

# THE JAPANESE DEFENSE DEBATE: A GROWING CONSENSUS

by

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The use of statistics demands caution, and certainly this is so when one attempts to analyze Japanese defense trends. To "prove" that Tokyo is enjoying a free ride, for example, a United States government official might point out that Japan, with the free world's second largest economy, spends a smaller percentage of its gross national product on defense than does Switzerland. On the other hand, a riposte from Moscow might note that despite its "Peace Constitution," a militaristic Japan now ranks ninth in the world (sixth in the free world) in terms of the actual amount spent on defense.<sup>1</sup> One politician might argue that the Japanese people are finally developing a realistic attitude toward national security, citing the 1978 Prime Minister's Office poll in which 86 percent of the respondents favored maintaining the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (JSDF).<sup>2</sup> But another could reply that in a recent *Yomiuri* poll, more than 71 percent of those queried would disapprove of any effort to revise Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution (the "no war" clause), thus indicating clearly that the Japanese continue to reject rearmament.<sup>3</sup> The problem with these contrary claims is not with the data; rather, it lies in the conclusions that the data is being used to support. While it might be useful to domestic and foreign polemicists to point to such figures as a clear indication that the policy choices facing Tokyo have been reduced to either pacifism or revanchism, such an interpretation only obscures reality.

The attitudes of a nation's people and its policymakers toward national security are shaped by three factors: their perceptions of

the relative strengths of friend and foe, to include the willingness of each to use force; their perceptions of their own nation's military and economic vulnerability; and the current political climate, which can determine how policy alternatives are presented and discussed. These factors underwent significant change in Japan in the 1970s. Accordingly, those Japanese groups most concerned with defense policy have had to adapt to new realities. It is worth noting that at no point have the key actors stopped to ask, "Should Japan rearm?" Instead, they have responded to the question "How should Japan defend itself and its interests?" As a result, there are no sharp breaks from past policy to be found, even though we can see clearly identifiable changes in orientation in the last decade.

The security arrangement between Japan and the United States in the years following World War II called for Japan to maintain only a small defense establishment. This arrangement was satisfactory to the Japanese for the following reasons: the United States was perceived to be willing to meet its military obligations under the terms of the US-Japanese Mutual Security Treaty; America was seen as having the ability to counter any military threat to Japan (the primary one being presented by the Soviet Union); and American and Japanese national interests were sufficiently compatible to allow for coordination on regional and often on international policy. In the 1970s, however, all of these conditions underwent considerable erosion and transfor-

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mation. The resolve of the United States to stand behind its Asian allies was questioned by some Japanese observers who perceived the Nixon Doctrine, the fall of South Vietnam, the "abandonment" of Taiwan, and the Carter Administration's initial moves to reduce US force levels in South Korea as manifestations of a decline of US power in the Pacific. The very logic of the US shift from a "2½ war" capability to a "1½ war" orientation, given US vital interests in the Persian Gulf, seemed to indicate a defensive strategy for the Pacific in the event of global war. This, then, has led to the conclusion that Europe and the Middle East rate as the top two US priorities—not a comforting reassurance to Japanese defense planners, knowing that despite its commitments, the United States will concentrate its forces in time of war where it feels it must win. The perceived use of the Seventh Fleet to reinforce other world trouble spots only serves to drive the point home.

The Japanese people are increasingly skeptical of US resolve. In 1970, 39 percent did not trust US promises to defend Japan.<sup>4</sup> By 1979 that total had risen to 60 percent.<sup>5</sup> And, as US resolve was perceived to be waning, US military capabilities relative to those of its global adversary, the Soviet Union, were also seen to be slipping.

The Soviet buildup in the East began to accelerate rapidly in 1970 in the aftermath of the Sino-Soviet border dispute. To the 30 divisions deployed in the East in 1970, Moscow had added 15 more by 1974.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, the Soviets strengthened their strategic rocket forces along the trans-Siberian railway and their air defense and frontal and long-range aviation throughout the Far East. Perhaps more alarming have been recent Soviet qualitative improvements in their Far Eastern forces. The SS-20 missiles and Backfire bombers now there pose a new strategic threat to the Japanese homeland and they have been addressed as such in recent Japanese Defense White Papers. The Soviet Pacific Fleet grew from 74 subs and 57 surface combatants in 1976 to more than 100 subs and about 80 surface combatants, including the light carrier *Minsk*, in 1980.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, recent Soviet military training exercises such as OKEAN II, in which blue-water convoy interdiction was practiced, and the reported paratroop and amphibious landings made on the occupied Japanese Northern Territories,<sup>8</sup> can hardly be reassuring to the Japanese or lead them to conclude that the Soviets are merely reacting to Chinese or American threats. The establishment of a naval facility in Cam Ranh Bay,<sup>9</sup> the buildup of perhaps one motorized rifle division on the still-contested northern islands, and the invasion of Afghanistan are seen as further manifestations of what the 1979 Japanese Defense White Paper referred to as a global Soviet strategy "designed to expand [Soviet] political influence by means of military power."<sup>10</sup>

The Soviet deployments and force improvements in the Far East have obviously been heavily influenced by the Chinese threat. In addition, a strong case can be made that theater naval activity as well as ground-force activities in the Kuril Island chain reflect implementation of Soviet Admiral Gorshkov's strategy of creating "Soviet controlled lakes" to protect the sub fleet during a nuclear war (as he has attempted to do with the area north of the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom gap). Nonetheless, no matter what particular threats the Soviets perceive at a given time or what strategy might be in vogue, they undeniably have always seen themselves as an Asian power. Even before the onset of the military confrontation with China, the Soviets maintained 17 divisions in the Far East.<sup>11</sup> Soviet protestations to the contrary, the Japanese do not view the Russians as narrowly concentrating on Europe and merely reacting to external threats in Asia. On the contrary, Russia is seen as an expansionist power whose recent actions reflect a historic desire to attain regional dominance.

While the Soviets have been seen as being on the march, the Americans have been viewed as being in retreat. In fact, there is evidence that such an assessment is valid. US Navy ship-days in the Pacific declined from 54,200 in 1965 to 19,700 in 1976.<sup>12</sup> The Seventh Fleet was reduced from three carriers

and 28 surface combatants in 1975 to two and 26, respectively, in 1980; and the percentage of the Seventh Fleet that is today used to reinforce the Indian Ocean is larger than that of its Soviet counterpart so employed.<sup>13</sup> The 1979 and 1980 Japanese Defense White Papers both noted that the Soviets had the potential to disrupt US sea lines of communication. And qualitative upgrading of US Pacific forces has not been forthcoming. In both force and weapon deployment, the US has clearly followed a "Europe first" and, recently, a "Middle East second" policy. The Soviet Union, of course, has likewise followed a "Europe first" policy. By spending 11 to 13 percent of its gross national product annually on defense, however, the Soviet Union has managed to improve across the board; the United States has not.<sup>14</sup>

A third area of change has been in the extent to which Japanese and American regional and international interests no longer seem to coincide. While the alliance has proven durable under stress (notably that prompted by the Nixon Doctrine, the change in US-Taiwanese relations, and recurrent trade skirmishes), one must ask if such stress is an aberration or more symptomatic of diverging interests. All of the developed countries of the free world remain dependent on Middle East oil, but Japan is clearly most dependent. Over 99 percent of Japan's oil is imported, with 78 percent of the total coming from the Middle East.<sup>15</sup> But Japan's strategic vulnerability goes beyond energy. More than 56 percent of its imports come from the Third World.<sup>16</sup> Almost 80 percent of Japan's imports are raw materials or food.<sup>17</sup> The reluctance of the Japanese to jump on the US anti-Iranian bandwagon during the hostage crisis is an example of how different degrees of vulnerability can elicit different responses. To the degree that the United States moves in directions that are detrimental to Japan's economy or, conversely, to the degree that Japan does not support US designs to frustrate the Soviets, tensions will result. As has been noted, such tensions have existed in the past and have been overcome. Nevertheless, given the decline in Japanese confidence in US resolve, the Soviet Far Eastern

military buildup, and the growth of protectionist sentiments within the United States, such tensions might have more serious consequences in the future.

**D**efense policy in Japan is shaped by a number of groups. At the base are the people. They both exert pressure on the government to take action and place limits on the policymakers' room to maneuver. The political parties also play a key role with, historically, the Liberal Democratic Party acting as the JSDF advocate and the other parties acting in disunified but noisy opposition. The bureaucracy translates political guidance into policy, with the role of the Defense Agency being, in addition, that of partisan advocate of increased defense spending. The role of the Ministry of Finance has been to live up to its "tight-fisted" reputation, while those of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) and the Foreign Ministry have been more complex. Finally, there is industry, with certain sectors, especially the members of the Defense Production Committee of Keidanren, acting as defense advocates.<sup>18</sup> There are other important actors as well; the four mentioned, however, are the key groups, and an examination of their evolving attitudes and roles can to a great extent explain Japan's overall position on the issue of defense.

Until recently, Japanese politicians have been unable to discuss defense issues

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realistically. The Liberal Democratic Party held a solid Diet majority, and the opposition parties, without hope of attaining power, could afford to make the entire matter of defense appear as a choice between pacifism and revanchism. There were other factors that limited all parties' interests in defense affairs: a public that questioned the legitimacy of the JSDF, a booming economy that enabled industrialists to seek profits outside of the arms business, and the unthreatening international setting already alluded to. There have been significant changes, however, not only in the international setting, but also in the overall political milieu and within the Liberal Democratic Party itself; and these changes have altered the context of the defense debate.

In the late 1970s the Liberal Democratic Party's control of the Diet appeared to be slipping. This loss of dominance accelerated the trend underway since the late 1960s toward the abandonment of confrontation tactics by the opposition parties. Instead, those parties began to drift toward the ideological center as they perceived that an opportunity to share power in some sort of coalition might present itself in the future. In the defense arena this development has meant that the opposition by and large no longer challenges the JSDF's existence or the nation's right to defend itself. In turn, this set of circumstances has allowed politicians to openly discuss such defense issues as how the JSDF should be integrated into the American plan to fight a Pacific war and how the Japanese forces should be structured.

By the 1980 general elections, the defense platforms of the Japanese political parties were as follows: The Liberal Democratic Party was seeking to expand the JSDF and supported the US-Japan Security Treaty. The Democratic Socialist Party also supported the continuation of the treaty, but favored only maintaining the status quo of the JSDF. Both the "Clean Government" Party and the Japanese Socialist Party were seeking to reduce the JSDF and supported the gradual invalidation of the security treaty. Finally, the Japanese Communist Party favored self-defense and neutrality.<sup>19</sup>

While these four positions certainly did not reflect a unanimous desire to create a powerful military establishment, neither did they reflect what Derek Davies has called the "rarefied atmosphere" in which the defense debate was carried out in the past. The increasing sense of responsibility displayed by the opposition has probably been most appreciated by the Japanese Defense Agency. In 1973, for example, the Japanese Socialist Party was able to muster enough votes to prevent the inclusion of bombsights and in-flight refueling systems on Japanese F-4 Phantom jets because that would have given them an offensive capability in violation of Article 9; by 1978, however, that party could not marshal the strength to similarly emasculate the McDonnell Douglas F-15 aircraft.<sup>20</sup>

Within the Liberal Democratic Party itself, there have been changes that have resulted in a far more realistic approach to defense issues. The changing nature of the opposition has played a critical role in this development, but other factors have been at work as well. For one thing, defense is not a burning issue with voters, and this fact has allowed the party some maneuvering space. A May 1980 *Asahi* poll indicated that only four percent of the voters considered a party's defense policy to be the most important issue in their choice of a candidate.<sup>21</sup> Further, to the extent that the Japanese people do consider defense issues, the Liberal Democratic Party voter clearly has a more pro-defense spending attitude than do the supporters of the opposition parties. Additionally, the political climate is now more suitable for politicians to articulate a more aggressive position on defense than was the case in the past. For example, one powerful Liberal Democratic Party faction leader, Yasuhiro Nakasone, a former Director of the Japanese Defense Agency, has openly exerted pressure within the party for increased defense spending.<sup>22</sup> And, as business becomes more restive about government restrictions on armament sales, the Liberal Democratic Party could become more "hawkish" in the future. The overall change in the political climate from one in which the mention of the word "defense" was anathema to one more

conducive to reasoned debate is significant, for it provides the opportunity for the more enthusiastic defense advocates—notably elements of the bureaucracy and of industry—to energetically pursue their goals.

**M**oving from an examination of political party rivalries to a view of the internal workings of the government itself, one can see that attitudes toward the JSDF vary considerably both between ministries and within ministries. The Ministry of Finance has consistently opposed substantial increases in the defense budget, but for economic, not ideological, reasons. Although Japanese defense expenditures grew from more than 483.8 billion yen in 1969 to 2400 billion yen in 1981, the increase represented a growth in the percentage of gross national product of from only 0.84 percent to 0.9 percent.<sup>23</sup> This modest rate of growth was acceptable to the Ministry of Finance, given a rapidly expanding economy. With the slowdown of the Japanese economy, however, the Finance Ministry has been opposed to any sizable increases in defense spending in the future. During the 1982 budget battle, the ministry was able to limit defense expenditures to 0.93 percent of GNP despite the Defense Agency's goal, put forth in their 1978 defense buildup plan, of reaching the one-percent mark by 1984.<sup>24</sup>

The position of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry is not as clear. MITI has been reported to be dubious about any defense buildup because it is afraid that a buildup would adversely affect Japan's successful policy of separating politics and trade. Increased defense spending also could cut into MITI's public works appropriations.<sup>25</sup> In addition, MITI is tasked with enforcing the government policy of banning the export of armaments to communist-bloc nations, countries that are belligerents in an international conflict, and countries that are the subject of United Nations boycotts; and an increase in Japanese defense production would bring greater pressures to bear on MITI's capability to perform this function.<sup>26</sup>

Against these reasons for an anti-defense spending posture, MITI might soon be giving consideration to several other significant

factors. The first of these involves the potential returns to be offered by an expanded defense sector in a time of reduced growth opportunities. To illustrate, from 1970 to 1979 the value of weapons exported from the United States to the Third World totaled over \$27.7 billion, compared to a total of \$3 million in Japanese arms exports to the Third World. Comparable figures for French, British, and Italian exports were approximately \$5.9 billion, \$3.0 billion, and \$1.9 billion.<sup>27</sup> Put in another light, the value of US arms transfers during the 1970s exceeded the entire cost of Japan's 1977-79 defense budgets. A second factor is that Japan, like most other nations, has shown a preference for producing many of its own weapons. Yet, because the JSDF is so small, such a course cannot be pursued economically by producing only for domestic consumption. For example, it is estimated that aircraft cost two to three times as much to produce in Japan as they cost if purchased abroad; for small arms, the difference may be as much as 10 times the cost.<sup>28</sup> MITI has tried to move Japanese industry into less energy-intensive and more technologically sophisticated fields since the 1973 oil shock. Given the enormous profits to be realized in the world arms market, however, MITI's charter as the champion of industrial growth could force it to modify its stance. In addition, the growing potential for legislation being introduced into a restive US Congress that would link US-Japanese trade to increased Japanese defense spending (22 percent of Japan's total trade in 1981 was with the United States) will perhaps lead MITI to encourage defense growth to defuse this issue.

Like the Ministry of Industrial Trade and Industry, the Foreign Ministry also finds itself in an ambiguous position. The ministry has traditionally remained sensitive to both regional and international concerns about resurgent Japanese militarism and therefore favors contributing to free-world defense through economic aid.<sup>29</sup> Yet there have been pro-defense forces at work as well, and pressure from abroad has compelled the Foreign Ministry to reconsider its position. In recent years the People's Republic of China

has urged Japan to strengthen its military forces and to take its security relations with the United States seriously.<sup>30</sup> Further, the attitude of most Asian nations seems to parallel that of China, and the defense limits once imposed by the legacy of the 1930s and 1940s are becoming less restrictive.

American pressure to get Japan to increase its military expenditures may also tend to tilt the Foreign Ministry toward a more pro-defense view. Japanese prime ministers throughout the 1970s have led Washington to believe that Japanese defense spending increases were forthcoming, yet the percentage remains below one percent of the GNP. The Foreign Ministry has been left to fill the credibility gap and has not relished the task. For example, former Foreign Minister Okita felt that the late Prime Minister Ohira had given Washington a commitment to increase expenditures in 1981 by 9.7 percent and was reportedly disgruntled with Prime Minister Suzuki's subsequent rollback to 7.75 percent.<sup>31</sup>

Further, the Foreign Ministry has remained adamant in its territorial claims against the Soviet Union and may be alarmed over the Russian buildup to the north. It would seem likely that there are elements within the Japanese Foreign Ministry who, like their counterparts in the US State Department, argue that only military strength can deter the Russians.

The most active arm of Japan's bureaucracy in the defense debate is the Japanese Defense Agency (in which I will include the JSDF's uniformed staff). The Japanese Defense Agency has always considered one of its missions to be to further the understanding of national security problems among the Japanese people. For example, the 1978 Defense White Paper noted:

It is . . . vital to inform and involve the public on matters that are concerned with defense issues, [promoting a] national consensus on defense which would support the defense forces and help them function effectively, [and increasing] people's defense-consciousness . . . .<sup>32</sup>

To what extent the Japanese Defense Agency has been responsible for the public's increasing acceptance of the JSDF is difficult to judge, yet it has unquestionably helped the process along with astute promotional campaigns. The agency has clearly become more aggressive and self-confident in the last decade. By 1978 the Subcommittee on Defense Cooperation had announced its "Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation," and for the first time since the 1951 US-Japan Security Treaty was signed, joint military training and planning—prerequisites for an effective military alliance—had begun.<sup>33</sup> Further, the Defense White Papers have now begun to refer to the Soviet Union by name as a potential threat, rather than employing euphemisms.

Weapon procurements and announced strategy also reflect a more expansive role for the JSDF. Modern armored vehicles and self-propelled artillery are entering the JSDF inventory and being provided on a priority basis to units on Hokkaido, reflecting a realistic appraisal of the Soviet threat.<sup>34</sup> The vulnerability of Japan to surprise attack, demonstrated so well by the celebrated penetration of Japanese airspace in September 1976 by a defecting Russian MiG-25 pilot, has been addressed with the purchase of four E-2C Hawkeyes.<sup>35</sup> In addition, the Maritime Self-Defense Force is attempting to counter the Soviet naval threat with the purchase of P-3C Orions and Harpoon missiles.<sup>36</sup>

The point is that the attention given to these three missions—defending against the Soviet military threat to the north, detecting and meeting a surprise attack, and controlling the sea lanes around Japan—represents a change in the Japanese Defense Agency's approach to national security. It has begun to define threats in concrete terms and to seek realistic military solutions to its problems, a big step forward from the former strategy of letting the United States fill gaps as they appeared.

As practical solutions are sought, the line between defensive weaponry and tactics and offensive weaponry and tactics will be more

difficult to draw. Weapons' ranges have increased to the point that it is difficult to attempt to limit Japan's defense responsibilities by setting an arbitrary perimeter around the islands, as some have tried to do in the past. General Kurisu, a former Chief-of-Staff of the Ground Self-Defense Force, probably stated the problem most succinctly in noting, "It is impossible to cope effectively with offensive operations . . . [by] defensive means alone."<sup>37</sup>

The growing bureaucratic independence of the Japanese Defense Agency began with the tenure in the early 1970s of Yasuhiro Nakasone as director. Since that time, both the civilian leadership and the uniformed staff have become more outspoken. General Kurisu was dismissed from his post after publicly stating that the JSDF might have to take "supralegal actions" to respond to a surprise attack, since the law mandated that only after approval had been given by the prime minister could the JSDF use force.<sup>38</sup> Yet the 1979 Defense White Paper made it clear that the problem raised by General Kurisu was under study.<sup>39</sup> More recently, the outgoing Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Goro Takeda, stated in a magazine interview that Japan's policy of restricting defense spending to less than one percent of the GNP made the JSDF "meaningless."<sup>40</sup> And although Takeda was rebuked by Japanese Defense Agency Director Omura, the civilians themselves have become more vocal in recent years. In short, even though the agency does not have ministry status and has traditionally played a supporting role within Japan's bureaucratic drama, it seems to have become more assertive in recent years.

**T**he attitude of Japanese industry also changed during the 1970s. Of course, favorable attitudes toward defense might be expected from those businessmen who stand to gain from an expanded defense sector, best typified in Japan by the members of the Defense Production Committee of Keidanren. The top 20 firms, which net more than 61 percent of the total value of all defense contracts,

include such heavyweights as Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and Mitsubishi Electric (one and two), Kawasaki Heavy Industries (three), Ishikawajima-Harima Industries (four); and Mitsui Shipbuilding (eight). Yet despite the small size of the JSDF, the number of firms producing equipment for, or selling items to, the Defense Agency stands at about 2200, and the number has recently been increasing at a rate of 50 to 100 firms per year.<sup>41</sup>

It will be extremely difficult for big business to remain on the sidelines as the United States and Western European countries land huge defense contracts in a time of worldwide economic troubles. In fact, industry was beginning to move off the sidelines in the 1970s. The Defense Discussion Council, a defense-oriented organization within the business community, was formed in 1965 with the goals of "spreading and enhancing national defense thought, [and] providing moral support for the Self-Defense Forces," and the council has continued to expand its activities over the past 17 years.<sup>42</sup> A notable success was also scored with the recent establishment of the Research Institute for Peace and Security, a defense think tank funded by Japanese big business and the Ford Foundation.<sup>43</sup> The institute will provide the conservative elements within the Japanese intellectual community with a forum from which they can articulate their views and provide support to the defense establishment.

The Defense Production Committee of Keidanren has argued that the portion of the defense budget allocated for research and development (one percent in 1979 versus 10.19 percent in the United States) must be increased.<sup>44</sup> In addition, defense suppliers have complained that the year-to-year procurement plans of the Japanese Defense Agency have not enabled key defense industries to expand their capabilities in any rational manner.<sup>45</sup> If the government were to respond favorably to these big-business grievances, the Japanese military-industrial base would be strengthened significantly.

All of this is not to argue that defense industries are in command in Japan. Opposition parties are still able to make

headlines by "exposing" arms transfers to other countries in violation of government policy ("arms" being a very broad term, since it has recently been applied to such items as amphibious bridging equipment). Additionally, industries not related to the defense sector but suffering the risk of having their international business adversely affected by a controversial arms transfer program can be expected to openly oppose any expansion of the JSDF. Nonetheless, the aggregate political and economic clout of the leading defense firms is enormous; their collective efforts to influence the defense debate will most certainly continue to affect the outcome.

**T**he Japanese public remains well informed about current events, and the Japanese political system does a reasonably good job of responding to their concerns; consequently, the public's attitudes do weigh heavily in the defense debate. There has been a steady shift in public attitude toward national defense during the past decade, but, again, defense is not considered a salient issue in the Japanese voter's mind. Accordingly, Japanese politicians and bureaucrats may be seen more as operating within the boundaries of what the people consider acceptable, rather than as responding to specific demands.

The Japanese people's commitment to Article 9 of the Constitution is often cited as proof of their pacifistic attitudes: as previously noted, over 71 percent of those polled in January 1981 do oppose its revision. The issue, however, is considerably more complex than that. To what extent are the people attached to the "no war" clause for emotional reasons? To what extent is it looked upon only as a safeguard against resurgent militarism? With almost a third of the people now stating a preference for a stronger or autonomous defense force, attachment to Article 9 is not the most accurate of barometers.<sup>46</sup>

The fact is that there has been a steady increase in the public's acceptance of the JSDF. The results of the Prime Minister's Office polls over the years makes this clear.

Those who favored the existence of the JSDF grew from 58 percent in 1956 to 86 percent in 1978.<sup>47</sup> And while acceptance had climbed to that level, almost 43 percent admitted that they thought the JSDF was "beyond" or "going beyond" the "self-defense" concept.<sup>48</sup> The people were becoming more security conscious in response to changes in the domestic and international arenas. In February 1980, 25 percent of the people approved of the US request that Japan increase defense spending, while 55.4 percent disapproved. By January 1981, the totals were 41.4 percent and 44.6 percent, respectively, with Russian activities around Japan and Ohira's pledge to Carter to increase defense spending cited as two important reasons for the shift.<sup>49</sup>

The Japanese people have shown an express dislike for the Soviet Union over the years that has been marked by an increasingly militant response to perceived Russian aggression. A 1979 Jiji Press poll indicated that unfavorable opinion toward the Soviet Union had reached a 15-year high (of those expressing dislike for a particular country, 40 percent named the Soviet Union). Only during the years of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, when Japanese attitudes toward the PRC momentarily soured, has the Soviet Union avoided the dubious honor of being the country most disliked by the Japanese people.<sup>50</sup>

The overall public picture is mixed, to be sure. Over 75 percent of the people oppose a draft; just under 75 percent disagree with the export of weapons or weapons' parts abroad; and over 60 percent would disapprove of JSDF involvement overseas, even as part of a UN peacekeeping force.<sup>51</sup> Yet, above all else, the public has come to accept the JSDF as legitimate and to increasingly look on it not as a necessary evil, but as an armed force performing vital military missions that protect the interests of the Japanese state.

**A** number of commentators have looked at the Japanese defense establishment and asked, "Is Japan rearming?"—the word "rearm" conjuring visions of the Japanese military juggernaut of the 1930s

and 1940s. The political, social, and international milieu has changed so radically for Japan since 1945, however, that attempts to find the roots of Japan's current defense policy in the prewar years are misguided. Further, the assumption that Japan will continue ad infinitum to maintain an undersized defense establishment could similarly be wide of the mark. The domestic and international conditions that allowed Japan to ignore its military in the early postwar years were unique and fleeting. Never in the history of mankind has a powerful nation not sought to safeguard its position by building up its war-making potential. Japan, ultimately, will not prove to be an exception.

The pace and extent of Japan's military buildup will be determined by how the different groups concerned with defense policy in Japan perceive changes in the international setting and how they calculate the political trade-offs associated with various courses of action. Many of the political, economic, and military trends of the past decade have led to the development of a much stronger pro-defense consensus in Japanese society today. Given seemingly unsolvable worldwide economic and military tensions, it would appear that this consensus will continue to grow in the years ahead.

#### NOTES

1. Edward C. Ezell, "The Japanese Self-Defense Forces, 1980," *International Defense Review*, 13 (No. 2, 1980), 188. With regard to the term "Peace Constitution," the American-imposed Japanese Constitution adopted in 1946 contains a no-war clause, Article 9, that says in part, "The Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation" and "Land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained."
2. "Japanese Defense" (adapted translation of the 1979 Japanese White Paper on Defense from *Mainichi Daily News*), *Survival*, 22 (January-February 1980), 36.
3. "The People's Attitudes Towards Defense," *Yomiuri Shimbun*, New York ed., trans. Kiyoko Masunaga, 9 February 1981, p. 11.
4. Douglass H. Mendell, Jr., "Public Views of the Japanese Defense System," *The Modern Japanese Military System*, ed. James H. Buck (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1975), p. 174.
5. Derek Davies, "The Return of the Rising Sun," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 14 March 1980, p. 21.
6. *The Military Balance 1974-1975* (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies [hereinafter IISS], 1975), p. 2; and *The Military Balance 1970-1971* (London: IISS, 1971), p. 7.

7. *The Military Balance 1976-1977* (London: IISS, 1977), p. 8; *The Military Balance 1980-1981* (London: IISS, 1981), p. 12; and *Asian Security* (Tokyo: Research Institute for Peace and Security, 1981), pp. 45, 77.
8. The Northern Territories are four islands at the southern end of the Kuril Islands northeast of Hokkaido. The Japanese claim sovereignty over these islands, occupied by the Soviets as World War II drew to a close. Soviet intransigence in negotiations with the Japanese over the issue has remained a source of bilateral friction since the early 1950s.
9. Steve Talbott, "The Soviets Stir Up the Pacific," *Time*, 23 March 1981, p. 55.
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11. *The Military Balance 1963-1964* (London: IISS, 1964), p. 5.
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