Japan's Defence Industry:

Pacifism, Pragmatism and Necessity

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日本の防衛産業: 平和主義と実用主義と必要不可欠なこと

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Abstract

This paper examines Japanese attitudes to pacifism and their intersection with the country's defense needs and argues that adoption of ideologically absolutist positions regarding antimilitarism act in a counterproductive manner by weakening the defense system. These vulnerabilities only serve to provide justification for more aggressive military expansion by a political system that is itself realist in nature and which only pays lip-service to the idea of Japan as a pacifist state. The historical development of the Japanese defense industry is used as an example of the complex role the military system has played in the evolution of modern Japan and how it has been a factor in promoting not only dark periods of ignominy but also many of the technological and political developments which made Japan a strong independent state. This complexity calls for a greater engagement between Japan's peace activists and the military defense system itself, in a manner which will produce more pragmatic and effective gains for Japanese and world security.

Key words: Japan, defence industry, pacifism, security, military

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抄 録

この論文では日本の平和主義と国防への影響について考察する。論点は、絶対平和主義 は防衛力を脆弱化するので、日本の平和に対し逆効果であるということである。防衛力が 脆弱化すれば軍事力を拡大しようと「現実的」政府はその弱さを利用しようとするだろう。 防衛産業の歴史をみると日本の成長で軍事力の役割は複雑であったことが分かる。攻撃的 な戦争を起こすような悪の原因であったと同時に、日本が強い独立国になるためにとても 重要で多くの国益も与えてきたのである。軍事力の役割が複雑だからこそ、平和活動家と 軍事専門家が、より高いレベルでの関係を築くことが日本の平和な将来のために最善の契 機となるであろう。 キーワード:日本、防衛産業、国防、平和主義、軍事

Introduction

In September 2011, eminent peace and conflict scholar Johann Galtung visited the Kyoto Museum for World Peace to discuss the necessity, or lack thereof, of the role of the military in Japanese society. Two of the central messages of his speech were the need to take a long-term approach to peace advocacy and the importance of not fixating upon irresolute ideological positions but instead to work for incremental change that might lead in a positive direction rather than aiming for some ideal, possibly unattainable, goal.¹ The need for a more nuanced view of peace activism is inescapable and critiques of the dangers of adhering to extremes of pacifist ideology have been quite widespread throughout the past century.² Despite this, and the intervening century of incessant warfare, intransigent views of absolute pacifism still draw wide support and continue to be widely accepted in Japan.³

In the 1980s people predicted an end to the Cold War style, military-based view of national security and the coming of a new 'peace dividend'.⁴ Others argued that the very idea of a military-based system of defense was a symptom of a pathological view of the sacrifice of life in return for security as a sacred act.⁵ Such extreme views, in terms of their optimism for peace or antipathy for defense, have slowly begun to be replaced by views that are based less on emotion or spirituality and more upon rational stances that can be used to promote pacifist goals in a pragmatic and effective form.⁶ Where it has taken hold, this change has led to a dramatic improvement in the mobilization capabilities and political visibility of peace movements who have shifted from absolute to pragmatic pacifism.⁷ It has seen less success, however, in Japan, where a more absolute form of pacifism still dominates peace activism. To adjust to both changing times and to bring about any effective political or social change in the coming century Japanese peace activism must adjust its thinking to accept a more rational stance focused on achievable goals rather than immutable ideological constants.

This article uses the Japanese defense industry as a case study of how pragmatic pacifist thought might be applied to an issue of military security. Doing so requires a thorough understanding of the subject in question and thus begins with an examination of the development of Japan's defense industry and a consideration of what the industry has contributed to Japanese society and its development into a first class economic power. An analysis of the current state of the industry raises the question of whether it is capable of sustaining itself, a pressing concern given the many regional security threats which Japan is currently facing. This vulnerability is coupled with a serious lack of analysis of defense issues in the Japanese media and academia. This lack of understanding of current realities helps to perpetuate the myth that Japan is militarily weak and ideologically pacifist, a serious miscalculation which brings the risk of increased rather than decreased Japanese militarism. The present system of ill-conceived pacifist opposition to the defense industry as a whole has brought about an economic malaise that is likely to only exacerbate Japan's security dangers as, while any benefit from reductions in military spending will take a long time to develop, the political and security backlash can be both strong and immediate.⁸ The danger here is that an underfunded or compromised defense system might leave Japan vulnerable to a threat which, should it occur, will promote widespread acceptance of increased militarism that could reshape the country's entire security mindset. The alternative is to accept a path of pragmatic pacifism that is far more effective in dealing with complex problems but requires from its proponents a great deal more effort and education.

The Historical Development of the Japanese Defense Industry

In the medieval period Japan reigned as the world's largest arms exporter, supplying much of Asia with high quality steel weapons,⁹ and began firearms production in 1452 with the arrival of Portuguese arquebuses.¹⁰ Since then it has shown an ability to rapidly adjust to technological change and critical developments, however, the *Sakoku* (closed country) policy in the 17th century prevented any contact with the outside world and the countries technological levels stagnated, remaining at an agrarian level while the Western world underwent the industrial revolution.¹¹ The initial firearms industry died out, creating a profound impact when the West finally lost patience with the foreign trade that was denied to it by Japanese seclusion.¹²

In the 1780s Hayashi Shihei highlighted the inability of the nation to produce gunpowder and urged the government to pursue foreign technology, especially in the area of maritime defense.¹³ This was prescient but went unanswered and by the mid-19th century America had pressured Japan into signing the Treaty of Kanagawa, permitting the opening of several ports to international trade.¹⁴ The widespread Japanese view was that this had rendered the nation a "semi-colonial state" and there was an explosion of militant nationalism.¹⁵ However, efforts to attack Western shipping proved far too weak to endure the inevitable Western reprisals and the full impact of Japan's technology deficit became apparent.¹⁶ This was the genesis of Dazai Shundai's concept of *fukoku kyouhei* (rich nation, strong army) which became the new rallying cry of Japanese nationalism and argued that Japan would not be militarily powerful enough to resist foreign intrusion without overhauling its entire economic system.¹⁷

Efforts to secure Western technology began in 1863 when Itou Hirobumi swore to learn the secret of Western military power and led a study group to London.¹⁸ In 1868 the new Imperial Government enshrined the principle in its Charter Oath which stated "knowledge shall be sought throughout the world so as to strengthen the foundations of Imperial rule."¹⁹ In 1869 the *Hyoubushou* (Ministry of Military Affairs) was established and one of its first actions was the founding of Numazu Military Academy to provide a system for diffusion of military technology which directly influenced the entire educational system that developed in its wake.²⁰ In 1871 the *Monbushou* (Ministry of Education) was established and the country split into 8 regions, each of which received a national university, 32 middle schools and 6,720 elementary schools.²¹ Japan was soon the most literate nation in Asia and promising students and researchers were sent abroad to study the latest Western techniques with the slogan *'Wakon Yousai'* (Japanese spirit, Western technology).²²

By the 1860's Japan was producing artillery and steamships based on British models, something Checkland argues was the base upon which Japanese industry developed.²³ The principle of *Ichigou yunyuu*, *Nigou kokusan* (1st import, 2nd produce locally) was embraced and reverse engineering of Western products spread through the country's arsenals.²⁴ Between 1876 and 1877 privatization of these facilities led to the establishment of Mitsubishi, Kawasaki and Ishikawajima-Harima who remain among the top present-day defense contractors.²⁵ These private firms soon out-performed the remaining state arsenals and began to diversify their enterprises into fields capable of supporting their central products, creating the industrial conglomerates known as *zaibatsu*.²⁶

Increased imperial militarism and unrest in Korea led to the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-5) and saw military expenditure increase from 19% of government expenditure in 1880 to 31% in 1890.²⁷ To meet demands the military increasingly focused on the more productive private industries and the country experienced its first taste of 'military Keynesianism', the use of military demand to boost industrial health. The primary beneficiaries were the shipping and steel industries who saw an intense boost in their technology levels.²⁸

While domestic opponents to militarism remained,²⁹ the common view was articulated by former pacifist Sohou Tokutomi, who stated,

Japanese imperialism is not based on momentary whims, it is neither a pleasurable pastime nor something that is to be undertaken in a spirit of light-heartedness. It is a policy born out of necessity if we are to exist as a nation and survive as a race.³⁰

In 1904 the increased production required by the Russo-Japanese War brought about a realization of the importance of domestic production of machine tools and the Navy became the primary benefactor of a slowly emerging Japanese machine tool industry.³¹ Meanwhile, the wider defense industry was itself lauded by Western commentators as being both the equal of any in the West and significantly more cost efficient.³²

Victory over Russia signaled the first defeat of a modern European power by an Asian rival, however, the resulting Treaty of Shimonoseki brought about humiliation and the view that further war with Russia was inevitable, resulting in the 1907 Imperial Defense Plan which had the goal of making Japan the dominant regional power.³³ The military now set its primary goal as overcoming dependence on foreign imports and transferring blueprints of foreign machine tools to private contractors.³⁴ As Grant notes,

Although in world history it is common to focus on Japan's methodical development of domestic industry as the key to its rising power, native industry alone could not have made it possible. The arms trade figured more prominently in the short run and proved an essential element for Japan to become a 1st tier power.³⁵

WWI revealed that economic capability as much as military might was key in the new era of 'total war' and Japan, confident in its military prowess, set about overhauling its industrial structure in what Dower calls Japan's "second industrial revolution".³⁶ Under the Hara cabinet of 1918, revisions to the Imperial Defense Plan linked further build up of the armed forces as mutually supportive of the shift from light to heavy industry and the dissemination of the new technologies that had been developed during the course of the war.³⁷ The war had shifted the balance of power in industry from employer to employee with heavy industry mobility reaching 70-90% each year. The number of trade unions increased some 250% in the two years following the end of the war and it was in this period that the Japanese staples of lifetime employment and seniority based earnings were introduced in a bid to secure skilled workers.³⁸

In 1921 the Washington Disarmament Conference brought about a 10 year moratorium on the construction of naval vessels.³⁹ Japan, now the world's third largest naval power, refocused its production, boosting civilian shipping and the fledgling aircraft industry, which had formed in 1916 with the Mitsubishi Aircraft Company. Ongoing support from both the Army and Navy saw this new industry increase production from 400 aircraft during the 1920s to over 5000 during the 1930s.⁴⁰

In the late 1920s the military began to offer lucrative contracts to the firms who could best

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reverse-engineer and imitate samples they provided of Western products. This saw a drop in dependence on foreign tools for military production from 80% to 56% between 1925 and 1932, and large-scale diffusion of technology between military and civilian industries.⁴¹ A renewed defense program, coupled with heavy capital investment in Manchuria, a reduction of the Yen's value and a general public policy of thrift, led to Japan being the first major nation to recover from the Great Depression,⁴² with military production identified as the key factor that achieved this result.⁴³

During WWII major technological developments in naval and air systems were made that allowed Japanese firms to rapidly develop strong footholds in these fields in the postwar years. A massive proportion of Japan's future industrial leaders and top researchers would come from a shared background of study and research at the Imperial Naval Research Institute, which had produced a wide variety of technical breakthroughs, such as Mitsubishi's Zero fighter and the 'Long lance' torpedo.⁴⁴

In the occupation era following the war the United States instituted plans to purge over 200,000 "potential militarists" from positions of authority in government, business, education, the media and academia.⁴⁵ Yet, within only a few years this policy changed, leading to a situation in which the civilian population had been 'pacified' but the security and political infrastructure was being reforged into military form. In his commentary on the post-war recovery, Allen claimed this reversal of the occupying US doctrine to have been a necessary condition for the survival of the new Japanese state.⁴⁶ By the early 1950s Japan had resumed production of war materiel, first for the US forces in Korea and then its own security services.⁴⁷ By 1952 more than 850 industrial plants had been returned to private control for defense-related production. Among these was an aeronautics industry which had been crippled in 1945 by a seven year moratorium on aircraft production. During this time aeronautic engine and aircraft design, as well as providing repair services for US planes involved in the Korean War. As a result, by the mid-1950s Japanese firms were able to quickly reenter the aeronautics industry.⁴⁸

Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s Japan become a military exporter to countries including the United States, South Vietnam, Indonesia, Brazil, Thailand, Burma and Taiwan.⁴⁹ Even so, the *Keidanren* (Japanese Business Federation) opposed to the idea of a new system of government directed arsenals due to the negative influence they felt this would have on productivity. They did, however, support the spread of US technology to Japanese firms and went so far as to declare defense production an area of national importance.⁵⁰

The 1952 'Security Treaty Between the United States and Japan' established the 'Yoshida Doctrine', the hosting of US forces in Japan so that the state could focus on economic recovery. The policy produced a backlash from both nationalists and antimilitarists that allowed the Ministry of Finance to establish a policy of 'minimum necessary defense' and a clause in the 1953 Arms Production Law that clearly signaled that the defense industry would receive no special government subsidization.⁵¹ However, in 1954 the treaty was expanded by a Mutual Security Assistance Agreement which allowed Japan to import defense related technology from the US.⁵² The definition of 'defense related' proved to be quite broad and the Keidanren used this loophole as a means of convincing major firms to maintain an investment in defense research which allowed ongoing diffusion of US technology to Japanese firms.

The shipbuilding industry was one of the first to benefit from this process. By 1968 practically all manufacturing equipment in the Japanese ship-building industry was dualuse, meaning it could be used to produce military vessels as easily as civilian ones, and the industry itself had risen to become the world's largest with over 50% of global market share.⁵³ They were soon followed by the electronics industry and the aeronautics industry in making use of this 'jump-start' to acquire cheap access to R & D that would allow them to quickly become top manufacturers in their fields. In all, between 1951 and 1984 more than 40,000 separate contracts were signed by Japanese firms to acquire foreign technology at a value of \$17 billion, which was only small a fraction of the *annual* R & D costs of the US companies involved. The knowledge acquired would become "the technological basis for nearly all of Japan's modern industries."⁵⁴

In 1967 accusations of profiteering from the Vietnam War prompted the government to introduce prohibitions against the export of defense systems to any country under UN embargo, engaged in conflict or a Communist state.⁵⁵ Despite this public commitment to peace, actual military levels had steadily grown over the past decades, with the number of troops rising from 165,000 in 1954 to 235,000 in 1972 and the defense budget climbing from \$509 million in 1961 to \$3 billion in 1974. Further limitations were imposed in 1976 with a limit on defense spending of 1% of GDP and a broadening of the export ban to include all states.⁵⁶ Even so, the industry managed to maintain its production levels through an increased focus on indigenous production and, from the mid-1980s, a series of joint development projects with the US which led to a new boom period for defense contractors.⁵⁷ For a time analysts were predicting an imminent relaxation of Japan's military restrictions which would see the country take a more prominent role in both international affairs and the defense market but those changes failed to materialize and in the post-Cold War era production capabilities began to stagnate.

Current State of the Defense Industry

Plans to relax the prohibitions against arms exports were again introduced in 2004 under the LDP and blocked by New Komeito. Since then revisions have been consistently supported by the incumbent government (both LDP and DPJ) and would almost certainly have been passed in late 2010 had the DPJ not found that they needed the support of the relatively minor, and staunchly anti-militarist, Social Democratic Party (SDP), in order to pass a new budget.⁵⁸ Since then calls for revision have continued from both industry sources and the government's own advisory panels.⁵⁹

At present, the major problem for defense contractors is that the prohibitive costs of Japanese defense production can be born only by the largest of companies, such as Mitsubishi and Fuji, for whom the majority of their business lies in other areas. Smaller and more specialized companies do not have the financial weight necessary to survive on an increasingly limited number of contracts, but the more pressing danger is that the general public seem to be unaware of both the dangers facing the industry or of the industry's vital role as part of Japan's security system.

Benefits of the Industry

A study of its history shows the significant part played by the defense industry in making Japan a first-class economic power. Taking a purely one-sided and negative view of it simply because of the potential for its products to cause violence is as illogical as condemning a state's police service because they have the potential to abuse the force they have been authorized to use. It also neglects the numerous positive impacts the industry has had upon Japan's development as a modern state. Without a robust defense capability it is likely that Japan would have suffered the same fate as China in the 18th century, being partitioned into areas of influence serving the capitalist needs of the Western powers. This need for military strength is what drove the Meiji-era leap forward in education, science and technology. Military production was also the driving force behind the development of indigenous machine and engineering industries and the seed of both Japan's aerospace and shipping industries. Military Keynesianism helped Japan recover from the Great Depression faster than any other state. Finally, in the post-war era spin-off technology derived from imported US systems enabled Japan to develop its current industrial power. While the negative effects, i.e. its support for military imperialism and wars of aggression in the 1890s and 1930s, are an everpresent danger, without the influence of its defense industry Japan would quite possibly be little more than an impoverished, post-colonial, developing state with little influence to affect the wider world in areas of peace or security.

Currently, the defense industry remains one of the primary areas of innovation in hightechnology, continuing to produce spin-off technology which diffuses throughout civilian sectors. A rising trend toward joint development in the industry also encourages greater spread of technology between partner states. Additionally, the industry acts as a safety net for civilian industry, such as was the case when the shipbuilding market experienced a 90% decline in the 1970's but was saved by the extension of Japan's sea-lanes to 1000 miles and the commissioning of a large number of new MSDF naval vessels.⁶⁰

Careful management of the industry can provide such benefits without succumbing to aggressive militarism. The trick should be to strike a balance between pacifist ideals and military necessity. Some might consider it a risky venture but Japan has shown itself capable of managing delicate long-term strategies. Henry Kissinger offered just such praise when he stated, "In my view Japanese decisions have been the most farsighted and intelligent of any major nation in the postwar era".⁶¹ In fact, while many view militarism as the primary threat there is much to suggest that the opposite extreme is just as great a danger.

Dangers of Neglect

In the past decade Japan engaged in what many consider a serious under-funding of its security systems that has created significant risks.⁶² As a result, calls to review both national security policy in general and the prohibitions on arms exports in particular, have increased from the business community,⁶³ government itself,⁶⁴ and even typically pacifist minority parties.⁶⁵ Despite the country's strong technological base the defense industry itself is in near freefall, with 56 companies leaving the defense sector between 2003 and 2010.⁶⁶ Two of the largest defense manufacturers have even sued the Defense Ministry itself for failure to sustain full production of contracts they were awarded.⁶⁷ Recently the Keidanren wrote that "it is no longer possible to fully achieve accountability to shareholders regarding the significance and potentials of defense budget operations".⁶⁸

Many fear an imminent collapse from which the defense industry would take decades to recover due to the market's high barriers for entry and the dwindling pool of specialized research personnel.⁶⁹ On top of this, the defense market has moved to a system of multinational joint development which Japan's export prohibitions prevent it becoming a part of.⁷⁰ The nation once seen as the center of 'techno-nationalism' is now on the verge of being surpassed by China as Asia's center of advanced technological research and development.⁷¹

Such weaknesses found Japan, in the wake of the Fukushima disaster, reliant upon robotic and UAV systems developed by US military contractors to respond to the hazardous conditions.⁷²

On top of the stifling effects of the ongoing economic contraction, made worse by the costs of Tohoku and Fukushima relief, the industry is also due to suffer from the economic effects of Japan's dwindling population. Japan's population is projected to drop from 128 million to 95 million by 2050, while those over the age of 65 will climb to 40% of the population.⁷³ The burden on the state from caring for an increasing number of elderly citizens, as well as having fewer working citizens paying taxes, will further restrict any possible increase in defense related budgetary expenditure. This at a time when Asia is undergoing a massive arms build-up. China's defense expenditure has increased 329% over the last decade, while Russia's has grown by 863%. Japan, meanwhile, has bucked this trend and seen its spending decline by 4%.⁷⁴ The danger of this institutional weakening is that Japan might lose access to systems required for effective ability to enforce territorial claims or react to emerging threats.

The Necessity of Defense

Writing in the Asahi Shimbun recently, Waseda Professor of Constitutional Law, Asaho Mizushima called for the complete elimination of the JSDF's military role and its conversion to purely disaster relief operations.⁷⁵ This is but one example of a frequently recurring argument that suggests that it is not necessary for Japan to worry about maintaining a military defense. Recent events, however, have shown that such good relationships are difficult to maintain even in periods of relative stability and are impossible to guarantee throughout an unknown future. Numerous studies have highlighted the growth of China and its aggressive regional policies as a potential threat to Japanese security,⁷⁶ something which was amply displayed in the 2010 Senkaku Incident which resulted in mass protests in both nations, riots and flagburning in China, an embargo on shipments of rare metals to Japan, the tit-for-tat arrest of Japanese citizens by China and a general military build-up in the disputed zone.⁷⁷ Presently, almost 75% of the Japanese public view China as a threat to world peace,⁷⁸ and the incident was serious enough to prompt the Ministry of Defense to revise its basic strategic footing to one of 'dynamic defense' focusing on the East-China Sea.⁷⁹ At its heart the issue is one of access to seabed oil and gas resources and China has, for years, been testing Japan's military resolve by breaching her territorial waters to gauge the country's willingness, or capability, to defend her holdings.⁸⁰ With the current political pressure to reduce reliance on nuclear power sources, access to such potential alternatives becomes ever more vital.

The same threat exists in Japan's disputed Northern Islands where, at the height of the Senkaku tensions, Russia revealed itself to be an opportunistic predator, working in tandem with China to press both state's claims to Japanese territory.⁸¹ Soon after, Russia announced it would no longer abide by the terms of a 1956 joint declaration which stated that it would eventually return the territory it seized during the closing days of WWII,⁸² and it seems likely that Russia will seek to hold the carrot and stick of energy dependence over Japan's head in attempts to play Tokyo and Beijing off one another while gaining small concessions from each.⁸³

These disputes also place a greater dependence upon Japan's shipments of African and Middle-Eastern fuel, 90% of its crude oil imports, that currently pass through the world's most pirate-infested seas.⁸⁴ The safeguarding of these vessels has seen the dispatch of two MSDF frigates to the Gulf of Aden to join an international piracy initiative there,⁸⁵ as well as the establishment in Djibouti of Japan's first overseas military base since WWII.⁸⁶ All of these will be further exacerbated should Israel or the US launch strikes that are currently being threatened against Iran,⁸⁷ as the latter's ability to shut down the Strait of Hormuz allow it to restrict one third of the world's seaborne oil supplies.

Finally, the threat from North Korea, a nation possessing nuclear weapons and a history of making dire threats of violence and initiating unprovoked military action, cannot be underestimated. Though some have argued that the danger has been exaggerated for political effect.⁸⁸ the scars of the abduction issue, the test-firing of Taepodong missiles and the ongoing question of their nuclear weapons program have led the Japanese government to identify North Korea as Japan's primary threat and public views of Pyongyang as a danger to Japan have increased by 21% since 2005.⁸⁹ The North's unpredictability was amply demonstrated in their recent sinking of the 'ROKS Cheonan', a South Korean Navy ship, and the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island, while revelations of a new uranium enrichment facility in late 2010 prompted the Japanese Prime Minister to declare that Japan "absolutely cannot tolerate" North Korea's nuclear weapons program, a sentiment shared by a large percentage of the population.⁹⁰ What may be a more pressing threat is the danger of a regime collapse, something that could initiate a massive humanitarian disaster in which the JSDF could be called upon to provide assistance in a region with a high potential for armed confrontation.⁹¹ The government has already stated it would use the JSDF to evacuate Japanese citizens from the peninsula, something that was criticized for its potential to drag Japan into war.⁹² Even the possibility of a peaceful unification, something China now supports,⁹³ does not mean that the tension between Japan and a new unified Korea would be reduced, as strong anti-Japanese sentiment exists below as well as above the border. Recently, South Korean schoolchildren ranked Japan as the South's number one potential enemy⁹⁴ and, according to Coghlan,

Pan-Korean feelings continue to resurface and grow in South Korea. These feelings rekindle myths of national victimization against Korea, that the North should no longer be seen as an enemy ... but as a brother to be embraced and helped, and are underlined by a pervasive anti-Japanese sentiment.⁹⁵

Drifte described Japan as a nation dominated by a "cult of vulnerability".⁹⁶ In periods of crisis people look for strong leaders and the danger exists that in the event of a serious security failure an aggressively militarist leader could garner considerable political influence, an idea buoyed by arguments that Japan exhibits an exaggerated reaction to new threats that bypasses careful analysis of the problem in favor of authoritarian responses.⁹⁷ This is only heightened in relation to security issues, an area where there remains a lack of widespread discussion of, and education about, issues of major importance.

Japan's Lack of Security Analysis

In his comparison of the relative naval power of 19th century Japan and Britain the Meiji scholar Fukuzawa Yukichi highlighted the dependency of nations on non-military systems of education and training that would create the academic and social networks required to mobilize effective military force.⁹⁸ In the case of modern Japan this applies not simply to the mustering of military force but also the countervailing ability to rouse pacifist segments of the public who might act as a control or brake on aggressive militarism. At present there is a general failure of the media and academia to address issues of security and military concern in open forums that restricts in-depth understanding of these complex and volatile subjects.

Japan has been referred to as a 'defense allergic' nation, wherein researchers, businessmen and politicians are all hesitant to establish any direct connection to military affairs.⁹⁹ Those who do address the defense industry directly tend to do so only in very narrow terms, as is the case with Takahashi¹⁰⁰ and Kubota.¹⁰¹ This lack of coverage has been addressed by the work of Sakurabayashi and Ogawa,¹⁰² and is evident in the public's ongoing lack of prioritization of security issues (in a recent poll of threats to Japan's security, 'territorial disputes' rank highest at 19th behind a variety of domestic issues) while simultaneously offering increasing support to the overseas deployment of the Japanese military.¹⁰³ This casual attitude to military matters is unlikely to be addressed as long as the Japanese public continue to conceive of their nation as inherently pacifist.

The Myth of a Pacifist Nation

It could be argued that some have confused Japan's passive role in international affairs with a pacifist one but many scholars, particularly Constructivists such as Berger, Chai and Katzenstein, have argued at great length that Japanese foreign policy is very effectively constrained by anti-militarist norms.¹⁰⁴ Yasuo recently argued though that such norms have no "independent causal effect" on defense spending but instead require institutional motives and other material factors for politicians to comply.¹⁰⁵ In other words, ideological factors have little impact unless they coincide with more meaningful pragmatic gain, or as Ishibashi argued in his study of the factors influencing the dispatch of troops to Iraq, the defense issue is a minor one in Japanese politics and is largely used to score political points.¹⁰⁶ An example of this is recent intervention of the SDP to block relaxation of weapon exports. In effect, neither the pacifist sentiments of the DPJ nor SDP prevented the relaxation but rather the happenstance of a pressing domestic issue that was considered more politically expedient than security concerns. This, and many similar examples, support Hein's conclusion that Japan's major political parties are quite removed from any anti-militarist sentiments held by the general public.¹⁰⁷

Even so, many still adhere to the view that the pacifist movement in Japan is both vibrant and highly influential.¹⁰⁸ Berger sees its roots in a post-WWII stigmatization of the populace,¹⁰⁹ while Katzenstein declares that military policy is highly constrained by anti-militarist norms which act as social restraints on national security policy.¹¹⁰ Hook speaks of the "persistent strength of anti-militaristic attitudes in Japan" including "resistance to a major build-up in the military",¹¹¹ something hardly reconcilable with the rapid accumulation of military technology and materiel that Japan experienced in both the pre and post-War years. Soeya goes so far as to argue that, "No responsible decision maker in postwar Japan has ever attempted to convert accumulated economic wealth into military might,"¹¹² and yet the country has somehow come to possess one of the world's most powerful military forces. Oros even predicts that Japan will remain tightly bound by these constraints for the foreseeable future.¹¹³

For many in Japan similar beliefs are based on the sanctity of Article 9 of the Constitution which forbids the maintenance of a military capable of waging aggressive war.¹¹⁴ Yet, Panton has shown that this same constitution has been undergoing constant reinterpretation since its very inception, a process that has gathered pace in recent years and will likely soon lead to a full-scale revision of the relevant article.¹¹⁵ Despite this, the myth persists that Japan is both militarily weak and constrained from institutional violence by her pacifist norms.¹¹⁶

Facing Realism

The simple fact of the matter is that, as Lind states, Japan is "no military pygmy".¹¹⁷ She ranks jointly with Britain for the second most powerful navy in the world and possesses far superior naval capability to each of her immediate neighbors. Her construction of new ships is also out-pacing every country apart from the US.¹¹⁸ While in terms of overall manpower Japan ranks only 24th globally, this has little meaning in an era where high-tech systems are vastly more important than massed troops and in terms of overall military spending Japan ranks 6th.¹¹⁹ The product of this expenditure has been helicopter 'carriers', missile destroyers, submarines and advanced jet fighters that can conduct bombing runs up to 1,700 km from Japanese shores.¹²⁰

Katzenstein argued that the end of the Cold War did not bring any major changes and that Japan's anti-military norms were remarkably stable,¹²¹ yet the change in military policy in the past decade is undeniable.¹²² Influential DPJ politician Ozawa Ichiro, was only one of many prominent leaders who have expressed humiliation for Japan's proscribed military status and called for a return to the status of a 'normal' nation.¹²³ Such figures have helped make incremental changes to a list of military prohibitions: the dispatch of troops to Iraq, refueling operations in the Indian Ocean, export of jointly-developed weapons to the US, the export of unarmed military vessels and the upgrading of the Defense Agency to a full Ministry.¹²⁴ More recently warships have been dispatched to Somalia's coastal waters, an overseas MSDF base was built in Djibouti and Japan has supported the concept of aggressive humanitarian intervention in conflict zones such as Libya, with defense analysts seeing Japan taking an even larger role on the international stage in coming years.¹²⁵

The fact that Japanese militarism has failed to develop to the extent predicted by experienced analysts such as Pyle¹²⁶ and Samuels,¹²⁷ can be put down solely to the political happenstance that led to a series of weak leaders and successive rounds of horse-trading in which defense was a minor factor, rather than any pacifist concerns. Izumikawa argued that Japan's post-WWII security policy has been considered an anomaly from a realist perspective,¹²⁸ a statement which overlooks several studies which have shown a strong correlation between Japan's long-term security strategies and various strands of realist thought. Even Hatoyama's stand against the US on the Futenma issue,¹²⁹ which is one of the few cases where the Japanese government could be argued to have taken an antimilitarist stand, is, when historical patterns are considered, closer to an example of realist 'balancing' as described by Walt, in which Japan seeks to to act as a fulcrum between US and Chinese power.¹³⁰

The Japanese people like to think of their nation as special in their upholding of pacifist principles and were it in fact pacifist in capability, strategy or action, it would be worthy of note. The only other nation with such ideals so starkly embedded in its constitution is Costa Rica, a small state that essentially outsourced its defense to the United States, with whom treaties guarantee a military response in the event of attack. Even in this case. Costa Rica has begun to reconsider the practicality of its stance.¹³¹ Among major powers though, Japan is the sole claimant to such status. However, had it been adhering to such a policy, it would in theory have developed no major military forces after WWII and strictly limited what power it did have to defensive roles. It would also have seen a gradual distancing from the militarily aggressive policies of the United States and a purely neutral stance in conflicts on the international stage. In actuality, anti-militarism was an influential force only before the 1970s when the adoption of the 1st National Defense Policy Outline in 1976 signaled a final shift to self-serving realism. While some have argued that antimilitarism had heavy influence on this document, studies of the relevant policy papers written by key figures of the drafting conclude that realism was the dominant influence while antimilitarist factors where marginal at best.¹³² Since then, Japan's military build-up has perfectly matched what realist policies would suggest, including a post-Cold War downgrading of conventional forces and refocusing on ballistic missile technology,¹³³ while the country's nuclear policy provides what Levite calls "the most salient example of nuclear hedging to date".¹³⁴

As such, Japans security policy is perfectly consistent with Twomey's view of the country as a defensive realist.¹³⁵ Such states believe in the necessity of maintaining a robust defense but view expansionism as counterproductive.¹³⁶ Of course, even offensive realists realize that aggressive foreign policies are unwise under some conditions and that security is sometimes best achieved through restraint.¹³⁷ Other than 'conquering' the other primary strategy of offensive states is 'bandwagoning', supporting the assault of stronger states upon weaker victims.¹³⁸ In this manner Japan's moral and material support for numerous aggressive US wars against Iraq, Yugoslavia, Somalia, Afghanistan, Libya and others, ¹³⁹ might easily be taken as bandwagoning. However, this passive support for aggression fits better with Lind's overall framework of Japan's dominant strategy being one of 'passing the buck'.¹⁴⁰ In this conception Japan gives lip-service to being a pacifist state in order to let its allies do all the heavy lifting in terms of military defense. It requires maintenance of a minimum necessary level of military power so that it might quickly respond itself should its ally fail to address a significant threat.¹⁴¹ Historically this would lead to a pattern of Japanese military expansion any time the US failed to respond to regional threats, a pattern which Lind shows has been ongoing for several decades. Such buck-passing is the most cost-effective way of promoting defense and, as we saw in the post-WWII development of the defense industry, Japan effectively used

it to boost its domestic economy. Despite its low prioritization of domestic military strength, the crucial point is that buck-passing states are prepared to significantly boost their military capability should any vulnerability become apparent. The danger thus exists that by adopting an absolutist opposition to military development Japanese pacifists might inadvertently push the defense system to a point of weakness that will lead to a greater militarist response in the opposite direction.

Toward a Practical Engagement

In the aftermath of WWII Japan's politicians were quick to shift blame for the war from political culpability to the institutions of the Imperial Army and Navy.¹⁴² This view of the primary danger being resurgent military strength rather than aggressive political leadership persists despite the rise of a Prime Minister who recently reiterated his views that Japan's convicted WWII war criminals had been vindicated.¹⁴³ Since their role in responding to the Tohoku disasters, public views of the JSDF have become more popular than the days when member's children were taunted at school as the offspring of "bad people",¹⁴⁴ however, there remains an ongoing negative attachment to defense-related groups. Last June MSDF vessels were picketed for making use of a 'civilian' port,¹⁴⁵ while the DPJ's Chief Cabinet Secretary recently referred to the JSDF as "an instrument of violence" in a statement calling for a ban on any guests with strong political views at JSDF events.¹⁴⁶ Such antipathy also extends to the defense industry with SDP Chair Mizuho Fukushima declaring that if export restrictions were eased "Japan-made weapons would be killing children around the world,"¹⁴⁷ and at other times reinvoking the 'merchants of death' label used to attack defense contractors during the Vietnam War.¹⁴⁸

Interviews with JSDF members of all ranks have shown that their main desire is to be accepted as normal and respected servants of the public good. They highly value their disaster relief role and consider those who partook in the Kobe and Tohoku relief efforts as their heroes. At the same time they greatly admire the public respect afforded by the US public to its military and, as a result, many feel this is the model to which they should aspire.¹⁴⁹ The clear danger is that without greater public acceptance and regard for their primary role as a defense force, the JSDF will become increasingly willingly to ape the aggressive military policies of the US military, rather than realizing and taking pride in the fact that their defense-oriented military posture is the ideal that other nations, including the US, should be aspiring to.

Despite a career dedicated to promoting peace, former UN Under-Secretary for

Humanitarian Affairs, Yasushi Akashi stated,

Many of us have come to feel that absolute pacifism is not realistic at this time. It is too utopian, "Akashi says." Any country must have a minimum of self-defense. Maybe Japan has gone too far in the direction of idealism and pacifism and neutrality, and so we are trying to find a happy medium.¹⁵⁰

To be effective Japanese pacifism must accept the necessity of working alongside defensive realists to maintain enough capability to defend the country. By doing so they will be able to establish deeper and more productive avenues of influence within Japan's defense system that will enable them to produce a more effective level of restraint and guidance upon Japan's defense forces. This is something that can offer an alternate path to offensive realism rather than being a mere speed-bump on the current road to increased militarism. This will also open up the possibility for more balanced debate on the potential use of Japan's military, and its defense industrial base, for the promotion of regional and international peace. While this may seem like a counter-intuitive proposal there are a variety of ways in which a robust defense industry might be utilized in a positive fashion.

Currently, the international defense market is worth \$1.5 trillion dollars annually and Japanese firms account for only 3.4% of the market.¹⁵¹ Since the late 1980s it has been predicted that Japanese entry into the market would lead to a far greater market share.¹⁵² In the intervening period Japan has developed cutting edge capabilities in the areas of miniaturized motors, electronics and robotics which would quickly allow Japanese firms to carve out a distinct niche in the global market.¹⁵³ It has also been suggested that traditional Japanese management skills of achieving consensus and harmony will be especially well-suited for joint development projects.¹⁵⁴ Were Japan to acquire even a 10% share of the international market it would represent an \$100 billion dollar boost to the domestic economy¹⁵⁵ and government regulations could easily ensure that firms engaging in international defense sales make-use of at least a portion of their profits in socially-responsible ways. In 2009 Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (Japan's largest defense contractor) donated 6.9% of its profits to charitable activities (primarily research and education) and in 2011 an additional 2.3% to disaster relief.¹⁵⁶ Rather than waiting for permissible military exports to continue their incremental growth it would be more practical to offer broader acceptance in return for ensuring a higher proportion of such profits are directed toward support of the work in peace education and activism necessary to ensure effective monitoring of the industry itself.

Protestations that such businesses would be 'merchants of death' ignore the fact that forges can produce shields just as easily as swords and that many modern military systems are purely defensive in nature, such as anti-aircraft systems, communications networks, bomb-

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disposal robots, satellite surveillance systems and Ballistic Missile Defense. The latter alone has been highlighted as a possible way of contributing to UN peacekeeping and humanitarian protection efforts, an incentive against investing in offensive ballistic R & D and a strong argument against the need for a Japanese nuclear deterrent.¹⁵⁷ The current concentration of major arms producers in the US and EU has resulted in a system whereby states whose relationships with these two blocs deteriorate, find themselves pushed to develop 'cheap and dirty' alternatives such as research into WMDs or support for asymmetric terrorist tactics.¹⁵⁸ A further provider of reliable high-end systems would provide greater room for countries to meet legitimate defense needs. Additionally, it has been argued that arms sales provide considerable influence over the actions of recipients and the entrance into the market of a vendor who placed issues of peace and human rights above its foreign policy aims might provide an answer to the question of how far such influence extends.¹⁵⁹ The development of any such influence would also be a major asset in campaigning for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, an avenue through which any Japanese efforts to promote international peace are likely to be far more effective. A further argument has been made that a reduction of the role of nuclear weapons will be easier if there is more trust in conventional defense capabilities.¹⁶⁰

One final factor would be the heightened ability to adopt a 'Goldilocks' strategy of balancing between the US and China.¹⁶¹ The current system of close integration of defense technology with the US, places restrictions on the ability of the Japanese defense forces to operate independently of US support and any balancing strategy or moves toward an East Asian Union would require just such a fully independent defense system.

There are, of course, dangers from any increase in the scope of defense production, particularly corruption and the influence of the defense lobby upon foreign policy. This only makes it more urgent that a higher level of open debate occurs before the chance to influence future policy has passed. Japan's peace activists are in danger of solely 'preaching to the choir' and neglecting the chance to develop influence over the views of people they see as ideological foes. In order to make practical policy, a meeting of moderates from both camps is likely to be more stable in the long-term than a battle for dominance by intractable extreme views. In recent years Japan's political system has been opening up in the areas of politics, education and the media such that a greater number of paths of influence now exist to exert pressure on government policy.¹⁶² In the speech referenced at the beginning of this article Galtung expressed the belief that Japan was undergoing a new revolution whereby previously unrepresented social demographics are starting to secure political infleence.¹⁶³ If this is the case, it must be hoped that they will approach the issue of security policy with open

and balanced opinions rather from positions of irresolute and ineffective ideological dogma.

Conclusion

Rather than taking an absolutist stand against militarism in any form, it should be accepted that defensive military force is, for the present at least, an unfortunate necessity. Accepting such necessity it becomes clear that a careful and balanced study of security issues is required in order to bring about effective influence upon developing military and security issues. Considering also, that the Japanese government has long followed a realist strategy in its security affairs, there is a danger that any weakness or vulnerability in the defense system, in this article the example of a weakened defense industrial base has been given, might be used to promote a more aggressive policy of military expansion. Rather than allowing such an event it would therefore be more practical for pacifists and defensive realists both, to ensure that the minimum necessary capability for the defense of Japan is maintained. Doing so means establishing a cooperative, working relationship with the military and defense sectors that would allow maintenance of capability alongside more robust restraints on use. This attitude is something which must be fostered through open debate and a willingness to accept compromise and incremental change. Only by adopting this more demanding and long-term path, can Japan hope to trade its lip-service to pacifism for proactive promotion of the security of both Japan and the world.

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