Japan's Article 9 and Japanese Public Opinion: Implications for Japanese Defense Policy and Security in the Asia Pacific

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JAPAN’S ARTICLE 9 AND JAPANESE PUBLIC OPINION: IMPLICATIONS FOR
JAPANESE DEFENSE POLICY AND SECURITY IN THE ASIA PACIFIC

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

By

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ABSTRACT


The Asia Pacific power structure is facing numerous challenges. Scholarship demonstrates Japan has encountered arduous obstacles as it balances Chinese and North Korean activity. As Japan attempts to expand its military capabilities, polling data shows that defense policy has conflicted with Japan’s citizens and neighboring countries. The focal point of these contentions is Article 9 of the Japanese constitution which restrains the Japanese military to self-defense purposes. Prime Minister Shinzō Abe has vowed to revise Article 9 by 2020. However, revising Article 9 is no simple task. Research demonstrates that for decades Japanese public opinion has been opposed to the revision of Article 9. This research examines trends in Japanese public opinion and its influence over Japanese defense policy. The research additionally suggests possible outcomes of the public referendum required before revising Article 9. Finally, this analysis provides implications for the Asia Pacific’s security environment if Article 9 is revised.
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ACRONYMS

A2/D2 Anti-area/area denial

ADIZ Area Identification Zone

CEC Cooperative Engagement Capability

CSIS Center for Strategy and International Studies

DDG Guided Missile Destroyer

DPJ Democratic Party of Japan

E2-D Northrop Grumman “Hawkeye” early warning aircraft

GDP Gross Domestic Product

ICBM Intercontinental Ballistic Missile

IISS International Institute of Security Studies

IRBM Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile

ISR Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance

JSDF Japanese Self Defense Force

LDP Liberal Democratic Party

MSDF Maritime Self Defense Force

OEC Observatory of Economic Complexity

OECD Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

PKO Peacekeeping Operations

PLA People’s Liberation Army

PM Prime Minister
SDF Self Defense Force

SIPRI Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

SM Standard Missile

SM-2 Block IIIB Standard Missile 2 medium-range anti-ship/surface-to-air missile

THAAD Terminal High Altitude Air Defense

UNPCC United Nations Peace Cooperation Corps

UNPKO United Nations Peacekeeping Operations

USD United States Dollar

UWS Underwater Weapons System
NON-ENGLISH TERMS

Amakudari (天下り) Literally heavens, sky imperial (天) and below, down, descend, give, low, inferior (下り); Meaning descent from heaven or the Japanese business practice of hiring retired bureaucrats into high level positions of a similar industry.

Gaiatsu (外圧) Literally outside (外), and pressure, push, overwhelm, oppress, dominate (圧); Meaning foreign pressure or one or more countries applying political pressure on Japan.

Gensuikyo (原水協) Literally original, primitive, primary, fundamental, raw (原), hydrogen, (水), and cooperation (協); Meaning an aversion to nuclear weapons or the organization within Japan devoted to the abolition of nuclear weapons, The Japan Council Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs.

Ritsuryo (律令) Literally rhythm, law, regulation gauge, control, orders (律), and ancient laws, command or decree (令); Meaning criminal, administrative, and civil codes; legal codes of the Nara and Heian eras based on Chinese models.

Shenzhan Literally to be cautious of war; Archaic Chinese term meaning non-war.

Zoku (族) Literally tribe or family (族); Meaning a specific interest group within the Japanese government.
I. CHAPTER 1: DILEMMAS ROOTED IN HISTORY

Statement of Problem

The Asia Pacific is a subtle, churning miasma of regional tensions, territorial disputes, and arms races. Territorial disputes exist between China, Japan, the Philippines, and Vietnam over the South and East China Seas. South Korea and China remain unsatisfied by Japan’s apologies for war crimes during World War II. Comfort women from South Korea demonstrate uncompromising behavior towards Japan, although Japan had offered an apology and financial compensation in 2015. A statue representing these WWII victims was erected outside of the Japanese embassy in South Korea in early 2017. Even expectations for Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe to address the Korean comfort women issue at the 2018 winter Olympics were present, despite the 2015 agreement (Kim and Seig 2018). Military buildup in China and Japan causes ripples of tension throughout Asia Pacific. Both countries have yet to reach an agreement concerning bilateral relations though as of early 2018, Prime Minister Abe and President Xi Jinping have publicly declared interests in improving ties (Suruga 2017). Actors not native to Asia Pacific such as the United States have also contributed to the distress in the region. The installation of the United States’ Terminal High Altitude Air Defense system in South Korea as well as Japan’s consideration of purchasing THAAD have triggered ruptures in Sino-Korean, Sino-Japanese and Sino-U.S. relations. (“South Korea’s Lotte” Jourdan and Lee)
What is the justification for these undesirable conditions? Much of the genesis of conflict in the Asia Pacific can be traced back to 1910 and later during the First World War when China and the Korean Peninsula quickly became victims of Japanese colonialism. Therefore, this research will analyze Japan’s history as well as its present actions in order to unpack regional tensions in the Asia Pacific. Since Imperial Japan was a militaristic state and most war crimes in Japan’s colonial territories were committed by the Japanese military, this research specifically examines Japanese defense policies. Most importantly, this research will focus on the debate surrounding Article 9 of the Japanese constitution established in 1947. An amendment to the Japanese constitution requires a public referendum therefore this research will also analyze Japanese public opinion data in order to determine the possibility of Article 9 being revised and consequently, a major rebalance in the Asia Pacific security environment.

Post-World War II Japan exhibits the world’s first successfully externally imposed democracy. Compared to neighboring China, Vietnam, the Korean Peninsula, and the Philippines, Japan has exhibited nearly seven decades of peaceful, westernized democratic rule. Other aspects of the Japanese state further differentiate the island nation from its neighbors. Post-WWII Japan is the only state in the Asia Pacific with a military purely for the purpose of defense, in accordance with Article 9 of the constitution. Japan exhibits more constraints concerning military development and utility than any other Asia Pacific state. Examples of defense constraints include the Arms Export Ban, the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, Article 9 of Japan’s 1947 constitution, and constitutional caps on either domestic or foreign defense spending. In comparison to China, Japan’s contributions to United Nations Peacekeeping Operations is incommensurable (United
Nations Peacekeeping 9-10). South Korea can spend a larger percentage of their GDP on defense but Japan is constitutionally limited to 1% of their GDP (Khan 2010).

Additionally, the Chinese People’s Liberation Army has an international presence, especially in Africa (Albert 2017). Conversely, the Japanese Self Defense Forces cannot deploy independently outside of Japanese territory without an extensive debate within the Japanese parliament.

Japan exists as one of the leading democratic world economies with a high standard of living, yet it is confined by anti-militaristic policies. Japan is the least corrupt country in the Asia Pacific after Singapore in Southeast Asia and New Zealand in Oceania (Transparency International 2017). The state is culturally eastern, but also considered western, as Japan’s 1947 constitution was instituted by a western power and Japan presently hosts the most U.S. military bases in Asia Pacific. If Japanese imperialism is to blame for many of the security concerns in Asia Pacific, especially the distrust between Japan, China, and the Korean Peninsula, a close examination of Japan's government, military, and democratic practices must be executed. Democracy is present, but is Japan’s democracy functioning as it should? Could Japan remilitarize without public support? What role does public opinion play in Japanese democracy and security policy? If Japan remilitarizes, how will other Asia Pacific states react? These conundrums are what makes Japan a unique and interesting player in the Asia Pacific. They are also pivotal in order to understand the origins and future of conflict in Asia Pacific and in the Japanese state itself.

Although Japan is a beacon of democratic stability in Asia Pacific, Japan’s democracy is not immune to shortcomings. This proffers vast ramifications. For example,
if Japan’s post-WWII pacifist stance is removed and Japan begins to utilize the Japanese Self Defense Forces offensively, it is likely neighboring China and South Korea will protest these actions as both neighbors are still haunted by Japanese colonization during WWII. North Korea regularly condemns Japan but more so for Japan’s deeply embedded connection with the U.S. However, since North Korea is an outlier in the international community due to its human rights violations, totalitarianism and rejection of other international norms, North Korea’s reactions to Japanese constitutional revision is a lesser priority. Furthermore, North Korea does not share economic ties with Japan, unlike China and South Korea.

If such a decision is made with disregard to public opinion, there are poor implications for domestic Japanese democratic practices. Similarly, if Japanese democracy consistently ceases to adhere to public opinion, Japan’s relation with the U.S. may be weakened and the resurgence of military power would send alarm throughout China and South Korea. Evidence exists of Japanese policy swaying against public opinion. Prime Minister Shinzō Abe has already lifted Japan’s Arms Export Ban policy since 2014 and proposed significant changes to Article 9 of the 1947 Japanese constitution. These actions have been met with protests throughout Japan, including self-immolation (“Man burns himself” Kyodo). As these changes have also been received negatively throughout the Asia Pacific (“Protests as Japan” BBC), it is imperative for Japan’s circumstance to be examined.

Studying Japanese defense policies and their potential future have become even more important since the United States elected a new president in November 2016. The Trump administration’s motives and goals differ from President Obama’s administration.
Trump has withdrawn from the Transnational Pacific Partnership, which would have greatly benefitted the Japanese economy. Overall, Trump’s erratic rhetoric has left Japan and other U.S. Asian allies unsure of U.S. intentions in the Asia Pacific. Therefore, the potential for Japan to remilitarize is critical to study as Japan’s primary defense partner and provider continues to illustrate itself as self-interested.

**Literature Review**

Constitutional change, remilitarization, the security environment in Asia Pacific, and the consolidation of democracy in Japan have not gone unnoticed by scholars. Ample literature exists examining the remilitarization of Japan as well as the constitutional change that would accompany such a change. The most prolific authors include Jeff Kingston and Michael J. Green. All literature utilizes historical analysis and either a structural or cultural approach in order to examine constitutional change, public opinion, security tensions in Asia Pacific, and remilitarization in Japan. However, a much smaller portion of literature exists that considers the consolidation of democracy in Japan as well as the clash between Japanese policies concerning national defense and public opinion. The literature connecting Japanese policy to public opinion is even smaller which furthers the need for the relationship between public opinion and Japanese policy to be studied.

Michael J. Green provides multiple works that analyze Japan’s struggle to adapt old security policies to a rapidly evolving environment. Green’s research observes the various economical and international restraints that occurred between the U.S. and Japan post-WWII as Japan struggled to increase its own military budget. Green’s research raises the question whether Japan will seek to increase domestic military production and
seek to expand the utility of the JSDF outside of purely defensive means when the
country is not under international and economical restraints similar to those induced by
the post-WWII constitution. Many of Green’s publications focus on Japan’s changing
identity especially in light of North Korea’s erratic behavior and various financial crises.

In partnership with Patrick Cronin, Green also writes that domestic constraints
affecting deliberations indicate that retooling the JSDF has been a long, careful yet
tedious process (Cronin and Green 1999). Therefore, Green concludes that JSDF policy
making has been carefully implemented in accordance with domestic attitudes in the past.
Cronin and Green also write that future retooling of the JSDF should “…allow for
decisions about the participation of the Self-Defense Forces to be handled on a case-by-
case basis with the full support of the Japanese public” (Cronin and Green 1999) although
Japan may face difficult situations induced by the unstable security environment in Asia
Pacific, in particular. Green’s publications do not entirely rely on polling data and
therefore do not consider the consolidation of democracy in Japan. Yet, Green’s
observations are noteworthy as they identify influences other than public opinion that
influenced Japan's increasing military spending or retooling the utility of the JSDF. As
PM Shinzō Abe and the Liberal Democratic Party have secured control of the Japanese
parliament and therefore begun the process of reinterpreting Article 9 of Japan’s 1947
constitution, Green’s work is imperative for understanding Japanese security policies.

Additionally, the work of Christopher W. Hughes demarcates reasons why
Japan’s post-WWII approach to security must change. Hughes cites multiple instances of
Japan struggling to adjust their limited defense spending budget to meet Japan’s security
needs. By emphasizing how Japan continuously utilizes loopholes within the country’s
defense spending constraints, Hughes shows that change within Japan’s post-WWII security constraints is necessary. Furthermore, Hughes notes the increasing security threat imposed by North Korea. Hughes thus concludes that Japan must be allowed to leave behind its pacifist policies and pursue more aggressive security policies in order to protect Japan’s interests as well as contribute to security in Asia Pacific against North Korea. Otherwise, if Japan continues to remain pacifist, the region may destabilize. The work of Hughes also examines how reactive China or South Korea may become if Japan truly remilitarizes. Hughes does not investigate public opinion and the consolidation of Japan’s democracy. However, Hughes’ work is still important as it provides a general illustration of the policies financially constraining Japan’s security capabilities. (Hughes 2009)

Polling data is essential in Paul Midford’s research. However, Midford also concludes that Japanese public opinion is shifting away from its traditionally pacifist stance to defensive realism rather than pure realism. Yet, unlike the concerns of Iida and Kingston to be discussed later, Midford finds that Japanese public opinion will always possess significant influence of policy making and elites due to its consistent nature (Midford 2011). Midford’s research does not comment on any neutrality or indifference among Japanese public opinion. Rather, Midford, by observing public opinion polls from the first Gulf War to the mid-2000s, makes a strong case that public opinion does sway Japanese policy and public opinion is becoming more defensive representing an interest in defending the country’s security.

Plan proposed by Yasuhiro Nakasone during the 1970s. Albeit dated, this study still represents a pivotal moment in Japanese history as Nakasone’s various defense buildup plans were the first time Japan considered increasing defense spending since the installation of the Japanese 1947 constitution that prohibited Japan from maintaining military forces. Emmerson collects polling data from a wide variety of Japanese newspapers of all biases in order to properly view the public’s reactions to Nakasone’s radical changes to Japan’s post-World War II orientation. Through his observations of polls, Emmerson finds it unlikely that Japan would extend its military spending to include a nuclear weapon nor did Japan’s public see a need for increased defense spending or amendments to the 1947 constitution to allow these actions because Japan did not face any threats from its international neighbors.

Work by Jeff Kingston offers an examination of the relationships between policy and public opinion in Japan. Although not entirely focused on the Japanese Self Defense Forces or defense spending, Kingston still observes that a disconnect between policy and public opinion certainly exists within Japan. Kingston’s articles utilize public opinion polls and detailed analysis of the Japanese government as well as Japan’s standing in the international community to support an approach that demonstrates structure ruling Japan’s attitude toward nuclear energy. Similar to public opinion research by Emmerson and Midford, Kingston finds that public opinion largely opposes nuclear energy post-Fukushima. For example, Kingston notes an Asahi Shimbun March 2014 poll noting “77 percent of respondents favor phasing out nuclear energy, while only 14 percent oppose such a policy. Restarts to nuclear reactors are opposed by 59 percent while 28 percent support such a policy. . .” (Kingston 474). Both of his articles focus on nuclear energy in
Japan heavily emphasize the veto power of Japan’s “nuclear village,” a group of industrial players within the Japanese government that control the nuclear sector and diminish any possible influence of public opinion concerning nuclear matters. Similar to the research findings of Iida, the Mansfield Foundation, Kojima and Emmerson, Kingston also notes an “…ebbing faith in politicians,” by noting an all time low 59.32 percent voter turnout in 2012 (Kingston 467). Therefore, Kingston contends that no matter how Japanese public opinion manifests itself, the nuclear village and Liberal Democratic Party will dominate Japan’s actions. Kingston’s conclusions forecast negatively on Japanese democracy thus warranting a critical examination of the relationship between policy and public opinion.

Yumiko Iida, Douglas Foyle, and Daniel Aldrich suggest that elite leaders may manipulate public opinion through media sources in order to shape public opinion to fit their policy or that public opinion has become ambivalent to government activity, if not more distrusting (Aldrich 2013; Foyle 1997; Iida 2003). For example, Iida writes that media is used to divert attention from Japanese politicians by creating “…‘media politics’, a form of politics based upon images and rhetorical tactics, thereby replacing the actual content of political practices with media-constructed images” (Iida 24). Iida continues to argue that media politics is interfering with democracy in Japan by directing attention to media images of a charismatic leader rather than political practices or mediating democratic institutions therefore dulling the intellectual discourse required for true democratic practices. The research by Iida emphatically reiterates that “…it is troubling that so much of Japan’s political discourse is dominated by intuitive appeal rather than reasoned argument and objective analysis” (Iida 29).
Christopher Wlezien and Stuart N. Soroka’s research demonstrates the importance of a healthy, symbiotic relationship between public preferences or opinion and policy. Although their research focuses on measuring the relationship between public opinion and policy in Canada, the U.S. and the United Kingdom, the research still claims that the study could be generalizable for other states. As Japan’s government is structured in a parliamentary system, the findings of Wlezien and Soroka can be applied to Japan. This is especially true as Wlezien and Soroka focus a portion of their book on the likelihood of parliamentary systems having more success than other governmental systems in properly representing the preferences of public opinion. Ultimately, Wlezien and Soroka’s research is vital to this critical case study as these scholars created a “thermostatic model” to measure the functionality of a democracy based on the representativeness of policy to public opinion as well as public opinion’s responsiveness to policy (Soroka and Wlezien 2010).

Finally, various governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations provide reports that shed significant light on Japanese public opinion, defense spending and security in the Asia Pacific. Books by the International Institute for Security Studies provide summaries of defense environments and spending supported by hard data. Non-governmental organizations within the U.S. such as the Council of Foreign Relations, the Asia Pacific Center for Strategic Studies, and the Center for Strategic and International
Studies provide academic analyses and reports. Pew Research specifically offers methodologically sound reports concerning public opinion. Thus, these sources provide additional academically-oriented material that covers the question of the Asia Pacific’s security in particular.

The literature concerning Japanese security policy, Japanese public opinion and the consolidation of Japanese democracy converges at similar axes. Research by Green, Hughes and Midford demonstrates that post-WWII Japanese security policy no longer appropriately fits the dynamic security environment in Asia Pacific. A clear relationship between public opinion and Japanese security policy is demonstrated by Emmerson and Midford. All scholars conclude that Japanese public opinion does have influence over security policy because political elites realize they will lose support, and therefore their positions within the Japanese government, if they do not harmonize with public opinion. However, less literature exists concerning recent discord between public opinion and security policy. Therefore, the question of how Japanese security is evolving within PM Shinzō Abe’s LDP-led government remains unanswered. Furthermore, the Soroka and Wlezien thermostatic model has not been applied as a critical case study to Japan. This application may uncover to what degree Japan’s externally imposed democracy is functioning, considering discord between public opinion and Japanese security policy.

**Historical Overview**

The key to remilitarization in Japan rests within the 1947 Japanese constitution. If Article 9 is revised to allow the JSDF to participate in non-defense related activities,
Japan’s identity will morph away from pacifism. Japan has already further cemented its identity shift away from pacifism by allowed the JSDF to participate in operations in South Sudan with the authorization by PM Abe to use force if necessary (“SDF rescue unit departs for South Sudan with new duties,” Asahi Shimbun). This metamorphosis is skeptically viewed by Japan’s neighbors, China and South Korea in particular, in light of Japanese nationalism spearheaded by PM Shinzō Abe. Yet in order to comprehend the 1947 Japanese constitution and the heavy implications revision carries, a historical analysis of the 1947 Japanese constitution must be observed. Although Japan is the oldest democracy in Asia Pacific, it is young compared to other democracies. Until Japan’s Meiji Restoration, the country did not have a written constitution.

Prior to the 1889 Japanese constitution, the island nation grew in isolation. Until Chinese travelers or traders came to Japan, Japanese people existed without a clear system of government. The 6th century demarcated Japan’s adoption of Chinese legal systems based on Confucianism. This system was dubbed as ritsuryo in Japanese. The ritsuryo system resulted in Japan being divided into districts and precincts. Organized administration and meticulous archiving were other benefits of the ritsuryo system. Yet, though the ritsuryo system was a significant evolution in Japanese government, the system was not enough to preserve peace. Internal wars increased until Japan was unified by Tokugawa Ieyasu in the early fifteenth century.

At the start of the Tokugawa Era in 1600, Japan tightened its isolationist policies. The Tokugawa Era was also a time when Japan was under military rule. The Kamakura and Ashikaga Eras that predated the Tokugawa Era also featured a warrior-like culture that attempted to control Japan. It wasn’t until the 1868 that Japan entered the Meiji
Restoration and was forced to end its isolationist policies. Before the Tokugawa Era, foreign visitors to Japan were still uncommon. With the exception of exchanges between other Asia Pacific nations, the other foreign visitors primarily consisted of Dutch and Portuguese traders. Yet, as Japan was forced to open its doors to trade and communicate with the international community by the U.S. in 1868, Japan quickly began to adapt to its environment.

Japan’s elites discarded the *ritsuryo* legal system created by the recently defeated China. However, the 1889 Japanese constitution written at the start of the Meiji Restoration was not composed without thorough research. Japan, with the desire to become a recognizable power in the international community, began to investigate constitutions of other nations. Once finalized, the 1889 Japanese constitution was formally installed by PM Ito Hirobumi and was called the Constitution of the Empire of Japan. Many experts were appointed to assist in the researching and writing of the first Japan’s constitution. For example, Kido Koin, a Meiji Imperial advisor, was a part of the diplomatic Iwakura mission in 1871 to visit the U.S. and Europe. In his diary he wrote, perhaps reflecting on the humiliating defeat China suffered to Great Britain, “There is an urgent need for Japan to become strong enough militarily to take a stand against the Western powers. As long as our country is lacking in military power, the law of nations is not to be trusted.” (Miyoshi 143) A man considered one of the founders of modern Japan, Fukuzawa Yukichi, also sensed it was urgent for Japan to dissociate itself from and assert control over defeated Asian empires. He writes “Japan must be ‘civilized;’ China and Korea are uncivilized and uncivilizable; in the sacred name of civilization, therefore, Japan must arm itself and conquer the two countries,” (Miyoshi 171). Similarly, Kido
Koin also noted that “...a country without a working constitution could never hope to be unified internally and thus would always risk falling prey to foreign intervention,” (McClain 185) Sentiments that Japan must quickly adapt in its own way to avoid the defeat China and Korea suffered became known as the *bunmei kaika* Era or “Civilization and Enlightenment Era.” Japan also desired respect within the international community, especially from other powerful empire states. To further distance itself from defeated China and Korea, Japan began imperial conquests to colonize China, Korea and later portions of Southeast Asia. The Empire of Japan found its first success in Korea, later renamed Chosen by the Japanese in 1910 and later China in 1931.

Some of the first diplomatic missions were launched from Japan to the U.S. in 1860 and to Europe in 1862. Seven diplomatic missions were sent from Japan before the constitutional establishment of Meiji Japan. Diplomatic missions proliferated and were more formalized after the Charter Oath was established in 1868, the first year of the Meiji Restoration. With the rule of the shogun disintegrated and the samurai defeated during the Satsuma Rebellion, crafting a new way to govern Japan was imperative. Although the U.S. was responsible for forcing Japan’s doors open, healthy skepticism of western culture permeated the Japanese officials delegated to investigate foreign methods of governance. Masao Miyoshi writes, “Arai Hakuseki wanted to learn technology from the West, but not what had contributed to produce it, that is, the assumptions and values that had formed the whole culture,” (Miyoshi 121). Hakuseki’s sentiment embodies the Japanese perspective as the country began to craft its own method of government. PM Ito Hirobumi noted “...that the mere imitation of foreign models would not suffice, for there were historical peculiarities of our country which had to be taken into consideration,”
Ultimately, the U.S. constitution was rejected as a model for the 1889 Japanese constitution. Japanese imperial officials found democracy and republics too liberal and also too tied to Christianity and therefore removed from eastern values.

The Prusso-German model of government that served the Empire of Germany had the strongest influence over the Japanese policy and German legal scholars assisted in the drafting of Japan’s first constitution. Although Japan had chosen Germany as the most suitable model for Japan’s new government, lesser influences included Britain and to a smaller extent in the second chapter of the 1889 constitution, the U.S. Although the rule of the samurai had been dissolved, Japan’s warrior culture took another form of a westernized military. Many higher ranking samurai were placed in positions of power within the new Meiji government. Unlike the military of post-WWII Japan, the military of Meiji Japan and onward played a significant role in Japan’s development as an international power. A strong military was a priority for Meiji Japan develop so Japan could first defend itself from invaders, assert control over the Korean Peninsula, China and the Asia Pacific overall and finally, be respected within the international community.

Yet even before Meiji Japan began assembling its military, the Meiji administration first considered how the military should be managed. The most significant difference between the Meiji Constitution of the Empire of Japan and the Constitution of Japan installed in 1947 was that the emperor held divine status as well as sovereignty. Similarly, “…the Meiji constitution predictably weighted power overwhelmingly in favor of the administration and against the Diet,” (Akita 59). Furthermore, war could be declared through the emperor. The ability to declare war at all was eradicated from the later 1947 Constitution of Japan. Similarly, the emperor of Japan was demoted to a
ceremonial figurehead without sovereignty at the installation of the new 1947 Japanese constitution. Power was allotted to a Prime minister instead. The postwar 1947 constitution also gave more civilian control over the military and also allowed Japanese male citizens more voting power to elect government representatives.

Civilian control of the military differed between the 1889 Meiji constitution and Japan’s 1947 postwar constitution. Little civilian control over the military existed in the Meiji Restoration. Lack of civilian control was later exemplified in the early twentieth century by the 1907 Basic Plan of National Defense. Prior to the 1947 postwar constitution of Japan, the prime minister was selected by the emperor rather than elected by citizens. Lack of civilian control became more apparent as Japan modernized throughout WWI and WWII. For example, the Meiji administration deemed it necessary for active duty military personnel to serve on the emperor’s cabinet. Specifically, “Two imperial ordinances in 1900 required the cabinet posts of army and navy minister to be staffed by officers on active duty,” (Humphreys 8). Japan’s 1947 postwar constitution dissolved this practice, even though it remained common for former high-ranking military members to serve in the prime minister’s cabinet. This practice, amukadari, is commonly used in Japan to absorb high ranking business or military individuals into elite political positions. Amukadari is also used when high-ranking politicians retire and are absorbed into powerful positions within business. In present day Japan, Amukadari is still practiced in present day Japan which, according to Jeff Kingston, presents some concern in attempting to reform Japanese government agencies, or add fresh faces to the Japanese government itself (Kingston 471).
The 1889 Meiji constitution also allowed for significant military growth and expansion until the postwar period when Japan’s military progress was forcefully reigned. During the beginning of the Meiji Restoration of 1866, the Japanese navy only possessed eight ships. However, at the time of the Russo-Japanese war in 1903, the Japanese navy had rapidly expanded to seventy-six ships. The Japanese defense budget had also rapidly increased to 63.2 percent of the national budget (Takafusa 39). The 1907 Basic Plan of National Defense aided the tremendous Japanese defense budget, although the plan underwent several adjustments that shifted defense spending from the army to the navy. At the time of the 1947 postwar Japanese constitution, the defense budget was constitutionally limited to less than two percent of the national budget. In the same year, a new military ordinance placed decisions about military organization, education, personnel and rules of engagement in army hands without the necessity of a prime minister’s signature or Privy Council deliberation. In December 1908, the war minister lost the right to approve changes in defense planning and force levels, thereby increasing general staff autonomy from the Ministry of War (Imai 5-6).

The Meiji Restoration ended in 1912 with the death of the Meiji emperor. The succeeding Era was titled the Taisho Era after the new emperor. The Taisho Era continued to allow Japan’s military to grow yet the rule of oligarchs and lack of civilian control of the military or government began to fray. Caps were placed on military spending, although the spending was still significantly more than the caps produced in the 1947 postwar constitution. Yet, the outbreak of World War I in Europe allowed for Japan’s military development to continue. The 1907 Basic Plan of National Defense was
revised and new extensions were given to develop the Japanese army and navy, although priority was given to the navy.

The Taisho political crisis signified the first shift away from oligarchs. At the end of WWI in 1918, rule of the oligarchs was also threatened as democratic regimes, unlike that of Japan, were victorious. Therefore, it seemed like that in order for Japan to remain in good standing in the international community, Japan would need to become democratic. Thus the Taisho Era also marked the emergence of party politics and constitutionalism, a further shift towards democracy. “Taishō Democracy has sometimes been described as combining the pursuit of constitutional government at home with imperialism overseas…” (Ryota 2014), yet, as Ryota writes, Meiji imperialism also continued in the Taisho Era. Japan’s interest in staying an international power relied upon the empire expanding. The most prominent mark of Japan’s imperialism were the Twenty One Demands imposed on China by Japan which would continue to strengthen Japan’s imperial hold across the Sea of Japan.

While the government worked to develop Japan’s military, Japan’s civilian population suffered. Similarly, Japan’s limited natural resources were dominated by the government to support the military. This included food resources such as rice which further obscured the Japanese population into poverty. The apogee of public frustration with government defense spending were the Rice Riots of 1918. Here, Japanese citizens protested the government’s unfair division of rice, a staple food for most Japanese in rural areas. In order to support Japanese troops in the Siberian Intervention of 1918-1922, the Japanese government had reserved a vast portion of Japan’s rice production for military personnel instead of the Japanese population. Afterwards, the military budget
shifted spending from 65.4 percent of the national budget between 1918 and 1922 to just 30.4 percent between 1928 and 1932 (Takafusa 39). Noting Japan’s expansionist military policies, the 1947 postwar constitution made specific provisions to allow for careful monitoring of military spending and activity. Extra provisions were also added to contain the Japanese defense budget, whether the spending was domestic or international.

Despite Japan’s shift towards democratic rule in the Taisho Era, Japan returned to imperialism exemplified by totalitarian rule. Nationalism and fascism characterized the WWII Showa Era. The party politics established in Japan during the Taisho Era also disintegrated with the rise of conservatives and collapse of leftist parties. These political shifts in the Taisho Era did not signify domestic stability. Civilian unrest grew with protests due to the Japanese government utilizing scarce resources to maintain the Japanese military rather than support Japan’s civilian population. The Great Depression deeply impacted Japan which further impoverished Japan’s citizens. Negligence towards Japan’s population resulted in the assassination of the prime minister in 1930. Yet, nationalism, militarism, fascism and totalitarianism prevailed despite civil unrest. Such events downgraded Japan’s position within the international community and contributed to Japan’s role in WWII.

Proposed Findings

The Meiji, Taisho, and Showa Eras in Japan demonstrated how quickly a new international power could evolve, adapt, and yet also be defeated. An examination of the formation of Japan’s 1889 constitution also provides insight into the history of Japanese
military development. Japan’s first constitution, and later empire, was developed in hopes of elevating Japan above its Asian neighbors and gaining respect within the international community. Therefore, Japan’s imperial past explains why Sino-Japanese and Korean-Japanese relations complicate security in present-day Northeast Asia. Furthermore, Japan’s past fascism with disregard for supporting the well-being of Japanese citizens illustrates why Japanese and other Asia Pacific states are suspicious of Japanese remilitarization, in addition to cyclic disputes over reparations or apologies Japan owes China and Korea (Green 101, 118).

Yet, revision of Japan’s Article 9 of the 1947 constitution is a problem that refuses to obfuscate itself. Revision to allow the JSDF more capabilities has been debated within the Japanese government since the 1970s yet no administration has successfully advanced the issue as far as Prime Minister Abe. Under the leadership of PM Shinzō Abe, revision of Article 9 has been made a priority of the LDP-led Japanese government and a personal mission of PM Shinzō Abe himself (“Japan’s Abe hopes” Reuters). Situationally, Japan’s struggling ties with China are continuously challenged by China’s aggressive behavior in the East China Sea. Thus, Japan has behooved themselves to buffer their own security in light of territorial disputes. North Korea continues to threaten the entire Asia Pacific region and though there was some hope of stabilizing Japan’s relations with North Korea in the early 1990s (Green 120), these hopes crumbled as North Korea’s nuclear program aggressively evolved. Consequentially, security issues attributed to China and North Korea have further supported PM Abe’s mission to revise Article 9.
Before revising the constitution, Japan’s government must hold a public referendum in which Japanese citizen’s vote on whether or not to revise the constitution. Remilitarization and revision of Article 9 has a history of disapproval within the Japanese public, post-WWII. Therefore, Article 9 has never been close to reaching public referendum despite the Japanese Liberal Democratic Party holding power in the Japanese government for the majority of Japan’s post-WWII history. Most recently, both the upper and lower houses of parliament are dominated by the LDP. As no other viable alternative to PM Shinzō Abe’s LDP (“JJP: Abe’s support” Harris), it seems that once again the Left is deteriorating as leftist political parties did in the late Taisho Era. However, no prior administration has been able to bring the Article 9 debate as far as PM Abe’s administration has as of early 2018. Yet, since Article 9 has never before reached public referendum, the task before the Abe administration is formidable.

Therefore, it seems Japan is at another pivotal point in history. If Article 9 of the 1947 Japanese constitution is completely revised to allow significant offensive use of the JSDF and an increase in defense spending, will stable security remain in Northeast Asia, especially in terms of Japanese relations with China and the Korean Peninsula? If Article 9 is revised despite a nearly even-split vote, how will the Japanese government balance public opinion and policy? Furthermore, has Japanese public opinion ever had a significant sway on security policy? This research hypothesizes that Japanese public opinion plays a pivotal part in determining the future of Japanese defense policies and the future since amending Article 9 depends upon a public referendum. Therefore, an analysis of previous research completed on Japanese public opinion towards defense policies as well as an analysis of more recent public opinion polls must be completed.
II. CHAPTER 2: THE RELEVANCE OF JAPANESE PUBLIC OPINION

Public Opinion in Japan

What role does public opinion play in policy making? Democratic theory generally assumes that public opinion matters in all decisions made by a government as the intention of a democracy is to be representative (Fishkin 1995; Przeworski, Stokes, and Manin 1999). However, when policy does not represent public opinion, what are the implications? At a deeper level, what encourages public opinion to respond to political elites making policy decisions and what elements influence elites to adhere to public opinion? The revision of Article 9 in the Japanese constitution depends on a public referendum, therefore these questions about public opinion and policy are necessitous to this research. Here, political elites are any politician within the Japanese government.

Many academics view a positive relationship between public opinion and policy (Blias and Bodet 2006; Franklin and Wlezien 1997; Geer 1996; Page and Shapiro 1983). For example, according to Stuart N. Soroka and Christopher Wlezien, public opinion and policy decisions are part of a symbiotic democratic system. The two must be in harmony in order facilitate representative, democratic practices. In particular, public opinion must exhibit responsiveness in order for policy by political elites to be representative. If public opinion is not responsive, then political elites have no motivation for policy to be
representative, which therefore retracts some democratic value from a democratic
government. Soroka and Wlezien define representation as essential element for a
democracy to properly function. Policy must be representative of public opinion.

Here, Soroka and Wlezien dissect representation. The authors emphasize Pitkin’s
1967 work labeling representation as “…policymakers’ active representation of citizens’
(aggregated) preferences” (Soroka and Wlezien 5). Soroka and Wlezien further articulate
that electoral representation and descriptive representation are not enough to examine
democratic practices within a country. Rather, policy that represents public opinion fills
this gap. The authors contend, “The quality of representation should be indicated not by
shared belief, demographic proximity, or the accuracy of a vote-seat function, but by the
extent to which representatives’ actions are related to the preferences to those being
represented,” (Soroka and Wlezien 10). Therefore, Soroka and Wlezien’s work is
instrumental in understanding Japanese public opinion and its relationship with the
revision of Article 9 or defense policy.

Soroka and Wlezien describe public responsiveness as the thermostat that
responds to policy decisions. They believe that the more the public responds to policy
decisions by political elites, the more democratic practices are strengthened. The public
must also “…acquire and process information about policy, and adjust its preferences
accordingly” (Soroka and Wlezien 22). Therefore, in order for the thermostatic model to
function, the public must be interested, informed, and quickly responsive. If the public is
the opposite, political elites would then have no reason to fine-tune policy, for example
defense spending policy. Although, if policy is unresponsive to a responsive public
opinion, democratic practices are undermined as public opinion is not being represented.
Soroka and Wlezien also note that it is unlikely that a public has exact policy preferences, nor is it monolithic. In the case of Japan for example, it is unlikely most of the public knows exactly how much it desires the government to spend on defense. It is also unlikely a public knows exactly what kind of policy change it would prefer as most policies are too complex to articulate to the public through a publication, website, or news source. Furthermore, it is questionable whether or not an average citizen would have the proper education to interpret a complex policy as well as its implications, if the policy in its entirety were made available. However, some policies are not as complex and can be measured relatively. Whether or not the public approves of revising Article 9 of the current Japanese constitution can be measured relatively as the subject is well known. Conversely, public opinion polls about complex military missions that could be executed by the JSDF may be more difficult for public opinion to have an exact preference due to the occasionally clandestine nature of military operations.

Soroka and Wlezien, however, warn of several limitations in observing the relationship between policy and public opinion. First, they note that it is unknown whether political elites use public opinion polls alone to model policy (Soroka and Wlezien 40). Thus, this is why they propose that the thermostatic model is reasonable as it is “…not highly demanding…” and the public is not expected to have “…clearly defined and well-reasoned positions on various issues,” (Soroka and Wlezien 41). Similarly, the thermostatic model does not require all of the public to respond to policy, or be completely informed (Soroka and Wlezien 42). Rather, the thermostatic model simply requires “…that some meaningful portion of citizens have a basic preference for policy change in one direction or the other and that they adjust this preference over time.
in reaction to what policymakers do…” (Soroka and Wlezien 42). Therefore, these limitations make the thermostatic model not a tool for exact measurement of the relationship between public opinion and policy as exact measurement is not possible due to the discussed limitations. Yet, the results produced by Soroka and Wlezien’s system still provide a general demonstration of the relationship between public opinion and policy.

The scholars describe the thermostatic model as follows:

> The model has as its referent the temperature control systems in our homes, where the public is the thermostat and policymakers the furnace or air conditioning unit. If the model works, we will observe three things. First the difference between the actual policy temperature and the preferred temperature will cause the public to send a signal to change the policy temperature, for example, to turn up the heat. Second in response to such a signal, policymakers will increase policy. Third, as the policy temperature approaches the preferred temperature, the signal for change will be reduced. (Soroka and Wlezien 3)

 Though Soroka and Wlezien argue that academic studies exist proving that most public opinion usually does not care about government or policy decisions, several scholars that tested Japan disagree. Paul Midford conducted an examination of Japanese public opinion concerning use of the Japanese Self Defense Forces during the 1980s-early 2000s. Midford notes that academic literature claims public opinion is often uninformed and ignorant of government policy making mechanisms (Midford 9). According to this literature, Japanese public opinion should not exhibit consistent patterns in public opinion concerning policy, in particular security policy, since most public opinion is uninformed and ignorant. However, Midford demonstrated that Japanese public opinion is informed and reliable because it exhibits consistent trends over time. Throughout various military operations in the Gulf War and peacekeeping operations in Cambodia, Midford shows that Japanese public opinion preferred the JSDF
be utilized for defensive purposes such as demining operations and natural disaster relief. Public opinion also consistently demonstrated that Japanese feared entrapment in an allies’ war as well as the effect of post-traumatic stress disorder on JSDF personnel. Midford summarizes his findings by writing, “…Japanese public opinion is influential because it is stable, coherent, and, regarding attitudes about the utility of military force, not easily or quickly swayed by elite attempts to influence it” (Midford 171).

In Japan’s case, when the state first began modeling a western style constitution in the late 19th century Meiji period, political elites researched and dispatched envoys to study western styles of government. Public opinion is an important component of western democracies. Consequently, so was public participation. Thus, in order to distinguish themselves from other Asian states that suffered defeat by western empires, China in particular, Japanese policy makers began discussing and drafting how the relationship between policy and public opinion in western democracies would manifest in Meiji Japan. To do otherwise would have risked Japan’s hope of being respected by other international powers.

Of the oligarchs and other officials drafting the first Japanese constitution in the late 19th century, not all agreed that public opinion was as important as westerns purported. Others, Okuma Shigenobu for example, believed that a western style parliamentary government should immediately be installed in Japan (Akita 1967). The debate between gradualism and swiftly installing a western style of government became so contested that Okuma Shigenobu and his supporters were ousted from the government in the Crisis of 1881 (Akita 32). Okuma had made a rash choice to propose that Japan hold elections to install a western, parliamentary government before 1883. Okuma’s
opposition, Ito Hirobumi, disagreed with this motion as though the last significant rebellion of the samurai, the Satsuma Rebellion, was defeated in 1877, Japan was still not entirely stable. Specifically, Japan’s public was not ready to suddenly adjust to a foreign system that required citizens to vote for their leaders.

The Crisis of 1881 was brief yet, the event exhibited several trends in Japanese governance that are relevant to this observation of Japanese governance and public opinion. First, the ousting of Okuma demonstrated that a gradual approach to changing Japanese governance was deemed most appropriate if not vital for Japan’s future development. Therefore, those with radical ideas, like Okuma and his followers, were removed from the Japanese government but yet not executed or banished from Japan (Akita 57). Okuma’s punishment demonstrates a more humane approach to show western powers that Japan was less barbaric than the recently fallen Chinese government. The Crisis of 1881 also demonstrated that the oligarchs who were in charge of the new changes in the Japanese government were skeptical of public opinion, especially since Japanese citizens were not familiar with the concept of voting.

However, the postwar constitution of 1947 did not allow for the same gradualism. With many cities devastated by bombings, Japan surrendered to the demands of Japan’s opponents. Foreign influence in Japan’s new constitution was apparent as the U.S. primarily guided construction of Japan’s new constitution. Japan’s government became more westernized. Therefore, other than stripping Japan of its militaristic principles, emphasis was placed on adherence to democratic principles such as adhering to public opinion. Consequently, the democratic relationship between public opinion and Japanese policy began.
Observing Japanese Public Opinion

This study is an analysis of public opinion polls from 1970 to 2017. These dates are selected for several reasons. First, by 1970, Japanese policy makers had installed several principles to ensure Japan’s pacifist disposition. The U.S. occupation of Japan had ended nearly a decade ago and therefore the country began to take responsibility of its own economy, security, and governance. Article 9 was written in the 1947 postwar constitution which revoked Japan’s right to wage war. Article 9 also reversed the role of Japan’s military. Instead of functioning as an offensive and defense military, Japan’s military added “defense” to their formal title. Therefore, Japan’s military now only existed for defense purposes. Spending caps – 1% of GDP - that are minuscule compared to 30% of GDP pre-World War II spending were added. Additionally, Japanese leaders adopted a self-imposed an arms export ban in 1976. This ban prevented Japanese foreign military sales to other states, with the exception of some technology transfers to the U.S., and therefore potentially influencing the atmosphere of war. Finally, to help prevent nuclear disasters similar to those that occurred in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan formally installed the Three Non-Nuclear Principles in 1971. These principles state that Japan shall not possess nuclear weapons, produce nuclear weapons, nor permit nuclear weapons on Japanese land (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2014).

By 1970, Japan was much more economically stable than it was in the decades directly following the conclusion of WWII. Finally, the U.S. occupation of Japan had also ended by 1970, leaving Japan as its own, independent state. Thus, the period between the end of WWII and 1970 does not yield desirable polling data due to the
occupation of the U.S. military as the occupation identified Japan as a state dependent on U.S. aid and supervision. Economic assistance and military protection were further solidified at the implementation of the Yoshida Doctrine in 1952. Furthermore, the second Japan constitution post-WWII, was not installed until 1947, two years after Japan’s defeat. Thus, it is more ideal to observe Japanese public opinion and security policy after Japan had become more stable and was less reliant on U.S. assistance. A steadier environment in Japan also allowed for talks to develop, expand, and repurpose the Japanese military. Consequentially, 1970 further serves as a proper starting point to observe Japanese public opinion and security policy decisions because in 1970, talks of reorientation the purpose of the JSDF began. Future Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, who was the head of the JSDF in the 1970s, spearheaded these discussions by creating the Defense Buildup Plans to repurpose the JSDF.

Finally, public opinion data prior to 1970 was mostly conducted by the government ("Japanese Public Opinion" Teraoka). The Council on Foreign Relations further notes that newspapers such as the Yomiuri were more thorough in surveying the Japanese public and this trend remains consistent. Thus, more survey data is available after 1970. Better conclusions are derived from survey data from liberal and conservative newspapers in addition to government surveys as opposed to only government surveys.

Although polls are surveyed from 1970-2017, not all years provide appropriate data. This is because security policy, particularly any issue involving Article 9 and retooling the JSDF, was not a priority every year. For example, the tsunami and resulting Fukushima nuclear crisis was more of a priority to the Japanese government that security policy when the disaster occurred in 2011. Therefore, public opinion polls during that
period tend to not place a strong emphasis on security policy, but rather focus on nuclear energy, restarting nuclear power plants, quality of foods due to the nuclear pollution as well as cleanup in Fukushima. Similarly, polls represented focus on the Japanese economy during the Asian financial crisis. Security policy also varied between different prime ministers and the dominating party of the upper and lower houses of parliament. The Japanese government hasn’t focused on security policy every year. Yet, the subject emerges multiple times in each decade between 1970-2017.

Sources used for this analysis are varied. However, newspapers are keystone sources. An assortment of newspapers with different political biases comprises this data set. For example, the data includes polls from the liberal leaning Asahi Shimbun as well as the conservatively minded Nikkei. Additionally, some polls are available through government organizations as well as the Japanese government itself. Non-governmental organizations such as the Council on Foreign Relations and Sasakawa Peace Foundation also provide polling data as well as polling studies. By analyzing public opinion polls from a wide variety of sources with different biases, ideally this research will indicate trends in public opinion concerning Japanese security policies and then potential for Article 9 to be amended at a public referendum.

1970-1979

The 1970s began Japan’s rapid economic rise. Growth in GDP rose 4.5% each year throughout the 1970s accompanied by increases in industrialization and land prices (OECD 1994). Japan had achieved much-needed stability. Previously, Japan became
independent with the end of the American occupation in 1952, but the economy was not yet thriving. In 1968, Japan was granted further sovereignty by the United State returning Iwo Jima and Okinawa in 1972. Consequently, the role of the JSDF was in question now that Japan’s sovereignty and stability was restored. Prominent JSDF member, and later Prime Minister, Yasuhiro Nakasone and Japanese Defense Agency officials were the first to begin discussions concerning what role the JSDF should take in Japan’s post-occupation era. Some of these actions included the Defense of Japan white paper released in October of 1970 by the Japan Defense Agency (Emmerson 134) as well as Nakasone’s Defense Buildup Plans. The 1970s was also dominated by prime ministers from the Liberal Democratic Party. Eisaku Satō had several terms as prime minister, from 1964-1972 and ushered in an era of LDP dominance. Following Eisako Satō was Kakuei Tanaka serving from 1972-1974, Takeo Miki from 1974-1976, and Takeo Fukuda from 1976-1978. The final Japanese prime minister, again of LDP persuasion, was Masayoshi Ōhira who served from 1978-1980 but did not complete his term due to a death of natural causes.

The line of prime ministers in the 1970s represented peace-focused efforts as well as peace-oriented politicians. Prime Minister Eisaku Satō publically stated he would not revise the constitution. Satō also successfully passed the Four Pillars Nuclear Policy and entered the United Nations Nuclear-Nonproliferation Treaty. These peace-promoting actions earned him the Noble Peace Prize in 1974. Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka’s term displayed particularly reconciliatory efforts by Japan recognizing China for the first time since the end of WWII. He also toured Europe as well as portions of Southeast Asia to discuss trade and reparations. Takeo Miki who also ran against the military government
of Japan in the 1940s, succeeding in passing Japan’s self-imposed arms export ban in 1976. The one exception in the 1970s was Takeo Fukuda who cultivated a reputation as a conservative war hawk, though no attempts to revise the constitution or reorient the JSDF took place during his term.

Polling data from the 1970s reflects a Japanese public that was pacifistic. The public saw little external threat to Japan and therefore, no need for the JSDF to adopt a more offensive and international role. Japan had officially recognized the People’s Republic of China in 1972, reparations and peace negotiations were in process with Southeast Asia and Korea and a treaty with Russia was also at hand. Furthermore, the devastation and poverty induced by war and a military-driven government hadn’t quite evaporated from Japanese minds. Therefore, revision of Article 9 was out of the question as most political elites found that campaigning against Article 9 as futile (Emmerson 95).

Yet 1970-1973 represents a time in which polls concerning security policies were frequently distributed. As noted by the Council on Foreign Relations, newspapers began meticulously recording public opinion - in addition to the government - by the 1970s. Thus, when talks of reorienting and expanding Japan’s military began in the early 1970s with Yasuhiro Nakasone’s Fourth Defense Buildup Plan, newspapers were ready to place a microphone in front of public opinion. John K. Emmerson’s book *Will Japan Rearm? A Study in Attitudes* presents a collection of polls from a variety of sources from 1970-1973 concerning defense buildup. Figure 2.1 represents public opinion responses toward the strength of the JSDF. This poll was conducted shortly after Yasuhiro Nakasone began stirring the debate about expanding the JSDF with the Fourth Defense Buildup Plan.
Two later polls in July and September from *Nippon Hoso Kyokai*, commonly known as *NHK*, asked if Japanese felt the Fourth Defense Buildup was excessive. More than 50% answered “Yes”, 36.1% answered “Suitable”, and 3.9% answered “Too Low”. The later asked if Japanese felt if Japan’s defense effort was insufficient in which 52.4% answered “No”, and 22.5% answered “Yes”. Finally, in November the *Tokyo Shimbun*, widely regarded as a conservative news source, asked if an increase of defense power was desirable in which 40.4% responded “No”, 10.3% responded “Yes”, 34.3% responded “Inevitable”, and 15% responded “Don’t Know” (Emmerson 102).

Figure 2.2: Response to “What do you think of the effectiveness of various means for Japan’s security?”
Figure 2.2 demonstrates that even in a conservative newspaper, the Japanese public was evenly split concerning the effectiveness of the JSDF in Japanese security and strongly favored economic cooperation instead. When asked about the Japan Defense Agency’s Fourth Defense Plan specifically in November 1972 by the Tokyo Shimbun, 17.1% of Japanese approved, 11.4% called for a reduction, 14.4% found the “…amount inevitable but opposed the domestic production of armaments” and 35.7% supported the total cancellation of the plan with the budget to be used for housing and welfare (Emmerson 102).

Figure 2.3: Activities of the SDF, 1973

What do you think of the activities of the SDF?

SDF operations should be limited to defense territorial waters and airspace………………42.9%
Maintain control of sea and air space around Japanese islands........................................22.6%

Conduct maritime escort operations without limit............................................................1.8%

No need to limit SDF activities..........................................................................................6.5%


Figure 2.3 adds further depth to what the Japanese public was thinking about security issues in the 1970s, especially around the time when the Fourth Defense Buildup Plan was circulated in the Japanese parliament. While the poll did not give the option for respondents to completely oppose the JSDF, its results demonstrated Japanese pacifism in the 1970s by 42.9% respondents selecting the most pacifist, anti-war response possible. Only 6.5% thought that there was no need to limit the Self Defense Forces and only 1.8% agreed the SDF should conduct maritime escort relations without limit. Therefore, it was apparent that even despite ambitious, revolutionary efforts of conservative LDP politicians, the Japanese public was sternly and consistently pacifist. As a result, the topic of constitutional revision was not approached as well as international dispatch of the JSDF and increases in Japan’s defense budget.

Thus, it is apparent that Soroka and Wlezien’s thermostatic model was functioning appropriately concerning Japanese security policy and public opinion in the 1970s as public opinion was attentive and consistent. Indeed, John K. Emmerson noted during the 1970s, “…no Japanese prime minister can afford to ignore public opinion, especially as it is manifested in the elected parliament and through such power groups as the bureaucracy, business, special interests, and the highly developed mass media,” (Emmerson 2). Finally, when asked by NHK in 1974 whether Japan should possess nuclear weapons, an overwhelming majority of 82% opposed the possession of nuclear
weapons. This trend remained consistent throughout the 1970s and provides another indicator of Japan’s pacifist resolutions (Emmerson 103). The time period of 1954-1960 known as the Gensuikyo years also likely influenced Japan’s long-living “nuclear allergy” or aversion to nuclear weapons. The generation that experienced the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were either still living or coming of age. Therefore, the negative effects of war and nuclear bombings in particular were still firmly rooted in public opinion.

1980-1989

The 1980s marked even more economic growth in Japan than the previous decade. GDP increased 5.1% each year and Japan’s economy, powered by electronic and robotic exports, rivaled the U.S. economy (OECD 1994). The 1980s also saw more forceful efforts to grow Japan’s military industrial complex. Specifically, Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, an outspoken military hawk, pursued this endeavor. Although Yasuhiro Nakasone was a key player in replanting Japanese nationalism, ultimately the prime minister did not achieve his goal of raising Japan’s self-imposed defense spending caps. Rather, Nakasone was only able to pass three budgets ever so slightly over the 1% cap. After Nakasone left office, the defense spending budget returned to its original 1% of GDP cap as political elites perceived maintaining the elevated defense spending caps too risky in light of negative public opinion.

Again, the 1980s exhibited LDP domination. In mid-1980, Masayoshi Ōhira ended his term as prime minister only to transfer power to another LDP politician, Zenkō Suzuki who served until late 1982. Following Zenkō Suzuki was the infamous Yasuhiro
Nakasone. Nakasone, with his nationalist and pro-JSDF motives, served for a majority of this decade, 1982-1987. Noboru Takeshita then served from late 1987-mid 1989. The last prime minister of the 1980s, Sōsuke Uno, only held office for several months before he resigned due to an extramarital affair. Sōsuke Uno was later replaced by Toshiki Kaifu, once again of the LDP, in August 1989. Even though the LDP held its dominance over the Japanese parliament in the 1980s, only Yasuhiro Nakasone was focused on reconstructing Japanese security policy. Furthermore, even though many of the Japanese prime ministers in the 1980s once held positions within the Ministry of Defense or the Japanese Imperial Army, none aggressively sought to reform the Japanese military-industrial complex like PM Yasuhiro Nakasone. Rather, other prime ministers of the 1980s prioritized domestic issues.

Paul Midford writes that the 1980s exhibited Japanese public opinion’s shift away from pacifism and to defensive realism. Public opinion saw the JSDF as necessary but that the JSDF should only be used for defensive purposes, especially for those of a humanitarian nature. Midford notes multiple polls from both liberal, conservative, and Japanese government sources that display the Japanese public opinion’s slow shift towards defensive realism during the 1980s. During the 1980s, the Japanese economy prospered and therefore Japan was able to dispatch funds to assist in foreign conflicts. But the 1980s gave birth to gaiatsu or “foreign pressure” (George 1991). The nodal point in gaiatsu during the 1980s and later 1990s was the U.S. During the Gulf War, the U.S. insisted wealthy Japan contribute more than just money or economic sanctions to international conflict resolution. Thus, PM Yasuhiro Nakasone in particular, began to investigate dispatching Japanese troops internationally for the first time since WWII.
Ultimately, dispatch of the SDF was not achieved but dispatch of Japanese civilians in disaster relief teams was authorized in 1987. In 1989, Japan sent a dispatch of Japanese civilians to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Figure 2.4 demonstrates the opposition of public opinion towards dispatching the SDF.

Figure 2.4: The SDF and UN PKO, 1989

Do you support the possibility of SDF participation in UN PKO;

Support……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….22%

Opposed…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………46%

Unsure…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………30%

Source: Data from Office of the Prime Minister. 1989. Rethinking Japanese Public Opinion and Security: From Pacifism to Realism?

Like the 1970s, security policy and public opinion aligned for the majority of the decade. Midford demonstrates that Japanese public opinion remained consistent throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The Japanese public was against the use of force by the SDF, against constitutional revision, against the possession of nuclear weapons, and against the SDF participating in regional conflicts outside of Japan. However, again, Midford’s research using data from the Roper Center and other polling sources indicates that Japanese public opinion became more defensively-minded in the 1980s.

Many citizens began to recognize the utility of the SDF providing humanitarian aid, especially via the U.N. Nevertheless they still disapproved of dispatching the SDF. Polls from the prime minister’s office in 1983 and 1986 demonstrated that at the most public opinion would only approve of an organized team of Japanese civilians to be
dispatched to an area of conflict (Midford 63). The smaller and more controlled an operation, the more Japanese public opinion seemed to approve. Thus, instead of legislation allowing the JSDF to participate in U.N. missions, only small groups of civilians were allowed under the 1987 Law Concerning the Dispatch of Japanese Disaster Relief Teams. Japan’s new legislation was a direct result of gaiatsu influence.

Polling data also made raising Japan’s defense spending limit difficult. A Mainichi Shimbun poll from April 1985 demonstrated a vast 78% disapproved of increasing the defense spending budget beyond Japan’s self-imposed 1% of GDP cap (Midford 66). The Asahi Shimbun recorded in October of 1985 that 70% disapproved of any increase to the defense spending budget at all (Midford 66). Political elites, Nakasone included, may have made attempts to write more aggressive bills, but ultimately pro-military efforts were watered down before they became legislation, so much that the legislation was only a mere sliver of the original intention. Therefore, Japanese public opinion remained influential throughout the decade.

Again, Soroka and Wlezien’s thermostatic model was functioning reasonably in Japan during the 1980s. Polling sources, especially newspapers, were quick to survey public opinion at the announcement of the possibility of new security policies. The surveys withdrawn from the Roper Center and presented by Midford note a high percentage of respondents to these polls. Therefore, public opinion was appropriately responsive in order to provide political elites with the motivation to mold policy appropriately. Yet, the 1980s ended with the first Gulf War looming on the horizon. With the Gulf War, and later crisis in Cambodia, Japan’s security policy and public opinion encountered new obstacles and stronger gaiatsu.
1990-1999

The 1990s exhibited the first significant shift away from LDP rule in Japan, as well as a return to Japan’s pacifist motives. Yet the 1990s also presented new challenges for Japan in order to maintain its status as a reputable, international power. *Gaiaatsu* from the U.S. in particular became more intense with the onset of the Gulf War and the later crisis in Cambodia (George 1991). Indeed, in the U.S. “Japan’s failure to dispatch personnel strengthened the impression of Japan as a self-centered mercantilist state” despite the fact Japan donated 13 billion USD to assist in the conflict in Iraq (Hiroshi 2011). The Gulf War additionally strained Japanese security policy as a significant portion of Japanese oil came from the Gulf, through the Strait of Hormuz. Therefore, Japanese political elites faced several difficult tasks in light of Japan’s self-imposed security restraints as well as public opinion. Most of these security issues occurred in the early 1990s, and the later half of the 1990s was focused on economic issues as the “bubble” had collapsed and the Japanese economy was stagnating. These economic conditions resulted in scholars titling the 1990s as the “Lost Decade” (Hayashi and Prescott 207).

The 1990s began again with LDP rule by Toshiki Kaifu who ended his term in late 1991. Taifu was then followed by Kiichi Miyazawa. Kiichi Miyazawa was of the LDP yet a step away from the stereotypical, conservative LDP politician. Kichi Miyazawa, who was present at the Treaty of San Francisco, was deeply committed to peace. Unlike particularly hawkish LDP members such as the ilk of Nakasone, Kiichi Miyazawa was publicly opposed to constitutional revision. For almost the next three
years, the domination of the LDP was disrupted. Though of previous LDP persuasion, Morihiro Hosokawa of the Japan New Party was elected in late 1993. Morihiro Hosokawa resigned early due to misuse of funds was then followed by another former LDP politician, Tsutomu Hata of the Japan Renewal Party in mid-1994. Perhaps the election of politicians focusing on reform and renewal of Japan was due to the sudden stagnation of growth as opposed to the explosion of growth Japan experienced in the past decades. Tomiichi Murayama followed Tsutomu Hata’s brief term. Tomiichi Murayama’s term represented the Japan Socialist Party’s first domination of the Japanese government since 1947. In 1996, the LDP returned to dominate the government by the election of LDP politicians Ryūtarō Hashimoto and later Keizō Obuchi in 1998.

Again, Paul Midford presents an analysis of public opinion data provided by the Roper Center, Japanese newspapers, and government sources. Similar to the 1980s, Japanese public opinion still demonstrated that JSDF had utility. However, public opinion still disapproved of the overseas dispatch of the JSDF. Yet, unlike the 1980s, Japanese public opinion, perhaps caving to gaiatsu and leaning towards defensive realism, began to approve of the dispatch of JSDF only to aid in humanitarian missions or disaster relief efforts, as demonstrated by Figure 2.5. This trend in public opinion remained consistent as polls from 1989 and 1991 continued to approve of the SDF participating in overseas humanitarian activities (Midford 85-86). Again, in the early 1990s, political elites made ambitious attempts to allow the JSDF to assist in U.N. peace-keeping operations. However, strong opposition to use of force caused the resulting legislation in 1992 to allow JSDF to deploy for UNPKO, but only carrying side arms for defensive purposes at maximum. Furthermore, those dispatched under UNPKO were not
permitted to use force as a unit (Midford 83). Figure 2.5 demonstrates that Japanese public opinion, similar to the 1980s, preferred economical assistance as Japan’s primary security tool. The poll also demonstrates that Japanese again preferred that the JSDF participate in humanitarian operations. Previous attempts occurred to expand these preferences such as the UNPCC bill. However, this first attempt to allow Japanese to participate in UNPKO failed due to public disapproval (Midford 108).

Gaiatsu from the U.S., such as requests for the JSDF to assist in logistical support by President Bush, effected Japanese public opinion and security policy during the Gulf War (Hiroshi 2011). However, in addition to feeling pressure to contribute more than money to an international crisis, the Gulf War directly affected Japan. Japan relied on oil export from the Gulf to supply a significant portion of Japan’s energy. Therefore, Japanese citizens and political elites found themselves in a situation that had not occurred since the end of WWII. Yet, as the Gulf War didn’t present a threat to Japan’s safety, public opinion remained consistent. When asked if Japan should dispatch the JSDF in the case of a Middle-East type crisis that affects Japan, only 9% approved in 1990 and later 19% in when asked again in 1991 (Midford 83).

**Figure 2.5: The SDF Overseas, 1991**

**Opinions about deploying the SDF overseas, What do you think of deploying the SDF overseas?**

The SDF should not be deployed overseas.................................................................21%

May deploy to render nonmilitary assistance, such as disaster relief/Would recognize a military role under U.N. command, such as participation in a UNPKO Army........................................46%
May participate in military activities such as Gulf War multilateral army.......................................5%

Other answers/don’t know..............................................................................................................5%


Japan’s cooperation with the UNPKO mission in Cambodia, A UN PKO has begun in earnest in Cambodia. How do you think Japan should respond?

Provide financial and economical assistance...............................................................37%

Organize private individuals and dispatch them for nonmilitary operations..................20%

Dispatch the SDF to participate in nonmilitary operations.............................................22%

Dispatch the SDF to participate in the peacekeeping force (army)..............................12%

Other/don’t know......................................................................................................................9%


Again, the 1990s represent a healthy relationship between Japanese security policy and public opinion. International events like the Gulf War and crisis in Cambodia inevitably forced Japan to tinker with security policy. Yet, security policy yielded to public opinion as demonstrated by the PKO Bill that allowed the JSDF to have a presence in Cambodia to monitor elections. After the Gulf War, public opinion polls reflected a resurgence in pacifism as approval for JSDF or civilian dispatch to areas of regional conflict decreased, though the approval rate was already low in the first place. Once again, public opinion was quick to respond to political elites and as demonstrated by Paul Midford’s research, surveys often noted a healthy response rate. Japanese political elites
therefore had incentive to respond to public opinion, otherwise the politicians may lose their popularity.

2000-2009

The 2000s presented more complex security problems for Japanese policy. The events of September 11th, 2001 triggered a review of Japanese security policy, especially considering Japan’s fear of being ensnared in another country’s war. Japanese feared that Japan would have no choice but to send JSDF troops to assist the U.S. in Afghanistan and Iraq. This decade also witnessed another ambitious, multi-term prime minister push Japanese security policy as PM Yaushiro Nakasone did in the 1980s as well as before his terms as a PM. Once elected in 2001, PM Junichiro Koizumi made strides towards renewing the LDP-based nationalism exhibited by previous LDP PMs and also attempted to enable the JSDF more than ever before to participate in international operations other than those with a humanitarian basis. PM Junichiro Koizumi’s efforts were viewed most popular at 65% in 2004, but then quickly began to fall erode throughout the rest of his term (Midford 157). In a 2007 Kyodo poll, 54.6% had answered they did not support constitutional revision while only a mere 18.3% supported the idea (Midford 148). In many ways, though ultimately unsuccessful, PM Junichiro Koizumi had attempted to set the stage for his predecessor, Shinzō Abe to revise the constitution. Notably, Midford’s data displays this attitudes throughout conservative and liberal newspapers (Midford 158). Similarly, public approval for the dispatch of the SDF to the Indian Ocean to assist in refueling operations, an activity neither humanitarian nor particularly war-like, eroded as the decade continued (Midford 159-167).
Support for constitutional revision, as well as expanding the military-industrial complex in general also further decreased after the JSDF returned from Iraq. Midford dubs this behavior as Japan’s “Iraq syndrome” (Midford 146). At the start of the Iraq War, Japan was pushed into a corner and saw no choice but to allow the JSDF to deploy in order to assist American vessels in refueling. This legislation became known as the Anti-Terrorism Special Measure Law which was passed under PM Junichiro Koizumi and set to expire in 2006. The bill was initially unpopular as a Yomuri poll in 2002 noted only 35.2% of Japanese supported the deployment of the JSDF and this number continued to decline throughout the life of the bill (Midford 148). In 2007, many sources both conservative and liberal were recording multiple polls in which Japanese public opinion did not favor continuing support in the Iraq War. Even Japan’s own Defense Agency noted that deployment of the JSDF in the Iraq War was a mistake and the public agreed in an Asahi Shimbun poll with 57% of respondents empathizing and 26% not empathizing (Midford 149-150).

Public opinion in Japan remained consistent with only incremental changes. Paul Midford’s extensive review of polls provided by the Roper Center, as well as government sources and other newspapers supported his thesis that the Japanese public saw “…military force as having utility for homeland defense but not for offensive military operations overseas” (Midford 170) and that these sorts of opinions have been consistent and influential over the decades (Midford 171). Translated polls from the Maureen and Mike Mansfield foundation also support Midford’s thesis. The Koizumi administration eventually paid the price for their breaking of the public opinion and policy relationship.
At the end of the decade, the parliament lost control of the Democratic Party of Japan who then held parliament until Shinzō Abe was elected in 2012.

Similar to the 1990s, the 2000s exhibited another break in LDP domination but also prime ministers resigning due to scandals and for the first time, early resignation due to abysmal approval ratings. Yoshirō Mori followed Keizō Obuchi at the new millennium after the former prime minister died in office. Although of LDP persuasion, Yoshirō Mori’s government suffering poor approval ratings which caused the prime minister to resign in 2001. Despite this unfortunate turn of events, perhaps the most popular and longest serving prime minister since Yasuhiro Nakasone was then elected - Junichiro Koizumi. Koizumi enjoyed wild popularity within Japan and served until September 2006. At this time, Junichiro Koizumi then resigned as he had reached the maximum time an LDP politician was allowed to serve as prime minister. Junichiro Koizumi was then followed by Japan’s present prime minister, Shinzō Abe. However, PM Abe’s term was short lived due to the unpopularity of his focus on continuing Junichiro Koizumi’s unpopular policies and poor health. Yasuo Fukuda took Shinzō Abe’s place in late 2007 and ended his term in 2008. Tarō Asō of the LDP concluded the reign of the LDP in the Japanese parliament. The decade was ended by the victory of Yukio Hatoyama of the Democratic Party of Japan in late 2009.


Within the last decade, Japan has begun to face even more new problems demanding more strains on Japanese security. 2010 saw a disturbance in Sino-Japanese
relations as conflict reappeared at the Japanese-named Senkaku or Chinese-named Daiayutai islands in the East China Sea. In 2011, Japan was shocked by the Great Tohoku Earthquake and the resulting Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant explosion. The issue of the performance of the Naoto Kan administration during the Fukushima nuclear disaster as well as raising taxes to support reconstruction and cleanup of the Sendai area were Japan’s primary concerns while thoughts of security policy were set aside. Finally, 2013 began Prime Minister Shinzō Abe’s quest to revise Article 9 of the Japanese constitution thus allowing complete deployment of the JSDF to any region of the world, for any reason.

The most recent decade in Japan opened with the continued dominance of the Democratic Party of Japan via Yukio Hatoyama. Naoto Kan of the DPJ was elected in mid-2010 only to resign due to poor approval ratings on account of the government handling the Fukushima nuclear disaster poorly. Yoshihiko Noda followed Naoto Kan’s resignation. The LDP then recaptured the parliament in 2012 by the election of a previous prime minister, Shinzō Abe. Shinzō Abe holds the office of prime minister as of early 2018.

The beginning of the 2010s was primarily focused on domestic issues, diplomacy with China and diplomacy with the U.S. Polls from various conservative and liberal newspapers as well as government sources display that Japan seems to maintain the same disposition as it did during the previous decade. As Figure 2.6 indicates, Japanese still saw humanitarian relief as the appropriate use for the JSDF.
Figure 2.6: The SDF Overseas, 2010

Q27. (J) What do you think should be done from now on regarding the Japan Self Defense Forces’ overseas activities? (Select one)

Except for disaster relief, there is nothing they should be doing overseas........................................21%

Should be limited to U.N.-related activities..................................................................................................................59%

Should accept U.N. activities and non-U.N. activities such as activities required by the U.S.....15%

Source: Data from Asahi Shimbun Telephone Poll. December 2010. Translated by the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation.

However, as the polls from Figure 2.7 note, Japanese public opinion noted a difference between providing humanitarian support to the U.N. and providing military support to the U.N. The 59% that answered the JSDF should be limited to U.N. related activities as opposed to the 21% that answered the JSDF should not be overseas with the exception of disaster relief indicates yet another incremental shift towards the defensive realism purported by Paul Midford.

Figure 2.7: Cabinet Priorities, 2010

Q3. From following list, please select one issue, if any, that you would like the Kan cabinet to prioritize:

Economic conditions and job security..................................................................................................................34%
Social security reform, including pensions and healthcare.................................................................27%
Support for childcare and countermeasures for declining birthrates..............................................8%
Tax reform such as the issue of the consumption tax.................................................................10%
Diplomacy, national defense, and security.................................................................................14%
The problem of money in politics..............................................................................................................7%
Other.........................................................................................................................................................1%
Nothing in particular..................................................................................................................................0%
No answer......................................................................................................................................................1%
Ambitious adjustments to Japan’s security policies did not occur until Shinzō Abe obtained office. At this time, security policy and public opinion began to clash. At present date, security policy in Japan has not adhered to public opinion. Rather, moves to enable Japan’s military sales and the capabilities of the JSDF have been made. PM Shinzō Abe raised Japan’s self-imposed Arms Export Ban which has resulted in attempted foreign military sales to Vietnam, the Philippines, and Australia. Japan has attempted to sell submarines, coast guard vehicles, and military training, especially that pertaining to the coast guard or navy. Instead of relying on the U.S. for fighter planes, Japan chose to domestically develop its own version of the Lockheed Martin F-35 fighter plane. Meanwhile, public opinion fumed that security policies were being lead in this direction. Figure 2.8 demonstrates what policies Japan public opinion desired to see input. An Asahi Shimbun poll in September of 2014 asked the same question yielding nearly the same results. “Nuclear power/energy” increased to 13%, “Education” decreased to 7%, “Diplomacy and security” increased to 11% and “Constitutional amendment” increased to 5% (The Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation 2016).

Figure 2.8: Cabinet Priorities, 2013-2014

Q8. What policy do you want Abe to put in the most effort? (Choose one of the following)

- Economy and employment……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..35%
- Social security………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………25%
- Nuclear power/energy………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………11%
- Education………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….9%
- Diplomacy and security……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..9%
- Constitutional amendment……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..4%
Q8. What policy do you want Abe to put in the most effort? (Choose one of the following)

- Economy and employment .......................................................... 35%
- Social security ........................................................................... 25%
- Nuclear power/energy ................................................................. 13%
- Education .................................................................................. 7%
- Diplomacy and security ............................................................... 11%
- Constitutional amendment ......................................................... 5%

Source: Data from Asahi Shimbun Poll. July 2014. Translated by the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation.

Figure 2.9 demonstrates that as PM Shinzō Abe and the LDP-dominated Diet approached constitutional revision of Article 9, public opinion disagreed. When asked again in June 2015 if the national security bill being presented to the Diet must be passed in the current term, 17% of respondents answered “Yes” while 65% of respondents answered “No”. An early July poll with the same wording yielded nearly the same results with 20% of respondents answering “Yes” and 69% of respondents answering “No”. The same question was posed in later July with 19% of respondents answering “Yes” and 66% of respondents answering “No”. Japanese public opinion displayed further lack of faith in the national security bill to revise Article 9 by responding to an Asahi Shimbun poll in June 2015 at 33% that the bill would improve Japan’s ability to deter a foreign attack and 40% that did not agree. In a July poll of similar nature, only 31% agreed that if the bill became law, it would contribute to Japan’s safety and 42% responded that the bill would not contribute to Japan’s safety. Furthermore, when asked in July 2015 if respondents thought the new security bill violated the Japanese constitution, 48%
answered “Yes” and 24% answered “No” (The Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation 2016).

Perhaps confusion concerning PM Shinzō Abe’s security policies were displayed in July and November of 2014. Public opinion exhibited evenly divided opinions concerning PM Shinzō Abe’s security policy. When asked if satisfied with the foreign and security policy Prime Minister Abe takes, 38% answered “Yes” and 40% answered “No”. Later in November, the divide continued to narrow by 41% answering “Yes” and 40% answering “No” when asked if the respondent supported PM Abe’s diplomatic and security efforts. Yet, these polling questions are outnumbered by the amount of polls disagreeing with the new national security bill.

Figure 2.9: Constitutional Revision and Abe Cabinet, 2013-2015

Q9. This is a question about the right of collective self-defense. The right of collective self-defense is, when an ally country like the U.S. is attacked, even if Japan is not attacked, Japan will see this attack as an attack to Japan as well and fight together. Up until now, the government has interpreted that Japan cannot use the right of collective self-defense based on the constitution. Do you agree or disagree to changing the interpretation of the constitution and allow the use of the right of collective self-defense?

Agree..........................................................................................................................27%

Disagree.......................................................................................................................59%

Source: Data from Asahi Shimbun Poll. August 2013. Translated by the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation.

Do you support PM Abe’s decision to change the interpretation of Constitution to implement collective self-defense?

Agree..........................................................................................................................32%

Disagree.......................................................................................................................50%

Source: Data from Asahi Shimbun Poll. December 2014. Translated by the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation.

Do you agree with the national security proposal which may be put before the current Diet? The proposal allows for the use of collective self-defense.

Yes..............................................................................................................................32%

No...............................................................................................................................44%
Do you agree with the expansion of the Self Defense Force activities? The expansion includes increased overseas deployment, and increased support for foreign military activities.

Yes............................................................33%
No.............................................................52%

Source: Data from Asahi Shimbun Poll. March 2015. Translated by the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation.

Do you agree with the current national security bill that has been presented to the current Diet? The bill permits the use of collective self-defense.

Yes............................................................33%
No.............................................................43%

Source: Data from Asahi Shimbun Poll. May 2015. Translated by the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation.

In the case of an international situation that threatens Japanese peace and security, the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) may support U.S. forces as they diminish the situation. However, the SDF may only provide support within Japan’s immediate geographical vicinity. Do you support the bill that would extend the geographical reach of foreign military support?

Yes............................................................29%
No.............................................................53%

Source: Data from Asahi Shimbun Poll. May 2015. Translated by the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation.

We will now ask about SDF deployment, in the case of international conflicts that do not threaten Japanese peace and security. At the present time, the Diet is required to pass a new law each time they wish to deploy the SDF in these circumstances. The new bill would allow the government to deploy SDF forces abroad without passing a new law each time. Do you support this bill?

Yes............................................................30%
No.............................................................54%

Source: Data from Asahi Shimbun Poll. May 2015. Translated by the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation.

The Abe administration aims to pass the new national security bill in the Diet’s current term. Do you believe that it must be passed within this term?

Yes............................................................23%
No.............................................................60%
We will now ask about the security bill which has been presented to the current Diet. Do you agree with the bill, which allows for the use of collective self-defense, and expands the SDF activities abroad?
Yes..................................................................................................................29%
No.....................................................................................................................53%

Source: Data from Asahi Shimbun Poll. June 2015. Translated by the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation.

We will now ask about the security bill which has been presented to the current Diet. Do you agree with the bill, which allows for the use of collective self-defense, and expands the SDF activities abroad?
Yes..................................................................................................................26%
No.....................................................................................................................56%

Source: Data from Asahi Shimbun Poll. July 2015. Translated by the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation.

We will now ask about the security bill which has been presented to the current Diet. Do you agree with the bill, which allows for the use of collective self-defense, and expands the SDF activities abroad?
Yes..................................................................................................................29%
No.....................................................................................................................57%

Source: Data from Asahi Shimbun Poll. July 2015. Translated by the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation.

More discomfort in the relationship between Japanese public opinion and security policy is revealed in other poll questions, not specifically relating to the revision of Article 9. In a December 2013 poll by Asahi Shimbun, the newspaper asked if the LDP’s overwhelming hold on the Diet was a good thing in which respondents answered “Good” 19% and “Bad” 68%. The same poll also asked, considering the current Diet sessions, if the Abe administration and the LDP were listening to the voice of the people in which 16% responded “Yes” and 19% “No”. An October 2014 Asahi Shimbun poll also recorded that when asked if the presence of another party in necessary to compete with
the LDP, 9% answered “No” and 80% answered “Yes”. Later in 2015, more anxiety was
demonstrated by the Japanese public as another Asahi poll revealed that 46% of
respondents felt their voices were reflected very little in the runnings of their local
governments. 40% Responded “Yes, Somewhat”, 16% responded “Yes, well reflected”
and 7% responded “No, not at all”. Furthermore, when asked in May 2015 if the
respondent agreed with PM Shinzō Abe’s argument that Japan will never get caught up in
a U.S. war, 19% answered “Yes” and 68% answered “No”. An astounding 81% agreed
when polled in June 2015 that if the national security bill became law, the risk of troops
being involved in combat would increase. In later July 2015, 79% of respondents agreed
that Japan would also now be more likely to find itself entangled in combat situations.
Only 13% disagreed. More resounding disagreement was displayed when asked if PM
Abe’s attempts to legitimize collective defense by reinterpreting rather than amending the
constitution were acceptable even when this method bypassed the formalities of
amendment. 10% Responded “Yes” and 74% responded “No” (The Maureen and Mike
Mansfield Foundation 2016).

In 2017, public opinion reflected a new change. A study by the Sasakawa Peace
Foundation examined 2017 public opinion polls from Asahi Shimbun, NHK, Mainichi
Shimbun, Nikkei Shimbun, Yomiuri Shimbun and even Kyodo news. Thus, by covering a
large variety of newspapers, a diverse population was surveyed in order to balance bias in
between different Japanese newspapers. Tobias Harris of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation
notes that “…the polls conducted over the last month [May 2017] suggest that the public
is receptive to a debate on revision and that there is a pathway for Abe to realize his
pledge” (Harris 2017). The polls offered by the swatch of newspaper studied by Harris
reveal that the same sharp divide between opposition and approval of the revision of Article 9 still exist but the amount of Japanese citizens uncertain or undecided has increased. Harris notes *Asahi Shimbun* has called this group the “persuadable middle” (Harris 2017). For example, in the *Asahi* and *Yomiuri* polls, 50% and 49% answered that constitutional revision is not necessary (Harris 2017). When asked more specifically about revising the peace clause within Article 9, 25% of respondents to an NHK poll said the change was necessary while 57% disagreed (Harris 2017). Yet a high of 36% of responders was recorded as not having any particular opinion on constitution revision (Harris 2017). The Sasakawa study by Harris also noted that when asked if pacifism plays a role in the respondent’s choice, an astounding 82% agreed pacifism influenced their decision (Harris 2017).

It is apparent a breakdown between public opinion and security policy has been present within the last few years in Japan. However, in 2016 and 2017 PM Abe has been more careful to heed public opinion as opposed to his first term as prime minister in 2006. Paul Midford’s argument that Japanese public opinion has been shifting from pure pacifism to defensive realism is also confirmed as this data demonstrates Japanese public opinion has been, albeit slowly, more receptive to allowing the JSDF more capabilities over time. However, it seems the political elites are not responding as they did in Japan’s previous decades. Instead of watering down bills before they are made into legislation, the LDP-dominated Diet has been unrelenting in their quest to revise Article 9 by 2020. Yet in order to achieve this goal, Abe and the LDP will need to carefully monitor public opinion as revision of the constitution and Article 9 in particular, requires a public
referendum. Therefore public opinion is pivotal in determining the future of Japan security policy as well as the security environment within the Asia Pacific.

**Conclusions**

Public opinion polls as well as extensive research of public opinion polls by John K. Emmerson, Tobias Harris, and Paul Midford demonstrate that Japanese public opinion has often been consistent in many ways. Public opinion has been noted to respond the same way to security policy, 1970-2017. Pacifism is a strong factor that influences poll respondents. If public opinion differs over the decade, it is only in incremental movements. The incremental movements are best described as a shift to defensive realism with some pacifist elements still present (Midford 2011). The primary example of this is that over time, Japanese public opinion eventually accepted the dispatch of the JSDF purely for humanitarian operations, disaster relief, or minesweeping efforts. This public opinion research also demonstrates that public opinion plays its role in the Soroka and Wlezien thermostatic model. Public opinion in Japan is consistent, attentive, and a significant amount of citizens respond to public opinion polls. Therefore, Japanese public opinion provides incentives for political elites to harmonize policy, in particularly security policy, with public opinion. Throughout 1970-2010, such was frequently the case. Political elites were mindful of the unpopularity they would face if acting on policies that clashed with public opinion. On several occasions, political elites resigned due to poor public approval. Yet, it is clearly notable that in the last decade, a disconnect between public opinion and security policy happened but policy makers, PM Abe in particular, were quick to respond. This research demonstrates consistent trends in
Japanese public opinion indicating that Japanese do not approve of the constitutional revision of Article 9. Furthermore, there is concern that Japanese feel disconnected and unrepresented by their government, which was also noted as a reason for PM Shinzō Abe’s unpopularity in his first term during 2006-2007 (Midford 159). Japanese further demonstrate their alienation from their government since 2013 by the second largest majority of respondents answering that they identify with no other political party other than the LDP. Other polls note that Japanese will support the LDP as it seems there is no other option though as demonstrated by polls, Japanese strongly believe having multiple parties to oppose each other is vital.
III. CHAPTER 3: A TUMULTUOUS SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Security in Asia Pacific

Chapter 2 demonstrates that post-World War II, Japanese public opinion influences policy. Defense policy is also affected by public opinion. Data selected from conservative, moderate and liberal newspapers demonstrate that Japanese public opinion is not erratic. Public opinion has also only changed incrementally over the decades. Data also demonstrate that Japanese public opinion is not easily swayed by political elites.

While the past two chapters examined Japan’s transition to a westernized democracy in the late 19th century and public opinion patterns concerning defense policy from 1970-2017, this chapter examines how external security factors influence public opinion and defense policy. Japan’s security environment will be examined in the same time frame this research observes public opinion – from 1970-2017. Japan’s closest neighbors, China and the Korean Peninsula are critical points of examination in this research.

Gaiatsu is one of the few factors that have been able to coerce Japanese public opinion to accept less restrictions of Japan’s defense policies. Gaiatsu concerns any action or statement by another country, including the United States, which influences Japanese public opinion to become more accepting of offensive capabilities and also causes political elites to tilt Japan’s defense policies in the same offensive direction. Japan’s gaiatsu obdurately radiates from the U.S., Japan’s primary ally. Therefore, gaiatsu from the U.S. in particular, has had a burgeoning influence as Japan is deeply connected to the U.S. militarily and economically.
Past examples include foreign pressure on Japan to offer more than “checkbook diplomacy” in major world conflicts (George 1991). The first example of Japan contributing to an international conflict with personnel, rather than money, occurred during the Gulf War in the early 1990s. As chapter 2 demonstrated, public opinion warmed ever so slightly to the idea of sending Japanese abroad but not enough to dispatch the Japanese Self Defense Forces. Ultimately, only a small group of less than 20 civilians was dispatched for a brief period. In late 2017, Japan faces a slew of challenges that weigh on the country’s defense policies. Some examples include China’s actions in the South and East China Sea, China’s military buildup, tension attributed reparations demanded by “comfort women” in South Korea, the United States becoming less of a reliable defense partner and finally, unpredictable security threats attributed to North Korea.

While chapter 2 demonstrates that Japanese public opinion has influence over policy, it is important to examine the changing security environment in Asia Pacific. Polling data show that previously, Japanese public opinion bent ever slightly when a direct security threat affected Japan, or Japan was pressured by other states to contribute more than just money to international conflicts. For example, Japanese public opinion in the 1970s was more pacifist than Japanese public opinion in the following decades because the country did not face a direct security threat until the Gulf War in 1990. The Japanese and neighboring Asia Pacific economies could not be compared and therefore Japan felt few threats from its neighbors. From 1970 to 1980, China’s Gross Domestic Product slowly increased from 92.6 billion to 191.1 billion, USD (The World Bank 2017). Meanwhile, in the same decade, Japan’s GDP rapidly increased from 209.1 billion
to 1.1 trillion USD (The World Bank 2017). Japanese and Chinese defense spending was also incomparable. Prior to 1989, little data is available to indicate Chinese defense spending (SIPRI 2017). It is probable that the ramifications of China’s Cultural Revolution which ended in 1976 impacted China’s defense spending capabilities. In 1990, Japan’s military expenditure was 28.8 billion USD while China’s military expenditure as only 10 billion USD. 5 years later, Japanese military expenditure had increased to 50 billion USD and Chinese expenditure only 12.6 billion USD (SIPRI 2017). China’s military expenditure did not surpass Japan’s until 2005 at 45.7 billion USD (SIPRI 2017). Similarly, many countries within Southeast Asia presented no military threat as many countries in Southeast Asia as well as South Korea were receiving reparations from Japan. As of 2017, Japan’s military expenditure was still higher than any other Asian Pacific nation, with the exception on China (SIPRI 2017). It was not until the Gulf War that Japanese began to feel a threat to their security as well as gaiatsu to contribute more than money to remedy an international conflict.

After North Korea began developing its nuclear program in the early 1990s, pressure accumulated to adjust Japan’s defense policies. With 20 launches of various missiles from 1990-1995, only 2 missile launches from 1996-2000, 12 launches from 2001-2005 and then a rapid increase of missile launches at 76 between 2006-2010 followed by 191 launches 2011-mid 2017, the North Korean threat weighs heavier each year on Japanese defense policy (“North Korea’s nuclear” Nikkei Asian Review). Therefore, it is necessary to examine the changing security environment in Asia Pacific in order to gauge how much influence Japan’s security environment has on public opinion. Direct threats are increasing from North Korea and China also poses a shift in the power
balance of Asia Pacific, therefore posing a threat to Japan’s security. Analyzing public opinion’s reaction to North Korean provocations as well as Chinese defense spending and activity in the East and South China Sea will indicate how Japanese defense policy might change.

Defense spending trends of Asia Pacific countries will also be examining in order to properly view Asia Pacific’s security environment. Particular procurements or productions of military equipment, known as defense articles, will also be examined. While North Korea promotes and provides direct disturbances in Asia Pacific’s security environment, many other security threats have manifested albeit less aggressively. For example, China’s increased military spending and production of defense articles have drawn attention from not only Japan and other Southeast Asian states, but the United States as well. Similarly, foreign military examples also demonstrate shifts in the Asia Pacific environment as security cooperation slowly overpowers traditional diplomacy. Therefore, domestic production of defense articles and the sales of defense articles of Japan and China in particularly, will be examined. Since India is considered part of South Asia and this study examines Asia Pacific, India’s defense activity will not be considered though India was the only other Asian country aside from China in 2005 to surpass Japan’s defense spending in 2014 and 2015 (SIPRI 2017).

**Japan**

Japan’s security environment was without significant threats, post-WWII, until the 1990s when North Korea’s nuclear program began to barrel away from international nuclear safeguards, China’s military began to take to the sea and Chinese defense
spending began to slowly elevate. Until the 1990s when Japan’s GDP dropped to 5.5% in 1990, never to reach beyond 3.3% in growth as of late 2017 (The World Bank 2017), Japan enjoyed economical domination over the Asia Pacific. In the 1960s and 1970s Japan had begun paying reparations to all former Japanese colonies in Asia in separate agreements as, with the exception of the Philippines and Vietnam, many did not sign the Treaty of San Francisco, therefore granting them rights to reparations (Ishikida 20) – 800 million USD to South Korea between 1965-1975, 200 million USD to Burma between 1955-1965, 550 million USD to the Philippines between 1956-1976 and 39 million USD to Vietnam between 1960-1965 (Ishikida 27). Despite Japan giving loans in addition to reparations during these decades, Japan’s economy and economic growth soared above its Asia Pacific neighbors until 2010. This year, China, the only Asia Pacific country to renounce Japanese war reparations, surpassed Japanese GDP (The World Bank 2017). As Japan’s neighbors weren’t nearly as wealthy as Japan, a security threat was unlikely.

Several states may have disagreements with Japan, but proffer low security threats, present day. Although territorial disputes exist between Japan and Russia, present day conflict between Japan and Russia is unlikely. Previously, conflict did not occur between the U.S.S.R. and Japan during the Cold War as the U.S.S.R. was preoccupied with the nuclear threat posed by the U.S. Present day conflict is increasingly unlikely between Japan and Russia as it is in both countries’ interests to cooperate in order to deter threats from North Korea. Disagreement has existed between Japan and South Korea over the Liancourt Rocks, known has the Takeshima islets in Japanese or the Dokdo islets in Korean. South Korea also demands reparations for sex crimes committed by the Japanese military. The demands of the “comfort women” continue to strain diplomatic ties
between South Korea and Japan. However, as demonstrated in 2017 by the first ever joint military exercise between Japan, South Korea and the U.S., and that Japan’s defense budget is always larger than South Korea’s defense budget though South Korea spends nearly 2% more of GDP on defense than Japan (SIPRI 2017), it is unlikely South Korea will pose a threat to Japan’s security. Benign cooperation between Japan and South Korea is also demonstrated by efforts to share intelligence between the two states in order to counter threats from North Korea (“South Korea, Japan” Reuters). Thus, it is apparent that Japan’s primary security concerns are not Russia and most of Asia Pacific but rather, North Korea and China.

North Korea and China pose the most direct threats to Japan’s security environment as both have interacted aggressively with Japan or have the potential for military to military tensions to flare. However, North Korea and China’s provocations destabilizing Japan’s security environment differ. North Korea’s threats have primarily relied upon displays of hard power. North Korea accomplishes these threats through various missile and nuclear bomb tests, despite international condemnation and sanctions. China’s provocations are more subtle. Instead of directly endangering Japan’s population, China ignores international regulations and rulings to navigate the East and South China Seas. Yet, a large, questionable shadow looms behind China’s actions. Consequently, China’s quieter actions weigh almost just as much as North Korea’s explosive behavior as conflict between Japan and China would be more detrimental, complex, and longer lived than conflict between North Korea and Japan.

Between the two states, North Korea has caused more direct threats to Japan’s security environment than China. For example, accompanying North Korea’s rapidly
increasing missile and bomb tests (“North Korea’s nuclear” Nikkei Asian Review) are the North Korean kidnappings of Japanese citizens from 1977-1983. The Japanese government only officially recognizes 17 kidnapped citizens though it is probable more than 17 Japanese were kidnapped by North Korea in order to train North Korean spies (Headquarters for the Abduction Issue, Government of Japan 2011). North Korea returned 5 of the kidnapped Japanese after efforts by PM Junichiro Koizumi but provided unsound evidence that the rest of the kidnapped Japanese had died of natural causes while in North Korea and even gave the remains of supposed kidnapped Japanese citizens to Japan only for DNA tests to determine the remains did not match the identities of the Japanese kidnapped (Headquarters for the Abduction Issue, Government of Japan 2011). Additionally, North Korea verbally antagonizes Japan with apocalyptic threats appearing in news headlines on a regular basis. The combination of inflammatory rhetoric, missile tests and refusal to obey international nonproliferation structures makes North Korea’s actions unpredictable and therefore a great threat to Japanese security.

The nature and variety of North Korea’s missile tests also characterize North Korea’s unique threat to Japan. North Korea’s missile tests began in 1984 with 7 tests of BM-25 Musudan missiles capable of striking Osaka. North Korea’s first nuclear plant did not become operational until 1986 and North Korea’s first nuclear test did not occur until October of 2006, shortly after North Korea claimed it possessed nuclear weapons in 2005. Since North Korea’s first test, the state has tested 6 nuclear weapons to date. Many other types of missiles were tested between 1984 and 2006, including short range ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and the Taepodong-1 which landed in the Pacific Ocean during August of 1998. In the early 1990s, there seemed to be some hope that North Korea
would be placated after signing the Agreed Framework of 21 October 1994 between the United States of America and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea of created by the United Nations and International Atomic Energy Agency that would offer economic assistance in exchange for North Korea dismantling their nuclear program (IAEA 1994). However, after nearly a decade with the absence of North Korean missile tests, North Korea restarted its nuclear reactors in 2002 and then withdrew from the U.N. Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in 2003 on account of the U.S. threatening North Korea’s security (Korea Central News Agency 2003). North Korea stated that “Our country's purpose for entering the NPT lay in removing the U.S. nuclear threat and importantly, in smoothly resolving the country's energy issue with nuclear power [haekdongnyok]”, claimed the U.S. treated North unfairly as “From the outset, the IAEA inspections were not conducted in compliance with the agency's rules and safeguards agreement, but under U.S. manipulation” and notes further bullying attributed to the U.S. throughout the publication (Korea Central News Agency 2003). Thus, unabashedly, North Korea quickly resumed missile and nuclear weapon development shortly after these actions.

 Appropriately, Japan has taken defensive measures to counter North Korea. A review of the equipment possessed by the Japanese military branches demonstrates that the military is strictly defensive, in accordance with Article 9 of the post-World War II constitution. Many defense articles include advanced radar, early warning systems or vehicles and in general, defense articles focused on “…power projection, mobility and ISR (Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance)” (IISS 260). Yet, purchasing or domestically producing defense articles capable of defending Japanese territory only aid Japan’s security so much as Japanese security policy allows the JSDF to use the defense
articles. Even as a missile was shot over the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido in August 2017, the JSDF did not act defensively to shoot down the North Korean Hwasong-12 missile.

Disruptions to Japan’s security environment attributed to North Korea and China are clear, but solutions to remedy Japan’s defensive dilemma are not as delineated. Diplomacy between Japan and North Korea has proven ineffective. North Korea signals that it intends to continue its nuclear program and will only accept diplomacy with the United States. Yet, the U.S. has produced few successful diplomatic efforts towards North Korea after the state was declared an “Axis of Evil” by the Bush administration in 2002 and instead increased sanctions. Under the Trump administration foreign policy in Asia remains vague. The U.S. administration also shows no indication of offering diplomacy towards North Korea, but rather shows of strength by the U.S. military and aggressive rhetoric from President Trump. Although Prime Minister Abe has developed a strong relationship with President Trump, Japan still anxiously seeks reassurance from the U.S. The present U.S. Furthermore, U.S. credibility has decreased within the international community with polls indicating poor views of the Trump administration in Southeast Asia and distrust of President Trump concerning North Korea (Pew Research Center 2017). With diplomacy and traditional alliances rendered unreliable tools for Japan, the archipelago must focus on the capability of its military.

Japan is reacting to shifts in its security environment attributed to that of China and North Korea by turning defense spending towards upgrading its defense-oriented defense articles. In 2016, Japan’s procurement trends “…for the first time, focused on power projection, mobility and Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance (ISR),” (IISS
A shift toward maritime defense articles as opposed to land or air oriented defense articles is also present, most likely in order to defend Japanese sovereignty of the Senkaku Islands especially. Overall, since 2013 Japan has been “…transitioning to a more technologically advanced and mobile force capable” (IISS 223). This has mostly entailed Japan upgrading its existing defense articles with the exception of Japan’s acquisition of the U.S. stealth fighter aircraft, the F-35A (IISS 217) and possible acquisition of the U.S. Terminal High Altitude Area Defense or THAAD manufactured by Lockheed Martin (“Japan may accelerate” Reuters). Japan’s requests to upgrade its existing defense articles such as its SM or standard missile systems to SM-2 Block IIIB Standard Missiles in July of 2016 (“Japan – SM-2 Block IIIB Standard Missiles” DSCA), E2-C Hawkeye early warning aircraft to the E2-D Hawkeye platform (“Japan – E2D Advanced Hawkeye Airborne Early Warning and Control Aircraft” DSCA) and scads of upgrades to Japan’s Aegis naval defense platform (“Japan -- DDG (guided missile destroyer) 7 and 8 AEGIS Combat System (ACS), Underwater Weapon System (UWS), and Cooperative Engagement Capability (CEC)” DSCA).

Aside from defense spending, Japan has also sought to strengthen diplomatic ties in response to its shifting security environment. Japan has sought to reaffirm ties with Australia in light of Chinese activity in the East and South China Sea. Japan and Australia signed the Economic Partnership Agreement in 2014, “…pledging further cooperation on cyber security and defence-technology exchanges” (IISS 223). Japan has also attended more diplomatic meetings with South Korea in order to combat the North Korean threat (“S Korea and” Al Jazeera) (“Korea, US, Japan” The Korea Herald).
In 2015, Japan revised its defense guidelines with the U.S. These four major changes were the implementation of The Law on Response to Contingencies, The Law to Ensure Security in Contingencies, The International Peace Support Law and revisions to the International Peace Cooperation Law. The four laws further enabled the JSDF to support allies or the U.N. logistically or offensively if a clear threat to the Japanese people was demonstrated (IISS 230). These changes included four major points that were hard-won in the Japanese parliament. After the changes to the U.S.-Japan defense guidelines were made, wide-spread protests occurred advocating that the changes would open the door to more global deployments for the JSDF (IISS 230).

It is telling that while Japan is seeking more domestic production of defense articles, Japan is not actively seeking to construct a nuclear weapons. In late 2017, when asked in a public opinion study by Geron NPO, 69% of Japanese answered that they were opposed to Japan acquiring a nuclear weapon, even in light of North Korean nuclear threats (Genron NPO 2018). A realist perspective contends that nuclear weapons provide stability and security for Japan. However, Japan is the only country to suffer not one, but two nuclear attacks. Japan’s northwest coast was also decimated by the Fukushima nuclear power plant accidents triggered by the Great Tohoku Earthquake in March of 2011. Japan is further constrained from producing nuclear weapons by its self-imposed Three Non-Nuclear Principles in the early 1960s, which, though not formally adopted into law, Japan has used the Three Non-Nuclear Principles to guide its nuclear policy. These principles state that Japan shall not produce, possess or introduce nuclear weapons on Japanese territory (Nuclear Threat Initiative 2017). While these three principles bear a striking resemblance to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty of the United Nations, Japan
has not signed the Nuclear Arms Ban being circulated during the 2017 United Nations conference. PM Abe has also indicated that production of a nuclear weapon is allowed by the Japanese constitution, so long as the weapon is produced for defensive means (“Japan’s Constitution Allows” International Business Times). Yet, Japan does not intend to review its Non-Nuclear Principles and instead has sought to upgrade its defensive defense articles (“Japan has no” The Global Times). After existing with China as a nuclear neighbor since the early 1960s and with North Korea as a nuclear neighbor since the early 1990s, the chances of Japan developing a nuclear weapon are low. Debating the production of nuclear weapons is also considered taboo among Japanese politicians as public sentiment against nuclear weapons and Japan’s nuclear allergy is strong (Nuclear Threat Initiative 2017). Even if Japan considered constructing a nuclear weapon in light of North Korean threats, the weapon wouldn’t be functional for 3-5 years and would cost an estimated additional 1.7-2.5 billion dollars over this time frame (Lewis 2006) on top of whatever other defense articles Japan desired to purchase, upgrade or produce domestically. It is a misnomer to assume Japan could build a nuclear weapons in six months, as some U.S. officials have claimed (“If Japan Wanted” Foreign Policy Magazine). Finally, Japan is still under the U.S. “nuclear umbrella” so it is strategically and financially wiser to rely on an ally that already has many nuclear weapons ready to use than to invest in Japan’s own nuclear weapon that wouldn’t be ready in time to effectively deter North Korea and would cost Japan billions.
China’s disruptions of Japan’s security environment have increased since the 1990s. The threat China poses to Japan is present but yet murky. China may be taking aggressive action to display ownership of the East and South China Sea but Chinese military strategy has been historically documented as defensive and favorable towards “non-war” or *shenzhan*. For example, “The ideas of ‘non-war’ and ‘shenzhan’ have had a great influence on policy making from ancient times until today. In history, when facing harassing from attacks by nomadic groups, China’s rulers usually used the pro-policy or offered amnesty” (Heng 12). Therefore, Chinese military strategy can be categorized as defensive and less threatening than the threat Japan faces from North Korea. When applying the concept of *shenzhan* to present Chinese military strategy it can be determined that “China’s current defense policy of active defense is to emphasize the premise of strategic defense, combining some tactical attacks with tactical defense, in which attack is a means for defense” (Heng 30). However, China still presents a problem as tensions between Japan and China have continued to spark and smolder, though they haven’t caught fire or exploded, as tensions attributed to North Korea have. For example, China continues to place maritime militias in the East and South China Sea that are described as “…a subset of China’s national militia, an armed reserve force of civilians available for mobilization to perform basic support duties. Militia units organize around towns, villages, urban sub-districts, and enterprises, and vary widely from one location to another” (Department of Defense 56). This strategy, near the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea especially, has been compared to Russia’s implementation of its little green

Despite shenzhen, Chinese activity in the East and South China Sea has unsettled other Asia Pacific state’s sovereignty, further permeating Asia Pacific with unease. Despite the 2016 official ruling in The South China Sea Arbitration (The People’s Republic of the Philippines v. The People’s Republic of China) by the International Court of Arbitration that the Philippines has sovereignty over their portion of the South China Sea, China has continued to build artificial islands, military bases and even small communities in the South China Sea. China also continues commercial fishing in these contested waters. China’s production of aircraft freighters in 2015 and 2016 is also telling of China’s maritime intentions. Southeast Asian states such as Vietnam have reacted to China’s unapologetic activity by increasingly patrols of the South China Sea or, in the case of Indonesia, renaming its portion of the South China Sea to the North Natuna Sea (“Indonesia renames part” Straits Times). These actions may be appropriate if China continues to assert sovereignty over the East and South China Sea as “Contemporary Chinese military culture still has the characteristic of “non-war,” i.e. it still stresses that war should be the last resort to solve problems. But at the same time, the core national interests, such as territorial integrity, sovereignty and national unity have become an unbreakable bottom line for the military” (Heng 29). Therefore, potential conflict may exist in the East and South China Sea if China insists sovereignty over these contested areas though China would likely defend its actions as active defense rather than offensive aggression.
However, Japan’s primary concern rests on the Senkaku Islands, or Diaoyu Islands as they are known in Chinese, within the East China Sea. Disputes over the small chain of relatively uninhabited rocks began in the 1990s. In 2012, after spats over the islands, a Japanese citizen bought the islands in order to nationalize them for Japan. Prior to the Japanese nationalization of these islands, the Senkaku or Diaoyu Islands were claimed by various Chinese and Japanese citizens through symbolic actions such as swimming to the islands or building lighthouses on the islands. PM Shinzō Abe and President Xi Jinping also met for the first time bilaterally in 2014 to discuss and calm the disputes over the islands. Yet, this did not fix the conflict between Japan and China over the islands. Incursions between the Chinese and Japanese coasts guards, as well as aircrafts, are still occurring as of late 2017.

In 2015, a Japanese defense white paper noted the security environment in the East China Sea was becoming increasingly severe and sent 1,100 JSDF personnel to California to take part in training exercises to regain control of the East China Sea islands (IISS 212). There are several factors that contributed to the stance of the 2015 white paper. Japanese policy makers still proved distrustful over the presence of a Chinese oil platform established in the East China Sea during 2013. The most outstanding factor were the increasing incursions of Chinese aircraft around the Senkaku Islands. A concern of Japanese policy makers is that China could declare an Air Identification Zone (ADIZ) over Japanese territory which would violate Japanese sovereignty over the islands. Establishment of such a zone could also lead to an A2/D2 problem or anti-access/area denial in which Japan would not be able to enter the airspace around or perhaps over the Senkaku islands. In the future, this could lead to denying Japan access to the potential
natural resources within the South or East China Sea and an overall hegemony of China in Asia Pacific.

Developments within China’s military are difficult to view clearly as often Chinese military activity and spending is opaque (Cordesman and Kendall 11). The exact number of Chinese military personnel can also only be estimated, though the International Institute for Strategic Studies assumes approximately 2,333,000 Chinese military personnel exist spread across the Chinese Army, Navy, Air Force, Strategic Missile Forces and Paramilitary (IISS 240). These numbers dwarf the estimated numbers of Japanese military personnel at 247,150 (IISS 260), South Korean military personnel at 628,000 (IISS 267) and North Korean military personnel at 1,90,000 (IISS 264). These estimates do not include reserve personnel in which China is estimated to possess 510,000 reserve personnel (IISS 240), Japan 56,100 reserve personnel, South Korea 4,500,000 (ISS 267) reserve personnel and North Korea 600,000 reserve personnel (ISS 264). However, the consistent rise in Chinese defense spending is apparent and has influenced spending in Japan as well as other Asia Pacific states (SIPRI 2017). Similar to Japan and other Asia Pacific states, China has been investing in maritime defense articles (IISS 240). Yet, China’s 2015 defense white paper, ‘China’s Military Strategy,’ also calls for more growth in the areas of space and cyber domains (IISS 221). Meanwhile, maritime strategy is emphasized as important for China to prepare for what seems to be evolving military struggle (IISS 221). China’s white paper further notes that the People’s Liberation Army will adhere to active defense guidelines which means “…assuming the strategic defense, while retaining the right to undertake active, perhaps even pre-emptive,
measures at operational and tactical levels” (IISS 222). These statements within China’s 2015 defense white paper further reflect the Chinese principle of *shenzhan*.

While outside powers may view China’s spending as ever-increasing, in addition to viewing their spending as defensively oriented, China rather views their growth as a “modernization” of the PLA. Whether or not Chinese defense spending, which accounted for 41% of defense spending in Asia Pacific in 2015 (IISS 215), is indicative of China’s military simply catching up with other modern militaries or preparing for something malicious is unknown. However, it is notable that the Chinese budget increased 10.1% from 2014 to 2015 and other Asia Pacific states’ budgets rose accordingly, but not as substantially (IISS 214). For example, in the same time period Japan’s defense budget rose 2.8%, Singapore’s budget rose 5.7% and South Korea predicted incremental budget increases by 7.5% between 2016-2020 (IISS 214-215).

Despite China’s looming, questionable shadow over the Asia Pacific, China is not as an immediate, direct threat to Japan’s security environment as North Korea. Rather, China is an emerging threat that could perhaps be avoided if PM Shinzō Abe and President Xi Jinping may be able to negotiate in order to soothe any rising tensions. China values internal security and founds its military strategy on the defensive philosophy of *shenzhan* whereas North Korea unapologetically has allowed its population to become impoverished as the international community places round after round of sanctions on the vociferous state. Furthermore, Japan and China’s economies are intertwined. Although the Chinese economy has surpassed the Japanese economy, both remain important trading partners. As of August 2017, China remains Japan’s top trading partner, just under the U.S. The Japanese Ministry of Finance noted exports to China rose
to 19.9%, just under the 21.8% of exports to the U.S. and 25.8% of exports to Hong Kong ("Japan Balance of Trade: 1963-2017" Ministry of Finance, Japan). Imports from China rose to 11% but still trailer several other export-providing countries ("Japan Balance of Trade: 1963-2017" Ministry of Finance, Japan). Meanwhile, trade and diplomatic relations between Japan and North Korea are nonexistent with North Korea’s Asia Pacific trading partners being China representing 83% of North Korean exports and 91% of North Korean imports and several Southeast Asia states all under 1% as exports but Thailand representing 2.3% of North Korean imports and the Philippines representing 1.6% of North Korean imports (OEC 2017).

Therefore, it is apparent North Korea is a higher concern than China, especially since the country started its nuclear program in the 1990s. In comparison to China, North Korea’s threat to Japan’s security environment is more unpredictable and volatile than China’s questionable threat. Since China’s highest priorities include internal stability, it is likely Japan and China will not directly threaten or become threats to each other, as both states are economically important to each other. A disruption of trade or perhaps the ability to send goods through airspace or naval waters in the East or South China Sea could affect internal stability in China as well as Japan. Thus, while China’s military modernization prods the balance of power in Asia Pacific, and therefore disrupts Japan’s security environment, there is a stronger chance of diffusing violent tensions because China and Japan are rational actors. Meanwhile, there appears to be little to no chance for Japan to placate North Korea through negotiations.
North Korea

North Korea is not just problematic for Japan’s security environment. Since North Korea started its nuclear program in the 1990s, the small nation has proved itself difficult to pacify. North Korea has become even more of a thorn in the international community since it withdrew from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in 2003. Sanctions have proven to be useless in stopping the fuming state’s erratic missile and nuclear tests. It seems opening diplomatic ties between the U.S. and North Korea, perhaps also South Korea, is the only chance of halting North Korea’s threats. However, as the U.S. has increased military drills, malicious rhetoric and even flown bomber planes past the demilitarized zone, the probability of a diplomatic solution is waning.

The Korean War happened shortly after the close of World War II. After the Korean peninsula split into Northern and Southern states, Japan’s relations with both Koreas sat on thin ice. However, Japan was able to establish diplomatic relations with the democratic South Korea and thus negotiate reparations to be paid to South Korea. Relations with North Korea were barren as the North Koreans condemned Japan for supporting the democratic, South Korean regime. Furthermore, North Korea abducted Japanese citizens from 1977-1983, 17 of which the Japanese government recognizes, in order to train their own intelligence services. Talks to release all of the Japanese hostages did not prove fruitful until the early 2000s when PM Junichiro Koizumi visited North Korea in order to negotiate the hostage’s release. Yet, not all of the hostages were released and further attempts to retrieve the hostages by PM Shinzō Abe were not successful, even when Japan eased sanctions imposed on North Korea. Thus, North
Korean-Japanese ties have always been either strained or absent and the two states share little to no trade.

North Korea regularly boasts of the various ways it plans to destroy the West and its allies. While North Korea may possess chemical and biological weapons, the most obvious and immediate threat North Korea demonstrates is a nuclear or missile attack. North Korea’s plethora of missiles and nuclear tests are indicators of this threat to Japan’s security. One of the most recent provocative IRBM tests in 2017 glided over the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido and landed roughly 2,200 km west of the island in the Sea of Japan (“North Korea responds” The Japan Times). The missile was not intercepted as the JSDF determined the IRBM would not strike Japanese territory.

Since 1984, North Korea has slowly developed its ballistic missile technology from medium range ballistic missiles to intercontinental missiles named “Hwasong” with the potential to carry nuclear warheads. Of the limited data available, it is apparent North Korea has been focused on the miniaturization of a nuclear warhead and improving the deliverability of a nuclear warhead. North Korea’s Hwasong 13, an ICBM, is the regime’s latest missile of land-orientation though it has yet to test successfully. Similarly, drafts for submarine launched ICBMs by North Korea have surfaced yet little evidence is available to support their existence (IISS 264). Yet, North Korea has not been able to improve its rocket technology from liquid to hard fuel thus causing errors in missile tests. Furthermore, nuclear weapons seems to be the only prominent feature within the North Korean military thus indicating that North Korea has put the vast majority of its funds to develop nuclear weapons from the Russian technology it was able to obtain in the early 1990s and scraps of military materials from China. Other non-nuclear military
technologies, primarily taken from Russia and China are growing increasingly obsolete with limited evidence of any attempts of modernization (IISS 264).

Thus, as Japan stares a ruthless regime in the face, it is made apparent that North Korea is a less rational state than China that will do anything spread its revenge against the West, primarily by protecting its nuclear program at any cost. There is not hope for diplomatic negotiations to harness North Korea’s nuclear threat as North Korea is only interested in negotiating with the U.S. History also demonstrates North Korea’s intransigence and taciturnity considering its nuclear program and scarcity of successful U.S. diplomatic negotiations that rely on sanctions. These unsteady circumstances leave Japanese political elites few choices but to reexamine Japan’s ability to defend itself against an attack from North Korea. Hence, Japan’s choice to upgrade its own ballistic missile defense systems and its defense articles capable of detecting an incoming attack.

**Conclusions**

It is apparent that North Korea and China are the primary perpetrators disturbing Japan’s security environment. Both states represent different kinds of threats; North Korea’s threat is less predictable, erratic and the most immediate. Meanwhile, China’s threat is emerging rather than direct. Yet, while Japan may have more hope in negotiating peace with China, China’s modernization of the PLA and activity in the East and South China Sea casts a questionable shadow. Therefore, political elites have sought to adjust Japanese security policy, including Article 9 of the post-WWII constitution, but yet invest in Japan’s defense-oriented military procurements.
Public opinion has reacted negatively to revisions of Article 9 of the post-WWII constitution as well as the 2015 Japanese defense white paper and adjustments to the U.S.-Japan defense guidelines. Public opinion has been skeptical of these choices. Widening the international capability of the JSDF will likely lead to more international deployments of the JSDF and entanglements of Japan in foreign wars. In Shinzō Abe’s first term as prime minister in 2006, Abe was criticized as being too devoted to nationalizing Japan and too disconnected from the public (“Japanese PM Shinzō” The Telegraph). Thus, only time will tell if the Abe administration will follow the same path of nationalization and remilitarization that led it to disconnect from public opinion and thus cause the Liberal Democratic Party to lose a significant portion of parliament seats. PM Abe’s call to a snap election in September of 2017 demonstrates efforts to connect with public opinion and solidify any further action towards North Korea (“Japan’s Abe announces” Reuters).

Yet as research by Paul Midford demonstrates, public opinion becomes less intransient when there is a clear security threat to Japan or Japan feels gaiatsu to contribute more than money to alleviate international conflicts. Research from Pew Research Center in July 2017 demonstrates that only 2% of Japanese have a favorable view of North Korea, 66% are “Very concerned” with North Korea possessing nuclear weapons and 24% are “Somewhat concerned” (“In Asia Pacific” Pew Research Center). Pew also provides research concerning Japanese public opinion on China and Chinese activity in the East and South China Sea. Pew records that as of 2016, 35% of Japanese are “Very concerned” that territorial disputes between Japan and China will lead to military conflict, and 45% “Somewhat concerned” (Pew Research Center 10). Polls
conducted by PM Abe’s September 2017 snap election showed mixed support for the LDP. The Asian Nikkei noted 44% intended to vote for the LDP while Kyodo recorded that 27.7% would vote for the LDP and 42.2% remained undecided (“Japan’s Abe announces” Reuters).

Public opinion recognizes the threats posed by North Korea and China. Polls also indicate that public opinion also registers the severity of the threat proffered by North Korea as opposed to China as only 2% of Japanese think favorably of North Korea (“In Asia Pacific” Pew Research Center) while, albeit not a high number, 11% favorably view China (Pew Research Center 2). If public opinion follows the same pattern as it has in the past, Japanese public opinion may yield to loosening the restraints placed on the JSDF, post-WWII. Yet, as past public opinion trends indicate, public opinion may continue to be stubborn and only allow the slightest of changes to Japanese defense policy (Midford 2011). The Japanese security environment is rapidly fluctuating which makes the future of Japanese defense policy somewhat uncertain if Japan must act quickly in order to defend itself from a North Korean attack. As Japan has not been attacked directly from another country since WWII, it is questionable what direction public opinion will move if Japan is attacked by North Korea and Japan’s defensive military is unable to intercept such an attack.
IV. CHAPTER 4: LESSONS FROM PRESENT DEFENSE POLICIES

Japanese Defense Policy

Defense policies are a key component of a state’s identity. As history demonstrates, investing in a state’s military is an indication of a state’s ambition to dominate its region. This has been observed, for example, by Japan’s military buildup in the early twentieth century. Imperial Japan’s efforts led to China’s defeat at the Battle of Shiminoseki and later invading South Korea and a large portion of Southeast Asia prior to the conclusion of World War II. However, a state’s military, a key tool of defense policies, can also bolster a state’s influence in less belligerent ways. Militaries and defense policies may send personnel to assist in humanitarian operations. Specifically, a state may also send military personnel through United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. A state’s ability to sell defense technology to neighboring states also spreads the state’s power. In the Asia Pacific, defense policies have been shifting for the last three decades as China began modernizing the People’s Liberation Army and playing a stronger economical role in the Asia Pacific. Additionally, the continuous development of North Korea’s missile and nuclear programs as well as North Korea’s erratic behavior have influenced defense policies in Japan, China and South Korea especially.
Thus, the Asia Pacific’s defense policies have existed in ever-morphing shapes in order to counter the region’s unstable security environment.

Previous chapters have demonstrated that Japanese defense policies have been characterized by pacifism since their inception, post-WWII. Public opinion influences defense policy and has prevented Japan from remilitarizing, despite increased direct or indirect threats from China and North Korea. Therefore Soroka and Wlezien’s thermostatic model of democracy is supported and Japan’s evolving role in the Asia Pacific, explained. This research also notes that security environment factors have been the primary element that has notably influenced public opinion away from its pacifist grounding as demonstrated by Japan’s involvement in U.N. PKO and other humanitarian relief operations such as demining operations.

As of early 2018, Japan faces a critical security dilemma. Direct threats, especially nuclear threats, from North Korea have increased. China’s rise as a dominant power has persisted. The Abe administration has proposed adjusting Japan’s pacifist policies since he was re-elected in 2012. Specifically, Abe hopes to reinterpret Article 9 of Japan’s present constitution to allow the Japanese Self Defense Forces to deploy on any variety of international missions without a turgid debate within the Japanese parliament. Yet, public approval of reinterpreting Article 9 has been mixed, with the majority typically favoring no reinterpretation of Article 9. Furthermore, previous attempts to increase the role of the JSDF outside of Japan have been thwarted not only by public opinion but also poor coordination exhibited by the prime minister (Shinoda 5). Bureaucratic structures, zoku or “interest groups,” and industrial interests are additional structures that have complicated efforts to adjust Japanese defense policy. Tomohito
Shinoda comments “Some even argued that the bureaucracy was so strong that political leaders, including the prime minister, had a limited role in policy making,” (Shinoda 5). Finally, no formal process or protocol exists for reinterpreting the present Japanese constitution. Thus, a stable path to the reinterpretation of Article 9, strengthening of Japan national identity, and a counter to Chinese influence, may not manifest itself gracefully or at all.

Therefore, an examination of previous successful Japanese defense policies is needed to forecast what circumstances may allow Abe to successfully reinterpret Article 9. Although the revision of Article 9 may be a difficult process, reinterpretation is possible. Some of the elements that promote reinterpretation of Article 9 include an increasingly precarious security environment and Abe’s proficient coordination and leadership. Abe has presented strong leadership within the Japanese parliament and international community while the United States’ role in the Asia Pacific has become less reliable. Previously chapter 2 reviewed public opinion data in comparison to major Japanese defense policies. This chapter presents Japanese defense policies from 1970 through 2017 in order to observe patterns and develop forecasts concerning the future of Japanese defense policy and the future of the Asia Pacific’s security environment.

**Japanese Defense Policy and Article 9**

The Constitution of the Empire of Japan, established in 1889, lacked any articles as restrictive as Japan’s present Article 9. In contrast, the Constitution of the Empire of Japan contained writing that shifted proper civilian control away from the military. Consequently, Japan’s pre-war government was filled with military personnel. The
defense budget swelled to as much as 22.7% of the national budget, a number greater than the budgets of the U.S.S.R., Italy, or Germany, by the end of WWII (Elorata 2005). After Japan’s defeat in 1945, the state adopted a new constitution heavily influenced by the U.S. Conversely, the political elites that designed Japan’s first constitution chose to follow the Prusso-German model of government. Notable differences between the two constitutions were that the Japanese emperor was required to renounce his divine status and Japan’s war-waging capability. The emperor also lost his ability to control the Japanese military as well as determine the organization of the military (National Diet Library 2004). Additional features that demilitarized Japan’s defense policies included the Japanese Arms Export Ban, three non-nuclear principles and the absence of a substantial defense department infrastructure. Undeniably, Imperial and post-WWII Japan are discernible contrastive states.

As of early 2018, the 1947 Constitution of Japan has not been amended. Yet, the dilemmas surrounding Article 9 may break the constitution’s implacable reputation as reinterpretation or revision of Article 9 is a perpetual topic in Japanese politics. Even after the onset of the new post-WWII Japanese constitution, Article 9’s pacifist intentions were questioned by practically-minded, conservative, within the Liberal Democratic Party. Politicians pushed to amend the postwar constitution after the occupation of Japan ended as the new constitution was not enacted by the Japanese people (Umeda 2006). Although Japan faced few surrounding security threats post-WWII, the most immediate being the Korean War from 1950-1953, some politicians still questioned how Japan would defend itself after the American occupation ended. Several efforts were made to bring attention to the revision or reinterpretation of Article 9, but such proposals were
dismissed in order to give the most attention to Japan’s economic development. Article 9 was not reintroduced to the parliament’s spotlight until Yasuhiro Nakasone was elected prime minister in 1982. Nakasone was the first of Japan’s prime ministers to emphasize the revision or reinterpretation of Japan’s constitution. However, despite Nakasone’s patriotic efforts to inject pride and nationalism into Japanese society, no approved bill emerged through the ranks of the Japanese parliament during his term and discussions of Article 9 were tabled in favor of other issues (Umeda 2006).

The revision or reinterpretation of Article 9 was not proffered as a critical issue again until Junichiro Koizumi took office in 2001. With the aid of the Constitution Research Committee, established in 2000 by the LDP, the party released its first draft of the amended constitution in November 2005 (Umeda 2006). However, the language of the draft was critically viewed by the opposing DPJ and no bills achieved the two-thirds majority vote to bring constitutional amendment to referendum (Umeda 2006). Article 9 did not sustain notoriety for nearly two decades due to the prime minister’s inability to lead and fully utilize and coordinate Japanese institutions to the policy goal’s advantage in addition to poor public support. For example, PM Koizumi primed the Japanese government for Shinzō Abe to harness the revision or reinterpretation of Article 9. Yet, Abe failed to do so in his 2006-2007 term by ineffectively leading and for being too disconnected from public opinion, therefore receiving abysmal approval ratings. Here, effective leadership is described by Tomohito Shinoda as the successful balancing of centralized institutions and bureaucratic support as well as recognizing the importance of institutions (Shinoda 7).
Tomohito Shinoda notes Nakasone, Koizumi, and even Abe, despite his first poor term, as successful leaders that also all belong to the Japanese LDP. Similarly, all three prime ministers achieved multiple terms as prime minister, Nakasone from 1982-1987 and Koizumi from 2001-2006. Abe served from September 2006-September 2007, was later re-elected in 2012 and still resides as the Japanese prime minister in late 2018.

Another commonality of these prime ministers is that all three believed that Japan should be a leading economic and military power within in the Asia Pacific. Although China did not begin its rise until the 1990s, PM Nakasone was not completely ignorant of the threat Japan's neighbor could pose to Japan’s hegemony. Thus, if Article 9 should be amended and the orientation of the JSDF altered, future prime ministers must heed to Tomohiro Shinoda’s recipe for an effective prime minister.

Attempts to change Article 9 have generally been presented either as revisions or reinterpretations. Revisions of Article 9 and reinterpretations of Article 9 are two distinctly different actions. In the case of the Japanese constitution, a revisions is more severe than a reinterpretation. Proposed revisions of Article 9 have entailed rewriting the article which has not been done to any portion of the post-WWII Japanese constitution. A revision of any part of the Japanese constitution would also require an amendment supported by a two-thirds majority vote within the Japanese Diet.

Reinterpretations however do not entail such an impactful change. By reinterpreting Article 9, or even simple clauses within Article 9, most of the original wording of the article remains intact. Legislation can be created in order to reinterpret the Japanese constitution without a laden two-thirds majority vote. Therefore, proposals of reinterpretations of Article 9 have elicited less visceral responses from public opinion.
Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized. (Government of Japan 2017)

In mid-2015, legislation was passed to reinterpret Article 9 to allow “collective self defense.” In order to pass the legislation, Abe’s LDP utilized a coalition with the New Komeito Party to gain needed votes. The LDP’s coalition with the New Komeito has existed since 1999, shortly after the Komeito renamed itself the New Komeito in 1998 (New Komeito 2013). Abe’s reinterpretation of Article 9 is the first successful adjustment to Article since 1945. While the successful reinterpretation of Article 9 was a significant victory for the Abe administration and paves the way for a true revision of Article 9, the motion was met with controversy. Protests filled Tokyo and the bill was criticized by some Japanese opposition leaders as “…a big scar on Japanese democratic politics” (“Japan Curtails Its” Ford).

Abe’s 2012 term demonstrates that the re-elected prime minister has learned from his previous mistakes as Abe has demonstrated skilled leadership through careful coordination within Japan’s bureaucracy and Abe’s utilization of Japanese institutions. Tomohito Shinoda writes, “To successfully exercise political leadership, the prime minister needs to balance centralized institutions and bureaucratic support” (Shinoda 7) and that, “…by doing so, the prime minister can beat institutional, partisan, and intraparty veto players and deliver drastic policies” (Shinoda 229). “Without effective bureaucratic
support, the prime minister cannot achieve major policy changes via top down decision making” (Shinoda 227), which explains the absence of work towards revising or interpreting Article 9 in between Nakasone, Koizumi, and Abe’s tenures. Therefore, structures and institutions also play a significant role in influencing Japanese defense policy, in addition to public opinion. If Japanese leaders do not consider the role institutions or public opinion plays in policy making, the policy goals will not be achieved.

Abe has demonstrated additional, careful attention to coordination among Japanese institutions, bureaucracy and public opinion unlike his 2006-2007 term. At the beginning of Abe’s second term in 2012, Abe reinstated the vice ministerial meeting which allows the prime minister to help promote his or her policies and initiatives within the ministries (Shinoda 235). At the opening of the meeting, Abe noted “In order to tackle the crises our country faces, it is necessary to promote real political leadership based on mutual trust between political leaders and bureaucrats” (Shinoda 235). In September of 2017, Abe called for a snap election in order to test public opinion. The short notice election dissolved half of parliament and called for the public to vote in order to replace the parliament with their preferred candidates. Abe’s snap election was successful and in late October, the dissolved parliamentary seats were replaced with LDP politicians. Abe has also carefully coordinated to reinforce defense policy with structures designed to support defense policy. For example, Abe established a “U.S.-style” National Security Council in order to “…analyze information and deal with crisis situations” (Shinoda 233). This move is reminiscent of Nakasone’s work to elevate the Japanese
Defense Agency to a cabinet-level ministry in the early 1970s, before Nakasone’s term as prime minister.

Although Abe has demonstrated strong leadership skills such as “…successfully balanced between centralized institutions and bureaucratic support and would likely beat institutional, partisan, and intraparty veto players in order to achieve, at least, some of his policy goals” (Shinoda 235), a formidable obstacle remains between his administration and the reinterpretation of Article 9. The first draft Abe’s administration created in 2012 “…called for a revision of the pacifist Article 9, strengthens the role of the emperor, and negates public servant’s right to strike, among other things” (Shinoda 234). The creation of the post-WWII Japanese constitution did not include any mechanism or process for the Japanese parliament to revise or reinterpret the constitution. Even if Abe is able to obtain a majority vote within parliament, there are not rules set in place for politicians to follow in order to change Article 9. Such a situation is likely foreign and uncomfortable for a country whose government has relied heavily upon the tedious processes of democratic bureaucracy for nearly six decades. Therefore, creating a new process for revising or interpreting Article 9 would be dependent on Abe’s ability to coordinate with his fellow politicians and bureaucratic institutions.

Article 96 also poses a problem for the Abe administration. Like Article 9, Abe has been vocal about revising or reinterpreting Article 96. Unlike Article 9, Article 96 does not reference Japan’s defense or military. Rather, Article 96 under Chapter IX named “Amendments” states:

Amendments to this Constitution shall be initiated by the Diet, through a concurring vote of two-thirds or more of all the members of each House and shall thereupon be submitted to the people for ratification, which shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of all votes cast thereon, at a special referendum or
at such election as the Diet shall specify. Amendments when so ratified shall immediately be promulgated by the emperor in the name of the people, as an integral part of this Constitution. (Government of Japan 2017)

The text within Article 96 that Abe’s LDP seeks to change is the passage that mandates amendments requiring a concurring vote of two thirds or more. The Abe administration has pilloried this clause within Article 96 as unfair and an impossible obstacle, should the constitution need to be revised or reinterpreted. The nature of Article 96 has also been unchanged since the establishment of Japan’s first constitution in 1889 where Article 73 also noted that the constitution could not be amended without a two-thirds majority vote (National Diet Library 2004). Therefore, although Abe’s LDP has had control over the Upper and Lower houses of parliament, it is still proposing to lower the concurring vote needed in order to amend the constitution. Concerning a vote to revise or reinterpret Article 9, the party’s chances are precarious. Abe may have demonstrated careful, balanced leadership within the Japanese government yet the LDP is dependent upon a coalition with the New Komeito Party. Since the New Komeito are backed by Soka Gakkai, a Buddhist, peace-oriented party, Abe’s LDP may not be able to rely on the LDP’s coalition with the New Komeito party. As of early 2018, the Abe administration intends to offer another draft to revise the Japanese post-WWII constitution in 2018 and complete the revisions or reinterpretations by 2020 (“LDP aims for” Asahi Shimbun).

The Japanese Self Defense Forces and the Military of the United States

At the close of WWII, Japan underwent a transformation that unveiled a new Japan. A state aggressively focused on military development and hegemony in the Asia Pacific became a state devoted to pacifism. An economy where nearly 30% of the state’s
budget was spent on military development became an economy focused on anything but defense spending. Additionally, Japan morphed from a state that modeled itself after Prusso-German governance to a state that not only relied on the U.S. for military protection but also adopted a more western, U.S. style of governance through the drafting of Japan’s new, post-WWII constitution.

Although the U.S. occupation of Japan ended in 1952, Japan remained heavily dependent on the U.S. military. U.S. preoccupation with the Korean War further increased Japanese security concerns. Prior to the establishment of the JSDF, Japan was permitted to maintain small police forces to attend to Japan’s security while U.S. military forces deployed to the Korean peninsula as needed. The first postwar police organization was initially known as the National Police Reserve which was later renamed the National Safety Force and then changed again to the Coastal Safety Force. These small police organizations slowly evolved into the JSDF which was formally established in 1954 under the Self Defense Forces Act (National Diet Library 2010). Whether or not the JSDF was truly constitutional was debated throughout post-WWII Japanese history though the JSDF was formally declared constitutional in 1994 (Shinoda 59). Debates concerning the constitutionality of the JSDF also thwarted attempts to draw attention to the revision or reinterpretation of Article 9.

After the formal establishment of the JSDF, the U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines remained relatively undisturbed. In 1979, a formal agreement titled the Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation was created which guaranteed the U.S. military as Japan’s defense, should Japan be attacked by a foreign entity. The Cold War especially influenced and supported the U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines as, until the beginning of
China’s challenge to Japan’s hegemony in the Asia Pacific in the 1990s, the Soviet Union existed as a shared threat between Japan and the U.S (Liff 1). Therefore, the U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines during the Cold War focused on deterring and containing the Soviet Union. It was not until 1997 when China’s rise in economy, defense spending, influence, and interference in the East China Sea that Japan revised the U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines. The 1997 Defense Guidelines stated that the changes “…expanded the alliance’s mandate beyond strict territorial defense of Japan. Japan’s Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) were tasked with providing ‘rear-area support’ to US forces in ‘situations in areas surrounding Japan’” (Liff 1). The guidelines underwent another revision in 2015 which still stands as the present guidelines as of early 2018. The establishment of the new guidelines was an achievement of the Abe administration that harmonizes with Abe’s policy goals of a “drastic reshaping” of the Japan-U.S. alliance as well as constitutional revision or reinterpretation (Shinoda 232).

The 2015 revisions of the U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines also demonstrate lessons learned from the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law passed in 2001 and the Replenishment Support Special Measures Law passed in 2008. Both laws lead to controversial deployments of the JSDF outside Japanese territory. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the U.S. Japan once again found itself in an implacable position. Tokyo’s most consequential ally was in need of assistance, yet Japan was restricted by its limited defense policies and public disdain towards involving the JSDF overseas, especially on missions concerning war. Under the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law, the maritime branch of the JSDF deployed to assist refueling operations in the Indian Ocean. Since the operation was not humanitarian, did not entail combat and wasn’t backed by the U.N., the
mission was truly the limit of JSDF involvement in international conflicts. Appropriately, after the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law expired in late 2007, the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Forces returned to Japan. New legislation to resume the refueling operations proved controversial within the Japanese Diet and in public opinion (“The Japanese Navy” Doi). Yet after deliberation between the LDP and the Democratic Party of Japan and mixed public support, the Replenishment Support Special Measures Law was passed in 2008 (Japan Defense Focus 2008). MSDF refueling assistance to the U.S. military continued until the law expired in 2010 at which the Japanese government offered $5 billion aid to civilian assistance in Afghanistan instead of deploying the JSDF (“MSDF wraps up” Asahi Shimbun). Thus, the Abe’s administration’s revision of the 2015 Defense Guidelines represents a clever nostrum. By expanding the JSDF’s ability to work with the U.S. military, authorizing refueling operations, or any sort of non-combat military assistance like those that occurred in the Indian Ocean may become less cumbersome. The 2015 Defense Guidelines may not be legally binding but by expanding the potential for the JSDF and U.S. military to collaborate, the Abe administration’s case for revising and amending Article 9 may gain traction.

Overall, the most recent changes to the U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines emphasizes that the alliance be “seamless, robust, flexible and effective” (“The 2015 U.S.-Japan” Sakoda). Essentially, a more capable JSDF will promote smoother military collaborations with the U.S. military. Also, by opening previously restricted channels, the potential for U.S.-Japan collaborations grows as the JSDF would be able to assist the U.S. military in international operations without the need for the Japanese parliament to pass legislation first. The changes in the 2015 Defense Guidelines also pave the way for a
revised or reinterpreted Article 9 as, “The Guidelines incorporate this adjustment noting various areas where Japan’s Self Defense Forces may now defend U.S. forces, and assets in Japan; during operations in the defense of Japan on the ground, sea and air; during peacekeeping operations; and for air and missile defense” (“The 2015 U.S.-Japan” Sakoda). Unlike amendments to the 1945 Constitution of Japan, the U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines are less dependent on public approval or the approval of the Japanese government. Therefore, expanding the JSDF’s alliance with the U.S. may prove to the international community, Japanese politicians and Japanese public opinion, how beneficial a fully-capable JSDF could benefit Japan.

If the 2015 Defense Guidelines continue to be successful, they may soften public opinion towards remilitarizing the JSDF. While the 1997 changes to the U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines occurred to support the post-Cold War security environment, the 2015 adjustments reflect an anxiety towards China and a direct concern towards North Korea. The fields of space and cyber were also added to the 2015 U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines though the specifications of how the U.S. and Japan may collaborate in these areas were not clearly defined. Space and cyber may also provide another avenue for the JSDF to demonstrate its usefulness in light of the pending revision or reinterpretation of Article 9. For example, expanded U.S.-Japan cyber collaboration may result in the improved protection of Japanese assets especially in light of increased cyber-attacks from North Korea and China that could tamper with Japanese early-warning systems, should Japan detect an incoming ballistic missile. Furthermore, 76% of Japanese fear cyber-attacks above other issues such as climate change and even China’s power (Stokes 5).
Citizen responses to the 2015 Defense Guidelines change were similar to public opinion reactions concerning the revision or reinterpretation of Article 9. The new Defense Guidelines triggered protests and low approval ratings, with nearly 50% of Japanese opposing the new document (“Nearly half of” The Japan Times). However, it is not the U.S. military that Japanese public opinion disdains. Rather, the U.S. military has maintained good approval ratings of at least 50% since in Japan though public opinion in Okinawa remains an outlier after poor U.S. military personnel conduct in Marine Corps Futenma base (Stokes 4). Even though President Donald Trump triggers low approval ratings (Stokes 15-16), the Japanese public still has confidence with the U.S. military as 82% of Japanese believe that the U.S. would defend Japan if Japan was caught in a military conflict with North Korea. Similarly, 62% of Japanese believe the U.S. would defend Japan if Japan was caught in a military conflict with China (Stokes 15).

**Japanese Defense Policy and the United Nations**

The precipice of obstacles that prevent the JSDF from acting as a normal military like that of the U.S. is the nature of the missions presented to the Japanese government. Overall, missions that lack a humanitarian or peacekeeping orientation are rejected. A mission that may connote the slightest use of force also deters the involvement of the JSDF. Even if the JSDF is not waging war through the use of force in a particular conflict, the most insignificant use of force is disparaged as a pathway towards war or becoming entrapped in another state’s war. Therefore, as of early 2018 the most promising avenue for JSDF to assist in international conflict is specifically through the United Nations. United Nations Peacekeeping Operations are crucial to understand what
allows the JSDF or in some cases Japanese civilians, to be sent abroad. Non-combat
authorized U.N. PKO allowed Japanese politicians to test public opinion’s interest in
sending the JSDF abroad and also allowed Japan to contribute to international conflicts in
ways more than simply contributing money.

JSDF missions connected to U.N.PKO demonstrate how sensitive Japanese public
opinion, and consequently Japanese politicians, are to reorienting the purpose of the
JSDF and by association, Article 9. For example, the first instance of sending Japanese
citizens to an international conflict only allowed a small group of Japanese civilians
rather than the JSDF to travel to the Middle East as consults. As of early 2018, the
number of missions Japan sends civilians on 13 U.N. PKO missions and JSDF troops are
contingent on 12 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2014). After the Act on
Cooperation for United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Other Operations,
otherwise known as the U.N. Peacekeeping Law, passed in June 1992, Japan was able to
dispatch the JSDF with ease so long as the non-combat oriented, U.N.PKO met these five
standards:

1.) Agreement on a cease-fire shall have been reached among the parties to armed
conflicts;

2.) Consent for the undertaking of U.N. peacekeeping operations as well as Japan’s
participation in such operations shall have been obtained from the host countries
as well as the parties to armed conflicts;

3.) The operations shall strictly maintain impartiality, not favoring any of the parties
to armed conflicts;
4.) Should any of the requirements in the above-mentioned principles cease to be satisfied, the Government of Japan may withdraw Self-Defense Force (SDF) units;

5.) The use of weapons shall be limited to the minimum necessary to protect the lives of personnel, etc. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2017)

The JSDF have contributed many personnel to operations in Southeast Asia and the Middle East. The JSDF has been particularly recognized for its skill in to removing landmines, for example. However, humanitarian assistance is often needed in areas that would not be defined as a “non-combat” zone. Therefore, dispatching the JSDF on a U.N.PKO to serve a humanitarian purpose quickly becomes troublesome if the geographical area is insecure. More scrutiny would be applied to the decision making process of sending the JSDF overseas on a U.N.PKO which overall delays the assistance the JSDF could contribute. Furthermore, if the Japanese Diet decides to deploy the JSDF in an area of conflict, the deployed JSDF members would need protection by other militaries. An example of these complicated logistics occurred during election monitoring during 2008 in Timor-Leste where the JSDF as civilian police were protected by Australian military personnel (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2015).

As of early 2018, the JSDF had participated in 10 missions sponsored by the U.N. These missions include UNTAC in Cambodia, Mozambique, UNAMIR in Rwanda, UNDOF in Golan Heights, UNMISET in Timor-Leste, MONUC in the Democratic Republic of Congo, UNMIN in Nepal and UNMIS in Sudan (Ishizuka 2013). Activities the JSDF contributed to on the U.N. PKO included election monitoring, construction, demining operations, and other logistical actions. The most recent U.N. PKO where the
JSDF contributed troops was during UNMIS in South Sudan. Although the JSDF personnel were dispatched in 2012, the troops were withdrawn in March of 2017 (“What next for” Mie). The capricious security environment in South Sudan presented enough danger to warrant the JSDF’s use of weapons. Thus, the JSDF were withdrawn from South Sudan as the JSDF’s use of weapons in the U.N. PKO would violate Japan’s five criteria to participate in U.N. PKO. The JSDF’s restrictive participation in U.N. PKO then received more criticisms from the U.N. that “…the JSDF may not be in a position to fulfil core obligations of peacekeeping mandates, including protecting civilians or ensuring the safety and security of other personnel that might come under attack” (“Reinterpreting Article 9” Sharland). Japan’s limitations in U.N. PKO are demonstrated by Japan ranking 112th out of 125 countries in personnel contributions to U.N. PKO, as of October 2017 (United Nations Peacekeeping 8). Meanwhile, China ranks 11th and South Korea 38th (United Nations Peacekeeping 9-10). At the beginning of 2017, Japan ranked 54th as the JSDF were still participating in UNMIS within South Sudan (United Nations Peacekeeping 2).

In chapter 2, Paul Midford’s research demonstrated that unlike proposals to revise or amend Article 9, proposals to deploy members of the JSDF on humanitarian missions were more accepted by public opinion. The humanitarian nature of the U.N. PKO missions helped Japanese politicians and public opinion feel Japan’s pacifist constitution was not violated by sending the JSDF abroad. By contributing to U.N. PKO, Japan started to build a reputation overseas as prior to the 1992 Peacekeeping Law, Japan chiefly assisted international conflicts through sending money. Yet, public approval of the JSDF in U.N. PKO is not necessarily another pathway leading to the dismantling of
Japan’s pacifist stance. Critics of the Japanese government’s goals to increase the JSDF’s reputation abroad assert that Japanese civilians or the National Police Agency are better suited for U.N. PKO as both groups do not face the same legal constraints as the JSDF ("Japan Self-Defense" Kenji). Therefore, the Japanese government may continue to send the JSDF abroad under non-combat U.N. PKO but a credible record of the JSDF’s participation may not erase conjectures against expanding the role of the JSDF.

Conclusions

It is undeniable that the pacifism planted in Japan’s post-WWII constitution has a robust influence on Japanese defense policy. Pacifist attitudes in public opinion have played a nearly unyielding role in preventing the JSDF from becoming involved in international conflicts as well as combat-oriented U.N. missions. Soroka and Wlezien’s thermostatic model once again demonstrates that democracy has functioned well within Japan’s government as Japanese politicians have demonstrated the pacifist views of public opinion by coordination defense policy appropriately. Japan’s post-WWII history represents the symbiotic relationship between public opinion and policy as the expansion of the JSDF has only increased in small increments since the installation of Japan’s post-WWII constitution.

Yet the changing reality of Japan’s security situation weighs heavily upon Japanese defense policy. Criticisms from the U.N. and allies note that Japanese military assistance in international conflicts is hindered by Japan’s restrictive defense policies. Gaiatsu, or pressure from foreign countries simultaneously stresses that Japan contribute more to international conflicts than money or “checkbook diplomacy” (George 1991).
The withdrawal of the JSDF before the U.N. UNMIS mission in South Sudan completed and the brief pause in Indian Ocean refueling operations demonstrate the quandary presented by *gaiatsu* and Japan’s prohibitive defense policies. Amending the constitution or coordinating Japanese defense policy was also bungled by poor leadership or coordination within the Japanese government by the prime minister and neglect of public opinion, leading to criticisms of Japanese democracy.

Therefore, the future of Japanese defense policy will rely upon carefully coordinated leadership by the prime minister and attunement to Japanese public opinion. Negligence towards coordination between Japanese bureaucracy and institutions or public opinion will either cause new defense policies to fail or reflect poorly on Japanese democracy. PM Abe, as of early 2018, has demonstrated attention to public opinion by calling a snap election amidst rampant threats from North Korea in order to gain reassurance in his administration. Yet, as noted by Shiro Sakaiya, public opposition to constitutional revision has continuously grown since 2006 and Abe’s win in October 2017 was likely due to public faith in Abe to revitalize the Japanese economy (“Scholar plumbs postwar” Yoshida). Abe must also be careful to coordinate within the Japanese government to promote the revision and amending of Article 9 and Article 96 of the Japanese government. The true test of Abe and the LDP’s defense policy goals will be tested if and when the revision and amendment reaches public referendum.
V. CHAPTER 5: CHANGE ON THE HORIZON?

The Relevance of the Asia Pacific

Why is the Asia Pacific, the security environment in particular, important to study? The Asia Pacific hosts some of the world’s densest populations, highest GDPs, oldest civilizations, most natural disaster prone states, and most technologically advanced societies. Japanese innovation has provided the world with advanced robotics, and facial recognition technology in China is continuously evolving (Phillips 2018). The Asia Pacific has also experienced numerous wars, colonialism, and American occupation in multiple states. Communism endures in several states while democracies are sustained in others. A region that has experienced so much change and growth is worth observing in order to understand how states balance with or against each other in fluid security environments as well as adjust to change.

Japan is a particularly critical player in the Asia Pacific security environment. Although the country is heavily restrained due to its constitution, Japan’s proposed 2018 defense budget, roughly 48 billion USD, is still larger than the defense budgets of South Korea and all of Southeast Asia (Aibara 2017). Until recently, Japan maintained the highest official defense budget in the region for several decades. China, and later India, usurped Japan’s position within the Asia Pacific, but if Japan’s restrictive defense policies are adjusted, either by amending Article 96 and Article 9, it is possible Japan will no longer lag in Asia’s competition for power.
Previous chapters have noted the trends of defense budgets, GDPs, the relationship between Japanese policy and public opinion as well as overall economic growth. Japan is studied carefully due to the availability of data, Japan’s hegemony over the Asia Pacific for several decades, and the fact that defense policies in Japan have been increasingly debated within the Japanese parliament and the larger public discourse. Furthermore, research demonstrates that public opinion plays a significant role in influencing Japanese policy, in particular defense policies. Since the orientation of Japanese defense policies and the Japanese Self Defense Forces rides on the revision or reinterpretation of Article 9, and public referendum will determine Article 9’s future, Japanese public opinion is critical to study.

**The Future of the JSDF**

Defense debates in Japan over the next few years are critical because altering Article 9 will make the JSDF more present in the Asia-Pacific and potentially other parts of the world. A successful revision of Article 9 and Article 96 foretells many outcomes. First, if the Japanese Self Defense Forces are consequentially permitted to deploy outside of Japanese territory, Japanese influence will likely spread across the Asia Pacific as a counter to Chinese power in the region (Sato 2013). It is probable that then, all kinds of deployments from those assisting in disaster relief to assisting the U.S. in overseas conflicts may proliferate. Although the image of a JSDF not restrained by Article 9 is still speculative (Brown 2018), potentially Japanese could play a greater role outside of the Asia Pacific in conflict-torn areas such as South Sudan, Turkey, and Iraq. Locally, the JSDF could also increase and sustain assistance the U.S. and the Philippines in
countering the ISIS-loyal Abu Sayyaf terrorist organization located in southern Marawai City (Flores, Gorit, Lee-Brago and Romero 2017).

The JSDF could also then more easily participate in United Nations’ Peace Keeping Operations. The JSDF could be sent to violent regions without the Japanese parliament carefully monitoring the security environment of the mission. For example, if Article 9 was worded differently when Abe deployed the JSDF in Sudan with the authorization to carry weapons for the first time, the JSDF would not have to have been withdrawn from Sudan when the region’s security environment became too unstable. The fact that the JSDF would no longer have to have another state’s forces protect the JSDF in an unstable region would also further facilitate effective U.N. peace keeping.

A change in defensive, pacifist Japanese defense policies could also morph the nature of the conflict in the East China Sea and potentially the South China Sea. Both conflicts hinge on threads. Allowing the JSDF to act beyond purely defense may trigger armed conflict as China has unapologetically patrolled and built structures in contested East and South China Sea waters. Aside from becoming more aggressive about the East China Sea, the JSDF could assist neighboring Asia Pacific states in maintaining their portions of the South China Sea. The JSDF could assist in patrols with Vietnam, Indonesia, and other southeast Asian countries in the South China Sea, thus attempting to monitor and contain Chinese activity in the area. The Philippines may also be a potential partner. However, the pro-China, anti-U.S. rhetoric from Filipino President Rodrigo Duterte follows a different tempo than from Benigno Aquino’s vehement protests against Chinese activity. Duterte’s stance perhaps degrades the attractiveness of making the Philippines an anti-China partner in the South China Sea.
Despite Duterte’s rhetoric suggesting changes in the Philippines’ allegiances, there is potential for Japan to collaborate with other Asia Pacific states to balance Chinese activity and influence in the region. Yet, it is too difficult to discern if the Japanese would promote purely Japanese influence or, rather, Japanese and American influence. As of late 2018, the United States’ position within Asia Pacific remains uncertain which has left many of the U.S. long-standing Asian allies anxious, if not turning to Chinese influence. However, although a reoriented JSDF may breed more heated conflicts in the East and South China Sea, it is likely the change will be beneficial in light of unpredictable, direct security threats from North Korea. Instead of waiting to determine if a ballistic missile is going to land in Japanese territory, the JSDF could move to shoot down the missile via Aegis destroyers and Standard Missile-3 interceptors purchased from the U.S. Furthermore, South Korea and Japan made significant strides in working together to manage the North Korean threat. If Article 9 is amended and the JSDF reoriented, it is probable that South Korean and Japanese collaboration could increase. Such collaboration would likely benefit both countries and the Asia Pacific in general.

The Significance of Public Opinion and Security in the Asia Pacific

A revision or reinterpretation of Article 9 and Article 96, if successful at public referendum, also demonstrates changes in public attitudes from being purely pacifist, and later defensively pacifist (Midford 2011). Notably, pacifism has not left the Japanese psyche, even if the pacifism has metamorphosed over the years. If Abe, or a later prime minister, is able to successfully construct an amendment to Article 9 and Article 96, and
the amendment passes the public referendum, there are significant implications for the Japanese public. First, public opinion approving of amending Article 9 would be a major departure from post-World War II trends. Secondly, a public that approves a change to Article 9 to reorient the JSDF may build nationalism within Japan, a goal of previous conservative prime ministers such as Nakasone and Koizumi. Finally, if the referendum for Article 9 and Article 96 narrowly passes, Japan could face divisiveness within its population and government. Therefore, while Article 9 and 96 may be changed, other adjustments to defense policy, foreign military sales especially, will likely face controversy.

Despite the tremendous change an amended Article 9 would cause, Japan would not necessarily race to develop formidable weapons to equip its military. An amended Article 9 and Article 96 do not mean remilitarized Japan will immediately abandon its three non-nuclear principles. Although pacifism is apparent after an observation of Japanese public opinion polls throughout 1970-2017, Japan’s “nuclear allergy” is stronger. Polls consistently demonstrate that Japanese public opinion is much more negative towards nuclear weapons than amending Article 9 or sending the JSDF abroad (Stokes 2015). While the latter two issues have sometimes displayed divided public opinion, attitudes towards violating Japan’s three non-nuclear principles have been sharply against the notion. The use of nuclear weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki during WWII and the 2011 nuclear disaster in Fukushima prefecture significantly reinforce public attitudes. As this research has demonstrated, Japanese defense policy is attuned to public opinion and politicians pay the price if they ignore public opinion. Therefore, it is
unlikely Japan will develop or use nuclear weapons, even if Article 9 is amended to allow Japan more military might.

If Abe, or future prime ministers, fail to amend Article 9, it is likely Japan may continue to struggle for dominance in the Asia Pacific. With U.S. influence in the Asia Pacific waning, Japan may have a harder time containing China when the JSDF does not have the same capabilities as the People’s Liberation Army. Smaller Asian states have also been gravitating towards China’s One Belt, One Road proposals as opposed to Japanese or American methods of economic development and institution building. Clearly, Japan will not easily be able to counter or even contain the rising power of a neighboring state, especially considering China and Japan’s challenged relationship.

Dealing with the North Korean threat would also be troublesome if Article 9 remains unchanged. Japan would, as it does in early 2018, heavily rely on the U.S. military for protection (Xu 2014). The fact that the JSDF must determine if an incoming North Korean missile will land in Japanese territory before launching a proper defense is distressing for several reasons. First, there is the possibility that tracking technology could be inaccurate. Furthermore, ballistic missile defenses could fail, despite their good test records (Majumdar 2017). North Korea is unpredictable in its threats and missile tests elevate Japan’s risk. Japanese defense spending may also be leaning towards greater capabilities in intelligence gathering and reconnaissance (IISS 2016) but development and acquisition of advanced military technology can take years. North Korea could fire a ballistic missile capable of striking Tokyo, or even delivering a nuclear weapon, at any time (Cordesman 2017).
This research analyzed the relationship between Japanese defense policies and public opinion. As trends demonstrate, public opinion and policy makers maintain a symbiotic relationship. Without a reactive public opinion, policy makers have few incentives to adjust policy. Similarly, without responsive policy makers, public opinion has little incentive to participate in politics. Therefore, both attentive policy makers and public opinion are necessary in order to maintain democracy. A symbiotic relationship in between public opinion and policy has been demonstrated by the presented polling data from 1970-2017, especially in times when debates about defense were prominent in the Japanese parliament.

The relationship between public opinion and policy demonstrates that an externally imposed democracy is working in East Asia. Although Japanese in late 2017 noted mixed feelings on whether the Japanese government was acting in citizens best interests (Stokes 2017), generally the trends between policy and public opinion demonstrate that democratic practices in Japan are functioning and sustainable. Democratic success in Japan is telling as Japan did not adopt democratic structures until 1889. The Constitution of the Empire of Japan did not allow for the same kind of democratic processes that Japan adopted after the end of WWII. Therefore, Japan’s success as a democracy may serve as a model to other newly democratic states such as Timor Leste (“After Timor-Leste’s Election” Hooi). Other Asian states seeking to become more democratic, less monarchical, and to have less military control, like Thailand, may also benefit from Japan’s example (Demetriadi 2017).
Areas for Further Research

As of early 2018, many contingent factors have the potential to drastically change Japanese defense policy. North Korea is Japan’s highest, most direct security threat. U.S. regional influence is steadily withering. Prime Minister Abe has set a goal of amending Article 9, and consequently Article 96, by 2020 in order to increase Japanese presence and power throughout the world, better aid allies and U.N. peacekeeping operations, and also counter Chinese influence within the Asia Pacific. The LDP has also approved a proposal to extend prime minister terms so Abe’s ambitions may be realized (“Abe could become” Al Jazeera). Similarly, China’s leader Xi Jinping is securing his legacy by extending his authority over an increasing amount of Chinese governmental organizations. The South and East China Seas remain areas of conflicting claims. Finally, Japanese public opinion has shifted from against any form of remilitarization to being nearly evenly divided on the amendment of Article 9 and thus, remilitarization of Japan. The 1970s displayed pacifist attitudes (Emmerson 1973) while the following decades slowly demonstrated a shift to defensive realist attitudes due to security concerns and gaiatsu (Midford 2011). Skilled leadership, communication, and coordination within the Japanese bureaucracy on behalf of prime ministers such as Nakasone, Koizumi, and Abe have catalyzed the Article 9 debate.

Therefore, the Asia Pacific offers a plethora of issues to study. Particular attention should be given to Japanese public opinion as a public vote will determine the revision of the Japanese constitution, if Abe is able to bring the issue to a public referendum. In order to bring revision of Article 9 to public referendum, Abe must first obtain the majority vote within the parliament, which is two thirds. The Japanese parliament is dominated by
the LDP as of early 2018 but the Abe administration must carefully negotiate among the various Japanese political parties in order to obtain the majority vote. Although Abe has been identified as a strong, capable leader (Shindoa 2013), this will be a difficult task. As demonstrated by this research, public opinion in Japan has been uniquely pacifist and a shift away from pacifism or the defensive realism noted by Paul Midford (Midford 2011) would be significant. Studying nationalism in Japan would be particularly important if Article 9 passes by a significant majority at public referendum. Japanese nationalism would become important to study as it is viewed negatively by Japan’s neighbors that were colonized by Japan during WWII. Studying the dynamics between Japanese nationalist and pacifists may also yield conclusions about Japanese civil society and politics.

However, a majority vote by Japanese nationalists, or pro-revisionists, is not the only likely outcome of a public referendum concerning Article 9. Similarly, many opportunities for research will present themselves if the public referendum doesn’t grant the revision of the Japanese constitution and the majority vote is pacifist. Studies examining how pacifism functions in a country with severe security threats like North Korea should be completed. Additionally, research could be conducted on how an LDP-dominated parliament would proceed with defense policy after the parties’ goal of revising the constitution failed. Finally, if the gap between approval and disapproval of constitution revision at the public referendum is small or tied, again, numerous opportunities for research will appear. Questions such as how Japan would create defense policies for a divided country would be valid and also a challenging test for Soroka and Wlezien’s thermostat model (Soroka and Wlezien, 2010).
Abe’s leadership is also worthy of further research. As noted by scholars, Abe’s second term has demonstrated himself as an effective leader (Shinoda 2013). Whether or not Abe succeeds in amending Article 9 by 2020, Abe’s term as prime minister likely offers a positive example to future Japanese leaders. As history demonstrates, the prime minister who follows Abe will also need to replicate Abe’s leadership in order to achieve party goals. Junichiro Koizumi was a successful leader but due to poor leadership and coordination during Abe’s first term in September 2006-September 2007, the Liberal Democratic Party’s goals set by Koizumi were not achieved. The LDP’s coordination with the New Komeito party should also be analyzed. As of early 2018, the LDP’s dominance in parliament depends on the LDP’s coalition with the New Komeito. Since the New Komeito draws most of its support from the Buddhist, peace-oriented party Soka Gakkai, the partnership between the LDP and New Komeito could easily be broken if the LDP’s defense policies step too far away from pacifism.

This research did not analyze political elites possibly manipulating public opinion or a foreign actor warping public opinion by manipulating social media. Similarly, most major works on Japanese public opinion do not recognize these elements (Emmerson 1973; Midford 2011). However, considering the cyberattacks on the U.S. attributed to China and North Korea (Inkster 2017; Lewis 2015), it is worth further research to determine if foreign actors are manipulating social media, creating fake accounts to spread false information within social media platforms, or spreading incorrect information in Japan. Efforts by political elites to manipulate public opinion in Japan may also be worth studying but harder to execute as the methodology political elites use may be difficult to measure or even identify.
Finally, the security environment in the Asia Pacific offers many elements to study in order to forecast the Asia Pacific’s future. South Korea’s position within the Asia Pacific could greatly sway the balance of power depending on whether South Korea balances with the U.S. and Japan, China, or even creates an agreement with North Korea independently. It is possible South Korea could favor China as a security partner in the future as China has already proven it can damage the South Korean economy by withdrawing Chinese business from South Korea due to the deployment of Lockheed Martin’s THAAD system (“South Korea and China” Sang-Hun). Although Japan has offered the Philippines potential sales of military equipment and training, the same scenario may also occur. The Sino-Japanese bilateral relationship also offers many avenues for research. The two powerful states have attempted to manage a difficult relationship marred by historical events but recently, leaders of both states have declared efforts to improve ties (Gao 2017). Successful mending of Sino-Japanese ties may solve many of the issues irritating both states and potentially making the Asia Pacific a more dangerous place by the day.

**Conclusion**

Military actions, or any projections of power, in the Asia Pacific by China, Japan, or even the Koreas are hardly without repercussions. Chinese vessels in Japanese territory cause Japanese policy makers and military leaders to react defensively (Wilson Center 2013). Similarly, Japanese dominance in the Asia Pacific is still viewed with scrutiny. Japan’s WWII legacy looms in the consciousness of Japan’s neighbors. Thus it is questionable whether any projection of Japanese power will ever exist without anxious
reactions. Reactions in defense development within the Asia Pacific is also apparent with Japanese defense technology heavily leaning towards ISR in reaction to Chinese military buildup or modernization. The Asia Pacific’s reactive environment fills the area with contingencies.

While not all contingencies can be properly quantified in order to flawlessly predict the Asia Pacific’s future, some contingencies can be analyzed to forecast the future. The patterns in Japanese public opinion serve as a litmus test for Japan’s future defense policies as the revision of Article 9 depends on a public referendum. Therefore, by following the trends in public opinion, it is possible to estimate how the balance in the Asia Pacific’s security environment might change whether or not the revision of Article 9 is approved at public referendum. If Article 9’s revision is enabled, Japan could build a sizable military presence in and outside of the Asia Pacific. Conversely, if Article 9’s revision is denied by public referendum it is questionable how Japan will continue to counter threats from North Korea. Additionally, the same dilemma arises considering how Japan will react to Chinese dominance in its many manifestations. Therefore, the next few years have the potential to be extraordinarily pivotal for the Asia Pacific. Numerous aspects of the Asia Pacific’s defense environment are in flux and some may drastically change at a contentious public referendum in Japan.


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