

JIAP OBSERVATION

WELL, I HAVEN'T GOT TIME TO TELL YA: Small Hearted Japan

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If the movie "High Noon" as any relevance to the Japan-US relationship [which I did not find], it is Gary Cooper's consistent response when asked why he stayed to defend an ungrateful town. Cooper, as the stoic Marshall Kane, would look wearily at the questioner and respond that if he had to ask that question, he would never understand. At one point he retorts, "I haven't got time to tell ya." Thus is the nature of the unrequited relationship between the US and Japan over the war against terrorism, or security policy in general.

For the Japanese, the issue remains, as the Japanese say, "a fire on the other shore." Terrorism in the US or anywhere is not a concern of Japan; it does not affect Japan. The US is arrogant and demanding of some sort of loyalty oath. If anything, terrorist activities are a local policing problem and not one for militaries. There is growing resentment and surprise by US requests for intelligence sharing and US laws that require greater scrutiny of foreign financial institutions.

For Americans, everything about 9/11 was a unifying moment that crossed cultures, countries, and suspicions. What had to be done was obvious, unquestionable, and unequivocal. Terrorism was an international problem requiring an international cooperative response. US allies had a special obligation to assist. Thus American surprise when that did not happen with Japan. Even the smallest gestures such as newspaper ads of condolences were late and spare. In one ad, most Japanese signatories refused to sign their family names. This is incomprehensible in the US.

The Bush Administration understands that any movement toward a more internationally responsive security policy in Japan is progress. Nonetheless, officials and analysts will remain forever disappointed that Japan's contribution to the terrorism effort may, in the end, be unfulfilled promises, debate, and whispered concessions. In comparison, Japan's begrudging 1991 Gulf War contribution of \$13 billion starts to look good.

US officials recognize that Japan is not Britain and understand Japan's political complexities. The White House knows that militarily Japan cannot be relied upon and maybe not even trusted, but they did expect a culturally more positive response. As one government expert noted, that if Japan does not do more than before, he will "forever look at Japan differently." He continued: "Those who know me know that I love Japan dearly, but even I would have a hard time forgiving her if she failed to stand beside the US without qualifications and caveats." Americans do not understand why Japan did not have the same visceral emotional response to 9/11 that this was an attack on all civilization. Herein lies the greatest gap and challenge in US-Japan relations.

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