

U.S. Global Strategy and Japan's Right to Exercise Collective Self-Defense: A Historical Perspective

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Introduction

The Japan-U.S. Security Treaty was signed on September 8, 1951. It became apparent during negotiations on the treaty that both parties were at cross-purposes with each other as to what they expected from the treaty. Japan desired U.S. forces stationed on Japanese territory to protect her “against an armed attack from without,” while the United States wanted Japan to contribute to “the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East.” The different perceptions of the treaty again surfaced during negotiations to revise the 1951 treaty, with Japan prioritizing Article Five and the United States viewing Article Six as essential, respectively in the revised Security Treaty of 1960. Article Five focusing on the security of Japan stipulated that “an armed attack against either Party in the territories under the administration of Japan” would be “dangerous to its own peace and safety” and it would “act to meet the common danger.” On the other hand, Article Six that Washington regarded as essential emphasized the importance of “the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East.”

Such differences occasionally caused tensions between Washington and Tokyo over what to expect from the bilateral security. Washington tended to define Japan's role in terms of Article Six, while Tokyo tried to limit the mission of U.S. troops stationed on Japanese territory to that of protecting her own security.

This paper intends to examine how Washington policymakers approached and responded to the question of Japan's right to collective self-defense in accordance with the requirements of U.S. Cold War strategy in the changing security environment by analyzing how the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty was redefined in the postwar years, centering on Article Five that Tokyo regarded as important and Article Six that Washington considered as essential. For this purpose, the

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evolution of the security treaty in the postwar years can be periodized into four phases. The first phase is from the occupation to the late 1960s during which Washington tried in vain to persuade Japan to increase her commitment to regional security. The second phase begins with the announcement of the Nixon Doctrine, lasting until the end of the Cold War. During this period, the U.S. government made substantial achievements in redefining Japan's security role in the direction desired by Washington. The third phase covers the years from the end of the Cold War to the Bush (Jr.) administration during which Japan's security role came to include the "law on emergency in situations surrounding Japan" that was enacted in May 1999. It was the legislation that allowed the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) to provide logistical support for U.S. troops during an emergency in the area surrounding Japan. The fourth period marks the beginning of the last phase of the redefinition process of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty during which both the Barak Obama administration and the Abe Shinzo administration reached an understanding that Japan would begin to reconstruct the legal framework for security including the agenda concerning the right of collective self-defense.

The following four chapters will examine this redefinition process finally culminating in the Abe cabinet's controversial decision of July 1, 2014 to change by fiat the government's longstanding interpretation of Article Nine of the Constitution which consistently denied Japan's right to exercise collective self-defense.

I: Washington's Unsuccessful Attempts to Redefine the Security Treaty: From the Occupation period to the End of the 1960s

U.S. officials desired to achieve two objectives from the bilateral security treaty. Firstly, they regarded the treaty as the indispensable means to contain Moscow and Beijing. To that end, they wanted a Japan firmly allied with the United States that would contribute to the common defense of the 'free world' as much as possible. In addition, the treaty was designed to contain the possible rise of Japanese militarism in the future. Containment of the future rise of Japanese militarism had two aspects: stationing of U.S. troops on Japanese territory would militate against the emergence of a neutral Japan more independent of U.S. Cold War policy, while also preventing Japan's militarization from causing serious concerns and anxieties among Asian neighbors. In other words, from Washington's perspective, the security treaty was expected to fulfill the functions of 'double containment.'

What emerged in the U.S. Cold War project in relation to Japan's role in Asia can be summarized as follows: (1) Tokyo's contribution to the peace and stability in Asia through its economic and technical assistance to non-Communist countries in the region, (2) Japan's rearmament and subsequent reinforcement of her military capabilities, (3) a Japan that could provide logistical support for U.S.

troops stationed on Japanese territory in times of an emergency not only involving Japan but also areas beyond its territorial boundary, as well as the U.S.'s liberal use of bases in Japan as emergency arises, and lastly (4) Japanese participation in and contribution to regional security.

Of these four roles Washington expected Tokyo to play, the matters related to Japan's right to exercise collective self-defense concerned (2), (3), and (4). The U.S. government, while making efforts to achieve (2) and (4), only regarded (3) as an essential requirement. Above all, Washington officials ultimately aimed at realizing (4) by inducing Tokyo to join Asia's collective security arrangements. To that end, they explored ways to get around Article Nine that prohibited Japan from joining collective defense arrangements.¹

From the late 1940s until the mid-1950s Eisenhower administration officials actively explored two alternatives with a vengeance. One was to conclude a bilateral security treaty between Japan and the United States. The other was to induce Japan to join collective defense arrangements so that Tokyo could contribute to the common defense of the 'free world' against Communist threats.

Initially, Washington pursued the possibility for Japan's participation in collective security arrangements. However, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand that Washington considered as possible members of a security arrangement were strongly opposed to their former enemy's membership. As a result, U.S. officials had no alternative but to conclude a bilateral security treaty with Japan, while concurrently signing the ANZUS treaty on September 8, 1951.

Given the distrust of Japan in Asia, Washington's desire to create a collective defense organization covering the Western Pacific abated after the mid-1950s. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the NSC document dated April 1955 defined the U.S. objectives as "a Japan, firmly allied with the United States" and "better able to serve as a counterweight to Communist China and contribute to free world strength in the Far East." At the same time, the document also postulated that Japan be included "in arrangements in the Pacific area for purposes of mutual security and economic benefit" and recommended that Washington should promote "the conditions necessary to form as soon as possible and then participate in a Western Pacific collective defense arrangement" including Tokyo, Seoul, Taipei and Manila, "eventually linked with the Manila Pact and ANZUS."²

As the NSC document shows, Washington policymakers expected Japan not only to develop military forces eventually capable of assuming primary responsibility for her own defense but also to contribute to the security of the

1. For a discussion of the U.S. objectives toward postwar Japan, see Kan Hideki, *Beiso Reisen to Amerika no Ajia Seisaku*, [American-Soviet Confrontation and U.S. Policy toward Asia] (Kyoto: Minerva Shobo, 1992), chapter 5.

2. NSC 5516/1 "U.S. Policy toward Japan," April 9, 1955, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957*, XXIII, 52-60 (hereafter, referred to as *FRUS*).

Pacific area against Communist threats in the region. Such U.S. objectives required Tokyo to amend Article Nine of the Constitution so that Japan could exercise its right of collective self-defense. However, the constitutional constraint, buttressed by strong pacifist sentiments among Japanese, militated against public discussions in favor of constitutional amendments and/or rapid rearmament. For the time being, therefore, Washington's security policy toward Japan was to concentrate on the gradual buildup of Japanese defense forces under the bilateral treaty, which lasted until the late 1960s.

It should be noted, however, that Foreign Minister Shigemitsu Mamoru, during his August 1955 visit to Washington to negotiate revision of the 1951 treaty, handed the U.S. side a Japanese proposal for a new Mutual Defense Treaty to replace the existing treaty that was regarded by Tokyo as unequal. The Japanese proposal contained a provision that challenged the established interpretation of Article Nine. The Japanese draft contained a provision that reads as follows: "each Party recognizes that an armed attack against either Party in the territories or areas in the Western Pacific under the administration of either Party would be dangerous to its own peace and security and declare that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional provisions and processes." Secretary of State John F. Dulles present at the meeting asked the Foreign Minister if Japan could come to the defense of Guam or the United States under the Japanese constitution. Shigemitsu replied in the affirmative, adding that the Japanese government could consult with the U.S. government as far as dispatching Japanese troops abroad was "for self-defense."³ Negotiations went nowhere, however, as Dulles thought revision of the existing security treaty was premature.

Nevertheless, the Japanese proposal was noteworthy because it involved changing the established interpretation of Article Nine that prohibited the JSDF from using force overseas. It should be pointed out, however, that U.S. officials took note of this proposal. Walter Robertson, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, sent a memorandum to Dulles to the effect that Shigemitsu's proposal "would be a great step forward toward our objectives of tying Japan into collective security arrangements in the Pacific if we can get Japan publicly in a treaty to accept a collective defense responsibility."⁴

Subsequent developments show, however, that it was no easy task for Washington to persuade Tokyo to go beyond the constitutional prohibition, committing Japan to a mutual collective defense arrangement. On March 16, 1959, Hayashi Shuzo, Director of the Cabinet Legislation Bureau (CLB), the

3. Memorandum from Foreign Minister to Secretary of State (second meeting), August 30, 1955, declassified by FOIA, declassification number 2001-00366 (June 1, 2001), Gaimusho Gaiko Shiriyokan Shozo (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan).

4. Memorandum from Robertson to Dulles, July 28, 1955, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, XXIII, 78-80.

Japanese governmental office in charge of interpreting Japanese laws, remarked at the Budget Committee meeting during the House of Councilors deliberations, to the effect that Article Nine of the Constitution prohibited Japan from exercising the right to collective self-defense. Hereafter, the CLB adhered to this interpretation. As the result, the successive Japanese cabinets also followed this CLB interpretation, sealing off collective self-defense arguments for the time being.

When Kishi Nobusuke assumed the premiership in February 1957, he decided to renegotiate the revision of the 1951 treaty with the Eisenhower administration. Throughout the negotiations in 1958–59, both parties were constrained by the CLB interpretation. During his meeting on July 31, 1958 with Douglas MacArthur, U.S. ambassador to Japan, Foreign Minister Fujiyama Aiichiro made the Japanese government's position clear. According to Fujiyama, under the present constitution, Japan "cannot dispatch its self-defense forces abroad," and such a mutual security treaty was not feasible at this time.⁵ According to the Japanese record of the same meeting, Fujiyama was even more specific. When MacArthur tried to clarify the meaning of the constitutional restrictions, Fujiyama reiterated that Japanese self-defense forces were prohibited from going abroad, not only to defend the United States but also to defend Korea. Fujiyama even stated that the existence of the JSDF itself was "barely possible by making the broadest interpretation of the Constitution."⁶

What was striking for the purpose of this paper was MacArthur's reference to a mutual security treaty absolving Japan from its obligation to dispatch self-defense forces abroad. As the July 31st telegram from the Embassy to Dulles shows, the ambassador was well aware that Kishi and Fujiyama would not commit themselves to sending Japanese troops abroad in the event of hostilities and that there was "no prospect of Japan joining in any multilateral collective security treaty" for the foreseeable future.⁷

It is important to note that MacArthur, to obtain mutuality in the new treaty, wanted to clarify the scope of the "treaty area." Washington insisted on the "Pacific area" but Japan was opposed to this expression. Eventually both parties settled for the "Far East." Thus, Article Six read as follows: the United States was granted "the use by its land, air and naval forces of facilities and areas in Japan, for the purpose of contributing to the security of Japan and the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East."⁸ Togo Fumihiko, then Director

5. Telegram from the Embassy in Japan to the Department of State, July 31, 1958, *FRUS, 1958–1960*, XVIII, 44.

6. Fujiyama · MacArthur kaidanroku bassui, July 30, 1958, declassified by FOIA. Gaimusho Gaiko Shiryokan Shozo.

7. Telegram from MacArthur to Dulles, August 1, 1958, *FRUS, 1958–1960*, XVIII, 48–49.

8. For the detailed process of negotiations, see the following documents. Fujiyama ·

of the Security Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, recalled in his memoir that the US proposal for the term “the Pacific area” was “based on the assumption that Japan would exercise collective self-defense,” and was apparently “unacceptable.”⁹ In the final analysis, however, both sides agreed to the treaty area as “the territories under the administration of Japan,” thereby assuring that both USFJ and JSDF units would act to meet an armed attack that falls within the territories under the administration of Japan. It means that the present Japan-U.S. security treaty applies to hostilities that occur within “the territories under the administration of Japan” and obviates Japan’s necessity to exercise the right to collective self-defense.

As we entered the 1960s, the mission of U.S. troops stationed in Japan increasingly gravitated to regional security in Asia. It would suffice to point out here that the significance of the Japan-U.S. security treaty to Washington, from its inception, lay not so much in the defense of the Japanese home islands as in “the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East.” The emphasis was clearly on the maintenance of regional security in Asia rather than on the defense of Japan proper. The latter responsibility was increasingly assumed by Japan in the 1960s. The Policy Planning Council paper of December 1968 confirmed this as follows: “Even now,” observed an analyst of the PPC staff, “there are no major U.S. units in Japan directly committed to the defense of Japan as a primary mission.” “The preponderance of U.S. forces in Japan,” he went on to explain, “are combat and service support units related to the execution of general war and contingency plans with regional scope and tasks, not exclusively for defense of Japan.” In other words, their missions included logistic support for operations in Korea, defense of Northeast Asia, strategic force operations in the Western Pacific/Asia area, and forward maintenance and repair for the fleet. “The only significant combat elements,” added the document, “are tactical fighter units of the U.S. Air Force which have missions in support of ground operations throughout the Pacific Command.” It means that there were no U.S. forces with missions “exclusively for air defense of Japan.”¹⁰ It is, therefore, quite revealing

MacArthur kaidanroku, June 9, 1959, declassified by FOIA. Gaimusho Gaiko Shiryokan Shozo; *FRUS, 1958–1960*, XVIII, 119–120; *ibid.*, 191, 198; *ibid.*, 231; Fujiyama · MacArthur kaidan, June 17 and June 19, declassified by FOIA. Gaimusho Gaiko Shiryokan Shozo; *FRUS, 1958–1960*, XVIII, 201–202.

9. Togo Fumihiko, *Nichibei Gaiko Sanjyu Nen*, [Thirty Years of Japanese-American Diplomacy] (Tokyo: Chuko Bunko, 1989), 78–80.

10. State Department Policy Planning Council, “Japan’s Security Role in Asia: December 1968,” National Security Files, “Transition: Policy Planning Council Papers,” Subject File, Box 50, Lyndon B. Johnson Library, Austin, Texas. For a more detailed analysis of the PPC paper, see the author’s following article. Kan Hideki, “U.S. Government’s Conception of Japan’s Role and Regionalism in the Asia-Pacific,” *Sougo Kenkyusho Ho* (The Bulletin of Central Research Institute, Fukuoka University), 204 (March 1998): 157–170, especially 159–

to find in the document the statement that “to those Japanese who do not see their country’s security in a regional context, the presence of U.S. bases which serve a regional purpose means nothing but trouble with no compensating gains.”¹¹

There is another telling observation in the document that deserves mentioning. It addressed the security role Japan might play “over the next decade and beyond,” and highlights three possible future courses of action Japan might follow: (1) ALPHA (defense only), (2) BETA (defense plus peacekeeping), and (3) GAMMA (major regional military power). ALPHA visualized Japan continuing to devote only modest resources to defense, while confining her military capabilities to defense of the home islands and their air and sea approaches. BETA envisaged Japan also having a capability to deploy forces abroad in peace-keeping operations under the United Nations or other international auspices. GAMMA envisaged Japan developing a military establishment capable of independent and sustained operations abroad in the framework of regional collective security arrangements.¹²

The PPC document then examined the advantages and disadvantages of each of these three options available to Japan. Given Washington’s desire to induce Japan to play a larger role in Asia, the ALPHA option was written off as unsatisfactory. Likewise, the GAMMA strategy was also rejected as inconsistent with U.S. objectives. It was feared that this option would impose upon Japan the costs at the expense of badly needed domestic social programs, generate alarm among Asian neighbors, and cause adverse effects on Japan’s progress in expanding her economic activities in East Asia as well as negative domestic reactions. Most of all, the author of the document was concerned that pressing Japan toward a GAMMA strategy would be likely to impel the country “to go the nuclear route than to develop conventional military power.” In addition, such a Japan would “present the strong possibility of a neutralist foreign policy of the Gaullist type,” leading eventually to termination of the US alliance and of US base rights. In light of the need for U.S. bases and facilities in Japan for support of the U.S.’s general war and contingency plans, a GAMMA strategy would not serve U.S. interests. Therefore, the preferred strategy was BETA, that is, a Japan having a capability to deploy forces abroad in peacekeeping operations.¹³

It is clear from the above analysis that the Japan-U.S. security treaty system was an indispensable means for Washington policymakers to maintain U.S. hegemony over Japan as well as an important rationale to urge Japan to increase its burden sharing.

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11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

II: The First Phase of Redefining the Security Treaty: From the Nixon Doctrine to the End of the Cold War

It was increasingly apparent in the late 1960s that U.S. hegemony was on the decline, compelling the Nixon administration to make adjustments in overseas commitments. President Nixon announced the Guam Doctrine on July 25, 1969. Nixon proclaimed that “except for the threat of a major power involving nuclear weapons,” the problems of military defense should be taken by Asian nations themselves. The Guam Doctrine was formulated as the Nixon Doctrine on February 18, 1970 at the First Annual Report to the Congress on United States Foreign Policy for the 1970s. Nixon stated that Japan’s partnership with the US would be “a key to the success of the Nixon Doctrine in Asia” and expressed his desire for Japan to “shoulder larger responsibilities” in the region.

Prime Minister Sato Eisaku’s visit to Washington from November 19–21, 1969 coincided with the time for adjustments of U.S. commitments abroad. In his meeting with Sato on November 19, 1969 Nixon stated that Japan must “assume a greater defense” for Asia. The President continued that he “did not say this by way of a demand, simply as a statement of fact.”¹⁴ Sato responded positively to Nixon’s expectations. In the U.S.-Japan joint statement announced on November 21, 1969 he stated that the security of the Republic of Korea was “essential” to Japan’s security and that the maintenance of peace and security in the Taiwan area was also “a most important factor” for the security of Japan. Due to his closer association of the security of Japan with those of Korea and Taiwan, an emphasis of the Japan-U.S. security treaty significantly shifted from the defense of Japanese home islands (Article Five) to regional security (Article Six). The shifting ground of the security treaty was to gradually undermine the constitutional prohibition, thereby paving the way for Japan’s exercise of collective self-defense.

During the latter half of the 1970s, Japanese-American security cooperation made substantial progress. The National Defense Program Outline (NDPO) of 1976 and the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Cooperation of November 1978 marked a turning point in this direction. Both of them were crafted on the basic concept of the Japanese home islands defense-only, focusing on the so-called Article-Five situation. The establishment of the 1978 Guidelines, however, set in motion a process of joint military studies and exercises between the JSDF and the U.S. forces in Japan (USFJ). In other words, studies would be initiated concerning what kind of logistical support Japan could provide U.S. troops in times of emergency in areas surrounding Japan (the so-called Article-Six situation).

It was in such circumstances that the Iranian Revolution overthrew the pro-US

14. Memorandum of conversation, November 19, 1969, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, VIP Visits. National Archives, College Park, Maryland (hereafter, referred to as NACP). This document is now moved to the Nixon Presidential Library.

regime under the Shah, bringing Ayatollah Khomeini to power in February 1979. Then the Iranian Revolution was followed by the Soviet invasion into Afghanistan in December of the same year. These events increased the strategic and military importance of the Middle East, which prompted the announcement of the Carter Doctrine. In his State of the Union message on January 23, 1980, President Jimmy Carter declared that the United States would use military force if necessary to defend its vital national interests in the Persian Gulf. The doctrine resulted in expanding the operational responsibility of the Seventh Fleet beyond the Pacific theater to cover an area near the Persian Gulf, thus linking Asia and the Middle East in the U.S. global security strategy.

Consequently, Washington wanted Japan's help in the Western Pacific. Prime Minister Suzuki Zenko responded in May 1981 by announcing that Japan would assume responsibility for the defense of sea-lanes up to 1,000 nautical miles from Japan. Then a study on sea-lane defense that was controversial because of its implications was initiated in May 1981. It suggested that Japan, in case of a regional conflict, would join U.S. operations, covering the defense of sea-lanes within 1,000 nautical miles from Japan.¹⁵ Upon resignation of Suzuki in November 1982, Nakasone Yasuhiro succeeded to the premiership. During the Nakasone administration (November 1982 until November 1987), Washington's demands to strengthen Japan's defense capabilities continued to escalate. These demands included the purchasing of anti-submarine and maritime reconnaissance aircraft (P3C) as well as airborne early-warning aircraft (E-2C) to strengthen Japan's anti-submarine and anti-aircraft capability. Furthermore, Washington requested an increase in Japan's capability to blockade the three straits (the Straits of Chishima, Tsugaru, and Tsushima) in the Sea of Japan. In addition, they asked Japan to purchase the next-generation fighter jets (F-15 Eagle), and to reinforce attack submarines.

The above analysis shows that Japan's role in regional security was expanded not so much by the need to cope with immediate threats to Japan as by the vicissitudes of the U.S. global strategy in a changing security environment.

Nevertheless, U.S. officials during the Cold War period did not necessarily press Japan to indiscriminately increase her defense capabilities or expand her mission. Rather, they took great care to ensure that Tokyo would collaborate with Washington within the confines of U.S. global strategy.

As early as in November 1957, the American embassy in Tokyo noted how

15. The study began in August 1982 and was completed in December 1986. For details on four studies pursued over the course of the 1980s after the establishment of the 1978 Guidelines as well as joint exercises including those of the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Forces (MSDF) that participated in the U.S.-led exercises with other allies, the Rim of the Pacific exercise (RIMPAC), see Hideki Kan, "U.S.-Japan Security Relations before and after 9.11", *KNDU Review*, 8, no. 2 (December 2003): 135-154, especially 136-138.

Article Nine had been “progressively reinterpreted by the various post-war governments” and offered the following comments. There was “a far greater probability,” observed the embassy staff, “of Article IX being amended in practice by interpretation than there is of its being formally amended.” They, therefore, recommended that it was in the U.S. interest to encourage Tokyo to meet Washington’s desire to increase Japan’s defense capability by amending Article Nine “in practice by interpretation than in formal amendment.”¹⁶ Five months later, Outerbridge Horsey, Minister-Councilor in Tokyo, reiterated the embassy’s thesis that the Japanese would “in their own way and their own time, take care of constitutional basis” for strengthening the Japanese Self-Defense Forces. In other words, they believed that it was quite likely for Tokyo to “ultimately decide to deal with these [defense] problems by constitutional interpretation rather than by constitutional amendment.”¹⁷

This kind of rather cautious attitude can be confirmed as well by the Reagan administration’s policy toward Japan as described in a document (NSSD-6) of July 20, 1982. According to the document, Reagan administration officials welcomed Japan’s evolution over the past decade or more “from the passive acceptance” of a role in the defense of Japan to “a consensus that accepts Japan’s primary responsibility for defense of its own territory, its surrounding seas and skies and its sea-lanes out to 1,000 miles; and a supportive role for U.S. forces engaged in contingencies elsewhere.” In particular, they stressed the need to obtain increased capabilities as soon as possible “to assume the defense of its surrounding areas and skies, and its sea-lanes to a distance of 1,000 miles” and to contribute to “overall regional and global stability.” They sought after “a more equitable division of labor” between the two countries to obtain Japan’s contribution to the Article Six emergency situation.

Secondly, however, the drafters clearly stated that Washington did not want Japan to “develop an autonomous nuclear defense capability” or “forces able to sustain operations far from Japanese territory.” For this reason, Reagan administration officials made it clear that they did not favor revision of the Japan-U.S. security treaty or the Constitution. It is apparent from their view that the bilateral security treaty served well the purpose of the ‘double containment’ as they had so far been successful in preventing the rise of Japanese militarism. It is

16. Outerbridge Horsey, Minister-Counselor, American Embassy, Tokyo, to Howard L. Parsons, Director, Office of Northeast Asian Affairs, November 29, 1957. RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Miscellaneous Lot Files, Subject Files Relating to Japan, 1954–1959. NACP. See also, “Prospects for Constitutional Revision in Japan,” Parsons to Walter S. Robertson Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, December 10, 1957, *ibid.*

17. Outerbridge Horsey to Howard L. Parsons, American Embassy, Tokyo, April 25, 1958. RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Japan, Tokyo Embassy, Classified General Records 1956–1958. NACP.

also quite revealing to see that, from Washington's standpoint, Tokyo's gradual change of constitutional interpretation without formal amendments played a similar role of restricting Japan's defense role to the one ancillary to the objectives of U.S. global strategy.

Particularly noteworthy in light of the nationalistic and assertive foreign policy of the present Abe administration was their persistent fear that Japan's extreme militarization combined with formal constitutional revision "would serve to strengthen the role of a small, vocal right wing minority" and "alarm other Asian nations comfortable with Japan's currently approved self-defense roles."¹⁸ Given the primacy Washington policymakers placed upon the goal of maintaining Japan's Western orientation, the above observation described in the document is quite insightful. A close look at Abe's defense policy during the second stint since 2012 seems to reflect, though to a lesser extent, the mindset and mentality of "a small, vocal rightwing minority" mentioned in NSSD-6.

III: The Second Phase of Redefining the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty: From the End of the Cold War to the Obama Administration

The end of the Cold War and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union meant that the Soviet threat that the Japan-U.S. security treaty postulated was now gone. The new security environment dictated a different rationale for its continuation. With no clear and common danger in sight, the alliance began to drift and 'the drift' continued until the mid-1990s.¹⁹ Then a crisis over North Korea's nuclear development project broke out in 1993-1994, attracting the attention of those bureaucrats and politicians both in Washington and Tokyo who were looking for an opportunity to redefine the alliance relationship. Facing the rising tension on the Korean peninsula, they were worried that the bilateral alliance would be in danger of collapse if the JSDF and USFJ did not work effectively to meet an impending emergency on the Peninsula.

Exploiting this situation, both Washington and Tokyo took the initiative in redefining the Japan-U.S. security treaty in November 1994. In February 1995, the Clinton administration released a report entitled "A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement" that outlined America's global security strategy after the Cold War. The National Security Strategy report was immediately followed by another "United States Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region." The Nye report, so called after Assistant Secretary of Defense Joseph S. Nye, who

18. "NSSD-6: United States-Japan Relations," July 20, 1982. *Japan and the United States: Diplomatic, Security and Economic Relations*, Part II: 1977-1992 (The National Security Archive, 2004).

19. For such observation, see the first Armitage report. *The United States and Japan: Advancing Toward a Mature Partnership*, INSS Special Report, October 11, 2000, 2-3.

took the initiative for drafting it, made it clear that the Clinton administration would keep U.S. troops in the region at the level of 100,000 men. Concurrently, the Japanese government also prepared a new “Outline of National Defense Program,” which was approved by the Hashimoto Ryutaro cabinet in November 1995. Reflecting Washington’s expectations, the new Outline placed more emphasis on “regional contingencies” rather than the defense of Japanese territory. The bilateral consultation among defense and foreign policy officials between Washington and Tokyo culminated in the announcement of the Japan-U.S. Joint Declaration on Security of April 1996 that was timed to President Clinton’s visit to Japan. In the Joint Declaration, both Hashimoto and Clinton agreed to conduct a review of the 1978 Guidelines in order to update the alliance and enhance bilateral defense cooperation.

The September 1997 release of the revised Defense Guidelines (hereafter referred to as the new Guidelines) marked a new era in Japan-U.S. security relations because it provided the basis for more effective bilateral cooperation during a regional crisis (Article Six situation). The new Guidelines eliminated the restricting premise that the JSDF will plan solely for the Japan-only scenario.

The most significant change to the old Guidelines was “cooperation in situations in areas surrounding Japan” because the “areas surrounding Japan” concept raises the question over whether or not Japan’s logistical support for U.S. actions against third countries not directly related to the defense of Japan would violate a long standing constitutional interpretation upheld by the CLB. The drafters of the new Guidelines worked out the wording calculated to strengthen the case that Japan’s supportive actions listed in the new Guidelines do not violate the Japanese constitution. Firstly, the drafters linked these “situations” surrounding Japan directly with Japan’s own security. Thus, the wording reads “cooperation in situations in areas surrounding Japan that will have an important bearing on Japan’s peace and security.” Next, the new Guidelines limited Japan’s rear area support for U.S. forces to “non-combatant area,” as distinguished from areas where combat operations are being conducted. Nevertheless, supporters of the Guidelines had a reason to be satisfied with the results. An ex-official at the Japan Desk of the U.S. Department of Defense says that Japan “for the first time has the option of being counted ‘in’ if there were a serious crisis in East Asia.”²⁰

In May 1999, legislation was finally passed by the Diet incorporating the provisions of the new Guidelines. The legislation was composed of three elements: first, the Law Concerning Measures to Ensure the Peace and Security of Japan in Situations Surrounding Japan (more popularly called the Law on

20. Giarra, Paul and Akihisa Nagashima, “Managing the New U.S.-Japan Security Alliance: Enhancing Structures and Mechanisms to Address Post-Cold War Requirements.” In *The U.S.-Japan Alliance*, edited by Michael J. Green and Patrick M. Cronin (New York: A Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1999), 94.

Emergencies in Situations Surrounding Japan), second, the revision of the Self-Defense Law, and third, the ratification of the revised version of the U.S.-Japan Acquisition and Cross-Serving Agreement (ACSA) of April 1996, an agreement to regularize logistical cooperation between U.S. forces and JSDF units. These achievements mean that the “drifting of the alliance” came to an end and was finally anchored securely to America’s global security strategy. They also mean that the functions of the bilateral security treaty gravitated further toward regional security.

After the passage of the Law on Emergencies in Situations Surrounding Japan in May 1999, Washington policymakers became increasingly vocal and insistent. Such voices found their expression in a series of reports, beginning with the first Armitage report of October 2000.²¹ The report welcomed the new Guidelines as the basis for joint defense planning between the two countries. More importantly, it emphasized that its recommendations should be regarded as “the floor - not the ceiling - for an expanded Japanese role” in the bilateral alliance. Furthermore, the report clearly stated that Japan’s prohibition against collective self-defense was “a constraint on alliance cooperation” and recommended that this prohibition be lifted.²² The first report was followed by the second report of February 2007 and the third in August 2012. The third report also reiterated that prohibition of collective self-defense was “an impediment to the alliance,” but was different from the previous reports in making it clearer that what Washington expected from Tokyo was not “a change in Japan’s Peace Constitution” but “a shift in policy.” Referring to the 2008 Yanai Committee chaired by Yanai Shunji, an ex-Vice Minister of the MOFA that was established by Prime Minister Abe during his first cabinet (September 26, 2006 through August 27, 2007), the 2012 Armitage report noted that the prime minister could “by fiat put aside the Article IX prohibition,” as was demonstrated in Japan’s antipiracy efforts in Djibouti.²³

The 2012 report’s message is that Washington desires the Japanese government to change its interpretation of the constitutional prohibition so that Japan can exercise the right to collective self-defense. To put it in the postwar perspective

21. The INSS special report commonly known as the Armitage report presents a consensus view of the members of a bipartisan study group on the Japan-U.S. relations. The study group consisted of the so-called Japan-handlers such as Richard L. Armitage, Kurt M. Campbell, Michael J. Green, James A. Kelley and Joseph S. Nye.

22. *Ibid.*, 6.

23. As for the second Armitage report, see Richard L. Armitage and Joseph S. Nye, *The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Getting Asia Right through 2020*, CSIS Report, February 2007, 22. As for the third report, see Richard L. Armitage and Joseph S. Nye, *The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Anchoring Stability in Asia*, CSIS August 2012, 15. Japan, for anti-piracy operations, deployed two Japan Maritime Defense Forces (JMDF) destroyers off the coast of Somalia as well as two maritime-patrol aircraft to the Gulf of Aden which began patrol missions out of Djibouti on June 2009.

here, Washington officials have come to entertain such a view at least since 1958. The American embassy in Tokyo sent a letter dated April 25, 1958 to Howard Parsons, Director of the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs to the effect that the revision of the Constitution was no longer “an objective of US policy.” They observed that the Japanese would “in their own way and their own time, take care of constitutional basis for the defense forces,” predicting that they would ultimately decide to deal with their defense problems “by constitutional interpretation rather than by constitutional amendment.”²⁴ As reiterated in the Armitage reports, such an attitude became more visible and pronounced in Washington in recent years.

The fact that Richard Armitage and Paul Wolfowitz, members of the Armitage report of 2012, became Under Secretary of State and Under Secretary of Defense respectively for the Bush (Jr.) administration indicates that one of the most important tasks for the administration’s policy toward Japan was to prompt the Koizumi Junichiro government to change its interpretation of the peace provision of the constitution.²⁵

The years from 9/11 in 2001 to the start of the war in Iraq in 2003 coincided with the final phase of the worldwide military transformation of U.S. forces abroad. The four principles of the transformation were (1) flexibility, (2) quick response, (3) abolishing respective responsibility for theaters of operations, and (4) strengthening of alliance relationships. The last principle naturally affected Japan as Bush administration officials imposed on Japan a further increase in burden sharing as well as a division of labor concerning roles and missions between Washington and Tokyo.

In the meantime, consultations and negotiations with regard to U.S. forces stationed in Japan began in December 2002. An interim report was completed in October 2005, which was followed by the final report in May 2006. At the February 19, 2005 meeting of the Security Consultative Committee (SCC), the Ministers reiterated their commitment to “work closely together to pursue the regional and global common strategic objectives.” Moreover, both sides confirmed that Japan would “take appropriate measures to provide seamless support to U.S. operations as the situation evolves.” Especially noteworthy for the purpose of this paper was their reference to the effect that “appropriate measures” included “support based on Japan’s legislation to deal with

24. Outerbridge Horsey to Howard Parsons, letter, April 25, 1958, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Japan, Tokyo Embassy, Classified General Records, 1956–1958, NACP.

25. For more details, see Kan Hideki, “Japan-United States relations in the postwar years: the dilemma and problems of postwar Japanese diplomacy and their implications for the East Asian Order.” In *Japan and Britain in the Contemporary World*, edited by Hugo Dobson and Glenn Hook (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 69–72.

contingencies.” Both sides underscored the need to continue examinations of the roles, missions, and capabilities of JSDF and USFJ, bearing in mind “common strategic objectives” on a regional and global scale. The language “support based on Japan’s legislation to deal with contingencies” was quite significant in light of subsequent developments leading to the Abe cabinet’s decision of July 1, 2014. To that end, they also reached an understanding to “enhance information sharing and intelligence cooperation in the whole range from unit tactical level through national strategic level.”²⁶

Consequently, Japanese-American defense cooperation not only advanced substantially and was further integrated into America’s global security strategy. Guam and Okinawa were regarded as strategic hubs for reinforcements. As for improvement of U.S. Army Command and Control Capability, the capabilities of the U.S. Army Japan’s command structure in Camp Zama, Kanagawa Prefecture would be transformed and modernized to accommodate the reorganized First Army Corps Headquarters in Seattle, Washington. The First Army Headquarters’ theater of operations extending beyond the Pacific theater to cover the Persian Gulf area, the International Legal Affairs Bureau of the MOFA was opposed to this idea in light of the expected complications issuing from the official view of the Japanese government that the scope of “the Far East” in Article Six of the Security Treaty was the area north of the Philippines and Japan including its surrounding area. However, Washington overrode the opposition.

The above mentioned transformation of roles, missions, and capabilities involving U.S. forces and JSDF has enhanced risks of Japan’s involvement in wars initiated by the United States. It has also expanded Japan’s area of bilateral defense cooperation beyond “the territories under the administration of Japan” to include areas that the bilateral security treaty does not cover. The war in Iraq in March 2003 was a case in point. The war against Saddam Hussein was initiated by the Bush administration without consultation with Tokyo. Moreover, it was a preemptive attack waged on the false assumption that Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction. In spite of that, the Koizumi government not only gave almost unqualified support to Washington’s position but also dispatched an Aegis destroyer to the Indian Ocean, while Japanese ships there provided fuel, oil and water to the coalition forces fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan. Koizumi also pushed through the Law Concerning the Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq in early July, 2003 and thereupon sent JSDF personnel to Samawah, a city in Iraq, 280 kilometers south of Baghdad, claiming that the area was “a non-combat zone.” Koizumi’s reference to “non-combat zone” was not only controversial but also dubious constitutionally because the

26. “U.S.-Japan Alliance: Transformation and Realignment for the Future,” October 29, 2005 by Secretary of State Rice, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, Minister of Foreign Affairs Machimura Nobutaka and Minister of Defense Ohno Yoshinori.

U.S. commander in Iraq at the time declared that “all of Iraq remains a combat zone” due to suicide bombings, looting or other attacks.²⁷

The evolution of Japanese security and defense policy after the release of the new Guidelines of September 1997 was aptly encapsulated by an observer of the Congressional Research Service. “Both proponents and opponents of the new guidelines argue,” wrote the observer, “that they go a long way towards breaching a long standing constitutional interpretation by blurring the lines between bilateral cooperation solely to defend Japan against attack, which has long been deemed constitutional and now has support across the political spectrum, and other situations such as logistical support of U.S. actions against third countries, or cooperation to enforce U.N. economic sanctions, which some see as crossing the line.”²⁸ This observation accurately describes the ongoing state of Japan-U.S. military cooperation. It shows that bilateral defense cooperation expanded and deepened to such an extent that those elements in favor of Japan’s right to exercise collective self-defense gained influence strong enough to advocate changing the CLB’s longstanding constitutional interpretation or amending Article Nine of the Constitution.

IV: The Final Phase of Redefining the Security Treaty: During the Tenure of the Obama Administration

In his address to the Parliament of Australia on November 17, 2011, President Obama announced that the United States would give the Asia-Pacific region “a top priority” and ongoing reductions in U.S. spending “will not come at the expense of the Asia-Pacific.” This strategy of “rebalancing toward the Asia-Pacific region” was confirmed in the new Strategic Guidance for the Department of Defense announced in January 2012. The Strategic Guidance emphasized that U.S. relationships with Asian allies and key partners were “critical to the future stability and growth of the region.”²⁹

With Washington’s strategy pivoting toward the Asia-Pacific, the U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee (SSC) meeting was held on April 27, 2012. The

27. A document prepared in 2008 by the Japanese Ministry of Defense was declassified in July 2015. The document is titled “A History of the Activities for Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq” recording the hazardous situations that JSDF units in Samawah faced during their duty. It shows that the area where they stationed was far from being a “non-combat zone.” The document reveals a commander of the JSDF units describing the situations as “the real military operations.” *The Asahi Shimbun* (August 20 and August 27, 2015).

28. Richard P. Cronin and Mark Manyin, “Japan-U.S. Relations: Issues for Congress,” *CRS Issue Brief for Congress* (Updated August 8, 2003), Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress: 4-5.

29. Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for the 21st Century Defense*, January 2012, 2.

SSC underscored Japan's efforts in development of "a dynamic defense force and enhancement of its defense posture in areas including the Southwestern Islands." Moreover, they expressed their intent to achieve further progress on realignment goals and to evaluate Alliance roles, missions, and capabilities, "in order to fortify the Alliance for the evolving challenges of the regional and global security environment."³⁰

The understanding reached between Washington and Tokyo raised the question of Japan's exercise of collective self-defense. As a follow-up on the SCC meeting of April 27, 2012, the committee members met again on October 3, 2013. In the joint statement that followed, both sides agreed on a number of significant issues and agenda. The emphasis was clearly on expanding Japan's role and mission on regional and global security. Accordingly, the Japanese side expressed its intention to "continue coordinating closely with the United States to expand its role within the framework of the U.S.-Japan Alliance." In response to Japan's intention, Washington welcomed "Japan's determination to contribute more proactively to regional and global peace and security." Most importantly, the joint statement referred to the fact that Japan was now "expanding its defense budget," "broadening regional contributions" and "examining the legal basis for its security including the matter of exercising its right of collective self-defense." Naturally, Washington welcomed these efforts and reiterated "its commitment to collaborate closely with Japan."³¹

In addition, the Ministers also agreed to revise the 1997 Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Cooperation, expand ballistic missile defense capabilities, and improve cooperation on space and cyberspace, as well as strengthening information and equipment acquisition collaboration. These agreements raise the question of exercising Japan's right to collective self-defense. They also reached an understanding that the task to draft recommended changes to the existing Guidelines would be completed "before the end of 2014." Recommended changes are expected to have far-reaching consequences for Japanese diplomacy. The existing Guidelines place an emphasis on emergencies in areas surrounding Japan, the Korean peninsula in particular. However, recommended changes to the 1997 Guidelines have China's expanding military capabilities in mind, and its main purpose is to review the roles and missions of U.S. forces and JSDF in order to reinforce Japan's military capabilities in the Southwestern Pacific.

30. Joint Statement of the Security Consultative Committee, April 27, 2012 by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, Minister for Foreign Affairs Gamba Koichiro and Minister of Defense Tanaka Naoki.

31. Joint Statement of the Security Consultative Committee, "Toward a More Robust Alliance and Greater Shared Responsibilities," October 3, 2013 by Secretary of State John Kerry, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, Minister of Foreign Affairs Kishida Fumio, and Minister of Defense Onodera Itsunori.

Such consultations were accelerated with the start of Abe's second stint in power beginning in December 2012. Abe had already made it clear that his cabinet would resolve the pending question concerning the right to collective self-defense as well as constitutional revision. Upon assuming the premiership, he reactivated deliberations by the Prime Minister's Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security. The Panel submitted its report on May 15, 2014, recommending that Japan be permitted to exercise the right of collective self-defense "when a foreign country that is in a close relationship with Japan comes under attack and if such a situation could pose a serious impact on the security of Japan."³² Then on July 1, 2014, Abe and his cabinet approved the decision to allow Japan to exercise the right of collective self-defense under the existing Constitution. This momentous decision not only marked a major turning point in the history of postwar Japan but was made by overturning the longstanding constitutional prohibition established by the successive Liberal Democratic Party administrations with the advice of the Cabinet Legislation Bureau.

Reflecting the above cabinet decision as well as responding to the revision called for at the SCC meeting of October 3, 2013, an interim report on the Revision of the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation was released by the Ministry of Defense on October 10, 2014. It stated that the two governments would "ensure seamless and effective whole-of-government Alliance coordination" in order to address any situation that affects not only Japan's security but also threatens "regional or global stability." Moreover, the new Guidelines would detail cooperation between the two governments "in case of an attack against a country that is in close relationship with Japan where Japan's use of force is permitted under its Constitution and in accordance with the cabinet decision by the Government of Japan on July 1, 2014."³³

The revised Guidelines mark a new departure from the Guidelines of 1997 in the following respects. The 1997 Guidelines made the distinction between three categories of bilateral defense cooperation: (1) peacetime situations where logistical support to U.S. troops engaged in operations beyond Japanese territory was provided through enactment of special laws of temporary nature such as the Anti-Terrorism Measures Special Law, (2) emergency situations that threaten the security of Japan where an armed attack would be repelled by resort to the right of individual self-defense, and (3) emergency situations surrounding Japan in which the JSDF would extend logistical support to USFJ units without resort to the right of collective self-defense. In contrast, the revised Guidelines, mindful of the

32. The Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security, *Report of the Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security*, May 15, 2014, 49.

33. *The Interim Report on the Revision of the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation*, October 8, 2014.

North Korean and Chinese threats, made no distinction between these categories, while putting aside the concept of emergency situations in areas surrounding Japan, and removing geographical restrictions imposed by the Constitution and related laws. The revised Guidelines, therefore, would allow Japan to respond to contingencies involving the Korean peninsula by exercising the right of collective self-defense. As for logistical support to U.S. troops in peacetime, Japan would be able to expand the scope of cooperation on a global scale or without geographical restrictions.

The Obama administration welcomed these moves and efforts by Japan. However, Abe's doctrine that advocates ending of the 'post-war regime' and reflects his new concept of a 'proactive contribution to peace' (*sekkyoku heiwashugi*) contains elements that challenge the San Francisco Peace Treaty system in the maintenance of which the United States has huge stakes. However, Abe, like former Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke, Abe's grandfather, represents those who have refused to accept the judgments of the Far Eastern Military Tribunal, the position contrary to Article Eleven of the peace treaty in which Japan "accepts the judgments of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East." Also controversial is his view of the 'comfort women' issue in which he and his ideological supporters have tenaciously tried to whitewash the Japanese responsibility by taking issue with the word 'coercion' or mention of the Japanese military's involvement in recruiting the women. Also, his visit to Yasukuni Shrine in December 2013 once again caused uproars in China and South Korea, another growing concern for the Obama administration.

It is more and more apparent in recent years that Abe's revisionist view of past history is creating anxieties for the Washington policy community even on the security front. The 'Japan handlers' in Washington, though welcoming Abe's campaign to remove the constitutional prohibition to the exercise of collective self-defense, are now concerned that this process is taking place within an environment of rising nationalism, myopic historical revisionism, and deterioration of Japan's relations with neighboring countries. Joseph S. Nye, a former U.S. assistant secretary of defense and an influential Japan observer who praised the Abe cabinet's approval in July 2014 of a constitutional reinterpretation that allows Japan to exercise its right to collective self-defense, opposed wrapping up the exercise of collective self-defense in the package of nationalism. Pointing out that Abe's revisionist remarks as well as his visit to Yasukuni Shrine were causing apprehensions about Japanese militarism among Chinese and Koreans, he cautioned that there were growing concerns among Americans about rising nationalist sentiments in Japan, as well.³⁴ On another occasion, Nye, referring to the 1993 Kono statement, issued under the name of then Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono Yohei, offering Japan's apology for the wartime 'comfort women', warned

34. *The Asahi Shimbun* (March 16, 2014).

that any move by the Abe government to revise the Kono statement would only be detrimental to Japan's national interests as such a move would antagonize China and South Korea. Richard Armitage, former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State and an influential 'Japan handler,' echoed Nye's sentiments. Armitage compared the comfort women issue with the history of hardships facing blacks in the United States, saying Americans would continue to apologize for their discrimination. Nye urged Japan to establish a national memorial facility for the war dead to replace Yasukuni Shrine, another source of friction with Korea and China because fourteen Class-A criminals from World War II are enshrined there.³⁵

Conclusions

Throughout most of the postwar years, U.S. officials, with the logic of the Cold War uppermost in their mind, urged Japan for a long time to increase her burden sharing in order to contain the Soviet Union and Communist China, while taking great care to keep Japanese nationalism under control. Their nagging fear was that Japan's rise to a military power, possibly armed with nuclear weapons, could nudge her toward neutralism or break away from her ties with the United States. A careful handling of Japanese nationalism was also necessary so as not to cause anxieties among Japan's neighbors. However, Abe's remarks and actions seem to suggest that Washington's power to keep Japan under hegemonic control is on the wane.

The Obama administration welcomed the Abe cabinet's momentous decision to reinterpret Article Nine to allow Japan to exercise its collective self-defense. However, the process of removing the barriers is occurring not only in parallel with Abe's historical revisionism but also has exacerbated Japan's relations with China and South Korea. What is happening in Japan as well as in East Asia may actually complicate the Obama administration's 'rebalancing' strategy in the Asia-Pacific region, given its present policy toward China and South Korea. For the time being, Washington's China policy, while hedging against her emergence as "a regional power" with the potential to offset the U.S. economy and security, is to "build a cooperative bilateral relationship."³⁶ Obama administration officials also want to promote cooperative trilateral relationships involving the United States, Japan and China. "We encourage all our allies," testified Daniel R. Russel, Assistant Secretary of State in February 2014, "to pursue positive and constructive relations with China," adding U.S. alliances were "not aimed at China." At the same time, Russel also stated that, in light of the rising power of China, strategic

35. Taketsugu Sato, "Joseph Nye: Revising Kono statement will hurt Japan's interests", *AJW by the Asahi Shimbun* (October 31, 2014).

36. Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership*, 2. See also, White House, *National Security Strategy*, February 2014, 24.

cooperation among the United States, Japan and South Korea was “essential to developing the security order in Northeast Asia.”³⁷ In that context, Abe’s historical revisionism is viewed with increasing concerns in Washington.

The Obama administration’s apprehensions about Abe’s revisionism strikes us as paradoxical because the postwar U.S. policy to push Japan’s militarization while condoning historical revisionists’ activities until very recently, was partly responsible for the prevailing situation in Japan, including the rise of historical revisionism combined with the volatile nationalistic sentiments among the Japanese public at large, as well as an overwhelming majority of politicians in favor of constitutional revision.

The paradox works both ways. The Abe administration made the historic decision to overrule the established interpretation of the Constitution. Abe’s next political agenda is constitutional revision itself and the campaign is well underway. It is in order in this context to recall South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun’s four-day visit to Japan starting on June 6, 2003. His visit happened to coincide with the passage of the military emergency laws (the so-called *yuji hosei*) at the Diet. In his news conference, he was asked about his view of the controversial laws. Roh replied that the question was not “in the legislation itself, but in whether Japan is trustworthy in the eyes of the neighboring countries in regard to the role it plays for peace in Northeast Asia and the world.”³⁸ His remarks grasp the essence of the unresolved history issue that plagues Japanese diplomacy today. Japan’s further militarization without gaining trustworthiness in the eyes of Asian neighbors will not contribute to peace and stability in the region. Neither will it serve U.S. or Japanese interests.³⁹

37. Testimony of Daniel R. Russel, Assistant Secretary of State, “Opportunities and Challenges in the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-ROK Alliances,” the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, March 4, 2014, 7.

38. *International Herald Tribune / The Asahi Shimbun* (June 10, 2003).

39. On September 19, 2015, the Diet passed the new security-related laws based on the Abe cabinet’s decision to allow Japan to exercise the right of collective self-defense under the present Constitution. The author would like to remind the reader that the paper was written and submitted before the enactment of these laws.