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The Evolving Missions and Forces of the JMSDF

Commander Edward L. Martin, U.S. Navy

THE JAPANESE MARITIME SELF-DEFENSE FORCE (JMSDF) of today is a proud, highly trained, and professional organization. It is generally well equipped and is in certain aspects—notably antisubmarine warfare and mine countermeasures—one of the most capable forces in the world. While some of its equipment is approaching obsolescence, the JMSDF possesses some of the most modern warships available, incorporating the latest technologies. The purpose of this article is to offer, on the basis of historical patterns and anticipated security needs, a plausible forecast of the force structure and missions of the JMSDF. The establishment of the JMSDF and its subsequent progression to the force that it constitutes today can be dealt with here only in general terms (see table 1). However, a basic knowledge of that development in the context of the world events and political realities of the time is essential if one is to theorize about the future of the JMSDF.

The History of the JMSDF

Japan's unconditional surrender at the end of the Pacific War occasioned calls for its total disarmament. This policy, articulated in the Allies' Potsdam

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Proclamation and accepted by Japan on 14 August 1945, was carried out under the auspices of the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP), General Douglas MacArthur. The Japanese Second Demobilization Ministry, formed on 1 December 1945, was given responsibility for executing the demobilization. This is not to say, however, that following the disestablishment of the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) on 10 October 1945 absolutely no naval forces existed under central Japanese authority. Several organizations ensured the safety of shipping in Japanese waters and enforced maritime regulations before the founding of the JMSDF as we know it today on 1 December 1954. These pre-JMSDF forces, limited as they may have been, were used to sweep mines, provide for maritime safety, and counter threats from outside Japan, specifically illegal entry and smuggling.

Minesweeping. At the end of hostilities in the Pacific, there were thousands of antishipping mines scattered around the coastal approaches and harbors of Japan. Although the Potsdam Proclamation called for the complete disarmament of all Japanese military forces, and notwithstanding the demobilization then in progress, a former Imperial naval officer, Captain Kyuzo Tamura, began minesweeping operations under U.S. direction on 15 August 1945. His force initially consisted of 350 small ships, 773 officers, and 9,227 enlisted men, all formerly of the Imperial Japanese Navy. This force was gradually reduced as the demobilization continued and by 1952 contained only 91 officers and 1,324 enlisted men. The minesweeping force, stripped of all rank insignia and officially not a military organization, had operated first under the Second Demobilization Ministry and then under successive agencies given responsibility for demobilization. Due to the importance of sweeping the coastal approaches and the Inland Sea for mines laid during the war, the minesweeping force was exempted from restrictions placed upon the rest of the former Imperial armed services. In fact, it remained lightly armed throughout the Occupation.

By 1952 Tamura's force had lost nineteen ships and seventy-seven lives. The remainder would eventually become part of the JMSDF; Tamura himself was to retire as a vice admiral. It is worth noting that as early as 1949, with the reduction of the Allied occupation forces, Japan possessed the largest and most capable minesweeping force in the western Pacific.

The outbreak of war on the Korean Peninsula in the summer of 1950 caught the United States and the United Nations unprepared in many areas, one of them mine warfare. The United States no longer possessed the capability to counter the threat that mines presented in Korean waters. In fact, the entire U.S. minesweeping force in the Pacific consisted of only ten ships: four 180-foot steel vessels, three of which were out of service, and six wooden auxiliary minesweepers. This number was clearly inadequate; extensive mining had cost the

Table 1
Force Composition
(As of 31 March 1993)

Ship Class	Number
Principal Surface Combatants	62
Submarines	15
Mine Warfare Ships	38
Patrol Combatant Craft	8
Landing Ships	10
Auxiliary Ships	31
Total	**164**

Aircraft Type	Purpose	Number
P–2J	Patrol	6
P–3C		87
SH–2B	Antisubmarine helo	75
SH–60J		26
MH–53E	Minesweeping helo	10

Performance Data

Type	Class	Standard Displace-ment (tons)	Maximum Speed (knots)	Main Equipment
Destroyer	*Kongo*	7,250	30	127mm guns, 2 CIWS Aegis, vertical launch SAM (SM-2 MR) SSM 2 triple torpedo tubes
	Shirane	5,200	32	2 127mm guns, 2 CIWS Short-range SAM, Asroc 2 triple torpedo tubes, 3 ASW helos
	Hatakaze	4,600	30	2 127mm guns, 2 CIWS SAM, 2 triple torpedo tubes SSM, Asroc
	Asagiri	3,500	30	76mm gun, 2 CIWS, Asroc Short-range SAM, ASW helo SSM 2 triple torpedo tubes
	Abukuma	2,000	27	76mm gun, CIWS, Asroc SSM 2 triple torpedo tubes
Submarine	*Harushio*	2,450	20	6 torpedo tubes Underwater-to-surface guided missiles
Minesweeper	*Uwajima*	490	14	20mm machine gun
Landing ship	*Miura*	2,000	14	76mm gun, 40mm machine gun

CIWS: Close-in Weapon System (20mm) **SSM:** Harpoon Surface-to-Surface Missile
SAM: Surface-to-Air Missile **Asroc:** ASW Rocket

Source: *Defense of Japan 1993*

United States command of the sea around Korea.[1] It was obliged to request minesweeping assistance from Japan. After considerable thought as to the legality of such action, Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida authorized the deployment of minesweepers to support the U.S. landings in Korea. Yoshida felt that since the request had been supported by the Occupation commander, Japan could not very well refuse. Led by Captain Tamura, forty-six Japanese minesweepers and 1,200 personnel swept over three hundred kilometers of channels between 2 October and 12 December 1950. Two ships were lost, one sailor was killed, and eight others were injured. This was the first postwar deployment (as is not commonly known) of Japanese forces outside territorial waters in support of United Nations operations.

Maritime Safety. In late 1945 and early 1946, Japan faced increasing black market smuggling and illegal immigration (primarily from Korea) as well as capture of its fishing vessels by the Soviet Union, China, and Korea. In response, Japan sought either authority from SCAP to protect threatened vessels and defend its coastline or provision of such protection by the occupation forces. SCAP directed Japan on 12 June 1946 to establish an emergency illegal entry control center on Kyushu, the focus of illegal immigration and smuggling activity at the time. Shipping found entering the country illegally was to be intercepted and turned over to U.S. forces. To accomplish this task, three ships and thirteen smaller vessels were dispatched; they proved totally inadequate, due to poor communications, lack of weapons, and insufficient funding. However, no further forces or actions were authorized until a U.S. Coast Guard representative, Captain Frank M. Meals, was sent to Japan to study its maritime defense and safety needs, made his report to SCAP.

Captain Meals recommended that a central organization be established "for the purpose of protecting life and property and preventing, detecting, and suppressing violation of law at sea."[2] Twenty-eight former IJN auxiliary subchasers were transferred on 28 August 1947 from the Demobilization Board to the Ministry of Transportation for use as coastal patrol ships. Only after overcoming considerable opposition from China, Russia, and the United Kingdom, in both the Allied Council and the Far Eastern Commission, was the United States able to obtain approval of the Maritime Safety Board bill, which officially established the Maritime Safety Agency (or MSA, a Coast Guard–type force) on 1 May 1948. The law imposed several restrictions: that total personnel were not to exceed ten thousand, total vessels were not to exceed 125 ships or fifty thousand tons, vessels were not to exceed fifteen knots in speed, weaponry was to be small arms only, and the operating area was limited to the seas adjacent to Japan. MSA functions were to include protecting coastal areas, establishing and enforcing maritime safety standards, suppressing smuggling, and clearing

marine obstacles, including mines. The Agency was defined as "non-military," and it incorporated the minesweeping forces led by Captain Tamura.

An External Threat. The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 was followed shortly by a call from General MacArthur for Japan to form a National Police Reserve Force of seventy-five thousand personnel and expand the MSA by eight thousand. While this plan, designed to offset the deployment of U.S. troops to Korea, is usually considered the beginning of the rearmament of Japan, for naval forces the case is not clear. It can be argued that because the new policy authorized only an increase of personnel and gross tonnage for the previously established MSA and did not affect its mission, "rearmament" of the naval forces had actually commenced with the formation of that agency in 1948. What is not debatable is that MacArthur had acknowledged Japan's need to help provide for its own defense against current and future external threats to its security.

The Korean War and the rapid deployment of U.S. forces in Japan to Korea seems to have left SCAP and most Japanese officials convinced that Japan would be required to assist in its own defense following the end of occupation. Early in 1951, the Soviet Union and China were harassing Japanese fishing vessels in the waters off Hokkaido and the East China Sea respectively. Korean smuggling was still a major problem around Kyushu and in the Sea of Japan. Additionally, with events in Eastern Europe, Germany, and Korea clearly indicating that the Cold War had begun, the threat to Hokkaido of invasion from the Soviet Union was a matter of increasing concern.[3]

In January of that year, SCAP recommended that the Demobilization Bureau search for "ten of the very best" former IJN officers available, to found a new naval force. SCAP proposed as its nucleus eighteen patrol frigates recently returned to the U.S. by the Soviet Union and located in Yokosuka harbor, and fifty Large Support Landing Ships (LSSL) that could be transferred from the United States. This was an easy task for the Demobilization Bureau, which had been confidentially examining the possibility of rearmament since 1946. At that time a decision had been made to conduct such studies "after normal working hours" in order to be prepared to deal with any situation that might develop once Japan was again independent. These preparations had included keeping track of former Imperial Japanese Navy personnel.

The official word came in March 1951. SCAP formally requested the Bureau to provide information on former naval personnel and their potential for remobilization. Amid debate concerning the composition and mission of any new naval force, the National Safety Agency Law was promulgated 31 July 1952, and the Coastal Security Force was inaugurated on 1 August. The only ships transferred from the U.S. at this time, however, were for training purposes—two frigates and one landing craft. The only missions specified were maintaining

peace and stability, defending the citizenry, and administering and supervising its own forces.

The Birth and Evolution of the JMSDF. On 14 January 1953 six frigates and three landing craft were formally transferred to Japan, and by 23 December all eighteen frigates and fifty landing craft previously envisioned had been delivered. Japan was told, however, that before the United States could legally offer more assistance, Japan would have to commit itself to provide more for its own security against external aggression. Japan was expected to state as official policy that it would counter external aggression and establish a defense force for such a purpose. It was not an easy course for the Japanese government to take.

Prime Minister Yoshida had said in 1952 that Japan "will not rearm. To rearm we must ask the consent of the people and revise the constitution."[4] In 1953, however, he maintained that the constitution did not prohibit military power for self defense, and he concluded an agreement with opposition leader Shigemitsu Mamoru. The agreement read: "In consideration of the present international situation and the spirit of national independence which is arising within our country, we will clarify the policy of increasing our self-defense strength and establish a long-range defense plan in response to the gradual reduction of U.S. armed forces stationed in our country and in proportion to our national power. Together with this measure, as a first step, we will amend the Safety Agency Law in order to reorganize the Safety Forces into the Self-Defense Forces and to add the mission of defense of our country against direct aggression to the former's mission."[5]

In early 1954, the U.S.-Japan Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement was signed. In return for U.S. aid, Japan undertook to "make, consistent with the political and economic stability of Japan, the full contribution permitted by its manpower, resources, facilities, and general economic condition to the development and maintenance of its own defensive strength" and to "take all reasonable measures which may be needed to develop its defense capabilities."[6]

On 9 June 1954 the Defense Agency Establishment Law and the Self-Defense Force Law were passed, effective as of 1 July 1954. The Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force was born.

For nearly three years the MSDF operated within the Defense Agency, with no clearly defined guidelines. On 20 May 1957 the Cabinet finally approved the "Basic National Defense Policy." That document set forth that the purpose of national defense was to prevent direct or indirect aggression, and, if necessary, to repel invasion in order to preserve for Japan the blessings of independence, peace, and democracy. The Self-Defense Forces were also:

• to support the activities of the United Nations in its promotion of international cooperation, thereby contributing to the cause of world peace;

• to promote the national welfare and enhance the spirit of patriotism, thus laying a sound basis for national security;

• to develop effective defensive power within the bounds of national capabilities and to the extent necessary for self defense; and,

• to cope with aggression by recourse to a joint security arrangement with the United States, pending effective functioning of the United Nations in preventing and reversing aggression.

On 14 June 1957 the first long-range defense buildup plan was approved.[7] The plan was devised with "a view to the build up of the minimum requirement of a self-defense potential in accordance with the Basic National Defense Policy and in keeping with national resources and conditions." At a time when the United States was encouraging Japan to perform more of its own defense, even this vague declaration was enough to allow significant U.S. troop reductions to proceed, yet it enabled the Japanese Finance Ministry to meet its goal of limiting defense spending for economic reasons. (See table 2 for a summary of the First Defense Buildup Program, 1958–1960.)

The Second Defense Buildup Program (1962–1966), approved on 16 July 1961, was delayed more than a year by disagreement between the Finance Ministry and the Defense Agency over funding and mission requirements. The draft of the Second Defense Buildup Program Outline described the goal of defense as the ability to cope with localized wars and lesser conflicts, through antisubmarine warfare (ASW) in cooperation with the U.S. to control the Sea of Japan and block the Tsushima, Tsugaru, and Soya straits.

The Third Defense Buildup Plan (1967–1971) was the most specific up to that point in terms of goals and priorities. Its very first priority was to strengthen maritime defense. The plan called for increased capability to safeguard maritime transportation and strengthen the defense of waters off Japan's coasts and in the adjacent straits. However, consensus did not exist concerning the force structure required to achieve this goal. Consequently, after three defense buildup programs, the MSDF still lacked a capability to monitor or control the straits effectively.

On 9 October 1972 the cabinet decided upon the Fourth Defense Buildup Plan; it gave the goal of the MSDF as being "to improve defense capabilities in the sea areas around Japan, and the ability to ensure the safety of the sea lanes in those areas. . . ." However, the program was never fully realized, either as to capability or numbers, due to the budget restraints imposed upon the Defense Agency by severe inflation during the oil crisis of 1973. Acquisition of seventeen vessels (including five destroyers, two submarines, and ten other vessels) was eventually canceled or postponed.[8]

By 1975, as a result of the four Defense Programs, and in spite of the absence of clear consensus as to the mission or final structure of the MSDF, Japan had

Table 2
Defense Buildup Programs

	First Defense Buildup Program (1958–60)	Second Defense Buildup Program (1962–66)	Third Defense Buildup Program (1967–71)	Fourth Defense Buildup Program (1972–76)
Approved by NDC	453.2 billion yen	1,163.5 billion yen	2,340.0 billion yen	4,630 billion yen
Actually Authorized	407.4 billion yen	1,142.5 billion yen	2,281.0 billion yen	5,905.8 billion yen*
MSDF budget share	23.2 percent	22.9 percent	24.9 percent	23.2 percent
MSDF goals	124,000 tons 222 aircraft	143,000 tons 235 aircraft	142,000 tons 200 aircraft	214,000 tons 200 aircraft
MSDF actual	99,000 tons	116,200 tons 228 aircraft	144,000 tons** 270 aircraft	193,000 tons 190 aircraft

Construction starts	**1958**	**1959**	**1960**	**1961**	**1962**	**1963**	**1964**	**1965**	**1966**	**1967**	**1968**	**1969**	**1970**	**1971**	**1972**	**1973**	**1974**	**1975**	**1976**
Helicopter Destroyers (DDH)											1		1				1		1
Guided Missile Destroyers (DDG)			1													1			
Destroyers (DD, DDA, DDK)	2				1	2	2	2	1	1		1		2			1	2	1
Destroyer Escorts (DE)		2		2						1	2	1	2	1	3	1	1	1	
Submarines (SS)		2	2	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Patrol Craft (PC)	2	3		1		1	1	1											
Minesweepers (MSC, MSO)	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	4	4	5	4	3	3
Minelayers/Tenders												2							
Torpedo Boats (PT, PTM)			1									1	1	1	4	2	1	1	1
Support Ships/Auxiliaries	1	1	1					1	1	3			4	2				1	2
Landing Ships (LST)													1		2	2	1		

* Due to inflation, even this outlay fell far short of the original program cost estimate.
** The number of MSDF aircraft exceeded the target due to the extension of the lifespan of antisubmarine S2F-1 planes, which had been intended to reach the end of their service in the latter part of the Third Defense Buildup Program.

Sources: Linton Wells II, *The Sea and Japan's Strategic Interest, 1975–1985* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975); and Defense Agency, *Defense of Japan 1976* (trans. by The Japan Times, Ltd., 1976).

gone from a state of near-total disarmament to a point where its naval forces ranked fifth in the world in tonnage (as seen in table 3). The MSDF had limitations, however, that reduced its true operational capability, notwithstanding the size of the force. In 1975 they included a lack of logistical support, poor antiair warfare capability, and weak anti-invasion defenses. On the other hand, MSDF minesweeping was probably the best in the world, and its escort capability was impressive.

Table 3
Comparison of "Blue-Water" Naval Strengths in 1974

	Britain Nr/Tonnage	France Nr/Tonnage	Japan Nr/Tonnage	PRC Nr/Tonnage	Spain Nr/Tonnage
Aircraft Carriers	1/ 43,060	2/ 54,600			1/ 13,000
Cruisers/DLG	11/ 68,170	4/ 28,680			1/ 10,282
DDG/DEGs	1/ 3,500	4/ 11,000	1/ 3,050	4/ 6,628	2/ 6,000
Helo Destroyers*		2/ 9,160	1/ 4,700		
Destroyers/DDM		14/ 39,300	27/ 56,850	5/ 16,250	13/ 31,847
Frigates/DD escorts	58/139,900	27/ 38,250	16/ 21,950	9/ 9,800	14/ 22,251
Attack sub (Nuclear)	7/ 24,000				
Attack sub (Conv.)	22/ 34,930	19/ 17,341	14/ 19,810	45/ 48,030	8/ 10,010
Minelayers	1/ 1,375		2/ 2,780		
Minesweepers	39/ 14,130	59/ 24,918	40/ 15,640	16/ 8,000	24/ 12,387
Amphib. Assault	4/ 69,320	2/ 11,600			
Amphib. Warfare	7/ 21,120	18/ 11,007	12/ 9,772	4/ 6,000	17/ 34,031
Corvettes		25/ 8,595	20/ 7,690	30/ 11,200	4/ 4,124
Total	**151/419,505**	**176/254,451**	**133/142,242**	**113/105,908**	**84/143,932**

* Those carrying two or more helicopters
Source: *Jane's Fighting Ships, 1974–75.*

In 1977 the National Defense Program Outline was adopted, and the goal of Japan's defense buildup was made clear. The program identified two "Basic Defense Concepts" for Japan:[9]

• *Prevention of armed invasion.* "Japan's basic defense policy is to possess an adequate defense capability of its own while establishing a posture for the most effective operation of that capability to prevent aggression. In addition, a defense posture capable of dealing with any aggression should be constructed, through maintaining the credibility of the Japan-U.S. security arrangement and insuring

the smooth functioning of that system." This first concept further stated Japan's intention to rely upon the U.S. nuclear deterrent against any nuclear threat.

• *Countering aggression.* "Should indirect aggression—or any unlawful military activity which might lead to aggression—against this nation occur, Japan will take immediate responsive action in order to settle the situation at an early stage. Should direct aggression occur, Japan will repel such aggression at the earliest possible stage by taking immediate responsive action and by trying to conduct an integrated, systematic operation of its defense capability. Japan will repel limited and small scale aggression, in principle, without external assistance. In cases where the unassisted repelling of aggression is not feasible, due to scale, type or other factors of such aggression, Japan will continue an unyielding resistance by mobilizing all available forces until such time as cooperation from the United States is introduced, thus rebuffing such aggression."

The Outline further identified defense capability levels and specific postures to be maintained by all branches of the SDF, norms that are still in effect today. These were achieved as a result of the Mid-Term Defense Program system also adopted in 1976, which stipulated the level of defense capability made necessary by the international situation. This new system, which also provided defense planners greater flexibility to budget "year to year," was used to plan MSDF quality upgrades and to achieve the currently maintained level of forces. (For the MSDF quota structure, see table 4.)

Table 4
National Defense Program Outline MSDF Quotas
(Adopted on 29 October 1976)

Basic Units	
Antisubmarine Surface Ship Units (for mobile operations)	4 Escort Flotillas
Antisubmarine Surface Ship Units (Regional District Units)	10 Divisions
Submarine Units	6 Divisions
Minesweeping Units	2 Flotillas
Land-based Antisubmarine Aircraft Units	16 Squadrons
Main Equipment	
Antisubmarine Surface Ships	Approximately 60 Ships
Submarines	16 Submarines
Combat Aircraft	Approximately 220 Aircraft

Source: *Defense of Japan 1993*

Funding. Japan's defense spending is a subject guaranteed to generate discussion, both at home and abroad. There are those who say Japan spends too much on defense, in light of its true security needs and the "Peace Constitution." Others argue that its defense spending policy is slowly but surely financing the feared remilitarization of the country. On the other hand, calls are heard that Japan

should increase spending and "burden-sharing" for its own defense, or increase its support to international peacekeeping operations and disaster relief. More extreme voices call on Japan to go it alone and provide totally for its own defense without any outside alliances. While the intent and adequacy of past Japanese spending policies are beyond the scope of this article, the unique considerations faced in drafting defense budgets, and the results achieved, may be outlined. Table 5 depicts SDF funding data for 1955–1993.

Early defense budgets of the SDF were primarily influenced by three factors. First, because the Japanese economy had been ravaged by the war, politicians had given economic recovery the highest priority in government spending. Second, general apathy, if not resentment, was prevalent toward the military, which was held responsible by most Japanese for the disaster that had been brought upon Japan. Therefore, support for defense spending was not very enthusiastic in either the government or the private sector. Third, there was lack of agreement in the political arena as to what level of defense was appropriate and lawful under the new constitution.[10]

The second-mentioned reason—resentment of the military's role in leading Japan into World War II—was instrumental in the adoption of a system of firm civilian control over the Self-Defense Forces when they were established in 1954. Civilian control has allowed the Finance Ministry significant influence over defense budget requests before they are submitted to the Diet, or parliament. In fact, this arrangement has resulted in procurement cancellations within the Finance Ministry or Defense Agency without benefit of full debate by defense experts and the Diet as to a system's merit. It is interesting to note that during the formulation of the Second Defense Buildup Program, a call by the MSDF for a Japanese-built helicopter carrier was defeated in the Defense Agency, just as an earlier offer of a carrier by Admiral Arleigh Burke, then the U.S. Chief of Naval Operations, had been rejected. Critics argued on both occasions that such armaments were both unauthorized by Japan's Constitution and prohibitively expensive.[11]

During the past two decades, Japanese defense expenditures have risen substantially. In the 1980s, defense spending increased annually by more than 5 percent and rose as a percentage of the national budget each year as well.[12] This trend was a result of several factors: increased Cold War tension in the late 1970s and mid-1980s, and a corresponding Soviet military buildup in the Far East; increased U.S. pressure on Japan to shoulder more of its own defense; growing Japanese concern about the long-term U.S. military commitment and role in the region in the wake of the 1969 "Nixon Doctrine"; U.S. military withdrawals from Asia in the early 1970s, and the fall of South Vietnam; and finally, the oil shocks of 1973 and 1979, which reinforced the perception of linkage between Japan's economic and military security.[13]

Table 5
Defense Expenditures (Original Budget, 100 million yen)

FY	GNP Initial Forecast (A)	General Account (Original) (B)	Growth from Previous Year %	Defense Budget (Original) (C)	Growth from Previous Year %	Percent Ratio of Defense Budget to GNP (C÷A)	Percent Ratio of Defense Budget to General Account (C÷B)
1955	75,590	9,915	−0.8	1,349	−3.3	1.78	13.61
1960	127,480	15,697	10.6	1,569	0.6	1.23	9.99
1965	281,600	36,581	12.4	3,014	9.6	1.07	8.24
1970	724,400	79,498	17.9	5,695	17.7	0.79	7.16
1971	843,200	94,143	18.4	6,709	17.8	0.8	7.13
1972	905,500	114,677	21.8	8,002	19.3	0.88	6.98
1973	1,098,000	142,841	24.6	9,355	16.9	0.85	6.55
1974	1,315,000	170,994	19.7	10,930	16.8	0.83	6.39
1975	1,585,000	212,888	24.5	13,273	21.4	0.84	6.23
1976	1,681,000	242,960	14.1	15,124	13.9	0.9	6.22
1977	1,928,500	285,143	17.4	16,906	11.8	0.88	5.93
1978	2,106,000	342,950	20.3	19,010	12.4	0.9	5.54
1979	2,320,000	386,001	12.6	20,945	10.2	0.9	5.43
1980	2,478,000	425,888	10.3	22,302	6.5	0.9	5.24
1981	2,648,000	467,881	9.9	24,000	7.6	0.91	5.13
1982	2,772,000	496,808	6.2	25,861	7.8	0.93	5.21
1983	2,817,000	503,796	1.4	27,542	6.5	0.98	5.47
1984	2,960,000	506,272	0.5	29,346	6.55	0.99	5.8
1985	3,146,000	524,996	3.7	31,371	6.9	1	5.98
1986	3,367,000	540,886	3	33,435	6.58	0.99	6.18
1987	3,504,000	541,010	0	35,174	5.2	1	6.5
1988	3,652,000	566,997	4.8	37,003	5.2	1.01	6.53
1989	3,897,000	604,142	6.6	39,198	5.9	1.01	6.49
1990	4,172,000	662,368	9.6	41,593	6.1	1	6.28
1991	4,596,000	703,474	6.2	43,860	5.45	0.95	6.23
1992	4,837,000	722,180	2.7	45,518	3.8	0.94	6.3
1993	4,953,000	723,548	0.2	46,406	2	0.94	6.41

Data taken from Defense Agency, *Defense of Japan* (white papers for each year). Figures for 1982 and thereafter are adjusted to the fiscal 1992 budget basis for convenience of comparison.

Japan stands today at a major turning point as regards funding for the Self-Defense Forces. Opponents of defense, pointing to the end of the Cold War and Japan's economic recession, say the time is right to cut spending in that area. Proponents are in a difficult position, because for the past several decades they have justified defense spending by the Soviet threat, which they must now admit is gone. Overall SDF funding is likely to be reduced in the next several years to realize savings from the end of the Cold War and the much-diminished threat from Russia. It is unlikely, though, that the JMSDF will bear the brunt of these cuts.

The Constitutional Debate

The Preamble and Article 9 of the Japanese constitution relate to the maintenance of "war potential" and military forces. They have been at the center of controversy surrounding the Constitution since its adoption in 1947.[14]

> [*Preamble*] We, the Japanese people, desire peace for all time and are deeply conscious of the high ideals controlling human relationships, and we have determined to preserve our security and existence, trusting in the justice and faith of the peace-loving peoples of the world. We desire to occupy an honored place in an international society striving for the preservation of peace, and the banishment of tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance for all time from the Earth. We recognize that all peoples of the world have the right to live in peace, free from fear and want.
>
> [*Article 9*] Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat of force as a means of settling international disputes.
>
> In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.

Whether Japan's constitution originally intended to deny the right of self defense has been extensively debated over the years. That debate need not be rehearsed here, except to say that the opposition voices base their argument on a literal reading of Article 9. They draw little or no distinction between offensive and defensive capabilities, and they continue to resist strongly any broadening in the SDF's mission or capabilities. Even proponents of the SDF have undergone a degree of evolution in their attempt to identify missions and allowable force structures in an ever-changing international situation. As circumstances have altered over the years, so too has the definition of what constitutes "war potential" and what role the SDF is to play in the defense of Japan. A brief summary of how the Constitution, specifically Article 9, has been and is being construed is useful here.

Past Interpretations. The Japanese government's reading of Article 9 has gradually shifted. The government's early official position was absolutely pacifist and highly idealistic, stating that war would not be permitted under any circumstances, including defensive wars.[15] In the summer of 1946, during a Diet debate on the proposed constitution, Prime Minister Yoshida declared: "The war-renouncing article seems to justify the right of self-defense; however, I find it too dangerous to recognize such a right. Many recent conflicts have occurred under the guise of defense. Thus the recognition of self-defense will only invite war. . . . The war-renouncing article does not directly reject the right of self-defense. However, as paragraph 2 of Article 9 denies all armaments and the right of self-defense and the right of belligerency of the state, wars based on the right of self-defense and the right of belligerency are renounced. By voluntarily renouncing the right of belligerency we establish the basis for world peace. Through this constitution we solemnly declare our determination to establish world peace and to lead all the peace-loving nations of the world."

The first major shift occurred following the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950. As American forces stationed in Japan deployed to Korea, Japan was left virtually defenseless. General MacArthur, as has been described, called for the establishment of the 75,000-man National Police Reserve Force (NPRF) to fill the void. On 30 July 1950 the government explained that the mission of the NPRF was solely to maintain public order and that it had no relationship to "war potential."[16] By 1952, with Japan's occupation by U.S. forces ended and the National Safety Force and Coastal Security Force soon to be established, that interpretation seemed to need clarification. As a result, the Japanese government asserted that Article 9 did not deny the right of self defense and that maintenance of minimal weapons needed in a defensive war was not prohibited under the Constitution. In November of the same year, Japan announced the following view of the new National Safety Force: "War potential is one which possesses equipment and corps useful in waging modern warfare. Objectively, since the National Safety Force and Coastal Security Force cannot execute modern warfare given their facilities and corps, they do not come under the term 'war potential' written in the Constitution."[17]

The meaning of "war potential" would be further redefined in 1954, with the establishment of the SDF, as meaning forces that "exceed the minimum requirement for self-defense." It is this definition of "war potential" that is used today and that has allowed the buildup of the MSDF.

Also clarified in 1954 was the government's position that the Constitution did in fact allow for the maintenance of self-defense forces. With the passage of the Defense Agency Establishment and Self-Defense Forces laws, which created the National Defense Agency and the Ground, Air, and Maritime Self-Defense Forces, the Japanese government officially acknowledged for the first time its

responsibility for Japan's external defense. The mission of these forces was given as to "defend Japan against direct and indirect aggression, and when necessary to maintain public order."[18] Further, in remarking on the inauguration of the SDF, the Defense Agency Director General argued that "the Constitution renounces wars. However, it does not renounce wars for the purpose of self-defense. Obstruction of armed interventions from abroad is in itself defense, and its essence differs from that of solving international disputes. Thus defending the nation through the use of arms in case of foreign attacks does not violate the Constitution. Article 9 recognizes the right of self-defense of Japan, an independent nation. Hence the self-defense Forces, whose mission is to defend the nation, and the establishment of a capable corps with the necessary limits to serve the purpose of self-defense, do not violate the Constitution in any way."[19]

A "Minimum Level" of Strength. The government's view remains that Article 9 does not deny the right of self defense and that therefore the maintenance of the minimum level of armed strength necessary to exercise this right is not restricted. This "minimum level" is subjectively defined and is relative to the world situation at any given time; qualitative and quantitative analysis of the threat determines what force structure is required to defend Japan.

Japan defines two conditions that must exist before the right of self defense can be invoked.[20] First, there must be an act of aggression against Japan, or the threat of one. Second, no appropriate means other than self defense may exist to deal with it. If self defense is finally resorted to, only the minimum necessary force may be used.

Concerning collective defense, the position is that agreements of this type would exceed the minimum level of security necessary for the defense of Japan and are therefore prohibited under the Constitution. However, as a sovereign state, Japan has the same right to collective defense under international law as all other sovereign nations.[21]

The use of force to defend Japan is not confined to the geographic scope of Japanese territorial land, sea, and air space. However, the exact boundaries of defensive action are difficult to define, especially in the case of the MSDF. Generally speaking, the government believes that the Constitution does not permit the dispatch of the SDF to foreign territory, waters, or air space, as such deployment would go beyond the "minimum level" necessary for defense and run counter to the portion of Article 9 renouncing "the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes." In fact, in 1954, the same year the SDF was established, an uneasy House of Councilors passed a motion (the Overseas Dispatch Prohibition Resolution) forbidding such deployments.[22] This stricture has become central to the debate on participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Japan's inability to participate in the UN-sanctioned Gulf war against Iraq in 1991, excepting minesweeping units sent following the end of hostilities, resulted in a national debate concerning Japan's role in future UN operations. Though it had provided financial support amounting to $13 billion for Gulf war operations and for aid to countries most seriously affected economically by the conflict, Japan was criticized harshly in some sectors for not having done more.[23] Desiring to provide leadership in the international community commensurate with its status as an economic superpower, and realizing that this goal would not be accomplished through financial donations alone, in the summer of 1992 Japan passed the International Peace Cooperation Bill and a bill for revision of the International Emergency Relief Corps Law. These laws allow Japanese SDF personnel to participate in UN peacekeeping outside Japan provided certain prerequisites can be assured:

• "Agreement on a cease-fire shall have been reached among the parties to the conflict."

• "The parties to the conflict, including the territorial states, shall have given their consent to deployment of the peacekeeping force and Japan's participation in the force."

• "The peacekeeping force shall strictly maintain impartiality, not favoring any party to the conflict."

• "Should any of the above guideline requirements cease to be satisfied, the government of Japan may withdraw its contingent."

• "Use of weapons shall be limited to the minimum necessary to protect the lives, personnel, etc."[24]

It should be emphasized that these two laws that allow SDF participation in UN peacekeeping operations and disaster relief were passed only after considerable debate and in the face of significant opposition from certain sectors of Japan's government and general populace. Japan's Asian neighbors, who remember only too well Japanese troop "deployments" of fifty years ago, have also been apprehensive over the passage of these laws. Japanese opposition parties, of course, insist that they violate the Constitution, specifically Article 9; even many supporters concede the apparent problem and suggest that any further broadening of these laws would require a constitutional amendment.[25]

The Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement

The most important factors in the stability of the Asia-Pacific region over the past forty years have been the presence of American forces and the Mutual Defense Treaty between Japan and the United States. The success of this relationship during the Cold War is indisputable. It deterred Soviet aggression and allowed many of the local economies, notably those of Japan and South

Korea, to flourish without the burden of providing entirely for their own defense. The United States also was well served in that it had access to stable markets and enjoyed military alliances that enhanced its position against the Soviet Union and facilitated movement to the Middle East. It is fair to say that the security arrangements between Japan and the U.S. worked very well not only for the two countries but for the entire free world as well.

During the past twenty years, Japan's Self-Defense Forces received significant quantitative and qualitative improvements. The justification offered by Japanese politicians and Defense Agency officials centered around the need to counter Soviet military capabilities. Additionally, Japan was increasingly under pressure to help provide for its own defense as the financial burden of the Cold War upon the United States grew greater. Today, however, the end of the Cold War makes it logical for both nations to ask, "How has Japan's need for self defense changed?" and, "Is the Mutual Defense Treaty still necessary?" What, then, is the future of this relationship?

The history of the JMSDF shows that despite Japan's "Peace Constitution," and even prior to the escalation of the Cold War, leaders in both Japan and the United States realized that Japan could not exist without adequate provision for self defense. It was true immediately following World War II; it was true during the Cold War; and it remains true today. Geopolitically, Japan lies in a region of extreme diversity and a long history of conflict between nations and cultures. The fact that Japan is an island nation relying almost exclusively on imported raw materials makes its survival as a nation forever dependent upon access to foreign resources and markets via unrestricted sea lanes. In view of this, the only real questions become, "To what extent will Japan contribute to the maintenance of a stable world order?" and, "To what extent will it assist in keeping sea lanes open?" Both conditions are vital to the national security of Japan. It is in this context that the security relationship between Japan and the United States is most likely to develop over the long term.

Economics. As the world's two largest economies, inseparably linked for the foreseeable future, Japan and the United States have a vested interest in the economic success of one another. Both Japan and America are struggling with sluggish economies, and America is further burdened with a budget deficit that even optimistic economists estimate will require many years to reduce significantly. Given growing economic competition, these factors and others make occasional trade friction likely to increase between Japan and the U.S. Such friction is, however, unlikely to be allowed to intensify to such a point that it jeopardizes the close relationship between the two countries. If it does interfere in the bilateral relationship, that will have been the unfortunate result of poor

diplomatic policy, a lack of mutual understanding; it will not have been at all in the best interest of either nation.

Politics. In the political arena several emerging trends will probably lead to a Japanese political philosophy more independent than at present from United States leadership. Most important among them is the Japanese government's desire, already noted, to play a more active world leadership role, one commensurate with the nation's economic stature. Japan seems no longer willing simply to follow the lead of the United States in international politics, perhaps as much as a result of restored national pride as of a desire to ensure that Japan's national interests are represented. The United States supports this orientation and since 1979 has endorsed Japan's bid for a permanent Security Council seat. Because the two nations' interests are so closely tied, most U.S. analysts foresee mainly positive results from increased Japanese influence in world affairs. In fact, many see Japan's leadership as critical to maintaining the balance of power in Asia as China begins to wield increasing influence in the region by virtue of its own economic growth and military modernization. United States policy envisions for Japan a more influential role in guiding other Asian countries toward democracy and political stability.[26]

One concern of some Japanese is America's commitment to Japan now that the Cold War has ended. The unease stems, to some degree, from the apparent willingness of the U.S. to embrace Russia, a country that has yet to conclude a formal peace treaty with Japan (due to the Northern Territories issue) and still maintains considerable forces in the Far East. Another concern is likely American response to limited acts of aggression against Japan. These are real concerns, and it would seem to be in the best interest of both nations for the U.S. to continue to demonstrate its commitment to Japan.

While United States interests in Asia have changed as a result of the end of the Cold War, they have not diminished in any way. Regional stability is still essential to the economic well-being of the U.S. and its allies around the world, and American presence in Japan remains essential to that stability. Military withdrawal would likely require Japan to increase its own defense capability. Other nations in the region, still mindful of the aggression inflicted upon them in World War II and wary of any Japanese movement toward a power-projection capability, would probably embark upon a large, rapid military buildup to counter a perceived rearmament of Japan. This development, in turn, would undoubtedly lead to military and political instability detrimental to continued economic growth and prosperity in the region. At present, even the administration of President William Clinton, elected in part due to his pledge to reduce defense spending, has acknowledged the need to maintain a credible level of

U.S. forces in the Asia-Pacific region despite the budgetary crisis and military down-sizing.

In short, the importance of the alliance between Japan and the United States is effectively unchanged by the end of the Cold War. As long as the United States intends to play a leading role in the security, both economic and military, of Asia, it seems in its best interest and Japan's to maintain this alliance. While the United States struggles with its debt problems, there may be even more pressure upon Japan to assist, financially and logistically, in maintaining U.S. forces in that country. The military relationship also is likely to become, more and more, one of equal partnership in the region. The future will probably involve greater sharing of advanced technology and cooperative development of technology designed to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the region.

Japan's Relations with Regional Powers

Several countries of Asia are today in periods of great uncertainty and change as a result of the end of the Cold War, the enormous economic success of many Asian nations, and the corresponding political clout such success brings. Over the past four decades, most countries in the area have flourished under the security umbrella of the United States. The success of bilateral security agreements, designed primarily as safeguards against communist aggression, provided stability and contributed to the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union.

Despite the obvious difficulty of predicting the future of the Asia-Pacific region and Japan's corresponding role, it is important to examine the underlying issues, because the forces at work in Asia will undoubtedly affect the course of world history. (For Japan itself, the task is complicated by its constitutional restrictions and the political sensitivity of discussing them. This sensitivity was vividly demonstrated in December 1993 by the resignation of the Director General of the Defense Agency after he had made comments supporting revision of the war-renouncing Constitution.)[27] The world as a whole is entering a time when economic power will wield increasing influence, as lesser-developed nations and countries economically devastated by the Cold War seek to raise their standards of living.[28] Even the so-called First World nations, particularly the United States, paid a heavy financial price. These economies must now be restructured to remain competitive in increasingly free world trade. Most economists agree that the Asia-Pacific region will fuel the world economy. Developments in Asia, economic and political, will have worldwide repercussions and consequences for Japan's military and naval requirements. Japan's current and probable future relationships with four countries—Russia, China,

North Korea, and, of course, the United States—will in large part determine Japan's defense needs.

Russia. Projections of the political, economic, and military relationship between Japan and Russia are complicated by continuing transition in the former Soviet Union and the uncertain outcome of political and economic reforms. The Cold War left Russia in economic collapse; for the Russians, who have known only authoritarian rule and possess no experience in free-market economics, the transition to a market economy is painful and time-consuming. Infrastructure is lacking, as is a judiciary capable of managing the complicated system of contracts and business regulations necessary to conduct both domestic and international business.[29] Faced with these obstacles, Russia will probably take many years to recover economically—provided political reform stays on track.

The collapse of communism created much anticipation in Japan that the Northern Territories issue could at last be resolved, which would lead to better economic ties and a more trusting relationship with Russia. This has yet to happen. Russian nationalist groups and the military establishment both strongly believe that the four disputed islands (Shikotan, Iturup, Kunashir, and the Habomai group) are important to Russian security in the Pacific and that any territorial concessions in the Kuriles would open the door for other border claims around Russia.[30] Accordingly, they sternly oppose any suggestion of returning the Northern Territories to Japan. The recent success of nationalist parties in parliament and the lingering Russian military resistance to the return of the islands to Japan has probably decreased the likelihood of a resolution in the near future. This dispute leads Japan to question Russian sincerity about reconciliation, and it seems certain to continue to discourage close relations.

Another primary obstacle to closer relations and larger economic investment in Russia by Japanese investors (and the accompanying political ties that would result) is Russia's economic and political instability. Japanese political leaders have informed Russia of the preconditions for large-scale aid; at a January 1992 Washington conference on aiding the new Commonwealth, the Foreign Minister, Michio Watanabe, listed full transition to a market economy, further political transformation, and a foreign policy "based on law and justice."[31] Business leaders have also stated prerequisites for private investment in the Russian Far East: stabilization of the ruble and improvement there of basic necessities and social infrastructure such as transportation and environmental protection.[32] Clearly, Japan desires expanded economic opportunity in Russia, particularly its Far East; but only after political and market reform is securely in place and irreversible will Japan make a large-scale commitment. Russia's ability to meet these prerequisites is probably still a number of years away.

Regardless of which political party is in power in Moscow, Russia will still control one of the world's largest (and nuclear-capable) armed forces, including a very powerful (at least in numbers) Pacific fleet. Given the size of this force, its close proximity to Japan, the delicate balance of power in the region, and the Northern Territories dispute (which has so far prevented any formal peace treaty between the two countries), the overwhelming consensus among the Japanese is that their nation should "wait and see" before discounting any potential threat from Russia. While the latter is obviously occupied at the moment with internal issues, the vision of an economically recovered Russia that has not truly abandoned past tendencies of settling international disputes with force clearly concerns many Japanese for the "mid to long term."[33] Japan's geographic location as a potential barrier to Russian access to the Pacific Ocean makes Japan a consideration in Russian military strategy, and vice versa. A true warming of relations between Russia and Japan will involve a difficult transition for both countries. Their history of animosity, mistrust, and even conflict, is a long one.

China. From a Japanese perspective, it is very possible that the end of the twentieth century will be remembered as the "good old days" of Sino-Japanese relations. Trends currently underway in the People's Republic of China will undoubtedly change the economic, political, and military complexion of Asia in the twenty-first century. These trends include "marketization" of China's structured economy and modernization of its military forces. When one looks where these trends could lead, it is difficult to envision a future situation in China that will serve Japan's national interest better than the current one.

China's market policies, introduced in 1979, have already generated enormous expansion in the Chinese economy. From 1984 through 1990 China's growth rate is reported to have averaged 9 percent per year.[34] Projections differ for China's sustainable economic growth over the next several years, but they range from about 6 percent to as high as 9 percent.[35] There are, of course, many factors that can restrict any economy, and China is no exception. The Tokyo-based Institute for International Policy Studies has identified four factors that impede growth in China: "inadequate transportation capacity, energy shortages, and environmental pollution—all of which can be eliminated by economic measures—and the low level of education, which requires a more fundamental long-term effort."[36] These factors are manageable, and few analysts doubt, barring a reversal of government policies (unlikely after fifteen years of experience of the benefits of a market economy), that China will develop into an economic heavyweight early in the twenty-first century. *The Economist* points out that "present day China, as measured by purchasing power parity, is the third largest economic power in the world, next only to the United States and Japan, and will be the top economic power by 2010."[37] While this report may be overly

optimistic, the point is clear—China is fast becoming an economic force to be reckoned with. It is this increased economic power that is financing the modernization of China's military, which is of particular concern to the countries of Asia, including Japan.

In the past several decades, China's massive military force was structured primarily to defeat territorial aggression. Today, however, like many countries, China is restructuring its military forces and reducing their size. In fact, since the mid-1980s it has reduced the number of personnel in uniform by 25 percent and is reportedly considering further cuts.[38] However, defense spending, which had been declining in the mid-1980s, has increased significantly since 1988. Since 1990 it has constituted approximately 9.8 percent of the gross national product (GNP), but actual defense expenditures increased 13 percent from 1991 to 1992 and by 14.9 percent from 1992 to 1993.[39] The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency estimates that "when adjusted for inflation, budgeted defense spending—which may account for only half the country's military spending—fell 21 percent from 1984–1988 . . . but had risen 22 percent since 1988."[40] While not out of line as a percentage of GNP, this outlay could be cause for concern. This money is being spent to modernize China's forces, especially its navy and air force, the arms that represent China's ability to extend its maritime interests and territorial claims should an armed struggle occur. China's acquisition of a new generation of destroyers and frigates with surface-to-surface missiles and electronic warfare systems will significantly upgrade its capabilities in the South China Sea. Air cover at sea has been enhanced by the 1992 acquisition of twenty-four Su-27 long-range, air-superiority fighters from Russia and the construction of an airfield on Yong Xing Island in the Paracels.[41] It is also reported that China is at least considering obtaining an aircraft carrier of some sort.[42] China is clearly structuring its forces to obtain a modest power-projection capability.

In the near term, however, there is no significant threat to Japan from China. The Chinese political leadership, having witnessed the dismal failure of Soviet communism, is convinced that it must proceed with market reforms.[43] This process must occur rapidly, lest China's own political system experience public dissatisfaction and instability. Therefore the nation is not likely to embark soon upon a confrontational path.

Nevertheless, in 1992 China asserted, in its Territorial Waters Act, a claim over the Spratly Islands, the northerly Paracel Islands, Taiwan, and Senkaku Island (which Japan claims) located at the southern tip of the Ryukyus island chain off the northern coast of Taiwan in the East China Sea. Beijing then awarded to an American oil company an exploration concession between the Spratlys and the southern Vietnamese coast and reserved the right to use force to protect it.[44] In addition, the construction of the airfield on Yong Xing underscores the seriousness of China's commitment to use force if necessary to

enforce its territorial claims. These claims of course include the natural resources and fishing rights associated with the islands.

China's geographic position adjoining Japan's sea lines of communication, a pending territorial dispute over Senkaku Island, the modernization of China's naval forces, and China's unclear intentions for the latter, seem ample reason for Japanese concern. Given the mutual suspicion of each nation that the other seeks to dominate the region, the possibility for conflict in the long term appears real for many Japanese. They see China as clearly the most significant potential threat to regional security for the coming years.

From Japan's perspective, the worst possible outcome of China's "marketization" and modernization would be for that nation to enforce territorial claims, especially against Senkaku Island. Military action to resolve territorial disputes could easily spill over and threaten Japan's sea lanes through the South China Sea. This concern is exacerbated by the fear that the U.S. would not militarily assist Japan in a dispute with China over Senkaku Island. With its current force structure, the JMSDF would be hard pressed to enforce Japan's claim, due primarily to the lack of air cover.

North Korea. Unquestionably, the primary near-term threat to regional stability in Northeast Asia is North Korea. Its government, often described as "unpredictable," embarked in 1994 upon a dangerous game of "cat and mouse" with the United States and the International Atomic Energy Agency over nuclear facilities. Suspected by the international community of developing nuclear weapons, North Korea refused inspections by the IAEA and caused severe concern by threatening to withdraw from the Nonproliferation Treaty. It is generally accepted by the major regional powers, including Russia, China, and Japan, that stability in North Korea is key to maintaining peace in Northeast Asia and to preventing a new arms race there.

In the long term, the seriousness of the threat posed to Japan from the Korean Peninsula will depend on the course of reunification and the attitude of the resulting government toward Japan. There is, of course, long-standing animosity on both sides. Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa's attempt to better relations with South Korea with an apology for Japan's wartime conduct in Korea received criticism at home.[45] From Japan's viewpoint, a unified Korea's intentions will be seen in how quickly it reduces the enormous size of its combined armed forces. That is, while the current situation on the Korean Peninsula has its dangers, a reunified Korea could also present problems for Japan.

The Future of the JMSDF

If one could accurately forecast political, economic, and military developments in the countries around Japan and foretell the success of diplomatic efforts toward their governments, then it would be possible to predict Japan's defense requirements, future missions, and "force structure"—that is, what assets it will have and how they will be organized. We have just seen the difficulty of such politico-economic forecasts, however. Military prediction is also complicated by the definition of "threat" in itself. It is a function of both capability and intent; capability may be (or seem) easy to measure, but intent is elusive and changeable.

Still, there are two possible developments that, if they were to occur, would change the missions and structure of the JMSDF more than would any other that could arise in the Asia-Pacific region. The first would be escalation of economic friction between the United States and Japan to such a point that American forces are withdrawn. Were this to occur before real trust of Japan on the part of its neighbors existed, a rapid and destabilizing arms buildup could result, as already noted. The second would be a Chinese decision not only to modernize but significantly enlarge its South China Sea forces. That would bring on at the minimum a moderate buildup of Japanese forces even if the U.S.-Japan security treaty remained in effect. With these two possibilities in mind, however, it is possible at least to sketch the evolution of missions and capabilities of the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force in the near, middle, and far terms, as far out as 2010.

Mission Areas. One highly plausible area for JMSDF activity is United Nations operations and international disaster relief. Perhaps the most visible items of evidence of Japan's desire to play a more influential role in international politics are its bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council and the passage in 1992 of the so-called "PKO Bill" authorizing SDF personnel to participate in UN peacekeeping. There are major issues here for both Japan and the United Nations, but it is very possible that Japan's Self-Defense Forces will play an increasing role in peacekeeping and in disaster relief operations in the coming years. MSDF participation could take several forms, including transportation of peacekeeping forces, logistical support to deployed ground SDF units, refugee evacuation, and emergency evacuation of Japanese personnel. The National Defense Program Outline currently being reviewed within the Defense Agency could well identify roles of this nature for the MSDF as part of Japan's growing UN-support activity.

A second mission area is the defense of the home islands and the sea lanes. The MSDF's primary wartime missions, in conjunction with the U.S. Seventh Fleet, are protection of Japan's sea lines of communication, deterring territorial

aggression, and controlling the major straits (Soya, Tsugaru, and Tsushima) surrounding Japan.[46] With the currently reduced Russian threat, mission priorities may reflect greater attention toward Japan's southern sea lanes and decreased emphasis on mainland defense in the northern regions. In 1981 Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki, visiting President Ronald Reagan, announced that Japan would commit the MSDF to protecting Japan's sea lanes out to a thousand nautical miles from the home islands.[47] Since that announcement, a thousand miles has remained the generally accepted area of responsibility for the JMSDF. Unless a major balance of power shift occurs in the Asia-Pacific region and political considerations accordingly dictate otherwise, there is little likelihood of change; expanding the area of responsibility would require additions of force sure to bring strong objections from Asian neighbors.

A third likely mission is the protection of ocean resources and outlying islands. The dispute over Takeshima Island (with South Korea) seems unlikely to be dangerous; however, those with China over Senkaku Island and, less directly, China's dispute with other regional nations over the Spratlys and Paracels, and how this dispute will be resolved, are of particular concern for Japanese defense planners. If matters so develop that China attempts to take possession of other disputed islands by force, for instance the Spratly or Paracel islands, Japan will be, as noted, in a difficult position militarily to enforce its claim to Senkaku. Its vulnerabilities make it likely that ocean resource and island defense priorities will be expanded as MSDF missions in the long term.

Finally, there is the mission of theater missile defense, or TMD. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction—biological, chemical, and nuclear—is a problem rapidly approaching crisis proportions. The best known examples of countries obtaining such weapons are Iran, Iraq, and North Korea—although these are certainly not the only states seeking to obtain this capability. Certain states may obtain in the coming decade not only weapons of mass destruction but, even more alarming, the means of delivery. Japan, in response to this threat, is considering seriously the concept of regional protection against ballistic missiles. One option may involve an improved version of the Patriot system, another an upgrade to its Aegis shipboard systems and Standard missile so as to develop a TMD capability that could be integrated with emerging U.S. programs. The U.S. Navy is currently investigating this option with its own Aegis ships as well.[48]

The cost-effectiveness of such a system aside, a significant question Japan may have to answer concerns related cooperative security arrangements with other nations; remote sensors (e.g., satellites), which markedly improve detection and tracking and would thereby enhance the system's performance, would involve third-party nations and therefore pose a difficult political dilemma for Japan.[49] Such arrangements are now considered to be prohibited by Article 9 of the

Constitution. This restriction may prove to be a formidable obstacle should Japan elect to proceed with regional TMD development. If a theater missile defense system is developed, the JMSDF, with its Aegis-equipped warships, will likely play a large role.[50]

Force Structure. Barring a catastrophic regional development, the outlook for the JMSDF is one of continued modernization, training, emphasis on high technology, and a slight reduction in size. In the near term (through the end of the century), budget restraints and the disappearance of the East-West confrontation seem likely to cause the total numbers of ships to decline slightly, through gradual retirement and a reduced rate of procurement. The current Mid-Term Defense Program was amended for these reasons in 1992. As a result, the MSDF is planning to have fifty-six destroyers by the end of 1995 instead of the original target of sixty.[51] Acquisition of the P-3C maritime patrol aircraft and of other aircraft was reduced as well. The existing goal of a total of 220 combat aircraft will probably be cut in the next program.

One important planned asset is a landing ship of 8,900 tons, intended to replace the old tank landing ships. The new type will be capable of operating air-cushion landing craft; accordingly, it will greatly improve the MSDF's logistical effectiveness, which would be particularly important in peacekeeping operations.

Fleet organization is not likely to change, though some transfer of assets to the south is a possibility. In the middle to long term, the most significant changes will occur if a TMD mission is undertaken. That would probably necessitate a significant increase in the number of Aegis-capable ships and, due to the high cost of the system, reductions in other MSDF assets. Also, many members of the MSDF seem eager to obtain a vertical-and-short-takeoff-and-landing (VSTOL) carrier to improve air defense; however, this is unlikely unless either China obtains a carrier (causing Japan and its neighbors to agree that Japan should also obtain one) or the U.S. can no longer deploy a conventional CV in Japan and Tokyo elects to obtain its own non-nuclear carrier rather than allow a U.S. nuclear-powered ship to be stationed there.

Finally, an anticipated shortage of recruitment-age personnel, caused by Japan's aging population, could bring about the need to increase significantly the size of the MSDF reserve forces. Increasing the reserve component, presently of insignificant numbers, could be seen as a way to provide the qualified personnel necessary to operate today's high-technology warfare systems in Japan's labor-short economy.

The issues and variables affecting Japan's defense are indeed complicated and numerous. First, Japan is dependent upon access to world markets and resources for its very survival, as acknowledged by the U.S. even in the immediate

aftermath of World War II. Accordingly, Japan's sea lines of communication must be secure. Second, the Asia-Pacific region will probably experience political realignments, economic growth, and military modernization (if not outright buildup) during the coming decades. Major changes are likely in many of the countries surrounding Japan; indeed, Russia is currently in the midst of such an upheaval. The course of these changes in neighboring countries, as of now unpredictable, will heavily influence Japan's defense policies over the next fifteen years. Third, Japan's international policies are still very much affected by the lingering memories of Japan's efforts to bring about the "Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere." As a result, Japan is acutely aware of its need to earn international respect and trust, especially from its immediate neighbors. Finally, since its inception, the United States–Japan Mutual Defense Treaty has been the cornerstone of Asia-Pacific security. The treaty continues to serve well the interests of both nations, and it is viewed by nearly all regional nations as being an indispensable stabilizing influence. For now and the foreseeable future, there is no acceptable substitute for that treaty. These four facts, or more specifically, their interrelationships, will constitute the driving force behind Japan's policies toward defense and United Nations support over the next fifteen years.

If and when the democratic and free market reforms within Russia are secure, and once the Northern Territories dispute is settled, perhaps Japan can fully relax with respect to its northern neighbor. If and when the Korean Peninsula, Japan's closest neighbor and historical rival, no longer presents a threat to regional stability, perhaps Japan can relax to the west. If and when the potential of Chinese expansion is removed and Japan's sea lanes to the south are unthreatened, perhaps Japan can relax in that direction.

For now, Japan cannot relax. The region today is relatively calm; but change is coming in many forms, and change often creates instability. Given the unpredictable possibilities for the Asia-Pacific region, even an optimist would have difficulty envisioning all of them developing in such a way as to enhance Japan's security. Japan's most likely and prudent security policy appears to be to continue to pursue a modern, well trained, high-technology defense capability. The Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force, working closely with U.S. forces, will be vital in maintaining the nation's defense and ensuring regional stability.

Notes

1. Malcolm W. Cagle and Frank A. Manson, *The Sea War in Korea* (Manchester, N.H.: Ayer, 1957), p. 142.

2. James Auer, *The Postwar Rearmament of Japanese Maritime Forces, 1945–1971* (New York: Irvington, 1973).

3. Arleigh Burke, personal papers (Washington: Naval History Division, 1951), quoted in Auer. For Cold War hostilities and U.S. and Japanese government concern over the Soviet threat, see Martin E. Weinstein, *Japan's Postwar Defense Policy, 1947–1968* (New York and London: Columbia Univ. Press, 1971), pp. 23–42.

4. Quoted in "Kokkai Rongi no Naka no Jieitai" (The Self-Defense Forces in Diet discussions), *Keizai Orai*, June 1967, p. 119.

5. Auer, pp. 94–9. Auer cites Aso Shigeru of the National Diet Library.

6. Article 8, "Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement between Japan and the United States Forces Japan," *United States–Japan Agreements and Other Documents* (Tokyo: U.S. Forces Japan, 1961), p. 50.

7. Until fiscal 1977, major procurement issues were laid out by the National Defense Council and the Cabinet for planning periods of from three to five years; the resulting plans were announced as the First through Fourth Defense Buildup Programs. Prepared under the general guidance of the Basic National Defense Policy of providing "effective defense capability," these programs aimed at a gradual buildup with the goal of procuring "efficient items which are the most effective against an invasion situation in a limited war with conventional weapons." In the early 1970s, the defense buildup became a subject of debate in the National Diet, especially as to the establishment of limits, which were lacking in policies and programs. The National Defense Program Outline (NDPO) became effective in fiscal 1977; it clearly identified the policy of buildup, maintenance, and employment of defensive power.

Because the Finance Ministry and Defense Agency were unable to agree on allocations for the 1961–1966 plan, no formal budget was approved for 1961 (see table 2). Individual ships were authorized in that year on a case basis.

Under the NDPO, planning decisions have been made for each fiscal year. In addition, however, Mid-Term Defense Estimates look out over five-year periods beginning two years after the preparation date; they contain strategic projections for the Ground, Maritime, and Air Self-Defense Forces. They are intended for the use not of the government (as the Defense Buildup Programs had been) but of the Japanese Defense Agency, which bases upon them its operational planning and budget requests for each fiscal year. The Mid-Term Estimates are not fixed but are reviewed annually and reissued every three years.

8. Linton Wells II, *The Sea and Japan's Strategic Interest, 1975–1985* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1975). For the broad area of JMSDF development, see Auer.

9. Japan Defense Agency, *Defense of Japan 1976* (Tokyo: The Japan Times, Ltd.).

10. Wells.

11. Auer, p. 159.

12. Lorell Levin and Arthur Alexander, *The Wary Warriors: Future Directions in Japanese Security Policies* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 1992), p. 8.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

14. Quoted from Osamu Nishi, *Ten Days inside General Headquarters (GHQ): How the Original Draft of the Japanese Constitution Was Written in 1946* (Tokyo: Seibudo Publishing Co., 1989).

15. Osamu Nishi, *The Constitution and the National Defense Law System in Japan* (Tokyo: Seibudo Publishing Co., 1987).

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*

18. "Jieitai Ho" (Self-Defense Forces Law), chap. 3, art. 1.

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Ibid.*

21. The one exception to this policy is, of course, the "Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security" of 23 June 1960 between Japan and the U.S. Article V reads in part: "Each party recognizes that an armed attack against either Party in the territories under the administration of Japan would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional provisions and processes. . . ." Article VII declares in part, "This Treaty does not affect and shall not be interpreted as affecting in any way the rights and obligations of the Parties under the Charter of the United Nations or the responsibility of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security."

22. *Ibid.*

23. Francis Fukuyama and Kongdan Oh, *U.S.-Japan Security Relationship After the Cold War* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 1993).

24. Japan Defense Agency, *Defense of Japan 1993* (Tokyo: The Japan Times, Ltd.).

25. Fukuyama and Oh, p. 20.

26. Dick Cheney, *Defense Strategy for the 1990s: The Regional Defense Strategy* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., January 1993), pp. 4, 21–2.

27. *Japan Times*, 3 December 1993.

28. Samuel Huntington, "America's Changing Strategic Interests," *Survival*, February 1991.

29. Stephen Blank, "We Can Live Without You: Rivalry and Dialogue in Russo-Japanese Relations," *Comparative Strategy*, June 1993, p. 180.

30. Fukuyama and Oh, p. 10.

31. Blank, p. 181.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 180.

33. A Russian border guard vessel opened fire on two Japanese boats fishing off the southern Kurile islands on 15 August 1994, wounding at least one crewmember. The two boats were fishing inside disputed Russian Pacific waters. It was one of the most serious episodes in the forty-year dispute between Russia and Japan over the islands. *The New York Times*, 16 August 1994.

34. Barber B. Conable, Jr., and David Lampton, "China: The Coming Power," *Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1992, p. 135.

35. Hisahiro Kanayama, *The Marketization of China and Japan's Response: Prospects for the Future* (Tokyo: Institute for International Policy Studies, 1993), pp. 16–7.

36. *Ibid.*, pp. 17–8.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

38. Conable and Lampton, p. 135.

39. Fukuyama and Oh, p. 11.

40. Conable and Lampton, p. 136.

41. Bonnie Glaser, "China's Security Perceptions, Interests and Ambitions," *Asian Survey*, March 1993, p. 265.

42. "Chinese Buy Russian Carrier," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, September 1992, p. 123. The sale is unconfirmed, however; see Alexander C. Huang, "The Chinese Navy's Offshore Active Defense Strategy: Conceptualization and Implications," *Naval War College Review*, Summer 1994, esp. p. 7.

43. Glaser pp. 266–8.

44. "South China Sea: Treacherous Shoals," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 13 August 1992, p. 15.

45. *Japan Times*, 7 November 1993.

46. *Defense of Japon 1993.*

47. Lee H. Endress and Karl H. Eulenstein, *U.S.-Japan Security Relationship in the 1990s*, Commander in Chief U.S. Pacific Command (J55) Background Paper, August 1991. (The views, opinions, and findings contained in that paper are those of the authors and should not be construed as an official USCINCPAC position, policy, or decision unless so designated by official documents.)

48. William D. Smith, "Creating Defenses against Theater Ballistic Missiles Is an Awesome Challenge," *Almanac of Sea Power*, January 1994, pp. 12-3.

49. A defense issues advisory group formed by former Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa recently reported to Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama that Japan needs to acquire an improved intelligence-gathering capability, build a missile defense system, and prepare to dispatch forces for UN peacekeeping missions. The panel of businessmen, academics, and former government bureaucrats said that Japan's laws should be amended so the country can take part more fully in peacekeeping missions. Some specific recommendations include shifting priorities to "high tech" equipment for the Ground Self-Defense Force, reducing ASW vessels and aircraft, seeking closer cooperation with the U.S. on TMD, and improving the JMSDF sea patrol, surface battle, and air defense capabilities. See Eiichiro Sekigawa, "Panel Urges Overhaul of Japan's Military" *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 22 August 1994, p. 59.

50. See Smith, esp. p. 12.

51. *Defense of Japan 1993.*

Ψ

The wisdom of the scribe depends
on the opportunity of leisure;
and he who has little business may become wise.

Ecclesiasticus 38:24