

Paul M. Linehan

Background. My participation in the Mike Mansfield Fellowship Program 7th class (MFP7: 2002–2003)—*The Seven Samurai*—exceeded my expectations and has paid dividends in my work on Asia issues during the intervening decade. It was an honor to be the second Department of Defense (DoD) civilian Fellow to the program, and I felt that the access I was afforded allowed me to expand my horizons across a wide cross section of Asian strategic international security affairs. At that stage in my career, I had spent nearly nine years in Japan and had left a decade earlier in 1992. During my time in Japan, I worked at a Japanese firm during Japan’s economic heyday, studied in a graduate program at Waseda University, and worked for nearly five years as a U.S. government liaison official with Japanese defense and national security counterparts. I had worked virtually every angle of U.S.-Japan relations, and was skeptical whether the MFP7 could afford me any additional experience. However, I soon discovered that MFP7 offered me a whole new facet to my personal and professional Japan experience that continues to be as rewarding and enduring as the U.S.-Japan relationship itself.

The Fellowship and Assignments. The MFP experience is an exceptional opportunity to work alongside government of Japan (GoJ) colleagues as a regular staff member. I gained immensely from understanding the intricacies of the GoJ’s bureaucratic processes, policymaking, consensus-building, leadership styles, and camaraderie. Though there is a tendency for GoJ colleagues to treat a Fellow as a special guest with the uniquely Japanese-style gracious hospitality, MFP encourages Fellows to actively contribute just as a regular front-line bureaucrat. For me, I sought to work seamlessly with my colleagues. In particular, I applied my professional experiences in discovering new avenues of cooperation. These translated into U.S.-Japan closer collaboration on a broad array of mutually beneficial defense and security issues.

In my assignments, I proactively took on mundane and inglorious tasks such as translating, re-writing, and practicing English; and even serving green tea and “*omiyage manju*” cakes to colleagues at afternoon break time. Though this is a task normally undertaken by the office ladies, I wanted to demonstrate an American team-player attitude. However, my male colleagues bristled while the office ladies relished the

opportunity to cow the men to serve alongside me. They came to know that my actions were a good-natured way of highlighting the need for Japan to consider the role of women in the workforce, especially since women make up 51% of its declining population. Though I've been sworn to secrecy on the identity of my fellow tea-servers, I provoked them to contemplate workforce gender issues, as well as the joys and responsibilities of both parents having a career while raising children and sharing household duties.

But on the more serious side, during these assignments I viewed, through the U.S.-Japan security prism, regional trade and economic dynamics and the attendant impact on the politico-military landscape of Asia, China's burgeoning influence and power, Iraq, the Middle East, North Korea, energy interests, and Japan's international role in the face of these challenges.

In keeping with the objectives of MFP and my own goals and interests, this experience allowed me to develop a better appreciation of Asian defense, security, and intelligence affairs in my assignments in:

- Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI)—Trade Policy Bureau: In this placement, I functioned as a strategic trade research analyst for a special geopolitical energy report that was briefed to then-Prime Minister Koizumi. Also, I played a central role in establishing the first DoD-METI cooperative arrangement on export security, technology transfer and trade control policy related to non-proliferation policy.
- Diet of Japan, Office of the Honorable Ichita Yamamoto: I worked as a special national security advisor to a minister of parliament and vice chairman of the Diet of Japan National Security and Defense Affairs Committee. This was especially relevant in the Diet deliberations and run-up to U.S. military action in Operation Iraqi Freedom in March 2003.
- Cabinet Intelligence and Research Office of the Cabinet Secretariat: As the first non-Japanese accepted to this office, the equivalent to the U.S. National Security Council staff, I contributed to daily national intelligence briefs and other special projects involving international and regional defense, security, and terrorism issues in this elite office.
- National Personnel Authority, Senior Managers Seminar (equivalent to the U.S. Federal Executive Institute—Senior Executive Service Seminar): Here, I deliberated and debated issues with thirty director-level GoJ career bureaucrats and future

public and private sector leaders of Japan on issues ranging from executive management, to human resources, organizational strategy, ethics, leadership training, and public and foreign policy.

Relevance. Aside from the personally enriching experience of providing me a new depth of understanding about my mother's country, I also took stock of my role in promoting U.S.-Japan defense alliance objectives. I reconnected with past GoJ colleagues, established new relationships, and forged even closer ties and focus on mutually beneficial work areas. Much is said about the U.S.-Japan strategic alliance and the promise of closer ties, but this rhetoric must actually translate into a relevant alliance in action.

Currently, I am the Asia branch chief and senior foreign affairs advisor at the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy on defense technology issues. In this capacity, I regularly engage with former GoJ co-workers from my MFP7 assignments. By way of example, I have been involved in a number of bilateral talks and negotiations involving defense technology sharing and information security related to strategic defense systems. During these consultations, some of my GoJ interlocutors were former MFP colleagues with whom I have developed a trusted rapport and partnership in many engagements, both at work and after work.

It is well-known that in Japan, much of the camaraderie is established after work by socializing at *izakaya* eateries, bars, and *karaoke* establishments. I must say that I have done my share of diligently partaking in those activities in the service of my country; but, in all seriousness, these trusted bonds of kinship are essential. Moreover, I can attest that they continue today as members on both sides strive to promote strong ties and cooperative endeavors in the furtherance of the alliance that binds our nations in lasting ties of security, trust, and friendship that is embodied in this exceptional fellowship program.

Paul Linehan participated in the Mike Mansfield Fellowship Program as a representative of the U.S. Department of Defense from 2001–2003. During his Fellowship year in Japan, he served in full-time placements in Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and in the office of the Honorable Ichita Yamamoto, LDP Member, House of Councillors. He currently serves as senior foreign affairs advisor for Asia and Asia Branch chief at the U.S. Department of Defense.