

## 3.11: Comparative and Historical Lessons 3.11の教訓—比較的、歴史的観点から

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“Following a destructive earthquake, even the ceremony of rescue is morally and politically ambiguous, as rescuers fight not against nature, but against the twisted ruins of their own design failures.”

-Gregory Clancey, 2006

“When the earthquake struck I knew that I had survived, and I feared for my wife and daughter, left behind in Yokohama. Almost simultaneously I felt a surge of happiness which I could not keep down. ‘Tokyo will be better for this!’ I said to myself...”

-Tanizaki Junichirō, 1923

“Such genuine and cordial friendship by the Government and people of the United States...will further increase the intimacy of the two countries and strengthen those bonds of concord and peace that exist throughout the world.”

-Prime Minister Yamamoto Gombei to President Calvin Coolidge, 1923

Like all catastrophes, 3.11 generated pain and imagination, heroes and villains. Political entrepreneurs with motivation and resources

were quick to do battle for control of the event. They spun narrative explanations for the tragedy across a broad horizon of meanings and values, all conforming to their own preexisting preferences and to what they believed would be effective with the Japanese public. Existing enemies were enemies still, but newly villainous. The stakeholders, thus rearmed, used these narratives aggressively in an effort to shift the still unformed preferences of a general public struggling to make sense of otherwise unfathomable events. But 3.11 is not alone in this respect. This chapter locates the dueling narratives of 3.11 in their historical and comparative contexts to derive guidance for understanding how disasters can be used by politicians and their allies as well as by citizens.

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The list of natural disasters along the Japanese archipelago is sadly long. It is so long, in fact, that as Peter Duus has noted, over the course of two millennia there has always been a disaster that older residents can remember.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, they have been so frequent that the Japanese tell themselves the four most frightening things in life are (in order): earthquakes, thunderstorms, fires, and fathers.<sup>2</sup>

### Historical Lessons from Japanese Disasters

The first recorded Japanese earthquake occurred in 416.<sup>3</sup> More than forty large-scale earthquakes have struck Japan since the mid-nineteenth century alone, and many of those within living memory, such as Fukui (1948), Niigata (1964 and 2007), Tokachi-Oki (1968),

and Sanriku-Oki (1994), are all but footnotes in this repetitive history of tragedy. During the Edo period alone, more than 500 major fires occurred, one hundred of which consumed more than 3,000 homes. One conflagration in Edo in 1657 claimed 100,000 lives, and another 25,000 were lost in 1772. The Japanese of that era were taught that no life span was complete unless it included three of these “flowers of Edo” (*Edo no hana*).<sup>4</sup> It is no surprise, then, that the Iwakura Mission, sent abroad after the opening of Japan to scan and absorb Western practice, made a special effort to learn how other nations controlled fires.



**A nineteenth-century earthquake woodblock print shows Daikoku, the popular god of wealth, showering people with money, while the god Kashima restrains a catfish (*namazu*). From the National Diet Library website.**

The most-destructive and best-documented earthquakes before 3.11 are the Ansei quakes of 1854-1855, the Nōbi quake in central Japan (1891), the Meiji-Sanriku earthquake of 1896, the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923 that struck Tokyo and Yokohama, and the Hanshin/Awaji earthquake of 1995 in Kobe. The physical footprint and impact varied considerably: Ansei was actually three separate temblors and many dozens of fore- and aftershocks that stretched from the coast of Tokai north through Edo and Chiba and south to Kyushu within a single year. The cauldrons of fire and tsunamis of these quakes claimed more than 17,000 lives. The 8.0 magnitude Nōbi disaster claimed 7,000 lives, still the largest known inland earthquake in modern Japanese history.<sup>5</sup> The Meiji-Sanriku Earthquake generated two tsunamis, caused more than 22,000 deaths, and eerily prefigured 3.11. The 1923 Kanto quake was the world’s largest urban natural disaster since the London fires of 1666.<sup>6</sup> Only 10% of the 140,000 who died in the quake were crushed by falling structures. Most were burned to death—including 40,000 refugees who were tightly packed in a military clothing depot at Honjō when the wind unexpectedly changed direction. Of Tokyo’s 500,000 buildings, 300,000 burned to the ground. It was the reverse in 1995 in Kobe, which failed “the first really severe test for a modern city built, theoretically, to be earthquake resistant.”<sup>7</sup> In what was the area’s first recorded quake in 1,500 years, 89 percent of the 6,400 who died were crushed to death. These differences notwithstanding, the political dynamics and the explanatory narratives that each disaster stimulated reverberate in—and inform the discourse of—post-3.11 Japan.

Ansei, 1854-1855

The political target of the Ansei quakes was the already-rickety shogunate in Edo and its local functionaries. Within two days of the December 1855 Ansei-Edo quake, hundreds of anonymous

broadsheets with wood-block print images of giant catfish—the mythic creature that carried the archipelago on its back—appeared on the streets.<sup>8</sup> These *namazu-e* (catfish prints) depicted merchants, tradesmen, and government officials whose fortunes the catfish could undo with a swish of its tail.

Indeed, because its tantrums could convulse the earth, conscientious overseers were needed to prevent shifts in its posture. In the wood-block images, the god of merchants and commerce, Ebisu, was widely depicted as having failed in his duty to control the giant creature. One recurrent motif was of gold coins falling from burning skies—an indicator that the redistribution of wealth was a prominent central concern. The prints were hardly subtle. They clearly presented a class-based narrative of inequity and corruption in which incompetent officials, greedy tradesmen eager to rebuild (presumably at extortionate rates), and prostitutes were set against the suffering masses who had lost everything. They offered a barely veiled critique of the sour and pessimistic mood of late-Edo Japan. One social historian of the period says that their reflection of popular “fear, disgust, and anger” was a “direct attack on the heart of the *bakufu* government[.]” The teetering shogunate certainly saw them as a dangerous source of criticism, and moved quickly to ban them. A decade later, the 250-year military regime collapsed. Its officials could not have been missed by those who had lost so much from the quakes and resultant fires.

### Nōbi, 1891

If the Ansei disaster generated a class-based critique of a weakened government, the Nōbi disaster—coming three decades later, when Japan was newly open to global commerce and preparing a catch-up imperialism of its own—was used to cast foreigners in the villain’s role. The very pattern of the destruction, one in which some (mostly Western) buildings were heavily damaged and other (mostly Japanese)

survived, triggered a vigorous public debate over the value of Western science and modernity. Even though most victims died in wooden homes of indigenous design and construction, the collapsed brick-and-mortar buildings—mostly public offices and icons of Western technology such as railway stations—that had connoted modernity soon came to represent the disastrous, slavish, debased path toward Western models of development. “Modernity had seemingly made the new regime not stronger than its predecessors, but weaker.”<sup>10</sup> Post-Nōbi politics, like the politics after Ansei, were fought through the medium of wood-block prints; some called attention to failed Western structures, while others portrayed the collapse of traditional-style Buddhist temples. This time, there were few catfish: “a discourse formerly about class and state-subject relations becomes one about civilizations.”<sup>11</sup> Why were foreigners allowed to build without sufficient regulatory oversight? Should Japanese believe in their superiority after all? Clancey captures this brilliantly:

“An unmistakable impression left by these woodblock prints ... was of the fragility and danger of the new western-style landscape ... [T]he prints neatly reversed the colonizing tropes so common in Meiji discourse over the previous two decades, which had located fragility exclusively in the ‘feudal’ landscape and volatility in Japanese nature.”<sup>12</sup>

A nationalizing narrative emerged from the Nōbi disaster, in part because for the first time there were foreigners to blame, and in part because this was the first large-scale disaster to receive sustained nationwide news coverage. The localized self-criticism that emerged after Ansei would not suffice. Now many Japanese expected and demanded a national response.

Once media reports reached the provinces, charity flowed to the disaster site from across the country. But no response after the Restoration could be national without the invocation of the Meiji Emperor, the deployment of the military, or discussion of scientific progress. As in most matters, the Meiji oligarchs were quick to deploy the imperial family.<sup>13</sup> “Ceremonies of [imperial] consolation” were held frequently in the affected areas to portray the imperial family in national media as empathetic and actively involved in relief efforts.<sup>14</sup> But they were more than just available for display. Clancey explains they were elements in the construction of a “much different Japanese government than the one that lived in mysterious seclusion in Kyoto or Edo,” and describes how the imperial family and government officials were frequently depicted as moved by the plight of the victims to the point of tears.<sup>15</sup> This no doubt helped shield the young regime when it called upon the military to suppress riots that erupted in Gifu after angry residents with nothing left to lose protested the dilatory response of the government. Science and technology also were not ignored. Each modern disaster has provoked actions to mitigate future damage, and in the wake of Nōbi, the Japanese government established its first interdisciplinary research institute to investigate a quake and its consequences.<sup>16</sup>

Kanto, 1923



**Downtown Tokyo after the Great Kanto Earthquake. 1923. Contemporary postcard from the author’s collection.**

The Great Kanto Earthquake, on 1 September 1923, was a greater disaster-induced test of state capacity. The authority of the Japanese state had long since been consolidated, and once again the state would prevail and shut the window on transformative change. The suppression of reluctant feudal domains and then two foreign wars—one against a decrepit China, the other against a decrepit, but Western, imperial Russia—had proved to most observers the rectitude of Japan’s path toward Western-style industrialization. Still, this was an inopportune time for the Japanese government to have to confront a major disaster; 1923 was a time of domestic political disarray. Parties governed, but not effectively, and the military was flirting with political power. Like March 2011, it was a time of frequent cabinet shifts, weak parties, economic malaise, nationalist posturing, the incipient rise of civil society, massive disaster diplomacy, and the fear of terrorism.<sup>17</sup>

The confusion started at the top. Katō Tomosaburō, the viscount and admiral who had become prime minister a year earlier, died just days before the quake, and—as in the weeks after 3.11—an overture to create a nonparty, grand coalition government was summarily rejected by the largest party, the Seiyūkai.<sup>18</sup> When the new prime minister, Admiral

Yamamoto Gombei, convened his first cabinet meeting the day after the quake, six ministers were absent, making it easy for the Home Ministry to introduce martial law.<sup>19</sup> The army assumed full and direct control of the capital district, and within one week thirty-five thousand troops were mobilized to preserve order in four prefectures. This proved largely unnecessary. On most accounts, despite their deprivations, the populace was orderly and compliant. One eyewitness anticipated observations that would reemerge ninety years later from visitors to Tohoku: “In the course of my long wanderings throughout the devastated area...I saw or heard of no instance of profiteering among the common people...One admired their stoicism.”<sup>20</sup> Another added that “the earthquake brought to the fore some of the finest traits of the Japanese character.”<sup>21</sup>



**Survivors in a devastated Tokyo after the Great Kanto Earthquake. 1923. Contemporary postcard from the author’s collection.**

It was not only the rhetoric of 1923 that echoed after 3.11. As in Tohoku, the military immediately mobilized for rescue and infrastructure repair. Within a week, the streetlights of the capital had been relit and its trams and postal system were operating; soon thereafter, Imperial Army engineers had built or repaired forty-five bridges.<sup>22</sup> Viscount Gotō

Shinpei, a former colonial administrator and Tokyo mayor who was named home minister in Yamamoto’s “earthquake” cabinet, became the recovery czar. No one had grander ambitions for change than Gotō, who insisted that the imperial capital reflect the grandeur of the empire itself. He would not rebuild Tokyo along its old contours, but would redefine the urban landscape. Gotō’s Tokyo was to be an “awe-inspiring” place of urban renewal, great boulevards, green zones, civic centers, sustainable development, and social progress.<sup>23</sup>

With the assistance of the American political historian and urban planner Charles A. Beard, Gotō pushed forward with his grandiose plan, thought by many to be unrealistic and excessive. The government would purchase the burned-out areas and redevelop them with a modern transport and sewer infrastructure. In its initial rendering, Gotō would have spent upwards of 4 billion yen, well beyond the state’s fiscal capacity— and well beyond its political capacity to declare eminent domain. Just as many wondered nearly ninety years later in Tohoku, Beard reflected:

“Will the Japanese seize this opportunity to correct ancient errors and lay out a modern city well defended against the recurrence of another holocaust, or will they follow the example set by London and San Francisco and rebuild substantially along the lines of the old street network?”<sup>24</sup>



**A view of Jimbōchō in Central Tokyo after the Great Kanto Earthquake. 1923. Contemporary postcard from the author's collection.**

The answer was not long in coming. Enthusiasm for Gotō's vision was not shared by bureaucratic colleagues who fretted about costs and doubted that local officials would spend central funds honestly.<sup>25</sup> There were also political objections. On Beard's account, many of Gotō's colleagues were allied with political parties loaded with "slogans, prejudices, and hatreds."<sup>26</sup> Jealously guarding the prerogatives of their individual ministries, they relied on the Imperial Capital Recovery Advisory Council (*Teito Fukkō Shingikai*), a commission convened by Prime Minister Yamamoto in September to advise him on reconstruction, to undercut the initiatives of the central planning apparatus. The Advisory Commission attacked Gotō for opportunism—namely, introducing long-desired projects into his reconstruction plan—and nearly killed his plan. In a move that would be replayed after 3.11, Gotō responded by trying to create a superministry that would concentrate resources in a single entity with powers beyond the existing ministries and urban planning apparatus. As it turned out, however, the Finance Ministry, led by the imposing Inuoue Junnosuke, bewailed "extravagance" and cut back reconstruction funding from 4 billion to 500 million yen, a figure Beard called "practically nothing."<sup>27</sup> The organization that was eventually created, the

Imperial Capital Reconstruction Office (*Teito Fukkō In*), was headed by Gotō but was tasked with assisting other agencies involved in reconstruction rather than with developing and implementing a plan independently.<sup>28</sup> Gotō also met strong opposition from landowners who had the ear of the political class. The deputy head of the 3.11 Reconstruction Design Council has described Gotō's plan as "a technological success and political failure."<sup>29</sup>

Indeed, the debate over reconstruction—much like the discourse after 3.11—foundered on existing political, administrative, and social schisms. The reconstruction bill was further watered down by the Diet before being replaced entirely after the Yamamoto government collapsed. Gotō's plan was undone by a national politics characterized by excessively diffused power guarded tenaciously within narrow policy silos.<sup>30</sup> Beard, who saw in Gotō's failure the fundamental pathologies of an immature democracy, concluded that the solution resided in democratic reform, including the extension of suffrage:

"[The government] is conservative at a time when nothing but radical courage can prevent Tokyo from rebuilding ...another fire trap... It remains to be seen whether in an age when the people have a voice in affairs there can be effected a concert of powers sufficiently potent to carry out a comprehensive scheme of city planning in the face of organized, short sighted private interests and political ineptitude."<sup>31</sup>



**All that is left of the vaunted Ministry of Finance after the Great Kanto Earthquake. 1923. Contemporary postcard from the author's collection.**

Notwithstanding Gotō's ambitions, when the recovery of Tokyo was declared complete in a "rebuilding festival" in March 1930, it had been rebuilt largely as it had been before the disaster.

First, though, there were ominously antidemocratic developments. Security officers used the cover of martial law to persecute political radicals and Asian foreigners in the days after the catastrophe.<sup>32</sup> They fed a hungry media with provocative stories of sedition and deceit. On 2 September 1923, for example, the *Tokyo Nichinichi Shimbun* reported that "Koreans and socialists were planning a rebellious and treacherous plot. We urge the citizens to cooperate with the military and the police to guard against Koreans."<sup>33</sup> At the same moment that the government was creating its Earthquake Relief Executive Bureau, fifty naval vessels, including battleships and destroyers were dispatched to the Korean coast.<sup>34</sup>

The persecution of Koreans continued with state acquiescence for days after the disaster.<sup>35</sup> According to one eyewitness: "... wild rumors swept through the city and a reign of terror followed that the police, exhausted with their efforts, were powerless to control."<sup>36</sup> These rumors that Korean immigrants had fanned the

earthquake's fires, had formed a militia of their own, were in cahoots with anarchists, were looting, and were poisoning Tokyo's water supply led to "wanton attacks" in which vigilante bands and soldiers hunted Koreans and Bolsheviks, dispatching thousands of such "enemies" with summary justice.<sup>37</sup> By 4 September, the Korean scare had subsided, and Japanese authorities could arrange a segregated evacuation facility for ten thousand Koreans outside Tokyo. On September 5, the government formally condemned the vigilantism, in part because it "would bring blemish upon our honor when reported abroad."<sup>38</sup> Indeed, in a transparent propaganda exercise, the government produced and distributed a film of the military's rescue of several thousand Koreans to depict their "considerate treatment."<sup>39</sup>



**The Crown Prince inspects the damage after the Great Kanto Earthquake. 1923. Contemporary postcard from the author's collection.**

Because of the efficacy of other media, particularly wireless communication, the Great Kanto earthquake was the first Japanese natural disaster to fully engage the international community. A spontaneous outpouring of munificence shocked contemporary observers, who reported with no little amazement that “a contest of generosity” had broken out among foreign powers and that “nations forgot boundaries and racial distinctions.”<sup>40</sup> Washington was first off the mark with an international relief mission of unprecedented scope that prefigured 3.11’s Operation Tomodachi in remarkable detail.

President Calvin Coolidge directed the American Red Cross to collect contributions for Japan relief. By December 1923, \$12 million had been raised. Prime Minister Yamamoto telegraphed President Calvin Coolidge to thank Washington and reassure the president of Tokyo’s commitment to the bilateral relationship. On the ground in Tokyo, U.S. Ambassador Cyrus Woods organized an American Relief Committee, which worked primarily to shelter or evacuate American citizens left homeless by the disaster. U.S. warships anchored in Dairen set sail for Japan with relief supplies on 2 September and arrived in Yokohama on 5 September, three hours ahead of the British, who also had steamed in from China.<sup>41</sup> The U.S. Navy joined the Imperial Navy and private steamship companies to provide relief supplies and ferry refugees to safety.<sup>42</sup> U.S. marines helped clear debris. U.S. Army personnel dispatched from the Philippines built a hospital they soon turned over to Japanese staff. Sensitive to the pride of the Japanese military and government officials, the commander of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet, Admiral Edwin Alexander Anderson, ordered U.S. Navy ships simply to drop off relief supplies dockside for the Japanese to distribute. Like Admiral Willard nine decades later, he insisted that “we were here to do all in our power to help the Japanese, but not to force any of our ideas on them.”<sup>43</sup> U.S. secretary of state Charles Evans Hughes declared that “the traditional friendship between Japan and the United States has been further strengthened.”<sup>44</sup>





**The Crown Prince meets with military and civilian officials (including Gotō Shinpei) after the Great Kanto Earthquake. 1923. Contemporary postcard from the author's collection.**

Despite this sensitive and massive relief effort, however, U.S. disaster diplomacy ultimately failed. The two countries were incapable of turning the disaster to their mutual benefit over the longer term. The proximate reason was that even as U.S. relief aid was being distributed in Tokyo, the U.S. Congress was debating the National Origins Bill, which would ban immigration from Japan to the United States. Amid accusations that the Japanese had been insufficiently grateful for U.S. aid, President Coolidge succumbed to racist lobbying and declared “America must be kept American.”<sup>45</sup> The so-called “Japan Exclusion Act” became law in July 1924 over just nine dissenting votes in the U.S. Senate and despite the protests of the Japanese government and Ambassador Woods. The day the bill passed was marked in Tokyo as National Humiliation Day. The immigration act “completely negated the goodwill” engendered by U.S. disaster relief.<sup>46</sup> It is not surprising, then, that while the international response was immediate and generous, it was “not entirely welcome.”<sup>47</sup> There remained considerable suspicion—with some justification—that U.S. aid might be a cover for Washington-based plans of domination.

In fact, however, the Great Kanto Disaster paved the way for political domination by the Japanese military. In its immediate aftermath, Tokyo-based units provided much needed support to badly depleted emergency services and, supplemented by units based elsewhere in Japan, they worked for months to clean up the destruction, assist the homeless, and aid the reconstruction of the capital region. Ultimately fifty-two thousand troops from around the country — nearly a fifth of the standing army — was deployed to restore order in Tokyo and the surrounding prefectures in a largely unnecessary show of force.<sup>48</sup> The contrast between the military’s restoration of order and the sustained bickering among politicians over how to pay for reconstruction was stark. The use of martial rhetoric by political leaders and commentators as they discussed the disaster further enhanced the military’s standing. Commentators noted that the devastation visited upon the capital region was a “totalizing experience” like that experienced in the Great War. Nagata Hidejirō, Gotō’s successor as Tokyo’s mayor, deliberately chose to hold a memorial service for the victims of the disaster on 11 November 1923, Armistice Day.<sup>49</sup> The military was not spared from the spending cuts demanded in a government-wide austerity drive, but the new public appreciation for the military, and its emergence as a hero in the dominant disaster narrative, stood it in very good stead. The military had rallied a vulnerable nation under banners of leadership, social solidarity, and change that would be waved more benignly nearly a century later.

In this way, the hand of the Imperial Japanese military was strengthened after a period in which it had been waning. The rise of political parties and the growth of the political Left had forced the military to face new contenders for power in Tokyo and challenges to its reputation. In Japan, as elsewhere, World War I produced a peace movement and a belief that international relations could be managed amicably through treaties and international

organizations like the League of Nations. The postwar economic downturn also led to pressure for military spending cuts. Recruitment sagged, more soldiers left the service early, and morale sank among those who remained. The military response to earthquake relief and reconstruction was a turning point for its fortunes:

“Under these fortuitous circumstances the army consciously labored to recoup its position of esteem among the Japanese people, and from that time popular treatment of the army took a dramatic turn for the better, not only in the capital but throughout the country.”<sup>50</sup>

There were surely plenty of villains to array against the heroic military. But soon after the Kanto quake, when heroes and villains were still being created, the Taisho Emperor tilted the playing field by calling for the restoration of traditional values:

“In recent years much progress has been made in science and human wisdom. At the same time frivolous and extravagant habits have set in ... If [they] are not checked now, the future of the country, we fear, is dark, the disaster that has befallen the Japanese people being severe.”<sup>51</sup>

In so doing, he unleashed every variety of critique against modernity.<sup>52</sup> Commentators were freed to stress the connection between the earthquake and the perception of Tokyo as a center of decadence and moral decay—a trope Tokyo governor Ishihara Shintarō would try unsuccessfully to invoke after 3.11. Many argued that the earthquake was a divine

warning to Japan to change its ways. For example, Keio University economics professor Horie Kiichi viewed wasteful spending on fine food and products as especially egregious and advocated a tariff on luxury imports. He believed “heaven had done what the people of Tokyo and its leaders had failed to do: eliminate the centers of hedonist consumer culture.”<sup>53</sup> The fact that the devastation in Tokyo centered on the entertainment districts in the east of the city reinforced the argument that it was divine punishment for impropriety: according to one Buddhist priest, “that the entertainment districts were completely destroyed must be an expression of divine will.”<sup>54</sup> It is uncertain what God may have been thinking when the red-light district in Yoshiwara was one of the first neighborhoods to be restored to prequake prosperity.<sup>55</sup>

Many intellectuals and “progressive” (*kakushin*) bureaucrats argued that the disaster would serve as a wake-up call for the Japanese people, suggesting that controls be imposed to rectify society. But their narratives competed with prescriptions for how the state might best promote spiritual correction. Takashima Heizaburō, a child education expert, stressed that parents had to begin setting good examples for their children at home, using the experience of the earthquake to break bad habits. Fukasaku Yasubumi, a philosopher, recognized the value of self-improvement within the family, but believed that the state should embark on a program of cultural renewal, using public resources to spread “messages of sacrifice, frugality, and diligence to a wider cross-section of society.”<sup>56</sup> As it happened, the Japanese state took up the ideological cause of spiritual renewal as a priority alongside relief and reconstruction. It thereby used the disaster to address existing concerns about civic duty.<sup>57</sup> Less than two months after the disaster, the Yamamoto government directed the Ministry of Education to collect still-fresh stories of sacrifice and heroism and published them in a three-volume

set for nationwide distribution. These materials featured “recurring themes of loyalty to the Emperor, filial piety, benevolence, personal sacrifice, courage, and obedience which the government stressed were relevant in everyday life.”<sup>58</sup>

Even as the official disaster narrative—replete with emphases on vulnerability, community, and state leadership—was taking shape, the Japanese political system continued to be plagued by disorder. Just three months after the disaster, the son of a Diet member who was angered by the treatment of Koreans after the earthquake fired a pistol point-blank at the prince regent—later the Showa Emperor. Although it missed, the shot did enormous political damage. Prime Minister Yamamoto took responsibility and dissolved his Cabinet, opening the way for an equally ineffectual nonparty “grand coalition” cabinet that lasted only six months.<sup>59</sup> The ensuing instability provided the military with justification for its repressive “Peace Preservation Law” a year later. Its status enhanced by the disaster, the Imperial military became more powerful than ever and, despite massive sympathy and aid from the United States, U.S.-Japan relations continued to be characterized by mistrust.

Hanshin/Awaji, 1995

Many of these dynamics—particularly those related to political instability and the role of the military in disaster relief—were replayed 72 years later, after the Hanshin/Awaji (Kobe) earthquake, in an entirely different political context. Kobe was the largest temblor in Japan since the Great Kanto Earthquake and, as in 1923, the human and economic costs were staggering. More than 6,400 persons perished, most of them elderly; one-fifth of all Kobe’s office space and four-fifths of the docks at Japan’s largest port were put out of commission. The affected area— 25 municipalities in two prefectures-- suffered between 9-13 trillion yen in damages, an

amount equal to more than 2.5% of Japan’s gross domestic product (GDP).<sup>60</sup>

By 1995, Japanese democracy had long been fully consolidated and, as a result of the catastrophic Pacific War, the Japanese military had long since been returned to its barracks. While the widespread embrace of democratic norms ensured civilian control and greater transparency, however, it did not ensure better leadership or guarantee more-effective relief. The government was criticized for acting too slowly, for being insufficiently prepared for a disaster, for placing excessive confidence in the mitigating capacity of the postwar infrastructure, and, in the words of one particularly acute critic, for having an “ossified administrative structure.”<sup>61</sup>

All this was personified in Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi. Murayama was Japan’s first Socialist prime minister since 1948, but he governed in a cabinet dominated by the conservative Liberal Democrats who had used him cynically (but successfully) to regain power after an unaccustomed nine months in opposition. If the political order was not as unstable as in 1854 or 1923, it was by no means as stable as it had been during the Liberal Democratic Party’s (LDP’s) first four decades in power (1955-1993). Moreover, while the military may have returned to barracks long before the crisis, its marginalization in some elite opinion is blamed for the problems of disaster response and management in Kobe.<sup>62</sup> Although the public likely would have welcomed Self-Defense Forces (SDF) rescue and relief teams, competing narratives grew from Kobe’s ashes that reflected a disconnect between the military and civilian authorities and deep divisions about SDF legitimacy. The SDF, the prime minister, the governor of Hyogo Prefecture, and volunteers all played leading roles as villains and heroes in the drama. In any number of ways that would reverberate in the 3.11 echo chamber, the dominant post-Hanshin/Awaji narrative combined maligned

leadership and bureaucratic negligence in equal measure with the importance of self-help and social solidarity.

The former was captured in Prime Minister Murayama's clumsy and belated response to the disaster and by his frequently ridiculed defense that the devastation was (in his own poorly chosen words) *sōteigai*, "beyond anyone's imagination."<sup>63</sup> Since the prime minister's office did not have a 24-hour duty officer in 1995, Murayama's ineptitude is usually dated by a phone call from a friend who suggested he turn on the TV news.<sup>64</sup> By then, thousands of Kobe citizens already lay beneath the rubble of homes and offices, and the city was engulfed in flames. In an astonishing misjudgment that compounds the damage to his legacy, Murayama decided to keep his original schedule of meetings for the rest of the day.<sup>65</sup> Meanwhile, the National Land Agency, which nominally owned disaster management responsibilities, busied itself squabbling with other ministries and agencies for control of the policy response. As a result, it took two days to establish an Emergency Disaster Relief Headquarters in the cabinet office. After further dithering, Murayama handed off responsibility he had never really assumed to a bureaucracy that was equally ill-prepared to accept it.<sup>66</sup> The inability of the government to rapidly and accurately assess the situation led to delays in the mobilization of critical resources that cost lives.<sup>67</sup> Many communications links—mostly landlines in that era before cell phones—were broken, compounding the problem. On one account, "poor planning and abysmal lack of preparation moved Kobe from the category of tragic natural disaster to that of preventable human catastrophe."<sup>68</sup> Significant reputational damage to the once-vaunted Japanese bureaucracy was merely collateral damage—it paled in comparison to the human tragedy that was unfolding less than 300 miles to the southwest.

The problems of disaster management and

political leadership were multiplied by the responses of local governments. A Disaster Countermeasures Headquarters was created in the Hyogo Prefectural office within an hour after the quake, but its disaster preparedness plan imagined a much less challenging scenario.<sup>69</sup> While the prefectural government was quick to call upon neighboring jurisdictions for police and fire services, Kobe City did not invoke the Disaster Relief Law until five days after the quake, and Kobe officials refused assistance offered by medical personnel from outside the area as well as temporary shelters proffered by Osaka City.<sup>70</sup> Governor Kaihara Toshitami was slow in transmitting requests to the central government for aid, and did not request the dispatch of SDF forces until several hours after the quake.<sup>71</sup> Worse, the military did not arrive until several days later, with only 9,000 underequipped troops.<sup>72</sup> When "fully mobilized," moreover, only 24,000 troops were dispatched to the scene.<sup>73</sup> The dilatory and inadequate response of the SDF has long been central to the Hanshin/Awaji story.

But accounts differ sharply on the cause, passing blame back and forth between politicians and soldiers, and between the central government and the affected localities. Some insist that the delay was due to incompetence in Tokyo—either in the prime minister's office or in the Defense Agency.<sup>74</sup> Defense officials acknowledge they arrived late and came up short, but argue that this was because the quake hit in the predawn hours and smoke covered the city, making damage assessment difficult. Some are more direct; they say that the delay was caused by the ideological rigidity of a left-wing prime minister and governor.<sup>75</sup> Like many opposition party politicians of that period, Governor Kaihara Toshitami was said to be reluctant to cooperate with the military.<sup>76</sup> An SDF flag officer who was involved in disaster management planning at that time commented: "In 1995, the Hyogo governor was the problem. We had approached him before the quake, but he refused to

cooperate with us.”<sup>77</sup> A senior U.S. military officer who has studied this event agrees. He claims that the SDF was “all ready” to mobilize, but did not get the necessary authorization from local authorities. He insists that “the bad press the SDF received was undeserved.”<sup>78</sup> According to a United Nations (UN) study of the disaster response, the SDF responded within minutes with several hundred troops—under a legal provision allowing it to begin to act without formal invitation “when there is no time to wait.”<sup>79</sup> But then it waited several days more.

Governor Kaihara acknowledges that he was roundly criticized for his handling of the disaster response. He says the problem was structural:

“The government of Japan had been very centralized and undemocratic until after the Pacific War. Under the Meiji Constitution, the central government would handle all natural disasters, directing the prefectures and municipalities as necessary. That was the extent of it. When the Local Autonomy Law and the new constitution came into effect, however, there was decentralization of police and other functions. But until 1995, local capabilities were never tested. The problem was not my incompetence or that of Prime Minister Murayama, but the system itself.”<sup>80</sup>

The system did indeed have serious problems. There was no central government ministry or agency with the authority to coordinate responses across all administrative jurisdictions. At the local level, before governors could ask the military for aid, mayors had to deliver written requests that specified

what resources they need and the expected duration of the operation. Telephone and faxed requests were not permitted. Moreover, the costs of SDF operations would be charged to the prefectures. This combination of paperwork and fiscal disincentives may have slowed disaster response considerably.<sup>81</sup>

Governor Kaihara rejects the ideological criticism outright:

“I had no allergy to the military. I am a legal expert and I knew the law. I did not need a crisis management specialist to tell me that I had to make a formal appeal to the SDF for help (*hakken yōsei*). The problems were on their end. The SDF did not anticipate such a large scale disaster and was not ready. I issued my appeal three hours after the quake because it happened early in the morning darkness and I needed to see and assess the extent of the damage. I was not getting much information at first because no one was in the prefectural offices. The Commanding General, Matsushima Yūsuke, had no experience mobilizing the sort of unit needed.”<sup>82</sup>

Either way, General Matsushima, commander of the Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) Middle Army, failed to work effectively with the local authorities and was passed over for promotion; his rumored ambitions for national office were shattered. More important, the deaths and injuries of thousands of Kobe residents are blamed on the delays.

There was also considerable criticism of the government’s response to the numerous, immediate offers of assistance from foreign governments, private firms, and

nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Just as in 1923, Washington offered the services of its fleet in Asia, now homeported in Yokosuka, a short sail from the affected areas. But Japanese officials refused all but 78 tents and 50,000 blankets.<sup>83</sup> After a two-day delay during which it rejected offers from fourteen other countries, the Foreign Ministry permitted Switzerland to send a 30-person search-and-rescue (SAR) team with 12 sniffer dogs. But when they arrived at the airport, immigration authorities placed the rescue dogs in quarantine. When British and French SAR teams were finally invited, it was through NGO channels and over Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) objections. The Foreign Ministry also rejected multiple offers of medical teams, arguing that there was sufficient domestic capacity and that foreigners lacked requisite Japanese language skills. Seventy-six countries made offers to supply basic consumer goods, but these too were initially turned aside “because the Japanese government reasoned that there were enough consumer goods in Japan.”<sup>84</sup> It was only later, after a raft of deeply embarrassing international press reports, that the government reversed itself and accepted offers of assistance from foreigners. In the meantime, organized crime groups established themselves in Kobe as the most-efficient community servants.<sup>85</sup>

The greatest success of the Hanshin/Awaji experience—and the phenomenon that ultimately came to dominate all Kobe disaster narratives-- was the unexpected and unprecedented upsurge of volunteerism. Within two weeks, more than 7,200 volunteers had registered, and a far greater number arrived without registering. Volunteer centers were established in each of Kobe’s wards, and volunteerism soon replaced administrative incompetence as the dominant story in the affected areas. Despite an “inhospitable regulatory environment” and a “rudimentary infrastructure,” volunteers made their way to the disaster area in what amounted to a

“quantum leap for volunteering in Japan.”<sup>86</sup> This outpouring of support from civil society came to be known as “the birth of Japanese volunteerism” (*borantea no gannen*).<sup>87</sup> Interaction centers (*fureai sentaa*), designed to stimulate community formation in temporary shelters, were also used as bases for the unexpected and unprecedented number of volunteer activities. According to former governor Kaihara, volunteer organizations “sprouted like bamboo shoots after the spring rain” even without formal legal standing because by 1995, “we Japanese recognized that we were rich in things, but poor in heart.”<sup>88</sup> Indeed, more than 1.2 million Japanese flooded into Kobe and the surrounding cities and towns to provide every variety of health and human services—from employment and psychological counseling to the distribution of relief supplies and the clearing of rubble.

These volunteers made enormous contributions to postquake Kobe. Their good works were especially critical because of the burden that rebuilding placed on local resources. Although an initial central government aid package was in place within two months, Tokyo and local authorities engaged in a long-running dispute over the appropriate level of central assistance. The Finance Ministry was reluctant to set a precedent by providing relief funds directly to disaster victims, making rebuilding more difficult.<sup>89</sup> Hyogo Prefecture and Kobe City sought some 17 trillion yen in central government aid over ten years for their “Phoenix” plan; but much less central aid was forthcoming, and the reconstruction of Kobe was funded locally for the most part.<sup>90</sup> Kobe’s utilities were restored to full service within months, and its transport network within 2.5 years—the former with disaster resistant piping, new emergency storage, and redundant transmission systems. Public spaces—museums, enterprise zones, and so forth—were completed within a decade, but their connection to Kobe’s urban revival has been mixed.<sup>91</sup> Kobe did not return to its

prequake population until 2004 and, as late as 2009, its overall manufacturing base was only four-fifths of its prequake level.<sup>92</sup> Disaster reconstruction spending had a negligible effect on Japan's macroeconomic performance, and seemed more directed at restoring what once was than at building something new.<sup>93</sup> Instead, it built a crippling local debt.<sup>94</sup>

Once a Hanshin/Awaji narrative critical of the government's lack of crisis preparedness became dominant, sixteen new national laws were passed. One centerpiece of this national legislation was the July 1995 Special Measures Law on Earthquake Disaster Prevention that created a central government office attached to the prime minister's office and headed by a deputy chief cabinet secretary for crisis management.<sup>95</sup> The formation of this office, later moved to the Ministry of Education, was an effort to reestablish central accountability and begin construction of a comprehensive national disaster response policy. It was based on a reading of the crisis, which held the problems of postquake response in Kobe lay with both local incompetence and the endemic jurisdictional overlap and competition—the so-called vertical administration that has long been a problem in Japanese governance. The new central office would be dedicated to administrative coordination and crisis management; it was tasked to establish effective protocols for disaster response, to create new crisis management manuals for the prefectures and municipalities, and to support the prime minister in making public statements in a timely fashion. As the 3.11 crisis would demonstrate sixteen years later, however, it was not clear that further centralization and the production of ready-made crisis manuals was the correct lesson.

A second prominent result was national legislation in 1998 supported by all the major parties that provided legal status to nonprofit organizations in Japan for the first time.<sup>96</sup> Before this legislation, NGOs had no corporate

identity, and consequently had difficulty renting office space and hiring staff. Now, organizations that promote activities in health, medical care, social welfare, education, community development, culture, the environment, disaster relief, community safety, human rights, international cooperation, and gender equality, inter alia, could qualify for special legal status. As a consequence, civil society enjoyed a renaissance; active citizenship and community involvement have not flagged since. As discussed in chapter 1, NGOs that had become major contributors to the civic life of Kobe became leaders in Tohoku after 3.11.<sup>97</sup>

Other lessons drawn from the bureaucratic inefficiencies that dominated the disaster narratives did not require new legislation or further centralization. Perhaps the most important lesson was that effective disaster response requires cooperation across levels and branches of government.<sup>98</sup> Observers across the political spectrum came to agree that this cooperation, in turn, must include both military and civil authorities. Although Japanese conservatives continued to have trouble passing national emergency mobilization legislation (*yūji hōsei*), discussion of emergency response was no longer taboo and virtually everyone came to accept a role for the military in disaster relief. According to the editor of a major progressive monthly: “Both the SDF and the localities changed after 1995. The SDF, because it failed to help enough people, and the local governments because they came to realize how much they need the SDF as a disaster relief force.”<sup>99</sup> An SDF general concurs: “If there had been no Hanshin/Awaji failure, there would have been no 3.11 success.”<sup>100</sup> The single most important development in cooperation between the SDF and local government was the dramatic increase in—and widespread acceptance of—joint disaster management exercises with better equipment.<sup>101</sup>

## Comparative Guidance

In order to broaden our perspective on how natural disasters become political events, it is useful to examine the experience of other countries and that of Japan abroad. We start with a domestic U.S. case that offers uncomfortable parallels to Hanshin/Awaji. After exploring several cases of U.S. disaster diplomacy, we conclude with an examination of how the Japanese government mobilized resources to assist victims in China. Taken together, these episodes raise important analytical questions for understanding how disaster narratives form and the extent to which they shape political choices going forward.

Hurricane Katrina, the horrendous natural disaster resulting in the deaths of nearly 1,500 persons in and around New Orleans in late August 2005, was notable for four reasons relevant to 3.11.<sup>102</sup> First, it had been anticipated as a high-consequence but low-probability event. As such, the inadequate response of civil authorities revealed worrisome deficiencies in U.S. disaster preparedness. Second, as in Tohoku after 3.11, the military—in this case, the U.S. Coast Guard and National Guard—came to be viewed as especially competent when compared to civilian officials. Third, the disaster melded with and shaped a broader narrative questioning the competence of the central government and the commander in chief. Finally, again like 3.11, the perception of Katrina varied predictably among those with different predisaster political preferences.

The public had every reason to believe the government was well prepared to respond to a major natural disaster on the Gulf Coast. The local and national media had predicted such an occasion, and near-disaster events had occurred in the recent past. One former head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) repeatedly declared more than a

decade earlier that his most serious concern was “that a storm surge as high as 15 to 20 feet could drive Lake Pontchartrain over its levees and submerge New Orleans” with catastrophic results.<sup>103</sup> A 2001 feature article in *Scientific American* titled “Drowning New Orleans” stated simply, “New Orleans is a disaster waiting to happen.”<sup>104</sup> And the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* ran a five-part series in 2002 that warned “flooding from even a moderate storm could kill thousands. It’s just a matter of time.”<sup>105</sup> These warnings were not ignored. Local, state, and federal officials organized a large-scale disaster management exercise in 2004 to identify the consequences and effective responses to a major hurricane hitting the New Orleans area.<sup>106</sup>

Despite considerable forewarning and planning, however—and despite accurate weather forecasts of the path and intensity of the storm—the dominant post-Katrina narrative portrays civil authorities as being unprepared. From the beginning, most reports held state and local officials particularly culpable. Louisiana and New Orleans were blamed for failing to order mandatory evacuations in a timely manner, and not at all in some specific areas.<sup>107</sup> The New Orleans Police Department’s failure to maintain law and order—and indeed, criminality in its own ranks—became central to many accounts.<sup>108</sup>

Federal officials were also targeted. After crediting FEMA director Michael Brown with “doing a heck of a job” on 2 September 2005, even President George W. Bush became an object of criticism.<sup>109</sup> The next day, twin items in *The New York Times*—a news story and a blistering Maureen Dowd op-ed—questioned Brown’s qualifications and competence. His most notable job prior to federal employment had been as head of the International Arabian Horse Association, a position he resigned under pressure.<sup>110</sup> There had been little mention of Brown’s background in news reports prior to 3 September, but after the president’s “heck of a



job” endorsement, Brown’s poor performance in both his previous post and in FEMA press conferences became prominent. This villain narrative had a long reach. FEMA was now denounced for a variety of pre- and postdisaster decisions, even in reports written at Republican-led institutions. Brown’s failures and questionable qualifications made him the poster boy of federal government failures, linking him to President Bush. CBS News polls found approval of President Bush’s response to Katrina sinking from 54 percent to 38 percent within a week.<sup>111</sup> Responsibility for search-and-rescue and recovery efforts was reassigned to U.S. Coast Guard vice admiral Thad Allen, and Brown resigned from FEMA on 12 September.

While not exempt from criticism for a slow response, the U.S. military was viewed widely as more capable than civilian administrators. The report of the U.S. House of Representatives select bipartisan committee on Katrina captures the overall tone of this trope when it concludes that “[t]he military played an invaluable role, but coordination was lacking.”<sup>112</sup> As in Japan after 3.11, images of the military were visually compelling and widely disseminated—helicopter rescues, search-and-rescue flights, troops in camouflage, transport planes landing. Two larger-than-life military leaders—Lieutenant General Russel Honoré and Vice Admiral Thad Allen—came to dominate their respective phases of the post-Katrina response, and anchored the post-Katrina hero narrative.

New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin’s description of Honoré captures several military stereotypes in quick succession and exemplifies the narrative’s civil-military competence gap:

“Now, I will tell you this—and I give the president some credit on this—he sent one John Wayne dude down here that can get some stuff done, and his name is General Honoré. And he came off the

doggone chopper, and he started cussing and people started moving. And he's getting some stuff done. They ought to give that guy—if they don't want to give it to me—give him full authority to get the job done, and we can save some people.”<sup>113</sup>

Even the generally critical New Orleans-based journalist Jed Horne is largely positive in his description of Honoré; again, because the contrast between military and civilian stereotypes is so apparent, it is worth quoting at length:

“What the media wanted, of course, was a star—someone on whom to focus the yearning for effective leadership that seemed so sorely lacking among the many politicians jabbering, finger-pointing, and blubbing on camera. And briefly, at least—for as long as he could put up with it—the media had their man in Lt. Gen. Russell (sic) Honoré ... In a landscape crawling with double-talk, he was blunt, action-oriented, and, after a delayed start, capable of results....”<sup>114</sup>

In a crisis with racial overtones, the fact that the general was an African American with Louisiana roots added to Honoré’s positive image.

While Thad Allen did not project the same “central casting” qualities as Honoré, press coverage of him was also admiring—in stark contrast to coverage of Mayor Nagin, Director Brown, and other flawed civilians. A sampling of headlines from the week of his appointment captures the tone of the press coverage: “Brown Replacement Familiar with

Challenges,” “New Katrina Chief Seen as Experienced,” “Bush Sends in the Coast Guard to Take the Helm of Katrina Relief,” “New Katrina Recovery Chief Viewed as Smart and Incisive,” “Commander Accustomed to Scrutiny and Crises.”<sup>115</sup> In the dominant narrative, Brown was the villain, Nagin was ineffectual, and Honoré and Allen were heroes.

Katrina soon became embedded in a broader narrative about the competence of the Bush administration. The president’s job approval rating had already begun a slow decline, one not evident in press coverage in the days immediately following the storm. In fact, among major news publications, the first wave of criticisms that linked response to Katrina with general Bush incompetence came from the British and European media, where columns in *The Independent*, *The Sunday Times*, and *The Guardian* linked the Katrina response to the Iraq War and other failures. These columns featured American commentators. Camille Paglia wrote of her surprise with “the disintegration of the administration’s mask of competence and confidence, as New Orleans sinks day by day into squalor and savagery, a shocking panorama of unrelieved human suffering.”<sup>116</sup> Andrew Sullivan commented: “The seeming inability of the federal or city authorities to act swiftly or effectively to rescue survivors or maintain order posed fundamental questions about the competence of the Bush administration and local authorities.”<sup>117</sup> Jonathan Freedland argued that “Americans expect competence from their leader as a minimum requirement. And if an image of a crashed helicopter in the Iranian desert could undo one president, surely pictures of an American city reduced to a Somali or Bangladeshi kind of chaos spell disaster for this one.”<sup>118</sup> David Frum, a former Bush speechwriter, noted on 3 September 2005 in a Canadian newspaper that “chaos and disorder in the streets of New Orleans inevitably remind Americans of chaos and disorder in Iraq, and raise questions about whether the hand on

America’s tiller is as skilled and capable as it ought to be.”<sup>119</sup>

The U.S. press soon joined the scrum, focusing on questions of presidential competence. On 8 September, *The New York Times* reported that “Democrats appear able to question the administration’s competence without opening themselves to attacks on their patriotism.”<sup>120</sup> Another Maureen Dowd column on 12 September—the same day as Brown’s resignation—argued that “ever since W. was his father’s loyalty enforcer, his political decisions have been shaped more by loyalty than substance or competence.”<sup>121</sup> Liberal columnist E.J. Dionne was instrumental in articulating what would become the dominant narrative:

“the Bush Era ended definitively on Sept. 2, the day Bush first toured the Gulf Coast States after Hurricane Katrina. There was no magic moment with a bullhorn. The utter failure of federal relief efforts had by then penetrated the country’s consciousness. Yesterday’s resignation of FEMA Director Michael Brown put an exclamation point on the failure.”<sup>122</sup>

By April 2007, this narrative was so widely embraced that even conservative writer Richard Lowry argued in the *National Review* that “Republican primary voters will be looking in 2008 for someone who doesn’t run the government like George W. Bush.”<sup>123</sup>

The case of Hurricane Katrina reminds us of the power of narrators to create heroes and villains. It suggests that leadership can be a key trope in the creation of a postdisaster narrative, that existing lenses filter evaluations of government performance, that this performance has implications for larger

narratives about competence, and that even partisans can be persuaded to abandon their cause in the face of a particularly muscular counternarrative.<sup>124</sup> In short, strong narratives can squeeze out weak ones and gain dominance.

### Disaster Diplomacy

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR) is commonly extended to states after devastating wars, usually by the victor and often with salutary effect. The Marshall Plan in Europe and U.S. aid to Japan are routinely credited with consolidating U.S. leadership and the postwar order, for example. A subset of postwar aid, “natural disaster diplomacy,” is also a long-standing tool of statecraft. Observers ask if these operations yield diplomatic advantages. Do they induce international cooperation between competing states and beget reconciliation, do they exacerbate conflict, or do they have no lasting effects at all?<sup>125</sup>

This tool has often been extended to current, as opposed to former, rivals.<sup>126</sup> A list of major disasters—disasters with more than 20,000 victims—since the end of the Cold War to which both the United States and Japan responded with assistance includes friendly and rival states alike:

January 2010	Haiti earthquake	
May 2008	Sichuan earthquake	Haiti
May 2008	Cyclone Nargis	China
October 2005	Kashmir earthquake	Myanmar
December 2004	Indian Ocean tsunami	Pakistan
December 2003	Bam earthquake	Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka
August 1999	Izmit earthquake	Iran
April 1991	Bangladesh cyclone	Turkey
June 1990	Manjil-Rudbar earthquake	Bangladesh
		Iran

The question inevitably arises whether natural disasters can create opportunities for rapprochement or even peacemaking. What advantages accrue to states that reach out to assist rivals or rebels after a natural disaster? Does trust evolve? Do preferences or interests shift? The evidence to date is both limited and mixed. One comparative study found that disaster assistance after the 2005 Kashmir quake did not lead to the sort of rapprochement between India and Pakistan that the 1999 İzmit quake did for Turkey and Greece because long-standing enemy myths in Kashmir were particularly difficult to overcome. They sparked communal violence that became routine and undermined efforts by state leaders to use the disaster as an opportunity to reset relations. Other work has questioned the reconciliatory power of the İzmit quake as well.<sup>127</sup>

The end of the insurgency in Banda Aceh after the Indian Ocean tsunami is also frequently cited as an example of the pacifying effects of disaster diplomacy. When the tsunami struck Indonesia, it disproportionately affected northern Sumatra, the site of a long-running separatist conflict between the Indonesian government and the independence-seeking Free Aceh Movement. Early reports suggested that after years of fighting, rebels and government officials used the disaster as a tool for peacemaking. One community leader told the British newspaper *Guardian* that “we would not be here without the tsunami.... It focused the minds on all sides. It demonstrated that there has been enough suffering in Aceh.” A rebel leader concurred, saying that the tsunami “opened a huge door in the deadlock that no one thought was there.” The tsunami may have been a pretext for the acceleration of peace efforts on both sides, but research indicates that the disaster was only one of several factors that brought the two sides together.<sup>128</sup> The case confirms that disaster can facilitate and catalyze diplomacy, but is unlikely to cause reconciliation on its own.<sup>129</sup>

These findings seem consistent with the U.S. experience, but there have been cases in which U.S. relief efforts have had salutary diplomatic effects. U.S. assistance to Bangladesh in 1991 after Tropical Cyclone 02B (Marian) is an example. Washington had opposed Bangladeshi independence in 1971, and the hope in some quarters was that U.S. aid might “wash the stink” off U.S.-Bangladesh relations. It was also hoped that aid might highlight the Washington’s compassionate side in the aftermath of the 1991 Persian Gulf War, an engagement that many Bangladeshis had opposed. Bangladesh had dispatched forces to Saudi Arabia to participate in Operation Desert Shield, a decision that led to anti-American protests, including a mob that overran the American Club in Dhaka.<sup>130</sup>

President George H.W. Bush diverted U.S. marines returning from the Persian Gulf to help with the relief effort. The U.S. military relief operation in Bangladesh was at that point the second-largest overseas humanitarian mission undertaken by the United States since World War II, surpassed only by the simultaneous U.S. relief effort in the Kurdish areas of northern Iraq.<sup>131</sup> In all, U.S. Air Force planes flew nearly 200 missions delivering more than 2,000 tons of cargo to affected areas. U.S. Army Blackhawks (helicopters) and navy and marine aviation flew an additional 1,774 sorties, delivering more than 1,500 tons of relief supplies in a mission that would ultimately be called “Operation Sea Angel.” U.S. medical teams dispatched to Bangladesh treated 15,000 patients.<sup>132</sup> General Henry Stackpole, who commanded the U.S. relief effort, somewhat grandiloquently explained in early remarks, “We went to Kuwait in the name of liberty, and we’ve come to Bangladesh in the name of humanity.”<sup>133</sup>

The operation had three long-term impacts. First, it was the most substantive engagement between the U.S. and Bangladeshi militaries to that point, and came to be viewed as the

beginning of U.S.-Bangladeshi military cooperation. Based on his conversations with senior Bangladesh military leaders, one Pentagon official claims that the U.S. disaster relief mission is why “the Bangladesh military holds the U.S. military in the highest esteem and looks to always partner first with [it].”<sup>134</sup> Second, its success led to aid and relief missions becoming a major component of U.S.-Bangladesh military training and joint exercises, with considerable improvement in the Bangladesh military’s ability to respond to disasters, either alone or with the assistance of others.<sup>135</sup> Third, the cyclone struck one month after the end of a decade of military rule; a new democratic government had just taken power in Bangladesh.<sup>136</sup> Although no evidence suggests it was an objective of the mission, U.S. assistance may have helped stabilize the young democracy. As General Stackpole wrote a year after the operation, “We shored up a fledgling government that everyone had expected to fail. That produced a political fallout, a benefit that had not been anticipated.”<sup>137</sup>

The situation (and results) were different in Myanmar (Burma) when Cyclone Nargis cut a swath of destruction along the southern coast in early May 2008. High-speed winds of up to 135 miles per hour combined with a 12-foot storm surge to kill approximately 140,000, destroy 450,000 homes, and displace 800,000 people. The delta region, the country’s “rice bowl,” suffered the most severe damage, but Yangon’s buildings, power, transport, and communications infrastructure were also heavily affected.<sup>138</sup> Losses totaled about 3 percent of Myanmar’s GDP.<sup>139</sup>

The United States, which had no diplomatic relations with the country it insisted on calling Burma, requested and received permission to begin shipping relief supplies. The first U.S. C-130 departed Utapao Air Base in Thailand and landed at Rangoon International Airport within two weeks, carrying 28,000 pounds of cargo as well as Admiral Tim Keating, the head

of U.S. Pacific Command, and Henrietta Fore, the administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development. Keating carried with him an appeal to the government of Myanmar to allow considerably greater U.S. aid and an expanded U.S. presence in the country. But permission was denied. The Myanmar government allowed flights in, but did not allow U.S. ships to dock or U.S. military personnel to come ashore. In fact, Myanmar did not allow any international aid workers into the country before a personal appeal in late May from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon.<sup>140</sup>

Rather than mark a turning point for the relationship, this episode largely reinforced U.S. and Burmese suspicions about each other. For its part, the United States viewed obstruction by the government of Myanmar as morally indefensible. Motivated in part by the slow response of the junta, the Bush administration awarded Burmese dissident Aung San Suu Kyi a Congressional Gold Medal for her human rights work. It is perhaps no surprise, then, that the Burmese government was highly suspicious of the flotilla of U.S. (and French) military vessels that quickly deployed off its coast, offering to deliver aid, troops, and helicopters.<sup>141</sup> In 2011, the Obama administration achieved a diplomatic breakthrough with Burma, but it is difficult to claim that the post-Nargis experience contributed to this outcome. It is easier to argue that it may have actually slowed a thaw in relations.

If the record of U.S. disaster diplomacy with rival states is mixed, what is the record with those that are friendly? Operation Tomodachi was not the first time the U.S. military was used to provide aid to a friendly, disaster-affected country. In order to answer the question of whether U.S. aid after 3.11 strengthened relations and led to new levels of mutual commitment, I examine two cases – both in Asia, and each following one of the most devastating natural disasters in history. In

both cases, the U.S. military was deployed to assist suffering people in a friendly state. As we discover, the diplomatic consequences varied in ways that are relevant for how we assess the impact of Operation Tomodachi on U.S.-Japan relations.

In December 2004, a 9.1 to 9.3-magnitude earthquake off the northern tip of Sumatra—the world’s largest in four decades and third largest ever recorded—triggered a massive tsunami that raced across the Indian Ocean. The quake and resultant tsunami killed approximately 230,000 people and displaced another 1.75 million. The majority of those dead or missing and presumed dead were from Indonesia, although Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, Malaysia, the Maldives, and the Seychelles also suffered substantial deaths and damage. The massive wave even slammed into Somalia on the far side of the Indian Ocean. Fifty-four nations, led by Australia, India, Japan, and the United States, mobilized to assist these countries.<sup>142</sup>

Aid from the United States has been credited with improving U.S.-Indonesian relations. One observer argued that post-tsunami assistance “transformed America’s image in Indonesia. Even more remarkably, it undermined support for Osama bin Laden.”<sup>143</sup> Indeed, widely cited opinion polls indicated that U.S. post-tsunami relief had both effects.<sup>144</sup> Admiral Mike Mullen, then chief of naval operations and later chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, referred to this polling when he wrote in 2006: “The poll found that, as a direct result of our humanitarian assistance—and for the first time ever in a Muslim nation—more people favored U.S.-led efforts to fight terrorism than opposed them (40% to 36%).”<sup>145</sup>

It is difficult to determine how much U.S. assistance contributed to these shifts of opinion. In 2003, Indonesians had vehemently opposed the U.S. invasion of Iraq, which was justified by a “war on terror” rhetoric that

many in the world's most populous Muslim nation took to be directed at them. The United States had generally been popular in Indonesia until the Iraq War, when support sank to new lows. Even the election of President Barack Obama, who had spent part of his childhood there, was not sufficient to raise U.S. popularity in Indonesia to pre-war levels.<sup>146</sup> The United States had a similar experience with another nominally aligned state, Pakistan, after the 2005 earthquake in Kashmir.

On 8 October 2005, a 7.6 magnitude earthquake struck outside of the city of Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, killing over 73,000 (including 18,000 school children) and wounding an additional 69,000.<sup>147</sup> Although Indian-administered Kashmir was not spared, casualties there were much lower: around 1,300 dead and 6,500 wounded on the Indian side of the Line of Control. The approaching onset of winter led to concerns that up to 200,000 of the several million displaced persons might die from exposure.<sup>148</sup>

Perceiving this as a “strategic moment” for U.S.-Pakistan ties that were critical to the U.S. war effort in Afghanistan, U.S. ambassador to Pakistan Ryan Crocker immediately concluded that the U.S. response would be “crucial to our future relationship” with Pakistan.<sup>149</sup> U.S. aid began arriving in Pakistan the day after the quake, and by the time the operation ended six months later, U.S. air and ground crews had conducted the largest and longest airborne relief operation since the Berlin Airlift.<sup>150</sup> More than 18 million pounds of humanitarian aid and relief supplies were off-loaded, and U.S. military medical personnel treated approximately 35,000 patients. Including civilian efforts, the United States provided medical care or medical supplies to 80,000 Pakistanis.<sup>151</sup>

The humanitarian benefits of the aid seem clearer than the political impact, despite

overwhelming evidence that Washington sought to win Pakistani “hearts and minds” through assistance.<sup>152</sup> One senior U.S. Marine officer who participated in the relief effort acknowledged that U.S. assistance was not purely humanitarian. Claiming that U.S. military assistance to Pakistan “provides a useful model of how humanitarian missions can contribute to political success,” he explicitly compares the effort to the Berlin Airlift as an example of “how a humanitarian assistance campaign could engender lasting political success in an ideological struggle.”<sup>153</sup>

The evidence, however, is mixed. Polls conducted by A.C. Nielsen Pakistan suggest that U.S. assistance enhanced bilateral relations.<sup>154</sup> They show a dramatic shift in opinions of Pakistani adults, more of whom felt that suicide bombing and other forms of violence against civilians were never justified, disapproved of Osama bin Laden, and had a favorable opinion of the United States. Fewer Pakistanis had confidence in Osama bin Laden, and the number with very unfavorable views of the United States declined considerably. Similar evidence comes from focus group discussions and interviews.<sup>155</sup> Researchers found “near unanimous sentiment by local respondents that [U.S.] organizations responded for humanitarian reasons rather than to promote hidden political, cultural or religious agendas.” This overall sentiment is echoed in the response of one resident of Muzaffarabad, the city near the epicenter: “The international military response was perceived as humanitarian. People said farewell to the U.S. Army with flowers. They had no political agenda.”<sup>156</sup>

However, other polling results show little or no lasting impact on Pakistani views of the United States.<sup>157</sup> In a Pew study, U.S. military aid did not appear to substantially or irrevocably change Pakistani perceptions of the potential threat from the United States. A shift away from support for terrorism in Pakistan did

begin around the time of earthquake relief, but attitudes appear to have changed before the relief effort. A localized increase in esteem and trust of Westerners in areas where the aid was most concentrated is apparent, but it is equally clear that this trust did not spill over across Pakistan. As the U.S.-Pakistan relationship entered its most difficult period after the 2011 assassination of Bin Laden, the transitory nature of public and elite-level opinion appeared more evident than any fundamental improvement. After the relief operation, positive views of the United States in Pakistan improved only slightly—to 27% from 23%—and within two years, it would slip to just 15%. The Pew study concludes that “distrust of American motives and opposition to key elements of U.S. foreign policy may run too deep in Pakistan for humanitarian effort to have a significant impact over the longer term.” U.S. disaster relief in Pakistan after October 2005 was a “stark example of the limits” of disaster diplomacy.<sup>158</sup>

What of Japanese disaster diplomacy? Japan had first authorized the international dispatch of rescue workers in 1987 and had sent its first Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) team to a frosty Iran after the Manjil-Rudbar earthquake claimed 40,000 lives there in 1990. In 1992, the enabling legislation was amended to allow dispatch of military personnel. In May 2008, less than one month after Cyclone Nargis devastated Myanmar, two months after the most violent disturbances in Tibet in 20 years, and just three months before Beijing was scheduled to host the summer Olympic Games, an 8.0 magnitude earthquake struck Sichuan Province in western China. Japan had another opportunity to organize and dispatch a JDR team, its twelfth.

The Sichuan (or Wenchuan) earthquake was 30 times greater than the 1995 temblor in Kobe and affected a territory the size of the Republic of Korea. It claimed 90,000 lives, injured 363,000, and left millions homeless.<sup>159</sup> Whole mountains were shaken loose, shedding rocks

and trees that covered entire valleys and the communities beneath. And in the most conspicuous tragedy of all, 1,000 school children were crushed when their school buildings were pancaked by the earth’s tremors. The temporal proximity to the Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar invited comparisons by observers who, by all accounts, found the Chinese response to the disaster timelier, better coordinated, and far more effective. Contrasting narratives about the two authoritarian states were quick to form: Beijing was remarkably accountable and transparent; Naypyidaw was irresponsible, opaque and “inhuman.”<sup>160</sup>

China had responded to its most recent natural disaster, the 1976 Tangshan earthquake that had claimed three times more lives, much as Myanmar did after Nargis. This time, party and state would engineer a response that boosted its legitimacy at home and its prestige abroad. Within hours of the quake, Premier Wen Jiabao was at the site, having already mobilized 130,000 People’s Liberation Army (PLA) troops for rescue and relief operations and having authorized the dispatch of local rescue teams and sniffer dogs from across the country. Invoking a model refined during the construction of the Three Gorges Dam, which relocated 840,000 people, Beijing ordered local governments to join the military on the front line of state support for the stricken province. Under the Wenchuan Disaster Recovery Pairing Support Plan, Beijing paired 18 regions and municipalities—as well as universities—with partner localities and schools in the affected area. To continue receiving central government support, these cities and regions would have to provide three years of reconstruction assistance—planning, housing, medical support, social welfare, agricultural and industrial assistance, education, and so forth -- to their partner localities at the level of at least 1% or their previous year’s budget.<sup>161</sup>

The voluntary mobilization of 200,000 people,

half of them college students, in the first week after the quake was even more striking—and likely even more consequential. The unprecedented surge of volunteers and their organization by some 200 Chinese and foreign NGOs was heralded as a “watershed event” for China’s civil society.<sup>162</sup> After all, these were organizations that the Chinese state had tried to contain in the past.<sup>163</sup> As a result, much like 1995 in Japan, 2008 in China was hailed as the “Year of the Volunteer,” signaling the importance of a surprisingly vibrant associational sphere. A ballast against the state was said to have emerged stealthily.<sup>164</sup> Change seemed to be everywhere, as individuals and groups from all across China competed to provide funds to the region. The response was by all accounts flexible and timely.<sup>165</sup> Private charitable contributions amounted to \$6.6 billion within a month.<sup>166</sup>

But China’s authoritarian reflexes had not atrophied entirely. Chinese officials imposed tight security in damaged areas to prevent demonstrations by distraught parents, in one case even preventing a memorial ceremony for lost children in Dujianyan, where journalists were banned and detained.<sup>167</sup> Party chief Hu Jintao became so concerned with the government’s initial relaxation of controls on the media—which resulted in damning reports on shoddy construction that accounted for thousands of deaths—that he called for new party guidance in the form of “construction of a new force” of journalists to lead public opinion.<sup>168</sup> Still, the Chinese people were rediscovering their own voice and a sense of national unity that, it was said, had been flagging.<sup>169</sup>

They were also discovering their appeal to the outside world. International relief agencies and disaster diplomats lined up to help, and this time—after a short delay that may have cost lives—Beijing welcomed them with open arms. More than 160 nations and international organizations expressed condolences and

offered assistance.<sup>170</sup> To the surprise of most observers, the first on the list was Japan. The quake had occurred just after Hu Jintao’s return from a state visit to Japan—the first by a Chinese leader after a decade of frayed relations. Hu was determined to maintain forward diplomatic progress, and when the Japanese Disaster Relief team arrived before dawn on 16 May, they were the first foreign rescuers to set foot on Chinese soil since the 1949 revolution. Beijing denied any political motives and attributed this to Japan’s “proximity and speed.” But a heavy dose of disaster diplomacy, from both sides, was clear to all observers.<sup>171</sup> According to a retired Japanese government official who was in Beijing at the time, the Chinese government was eager to soften public opinion vis-à-vis Japan in order to avoid an Olympic reprise of the nationalist disruptions that had marred the 2004 Asian football championships. It placed a Chinese television crew on the JDR bus to record its every effort, supervised by a Chinese diplomat who had a cell phone with a “direct line to Premier Wen Jiabo.”<sup>172</sup> News of the Japanese rescuers was broadcast live across China for days.

Japan was ready for this moment and just as eager as China to gain diplomatic advantage from the tragedy. Preparations began immediately after news of the quake reached the Cabinet Office. Within minutes, ten Ministry of Defense (MOD) and MOFA officials were assembled to organize a JDR team for dispatch to China, and the team was ready within 36 hours, while Tokyo waited for Beijing’s green light and felt out its willingness to allow Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) C-130 transports to shuttle relief workers and supplies to western China.<sup>173</sup> The use of the Japanese military in this rescue operation had immediate appeal among politicians. One unnamed Diet member declared that “this is a good opportunity to have the Chinese understand the real mission of the SDF,” and the Policy Affairs Research Council of the



ruling LDP affirmed its support for the use of the ASDF.<sup>174</sup>

This may have delayed China's invitation to the JDR team, however; which in turn made the Japanese rescue of survivors even more difficult. Growing testy as hours dragged on into days, Foreign Minister Kōmura reminded the Chinese that "Japan is ready with trained personnel," and Chief Cabinet Secretary Machimura Nobutaka declared undiplomatically that "China is a self-sufficient country that wants to do everything on its own."<sup>175</sup> Not having heard from Beijing, the team was recalled from Haneda airport on 13 May.

Permission was finally granted late on 15 May 2008—a welcome development attributed by Prime Minister Fukuda to his successful summit meeting earlier in the month with General Secretary Hu.<sup>176</sup> The JDR was in the air in chartered aircraft within six hours, led by a foreign ministry official, Koizumi Takashi.<sup>177</sup> But vital time had been lost, and it turned out that two Japanese rescue teams with 61 trained personnel were unable to save any lives. They did, however, pull 16 corpses from the wreckage in three locations.<sup>178</sup> An additional Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) team of 23 doctors and nurses provided medical assistance to survivors, and the Japanese government gave \$1.7 million through the International Red Cross and Red Crescent, along with tents, food, blankets, and other supplies.<sup>179</sup> Group leader Koizumi pronounced his regret at not having found anyone alive in the rubble, but expressed pride in having "received high evaluations and gratitude from both the Chinese government and its citizens," adding that "although the purpose of the JDR effort was entirely humanitarian assistance, it also had a positive effect on the bilateral relationship...a silver lining in this dark cloud."<sup>180</sup> The JICA teams were followed by a more symbolic string of visits by Japanese politicians bearing supplies, and cash donations

from Kansai political leaders, including Hashimoto Tōru, then governor of Osaka, as well as six months of substantive assistance from Japanese NGOs supported by the government and Keidanren.<sup>181</sup>

Both sides were unabashed about the diplomatic advantages they could gain from the crisis and from their unprecedented bilateral cooperation. Prime Minister Fukuda used the opportunity to call for "diplomacy for disaster management cooperation," in effect a regional agreement to cooperate on disaster relief.<sup>182</sup> China's ambassador to Japan, Cui Tiankai, called Japan's response "a sign of strategic, mutually beneficial relations."<sup>183</sup> Japanese editorialists concurred. The conservative *Sankei Shimbun* suggested that Sino-Japanese cooperation in Sichuan demonstrated that "the Chinese government viewed the earthquake as a rare opportunity to quickly promote reciprocal strategic relations."<sup>184</sup> The more moderate *Mainichi Shimbun* pointed out that China clearly deemed its relations with Japan to be of great importance, and said that "apparently China accepted the Japanese relief team ahead of other countries with the goal of deepening popular understanding of Hu's visit to Japan." It then quoted an unnamed Japanese diplomat who reported that "state-run TV cameras covered our relief teams from the start. One could sense the intentions of the Chinese government there."<sup>185</sup> A Japanese Foreign Ministry official declared that the JDR team "displayed Japan's presence and had a positive effect on Sino-Japanese relations."<sup>186</sup>

In China the emerging narrative was one of new social solidarity and effective but compassionate leadership. The Chinese government won over the foreign media, which hailed its quick response and new openness.<sup>187</sup> Even human rights groups that had been extremely critical of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in Tibet now were acknowledging its sensitivity and concern for the people of Sichuan. China's Foreign Ministry spokesman,

Qin Gang, connected Chinese relief operations to the PRC's concerns for human rights, calling the Chinese effort a "people-centered relief effort" that demonstrates how "the Chinese government respects and protects human rights."<sup>188</sup>

In Japan, there was also widespread self-congratulation. Much of it was leveraged off the attention given to the JICA team by the Chinese media, particularly the public broadcaster, CCTV, and Xinhua, which repeatedly reported how Japanese rescuers "worked around the clock" and "never gave up," working without regard for their own safety.<sup>189</sup> It was Xinhua which snapped and published a photo of Japanese rescue workers bowing before the corpses of a mother and infant they had pulled from the rubble. The incident touched Chinese hearts, and the photograph became iconic.<sup>190</sup>



**Japanese rescue workers from the Self-Defense Forces pay respects to the bodies of a mother and child recovered after the Sichuan earthquake. 2008. Photo by Li Tao, Xinhua photographer.**

Japanese observers fixed on the bravery of Japan's rescue workers and on the gratitude of average Chinese who, they reported, could previously have imagined uniformed Japanese

only in the form of cruel, marauding invaders. Now, they said, it was clear to the average Chinese that Japan had changed. According to opinion polls—and as evidenced by the standing ovation Japanese athletes received from Chinese fans at the Olympic opening ceremonies—the Chinese were seeing Japan clearly for the first time.<sup>191</sup> Japan's relief effort would be remembered as a "turning point," a moment of deep reconciliation in Sino-Japanese relations.<sup>192</sup> Japanese Foreign Minister Kōmura crowed to reporters that a visitor to the Chongqing consulate had declared that "ill feelings toward Japan had changed," and Chief Cabinet Secretary Machimura reported a new respect and admiration now harbored by the Chinese for Japan.<sup>193</sup>

The collateral diplomatic benefits of this operation had their limits. Two weeks after the disaster—while Japan was still basking in the success of its JDR team—Tokyo again pressed Beijing for permission to use ASDF C-130s to shuttle relief supplies to Sichuan. At first, they seemed to be pushing on an open door; word of imminent approval of 8 round trip military relief flights was leaked to a credulous press, which spoke of a breakthrough in bilateral relations.<sup>194</sup> These reports touched off a backlash in China. Anti-Japanese posts began to appear on Chinese electronic bulletin boards, and the Chinese government quickly announced that the SDF "cannot be welcome [due to] the impact on the psychology of the Chinese people."<sup>195</sup> Military officers who welcomed the dispatch as laying the way for "a large expansion in the scope of SDF missions abroad" were now embarrassed that U.S., South Korean, and Russian military transports had been welcomed to China while they were turned away.<sup>196</sup> In the words of a *Yomiuri Shimbun* editorial: "Both governments apparently concluded it would be unwise to risk putting a damper on Chinese public opinion toward Japan, just as it was finally warming up."<sup>197</sup>

There would be one more opportunity, and it too was missed. In June, after the C-130 imbroglio had settled down, the PRC invited the destroyer JS *Sazanami* to visit Shenzhen, per a 2007 arrangement made by the two nations' defense ministers and ratified by Prime Minister Fukuda and General Secretary Hu at their prequake summit in Japan. Even before the *Sazanami* arrived in Zhanjiang port—63 years after the last Japanese military had left China—the Chinese government had cancelled virtually all public events, and foreign journalists were not allowed to cover the port call. The Japanese sailors off-loaded relief supplies for Sichuan as a band played to a limited audience in the military base, and they returned to Japan with little fanfare. China's English-language press ran photos of the *Sazanami* visit and the overseas *People's Daily* editorialized that the port call was a “sign of the broadmindedness and confidence of the Chinese people,” but criticism at home was suppressed and anti-Japanese websites were temporarily shut down.<sup>198</sup> A Chinese navy admiral, Yang Yi, explained that “a port call by a warship with a Japanese flag easily calls up our painful memories.”<sup>199</sup> It was yet another reminder of the limits of disaster diplomacy.

## Conclusion

These historical and comparative cases are filled with clues for how to understand the impact of 3.11 on Japanese politics and public policy. We have seen how earthquakes and other natural disasters have served as moments for reinforcing, revising, or replacing the status quo. Optimism and pessimism always mingle in unstable suspension alongside crisis management, national mobilization, and recovery. The many domestic antecedents of the Tohoku disaster were each laden with popular dissatisfaction with national leadership, brimming with expectations for fundamental change, and debilitated by administrative competition within the state. Postdisaster politics were dominated by

political actors with extant preferences who would generate and use narratives to explain what had happened and sell their prescription for how to make things better. And so each Japanese disaster engendered new building codes, new regulatory structures, new land use plans, and new promises of public safety.<sup>200</sup> Just as important, each unleashed new promises of change and new forms of political and social activism that challenged national policy. Each triggered contestation among political entrepreneurs who sought to impose their preferred meaning on the disaster, and to take control of the recovery. Debate ensued, but so did politics—often in chaotic form—involving military, civic, bureaucratic and, after the Japan opened to the outside world in the 1860s, the disaster diplomacy of foreign powers.

Nor should we forget that indeterminacy is among the many lessons to be drawn from historical and comparative material here. In addition to being struck by the constants across such a diverse array of disasters, we are also reminded of how open-ended disasters can be. It is, we see, difficult to know a priori how each catastrophe will be unwound and spun up in the narratives that follow. They serve not only as sources of guidance for the questions we ask of 3.11 and its consequences, but also warn of the susceptibility of disaster to narrative construction. History and comparison remind us that crises are as much tools for policy entrepreneurs as they are sources of pain for those who must experience and recover from them.

Recovery from each disaster occurred against a political and economic backdrop of instability and mistrust, requiring large and consequential choices under uncertain conditions. Without regard for regime type—autocratic or democratic—government officials always responded by trying to reassert central authority; and local actors pushed back with demands for greater local autonomy. Competition across bureaucratic jurisdictions

at the center always slowed the response and resulted in promises that “the evils of vertical administration” would be corrected. Lofty hopes for significant change were proclaimed and then dashed. Social ills were laid bare and debated. Scapegoating was ubiquitous—at times with deadly consequences. Offers of foreign aid, even when not viewed with suspicion, were weighed against the appearance of domestic incompetence. Communication failures and the insufficiency of emergency management training were met by tightfisted central budget officials pleading fiscal constraints. Perverse and unintended consequences were never far from the post-reconstruction landscapes. And there were always the same broad-brush choices to make: rebuild the devastated area as it was, or use the crisis as an opportunity to invent something new. Reconstruction always hinges as much on prior political divisions as on opportunism. But above all, in each case, we observe the Japanese people responding with determination and the Japanese nation responding with resilience. At the level of regional survival, at least, we are led to wonder just what choices they really had.

Our comparison to non-Japanese cases also offers lessons for 3.11, not the least of which is that there is nothing unique about Japan’s rhetoric of crisis. As President George W. Bush learned the hard way, national governance—and the public support on which it depends—hinges on an empathetic and effective response to local needs as much as it depends on abstract economic policies or foreign conquests. Hurricane Katrina generated narratives about competence and caring that were eerie precursors of those that emerged in Japan after 3.11. Prime Minister Kan’s failures and the criticisms of his leadership were different in kind from President Bush’s—Kan was seen as too close to the crisis and Bush as too distant—but their credibility as national leaders suffered in parallel ways and they were victims of similar

political dynamics. Questions of leadership, community, vulnerability and change are as American as they are Japanese. But the comparison also reminds us that talk of change is cheap—certainly cheaper than the lives claimed by natural disaster and the actions that states take to ameliorate the destruction.

We learn from our cases of disaster diplomacy—American, Japanese, and Chinese—that humanitarian assistance and disaster relief are no substitutes for the fundamental forces, the normal dynamics, of international politics. Whether U.S. efforts (as in Pakistan, Myanmar, and Bangladesh) were strategic or simply opportunistic, extant divisions were more likely to constrain post disaster diplomacy than munificence was likely to transform it. States that fundamentally mistrust one another seem unlikely to reset their relationship as a result of aid, and actors that have other reasons to pursue reconciliation will find humanitarian assistance a useful tool in their efforts. This was no less true in the Sino-Japanese case, when both sides aggressively used the Sichuan disaster to further diplomatic ends, with limited results.

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How do such lessons apply to 3.11, where the United States came to the immediate aid of an ally? We want to learn whether humanitarian intervention can lead to even higher levels of cooperation and trust in allied nations where public acceptance of the alliance is high. But these other cases suggest it may be best to lower our expectations. So with these historical and international comparisons in hand—and with a healthy appreciation of how indeterminate outcomes can be—the book from which this chapter is derived turns to much finer grained analysis of the impact of 3.11 on policy debate in Japan, beginning with analysis of the dueling narratives in the discourse about security after 3.11—precisely the realm where domestic politics and disaster diplomacy come

together most directly.

This is chapter 3 of Richard J. Samuels, *3.11. Disaster and Change in Japan*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013, with a new introduction and conclusion and additional photographs. Reprinted “Historical and Comparative Guidance,” from *3.11. Disaster and Change in Japan*, by Richard J. Samuels. Copyright © 2013 by Cornell University. Used by permission of the publisher, Cornell University Press.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Duus, 2012, p.175.

<sup>2</sup> Busch, 1962, p.39.

<sup>3</sup> Davison, 1931, pp.56-7.

<sup>4</sup> Busch, 1962, p.78-9.

<sup>5</sup> Nōbi shook along an 80km fault line. See Awata, Kariya, and Okuma, 1998, [here](#). They conclude that this fault has a recurrence interval of 2,700 years.

<sup>6</sup> Beard, 1924, p.11.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Centre for Regional Development, ed., 1995, p.xiii. Nearly 60% of prewar buildings in Kobe were destroyed, and fully one half of those erected during Japan’s postwar high growth period (1946-1965). Only 6% of the post-1986 buildings failed. See [here](#).

<sup>8</sup> Smits, 2006; Hammer, 2006; Duus, 2012. See an interesting collection of these images [here](#).

<sup>9</sup> Smits, 2006, pp. 1052, 1066.

<sup>10</sup> Clancey, 2006b, p.128.

<sup>11</sup> Clancey, 2006b, pp.130-1.

<sup>12</sup> Clancey, 2006b, p.122.

<sup>13</sup> See Fujitani, 1996 and Samuels, 2003 for accounts of the political use of the imperial institution.

<sup>14</sup> Clancey, 2006b, p.132.

<sup>15</sup> Clancey, 2006b, p.131.

- <sup>16</sup> The Imperial Earthquake Investigation Committee (*Shineiai Yobō Chōsakai*). Clancey, 2006b, p.151.
- <sup>17</sup> Beard, 1924 is a particularly interesting contemporary account by a major American social scientist. See also Seidensticker, 1991; Hammer, 2006; Duus, 2012; and Busch, 1962. Mikuriya, 2011b and Hando, Hosaka, and Mikuriya, 2011 draw parallels between 1923 and 2011.
- <sup>18</sup> Beard, 1924, p.17.
- <sup>19</sup> Kan, 1975, Chapter 1. For a glimpse of how reflective the Japanese military has become, and the extent to which it has come to embrace democratic norms, see the article by Satō Masahisa, a retired GSDF general, who acknowledges that the imperial military used martial law to suppress freedoms after the 1923 quake: Satō, 2011b, p.103.
- <sup>20</sup> Kinney, 1924, p.3-4.
- <sup>21</sup> Davison, 1931, p.40.
- <sup>22</sup> Davison, 1931, p.18-22.
- <sup>23</sup> Schencking, 2006, p.835 and Beard, 1924, p.18; Dimmer, 2011.
- <sup>24</sup> Beard, 1924, p.11.
- <sup>25</sup> Busch, 1962, pp.173-174.
- <sup>26</sup> Beard, 1924, p.14-15.
- <sup>27</sup> Beard, 1924, p.18.
- <sup>28</sup> Mikuriya, 2011b, pp.13-16.
- <sup>29</sup> Mikuriya, 2011b, pp.14.
- <sup>30</sup> Schencking, p.870.
- <sup>31</sup> Beard, 1924, p.18, 21.
- <sup>32</sup> In one infamous incident, the *Kempeitai* abducted Ōsugi Sakae, an anarchist writer, his common-law wife, and their nephew (an American citizen) and murdered them in custody. See Humphreys, 1995, pp. 56-58. Kinney, 1924, p.14 refers to a similar incident.
- <sup>33</sup> Quoted in Allen, 1996, pp.67-68.
- <sup>34</sup> Hammer, 2006, p.194.
- <sup>35</sup> Martial law continued until 15 October.
- <sup>36</sup> Davison, 1931 p.19.
- <sup>37</sup> Kinney, 1924, p.11; Busch, 1962, p.108-112. Hammer, 2006, p.159.
- <sup>38</sup> Hammer, 2006, p.167. Busch, 1962, p.111 reports that the government never conducted a serious investigation into the atrocities, nor did it ever punish appropriately those who committed them.
- <sup>39</sup> Hammer, 2006, p.168.
- <sup>40</sup> Quoted in Davison, 1931, p.50.
- <sup>41</sup> For an eyewitness account, see Kinney, 1924, p.12. Hammer, 2006, p.217.
- <sup>42</sup> Davison, 1931, p.21. An earlier account suggested that the Imperial military was idle, awaiting instructions from Tokyo, while the US and other foreign navies bypassed them to provide early rescue and relief support. See Kinney, 1924.
- <sup>43</sup> Quoted in Hammer, 2006, pp.219-220.
- <sup>44</sup> Quoted in Busch, 1962, p.34.
- <sup>45</sup> Hammer, 2006, p.246-248.
- <sup>46</sup> Humphreys, 1995, p.88.
- <sup>47</sup> Hammer, 2006, p.217 refers here only to the US response, but notes also that the Soviets were turned away and the volunteers of other nations were also eyed with suspicion.

- <sup>48</sup> Schencking, 2009.
- <sup>49</sup> Schencking, 2009.
- <sup>50</sup> Humphreys, 1995, pp.52, 46-52.
- <sup>51</sup> Duus, 2012, p. 178.
- <sup>52</sup> Schencking, 2006; Schencking, 2008; Schencking, 2009.
- <sup>53</sup> Schencking, 2008, p.306.
- <sup>54</sup> Okutani Fumitomo, a Tenrikyō priest, quoted in Borland, 2006, p. 889.
- <sup>55</sup> Busch, 1962, p.148.
- <sup>56</sup> Schencking, 2006, pp.309-310.
- <sup>57</sup> Borland, 2006, p.891.
- <sup>58</sup> Borland, p.894.
- <sup>59</sup> Seidensticker, 1991, p.14-15. As Home Minister in charge of the police and protection of the Emperor, Gotō had to assume special responsibility.
- <sup>60</sup> Estimates of total cost vary considerably. See Nagamatsu, 2007, p.373 and *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, 21 March 2011. For reliable analyses of the Hanshin/Awaji disaster and its aftermath in English, see Tierney and Goltz, 1997; Kingston, 2011; Özerdem and Jacoby, 2006; Edgington, et al., 1999; United Nations Center for Regional Development, ed., 1995. The best account in Japanese is Asō, 2003.
- <sup>61</sup> Asō, 2003, p.114, details the “ossification of Japan’s administrative structure” (*kōchaku shita nihon no gyōsei kikō*).
- <sup>62</sup> Midford, forthcoming, shows that the general public was ahead of elites in accepting the legitimacy of the SDF.
- <sup>63</sup> Nakagawa, 2000.
- <sup>64</sup> See Nakagawa, 2000 and Asō, 2003, pp.72-76.
- <sup>65</sup> Asō, 2003, pp.72-76.
- <sup>66</sup> Terry, 1998, p.233.
- <sup>67</sup> Tierney and Goltz, 1997, p.5.
- <sup>68</sup> Terry, 1998, p.232.
- <sup>69</sup> United Nations Center for Regional Development, ed., 1995, p.144; Tierney and Goltz, 1997, pp.6-7.
- <sup>70</sup> United Nations Center for Regional Development, ed., 1995, p.144; Terry, 1998, p.237.
- <sup>71</sup> Tierney and Goltz, 1997, p.6.
- <sup>72</sup> United Nations Center for Regional Development, ed., 1995, p.151.
- <sup>73</sup> Bōeishō ,ed., 2011a.
- <sup>74</sup> Özerdem and Jacoby, 2006, p.39 say the mobilization was held up in Tokyo.
- <sup>75</sup> See [here](#).
- <sup>76</sup> This is the view of Terry, 1998, p.236 and of Tierney and Goltz, 1999, p.7. See also Satō Masahisa, 2011, p.62.
- <sup>77</sup> Interview, Tokyo, 16 December 2011.
- <sup>78</sup> Interview, Tokyo, 18 November 2011.
- <sup>79</sup> United Nations Center for Regional Development, ed., 1995, p.151.
- <sup>80</sup> Interview, former Hyogo Prefecture Governor Kaihara Toshitami, Kobe 22 December 2011.
- <sup>81</sup> Özerdem and Jacoby, 2006, p.40.
- <sup>82</sup> Interview, former Hyogo Governor Kaihara Toshitami, Kobe, 22 December 2011.

- <sup>83</sup> Terry, 1998, p.234. Governor Kaihara reports that he was happy to speak with U.S. Ambassador Walter Mondale and to accept his offer of tarpaulins. Interview, 22 December 2011.
- <sup>84</sup> This account is from United Nations Centre for Regional Development, ed., 1995, p.171-2.
- <sup>85</sup> Leslie Helm, “Gangs Bridge Relief Gap After Quake,” *Los Angeles Times* 22 January 1995.
- <sup>86</sup> Avenall, 2012, p.59.
- <sup>87</sup> United Nations Center for Regional Development, ed., 1995, p.175.
- <sup>88</sup> Interview, former Hyogo Governor Kaihara Toshitami, Kobe, 22 December 2011.
- <sup>89</sup> Edgington, et al., 1999, p.15.
- <sup>90</sup> Despite Tokyo’s provision of three supplementary budget outlays of 3.23 trillion yen, nearly half the reconstruction funds were derived from a municipal bond alone. See [here](#); [here](#); [here](#); Nagamatsu, 2007, p.372; and United Nations Center for Regional Development, ed., 1995, p.143.
- <sup>91</sup> Edgington, 2010.
- <sup>92</sup> And in key local industries, such as non-leather shoes and sake, it was far less. See [here](#).
- <sup>93</sup> Mikuriya, 2011, pp.16-17.
- <sup>94</sup> Edgington, et al., 1999, p.15.
- <sup>95</sup> Nakagawa, 2000; Tierney and Goltz, 1997, p.4; Özerdem and Jacoby, 2006, p.41; *Japan Times*, 26 January 1995.
- <sup>96</sup> For a local perspective, see [here](#). Also see Pekkanen, 2006, for a detailed analysis of how Hanshin/Awaji volunteerism changed Japanese politics nationally. A short explanation is found [here](#).
- <sup>97</sup> *Nippon Seisaku Toshi Ginkō*, ed. 2011, p.7.
- <sup>98</sup> Tierney and Goltz, 1997, p.4, 7; [link](#).
- <sup>99</sup> Interview, Okamoto Atsushi, editor *Sekai*, 13 September 2011.
- <sup>100</sup> Interview, 16 December 2011.
- <sup>101</sup> One such exercise is reported in *The Wall Street Journal*, 25 October 2004. See Chapter Four for a detailed look at how these exercises evolved.
- <sup>102</sup> Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, “[Reports of Missing and Deceased](#),” 2 August 2006. I am grateful to Christopher Clary for his research assistance in support of this section.
- <sup>103</sup> *Washington Post*, 28 September 1998 paraphrases James Lee Witt, then head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. He used similar language elsewhere. See, e.g., *NBC News Transcripts*, 26 September 1998.
- <sup>104</sup> *Scientific American*, October 2001.
- <sup>105</sup> Access to the full series of articles is available at [The Times Picayune](#). The article quoted appeared 24 June 2002.
- <sup>106</sup> Federal Emergency Management Agency, “[Hurricane Pam Exercise Concludes](#),” Press Release no. R6-04-093, July 23, 2004. Also see U.S. House of Representatives, 2006, pp.81-84.
- <sup>107</sup> U.S. House of Representatives, ed., 2006, Chapter 16.
- <sup>108</sup> See, e.g., U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Public Affairs: [here](#) and [here](#).
- <sup>109</sup> See [here](#).
- <sup>110</sup> *New York Times*, 3 September 2005 and *Boston Herald*, 3 September 2005.
- <sup>111</sup> Joel Roberts, “[Poll: Katrina Response](#)”

- Inadequate,” *CBS News*, September 8, 2005.
- <sup>112</sup> U.S. House of Representatives Select Bipartisan Committee, 2008, p.3.
- <sup>113</sup> See the [transcript of Mayor Nagin’s Interview](#).
- <sup>114</sup> Horne, 2006, p.3.
- <sup>115</sup> Sampling of *Associated Press*, *Associated Press Online*, and *New York Times* headlines from 9-10 September 2005.
- <sup>116</sup> Paglia in *The Independent* London, 3 September 2005.
- <sup>117</sup> Sullivan in *The Sunday Times* London, 4 September 2005.
- <sup>118</sup> Freedland in *The Guardian*, 5 September 2005.
- <sup>119</sup> Frum in *National Post* Toronto, 3 September 2005.
- <sup>120</sup> *New York Times*, September 8, 2005.
- <sup>121</sup> Dowd in *New York Times*, 12 September 2005.
- <sup>122</sup> Dionne in *Washington Post*, 13 September 2005. Also see *New York Times*, 28 August 2006, *Washington Post*, 29 August 2006, and *The New Republic*, 25 September 2006.
- <sup>123</sup> Lowry in *National Review*, 2 April 2007.
- <sup>124</sup> Also see Malhotra and Kuo, 2008.
- <sup>125</sup> See Kelman, 2012; Kelman, 2007; Kelman and Koukis, 2000. See a [list of studies](#) of disaster diplomacy.
- <sup>126</sup> Among the 133 countries that offered assistance to the United States after Katrina were rival states Cuba, Iran, and China.
- <sup>127</sup> Akcinroglu, et al., 2011; Ker-Lindsay, 2000.
- <sup>128</sup> Gaillard, Clavé, and Kelman, 2008. See also *The Economist*, 20 July 2005 and *The Guardian*, 14 August 2005.
- <sup>129</sup> Kelman and Koukis, 2000; Kelman, 2012.
- <sup>130</sup> *CBS News Transcripts*, 17 May 1991.
- <sup>131</sup> *Agence France Presse*, 15 May 1991.
- <sup>132</sup> McCarthy, 1991, p.31.
- <sup>133</sup> *New York Times*, 16 May 1991.
- <sup>134</sup> Email to research assistant Christopher Clary from U.S. defense official, Dhaka, 2 August 2011.
- <sup>135</sup> Smith, 1995, pp.85-87.
- <sup>136</sup> Seiple, 1995, p.68.
- <sup>137</sup> Stackpole, 1992, p.116; Also see Brig. Gen. Rowe, commander of 5<sup>th</sup> MEB, quoted in Seiple, 1995, pp.88, 93; electronic correspondence with U.S. defense official, Dhaka, 2 August 2011.
- <sup>138</sup> Tripartite Core Group, ed., 2008, p.1.
- <sup>139</sup> Tripartite Core Group, ed., 2008, p.21.
- <sup>140</sup> *The Guardian*, 23 May 2008.
- <sup>141</sup> See International Crisis Group, *Burma/Myanmar after Nargis: Time to Normalise Aid Relations*, Asia Report, no. 161 (Brussels, October 20, 2008), 6-7.
- <sup>142</sup> This was the largest and most effect overseas deployment of the SDF ever.
- <sup>143</sup> Peter Beinert, 2006, p. 194.
- <sup>144</sup> See [here](#).
- <sup>145</sup> ADM Mike Mullen, “What I Believe: Eight Tenets that Guide My Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” *Proceedings* (January 2006).

- <sup>146</sup> Wike, 2012.
- <sup>147</sup> Bowers, 2010, p.132.
- <sup>148</sup> Bureau of Legislative and Public Affairs, ed., 2006, pp.3-4; Bowers, 2010, p.132; Wilder, 2008, p.3.
- <sup>149</sup> Crocker quoted by Bowers, 2010, p.133.
- <sup>150</sup> *Newsweek*, 4 September 2009; U.S. AID, *Pakistan Earthquake Relief*, 6 and “Fact Sheet – DOD Assistance to Pakistan.”
- <sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.
- <sup>152</sup> See, for example, *Wall Street Journal*, 22 December 2005; *Associated Press*, 10 October 2005; and *Washington Post*, 13 October 2005.
- <sup>153</sup> Bowers, 2010, p.132.
- <sup>154</sup> *Terror Free Tomorrow, A Dramatic Change of Public Opinion in the Muslim World: Results from a New Poll in Pakistan* (Washington, D.C.: Terror Free Tomorrow, 2005).
- <sup>155</sup> Wilder, 2008, p.4.
- <sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.
- <sup>157</sup> Pew Research Center, Global Attitudes Project, 2011.
- <sup>158</sup> Wike, 2012.
- <sup>159</sup> The number of homeless is disputed, but no reported figure is less than five million. See [here](#). See also Restall, 2008; Zhang, 2011; Chen, et al., 2010; *BBC*, 1 September 2008; Huang, Zhou, and Wei, 2011; *Kokusai Kyōryoku Kikō*, ed., 2009.
- <sup>160</sup> *BBC* 19 May 2008. For fuller comparisons see Kapucu, 2011 and Ayson and Taylor, 2008.
- <sup>161</sup> This “partner support” system became a model in Japan after 3.11. For Japanese analysis of how it worked in China, see Hayashi and Akihara, 2011. For a positive, but less effusive Chinese analysis of how the townships responded, see You, Chen, and Yao, 2009, pp.384-5.
- <sup>162</sup> Shieh and Deng, 2011, pp.185, 194.
- <sup>163</sup> Restall, 2008, p.80.
- <sup>164</sup> Restall, 2008, pp.77-8 calls it the “renaissance” of Chinese civil society. Teets, 2009, is less sure. She finds greater ambiguity in the robustness of Chinese civil society during and after the Shichuan event. See also Shieh and Deng, 2011, p.181.
- <sup>165</sup> Zhang, 2011.
- <sup>166</sup> Restall, 2008, p.77.
- <sup>167</sup> See *BBC*, 12 June 2008.
- <sup>168</sup> See Mine, 2011, p.3 and Restall, 2008, p.77-8.
- <sup>169</sup> Ayson and Taylor, 2008; Restall, 2008, p.79.
- <sup>170</sup> Wei, et al., 2009.
- <sup>171</sup> *Xinhua*, 16 May 2008; *Jiji*, 16 May 2008; *Kyodo*, 16 May 2008.
- <sup>172</sup> Interview, former Bank of Japan Chief Beijing Representative, Seguchi Kiyoyuki, Tokyo, 14 May 2012.
- <sup>173</sup> *Mainichi Shimbun*, 8 June 2008.
- <sup>174</sup> *Tokyo Shimbun*, 14 May 2008.
- <sup>175</sup> *Tokyo Shimbun*, 14 May 2008; *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 14 May 2008.
- <sup>176</sup> *Mainichi Shimbun*, 8 June 2008. Vice Foreign Minister Onodera Itsunori also tied the mission to Japanese diplomacy. See Przystup, 2008.
- <sup>177</sup> According to JICA officials, it is very unusual

for a Foreign Ministry official to lead a JRT team, but this was an exceptional case. Interview, Ogata Sadako, former Director General, Japan International Cooperation Agency and Fuwa Masami, Director, Office for Reconstruction Assistance, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Tokyo, 15 May 2012.

<sup>178</sup> The full JICA report of the JRT mission is: *Kokusai Kyōryoku Kikō*, ed., 2009.

<sup>179</sup> *Asahi Shimbun*, 31 May 2008;

<sup>180</sup> *Kokusai Kyōryoku Kikō*, ed., 2009, p.14.

<sup>181</sup> *Kyodo*, 8 June 2008; *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 4 June 2008; *Jyapan Purattohōmu*, 2009

<sup>182</sup> There was a basis for this. In 2007 China had signed the “Space and Major Disasters Agreement” and as a consequence, its National Space Administration received satellite images of the disaster area from Japan’s Aerospace Exploration Agency. *Yomuiuri Shimbun*, 24 May 2008; *Kokusai Kyōryoku Kikō*, ed., 2009.

<sup>183</sup> *Kyodo*, 21 May 2008.

<sup>184</sup> See [here](#).

<sup>185</sup> *Mainichi Shimbun*, 15 May and 8 June 2008. The “avid interest” of the Chinese media in the Japanese relief effort was also reported by MOFA’s Koizumi, the leader of Japan’s JDR team. See *Kokusai Kyōryoku Kikō*, ed., 2009.

<sup>186</sup> *Mainichi Shimbun*, 20 May 2008.

<sup>187</sup> For examples, see *New York Times*, 29 July 2008; *BBC*, 12 June 2008 and 27 December 2008; *Los Angeles Times*, 29 July 2008.

<sup>188</sup> Qin quoted in *BBC*, 28 May 2008.

<sup>189</sup> *Xinhua*, 17 and 18 May 2008. The JICA report lists all the Chinese and Japanese media that covered their JDR team.

<sup>190</sup> For a video account of the photo, including an interview of the Xinhua reporter who captured the image, see [here](#).

<sup>191</sup> Polls indicated that more than 70% of Shanghai residents reported their views of Japan had changed and that 84% of now held positive feelings toward Japan. See *Chōsa Niyuzu*, 22 May 2008.

<sup>192</sup> For representative accounts, see Takarabe, 2008: Mine, 2011; *Chōsa Niyuzu*, 22 May 2008.

<sup>193</sup> Their comments are reported in Przystup, 2008.

<sup>194</sup> See, for example, *Sankei Shimbun*, 29 May 2008; *Asahi Shimbun*, 29 May 2008; *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 29 May 2008 correctly reported the divisions within China on this issue.

<sup>195</sup> This is the statement of PLA Deputy Chief of Staff, Ma Xiaotian. *Asahi Shimbun*, 1 June 2008. One post was quoted in the *Financial Times* on 29 May 2008: “Yesterday their planes were dropping bombs. Today they are giving a little kindness to confuse the Chinese people.” Another was quoted in the *Yomiuri Shimbun* two days later: “[Allowing the SDF into China] is like letting the wolf into your room.”

<sup>196</sup> *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 29 May 2008; *Jiji Press*, 30 May 2008. Note that the ASDF chief of staff during this period was the nationalist Tamogami Toshio, who would soon lose his position.

<sup>197</sup> *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 31 May 2008.

<sup>198</sup> *Asahi Shimbun*, 28 June 2008.

<sup>199</sup> *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, 25 June 2008.

<sup>200</sup> For documentation of this point, see Nakabayashi, 2009.