Asia Pacific:
PERSPECTIVES
an electronic journal

Volume VIII · Number 1   June · 2008

The Redefinition of Japan's National Security Policy: Security Threats, Domestic Interests and a Realist-Liberal Approach

By Elena Atanassova-Cornelis, Ph.D.

Abstract

This article examines the redefinition of Japanese national security after the Cold War by emphasizing the role of domestic political interests in security policy-making. It also analyzes the combined impact of international and domestic variables on the process of policy formulation.

The article suggests a realist-liberal perspective and argues that although Japanese national security policy has been underpinned by the goal of "survival" in the anarchic international system, this policy has served the primary interest of the dominant decision-makers to maintain their power. With the emergence of non-conventional security threats after the Cold War, ensuring national security has gradually turned into a tool for strengthening the policy-making power of political actors and hence for a steady expansion of Japan's security role. However, seeking to avoid jeopardizing their policy-making position, Japanese leaders have pursued policies within the scope of the Japanese public's anti-militaristic acceptance of their country's expanded security presence.

Introduction

Japan's position in the international arena has changed substantially after the Second World War. From a defeated and occupied country Japan turned into a major economic power. From an aggressor it became a pacifist state. Under the protective security "shield" of its U.S. 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 a "passive" and "reactive" state, which had to respond to *gaiatsu/beiatsu*, i.e. to foreign and U.S. pressure (Calder 1988; Lincoln 1993; Kuriyama 2000).

In the beginning years of the 21st century, Japan's anomaly of being a so-called "economic giant" and "political pygmy" appears to belong to the past. Indeed, after 1989, the country has been taking on a new international role for itself, particularly in the military security area. Japan has modernized its military capabilities and expanded its presence in overseas security missions, ranging from the United Nations Peace-Keeping Operations (UN PKO) to the fight against international terrorism. This change from passivity to activity seems to be a vindication to the neo-realist expectations that Japan would sooner or later move towards becoming a "great" power, by means of acquiring massive military capabilities (including nuclear weapons) and acting as an assertive power (Kahn 1970; Layne 1993; Waltz 1993). Nevertheless, Japan's anomaly in neo-realist terms appears to be continuing. Indeed, it has not engaged in autonomous defense, it has deepened its security partnership with the U.S. (including continuing reliance on 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 article 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. Rather than excluding international variables the article seeks to combine them with domestic ones, and thereby offer insight into the complex relationship between the changed international security environment, the policy preferences of Japanese decision-makers, and the country's security policy. By suggesting a combined realist-liberal perspective, this article will promote an "eclectic" approach (Suh et al. 2004; see also, Kim 2004), which has recently gained prominence in studies on Asian politics and security.

The above considerations limit the scope of analysis. The focus of this article is the conventional military dimension of Japan's security policy and its evolution from the perspective of the U.S.-Japan alliance rather than in a multilateral context. Indeed, the changes in this dimension in recent years have led some observers to describe Japan as "normalizing." However, not only has Japan chosen to confine its military security policy to the U.S.-Japan security framework, since the Cold War it has also applied a "comprehensive" and largely non-military approach to national security, which has included the promotion of "human security."[1] It is clear that the military dimension of Japan's security policy deserves attention.

The following discussion will first explore Japan's national security policy during the Cold War by demonstrating how both international and domestic factors shaped the country's approach to national security. Second, the discussion will examine the post-1989 changes both in the Japan's strategic environment and the domestic security climate, and address the ways in which Japan has redefined its security role. Finally, the article summarizes findings from several theoretical perspectives and concludes by suggesting a combined realist-liberal approach to understanding Japanese post-Cold War national security policy.

The Yoshida Doctrine and the Norm of Anti-Militarism

Japanese national security policy during the Cold War followed a path which Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida launched in 1951 with the signature of the original U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. What later became known as the "Yoshida Doctrine" meant economic development, pursuit of minimal military rearmament, and alignment with the U.S., with the main goal being Japan's post-war rebuilding. Yoshida's policy was formulated in close collaboration with the U.S.-led occupation authorities and evolved with the increasing threat from communist expansion in East Asia. Indeed, a large number of post-war, conservative Japanese politicians and members of the economic elite regarded alignment with the U.S. as the best option for Japan's economic recovery and, equally important, for provision of defense assistance. The need for U.S. protection against the Soviet threat strengthened the domestic legitimacy of the Yoshida Doctrine and ensured the centrality of the Security Treaty in Japan's national security policy.

In 1960, the treaty was revised to make clear the division of allies' roles: the U.S. would provide for Japan's defense (Article 5), while Japan would provide bases and host-nation support to the U.S. military forces, which would contribute to Japan's security and to stability in the Far East (Article 6). The asymmetrical arrangements under the revised treaty permitted Japan to minimize its defense spending, forego significant military build-up, and avoid involvement in international security issues. Instead, the country focused on economic growth and expansion.

The limitation of Japan's security role, which stemmed from Yoshida's approach, also had a normative basis. The domestic standard of anti-militarism, institutionalized in the 1947 Constitution through the Preamble and, particularly, Article 9, became the main normative guideline for the country's post-war foreign and security policy. While the Preamble expressed Japan's desire for world peace, Article 9, known also as the "peace clause," renounced the use of military force as a legitimate instrument of statecraft (paragraph one) and committed Japan to non-possession of war potential (paragraph two). Since the post-war period the Japanese government has interpreted Article 9 as permitting Japan to maintain only the minimum level of armed force necessary for self-defense.[2] This interpretation has prohibited the country from exercising its right to collective self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter, for this would exceed the scope of the use of military force permitted under Article 9.[3]

Domestic anti-militarism was particularly strong during the Cold War period, which saw fierce public opposition to military activities, particularly those involving Japan's overseas participation. Indeed, given the devastating consequences for Japan of its pre-war militarism, people were wary of expanding the country's security role. The anti-militaristic public mood also 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 the international level (Dobson 2003).

Civilian Control and Decision-Making Actors

The path set by Yoshida led to, and resulted from, the establishment of a Japanese domestic decision-making system, which significantly constrained the country's security role through the principle of civilian control of the military (Hughes 2005). The Japan Defense Agency (JDA), created together with the Self-Defense 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 (Katzenstein 1996). The agency was not accorded a ministerial status and was placed within the administrative structure of the Prime Minister's Office. Furthermore, as the JDA's role was circumscribed to overseeing SDF activities, it became a subordinate to MOFA. The latter, therefore, emerged as the primary bureaucratic actor responsible for the "making" of Japanese national security policy, while the JDA engaged in implementing it by means of conducting the country's defense (Katzenstein and Okawara 1993, 104). Overall, the agency's structure of civilian-bureaucratic control ensured that the military would occupy a low position in security

policy-making, which, in turn, would prevent the revival of centralized and powerful military establishments.

MOFA's central role in the decision-making process, on the other hand, was facilitated by the weak position of the chief executive and the Cabinet. Despite being vested by the Constitution with significant policy-making powers over the three government branches, the prime minister was not able to exercise his authority due to dependence on the party politics of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and institutional weaknesses related to the core executive. The Cabinet was ineffective as a result of frequent reshuffles and, therefore, reliance on bureaucratic expertise for fulfilling its tasks.

Among political actors in the legislative branch, a key player in Japanese security decision-making was the conservative LDP. The one-party governance of the LDP, based on the party's absolute majority in both houses of the Diet in most of the elections until 1989, became known as the "1955 political system" (*55 nen seiji taisei*). That political system allowed the LDP to assert its policy preferences over those of the other political parties and to dominate parliamentary politics in Japan. With economic growth being a priority on the government's 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 defense posture for Japan. However, the consequence was a further institutionalization of that approach, and hence a "renewed emphasis" on both economic expansion and alliance with the U.S. (Green 2003, 13). Indeed, for the Japanese political leadership it was the best way to eschew a major military build-up, while permitting some level of rearmament and providing security protection against the Soviet military threat.

For their part, the political parties of the left wing and, in particular, the leader of the opposition, the Japan Socialist Party (JSP), played an important role in promoting domestic anti-militarism. The political opposition demanded strict adherence to the Constitution and Article 9, as well as a withdrawal from the Security Treaty and limitations on the role of the SDF (Dobson 2003). Curtailment of the SDF's role to the mission of Japan's territorial defense was also the stance of the centrist *Kōmei* Party (known as Clean Government Party)[4], which until the end of the Cold War occupied a middle position on the political spectrum between the LDP and the left (Katzenstein and Okawara 1993; Stockwin 1999). From 1999 on the *Kōmei* Party has been a member of the LDP-led coalition governments.

Japan's Cold War National Security Concepts and Principles

The Yoshida Doctrine, together with the U.S.-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 the domestic level. The priority

given to economic growth evolved throughout the Cold War into a policy approach, which embraced a broad conceptualization of national security beyond the traditional military dimension. This "comprehensive security" (*sōgō anzen hoshō*) policy emphasized economic, social, technological, and political objectives for ensuring national security (Katzenstein and Okawara 1993; Katzenstein 1996), as well as environmental security concerns, such as natural disasters and environmental degradation (Hughes 2004).[5] While the pursuit of military security was not altogether substituted by other security objectives, it remained mostly confined to the bilateral security framework with the U.S. and was viewed from the perspective of ensuring Japan's security protection against the Soviet military threat.

In 1957 Japan adopted its first post-war national security document, titled the Basic Policy for National Defense (BPND, *Kokubō no Kihon Hōshin*). The document indicated that the objectives of the country's national security policy were to prevent and repel aggression towards Japan. The BPND stressed Japan's support for UN activities and the promotion of international cooperation for world peace. It also emphasized the incremental development of Japan's defense capabilities together with the centrality of Japan-U.S. security arrangements to Japan's protection from aggression.[6] Based on the Constitution and the BPND, the Japanese government subsequently developed the following four key national security principles: pursuit of an exclusively defense-oriented policy, not becoming a military power, adherence to the three non-nuclear principles of not manufacturing, possessing or bringing nuclear weapons into Japan, and ensuring civilian control of the military.

The domestic climate of anti-militarism limited the expansion of the country's military capabilities and role. Cases in point were the introduction by the LDP government of the three non-nuclear principles and the placement of restrictions on arms exports in 1967, and the limitation of Japan's defense spending to one per cent of the country's Gross National Product in 1976.[7] The decision of the LDP to impose a ceiling on defense spending was a response to the Socialists' objection to the legitimacy of the SDF as well as their worries about a significant military build-up (Katzenstein and Okawara 1993; Smith 1999). In turn, this measure allowed the LDP to achieve domestic acceptance of Japan's first post-war national security doctrine adopted in 1976, the National Defense Program Outline (NDPO, *Bōei Keikaku no Taikō*).

Having introduced the "basic defense force" concept (*kibanteki bōeiryoku kōsō*), the NDPO expressed Japan's intention to pursue its national security policy in terms of defense and deterrence. Japan would posses the minimum necessary defense 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 U.S. forces (Ministry of Defense, Japan 1977). The adoption of the basic defense 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 (Smith 1999). A case in point is the 1972-1976 JDA defense build-up plan, which proposed to double defense

spending with the strong support of then JDA Director-General Yasuhiro Nakasone. The program failed, not least because of strong domestic opposition to Japan's potential rearmament (Murata 2000). In this sense, although the NDPO allowed for a qualitative upgrade of the defense forces, their subsequent modernization remained limited in quantitative terms, with no aim of matching the Soviet military strength (Katzenstein and Okawara 1993; Smith 1999). In accordance with the principle of an exclusively defense-oriented policy, Japan has refrained from possessing offensive weapons, such as Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM), long-range bombers or offensive aircraft carriers.

The LDP's security ambitions, together with the Soviet military build-up and the onset of the Second Cold War in the late 1970s, played an important role for the incremental strengthening of Japan's defense posture and the security partnership with the U.S. In 1978, the two sides adopted Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation (hereafter, the Defense Guidelines). In line with Japan's exclusively defense-oriented policy and the basic defense force concept, the Defense Guidelines emphasized Article 5-related joint operations for Japan's defense (Ministry of Defense, Japan 1979). In addition, they included provisions for exploring bilateral cooperation under Article 6 of the Security Treaty, i.e. in regional contingencies in the Far East. The latter provision remained unexplored during the Cold War, as successive LDP administrations adhered to the principle of exclusively defense-oriented policy and avoided Japan's involvement in overseas conflicts (Hughes 2004). While the domestic opposition to overseas security missions successfully constrained the LDP policy-makers' security ambitions, there was no external demand for such participation either. By contrast, from 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 an alteration of the decision-makers' approach to Japan's security role.

Japan's Post-Cold War Security Environment

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 U.S.-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 U.S.-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 rose sharply following the Persian Gulf War of 1990-1991, which exposed Japan's "checkbook diplomacy" and its inability to deal with global security concerns. Although the LDP government made a U.S. $13 billion financial contribution, its failure to make a "human" contribution of

personnel to the U.S.-led multinational forces deployed in 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's dispatch, these domestic constraints did not prevent Japan being described as a "free-rider," particularly given its dependence on the U.S. for security.

The 1990-1991 Gulf War was followed by the 1994 North Korean nuclear crisis, which revealed a new military threat, as well as questioned Japan's role in the bilateral alliance. With the possibility of a military conflict with the North becoming real, Washington demanded that the SDF provide non-combat logistical support for U.S. 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 became clear that Japan's inward-oriented security approach and hence the U.S.-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 2002-2003 a second nuclear crisis erupted when the North restarted its nuclear program and withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. A July 2006 missile launch and subsequent October nuclear test by the North served as further indicators of Pyongyang's potentially dangerous intentions. The North Korean security threat is additionally complicated because it continues to be associated with the issue of Japanese kidnapped by North Korean agents operating along Japan's coasts in the 1970s and the 1980s, and the incidents of repeated incursions of North Korean spy ships into Japanese territorial waters.[8]

For Japan, the post-Cold War external security environment has become even more complicated with the rise of China. Although Japan's traditional policy towards China has been based on economic engagement through foreign aid and growing trade relations, the 1990s saw a 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 modernization 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 (Berger 2004, 154).

Bilateral tensions were further exacerbated by former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's yearly visits to Yasukuni Shrine where fourteen Class A war criminals, in addition to two and a half million soldiers, are enshrined. Having suffered from Japanese militarism, China regarded those visits as Japan's attempt to legitimize its past aggression. The consequence was Beijing's refusal to hold summit meetings with Tokyo. While the shrine visits were not continued by Koizumi's successor, Shinzo Abe, and bilateral diplomatic relations resumed during Abe's term, tensions between the two neighbors remain. Indeed, territorial disputes over small

islands in the East China Sea, believed to have under-sea gas fields in the surrounding waters, continue to be unresolved. In this regard, 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, approaches into Japanís airspace by Chinese planes increased eight times from 2004, reaching a record-high of 107 sorties (*ASDF scrambles up 60% in '05*, 2006). The increase of flights by Chinese reconnaissance planes near the disputed area is believed to be for the purposes of collecting the SDF's electronic intelligence.

Last but not least, international terrorism has expanded the list of non-conventional security threats that Japan has been facing after 1989. The need to tackle this new threat has placed more demands on Japan for international security presence, particularly in the context of the U.S.-led "war on terror."

Political and Policy-Making Changes in Japan after 1989

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 1990-1991 Gulf Crisis and its negative consequences for Japan's diplomacy, by the 1992 split of the LDP due to financial scandals, and by the emergence of new political parties. Although these developments ended the LDP's one-party dominance in the early 1990s and marked the start of coalition governments, the LDP continued to lead parliamentary politics in Japan. Indeed, this remained so until the last election for the Diet's Upper House in July 2007. This election deprived the LDP-led coalition government of its majority and resulted, for the first time since 1955, in an opposition party's becoming the largest party in the chamber.

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 during the first post-Cold War decade. The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), which included former JSP and LDP members among others, became the leader of the opposition in the second half of the 1990s. The DPJ achieved unprecedented success in the 2007 election and became the dominant party in the Upper House, which has led to discussions that a two-party system may eventually emerge in Japan.

One of the most important outcomes of the post-Cold War political changes in Japan has been the increasingly overlapping view on national security of the two largest political parties. From the 1990s on, a priority on the LDP's policy agenda has been the redefinition of Japan's security role and the strengthening of the security partnership with the U.S., which has been linked to Japan's expansion of its international contributions. The DPJ, for its part, has accepted the existence of the SDF, and has recognised the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty and related bilateral security cooperation as central to Japan's security. The main difference between the two parties boils down to Japan's international contributions,

with the DPJ advocating Japan's expansion of its international engagements only under a UN mandate.

The political changes after 1989, which have resulted in a changed composition of the legislature, have been accompanied by alteration of security policy-making. As discussed earlier, the formulation 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 defense in the context of the Soviet military threat. 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 as well.

Perhaps the most significant change in Japanese security policy-making has been related to the prime minister's and the Cabinet's role. The political and executive leadership was strengthened as a result of the administrative reforms of the 1990s, which reduced the number of ministries. More importantly, the reforms expanded both the prime minister's authority (by enabling him to initiate policies) and the role of the Cabinet ministers in the policy-making process. Under Junichiro Koizumi and Shinzo Abe the trend towards strengthening the prime minister's top-down executive leadership and weakening the bureaucratic influence has become clear. Abe, in particular, focused on centralizing decision-making on national security by increasing the number of special advisers to the prime minister and assigning them issue-areas considered a priority for his administration, including national security and North Korea's abductions. Abe also proposed establishing a National Security Council (NSC) in Japan, which would be modelled on the one existing at the White House. As the purpose of the NSC would be to devise foreign and security policy strategies, as well as to discuss responses to national emergencies, the NSC would in essence give more power to the prime minister and the core executive over national security issues.

Japanese Public Opinion on Security

As far as Japan's security protection is concerned, public opinion polls conducted by the Japan Cabinet Office regularly since 1965 reveal continuity in the Japanese people's support for the maintenance of the U.S.-Japan alliance.[9] Table 1 (second column) shows that a stable majority of Japanese since the late Cold War period view the best option for Japan's defense to be the U.S.-Japan security arrangements together with the SDF. Figures have remained above 60 per cent from 1978 on and have increased in the post-Cold War period, particularly since the end of the 1990s, reaching 76.2 per cent in the latest 2006 survey.

Table 1: *Public Opinion on the U.S.-Japan Alliance and the Primary Role of the SDF*

Year	Japan's defense through the U.S.-Japan security arrangements and the SDF	The Security Treaty as a provider for Japan's peace and security	SDF image: Overall positive	Primary Role of the SDF: To prevent aggression	Primary Role of the SDF**: For disaster relief
Feb. 2006	76.20%	75.10%	84.90%	69.40%	75.30%
Jan. 2003	72.10%	73.40%	80.30%	68.60%	71.80%
Jan. 2000	71.20%	71.60%	82.20%	59.00%	67.10%
Feb.1997	68.10%	69.40%	80.50%	56.60%	66.90%
Jan. 1994	68.80%	68.30%	76.80%	48.90%	23.80%
Feb.1991	62.40%	63.50%	67.50%	58.30%	15.70%
Jan.1988	67.40%	68.80%	76.70%	63.50%	10.80%
Nov.1984	69.20%	71.40%	74.30%	63.00%	13.60%
Dec.1981	64.60%	65.80%	71.20%	59.60%	13.20%
Dec.1978	61.10%	65.60%	75.40%	56.60%	13.30%
Oct.1975*	54.30%		69.20%	56.50%	13.00%
Nov.1972	40.70%		28.90%	56.10%	10.30%
Sept.1969	40.90%		68.80%	50.40%	12.70%
Nov.1965		37.90%	56.80%	39.90%	15.60%

Source : Japan Cabinet Office, Opinion Polls on the Self-Defense Forces and Defense Affairs, various years.

*Where percentages are not indicated means that the question was not included in the questionnaire.

**The question regarding the SDF's primary role permitted multiple answers.

A similar trend is observed with regard to the support for the Security Treaty as a provider for Japan's peace and security (Table 1, third column), with figures steadily increasing from 1997 on. Related to the Japanese people's support for the U.S.-Japan alliance is their overall positive attitude vis-à-vis the SDF (Table 1, fourth column). Despite having shown some signs of instability in the early 1970s and a slight decline during the 1990-1991 Gulf War (a trend also observed in the previous two columns), the public's support for the SDF has remained above 70 per cent since the end of the 1970s and above 80 per cent from 1997 on.

As far as the primary role of the SDF is concerned (Table 1, fifth column), a stable majority of more than 56 per cent since 1972 (except in 1994) indicates that it should be preventing aggression. Noticeable are the results of the 2003 and the 2006 surveys, which have registered 68.6 per cent and 69.4 per cent respectively. In addition, a clear trend towards viewing the SDF as important in domestic disaster relief activities is observed after 1989 (Table 1, sixth column). Figures show an increase from around 16 per cent in 1991 to a little above 75 per cent in 2006.

In contrast to continuity of the trend in the public opinion regarding the U.S.-Japan alliance and the SDF's primary mission, the post-Cold War period has seen a major change in the people's view on the SDF's participation in overseas security missions, notably in UN PKO. Whereas in 1990 the majority of Japanese opposed the SDF's dispatch on UN PKO, in 1992 the majority sanctioned this new SDF's role (Dobson 2003). In the early 2000s more than 70 per cent of respondents approved of the SDF's peace-keeping operations (Japan Cabinet Office 2000, 2003). At the same time, domestic support for international disaster relief missions increased from 54.2 per cent in 1991 to over 78 per cent in the 2000s (ibid. various years). Despite the gradual acceptance of human contribu-

tions abroad, the Japanese people have continued to oppose the SDF's use of military force in overseas operations, and favor only humanitarian and non-combat activities (Midford 2006).

Finally, a major change in Japanese public opinion on security has also 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 the rise of China's military. Since 2000, opinion polls have shown the public's increased concern about Japan's involvement in a war due to existing international conflicts and tensions. Figures increased from 64.5 per cent in 2000 to 80 per cent in 2003 (Japan Cabinet Office 2000, 2003). 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 the Middle East. The latest 2006 poll showed that the Korean peninsula 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 modernization and maritime activities, and 29.6 per cent pointed out WMD and missiles (ibid. 2006).

Redefining Security Policy: Beyond Japan's Territorial Defense

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 the decision-makers in Tokyo that if they wanted to ensure Washington's continuing commitment to the country's defense, they had to expand Japan's contribution to the bilateral alliance. In addition, after the 1990-1991 Gulf War, demands for Japan's presence in the international security arena increased, particularly on the part of the U.S. 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 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 Cooperation Law (IPCL), which enabled the SDF to participate in UN PKO and international humanitarian relief missions. As the IPCL cleared the way for the defense forces' overseas dispatch, it was followed in 1995 by a revision of Japanese Cold War national security doctrine, i.e. the 1976 NDPO. The new NDPO reaffirmed Japan's commitment to the four key national security principles and to the concept of the basic defense force, but envisaged a more active response to external aggression in cooperation with the U.S. military (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan 1995). The SDF's role also was expanded to include peace-keeping and international humanitarian relief missions. More importantly, the document introduced cooperation with the U.S. in regional contingencies, thereby paving the way for a revision of the Cold War U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines.

Essentially, the 1997 guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation (hereafter, the 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 of the U.S.-Japan alliance. The significance of the new document was that it both defined the "functional" scope of the bilateral security cooperation under Article 6 of the Security Treaty and expanded the "geographical" range of U.S.-Japan operations (Hughes 2004, 178). Japan would now extend non-combat rear-area support to its U.S. ally during regional security crises, defined as "situations in areas surrounding Japan." Although the Revised Guidelines made the alliance become a "multi-functional" one (Murata 2000, 31), the Cold War asymmetrical structure of the allies' roles was somewhat preserved, as the prohibition on collective self-defense and on the use of force overseas remained unchanged for the SDF.

In Japan, the implementation of the Revised Guidelines was speeded up by the 1998 North Korean missile launch. Together with the 1994 nuclear crisis, the launch contributed to a realignment of the conservatives and the establishment of an LDP-led coalition at the end of the 1990s, which, in turn, ensured political support for passing a special law in 1999 (Green 2003). The law enabled 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 was also the Japanese government's decision of the same year for joint research with the U.S. on ballistic missile defense (BMD). While a joint study on BMD systems was initiated in 1994, until the 1998 launch Tokyo refrained from making a formal commitment to joint development, not least because of Beijing's objections that this would neutralize China's nuclear deterrent and involve the Taiwan issue (Green 2003; Hughes 2005). The presence of a clear military threat heightened the domestic security concerns and cleared the way for BMD cooperation. Not surprisingly, 57 per cent of Japanese polled in 2006 supported a defense system against ballistic missiles (Japan Cabinet Office 2006).

Fighting Terrorism

The expansion of Japan's security role was accelerated following the 11 September terrorist attacks on the U.S. and during the term of former Prime Minister Koizumi. While Koizumi's public popularity and leadership abilities were certainly facilitating factors for the SDF's participation in "the war on terror," the domestic political and institutional changes 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 2002-2003 nuclear crisis, meant a pressing need for U.S. support for its resolution. The 1990-1991 Gulf War experience served as a negative reminder 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 U.S. this time [in comparison with the 1990-1 Gulf War] will determine the course of Japan-U.S. relations for the next 20 years...We have to make it possible to send SDF people this time. There is no other choice" (Asakura and Takahashi 2001).

Strongly supported by Koizumi and the LDP, and with the proactive involvement of MOFA, the Anti-Terrorism

Special Measures Law (ATSML) was enacted in October 2001. The ATSML authorized the dispatch of Maritime SDF ships to the Indian Ocean for rear-area logistical support for the U.S.-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. 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 favor and in those against the dispatch (Midford 2006). Indeed, despite generally approving of Japan's contribution to the international fight against terrorism, the public was worried about possible negative outcomes.

In contrast to the 1990-1991 Gulf War, however, the concerns now were less about the overseas dispatch *per se* and more about the form of the SDF's contribution, as well as its possible integration with the use of force. On the other hand, given the Japanese people's support for UN-centered activities, UN legitimacy (seen in the references made in the law's full name to the UN Charter and relevant UN resolutions) must have played an important role for the ATSML support.[10] In its justification for passing the ATSML, the Koizumi government emphasized UNSC Resolution 1368 on eradication of terrorism and hence the need for Japan's cooperation with other states for elimination of this threat (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan 2002, 16, 18).

Being a strong advocate of Japan's participation in the fight against international terrorism, Koizumi also was one of the first supporters of the U.S. policy in Iraq in 2003. Under his executive leadership and despite the opposition of the DPJ, the LDP-led coalition government succeeded in enacting a special law on Iraq, known as the Law Concerning the Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq. The law opened up the way for dispatching in early 2004 the SDF to southern Iraq on a non-combat mission for humanitarian and reconstruction purposes. In comparison with the Afghan case, the Iraq situation clearly showed the link between the LDP's alliance-based security policy and the need for extending support to the U.S. 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 U.S. campaign in Iraq (Berger 2004; Penn 2007). In the early stages of the war, Koizumi stressed that the preservation of the U.S.-Japan alliance was closely linked to Japan's national interest, to the country's prosperity in peace, and to the deterrence of potential threats against Japan (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2003). He also emphasized 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 (National Institute for Defense Studies 2004, 226).

Despite these initial statements, the law on Iraq (as was the ATSML) was separated from the legislation covering U.S.-Japan security relations (Hughes 2005) and enacted only after UNSC Resolution 1483 on 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 less-dangerous southern Iraq. All this suggests that the Koizumi government tried to avoid Japan's direct involvement in a war not sanctioned by the UN and to respond to the domestic anti-militaristic concerns. Nevertheless, the public's opposition to the war and its rather mixed attitude towards the SDF's dispatch played a role for the LDP's poor performance in the July 2004 Upper House election (Midford 2006). Furthermore, the defense forces' deployment to a country with ongoing hostilities involved the risk of casualties, which might have significantly jeopardized 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 would even demand his resignation (*"51.6% Oppose SDF Dispatch to Iraq"*; *"Public is split over policy not to pull out SDF"* 2004). Such an outcome was eventually avoided, for the Ground SDF did not suffer even one single casualty and were withdrawn by the Koizumi government in the summer of 2006.[11]

The question, however, remains about the fate of the Air SDF, which have been kept in Kuwait to provide logistical support for the U.S.-led multinational forces and the UN, and whose activities have been extended to the more dangerous region of northern Iraq. Given that Abe in June 2007 extended the law on Iraq by two years, it is the current administration of Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda that may have to face possible negative developments. Indeed, the altered domestic political situation has already had its impact on the LDP's security plans. As a result of the DPJ's becoming the largest party in the Upper House and due to its opposition to the extension of the ATSML, Fukuda was forced to withdraw the Maritime SDF ships from the Indian Ocean after the ATSML expired in early November 2007. An opinion poll conducted by the Yomiuri Shimbun in mid-November, however, revealed that a majority of 51 per cent favored the continuation of the refuelling mission in the Indian Ocean (while 40 per cent opposed it) and 49 per cent supported the Fukuda administration's proposal for new anti-terrorism legislation, against 39 per cent who opposed the bill (*Majority favor refueling mission for first time* 2007). Although the LDP-led coalition government in January 2008 succeeded in enacting a new law on the basis of its majority in the more powerful Lower House of the Diet, it is highly likely that any casualties related to the Iraqi mission may bring an end to Japan's participation in "the war on terror."

Turning Responses into Opportunities: Legislative and Conceptual Changes

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

The 9/11 terrorist attacks and the 2002-2003 North Korean

nuclear crisis, as well as several incidents of North Korean spy vessels' incursions into Japanese territorial waters, paved the way in 2003-2004 for the enactment of national emergency legislation (*yūji hōsei*). Although studies on domestic crisis management systems were launched in the late 1970s, anti-militaristic constraints and fears of re-militarization prevented the enactment of relevant bills during the Cold War. However, the emergence of new security threats created a large domestic coalition in favor 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 favor 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 U.S. forces engaged in Japan's defense.

Similar 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 gradually created momentum for attaining this goal. The bill was submitted to the Diet by the Koizumi administration, but was passed into law in late 2006, during the administration of Abe. Supported also by the DPJ, it was enacted together with a second bill, which amended the SDF's law to expand the "primary duties" of the SDF. Before the amendment the SDF's core duties included only national defense and domestic disaster relief missions, while overseas operations were defined as "supplementary duties." Reflecting the change in Japanese national security policy towards more international security engagements, the SDF's 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 a Ministry of Defense (MOD) will have an important impact on Japanese security policy-making. Not only is MOD equal to MOFA, it also should become the main bureaucratic player in the formulation, not merely implementation, of national security policy. The JDA's elevation to a ministry has, however, raised the question how civilian control of the military would be maintained in the future. In this regard, calls have been made for strengthening the role of the political actors, notably the prime minister and the Diet, in the system of civilian control. Ultimately, one hopes this would ensure politicians' final say in security policy-making.

The legislative changes related to Japanese national security policy were reflected in conceptual changes of Japan's security role made by the Koizumi administration. This was clear from the 2004 National Defense Program Guideline (NDPG, *Bōei Keikaku no Taikō*), which replaced the 1995 national security doctrine. Although the NDPG reaffirmed Japan's commitment to the four key national security principles (mentioned earlier in this discussion), the revised document stated that after providing for its own defense, the second aim for Japan would be "to improve the international security environment in view of preventing any threats from reaching Japan" (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 2004). Likewise, the NDPG introduced a new concept of "multi-functional, flexible and effective" defense forces (*takinō de danryokutekina jikkōsei*

no aru bōeiryoku), which would respond not only to a full-scale invasion, but also to "new threats and diverse situations," as well as actively engage in international peace cooperation activities. In this way, the SDF would be transformed from having a "deterrent effect"-orientation (*yokushi kōka*) to a "response capabilities"-focus (*taisho nōryoku*). The 2004 NDPG emphasized that the conceptual changes and, in turn, the strengthening of the defense force structure were deemed necessary due to the altered nature of the threats that Japan was facing. In other words, while the conventional threat of a full-scale invasion decreased, new security threats, such as WMD and international terrorism, 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 opened up the way for expansion of U.S.-Japan alliance's scope and for finalization in 2006 of bilateral security agreements, notably the adoption of the U.S.-Japan Roadmap for Realignment Implementation. In line with Japan's newly defined security role, the U.S.-Japan security cooperation would now include the following two new priorities: "responses to new threats and diverse contingencies" and "efforts to improve the international security environment" (United States Department of State 2005). The first objective, in particular, would supplement the alliance's missions for Japan's defense and for responding to regional contingencies. The U.S.-Japan cooperation would be enhanced through integration of the SDF's functions with those of the U.S. military, and through expanded bilateral cooperation in areas such as BMD and international peace cooperation activities (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan 2006).

The significance of the NDPG and the latest U.S.-Japan agreements is that they may have been the first step towards a new revision of the 1997 Revised Guidelines. The revision was proposed in 2006 by Japan and would reportedly focus on bilateral cooperation in BMD, international peace activities, combating international terrorism and responding to emergencies (*Japan, U.S. eye SDF guideline revisions 2006*; Yoshida, 2006). If the U.S. and Japan move towards the attainment of that goal, and given that the SDF's primary duties now include overseas operations, a domestic debate on new security legislation will likely gain momentum in Japan.

Constitutional Revision

The legislative and conceptual changes in Japanese national security policy have been paralleled by an intensified domestic debate on constitutional amendment. Given the significance of the peace clause for Japan's security role, Article 9 has become the center of discussions. For the LDP, which included revision of the Constitution in its policy platform announced at the party's establishment in 1955 (Green 2003, 13), this domestic debate has represented the first step towards the achievement of that goal. The amendment is no easy task, however, for it requires the support of a two-thirds majority of the Diet members and then a simple majority vote in a national referendum. Indeed, domestic consensus will become a crucial factor for the LDP's success on the issue.

The strongest advocates of the amendment of Article 9

have been Koizumi and Abe. Although the two ruling parties the LDP and the *Kōmei* Party and the DPJ have 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 focused on how to define the SDF's 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 both the LDP and the DPJ have further narrowed the gap between the two major parties, as both expressed support for the legitimization of the SDF and clarification of their right to self-defense. The disagreement between the LDP and the DPJ has thus remained limited to the issue of collective self-defense.

Not surprisingly, it is the LDP, a traditional "guardian" of the U.S.-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-defense (The Liberal Democratic Party of Japan 2004). Koizumi and Abe have openly advocated Japan's support for the U.S. in collective self-defense arrangements. During his term as prime minister, Abe even established an advisory panel of experts to discuss the following four cases, in which the exercise of that right would be acceptable for Japan: response to attacks on U.S. Navy ships operating jointly with the Maritime SDF in international waters; interception of ballistic missiles headed towards the U.S.; protection of troops of other nations who come under attack during joint international PKO; and provision of logistical support to other nations taking part in international PKO.

In contrast to the LDP, the DPJ has approached cautiously the issue of Japan's use of military force, particularly for collective self-defense purposes solely in support of the U.S. A strong advocate of Japan's participation in UN-centered collective security missions, the DPJ has called for a "maximum restriction" on the use of force even in such operations (The Democratic Party of Japan 2005). Nevertheless, current DPJ President Ichiro Ozawa has argued that under the present constitution the SDF may participate in UN-sanctioned military missions, for example, as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) that is currently operating in Afghanistan (*Ozawa in power would send SDF to U.N. force in Afghanistan* 2007). The gap between the positions of the DPJ and the LDP on the right to collective self-defense seems to have further narrowed. This is suggested by the DPJ's security policy draft of 2006, which reportedly proposed to allow that right in limited situations, notably when Japan "faces a direct, imminent and unjust threat to its territory" (*DPJ argues for collective self-defense* 2006).

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

Explaining Japan's National Security Policy: International or Domestic Variables?

Despite the disappearance of the Soviet threat and the changes in polarity, Japan has not followed the path expected by neo-realists leading to greater autonomy from the U.S. and ultimately to becoming a power pole in the international system. Indeed, the post-Cold War period has seen a qualitative upgrade of Japan's military capabilities, including notably enhanced intelligence capabilities, research in BMD and procurement of new military equipment.[12] However, Japan has not acquired massive military capabilities, such as a nuclear arsenal, and has not embarked on autonomous defense. Quite the opposite, Japan has deepened its reliance on the U.S. for security protection. The modernization of Japanese military capabilities and their integration with those of the U.S. ally have made the "national defense build-up" become an "alliance-oriented defense build-up" (Hughes 2005). Finally, Japan has increasingly sought expansion of its international security role through the bilateral alliance rather than independently.

Japan's security behavior may, to some extent, be explained by a somewhat "softer" variation of neo-realism, which Baumann et al. (2001) defines as "modified neo-realism." This perspective takes account of security pressures exerted on a state, which, in turn, are related to changes in the nature of security threats, for example, as a result of the development of new, sophisticated military technology. The approach also stresses the importance of exercising influence on one's allies, which contrasts with neo-realism's emphasis on states' autonomy-seeking behavior. For modified neo-realism, Japan's decision to maintain its security partnership with the U.S. after the Cold War stems from the altered security threats and, consequently, the costs associated with ensuring its survival. Japan's regional situation, in particular, has become very unpredictable due to the tensions related to North Korea's missile and nuclear programs, and to 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 U.S. commitment to Japan's protection and to minimize 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).

As does neo-realism, so too the modified neo-realist perspective cannot account for Japan's striving to deepen its reliance on the U.S. for security and to assume an international security role largely through the framework of the U.S-Japan partnership. Although modified neo-realism regards the maintenance of the bilateral alliance as crucial to Japan's survival in a changed international security environment, this approach also expects a realist Japan to seek room for some independent security action both for its own defense and internationally. As noted earlier, changes in the polarity of the international system and Japan's modernized military capabilities have created the conditions for Tokyo to pursue a more autonomous and active security policy. Indeed, such a policy would not necessarily lead to complete independence

from Washington (as expected by neo-realism), as long as Japan's actions would not weaken the U.S-Japan security partnership. Finally, for both variations of neo-realism, Japan's continuing unwillingness to use force overseas, particularly in regional conflicts directly threatening Japan's security, remains puzzling as well. Again, the altered polarity and Japan's expanded military presence suggest that Japan after 1989 should be more ready to use military power overseas than during the Cold War.

A better explanation of Japan's national security policy after the Cold War may be provided if one adds international variables to the domestic ones. It is not simply Japan as a rational entity that seeks to "survive," but rather its utility-maximizing decision-makers who, led by policy-making power concerns, "make" the Japanese state behave in one way or another for security-related purposes.

An approach that indicates domestic interests as leading the state's security policy behavior has been defined by Freund and Rittberger (2001) as "utilitarian-liberalism." The strength of this theoretical perspective is that, once applied to Japan, it looks inside the Japanese state and indicates who the dominant decision-makers are, what policy preferences they have, and how their priorities eventually translate into Japan's security policy. According to Freund and Rittberger security policy will change if domestic interests change, which, in turn, may occur either as a result of the alteration in the composition of the dominant domestic actors or of the actors' preferences. As is 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 maximize their policy-making power (as well as financial gains) is said to remain the same (ibid.).

Understanding Japan's Security Behavior: Security Threats, Policy Preferences and Anti-Militarism

While after 1989 the composition of dominant domestic actors in Japanese security policy-making has not changed significantly, a power shift from bureaucratic actors towards political ones has been taking place. Notable is the strengthening of the premiership and, in turn, the centralization 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 Japan Defense Agency's transformation into a Ministry of Defense, 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 national security policy in the framework of the U.S.-Japan alliance. The incremental strengthening of Japan's military capabilities and responsibilities was premised on contributing to Japan's defense on the basis of bilateral security arrangements. Having followed 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 an overseas security presence.

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

The relation between altered security threats, domestic interests, and Japanese security policy is significant in two ways. In the first place, it explains why after 1989 Japan chose to expand the U.S.-Japan security cooperation and to assume a larger security role through the bilateral alliance rather than independently. A 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 political leadership in security policy-making. Ultimately, the primary aim of ensuring Japan's security, viewed in the broader perspective of the existing non-conventional security threats, seems to have turned into a tool for generating more policy-making power for political actors.

As noted above, one of the questions that remains unanswered by neo-realist accounts of Japanese post-Cold War security policy is the country's unwillingness to use force in overseas operations. Some scholars inspired by constructivism have attributed Japan's so-called preference for peaceful means of foreign policy, and for pursuit of cooperation in humanitarian and non-military areas to domestic anti-militarism and pacifism (e.g., Berger 1993; Katzenstein and Okawara 1993; Katzenstein 1996). Other analysts (Dobson 2003; Midford 2006) have emphasized the constraining influence of Japanese public opinion and, generally, of the norm of anti-militarism on the security policy preferences of decision-

makers. After 1989, that domestic norm has been weakened, particularly following the collapse of the JSP and the public's increased awareness of new security threats. The domestic consensus, which has emerged from 2000 on, is on the need for the SDF's legitimization, a recognition of Japan's right to self-defense (viewed within the U.S.-Japan security framework) and the defense forces' overseas dispatch for non-military missions under a UN umbrella.

The Japanese public, as argued by Midford (2006), has become more willing to accept the use of military force for territorial or national defense, but has remained opposed to military power for overseas offensive purposes. If domestic interests in Japan are taken into consideration, it may be argued that the LDP's (as well as other parties') lawmakers are disinclined to promote, let alone pass, laws authorizing combat because of strong domestic opposition. As the case of Iraq illustrated during Koizumi's term, if the SDF suffered casualties, even a mission for humanitarian and reconstruction purposes might potentially jeopardize the position of the prime minister and that of the LDP. Indeed, so far the LDP has been very cautious in defining both the form of the SDF's contribution and the location of their overseas deployment. This cautiousness may be attributed to a simple "rationalist" concern, which dictates that going against public opinion may cost utility-maximizing policy-makers their power.

Conclusion

The present article has analyzed the redefinition of Japanese national security policy after the Cold War by emphasizing the role of both the international and the domestic variables in Japan's move towards a more active security role. Although Japan has revised its Cold War "basic defense force" concept, modernized its military capabilities and embarked on "improving the international security environment," it did not avail itself of the disappearance of the Soviet threat and bipolarity in order to seek more independence from the U.S. The changes that Japan made after the Cold War have, in fact, contributed to the continuity of its security partnership with the U.S. Finally, not only has Japan maintained the bilateral alliance, but in the past few years it has also increasingly sought expansion of the alliance's scope and of its own international security role.

By emphasizing the utility of "analytical eclecticism" (Katzenstein and Okawara 2004) for understanding Japanese post-Cold War security policy, the present article has suggested combining the realist and the 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 interests of the dominant decision-makers to maintain their power. With changed security threats, ensuring national security has gradually turned into a tool for maximizing the political actors' policy-making power. In turn, this has facilitated a steady expansion of the country's security role. However, seeking to avoid jeopardizing their policy-making position, Japanese decision-makers have pursued policies within the scope of the Japanese public's anti-militaristic acceptance of that role.

The crucial importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance for

Japan's security and to its "rational" policy-makers suggests that Japan is unlikely to seek a weakening of the security partnership with the U.S. in the near future. This is clear from the words of former Prime Minister Koizumi:

> 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-U.S. Security Treaty and Japan-U.S. 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]... (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 2003, emphasis added)

The complex regional security situation in Asia and the presence of various security challenges mean that the LDP's staying in, or the DPJ's assuming, power will depend on their success in guaranteeing the country's national interests. As indicated in the 2003 Diplomatic Bluebook of Japan, these interests are "the safety and prosperity of Japan and the Japanese people, first and foremost" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan 2003). So far, the U.S.-Japan alliance has been considered as the best option for Japan's security. It seems, however, that the steady expansion of the bilateral security partnership, as well as Japan's security "normalization" may well have reached a limit accepted by the Japanese people. One can only wonder how the balance among security threats, Japanese decision-makers' policy preferences, and domestic anti-militarism may change, should the *modus operandi* of achieving Japan's post-war "safety and prosperity" be shaken.

ENDNOTES

1. On Japan's approach to human security, see Elena Atanassova-Cornelis, 2005.
2. See Ministry of Defense, Japan, www.mod.go.jp/e/d_policy/dp01.html [accessed 18 March 2008].
3. Ibid.
4. The original *Kōmei* Party was established in 1964 by the Buddhist organization *Sōka Gakkai*, which was the only religious organization in Japan to create its own political party. The present New *Kōmei* Party was formed in November 1998 as a result of a merger including the original *Kōmei* Party. For the sake of clarity, the party will be referred to as the *Kōmei* Party throughout the text.
5. See also Katzenstein and Okawara 2004, 101-103.
6. See Ministry of Defense, Japan, www.mod.go.jp/e/d_policy/dp02.html [accessed 18 March 2008].
7. The restrictions on arms exports prohibited the export of weapons or weapons-related technology to countries in the following categories: those in the Communist bloc; those to whom arms export were 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.

8. Until the end of the 1990s North Korea refused to address the abductee issue. In September 2002, during a visit by then Prime Minister Koizumi to Pyongyang, Kim Jong Il made a shocking acknowledgement that North Korea had abducted thirteen Japanese citizens out of whom only five were alive. The admission of such a state crime triggered an unprecedented Japanese public backlash and influenced the public's subsequent support for Shinzo Abe's "hard-line" policy on the North. While Pyongyang regards the issue as closed, particularly because the five survivors were returned to Japan, Tokyo demands further explanation about the deceased and claims that more Japanese citizens had been abducted. As a result, the abductee issue remains a major obstacle to the normalization of Japan's relations with North Korea.

9. The reliability of these opinion polls as an indicator of the Japanese people's attitude towards security issues should be put in the context of the Cabinet Office's interest in ensuring public support for the U.S.-Japan alliance. The surveys were conducted with 3000 individuals above 20 years of age (with the exception of the year 2000 when the number of polled was 5000). Until the end of the Cold War the valid responses were between 79 and 84 per cent, but after 1988 the percentage of valid responses declined from around 72 per cent in 1991 to a little above 55 per cent in 2006. One of the most important reasons for the decline was the respondent's refusal to answer. Throughout the years women represented between 52 and 55 per cent of the polled, while the percentage of men fluctuated between 45 and 48 per cent.

10. 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. (*Heisei Jūsannen Kugastu Jūichinichi no America Gashūkoku ni oite Hassei shita Terorisuto ni yoru Kōgeki nado ni Taiōshite Okonawareru Kokusai Rengō Kenshō no Mokuteki Tassei no tame no Shogaikoku no Katsudō ni Taishite Waga Kuni ga Jisshi suru Sochi oyobi Kanren suru Kokusai Rengō Ketsugi nado ni Motozuku Jindōteki Sochi ni Kansuru Tokubetsu Sochihō.*)

11. Due to legislative limitations related to the use of weapons by the SDF, the Japanese ground troops carried out their activities in Iraq by relying on the Dutch armed forces for protection. The SDF activities included humanitarian and reconstruction assistance in the form of medical care, water supplies, and restoration and reconstruction of infrastructure, such as schools, roads and health centers. Indeed, the activities of the Ground SDF sharply contrasted with the fact that this overseas dispatch was Japan's "most heavily armed" (Hughes 2005, 130) one since 1945.

12. On equipment and personnel changes under the NDPG, see Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 2004.

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Elena Atanassova-Cornelis is a post-doctoral researcher at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (K. U. Leuven) and Adjunct Professor at the University of Antwerp in Belgium.