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Japan's Self-Defense Forces: What Dangers to Northeast Asia?

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FOREWORD

Perhaps the most serious threat to stability in East Asia is the widespread fear that Japan will again become a military power and threaten the interests of the other states of the region.

In this study, the author examines Japan's defense policy and the capabilities of its Self-Defense Forces (SDF) to determine if the fears of a remilitarized Japan have any basis in fact. He concludes that Japanese defense policy places rigid restraints on the SDF, and that currently there is no support for anything but a thoroughly defensive military posture. Moreover, the SDF lack the force projection ability to attack any of Japan's neighbors, and could not develop the ability in less than a decade--even if there were a political decision to do so. Finally, the preponderance of evidence suggests that future generations of leaders are no more likely to pursue a military role in the region than the generation which has governed since the end of American occupation, in 1952.

This study fulfills a requirement in SSI's research program for 1994, *Strategic Challenge During Changing Times*.

The Strategic Studies Institute offers this monograph as a contribution to the on-going dialogue on U.S. strategy in Asia and the Pacific.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

DR. THOMAS L. WILBORN, a Research Professor of National Security Affairs, is an Asian specialist with the Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College. His recent publications include *Stability, Security Structures, and U.S. Policy for East Asia and the Pacific*; *Roles for the Army in a Peacetime Engagement Strategy for the Pacific;* and *How Northeast Asians View Their Security*, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1993, 1992, and 1991, respectively; and "Arms Control and R.O.K. Relations with the D.P.R.K.," *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Winter 1990. He is also author or coauthor of several other studies and articles related to Asian security, nuclear doctrine, and NATO. Before joining the Institute in 1975, Dr. Wilborn taught international relations and political science at James Madison University and Central Missouri University, and served on a University of Kentucky educational assistance group working at the Institut Teknologi Bandung, Bandung, Indonesia. He received the Ph.D. degree in political science from the University of Kentucky.

SUMMARY

This study examines Japan as a potential military power in the Asia-Pacific region, and tests the view held by many in the region that Japan could unleash its military and threaten the security of its neighbors. The conclusion is that Japan is not now and is not likely to become a military threat to East Asia, or anywhere else. In the first place, U.S. policy is to remain engaged, and retain a military presence, in the region. Most Asian observers agree that the U.S.-Japan alliance is a guarantor of a peaceful Japan; they worry about Japan because they mistakenly believe that America will "withdraw," and the alliance will lose its meaning.

Second, there is almost no support in Japan for a foreign policy based on military force. If it had not been for U.S. pressure after 1950, Japan probably would have only very small Self-Defense Forces (SDF), if it maintained armed forces at all. As it is, the SDF are under tight civilian control, and restricted by a long series of policy and budget constraints which make these forces the most restricted military organizations among the world's major powers.

Third, the SDF simply do not have the capability to threaten any nation, and could not develop one for years. Japan's defense budget is very large, but not as large as it seems when expressed in U.S. dollars. Moreover, Japan pays extremely high prices for weapons and equipment, and must spend some 40 to 45 percent of its budget on personnel related costs, an unusually high ratio. Additionally, the most generous burden-sharing contributions of all U.S. allies are included in the Japan Defense Agency budget. Except for its navy, the Maritime Self-Defense Force, Japan's armed forces are not superior to those of its neighbors, and are probably inferior.

It would be foolish to predict the future of Japan. Evidence available now suggests that a new generation of Japanese leaders may pursue more active diplomatic roles for Japan, including participation in U.N. peacekeeping activities. Unless the United States disengages from the region and tension develops with North Korea or China, there is little if any evidence that Japan will revert to the use of force as an instrument of *national* policy.

The United States can and should help change destabilizing perceptions about Japan in at least four ways:

• By maintaining its alliance with Japan and remaining diplomatically, economically, and militarily engaged in Northeast Asia.

• By being cautious about pressuring Japan to improve or enlarge the capability of the SDF, especially in ways which might be interpreted as offensive.

• By supporting efforts, hopefully initiated by other Northeast Asian governments, for confidence-building and transparency measures among the armed forces of the region.

• By supporting and participating in regional security dialogues and new regional security frameworks, including those initiated by others.

JAPAN'S SELF-DEFENSE FORCES: WHAT DANGERS TO NORTHEAST ASIA?

Introduction.

Throughout the Asia-Pacific region, but most noticeably in Korea and China, many defense intellectuals express concerns about potential trouble if--or, sometimes, *when*--Japan assumes an active, aggressive international role backed by expanded Self-Defense Forces (SDF) with the capability to project power on the mainland of Asia and into the waters of the South China Sea, the Western Pacific Ocean, and the straits and channels which connect them to the Indian Ocean.[1] The mere possession of the capability, not to mention its use or the threat to use it, would, many say, cause Japan's neighbors to expand their armed forces and prepare to defend themselves. At the least, there would be troubling tensions and the diversion of assets from economic development to defense; at the worst, there would be instability or even war. Neither development would serve the interests of the United States, which increasingly looks to the region as a market for U.S. exports to stimulate U.S economic growth and global prosperity.

Such critics and others virtually all agree that the immediate catalyst for Japan to reverse four decades of security policy based on the formal renunciation of the use of force could only be the military disengagement of the United States from the region.[2] Because of the end of the cold war and a plethora of economic and social problems at home, these critics assert that U.S. disengagement is inevitable. While some believe that Japan will adopt an assertive posture simply because, without U.S. restraint, the latent militarism of the Japanese will reassert itself, less hostile observers do not necessarily assume aggressive Japanese intentions. The latter contend that, having depended upon the alliance with the United States for its defense and the security of its sea lines of communications (SLOC), Japan will have no choice but to reconsider its military posture and security policy when the alliance loses its credibility.[3] Many observers believe that the possibility of a rearmed Japan will become extremely high if U.S. disengagement were coupled with a North Korean nuclear threat, an assertive, powerfully armed China, or some currently unforeseen but equally disturbing development.

There is a widespread perception that the United States will soon disengage from the region. That is probably incorrect. Both post-cold war U.S. administrations have pledged to the contrary, making compelling arguments why maintaining a credible military presence and sustaining U.S. alliances--especially with Japan and South Korea--will be in the interest of the United States for the foreseeable future.[4] Given open channels of communication and adequate information, perceptions tend to approximate reality,[5] so that in time the perceptions of East Asian policy elites about

U.S. steadfastness may change, assuming that the United States does indeed remain engaged as its leaders (and I) say it will. However, in the meantime, the perceptions of probable U.S. behavior and corresponding Japanese responses, whether correct or not, influence decisions of Asia-Pacific governments, with the potential of undermining the stability of the region.

The purpose of this monograph is to examine Japan as a potential military power in the Asia-Pacific region, and to systematically test the view that Japan will unleash its military and threaten the security of its neighbors. To do so, three major variables will be examined, including current defense policy as it evolved through the cold war to the fall of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) cabinet in June 1993, the capabilities of the SDF, and the attitudes of Japanese elites. To some degree, it will also be necessary to examine some aspects of Japanese politics and bureaucratic decisionmaking. The Japanese political system may be in the midst of a fundamental transformation, the direction and extent of which are not yet clear. It is extremely difficult, not to say hazardous, to speculate on how these domestic political changes will affect Japanese security policy. Nonetheless, some discussion of the possible impact of domestic political change is included. While the findings will not answer all of the concerns of many defense intellectuals in the region--undoubtedly Japan's future behavior could conflict with the interests of its neighbors--on balance the conclusions should at least offer plausible alternatives to the hypothesis that Japan will become a military threat in Northeast Asia. For methodological reasons too complex and pedantic to be included in this essay, arguments based solely on geopolitical systems theory, such as those contained in *The Coming War With Japan*,[6] will not be included in the analysis. Suffice it to say that I believe that Japan's national policies are made by national leaders, influenced but not dictated by systemic factors like geography.[7] Finally, the implications for the United States and some recommendations for U.S. policy will be presented.

Security Policy under the Peace Constitution.

> Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on Justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat of force as a means of settling international disputes.
>
> In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the State will not be recognized.
>
> Article 9
> Constitution of Japan

This Constitutional provision has denied Japan the authority

to use or threaten to use force as instruments of national policy. Even though written by General MacArthur's staff and imposed on Japan's political leaders,[8] Article 9 has always had broad popular support in Japan, and was deliberately used by the conservative rulers of the nation to control the costs of security while almost single-mindedly pursuing economic recovery and development.[9] In addition to this pragmatic support from Liberal Democratic politicians, bureaucrats, and businessmen, it has had ideological and emotional support from the Japan Social Democratic Party (JSDP),[10] many educators and journalists, organized labor, and large segments of the public. Indeed, until recently, just raising the issue of changing Article 9 was unthinkable--an act of political suicide--among Japanese politicians.

Today, few in Japan still accept Article 9 literally. The official interpretation of the provision, reconciling its words with the sovereign right of self-defense awarded by international law and irresistible U.S. pressures, guides Japanese defense policy and permits the existence of a sophisticated military organization. But the existence of the SDF, in spite of the clear language of Article 9, is not merely an example of the cynical manipulation of legal norms for political expediency. Reflecting the spirit of Article 9, the official interpretation permitting a military organization also includes restrictions and limitations which do not apply to the armed forces of any other major nation in the world, and foreclose a wide range of defense policy options.

Japan's defense policy has not only been circumscribed by the Constitution, but by a complex of attitudes embedded in its political culture by the trauma caused by World War II, which reinforces the antimilitary Constitutional provisions. The importance of that great conflict in forming Japanese political attitudes can be better appreciated by summarizing some of its results for Japanese society. Japan suffered a humiliating defeat--the first ever by a foreign foe--and enormous human and material losses. There were some 2.3 million battlefield casualties between 1937 and the end of the war. Civilian casualties amounted to 800,000 more, mostly because of conventional bombing of Tokyo and almost every other city except Kyoto.[11] Thirty percent of Japanese were left homeless, and only 25 to 30 percent of prewar industrial capacity remained. These numbers also include the results of atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.[12] Moreover, the very people who had been described to the Japanese people as evil incarnate in wartime propaganda occupied their land and took control of their lives.

The Japanese saw themselves, at least as much as the non-Japanese members of the East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere, as the great victims of the Pacific War.[13] Not only had they been punished by their conquerors, but more importantly they had been deceived by their own arrogant military. According to one perceptive observer, they reacted to these conditions by

internalizing a set of four "never again resolves," described below, which no government dare cavalierly ignore.

• Never again rely on the military instrument as the primary means to achieve desired domestic or international goals.

• Never again have the homeland experience mass domestic bombing.

• Never again allow military institutions or military officers to exercise a veto on public policy or to confront civilian politicians, bureaucrats, or business leaders with life-threatening ultimata or political-military *fait accompli*.

• Never again slight the importance of superior technology and the capacity to produce large quantities of advanced weapons with high quality control.[14]

Capability for Self-Defense Only.

Article 9 and antimilitary/pacifist attitudes have resulted in unusual, if not unique, defense policies. As expressed in *Defense of Japan 1993,* the authoritative White Paper annually issued by the Japan Defense Agency (JDA), there are two operative principles of the "Basic Policy for National Defense,"[15] plus several others which apparently are also considered fundamental. The first is that a military capability will be maintained at the minimum level necessary for self-defense--and for self-defense only. The self-defense limitation is repeatedly noted in the White Paper and other expressions of policy, as in the self-imposed prohibition against maintaining a capability strong enough to threaten another nation.[16] Among other things, it means that military force cannot be exercised until there is an "imminent and illegitimate act of aggression against Japan."[17] Even then, there must be no other means to deal with the issue which threatens imminent aggression. Finally, the SDF cannot deploy more than the minimum force necessary to exercise the right of self-defense. Official policy does not necessarily proscribe every deployment outside Japan, because the requirements of self-defense may require striking an aggressor off-shore.

> Nevertheless, the government believes that the Constitution does not permit it to dispatch armed forces to foreign territorial land, sea, and airspace for the purpose of using force, because such a deployment of forces overseas generally goes beyond the minimum necessary for self-defense.[18]

The requirement that the Self-Defense Forces be maintained only at the minimal level, and that they be structured exclusively for a "passive defense strategy"[19] sometimes leads to

apparent anomalies, because no Japanese government has advocated a technologically inferior force and each has chosen sophisticated weapons systems whenever possible. Many, if not all, of them may be used for offense as well as defense. But "exclusively" offensive weapons are not permissible. This category has not been fully defined, but apparently includes long-range ballistic missiles, long-range bombers, "offensive" aircraft carriers, and weapons of mass destruction. The three nuclear principles: Japan will not possess, produce, or allow the introduction of nuclear weapons into Japan, constitute a "fixed line of national policy."[20]

International Peace Cooperation Law.[21] Legislation adopted in 1992, after a long, agonizing, and often painful debate, authorizing the SDF to participate in U.N.-sponsored peacekeeping operations, did not directly violate the self-defense only policy, although some domestic and foreign critics treated the proposal as the first step which would inevitably conclude in the use of the SDF for aggression overseas.[22] The law did provide a new international role for Japan and an unprecedented task for the SDF. Three considerations about the law, which is popularly called the PKO bill, are particularly relevant to this discussion.

First, the Prime Ministers who attempted to guide the measures through the Diet, Toshiki Kaifu and Kiichi Miyazawa, did so under intense international pressure--from Washington urging active Japanese participation in support of international security, and from Beijing and Seoul opposing a larger international role by Tokyo. There is little doubt that neither leader's cabinet would have introduced a PKO measure which raised such troubling issues for the Japanese political elite except for sharp criticism in the United States on Japan's failure to support DESERT SHIELD/STORM except with money. Not only was the idea extremely unpopular with opposition parties in the Diet and the public at large, it also had only limited support within the LDP. On the other hand, the reactions in Beijing and Seoul (and less frequently and fervently from other Asian capitals) provided additional ammunition for opponents of the measure and additional reasons for the eventual law to be extremely restrictive.

The second major consideration related to this paper is the narrow set of restrictions placed on the SDF. Under the law, they will never violate the basic policy of overseas deployment because they cannot be dispatched for the purpose of using force. Five principles concerning Japan's participation in peacekeeping forces incorporated in the PKO bill require the following:

> I. Agreement on a cease-fire shall have been reached among the parties to the conflict.
>
> II. The parties to the conflict, including the territorial state(s), shall have given their consent to deployment of the peacekeeping force and Japan's

participation in the force.

III. The peacekeeping force shall strictly maintain impartiality, not favoring any party to the conflict.

IV. Should any of the above guideline requirements cease to be satisfied, the Government of Japan may withdraw its contingent.

V. Use of weapons shall be limited to the minimum necessary too protect the personnel's lives, etc.[23]

In other words, the law does not authorize participation in anything but conventional U.N. peacekeeping operations. Had it been adopted before 1990, Japan could not have participated in DESERT STORM. To obtain passage, the government agreed to "freeze" the dispatch of combat (as opposed to support) forces until 1995, when the law was to be reviewed.[24]

The last relevant consideration is that most of the controversy surrounding adoption of the measure--which, to repeat, was very intense and often emotional--seemed to dissipate after it was finally passed. Noncombatant SDF personnel served with the United Nations Transitional Authority for Cambodia, and a small detachment is now in Mozambique. When police and civilian volunteers in the Japanese detachment came under attack by the Khmer Rouge and suffered casualties, there was an immediate outcry in Japan, but in a short time the issue disappeared from the headlines and public discourse. The Japanese people now appear to reluctantly accept peacekeeping, as restricted by the PKO bill, as a function for the SDF--part of the consensus on security. It will probably be formally institutionalized as a major official mission of Japan's military in amendments to the SDF law.[25] But the unwillingness of the Hosokawa cabinet and the bureaucracy to go beyond present restrictions was underlined in their negative reaction to a U.N. request for an infantry unit to join peacekeepers in Bosnia-Herzegovina.[26]

Civilian Control of the Military. Another fundamental principle regulating the commitment to maintain an exclusively self-defense capability, directly related to the "never again" resolves, is that there will be complete civilian control over the military. The principle is probably executed in Japan more rigorously than in any other nation--certainly more than any other major industrial nation.[27] Japan avails itself of all the democratic instruments of control: The Prime Minister (not the Emperor, as in pre-war Japan) is commander-in-chief; the Diet controls the budget, size, organization, and functions of the SDF; the Director of the JDA is always a civilian minister of state (all ministers are required by the Constitution to be civilians); and a Security Council is established within the Cabinet. Moreover, the subjugation of the military is reinforced by a number of structural and cultural considerations. For instance, many key areas of security policy are initiated and

sometimes settled outside of the JDA by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (the alliance with the United States), Finance (budget), and International Trade and Industry (procurement). The JDA is not a ministry and JDA bureaucrats do not enjoy the status and prestige of their counterparts in the major ministries. In a system like Japan's where many of the most critical decisions are reached through interagency consultations and bargaining,[28] the limited status of the Defense Agency and its people is extremely significant. Moreover, many key JDA personnel who routinely participate in interagency negotiations are seconded for a limited period of time from other ministries, where their primary loyalties are likely to remain during their sojourn with JDA.

Within the JDA, the services and military personnel are not particularly influential. That is, civilian bureaucrats make most decisions and submit most of the advice to political leaders. The SDF's senior officer, the Chairman of the Joint Staff Council, is not the official adviser to the Commander-in-Chief (the Prime Minister), but merely to the Director General of the JDA. There is very little joint structure, partly because of intense interservice rivalry and partly because most politicians and bureaucrats fear the existence of a single military structure which might be capable of articulating the common interests of the SDF. One of the most visible and persistent effects of the "never again resolves" is the unwillingness of the elites to allow an important policymaking or political role to the uniformed military, and the low status and reputation of members of the SDF in Japanese society. Many SDF officers believe that they can influence decisions of the Japanese government which effect them more easily by lobbying U.S. military counterparts, who in turn, they hope, will lobby Japanese decisionmakers, than by acting through their own chains of command.[29]

The size of the budget for JDA has also been limited by arbitrary policy standards. For a time, there was an explicit cabinet decree that no more than 1 percent of GNP could be spent on defense.[30] This was formally overturned in 1987, but in fact almost all budgets since 1962 have been less than 1 percent of GNP.[31] Since Japan's economy for the last several decades (until recently) has been robust, this limitation has not been as significant as the other restrictions already mentioned. Funds have been sufficient, or nearly so, to acquire the capability which the Japanese government said it required when it adopted the National Defense Program Outline in 1976. In a later section of the analysis, more attention will be focused on defense budgets in Japan.

Alliance with the United States.

The second basic operative policy is that Japan will deal with external aggression on the basis of security arrangements with the United States. A defense capability which could handle any eventuality would require an "excessive economic burden" and

would be politically unwise if not unconstitutional.[32] The National Defense Program Outline (NDPO), an official document adopted in 1976 which contains the rationale and purpose of the SDF and sets limits on its structure,[33] asserts that the self-defense capability should be developed to repel or defeat "small-scale" aggression--aggression that is launched without extensive preparations which could be detected in advance. On the other hand, the SDF need only be able to slow down large-scale aggression until the presumably superior forces of the United States are brought to bear. The U.S. nuclear umbrella is also a part of the Japanese concept of defense. Openly and explicitly, then, Japanese security against the most serious dangers is tied to and dependent upon the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security Between Japan and the United States (hereinafter, Mutual Security Treaty) and political decisions made in the United States.

Unlike the North Atlantic Treaty, the agreement with Japan is asymmetrical. That is, the U.S. commitment to come to the defense of Japan in the event of aggression is not matched by a Japanese commitment to come to the defense of the United States in the case of aggression.[34] Such a commitment, according to the official interpretation of Article 9, would be an exercise of the right of collective self-defense, which Japan as a sovereign nation enjoys, but it would also extend beyond the *minimum* required for self-defense, which is all that the Constitution allows. Japan does agree to help defend U.S. personnel and facilities on Japanese territory if they are attacked by an outside aggressor (when, of course, Japan also would be under attack), but that is all.[35] Japan's direct contributions to the military aspects of the alliance, beyond maintaining the SDF, are limited to providing facilities for U.S. forces in Japan and financial support for the operations of those facilities, agreeing to attempt to develop the capability to patrol SLOC out to 1,000 nautical miles,[36] and permitting limited transfers of military technology to the United States. The last concession, an exception to the general rule that prohibits exporting weapons and weapons technology,[37] was only made after intense pressure from Washington, but recently has been positively reaffirmed in the Tokyo Declaration on the U.S.-Japan Global Partnership signed during President Bush's Tokyo visit in 1992.[38] In 1988, the two governments agreed to the co-design and co-production of the controversial FSX fighter, a project still incomplete, and have initiated other less well-known cooperative undertakings.[39]

During the cold war, the availability of bases for U.S. forces was of obvious value in the execution of the strategy of containment. The projection of Soviet military force into the Pacific was complicated, if not blocked, by the geographic location of Japan. All Soviet, now Russian, warm-water ports in Asia were/are accessible only through narrow straits around or through the Japanese islands. Moreover, Soviet submarines with ballistic missiles targeted on the United States hovered in the Sea of Okhotsk, well-protected but clearly more easily detected

and intercepted from Japanese naval and air bases than from U.S. territory. Japan's location also made it (and still does) a highly desirable logistic and staging base for operations on the Korean peninsula, should conflict reoccur there. The Mutual Security Treaty authorizes U.S. bases in Japan not only to defend Japan, but also for "the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East,"[40] a euphemism for deterring or engaging in conflict on the peninsula. The SDF itself cannot directly participate in regional quarrels, but according to the NDPO "the very fact that Japan firmly maintains...a defense posture [the SDF plus the alliance] contributes as well to the international political stability of Japan's neighboring region,"[41] while the absence of this posture might create a vacuum which would invite aggression.[42] The differences in responsibilities illustrate the limitations on the SDF as well as the asymmetries of the alliance.

Due to the benefits of possessing the bases, plus the fact that a war against the United States in which U.S. forces in Japan were not attacked seemed highly implausible, the disparities in the obligations of the two parties had no practical significance during the cold war. On the other hand, the value of these bases now, with no clear and immediate danger to U.S. security in the region, is increasingly being challenged by observers in the region, including many in Japan,[43] and in the United States. The recent willingness of Japanese to respond to U.S. entreaties for greater "burden sharing" is no doubt at least partly in recognition of this reality, and an effort to make the deployment of forces in Japan as painless as possible for the United States. Despite growing economic problems and increasing pressures on its own budget,[44] Japan makes a larger financial contribution for the maintenance of U.S. forces than any other U.S. ally. All yen costs, including the salaries of local employees, will be borne by Japan in and after FY1995,[45] which will make maintaining military units in Japan considerably less expensive than maintaining them in the United States. The 20 percent of the SDF's weapons and equipment not produced in Japan is purchased from the United States, sometimes as much to support the alliance or help reduce the U.S. trade deficit with Japan as to meet military requirements, a fact that Japanese industrialists understand but sometimes resent.[46]

Adhering to the two fundamental principles (maintenance of a defense capability and alliance with the United States) and the constitutional restrictions of Article 9 as interpreted by a succession of governments, Japan has woven a defense policy which, as far as its language is concerned, may be described as defensive and completely nonthreatening. The analysis must now proceed to an examination of how that policy has been implemented in structuring and equipping its military establishment, the Japan Self-Defense Forces.

The Japan Self-Defense Forces.

At the urging of the United States, the Japan Defense Agency and Self-Defense Forces were created on July 1, 1954, a little more than 2 years after the formal end of the Allied--mostly American--occupation, and almost 10 years after--the Imperial Army and Navy were abolished.[47] Evolving hesitantly in the 1950s and 1960s, before the dramatic economic growth which transformed Japan into an industrial and technological giant, the components of the SDF--the Ground Self-Defense Forces (GSDF), Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF), and the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF)--began to take the form of modern, sophisticated military organizations during the 1970s, and have been marginally improved during every year since. Highlights in their development have been the adoption of the NDPO in 1976, the sequence of 5-year military buildup plans (Mid-term Defense Program Estimates until 1985 and Mid-term Defense Program Plans thereafter) designed to systematically achieve the goals of the NDPO,[48] the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation adopted in 1978, and the extensive program of U.S.-Japanese combined exercises which also began, modestly at first, in 1978.

At present, the SDF are well-equipped, moderately sized organizations of competent personnel. As is frequently pointed out, they deploy more of some weapons systems than the U.S. Seventh Fleet or the U.S. Pacific Air Force.[49] It is less frequently noted that the SDF have far fewer of other weapons systems than do U.S. forces in the region. Japan also appears to have a very large defense budget.

Focusing on Japan's defense budgets as a measure of Japan's military capability is deceptive, however. It is true that the defense budget is large--4.6 trillion yen for FY1993--and that it has increased regularly and consistently over a long time. The rate of increase from 1975 to 1991 averaged 8.6 percent (and was never below 5.2 percent),[50] almost certainly the record for a nation not at war. It dropped to 3.8 percent[51] and 1.9 percent (the lowest rate of increase since 1960)[52] for FY1992 and FY1993 respectively, years when most nations outside of Asia, like the United States, were reducing their defense budgets significantly. The increase for FY1994 was only 0.9 percent. However, while this record may illustrate government priorities, it does not necessarily realistically indicate anything about Japan's military capability. Three factors--volatile exchange rates, high personnel costs, and high equipment costs--distort defense spending as a standard of military capability for Japan.

International comparisons are always distorted because of exchange rate fluctuations. The appreciation of the yen--but not of other major currencies to anything like the same degree--against the dollar (always the currency used for comparisons) makes this phenomenon especially significant.

Table 1 demonstrates the distortions in comparing 1991 defense budgets among the United States, Russia, the United

Kingdom, Germany, France, and Japan with different rates of exchange. In column A, 1985 prices and exchange rates are used. Column B compares the same local currency amounts but converts them into dollars at 1991 rates of exchange. Germany has a higher ranking in Column B because the Deutsche mark appreciated significantly between 1985 and 1991. If October 1993 rates of exchange (arbitrarily chosen to illustrate this point) are applied, exactly the same local currency amounts result in the figures shown in Column C, making Japan appear to have the second largest military budget because of the appreciation of the yen and the almost total collapse of the Russian ruble, which was set at 1.7 per dollar for Column B and an astounding 1193 per dollar for Column C. Any conclusions about either nation's defense capability on the basis of the comparison is totally unjustified. Unless exchange rates are stable over extended periods of time, international comparisons in a single currency may conceal as much information as they convey.

(Billions of Dollars)

	A	B	C
Exchange rates*	1985[+]	1991	1993
United States	227.1	303.6	303.6
Russia	91.6	238.0	0.1
United Kingdom	22.4	42.2	36.3
France	18.0	34.5	33.3
Japan	16.5	32.7	40.6
Germany	16.5	40.0	32.2

*1985 and 1991 are average rates as they appear in *Military Balance: 1992-1993*, pp. 220-221. 1993 rates are those of October 22, 1993, as reported in the *The New York Times*, October 23, 1993, p. D15.

[+]Totals are expressed in 1985 prices.

Table 1.
1991 Defense Budgets of Major Nations.

A second reason for discounting comparisons of Japan's defense budget with other nations is that Japan spends an unusually large portion of its budget on personnel costs. Between 1983 and 1991, 40.1 to 45.1 percent of Japan's defense budget was spent on military personnel and provisions,[53] even though the total strength of the SDF was less then 250,000 throughout the period. During the same time, the United States allocated 23 to 27.1 percent of its defense budget to personnel.[54] The Soviet Union, with a conscripted military force, budgeted only 26.1 to 32.1 percent for personnel *and* operations and maintenance for

1989, 1990, and 1991.[55] The JDA, therefore, has a relatively smaller proportion of funds appropriated to spend on research and development, procurement of equipment and weapons systems, and training, than most other developed nations. In fact, Japanese authorities have decided to maintain equipment acquisition funds at 25 to 28 percent,[56] approximately the same levels as the United States.[57] They have neglected research and development and operations and maintenance, including consumable supplies, in order to maintain their procurement program. This factor should be especially salient for observers in East Asian states with much lower personnel costs, when they compare Japanese defense costs with their own.

Finally, total defense budgets or total defense expenditures tend to present a distorted picture of Japan's military capability because much of what Japan purchases for military purposes is extremely expensive due to the high costs of production in Japan.[58] For reasons only partly related to defense, the JDA (like most national procurement authorities) has consciously favored Japanese producers--the NDPO apparently requires it[59]--so that 80 percent of all weapons and equipment are domestically produced.[60] Since the export of military equipment and weapons systems is forbidden, Japanese defense industries must limit their production lines to JDA demand only, which normally leads to two to three times higher prices than that of foreign, including U.S., producers.[61] As a result, the costs which Japan pays for weapons per unit are probably as high or higher than comparable expenses by any other major nation.

A more meaningful way of evaluating the SDF is to describe their capabilities and compare them to the armed forces of other nations, especially those in Northeast Asia, and to the self-imposed restrictions which Japan purports to follow. Table 2 summarizes a comparison of the GSDF, MSDF, and ASDF to the 15 largest armies, navies, and air forces as of 1991-92. The GSDF is much smaller in terms of number of personnel than any of the top 15, which include all of the other armies of Northeast Asia, India, and Pakistan. In Southeast Asia, the Burmese, Indonesian, and Thai armies[62] (also not among the 15 largest), are also larger than the GSDF. The ASDF had somewhat fewer combat aircraft than any of the 15 largest, which included the air forces of China, India, and North Korea. The air force of Taiwan, with 486 aircraft,[63] was also larger than Japan's. The South Korean air force, with 415 combat aircraft,[64] was the only one in Northeast Asia smaller than the ASDF. The MSDF was the 6th largest navy in terms of tonnage, and, among the top 15 in tonnage, ranked 12th in number of ships. In Asia, only the Chinese navy had greater tonnage, and only China, Taiwan, and India had a larger number of ships. While clearly rudimentary, this comparison suggests that Japan is not a particularly significant military power, even regionally, except perhaps in terms of its naval capabilities.

Table 3 summarizes a comparison of selected weapons systems held by Northeast Asian countries, showing Japan behind all of its

neighbors except in surface combatants. Like the information in Table 2, this data only reflects quantities, and therefore does not necessarily reflect capabilities. Nonetheless, Table 3 alone clearly does not suggest that the SDF represent a military threat to any of Japan's neighbors.

Ground Forces		Naval Forces			Air Forces	
Name of country	(10,000 persons)	Name of Country	(10,000 tons)	(Number of vessels)	Name of Country	(Number of planes)
China	230.0	FSU	687.4	2,460	FSU	7,820
FSU	150.0	USA	590.5	1,130	China	6,140
India	110.0	China	98.3	1,910	USA	5,280
DPRK	93.0	UK	88.9	410	France	900
Vietnam	90.0	France	46.3	230	DPRK	800
USA	69.1	India	24.6	450	Germany	760
ROK	55.0	Taiwan	23.0	660	India	690
Pakistn	50.0	Peru	22.3	50	Syria	650
Turkey	47.0	Germany	21.0	260	Israel	620
Iraq	35.0	Turkey	20.0	240	UK	600
Germany	33.5	Italy	17.5	200	Turkey	550
Taiwan	31.2	Canada	14.1	70	Poland	510
Iran	30.5	Brazil	13.8	110	Italy	500
Syria	30.0	Indnesia	13.2	130	Egypt	490
Egypt	29.0	Spain	12.5	230	Yugslvia	490
Japan	15.1	Japan	31.9	160	Japan	460

Adapted from *Defense of Japan 1992*, Reference 3, p. 209.

Table 2.
Outline of Major and Regional Countries' Military Power.

Weapons System	China	DPRK	ROK	Taiwan	Japan
Main Battle Tank	7500	3000	1800	459	1210
Armored Personnel Carrier	2800	4000	1550	990	768
Artillery Pieces	NA	4500	500	610	859
Multiple Rocket Launchers	3800	2400	140	NA	120
Attack Helicopters	62	50	135	NA	64
Reconnaissance aircraft	290	NA	28	38	81
Fighter, Ground Attack	600	310	206	392	73
Fighters	4600	401	132	NA	207
Bombers	630	3	-	-	-
Submarines	46	26	4	4	13
Destroyers	17	-	9	24	6
Frigates	37	3	59	10	58
Mine Countermeasures	130	23	10	13	42
ASW Helicopters	350	-	273	12	105
Amphibious Ship	56	-	14	26	6
Amphibious Craft	370	191	36	168	40

Source: *Military Balance: 1992-1993.*

Table 3.
Selected Weapons Systems in Northeast Asia.

A thorough comparison of weapons systems is beyond the scope of this study and the expertise of the author. Nonetheless, it may be noted that the latest generation of equipment and weapons systems which Japan has fielded, especially for the MSDF and ASDF, are state-of-the-art or near state-of-the-art. However, the same also may be said of the armed forces of other Northeast Asian military forces, especially the PLA and the ROK armed forces. In other words, the SDF's newest equipment is as good as--in some cases probably better than--any deployed by any other Northeast Asian country. On the other hand, like the other military organizations, most SDF equipment and weapons systems are still second generation or older, and not state-of-the-art. JDA plans to modernize the SDF have been significantly slowed because of relatively austere defense budgets in recent years--probably more so than in neighboring countries. The modernization program probably will continue only at the current, or even a slower, pace. Thus, any advantage over the forces of other Northeast Asian countries which the SDF may enjoy in quality because of superior technology may not be very large.

In addition, the SDF has persistent problems. The underfunding of logistics has produced a force with very limited sustainability--ammunition stores may be sufficient for a concerted defense of no more than a week, and few troops are able to practice with live ammunition once a year.[65] Many observers agree with Michael W. Chinworth in wondering if the purpose of the SDF is really to assuage U.S. pressure rather than to provide for defense, or any other military purpose.[66] Constraints on the defense budget in the last several years have probably caused even smaller allocations to logistics and operations than in the past. Some 80 percent of recent budgets have been committed to nondiscretionary or already obligated funds for personnel costs, deferred payments for equipment ordered in previous years,[67] and support of U.S. forces stationed in Japan, expenses which have increased more rapidly than the overall budget. Expenses for ammunition and other logistics items are among the relatively small portion of total expenses which JDA is able to reduce. Training areas for the GSDF are extremely limited, which would make effective training difficult even if adequate funds were available. Complaints of loud noises hinder the ASDF, just as they do U.S. Air Force and U.S. naval aviation units stationed in Japan.

The lack of a joint command structure also reduces the capability of the SDF. As U.S. experience in the Persian Gulf verified, synchronization of land, sea, and air power is required to obtain the maximum advantage of military force. The absence of adequate joint command and control in the SDF, which may assure civilian control, also reduces combat effectiveness, even in the conduct of purely defensive strategies. The SDF also lack an adequate reserve system, a particularly dangerous vulnerability as the size of the services, especially the GSDF, is reduced due to budget pressure and demographic changes. Currently, there are less than 48,000 personnel in the reserves, most GSDF,[68] who receive very limited training and are very poorly compensated.[69] Moreover, in a society where the military are held in low esteem, recruitment for the reserve will be unusually difficult. The JDA is studying the problem, but no solutions have been

proposed. Lastly, the SDF has absolutely no combat experience.

Whether or not Japan's military organization represents an "exclusively defensive" force is subject to interpretation, but the SDF must be as close to that standard as the military of any major nation. Almost any weapons system may be used for offensive or defensive purposes, depending on the intent of the user more than the characteristics of the weapons themselves. Yet, as an island nation with no land borders, Japan cannot engage in offensive military action--except counteroffensives against invaders, which certainly should be included in any definition of defense--unless it can project power relatively great distances. Japan's closest neighbor, the ROK, the most vulnerable country to a Japanese incursion, is some 250 kilometers away at the narrowest distance across the Korea Strait. Vladivostok is about 900 kilometers from Sapporo on Hokkaido, and Shanghai is approximately 1,000 kilometers from Fukuoka on Kyushu.[70] To reach any of these areas, except southern Korea, with sufficient military force to achieve political goals important enough to justify the use of force would require bombers, long-range fighter aircraft, in-flight refueling tankers, a large fleet of amphibious vessels, long-range missiles, aircraft carriers to protect the fleet, etc. In the case of Korea, a robust land force capable of sustaining itself against determined opposition would be required. The SDF do not possess these capabilities, and, except for marginal increases in the ranges of fighter aircraft and expansion of the sea-lift capacity of the MSDF, current plans do not provide for their acquisition.[71] For Japan to develop and produce such systems would require at least a decade, even if a political consensus existed. While Japanese commercial maritime and aviation carriers could augment SDF lift capacity, the SDF could not effectively protect them against hostile fire except in Japanese waters and air space.

Japan's Defense Industry.

Whether Japan can become a military power in the region will depend in part upon its defense industry.[72] Most of the SDF's weapons systems and equipment have been produced in Japan, as previously noted, as the result of a policy designed to reduce the nation's security dependence on foreign suppliers and acquire defense-related technologies, primarily to exploit for commercial purposes.[73] Therefore, a modern defense sector exists which produces a broad range of items ranging from rifles and trucks to aircraft, naval combatants, and missiles. Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Toshiba Corporation, and other major Japanese industrial concerns are leading producers of defense-related equipment. Moreover, the Japanese have developed technologies for commercial use which also have important military applications. Indeed, this "Japanese model" of "spin-on" (as opposed to the Pentagon argument that the civilian economy has benefitted from "spin-off" of military research and development) has been cited as a promising pattern to be emulated by the United States and other post-industrial nations which seek to reduce military procurement costs.[74]

The defense sector of Japanese industry is important, but its capacity is limited and it is not at all critical to the national economy. Defense orders have consistently accounted for only 0.3 to 0.4 percent of total production.[75] Mitsubishi Heavy Industries has won 25 percent of defense contracts in the last decade, but defense only accounted for 15 percent of its total income for the same period. For most of the top 20 companies doing business with JDA, defense work accounted for less than 5 percent of total production.[76] The only sectors of industry that depend on JDA are weapons and ammunition, which have no other client, and aircraft, some 80 percent dependent on JDA orders.[77] The declining increases in defense budgets of the last few years and possible decreases in the near future[78] suggest that unless the Japanese economy fails to recover in the next few years, the relative significance of the defense industry as a share of the economy will decrease. If the JDA relaxes its policy of always giving priority to Japanese producers, regardless of price, there may be even greater reductions in funds available to domestic contractors. (In 1993, in "an almost unprecedented" decision which may or may not represent a new policy, JDA purchased a landing craft with air cushion from a U.S. supplier because it was less expensive and of higher quality than the same item, at least acceptable in quality, made in Japan.)[79] Anticipating decreases in orders, a number of companies are readjusting internal structure to shift resources from defense to commercial production.[80] Whatever defense industrial base which exists in Japan may atrophy even more as budgets decline in the near term.

Future International Roles for Japan.

Many variables--some of which cannot now even be identified--may influence future international roles which Japan will adopt. Three which can be specified are the perceptions held by Japanese opinion leaders and defense intellectuals about (1) the international system, (2) likely developments in U.S. policy toward the region and Japan, and (3) the proper international posture for Japan in the emerging world order.[81] In the context of this study, the first two of these variables may be stipulated: (1) many Japanese believed that the end of the cold war introduced a period of dangerous uncertainty into regional and international politics; and (2) there would be some degree of disengagement from the region by the United States, the great nation which acted as Japan's defender for almost five decades, but which was now preoccupied with domestic concerns.[82]

The almost simultaneous emergence of these widely held perceptions called into question the "core axioms that have guided Japanese foreign policy since 1945," and stimulated a national debate, still very much in process, comparable to "American `Great Debates' just prior to World War II, at the outset of the cold war, and during the Vietnam War."[83] The debate has been almost unprecedented for Japan, where the public discussion of security and defense policy had been systematically avoided as a taboo by many politicians, or at most limited to marginal changes in the inventory of the SDF or the percent of GNP dedicated to defense for decades.[84]

This foreign policy debate, which was accelerated and broadened by Japan's need to respond to the Persian Gulf crisis and subsequent attempts to authorize Japanese participation in U.N. peacekeeping operations (which in 1992 resulted in the PKO bill discussed above), had yet to reach a consensus on a new international stance for Japan in 1993. There seemed to be broad acceptance that some change was required, but no substantive consensus on the direction that change should take. One result was new attention toward restructuring Japan's inadequate and cumbersome foreign affairs bureaucracy, including the undermanned Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There were no serious proposals to significantly strengthen the JDA, still the step-child of Japan's administrative structure.

The evolution of the consensus on security and defense since the establishment of JDA and SDF, and the great differences of opinion still remaining, were illustrated by an LDP study group report on Article 9 which was issued in February 1992. During the parliamentary wrangles over the PKO bill, its opponents frequently asserted that any foreign deployment of SDF was prohibited by Article 9 of the Constitution. LDP proponents of the bill rejected that interpretation, but some of them also believed that the official interpretation was overly restrictive. Through the LDP study group report, they recommended a new interpretation to permit an "active pacifism," a shift "from a passive stance of mainly enjoying the benefits of a global system to an active stance of assisting in the building of a new order." The report also called for a review of the Self-Defense Forces Law to provide the legal basis for the SDF to take part in "international security" operations which included, but were not necessarily limited to, orthodox peacekeeping activities.[85] The report did not support collective defense, although some of its members did. That elected members of the House of Representatives would take such positions represented a sea-change in attitudes about defense from, say, a decade ago. That neither the LDP nor the Miyazawa government embraced the report, which would have been totally rejected by much of the opposition, showed that the foundation for a radical departure in foreign and defense policy did not exist.

The great foreign policy debate has mostly focused on the basic orientation of Japanese foreign policy: Should Japan foster its bilateral alliance with the United States in a global partnership, or concentrate on a regional focus linking Japan with the rest of Asia? As Eugene Brown has pointed out, these positions are not logically exclusive, but factions among the policy elites are engaged in a contest "over which of the two paradigms should lie at the heart of Japan's nascent effort to construct a coherent foreign policy."[86] What is most significant for this report is that only a small minority of the minority who favored the emphasis of regionalism over bilateral ties with the United States in any way implied, much less explicitly advocated, that Japan should back its policy with deployments of armed forces except as a part of U.N.-sponsored peacekeeping forces. Similarly, few of the group which emphasized ties with the United States as the basis for Japan's geopolitical strategy, which Brown believes clearly dominated among the policy elites,[87] entertained a military component beyond peacekeeping. Indeed, one of the major

arguments for focusing on bilateral relations with the United States was that other Asian nations would accept Japan's military capability only when operated in the context of, and circumscribed by, the alliance.

The national debate on Japan's proper international roles is not over, and new rationales supported by new coalitions could emerge. The elections in July 1993 were a watershed in Japanese politics,[88] introducing what many observers believe will be the most significant period of political change since the end of the Occupation,[89] inevitably affecting the foreign policy debate and vice-versa. Indeed, it has been argued that, despite the fact that corruption and political reform were the issues which led to the fall of Miyazawa's cabinet, the present "political upheaval" is primarily a response to the end of the cold war. The contention is that Japan's prosperity depends on the international system, and

> [t]he ability to grasp the trends of the time and to profit from this [has become] the mark of an astute politician. The leaders of this upheaval grasped the meaning for Japan of the end of the cold war and have pressed for changes in the domestic system required by the new international circumstances.[90]

The probable beginning of a new era of Japanese politics is why the elections are used as a major division of the analysis.

In any case, most of the young dynamic leaders of the first non-LDP cabinet,[91] such as Prime Minister Hosokawa, Foreign Minister Hata, and the man who is credited with masterminding the formation of the diverse coalition, Ichiro Ozawa, are exponents of a more active, responsible role in international affairs for Japan. The LDP study group which called for a more active Japanese posture was chaired by Ozawa, then secretary-general of the LDP but now leader of one of the break-away parties which are providing the leadership for the movement for change.[92] The process of political change is likely to be slow, probably taking years to solidify. As it does, a new leadership attuned to international realities and supported by some of the more forward looking Japanese interests will not only enrich the foreign policy debate, but also introduce new approaches and policies on defense and security. Based on what is known of the positions of these people now, they probably will support more active diplomacy and a firm commitment to U.N. collective security, but not a military capability for unilateral action.[93] They may also continue to restrain defense spending. If their goal is to make Japan what Ozawa calls "a normal country,"[94] it will probably be normal primarily in the sense that it no longer claims an exception from the normal responsibilities of a major power, not necessarily in the sense of deploying formidable military forces.

While determining foreign policy will probably continue to be primarily the business of the governing elite, including the bureaucrats at relevant ministries, Japan's future international posture will also be influenced by public opinion, reflected in

choices made at the polls and pressures applied on elected and other officials.[95] It cannot be said what future public opinion in Japan will support, but in recent years it definitely has not been expansionism or aggression. On the other hand, leaders seeking to guide Japan toward "active pacifism" may be restrained by public opinion until they can alter the views of many citizens. In 1992, 46 percent of a USIA poll agreed that "Japan should be a pacifist country and the SDF should be strictly limited to defending Japan," with the same percentage--not a majority--holding that Japan should take responsibility for maintaining peace in the world, even if it required sending SDF troops on peacekeeping duty.[96] And what about the SDF? In a poll sponsored by the Prime Ministers Office in February 1991, only 33.3 percent thought that the SDF should place priority on maintaining national security, while 15.6 percent choose maintaining civil peace as the primary mission, and 39.2 percent indicated disaster relief.[97] In almost any other nation, most citizens would expect the first mission of the armed forces would be to defend the nation. In the same poll only 7.3 percent believed that Japan should go it alone on defense instead of depend upon the alliance with the United States.[98]

Some observers of Japan argue that future generations of Japanese will be less impressed than older Japanese with the horrors of war and the tragic results of Japan's last flirtation with militarism. Failure of Japan's education system to realistically present the history of the Pacific War in the schools supports this position. The argument continues that future generations will also be less willing than their elders have been to accept responsibility for the damage which Japan inflicted on East Asia, especially China and Korea. As they begin to assume authority in Japan, then, Japan's foreign policy will become increasingly independent and assertive, and profoundly destabilizing. However, this argument has not been strengthened by the very strong apology to Japan's war victims by Prime Minister Hosokawa, the most prominent representative of the new generation of Japanese politicians, in his first address to the Diet as Prime Minister.[99]

On the other hand, a contrary argument holds that the trends of change in Japanese society are toward more individualism, more concern for the present, less identification in terms of larger groups, and less emphasis on tradition. Such cultural and intellectual developments can mean less support in coming generations for nationalism than exists at present, and certainly at least as much avoidance of militarism.[100]

Summation and Conclusions.

The discussion thus far has considered Japan's security policy, the SDF, Japan's defense industry, and future international roles for Japan as currently envisioned by its political elites and defense intellectuals. The analysis does not support the hypothesis that Japan and the SDF are likely to become a military threat to Northeast Asia, or anywhere else, in the near term. Declaratory policy is certainly not aggressive--few governments ever openly admit aggressive intentions, but what governments say is important in this information

era--and, more significantly, the SDF does not have the capacity to project sufficient force to compete with its well-armed neighbors or sustain a conflict anywhere for more than a few weeks. The SDF are competent to effectively initiate defensive action, and in the case of the MSDF are probably best of any regional rival, but they would not be able to take the battle to mainland Asia or Taiwan. Undoubtedly, the Japanese economy, in time, could shift resources and restructure industry to produce whatever equipment and weapons systems were desired. But time would be required: the Japanese defense industry is not particularly robust, and it represents a small segment of the economy.

The movement in the defense consensus from idealistic pacifism enshrined in Article 9 to present defense policy and SDF was at least as much a response to U.S. pressures for contributions to the cold war as the result of internal pressures for security: the buildup in the SDF is normally described as a series of minimal Japanese responses to U.S. demands. In the last few years, with the taboo against publicly discussing the military broken, there are still few voices (and they represent an ultra-nationalist fringe) seeking a radical break with the pacifist tradition of the post-war era. The debate on PKO legislation, which eventually was adopted in watered-down form, related to Japan assuming responsibility for international stability and security, not for Japan developing military might to support its diplomacy. Against the assertions that deploying SDF units abroad violated Article 9, there were proposals to amend the Constitution. But the changes advocated by mainstream Japanese politicians and opinion leaders would not have affected the existing language which prohibits resort to force as an instrument of policy. Instead, they would add another paragraph giving explicit Constitutional recognition of armed forces only for self-defense and participation in U.N.-mandated collective security activities.

As far as *economic and technological* capacity is concerned, Japan clearly could commit more resources to maintaining and expanding its military. More than 1 percent of GNP could go to defense, a much larger share of its industry could be dedicated to weapons systems and military equipment, and with difficulty tens of thousands more possibly could be enticed or ordered into uniform.[101] However, this implies the *political* capacity to fashion and adopt a new security policy, which is not at all self-evident.

If the 1993 elections in Japan did not unleash new political forces--if the rules of the old system are to continue to apply for the foreseeable future--then the likelihood of a new consensus behind radical policy departures is extremely low. As in the past, defense decisions will be designed to avoid or minimize domestic political conflict with little or no attention to substantive positions. The politics of defense in Japan will continue to mean the management of external and internal pressures, and only marginal adjustments in policy will be adopted.

On the other hand, if a period of fundamental political change is underway, departures from past practices in every arena, including

defense, are possible. The current consensus on government policies--even the requirement that important policies proceed on the basis of consensus--could be radically reshaped as new forces, new styles, and new ideas permeate Japanese politics. If it is true that the real motivations for the present political upheaval are the requirements for Japan to conform to the expectations of the transformed international system, then changes in security policy and defense posture are more likely than in many other policy areas.

But there is no evidence that the politicians pressing for political reform--the young, dynamic former Liberal Democrats who were frustrated by the old system--advocate militarily expansive policy at all. Most of them would like to see Japan more active in regional and international affairs by serving permanently on the Security Council, by participating in selected U.N. peacekeeping operations, by taking a leading role in regional security fora, and perhaps in creating new regional security frameworks. They will want to preserve Japan's alliance with the United States, and they probably will want to keep defense spending low. All this conforms with existing Japanese policy. At least until political reform has taken root throughout Japanese government, which may take many years, the most noticeable changes in Japan's security will be in style and timing. The least noticeable, because very little will be taking place, will be in the strategic posture of the SDF.

Implications for the United States and Japan's Neighbors.

Regardless of the qualities of the SDF, if Japan is viewed as a regional danger because of its military strength the stability of Asia is threatened. The United States seeks stability in its own right, because stability is a prerequisite for the pursuit of trade and investment opportunities, the expansion of human rights, and most other regional objectives. More specifically, Washington does not want Seoul to divert any of its defense resources to deal with a Japanese "threat" instead of focusing single-mindedly on the danger from the North, which accounts for 37,000 American troops on the peninsula. Japan's neighbors also value stability, if not necessarily for the same reasons. The logic of this analysis to the contrary notwithstanding, they are all, unfortunately, in various degrees concerned about the potential of Japan as a military threat.

To moderate the destabilizing consequences of perceptions that Japan is a military threat, at least four courses of action can be taken by the United States. It would be highly desirable if Japan's neighbors assumed the leadership in two of them.

• The United States must maintain its alliance with Japan and remain militarily engaged in Northeast Asia to foster the conditions which would permit regional governments to view the SDF as nonthreatening military organizations. Since fears of U.S. disengagement seems to generate perceptions of a Japanese military threat, credible actions which show that the fears are unfounded are obvious first steps for the United States to take to weaken these

perceptions. I argue at the beginning of this report that, in fact, the United States is not disengaging in any significant sense, and that its leaders repeatedly indicate that it will remain engaged for the foreseeable future. As far as undermining beliefs that the United States is disengaging from the region, the United States needs only to continue the present course, articulate policy as forcefully as possible, and wait for the statesmen of Asia to recognize reality.

• The United States should continue to be very careful and discrete about influencing the expansion and modernization programs of the SDF. Asian leaders tend to believe, with good reason, that the Japanese made improvements in the SDF in response to U.S. pressure. While they were unhappy about these U.S. demands, they could at least understand them in the context of the cold war. U.S. calls for Japan to assume military roles in Northeast Asia in the current international environment will be less palatable, and far more difficult to understand. That is not to say that the U.S. Government should not be at all concerned with Japan's military participation in the alliance. For example, it is appropriate for U.S. officials to publicly discuss co-development or co-deployment of theater missile defense systems with their Japanese counterparts; the weapons system involved is defensive, and the project is related to the security concerns of both nations. Suggestions that Japan increase spending for military purposes generally, or procure weapons with offensive potential against China, Russia, or Korea, would be bad policy and worse politics.

• The United States should continue to foster--better if the initiative came from the region--military-to-military cooperation and openness among the armed forces of Northeast Asia. It is not necessarily true that increased information always leads to increased understanding, but in the case of the SDF and their counterparts in other nations of the region, greater interaction and transparency probably will lead to more understanding of each others' policies, capabilities, and limitations. If this analysis is correct and the SDF are not a threat to their neighbors, such a program should result in more secure relationships among Asian countries.

• Finally, the United States should support regional security arrangements, hopefully developed by Northeast Asian governments, in which Japanese military powers can be legitimized and circumscribed. The nations of Asia will feel more secure about Japan having any level of military capability if it is woven into security arrangements in which all participate and in which all have some means of influencing what the others do. Exactly what form they should take is unclear. I have argued in another place that regional security arrangements in Asia should evolve from local initiatives, and probably should be limited in terms of participants or function so that they are related to real needs of the members.[102] Other analysts have arrived at similar conclusions.[103] From the U.S. perspective, such security arrangements would deserve support and participation because some of them, depending on their structure, might also encompass China, another potential challenger to stability in the region.

ENDNOTES

1. For a summary of these perceptions see Thomas L. Wilborn, *How Northeast Asians View Their Security*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, August 8, 1991.

2. For example, Thomas U. Berger, "From Sword to Chrysanthemum," *International Security*, Vol. 17, November 4, 1993, p. 148; and Eugene Brown, *Japan's Search for Strategic Vision: The Contemporary Debate*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, February 25, 1993, pp. 24-26.

3. Michael W. Chinworth, *Inside Japan's Defense: Technology, Economics, and Strategy*, Washington: Brassey's (US), Inc., 1992, p. iii.

4. For authoritative statements of the Bush and Clinton administrations, see James A. Baker III, "America in Asia: Architecture for a Pacific Community," *Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1991/1992, pp. 1-18; and William J. Clinton, "Building a New Pacific Community," an address to students and faculty at Wasada University, Tokyo, July 7, 1993, printed in *Dispatch*, Volume 4, Number 28.

5. Wilborn, p. 3, and sources listed therein in note 5, p. 5.

6. George Friedman and Merideth LeBard, *The Coming War with Japan*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991. <T>

7. For a sophisticated discussion of the levels of analysis in the study of international politics, see James N. Rosenau, ed., *Linkage Politics: Essays on the Convergence of National and International Systems*, New York: The Free Press, 1969.

8. The language of the GHQ original draft of Article 9 was amended by the Japanese for the express purpose of leaving the possibility of raising a defense force. American occupation authorities allowed the change, but demanded the inclusion of Article 66, which requires that military personnel may not become ministers of state. See Akio Watanabe, "Japan's Postwar Constitution and Its Implications for Defense Policy: A Fresh Interpretation," in *Japan's Military Renaissance?,* ed. Ron Matthews and Keisuke Matsuyama, New York: St Martin's Press, 1993, p. 40.

9. See Kenneth B. Pyle, "Where is Japan Headed? Implications for the Alliance," in *Whither Japan? NBR Analysis*, Volume 4, Number 5, p. 7, for a discussion of Article 9 as a foil to hold off U.S. pressure for increased military expenditures.

10. In 1990, the Japan Socialist Party changed its name, when translated into Roman script, to the Japan Social Democratic Party. The same characters are used as formerly when written in Japanese.

11. Kyoto was spared because of its cultural significance.

12. Frederica M. Bunge, ed., *Japan, A Country Study*, Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981, p. 40.

13. David B. Bobrow, "Pursuing Military Security: Lessons from Japan," *The Ridgeway Papers in International Security Studies*, Number 91-1, December 1991, p. 8.

14. *Ibid*., p. 7.

15. See Japan Defense Agency, *Defense of Japan 1993*, translated by the Japan Times, Tokyo: The Japan Times, 1993, p. 65. Actually four principles make up the Basic Policy for National Defense. The first two, having to do with supporting the United Nations and promoting public welfare and love of country, are primarily statements of philosophy.

16. *Ibid*., p. 66.

17. *Ibid*., p. 64.

18. *Ibid*.

19. *Ibid*.

20. *Ibid*., p. 66.

21. Actually, two pieces of legislation were adopted to authorize participation in peacekeeping operations: the Bill Concerning Cooperation for United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Other Operations and the Bill to Amend Part of the Law Concerning the Dispatch of Japan Disaster Relief Team. *Ibid*., pp. 127-128.

22. See Victor Fic, "The Japanese PKO Bill," *Asian Defence Journal*, November 1992, pp. 30-31.

23. *Defense of Japan 1993*, p. 128.

24. One reason for official dismay at a U.N. request for an infantry unit for a peacekeeping mission was the "freeze" pledge. See *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, November 28, 1993, p. 1; translated in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service* (*FBIS*)-EAS-93-229-A, p. 12.

25. *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, October 23, 1993, p. 1, translated in *FBIS*-EAS-93-204-A, p.6, states that a forth branch of the SDF for peacekeeping would be created, but JDA officials have denied the report. During discussions in Tokyo in February 1994, they suggested that other mechanisms to institutionalize peacekeeping were under study.

26. *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, November 28, 1993, p. 1. The dispatch is not clear whether the deployment was requested if and when a cease-fire was agreed to, or under present conditions. If the latter, Japanese participation clearly would not be permissible under the law.

27. For a thorough, yet brief, discussion of the issue of civilian control, see Bobrow, pp. 19-22.

28. For an account of the importance and eccentricity of the bureaucracy in Japanese decisionmaking, see Edward B. Keehn, "Managing Interests in the Japanese Bureaucracy: Informality and Discretion," *Asian Survey*, Volume XXX, Number 11, 1990, pp 1021-1038. Chinworth, pp. 1-28, discusses all of the actors in Japanese procurement decisions, including relevant elements of the bureaucracy.

29. Bobrow, p. 20.

30. The 1 percent ceiling was formally adopted by the Tanaka cabinet in 1972. Actually, defense expenditures had not exceeded 1 percent of GNP for 10 years. Joseph P. Keddell, Jr., *The Politics of Defense in Japan: Managing Internal and External Pressures*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1993, p. 80.

31. The defense budgets of FY1987, FY1988, and FY1989 represented 1.004, 1.013, and 1.006 percent of GNP respectively. Keddell, Table 4.2, p. 149.

32. *Defense of Japan 1992*, p. 80.

33. See *Ibid*., Reference 25, pp. 344-349, for the complete text and attached table.

34. Article 5, Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States, reprinted in *Ibid*., Reference 10, pp. 20-21:

> Each Party recognizes that an armed attack against either Party in the territories under the administration of Japan would be dangerous to its own peace and security and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional provisions and processes.

35. *Ibid*.

36. *Defense of Japan 1992* does not mention this commitment, which frequently is interpreted differently by U.S. and Japanese officials. The former tended to see the commitment, made by Prime Minister Suzuki in 1981 and reaffirmed several times by his successors, as a burden-sharing measure which would allow the U.S. Navy to concentrate on other areas of the Pacific Command's vast territory. Given constitutional and legal restrictions, the Japanese could only envision Marine Self-Defense Force combat action in cases where Japan was under direct attack. Otherwise, to the extent that it had the capabilities, Japan could provide surveillance, intelligence sharing, and search and rescue support. See *Japan: A Country Study*, 1990, pp. 430-431. With the end of the cold war, the issue is more important to Japan's neighbors than to the United States.

37. Japanese businesses have exported civilian technology with

military applications, a famous example being Toshiba's sale of a device permitting the Soviet Union to reduce the noise, and thus vulnerability, of their submarines.

38. See *Defense of Japan 1992,* Reference 9, p. 219.

39. In January 1993, an agreement was reached for Japan-U.S. joint research on a ducted rocket engine. *Ibid*., p. 75. In a Global Partnership Plan of Action concluded to implement the Tokyo Declaration of U.S.-Japan Global Partnership, four other technologies were designated as candidates for joint research. *Ibid*., Reference 22, p. 239.

40. Article 6. The Eurocentric reference to the Far East, a term many Japanese intellectuals object to, probably would not appear in a revised treaty.

41. Section 1, National Defense Program Outline, reprinted in *Defense of Japan 1992*, Reference 25, p. 244.

42. *Ibid*., p. 80.

43. See Wilborn, *passim*. Chinworth, p. iii, maintains that bureaucrats in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Defense Agency see the United States as a declining power.

44. The authors of *Defense of Japan 1992*, pp. 76-77, make an extended justification, obviously directed at Japanese readers who would prefer expenditures on other programs, for Japan assuming so large share of the costs of U.S. bases.

45. *Ibid*., pp. 77-78.

46. Many Japanese business leaders, who see a large share of the declining defense procurement budget allocated to the purchase of four AWACS from Boeing, believe that political factors governed JDA decisions. See *Asahi Shimbun*, December 21, 1992, p. 3, translated in Daily Summary of the Japanese Press (DSJP), American Embassy Tokyo, December 29, 1992, p. 12; *Yomiuri Shimbun*, July 5, 1993, p. 1, translated in DSJP, July 14, 1993, p. 5; and *Mainichi Shimbun*, October 29, 1993, translated in *FBIS*-EAS-93-208-A, October 29, 1993, p. 3.

47. There were precursors to the SDF. Two paramilitary organizations, a national police force and the Maritime Safety Agency, were established in 1947 and 1948. Shortly after North Korea attacked South Korea in June 1950, General MacArthur established a National Police Reserve Force with an authorized strength of 75,000 personnel. It became the cadre for the SDF.

48. There had been multiyear plans for buildup of the SDF since 1956, but they did not develop cohesion until the Outline was adopted in 1976.

49. For instance, Kebbell, p. 154, and Ron Matthews, "Japan's

Security into the 1990s," in *Japan's Military Renaissance?*, pp. 11-13.

50. *Defense of Japan 1992*, Reference 33, p. 264.

51. *Ibid*.

52. *Yomiuri Shimbun*, December 1992, p. 1; translated in *FBIS*-EAS-92-279-A, December 23, 1992, p. 2.

53. *Defense of Japan 1992*, p. 263.

54. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Yearbook 1992: World Armaments and Disarmament*, London: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 198.

55. *Ibid*., p. 215.

56. *Defense of Japan 1992*, p. 263.

57. *SIPRI Yearbook 1992*, p. 189.

58. This and subsequent discussions of defense procurement rely heavily on Michael W. Chinworth, *Inside Japan's Defense: Technology, Economic, and Strategy*, the most extensive analysis of Japan's defense industry and the complex patterns of defense politics in Japan.

59. The words of the Outline ("Attention should also be given to the possibility for adequate domestic production of the equipment in question.") have been interpreted to require purchase in Japan unless quality standards cannot be met by domestic production. Price presumably is not considered.

60. *Ibid*., p. 26.

61. See Bobrow, p. 29, note 8: "Fully indigenous development and production, licensed co-production, or even co-development are two or three times more expensive than direct purchase of finished military products from abroad. The last provides no technology transfer to Japan or indigenous productions base."

62. *Military Balance: 1992-1993*, pp. 134, 148, and 162, respectively.

63. *Ibid*., p. 162.

64. *Ibid*., p. 154.

65. Chinworth, p. 8.

66. *Ibid*.

67. Procurement expenses are part of a category of expenses called *saimu futan koi,* described in Chinworth, p. 50-51, as follows:

> In essence, this is the practice of deferring payments for major expenditures. Typically, after contracting with a company for delivery of a specified number of units of a system, the JDA will place virtually nothing down and make only marginal payments during the second and even third years of the order. Significant payments for the systems do not come until the final years of the order. Short-term government bonds provide the funds necessary to make these payments . . . By rolling over payments for major programs from one year to the next through this deferred-payments system, Japan has been able to upgrade its forces with ultramodern equipment, satisfy international pressures to boost its defense capabilities, increase spending annually, and yet maintain total spending to about 1 percent of the GNP (since the funds that are assigned to future-year payments do not count against the current year's budget totals).

In a given year, JDA may have obligated more than any one year allocation. Ibid., p. 62.

68. *Defense of Japan 1993*, Reference 4, p. 227.

69. A brief description of the SDF reserve system is contained in *ibid.*, Reference 57, p. 319.

70. These distances are estimates based on computations from a Northeast Asia map.

71. Jane's Fighting Ships contended that a tank landing ship to be purchased by MSDF "is premised on operating Sea Harriers, perhaps as an interim step toward an aircraft carrier." JDA said the purpose of the ship was merely to provide the capability to respond to PKO missions. See Yoshitaka Sasaki, AERE, April 13, 1993, p. 13; translated in *FBIS*-EAS-93-091-A, May 13, 1993, pp. 9-10.

72. Alistair D. Edgar and David G. Haglund, "Japanese Defense Industrialization," in *Japan's Military Renaissance*? p. 158, argue that there is no "defense industrial base," which is the phrase which is normally used in Japan, because three principal characteristics are missing. Japanese companies which produce defense material lack a significant dependence upon (1) the production of arms or related products; (2) large government financed or supported R&D programs as the primary incentive for their involvement in defense production; and (3) the export of arms to increase economies of scale.

73. Much technology transfer occurred through licensing and co-production arrangements with U.S. firms. No doubt the defense sector used some of this technology, but the consensus that first priority should always placed on technological and economic advancement made the adaption of all technology for commercial purposes the highest priority. See Edgar and Haglund, p. 142.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 158.

75. Kebbell, p. 118.

76. Edgar and Haglund, p. 148.

77. *Ibid*., p. 149.

78. *Yomiuri Shimbun*, October 24, 1993, p.1, translated in *FBIS*-EAS-93-204-A, October 25, 1993, p. 9.

79. *Tokyo Shimbun*, October 9, 1993, p.1, translated in *FBIS*-EAS-93-200-A, October 19, 1993, p. 4; and *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, October 22, 1993, translated in *FBIS*-EAS-93-204-A, October 25, 1993, p. 4.

80. See, for instance, *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, May 13, 1993, p 11, translated in *FBIS*-EAS-93-092-A, May 14, 1993, p. 25, on plans of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries.

81. For careful analysis of the attitudes of Japanese officials and intellectuals, see the works of Eugene Brown, including *The Debate Over Japan's International Role: Contending Views of Opinion Leaders During the Persian Gulf Crisis*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, July 17, 1991; "Contending Paridigms of Japan's International Role: Elite Views of the Persian Gulf Crisis," *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies*, Spring 1992, pp. 3-18; *Japan's Search for Strategic Vision: The Contemporary Debate*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, February 15, 1993. For a summary of attitudes after the first PKO debate in 1990, see Wilborn, pp. 27-42.

82. Brown, *Japan's Search for Strategic Vision: The Contemporary Debate*, p. 2.

83. *Ibid*., p. 1.

84. Keddell, pp. 55-58.

85. *Asahi Shimbun*, February 21, 1992, cited in Pyle, p. 11.

86. Brown, *Japan's Search For Strategic Vision: The Contemporary Debate*, p. 8.

87. *Ibid*., p. 24.

88. Not only did the LDP fail to gain a majority in the House of Representatives for the first time since 1955, but the JSDP, which as the largest opposition party also symbolized the old ways of Japanese politics, was reduced from 137 to 76 seats. The big winners were two groups of relatively young former Liberal Democrats which formed just before the election, and Hosokawa's Japan New Party, also primarily composed of relatively young former Liberal Democrats, which was established in May 1992.

89. James Sterngold, "Can Clamor for Change Be Stilled in Japan?" *The New York Times*, January 24, 1994, p. A3.

90. Pyle, p. 6. In the same publication, however, T. J. Pempel, "Towards an Understanding of Japan's Changing Political Economy," p. 20, explains that Japanese elites are more preoccupied with local politics than politicians in most countries.

91. The exception appears to be Chief Cabinet Secretary Masayoshi Takemura, leader of *Sakigake* (Harbinger), the smaller of the parties which broke away from the LDP in 1993, who adheres to a much more pacifist line. See *Mainichi Shimbun*, January 24, 1994, p. 2, as translated in *FBIS*-EAS-019-A, January 28, 1994, p. 9.

92. Ozawa and Tsutomo Hata led the largest group, Shinseito (Japan Renewal Party), which broke with LDP over reform. It held 55 seats in the House after the 1993 elections.

93. Pyle, pp. 10-11, analyzes Ozawa's position, based on his recent book.

94. The title of one chapter in Ozawa's book is "Become a Normal Country."

95. For an excellent discussion of the attitudes of Japanese toward violence in international life based on literature and popular culture, see Richard Halloran, "Chrysanthemum and Sword Revisited: Is Japanese Militarism Resurgent?" *East-West Center Special Report*, Honolulu, 1991, pp. 12-17. Halloran finds no evidence of popular or elite attitudes supporting militarism.

96. Office of Research, U.S. Information Agency, *USIA Opinion Research Memorandum*, August 6, 1992, p. 5.

97. *Defense of Japan 1992*, Reference 58, p. 306.

98. *Ibid*., p. 308.

99. See *Asia Yearbook 1994*, Hong Kong: Far Eastern Economic Review, 1993, p. 144.

100. John Endicott, "Japan's Military Renaissance? Prognosis into the 1990s and Beyond," in *Japan's Military Renaissance*, pp. 241-248. See also Halloran.

101. The military in Japan are held in such low esteem, that, in practice, recruitment might be a serious barrier to grandiose military build-up plans. Moreover, the size of the pool of military age males--and females--is decreasing absolutely and as a proportion of the population.

102. Thomas L. Wilborn, *Stability, Security Structures, and U.S. Policy for East Asia and the Pacific,* Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, March 24, 1993.

103. For example, see Berger, p. 121; and Toshiyuki Shikata,

"Perspectives on a Future Security System in East Asia," in *Prospects for Global Order: Volume II*, ed. Seizaburo Sato and Trevor Taylor, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1993, pp. 64-65.

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