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JAPAN'S REARMAMENT: TRENDS, DETERMINANTS AND PROSPECTS

By

Sorpong Peou

Institute of Southeast Asian Studies
Singapore

INTRODUCTION

War has always been the most-pressing issue that concerns the entire human race. In recent years, however, a certain number of scholars have pronounced major wars obsolete due to the changing nature of the international system, the rise of regionalism and the role of social forces. Liberal scholars have come to recognize that "high politics" characterized by issues of war and peace has given way to "low politics" defined in socio-economic terms. The world of growing "complex interdependence" among nation-states has rendered military issues subordinate to socio-economic ones.¹ There are linkages between prosperity, democracy and peace. Norman Palmer's observation of the new regionalism in the Asia Pacific characterized by a broad and flexible pattern of interaction among East Asian states engenders the prospect of regional stability.² Critical theorists like Robert Cox also argue that a revival of a nationalist-militarist state is less likely. To the contrary, Japan has developed an "alternative culture" characterized by the trend towards 'socially inspired internationalism' or the globalization of Japanese people's interests in such
issues as international justice, socio-economic development.\textsuperscript{3}

These schools of thought share an optimistic view based on growing complex interdependence and the development of a common culture with its shared values. They posed a theoretical challenge to those who inherited the realist tradition and have pointed to the danger of resurgent Japanese militarism. In 1970, Herman Kahn put forward an alarmist argument that Japan was emerging as a superstate: "The 1970s and 1980s will see a transition in the role of Japan in world affairs not unlike the change brought about in European and world affairs in the 1870s by the rise of Prussia."\textsuperscript{4} In his widely acclaimed study of the rise and fall of the great powers, historian Paul Kennedy also argues (based on his landmark acquaintance with the pattern of war and change in world politics) that it should not be taken as a surprise if one day Japan "decided to turn its economic strength into a large degree of military strength."\textsuperscript{5}
Daniel Burstein also presents an alarming prediction that the world may "end up with American and Japanese missiles pointed at each other." Even more alarmist is the thesis developed by George Friedman and Meredith Lebard who argue that both the United States and Japan will engage in armed conflict in the future. With the Cold War over, the American "altruism" of defending the free trade system previously disguised in anti-soviet strategic interests has been fading into history. Armed with protectionism, the United States is no longer interested in sustaining a powerful Japanese economy and enduring "Japanese economic encroachments". On the one hand, with a self-seeking re-energized Japan becoming more assertive politically and more vulnerable to the importation of critical overseas raw materials, Japan "will inevitably need to control the elements of its own survival" by developing its own military power equal to its own needs. On the other hand, with the most powerful naval force on earth, the United States will be capable of determining the "pattern of world trade" in terms of what goes where and how. Thus, "if this is intolerable for Japan, then Japan must try to challenge that power, at least in the Pacific."

This paper rejects the above views. It argues that Japan has slowly rearmed and will continue to do so well into the next century. While domestic and international social forces may constitute a major hindrance to the process of rearmament, they nevertheless are not the most important determining factors. External factors have been, and will most likely be, a powerful force forging Japan's rearmament policy. During the 1980's, the direct threat posed by the Soviet Union gave rise to the spirit of nationalism and militarism. With the Cold War over, prospects of armed conflict between the United States and Japan will remain unlikely. The new treat to Japan will derive from newly rising regional powers like North Korea and China which have not so far demonstrated any serious political will to cooperate with other neighbouring Asian nations in efforts to create a regional defence or security community. We may one day witness Japan and
the two communist states pointing their missiles at each other.

I. MILITARY TREND AND SIGNIFICANCE

After the Second World War, Japan was disarmed and placed under the military supervision of foreign forces. A war-renouncing constitution was drafted and adopted in 1947 to ensure that the Japanese would never again rise to military dominance in world politics. According to one report, Japan is facing two problems: its recruitment is suffering and the quality of Japanese soldiers, sailors and airmen has substantially deteriorated over the years. During the past several years, however, Japan has taken a number of measures to transform itself into a more credible military power. Those measures involved the abolition of banned military technology exportation, Japanese support for the U.S. Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI), and the removal of the self-imposed one percent restraint on defence spending. Since the end of the Cold War, however, Japan has been slowing down its military build-up but expanding its military role at the international level.


The 1980's witnesses Japan's movement toward the building up of a military power despite the Japanese denial of such intentions. The first self-assertive move that the Japanese undertook was in 1986 when Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki decided to expand the goal of self-defence up to 1,000 nautical miles of Japan's surrounding waters and sealanes.

Defence Capability: In 1983, another significant action was taken. Prime Minister Nakasone went one step further by abolishing a comprehensive ban on exports of military technology. In 1976, Prime Minister Takeo Miki had banned all weapons exports under Article 9 of the 1947 Constitution. (According to the Constitution, Japan was prevented from developing its own military establishment with the potential of conducting warfare against other
states. The Constitution also prevented Japan from forming any offensive army, navy or air force.) A veteran of Japan's Defence Agency (DA) said: "Until 1975, [Japan was] at a level of training readiness only. But after 1976, the Self-Defence Forces moved gradually to combat readiness."\

Some analysts argue that Japan now has the world's eighth largest army with the most modern military equipment, second only to the Soviet Union in Asia. A Japanese professor at the Government's National Defence Academy indicated that Japan had some of the most up-to-date weapons in the world. Since 1955, Japan's military technology developed small rockets when the restrictions imposed after the Second World War were lifted. By 1985, the Japanese armed forces were comparable were those of Great Britain, except that the former did not have nuclear weapons. In 1987, Japan already had more than 50 modern destroyers and frigates, 14 sub-marines, 430 combat aircraft and 1,100 tanks. Japan's navy was larger than Britain's. Japan also has the biggest naval force in the Pacific - - superior in defence capability to those of the United States and the Soviet Union.

On September 9, 1986, Japan declared its official support for the Reagan Administration's SDI programme. Although the justification of this action lay in the imperative need to enhance technological and scientific discovery, it has been seen as a "militaristic adventure". The decision to join the SDI programme runs in contradiction to Prime Minister Sato's three-nuclear principles: "Japan will not produce, possess or let others bring it 'nuclear weapons'". But, things have changed.

Certainly, the increase in Japanese defence capabilities have been fuelled by Japan's spending on defence. By the end of 1986, the Nakasone government took another bold action to remove the one percent ceiling on defence spending. In 1976, Prime Minister Miki had established the 1 percent ceiling on military expenditure in line with the war-renouncing Constitution. On January 24, 1987,
an official decision was made, putting an end to the decade-old policy of limiting defence spending to less than 1 percent of its GNP.

Japan's annual defence spending has increased dramatically: approximately $2 billion between 1970 and 1974; $4 billion between 1974 and 1978; $8 billion between 1978-1979; $10 billion between 1979-1982; $12 billion between 1983-1985. By 1986, the Japanese government called for an annual increase of 7.9 percent in defence spending, compared to only 6 percent over the past three years. The total budget for the 1986-1990 period accounted for $77.55 billion. The government said it would increase defence spending to an average of 1.038 percent of GNP per year over this five-year period. The defence spending for 1987 accounted for $22 billion, representing 1.004 percent of GNP compared to only 0.997 percent of GNP in 1986. It was reported that Japan planned to spend just under $30 billion in 1988: an increase trailing only the Soviet Union and the United States. Although it has been recognized that its annual military expenditure accounts for a small proportion of the GNP, Japan has in recent years made itself number three in world defence spending, trailing only the Soviet Union and the United States. Its defence expenditures are at the same level as that of France, Germany and Britain. Yet, in terms of its population, Japan represents twenty third in the world.

2. Japan's Post-Cold War Defence: Expanding Military Role

Even with the Cold War over, Japan still maintains a credible military might. By 1992, it had a substantial and quite modern naval force, with one hundred maritime aircraft, sixty principal surface combatants and seventeen submarines. Japan is not taking any dramatic steps to reduce its military capabilities. Japan's present naval capabilities also look rather impressive. On the spending side, Japan has taken no drastic cut down its defence spending. In 1993, the government moved to reduce its defence budget by $4.7 billion in the next 3 years. The main objective is not, however,
to cancel any principal programmes but just to slow down the current Five Year Plan (FY 91-95), meaning major weapon procurement will be moved into the next Five Year Defence Programme, starting in FY 96.\textsuperscript{21} Japan is now considering the introduction of an advanced air defence system. Japan was reported to have studied the feasibility of purchasing and using the Theatre Missile Defence (TMD) system (part of the abandoned US Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) known as the "Stars Wars") for deployment in the second haft of the 1990's.\textsuperscript{22}

Since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, however, Japan has taken a new approach: toning down militarism but expanding its international military role. The Japanese peace constitution has been put on the table for debate. During the Gulf War, Japan contributed $9 billion to the joint military efforts by the international community. At the same time, the Peace Constitution was somehow interpreted in such a way that would permit Japan to send some peace-keeping troops overseas. A Japanese professor of law argued that, "The Constitution no doubt prohibits belligerency, but it does not preclude preparing for emergencies, such as reversing Iraq's blatant contravention of international law."\textsuperscript{23} Japan did indeed manage to send four minesweepers to the Gulf. Japan's role in the Gulf, however insignificant it might appear, marks a new point of departure in its post-War military history. Until this time, Japan had remained cautious in playing an active role in international affairs.\textsuperscript{24} The constitutional issue did not completely subside. In early December 1991, the Miyazawa government tried, although in vain, to get a bill passed that would allow Japan to send its troops abroad as part of a U.N. peace keeping force. It was not until June 1992 that the Japanese Diet passed legislation which allows up to 2,000 Japanese military and police personnel to participate in UN peacekeeping operations.

Since then, Japan has sent its troops to join two important UN peacekeeping missions. In September 1992, an eight-member
Japanese independent military observer team arrived in Cambodia. In October, three Japanese transport vessels arrived in Cambodia, carrying a sophisticated line of military engineering equipment designed for about 600 Japanese troops joining the United Nations Transitional Authority of Cambodia (UNTAC). They were equipped with light ears. Recently, Japan decided to send 50 troops to join the 7,500-strong UN operation in Mozambique (ONUMUZ). According to Parliamentary Vice Minister Asahiko Mihara, "We have already sent the first group to Mozambique to get things moving. Fifty will in May but when the Cambodian peacekeeping operation runs down in the autumn we will be able to send more." 

II. JAPAN'S DEFENCE POLICY: DOMESTIC DYNAMICS:

In view of Japan's military capabilities, it is reasonable to ask what factors have compelled the Japanese to modernize and expand their military power. A number of arguments concerning Japan's current defence policy could be made. One may argue that Japan's movement toward increased defence spending derived from U.S. pressure on Japan to share the burden and from the perception of Soviet threat. Another argument could also be made: major Japanese companies have sought after profits through the pursuit of military production. A third argument may be that Japan realizes that the time has come for more independent action commensurate with its economic superpower status: a more "self-assertive" policy is needed to keep Japan politically and militarily strong. While there positions may have some validity, the first two have little credibility. Japan's decision to expand and modernize its military power is associated with its desire to become a world power.

1. Japan's Military-Industrial Complex:

With respect to the second argument, Japan has plunged itself into military modernization and expansion due to its motivation toward economic growth and security. Since the 1980's it is quite
apparent that Japan has reconsidered its economic strategies. During this decade, Japan experienced some economic difficulty. According to a 1987 report, Japan's economic miracle is running out of steam. Another report makes a similar comment: the Japanese economy in 1986 was the worst in 12 years.26

Slow economic growth may well have pushed the Japanese to reconsider strategic alternatives. Japanese companies did not perform well in North America. According to Ministry of International Trade and Investment's 1984 survey, the Japanese had losses on their operations in a dozen or so manufacturing sections in Canada and the United States, totalling Y 20.8 billion. On the other hand, the survey revealed that Japanese manufacturing investments in Asia covered a total of Y 51 billion in profits.1 The positive result of investment may have reoriented the Japanese to see the possibility of more profits in Asia. In strategic terms, Japan's future political role on that continent might be very important to its future economic growth.

The negative effect of investment in North America may have some important implications for Japan's defence measures. Japanese businessmen applauded Nakasone's decision on military technology exportation and more defence spending. According to one bank economist, "Many businessmen fear the Japanese economy is headed for permanent stagnation. So again, [as in the 1930's] they are turning to the idea of military production."28 Shigeto Nagano, former Chief of Staff of the Ground Self-Defence Forces and later president of a private company, said: "In order to cope effectively with the military build-up of the Soviet Union, all countries in the Western bloc should go hand in hand to retain technological advantage over the U.S.S.R." He also admitted that: "Our company is, of course, willing to offer our technological know-how for such joint schemes insofar as it is profitable."29

The primary profit motive of Japanese businessmen has undoubtedly resulted in a kind of military-industrial complex. Military
officers have left the public sector to join the private sector in the pursuit of material and financial gain. In 1982, the Japanese sales of arms accounted for $3 billion,30 and Japan's arms production industries have also been expanded. (Japanese military technology has remained attractive to other major states like the United States. Japan has reached the world's highest level in the area of electronics).31 It is not inconceivable to argue that profits in the private sector have attracted those in the military sector. According to a business report: "From 1975 to 1980 nearly 340 former officers of Japan's defence went into private companies." For instance, Shigeto Nahano, once a general of the Japanese Defence Agency, later took up the position of executive vice-president of the defence research arm of Fujitsu, Japan's biggest computer maker.32

In spite of the military-industrial complex in Japan, it would be wrong to suggest that all Japanese businessmen are after private profits at the expense of national security interests. There were of course glaring examples of military technology exported to the Soviet Union. Japanese Toshiba Machine, for instance, was accused by the United States of having shipped highly sophisticated military machinery to the Soviet Union in 1981 and 1984-85. These companies may have been motivated by personal gain, but they do not play a dominant role in Japan's defence policy making. Japan is a neo-mercantilist state with institutions and industrial, fiscal and social policies adopted to advance Japanese interests.33

2. Japanese Nationalism: Democracy and Peace?

Arguably, although Japan remains a conformist society, its political leadership connot function as freely as it used to. Japan has a democratic form of government which has imposed considerable restraints on policy makers. Political leaders must rely on the population for their political support, especially during election times. Most Japanese tend to be nationalistic but at the same time are pacifists. Consequently, Nakasone failed to capture national atten-
tion on his defence issues even though the majority of the Japanese perceived a threat to their nation. After 1984, Nakasone's popularity dropped significantly, largely because of his "hawkish reputation" on defence policy. A poll of 3,500 researchers showed that 80 percent opposed Japan's participation in the SDI programme. Only 4 percent favoured the plan.34

There exists some sign of Japanese people's anti-war politicization with regard to Japanese militarism. It is possible that more and more Japanese will become supportive of the defence plans as the years go on. There are some signs of compromise and unveiled approval. Nakasone delayed his decision to drop the 1 percent ceiling in 1984 and 1985 due to the drop in his personal support rating, from 46 percent to 35 percent.35 A poll conducted in 1985 revealed that 56 percent of the Japanese were worried about Nakasone's defence policy of modernizing and expanding Japan's military capabilities.36

Yet, under his political leadership, Nakasone made numerous efforts to revive Japanese nationalism and militarism. As Gwynne Dyer points out: "...the obvious tactic for Nakasone is to encourage a revival of the traditional form of Japanese nationalism."37 The general perception of the Japanese majority about American credibility may have boosted Nakasone's "hawkish" attitudes toward defending his nation. As former minister of national defence, Nakasone has become known for his strong nationalism and militarism. He decided to visit and honour the nation's war dead at the Yasukuni Shrine, despite severe criticisms about his attempts to revive militarism in Japan. In defence of his political action, Nakasone simply responded: "In every country, the government leads in expressing gratitude to those who lost their lives for their country. This is quite natural. Otherwise, who would sacrifice themselves for their state." A political analyst made the following comment: "Many among the salient majority feel that Nakasone's reasoning is convincing. It is because his logic suits the national sentiment."38

Prime Minister Nakasone's ardent nationalism certainly
inspired Japanese political motivation. Under his political leadership, he tirelessly sought world respect for Japan. His slogan "making a final account of post-war politics" and the popular advocacy of "saying what needs to be said" reflected the chilling revival of Japanese nationalism and possibly was directed at unreasonable foreign criticism. Many right-wing groups also spread their propaganda even on Tokyo streets. As a reporter quoted: "Return the northern territories. Drive the Communists from the schools, destroy the traitorous liberal press. For the emperor, 10,000 years." Right-wing organizations such as the Union of Greater Japan Patriotic Organization would like to see left-leaning groups such as Japan Teachers Union destroyed. There is some speculation that these kinds of propaganda have been supported and organized by some "hawkish" LDP members. Japanese nationalism was on the rise, albeit at a slow pace and in a subtle manner, thus paving the way for a militaristic spirit.

The Japanese population can also be politicized. In recent years, the Japanese have been taking pride in their spectacular achievements in the economic and technological realms. A best-seller inflammatory book, The Japan That Can Say No, represents this tide of nationalist sentiment. Written by a liberal Democrat member of the Diet and former transport minister, the book argues that Japan should champion its own ideals independently of the United States. This book has had a powerful impact on people. In addition, it would be foolhardy to argue that people's ideas and views can influence foreign or defence policy. As already pointed out, only 42% of the Japanese respondents believed that the United States would come to defend Japan when the latter was at war. Furthermore, rather than seeing the Americans as their saviour in any crisis time, Japanese now begin to see them as a serious threat to their policy. Popular perception can therefore be created and politicized by justifiable reasons and changed by other external determining factors. The new revisionist school in Japan is even now attempting to paint Japan's imperialism during the Second World War as the benefactor of its
Asian colonies. Revisionists have also pushed for Japan's greater role in the world.\(^{43}\)

3. Effective Domestic Opposition to the Government's Decisions?

Naksone's attempt to remove the 1 percent ceiling on defence spending was frustrated by senior members of his ruling party. Within the LDP, there exist 5 major factions. One of them was led by Toshio Komoto, known as "dovish" on defence issues and personally hostile to Nakasone. Within the Diet, the four major opposition parties have resisted the government's militaristic policy. Those parties include: Democratic Socialist Party (SDP), Japan Socialist Party (JSP), Japan Communist Party (JCP) and the Buddhist-backed Komeito or Clean Government Party. Nakasone's defence policy was strongly criticized by these opposition parties vowing to use available means to block the decision on the ceiling, including an indefinite boycott of parliamentary debates.\(^{44}\)

However, some of these opposition parties have compromised and toned down their protests against the government in recent years. The impact of such domestic opposition on Japan's defence policy should never be over-exaggerated. There is much evidence suggesting that the Japanese governments have not always bowed down to any domestic political demands with regard to defence issues. In May 1990, for instance, when all the opposition parties demanded that the original defence build-up program of the Self-Defence Force (SDF) be revised and that the defence budget be frozen, the Japanese government did not alter their position. On the contrary, the Government was determined to maintain the programs for modernizing and building up the SDF.\(^{45}\) During the Gulf War, the government dispatched four minesweepers, despite the opposition parties' protests that the mission had violated the Peace Constitution and other laws of Japan.\(^{46}\) In spite of domestic constraints on Japan's potential to play a more active military role, the government's decision prevailed. The Iraqi invasion also softened the Japanese public's
attitude toward the SDF.47

More recent evidence of the failure of domestic attempts to obstruct the government's persistent effort to pass the peacekeeping (PKO) bill is found in the contentious process within both the upper and the lower house. For some time, before the bill was passed, two important opposition parties - the Social Democratic Party of Japan (SDPJ) and the Japan Communist Party (JCP) - joined ranks in an attempt to block a vote on the PKO bill on grounds that it contradicted Japan's "Peace Constitution". For three days, from June 6 to June 8, their members delayed proceedings by "ox-walking". On June 8, SDPJ leaders abandoned their ox-walking tactics and agreed to shelve five additional censure bills that had been filed against cabinet members. When the upper house reconvened shortly after midnight on June 9, the decision was finally made: the PKO bill was passed by vote of 137 to 102, with the support of two centrist parties - the Komei Party and the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) which also demanded certain modifications be made. The next step was for the passed bill to go to the lower house for final approval. Again, the SDPJ and JCP vowed to resume their efforts to block the bill, in spite of growing evidence of popular support for the ruling party.48 And once again, they filed, when the Diet passed legislation allowing Japan to send up to 2,000 Japanese troops abroad.

III. DEFENCE POLICY: EXTERNAL FACTORS

As already seen, domestic constraints on Japan's defence policy have not been very potent. Due to its desire to become a world power, the Japanese government has pursued a political path through economic and military means in order to secure itself in the midst of growing potential for hostility by Asian neighbours by way of expanding its influence in the world community.

1. Cold-War Threat to Japan's National Security:

Japan vs. Russia: Russian power has been sliding down
the slippery slope. Arguably, one might assume that Japan took a more militant action in order to please the United States. East-West relational tensions re-emerged in the late 1970's after the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT) II had failed. By the early 1980's, Soviet-American relations had deteriorated dramatically. At the same time, the United States exerted pressure on Japan to take more responsibility for its national defence. It argued that for years Japan had obtained a "free ride", leaving Washington to bear the exclusive brunt of preserving Japan's security. Thus, Washington liked to see Japan become more co-operative in military terms in order to contain the Soviets more effectively. The U.S. line of strategic thinking was echoed in Japan's defence policy as well. The 1984 report on defence pointed out that "The Soviet Union has been persistently building up its military might in this region in terms and quality, forming an increased potential threat to Japan." It indicated the American role in counter-balancing Soviet threat: "The United States, to counter the Soviet military building up, has been trying to modernize its forces and strengthen its military posture to maintain and enhance its reliability of deterrent in this region." The White Paper on defence continued to place the same emphasis on Soviet threat and the need for U.S. protection. It clearly stated that, "The international military situation in the region surrounding Japan is getting worse." The Paper said that the Soviet Union had developed up to a third of its total strategic nuclear forces in the Far East over the past decade, inclusive of 162 to 170 of its SS-20 medium-range missiles.

While the Soviet threat may have had some effects on Japanese defence policy in recent years, it was by no means the most essential determinant. It would also be wrong to hypothesize that Japan responded according to American pressure or Soviet threat. Japanese interests in increasing defence spending have been basically self-motivated and nationally inspired. The Japanese have not actually perceived any imminent threat from the Soviet Union. As a Japanese Defence Ministry official put it bluntly: "Nobody is saying..."
the Soviet Union is getting ready to attack Japan right now, but the fact that it has military build up in the Far East cannot be denied."51

The collapse of the former Soviet Union meant the Soviet threat has been rapidly receding. In spite of the bickering over a cluster of four islands overrun and conquered by Stalin's Soviet armed forces on the concluding days of the Second World War, Japan slowly moved toward adopting a policy that showed political maturity in dealing with the currently troubled Russia. It became clear that Japan came to see Russia, as indicated in its annual Defence White Paper released on 7 August 1992, as becoming less of a threat to its national security. By mid-April 1993, Japan seemed to abandon its linkage between large-scale assistance to Moscow and the resolution of a territorial dispute. Now, Japan was ready to offer a $U.S.1.8 billion package of aid (an amount exceeding that of the US commitment, $U.S.1.6 billion).

2. Japan and its Perception of a Declining U.S.:

Japan's new defence posture is self-motivated. With regard to the United States, it would be incorrect to argue that what Japan has undertaken is similar to what the United States has wanted. It is true, to a limited extent, that Washington has expressed its satisfaction about the Japanese initiatives. But it is more accurate to suggest that Japan did so for its own best interests. The crux of the matter is that American pressure on Japan to increase its defence spending was not unprecedented. As a reporter said: "American pressure on Japan to remilitarize is nothing new. What is new, and surprising, is the degree to which Japan is aiding and abetting - even encouraging - joint military projects, which soon may include an introduction of nuclear weapons."52 Never has Japan considered American interests over and above its own.53

Japan has increased its defense due to the decline of American hegemony worldwide which has left Japan insecure.54 Japan's potential as a world power has risen as the United States has declined as the
world empire. Japan simply does not trust American credibility as the world's "police officer" or rescuer. According to a report in August 1985, it was found that while 79 percent of American respondents believed that the United States would come to Japan's defence should the latter be attacked, only 42 of the Japanese respondents shared the same view. Fifty-four percent of the Japanese respondents stated explicitly that they did not believe the United States would do so.\(^{55}\)

This perception is not without reality. A key U.S. Defence official expressed the view that the United States did not want to see Japan capable of defending itself: It is in the interest of the [U.S.] Department of Defence to equip the Japanese with weapons they need to defend themselves. But we do not intend to provide them with offensive weapons or give them access to any of our high technology."\(^{56}\)

Later, Washington began to talk about reducing its commitments to defending Japan. During his visit to Japan on February 20, 1990, American Defence Secretary Dick Cheney said that the Pentagon planned to withdraw somewhere between 10,000 to 12,000 men over the Pacific over the next three years. In addition, Cheney wanted Japan to increase its financial contribution to defence spending from 40% of the annual $6 billion to 60%.\(^{57}\)

It would be mistakes, however, to conclude that the United States will become Japan's future enemy. According to a Japanese professor at the Government's National Defence Academy, the United States was seen as a threat to Japan: "The U.S. is a threat to us. We don't use the word threat, but certainly the U.S. is the biggest source of pressure on Japan."\(^{58}\) Nevertheless, it is not unlikely that Japan could become a competitor with the United States in the future if it had the means to do so, if the balance of world power changed, and if circumstances permitted. Japan has shown some signs of wanting to stand more aloof from the United States. The need to become more independent was expressed when Zenko Suzuki remained in power. He frequently reminded the Japanese that they had to have the will to defend their country.\(^{59}\)
In the future, Japan might wish to rise over and above the United States. As a defence official put: "In terms of economic power, we have reached the stage where we can be an equal partner of the United States. In terms of military power, we are still a third-or fourth-class country."\(^{60}\) This statement echoes Japan's desire to compete militarily with external powers, including the United States. In his address to the seven democratic leaders at the 1983 Williamsburg Summit, Nakasone's thinking was global: "The security of our nations is indivisible and must be approached on a global basis."\(^{61}\) Since the European Cold War has come to an end, Japan has demonstrated its desire to pursue foreign policy independent of the United States, albeit within a co-operative framework.\(^{62}\) Japan has achieved what it wanted to achieve in economic terms. It has become the world's largest creditor, contrary to the United States which has emerged as the world's largest debtor. Yet, conventional wisdom that protectionism and trade wars between the two states will occur has not materialized. The old allies might find it necessary to compromise.\(^{63}\)

3. Post-Cold War Threat to Japan's National Security:

While future competition between the two states is inevitable, it is very unlikely that they will become two great enemies. During the Cold War period when Russia posed the most serious direct threat to Japan and the threat became worse as the American commitments to Asia appeared to recede, Japan took a major step to emphasize the need for a more important political role in world affairs by moving toward a military build-up. As the Cold War was winding down and came to an end, Japan began to view a new and more immediate threat to its national security to be rooted in power competition among its neighbours, North Korea and China - the only two major Vietnam communist states left on earth.

**Japan Vs. Asian Powers:** Beyond its national boundaries, Japan has also encountered potential external opposition to its defence plans. Both non-Communist and Communist states have not looked
favourably on the Japanese military trend. But, external constraints seem to give way to Japan's drive for military build-up. Certainly, other non-Communist states in Asia have voiced their suspicions about "revived Japanese militarism". A Hong Kong newspaper severely criticized Nakasone's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine by depicting the Japanese troops during the war as "more barbaric than wild animals, crueler than demons." It vowed to "fight to death the resurgence of Japanese militarism."64 (It should be noted that the Japanese invaded Hong Kong in 1941.) The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) states have expressed their fear of another phase of Japanese imperialism and colonialism. (Five out of the six ASEAN member states were occupied by Japan during the Second World War.) Other Communist states have reacted to Japan's "revived militarism" in a similar manner. The Soviets have taken notice of Japan's military move and responded with more military buildup. The Chinese have criticized Japan's removal of the one percent ceiling. Anti-Japanese demonstrations have become widespread in China, especially in 1985.

**Communist North Korea:** The fact of the matter is that Asia remains a dangerous continent. One should be reminded that 6 of the 11 largest armies in the world are in Asia. In order, they are: China (also the world's most populous nation), India (the world's future most populous nation), Vietnam, North Korea, South Korea and Pakistan (also with Taiwan in 14th and Indonesia in 21st place).65 The end of the European Cold War may not necessarily bring an end to the Asian Cold War. In recent years, one of security concerns in international relations has been that both China and North Korea have been unwilling to take any concrete initiative towards promoting peace with the region through disarmament or arms control. The North Korean case has raised many concerns about future regional stability in East Asia.

North Korea has been reported as developing a nuclear-weapons program. In spite of the Bush Administration's promised
action to withdraw the American tactical nuclear weapons from South Korea and in spite of South Korea’s announcement that it was ready to forego any development of weapons of mass destruction, North Korea did not respond in kind and dismissed these moves as empty gestures.66

Its refusal to allow international inspection of its nuclear complex 60 miles from Pyongyang testifies to the fact that North Korea remains intransigent about its nuclear policy objective. Japan's annual Defence White Paper released on 7 August 1992 reflected on this concern. Experts monitoring North Korea have become increasinged about the country’s likelihood of using 50 tonnes of uranium now fuelling a large reactor as raw material for nuclear weapons. The 50 tonnes would be sufficient to produce two or three nuclear bombs. Worse still, North Korea also announced in early 1993 that it would withdraw from the nuclear-Non-Proliferation Treaty. In response to North Korea’s decision, Japan invoked economic sanctions. On March 12, 1993, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) banned the export of all machinery and chemical products to North Korea with immediate effect. Japanese exports to countries that have close relations with North Korea would be effectively screened.67

When North Korea reversed its decision to withdraw from the nuclear non-proliferation treaty in June 1993 after a series of negotiations with the United States, Japan welcome it with caution: "This is not a solution to the fundamental problem," said a Japanese Foreign Ministry official. He also added: "The Government of Japan will continue to urge North Korea to completely reverse its decision to pull out of the NPT and to comply with the [International Atomic Energy Agency]'s requests."68

It is no exaggeration to suggest that Japan without American protection would be left to stand on insecure ground. The fact that Japan is studying the possibility of purchasing and using the Theatre Missile Defense (TMD) system was not a sheer coincidence. In June
1993, the Japanese government was looking into evidence suggesting that North Korea test-fired two missiles capable of carrying chemical and nuclear weapons late in May with a range of about 1,000 km and 1,300 km (which would bring Tokyo within range). At that point, Japanese Foreign Minister Kabun Muto vowed "counter-measures" if the evidence was confirmed.69

Communist China: If there is direct threat to Japan, it will come from China.70 China has not done much to discourage North Korea. With respect to this communist ally, China remains largely hesitant about pressurizing it to abandon its nuclear-weapons program. Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen expressed his unassuring optimism by saying "We hope to see the parties concerned engaged in effective consultation to find a solution to this problem, but we do not wish to see any international pressure."71 China's lukewarm attitude toward North Korea's nuclear program has of course much to do with its own nuclear program.

In some ways, China may not wish to be seen as hypocritical about its close ally. According to one report, in the past decade, China has delivered nuclear-related technology to a number of countries such as Argentina, Brazil, India, South Africa and Iran. China is also believed to have missile sales to Syria and Pakistan. At present, China is still helping Algeria build a nuclear reactor.72 China has also expanded its arms sales. At present, it represents the world's third-largest arms supplier to the Third World, second only to the former Soviet Union and third to the United States.73 Recent classified reports by U.S. intelligence agencies have collected compelling evidence suggesting that China has delivered missile parts to Pakistan in violation of its commitment not to export such military technology.74

More notably, China's economic prosperity has never been intended to promote capitalism; rather, the ultimate objective is to build China up as a modern militarized state under highly centralized leadership.75 Since 1990, China has doubled its defence spending.76
According to one analyst, "Beijing remains committed to substantially improving its military capabilities, including the acquisition of advanced fighter aircraft, development of rapid deployment forces, modernization of nuclear forces, and the commissioning of aircraft carriers." However, China's military threat still appears at this point to be far distant: "with extremely tight funds, these ambitious plans are long-term goals stretching well into the next century. It will be well into the next century before the PLA [the People's Liberation Army] can claim to be a regional military power." As a regional power, China desires to become a regional superpower, at least in Asia. Its new posture is manifested in its military modernization as the fourth component of China's overall modernization project which encompasses agriculture, industry and science.

More importantly, China's traditional claim as a credible regional power has not apparently disappeared. In spite of recently improved Sino-Vietnamese relations, China has continued to attempt at expanding its influence in Indochina. In 1990, the Chinese leaders "offered to replace the Soviet Union as Vietnam's major source of foreign aid, if Hanoi would agree to start coordinating its foreign policy with China." Meanwhile, China not only dares to lay claim to "all the islands in the South China Sea, but its military men talk airily of the need to secure the Malacca Straits between Malaysia and Sumatra, half an Asian world away." In August 1991, Chinese officials expressed strong opposition to both the creation of a multilateral security regime to handle territorial disputes and the intrusion of outside powers like Japan, the United States and Russia. They maintained that territorial disputes and the intrusion of outside powers like Japan, the United States and Russia. They maintained that territorial disputes should be settled by the countries directly involved on a bilateral basis. China then began to challenge Japan on the sea. In December 1991, for instance, a Chinese ship fired warning shots at a Japanese freighter in the East China Sea off the
Senkaku Islands claimed by China. According to Japan, since March of that year, there had been 12 cases of warning shots fired from the Chinese side.  

China's growing assertiveness was also followed by the National People's Congress's adoption on February 25, 1992 of "the Law of the People's Republic of China on its Territorial Waters and their Contiguous Areas". Article 1 will "enable the People's Republic of China to exercise its sovereignty over its territorial waters and its rights to exercise its control over the adjacent areas, and to safeguard state security as well as its maritime rights and interests." Article 2 asserts China's territorial sovereignty over "the mainland and its offshore islands, Taiwan and the various affiliated islands, Dongsha Islands, Xisha Islands, Nansha Islands, and other islands that belong to the PRC." According to Samuel Kim, "The law gives the Chinese military the right to repel by force any foreign incursion into the stipulated islands and areas." The law provoked Japan's protest. China is becoming less flexible about its claims and may be using informal negotiations to buy time military build-up.

China's growing assertiveness commensurate with the dismantling of the former Soviet superpower will concern Japan a great deal. In other words, China will definitely pose a new form of threat to Japan in the future. As the most-populated nation on earth, China has been a cause for concern among its neighbours, especially Japan, because it has attempted to promote its identity in the face of rising nationalism within the national boundaries. According to Lucian Pay, "China is really a civilization pretending to be nation-state." As such, China has to find ways to unify itself in order to thwart the road toward national disintegration. According to the insight of one observer, "The only national issue that seems to fire up the general public is the conduct of Japan." In his analysis, "Many Chinese blame Japan for failing to provide more compensation for wartime injuries, for laying claim to islands that China regards as its own, and for supposedly waging economic imperialism by flooding
China with Japanese products."

Conclusion

Although both arguments against the resurgent Japan thesis and those that predict future armed conflict between Japan and the United States are compelling, they seem to have missed the point. Some Japanese have expressed their concern about the reduction of the American presence in Asia and about China’s potential aggression. According to Akira Hiyoshi, Japanese Defence Agency Vice-Director, there is no need for Japan to reduce its arms: "The on-going world-wide arms reduction is to reduce offensive military forces. As Japan has the minimum size of military forces, I do not think that we have to reduce arms, though it is being done in the world." Japan's annual Defence White Paper released on 7 August 1992 stressed China's expanded naval capability and its increased activity in the South China Sea. Despite the fact there exist a number of domestic and international constraints on what Japan can do with respect to military build-up, the future trend in Japan's defence policy is likely to be moving slowly upward. George Friedman and Meredith Lebard are right, albeit obviously for the wrong reason, in asserting that "One does not have to argue that Japan is preparing for war. It is sufficient to note that Japan would be insane not to prepare for war." However, in spite of the existing movement toward militarism Japan still has a long way to go in order to become a complete military power in contemporary terms. Yet, the above evidence has suggested that during the 1980's Japan's military build-up appears to be an inevitable trend. Japan's economic, technological and scientific success has boosted nationalism which in turn has created the conditions for an emphasis on militarism. Japan has been very successful in going against the 1947 Constitution despite social and political opposition at home and abroad. At this stage, however, the Japanese people remain unready for a drastic military move. The four major
opposition parties continue to be a serious obstacle to the government initiatives on defence issues, although there were some signs of compromise in recent years.

Japan's future defence policy will most likely depend on external factors. Unquestionably, outside powers will definitely not permit Japan to become a powerful military nation in Asia. In the 1990's and well into the next century, however, Japanese rearmament will continue with the justification of self-defence in a world with diminishing American protection. Should China's military modernization go unchecked, Japan will become more assertive and even more aggressive. New regionalism and regional integration suggested by liberal or regime scholars may constitute a source of constraint on the potential for future armed conflict, but without a strong political will to cooperate with each other, both Japan and China might early in the next century have their missiles pointed at each other. So far, East Asian states' political will to cooperate with one another has been tarnished by nationalistic emotionalism, social, economic, ideological and cultural diversity coupled with the absence of a common threat and the uneven distribution of power within the region. 88


52. In These Times, August 7-20, 1985.
54. This position runs counter to arguments put forward by such international scholars like Joseph Nye, Bound To Lead (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publisher, 1990); Samuel Huntington, "The U.S. - Decline or Renewal?", Foreign Affairs, 67 (Winter 1988/1989)
57. The Economist, February 24, 1990, p. 32. According to Andrew Mack, "it is the perception of the dangers of a future without America which is the major factor driving the current military build-up in the region." A. Mack, "Prospects for Security in the Asia-Pacific," Peace Review, 4 (Summer): 7-12.
60. Ibid.
70. This point rejects the argument put forward by Jiro Tokuyama who, in 1979, pointed to that the establishment of the Pacific Basin as taking on increasing importance since Japan can fulfil its international responsibilities for the reconstruction of the global order. The development of Sino-Japanese relations, says Tokuyama, is a first step to this end. As economic development progresses, the politically unstable structure of the East Asian region will be considerably


75. In his book, Michael Yahuda argues that there exists "a striking continuity" between former Chinese Communist leader Mao and China's current leadership with regard to strategic thinking. The legacy of Mao's geo-political thinking is that "the people should dare to rise in struggle, dare to take up arms and grasp in their hands the destiny of their country." M. Yahuda, Towards the End of Isolationism: China's Foreign Policy After Mao (New York, NY: St Martin's Press, 1984), p. 93.


88. The will to cooperate is essential to the success of regional integration. Donald Puchala made an interesting observation about the early failure of regional integration in Western Europe. Integration theorists were too preoccupied with their abstract model of "integration processes" and failed to recognize the importance of Western Europeans' will. He wrote: "What went largely unnoticed by all but a few observers was that while Western European capacities to cooperate during the 1970s and the early 1980s were constrained, Western Europeans' will to cooperate was not greatly diminished." D. Puchala, "The New Meaning of European Unity," in C. Kegley and E. Wittkopf, (eds.) The Global Agenda 3rd ed. (N.Y.: McGraw-Hill Inc., 1992), p. 264. On social, economic, ideological and cultural aspects, see Gerald Segel, Rethinking the Pacific (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990)