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Japanese Attitudes Toward Defense and Security Issues

by

Larry A. Niksch

Since President Nixon enunciated the Guam Doctrine in 1969, Japanese defense policy has emerged as a major issue in US relations with Japan. Americans have viewed Japanese defense policy from three perspectives:

- as an aspect of burden sharing between the United States and its allies,
- as part of the problem of maintaining a satisfactory military balance with Soviet forces in the Western Pacific, and
- as part of the overall relationship between the United States.

An awareness of Japanese attitudes toward defense and security issues is an important consideration for US strategy. Japan's democratic political environment and diverse economy produce a variety of institutions and groups whose views contribute to the shaping of defense policy. The ruling Liberal-Democratic Party (LDP) decides policy at the top through control of the office of the Prime Minister and the cabinet ministers. The party representatives in the Diet also affect policy through their support of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and through their legislative responsibilities. The system of factions among the LDP parliamentarians requires the Prime Minister to rely on intra-party coalitions for support and thus increases his sensitivity to viewpoints held within the individual factions and by leaders of the factions.

The ministries themselves have substantial influence and it is common for them to play a major policy role. Senior bureaucrats may have personal relationships with members of the Diet and often take a part in drafting legislation. The Vice Ministers are usually career civil servants, frequently wield extensive power in the Cabinet, and appear better informed than the Ministers on matters of policy and administration. Given the Finance Minister's authority over budgetary matters, including the defense budget, he is considered the most influential ministry in a hierarchy of ministerial power. The Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) ranks second in this hierarchy. The Foreign Ministry falls somewhere below the Finance Ministry and MITI; and the Defense *Agency*, according to most observers, stands at the bottom of the groups that deal with international matters.

Big business plays a significant role in formulating government policies. Japanese firms exercise influence through financial support to the parties and political leaders, especially the LDP, and through the close contacts business leaders maintain with senior bureaucrats in the ministries that deal with economic issues. Big business has several lobbying and research organizations, the most important of which is Keidanren (Federation of Economic Organizations). Keidanren represents most of Japan's largest corporations and maintains a research staff dealing with many issues including defense policy.

The opposition parties have served as reflections of certain strains of public opinion. Their views on defense and foreign policy issues have often shaped the character of national opinion on these issues. This is particularly true since the opposition parties are more ideological than the LDP and have concentrated on foreign and defense issues owing to their lack of success in influencing public opinion on domestic issues.

Newspapers are at the heart of a system of mass communications that has grown up in Japan since World War II. Five newspapers have a nationwide distribution; these and local newspapers attained a daily circulation approaching 60 million in the mid-1970s.* The major dailies give extensive coverage to international affairs, and editorial opinion is freely expressed. Newspapers profess to be politically neutral with editorial opinion independent of the newspapers' ownership. Government officials and political leaders believe newspapers to be very important in influencing and reflecting public attitudes toward defense and security issues, (Foreign Ministry officials confided in the author that they watch closely editorial opinion in the leading dailies).

Newspapers and other organs of mass communications give intellectuals a wide forum to express their views, especially on defense and foreign policy questions. The influence of academics on students has contributed to the existence of politically active student groups throughout the postwar period. Both intellectual expression and intellectual contact with government broadened in the 1970s to include business-sponsored defense research in Keidanren, related organizations, and private research organizations.

Finally, Japan's democratic political system renders the views of the Japanese public an important influence on policy. The Japanese frequently resort to public opinion polls in order to survey national sentiment on defense and foreign policy issues, and the government conducts such surveys regularly as an input into the decision-making process.

Japanese Attitudes

The origins of the current debate in Japan over defense policy lay in the 30-year period following World War II. In this postwar period, four themes dominated Japanese attitudes toward military issues: pacifism, reliance on

Asahi Shimbun and *Yomiuri Shimbun* have the largest national readership, followed by *Mainichi Shimbun* and the economic daily, *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*.

the United States for defense, the perceived absence of an external military threat and the primacy of economic expansion. These attitudes are the basis for a cautious approach toward defense that emphasizes constraints on the role of the military as an instrument of national policy.

Pacifism. Pacifism was especially strong during post-World War II years. It grew out of the vast destruction suffered by Japan through the American bombings in 1944-45, culminating in the explosion of nuclear weapons over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japan's capitulation discredited the armed forces in the eyes of the Japanese, and the humiliation the former military leader sustained during the war crimes trials had an even greater discrediting effect in a country that had honored the samurai tradition for centuries.

American policies during the occupation period contributed greatly to the growth of anti-militarism in Japanese society. American policy sought a Japan that would be "completely disarmed and demilitarized."[1] US occupation authorities under General MacArthur dissolved the Japanese armed forces, purged militarists and ultra-nationalists from the government, and abolished the Zaibatsu—the organization of industrial barons that had built Japan's war-making potential in the years before Pearl Harbor. MacArthur and his staff closely supervised the work of Japanese officials in drafting the Constitution. Adopted in 1947, the Constitution contains Article IX, the famous no war clause: "Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling 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."

In the autumn of 1945, General MacArthur reportedly suggested that Japan renounce war "even for preserving its own security."[2] Shigeru Yoshida, soon to be Prime Minister, stated in his capacity as Foreign Minister on 25 June 1946, that the new constitution did not specifically deny the right of self-defense but that since it renounced both the right of belligerency and the maintenance of all forms of war potential, it followed that war as a means of self-defense was also renounced.[3] Thus, Japan was to become, as General MacArthur put it, the "Switzerland of the Far East."

With American involvement in the Korean War, its attitude on Japanese rearmament began to change and the Government of Japan pushed through a bill in 1954 creating the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (SDF). However, by this time pacifism was firmly fixed in Japanese attitudes and it was reinforced by leftist views, which were held by the opposition Japan Socialist Party (JSP) and which were influential within labor unions, student groups, and intellectuals. These groups advocated a policy of "unarmed neutrality" and sought to abolish the SDF and terminate Japan's alliance with the United

States. Editorial opinion in the influential Japanese press generally contained similar themes, and such commentary reached high levels of criticism during the late 1960s.[4] Intellectuals and academics of this period generally supported a nonmilitary Japan although many did not hold strictly to pacifist views.[5]

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, there was little public sentiment for strengthening the Self-Defense Forces beyond the 1954 authorized level of 250,000. A public opinion poll taken in January 1969 by the newspaper *Asahi Shimbun* asked what was the best way to protect the peace and security of Japan. Only 25 percent of the respondents favored an increase in Japanese military strength.[6] The constitutional constraint embodied in Article IX received overwhelming support from the public. A 1968 public opinion poll showed that 91 percent of the Japanese people supported retention of the clause.[7] Much of the debate on defense policy prior to 1970 focused on the legality of the Self-Defense Forces in relation to Article IX. The government, controlled throughout the period by the Liberal-Democratic Party (LDP), asserted that Article IX did not prohibit the right of self-defense. Opposition elements led by the Socialist Party argued that a literal interpretation of Article IX rendered the Self-Defense Forces illegal under Japanese law.

The strength of pacifist sentiment put the government on the defensive which led to restraints on the SDF. The head of the Defense Agency was not given ministerial rank in the cabinet. The government barred the SDF from sending troops abroad and scrutinized weaponry to prevent any buildup of "offensive capabilities." Official policy prohibited the Maritime Self-Defense Force from procuring aircraft carriers, cruisers, or other vessels designed for "offensive" operations. The Air Self-Defense Force was barred from procuring strategic bombers. Reserve capabilities were miniscule, and no plans existed for general mobilization in case of war. In the mid-1960s the government established a policy of limiting defense budgets to no more than one percent of the GNP. Finally, every Japanese government firmly upheld three principles governing nuclear weapons: nonproduction, nonpossession, and prohibition of nuclear weapons on Japanese soil.

Reliance on the United States for Defense. The second basic theme emerged during the early period of the occupation, and came to fruition in the 1951 and in the 1960 US-Japan Security Treaties. The 1951 treaty had stated that the maintenance of US forces in and around Japan was based on the expectation that Japan would itself increasingly assume responsibility for its own defense against direct and indirect aggression. The 1960 treaty deemphasized Japan's "obligation" to rearm by referring only to action by the two parties to develop defensive capabilities subject to their constitutional provisions. In short, the 1960 treaty placed greater stress on the US commitment to defend Japan and less on the importance of increases in Japanese military capabilities.

However, the alliance with the United States and the stationing of American forces in Japan were not universally popular. The Socialist Party and other leftist groups constantly demanded an abrogation of the treaties, warning that the US-Japan alliance threatened to draw Japan into a war. The Socialists, Communists, and other leftist organizations fomented massive riots in 1960 against ratification of the Security Treaty, which led to the cancellation of President Eisenhower's visit to Japan. Even government officials described American bases as a negative factor in US-Japan relations. In outlining Japanese policy in connection with the future reversion of Okinawa to Japanese administration, Japanese officials stressed that the government would scrutinize any proposal by the United States to use US bases in Okinawa to support combat operations in the Far East. Foreign Minister Aichi declared that the government would approve such use only if Japan were attacked or placed in extreme danger.

Public opinion polls of the late 1960s portrayed the Japanese people as willing to accept the American defense guarantee as embodied in the Security Treaty. However, they either opposed or were divided over tenets of the pact considered vital by the United States: namely that Japan's security is related to the security of other free Asian countries; and the presence of American forces in Japan proper and Okinawa enhances Japan's defenses. Former US Ambassador to Japan, Edwin Reischauer, stated in an article in the 10 March 1968, *New York Times Magazine* that: "Given this situation, it would be comical, if it were not so tragic, that most Japanese regard matters of defense and stability in East Asia as being peculiarly American problems, not Japanese. They feel that what is involved is American pride and an evil ambition to dominate the world. While valuing close contacts with the United States, with which Japan does about thirty percent of its total trade, many Japanese fear too close an association. They regard American bases in Japan, not so much as valuable to Japan for the security and stability they provide to much of East Asia, but as detrimental to Japanese interests, because they might involve Japanese in an American war with China."

Perceptions of External Threats. These misgivings about the alliance and the presence of US forces were related ro the third basic attitude: that Japan was in little danger of being attacked by another country, especially China or the Soviet Union. No power other than the United States maintained sizable military forces near Japan until the late 1970s, and Japan faced no apparent threat. A January 1969 *Asahi Shimbun* survey found that 32 percent of those polled were concerned over an external threat while 52 percent were not.

Neither the government nor the opposition parties perceived an appreciable threat from China or the Soviet Union, despite concern over China's emergence as a nuclear power in 1964 and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Socialist Party planks called for closer Japanese

alignment with the communist powers, especially China. The government took specific steps to improve economic relations with both while downplaying contentious issues.

The Primacy of Economic Expansion. Japan's emergence as an economic superpower by the early 1970s reinforced attitudes unfavorable to an expansion of defense capabilities. Japan's success in creating a prosperous consumer-oriented society helped to shape the widely held view that the government should emphasize the promotion of the economy rather than shift priorities toward a buildup of military power. Japan's economic growth in the 1950s and 1960s was based on domestic capital resources, and there emerged a reluctance to jeopardize future economic development by devoting more of these resources to the development of defense-related industries. The growing importance of foreign trade to the economy in the 1960s reinforced these perceptions, since Japan could rely on US military power to protect its overseas economic interests and did not see an immediate Soviet or Chinese threat to its markets, sources of energy, and raw materials.

Japan's View of its Place in the World

The Japanese perceptions of their country's role in the international environment has been closely shaped by the role economics has played in Japanese life since the early 1950s. There are four geographic areas deemed especially important to Japan's future, they are: Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia and Australia, the Persian Gulf region, and the United States.

Japan's immediate security interests are in Northeast Asia. Here, the atmosphere is dominated by the physical presence of the Soviet Union and China. The divided Korean peninsula remains a source of potential war, and all four major powers have vital interests in Korea. Economically, Japan has established a growing relationship with China and remains interested in arrangements with the USSR for the development of natural resources in Siberia. Korea and Taiwan are major trading partners and locations of sizable Japanese foreign investment.

The importance of Southeast Asia and Australia to Japan is essentially economic. Australia has emerged as a vital supplier of coal, iron ore, and uranium, and the current resources "boom" there offers Japan lucrative opportunities for the future. Southeast Asia is a major market for Japanese exports, and Japanese investors constitute the number one foreign business presence in the region ($4 billion). Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei supply Japan with nearly 20 percent of its oil. Southeast Asia also straddles the sea transport routes linking the Persian Gulf region to Japan.[8]

The relationship of Persian Gulf countries with Japan is based on oil. Of the 6 million barrels of oil that Japan consumes daily, over 75 percent comes

from the Persian Gulf region. Japan's economic machine is totally dependent on this source of energy.

Japan views its alliance with the United States as fundamental to its security and the safeguarding of its overseas economic interests. The alliance is a guarantee of Japan's physical security in a Northeast Asian atmosphere dominated by China and the Soviet Union. The alliance allows Japan room for diplomatic maneuver in dealing with countervailing policies and pressures from Moscow and Beijing and thus helps to stabilize political relationships in the region. It reinforces the close economic relationship with the United States. The alliance is one basis for an American role in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean as well as the Pacific that protects Japan's economic interests and sea transport routes. Finally, the alliance reinforces the US security roles in South Korea and Taiwan, countries that recent Japanese governments have cited as important to Japan's own security.

Changing Soviet Military Presence

The growth of Soviet military power in the Far East and Western Pacific has had an important influence on Japanese attitudes toward defense in the late 1970s. Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda stated in October 1977 that the Soviet military buildup near Japan and the planned withdrawal of US troops from South Korea were substantially changing security conditions in Northeast Asia. Eighteen months later, his successor, Masayoshi Ohira, declared that the Soviets' energetic efforts to strengthen their forces in Asia was a development Japan could not remain unconcerned about. Similar pronouncements have come from other organs of the government, the press, business groups, and nongovernment experts. Japan remains aware of the buildup in Soviet military strength in the past ten years, but differing viewpoints exist with regard to Soviet capabilities and intentions as well as the proper approach Japan should take toward the USSR.

After the large-scale "Okean 75" naval maneuvers of the Soviet Pacific Fleet in 1975, the Defense Agency began to emphasize the Soviet military posture in its annual defense white papers.[9] The white papers have described a steady growth and qualitative improvement of the Soviet Pacific Fleet, in particular ballistic missile-firing submarines, missile-firing surface ships, and the development of amphibious warfare capabilities. Modernization of the Soviet Air Force in eastern Siberia has been noted, especially the increasing deployments of MIG-23, MIG-27, and SU-19 attack fighters and the 1979 deployment of long-range Backfire bombers in Siberia. The 1979 and 1980 white papers reported on the Soviet military buildup in the Kurile islands north of Hokkaido and Soviet use of military facilities in Vietnam.

The Defense Agency has concluded that Moscow has created a multi-purpose force with important implications for Japan's security and the security of the region as a whole. Major findings have been:

- Soviet naval and air forces now pose a potentially formidable threat to sea transport routes connecting Japan with the United States and with its sources of oil and other natural resources in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Australia.
- Soviet access to bases in Vietnam has provided the Soviet Pacific Fleet with a greater operational range in the Indian Ocean and near the Southeast Asian straits connecting the Pacific and Indian Oceans.
- Air force modernization and the construction of new airfields in eastern Siberia and Sakhalin give the USSR impressive air attack capabilities against the Japanese home islands.
- Soviet military support of client governments in Vietnam, Angola, and Ethiopia demonstrated a growing ability and willingness to intervene militarily in the "Third World."
- Amphibious landing capabilities have emerged in the Soviet Pacific Fleet and may represent the beginning of a long-term effort to develop a greater capability.
- The expansion of Moscow's political influence in East Asia is a key motive behind the Soviet military buildup. The assertion of military power gives the USSR greater leverage in dealing with client states like Vietnam. It forces noncommunist states in the region to take the Soviets into greater account in their formulations of foreign policy.

The Soviet buildup has affected Japanese government perceptions of the US-Soviet military balance of power in the Pacific. The government views this as important to Japan's security from three standpoints:

(1) The ability of US forces in the Western Pacific to absorb a Soviet first strike and retain an adequate retaliatory capability: the Defense Agency assumes that Soviet naval forces, Backfire bombers, and modern attack fighters have primary missions aimed at US naval and air forces in the region.

(2) The ability of the United States to reinforce its forces in Japan and elsewhere in the Western Pacific from Hawaii and the continental United States.

(3) The ability of US naval forces to prevent Soviet forces from cutting off the sea transport routes from the Persian Gulf to Japan.

With regard to the regional balance, the Defense Agency believes that Soviet forces have the capability to launch a multipronged first strike against the United States 7th Fleet, and this capability has increased with the deployment of Backfire bombers and the use of bases in Vietnam. In the immediate Northeast Asian environment, the Soviets would have the added advantage in a first strike of land-based aircraft. This advantage may have been strengthened by the reduction of US aircraft carrier strength through deployments to the Indian Ocean. However, the white papers conclude that the 7th Fleet's defensive assets still give it the ability to absorb a first strike and inflict "considerable losses" on Soviet forces, although the Fleet will have to take "appropriate countermeasures" in the future.

Reactions outside the government to the Soviet military buildup show a considerable range of differences. This is especially true of the press, businessmen, and an emerging group of academics who specialize on defense issues.

Japanese newspapers have been responsible for much of the public's awareness of Soviet military moves in East Asia, and newspaper editorials have expressed concern over the impact of Soviet actions on Japan's security. Nevertheless, prominent editorials, especially in the Mainichi and Asahi newspaper chains, have cautioned against allowing Japanese policy toward Moscow to be influenced excessively by the Soviet military buildup. They have criticized the white papers, the 1980 Blue Book, and other government studies for placing too much emphasis on the military aspect of the relationship and not enough on other aspects, including diplomacy aimed at improving relations. They have voiced opposition to proposals for Japanese cooperation with the United States and China in an anti-Soviet front. Yomiuri and Mainichi editorials have criticized continued economic sanctions against the Soviet Union. In short, leading newspapers support a continuation of the policy of equidistance and advocate Japanese resistance to US pressure for tougher anti-Soviet measures in response to the invasion of Afghanistan. Echoed was a warning against "a vicious circle of steadily progressing Japan-China relations and steadily deteriorating Japanese-Soviet relations."[10]

Public opinion polls taken by Japanese newspapers and for the US Internatoinal Communications Agency (USICA) reveal that the Soviet Union is disliked far more than any other country. It is singled out by a large majority of Japanese as the neighboring country most likely to threaten Japan militarily. Despite this a Soviet attack ranks fairly low among possible dangers; this view is shared by a majority of defense experts in and out of government, according to the USICA survey of 1980 cited earlier. The public is about equally divided over whether the United States or the Soviet Union is stronger militarily, but a gradual trend is toward a view of Soviet superiority. A majority of the public is opposed to cooperation with the United States in retaliatory measures for the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In short, there is correlation between public attitudes and the newspaper editorial themes cited above: concern over Soviet military power but a reluctance to adopt stronger anti-Soviet measures and accept the notion of a direct military threat.

Businessmen, too, do not support fully the government's increasing hard line toward the USSR. They have complained that the sanctions policy cost them over $500 million in lost sales in 1980 and that Western European firms have obtained lucrative deals that Japanese companies ordinarily would have secured. Japanese business views the Soviet Union as a future growth market and fears that it will lose additional opportunities if the government maintains sanctions.

Defense-oriented academics have increasingly emphasized the Soviet military role. In its annual reports published in 1979, 1980, 1981, and 1982, the Research Institute for Peace and Security warned that the USSR was actively expanding its military presence in Asia, especially naval forces. They described in detail Soviet moves in the Western Pacific, in the vicinity of Japan, and outlined likely Soviet objectives. The tone of the reports suggested skepticism that Japanese diplomacy could influence Moscow away from this course.

Another group, the Prime Minister's Comprehensive National Security Study Group, issued a report in July 1980. The Study Group, composed of prominent academics, businessmen, and government officials, stated that the military nature of the Soviet Union's foreign relations is becoming increasingly obvious and that the Soviet military buildup increases the real threat to Japan. The report concluded that it would be no easy task to improve relations with the USSR but that Japan must make the attempt.

Nineteen eighty-three will be the fourth year of the dialogue between the US and Japanese governments over future Japanese defense policy. The dialogue has been marked by intense US pressure on Japan to build up its Self-Defense Forces (SDF) and accept new military responsibilities. Until the summer of 1982, the government of Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki sought to preserve the status quo in defense policy while softening the criticism from Washington and from elements inside the Japanese government that advocate a stronger defense. He gradually lost flexibility, by reason of an escalation of the pressures and the Japanese government's decision to develop a five year defense plan designed to meet force structure targets through procurement of new weaponry.

The government approved the second five year plan or Mid-Term Program Estimate in July 1982. It sets defense procurement goals for the 1983-1987 period and will have an important influence on the pace and scope of Japanese defense efforts. It also raises new questions for the future including:

- the amount of defense spending necessary to attain the procurement targets;
- the level of Japanese capabilities to be attained during the plan period in relation to the defense of the Japanese home islands and sea areas of the Northwest Pacific against the Soviet Union; and
- the impact of the plan on the US-Japan dialogue.

The assumption of the office of Prime Minister by Yasuhiro Nakasone in November 1982 represents another milestone in the evolution of Japanese defense policy. Unlike his predecessors, Nakasone has consistently advocated a strengthening of the SDF. Thus, his performance as Prime Minister will have a decided bearing on Japan's future defense role.

Japanese Military Capabilities

The new Mid-Term Program Estimate and the ascent of Nakasone are set against the background of Japan's current defense policy and military capabilities. Japanese defense policy is governed by a Defense Outline adopted by the government in 1976. The Outline sets a basic objective of repelling a "limited and small-scale aggression" against the Japanese home islands. It declares that if aggression occurs on a scale that the SDF could not cope with, Japanese forces would resist until American forces come to their aid.

The Outline sets the following targets for a force structure deemed sufficient for the objective:

- Ground Self-Defense Force: twelve divisions including one armored division.
- Maritime Self-Defense Force: 60 antisubmarine ships (destroyers and frigates) and 16 submarines.
- Air Self-Defense Force: ten interceptor squadrons of 250 aircraft; three squadrons of ground support fighters; one squadron of early warning aircraft; and six groups of high altitude surface-to-air missiles.

Such force structure targets required an increase in weaponry and equipment, but the emphasis was on improvements in quality through acquisition of new weapons to replace older ones. The Outline did not set a target date for attainment of the force structure goals, and it did not specify the level of modernization to be achieved.

In approving the Outline, the government reaffirmed the policy of keeping defense expenditures under one percent of the GNP. Coupled with the lack of a target date, this meant that the pace of modernization would continue to be leisurely as it had been under previous plans. Japanese defense budgets were under ten billion (US dollars) annually, and approximately 50 percent of expenditures went for personnel costs.

By 1982, five years into the Outline, the SDF possesses minimal and often obsolete assets. The Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) is built around 33 destroyers and 16 frigates. Japanese experts in and out of the government have acknowledged that the MSDF is ill-equipped to deal with Soviet nuclear submarines and attacks from enemy aircraft and surface ships. The primary weapon against submarines, the Mark 44 torpedo, is obsolete. Japanese naval vessels lack surface-to-air and surface-to-surface missile assets as well as modern electronic equipment. The MSDF air arm is an antisubmarine force with no interceptor or attack aircraft. The Air Self-Defense Force has not been integrated into an air defense scheme for Japanese surface ships. The Japanese surface fleet thus is dependent on US air superiority even in the seas nearest to Japan.

The Japan Defense Agency acknowledged in 1980 that in wartime, the

MSDF could protect at most only half of the 400 merchant ships per month required to supply Japan with minimum import needs. The minelaying and blockade assets of the MSDF are also limited. It has only one minelaying vessel, and most of the mines are obsolete and not ready for immediate use. Toru Hara, Director of the Defense Bureau of the Defense Agency, stated in the Diet in 1980 that it would take Japanese forces as long as six months to lay mines in the straits separating the Sea of Japan and the Pacific Ocean. Hara and the Director of the Defense Agency acknowledged that Japanese naval and air forces could not prevent a hostile power from using the straits.

The Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) has over 350 combat aircraft, including ten interceptor squadrons composed of 130 F-104DJ fighters and 90 F-4EJ fighters. Both are dated, particularly the F-104s. The Defense Agency's annual "white papers" have described the defense facilities for air bases as a "striking deficiency," citing a lack of modern surface-to-air missile defense and outdated radar sites. Japanese air bases would appear to have a minimum survivability in wartime. It is unlikely that the ASDF could control the skies over Japan and adjacent waters in the face of attacks by modern Soviet MIG 27s, MIG 23s, and SU 19s, which have become the backbone of the Soviet attack fighter force in eastern Siberia. Moreover, the ASDF would be hard pressed to deal with the Backfire bomber, which the Soviets are deploying in eastern Siberia.

All branches of the Self-Defense Forces suffer from shortages of ammunition and spare parts and other logistical problems. The MSDF and ASDF have no reserves to speak of. The SDF has no system for integrated command and control of ground, air, and sea forces. The Prime Minister's study group on national security issues estimated in its July 1980 report that only half of the assets of the SDF could be counted as "actual combat power" in an emergency.

United States Proposals

Japanese weaknesses contrast sharply with the proposals of the Reagan administration for a future Japanese defense role. These proposals, which Pentagon specialists developed during the Carter administration, call on Japan to assume responsibility for the defense of a large area of the Northwest Pacific at least 1,000 miles out from the Japanese home islands. According to Pentagon officials this zone would encompass the waters between Japan and the Philippines, swinging east from the Philippines to Guam, and north from Guam toward Japan. US officials have described three missions that would fall to Japanese naval and air forces:

(1) Sea control: This would involve offensive and defensive capabilities against Soviet submarines, surface ships, and aircraft over a wide ocean area. US officials have stressed the need for effective defense against Soviet submarines and Backfire bombers. After March 1981, the Reagan

administration steadily increased its emphasis on the mission of sea control 1,000 miles out from Japan. Secretary Weinberger visited Tokyo in March 1982 and urged Japanese officials to give sea control a special priority.

(2) Mining and blockading the Tsushima, Tsugaru, and Soya Straits connecting the Sea of Japan with the open waters of the Pacific, thus preventing access by Soviet naval vessels from bases in eastern Siberia into the Pacific.

(3) The establishment of an air defense screen that could inflict heavy losses on Soviet tactical fighters and long-range bombers, particularly the Backfire bomber.

In taking on these responsibilities the Reagan administration sees the Japanese as providing an essential component of a wartime strategy of holding the oil-rich Persian Gulf by shifting sizable US forces from the Pacific into the Indian Ocean. Defense Department analysts appear to see strengthened Japanese armed forces as helping to accomplish two strategic objectives in such a scenario: (1) preventing the Soviet Union from establishing military domination over Northeast Asia, including Japan itself; and (2) blocking Soviet forces in eastern Siberia from moving south to attack US forces traversing sea and air routes through the Southwest Pacific and Southeast Asia into the Indian Ocean.

The Administration has suggested that the Japanese government "review" the 1976 Outline in view of changed international conditions. This suggestion has developed into American proposals for a force structure larger than that envisaged in the Outline. At the Japan-US Security Conference in Hawaii in June 1981, the US side laid out a force structure that would have Japan add four squadrons of F-15 fighters to the ten squadrons of interceptors set in the Outline. Japan's destroyer force would increase from 60 to 70, and the submarine target would go up from 16 to 25. The US delegates suggested an antisubmarine aircraft force of 125 P-3Cs. Another proposal reportedly called for the establishment of a three-month supply of ammunition.

Weinberger indicated to the Japanese in March 1982 that Japan should attain this kind of force structure by 1990. He declared that such a buildup will require substantial improvements in military capabilities and increases in defense spending substantially greater than the current annual growth rate. US officials who accompanied the Secretary counseled reporters that Japanese defense expenditures would have to increase at least ten percent annually in real terms (probably at least 15 percent in yen amounts).

Japan's Response: The Second Five Year Plan

The second Mid-Term Program Estimate represents the most substantive Japanese response to American pressure. In April 1981, the cabinet-level National Defense Council, chaired by Prime Minister Suzuki, approved a proposal by the Japan Defense Agency to prepare a second Mid-Term

Program Estimate for the 1983-1987 period "with the basic aim of accomplishing the goals of the [1976] Outline." With this action, the open-ended Defense Outline became less so. The Defense Agency viewed the new plan as a way to bridge the gap between current defense policy and Reagan administration objectives by creating a modern force capable of carrying out some of the missions proposed by the United States.

The Defense Agency spent over a year preparing draft proposals, and the final stage involved negotiations with the Finance Ministry. Defense Agency drafts were whittled down at certain stages, usually because of anticipated financial constraints. The plan, as approved by the National Defense Council, calls for the expenditure of 4.4 to 4.6 trillion yen (U.S. $17.4-$18.2 billion) for front-line equipment during the 1983-1987 period. Defense Agency officials expect that military spending will exceed one percent of GNP by 1984 and that defense spending will have to increase by 7 to 8 percent annually to reach the targets. The major procurement goals relating to sea and air defense are:

(1) Air defense: The Air Self-Defense Force will acquire 75 F-15 fighters, bringing the total of F-15s to between 138 and 155, depending on attrition. F-15s will comprise six of the ten interceptor squadrons, while approximately 100 F-4s will make up the remaining four. Japan is refurbishing the F-4s to upgrade a ground attack capability, and add sophisticated air combat electronic equipment and missiles. It will replace two of the six antiquated NIKE J surface-to-air missile batteries with a modern SAM system, and it will replace the obsolete Badge radar warning system with a new system under development. New air base defense assets also will include 130 new 20mm antiaircraft guns, mobile radar systems, and aircraft shelters. Japan will have a full squadron of nine E-2C early warning aircraft.

(2) Naval vessels: Eleven new destroyers, three frigates, six submarines, six high-speed missile boats, two supply ships, and assorted craft will be procured. Forty existing destroyers and frigates are to be outfitted with US-designed Tartar or Sea Sparrow surface-to-air missiles. The destroyer/frigate force will total 60.

(3) Antisubmarine aircraft: Japan is slated to purchase 50 P-3C antisubmarine aircraft, bringing the total to 72. The P-3Cs will be organized into nine squadrons with one older P-2J squadron remaining. Sixty-three antisubmarine helicopters also will be added, including twenty ship-based helicopters. This will give the maritime force 48 land-based and 43 ship-based helicopters.

Prospective Capabilities. What kind of military capabilities will Japan have if it achieves these procurement goals by the late 1980s? Japan undoubtedly will possess a credible though not overwhelming air defense capability for the four home islands and the immediately adjacent waters. The combination of

F-15 fighters, E-2C early warning aircraft, and a new ground radar system will constitute significant opposition to Soviet fighters entering Japanese airspace, and these assets will make the route over the Japanese home islands a more dangerous one for Soviet Backfire bombers seeking to enter the open waters of the Pacific.

Air defense assets to the southwest, along the Ryukyu island chain (another potential route for the Backfires over north China and out through the East China Sea) will be less effective if they exist at all. Japanese interceptor strength will not be sufficient to cover this area in addition to the home islands, and Japan appears to have no plans to construct air bases on Okinawa or other islands of the southern Ryukyus. The three US F-15 squadrons on Okinawa will have to provide air defense, and US contingency plans reportedly list these squadrons as subject to deployment in the Indian Ocean under certain circumstances.

The Japan Defense Agency expects that attainment of the plan targets will enhance the SDF's ability to defend sea lanes, although Japanese experts reportedly agree with the US Department of Defense that Japanese force levels will not allow complete coverage of the proposed sea control zone. This is especially true of defense against the nearly 130 Soviet attack submarines in the Pacific, a force that undoubtedly will grow in the 1980s. On the other hand, Japanese P3-Cs and antisubmarine surface assets will constitute a larger antisubmarine force for this area than the thinly spread 7th Fleet currently provides.

There is an important caveat to this general assessment. The buildup of front-line weaponry will have little overall impact on Japanese military strength unless there is a commensurate increase in logistics, particularly ammunition stockpiles, spare parts, and transport equipment. Japan today has little sustainable combat capacity, and this will not change unless Japan gives greater priority to logistics. The new Mid-Term Program Estimate does not include targets for logistics improvement, and future efforts are uncertain.

The Nakasone Administration. Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party selected Yasuhiro Nakasone in November 1982 to succeed Zenko Suzuki as Prime Minister. Nakasone is a long-time party leader and a former Director-General of the Defense Agency. He is on record as favoring an increase in military strength, and he is likely to follow a more flexible policy on defense than did Suzuki, in terms of defense spending and acceptance of new responsibilities.

Since assuming office, Nakasone has spoken out frequently on the need to strengthen the SDF so as to ensure future cooperation with the United States in order to counter the Soviet military buildup in the Western Pacific. In an interview with the *Washington Post* during his visit to Washington in January 1983, he stated his view that Japan should: develop effective air defenses

1983, he stated his view that Japan should: develop effective air defenses against the Backfire bomber, be able to close off the Sea of Japan straits to the Soviets, and have the capability to defend the sea lanes to Guam and the Taiwan area. This was by far the closest any Japanese leader came to endorsing US proposals for future Japanese defense responsibilities. Nevertheless, it is uncertain whether he will be able to move the government in this direction. He must contend with two key elements in the political environment: the powerful Japanese bureaucracy and the deep suspicion that the Japanese public has towards "defense." This skepticism was reflected in the heavy criticism in the Japanese press and the Diet that greeted his remarks.

Within the bureaucracy, the Finance Ministry can be expected to persist in its advocacy of minimal defense budget increases as part of its drive for overall spending constraints. The 6.5 percent hike in military expenditures for FY 1983 to 2.75 trillion yen, or about $11.8 billion, reflects the ministry's influence. Defense procurement requests for FY 1983, the first year of the new five year defense plan, have been cut, and little enhancement of logistics assets is apparent.

A more complete test for the prime minister will come with the budget for FY 1984. His ability to influence the drafting process, which began this spring, will tell much about his role in the formulation of defense policy and how strongly he will commit himself to meeting the targets of the new five year defense plan.

Notes

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10. The Comprehensive National Security Study Group, *Report on Comprehensive National Security* (Tokyo: 1980), pp. 47-52.

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