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REARMING JAPAN

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INTRODUCTION

Japan accounts for over ten percent of the world's GNP. It has the second largest economy in the non-Communist world and runs up huge trade surpluses in its commerce with the United States and Western Europe. Conversely, Japan spends just slightly over one percent of its GNP on defense indicating to many in the U.S. and Western Europe that Japan is enjoying a free ride and waxing rich under American military protection. While the United States and its European allies welcome Japan's insistence that it should be counted as a member of the Western camp, they ask whether such professions can be taken seriously when Japan is so obviously not shouldering its fair share of the common defense. But the economic strength vs. defense disparity and the complex problems of rearming Japan lose all superficial aspects of mere monetary adjustment when contrasted from within Japan and the Asian-Pacific region.

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The purpose of this paper is to show that Japan continues to rearm and why she must. It will explain why this must be a slow process for the Japanese and the region and demonstrate that Japan does share more of the defense burden than is popularly believed.

BACKGROUND

In 1946 Japan adopted a new Constitution which reestablished the state on the lines of a Western democracy. The Emperor became a symbol of the state and sovereignty was vested in the people through their representatives in a Diet elected by universal suffrage. In Article Nine of the ^Cconstitution, the Japanese people forever renounced war as a sovereign right of the nation and a threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes. In pursuit of this objective, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, would not be maintained.

The article has become controversial for historical reasons and in the matter of its interpretation. It was drafted on the instructions of General MacArthur, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, and was reluctantly accepted by the Japanese cabinet because it feared resistance which might have placed the Emperor's position in jeopardy. However, phrases were added to the original draft which made it possible to argue later that the renunciation of war was conditional on the establishment of an international peace based on justice and order. Thus, when the Government began a modest program of rearmament in the 1950's, it was suggested that since there was manifestly no peace, order or justice in the world, Japan had to look to other means with which to ensure its security.¹

¹ Frederica M. Bunge, ed., Japan A Country Study, (Foreign Area Studies, The American University) pp. 40-41.

Since that period, the case of those who favor rearmament has rested on this argument, underlined by the insistence that the right of national self-defense is not explicitly denied in the Constitution. On the contrary, it is implicitly recognized in the preamble, and the Japanese Supreme Court has ruled that the Japanese Self-Defense Force is constitutional. More recently, this stand has been reinforced by the argument that the constitution had been imposed on Japan by the occupying powers, and, therefore, cannot be regarded as truly Japanese. Nonetheless, at the time of its promulgation the Constitution was genuinely accepted, even welcomed, by the people of Japan who had suffered as much under the consequences of militarism and its disastrous policies (as) Japan's Asian neighbors. The atomic destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had further strengthened popular revulsion against war. In the past two decades the desire not to interfere with Japan's phenomenal prosperity has begun to replace fading memories of militarism as the chief obstacle to a substantial rearmament in spite of American efforts to wean Japan from its pacifism.² ?

Following the end of the occupation in 1952, Japan's defense rested on the twin pillars of the Security Treaty with the United States first signed on the same day as the Peace Treaty of San Francisco

² Robert F. Reed, The US-Japan Alliance: Sharing the Burden of Defense (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press) pp 16-18.

in September 1951, and subsequently revised in 1960, and the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) which were formally established by law in 1954 though their origins to back to the last years of the occupation.³

For a long time there was a strong opposition to the existence of the SDF. Their constitutionality was periodically challenged in the courts while they continued to exist uneasily on the margin of legality. However, by the 1960's public opinion surveys revealed that substantial majorities accepted the SDF as necessary though there were also sizable majorities which did not want to see any further expansion of Japan's Armed Forces. Similarly, there is now a widespread acceptance of the security treaty with the United States. Even the most important opposition party, the Japan Socialist Party (JSP), has abandoned its total opposition to the SDF and its advocacy of unarmed neutrality.⁴

The shift in public opinion towards accepting the need for armed forces and the security arrangements with the United States has been gradual and unenthusiastic. This has had two important consequences: It has ruled out any immediate prospect of amending the Constitution, although the right-wing of the ruling Liberal

³ Ibid., pp. 6, 7 & 44.

⁴ James E. Auer, private interview held in Washington, DC, July, 1988.
A Joint Report by the United Nations Association of the USA and the Asia Pacific Association of Japan, The Japanese-American Alliance: A Framework for the Future, (New York: United Nations Association of the USA, 1983), p. 13.

Democratic Party (LDP) favors such a revision. It has also meant that the build-up of the SDF has been slow. Moreover, the Government never ceases to emphasize the peaceful orientation of its foreign policy and to underline the defensive nature of Japan's military posture.⁵

Today, the SDF is well-equipped with Japanese-produced armaments, though in aircraft and some advanced weapons systems they still depend on imports or production under licensing agreements. The main emphasis is on air and sea defenses and on the modernization and expansion of the logistical infrastructure. Although by 1990 Japan will be the third largest military spender in the world, this is due to the size of its budget and not a reflection of the proportion of national resources devoted to defense which is by far the lowest among the major allies of the United States.⁶

The Constitution, domestic political considerations, and the constraints of a deficit-ridden national budget are not the only reasons why Japan is slowly developing its military capabilities. There is also the inhibition imposed by the attitude of Japan's neighbors. Even China, a country which had abandoned its uncompromising opposition to Japan's rearmament in the 1970's and

⁵ Reed, pp. 44-49.

⁶ Tadashi Tajiri, Problems and Countermeasures, Security of the Sea Lanes of Asia (New York: International Security Council, Feb 1987), p. 41.

had actively encouraged it immediately after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, has become nervous in recent years due to the hawkish nature of Japan's Government and has joined other East Asian states in warning against a revival of Japanese militarism.⁷

More fundamentally still, there remains the question of the function of the SDF in Japan's present situation. Here one has to distinguish between Japan as an economic power with interests in every part of the world, and Japan as a strategically located but vulnerable power in the Northeast Asia region.

⁷ Mr. Zhou Guocun, Chinese Navy, Assistant Naval Attache, private interview held in Washington, DC, July, 1988.

THE JAPANESE DEVELOPMENT

The Japanese have succeeded thus far because of their ability to translate their strengths into actions which reduce the impact of their weaknesses. Their strengths are cultural. Their homogeneity, protected by their physical isolation from the rest of the world for more than 200 years, allowed development of cultural strengths that withstood their accelerated movement from feudal to industrial state during the Meiji Restoration, withstood the devastation of the country and its institutions as a result of World War II, and even today withstands the pressures from the outside world. On the surface Japan looks very similar to the United States, and many Japanese try to encourage the impression that they are Westerners. But cultural values that are uniquely Japanese exist beneath the veneer.⁸

Probably the single greatest strength is the Japanese tradition of consensus decision-making. While maddeningly slow to Americans, this system, common throughout their society, binds all interested parties together and ensures understanding and conformity to the objectives.⁹

⁸ Bunge, pp. 71 & 72.

⁹ Ibid.

Consensus has allowed Japan to move with a sense of national purpose greater than that found in other countries. There has been considerable debate over the degree with which "Japan, Inc." has been responsible for their remarkable success. This refers to the targeting of growth industries by the Government frequently in the form of tax incentives, inexpensive financing, and the like. The actual amount of these incentives has been relatively modest but the effect has been large. These government actions essentially act as a catalyst for forming a national or industry-wide consensus on industrial priorities.

The Japanese, now the largest international aid donor, are not altruistic. While they express sympathy with victims of national disasters, they are parsimonious with tangible assistance. They may privately condemn human rights abuses, but they will not make this an element of their policy. They consider such involvements as beyond their responsibility and view with curiosity the Western propensity to export its morality with its machinery.¹⁰

The Japanese base their policies unswervingly on self-interest. Once a consensus has been developed as to what that self-interest is, they have the capability for coordination and rationalization beyond that of the more heterogeneous societies of the West. Excellent examples of this trait are the post-World War II

¹⁰ James E. Auer, a private interview held in Washington, DC.

reindustrialization and the recoveries from the two oil shocks.

In spite of their tremendous strength, the Japanese are vulnerable to any event which affects trade. Without natural resources of significance, Tokyo must import raw materials and export finished products in order to survive. Their decision to target high value-added technologies for future development is consistent with this need. By moving in this direction they can move labor and resource-intensive industries offshore and develop knowledge-intensive industries at home. The information revolution is a near perfect match for Japanese capabilities.¹¹

The Japanese are entering an era as threatening to their near-term prosperity as the two oil shocks of the 1970's. Japan is now under attack by trading nations from around the world for its refusal to open and stimulate its domestic markets. Each concession is made only after drawn-out consultations and negotiations, and they have thus far avoided broad substantive action. If (Japan) does not take significant market opening actions soon, (they) will become the target of severe protectionist measures of the U.S. and Western Europe. They are vulnerable to disruptions of trade and would come out big losers in any sort of a trade war. Since the consequences of this for Japan would be far worse than the consequences of opening its markets, they are expected to take concrete action to

¹¹ Tajiri, pp. 39-40.

reduce their trade surpluses.¹²

The recent actions by the U.S. Government to invoke penalties on certain Japanese manufacturers for semiconductor dumping were prudent, correct, and necessary. More such moves will almost certainly be necessary because the Japanese will never take gratuitous actions not in their interests. So long as we merely talk, there will be no progress. Only when we demonstrate that it is in their interest to open up their markets will the change take place. An excellent example of this was the case of the automobile exports to the United States. The U.S. negotiated for many months in hopes of reducing the import of Japanese automobiles. Although on several occasions ~~the~~ Americans felt that the Japanese had made substantive commitments to reduce the flow, nothing happened. It was not until the U.S. Congress was about to pass the Domestic Content Bill that the Japanese quickly responded with a program of voluntary restraint. Again, the lesson is that the Japanese will not take actions which are not in their interests.¹³

¹² James E. Auer, a private interview held in Washington, DC.

¹³ News Release, Office of the Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), January 17, 1986.

SHARING THE BURDEN?

The defense of the free world is based on a defense coalition and backed by the nuclear deterrence of the nuclear-capable nations. Within an alliance, the question of each country's fair share towards the support of the alliance is easily and often debated. There is no single universally accepted formula for calculating each country's fair share. Perhaps the lack of a single measure avoids comparison which would threaten the current level of harmony. Likewise, there is no common understanding of what the burden is. The burden in this case is the function of the perceived threat. Judging the proper share of contribution to the defense of a country or region consists of some quantitative inputs subject to important caveats and limitations, and a great many intangible contributions.

Each country has a unique perception of the threat to its own well-being based on history, culture, and geography. Likewise, it has a politically and economically constrained set of possible responses to the threat.

.Quantitative Measures.

Numerical comparisons are as difficult to compile as they may be misleading. Measures commonly employed include: 1. Percentage of population involved in defense. 2. Defense budget as a percent

of total budget. 3. Defense budget as a percent of gross domestic product (GDP). 4. Defense dollar spent per capita.

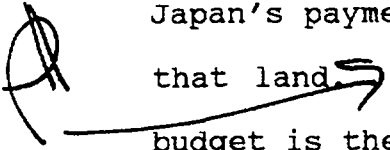
When countries are ranked on the basis of these indicators, countries change rank order positions widely indicating no one measure is definitive.

.Intangibles.

Intangible costs and benefits accrue to a country actively involved in an alliance defense. For example, the Federal Republic of Germany rents many thousands of acres of valuable land for use by NATO countries for training. The cost or value of this contribution is both difficult to compute and is not reflected in any of the quantitative comparisons. The very large subsidy paid by the Government of Japan to local employers of employees of the U.S. Forces is included in Japan's Department of Labor budget and is not reflected in the Japanese Defense Budget. Lost revenues from taxes, rent, duty and host nation support are impossible to compute.¹⁴

The measures available to examine Japan's share of the defense burden are as varied as suggested above and are likewise not definitive. NATO countries in the aggregate devote roughly

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 14-16, 27-30.

3.5 percent of their GDP towards defense while Japan spends slightly over 1 percent. Yet, when compared with the U.S., Japan has more than twice as many destroyers and more than three times as many antisubmarine aircraft in the West Pacific as the U.S. Fleet and as many fighter aircraft defending its territory as the U.S. has defending the continental U.S. The widely cited figure of one percent GDP as Japan's contribution to defense spending can be adjusted by both tangible and intangible costs and benefits. Costs not included in the one percent GDP figure include the rent for use of Japanese land for U.S. bases, and the Government of Japan's payment of rent to private landowners for the U.S. use of that land.  Another cost not reflected in the Japanese defense budget is the co-payments made to Japanese nationals who work for U.S. forces in Japan. The U.S. Government does not pay the fair market rate for civilians employed on military bases. The difference, often as high as 50 percent of the wage, is made up by the Japanese Government under the Master Labor Contract and comes not from the Japanese defense budget but from its Labor Department budget. Major capital improvements and repairs of U.S. housing and base facilities are provided by Japanese funding. This infrastructure directly benefits U.S. defense interests but is not billed to the U.S.¹⁵

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¹⁵ Reed, pp. 40-44.

Intangibles that Japan provides include such things as allowing the U.S. to homeport major naval assets in Japan, forward basing Army and Air Force units in Japan, and the reduced transit time for repairs by providing repair facilities for U.S. units in Japan. Other unmeasurables (accrued by) the United States are the value of having Japan as our "unsinkable aircraft carrier" within one thousand miles of the Soviet Union's major bases in Asia and the power projection that Japanese bases provide us.¹⁶

¹⁶ New Release, Office of the Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), January 17, 1986.

STRATEGY OF THE FAR EAST

As an area of global strategic importance, the Far East is surpassed in the modern world only by Western Europe for the littoral nations of the Western Pacific are among the great military and economic powers in the world. The greatest of these is the Soviet Union, one of the world's two superpowers and great naval powers. The Pacific Provinces of the Soviet Union are linked to European Russia via a single major land route, the Trans-Siberian Railway. The majority of all other commerce must pass back and forth by sea. To secure its interests in the area, the Soviet Union maintains its most modern and largest naval force which underscores the importance that the Soviets place on maintaining a strong influence in the maritime region.¹⁷

South of the Soviet Union lies China and the two Koreas. China has re-emerged since World War II as one of the world's major powers and its Navy, although it consists exclusively of minor combatants and small crafts, is now numerically the third largest in the world. China's shipbuilding industry has enjoyed a recent resurgence linked to an expansion of maritime trade in the related construction of commercial hulls. Astride the Soviet-Chinese border where it reaches toward the Pacific lie the two Koreas. Reaching like a land-bridge across the water toward Japan the

¹⁷ Hisatomo Matsukane, A Proposal from Japan's Standpoint, (New York: International Security Council Feb 1987) pp. 51-52.

no Korean would agree with this 2 states perhaps but only 1 nation.

strategic peninsula which the (two nations) share is potentially the most volatile of the East-West confrontation points, an area where clients strongly tied to their respective patrons come into direct and abrasive contact.

Further south lies the offshore state of Taiwan, a tenuous remnant of the Nationalist Chinese Government of China. Although the internal machinations of the People's Republic and the subsequent warming of relations between that nation and the West have reduced the urgency of the two Chinas' problem, the very future of the two states to reach a settlement on the reunification issue leaves the long-term stability of the status quo in question. Perhaps even less stable is the status of Indochina. With Vietnam as a client state of the Soviet Union and Cambodia in total upheaval, the Soviet-Chinese struggle for influence and domination engulfs the former French colonial region. Finally, although its massive military ground presence has departed Southeast Asia, the United States retains a strong naval ^{and air} presence in the Far East, motivated by economic interests, treaty and alliance commitments and political interests. Indeed, the Far East is the one area of the globe where the world's three largest navies come into direct contact in the same waters.¹⁸

83 Potential to fight

¹⁸ Richard H. Soloman, "The Pacific Basin: Dilemmas and Choices for American Security:", Naval War College Review, (Winter, 1987), pp. 36-39.

Lying off the Pacific Coast of the Soviet Union and Korea is the one nation which, if it should choose to accept the role, could determine the strategic balance of the region and the course of its development. Only the Japanese have the economic potential and the dominant geostrategic position which could allow them to assume such a role.

East Asia is a maritime region and it will take maritime supremacy to control its destiny. Land communications in East Asia are rudimentary and limited in capacity and the terrain is hostile. The great majority of all commerce, both within the region and between Asia and other parts of the world, must travel by sea. Controlling the sealanes of communication is equivalent to exerting a controlling interest in the development of East Asia.¹⁹

A cursory look at the geography of the region shows that the strategically dominant features of the region are the series of interior seas which stretch from the Straits of Malacca at the south to the Kamchatka Peninsula on the north. Enclosed by a long series of offshore island chains, these seas are the commercial arteries of the Far East. The northern most of these is the Sea of Okhotsk enclosed by the Kamchatka Peninsula, the Kuril Islands, and the Japanese island of Hokkaido and claimed by the Soviet Union

¹⁹ Edward N. Luttwak, The Political Uses of Sea Power (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1974), pp. 61-63, 79.

as sovereign territory, an inland sea. Moving southward, the next encountered is the Sea of Japan enclosed by the main Japanese islands, the coast of the Soviet Union and the two Koreas. Less important to global strategy, but nonetheless regionally important, is the Yellow Sea which separates Korea from China. Of much greater significance are the two China Seas, East and South. These seas are loosely enclosed by the Ryukyo Islands, Taiwan and the Philippine Islands. Within these interior seas lie many other significant islands, some significant for political reasons, some for economic. Sakhalin Island, Quemoy and Matsu Islands are examples of the latter, largely owing to the access to resources they control through their associated exclusive economic zones. It may be the offshore oil deposits of the interior sea which will be the cause of the most important maritime activity of the region in years to come. The Chinese invasion and subsequent seizure the Parcel Islands in 1974, for example, appears to have been largely motivated by offshore resources access.

*Parcel Islands +
Taiwan*

Two geographic considerations dominate the strategic maritime balance in the interior seas of the Far East: first, from a purely naval point of view access to the interior seas is controlled by a relatively small number of choke point passages. Moving again from north to south, one finds first the La Perouse or Soya Strait which controls passage between the Sea of Okhotsk and the Sea of Japan. The other major passage between these seas is the Tartar Strait between Sakhalin Island in Siberia, but this is blocked by

ice much of the year. Southward are the Tsugaru, Shimonoseki and Tsushima or Korea Straits which control access to the Sea of Japan. Control of these passages completely dominates access to the major Soviet naval base at Vladivostok. Further south are the passages which control access to the East and South China Seas. Separating the two seas is the Strait of Taiwan, a shallow channel roughly one hundred miles wide separating Taiwan from mainland China. Other entry points to the South China Sea include the San Bernadino and Blabac Straits and the Sibutu Passage which are adjacent to or within Philippine waters, and Bashi Channel, the main passage between the South Sea and the Pacific, and the favorite submarine hunting ground during World War II. Each of these choke points is shallow enough to be vulnerable to mining, restricted enough to be easily patrolled by conventional submarines, and narrow enough to be vulnerable to shore-based aircraft or antiship missile attacks. Even the Tsushima Strait, although it is nearly 150 kilometers wide and subject to strong sub-surface currents, is vulnerable to mining with new technology.

The narrowness of these passages, indeed the diminutive breadth of each of the previously discussed interior seas, leads directly to the second major strategic confrontation. Control of these seas will be dependent upon control of the skies. Surface vessels will be vulnerable to attack by shore-based aircraft and shore-based antiship missiles anywhere within the region. The South China Sea, largest of the interior seas, is no more than 425 miles from the

nearest airfield. The Sea of Japan, perhaps the most important sea strategically, is within 450 miles of airfields of both Japan and the Soviet Union, easily within the range of most tactical aircraft.²⁰

The strategic implications of the geographic arrangement of the region are profound. Air power will probably determine control of the seas. This includes shore installations capable of firing antiship cruise missiles at maritime targets and naval surface units equipped with anti-air missile systems. The antisubmarine warfare problem will be vastly more complicated than it was in the Second World War, with conventional torpedo-firing submarines joined by nuclear attack submarines and cruise missile firing submarines. The surface forces opposing the submarines will be augmented by highly capable air units, both fixed and rotary-wing, which must be provided with protection from enemy fighter aircraft.

Mine warfare forces could be especially effective in restricted waters of the various choke points, and capable mine countermeasure forces will be absolutely necessary for the preservation of free passage against mines placed by surface, submarine, or air forces.

²⁰ Stuart E. Johnson, The Military Equation in Northeast Asia, (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute, 1979), p. 50.

JAPANESE MARITIME POWER

Historically, Japanese naval power, like all elements of the Japanese military, operated under constitutional constraints adopted following World War II. Article Nine of the Japanese Constitution adopted in 1946, reads as follows: "Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of a nation, and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes . . . In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized."

The Japanese military is not really a military force at all but rather a very limited self-defense force. Among the normal military trappings missing are a system of military justice and national security law for protecting state secrets, a system of conscription, and a (system of civilian control) which effectively permits policy formulation and independent action by uniformed leaders of the self-defense force, or a civilian Chief Executive. Most important are the restrictions on the accumulation of war potential, and the renunciation of the right of belligerency as provided for in the Constitution. The land and sea arms of the Japanese self-defence force are severely limited in the types of missions for which they may plan, and the types of equipment which

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civilian control
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they may procure. (Much) of the nation's population still questions the constitutionality of maintaining any military force. Thus, the restraint on the power of the Japanese military is as much political as legal.²¹

Defense spending has just recently broken through the one percent limit of GNP. Overseas combat deployments are forbidden by ^a1954 Diet resolution, and military and civilian leaders alike universally reject any maritime self-defense force role beyond one thousand miles. Yet Japan has many reasons why she needs a strong maritime force to protect her interests. The greatest of these is the nature of her economy which is totally oriented toward foreign trade, nearly all of which must pass back and forth by sea. In the early 70's Japan's ratio of imports to total raw materials exceeded 90 percent and was 100 percent for many critical resources such as nickel and aluminum. Eighty percent of the nation's energy is imported from the Middle East by sea.²²

There are political reasons, too, why Japan might consider a strong military force a prudent option. The Soviet Union covets the control of the warm water choke points which control access to their naval facilities on the Sea of Japan. Petropavlovsk, the

²¹ James E. Auer, The Postwar Rearmament of Japanese Maritime Forces, 1945-1971, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), pp. 110-127.

²² James E. Auer, "Japan's Defense Policy", Current History VOL 87 No. 528 (April 1988): 145.

*Also not
open
of sea*

only Pacific base with unchallenged access to the ocean, has never been an adequate base for large scale naval operations. It does not have adequate overland communication routes and must be resupplied by sea. It is therefore susceptible to siege from the sea and the quantity of POL and supplies which could be brought into the base in time of war would be limited. It is critical to Soviet strategy that unfettered access to the major base at Vladivostok be maintained. The southern half of Sakhalin Island and the four southern Islands of the Kuril chain were seized from the Japanese at the end of the Second World War to help guarantee this access. Ownership of the Kurils is still a very sore point of dispute which mars Soviet-Japanese relations. The large portion of naval infantry and amphibious lift forces which the Soviets maintain at Petropavlovsk can only be explained by a contingency mission which calls for seizure in securing the choke points at the

*There is
some concern
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Soya and Tsugaru Straits in case of conflict. While most Japanese do not fear a direct invasion of their homeland by the Soviets, they do fear Soviet opportunist activity in support of internal unrest within Japan itself.²³

In spite of these motivating factors, Japan's military mission orientation remains modest. The legitimate missions of the self-defense force are limited to two: defending the many islands against invasion and protecting vital sealanes of communication.

²³ Solomon, p. 53.

The latter mission is viewed as very limited in scope, as previously discussed, although logically Japanese concern with SLOC protection should extend at least to the Strait of Malacca through which so much of its energy and raw materials must pass. There appears to be no inclination on the part of civilian or military leaders to shoulder such responsibilities. Further, renunciation of the right of belligerency is interpreted to preclude preempted strikes at enemy submarine and air bases which could threaten control of the SLOC's. At least some view the Japanese force posture as being designed to hold on until the U.S. comes to the rescue.²⁴

*Why is this
S. of the
main thrust
is maritime?*

Given these kinds of constraints, it is easier to understand why the Japanese defense force composition is what it is, and to visualize how it might be used in a regional conflict. The maritime self-defense force receives the lowest priority for funding and manning. The ground forces and tactical air forces, which would be responsible for repelling an invasion, receive the highest priority. Naval forces are tasked to concentrate on defensive roles of ASW and mine countermeasures. The Japanese remember well the lessons of World War II and the threat of the diesel submarine in the interior seas of the Western Pacific. During that war the Japanese lost 7.6 million tons of shipping, 2,117 ships to hostile action, over 60 percent of that figure being

²⁴ Reed, pp. 49-50.

sunk by U.S. submarines alone. In October, 1944, 60 U.S. submarines deploying from Pearl Harbor and Brisbane sank 320,000 tons of shipping. Japanese merchant shipping operating in the region today could potentially face a hostile submarine force numbering nearly twice that many hulls deploying from much closer bases for much longer patrols.²⁵

The Japanese have a logical and continuing hardware procurement program, and the systems which they are buying are building a modern, effective combat system. The procurement program is designed for modernization, however, and not for great expansion. There is a desire to upgrade force quality, but not to expand force missions. Thus, there are some mission areas in which the Japanese forces are woefully inadequate even to do the minimum mission which they have assumed. One of these areas is air superiority. As a concession to the growing air threat new destroyer-size ships are being constructed with anti-air missile capacity, and Japan is attempting to buy the AEGIS combat system for their next generation of ships.

But there is no provision for coordinated air coverage from the ASDF ashore in the event of a massed air attack on fleet units, and there is no capability to attack hostile airfields or shore based antiship missile sites which threaten the fleet and impair

²⁵ Samuel Eliot Morison, The Two Ocean War, (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1963) p. 505-511; Auer, a private interview.

its ability to maintain free access to the SLOC's. THE ASDF is a respectable force with more than 100 F-15's and E-2 aircraft. The capability now exists to perform coordinated maritime missions, but neither the ASDF nor the MSDF seem inclined to pursue these options. Further, the size of the JMSDF seems terribly inadequate to perform the assigned mission even in the minimum area of responsibility that they define it.

With the limited number of ships available, the Japanese could not begin to hope to maintain a constant search of critical choke point areas or routine area patrols and still have adequate forces left for convoy duty. The hope is that surface force effectiveness can be augmented by shore-based ASW aircraft of the JMSDF and the U.S. Navy. The Japanese have about 50 new P-3 aircraft very similar to those operated by U.S. forces based in Misawa, Kadena, Guam, and the Philippines. These aircraft are the finest ASW aircraft in the world and are reasonably effective at locating and attacking nuclear submarines operating in the deep waters of the Pacific Ocean. But the primary sensors of these aircraft, like all fixed-wing ASW aircraft, are passive acoustic systems. Operations against patrolling diesel submarines in the shallow waters of the interior seas of the Western Pacific where the background or ambient noise level is very high, would produce less than satisfactory results. The only effective air platform with an active sensor is the helicopter. While the MSDF has active sonar helicopters, there is no provision for developing them at sea. The

planned mission is choke point areas which are immediately adjacent to Japanese shores.²⁶

A strength of the JMSDF is its mine countermeasures capability which rates very high. In fact, this is the oldest arm of the force, having been left intact following World War II to complete minesweeping operations in the home waters. It is also the only arm of the SDF to have been deployed overseas having deployed to Korea in 1951 to support United Nations actions there. The JMSDF today maintains about 30 mine countermeasure vessels in its inventory, one of the largest such forces in the world. Like the ASW force, however, the mine forces may find their wartime effectiveness limited by lack of friendly aircover.²⁷

²⁶ Defense of Japan 1987 (Defense Agency, Japan, 1987), pp. 98, 114.

²⁷ Bunge, p. 362.

CONCLUSION

Maritime power in the Far East is now fairly evenly balanced with no nation, or readily imaginable alliance of nations, clearly dominating the region. It seems unlikely that any nation save the Soviet Union will embark on a major effort to change the regional balance in the near future. The Soviet effort will be severely hampered by geographic limitations which will limit the effectiveness of her Pacific fleet until control of key choke point passages can be secured. The emergence of the Indian Ocean as an area of strategic maritime confrontation has drawn down Soviet Pacific fleet presence in the Far East as it has United States presence in spite of the improved Soviet position regarding operations from the former U.S. base at Cam Ranh Bay.

This leaves greater latitude for the lesser powers to assume a larger maritime role in the region. Yet at the present time no regional navy is capable of performing other than a peripheral role in strategic regional maritime control, although the large submarine fleet of the People's Republic would immensely complicate the task of any opponent which sought to gain control of the area. Of all the nations in the region the one with the most persuasive reasons for desiring an effective voice in determining the regional maritime balance, the only nation with the present economic base and industrial technical capability to make an immediate contribution to that balance is Japan. The Japanese have shown

with their present fine weapon systems that they have the ability to build and operate the sophisticated ships and aircraft which will be needed to maintain regional superiority as new technology becomes available to other regional forces. Yet, as long as the present political climate persists in that nation, it is unlikely that Japan will assume a greater degree of responsibility in defending her own national interests outside the proclaimed one thousand nautical miles. Japan will continue her slow, methodical increase of spending for her self-defense force and, by the turn of the century, will have an extremely capable force which will complement, to even a greater degree than it does now, the U.S. Fleet and other U.S. forces in the region. This will present the Soviet Union with an extremely knotty strategic problem in relation to her own maritime forces.

The PRC, South Korea, the ASEAN nations, and the other nations of the South Pacific, continue to view the rearming of Japan with a great deal of apprehension. Lessons learned by these nations during World War II have not been forgotten, and those nations take every opportunity to remind the United States of their concerns. In addition, the United States will have to come to grips with having a Japan in the future that is not only an economic power by also a military power of consequence. Along with that force structure will come the clout in the region that Japan will use in her own self-interest which may or may not coincide with the interests of the United States. We are witnessing the redefining

of the US-Japan partnership. On Japan's part, it must bear its fair share of the security burden. On the U.S. part, it is beginning to consult and otherwise deal with Japan as an equal. This in turn will require a convergence of Japanese and American views and strategic thinking.

Japan will continue to rearm simply because it is in her own best economic interest to support the West's deterrence of war. For no people in the world know better than the Japanese that war does not pay.²⁸

Howard,
Most of my comments are in the margins or have been discussed with you after your first draft. Japan has relied on "comprehensive defense" policy for many years, and I don't believe it will change appreciably in the near term for domestic and international pol. reasons. You are right about the U.S. & Japan needing to redefine the relationship. That is part of the FSX issue. Good job.
Bill Berry

²⁸ Kenneth N. Waltz, Man the State and War, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954) p. 224.

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