

**The Bush-Koizumi Santiago Summit –  
November 20, 2004**

**By  
Dr. C. Kenneth Quinones  
Retired U.S. Diplomat**

The forthcoming summit between Prime Minister Koizumi and President Bush in Santiago, Chile on November 20, 2004, is certain to be similar to November 12 summit between Britain's Prime Minister Blair and President Bush. Both summits are designed to reaffirm the close alliance between the United States and its two closest allies, Britain and Japan. They also enable the two prime ministers to congratulate Bush on his re-election. Most importantly, foreign policy tops both summits' agenda. In short, having won re-election, Bush now needs more help than before from his British and Japanese counterparts to attain his foremost goal – the restoration of political stability in Iraq.

President Bush has already made clear his intention to continue the foreign and domestic policies of his first term. His foreign policy priorities remain: pursue the global war on terrorism and counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Blair and Koizumi generally concur with both of Bush's priorities.

Bush also intends to continue his "top down" management of policy. In other words, he sets the goals and strategy and then calls his allies to assist him in pursuing his goals. President Bush is certain to continue handling his top priority – Iraq – in this manner. Eventual U.S. success there remains closely linked to substantial British and Japanese diplomatic support and financial aid to rebuild Iraq. Equally critical is both allies' continuing contribution of troops to the US-led military coalition. Blair reaffirmed Britain's contributions. In Santiago, Bush is certain to ask Koizumi to do the same.

At this point, Bush's and Koizumi's priorities diverge. Bush remains preoccupied with ending the insurgency in Iraq. This is proving to be much more difficult than the Bush Administration had calculated. The battle for Falluja may be a victory for US military forces on the battlefield, but will not end the insurgency. If anything, the U.S. occupation of Falluja has spread the insurgency to other Iraqi cities, particularly Mosul. Consequently, restoring political stability prior to next January's elections in Iraq remains an elusive hope.

President Bush at his post re-election press conference on November 4 reaffirmed his intention to "stay the course" in Iraq. In other words, Iraq will continue to pre-occupy the Bush Administration's attention into the foreseeable future. For Japan, this translates into two major concerns. First, Bush will be hard pressed to pursue other foreign policy concerns, particularly regarding North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs. At the same time, Bush will be compelled to press Koizumi for more assistance regarding Iraq. But Koizumi's priorities are the exact opposite. Its priority concern is North Korea and the Japanese public is pressing Koizumi to minimize Japan's involvement in Iraq.

Recognizing that Britain support remains critical to President Bush's goals, UK Prime Minister Tony Blair visited Washington prepared to exchange favors with Bush. Blair publicly pledged to continue Britain's current level of support regarding Iraq. But political concerns at home prevented Blair from promising more. In exchange for his continuing support, Blair pressed Bush to restore the U.S. foreign policy priority list the promotion of an independent Palestinian state.

The Santiago Summit will allow Prime Minister Koizumi a similar opportunity to push for a *quid pro quo* deal with Bush. For Japan, Iraq and terrorism remain top concerns because they could adversely affect Japan's economy by disrupting the flow of oil from the Middle East to Japan. But North Korea's ballistic missile arsenal and quest for a nuclear weapons capability pose a direct threat to Japan's national security. At the same time, however, North Korea's reluctance to return to the Six Party Talks, the multilateral diplomatic effort to blunt North Korea's threat, appear to be on the verge of collapse. A fourth round of the talks did not materialize in September and North Korea has yet to commit to returning to the talks.

Tokyo, like Beijing, Seoul and Moscow, is anxious to get the talks restarted. Animosity between Washington and Pyongyang, however, remains a formidable impediment. Equally troublesome has been Washington's adamant refusal to engage Pyongyang in bilateral diplomatic talks and to offer any inducements for its cooperation. Tokyo resolutely backs US demands that North Korea "completely, verifiably, irreversibly dismantle" (CVID) all its nuclear programs, both civilian and military. But Prime Minister Koizumi shares the discomfort of Seoul, Beijing and Moscow with Washington's unbending refusal to talk directly to Pyongyang and to offer inducements. Instead Tokyo prefers the tactics of Seoul, Beijing and Moscow which emphasize negotiations and the offering of inducements to win North Korea's cooperation..

The Santiago Summit will provide Prime Minister Koizumi an opportunity to press President Bush to bring the US strategy for dealing with North Korea into alignment with that preferred by Tokyo, Seoul, Beijing and Moscow. After all, it is time for Bush to demonstrate concrete consideration for Japan's support of the United States' effort in Iraq and the global war on terrorism.

Koizumi's candid and quiet advice to Bush regarding North Korea could give the U.S. president a face saving way out of his previously rigid stance. Bush could explain to the Republican dominated US Congress and his hard line advisers that he agreed to show flexibility for the sake of promoting multilateral cooperation with his close ally Japan. Increased diplomatic flexibility by the US regarding the Six Party Talks would deflect pressure back onto North Korea which could get the Six Party Talks restarted. Without greater US flexibility, however, the Six Party talks appear doomed to imminent collapse.

Dr. C. Kenneth Quinones  
November 15, 2004