

Introduction

What's New about "Democracy and Diplomacy in East Asia"?

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This volume assembles the papers presented at the international conference sponsored by the *Todai-Yale* Initiative, titled "Democracy and Diplomacy in East Asia," held at Kojima Hall, the University of Tokyo, on September 16, 2011. The meeting concluded the second (2010-11) cycle of cooperation in political studies between Yale University and the University of Tokyo, organized by Professor Jun Saito at Yale and myself. We expect the papers in this volume to be revised and published, following the path of last year's (2009-2010) project. The proceedings of last year's project has been published by this Journal (in a special edition titled "A Tectonic Shift? Structural developments, Koizumi reforms, and the collapse of LDP rule"), and a revised Japanese version is in press at the University of Tokyo Press.

In this brief note, I will introduce the purpose of our project, stressing that it is not intended to be another volume on the current foreign affairs of East Asia. Admittedly, like the earlier project, the inspiration came from actual political developments in Japan, originally discussed at a series of conferences on Japanese foreign policy under the new DPJ (Democratic Party of Japan) government, which were held at Yale and Columbia under the sponsorship of the Boston Consulate of Japan. Among the wide range of topics discussed at the meeting, the primary topic was the ongoing confusion of the Hatoyama government's attempt to renegotiate the *Futenma* Air Base relocation, which eventually brought the government down in a matter of months. Everyone seemed bewildered as to why Hatoyama, who was clueless about (as it turned out) how to settle the issue, would risk his premiership and waste precious political capital on a seemingly impossible foreign policy mission, only to endanger ties with the United States. More generally, how could a government with an historical mandate and invincible majority implode in a most embarrassing way less than a year after being ushered into power?

The puzzle turned into a research question that asked, (a) what foils partisan attempts to change foreign policy at democratic regimes, is it external constraints or democratic institutions, and (b) does that element work to ensure foreign policy adjustments in spite of changes in the ruling party? We eventually turned our initial bafflement into a research agenda via two steps: firstly, in addressing the *why Futenma* question, we realized that when the opposition comes into power after a long period of one-party rule, it tends to propagate an ambitious anti-incumbent platform, which in the case of the East Asian democratic states includes an ambivalence towards, if not a repudiation of, close political ties with the United States. Secondly,

What's New about "Democracy and Diplomacy in East Asia"?

in trying to figure out whether the *Futenma* issue was doomed from the beginning, we started to ask why some partisan attempts to change foreign policy fails while others do not? Does the factor that hinders abrupt and hasty policy shifts also ensures stable foreign policy adjustment in democratic regimes? The first question illuminated the cases we should examine, and the second question remained as the project's core research question.

In investigating our research question, we found that the impact of partisan competition on democratic foreign policy change to be an area relatively unexplored in the relevant literature of international relations and foreign policy studies. In the international relations literature, the paradoxical observation that democracies seem capable of maintaining policy continuity, or making credible policy commitments, in spite of leadership changes is made in studies using formal modeling that stress the constraints the voters impose on their leaders (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 1999, 2002). Although sophisticated and enlightening, the literature does not model party competition and hence fails to address our concern; that is, whether democracies can remain committed to a certain policy regardless of governmental power being transferred to parties that hold international outlooks that are opposed to those of their predecessors.

Furthermore, our review of the foreign policy literature, mainly pertaining to the United States, did not provide much guidance. Indeed, the literature on U.S. foreign policymaking seems to have shadowed the developments in the institution analysis of domestic policymaking in the United States, progressing from the Two Presidencies thesis (Shull ed. 1991), to the Congress resurgent theme, and to the divided power theme. While the Two Presidencies thesis was unique in claiming Presidents are allowed a large amount of autonomy in foreign policy in contrast to domestic policy, further developments in the literature reflected the predominant view of domestic policy making and became preoccupied with the tug of war between the President and the Congress, especially its majority party. For instance, the Congress resurgent theme (Ripley and Lindsay eds. 1993, Peterson ed. 1994) resonates with the conditional party government theme in domestic politics, both claiming that the majority Congressional party has strong influence on policy outcomes, overshadowing the President (Edwards 1989, Bond and Fleisher 1990, Rohde 1991, Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2005, Aldrich 1995). Similarly, the divided power theme (Kelley ed. 2005) reflects the divided politics theme in domestic politics, which focused on whether, divided government leads to policy indecision and gridlock (Bond and Fleisher eds. 2000, Binder 2003, Mayhew 2005). However, the current theoretical interest in American politics on the possibility of a partisan balance (Mayhew 2011) in a highly polarized atmosphere has not extended to foreign policymaking (cf. Nivola and Brady eds. 2008, Abramowitz 2010). Hence, the issue of whether foreign policy is affected by the change of government party when the parties are ideologically polarized remains unexplored.

Naturally, the fact that we have a research question that is new and has yet to be explored is exciting and challenging. To fruitfully pursue this venue, we decided to examine three East

Asian governments, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan to formulate a general idea of the reality we seek to theoretically explain. As mentioned above the three cases have recently experienced a break from one-party dominance, in the case of Korea and Taiwan under authoritarian rule, and they share a common international economic and security environment.

Our tentative conclusions derived from the conference papers and presentations, most of which are included in this volume, can be summarized as the following: Firstly, democracies seem capable of pursuing economic reforms and trade agreements when positioning parties can compromise, reflecting the interests of the general public, to accommodate the policies of other countries (the Hiwatari paper, the Koo paper, and the Hoshiro paper); secondly, U.S. ties with East Asia or territorial issues within the region are likely to be valence issues and removed from partisan political agenda (the Tago paper and the Wan paper as well as Hee Min Kin paper not included in this volume); and finally, partisan attempts to change the status quo policy are likely to fail unless supported by other countries and is founded on bipartisanship (the Niou paper, the Matsuda paper as well as Yeongun Kim and Saito papers not included in this volume). A word is warranted about the three papers missing from this collection: The Yeongun Kim paper was accepted by an international journal prior to being presented at the conference, the Hee Min Kin paper will not appear since the author wished to make further revisions to fit the overall theme, and the Satio paper was not completed in time due to personal problems. As such, we were unable to incorporate these papers in this volume.

Readers will realize that although all the papers in this volume are completed articles, an improved and extended introduction and further revisions of each paper are necessary to produce as a coherent volume that fully addresses the research question posed earlier. That is exactly the task we are currently engaged in. However, although the published volume may be more polished, coherent, and focused, such benefits may come at the cost of each paper losing their individuality as complete and self-contained articles. Such is the reason why we think that it is desirable and appropriate to publish the papers in their original form as a conference proceedings volume.

Finally, any organizer of academic conferences knows that international conferences can only succeed with the help of a larger number of people in addition to the paper presenters. These people richly deserve our thanks. At the first Yale meeting, Jessica Weiss (Yale University) generously shared the essence of her book project now in print, and Frances Rosenbluth (Yale University) and Keisuke Iida (University of Tokyo) kindly served as invaluable commentators. As usual, Anne Letterman (The Council on East Asian Studies, Yale University) did an excellent job setting up the meeting assisted by Seki Tanaka, Su Kyeong Yun, Hiroko Ichikawa, and Takeshi Umekawa (all affiliated with University of Tokyo/Yale University). The meeting was supported by The Todai-Yale Initiative (University of Tokyo) and the Council on East Asian Studies (Yale University). For the second Tokyo meeting, Kimura Kan (Kobe University), Gregory Noble, and Atsushi Ishida joined Keisuke Iida to discuss our papers (all

What's New about "Democracy and Diplomacy in East Asia"?

three from University of Tokyo). Midori Fujiyama, Shin Sudo (both of Institute of Social Sciences, University of Tokyo), and Natsu Matsuda (Yale University/University of Tokyo) undertook the organizational tasks necessary to make the meeting a memorable success. The meeting was sponsored by The Todai-Yale Initiative, Institute of Social Sciences (University of Tokyo), the Council on East Asian Studies (Yale University), and received additional funding from the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science, the Japan Foundation's Center for Global Partnership and the Friends of Todai Inc.

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