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## EDITORIALS

### A leading Japanese politician espouses a 9/11 fantasy

Monday, March 8, 2010

YUKIHISA FUJITA is an influential member of the ruling Democratic Party of Japan. As chief of the DPJ's international department and head of the Research Committee on Foreign Affairs in the upper house of Japan's parliament, to which he was elected in 2007, he is a Brahmin in the foreign policy establishment of Washington's most important East Asian ally. He also seems to think that America's rendering of [the events of Sept. 11, 2001](#), is a gigantic hoax.

Mr. Fujita's ideas about the attack on the World Trade Center, which he shared with us in a recent interview, are too bizarre, half-baked and intellectually bogus to merit serious discussion. He questions whether it was really the work of terrorists; suggests that shadowy forces with advance knowledge of the plot played the stock market to profit from it; peddles the fantastic idea that eight of the 19 hijackers are alive and well; and hints that controlled demolition rather than fire or debris may be a more likely explanation for at least the collapse of the building at 7 World Trade Center, which was adjacent to the twin towers.

As with almost any calamity whose scale and scope assume historic proportions, the events of Sept. 11 have spawned a thriving subculture of conspiracy theorists at home and abroad. The only thing novel about Mr. Fujita is that a man so susceptible to the imaginings of the lunatic fringe happens to occupy a notable position in the governing apparatus of [a nation that boasts the world's second-largest economy](#).

We have no reason to believe that Mr. Fujita's views are widely shared in Japan; we suspect that they are not and that many Japanese would be embarrassed by them. His proposal two years ago that Tokyo undertake an independent investigation into the Sept. 11 attacks, in which 24 Japanese citizens died, went nowhere. Nonetheless, his views, rooted as they are in profound distrust of the United States, seem to reflect a strain of anti-American thought that runs through the DPJ and the government of [Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama](#).

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Mr. Hatoyama, elected last summer, has called for a more "mature" relationship with Washington and closer ties between Japan and China. Although he has reaffirmed longstanding doctrine that Japan's alliance with the United States remains the cornerstone of its security, his actions and

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those of the DPJ-led government, raise questions about that commitment. It's a cliché but nonetheless true that the U.S.-Japan alliance has been a critical force for stability in East Asia for decades. That relationship, and its benefits for the region, will be severely tested if Mr. Hatoyama

tolerates elements of his own party as reckless and fact-averse as Mr. Fujita.

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