Summary

Japan assisted the U.S. and NATO-led, UN-mandated war in Afghanistan (2001-continuing), and contributed to the more exclusively U.S.-led, and controversial "coalition of the willing" that supported America's intervention in Iraq (2003-11). Japan defined its goals as humanitarianism, reconstruction, and reconciliation. Its actions included:

• Deploying Marine Self-Defense Forces (J-MSDF) for refueling for coalition members in the Indian Ocean (2002-2010);
• Deploying 600 Ground Self-Defense Forces (J-GSDF) to the southern Iraqi city of Samawah in Iraq (2004-2006). The non-combat troops were involved in reconstruction efforts and protected by UK and Australian troops;
• Deploying about 200 Air-Self Defense Forces (J-ASDF) troops to the Ali Al-Salem Air Base in Kuwait to airlift humanitarian aid and reconstruction equipment to Iraq (Jan. 2004-Dec. 2008);
• Dispatching JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) volunteers and other development and technical specialists to conduct massive reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan (under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or MOFA);
• Facilitating six multinational dialogues in Japan between the Taliban, the Government of Afghanistan, and other nations.
• Facilitating reconciliation seminars among Iraqi Sunni and Shi'ite members of parliament, held in Japan;
• Pledging monetary reconstruction aid to both conflicts. Japan is the largest national donor after the USA for reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan; from 2004-2005, during its deployment to Iraq, Japan was the largest humanitarian donor to Iraq.

Under the administration of President George W. Bush,[1] the American government considered its role in both conflicts as counterterrorism. It first implemented its "war on terror" strategy in Afghanistan, in retaliation against Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda network for the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 on the United States. Part of the Afghanistan effort included ousting the government of the Taliban, which controlled the nation from 1996-2001 and provided a base for multinational members of Al Qaeda to operate. Counterterrorism strategy also extended to areas of Pakistan under Taliban influence. The conflict in Afghanistan continues and is the longest war in American history. In 2003, Bush and his closest ally, Prime Minister Blair of the United Kingdom, launched a second attack on Iraq, making the argument

[1] From the start of the war in Afghanistan in 2001 until now, the United States has had two presidents representing two political parties, the Republican party of President George W. Bush (2000-2008) and the Democratic party of President Barack Obama (2009-2016). Japan has had seven prime ministers (including the administration of Abe Shinzō, elected twice and counted here as one), representing two political parties: the Liberal-Democratic Party (*jimintō)*, from 2001-2009 (Koizumi Jun'ichirō, Abe Shinzō, Fukuda Yasuo, Asō Tarō) and again starting in 2013, with Abe Shinzō's second election; and the Democratic Party of Japan (*minshutō)*, serving from 2009-2012 (Hatoyama Yukio, Kan Naoto and Noda Yoshihiko).

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that the nation was planning to use weapons of mass destruction, although such weapons were never found. Taking office in 2009, President Barack Obama ended U.S. involvement in Iraq in 2011, with some residual personnel remaining until 2012.

Official documents under the Bush administration refer to the "Global War on Terrorism," a slogan dropped under the Obama administration.

As a reminder, Al Qaeda did not have operations in Iraq prior to the American intervention in 2003. A sub-group, Al Qaeda in Iraq, formed after that conflict began. The present-day Islamic State (IS) in Iraq and Syria (ISIS, also called ISIL or Daesh) emerged from Al Qaeda in Iraq and in 2013 began territorial takeovers of large areas of Syria and Iraq. ISIS also has operations in Afghanistan and has claimed responsibility for a number of terrorism attacks throughout the world.

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