

**Conceptualising Security:
Security Threats and Domestic Interests in Japanese
Security Policy after 1989**

Elena Atanassova-Cornelis

Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium

**Paper for the ECPR SGIR 6th Pan-European Conference on International
Relations
Turin, 12-15 September 2007
Section 15, Panel 8**

Draft paper. Please do not quote without author's permission.

Comments welcome at: elena.atanassova@arts.kuleuven.be

'The purpose of Japanese diplomacy is to secure its national interests, or in other words, to secure the safety and prosperity of Japan and the Japanese people first and foremost. To that end, it is essential that Japan strives for the realisation of peace, stability and prosperity throughout the entire international community.'
(Diplomatic Bluebook 2003)

Introduction

Japan's position in the international arena has changed substantially after the Second World War. From a defeated and occupied country Japan has turned into an economic miracle, from an aggressor it became a pacifist state. Under the protective security 'shield' of the US ally Japan enjoyed peace and economic expansion during the Cold War. By contrast, the low profile of its foreign policy gave Japan labels such as 'passive' and 'reactive' state, which had to respond to '*gaiatsu/beiatsu*' (foreign, rather US, pressure).¹

In the 21st century, Japan's anomaly of being an 'economic giant' and a 'political pygmy' appears to belong to the past. Indeed, after 1989 the country has been forging a new international role for itself, particularly in the military-security area. Japan's modernised military capabilities and presence in missions ranging from United Nations Peace-Keeping Operations (UN PKO) to fight against international terrorism seem to be a vindication to neo-realist expectations that Japan would sooner or later move towards becoming a 'great' power.² Nevertheless, Japan's anomaly appears to be somewhat continuing: it has not engaged in autonomous defence, it has deepened its security partnership with the US (including continuing reliance for nuclear protection), and its 'active' overseas security role is largely limited to the bilateral alliance and is far from the threat or use of force.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the redefinition of Japanese national security policy after the Cold War by taking into account the role of domestic interests, particularly political ones, in the process of policy formulation. However, rather than excluding

1 See, for example, Kent. E. Calder, 'Japanese foreign economic policy formation: explaining the reactive state', *World Politics*, 40 (4), 1988, pp. 517-41; Edward J. Lincoln, *Japan's New Global Role*, The Brookings Institution, Washington (D.C.), 1993; Takakazu Kuriyama, 'Challenges for Japan's foreign policy future', *Japan Review of International Affairs*, 14 (3), 2000, pp. 196-220.

2 For neo-realist accounts on Japan, see, Christopher Layne, 'The unipolar illusion: why new great powers will rise', *International Security*, 17 (4), 1993, pp. 5-51; Kenneth N. Waltz, 'The emerging structure of international politics', *International Security*, 18 (2), 1993, pp. 44-79; see also, Herman Kahn, *The Emerging Japanese Superstate: Challenge and Response*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs (N.J.), 1970.

international variables the paper seeks to combine them with domestic ones and offer an insight into the complex relationship between the changed international system, policy preferences of decision-makers and Japanese security policy. By suggesting a combined realist-liberal perspective, this paper will promote the approach of 'analytical eclecticism', which has recently gained prominence in studies on Asian security.³

The above considerations limit the scope of analysis. Although Japan has applied a 'comprehensive approach'⁴ to national security since the Cold War and, in this context, has become one of the leading states in defining and implementing 'human security'⁵, the primary concern in this paper is with the military dimension of Japan's security role. Indeed, not only has this dimension been the most contested one, but Japan's increased security activism in recent years has also led many observers to describe Japan as 'normalising', not least viewed in neo-realist terms. As the conventional military dimension of Japan's security policy has remained largely limited to the bilateral security framework with the US, which, in turn, has become the centre of Japan's 'anomaly', the paper will focus primarily on the evolution of Japanese national security policy from the perspective of the bilateral alliance rather than in multilateral context.

This paper explores, in the first place, Japan's national security policy during the Cold War by demonstrating how international and domestic factors shaped the country's approach to national security. Second, it examines the post-1989 changes both in Japan's strategic environment and domestic security climate, and discusses the ways in which Japan has redefined its security role. Lastly, the paper summarises the findings from a theoretical perspective and concludes by suggesting an 'eclectic' approach for understanding Japanese post-Cold War national security policy.

3 On eclectic theorising and its application in case-studies in Asian security, see, J.J. Suh, Peter J. Katzenstein and Allen Carlson, eds., *Rethinking Security in East Asia: Identity, Power, and Efficiency*, Stanford University Press, Stanford (CA), 2004; See also, Samuel S. Kim, ed., *The International Relations of Northeast Asia*, Rowman&Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Lanham, 2004.

4 For an excellent analysis of Japan's security policy since the Cold War in the different dimensions of security, see, Christopher W. Hughes, *Japan's Security Agenda: Military, Economic & Environmental Dimensions*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder (Colorado) and London, 2004.

5 See, Elena Atanassova-Cornelis, 'Defining and implementing human security: the case of Japan', in Tobias Debiel and Sascha Werthes, eds., *Human Security on Foreign Policy Agendas. Changes, Concepts and Cases*, Institute for Development and Peace (INEF) Report 80, Duisburg-Essen, 2006, pp. 39-51.

1. Pillars of Japanese Post-War National Security Policy

1.1 Strategy: Economic Development and Reliance on the US

Japanese national security policy during the Cold War followed a path that Prime-Minister Shigeru Yoshida⁶ set in 1951 with the signature of the original US-Japan Security Treaty. What later became known as the 'Yoshida Doctrine' meant economic development, pursuit of minimal military rearmament, and alignment with the US, with the main goal being Japan's post-war rebuilding. The need for US protection from the Communist, particularly Soviet, threat ensured the centrality of the Security Treaty in Japanese national security policy. In 1960, the treaty was revised to make clear the division of allies' roles: the US would provide for Japan's defence (Article 5), while Japan would provide bases and host-nation support for the US military forces in the Far East (Article 6).⁷ The asymmetrical arrangements under the revised treaty permitted Japan to minimise its defence spending, forego significant military build-up and avoid involvement in international security issues. Instead, the country focused on economic growth and expansion.

1.2 Norms: Domestic Anti-Militarism

The main normative guideline for Japan's post-war foreign and security policy is the domestic norm of anti-militarism, which is institutionalised in the 1947 Constitution through the Preamble and, particularly, Article 9. The latter is also known as the 'peace clause'.⁸ While the Preamble expresses Japan's desire for world-peace, Article 9 renounces the use of military force as a legitimate instrument of statecraft (paragraph one) and commits Japan to non-possession of war potential (paragraph two). The Japanese government has interpreted Article 9 as permitting Japan to maintain the minimum level of armed force necessary for self-defence.⁹ The country is prohibited from exercising its right to collective self-defence, which it possesses under Article 51 of the UN Charter, for this would exceed the scope of the use of

6 Yoshida served as prime-minister in 1946-7 and 1948-54.

7 The US air, land and naval forces were to contribute 'to the security of Japan and the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East'. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, *The 1960 Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States of America*, online, available at: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/q&a/ref/1.html>, Article 6.

8 For the full text of the Constitution in English, see: http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html.

9 See, Ministry of Defence, Japan, online, available at: http://www.mod.go.jp/e/d_policy/dp01.html.

military force permitted under Article 9.¹⁰

The government's interpretation of the 'peace clause' and hence limitation of the Japan's security role has reflected the anti-militarist public mood in Japan. As will be discussed later in this paper, domestic anti-militarism has changed after 1989. Whereas during the Cold War there was a strong opposition to any military activities, particularly those involving Japan's overseas participation, since the end of the Cold War the public has gradually come to accept more security responsibilities for Japan. Nevertheless, the Japanese people have remained wary of expansion of the country's security role, given the devastating consequences for Japan of its pre-war militarism. In addition, the anti-militarist public mood has resulted from a general belief that Japan's foreign policy should be guided by economic goals, which would ensure the country's economic well-being and eliminate conflicts at international level.¹¹

1.3 Policy-Making: Civilian Control

The path set by Yoshida led to, and resulted from, the establishment of Japanese domestic decision-making system, which significantly constrained the country's security role through the principle of civilian control over the military.¹² The Japan Defence Agency (JDA), created together with the Self-Defence Forces (SDF) in 1954, included a significant number of officials from other ministries, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Ministry of Finance (MOF).¹³ The agency was placed within the administrative structure of the Prime-Minister's Office¹⁴, with the consequence being that the JDA director-general was a 'minister of state' rather than a 'minister of defence'.¹⁵ As the agency's role was circumscribed to overseeing the SDF activities, it became a subordinate to MOFA. The latter, for its part, assumed the primary responsibility for devising national security policy and maintaining the security partnership with the US. The JDA's structure of civilian-bureaucratic control thus ensured that the military would occupy a low position in security policy-making,

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Hugo Dobson, *Japan and United Nations Peacekeeping: New Pressures, New responses*, Routledge, London, 2003, p. 36.

¹² Christopher W. Hughes, *Japan's Re-emergence as a 'Normal' Military Power*, reprinted, Routledge, London and New York, 2005.

¹³ See, Peter J. Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security: Police and Military in Postwar Japan*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1996.

¹⁴ The Prime-Minister's Office was reorganised into the Cabinet Office in 2001.

¹⁵ Another example of the system of civilian control is Article 66 of the Japanese Constitution, which stipulates that all member of the Cabinet must be civilians.

which, in turn, would prevent revival of strong military establishments.

2. Japanese National Security Policy during the Cold War

2.1 Domestic Political Divisions

The bipolar international system was reflected in the right-left political division in Japan. In 1955, the conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) was formed. This marked the start of the so-called '1955 political system' hence the LDP's one-party dominance, which was based on the party's absolute majority in both houses of the Diet in most of the elections until 1989. With economic growth being a priority issue on the government's policy agenda, successive LDP administrations continued to strengthen Yoshida's approach. This is not to say that the Yoshida Doctrine was not challenged by some conservatives who wanted Constitutional revision and a more independent defence posture for Japan. However, the consequence was a further 'institutionalisation' of this approach, and hence a 'renewed emphasis' on both economic expansion and alliance with the US.¹⁶ Indeed, for the Japanese political leadership this was the best way to eschew a major military build-up, while permitting some level of rearmament and ensuring the country's protection from the Soviet military threat.

Domestic anti-militarism was strongly advocated by the political parties from the left wing, most notably the Japan Socialist Party (JSP). Established in 1945, the JSP was the first post-war political party and remained the leader of opposition until the political changes of the 1990s. The political opposition demanded strict adherence to the Constitution and Article 9, withdrawal from the Security Treaty and limitation of the SDF role.¹⁷ Curtailment of the SDF role to the mission of Japan's territorial defence was also the stance of the centrist *Komei* Party (known as Clean Government Party)¹⁸, which until the 1990s occupied the position on the political spectrum between the LDP and the left.¹⁹ The LDP's security ambitions, however, played an important role for the incremental strengthening of Japan's defence

16 Michael J. Green, *Japan's Reluctant Realism: Foreign Policy Challenges in an Era of Uncertain Power*, 2nd edition, Palgrave, New York and Hampshire, 2003, p. 13.

17 Dobson, 2003.

18 The present New *Komei* Party was formed in November 1998 as a result of a merger including the original *Komei* Party. For the sake of clarity, the party will be referred to as the *Komei* Party throughout the text.

19 Peter J. Katzenstein and Nobuo Okawara, *Japan's National Security: Structures, Norms and Policy Responses in a Changing World*, Cornell University Press, New York (Ithaca), 1993; A.A. Stockwin, *Governing Japan: Divided Politics in a Major Economy*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1999.

posture and the security partnership with the US, particularly in the later stages of the Cold War. For its part, the domestic climate of anti-militarism successfully constrained a significant expansion of the country's military capabilities. This resulted in 1967 in the introduction of the three non-nuclear principles and placement of restrictions on arms exports, and in 1976 in limitation of Japan's defence spending to one per cent of the country's Gross National Product.²⁰ The decision of the LDP to impose a ceiling on the defence spending was a response to the Socialists' objection to the legitimacy of the SDF and the JSP's worries about a significant military build-up.²¹ In turn, this measure allowed the LDP to gain domestic acceptance of Japan's first post-war national security doctrine.

2.2 Decision-Making Actors

As discussed earlier, the organisation of the Japanese state from the early Cold War years precluded the revival of centralised and powerful military establishments through the system of civilian control. As a result, MOFA emerged as the primary bureaucratic actor responsible for the 'making' of Japanese national security policy,²² while the JDA engaged in implementing it by means of conducting the country's defence.²³ The prime-minister, despite being vested in the Constitution with significant policy-making power over the three government branches, was not able to exercise his authority due to dependence on the LDP's party politics and institutional weaknesses related to the core executive. The Cabinet was weak and ineffective as a result of frequent reshuffles,²⁴ which ensured MOFA's central position in security policy-making. Finally, the LDP's absolute majority in both houses of the Diet during most of the Cold War period allowed it to assert its policy preferences over those of the other political parties and to dominate parliamentary politics.

20 The three non-nuclear principles refer to not producing, possessing or bringing nuclear weapons into Japan. The restrictions on arms exports prohibited the export of weapons or weapons-related technology to the Communist bloc; the countries to which arms export was banned under UN resolutions; and states involved in, or likely to enter into, international conflicts. The ban on arms exports was strengthened in 1976 when its applicability was extended to all countries.

21 Katzenstein and Okawara, 1993; Sheila A. Smith, 'The evolution of military cooperation in the U.S.- Japan alliance', in Michael J. Green and Patrick M. Cronin, eds., *The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Past, Present, and Future*, Council on Foreign Relations, New York, 1999, pp. 69-93.

22 Two other ministries also have played an important role in security policy-making, albeit not in the actual process of devising national security policy: the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), being in charge of industrial policy, and MOF, in its capacity of the authority in charge of the budget and hence defence spending.

23 Katzenstein and Okawara, 1993, p. 104.

24 Between 1945 and 2006 there were twenty-seven prime-ministers in Japan. During the same period, there were eleven prime-ministers in the UK and eleven presidents in the US.

2.3 Conceptualising Security

2.3.1 'Comprehensive' approach to national security

The Yoshida Doctrine together with the US-Japan Security Treaty ensured Japan's security in the context of the East-West military confrontation and facilitated fast economic growth. Furthermore, the pursuit of economic-related security objectives was a means for Tokyo policy-makers to avoid Japan's assumption of a larger military-security role, which remained highly unpopular at domestic level. The priority given to economic growth evolved throughout the Cold War into a policy approach, which embraced a broad conceptualisation of national security beyond the traditional military dimension. This 'comprehensive' security policy emphasised economic, social, technological and political objectives for ensuring national security,²⁵ as well as environmental security concerns, such as natural disasters and environmental degradation.²⁶ This is not to say that the conventional military dimension became altogether substituted by the other security objectives. As stressed earlier, Japan's pursuit of military security has remained mostly confined to the bilateral security framework with the US.

2.3.2 National security doctrine and principles

Japanese security and defence policy after the Second World War has been based on the adopted in 1957 'Basic Policy for National Defence' (BPND) whose objectives were to prevent and repel aggression on Japan. The BPND stressed Japan's support for the UN activities and promotion of international co-operation for world peace, and the incremental development of Japan's defence capabilities together with the centrality of Japan-US security arrangements to Japan's protection from aggression.²⁷ Based on the Constitution and the BPND, the Japanese government subsequently developed four key national security principles: pursuit of exclusively defence-oriented policy, not becoming a military power, adherence to the three non-nuclear principles and ensuring civilian control of the military.²⁸

The basic principles set forth by the BPND were incorporated into the National Defence Programme Outline (NDPO) adopted in 1976, which was Japan's first post-war

25 Katzenstein and Okawara, 1993; Katzenstein, 1996; See also, Peter J. Katzenstein and Nobuo Okawara, 'Japan and Asian-Pacific security', in J.J. Suh, Peter J. Katzenstein and Allen Carlson, eds., *Rethinking Security in East Asia: Identity, Power, and Efficiency*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2004, pp. 101-3.

26 Hughes, 2004.

27 See, Ministry of Defence, Japan, online, available at: http://www.mod.go.jp/e/d_policy/dp02.html.

28 Ibid.

national security doctrine. Having introduced the 'basic defence force' concept, the NDPO expressed Japan's intention to pursue its national security policy in terms of defence and deterrence. Japan would possess the minimum necessary defence capability in order to deal on its own with a limited aggression, while in case of a large-scale attack it would seek the assistance of the US forces.²⁹ The adoption of the basic defence force concept resolved the problem between the ambitions of some JDA officials to have Japanese military capabilities match those of its regional adversaries and the political demands for restraining the SDF expansion.³⁰ A case in point is the 1972-6 JDA defence build-up plan, which proposed to double defence spending under the strong support of then JDA Director-General Yasuhiro Nakasone. The programme failed, not least because of strong domestic opposition to Japan's potential rearmament.³¹ In this sense, although the NDPO allowed for a qualitative upgrade of the defence forces, their subsequent modernisation remained limited in quantitative terms, with no aim of matching the Soviet military power.³² Furthermore, in accordance with the principle of exclusively defence-oriented policy, Japan has refrained from possessing offensive weapons, such as Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM), long-range bombers or offensive aircraft carriers.

The Soviet military build-up and the onset of the Second Cold War in the late 1970s created incentives for deepening the US-Japan security partnership. In 1978, the two sides adopted Guidelines for US-Japan Defence Co-operation (hereafter, the Defence Guidelines). In line with Japan's exclusively defence-oriented policy and the basic defence force concept, the Defence Guidelines emphasised Article 5-related joint operations for Japan's defence.³³ However, they also included provisions for exploring bilateral co-operation under Article 6 of the Security Treaty, i.e. in regional conflicts in the Far East. The latter provision remained, however, unexplored during the Cold War, as successive LDP administrations regarded the SDF overseas dispatch, hence participation in Article 6-related operations, as exceeding the minimum level of force needed for self-defence.³⁴

29 Ministry of Defence, Japan, *Boei Hakusho 1977* (White Paper on Defence 1977), online, available at: http://www.clearing.mod.go.jp/hakusho_data/1977/w1977_00.html.

30 Smith, 1999.

31 Koji Murata, 'Do the new guidelines make the Japan-U.S. alliance more effective?', in Masashi Nishihara, ed., *The Japan-U.S. Alliance: New Challenges for the Twenty-First Century*, Japan Center for International Exchange, Tokyo and New York, 2000, p. 24.

32 Katzenstein and Okawara, 1993; Smith, 1999.

33 Ministry of Defence, Japan, *Boei Hakusho 1979* (White Paper on Defence 1979), online, available at: http://www.clearing.mod.go.jp/hakusho_data/1979/w1979_00.html.

34 Hughes, 2005.

Indeed, the domestic opposition to overseas dispatch, which stemmed from the strong anti-militarist sentiments, successfully constrained the LDP policy-makers' security ambitions. In addition, there was no external demand for overseas participation. By contrast, since the 1990s on, the growing pressure on Japan to contribute both to the alliance and international security, on the one hand, and the public's increased awareness of security-related issues, on the other, have led to alteration of decision-makers' approach to Japan's security role.

3. Post-Cold War Changes

3.1 External Security Challenges

The end of the East-West military confrontation and the collapse of the Soviet Union had a profound impact on Japanese national security policy and the US-Japan alliance. Produced by the Cold War's bipolarity, the bilateral security arrangements served a purpose to deter the Communist threat and expansion. The disappearance of the common enemy and the emergence of 'non-conventional' security threats, such as weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and international terrorism, questioned the rationale of the US-Japan security partnership. More importantly, the changed external security environment raised the issue of burden-sharing between the allies, thereby pressing for a redefinition of Japanese security policy.

The need for Japan's presence in the international security arena sharply arose following the Persian Gulf War of 1990-1, which exposed Japan's 'chequebook diplomacy' and its inability to deal with global security concerns. Although the LDP government made a US\$13 billion financial contribution, its failure to make a 'human', i.e. personnel, contribution to the US-led multinational forces deployed to the Gulf overshadowed the substantial monetary contribution. The result was severe international, particularly American, criticism of Japan. While constitutional restrictions under Article 9 and a strong domestic opposition stalled the LDP government's attempt to pass a law for the SDF dispatch, these domestic constraints did not prevent the criticism of Japan as a being a 'free-rider', particularly, given its dependence on the US ally for security.

The 1990-1 Gulf War was followed by the 1994 North Korean nuclear crisis, which both revealed a new military threat and questioned Japan's role in the bilateral alliance. With

the possibility of military conflict with the North becoming real, Washington demanded that the SDF provide non-combat logistical support for the US troops. As was the case during the Gulf Crisis, a 'human' contribution was not possible, for Tokyo did not have the legal authority to engage the SDF in overseas security operations. It, therefore, became clear that Japan's inward-oriented security approach and hence the US-Japan security arrangements could not be applied to the post-1989 security environment.

After the 1994 nuclear crisis Japan's anxieties about the North Korean nuclear threat only continued to be heightened. In 1998, Pyongyang launched a three-staged ballistic missile over Japan, while in 2002-3 a second nuclear crisis erupted when the North restarted its nuclear programme and withdrew from the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT). The July 2006 missile launch and the subsequent October nuclear test by the North served as further indicators for Tokyo of Pyongyang's potentially dangerous intentions. In addition, the North Korean security threat has continued to be associated with the issue of Japanese kidnapped in the 1970s and 1980s, and the incidents of repeated incursions of North Korean spy ships into Japanese territorial waters.

The post-Cold War external security environment has become for Japan even more complicated with the 'rise' of China. Although Japan's policy towards China has traditionally been based on economic engagement through foreign aid and growing trade relations, the 1990s saw worsening of the bilateral security dialogue. On the part of Japan, concerns have emerged regarding the expansion of China's naval and air military capabilities, and, particularly, the modernisation of its nuclear and missile potential. The 1995 Chinese nuclear tests and the 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis have been significant in their negative impact on the Japanese public and pro-China LDP politicians.³⁵ Bilateral tensions have been exacerbated by territorial disputes over small islands in the East China Sea, while Japan's China concerns have intensified as a result of frequent approaches by Chinese ships and aircraft of the Japan-China median line in the contested area. According to the JDA, during fiscal year 2005, Chinese aircraft's approaches of Japan's airspace increased eight times from 2004, reaching a record-high of 107 sorties.³⁶ The increase of flights by Chinese reconnaissance planes near the disputed area is reportedly believed to be for the purpose of collecting the SDF electronic intelligence.

³⁵ Thomas Berger, 'Japan's international relations: the political and security dimensions', in Samuel S. Kim, ed., *The International Relations of Northeast Asia*, Rowman&Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Lanham, 2004, p. 154.

³⁶ *Daily Yomiuri on-line*, 22 April 2006.

Last but not least, international terrorism has expanded the list of non-conventional security threats that Japan has faced after 1989. While the unpredictability of terrorist attacks makes them particularly difficult to be dealt with, another concern emerged during the second nuclear crisis: the danger that North Korea might embark on selling WMD to terrorist organisations and thereby become a target in the US-led 'war on terror'.³⁷

3.2. Domestic Changes

3.2.1 New political divisions

The 1955 political system was established during the period of bipolar confrontation between the East and the West. With the disappearance of the communist versus capitalist ideological division, the domestic political scene in Japan changed. Contemporaneously, the 1955 system was shaken by the 1990-1 Gulf Crisis and its negative consequences for Japan's diplomacy, by the 1992 split of the LDP due to financial scandals and by emergence of new political parties. Although these developments ended the LDP's one-party dominance and marked the start of coalition governments, the LDP has continued to lead parliamentary politics in Japan.³⁸ In the security area, a priority on the LDP's policy agenda since the mid-1990s on has become redefinition of Japanese security role and strengthening the security partnership with the US, which has been linked to Japan's expansion of its international contributions.

The collapse of the 1955 system was paralleled by alterations in the opposition camp, as the JSP, the old 'guardian' of domestic anti-militarism, significantly declined in popularity in the early 1990s. The leader of opposition became the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), which included former JSP and LDP members among others. The DPJ's stance on Japanese national security policy has largely overlapped with that of the LDP in that the Democrats have accepted the SDF existence, and recognised the US-Japan Security Treaty and related bilateral security co-operation as central to Japan's security. The main difference between the two parties has concerned Japan's international contributions, with the DPJ advocating Japan's international engagements only under a UN mandate.

³⁷ Berger, 2004, p. 157.

³⁸ The last election for the Diet's upper house, which took place in July 2007, deprived the LDP-led coalition government of its majority in the chamber. At the time of this writing (August 2007), it is too early to comment on likely political realignments.

3.2.2 Power shifts and centralisation of security policy-making

The political changes after 1989 have been accompanied by alteration of the policy-making on security. As discussed earlier, the devise of Japanese national security policy during the Cold War was dominated by MOFA, while the JDA's role was restricted to ensuring Japan's territorial defence in the context of the Soviet military threat. The prime-minister's, as well as the Cabinet's, role was rather limited. However, the political and executive leadership in security decision-making has been strengthened as a result of administrative reforms in the second half of the 1990s, which reduced the number of ministries. More importantly, the reforms have expanded both the prime-minister's authority (by enabling him to initiate policies) and the role of the Cabinet ministers in decision-making.

In recent years, notably under Junichiro Koizumi and Shinzo Abe, the trend towards strengthening the prime-minister's top-down executive leadership and weakening the bureaucratic influence has continued. Abe, in particular, has focused on centralising the decision-making on national security by increasing the number of special advisers to the prime-minister from the previous two to five. He has assigned them issue-areas considered to be a priority for his administration, including national security and North Korea's abductions. Abe also is determined to establish a National Security Council (NSC) in Japan, which would be modelled after the one existing in the White House. As the purpose of the NSC would be to devise foreign and security policy strategies, as well as discuss responses to national emergencies, the NSC would in essence give more power on national security issues to the prime-minister and core executive.

Finally, the composition and role of political actors from the legislative branch have changed as well. As previously discussed, while the LDP has remained the dominant political party, coalition governments have emerged and the DPJ has become the leader of opposition. With the need to respond to new security challenges and pass relevant legislation, the Diet has expanded its input into security decision-making. Ultimately, both the tasks and importance of the JDA, and in turn of the SDF, have increased too.

3.2.3 Public opinion on security

Japanese public opinion has proved to be supportive of the US-Japan alliance with regard to Japan's security protection. According to the Japan Cabinet Office opinion polls, a stable majority of Japanese since the late Cold War period view the best option for Japan's

defence to be the US-Japan security arrangements together with the SDF. Figures have remained above 60 per cent since 1978 and increased in the post-Cold War period, reaching 76.2 per cent in the latest 2006 survey.³⁹ Similar trend is observed with regard to support for the Security Treaty as a provider for Japan's peace and security.⁴⁰ A stable majority of more than 56 per cent since 1972 (except in 1994) also indicates that preventing aggression should be the SDF primary mission, with figures reaching 68.6 per cent and 69.4 per cent in 2003 and 2006, respectively.⁴¹ In addition, a clear trend towards viewing the SDF as important in domestic disaster relief activities is observed after 1989. Figures show an increase from around 16 per cent in 1991 to a little above 75 per cent in 2006.⁴²

One of the post-Cold War changes in public opinion on security has been related to the SDF participation in overseas security missions, notably in UN PKO. Whereas in 1990 the majority of Japanese opposed the SDF dispatch on UN PKO, in 1992 a majority sanctioned this new SDF role.⁴³ In the early 2000s more than 70 per cent of respondents approved of the SDF peace-keeping operations.⁴⁴ Contemporaneously, domestic support for international disaster relief missions increased from 54.2 per cent in 1991 to 78 per cent and more in the 2000s.⁴⁵ At the same time, despite the gradual acceptance of 'human' contributions abroad, the Japanese people have continued to oppose the SDF use of military force in overseas operations, and favour only humanitarian and non-combat activities.⁴⁶

Finally, a major change in Japanese public opinion on security has been observed with regard to threat perceptions, which have been altered as a result of the 1998 missile launch and the 11 September terrorist attacks, but also because of China's military 'rise'. Since 2000, opinion polls show the public's increased concern about Japan's involvement in war due to existing international conflicts and tensions. Figures have increased from 64.5 per in 2000 to 80 per cent in 2003.⁴⁷ In the 2003 survey, 74.4 per cent of the polled cited North Korea as the biggest security concern, 34.7 per cent indicated WMD and missiles, and 33.9 per cent cited

39 Japan Cabinet Office, *Jieitai Boei Mondai ni Kansuru Yoron Chosa* (Opinion Polls on the Self-Defence Forces and Defence Affairs), online, various years, available at: <http://www8.cao.go.jp/survey/y-index.html>.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid.

43 Dobson, 2003.

44 Japan Cabinet Office, *Opinion Polls on the Self-Defence Forces and Defence Affairs*, 2000, 2003.

45 Ibid., various years.

46 Paul Midford, 'Japanese public opinion and the war on terrorism: implications for Japan's security strategy', *Policy Studies* 27, East-West Center Washington, online, 2006, available at: <http://www.eastwestcenterwashington.org>.

47 Japan Cabinet Office, *Opinion Polls on the Self-Defence Forces and Defence Affairs*, 2000, 2003.

the Middle East. The latest 2006 poll showed that the Korean peninsula has remained the main concern for the majority of respondents, 63.7 per cent. In addition, 46.2 per cent cited international terrorism, 36.3 per cent indicated China's military modernisation and maritime activities, and 29.6 per cent pointed out WMD and missiles.⁴⁸

4. New Security Threats: Japan's Responses

4.1 Beyond Territorial Defence

The changed international security environment after the Cold War became the external pressure for Japan to embark on redefining its national security policy. The North Korean nuclear threat, in particular, made it clear to Tokyo decision-makers that if they wanted to ensure Washington's continuing commitment to the country's defence, they had to expand Japan's contribution to the bilateral alliance. In addition, after the 1990-1 Gulf War demands for Japan's presence in the international security arena have increased, particularly on the part of the US ally. Domestically, the collapse of the JSP, the strengthening of the prime-minister's executive leadership and the Japanese public's increased awareness of new security threats have facilitated incremental expansion of the country's security role.

Japan's first response to the demand for international contribution was the enactment in 1992 of the International Peace Co-operation Law (IPCL). The law enabled the SDF to participate in UN PKO and international humanitarian relief missions,⁴⁹ although placed restrictions on the SDF peace-keeping duties.⁵⁰ Clearing the way for the defence forces' overseas dispatch, the IPCL was followed in 1995 by a revision of Japanese Cold War national security doctrine. The new NDPO reaffirmed Japan's commitment to the four key national security principles and to the concept of the basic defence force, but envisaged a more active response from the SDF in co-operation with the US military to external aggression.⁵¹ The SDF role also was expanded to include peace-keeping and international humanitarian relief missions. More importantly, the document introduced co-operation with the US in regional contingencies, thereby paving the way for a revision of the Cold War US-

48 Ibid., 2006.

49 Since the enactment of the IPCL the SDF have participated in a number of UN PKO, including in Cambodia, Mozambique and East Timor, and in international humanitarian relief missions for refugees from Rwanda, East Timor and Afghanistan.

50 The IPCL was amended in 2001 to permit the SDF full-scale participation in PKO.

51 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, *National Defense Program Outline in and after FY 1996*, online, 1995, available at: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/q&a/ref/6a.html>.

Japan Defence Guidelines.

Essentially, the 1997 Revised Guidelines resulted from a series of security crises, notably the 1994 North Korean nuclear crisis and the 1996 Taiwan Strait crisis, which necessitated strengthening the US-Japan alliance. The significance of the new document was that it both defined the 'functional' scope of the bilateral security co-operation under Article 6 of the Security Treaty and expanded the 'geographical' remit of the alliance.⁵² Japan would now contribute to regional crises, defined as 'situations in areas surrounding Japan', through non-combat rear-area support. Although the Revised Guidelines made the alliance become a 'multi-functional' one,⁵³ the Cold War asymmetrical structure of the allies' roles was somewhat preserved, for the prohibition on collective self-defence and use of force overseas remained unchanged for Japan.

The implementation of the Revised Guidelines in Japan was speeded up by the 1998 North Korean missile launch. Together with the 1994 nuclear crisis, the launch contributed to realignment of conservatives and establishment of an LDP-led coalition at the end of the 1990s, which, in turn, ensured political support for passing in 1999 a special law.⁵⁴ The law permitted the SDF to engage in rear-area support, and rear-area search and rescue operations during regional security crises. A direct consequence of the 1998 missile launch also was the Japanese government's decision the same year for joint research with the US on ballistic missile defence (BMD). While a joint study on BMD systems was initiated in 1994, until the 1998 launch Tokyo had refrained from making a formal commitment to joint development, not least because of Beijing's objections that this would neutralise China's nuclear deterrent and involve the Taiwan issue.⁵⁵ The presence of a clear military threat heightened domestic security concerns and cleared the way for BMD co-operation. Indeed, 57 per cent of Japanese polled in 2006 supported a defence system against ballistic missiles.⁵⁶

4.2 Fighting Terrorism

The expansion of Japan's security role was accelerated following the 11 September terrorist attacks on the US and during the term of former Prime-Minister Koizumi. While Koizumi's public popularity and leadership abilities certainly facilitated the SDF dispatch in

52 Hughes, 2004, p. 178.

53 Murata, 2000, p. 31.

54 Green, 2003.

55 Green, 2003; Hughes, 2005.

56 Japan Cabinet Office, Opinion Polls on the Self-Defence Forces and Defence Affairs, 2006.

'the war on terror', the domestic political reforms of the 1990s had paved the way for Koizumi to exercise his executive authority. Externally, the presence of the North Korean issue, particularly in the context of the 2002-3 nuclear crisis, meant a pressing need for US support for its resolution. The 1990-1 Gulf War experience, for its part, served as a negative remainder from the past. Indeed, already in the early stages of the Afghan campaign a senior MOFA official was quoted as having said that, 'How we support the US this time [in comparison with the 1990-1 Gulf War] will determine the course of Japan-US relations for the next 20 years. We have to make it possible to send SDF people this time. There is no other choice'.⁵⁷

Strongly supported by Koizumi and the LDP, and with the pro-active involvement of MOFA, the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law (ATSML) was enacted in October 2001. The ATSML authorised the dispatch of SDF ships to the Indian Ocean for rear-area logistical support for the US-led forces fighting in Afghanistan. From the opposition parties, the DPJ expressed support for the dispatch under certain conditions, although it eventually voted against the law.⁵⁸ The Japanese public, for its part, showed initial support and a clear preference for SDF non-combat participation, although opinion polls over time revealed fluctuations in the numbers in favour and in those against the dispatch.⁵⁹ This suggests that, despite the general approval of Japan's contribution to the international fight against terrorism, the anti-militarist sentiments continued to dominate the public mood. In contrast to the 1990-1 Gulf War, however, the concerns now were related to the form of the SDF contribution and not to the SDF overseas dispatch *per se*. Finally, given the Japanese people's support for UN-centred activities, the UN legitimacy, seen in the law's full name, must have played an important role for the ATSML support.⁶⁰ Indeed, in its justification for passing the ATSML, the Koizumi government emphasised UNSC Resolution 1368 for eradication of terrorism and hence the need for Japan's co-operation with other states for elimination of this threat.⁶¹

Being a strong advocate of Japan's participation in the fight against international

57 The Japan Times on-line, 17 October 2001.

58 For a detailed analysis on the process leading to the enactment of ATSML, see, Christopher W. Hughes, 'Japan's security policy and the war on terror: steady incrementalism or radical leap?', *Working Paper No. 104/02*, Centre for the Study of Globalisation and Regionalisation, University of Warwick, 2002.

59 For details on opinion polls, see, Midford, 2006.

60 The full name of the ATSML is: The Special Measures Law Concerning Measures Taken by Japan in Support of the Activities of Foreign Countries Aiming to Achieve the Purposes of the Charter of the United Nations in Response to the Terrorist Attacks Which Took Place on September 11, 2001, in the United States of America as well as Concerning Humanitarian Measures Based on Relevant Resolutions of the United Nations.

61 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, *Diplomatic Bluebook 2002*, online, available at: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/2002/index.html>, pp. 16, 18.

terrorism, Koizumi also was one of the first supporters of the US policy towards Iraq in 2003. Under his executive leadership and despite the DPJ opposition, the LDP-led coalition government succeeded in enacting a special law on Iraq,⁶² which opened the way for dispatching the SDF in early 2004 on a non-combat mission for humanitarian and reconstruction purposes to southern Iraq.⁶³ In comparison with the Afghan case, the case of Iraq clearly showed the link between the LDP's alliance-based security policy and the need for extending support to the US ally. Indeed, Koizumi backed President Bush's actions in Iraq without UN sanction and in the face of 80 per cent domestic public opposition to the war. The North Korea issue was reportedly a crucial factor for the Koizumi administration's support for the US campaign in Iraq.⁶⁴ In the early stages of the war, Koizumi stressed that the preservation of the US-Japan alliance was related to Japan's national interest, to the country's prosperity in peace and to deterrence of potential threats against Japan.⁶⁵ He also emphasised the link between Japan's pursuit of international responsibilities and the maintenance of the bilateral alliance. Subsequently, Koizumi's views were echoed in the Japanese government's official statement made in support of the war.⁶⁶

Despite these initial statements, the law on Iraq (as was the ATSMML) was separated from the legislation covering the US-Japan security relations⁶⁷ and enacted only after UNSC Resolution 1483 for the reconstruction of Iraq had been adopted. The activities of the SDF were restricted to non-combat humanitarian and reconstruction assistance, while the SDF were deployed to the less dangerous Southern Iraq. All this suggests that the Koizumi government tried both to avoid Japan's direct involvement in a US-led (and not UN-sanctioned) war and to respond to domestic anti-militarism. Nevertheless, the public's opposition to the war and rather mixed attitude towards the SDF dispatch have played a role for the LDP's poor performance in the July 2004 upper house elections.⁶⁸ Furthermore, the

62 Law Concerning the Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq.

63 Although the Koizumi government withdrew the Ground SDF in the summer of 2006, it decided to keep the Air SDF in Kuwait to provide logistical support for the US-led multinational forces and the UN, and to extend their activities to northern Iraq.

64 Berger, 2004; Michael Penn, 'The US-Japan security alliance and the decision to deploy the GSDF to Iraq', *Shingetsu Electronic Journal of Japanese-Islamic Relations*, 1, March 2007, pp. 31-56.

65 Prime Minister of Japan and his Cabinet, *Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's Interview on the Issue of Iraq*, 18 March 2003; *Press Conference by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on the Issue of Iraq*, 20 March 2003, online, available at: http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/kikikanri/iraq/index_e.html.

66 National Institute for Defense Studies, *East Asian Strategic Review 2004*, The Japan Times, Tokyo, 2004, p. 226.

67 Hughes, 2005, p. 131.

68 See, Midford, 2006.

defence forces' deployment to a country with ongoing hostilities involved a risk of casualties, which, in turn, might have significantly jeopardised the position of Koizumi and the LDP. Indeed, this was clear from opinion polls, which showed that the Japanese people would hold Koizumi responsible for casualties and even demand his resignation.⁶⁹ Such an outcome was eventually avoided, for the SDF did not suffer even one single casualty in Iraq.

5. New Security Threats: Japan's Opportunities

5.1 Legislative Changes

The Koizumi administration's response to the 'war on terror' has not only strengthened the US-Japan alliance, but also added a global dimension to Japan's security role. At domestic level, the need to expand Japan's international contributions and tackle new security threats has created opportunities for more pro-activity on the part of political actors, including notably the prime-minister. This, in turn, has permitted the LDP to realise long sought security goals through enactment of several security-related bills.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks and the 2002-3 North Korean nuclear crisis, as well as several incidents of North Korean spy vessels' incursions into Japanese territorial waters, paved the way for enactment of national emergency legislation in 2003-4. Although studies on domestic crisis management system were launched in the late 1970s, anti-militarist constraints and fears for re-militarisation prevented enactment of relevant bills during the Cold War. However, the emergence of new security threats has created a large domestic coalition in favour of the legislation. Indeed, even though the legislation was promoted by Koizumi and supported by the ruling parties, the largest opposition party, the DPJ, voted in favour as well. The new set of laws established Japan's crisis management system and strengthened, in particular, the prime-minister's authority in dealing with emergencies and in providing support for the US forces engaged in Japan's defence.⁷⁰

Similarly to the national emergency legislation bills, the LDP government endorsed another bill during the Cold War, yet, never moved towards its enactment – a bill for upgrading the JDA to a ministry. Again, the altered external security environment and political situation in Japan have gradually created momentum for realising this goal. The bill

⁶⁹ The Japan Times on-line, 19 January 2004, 11 April 2004.

⁷⁰ For details on the legislation, see, Hughes, 2005, pp. 73-6.

was submitted to the Diet by the Koizumi administration, but passed into law in late 2006, during the current administration of Abe. Supported by the DPJ from the opposition parties, it was enacted together with a second bill, which amended the SDF law to expand the 'primary duties' of the SDF. Before the amendment the SDF core duties included only national defence and disaster relief missions in Japan, while overseas operations were defined as 'supplementary duties'. Reflecting the change in Japanese national security policy towards more international security engagements, the SDF primary duties now also include overseas missions, such as UN PKO and those conducted in Iraq.

For its part, the elevation of the JDA to the Ministry of Defence (MoD) has important impact on Japanese security policy-making. Not only is MoD equal to MOFA, but it also should become the main bureaucratic player in the formulation, not merely implementation, of national security policy. The new minister of defence would reportedly become one of the three members of the NSC (the other two being the chief cabinet secretary and the minister of foreign affairs) to be chaired by the prime-minister. Finally, the JDA's elevation to a ministry has raised the question how civilian control over the military would be maintained in the future. In this regard, calls have been made for strengthening the role of political actors, notably the prime-minister and the Diet, in the system of civilian control. Ultimately, this would ensure politicians' final say in security policy-making.

5.2 Conceptual Changes

The legislative changes related to Japanese national security policy have been reflected in conceptual changes of Japan's security role, which were made by the Koizumi administration. This is clear from the 2004 National Defence Programme Guideline (NDPG), which replaced the 1995 national security doctrine. Although the NDPG reaffirmed Japan's commitment to the four key national security principles, the revised document stated that after providing for its own defence, the second aim for Japan would be 'to improve the international security environment in view of preventing any threats from reaching Japan'.⁷¹ Likewise, the NDPG introduced a new concept of 'multi-functional, flexible and effective' defence forces, which would respond not only to full-scale invasion, but also to 'new threats and diverse situations', as well as actively engage in international peace co-operation activities. In this way, the SDF would be transformed from having a 'deterrent effect-orientation' to a 'response

⁷¹ Ministry of Defence, Japan, *National Defense Program Guideline for FY 2005 and After*, online, 2004, available at: http://www.mod.go.jp/e/d_policy/index.html.

capabilities-focus'.⁷² The 2004 NDPG emphasised that the conceptual changes and, in turn, the strengthening of the defence force structure were deemed necessary due to the altered nature of threats that Japan was facing. In other words, while the conventional threat of full-scale invasion has decreased, new security threats, such as WMD and international terrorism, have emerged. Notable in this context was the first explicit mentioning in Japanese national security doctrine of two specific countries - North Korea and China - as key threats to Japan's security.

The NDPG led to a series of US-Japan security agreements finalised in 2006, which opened the way for expansion of the alliance's scope. In line with Japan's newly defined security role, the US-Japan security arrangements would now respond to 'new threats and diverse contingencies' and contribute to improving the international security environment (in addition to their mission for Japan's defence and response to regional contingencies).⁷³ This would be achieved through closer integration of the SDF functions with those of the US military, and through expanded bilateral co-operation in areas such as BMD and international peace co-operation activities.⁷⁴

The significance of the NDPG and the latest bilateral agreements is that they may have been the first step towards a new revision of the 1997 Guidelines for US-Japan Defence Co-operation. The revision was proposed by Japan in 2006 and would reportedly focus on bilateral co-operation in BMD, international peace activities, combating international terrorism and responding to emergencies.⁷⁵ If the US and Japan move towards the realisation of this goal, a domestic debate on new security legislation will likely gain momentum in Japan. Furthermore, as the SDF primary duties now include overseas operations, the LDP may seek enactment of a general law covering international missions, which would obviate the need to enact special legislation, such as the ATSMML. Both Koizumi and Abe have stressed the need for such legal framework, and the LDP has already drafted a proposal for the general law. The proposal, however, does not necessarily require authorisation by the UN or request by other international organisations for the SDF dispatch.⁷⁶ Rather, it stresses the

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ United States Department of State, *Rumsfeld Hosts U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee*, 29 October 2005, online, available at: <http://www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/ot/55773.htm>.

⁷⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, *Joint Statement of the U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee*, Washington, DC, 1 May 2006, online, available at: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/scc/joint0605.html>.

⁷⁵ *Daily Yomiuri* on-line, 27 April 2006; *The Japan Times* on-line, 3 May 2006.

⁷⁶ *Daily Yomiuri* on-line, 2 September 2006.

government's discretion in taking the decision. In other words, the LDP seeks to have the freedom to decide when and where to 'carry out an activity under international co-operation, as a nation'⁷⁷ so that, presumably, it could justify easier Japan's future support for the US.

5.3 Constitutional Revision

The legislative and conceptual changes in Japanese national security policy have been paralleled by intensified domestic debate on Constitutional amendment. Given the significance of the 'peace clause' for Japan's security role, Article 9 has become the centre of the discussions. For the LDP, which included revision of the Constitution in its policy platform announced at the party's establishment in 1955,⁷⁸ this domestic debate has represented a first step towards the realisation of this goal.

The strongest advocates of the amendment of Article 9 have been Koizumi and Abe. Although the two ruling parties – the LDP and the *Komei* Party – and the DPJ have all agreed that paragraph one of the peace-clause should be preserved, the parties have not reached consensus with regard to the second paragraph. The debate has, therefore, focused on how to define the SDF existence and role, while maintaining the renouncement of war and the threat or use of force for settling international disputes. The 2005 constitutional proposals of the LDP and the DPJ have further narrowed the gap between the two major parties, as both parties expressed support for legitimisation of the SDF and clarification of their right to self-defence. The disagreement between the LDP and the DPJ has thus remained limited to the issue of collective self-defence.

Not surprisingly, it is the LDP, the traditional 'guardian' of the US-Japan alliance and a strong proponent of a strengthened bilateral security partnership, which has called for the removal of Japan's self-imposed ban on collective self-defence.⁷⁹ Koizumi and Abe have openly advocated Japan's support for the US in collective self-defence arrangements. Prime-Minister Abe has even established an advisory panel of experts to discuss specific cases, in which the exercise of this right would be acceptable for Japan.⁸⁰ In contrast to the LDP, the

77 Ibid.

78 Green, 2003, p. 13.

79 The Liberal Democratic Party of Japan, *Kenpo Kaisei no Pointo - Kenpo Kaisei ni Mukete no Omona Ronten* (Points for Constitutional Revision – Main Issues of the Debate on Constitutional Revision), online, 2004, available at: http://www.jimin.jp/jimin/jimin/2004_seisaku/kenpou/index.html.

80 At present, there are four case-studies under consideration: response to attacks on US Navy ships operating jointly with the Maritime SDF in international waters; interception of ballistic missiles heading towards the US; response and protection of troops of other nations who come under attack during joint international PKO; and provision of logistic support to other nations taking part in international PKO.

DPJ has approached cautiously the issue of Japan's use of military force, particularly for collective self-defence purposes solely in support of the US ally. A strong advocate of Japan's participation in UN-centred collective security missions, the DPJ has called for a 'maximum restriction' on the use of force even in such operations.⁸¹ The current DPJ President Ichiro Ozawa, for his part, has argued that under the present Constitution Japan may participate in UN-sanctioned military activities. The gap between the DPJ and the LDP on the right to collective self-defence seem to be further narrowing, for the DPJ has reportedly proposed that this right be allowed in limited situations, notably when Japan faces a direct and imminent threat to its territory.⁸²

Despite the increasingly converging views of the two largest parties, the *Komei* Party, the LDP's junior coalition partner, has expressed a different position. Although the party has approved of Constitutional amendment, it has opposed changing Article 9 and allowing the country to exercise its right to collective self-defence. Likewise, the majority of the Japanese people support revision of the Constitution and legitimisation of the SDF, but want to preserve Article 9 and the prohibition on collective self-defence.

The domestic debate on Constitutional amendment seems to have produced fruitful results for the LDP, as Prime-Minister Abe has succeeded in May in enacting the national referendum procedure bill required for making changes. Given that Constitutional revision requires the support of a two-third of the Diet members and a simple majority vote in a national referendum, domestic consensus will become a crucial factor for the LDP's success on the issue.

6. Security Threats and/or Domestic Interests?

6.1 Altered Security Threats

Despite the disappearance of the Soviet threat and changes in polarity, Japan has not followed the path expected by neo-realism leading to more autonomy from the US and ultimately to becoming a power pole. Indeed, the post-Cold War period has seen a qualitative upgrade of Japan's military capabilities, including notably through enhanced intelligence

81 The Democratic Party of Japan, *Kenpo Teigen* (Constitutional Proposals), online, 2005, available at: http://www.dpj.or.jp/seisaku/sogo/BOX_SG0065.html.

82 *Daily Yomiuri* on-line, 20 November 2006; The Japan Times on-line, 30 November 2006.

capabilities, research in BMD and procurement of new military equipment.⁸³ However, Japan has not acquired massive military capabilities, such as nuclear arsenal, and has not embarked on autonomous defence. Quite the opposite, Japan has deepened its reliance on the US for security protection. The modernisation of Japanese military capabilities and their integration with those of the US ally have made the 'national defence build-up' become an 'alliance-oriented defence build-up'.⁸⁴ Finally, Japan has increasingly sought expansion of its international security role within the framework of the bilateral alliance rather than independently.

Japan's security behaviour may, to some extent, be explained by a modified neo-realist perspective,⁸⁵ or by a somewhat 'softer' variation of neo-realism. This approach takes account of security pressures exerted on a state, which, in turn, is related to changes in the nature of security threats. It also stresses the importance of exercising influence on one's ally rather than primarily seeking autonomy from them. Thus, Japan's decision to maintain its security partnership with the US after the Cold War may stem from altered security threats and, consequently, the costs associated with ensuring its survival. Whereas the conventional threat of full-scale invasion has dropped, WMD and other offensive weapons have been proliferating, and international terrorism has emerged as a new security threat. Japan's regional situation, in particular, has become very unpredictable due to the developments on the Korean peninsula and China's expansion of its military capabilities. All these non-conventional security threats could endanger Japan's survival in the long-term and would require significant military build-up in order to be dealt with. Maintaining the alliance with Washington is thus a way to ensure the US commitment to Japan's protection and to minimise costs. It also enables Tokyo to exert influence on Washington in order to shape policy outcomes to suit Japan's interests (for example with regard to North Korea).

The modified neo-realist perspective, however, remains questionable regarding Japan's strive to increase its reliance on the US. Furthermore, it is unclear why a realist Japan is seeking to assume international security role largely within the framework of its partnership with the US. Last but not least, Japan's unwillingness to use force overseas is puzzling as well. Neo-realism would certainly expect post-1989 Japan to be ready for such participation,

83 On equipment and personnel changes planned under the NDPG, see, Ministry of Defence, Japan, 2004.

84 Hughes, 2005.

85 See, Rainer Baumann, Voker Rittberger and Wolfgang Wagner, 'Neorealist foreign policy theory', in Volker Rittberger, ed., *German Foreign Policy since Unification: Theories and Case Studies*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2001, pp. 37-67.

particularly in regional operations directly threatening Japan's security.

6.2 Altered Domestic Interests

A better explanation of Japanese national security policy after the Cold War may be provided if one adds international variables to domestic ones and, thereby, considers the role of domestic interests in shaping the country's security policy. Thus, it is not simply the state as a rational entity that seeks to survive, but rather its utility-maximising decision-makers who 'make' the state behave in one or another way. The strength of such a utilitarian-liberal approach is that it looks inside Japan and indicates who the dominant policy-makers are, what preferences they have and how their priorities eventually translate into Japan's security policy.⁸⁶ If domestic interests change, either as a result of alteration in the composition of the dominant domestic actors or of actors' preferences, security policy will change too.⁸⁷ As will be illustrated below, policy preferences in Japan have changed due to international and domestic factors. The primary interest of decision-makers, notably politicians and bureaucrats, to maintain and maximise their policy-making power (as well as financial gains) is said to remain the same.⁸⁸

6.2.1 Security threats and policy preferences

While the composition of the dominant domestic actors in Japanese security policy-making has not significantly changed after 1989, a power shift from the bureaucratic actors towards the political ones has been taking place. Notable is the strengthening of the premiership and, in turn, the centralisation of security decision-making. Another development is the increased involvement of political actors from the legislative branch, which gives them more leverage vis-à-vis MOFA. Given the JDA's transformation into MoD, MOFA's role in national security issues is likely to be further weakened and the role of politicians in the system of civilian control strengthened. These power shifts have been paralleled by changes in the policy preferences of the dominant domestic actors, particularly politicians, regarding Japan's security role.

During the Cold War, successive LDP administrations supported conducting Japan's

86 See, Corinna Freund and Volker Rittberger, 'Utilitarian-liberal foreign policy theory', in Volker Rittberger, ed., *German Foreign Policy since Unification: Theories and Case Studies*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2001, pp. 68-104.

87 Ibid.

88 Ibid.

national security policy within the framework of the US-Japan alliance. The incremental strengthening of Japan's military capabilities and responsibilities was premised on contributing to Japan's defence on the basis of the bilateral security arrangements. Following the path set by Yoshida, the LDP managed to eschew significant national military build-up and ensure economic growth, which was certainly popular with the electorate. The strong political opposition coming from the left and the low public support for security-related activities meant that the LDP could have risked losing its power, if it had attempted to expand Japan's security role. In addition, there was no external demand for overseas security presence.

After the end of the Cold War, both international and domestic factors have caused a change in Japanese decision-makers' policy preferences. The emergence of new security threats together with international demands for Japan's contribution to multilateral security missions necessitated a redefinition of the Cold War inward-oriented approach to national security. For their part, the domestic political changes, notably the collapse of the JSP, and the increased consensus between LDP and the DPJ on national security issues, facilitated the process. The option of autonomous defence (including development of own nuclear deterrent), weakened US-Japan alliance and independent involvement in military operations abroad could not have been the preferred one for the LDP. As this would have required significant defence spending, such a policy decision could have cost the LDP its remaining in power. Furthermore, Japan's move towards independent security role would have raised concerns from the past and thus hurt Japan's interests on international, let alone regional, level. In contrast, a strengthened alliance with the US would not only continue to give Japan the desired security protection and hence permit lower costs for defence, but also allow more international security presence (and lead to benefits from this, for example, economic ones) without raising suspicion in Japan's Asian neighbours.

The relation between altered security threats and domestic interests in Japan, and, in turn, Japanese security policy is significant in two ways. In the first place, it explains why after 1989 Japan (rather, the LDP) has chosen to expand the US-Japan security co-operation and assume a larger security role through the alliance rather than independently. Second, and perhaps more important, observation is that the changed international security environment (together with domestic political changes) has created momentum for strengthening the prime-minister's role and, generally, political leadership in security policy-making.

Ultimately, the primary aim of ensuring Japan's security, viewed in a broader perspective of existing non-conventional security threats, seems to have turned into a tool for generating more policy-making power for political actors.

6.2.2 Anti-militarism and policy preferences

As noted above, one of the questions that remain unanswered by neo-realist accounts of Japanese post-Cold War security policy is Japan's unwillingness to use force in overseas operations. If domestic interests are taken into consideration, it may be argued that the LDP (as well as other parties') lawmakers are disinclined to promote, let alone pass, laws authorising combat, given the public's strong opposition to such participation. As the earlier analysis of public opinion polls has illustrated, had the SDF suffered casualties in Iraq, Koizumi would have jeopardised his position and that of the LDP. Indeed, he could have been forced to step down, even though the mission of the SDF was for humanitarian and reconstruction purposes. Apparently, an essentially 'realist' concern regarding North Korea outweighed the domestic unpopularity of the war in Iraq and forced Koizumi to dispatch the SDF. This, however, affected negatively the LDP performance in the 2004 upper house elections.

Japan's so-called preference for peaceful means of foreign policy, and for pursuit of co-operation in the humanitarian and non-military area have often been attributed to the domestic anti-militarism and pacifism.⁸⁹ Analyses have also emphasised the constraining influence of Japanese public opinion and, generally, the anti-militarist norm on the security policy preferences of decision-makers.⁹⁰ After 1989, the domestic norm of anti-militarism has been weakened, particularly following the collapse of the JSP and due to the public's increased awareness of new security threats. The domestic consensus on the need for the SDF legitimisation, recognition of Japan's right to self-defence and the SDF overseas dispatch under UN (not US only) umbrella means that the norm may now equal to a prohibition on the use of force in overseas operations not related to Japan's security. Indeed, the LDP has not attempted so far to authorise combat abroad. Furthermore, although Japan's participation in the 'war on terror', particularly in Iraq, was essentially based on the LDP's strive to support the US, Koizumi was careful to adhere to relevant UN resolutions. Given that domestic anti-

⁸⁹ See, Thomas U. Berger, 'From sword to chrysanthemum: Japan's culture of anti-militarism', *International Security*, 17(4), 1993, pp. 119-50; Katzenstein and Okawara 1993; Katzenstein, 1996.

⁹⁰ See, Dobson, 2003; Midford, 2006.

militarism has been weakened, the LDP restraint may be attributed to a simple 'rationalist' concern, which dictates that going against the public opinion may cost 'utility-maximising' policy-makers their 'power'.

Conclusion

The present paper has analysed the redefinition of Japanese national security policy after the Cold War by emphasising the role of both international and domestic variables in Japan's move towards a more active security role. Although Japan has revised its Cold War 'basic defence force' concept, modernised its military capabilities and embarked on 'improving the international security environment', it has not profited from the disappearance of the Soviet threat and bipolarity to seek more independence of the US. The changes that Japan made after the Cold War have, in fact, contributed to continuity of its security partnership with the US. Finally, not only did Japan maintain the bilateral alliance, it also in the past few years has increasingly sought expansion of the alliance's scope and, in turn, of its own security role in international context.

By emphasising the utility of 'analytical eclecticism'⁹¹ in understanding Japanese post-Cold War security policy, the present survey has suggested combining the realist and liberal research traditions. In other words, while Japanese security policy has been underpinned by the goal of survival in the altered international system, it has served the primary interest of the dominant decision-makers to maintain their power. With the changed security threats, ensuring national security has gradually turned into a tool for maximising policy-making power; however, within the remit of the public's acceptance of Japan's strengthened security role.

The crucial importance of the US-Japan alliance for Japan's security and to its 'rational' policy-makers suggests that Japan is unlikely to seek weakening of the security partnership with the US in the near future. This is likely to be so, even though the DPJ has become the largest party in the Diet's upper house following the July 2007 elections. The DPJ will certainly seek to distinguish its policies from those of the LDP and try to seize the LDP's dominant policy-making position. Indeed, now that the LDP has broken a number of taboos from the Cold War, including notably sending the SDF overseas and advocating collective

91 Katzenstein and Okawara, 2004.

self-defence, it will be much easier for the Democrats to promote more UN-centred security engagements. Although the DPJ may not seek strengthening the alliance at the pace of the LDP, the complex regional security situation in Asia and the presence of other security threats mean that the DPJ's possible assuming of, and staying in, power will depend on its success in securing the country's national interests. As indicated in the epigraph to this paper taken from the 2003 Diplomatic Bluebook of Japan, these are 'the safety and prosperity of Japan and the Japanese people first and foremost'. In this regard, the words of former Prime-Minister Koizumi seem to remind us the everlasting truth of realism:

We can never be sure *when a threat will fall upon Japan*. In the event that Japan's own responses are inadequate, we must make full efforts to ensure the security of the Japanese nationals based on *the strong relationship of trust under the Japan-US Security Treaty and Japan-US alliance...*

The United States is *the only country*, which clearly states that an attack on Japan would be considered as an attack on the United States. The people of Japan should not *forget [this]...* ⁹²

92 Prime Minister of Japan and his Cabinet, 20 March 2003, emphasis added.