

BBL Seminar Handout

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An American's View of Japan's FSX Program:
Was It "Reinventing the Wheel"
or Increasing Japan's Defense Capability?

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FIVE POINTS:

- 1. U.S. Actions vis-à-vis Japan's Aircraft Industry Post World War II**
- 2. Differences between Japanese and American Perspectives of Japan's FSX Program**
- 3. Different Views of the U.S. Department of Commerce and U.S. Department of Defense**
- 4. The "Yasu – Ron" Relationship**
- 5. Lessons Learned**



1. U.S. Actions vis-à-vis Japan's Aircraft Industry Post World War II

During the U.S. Occupation:

- 1945 Japanese munitions factories ordered closed
- 1950 U.S. contracted aircraft parts from Japanese industry
- 1952 U.S. contracted aircraft manufacturing in Japan



Following the U.S. Occupation:

- **1954 – 1970s U.S. loaned, cost shared and licensed aircraft to new Japan Air Self-Defense Force -- U.S. encouraged increased aircraft manufacturing in Japan in order to increase Japan's defense capability and to allow for a second source of supply in case of a major war with the USSR**
- **From mid 1970s U.S. encouraged Japan to purchase aircraft off the shelf from the USA**
- **Why the change?**



2. Different Japanese and American Views of Japan's FSX Program

National Security Establishment Level:

- **The Japan Defense Agency wanted a replacement for the F-1 Support Fighter**
- **U.S. Department of Defense wanted Japan's air defense capability increased as rapidly as possible**
- **Why were these incompatible?**



Japan and U.S. Politicians and Aircraft Manufacturing Industries:

- **Japanese aircraft industry and its workers were a source of political support for the ruling LDP**
- **Japanese manufacturers [led by MHI] saw the need to keep its aircraft design and production base alive**



- **U.S. politicians feared that Japanese successes in fields such as automobiles and electronics could be followed by Japanese success in aircraft manufacturing**
- **U.S. industry [General Dynamics and McDonnell Douglas] felt that Japan had definitely decided on an autonomously designed and manufactured F-2 and that only U.S. political pressure could prevent “kokusan” production**



Although both JDA and DOD felt the need for additional and more capable Japanese aircraft:

- **At least some civilian elements in JDA and definitely the Aircraft Division of METI wanted to support Japanese industry**
- **DOD engineers definitely felt a Japanese designed F-2 would be “reinventing the wheel”
– end up costing twice as much or more as a U.S. F16 or F 18 and result in an inferior Japanese aircraft ; however**



- **It is important to note that DOD DID NOT DOUBT that MHI could design and build something better than the F-1 [which had lots of American content] but that what would end up as the F-2 would a) be more costly, b) inferior to the F-15 or F-16 and c) would take MUCH MORE TIME to get on-line vis-à-vis the growing Soviet threat [3000 aircraft in the Far East alone]**



3. Different Views of the U.S. Department of Commerce and U.S. Department of Defense

- **DOC (Secretary Mossberger and Counselor Prestowitz) accepted the view of General Dynamics and McDonnell Douglas that only U.S. pressure could prevent “kokusan”**
- **DOD (Secretary Weinberger and Assistant Secretary Armitage) argued that the U.S. could not order Japan how to spend its defense budget in the 1980s**
- **President Reagan agreed with Secretary Weinberger**



4. The “Yasu – Ron” Relationship

- **Minister of Defense Kurihara accepted Secretary Weinberger’s suggestion to not “reinvent the wheel” – but to add excellent Japanese technologies to an existing U.S. aircraft**
- **Prime Minister Nakasone agreed with Minister Kurihara to the disappointment of MHI and some Japanese defense and METI officials**



- **Naively and clumsily the Bush Administration agreed to “review” the FSX agreement based on sensational misinformation provided by Prestowitz (no longer at the DOC but who wanted to join the Bush Administration) and lower level officials**
- **The original FSX agreement was finally implemented although not before creating extreme anger and disillusionment on the Japanese side which delayed any meaningful codevelopment for years to come.**



5. Lessons Learned:

a. The FSX/F2 was NOT CODEVELOPMENT

- The F-16 was not a new aircraft; it was developed decades earlier and had been licensed or sold to 10 other countries before Japan procured a co-production license as it did in the case of the F-15, P3C, etc.**



- **Minister of Defense Kawara [successor to Kurihara] and Secretary of Defense Carlucci [successor to Weinberger] agreed that the FSX was not really codevelopment. but expressed the mutual hope that it would be the predecessor of MEANINGFUL, REAL codevelopment in the future.**



- b. Japan wisely decided to adopt a U.S. aircraft and add new technologies to it rather than to “reinvent the wheel.”**

- Although some Japanese felt the Toshiba COCOM Incident influenced Japan’s decision to choose an American aircraft, Minister Kurihara and Prime Minister Nakasone emphasized Japan’s basic national security interest: safeguarding Japan’s close ties with the United States.**



- **The release of information about Toshiba Kikai's illegal export was primarily the result of an internal US Government struggle over the control of exports to foreign countries.**
 - **DOC wanted a more liberal release policy regime to aid U.S. exports**
 - **DOD wanted control over exports for technology security reasons**



- **The sensational hyping of Toshiba Kikai's violation was intended to bolster the case of continued strong regulation by Defense although Secretary Weinberger was not a party to the decision to do so.**



- c. Under pressure from Congress the new Bush Administration agreed to “review” the FSX agreement which Japan had signed on in order to aid alliance cooperation.**



- **The results were:**
 - **Implementation of the original agreement after cosmetic changes;**
 - **Extreme anger and disillusionment on the Japanese side.**
 - **Delay of any meaningful codevelopment for years to come; is Japan's reluctance to become a F-35 development partner a result?**



d. For real codevelopment to happen, U.S. and Japanese planners would have to come together and agree to pursue common needs and objectives prior to the implementation of design, development and manufacturing of equipment. Is this a bridge too far?



Thank you.

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