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Japan's Changing Security Discourse from the prism of its Deterrence Imperative

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"In strategy, it is important to see distant things as if they were close, and to take a distanced view of close things" -Miyamoto Musashi, Book of Five Rings, 1645.

Abstract

All International Relations experts contend that the US-Japan alliance is cornerstone for Japan's security and its deterrence. However, most miss out as to why despite conflicts of interests and intermittent tensions; Japan has never sought to replace the alliance with its own defense capabilities. Though Japan's strategic policies have underwent massive change with the beginning of 2000s, its security policy for deterrence has not shifted from resting on the US-Japan alliance. In this paper, through the prism of the changing dynamics of the alliance-arms substitution argument in regard to the US-Japan alliance, we will study Japan's Changing Security discourse to meet its deterrence imperative and efforts to formulate new security frameworks to suit the changing times.

Introduction

Bernard Brodie, in his pioneering work 'The Absolute Weapon: Atomic Power and World Order' in 1946, wrote that the world before 1945 was fundamentally different from the world that would follow. Up to that point, he argued, "the chief purpose of our military establishment [had] been to win wars. From now on its chief purpose must be to avert them. It can have almost no other purpose". For Japan, the essence of deterrence has formed the underlying theme of its security policy since the adoption of its Peace Constitution in May 1947. The Peace Constitution led Japan to give up its right to belligerence as a means of settling international disputes, while not maintaining any offensive war armaments. As a result, Japan's concept of deterrence has focused more on the conceptualised end of deterrence (prevention of war) rather than the means necessary for deterrence (military preparations to deter).

Over the decades, Japan has maintained three bright-lines with regard to its security policy. First is, it will pursue an exclusively defense-oriented policy. Second is, it will not become a military power that poses threat to other countries. Third is the three 'Non-Nuclear Principles' of not possessing nuclear weapons, not producing nuclear weapons, and not permitting nuclear weapons to be brought to Japan. The Security Treaty of 1951 and Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security of 1960 with the United States have been the underpinning of its

territorial and external military security till current date. These security treaties entitling the United States to station military bases in Japan and extend nuclear deterrence to Japan have been pivotal to not only Japan's post-war security policy but also to the strategic-military balance of power in the region.

Extended Deterrence

Vesna Danilovic writes in her 2002 book 'When the Stakes Are High: Deterrence and Conflict among Major Powers' that the outcome of extended deterrence is determined by two factors - retaliatory capability and threat credibility. Retaliatory capability is linked to the analysis of relative power distribution between the 'challenger' and 'defender' in regard to defending the third party. On the other hand, threat credibility is a function of three factors: (a) the intensity of linkages between a major power and the region in which a conflict occurs (an extension of inherent credibility theory); (b) the domestic incentives for not backing down; and (c) the pursuit of a costly signaling strategy intended to develop an international reputation for strong resolve in honoring commitments (i.e., the core of commitment theory). The author also notes that the power shift argument is inconsistent that wars are likely to result from an uncertainty of power parity and emphasizes it is important to differentiate between balance of power and balance of interests, as they can have reverse effects on deterrence outcomes.

In view of the rapidly changing security environment in the region, Japanese policymakers note an increase in and prolongation of so-called 'gray-zone' situations that can be considered neither pure peacetime nor contingencies over territory, sovereignty, and maritime economic interests. Gray-zone coercions also involve show of physical presence frequently in an attempt to make changes to the status quo to the extent that it does not constitute armed attack. In the context of shifting balance of power and insufficient institutionalisation of security frameworks in the region, the increasing number of gray zone situations especially in the maritime domain - East China Sea and South China Sea - have led to a negation of diplomacy and the established rules-based order¹. In addition, the very countries involved in gray-zone coercion like North Korea and China have sought to rapidly reinforce their military capabilities and intensify their military activities. In view of the US' growing entanglements with North Korea and more specifically China, it is difficult to predict what regional issues and interests in Japan will determine the US' willingness to get involved in a conflict on behalf of Japan.

All international relations experts contend that the US-Japan alliance is cornerstone for Japan's security and its deterrence. However, most miss out as to

why despite conflicts of interests and intermittent tensions; Japan has never sought to replace the alliance with its own defense capabilities. Though Japan's strategic policies have underwent massive change with the beginning of 2000s, its security policy for deterrence has not shifted from resting on the US-Japan alliance.

In this paper, through the prism of the changing dynamics of the alliance-arms substitution argument in regard to the US-Japan alliance, we will study Japan's Changing Security discourse to meet its deterrence imperative and efforts to formulate new security frameworks to suit the changing times.

Table- Japan's Defense Budget (Source: SIPRI²)

Year	Defense Budget (in US\$ bn)	Defense Budget as Percent-
2000	45.402	0.9
2001	46.197	0.9
2002	46.427	1.0
2003	46.486	1.0
2004	46.300	0.9
2005	46.216	0.9
2006	45.627	0.9
2007	45.034	0.9
2008	44.601	0.9
2009	45.436	1.0
2010	45.595	1.0
2011	46.209	1.0
2012	45.653	1.0
2013	45.459	1.0
2014	45.944	1.0
2015	46.754	1.0
2016	46.471	0.9
2017	46.556	0.9

Alliance-Arms Substitution

As mentioned by Robert Rothstein in his 1968 seminal work 'Alliances and Small Powers', alliances with other countries may substitute for arms (i.e. national defense capabilities), if an 'alliance' increases the probability of successful deterrence by making the deterring state stronger. Through an alliance, a state is able to acquire a reliable promise of support from an ally and translate that promise into a credible threat, though at the prospective cost of having to moderate conflicts with the ally. In case of Japan, a number of reasons, from its constitution, historical legacies, to increasingly severe security environment with various challenges and destabilizing factors, have led it to substitute arms with the US-Japan alliance to pursue its national interests and national security objectives. Thus, it is no surprise that many of Japan's official policy documents when talking about strengthening Japan's own deterrence include strengthening the extended deterrence of the deeply-embedded US-Japan alliance.

One must note that arms or national defense capabilities and alliances are also complements rather than water-tight substitutes for one another. Substitution or complementary effects of alliances on arms spending depend on alliance types, prevailing defence burdens, and numbers of allies. Increases in a state's relative capabilities allows for increases in both arms and alliances, leading a state to rely on increases in both because they help to obtain the same good. While the costs of arms and alliances are usually internal, arms and alliance benefits tend to be external. The internal costs of arms are that they necessitate dealing with domestic political opposition, especially to increases in taxation and extra-territorial military involvement. The internal costs of alliances are that they necessitate dealing with domestic political opposition to certain policy concessions required to placate alliance partners. The external benefits of arms are that they are more reliable than alliances in improving a state's international security environment, although arms build-ups generate security more slowly than alliance ties. The external benefits of alliances are that they improve a state's international security environment more quickly than arms build-ups, although alliances are less reliable than arms in generating security³.

States evaluate the gains they would receive from an alliance in terms of the trade-offs they would make that arise from the risks of 'abandonment' and 'entrapment'. Abandonment occurs when a state's allies fail to come to its assistance. Entrapment occurs when a state is drawn by an ally into a conflict it otherwise would have avoided. Evaluating alliance costs thus means comparing the risks of abandonment and entrapment to the gains in security or autonomy that a state expects to receive from its alliance. Thinking of alliance costs in terms of

abandonment and entrapment puts arms-alliance substitution into a meaningful context. In case of Japan, its alliance with the US provides it with additional strength and a more effective deterrent posture. However, similar to asymmetric alliances for security, Japan is more likely to be concerned about the risks of abandonment than the risk of entrapment. In fact, much of its changing security debate is based on strengthening Japan's contribution to the US-Japan alliance in fear of abandonment by the US. Entrapment on the other hand, tends to be more important to a state whose alliance is intended to increase its autonomy, or to a member of symmetric alliance in which both states' military capabilities affect the other's security. Thus, on the issue of sovereignty of the Senkaku Islands, the official US position on its security involvement has only been reiteration of Article 5 of the US-Japan Security Treaty that limits the scope of the Treaty's application to "territories under the administration of Japan"⁴.

For the US, Japan holds a unique position among its allies, and very rightly so, owing to Japan's unique geopolitical position of bordering on the maritime front with Russia, the Korean Peninsula, and China. In its 2017 National Security Strategy, the US clubs Russia and China as 'revisionist powers' and North Korea as a 'rogue power' in its three categories of prime challengers (third being 'transnational threat organisations') to US security. Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) located in Tokyo Bay is home to 55 tenant commands and is strategically the most important US naval installation in Western Pacific. It houses the headquarters of both the US Seventh Fleet and Naval Forces Japan. The Americans have been at Yokosuka since 1945 and not so surprisingly Yokosuka is the home to the only forward deployed US aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan and one of the two Blue-Ridge Class command ships of US Navy. Yokosuka Naval Base was the heartbeat of the Imperial Japanese Navy for its ship-repair facilities which are considered better than even on the US mainland. Yokosuka today is the second largest US fuel storage depot which can keep the US Seventh Fleet operating for six months. Even with the Trump Administration in the US and its 'America First' strategy', Japan will thus continue to remain the core of US access and influence in the Asia-pacific region, while housing its second largest number of overseas bases.

Further, unlike the mutual defense agreement with South Korea or collective defense agreement such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Japan is heavily reliant on US military protection for defense, with total dependence upon US nuclear deterrence. Japan provides the US with "facilities and areas" and "Host Nation Support" in return for a US commitment to defend Japan and ensure the security of the region. Though, unlike Japan that seeks

alliance to increase security, the US with a high level of security seeks this alliance to increase autonomy and its leverages to serve as its substitute for arms. The unique bilateral defense relationship between US and Japan is also cemented by close trade and investment relations.

Background to Japan's Security Debate

In a paper, Sorokin (1994)⁵ illustrates how states tend to rely on their allies' arms when allied support is relatively cheap and their allies are militarily strong, whereas they tend to rely on their own capabilities when allied support is relatively costly and their allies are militarily weak. To this dynamic, one could further add the non-military cost of mitigating differences and managing conflicts of interest with the ally.

Though over the course of decades post World War II, even when alliance costs went up for Japan, rapidly changing external security variables led it to continue to substitute pursuing arms with the continuation of the alliance. In its costs and benefits analysis, allying with the US provided it substantial remunerations beyond security for a resource-scare nation. The US allied security support was not only cheap, but also entailed Japan's access to US domestic market, international re-acceptance, access to a world-class intelligence and surveillance network, technology, international legitimacy with US being the leader of the free world etc. After its horrendous defeat in World War II, strong public aversion to war and historical legacies that made relations with nearly all its neighbors difficult, the militarily strong US led Japan to contentedly reduce its defense spending as it gained security at almost nil rate.

Yoshida Shigeru, one of the most powerful figures in postwar Japan and prime minister from 1946-47 and then 1948-1954, influenced much of postwar Japan's strategic-military policy. He promulgated the 'Yoshida Doctrine' built on three pillars of 'seikei-bunri' or economics first policy, Japan's adherence to the Peace Constitution and reliance on the US for security. Japan's first postwar official document, the Basic Policy on National Defense (1957), defined Japan's strategic-military role as to resist direct and indirect aggression against Japan's national security pending the arrival of assistance from the US/UN forces. This approach was reinforced in the second official document on Japan's defense policy, the National Defense Policy Outline (NDPO), that for the first time defined mission and force structure for Self Defense Forces (SDF) in 1976. Yoshida's landmark quote, "*If you like shade, find yourself a big tree*", was to remain a defining theme in Japan's postwar strategic-military culture until the 1970s. Thereupon it was challenged by multiple international events such as Nixon

visiting China in 1972, Oil Crisis, withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam in 1975, increased trade friction with the US and continuous US pressure after the Nixon-Sato Communiqué in 1969 to take up greater military responsibilities⁶.

Post-war Japan had assumed that the international security environment was given which could not be affected by Japan. By 1968, Japan surpassed West Germany to become the world's second largest economy after the US. But the breakdown of détente and intensification of Cold War in late 1970s, led to a new comprehensive security concept that security went beyond military issues where Japan could also influence international environment. In 1974, Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka's tour of Southeast Asian capitals was met by vehement anti-Japanese demonstrations especially in Bangkok and Jakarta. To resolve tensions, Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda in his 1977 tour of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states enunciated the Fukuda Doctrine. The Doctrine pledged that Japan would never become a military power, two that it would build up a relationship of mutual confidence and trust with Southeast Asian countries in wide-ranging fields, and that Japan would cooperate positively with ASEAN and its member countries in their own efforts, as an equal partner. The Doctrine itself became "a symbol of amity and cooperation between Japan and Southeast Asia."

In fears of US military withdrawal from Asia, the Guidelines for Defense Cooperation were signed in 1978 when Japan started contributing 10 percent to the maintenance of US forces in Japan. Thus, even though Japan had adequate economic resources, the unresolved historical legacies and increasing instability in the international and regional strategic environment led it continue with alliance-for-arms substitution after alliance support costs went up. The 1978 Defense Cooperation Guidelines between Japan and the US provided division of responsibilities and the foundation for joint planning and crisis response to defending an armed attack against Japan. Subsequently, after 20 years, the 1997 Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation would introduce the Bilateral Coordination Mechanism (BCM) to provide formal structures for joint planning and crisis response in response to an armed attack against Japan, and cooperation in situations surrounding Japan. The BCM, however, could not be activated unless an armed attack commenced. Thus in 2015, the Revised Defense Guidelines outlined the need for whole-of-government coordination. They stated that the Alliance Coordination Mechanism (ACM) will be utilised in "any situation that affects Japan's peace and security or any other situation that may require an Alliance response."

Japan, in its efforts to support the US-Japan alliance, expanded its Official Development Assistance (ODA) policy in the 1980s to countries deemed as “strategically important” by the United States⁷. More changes came along under Nakasone’s term as prime minister as he removed ban on Japan’s export of dual military technology to the US. Under him, Japan also increased cooperation on military front with the US. Japan agreed to cooperate with the US in its Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) and entered into joint production of advanced fighter aircraft FSX. Nakasone also broke the 1 percent ceiling on defense expenditure (though it amounted to only 1.013 percent) to strengthen military capability⁸. Nakayama Taro’s (foreign minister at time of Gulf War) quote, “*peace has its price, and we have to pay it*”, was a radical departure from Yoshida. It lay down the tone for 1990s marked by Gulf War, North Korean nuclear and missile crises, Taiwan Strait Crises and an increased threat perception from China.

In fact, it was the Gulf War in the beginning of the 1990s decade that raised the alliance support costs for Japan tremendously. Japan though initially declined US/ UN requests for participation in the war on grounds that it did not want to involve in a middle-eastern crises, it later contributed about \$13 billion to the war effort. However, its contribution was derided as “checkbook diplomacy” and it was excluded from Kuwait’s congratulatory message to US/UN forces. The fear of alienating the US provoked Japan to seriously question its pacifist policy. While in the 1950s, Japan used the UN as a shield for its minimalist security policy, decades later in the 1990s UN once again became the legitimising institution to overcome domestic constraints so as to carve a responsible role in international security affairs. With the enactment of the International Peace Cooperation Law (IPCL) in 1992 that allowed Japan to send not just civilian personnel but even its SDF, Japan cooperated in numerous peace keeping operations and international humanitarian relief operations such as in Angola, Cambodia, Rwanda and Iraq.

Japan’s participations in the UN peace keeping operations (PKO) and its anti-piracy measures in Somalia by guarding commercial ships through military escort won it much international acclaim and praise. Owing to the Gulf War debacle, after the 2001 terrorist strike on US soil, Japan was quick to show solidarity and passed the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law in September 2001, following which SDF was deployed to assist the US led international coalition through rear end and logistics support. Former Prime Minister Koizumi justified the decision to send the SDF to Iraq with the following three points: To send SDF to Iraq is to help Iraq people and support international cooperation; the SDF would be offering humanitarian assistance and would not be using force; it is important for Japan's international relations with the US. Further in the Diplomatic

Bluebook 2004, the Japanese government stressed that the instability in Iraq would have a direct impact on Japan due to its extensive reliance of almost 90 percent on Middle Eastern oil and hence it was necessary that Japan make efforts towards ensuring peace and stability in this region. Japan withdrew from Iraq in 2006.

After North Korea withdrew from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 2003, Japan announced its decision to build missile defense system through joint-efforts with the US and introduced the Aegis Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) capability of the Sea-Based Midcourse Defense System as an upper-tier capability, and Patriot PAC-3 for lower-tier Ground-Based Terminal Defense. 2004 saw the beginnings of both the East China Sea Conflict and the rapid ascent of the China-Japan bilateral trade relationship. In 2004, China with Hong Kong became Japan's largest trading partner. 2005 saw Tokyo and Washington's Two-Plus-Two meeting in February 2005 and issuing of a joint security statement that placed the Taiwan Strait under Japan-US joint defense. This indicated that Japan might intervene in a future cross-strait scenario and thus interfere in what China deemed a domestic matter. The next month, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan declared his support for adding Japan to the permanent members of the UN Security Council. Additional anger arose when the Japanese Ministry of Education approved a supposedly nationalist textbook which glossed over Japan's war record. All this led to the largest anti-Japanese demonstrations in China since the two countries normalised diplomatic relations in 1972⁹.

What is truly interesting that when across China, businesses with connections to Japan, billboards advertising Japanese goods and stores stocking Japanese made products were vandalised by protesters, the same year Japan became the largest overseas supplier of products to China with \$79.9 billion in exports. China's displacement of the United States as the largest destination for Japanese exports highlighted the growing dependence of world economy on China as it helped to keep the then world's second-largest economy from falling back into recession. Also by the end of 2005, Japan's accumulated investment in China had reached over US \$70 billion to make it the main source of foreign investment in China. To add further insult, Japan was soon surpassed by China as world's second largest economy in last quarter of 2010. Ironically, when the ruling Democratic Party of Japan was engaged in a vehement conflict in 2010 with the US to move the United States' Futenma military base unpopular with many locals from Okinawa, China became a saving factor in the weakening alliance. In September 2010, Japan seized a Chinese trawler and its crew after it collided with two coast guard vessels near the islands, sparking a serious diplomatic row. Small

anti-Japanese protests were held in several cities in China. In the end, Japan released the trawler's crew.

In the aftermath of the boat collision incident near the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, Chinese customs officials reportedly stopped shipments of rare earth minerals to Japan. Japan was China's largest purchaser of the minerals, which have a wide variety of applications in high tech machinery, especially in clean energy and military technologies. Therefore, the drop in rare earth shipments, which reportedly lasted until the end of November 2010 and then resumed at less than previous amounts, was keenly felt in Japan's high-tech industry. In August 2012, Japanese government's purchase of the three of the disputed islands from a private landowner, in order to pre-empt their sale to Tokyo's nationalist governor Shintaro Ishihara, sparked massive Chinese protests and a marked drop in Sino-Japanese trade. This led to military escalation in East China Sea by both the countries, leading to scrambling of fighter jets, locking of radars followed by undue display of naval warships which further precipitated suspicion rather than calming the conflict.

On 23 November 2013, a Chinese Air Force spokesperson, Shen Jinke announced that, "any aircraft flying through the newly designated East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) must seek prior permission from the Chinese authorities in advance and follow instructions from its air-traffic controllers". He further stated that "China's armed forces will adopt 'defensive emergency measures' to respond to the aircrafts that do not cooperate in the identification or refuse to follow the instructions¹⁰". This sudden declaration from the Chinese side was vehemently opposed by Japan and the US, which are strong proponent of freedom of navigation in the international waters. While Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe expressed his discontent by terming China's action to create a new ADIZ over the disputed islands as dangerous, the US President Barack Obama responded swiftly by sending two unarmed B-52 bombers in a 'routine exercise' to fly over the new ADIZ without informing China. The United States is bound by the US-Japan Security Treaty to protect "the territories under the Administration of Japan" and has asserted that Japan administers the Senkaku (Diaoyu, for the Chinese) Islands. Yet though Japan is assured of US help through the treaty, its anxiety remains over Washington's commitment to defend Japanese territory if it risks going to war with China.

The islands conflict in East China Sea goes beyond mere questions of territorial sovereignty of three uninhabitable islands and five rocks (which, in total, amount to only 2.7 square miles in the East China Sea). The conflict spills over to clashing Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) and continental shelves based

on inconclusive UN Convention on the Law of Sea (UNCLOS), fisheries, shipping routes and logistics. The uncertainty of exact scope and scale of natural resources of the East China Sea which were last explored in 1968, and a derisive desire to perpetuate the conflict as a nationalist agenda by building upon historical wounds and memories by both countries exacerbates the matter. China's increasing demand for energy has prompted intense interest in resource extraction from the continental shelf that runs under the East China Sea. Also, the strategic shipping routes for China in the Yellow Sea Economic Basin (YSEB), catering to 57 percent of China's trade¹¹ north of East China Sea lead to more reasons for China's controlling interests in the Islands. For Japan, its stake to those Islands assume even more strategic importance beyond the oil and the fish as they form its first line of defense and are a mere 410 kilometers or 220 nautical miles away from Okinawa which is strategically important for both Japan and the US.

Despite a brewing debate in Japan, lack of stable domestic political government after Koizumi administration had prevented steering of security policy-making in a distinct direction. From 2007 to 2013, no party in Japan enjoyed majority in both the Lower and Upper Houses of the Diet for more than a few months. In fact since 2007, Japan saw six prime ministers, including Prime Minister Shinzo Abe who came to office in late 2012 after holding the office previously in 2006-2007 with a landslide victory for his Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Abe's statement of "*Japan will never be a tier-two country*", during his famous 'Japan is Back' speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in 2013, greatly sums up his vision for Japan. There has been a growing pressure on Japan from US in recent years to participate in joint efforts for peace and stability and take on a larger security role commensurate with its national capabilities. Japan is now at crossroads of having to deal with new power realities associated with the dramatic rise of China - both economically and militarily. Since surpassing Japan to become the world's second largest economy, China has also begun infringing on economic leadership enjoyed by Japan in the Asia-Pacific region. China led initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) rival Japanese initiatives such as the Official Development Assistance (ODA) and the Japan-led Asian Development Bank (ADB).

At this stage, the power differential between China and Japan has widened considerably, whereas continuing with the alliance-for-arms substitution is Japan's only pragmatic choice to deter aggression. As the leeway of Japan's free-ride on the US's arms declines and as US becomes militarily stronger, the disparity in contribution to the alliance has increased the price of alliance support on Japan.

Yet, any efforts by Japan to offset the controversial aspects of shifting its arms-alliance in favour of arms build-up will still need to be done under the auspices of the US-Japan alliance. The alliance offsets the controversial aspects that could fuel a regional arms race and alienate Japan's neighbours it enjoys good ties with, such as the ASEAN member states and South Korea. Arms build-up under the umbrella of alliance will also cushion the domestic resistance where economics plays a dominant role and historical memories of World War II have not yet faded.

Nuclear Deterrence

In modern International Relations discourse, deterrence is more often than not referred to as nuclear deterrence. It is not an understatement to say that there is probably no country which shows more dislike for nuclear armaments than Japan, that suffered the trauma of nuclear attacks twice, does. Japanese public opinion polls consistently revealing that public opinion is overwhelmingly opposed to nuclearization. Concurrently, Japan has been active in encouraging and strengthening multi-lateral non-proliferation and disarmament regimes since the early 1990s and submitted disarmament resolutions to the United Nations General Assembly every year since 1994. However, Japan's nuclear deterrence is provided in entirety by a country that dropped two atomic bombs on it. In a paper, Satoh (2017)¹² mentions that Japan lacks strategic depth, as its population is heavily concentrated in a few major cities along the coasts. Thus, the only credible deterrent it might consider would be the one deployed at sea — nuclear submarines carrying nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles. Being a US ally, Japan is ensured of a very credible extended nuclear umbrella, evident through the US's major Trident II SLBM program and the global deployment of US surface ships and submarines.

Japan's nuclear and non-proliferation policy is comprised of four main pillars: Atomic Energy Basic Law of 1955, restricting Japan's nuclear energy use exclusively to peaceful purposes; the 'Three Non-Nuclear Principles', of not possessing, producing or introducing nuclear weapons on Japanese soil; compliance with the NPT; and reliance on US nuclear umbrella for external security¹³. However, Japan's role as a spokesperson for nuclear disarmament have been complicated between its contradictory positions of nuclear abstinence and ensuring credibility of US extended nuclear deterrence. In 2010, Japan acknowledged a Cold War secret pact with United States, concluded in 1969, that US ships carrying nuclear weapons could stop at Japanese ports as it was not tantamount to passage of nuclear weapons on Japanese soil, and that nuclear weapons could be stationed in Okinawa in time of emergency. The 'No Confirm-

No Denial' policy deferred questions over United States Forces in Japan (USFJ) without creating tensions in the region and implicating Japan¹⁴.

The National Defense Policy Guidelines (NDPG) documents of Japan from 1976, 1995, and 2004 left it to the US entirely to deter nuclear threats. The first NDPG of 1976 simply stated, "Against nuclear threats, Japan will rely on the nuclear deterrent capability of the United States." The second NDPG of 1995 qualified reliance on US nuclear deterrence with an emphasis on Japan's diplomatic efforts for nuclear disarmament. By contrast, the NDPG of 2004, adopted by the Koizumi government separated reliance on US nuclear deterrence from efforts for international nuclear disarmament. It also underlined the importance of BMD as Japan's own efforts to supplement reliance on US extended deterrence. This NDPG also stressed Tokyo's preparedness to play an active role in international disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, including Japan's participation in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) proposed by US President Bush a year earlier in 2003¹⁵.

Against this backdrop, the NDPG of 2010 reflected a major shift in Japanese leadership views of the US extended deterrent. It recognised that US' 'extended deterrence, with nuclear deterrent as a vital element' would be indispensable as long as nuclear weapons exist, and stated that Japan would closely cooperate with the US in order to maintain and improve the credibility of extended deterrence. Thus, the Extended Deterrence Dialogue (EDD) was instituted in 2010 to strengthen policy coordination on extended deterrence and the nuclear umbrella, Dialogue and has happened every year since then. Surprisingly, the Dialogue has aroused little backlash in public and political opinion, testifying to the increased public awareness of the need to ensure the effectiveness of that umbrella. The major shift reflected in the 2010 NDPG was also reflected in Japan's first-ever National Security Strategy, as crafted by Abe government and released in 2013. On the topic of extended deterrence, it argued, "with regard to the threat of nuclear weapons, the extended deterrence of the US with nuclear deterrence at its core is indispensable. In order to maintain and enhance the credibility of the extended deterrence, Japan will work closely with the US, and take appropriate measures through its own efforts, including BMD and protection of the people."

In 2014, the world was stunned when Japan agreed to turn over more than 700 pounds (320 kg) of weapons grade plutonium and highly enriched uranium (HEU) back to the US that it had received for research and development (R&D) purposes. Japan already has 9 tons of plutonium in Japan and an additional 35 tons stored in Europe. This amount is sufficient to produce 1000 nuclear weapons¹⁶.

Japan was one of the earliest countries to participate in 'Atoms for Peace', and has utilised research reactors and critical assemblies powered by HEU since the 1960s. However, the country became an early participant in civil HEU minimisation efforts. Since 1992, Japan Nuclear Fuel Ltd. has produced low-enriched uranium (LEU) at Rokkasho for Japan's extensive nuclear power program. Japan is in the final stages of conversion and shutdown of most HEU-powered facilities. All new research reactors in Japan have been designed to use LEU fuel. However, Japan's policy on how to handle its HEU materials has been less clear, and there are simultaneous and interlinked concerns regarding Japan's policy on plutonium. There have been some shipments of HEU spent fuel to the United States, but other HEU spent fuel remains in Japan¹⁷.

Further, Japan also has an active commercial space launch program using several types of solid-fuel rockets, which could provide the basis for a long-range ballistic missile program. Under the conditions set by the Allied Powers following World War II, Japan was forbidden to develop rockets until 1955. Some experts suggest that Epsilon, an advanced three-stage, solid fuel rocket with its shortened pre-launch timeline, could allow it to be converted to an Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM); numerous technological modifications would be necessary, however, specifically in the area of guidance and payload delivery¹⁸. Further, Japan's quest for reusable launch vehicles (RLV) technologies for space programs (OREX, HOPE-X) has allowed the country to successfully develop and test re-entry and advanced guidance technologies applicable to ballistic missile program¹⁹. Toshiyuki Shikata, a government adviser and former lieutenant general, indicated that part of the rationale for the fifth M-V Hayabusa mission, from 2003 to 2010, was that the re-entry and landing of its return capsule demonstrated "that Japan's ballistic missile capability is credible²⁰." Therefore, Japan inherently possesses both an extended nuclear and existential nuclear deterrence. Its *de-facto* nuclear readiness state has the potential to be translated from capability to ability in a short span of time.

Shinzo Abe Administration

Morrow (1991) argues that states use alliances less to aggregate capabilities but to exchange security. It is important to consider arms-alliance trade-offs, because national military capabilities differ from allied military capabilities in their restraint over involvement in armed conflict. A state has no direct control over allied military capabilities, unlike national military capabilities. Allied involvement depends on its allies' national interests and on a state's own ability to shape those interests. Sabrosky (1980), reports that allies honour their agreements reliably in less than 30 per cent of war opportunities. By contrast, when

considering the specific obligations mentioned in alliance treaties, Leeds, Long, and Mitchell (2000) find that alliance reliability amounts to 74.5 per cent. Still, even this increased reliability figure is clearly below the aforementioned 100 per cent reliability of national military capabilities.

A number of new legislations under the present Shinzo Abe administration have started to slowly unshackle Japan of its historical remorse and constitutional restrictions. Shinzo Abe's agenda and policy intentions are well known. With his overwhelming priority on security policy, his foremost desire is to revise the Japanese Constitution to seek legitimacy for the SDF. Abe feels an amendment of Article 9 is necessary to rejuvenate Japan on both domestic and international platform, and enable it to be a security provider for itself and in the region. However, along with the Japanese populace, Japan's neighbours such as China and South Korea remain highly wary. Doubts remain as to whether Abe seeks to amend the unconstitutionality of the SDF or expand the role of the forces. In a bid to calm domestic and international fears over his new security reforms, Abe has transformed from an erstwhile historical revisionist to a pragmatic nationalist in his second innings as Prime Minister. Abe's visit to Pearl Harbor in December 2016 indicates his desire to settle the ghosts of Japan's World War II history once and for all and ensure that future generations are not burdened by having to apologise for Japan's World War II history.

It was during Abe's first stint as the prime minister that the Defence Agency was elevated (after 53 years) to the level of Defence Ministry in 2007. In his second and third stints, Abe instituted the National Security Council that centralised security policy of Japan under the prime minister. This was followed by the first National Security Strategy that outlined a 'Proactive Contribution to Peace' on Japan's part and even discarded the sacrosanct one per cent ceiling of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on defence spending. Abe further introduced the most extensive legislation in Japan's security policy, the National Security Legislation, which allowed the SDF to operate overseas for collective self-defence. Abe also lifted the total ban on arms exports and passed the State Secrets Law that had been abolished under the Allied Occupation period.

Rebooting Indigenous Defence Industry

The defence production and technological bases that Japan's defence industry possesses contribute to latently enhance its deterrence, by possessing industrial capability sufficient to build up defence forces in a timely manner at Japan's will. Japan's one of the domestic foundations for strengthening its military posture, its defence production and technological bases, face challenges in the changes in

international security environment through realignment of European and US defence industry. However, Japan has massive advantages in certain technologies such as high tensile steel, thin plate technology, welding technology and varieties of sensors systems for building of destroyers, submarines and general shipbuilding. Japan also has internationally advanced guidance and propulsion technology, semiconductors, infrared sensors and solid rockets and due to joint R&D with the US²¹. However, inability to resolve its historical legacies has led Japan to constantly reiterate its pacifist stand by prohibiting manufacture and export of complete weapons-systems.

In the years following World War II, Japan's military industries were totally shut down during a period of internationally rapid development, particularly in the case of the aircraft industry. Japan's defence industry was kept in quasi-isolation by its own government under a ban on arms exports in keeping with 'The Three Principles' formulated at the 1967 Session of the Diet. The Three Principles prohibited export to communist bloc countries, countries subject to arms exports embargo under the United Nations Security Council's resolutions, and countries involved or likely to be involved in international conflicts. In February 1976, the Government of Japan announced the collateral policy guideline at the Diet Session that the arms exports to other areas not included in the Three Principles would also be restrained in conformity with Japan's position as a peace-loving nation²². However, despite the isolation, the domestic defence industry transformed into a dominant player in design and manufacture of defence components. Japan began as a supplier of defence components and later began to build and produce various indigenous aircraft such as the C-1 and PS-1 to the more recent P-1 and F-2. Though Japanese industry went on to make great progress, building components for the most advanced civilian aircraft such as Boeing 767s/777s/787s and co-producing advanced military aircraft such as the Lockheed P3Cs and F-15s, it was handicapped by restrictions placed on exports of military technology or products²³.

On December 27, 2011, the Japanese government officially eased the ban allowing Japanese defence contractors to take part in the joint development of weapons with other countries (and not only the US) and to supply military equipment for humanitarian purposes. While defence equipment has become more advanced and complex, the defence industry in Japan has been exposed to harsh conditions by a decrease in the number of units procured caused by Japan's severe financial conditions and an increase in imports of foreign-made equipment when other countries are aiming to acquire advanced military capabilities utilising the latest technologies. In order to ensure the quality of defence capabilities and to

enhance deterrence as well as response capabilities in a situation when rapid technological innovations have significant influence on the global security environment, it is crucial that Japan acquires due technological superiority. Hence, it is indispensable for Japan to work on strategic research and development, maintenance and strengthening of defence production and technological bases, and promotion of defence equipment and technology cooperation.

On April 1, 2014, the Government of Japan, in accordance with the National Security Strategy adopted on December 17, 2013, set out ‘The Three Principles of Transfer of defence Equipment and Technology’ as a set of new principles on overseas transfer of defence equipment and technology, which replaced ‘The Three Principles on Arms Exports and their Related Policy Guidelines’. According to the new principles, an appropriate overseas transfer of defence equipment and technology contributes to “active promotion of the maintenance of international peace and security through timely and effective implementation of contribution to peace and international cooperation.... to strengthening security and defence cooperation with the United States as well as other countries”²⁴. The new principles lay out that the Japanese government will make a comprehensive judgment in light of the existing guidelines of the international export control regime and based on the information available will analyse the extent the overseas transfer of such equipment and technology will raise concern for Japan’s security.

With a more capable indigenous defence technology base, Japan has the potential to reduce its reliance on imports of defence products as indigenously developed technologies can be tailored to Japan's specific needs. This has the added benefit of increasing economic activity at higher levels of the value chain, including design and R&D. Since defence technology can often be applied to the electronics, computing, or commercial aerospace industries, Japan’s edge in robotics can also be multiplied by leveraging technology and processes developed in the defence industry.

New Agenda: Upgrading the SDF and BMD

The Air SDF is steadily reinforcing Japan’s defence posture through measures such as creating one new squadron in the Air Warning Unit at Naha Air Base in 2014, and establishing the 9th Air Wing by increasing the number of fighter squadrons to two in 2016. In 2017, based on the importance of its missions and roles it is tasked with, the Southwestern Composite Air Division, which was historically positioned as a sub-unit to air defence forces, was upgraded and

reorganised into the Southwestern Air Defence Force for enhancing the defence posture in the south western region²⁵. In March 2018, Japanese Ground SDF underwent its most significant structural reform since its formation in 1954 with the creation of a unified command and the launch of an Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade (ARDB) tasked with defending Japan's remote islands.

On June 20, 2017, the Research Committee on Security within the ruling LDP released an interim report with recommendations for Japan's next NDPG and Mid-Term Defence Program (MTDP) for fiscal years 2019-2023. The interim report supported the increase of Japanese defence budget to 2 percent of GDP (similar to NATO) and pushed for acquisition of counter-attack capabilities such as the cruise missiles²⁶. A study released in redacted form by Japan's Ministry of Defence on April 27, 2018 asserted that the helicopter destroyer JS Izumo, along with its sister ship, JS Kaga, can be turned into fully fledged aircraft carriers. With certain modifications, the Izumo-class can operate the F-35B, capable of vertical or short take-offs and vertical landings (STOVL) without requiring a catapult launcher from the warship's flight deck²⁷. The Japanese Maritime SDF is also expected to acquire 22 submarines by the mid-2020s as specified in the NDPG 2014. While its ally, the US' maritime capabilities is unsurpassed, the priority on security lines of communication has led Japan to pursue a strong, independent maritime capability to hold certain decision autonomy as well as to support the US.

North Korea fired two missiles over Japan in 2017, as well as three inter-continental ballistic missiles on steep trajectories into the Sea of Japan. The unprecedented and high number of ballistic missile and nuclear tests from North Korea forced Japan to fast track the installation of two land-based Aegis Ashore missile defence systems. Japan's position east of North Korea means that missiles fired by the North toward the US, including its Pacific military base in Guam, would (almost certainly) have to fly over Japanese territory. In 1999, the US and Japan had signed a memorandum of agreement to cooperate to develop the SM-3 Block IIA interceptor, and began the SM-3 Cooperative Development Project with a revised Memorandum of Understanding in 2006. The December 2014, the Mid-Term Defence Plan mandated the Maritime SDF to purchase two new Atago-class guided missile destroyers. These are scheduled to enter the fleet in 2020-21 and will be armed with the SM-3 Block IIA interceptor.

Japan's missile defence system inter-connects Japan's domestically owned and operated missile defence systems and sensors, as well as those hosted from the US. Also, Japan already hosts two US Army-Navy Transportable Radar Surveillance Systems, or AN/TPY-2, that are deployed in Kyogamisaki and

Shariki. The United States has also deployed its own PAC-3 battery and a Ticonderoga-class missile cruiser in Japan since 2006. The PAC-3 unit was deployed to Kadena Air Force Base in Okinawa in October 2006 after the North Korean nuclear test and subsequent missile launches in July of that year. The US currently deploys six Aegis BMD-capable ships at Yokosuka as part of the Seventh Fleet²⁸.

Revision of Article 9 of Japanese Constitution

“Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. 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 recognised.” - Chapter II, Article 9 of Japanese Constitution.

Japan has as world’s 21st largest army where most of its neighbours China, Russia, North Korea, South Korea rank in world’s top ten largest armies. Despite the constraints — constitutional, legal, political, and societal — the SDF has been operating under this Constitution. Since its establishment the SDF has evolved into one of the most sophisticated defense forces in the world.

Abe, in his second administration has already passed new legislations that re-interpret the pacifist constitution to allow Japanese troops potentially to fight overseas, eased curbs on military exports and erased the sacrosanct defense-budget ceiling of 1 per cent of the previous administrations. Abe’s winning the 2016 Upper House national elections and obtaining the critical two-thirds majority in both houses with coalition partner Komeito now gives him mandate to start the Diet processes for constitutional revision. In a bid to calm domestic and international fears over his new security reforms, Abe has transformed from an erstwhile historical revisionist to a pragmatic nationalist in his second innings as Prime Minister since 2012. Abe’s visit to Pearl Harbor in December 2016 indicates his desire to settle the ghosts of Japan’s World War II history once and for all and ensure that future generations are not burdened by having to apologise for Japan’s World War II history. This makes constitutional revision a realistic possibility for the first time in its 70 year history.

Critical constraint on an actual amendment to the Constitution, however, lies in the public referendum mandated by Article 96 that specifies the process for amendment. It states that after concurring vote of two-thirds or more of all the members of each House, an amendment shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of all votes cast at a special public referendum. While Japanese public

opinion has a strong anti-militarist distrust even after more than seven decades post-World War II, it also has an attitudinal defensive realism indicated by overwhelming support for missile defence systems and enhancing capabilities of the coast guard. However, support for overseas deployment of Japan's SDF still remains an issue with the public evidenced by the recent scrapping of the South Sudan mission for Ground SDF even under UN auspices.

Developing New Neighbourhood Allies

In a bid to expand its autonomy and leverage to influence strategic equations in the region, Japan has strongly expanded its security cooperation along with diplomatic engagement with many of its neighbours. Some of these are elaborated in succeeding paragraphs.

ASEAN

The *Vientiane Vision*²⁹ is a guiding principle for Japan's defence cooperation with ASEAN, as announced by Defence Minister Inada at the second ASEAN-Japan Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting held in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 16 November 2016. Practical defence cooperation is conducted by combining the sharing of understanding and experience regarding international law, Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), conducting capacity building cooperation in various fields such as HADR, PKO, landmine and unexploded bomb clearance, cyber-security, etc., transferring technology, developing human resources and multi-lateral joint training and exercises, etc. Japan supplied front-line coast guard cutters to the Philippines and Vietnam in May 2017. It also agreed to supply Vietnam six patrol boats in January 2017. In May 2017, Japan sent its Izumo helicopter-carrier to the South China Sea for three months of port visits in Southeast Asia under the Japan-ASEAN Ship Rider Cooperation Program.

India

During the 2015 Annual India-Japan summit, both the countries signed two major agreements aimed at enhancing defence and security cooperation. One of the agreements focused on transfer of defence equipment and technology transfer. The second was an agreement concerning the security measures for the protection of classified military information. Concurrently, these agreements have paved the way for robust India-Japan cooperation in the avenues of intelligence exchanges between the Indian Armed Forces and the Japanese SDF as well as in defence technology. Earlier during the Sixth Strategic Dialogue in April 2012, Foreign Ministers also agreed to launch a bilateral cyber security dialogue at the diplomatic, national security, and technical level. Recently, we also see the re-

emergence of Shinzo Abe's 'Diamond Concept', evidenced by the first Indo-Pacific consultations in the Manila, Philippines, in November 2017. As part of a 'Quad', the United States, Japan, Australia and India have instituted coordinating mechanism to consult on regional challenges, in particular, in dealing with 'gray-zone' maritime emergencies and security threats like piracy.

Russia

Abe has held almost twenty Japan-Russia summits with Russian President Putin in his two terms as Japanese Prime Minister. A lingering territorial dispute over the four islands of Etorofu, Kunashiri, Habomai and Shikotan (called the Northern Territories by Japan and Southern Kuril Islands by Russia) — has led to Japan and Russia being unable to negotiate a peace treaty even after 7 decades post-World War II. Abe's perseverance is remarkable since he held more summits with Putin (almost double) than with US President Obama during his tenure. The proposal of joint sovereignty has been mooted, with Japan and Russia agreeing to expand joint economic engagement under an eight-point cooperation plan proposed by Abe totalling around ¥300 billion and covering over 60 projects from energy sector, tourism, transfer of cutting-edge Japanese technologies to higher human exchanges and the industrialisation of the Russian Far East. Even if there is no breakthrough in the Kurils dispute *per se*, the process of Japanese-Russian rapprochement can be said to be more important than the outcome.

Limitations

Japan, after World War II, believed peace was 'domestically generated', that there would be no international peace unless the countries of the world were themselves peaceful. After a self-described increasingly severe security environment, Japanese policy makers now consider that no nation can maintain its own peace and security alone. Thus, they seek to prevent emergence of threats by making proactive efforts to improve the international security environment and expand its ability to cooperate on international security operations. However, population aging and decline reduces Japan's capacity to absorb soldier casualties. There is strong public aversion to Japanese SDF engaging in anything that looks like combat activity. Even the former Chief of Staff of Maritime SDF, Admiral Koichi Furusho warned that any further collapse involving insufficient manpower resources for recruitment, education and training (schools), and rear end support could weaken the combat capabilities of the MSDF as a whole³⁰. The 2014 NDPG also talks of a number of measures to increase the forces strength such as promoting the perception that the SDF is an attractive job option and making more

effective use of female SDF personnel, expansion of re-appointment, and measures related to honors and privileges³¹.

The SDF earned widespread recognition and appreciation from the Japanese public following its prompt disaster relief and reconstruction activities after the earthquake and tsunami in 2011. Ironically, its image as a disaster relief force rather than one for national security dominates the discourse in Japanese security policy regarding its role and organisation. The first rush clause added for the UN Peacekeeping Operation in South Sudan in November 2016 saw strong public backlash when the unrest in South Sudan became public. Japan withdrew in March 2017.

Conclusion: Anxieties with Trump Administration

The inter-operability between the US forces and the SDF has been dramatically advanced after the revision of Guidelines for the US-Japan Defense Cooperation in 2015. US and Japan continue to meticulously consult with each other on joint-exercises and other issues through the Alliance Coordination Mechanism. In case the US forces exercise the Flexible Deterrent Options (FDO) by deploying aircraft carriers and strategic bombers around the Korean Peninsula, based on the 2015 revised Guidelines the Japanese SDF would also join and support the FDO. Besides that, the SDF can also make a more proactive contribution to the US forces such as protecting the US forces' assets³². In May 2017, JS Izumo escorted US Naval Supply Ship following increasing tensions with North Korea³³.

Despite reiterations, Japan has reservations against continuity of American commitment to Japan's security. The US attitude of special engagement with security partners especially Japan has undergone a dramatic change in Trump era. US President Trump's 'America-First', led to US walked out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a US-Japan led regional trade deal. Japan was also informed later about Trump consenting to talks with Kim Jong-un. Further, Japan and the US are at loggerheads on how to frame future trade talks, with Tokyo resisting US calls to enter negotiations for a bilateral FTA that could force Japan to open its highly protected agricultural markets. To appease the increasing demands by Trump for more alliance support, Japan markedly stepped up its defence purchases from the United States. Japanese Defence budget fiscal 2018 will total a record-high of \$45.91 billion, marking the sixth consecutive increase since fiscal 2013. We can expect similar hikes in 2019. Japan will purchase about \$4.24 billion worth of equipment in fiscal 2018 that will include the Aegis Ashore, a land-based system to intercept missiles, Lockheed Martin's extended-range Joint Air-to-

Surface Standoff Missile (JASSM-ER), F-35A fighter planes, Global Hawk unmanned reconnaissance planes manufactured by Northrop Grumman, and Osprey tilt-rotor transportation aircraft produced by Bell and Boeing from the US.

In summary, it is the anxiety over US security commitment in Japan that has triggered the recent warming of ties between China and Japan. But, as shown throughout history Japan will never accept a subordinate role to China's. To cope with the North Korea crisis, Abe has often emphasised the importance of the US-Japan alliance. However, increasing power differential between Japan and its neighbors and the inability to predict US' short and medium term interests in the region (for the long term, the US is definitely not retreating), will force Japan to increase the proportion of its own defense capabilities in its arms-alliance balance, for its deterrence to be effective in coming future.

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