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AJISS-Commentary

Japan and the Transformation of the United Nations - Catalyzing a Comprehensive Collective Security for Our Common Future

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Introduction

On the occasion of his first formal General Debate address at the United Nations General Assembly in the *Reiwa* era (2019), Prime Minister Shinzo Abe openly called for the audience to "recall" the principles of the United Nations, has walked a path that has been steadfast, always intending to strengthen the United Nations." He further added that "(F)or the UN, which has now come three quarters of its founding, structural reform, especially that of the Security Council, is absolutely imperative for the realization of such reform." It was Japan's latest call to "transform" the UN, in terms of its model and performance to be more relevant and effective in building a better world for our future.

Certainly without its dynamic reform, the 15-member UN Security Council, whose permanent powerful veto power are still limited to the 5 victors of the World War II - the United States, France, the Russian Federation and China, who are also nuclear weapon states - would not the progress of the post-war world as well as enhancing the legitimacy of its decisions. The permanent membership to this body, once approved, together with other eligible countries' true departure from the historical baggage but its much anticipated update to reflect the new world.

1. Japan's transformative role in the transformation of the UN

The UN today needs transformation well beyond the Security Council reform, too. Japan's role in that process. Recalling the entire history of Japan's engagement with the UN, one can see a reversal from wartime enemy to indispensable member of this world body. Indeed over the years from *Showa* to *Heisei* to current *Reiwa* eras, Japan also has transformed itself to a leading industrial power, playing highly responsible roles in the UN.

On the diplomatic front, the Abe Administration has put forward the policy of "Proactive Contribution to Peace" based on the principles of international cooperation and pursued to ensuring the peace, stability and the international community. In this regard, today's UN proves to be an important policy instrument that advances its national interests as well as multilateral initiatives for global issues ranging from (North Korea, UN PKOs <Peacekeeping Operations> and Peacebuilding, disarmament and just a few) to development (SDGs <Sustainable Development Goals>, UHC <Universal Health Coverage> <Disaster Risk Reduction> and environment, particularly climate action, for example) and humanitarian affairs. Japan has actively engaged in the UN reform process, so as to become more effective and fit for purpose within available resources. Tokyo therefore is fully engaged in supporting the Secretary-General's initiative of management and sustainable development system reforms in highly professional manners.

2. The UN's Four Governance Models and Japan

As it enters the third decade of the new millennium and Japan enters the *Reiwa* era, the world faces a chain of mutually intertwined challenges: Protracted conflicts across and within borders, terrorism, extremism, devastating environmental and natural disasters, which are growingly exacerbating economic inequalities, migration, and global health, to list the least. Nothing is more apparent in our globalized world, a crisis in a remote corner of the world can spread across the globe much more rapidly than we imagine, just as evident in the ongoing pandemic of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19). While women's empowerment still need to be highlighted while making determined efforts to tackle gender-based violence cases. The rapid game-changing progress in science, technology and innovation must be managed so as to avoid any negative repercussions.

Under these circumstances, we will realize that "collective security" today would no longer political and defense perspective alone but encapsulate the measures to protect and emp from social, economic and environmental challenges as well as taking actions against glob security agenda. In this comprehensive way, every nation can ensure its pathway to achie national efforts and international partnership and by bring both public and private stakehc do we proceed? This is the test we face today. And for the UN to be relevant and effective needed catalytic role, it requires yet another, the fourth, transformation of its governance propose to introduce here is "*comprehensive collective security*" - and I believe that Japar help promote the UN to perform its expected role.

Before jumping to the blueprint of the *comprehensive collective security* model, however, previous three incarnations of the United Nations: mechanisms for *collective self-defense security* and collective (human) security. The UN, as today's most universal inter-governm already incorporated these functions in its mandates over the years as it expands its scop process was intrinsically linked to the Japan's history in *Showa* and *Heisei* eras.

The first governance model of the UN is *collective self-defense*. While it is often overlooked formed as an alliance during World War II brought together by the "Declaration by United N The "United Nations" here meant two things: One was to join forces to "complete victory" Axis and the other was to unite against "mak(ing) a separate armistice or peace with the Imperial Japan was clearly an enemy to the UN. This right of self-defense, both individual subsequently enshrined in Article 51 of the current UN Charter.

The UN's second governance model is collective (national) security. It was embodied in th Franklin Roosevelt, turning the war-time alliance into a general international organization order. This world body succeeded the name "The United Nations." And the heart of its ma international peace and security" and "to that end: to take effective collective measures fc removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other bre wonder that Showa Imperial Japan, which announced its surrender after the UN Charter v was initially slated as one of the "enemy" states who were suspected to pose threats to th

This is a classic ramification of *collective security* among sovereign nations in international least, to deem an aggression to one country the concern of all. The international commun response in the event when threats to, and breaches of, peace were posed by aggressor(s) Council was tasked to decide on actions including coercive military, as well as non-military maintain or restore international peace and security. This procedure was incorporated in t Chapter VII. And the UN-authorized coalition against the first post-Cold War crisis of Iraqi Gulf War of 1991 - was one such case in point.

In fact, the end of Cold War coincides with the start of *Heisei* Japan in 1989. And Japan's articulated by then-Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita. In his historic speech in London in M new foreign policy of "Japan contributing to the world," which had three elements: namel

for international peace, strengthening international cultural exchange, and the expansion of development assistance (ODA). It was a precursor for subsequent adoption, though after international criticism of "too little, too late" in spite of its massive financial contribution of multinational force in the Gulf, of the International Peace Cooperation Act of 1992. It has over 12,000 Japan Self-Defense Forces (SDF) members to contribute to 14 peacekeeping operations to date in such places like Cambodia, Timor Leste, Haiti and South Sudan.

Then came the third model in the 1990s which captured a paradigm shift in the UN, starting on human dimension through collective actions - what I call the "*collective (human) security*" for the lives of people and communities in complex conflict, humanitarian and developmental trends here: One is an approach, by employing the doctrine of "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P) to protect populations from the following four extremely atrocious situations: namely, genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The other is a variety of peace-development-humanitarian response, based on the concept of *human security*, which is defined in the UN context as "an approach to assist in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of people" (UNGA Resolution A/RES/66/290). *Heisei* Japan has been a main proponent of the UN Trust Fund for Human Security in 1999 and supporting its mandated roles ever since to protect people, including women and youth, who are in vulnerable economic, food, health, environmental, community and political situations.

3. Japan and the UN in *Reiwa* Era - Catalyzing a *Comprehensive Collective Security* for the Future

It was Secretary-General Antonio Guterres who rightly analyzed that "(H)uman security, human development and human rights are indivisible," in his speech in Geneva in May 2018. Indeed, the world today needs to make this indivisibility of security a reality. The proposed "*comprehensive collective security*" aims to achieve exactly this indivisibility of security interests of people, nations, and the planet by utilizing the tools of the UN.

Random mix of tools and expertise and resources, however, do not work. A *comprehensive* perspective should be introduced to better address the issues comprehensively in three dimensions: one is to identify the local context by examining the inter-linkages among affected populations, relevant actors, and global/trans-border environments involved with evidence, two is to define "security" beyond the traditional military sense and to incorporate specific socio-economic-environmental lenses, and three is to involve collectively gathered actors, local and international combined, including UN organs with expertise and other relevant actors, both public and private. Civil society and business are important to help design the set of specific projects to comprehensively improve the security of a group of people, nations, governments, and the planet under vulnerable situations, raise and allocate the necessary resources, and collaborate among a like-minded "coalition" to provide the solution to the issues at stake.

The set of global consensus we reached in 2015 under the UN auspices are the key found to build on: Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on climate a Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for others.

The High-level Segment of the 74th UN General Assembly in 2019, or *Reiwa 1*, was exceptional to discuss issues of high profile that ranged from SDGs, Climate Actions, and Universal Health for Development on top of annual General Debates by heads of states and governments. At the SDGs Summit, Prime Minister Abe stated, by laying out his recent leadership roles: "Japan building and human resources development all over the world, founded on the philosophy to realize a society where no one is left behind, which is what the SDGs stand for. With this spirit, at the G20 Osaka Summit and TICAD7 which were held in Japan this year, as the chair presiding the debate to address issues such as environment, education, health, quality infrastructure, and technology innovation." This remark exemplified Japan's willingness and capabilities to expand partnership roles that the world of today anticipates.

In *Reiwa* era, it is my expectation that Japan will lead a constructive and creative role, while designing and implementing "*comprehensive collective security*" initiatives to improve speed in the way we can collectively save and empower people, promote national SDGs implementation, transborder environmental challenges through national ownership and international partnership would be more impactful as it becomes the new permanent member of the UN Security Council at a possible timing.

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