

# JAPAN AND THE PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES

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*The present paper looks at the Japan-South Pacific Forum Summit Meeting held in April 2000 (PALM 2000) and asks what it is about the Forum Island States that prompted Japan to make such an effort. The focus is on the post-war period, but a brief historical overview is included. In particular two issue areas which both link and divide Japan and the Pacific are addressed: nuclear concerns (testing, waste dumping and waste transport) and tuna/skipjack fisheries (EEZ access, international and regional management efforts, drift nets). The final section is an overview of political initiatives such as the establishment of the Pacific Island Centre in Tokyo and PALM 2000. The conclusion is that for Japan, the Forum Island Countries are important for certain natural resources, sea and shipping lanes, access to deep sea minerals and support in the United Nations and other international fora.*

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*Cet article s'intéresse aux conclusions du sommet PALM 2000 (Japan-South Pacific Forum Summit qui s'est tenu en avril 2000). L'auteur s'interroge d'abord sur les raisons qui ont conduit le Japon à vouloir organiser ce forum. Après une brève introduction historique, l'axe central des réflexions porte sur la période qui s'étend de l'après-guerre à nos jours. En particulier, sont abordées les deux questions qui à la fois opposent et unissent le Japon et les autres pays du Pacifique : celle du nucléaire (essais, transport et retraitement des déchets radioactifs) et celle des droits de pêche (accès aux zones économiques, coopération régionale et internationale, problème des filets dérivants). Dans une dernière partie l'auteur récapitule l'ensemble des initiatives politiques qui ont pu être prises jusqu'à ce jour, telles que la mise en place du Pacific Island Centre à Tokyo et PALM 2000. Il conclut à l'importance qu'elles revêtent pour le Japon, agissant en collaboration avec les instances internationales dont les Nations Unies, en matière notamment de gestion des ressources naturelles, de transports maritimes et d'accès aux gisements de nodules.*

## I INTRODUCTION

In April 2000, Japan hosted the second Japan-South Pacific Forum Summit Meeting called 'PALM (Pacific Island Leaders Meeting) 2000'. This event was a precursor to the July

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G-8 meeting hosted by Japan, and was a display of not only Japan's political good will toward the Forum Island Countries (FICs), but also included considerable economic commitments. One could, with reason, look at PALM 2000 and wonder why Japan would go to so much trouble.

This paper will try to provide some answers to that question. It will focus on Japan as a state, rather than the Japanese people. After giving some brief historical background, it will look primarily at two areas which have been of concern throughout the period since World War II, but especially since the 1970's: nuclear issues and fisheries. It will conclude with a look at some of the major initiatives toward the Pacific, such as PALM 2000, as well as covering briefly some other areas of concern.

## II HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS

Japan has a long history of involvement with the Pacific, and Japanese voyagers have been found in most Pacific islands. Interest in the Pacific islands became particularly great in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the islands to the south were seen as an area for potential colonial expansion. An intellectual and, later, military theory of southward expansion called *Nanshinron* focused first on the 'inner' route south from Okinawa to Taiwan, Hong Kong, Indo-China and southward. After World War I, emphasis changed to the 'outer' route through the Ogasawara Islands to the Marianas, Carolines, and then on to New Guinea and Australia (Yano, 1979: 80-82). *Nanshinron* was accompanied by a romantic interest in the Pacific, promoted by such authors as Mori Koben, who lived in Truk in the 1890's and wrote a popular cartoon called *Boken Dankichi*. By the early twentieth century, there was also quite a substantial, if one-sided, commercial relationship established between Japan and the closer Micronesian islands through such enterprises as the South Seas Trading Company.

Japan's colonial expansion into the Pacific began at the outbreak of World War I, when a Japanese naval force occupied the Micronesian islands that were at the time German territories. This was the beginning of what Prime Minister Mori characterized at PALM 2000 as "the sad period of the war" (Mori, 2000). The navy established a military headquarters on Truk (present Chuuk) Island and created six administrative districts: Saipan, Yap, Palau, Truk, Ponape (present Pohnpei) and Jaluit (Marshall Islands). In 1921, the former German possessions north of the equator were placed under Japanese civilian control by the League of Nations through a Class 'C' Mandate, which continued until World War II. The Japanese carried out extensive phosphate mining and sugar production, bringing in huge numbers of people as both laborers and for administration. Islanders were given three years of education which, as the war approached, became more and more focused on both physical and moral support for the war effort. With the beginning of the Pacific War, Islanders in not only the mandated islands but in islands throughout the region were involved. Many were recruited by one side or the other as coast watchers,

construction workers or in other military capacities. This was often brutal and dangerous work. In addition, limited island resources were diverted to the war effort and the combat devastated the fragile island environments. It was particularly hard on those who lived within the Japanese occupied territories and whose villages became battlefields. The Islanders recruited to work by the Japanese did so under extremely harsh conditions and many did not survive. The war brought death not only in combat, but also from starvation and disease (Howe, 1994: 153-161).

After World War II, the islands of Micronesia came under US administration through the establishment of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Prior to the war, Japan had developed extensive commercial interests in Micronesia, most of which were destroyed by the extensive bombing and fighting in the islands. Much of what was left was destroyed by the new US administration. When the US Trust Territory was formed, US policy prevented Japanese involvement in the islands. Moreover, Japanese distant water fishing, which had been extensive in the Pacific, was seriously curtailed by the establishment of the MacArthur Line<sup>1</sup> which remained in effect until the Peace Treaty was signed in 1952. It was not really until the late sixties and early seventies that Japan again began to express official interest in the Pacific Island countries.

In addition to strategic considerations centering on access to resources, there were also military concerns. *Nanshinron* called for expansion to the islands as stepping-stones to the rest of the region, but also as insulation for Japan against outside forces. During the cold war, the US used a similar concept, 'strategic denial' to justify control of the Pacific Islands, claiming that rather than having an active interest in possession, it was merely denying first Japan, and then the Soviet Union, the opportunity to have access to the islands. Japan used the same kind of logic with regard to the other colonial powers in the Pacific.

In addition to providing justification for military expansion southward, the non-military aspects of *Nanshinron* gave an intellectual basis for claims of similarity. The idea of the Great East-Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere was never fully developed with regard to the Pacific Islands. At the same time, the claim of 'similarity,' be it geographical, cultural or merely a negation of Western affiliation, remains an important element of the way the Pacific islands are viewed from Japan. An example of this would be the characterization of Japan and the FICs as the 'same' because they are all island countries (Mori, 2000) or the current trend of referring to Japan as 'Japonesia,' but only in the context of the Pacific. These superficial claims to similarity are echoed in the idea of 'partnership,' which refers to a cooperative relationship but not necessarily to one on equal footing. No one in Japan, least

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1 General MacArthur announced the first restrictions in August, but these were soon revised. On 27 September 1945, the first MacArthur Line was established. The line was moved back four times, but still comprised only about one-sixth of Japan's present 200-mile zone (Kawai, 1994: 52-55).

of all the proponents of 'Japonesia,' would claim that in the realm of economics the FICs are equal to Japan. Most Japanese would make the same claim for politics and in some cases even for culture.

An aspect of this claim to 'similarity' which bears particular mention in the context of Japan-FIC relations is that of nuclear victimization. As both Japan and the Pacific Islands have suffered from the effects of nuclear contamination at the hands of a foreign power, Japan makes a claim to nuclear solidarity with the Pacific. Japan not only experienced the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but a number of fishing vessels were contaminated in the 1 March 1954 US hydrogen bomb test at Bikini. Fallout from the test caused the death of the radio operator of the *Lucky Dragon No 5*, a tuna boat, as well as contamination of the catch.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, Japan claims special status in the realm of non-nuclear policy, making a clear distinction between the *hibakusha* (nuclear victims) who are victims of nuclear contamination as a result of nuclear weapons used in war and other *hibakusha* who were contaminated in other ways, including as a result of nuclear weapons testing.<sup>3</sup> Here, too, we can see layers of 'equality' within a 'partnership' relationship. As we will see, this becomes relevant in the context of nuclear waste disposal and transport.

### III NUCLEAR CONCERNS

After the contamination of the *Lucky Dragon* in 1954, the anti-nuclear movement in Japan gained momentum, taking a firm stand against nuclear weapons and nuclear testing. Since that time, it has maintained a clear and unified stance in opposition to nuclear weapons and nuclear war. At the same time, the Japanese anti-nuclear movement soon developed two major internal contradictions. One concerned nuclear testing; the movement was initially united against all nuclear testing, but it soon split. While all factions remained opposed to US atmospheric testing, the Communist Party elected not to oppose Soviet testing. The other contradiction concerned nuclear power. The Japanese anti-nuclear movement grew out of opposition to wars of aggression and to the use of weapons of mass destruction. As such, the question of nuclear power was seen as a separate issue. It was thus possible to oppose nuclear weapons and nuclear testing, while at the same time supporting nuclear power. This division of nuclear weapons and nuclear power is what allowed Japan on the one hand to claim solidarity with the Pacific over nuclear issues and on the other, try to

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2 Within a month of the test, tuna prices in Tokyo dropped 21.9% for offshore tuna, 29.4% for yellowfin, and 49.4% for bigeye. A total of 326.3 tons of tuna was discarded (Matsuda 1987: 86). The US government paid Japan US\$2 million in compensation for the contamination: \$216,000 for the *Lucky Dragon No. 5* (*Dai 5 Fukuryu Maru*), the most heavily contaminated vessel, and the rest for damage to 683 other Japanese ships (Micronesia Support Committee 1983, p 28 and Hata (1988).

3 The term *hibakusha* is written two different ways in Japanese, one for Hiroshima and Nagasaki victims; and another for others. This difference is in the nature of the explosion.

dump nuclear waste in the region. Even today, there is a significant part of the anti-nuclear/peace movement which is at best silent on the issue of nuclear power.

At present, about one-third of Japan's electricity comes from nuclear power and it is perhaps the only developed country still devoted to the expansion of its nuclear industry. Leaving aside the question of overall safety, the most difficult issues for the nuclear industry are where to build new nuclear facilities and where to dispose of nuclear waste. People are growing increasingly aware of the potential danger of nuclear facilities, including waste disposal facilities, especially in an earthquake-prone country. At the same time, people are generally convinced that in a country with high levels of energy consumption and few energy resources, nuclear power is a necessary evil. Moreover, the government claims that nuclear power is the only reasonable alternative to the use of fossil fuels to meet Japan's energy needs.<sup>4</sup> As a result, Japan continues to use nuclear power and the government and power companies are stuck with the problem of how to dispose of the waste. One partial solution is to export it; another is to reprocess it. In either instance, the problem for the Japanese government has been how to do it without causing an international uproar.<sup>5</sup>

Japan's first attempt at exporting nuclear waste came in 1980 with the announcement by the Science and Technology Agency that the Japanese government would begin the experimental dumping of low-level nuclear waste in the Pacific. The 2 February 1980 edition of the *Pacific Daily News* (Guam) announced that "The Japanese government plans early next year to dump between 5,000 and 10,000 drums of low-level radioactive waste in the ocean about 600 miles north of Maug, an uninhabited island at the northern tip of the Mariana archipelago." Experimental dumping was to begin in 1981, following the ratification of the London Dumping Convention, and full-scale dumping would begin two or three years later, and would be conducted annually. The experimental dumping was to take place in the Pacific at one of four sites, 800-2100 km east of Tokyo. The plan was outlined in a glossy pamphlet published by the government in both English and Japanese entitled *Dumping at the Pacific*.

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4 This is of course an on-going issue with Japan and the FICs because of the problem of global warming and sea-level rise. Japan has yet to ratify the 1997 Kyoto Protocol on lowering greenhouse gas emissions.

5 As of March, 1999, Japan had 84,000 200-litre drum cans of 'uranium waste'. It is estimated that by 2030, this will have increased to 560,000 drum cans. As Japanese are increasingly opposed to having waste stored locally, it is generally believed that ultimately this waste will be exported. At present, the most likely places seem to be Mongolia, Kazakhstan, central China or Russia. (Official Record of the 17<sup>th</sup> Radioactive Waste Symposium, Omiya City, 16 October 2000, [http://www.mext.go.jp/a\\_menu/shinkou/shinpo/00\\_17/giji7\\_02.html,01/03/16](http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shinkou/shinpo/00_17/giji7_02.html,01/03/16)).

Pacific Island leaders were shocked to learn of the dumping plans and, much to the surprise of the Japanese government, they responded with fast and strong opposition. The South Pacific Forum, already sensitive to nuclear issues because of French testing in the region, condemned the plan at the 11<sup>th</sup> South Pacific Forum (Port Vila, Vanuatu, 1981). The 14<sup>th</sup> South Pacific Forum (Funafuti, Tuvalu, 1984) called the dumping plan 'intolerable' and expressed commitment toward work on the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Natural Resources of the Pacific (South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme, 1986) which was to prohibit ocean dumping of nuclear waste.<sup>6</sup> In addition, Nauru and Kiribati immediately joined the London Dumping Convention and successfully lobbied for a moratorium on nuclear waste dumping. This made it impossible for the government to go through with its plans, although they remained hopeful. Even as late as 1988, Science and Technology Agency official Goto Hiroshi confirmed that "The Japanese government has not changed its basic policy to dispose of low-level radioactive wastes through a combination of sea-disposal and land- disposal" (*Islands Business*, 1988:10: 46-47).

The Japanese government responded to Pacific Island opposition to the waste dumping plan by sending out teams of experts to explain the nature and safety of the proposal. These explanations proved insufficient to quell the opposition. Japan realized that more serious diplomatic and economic measure were necessary. In 1985 Prime Minister Nakasone paid an official visit to Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Fiji. This was followed in 1987 by a visit to PNG, Fiji and Vanuatu by Japanese Foreign Minister Kuranari. The Minister outlined a policy which later became known as the 'Kuranari Doctrine.' The five-point plan confirmed Japanese support for the independence and autonomy of the small island states, cooperation within the region, and stressed the importance of regional stability. In addition, it also offered increased economic aid and support for better cultural communication between Japan and the Pacific region. In order to facilitate this new relationship, Japan would provide US\$ 2 million to establish a special Pacific Island Fund in UNDP (*Gaiko Forum*, 2000:5: 30). In fact, in the five-year period from 1985 to 1990, Japanese annual aid expenditures to the region increased from US\$24 million to US\$98 million, leveling off at about 1% of the total annual bilateral Japanese official development aid expenditures. The rate of expansion was 2.7 times the growth rate of Japanese aid on a world basis during the same period, and made Japan into a major donor (Henningham, 1995: 101).

By the late eighties, concern about nuclear dumping had begun to subside, but in 1992 the Japanese government once again became the target of anti-nuclear protest. This time the cause was spent nuclear fuel, which is sent to reprocessing plants in France and Britain. The government announced that a Japanese ship carrying a ton of separated plutonium would

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6 Unfortunately, the proposed Japanese dumping sites are outside of the Treaty boundaries.

be crossing the Pacific on its way from France to Japan. The voyage of the *Akatsuki Maru* was to be the first of many trips across the Pacific carrying spent fuel from Japan to France and Britain, and bringing back both the separated plutonium and the leftover high level waste.<sup>7</sup> Pacific leaders once again responded with strong protest, with some countries saying that they would refuse to allow the ship to cross their territorial waters.<sup>8</sup> Fears of contamination as a result of an accident were combined with those of nuclear hijack since the ship would not be guarded for much of its journey. As a security precaution, the Japanese government refused to reveal details about the route, bringing further protest.

The reaction of Japan to this protest was similar to that in response to protest about nuclear dumping. The government attempted to show that the plan presented little threat to the Pacific Island countries. Pacific leaders were invited to Japan for nuclear safety seminars, and Japan used every opportunity to emphasize the safety of its nuclear program. In spite of these efforts, the South Pacific Forum and its member countries repeatedly condemned the shipments. On 13 October 1997, five years after the shipments began, Japan hosted the first Japan-South Pacific Forum Summit Meeting. In the Joint Declaration issued at the meeting, Japan "noted the Forum's continuing concerns over the shipment of plutonium and high level waste through the Pacific region," but continued to drag its feet in response to the opposition (Forum Secretariat, 1997).

Pacific leaders have continued to object to the shipments and express fear that an accident could cause damage to Pacific industries such as fisheries and tourism. It remains important because Japan still plans to send 600 tons of spent fuel to France, and still has 20.6 tons of separated plutonium in France and 6.9 tons in Britain. The separated plutonium is now sent as MOX (mixed plutonium/uranium oxide) fuel due to concerns over the safety of the highly radioactive plutonium.

In addition to expressing fears over the danger of shipping highly toxic nuclear waste, Pacific leaders have repeatedly asked about liability in case of an accident. Finally, in August 1999 and August 2000, Forum officials held discussions with representatives from France, Japan and the UK on the creation of a liability regime to compensate the region for

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7 As of February 2000, Japan had sent about 5,600 tons of spent fuel to Britain and France for reprocessing. A total of 272 drums cans of high level waste have already been returned to Japan and are being stored at Rokkashomura. More than 3,000 drum cans of waste are due to be returned to Japan over the next ten years. A million-KW reactor produces about 30 tons of spent fuel in a year which produces about 15 tons (30 cans) of high-level waste (Tokyo Electric Nuclear Power Data: 01/03/23).

8 In 1995, some FICs drew up the 'Convention to Ban the Importation into FICs of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes and to Control the Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within the South Pacific Region' (Waigani Convention). The Convention has yet to enter into force.

economic losses caused to tourism, fisheries and other industries affected in the case of an accident involving the shipment of radioactive materials and MOX fuel even if there is no actual environmental damage caused (31<sup>st</sup> Forum Communique, par.29). No immediate agreement was reached.

Directly after PALM 2000, Pacific leaders and officials met with Japan's Federation of Electric Power Companies. Japanese representatives were quick to promote the importance of nuclear power in conjunction with the reduction in the use of fossil fuels. Pacific Island journalists, Forum officials and two prime ministers (Cook Islands and Niue) were taken to visit the Hamaoka nuclear power plant, about 140 miles outside of Tokyo. Afterwards, Cook Islands Prime Minister Maoate stated, "I have learned a lot of things that I didn't know about nuclear power stations. I am convinced of the safety measures that have been shown to us, of the plant itself." On the Japanese side, Kaneko Koji, Secretary General of the Overseas Reprocessing Committee, responded to concerns about the nuclear shipments by saying that "The same safety measures applied to ground facilities are also applied to the vessels" (*Pacific News Bulletin*, 15:5: 10).

In addition to safety proclamations and demonstrations, Japan has begun to respond to FIC pressure in other ways. After PALM 2000, the Japanese government offered to establish a 'good will' trust fund with an initial principal of US\$10 million. Interest will be used to finance development projects of the FICs in the fields of environment, energy and tourism. The principal of the fund would be available to cover the cost of the initial response to incidents during shipments of radioactive waste and MOX fuel through the region. This offer was endorsed by the PIF (31<sup>st</sup> Forum Communique 2000, Par 33).

The nuclear industry in Japan is currently facing major difficulties. There have been a series of small accidents in several of its aging reactors, and a major accident (Japan's worst to date) at Tokaimura, where two people were killed and hundreds exposed to radioactive contamination. There has also been a major scandal involving MOX fuel returned to Japan from British Nuclear Fuels Limited (BNFL). The Japanese refused to use the fuel, due to the falsification of important safety records, and demanded that BNFL take it back. In spite of this, the Japanese continue to insist to Pacific Island leaders that there is no danger in the shipments.

#### **IV FISHERIES**

When people in the Pacific think of Japan and tuna, the immediate association is with sushi. In fact, the Japanese target several different species of tuna and use them for various purposes. The overall tuna landings are dominated by skipjack (*Katsuwonus pelamis*), using both pole and line and, more recently, purse seine in the western central and south Pacific. The primary use for skipjack in Japan is *katsuobushi*. The fish is dried and used for making soup and other stock. Yellowfin (*Thunnus albacares*) and bigeye (*Thunnus obesus*) intended



for the sashimi market are caught with longlines while those destined for other markets are harvested primarily by purse seine. Albacore (*Thunnus Alalunga*) is caught by long-line, primarily for canning. Japan fishes for these four species in the southeast, eastern central, western central and south Pacific. While the volume of the catch is relatively low, the most profitable tuna are southern bluefin (*Thunnus maccoyi*) for the sashimi market (FAO, 1997).

In Japan, fisheries are divided into three categories: coastal, offshore and distant water. The distant water fishery (DWF) operates in the high seas and in the 200-mile zones of other countries, using boats of over 100 gross tons. While some tuna and skipjack are caught close to Japan, most is taken by the distant water fishery. About half of the annual catch of tuna and skipjack taken by Japanese DWF boats (260,000 tons) comes from the FIC region (FAO, 1997).

## V POST-WAR TUNA FISHERIES AND THE OIL CRISES

During World War II, the Pacific Japanese distant water tuna fleet served two purposes: one was to provide fish for Japanese forces in the region, and the other was to serve as lookouts for submarines. By the end of the war, the distant water tuna fleet had been decimated. Not only had many of the ships been sunk, but also much of the gear on the remaining ones had been destroyed. As a result, after the war priority was given to restoring the distant water fleet.

After the war, the Japanese government and industry officials focused on finding the best ways to reconstruct the fishing industry and at the same time feed the starving population. In 1946, special funds were appropriated for the construction of new large-scale DWF tuna and skipjack boats. Around this same time, restrictions were placed on the area in which Japanese fishing boats were free to operate. In September 1945 the first 'MacArthur Line' was drawn, reducing the fishing grounds to one-eighth of their original size. The area was increased somewhat in 1946, 1949 and 1950, but distant water fishing remained curtailed until the signing of the Peace Treaty in 1952.

When the restrictions were lifted, the distant water fleet sprang into action. By 1954, the number of ships engaged in tuna and skipjack fishing had doubled, and the catch had gone from 116,000 tons to 231,000 tons. In an effort to meet nutritional demand, the government adopted a 5-year plan in 1954 to take fishing 'from coastal waters to offshore, and from offshore to distant waters.' Tuna fishing was expanded to the Indian and Atlantic Oceans. By 1963, tuna had become a 60-70 trillion yen industry with a catch of more than 530,000 tons (Ebizawa, 1996: 122-125).

In the mid-sixties, things began to change for the tuna industry. The tuna catch reached a peak in 1963 and then began to decline. While production in the canned and frozen tuna industry declined, wages and costs increased, and smaller producers began to collapse. In addition, new competition came when Korea and Taiwan began to fish in the Pacific. In

1969 the US imposed a ban on the sale of fish with a mercury content of higher than 0.5 ppm. This was subsequently raised to 1.0 ppm. Since tuna tends to have a high mercury content, this effectively meant that exports to the US became impossible. Things were further compounded by the 1972 devaluation of the US dollar (Matsuda, 1987: 86). Something had to be changed if the Japanese distant water tuna industry was to survive.

When distant water fishing was resumed in the mid-fifties, Japanese fleets established base ports in the Pacific Islands, near to where the fishing actually took place. The longline fleets worked out of these ports and their primary function was to provide fish for canneries. This situation lasted for about ten years. In the 1960's, new techniques were developed for refrigeration and instant freezing at temperatures colder than -50 degrees centigrade. Ships equipped with this new refrigeration equipment were able to spend longer periods at sea and return with higher quality fish. The foreign bases were no longer necessary because the fleets could bring the fish directly back to Japan without having to worry about spoilage. As a result, less than a decade after the signing of the peace treaty, the industry was being restructured and the fleets were once again being based in Japan.

Just as the tuna industry was settling into the new regime, it was confronted with two major setbacks. When the first oil crisis occurred in 1973, fuel prices skyrocketed to about eight times the original price. This presented a serious threat to the new tuna industry because the new fuel prices meant that fleets could no longer afford to be based so far away from their fishing grounds.<sup>9</sup> The government responded to the oil crisis with special loans for the fishing industry and that, in conjunction with a rise in the price of fish, enabled the tuna fishers to survive the first oil crisis. Unfortunately for the tuna industry, there was no rise in the price of fish at the time of the second oil crisis (1978). Moreover, in the mid-seventies, large amounts of cheap, frozen tuna began to enter Japan from Korea.

## *VI EEZ ACCESS FEES AND ODA*

At the same time that Japan was trying to overcome the difficulties caused by the oil crisis, another international development which would have serious implications for Japanese distant water fisheries was in progress. The Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea formally began in 1973, and an important issue at the conference was the principle of extended coastal state jurisdiction. Japan was opposed to the idea of the 200-mile exclusive economic zone, but it soon became clear that it was going to happen.

Japan claimed its EEZ on 1 July 1977. Many other states, including the US, USSR and Canada, did likewise that year. At that time, 48% of the Japanese tuna catch, as well as 41% of the skipjack catch, came from within 200 nautical miles of the coasts of 54 countries

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<sup>9</sup> In 1973, the distant water tuna fleet was using 21% (1.45 million kilolitres) of all of the fuel consumed by the fishing industry (7 million kilolitres) (Ebizawa, 1996: 130).

(Matsuda, 1987: 86). This comprised about a third of the total value of the distant water catch. While Japan could expect some revenue from its own EEZ, the establishment of the zones meant that Japanese fleets would now have to pay to fish in places they had previously exploited without cost. As a result, many of the distant water fleets were downsized or sold, and some fishing companies began to find it more profitable to import fish rather than pay for the privilege of catching it. This marked the beginning of large-scale imports of fish to Japan.

In 1973, Japan took two steps to mitigate some of the damage it thought was likely to occur as a result of the establishment of EEZs. The first was the creation of fisheries grant aid. The purpose was both to assist in the building of fisheries in developing countries and also as an indirect subsidy to the fishing industry toward the payment of access fees (Tarte, 1994: 8). In addition to the fisheries grants, in June 1973, the government established the Overseas Fisheries Cooperation Foundation (OFCF). The OFCF has the "joint purpose of facilitating overseas fishery cooperative projects implemented by Japanese fisheries companies or organizations, as well as promoting mutual understanding between coastal countries concerned and Japanese interests through technical and economic cooperation" (OFCF, 2001). It does this by extending loans to Japanese firms and/or foreign governments, technical cooperation, and assistance in the establishing of joint ventures and other projects. In 1977, OFCF was mandated to provide goods and services (fishing gear, nets, etc.) to up to about 10% of the access fee. The bulk of the cost for these goods and services is born by OFCF; the industry pays about 25%. OFCF works in cooperation with JICA, the agency responsible for Japanese aid, including fisheries aid.

Between 1978 and 1979, twelve of the fourteen FICs declared 200-mile exclusive economic and/or fisheries zones.<sup>10</sup> This left Japan with few choices. The only ways to avoid paying access fees were to refrain from fishing in declared EEZs, ignore the rule and hope they did not get caught, or establish joint ventures.<sup>11</sup> Japan opted initially to establish bilateral access agreements with seven FICs (Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Belau, PNG, Solomon Islands and the French territories), agreeing to pay about 1-2% of the catch value as an access fee.<sup>12</sup> In addition, Japan began to provide fisheries grants. The first such grant was given to PNG in 1975. Since that time, fisheries

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10 Fiji declared its EEZ in 1981 and Tuvalu declared its EEZ in 1984.

11 Many Japanese fishing companies set up joint ventures with FIC governments in the seventies and eighties, but few of them were very successful. Exceptions were PAFCO (1964-1985, Itochu and Fiji) and Solomon Taiyo (1973-2001, Taiyo Gyogyo and Solomon Islands) two fishing and canning enterprises.

12 In 1987, PNG demanded 6% of the catch total as an entry fee and, as a result, Japan withdrew from the PNG zone (Tarte, 1999: 53).

grants have continued to comprise a major part of Japanese aid to the FICs. The linking of access to fishing grounds with aid has been a point of contention with the FICs since the beginning.<sup>13</sup>

Since the establishment of the EEZs and fisheries zones, an ongoing and important issue has been the percentage that Japan has been willing to pay for access to the FIC fishing grounds. The access fees provide an important source of foreign exchange for the FICs and in some cases it may be their primary and/or only source. In 1979, the South Pacific Forum (present Pacific Islands Forum) established the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) to promote cooperation among the Forum countries. One purpose of the FFA is to help member countries with their fisheries negotiations. The FFA is working on harmonization of fisheries rules and regulations within the region, as well as on increasing access fees and payments. At first, both Japan and the US, the major DWF countries, conducted bilateral negotiations to determine access fees. In 1981, a group of FICs established the Nauru Agreement, an arrangement by which all participating countries receive a basic access fee, in addition to which they are also entitled to a fee based on the total catch value within each individual zone. In 1987, the United States agreed to a multilateral fisheries agreement with the FICs. This increased pressure on Japan to follow suit, rather than continuing with bilateral negotiations. Japan has continued to both resist that pressure and to link access fees with fisheries aid. In recent years, Japan has increased its payments to about 5% of the catch value, but this is still far from the 6%-8% desired by the FICs (Tarte, 1999: 54).

## **VII INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT EFFORTS**

One factor which has been in the background of all fisheries negotiations since the sixties is the overall decline in global fisheries resources. Japan has been the target of international and/or regional criticism for its whaling, driftnet fishing, fishing for both southern and Atlantic bluefin, and 'dolphin-unfriendly' fishing techniques. While the specifics of these debates differ, there are two basic similarities among them. Firstly, they all involve that very difficult balance between profit and species protection, made especially difficult by the fact that no one really knows for certain how many whales or bluefin there are, or how many more can be killed without causing irreversible damage. Secondly, they involve species which travel great distances, crossing the borders of fisheries zones and making management by the individual coastal states very difficult. Particularly with regard to tuna, the coordination of individual management, the degree of autonomy for

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13 For example, the 13<sup>th</sup> South Pacific Forum Communique (Rotorua, New Zealand, 9-10 August 1982) stated that Pacific Island leaders "deplored the increasing tendency of DWF countries to link the grant of aid with the receipt of fisheries access." Japan was the only country doing this at the time.

coastal states and the logistics of management are especially difficult, and are made more so by the differing (and sometimes contradictory) political and economic objectives of the parties involved. Of particular relevance to the relationship between Japan and the FICs are international negotiations regarding the use of driftnets and the multilateral high level conferences on the conservation and management of highly migratory fish stocks in the western and central Pacific.

#### **A *Driftnet Fishing***

In order to overcome the impediments created by the oil crises and the establishment of 200-mile exclusive economic zones, the Japanese distant water tuna industry was forced to cut costs. In order to survive, tuna fleets sought to maximize their cost per unit of fishing effort (CPUE). One method was to use equipment capable of catching more fish using fewer people. The method of choice for Japan was driftnets.

Driftnets, often referred to as 'walls of death,' are invisible nylon nets of up to 60 km in length and 45 km in width, and which are suspended to a depth of 15 meters below the surface. They were used for catching tuna and squid in the south Pacific. Tuna driftnets have large mesh which is designed to allow smaller fish to swim through without being harmed. In fact, the pressure of the water makes the mesh smaller and not only tuna but also smaller fish, sea mammals, turtles and sea birds become caught in the nets. In addition, the flashing of the glittering nylon and fish caught in the net attract birds. Moreover, bits of the nets break off or are cut, and remain floating in the sea catching fish.

From the early seventies, Japanese tuna driftnetters worked around the southeastern Pacific east of New Zealand and in the Tasman Sea. Originally there were about fifteen boats, but in the late eighties, the price of fish rose and it was discovered that driftnetting was profitable. By 1988, the number of boats had increased to sixty. Not only were they seen as presenting a threat to the environment, but they also presented a threat to the development of local island tuna fisheries and to US fishing in the region. In 1989, the South Pacific Forum called for a global ban on driftnets. This was endorsed by the South Pacific Commission and was introduced to the UN General Assembly by the US. The UN called for the reduction of driftnetting in the Pacific by 1990 and the cessation of all use of driftnets in the Pacific by July 1991. Japan agreed to the ban and stopped using driftnets a year before the deadline. In 1993, the UN drew up an international convention banning the use of all driftnets.

#### **B *Multilateral High Level Conferences on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stock in the Western and Central Pacific***

The first Multilateral High Level Conference on South Pacific Tuna Fisheries (MHLC) was held in December 1994 with representatives from Pacific island countries, distant water fishing countries and related international organizations. The conference discussed a range

of technical and policy issues, and agreed to have subsequent technical level consultations on the collection and exchange of data. A second MHLC conference was held in 1997, at which the Majuro Declaration was adopted. Since 1997, the MHLC process has been chaired by Ambassador Satya Nandan, Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority. In September 2000, the talks finally came to fruition when 19 out of 24 participating countries agreed to the Convention for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific. In a preliminary vote, Japan and Korea voted against the convention, and China, France and Tonga abstained (*Islands Business*, October 2000: 36). The convention establishes a Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific. The Commission will be responsible for setting fishing quotas for four species of tuna and other fish species, placing observers on fishing boats, regulating trans-shipment of fish at sea and charging fees to fund regulation and enforcement.

Japan is responsible for about half of the tuna taken from FIC zones, and the five years of negotiation for the convention have been difficult. One area of contention has been over the enforcement and compliance measures, including the use of advanced technology such as VMS (vessel monitoring systems). Japan has objected to these measures, saying that they infringe on its rights on the high seas. Another area of difference has been the allocation of quotas. Japan and other DWF countries have lobbied for an overarching authority to decide on levels of fishing for all of the zone, while the FICs have sought to have control over the quotas for their individual zones.

At the August 2000 conference, Japan objected to the decision-making process, demanding an 'opt-out' clause which would allow them to reserve the right to walk out of a measure if they do not approve of it. 'Opt-out' clauses have seriously weakened other fisheries regimes in the past, so Ambassador Nandan was unwilling to allow one to be put in place in this convention (Tarte, 2000: 9). They also objected to the northern boundary of the treaty area and a decision about placing observers on fishing vessels. In spite of its objections, however, FFA officials predict that due to the importance of the Pacific fishing grounds for Japan, they will eventually have to accept the treaty. (*Islands Business*, 2000:10: 36).<sup>14</sup>

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14 At an informal MHLC meeting on 17-18 January 2001, Japan cited two problems: the exclusion of EU and Latin American countries from the MHLC process; and the decision-making process area of the treaty north of the present 20°N line. Japan suggested that the MHLC process be extended and that those countries which had been excluded from the main conferences be included (Fisheries Agency: <http://www.jfa.maff.go.jp/rerys/13.01.23.1.html> 01/03/16).

### VIII POLITICAL INITIATIVES

Since the end of the war, Japan has continued to be involved with the Pacific Islands. As we have seen, the first major post-war political initiatives involved fisheries grants and occurred around the time of the establishment of exclusive economic and/or fisheries zones. The next major initiative, the Kuranari Doctrine, followed on the heels of the first post-war official Japanese visit to a Pacific Island Prime Minister Nakasone's visit to Fiji and PNG in 1985. As we have seen, the 1987 Kuranari Doctrine both outlined new thinking and came with a major increase in aid to the region. Two years later, Japan became a Post-Forum Dialogue Partner, and it has made contributions to SPF for regional cooperation ever since.<sup>15</sup>

The end of the Cold War brought the end of US-Soviet rivalry in the Pacific, leading to major changes to the region.<sup>16</sup> In the 1990's, Japan made overtures to the South Pacific Commission (current Secretariat of the Pacific Community) for membership, as well as approaching the South Pacific Forum. At the request of the SPF, Japan established the Pacific Islands Centre (PIC; South Pacific Economic Exchange Support Centre) in Tokyo in 1996. The purpose of the PIC is to help the economic development of the FICS through the promotion of trade, investment and tourism in the Pacific.<sup>17</sup>

In 1997, Japan hosted the first Japan-South Pacific Summit Meeting. For Japan, this was in part a demonstration of its commitment to the FICs, but also an attempt to garner support for its bid for permanent membership in the UN Security Council (Miyajima, 2000: 31). Prime Minister Hashimoto's opening speech outlined 'four pillars of cooperation,' but unfortunately the prime minister was called away on other business and his speech was read by the Parliamentary Vice President for Foreign Affairs, Masahiko Komaru. The Pacific leaders were "deeply disappointed" by Hashimoto's absence, and by the fact that little of substance happened. The first summit ended with a promise to hold another within a few years (*Pacific News Bulletin*, 12:11: 8).

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15 Japan's contribution to SPF in 1999 was approximately US\$400,000. Aid to the region in 1998 comprised about 2% of Japan's ODA budget and totaled US\$150 million. Of this, 54% was in untied loans, while 33% was technical cooperation (Miyajima, 2000: 31). Another source of funds for Pacific Islands that was created about this time was the Sasakawa Peace Foundation's Pacific Island Nations Fund (3 billion yen).

16 APEC was established in 1989. The fast economic growth of the NIES at this time also contributed to increased focus on the 'Asia Pacific' region. The end of Cold War rivalry also had implications for fisheries vis a vis the negotiation of access agreements.

17 Part of the aid package announced at PALM 2000 was 30 million yen in funding for the PIC (Miyazaki Initiative 2000).

The second Japan-South Pacific Summit, PALM 2000, was held in Miyazaki, Japan on 22 April. This time, a busy schedule and full attendance by the prime minister was provided. The 'Miyazaki PALM Declaration: Our Common Vision for the Future,' outlined cooperation in the areas of economic relations, trade and aid. Japan's Miyazaki Initiative, called '*Frontier Gaiko* (Diplomacy)', is based on three themes, each of which represents one aspect of Japan's cooperation. The first is 'Youth: Cooperation' toward the sustainable development of the FICs, and entails such items as the dispatch of 3,000 cooperation workers over the next five years and a contribution of US\$1 million to the UNDP 'Pacific IT Project' for information technology training and support. The second theme is 'Ocean: Regional and Global Issues of Common Concern.' This entails such things as a grant of US\$2 million to the UN 'Human Security Fund' for eradication of AIDS, malaria and infectious disease, fighting organized crime and drug abuse, and dealing with problems such as refugees. The third theme, 'Future: Strengthening Japan-South Pacific Partnership', includes US\$1 million in support of student exchanges and training through the Forum Secretariat. Japan also pledged support for preservation of the region's environment, culture and general well being, backing for a UNESCO project on indigenous languages, and cooperation with the region in deep-sea mineral exploration. Pacific leaders on the whole expressed appreciation for the PALM 2000 summit. At the same time, it is significant that two of the areas of greatest concern to the FICs, nuclear shipments and the MHLC process, were not addressed (*Islands Business*, 2000:6: 37).

According to *Islands Business*, the Japanese officials at PALM 2000 took offence when asked by journalists, "What does Japan want from the islands in return for its aid input?" No answer was provided. In fact, in November 2000, the government provided an answer to that question in a glossy government pamphlet with the English title, 'Our Common Future.' The pamphlet summarizes the results of PALM 2000, but also outlines the general situation of the Pacific Island Countries, giving some historical and cultural background, and focusing on the relationship with Japan. Among other things, the pamphlet cites three areas of particular interest to Japan: natural resources (tuna, skipjack, logs and squash), shipping lanes, and the FICs as reliable partners in the international arena.<sup>18</sup>

## **IX CONCLUSION: WHAT'S IN IT FOR JAPAN?**

In 1999, the FICs exported a total of US\$514,870,000 worth of goods to Japan. Of these, tuna accounted for 14.4% percent (\$74,141,280) of the total FIC exports. Percentages by country are as follows: FSM: 95%, Palau: 94%, Kiribati: 73.4%, Solomon Islands: 49.4% exports (processed tuna accounted for another 12.8%), Vanuatu: 31.4%, Fiji: 20.1% and Tonga: 3.3%. Wood products accounted for 27.6% of the total and came from Samoa (72% of

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<sup>18</sup> The pamphlet (A4, 6 pages) was published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in November 2000.



total Samoan exports), PNG (34.4%), Solomon Islands (33.2%), Fiji (wood chip; 43.9%), and Vanuatu (wood chip; 18.7%). Tonga is responsible for squash, which comprises 93.5% of its exports to Japan and accounts for 2.0% of total FIC exports (PIC 2000:5). In addition, about half of Japan's coal and iron ore imports are from Australia.

Timber and squash are important resources, but not nearly as significant to Japan as tuna and skipjack. Timber from the Pacific accounts for about 20% of Japanese timber imports. Squash is grown locally in Japan, and 65% of the squash imports are from New Zealand. Another 5.6% are from Tonga. However, for the three winter months (October to December), squash from Tonga comprises 28% of import totals (PALM 2000). While this has proved beneficial to the Tongan economy, the creation of dependence on one agricultural product for three months of the year may prove to be a mixed blessing.

Japan ranks about 5<sup>th</sup> in the world in terms of per capita consumption of fish and fish products (69.8 kg/year). At the same time, Japan is dependent on imports for about 42% of its fish. This dependence has increased five-fold in the last twenty years. With regard to tuna, about half of Japan's distant water tuna (260,000 tons) comes from the Pacific fishing zones. Fish caught by Japanese fleets does not enter into the FIC export total, but requires the payment of access fees. Currently, Japan pays such fees to seven FICs, plus the French territories.<sup>19</sup> Given the size and importance of the Pacific fishing zones, there is no question that continued access to those zones, preferably on its own terms, is an important issue for Japan.

In addition to natural resources, Japan wants several things. It wants free access to sea-lanes for shipping, including the shipping of nuclear products. It also wants access to deep-sea minerals. In February 2000, an agreement for deep ocean mineral exploration in the EEZs around the Cook Islands, Fiji and Marshall Islands was signed by those countries and the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission, The Japan International Cooperation Agency and the Mental Mining Agency of Japan (*Pacific News Bulletin*, 2000:5: 10-11). The emphasis on IT development and education indicates a desire to corner the market on communications and IT development in the Pacific, a potentially lucrative area. Japan also no doubt wants to have its 'partnership' firmly in place when PARTA, the Pacific Free Trade Zone, goes into effect. Finally, Japan is interested in the Pacific because even though Pacific Island countries are small, they are numerous, and that means votes in the United Nations. The recent entry of Tonga and Tuvalu as UN member states brings the total number of Pacific Island countries in the UN to fifteen. That is not an insignificant number.

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19 The seven countries are: Marshall Islands, FSM, Palau, PNG, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu. Japan is the top donor country for three of these countries (Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu), as well as for Fiji, Samoa and Tonga. It ranks second after the US for the Marshalls, FSM and Palau, and second after Australia for PNG (*Gaiko Forum*, 2000:5: 35).

'Partnership' with the FICs can help to make goals such as permanent membership in the Security Council a reality.

Historically, while Japan did have some significant commercial interests in the Pacific islands in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, it can be said that the primary motivation for involvement in the Pacific was strategic rather than economic. Moreover, the focus of that interest has from the outset been on the ocean rather than on the islands themselves. The significance of the islands arose in so far as they were necessary for access to the ocean and its resources, specifically fishing and shipping interests. We have seen that these interests remain paramount today. In this context, it is interesting to note the name of the PALM 2000 Initiative: 'Frontier Diplomacy.' Japan sees the last frontier as the oceans and space. It has significant strategic interests in the oceans, and has recently made an agreement with Kiribati for use of Christmas Island facilities in conjunction with its space program (Gaiko Forum, 2000:5: 18). For Japan, the Pacific really is the last frontier.

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