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Looking Back: MIGA Talk 2014

JUN OKUMURA

VISITING RESEARCHER AT MEIJI
INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL AFFAIRS



A GRADUATE OF TOKYO UNIVERSITY, HE WORKED MAINLY METI ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT AND OTHER ISSUES. AFTER LEAVING THE CIVIL SERVICE, HE HAS PLAYED ADVISORY ROLES FOR THE EURASIA GROUP AND NASIC. HE IS OFTEN APPEARS IN THE OVERSEAS MEDIA ON JAPANESE POLITICS AND POLICY ISSUES AS WELL AS INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

In my first essay, I looked at the April 19 impoundment by the Chinese authorities of a Mitsui O.S.K. Lines (MOL) ore carrier and essentially agreed with the Chinese assertion that this was a purely commercial case with no political implications whatsoever. No new cases have cropped up since, which strongly suggests that I got it right. Grade: A

Next, I argued that Narendra Modi will push Parliament hard on reform and that he had the votes to do it despite the fact that his government did not have a majority in the lower house. I asked a member of the Indian civil service about this, who told me that the opposition was aware of the constitutional device, a joint session of the two houses, in which the Modi administration does have a majority, the president as a practical matter could not refuse to convoke it if the ruling coalition so demanded, and so the opposition would be more forthcoming than widely assumed. Modi had so far been pushing on the easier items that do not require legislation or, like the nationwide VAT, appeared to enjoy National Congress support. However, National Congress now appears to be joining the other opposition parties in unwillingness to cooperate with Modi. Analysts are finally taking note of the joint session option and talking of a possible showdown next year. I think that I was pretty much ahead of the curve on this, but I'll really believe it when I see it. Grade: B, with upside potential

I did not make any specific call in my third installment, on the United States initiative regarding cybertheft. In any case, the United States has public communications issues of greater urgency than cybersecurity, which was supposed to be its most important national security concern. Grade: Incomplete

My next two installments concerned the willingness of the United States to defend Japan (more specifically the Senkaku Islands). Nobody has invaded us yet, so this is still a hypothetical. I will be tackling this issue again on December 18 at the Temple University Japan Campus. [Click here](#) for more information. Grade: Incomplete (thankfully)

They were followed by a piece on robots, where I argued against the old saw that we Japanese treated robots more nicely because of our cultural capacity for empathy for non-humans. I soon learned that the Ministry of Defense was already prioritizing robotic technology in its R&D plans and later that it was going to begin work on a “[high-function power suit](#)” in FY 2015. Grade: B+ (because I forgot to fact-check and failed to make the point that MOD was already into robotics.)

The fighting goes on, so the Kobani, or Ayn al-Arab story does not have an ending yet. Let’s hope that it will be a happy one. Grade: Incomplete

And finally, my piece on a Pew Research data point regarding one-word descriptions of the 50 states of the United States of America. Unfortunately, I did nothing close to making a call there. Grade: non-credit

And on that note, let me end the year wishing you a happy holidays, and the best New Year of your lives.

以下、掲載用ではなく、別途メモ、関係資料です。

PS: While this essay was in the editing pipeline, a few predictions that I made elsewhere are on target. The LDP lost fewer than 30 seats, Komeito gained seats, and Mr. Abe is set to reappoint all his pre-election cabinet ministers. Just thought that you’d like to know.

参考

<http://www.nikkan.co.jp/news/nkx0120141111baag.html>

防衛省、「高機動パワードスーツ」開発へー自衛隊員の動きアシスト、迅速機敏な行動に

掲載日 2014年11月11日

防衛省は、2015年度から装着者の動きをアシストする「高機動パワードスーツ」の開発に乗り出す。自衛隊員の装備は銃などを含め最低でも20キログラム以上。パワードスーツにより装備状態の隊員の負担を軽減、迅速機敏な行動に役立てる考えた。15年度当初予算概算要求には関連予算として9億円を計上している。

防衛省は隊員の運動能力向上を目指し、パワーアシスト技術の研究を進めてきた。12年度には数千万円を投じ、重装備時の運動をサポートするスーツ、高い運動能力を実現する高機動用スーツを試

作。民間のパワーアシストスーツ市場が成熟してきたこともあり、自衛隊の実作業に耐えるパワードスーツ開発を決めた。予算が認められれば、15年度に事業者を公募する。

同研究を主導する技術研究本部のロボット開発プロジェクトは3カ年で行われることが多いため、同スーツも3年程度で完成を目指すと思われる。その後に評価試験を行い、性能が認められれば自衛隊の装備となる見通しだ。

防衛省のパワードスーツは民間のアシストスーツ以上の頑強さと汎用性が求められる。水際でも使用できる防水・防塵性能、銃弾でも故障しない強さ、装着者が倒れたり座り込んでも誤作動しない安全性の実現を目指している。



12年度に試作した重装備用スーツ