with Japan remain highly important to U.S. national interests and, therefore, to the U.S. Congress.⁴ By the most conventional method of measurement, the United States and Japan are the world's two largest economies,⁵ accounting for around 40% of world gross domestic product (GDP), and their mutual relationship not only has an impact on each other but on the world as a whole. Furthermore, their economies are intertwined by merchandise trade, trade in services, and foreign investments.

Overview of the Bilateral Economic Relationship

Although Japan remains important economically to the United States, its importance has slid as it has been edged out by other trade partners. Japan is the United States's third-largest merchandise export market (behind Canada and Mexico) and the fourth-largest source for U.S. merchandise imports (behind Canada, Mexico, and China) as of the end of 2006. At one time Japan was the largest source of foreign direct investment in the United States, but by 2006 had fallen behind the United Kingdom. It was the ninth-largest target for U.S. foreign direct investment abroad as of the end of 2005. The United States remains Japan's largest export market and second-largest source of imports as of the end of 2006.

Japan's domestic economic conditions have influenced the U.S.-Japan economic agenda. Except for some brief periods, Japan had incurred stagnant or negative economic growth in the 1990s and the first few years of this decade. However, Japan has shown signs of achieving sustained economic recovery during the last three years. Some long-standing trade disputes continue to irritate the relationship. The U.S. bilateral trade deficit with Japan reached \$81.3 billion in 2000. However, in 2001, the U.S. trade deficit declined 15%, primarily because of the slowdown in the U.S. economy, but increased moderately to \$70.1 billion in 2002. The trade deficit decreased slightly to \$66.0 billion in 2003 but increased to \$75.2 billion in 2004, and to \$82.7 billion in 2005, breaking the record set in 2000. In 2006 the U.S. trade deficit with Japan hit another record at \$88.4 billion. (See **Table 1**.)

³ This section was written by William Cooper.

⁴ For a more complete treatment of U.S.-Japan economic ties, see CRS Report RL32649, *U.S.-Japan Economic Relations: Significance, Prospects, and Policy Options*, by William H. Cooper.

⁵ China's economy is now larger than Japan's by another method of measurement: purchasing power parity.

Table 1. U.S. Trade with Japan, Selected Years
(\$ billions)

Year	Exports	Imports	Balances
1995	64.3	123.5	- 59.1
2000	65.3	146.6	- 81.3
2003	52.1	118.0	-66.0
2004	54.4	129.6	-75.2
2005	55.4	138.1	-82.7
2006	59.6	148.1	-88.4

Source: U.S. Commerce Department, Census Bureau. FT900. Exports are total exports valued on a free alongside ship (f.a.s.) basis. Imports are general imports valued on a customs basis.

The continuing rise in the U.S. trade deficit with Japan has generated complaints from U.S. industry, especially the auto sector, and some Members of Congress about Japan's exchange rate policy. They have argued that the yen is undervalued, giving Japanese exports a price advantage in the United States. The yen has depreciated against the dollar on average over the last three years. In January 2004, the exchange rate averaged \$1= ¥106.31 and averaged \$1=¥115.87 in October 2007.

Some Members have raised the issue in the 110th Congress in the wake of the record-breaking level of imports of Japanese cars in 2006. On February 8, 2007, the Chairmen of the House Ways and Means Committee, the House Energy and Commerce Committee, and the Finance Committee, along with the Chairman of the Trade Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee, sent a letter to Secretary of the Treasury Henry M. Paulson to raise the issue of the weak yen at a February G7 meeting in Germany. The Chairmen had expressed concern that the Treasury Secretary indicated in testimony at a hearing earlier in the week before the Ways and Means Committee that the issue would not be raised. The communique from the G7 meeting stated that the participants "reaffirm that exchange rates should reflect economic fundamentals" and that they are "monitoring exchange rates closely." The yen issue apparently was not raised directly. The Bush Administration asserts that Japan has not intervened to dampen the value of the yen since 2004 and that its value is determined by market forces. On March 28, 2007, S. 1021 (Stabenow) was introduced "to address the exchange-rate misalignment of the Japanese yen with respect to the United States dollar, and for other purposes." A companion bill, H.R. 2886 (Knollenberg), was introduced in the House on June 27, 2007. Other legislation has been introduced to address currency manipulation in China and in other countries.⁶

Despite some outstanding issues, tensions in the U.S.-Japan bilateral economic relationship have been much lower than was the case in the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s. A number of factors may be contributing to this trend: Japan's economic

⁶ For more information on the currency issue and Japan, see CRS Report RL33178, *Japan's Currency Intervention: Policy Issues*, by Dick K. Nanto.

problems in the 1990s and in the first few years of this decade changed the general U.S. perception of Japan as an economic “threat” to one of a country with problems; the rise of China as an economic power has caused U.S. policymakers to shift attention from Japan to China as a source of concern; the increased use by both Japan and the United States of the WTO as a forum for resolving trade disputes has de-politicized disputes and helped to reduce friction; and the emphasis in the bilateral relationship has shifted from economic to security matters.

Bilateral Trade Issues

Japan’s Ban on U.S. Beef.⁷ In December 2003, Japan imposed a ban on imported U.S. beef in response to the discovery of the first U.S. case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE or “mad cow disease”) in Washington state. In the months before the diagnosis in the United States, nearly a dozen Japanese cows infected with BSE had been discovered, creating a scandal over the Agricultural Ministry’s handling of the issue (several more Japanese BSE cases have since emerged). Japan had retained the ban despite ongoing negotiations and public pressure from Bush Administration officials, a reported framework agreement (issued jointly by both governments) in October 2004 to end it, and periodic assurances afterward by Japanese officials to their U.S. counterparts that it would be lifted soon.

In December 2005 Japan lifted the ban after many months of bilateral negotiations but reimposed it in January 2006 after Japanese government inspectors found bone material among the first beef shipments to have arrived from the United States after the ban was lifted. The bone material violated the procedures U.S. and Japanese officials had agreed upon. U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns expressed regret that the prohibited material had entered the shipments.

In July 2006, Japan announced it would resume imports of U.S. beef from cattle 20 months old or younger; the first shipments arrived in August 2006. While praising the decision, some officials have called on Japan to broaden the procedures to include beef from older cattle. Members of the 110th Congress may press Japan to lift restrictions on imports of U.S. beef further. In February 2007, Japan suspended beef shipments from a Tyson’s plant in Nebraska after Japanese inspectors discovered beef from cattle older than 30 months. To date, the action has not affected other shipments of U.S. beef from Japan. In May 2007, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) announced that the United States was a “controlled risk” regarding BSE, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture urged Japan to allow U.S. boned and boneless beef from cattle older than 20 months to enter Japan. The Japanese government has replied that it needs to verify the results of audits of U.S. meat-packing facilities and obtain findings from the Japanese government Food Safety Commission. On August 3, 2007, Japanese officials notified their U.S. counterparts that Japan is considering allowing imports of U.S. beef from cattle up to 30 months of age. The government’s recommendation would have to be approved by the independent Japan Food Commission before it could go into effect.

⁷ For more information, see CRS Report RS21709, *Mad Cow Disease and U.S. Beef Trade*, by Charles Hanrahan and Geoffrey Becker.

The Japanese officials did not say how long this process would take.⁸ At the November 2007 summit meeting in Washington, President Bush raised the beef issue with Fukuda, who said that “[W]e are addressing the beef issue on the basis of scientific findings. We are still in the process of our bilateral meetings.” The change could have a major impact on U.S. exports to beef to Japan, by increasing the share of cattle eligible for export to Japan from 10% of the herd to 90%, according to one analysis. A major concern of Japanese agricultural officials is the ability to trace the origin of beef to ensure compliance with Japanese safety regulations.⁹

U.S.-Japan FTA. With the conclusion of negotiations on a U.S.-South Korean free trade agreement (KORUS FTA) on April 1, 2007, and the formation of FTAs among other East Asian countries, interest seems to have increased in the possibility of a U.S.-Japan FTA. Japanese business leaders are concerned about being adversely affected by the trade preferences that South Korean exporters would gain under the proposed KORUS FTA. In May 2007, a Japanese government advisory panel recommended that Japan undertake the formation of an economic partnership agreement (EPA), Japan’s version of an FTA, with the United States. During their late April 2007 summit meeting, President Bush and Prime Minister Abe touched on the issue. According to a White House fact sheet, they agreed to exchange information about one another’s FTAs and EPAs with third countries. U.S. Ambassador to Japan J. Thomas Schieffer stated in a May speech before the Asia Society that the United States would welcome an FTA with Japan as long as agricultural trade is a part of it. A number of observers have argued that Japan’s restrictions on agricultural imports would be a major stumbling block to an FTA.

Insurance. Market access in Japan for U.S. and other foreign insurance providers has been the subject of bilateral trade agreements and discussion for some time. Current U.S. concerns center around making sure that Japan adheres to its agreements with the United States, especially as Japan’s domestic insurance industry and government regulations of the industry are restructured. Specifically, American firms have complained that little public information is available on insurance regulations, how those regulations are developed, and how to get approval for doing business in Japan. They also assert that government regulations favor insurance companies that are tied to business conglomerates — the keiretsu — making it difficult for foreign companies to enter the market.

The United States and Japan concluded agreements in 1994 and 1996 on access to the Japanese market for U.S. providers of life and non-life insurance and also on maintaining competitive conditions for foreign providers in the specialty insurance market — cancer insurance, hospitalization, nursing care, and personal accident insurance. U.S. and Japanese officials continue to meet under those two agreements, and U.S. providers have been able to expand their presence in Japan under them, according to the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR).

However, the United States has raised concerns about Kampo, the government-owned insurance company under the Japan Postal Service, which offers

⁸ *International Trade Daily*. August 6, 2007.

⁹ *Feedstuffs*. August 13, 2007.

insurance services that directly compete with U.S. and other privately owned providers. The United States has also raised questions about the activities of regulated and unregulated insurance cooperatives, *kyosai*, claiming that these entities do not have to adhere to the same regulations that bind traditional private insurance companies, creating an unfair competitive advantage. A Japanese government privatization framework released in July 2006 generated statements from the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan and from the American Council of Insurers arguing that the privatization plan would allow *Kampo* to compete with foreign insurance providers by offering new products before it has been completely privatized. In February 2007, the Japan Post board announced that the privatization of Japan Post will go ahead as planned on October 1, 2007.

The Byrd Amendment. Japan, together with other major trading partners, challenged U.S. trade laws and actions in the World Trade Organization (WTO). For example, Japan and others challenged the so-called Byrd Amendment (which allows revenues from countervailing duty and antidumping orders to be distributed to those who had been injured). The WTO ruled in Japan's favor. In November 2004, the WTO authorized Japan and the other complainant-countries to impose sanctions against the United States. In September 2005, Japan imposed 15% tariffs on selected imports of U.S. steel products as retaliation, joining the EU and Canada. It is the first time that Japan had imposed punitive tariffs on U.S. products. In the meantime, a repeal of the Byrd Amendment was included in the conference report for S. 1932, the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, that was signed by the President into law (P.L. 109-171) on February 8, 2006. The measure phases out the program over a period ending October 1, 2007.¹⁰ Although Japan has praised the repeal of the Byrd Amendment, it criticized the delayed termination of the program and has maintained the sanctions on imports from the United States. Consequently, Japan announced in August 2006 that it would maintain the tariff sanctions until October 1, 2007, and again extended the sanctions for another year in August 2007.

The Doha Development Agenda. Japan and the United States are major supporters of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA), the latest round of negotiations in the WTO. Yet, the two have taken divergent positions in some critical areas of the agenda. For example, the United States, Australia, and other major agricultural exporting countries have pressed for the reduction or removal of barriers to agricultural imports and subsidies of agricultural production, a position strongly resisted by Japan and the European Union. At the same time, Japan and others have argued that national antidumping laws and actions that member countries have taken should be examined during the DDA, with the possibility of changing them, a position that the United States has opposed.

In July 2006, WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy suspended the negotiations because, among other reasons, the major participants could not agree on the modalities that negotiators would use to determine how much they would liberalize their agricultural markets and reduce agricultural subsidies. Negotiators have been

¹⁰ For more information on the Byrd Amendment, see CRS Report RL33045, *the Continued Dumping and Subsidy Offset Act ("The Byrd Amendment")*, by Jeanne J. Grimmett and Vivian C. Jones.

meeting in smaller groups to try to restart the talks. The resumption of negotiations will depend in large part on whether the United States and Japan, along with the European Union and developing countries, can resolve their differences.

Japanese Political Developments¹¹

Recent Developments

Japan's First-Ever Experience with Divided Government. A landmark election in the summer of 2007 has injected considerable uncertainty into Tokyo's political situation, thereby weakening the clout of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and its ability to influence major issues in the U.S.-Japan relationship. In July 2007 Diet (parliament) elections, the opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) emerged as the largest party in the Diet's Upper House, depriving the LDP of control of the weaker chamber in Japan's bicameral legislature. This is the first time since World War II that the two chambers have been controlled by different parties. The LDP remains the ruling party by virtue of its majority in the more powerful Lower House. The DPJ's victory appears to have been attributable to the Abe Cabinet's political scandals and perceived incompetence, as well as to the DPJ's prioritization of economic issues during the campaign. Public opinion polls indicate growing worries over personal economic security issues such as concerns over the country's aging population, the health of the Japanese pension system, and the growing gap between rich and poor emerging under the Koizumi-era reforms. Although Lower House elections are not required to be held until 2009, the DPJ has adopted a strategy of using its control of the Upper House to pressure the LDP to dissolve the Lower House and hold early elections. Under the Japanese constitution, on most bills, only a two-thirds vote by the Lower House can override Upper House decisions, thereby giving the DPJ considerable ability to delay or block legislation.

Abe's Fall and Fukuda's Rise. In the weeks after its victory, the DPJ scored a victory with Abe's abrupt resignation in September. Abe's departure capped a year of falling approval ratings based on his competence and reformist credentials. Most significantly, it was revealed that the government had lost the records of over 50 million individuals' payments into public pension plans. Abe also was hurt by his decision to readmit into the LDP several former "postal rebels" whom Koizumi had expelled from the party after they had rejected his plan to reform Japan's massive postal system (which includes one of the world's largest financial institutions). Abe's decision to readmit the rebels tainted the LDP's image as a reformist party, a perception that Koizumi had created. A series of other scandals and gaffes from Cabinet members further contributed to the downturn. Abe did achieve two of his goals: upgrading the Japan Defense Agency into a full-fledged ministry and passing a sweeping education reform law, which among other things requires schools to teach "patriotism." Both initiatives were carry-overs from the Koizumi Administration, in which Abe was Chief Cabinet Secretary. Abe also made some incremental gains in pushing along the process to amend Japan's constitution, another of his stated goals.

¹¹ This section was written by Mark Manyin.

On September 23, the LDP selected Yasuo Fukuda, a 71-year old veteran lawmaker and former Chief Cabinet Secretary (Japan's second-most powerful position), to succeed Abe. Two days later, he was sworn in as Prime Minister and quickly announced his cabinet, a line-up of experienced LDP officials with strong factional ties. Most analysts agree that Fukuda's success will depend on his ability to work with the empowered opposition, starting with his two stated priorities of reforming the pension system and renewing the anti-terror legislation that allows Japan to participate in military operations in Afghanistan. However, through early November, the DPJ had effectively paralyzed parliament; the Diet had not passed any legislation since the July elections. The DPJ was successfully placing Fukuda on the defensive almost on a daily basis.

The DPJ's Missteps. This situation apparently led Fukuda in early November to convene three meetings with DPJ head Ichiro Ozawa, during which the two discussed the formation of a "Grand Coalition" that would enable the passage of some version of the anti-terror legislation authorizing Japan's Indian Ocean deployment. According to some reports, the two were nearing an agreement in which the DPJ would be brought into the government and in return the LDP would draft an anti-terror bill stipulating that all overseas military dispatches — including the Indian Ocean deployment — could only be permitted if done under a United Nations mandate. If accurate, the reported deal would have suited Ozawa's needs. Not only would he have achieved his longstanding goal of enabling Japanese deployments under U.N. auspices, but he also had come to believe that the DPJ was unlikely to win an outright majority if early elections for the Lower House were called in 2008. Instead, Ozawa decided the best way to come into power was to set itself up for victory in a later election (say, in 2009) by first entering into a coalition with the LDP to build the DPJ's governing credentials.

However, Ozawa apparently did not discuss the Grand Coalition idea with other members of the DPJ before his meetings with Fukuda. When he finally proposed the idea, DPJ leaders — who for weeks had been single-minded in their focus to force the LDP into calling early elections — objected and criticized Ozawa for moving forward without their consent. Ozawa reacted by announcing his intention to resign. Equally damaging, he stated that his party not only would find it difficult to win in early elections, but that it lacked the capability to govern. DPJ leaders worried that Ozawa and his core supporters might leave the party to form a small coalition with the LDP, thereby giving the LDP control over the Upper House. After several days, Ozawa was persuaded to reverse himself and stay on as head of the Democrats. He has publicly rededicated himself to the cause of forcing early elections.

Implications for the United States. Ozawa's actions have transformed the political dynamic in Japan, seriously damaging the DPJ's newfound image as a potentially responsible governing party, exposing long-standing divisions within the party, and sapping the DPJ of the momentum it had enjoyed since taking the July Upper House elections. As a result, Fukuda's weak hand appears to have been somewhat strengthened, and he may be able to retain his post longer than initially had been thought. Thus, there may be a bit more stability in Japanese politics, at least in the short to medium term, compared to the turmoil that had been expected. If true, this continuity is likely to benefit the United States, for instance by making it easier for the two countries to contain and manage disagreements over North Korea policy,

the realignment of U.S. forces and facilities on Okinawa, the level of Tokyo's contribution to the costs of stationing U.S. troops in Japan, and Tokyo's partial ban on imports of U.S. beef.

Background

In general, Japan's political peculiarities both constrain and enhance U.S. influence over Japanese policy. Compared to most industrialized democracies, the Japanese parliament is structurally weak, as is the office of the prime minister and his cabinet. Though former Prime Minister Koizumi and his immediate predecessors increased politicians' influence relative to Japan's bureaucrats, with important exceptions Japan's policymaking process tends to be compartmentalized and bureaucratized, making it difficult to make trade-offs among competing constituencies on divisive issues. The result is often paralysis or incremental changes at the margins of policy. On some issues this can provide an opening to use foreign pressure (*gaiatsu*) to break policy logjams.

On the other hand, the nature of Japan's policymaking process often makes it difficult for Japanese leaders to reach controversial agreements with foreign countries. Japan's structural debilities also have tended to retard its ability to act decisively and proactively in the international sphere — often to the frustration of the United States — though this characteristic is less pronounced today than the 1990s.

The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ). With its victory in the Upper House, the DPJ has re-emerged as a viable candidate to defeat the LDP and created an opening for a two-party system in Japan. The LDP has ruled almost continuously since its formation in 1955. The results represent a sharp reversal from the DPJ's showing in the 2005 Lower House elections, when the DPJ lost more than one-third of its strength. With this win, the DPJ hopes to build on its earlier progress: in several elections in the early part of the decade, the DPJ steadily increased its strength in the Diet by winning over reform-minded urban and independent voters. In the September 2005 election, however, many of these voters opted for Koizumi's LDP, in part because Koizumi was able to establish himself — rather than the DPJ — as the symbol of reform. In the July 2007 elections, however, the DPJ was able to capitalize on widespread discontent with Abe by emphasizing economic and social security issues, and succeeded in winning over large numbers of voters from the rural areas of Japan, usually an LDP stronghold.

Much of the credit for the DPJ's victory has been accorded to Ozawa's electoral strategy. Ozawa (63) was once a top LDP leader before he defected in mid-1993 to press for sweeping reform in the Japanese political system. Since leaving the LDP, Ozawa has pushed for reforming Japan's political and economic systems, as well as adopting a more assertive and independent foreign policy. Following his selection, Ozawa stated that he would push for "a U.N.-centered national security policy" that has the Japan-U.S. alliance "as a pivot, but emphasizes Asia." In the past, Ozawa has been hampered by what many see as his top-down management style and his political opportunism.

Constitutional Revision. Japan's constitution was drafted in 1946 by the U.S. Occupation authorities, who then imposed it on a reluctant Japanese legislature.

Since the early 1990s, previously strong public opposition to revising the constitution has gradually weakened and public opinion polls now show widespread support for some sort of revision. In October 2005, Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) released its long-awaited draft revision of the Japanese constitution. The most notable changes reduce many — though not all — of the provisions in the war-renouncing clause (Article 9) that set limits on Japan's military activities. After renouncing war and the “threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes,” the proposed revision explicitly states that Japan “shall maintain armed forces for self-defense” that operate under the prime minister and are subject to the Diet's approval and direction. The explicit mention of a military force is designed to rectify the disconnect between the current constitution — which says that “land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained” — and the reality that Japan possesses a Self Defense Force. More importantly, the LDP's draft appears to allow Japan to participate in collective security arrangements by stating that the armed forces “may act in international cooperation to ensure the international community's peace and security.”

Both the LDP and the DPJ are split — with the DPJ's internal divisions much deeper — between relatively hawkish and pacifist wings that appear to be sparring over the question of whether or not conditions (such as United Nations backing) should be attached to the right to join collective security arrangements. In other words, the issue is not whether, but how, Article 9 should be revised, a development that is due in part to increased concerns about North Korea and China. In March 2005, Japan's House of Representatives Research Commission on the Constitution, composed of representatives from various parties, released a report indicating that over two-thirds of members generally favor constitutional provisions allowing Japan to join U.N. collective security arrangements, stipulating the Self-Defense Forces' existence, and maintaining some portion of the war-renouncing clause of Article 9. A wide majority of the commission also favored allowing women to serve as emperor, establishing stronger privacy and environmental rights, creating a constitutional court, and revising Japan's federalist system.

Constitutional amendments must be approved by two-thirds of each chamber of the Diet, after which they are to be “submitted to the people” for majority approval. In May 2007, after over a year of debate, the Diet passed legislation detailing how a national constitutional referendum would be conducted. However, the bill was passed without any significant DPJ support. Indeed, the LDP-led coalition and the DPJ proposed separate referendum bills, dampening hopes for the two camps to cooperate on constitutional revision. Notably, according to the timetable outlined in the bill that passed, the soonest that a national referendum could be held would be three years after a referendum law is passed, i.e. 2010.

Japan's Demographic Challenge

Japan's combination of a low birth rate, strict immigration practices, and a rapidly-ageing population present policymakers with a significant challenge. Polls suggest that Japanese women are avoiding marriage and child-bearing because of the difficulty of combining career and family in Japan; the birthrate has fallen to 1.25, far below the 2.1 rate necessary to sustain a population size. Japan's current population of 128 million is projected to fall to about 100 million by mid-century.

Concerns about a huge shortfall in the labor force have grown, particularly as the elderly demand more care. Japan's National Institute of Population and Social Security Research projects that the working-age population will fall from 85 million in 2005 to 70 million by 2030. Japan's immigration policies have traditionally been strictly limited, but policy adjustments have allowed for a larger foreign labor force. Over 68,000 foreign workers came to Japan in 2006 under a government-sponsored training program, in addition to 80,000 on an extended program.¹² With government encouragement, some private firms offer incentives to employees with children.

Recent Legislation

110th Congress

H.R. 662 (Becerra). Establishes a fact-finding Commission to extend the study of a prior Commission to investigate and determine facts and circumstances surrounding the relocation, internment, and deportation to Axis countries of Latin Americans of Japanese descent from December 1941 through February 1948, and the impact of those actions by the United States, and to recommend appropriate remedies, and for other purposes. Referred to House committee on the Judiciary on 1/24/2007.

H.R. 1570 (Mica). Provides compensation for certain World War II veterans who survived the Bataan Death March and were held as prisoners of war by the Japanese. Referred to House committee on Armed Services on 3/19/2007.

H.R. 3650 (Ros-Lehtinen). Provides for the continuation of restrictions against the government of North Korea unless the President certifies to Congress that the government of North Korea has met certain benchmarks, including releasing the 15 Japanese nationals recognized as abduction victims by the National Police Agency (NPA) of Japan. Referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on 9/25/2007.

H.Res. 109 (Costa). Recognizes the historical significance of the Pinedale Assembly Center, the reporting site for 4,823 Japanese Americans who were unjustly interned during World War II. Passed/agreed to in House on 2/12/2007.

H.Res. 121 (Honda). Expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that the Government of Japan should formally acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner for its Imperial Armed Force's coercion of young women into sexual slavery, known to the world as "comfort women," during its colonial and wartime occupation of Asia and the Pacific Islands from the 1930s through the duration of World War II. Referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on 1/31/2007.

H.Res. 122 (Honda). Recognizes the significance of the 65th anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and

¹² "Foreign Labor Works for Japan," *Wall Street Journal Asia*. May 25, 2007.

supporting the goals of the Japanese American, German American, and Italian American communities in recognizing a National Day of Remembrance to increase public awareness of the events surrounding the restriction, exclusion, and internment of individuals and families during World War II. Passed/agreed to in House on 2/13/2007.

S. 125 (Allard). Establishes the Granada Relocation Center National Historic Site, where more than 10,000 Japanese-Americans were interned between August 1942 and October 1945, as an affiliated unit of the National Park System. Referred to Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on 1/4/2007.

S. 1021 (Stabenow). Addresses the exchange-rate misalignment of the Japanese yen with respect to the United States dollar, and for other purposes. Referred to Senate Committee on Finance on 3/28/2007.

S. 1686, Sec. 6 (Landrieu). Establishes a United States-Japan Inter-parliamentary Group to meet once per Congress with representatives of the Diet of Japan for discussion of common problems in the interest of relations between the United States and Japan. Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders on 6/25/2007.

109th Congress

P.L. 109-5 (S. 384). Extends the existence of the Nazi War Crimes and Japanese Imperial Government Records Interagency Working Group for two years. Passed by both houses and signed into law by President Bush in March 2005.

P.L. 109-97 (H.R. 2744). The Agriculture Appropriations Act of 2006. Signed into law (P.L. 109-97) November 10, 2005. The Senate-passed version included two amendments, adopted on September 20, 2005, that would have denied funds to implement a rule to lift the U.S. ban on Japanese beef until Japan has lifted its ban on imports of U.S. beef (S.Amdt. 1732 agreed to by a vote of 72-26); and that expressed the sense of the Senate that the U.S. ban on imported Japanese beef should remain in place until Japan has lifted its ban on imports of U.S. beef (S.Amdt. 1738, agreed to by voice vote). House and Senate conferees did not include either amendment in the final bill, though the conference report (H.Rept. 109-255) says Congress “clearly reserve[s] the right to impose restrictions similar to those suggested by the Senate if there is not a swift resolution to this issue.”

P.L. 109-114 (H.R. 2528). Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act of 2006. Section 118 requires the Defense Department to report by February 15 on U.S. efforts to encourage Japan and other allied countries to increase their share of the allied defense burden. Became public law on November 30, 2005.

P.L. 109-171 (S. 1932). The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. The conference report includes a repeal of the Byrd Amendment. Received final congressional action on February 1, 2006, and was signed by the President into law on February 8, 2006. The measure phases out the program over a period ending October 1, 2007.

H.Con.Res. 68 (Evans). Expresses the sense of Congress that the Government of Japan should formally issue a clear and unambiguous apology for the sexual enslavement of “comfort women” during the colonial occupation of Asia. Introduced March 17, 2005; referred to House Asia Pacific Subcommittee.

H.Con.Res. 168 (Hyde). Condemns the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea for the abductions and continued captivity of citizens of the Republic of Korea and Japan. Passed by the House (362-1) on July 11, 2005; referred to Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

H.Con.Res. 191 (Hyde). Commemorates the 60th anniversary of the conclusion of the War in the Pacific and reaffirms the judgments rendered by the International Military Tribunal for the Far East of 1946-1948, including the conviction of certain individuals as war criminals. Passed by the House (399-0) on July 14, 2005; referred to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

H.Con.Res. 311 (Ramstad)/S.Con.Res. 67 (Coleman). Urges Japan to honor its commitments under a 1986 bilateral agreement on medical equipment and pharmaceuticals. House bill introduced December 7, 2005; referred to House Ways and Means Committee. Senate bill introduced November 18, 2005; referred to Foreign Relations Committee.

H.R. 4179 (Salazar) and S. 1922 (Conrad). Require the President to impose extra tariffs on various Japanese products beginning on January 1, 2006, if Japan has not lifted its ban on imports of U.S. beef. H.R. 4179 introduced October 28, 2005; referred to House Ways and Means Committee. S. 1922 introduced October 26, 2005; referred to Senate Finance Committee.

H.Res. 137 (Moran)/S.Res. 87 (Thune). Expresses the sense of the respective Houses that the U.S. government should impose economic sanctions against Japan if it does not lift its ban on U.S. beef. Neither resolution has seen committee action.

H.Res. 321 (Leach). Expresses support for a “regionally balanced expansion” of the membership of the United Nations Security Council, which would include adding Japan, India, Germany, Brazil, and an African country. Introduced June 15, 2005; referred to the House Committee on International Relations.

H.Res. 759 (Evans). Expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that the Government of Japan should formally acknowledge and accept responsibility for its sexual enslavement of young women, known to the world as “comfort women,” during its colonial occupation of Asia and the Pacific Islands from the 1930s through the duration of World War II, and for other purposes. Committee Agreed to Seek Consideration Under Suspension of the Rules (Amended) by Unanimous Consent.

S. 377 (Lieberman). Requires negotiation and appropriate action with Japan, China, and other countries that have engaged in currency manipulation. Introduced February 15, 2005; referred to Senate Finance Committee