

# CATALYSTS, CHOICES AND COOPERATION

## JAPANESE MILITARY NORMALIZATION AND THE US-JAPAN ALLIANCE

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*Jacob Brown dissects the contemporary Japanese political debate over constitutional revision and the nation's military role in the world in "Catalysts, Choices and Cooperation: Japanese Military Normalization and the US-Japan Alliance in the 21st Century." Analyzing a combination of external factors, from the end of the Cold War to the American engagements in Afghanistan and Iraq post-9/11, and internal factors, including changes in the balance of power among differing political factions and in social attitudes as a new generation voices an opinion of its own, Brown finds the US-Japan alliance is in no danger of withering away anytime soon, though constitutional changes are on the horizon.*

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On February 7, 2004, the *Japan Times* printed a special article on the Japanese Self Defense Force's (JSDF) dispatch to Iraq, proclaiming what many in the United States government and intellectual community had been waiting to hear<sup>1</sup>: "Japan has crossed the Rubicon."<sup>2</sup> This allusion, recalling to Julius Caesar's fateful decision in 49 BCE to lead his armies back across the Rubicon River into Rome, connotes an irrevocable commitment to a course of action. While Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro's decision to send his troops to Iraq may or may not portend an irrevocable change in Japan's foreign and security policy, it does bring into focus trends therein that have been gaining momentum since the early 1990s.

A variety of forces have converged in Japan to produce conditions under which the Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) long-held goal of constitutional revision has become a more credible possibility. Specifically, Article IX of the Japanese constitution, which bans Japan from engaging in collective self-defense, is currently subject to an unprecedented degree of national scrutiny. Through Article IX revision, Japan may establish the legal, political, and doctrinal framework for a more normalized military role and open the door to substantially improved military cooperation between Japan and its principal ally, the United States. The specifics of any changes, however, are still subject to fierce debate by the three main ideological camps that currently compete to define the process of constitutional revision.

### *Catalysts: Why Constitutional Revision? Why now?*

Since the collapse of the USSR in 1991, three processes have combined to cast serious doubt upon the functionality of Japan's constitutional ban on collective self-defense and forswearing of offensive military capabilities. The first two processes, which are interrelated, are external; post-cold war changes in Japan's geo-strategic landscape and changes in the balance of Japanese domestic politics. The third process is defined by social changes associated with the natural, demographic process of generational replacement. Together, these processes have far-reaching implications for the future of the US-Japan alliance.

### *External Changes in Japan's Geo-strategic Landscape:*

#### *Post-war Security Strategy*

In the post-World War II era, Japanese security strategy was defined by the "Yoshida Doctrine," the policy set by Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru, under which Japan sought security through alignment with the US, supplemented by limited national rearmament.<sup>3</sup> Stressing *alignment* over *alliance*, the Yoshida Doctrine was designed largely to allow Japan to walk a fine line between abandonment by the US and entrapment in US military actions. The doctrine first progressed from theory into practice with the signing of the 1951 US-Japan Security Treaty.<sup>4</sup> Under the terms of this treaty, Japan provided the US with bases to allow for American power projection into East Asia. In return,

the Japanese received an implied US security guarantee, including shelter under the US nuclear umbrella. The security guarantee was made explicit under Article 5 of the revised 1960 Treaty of Mutual Security and Cooperation between the US and Japan, under which the Japanese would observe their Article 6 obligation to continue to supply the US with bases on Japanese soil.

At this stage, the Japanese remained wary of their security arrangement with the US; in negotiating the 1960 treaty, Japan stressed that it could not participate in collective self-defense and that Japan could not dispatch troops abroad to assist US troops in action. The developments of the Cold War, however, restructured the international security environment. In his 2004 book *Japan's Re-emergence as a 'Normal' Military Power*, Christopher W. Hughes, notes that:

During the late 1970s and 1980s, the enhanced common threat of the USSR forced a convergence of Japanese and US strategic interests . . . Japan and the US discovered, for the first time, a division of labor for military cooperation under the security treaty.<sup>5</sup>

This division of labor was defined in the 1978 Guidelines of Japan-US Defense Cooperation. Through these guidelines, Japan and the US outlined the particulars of bilateral cooperation in both Japan's immediate defense and in regional contingencies in the Far East.<sup>6</sup> The Japanese perception of US military activities underwent a profound shift at this time; countering the Soviet threat, even if not on Japanese territory, was perceived as contributing to Japanese security. It was in this mindset that in 1981 Prime Minister Suzuki Zenko for the first time publicly referred to the US-Japan relationship as an "alliance,"<sup>7</sup> and for 10 years the logic of this arrangement persisted unchallenged.

### *The Collapse of the USSR*

The sudden collapse of the USSR in 1991 removed the main rationale for the US-Japan security alliance. Lacking the clear paradigm of Soviet containment, the US-Japan alliance entered a period of uncertainty. A process identified in the Armitage-Nye report as "post-cold war drift"<sup>8</sup> and heightened tensions between the US and Japan began, coming to a head in the 1991 Gulf War.

Thirty-seven allied nations provided ground, air or naval support for Operation Desert Storm, with Japan noticeably

absent. Its contribution was entirely financial, consisting of \$13 billion for the war effort.<sup>9</sup> As significant as this financial support may have been, Japan's actions were dismissed internationally as "checkbook diplomacy." Moreover, Kuwait declined to include Japan in a list of allied countries it thanked for liberating the emirate.<sup>10</sup> Japan did eventually dispatch six minesweepers to the Gulf in April 1991 to assist in cleanup activities—after stressing that all combat had ceased<sup>11</sup>—but this action was widely regarded as too little, too late.

Ultimately, Japan's largest contribution in the 1991 Gulf War was to its own national shame; a senior Japanese diplomat, Okamoto Yukio, noted that "Japan was laughed off by the rest of the world as little more than a 'cash dispenser.'"<sup>12</sup> Additionally, "Japan's failure to actively support its US ally in the Gulf War, and to meet US requests to participate more actively in security at the global level, was the first indication that the status quo in its security policy was no longer tenable."<sup>13</sup>

The questions raised by the Gulf War debacle gave the Japanese serious reason to rethink their security policy and opened the door for new types of participation. This was first illustrated by Japan's passage of the Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) Law in 1992, which allowed for JSDF participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations; a new capability quickly demonstrated by UN PKO in Cambodia.<sup>14</sup> According to Paul Midford, it was participation in this UN mission that broke the Japanese domestic taboo on foreign military deployment.<sup>15</sup>

### *The 1990s Continued: a Decade of Security Crises*

After the Gulf War, the rest of the 1990s brought a series of security crises that heightened the Japanese regional threat perception and raised further doubts about existing security policy, especially the status of the US-Japan alliance. Trouble continued with the 1993-1994 North Korean nuclear crisis, in which North Korea threatened to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and conducted a ballistic missile test in the Sea of Japan.<sup>16</sup> Negotiating a substantial military build-up in South Korea to combat the rising North Korean threat, the United States also requested military assistance from Japan but was unable to secure a sufficient response. The Japanese government, taking on a role similar to the one it had during the Gulf War, was unable to support the US in any military action. As Hughes notes, this

“led to a full-blown crisis of confidence in the alliance, raising concerns about its future viability and raising the specter of Japan’s abandonment by the US as an unreliable ally.”<sup>17</sup>

In 1995, missile tests would again send shockwaves through the alliance, this time from China. In an attempt to influence the 1996 Taiwanese elections and send a strong signal to the US, China launched at least 10 ballistic missiles into the seas surrounding Taiwan and conducted a series of war games.<sup>18</sup> Landing within 60 kilometers of Japan’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ),<sup>19</sup> the missile tests presented Japan with a concrete demonstration of China’s rising military capabilities and willingness to use force for political purposes, raising familiar questions about abandonment and entrapment, and whether the US should enter into conflict with China over Taiwan. With the capacity of the US-Japan alliance to deal with such crises in doubt, President Clinton and Prime Minister Hashimoto met in 1996 and announced plans to update the 1978 security guidelines in light of Japan’s evolving strategic environment.<sup>20</sup>

The process of external events affecting Japanese security policy continued with yet another crisis: the 1998 North Korean *Tae’o-dong* 1 missile launch. Launched on August 31 from a test launch pad in eastern North Korea,<sup>21</sup> the missile’s Scud-B-derived second-stage actually continued over mainland Japan, landing in the waters off the Sanriku coast. The incident prompted great concern among the Japanese, drastically heightening the public’s threat perception of North Korea, and confirmed to policymakers that Japan was extremely vulnerable to ballistic missile attack.<sup>22</sup> Adding to Japan’s wariness of North Korea was a series of intrusions into Japanese waters by suspected North Korean spy vessels in 1999.<sup>23</sup> Today North Korea represents the most immediate threat motivating Japan to adopt a stronger military posture within the US-Japan alliance.<sup>24</sup>

#### *September 11<sup>th</sup> and the MSDF Dispatch to the Indian Ocean*

Shortly after the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the White House announced a new security policy of preemption.<sup>25</sup> President Bush justified this radical departure from Cold War theories of containment and reaction by saying “the only path to peace and security is the path of action.”<sup>26</sup> Japan responded to the changes in American foreign policy by recognizing that American priorities had shifted from extended deterrence to

offensive preemption.<sup>27</sup> Desiring to avoid a repeat of the 1991 Gulf War debacle, Japan dispatched the Maritime Self Defense Forces (MSDF) to the Arabian Sea to provide rear-area logistical support for the US military in Operation Enduring Freedom.<sup>28</sup> To facilitate this action, the Japanese Diet passed the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures bill on October 29, 2001, allowing the JSDF to supply fuel and other material to US forces, and JSDF troops to fire weapons in self-defense.<sup>29</sup> Japan’s contribution to the Afghanistan campaign revealed a marked shift in security policy compared to just one decade earlier. Further evidence of this trend is provided by Japan’s contributions to Operation Iraqi Freedom.

#### *2003 Operation Iraqi Freedom – The JSDF in Iraq*

The Japanese Diet passed the Law Concerning the Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq on July 26, 2003.<sup>30</sup> The law stipulated that the JSDF dispatch to Iraq would provide logistical support for the US and coalition forces engaged in Operation Iraqi Freedom and participate in non-combat reconstruction missions.<sup>31</sup> In stark contrast to the 1991 Gulf War, and continuing the trend began by MSDF participation in the Afghanistan campaign, Japan had boots on the ground in Iraq. Japan’s logic for this increased role was made clear by Prime Minister Koizumi when he said, in a December 9 press conference about his cabinet’s decision to dispatch the JSDF to Iraq, that:

... in order to ensure the peace and security of Japan, and achieve greater prosperity, we must continue to enhance the Japan-US alliance . . . Japan cannot alone secure its own peace and security . . . I believe that Japan must also be a trustworthy ally for the United States.<sup>32</sup>

Here Koizumi reasoned that the dispatch of the JSDF to Iraq was essential in enhancing the US-Japan alliance and building US confidence in Japan’s status as a credible ally. His comments are further evidence of Japan’s new willingness and perhaps eagerness to participate more proactively in international security. Finally, Koizumi indicated that a more proactive Japan, one more involved in military affairs, would stay close to the United States and the bilateral alliance; such cooperation would likely require revision of Article IX.

In general, these external, post-Cold War events have heightened regional threat perceptions in Japan, especially vis-à-vis

China and North Korea, while raising doubts about the tenability of Cold War-era justifications for the US-Japan alliance.<sup>33</sup> The next section will examine the process of internal changes in the balance of Japanese domestic politics that have occurred in response to the geo-strategic changes, making Japanese constitutional revision an even more open prospect.

### *Process of Internal Changes in the Balance of Domestic Politics*

The traditional ideological divide in Japanese politics was fashioned after the bipolar paradigm of the Cold War.<sup>34</sup> The collapse of the USSR was therefore deeply destabilizing to the traditional or “1955” system. Upset by this challenge, the balance of Japanese domestic politics was completely redefined in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War, with far-reaching implications for constitutional revision and for Article IX. This section will examine the three main political camps that have battled over the Japanese constitution since the 1950s: the conservative pragmatists, the conservative revisionists, and the leftists.<sup>35</sup> Following this analysis, we will see how since 1991 in particular the conservative revisionists have gained support at the expense of both the conservative pragmatists and the leftists, making the grounds for constitutional revision increasingly fertile.

### *Post-war Constitutional Debate*

After Japan’s defeat in World War II, Douglas MacArthur’s staff produced a document that would become Japan’s constitution.<sup>36</sup> Known as the 1947 Peace Constitution, the document imposed strict prohibitions on Japan’s right of belligerency. This was articulated as follows in Article IX:

- (1) 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 or use of force as a means of settling international disputes
- (2) In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.<sup>37</sup>

The interpretation of Article IX was subject to considerable debate. In 1954, the Cabinet Legislation Bureau (CLB) released its first formal interpretation, declaring that, because Japan as a

sovereign nation had the right to self-defense, the maintenance of military forces for self-defense was not unconstitutional as long as such forces did not exceed the minimum necessary force to repel a direct invasion of Japan.<sup>38</sup> Under this interpretation, however, Japan could not send forces abroad or participate in any form of collective self-defense.<sup>39</sup> On this basis the debate surrounding Article IX has been taking place since the 1950s.

### *The Conservative Pragmatists*

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) of Japan, which ruled the Diet without interruption from 1955 to 1993, was composed mainly of two groups of conservatives: the pragmatists and the revisionists. The conservative pragmatists, represented by Yoshida, have traditionally held more sway than the revisionists, and were responsible for the most basic component of Japanese defense policy—the Yoshida Doctrine.

It was at the request and under the supervision of Prime Minister Yoshida that the CLB’s 1954 interpretation of Article IX was drafted.<sup>40</sup> The concepts of limited self-defense capabilities and a ban on collective self-defense were designed pursuant to an asymmetrical security relationship with the US, leaving Tokyo free of equal commitments to Washington.<sup>41</sup> Such commitment, according to Yoshida and the rest of the conservative pragmatists, would allow Japan to focus on economic success in the absence of burdensome defense spending and supply Japan with the security of US extended deterrence without the risk of entrapment in American military ventures.

### *The Conservative Revisionists*

The revisionists, in contrast to the pragmatists, adhered to a more *realpolitik* ideology of national security, advocating national rearmament and more conventional security arrangements.<sup>42</sup> In the post-war years, the revisionists were led by such politicians as Hatoyama Ichiro, Kishi Nobusuke, Nakasone Yasuhiro and Ozawa Ichiro.<sup>43</sup> Following the establishment of the SDF in 1954, Nakasone and Ozawa argued against the limitations defined in Article IX and in favor of an increased role for the SDF.<sup>44</sup> Additionally, these politicians supported a complete revision of the constitution aimed at replacing the American-supplied document with one drafted entirely by the Japanese (*jishu kempo*, or an independent constitution).<sup>45</sup>

Focused not only on the nationalist goal of a truly Japanese constitution, the revisionists also called for the revision of Article IX pursuant to the rebuilding of Japan's military capabilities and a more reciprocal security arrangement with the United States.<sup>46</sup> This line of reasoning, however, did not represent the mainstream sentiment of the LDP in the post-war years, so the party did not pursue the revisionist agenda for constitutional revision.<sup>47</sup>

### *The Leftists*

The leftist political camp in post-war Japan functioned almost exclusively as opposition to the LDP. This group, represented mainly by the Japanese Socialist Party (JSP), viewed Japan as a "peace nation" (*heiwa kokka*) and was wholly pacifist.<sup>48</sup> This position gained political momentum during the 1960's, becoming a notable political and social force.<sup>49</sup> Officially, the JSP represented a larger socialist agenda: Green notes that the party became "increasingly wedded to a rigid ideological position (opposing constitutional reform, nuclear energy, and any remilitarization) and lost credibility as anything other than a 'brake' or protest vote against the LDP."<sup>50</sup>

The JSP steadily lost support throughout the Cold War, as other opposition parties arose to siphon votes, including *Kōmeitō* (the Clean Government Party) and the Democratic Socialists.<sup>51</sup> The LDP's dominance was never truly threatened, however, until after the collapse of the USSR, when Japanese politics were thrown into flux. While the LDP has again held power since 1994 (following a year-long stint in opposition), its position has shifted in favor of the revisionists, and both the conservative pragmatists in the LDP and the leftists in opposition have been correspondingly weakened.

### *Domestic Political Change since 1991*

Following Japan's poorly received performance in the 1991 Gulf War, revisionist politicians in the LDP exploited Japan's national shame, garnering popular support.<sup>52</sup> Stalwart conservatives in the LDP, including Ozawa Ichiro, defected and formed their own parties. Ozawa, leading a party of 43 ex-LDP politicians, formed an eight-party coalition under Hosokawa Morihiro that included every opposition party other than the LDP and the Japanese Communist Party (JCP).<sup>53</sup> Morihiro's coalition seized the majority of the Diet in 1993, and for the

first time in forty-three years the conservative LDP was in the opposition.<sup>54</sup>

In June of 1994, however, the LDP arranged a coalition with its formal rivals in the JSP and again rose to power.<sup>55</sup> This arrangement proved fatal for the Socialists; as a price for becoming prime minister of the LDP-JSP coalition, the LDP forced Socialist Murayama Tomiichi to endorse the US-Japan Security Treaty, greatly alienating the JSP political base.<sup>56</sup> By May of 1998, the JSP had been reduced to only 18 seats, and was forced to back out of the LDP-JSP coalition, limping away under Doi Takao and forming the Socialist Democratic Party.<sup>57</sup> The name change did little to aid the Socialists, however, and they have to yet to recapture any semblance of their former numbers; the Japanese left has remained decimated since 1998.

Corresponding to the fall of the Japanese leftist camp has been the rise of revisionist elements in the center and right. When the JSP left the LDP coalition in 1998, the LDP re-formed with the centrist-party, *Kōmeitō*, whose politicians have come to endorse an enhanced Japanese role in international peacekeeping, collective security under the UN, and expanded defense cooperation with the US—perceptions bolstered by the rising perceived threat of North Korea and China.<sup>58</sup> Thus the LDP's coalition partner is somewhat in tune with the revisionist agenda.

The main opposition to the LDP coalesced in 1998 under the name *the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ)*. Formed from defectors from Ozawa's New Frontier party, ex-Socialists, and the New Japan Party, the DPJ became an eclectic mix somewhat further to the left than the LDP. In practice the DPJ, however, does espouse stronger cooperation with the United States,<sup>59</sup> but in general leans toward a more UN-centric security policy than the right of the LDP. In September 1999, Hatoyama Yukio ran successfully for DPJ party presidency while actively supporting constitutional revision to attract younger politicians.<sup>60</sup> In fact, as Green notes:

While resistance to this rightward drift continues within the DPJ, the party is increasingly overlapping on foreign policy and defense with the LDP, with the DPJ highlighting tactical differences with the government over process and transparency rather than new coordinates for Japan's international role.<sup>61</sup>

The main opposition, in stark contrast to the 1955 System, was by 1999 much closer to the conservative revisionist position than the DSP had ever been; the Left no longer represents a

major obstacle to defense policy.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, a 1999 survey by political scientist Kabashima Ikuo found that there had been a shift to the right by all major parties other than the Japanese Communist Party and the Socialists.<sup>63</sup> Further shifts in Japanese domestic politics, especially within the ruling LDP, have occurred since Prime Minister Koizumi assumed office in 2001.

#### *The Koizumi Era: 2001 – Present*

Koizumi Junichiro was elected prime minister in a landslide victory, securing 61.19 percent of the vote.<sup>64</sup> Koizumi's victory was further distinguished by the unique circumstances under which it was won: due to a set of previously-enacted electoral reforms, observes Shinoda, "Koizumi was the first LDP president and prime minister to be selected outside of the traditional factional power struggles"<sup>65</sup> that corrupted and defined the 1955 System. Koizumi's approval rating reflected his more "natural" path of election; a poll taken by the *Yomiuri Shimbun* immediately after the establishment of his cabinet found this number to be 87 percent.<sup>66</sup>

Immensely popular, Koizumi's power was further bolstered by a set of governmental reforms enacted in 1999 by Ozawa, which consolidated the cabinet and greatly increased its relative strength and efficiency.<sup>67</sup> The cabinet was strengthened again in 2001 by an administrative reform known as the Cabinet Law, which granted the prime minister and the cabinet the power to initiate and proceed with policy processes independent of the relevant ministry.<sup>68</sup>

Armed with an unprecedented degree of support and influence, Koizumi set about pursuing his agenda, which included constitutional revision. The emergency legislation drafted in 2001 and 2003 to allow the SDF dispatches to the Indian Ocean and Iraq, respectively, were part of this agenda. Samuels notes that Koizumi has also consolidated the LDP's position by "systematically punish[ing] pragmatists and reward[ing] revisionists within the party"<sup>69</sup> throughout his first years in office. In November 2004, the LDP released a draft outline for revising the constitution.<sup>70</sup> In this draft, the LDP called for Japan to explicitly claim the right to maintain military forces for national defense, participate in collective self-defense, and authorize the use of force in conjunction with UN peacekeeping operations.<sup>71</sup> A month later, Koizumi launched a task force to form a complete draft for revision, the

results of which are expected before the LDP's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in November 2005.<sup>72</sup> At the team's first meeting, Koizumi pledged to revise the constitution "at any cost."<sup>73</sup>

#### *Popular Support under Koizumi: a Moderating Factor*

Popular with the public as well as his party, Koizumi has enjoyed great popular support for his cabinet and his policies. The JSDF participation in Iraq, however, has proven an unpopular decision and a difficult issue. While public approval for the dispatch increased to more than 50 percent by November 2004,<sup>74</sup> approval has since dropped: an early 2005 poll by the Kyodo News agency found that a majority of Japanese wanted Japan to withdraw its troops from Iraq following the withdrawal of Dutch forces in March.<sup>75</sup> Additionally, 65.2 percent of respondents said the Japanese troops should withdraw immediately if any Japanese troops in Iraq were killed or injured.<sup>76</sup> This sentiment could have a moderating effect on public support for constitutional revision, which was polled at 61% in April 2005.<sup>77</sup>

Certainly domestic disapproval was a factor in the LDP's relatively poor showing in the July 11, 2004, upper-house election, coupled with the gains of the DPJ and *Kōmeitō*.<sup>78</sup> According to Rust Deming of the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the National Defense University, these setbacks may force "substantial movement toward revision of the constitution" as far back as late 2006 or early 2007. Nevertheless, "the process," notes Deming, "will keep moving forward."<sup>79</sup> According to his predictions, the Diet will approve constitutional amendments sometime between 2007 and 2010, with the constitution itself being revised following a national referendum sometime between 2008 and 2012.<sup>80</sup>

Japanese domestic opinion has been building steadily in favor of constitutional, and specifically, Article IX revision for over a decade. Part of this process, as mentioned in the beginning of this article, has been the natural demographic process of generational replacement. The details and implications of this process will be discussed in the next section.

#### *Demographic Change: Generational Replacement and Popular Opinion*

Although politicians such as Yoshida maintain that Japan's post-war pacifism represented a pragmatic calculation vis-à-vis the US-Japan security alliance, this was not the case for the Japanese

people. Following World War II, there developed at the grassroots a genuine abhorrence of even the most abstract concept of warfare. A principal effect of this national sentiment was the near-complete assimilation of Article IX into post-war Japan's social definition.

Japan's younger generation, however, is far removed from the events and times that justified this social definition. "They grew up in a peaceful and prosperous Japan," asserts a 2002 study by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), "and have no living memory of World War II or its immediate aftermath."<sup>81</sup> Consequently, "they are prepared to take on greater responsibility within the US-Japan alliance and in the Asia-Pacific region."<sup>82</sup> This ambition is present in both young political elites and the younger generation at large. Moreover, because any revision to the Japanese constitution must pass a national referendum, this trend is of great relevance to the revision process. In fact, as reported by the *Mainichi* Daily News service, "many commentators believe that the reason support has tipped in favor of revising the Constitution lies in generational change."<sup>83</sup>

The Center for Strategic and International Studies divides the Japanese population into two main categories—those who are over 50 years old and have memories of WWII or the immediate post-war period, and those who are younger than 50 and were shaped not by memories of war, but by Japan's economic surge in the second half of the 20th century.<sup>84</sup> It is the second generation who, in the next 10 to 15 years, will occupy the bulk of Japan's senior leadership positions.<sup>85</sup> For the immediate future, they will remain an important influence on Japanese policymaking. Notably, although Prime Minister Koizumi is part of the older generation, his personal views and policies appear to reflect more accurately those of the younger generation.

#### *Views on Constitutional Revision*

Japan's younger generation is largely in favor of constitutional revision. A 2002 *Yomiuri Shimbun* survey found that 80 percent of Diet members under 39, and 73 percent of those 40 to 49 years old support constitutional revision.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, 64 percent of responding politicians believed that issues related to Article IX should be re-assessed.<sup>87</sup> This view is not limited to politicians: a summer 2004 article by Agence France Presse reported that more than 60 percent of Japanese in the 20-30 age bracket support constitutional change.<sup>88</sup> Additionally, while only 40 percent of

Japanese were willing to entertain revisions to Article IX in mid-2004, this number went up 14 percent from a similar survey conducted three years earlier.<sup>89</sup> By April 2005, this number had reached almost 60 percent.<sup>90</sup> Notably, the CSIS study found that this support for revision is geared mainly towards "address[ing] the current limitations that constrain Japan from playing a more active role within the [US-Japan] alliance."<sup>91</sup>

Shifting popular opinion, external changes to Japan's geo-strategic landscape, and accompanying shifts in the balance of Japanese domestic politics have produced conditions under which Japan's constitution is more likely to be revised. The qualities of this potential revision, however, are still under debate. This debate will be examined in the next section.

#### *Choices: The Battle over Article IX*

Just months from its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in November 2005, the LDP is steadily nearing the accomplishment of its decades-old ambition: constitutional revision. The Diet is still divided on how exactly to do this, and LDP members themselves are split on the issue. Japanese politicians who seek to revise the constitution can be divided into three main camps: the Bilateralists, the Multilateralists, and the neo-Realists.<sup>92</sup>

#### *The Bilateralists*

The Bilateralists are defined by their preoccupation with the US-Japan alliance as the best guarantor of Japan's security and prosperity. Following the Cold War, the Bilateralists have sought to pursue constitutional revision as a way of increasing cooperation with the United States, thereby strengthening the alliance. Cooperation here refers to military cooperation; some even advocate an offensive role for Japan's military alongside US forces. For example, Kiyoshi Sugawa of the Brookings Institution reports that:

Katsuoshi Kawana, a Marine SDF (MSDF) officer suggests that the SDF 'should enlarge the scope of its operations, specifically to include offensive operations to support U.S. forces within Japanese areas of interest.' He proposes strengthening 'functions such as anti-mine warfare, maritime transport, and seaborne supply' to 'support amphibious operations by U.S. forces.'<sup>93</sup>

To Sugawa, the MDSF officer is an ‘Alliance Supremacist,’<sup>94</sup> a classification equivalent to the term Bilateralist or Rust Deming’s Alliance Nationalist.<sup>95</sup> It must be noted, however, that the Bilateralist camp does not, on the whole, support an offensive role for Japan’s military. Although there is a broad consensus within the group on the issue of collective self-defense, as Deming notes, the Bilateralist camp:

support[s] a broad interpretation of the right of self-defense and collective self-defense, including a more active rear-area support for U.S. forces, full cooperation with the United States on BMD (Ballistic Missile Defense), and the right of Japan to take pre-emptive action against missiles sites . . . To accomplish these objectives, the [Bilateralists] urge removing the constraints on collective self-defense.<sup>96</sup>

Notables in this group include Prime Minister Koizumi, JDA Minister Ishiba, Transportation Minister Taro Aso, and former Prime Minister Hashimoto.<sup>97</sup>

#### *The Multilateralists*

Like the Bilateralists, the Multilateralists support an expanded military role for Japan. They are distinct in believing that this role should function primarily under the United Nations, as opposed to the United States.<sup>98</sup> This camp constitutes a significant, centrist group in Japanese politics, and includes members of the LDP, *Kōmeitō*, and DPJ.<sup>99</sup>

The logic of the Multilateralist camp has been invoked in the past, for example when the SDF was sent to Cambodia for UN peacekeeping operations. Recognizing that international stability is key to their own security, the Multilateralists have advocated international peacekeeping as a way of both soothing global hot-spots and preventing Japan from being abandoned by the international community at large.<sup>100</sup> In order to expand this participation in the future, thereby ensuring Japan’s security *vis-à-vis* the international community, the Multilateralists argue that Japan should lift its ban on collective self-defense in order to participate in UN collective security arrangements. Some in the Multilateralist camp, including former deputy chief of the DPJ Ozawa Ichiro, argue that Japan should also establish a separate force from the SDF for the sole purpose of participating in UN-led operations.<sup>101</sup> Ozawa submitted a draft constitutional revision in September 1999 suggesting that a third paragraph be added to

Article IX:

(3) The preceding second paragraph does not prevent Japan from exercising its right to self-defense and from maintaining armed forces to exercise that right.<sup>102</sup>

Ozawa explained that this article would articulate Japan’s right to engage in both individual and collective self-defense. Additionally, Ozawa argued for the insertion of a completely new article, which would read:

The Japanese people shall take the initiative in participating in international peace activities, in order to maintain and restore international peace and security from threats to peace and acts of destruction and aggression, and actively contribute to world peace, through every means including armed forces.<sup>103</sup>

This active contribution, in Ozawa’s view, would require the establishment of a standing UNF, for which Japan and other major world powers would provide both human and economic resources.<sup>104</sup>

Ozawa’s proposal reflects a genuine concern among many Japanese; on the one hand, they seek to contribute more to international security, while on the other they are wary of entrapment in exclusively American military ventures. Careful diplomatic efforts on the part of the United States may be necessary to assuage the concerns of this group.

#### *The Neo-realists*

The Neo-realists are the smallest of the three groups identified in this section, constituting no more than 10 percent of the political spectrum.<sup>105</sup> In general, this group argues that Japan must become a “normal” country and cast aside its constitutional constraints on the use of military force. The Neo-realists also maintain that Japan must increase its indigenous defense capability, decreasing its reliance on the United States.<sup>106</sup> This attitude reflects the realist philosophy of this camp, which distrusts certain elements of Liberalism that are more alliance-focused. Just because the Neo-realists advocate a more autonomous Japan, however, does not mean that they are prepared to cast off the alliance entirely. According to Sugawa, the group seeks mainly to “enhance certain indigenous capabilities while turning to the U.S alliance for ‘insurance’ against large-scale threats.”<sup>107</sup> In this way, the United States is still seen as a vital buffer against China and North Korea

in the long run.

In order to strengthen the US-Japan alliance, the Neo-realists are prepared to increase Japan's military cooperation with United States military operations, provided that such operations directly advance Japanese interests.<sup>108</sup> Japan would also have to be granted increased decision-making power and assume a more assertive role in the alliance. Thus, the Neo-realists aspire to redefine the US-Japan alliance on more equal terms, and are therefore more willing to negotiate for a reduction of the US military's footprint in Japan.<sup>109</sup>

Because of their demands for greater power within the alliance and innate appreciation for greater autonomy from the United States, the Neo-realists could present some challenges to the United States, should they prevail in the battle for Article IX. However, as Deming notes, they "have little chance of becoming the dominant voice in Japan, barring a catastrophic collapse of the US-Japan alliance or a major conflict in the region."<sup>110</sup> Hence it is unlikely that Neo-realist thinking will dominate the course of Japanese constitutional revision.

Although the battle between these three camps may frustrate progress toward constitutional revision, a tentative consensus may emerge following the release of the LDP's revision draft later this year. A 2004 study on Japanese defense policy, published just prior to the release of the 2004 National Defense Program Guidelines, provides some insight into how such a consensus may be reached. This study will be examined in the next section.

### *The LDP Vision: A Consensus Emerging?*

In March 2004, the LDP released a study titled "Recommendations on Japan's New Defense Policy."<sup>111</sup> The report is summarized by Deming:

To address both traditional threats of state aggression, focused on North Korea and 21<sup>st</sup> century threats by non-state actors, the LDP report argues that Japan needs to enhance the credibility of the U.S.-Japan alliance, play a more active role in international organizations such as the United Nations, and strengthen regional cooperation by utilizing the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum and Six-Party Talks.<sup>112</sup>

Regarding Article IX, specifically, the report recommends that Tokyo make "a clear statement that Japan possesses the right of

individual and collective self defense [and] a new definition of the SDF as a national defense force that is tasked not only with the defense of Japan but also with participation in activities for the maintenance and restoration of international peace."<sup>113</sup>

Regarding the US-Japan alliance, the report recommends, *inter alia*:

- Enacting a general law governing international cooperation activities of the SDF [with the US, for example] to replace the ad hoc approach of passing specific legislation for each overseas mission
- Transforming the SDF force structure with an orientation toward rapid-response units for ground forces and increased maritime and air transport capability to support the new importance of Japan's involvement in international activities [vis-à-vis the US or the UN]
- Ensuring the smooth introduction of a ballistic missile defense system by streamlining command and control arrangements in view of the compressed decision-making timeframe and spelling out the operational arrangement with US forces
- Deepening the U.S.-Japan defense cooperation by building on the 1997 Guidelines for Defense Cooperation to allow SDF and U.S. forces, 'whenever Japan deems necessary, to work together beyond the treaty area of the Far East in such areas as international peace and stability operations and in response to other emerging threats'<sup>114</sup>

In general, the report attempts to offer a compromise among the three camps, tilting toward the Bilateralist and neo-Realist camps by calling for a more activist Japanese role in respect to the US-Japan Security Treaty, reducing constraints on Japan's autonomous defense activities and conceding to the Multilateralist camp on the issue of expanded international cooperation.<sup>115</sup> The collaborative nature of this report could therefore represent model for consensus among the three camps, should one emerge. As discussed earlier, however, the unpopularity of JSDF participation in Iraq and the LDP's losses in the 2004 upper-house elections have weakened Koizumi's ability to take on major new initiatives,<sup>116</sup> and may frustrate his efforts to push for such a consensus; although, these difficulties are not likely to stop the revision process so much as delay it.<sup>117</sup>

*Cooperation: The US-Japan Alliance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

In December 2004, the National Intelligence Council released a report that predicted, “with relative certainty,” the rise of China as a major military and economic global player by the year 2020.<sup>118</sup> Indeed, the violent anti-Japan protests seen in China this April foreshadow future crises.<sup>119</sup> It is scenarios such as these, combined with the specter of North Korea’s nuclear program and the general post-September 11 threat environment, that have provided the impetus for American officials to make urgent comments—as Richard Armitage did in July of 2004—that Article IX was an obstacle to the further strengthening of the US-Japan alliance.<sup>120</sup>

Indeed, the US continues to push for Japan to assume a bigger military role in the alliance. In April 2005, the Associated Press reported that negotiations were underway to realign US forces in Japan pursuant to “nudg[ing] Japan out from under the U.S. security blanket and mak[ing] Tokyo a much more active player in global strategic operations.”<sup>121</sup> Lt. Gen. Bruce A. Wright, head of the U.S. Forces Japan, said that the negotiations were designed principally to “safeguard the credibility and deterrent power of the alliance and bolster ‘interoperability’ with the Japanese [emphasis added],”<sup>122</sup> a term that is highly telling of Washington’s intentions for the US-Japan alliance.

So what can be expected of the alliance in the future? As previously discussed, Prime Minister Koizumi has been both a staunch supporter of constitutional revision and an eager participant in international security efforts. With his term set to end in 2006, it is not unlikely that Koizumi will launch a concerted effort toward revision in the remainder of 2005.<sup>123</sup> With public opinion and the political landscape more amenable to revision than ever before, an increased degree of military cooperation between the US and Japan seems likely in the near future.

Increased military cooperation, however, would not necessarily entail an equal division of labor in all military affairs, such as the major ground offensives and urban combat seen in Iraq. While Tetsuo Maeda of Tokyo International University has correctly observed that “the United States wants Japan to assume a role very much like...the British”<sup>124</sup> in cooperative military ventures, such a dramatic shift would prove difficult—a majority of Japanese politicians are still wary of revising Article IX, although an April survey appearing in the *Yomiuri Shimbun* revealed that nearly 60 percent of the Japanese public finds that current constitutional

restrictions prevent Japan from playing an appropriate role in international security.<sup>125</sup> And although the House of Representatives Research Commission on the Constitution publicized a report in April calling for the preservation of Article IX, the commission was reportedly divided on the issue of collective self-defense, with some members demanding that Japan be allowed to participate without limitation.<sup>126</sup>

Therefore, in the short term, increased military cooperation between the United States and Japan will likely be characterized by the continued development of existing projects in Ballistic Missile Defense, counter-proliferation, intelligence and peacekeeping and humanitarian-reconstruction missions. As these projects progress, however, and cooperation increases past levels that can be justified under the current constitution, it is likely that Article IX will slip into obsolescence.<sup>127</sup>

*Conclusion*

In this article it has been presented that the convergence of three processes has produced conditions in Japan under which the Liberal Democratic Party’s (LDP) long-held goal of constitutional revision has become a more credible possibility. External changes in Japan’s geo-strategic landscape have prompted internal changes in the balance of Japanese domestic politics, which have combined in turn with the natural demographic process of generational replacement. The result is a building consensus towards the revision of Article IX.

The debate over Article IX, however, is far from finished. Three main political-ideological camps currently compete to define the process of Article IX revision: the Bilateralists, the Multilateralists, and the neo-Realists. The future development of the US-Japan alliance may therefore depend on the prevailing thinking that ultimately guides any revision to Article IX. A projection of current trends would indicate, however, that Japan will not deviate far from the alliance, and will rather seek to strengthen the alliance in order to best confront the threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This endeavor will likely necessitate an end to the Japanese ban on collective self-defense, and the coming years should demonstrate an increase in military cooperation between the United States and Japan.

## Endnotes

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- 10 Midford, 338.
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- 26 National Security Strategy
- 27 Aurelia George Mulgan, "Japan and the Bush Agenda: Alignment or Divergence?" University of Queensland symposium, November 26, 2004.
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- 29 Ibid., 332.
- 30 Christopher W. Hughes, "Japan, the Post-9/11 Security Agenda, Globalisation, and the Political Economy of Inequality and Insecurity," University of Warwick Centre for the Study of Globalisation and Regionalisation, Working Paper No. 127 (2004), 5.
- 31 Hughes, *Japan's Re-Emergence as a 'Normal' Military Power*, 128.
- 32 "Press Conference by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi," The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, December 9, 2003. Available at <[http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/middle\\_e/iraq/issue2003/pmpress0312.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/middle_e/iraq/issue2003/pmpress0312.html)>.
- 33 North Korea's February 10, 2005 announcement that it possesses nuclear weapons also deserves mention, but it is, as of yet, too early to discern exactly how this development will affect the Japanese domestic debate over Article IX revision.
- 34 Michael J. Green, *Arming Japan: Defense Production, Alliance Politics, and the Postwar Search for Autonomy*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 40. Note: The traditional Japanese political system, called the 1955 System, reflected the fundamental divide between the Liberal Democratic Party's support for alignment with the West, and the main opposition Socialist Party, which represented anti-US alliance ideologies and completely opposed national rearmament.
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81 Kurt Campbell, Derek Mitchell, Carola McGiffert and Yuki Tastumi, "Generational Change in Japan: Its Implications for U.S.-Japan Relations" (The Center for Strategic and International Studies, August 2002), 3. Available at <<http://www.csis.org/isp/pastprojects/GenChangeJapan.pdf>>

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91 Campbell, 41.

92 This division is mainly schematic and does not purport to define either permanent boundaries between Japanese politicians or officially recognized, self-proclaimed political camps; it is, however, useful in trying to understand the general ideological divisions that exist in Japanese politics and currently compete to define the process of constitutional and Article IX revision.

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94 Sugawa.

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96 Deming, 5-6.

97 Deming, 6.

98 Referred to as 'United Nations Believers' in: Sugawa, 2000. See also: Deming, 6 for his description of the 'Internationalists'; See also: Itoh, 315 for a description of Ozawa's 'neo-Conservative' proposal for constitutional revision, which, in Japanese politics, is a Multilateralist proposal.

99 Deming, 6.

100 Sugawa.

101 Deming, 6.

102 Itoh, 315.

103 Ibid., 315-316.

104 Ibid., 316.

105 Referred to as "Neo-Nationalists" in Deming, 6.

106 See the description of the 'New-Realists' in Sugawa.

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127 Hughes notes, for example, that Article IX's ban on collective self-defense will present increasing degrees of difficulty for missile defense programs—a factor that may play a prominent role in its eventual revision. See: Hughes, 113.

**Appendix:**  
**Timeline of External and Internal Processes**  
**Affecting Japan's Constitutional Debate**

Process 1: External Changes in Japan's Geo-Strategic Landscape

- 1991 – USSR Collapses
- Gulf War
- 1992 – SDF UNPKO in Cambodia
- 1994 – DPRK Nuclear Crisis
- 1995 – Taiwan Straits Crisis
- 1998 – DPRK missile test over Japan
- 2001 – Sept. 11 WTC attacks
- JSDF to Indian Ocean
- 2003 – Operation Iraqi Freedom
- 2004 – JSDF to Iraq
- 2005 – DPRK announces possession of nuclear arms.

Process 2: Internal Changes in the Balance of Japanese Domestic Politics

- 1992 – PKO legislation passes
- 1993 – LDP loses power in the Diet
- 1994 – LDP/JSP Coalition
- Electoral Reforms
- 1996 – Revised Defense Guidelines
- 1998 – End LDP/JSP Coalition.
- Start LDP/Kōmeitō Co.
- 1999 – Cabinet Reforms
- 2001 – Koizumi elected PM.
- ATSSML passes the Diet.
- 2003 – IHRSSML passes the Diet.
- 2004 – LDP Const. Revision Draft Outline released.
- 2005 – LDP Const. Revision draft (complete) to be released in spring '05.