Review of Japan's Defense Policy Debate

Takao SEBATA

Abstract

This paper introduces defense debate in the 1980s and 1990s in Japan and points out that there has become little difference between the political and the military realists

It also argues that the Japanese public has become more conservative and has supported the SDF's overseas dispatch. The paper concludes that as a result Japan will further use the SDF overseas as a means of foreign policy.

Introduction

This paper analyzes defense policy debate in Japan in the 1980s and 1990s. Over the last three decades, the Japanese people have become conservative in security and defense areas. Now, many Japanese have supported the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) and the United States-Japan Security Treaty (hereafter referred to as the Security Treaty) The parties and the groups, which support the Article 9 of Japan's Constitution, have had difficulty gaining the support of the people. The Japanese Government has tried to exercise the right to collective self-defense to support the United States. Therefore, it is important to review defense policy debate over the last three decades.

The Defense Debate in the 1980s

Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 discussions on Japanese defense and security policies intensified in both political and academic circles within Japan. From the 1950s to the 1970s, criticisms concerning the San Francisco Peace Treaty, the Security Treaty, and Japanese re-armament in relation to the legitimacy of the SDF were major issues

In the 1980s, however, the discussions no longer centered on the Security Treaty or on the unconstitutionality of the SDF. With the advent of the 1980s, the discussions began to focus on how much and how fast Japan should increase her defense capability. The discussions also focused on the roles and missions of the SDF

Under these circumstances in the 1980s, according to Mike Mochizuki, there were four schools of thought with regard to contemporary Japan's defense policy: political realists, military realists, Japanese Gaullists, and unarmed neutralists. [1] The political realists, including Masataka Kosaka, Yonosuke Nagai, Masamichi Inoki, and Masashi Nishihara, comprised the conservative

mainstream of Japanese foreign policy thinking. Their primary concern lay in the political and diplomatic implications of Japan's defense and security policies. They stressed the importance of United States-Japan relations with regard to security and the economy, expressing fear that Japan might lose the United States security guarantee and thus expose Japan's economic vulnerability. The political realists did not see the Soviet threat in the same way that the United States government did in the 1970s and 1980s, perceiving the Soviet threat as more political than military. They were reluctant to go along with the United States hard-line policy against the Soviet Union because the decision to do so might increase the Soviet threat to Japan. Their fundamental concern was to prevent the United States from linking economic relations with defense. Finally, they thought that revision of the Constitution and the Security Treaty was unnecessary. This school of thought had the support of the majority of the LDP and the *Zaikai*, some bureaucrats in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the majority in the Ministry of Finance and MITI in the 1980s. Their thinking clearly affected the policies of the Masayoshi Ohira and Zenko Suzuki Administrations, and was clearly represented in the" Report on Comprehensive National Security" submitted to the government in 1980. [2]

The military realists, including Hisahiko Okazaki, Hideaki Kase, Shinsaku Hogen, and Osamu Miyoshi, focused on the military environment and the formulation of a strategy most likely to effectively meet the Soviet military threat in the 1980s. Unlike the political realists, they did not consider domestic political constraints as barriers to a major defense buildup. They advocated closer military cooperation between the United States and Japan. The military realists were developing concrete regional and global war scenarios to analyze the strategic tactical options. They also criticized the efficacy of the SDF by saying that the forces were both quantitatively inadequate and qualitatively deficient. The military realists believed that the most sensible way for Japan to avoid war was to have a military capability that would make a Soviet attack in East Asia extremely costly. In the 1980s, this school of thought was supported by a majority of officials within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Defense Agency, the Ground, Air, and Maritime SDF, the right wing of the LDP, the Japan Youth Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JYCCI) and the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) Some within this group advocated the revision of the Constitution and the Security Treaty while others preferred re-interpretations of the Constitution and the Security Treaty because total revision would involve great political risk.

The Japanese Gaullists, including Jun Eto, Tetsuya Kataoka, Yatsuhiro Nakagawa, and Ikutaro Shimizu, were not only afraid of the Soviet military threat, but also mistrusted the United States commitment to defend Japan. They supported the revision of the Security Treaty and of the Constitution, as well as a major military buildup that included nuclear weapons, although Eto did not favor nuclear armaments. They wished to found the Japanese polity that advocated a rapid military buildup and a restoration of the values of prewar Japan. This school of thought had a political basis supported by the far right wing within the LDP, the anti-elite masses that supported the far right wing of the LDP, and some of the JYCCI and of the Ground SDF in the 1980s.

Finally, the unarmed neutralists, including Yoshikazu Sakamoto, Hiroharu Seki, and Masashi Ishibashi, insisted that arms control and disarmament were a way to ensure peace in both Japan and the world. They did not see the Soviet Union as a realistic military threat to

Japan. The greater threat to Japan, according to this group, was the country's economic vulnerability. A termination of the Security Treaty and the signing of friendship treaties with Japan's neighbors were their ultimate goals. This group was affiliated with politicians from the JSP in the 1980s

There were other ways to categorize different defense strategy positions. Kenneth B. Pyle defines these four categories: 1) the progressives (Yoshikazu Sakamoto, Shigeto Tsuru, and Jiro Kamishima); 2) the liberal realists (Masamichi Inoki, Kentaro Hayashi, and Masamori Sase); 3) the mercantilists (Masataka Kosaka, Naohiro Amaya, and Yonosuke Nagai); and 4) the new nationalists (Ikutaro Shimizu and Yatsuhiro Nakagawa). His categories were based on a broad perspective that projected Japan's future economic role in the world. His progressive category was close to Mochizuki's unarmed neutralist category, while the liberal realists and the mercantilists were similar to the political realists, and the new nationalists were much like the Japanese Gaullists.

Edward A. Olsen also considers criteria that included cultural and economic as well as military factors. His four groups were: 1) the emotional pacifists (Hideo Matsuoka, Yonosuke Nagai, and Michio Morishima); 2) the pragmatic pacifists (Masataka Kosaka and Naohiro Amaya); 3) the emotional nationalists (Ikutaro Shimizu, Yatsuhiro Nakagawa, and Kichitaro Katsuda); and 4) the pragmatic nationalists (Yasuhiro Nakasone, Tetsuya Kataoka, Hideaki Kase, and Masamichi Inoki). Olsen's approach is similar to the approach of Mochizuki. That is, the emotional pacifists corresponded to the unarmed neutralists, the pragmatic pacifists were similar to the political realists, the emotional nationalists were close to the Gaullists, and the pragmatic nationalists were similar to the military realists.

Gerald L. Curtis divides the thought of mainstream Japanese leadership into three groups. One group wanted" to develop its own autonomous defense and to move away from what is perceived as a subordinate relationship to the United States." This group was a counterpart of the Gaullists in Mochizuki's study. Another group adopted the policy that gradually increased " defensive capabilities within the context of the United States-Japan alliance, . . . " This group adopted the military realists' stance. The third group advocated " a minimal response position, . . . to avoid a crisis in Japanese-American relations." This group took the political realists' stance.

Taketsugu Tsurutani presents four alternatives to Japan's defense positions. The first alternative was called" the permanent limits thesis." The" limits" referred to the Peace Constitution, the civilian control over the military, the three non-nuclear principles (no production, no possession, or no introduction of nuclear weapons) the exclusively defensive character of the SDF, and a ceiling for defense spending of 1 percent of the GNP. This alternative supported the national defense philosophy in the past government policy. The second alternative was" the basic defense policy"and referred to the 1976 National Defense Program Outline (NDPO) " Basic" in this case meant the SDF, not the United States military " would be the' basis' of national defense. . . . " The above two alternatives were the political realists' position. A third option was " the requisite capability thesis," which proposed that Japan's military capability should be determined" by the magnitude of potential external contingencies and the extent of actual or potential adversaries' capabilities." This position was close to the position of the military

realists. The fourth alternative was " the autonomous defense thesis, " which was the same as the Gaullists' position.

Tatsuo Yoshikawa identifies five groups: 1) the absolute pacifists/unarmed neutralists; 2) the relative pacifists/arms reductionists; 3) the moderate defense advocates; 4) the autonomous defense advocates; and 5) the Japanese ultra-nationalists. According to Yoshikawa, there were strong disagreements among the second, the third, and the fourth groups in the 1970s and 1980s. The first and second groups included Yoshikazu Sakamoto and Hiroharu Seki. The third group was led by Masamichi Inoki, Kiichi Saeki, Masataka Kosaka, Shinkichi Eto, and Fuji Kamiya. The fourth group included Hideaki Kase, Osamu Miyoshi, and Shin Kanemaru. The first and second groups corresponded to the unarmed neutralists, the third was similar to the political realists, the fourth was close to the military realists, and the fifth identified with the Gaullists

Finally, Kiyofuku Chuma proposes five categories in addition to the four presented by Mochizuki, the fifth being the moratorium realists. The moratorium realists stood between the political realists and the unarmed neutralists. This group idealized an unarmed neutral policy and wished to keep good relations with the United States, but also thought that this policy was not practical enough. The moratorium realists also questioned the idea that every policy should be based on the notion that Japan was " a member of the West. " Chuma states that the public opinion polls in the 1980s indicated that the moratorium realists represented the majority view among the people.

All of the aforementioned studies can fit into Mochizuki's four categories. Yonosuke Nagai had introduced a similar idea prior to Mochizuki and reconfirmed four schools of thought based on political parties, ministries, and business groups. According to Nagai's categories, the Japan Socialist Party (JSP) the Japan Communist Party (JCP) and the Komeito were put into the same group under the unarmed neutralists. It is difficult, however, to put the JSP and the JCP in the same category since the JCP did not, and still does not, advocate an unarmed policy. The Komeito seemed closer to the moratorium realists than an unarmed neutral stand. In fact, the Japanese public supported the Security Treaty and the SDF, but they preferred the status quo in the level of the SDF's defense capability and defense expenditure. The shift of the JSP and the Komeito to the right in the 1980s and 1990s reflected this atmosphere among the Japanese people. Among the above studies of the different schools of thought, Chuma's category, which included the moratorium realists, seem better than those of Mochizuki and Nagai. Neither Mochizuki nor Nagai paid much attention to the groups that were center and left wing, probably because these groups have been excluded from the decision-making process.

One additional group can be identified as the left wing Gaullists, namely the JCP. Although this group had little influence on decision-making in the past, it should neither be omitted nor included in other groups. The JCP still has a certain degree of influence among labor unions, student groups, teachers' unions, and peace activists' groups. This group can be placed alongside the Japanese Gaullists in terms of anti-United States and armed neutrality, but has a distinctly different ideology from other groups

As Mochizuki, Nagai, and many others argue, the future of Japan's defense policy will be determined by the power relationships among these groups. Particularly within the decision-

making structure, the combination of alliances among the political realists, the military realists, and the Gaullists will be of importance. Nagai worries about Japanese nationalism, which he believes has been a very strong factor in postwar Japan. If the political and the military realists comprises one group, he argues, the Gaullists and the unarmed neutralists will make up a counter-group. Both realists agree with the notion that Japan is" a member of the West" and that autonomous defense is impossible. According to Nagai, both Gaullists and unarmed neutralists are strongly nationalistic. [10]

In fact, entering the 1990s and 2000s, nationalism in Japan has become strong, supporting overseas dispatch of the SDF as can be seen in the Indian Ocean and Iraq. Japan will further use the SDF as a means of promoting national interests in foreign policy.

The Defense Debate in the 1990s[11]

After the 1991 Gulf War, the debate on defense and security issues in Japan intensified as a result of foreign criticism of Japan's response to the Gulf Crisis of 1990-1991 and the so-called " checkbook diplomacy. " Some in Japan began to argue that the country should become a" normal nation. " According to Mochizuki, those who supported the" normal nation" concept were divided into three groups, although all agreed that Japan should exercise the right to collective self-defense. The first group   led by then former Liberal Party president Ichiro Ozawa   emphasized Japan's active participation in the United Nations Peace Keeping Operations (UNPKO). The second group advocated the exercise of the right to collective self-defense within the framework of the Security Treaty, while the third group offered a more independent approach that focused on redefining Japan as an Asian power. [12] Those who had supported the Yoshida Doctrine represented the mainstream view in Japan's defense policy debate until the 1990s. However, by the early 1990s, those who advocated the" normal nation" concept began to gain influence. Some groups had been advocating a more independent approach toward Japan's foreign and defense policies rather than one relying on the United States. However, they do not represent the majority view.

Within the abovementioned groups, the first group might challenge the second group in the future. Ichiro Ozawa argues that the SDF could participate in the UNPKO under a United Nations directive without changing Article 9 of the Constitution, and Japan should establish a security policy based on the United Nations-centered collective security system. [13] The second group, which Mochizuki called" the realists, " criticized Ozawa's approach (which focused on the United Nations) and emphasized the revitalization of the Security Treaty through the reinterpretation of Article 9. [14] The third group advocated that Japan take a more independent path with regard to its foreign and defense policies, emphasizing indigenous values and the country's role in the greater Asian community. This group also argued that Japan should revise the Constitution and form a" real" military. [15] In fact, these three groups comprise all realists, whom Mochizuki called the military realists and the political realists in the 1980s. Since the 1990s, little difference exists between the military realists and the political realists in terms of using the SDF as a means of Japan's foreign policy.

The major difference between these groups is the emphasis on a particular region, i.e. the

United Nations, the United States or Asia. Japan's relations with the United States will continue to be a priority, but those who argue that Japan should seek a more independent policy will gradually have a stronger voice and greater role in decision-making. There is a possibility that a more independent approach might gain momentum, given the fact that there is a growing nationalism in Japan in the 1990s and 2000s.

While those who supported Japan's more active participation in international security activities increased their influence after the Gulf War, those who believed that Japan should maintain a pacifist ideology began to assert that" Japan should contribute more actively to international peace. "[16] According to Mochizuki, there are two groups pushing for Japan's pacifist stance, in addition to the traditional pacifists, that exist in the post-Cold War era: those who support a " reconstituted form of pacifism" ; and those who want Japan to become a" global civilian power. "[17]

The first group of pacifists supports the idea of a minimum defensive force that is hierarchically equivalent to the coast guard or police. The so-called" Iwanami group" argues that this defensive force is strictly limited to defending the land, airspace, and territorial waters of Japan. [18]

The *Asahi Shimbun* shares the views of the" Iwanami group" and advocates that Japan pursue non-military alternatives (e. g. through humanitarian and economic activities) as a way of contributing to international peace. Although both the *Asahi Shimbun* and the" Iwanami group" admit that the Security Treaty has been beneficial to Japan and Asia, they want United States military bases to be gradually reduced and ultimately removed from Japan. They do not want Japan to participate in combat operations in the UNPKO either. [19]

The second group led by Yoichi Funabashi of the *Asahi Shimbun* attempts to make Japan a" global civilian power" which, according to Mochizuki, the majority of the public supported. Funabashi places emphasis on non-military and multilateral approaches to international peace, and argues that through economic liberalization, Japan should become a" global civilian power. "[20] As of the early 2000s, the first group is still a minority among the public. In recent years, the Japanese public has become more conservative and some nationalistic arguments have become increasingly popular. Therefore, the pacifist groups may have difficulty persuading the public in the future, particularly when Japan faces foreign criticism.

Conclusion

In the 1980s and 1990s, the unarmed neutralists lost their influence in Japan's defense policy debate as compared with the 1960s and 1970s. Instead, the realists, both political and military, gained further influence in the 1990s and 2000s. In fact, there has become little difference between the two realists in terms of using the SDF in Japan's foreign policy The Japanese public has also become more conservative and has supported SDF's overseas dispatch. Politicians, bureaucrats, and business people all agree that Japan should further participate in peace keeping and peace-making activities in an international society. Therefore, in the future, Japan will carry out more SDF's overseas dispatch.

Notes

This category is drawn from the studies of Mike M. Mochizuki, Hideo Otake, and Yonosuke Nagai. The following analysis in this section is mainly extracted from Mochizuki's and Nagai's studies. Mike M. Mochizuki " Japan's Search for Strategy, " *International Security* 8 (Winter 1983-84): 152-79; Hideo Otake, *Nihon no Boei to Kokunai Seiji* (Japan's defense and domestic politics) (Tokyo: San Ichi Shobo 1983); and Yonosuke Nagai, *Gendai to Senryaku* (The present age and strategy) (Tokyo: Bungei Shunju 1985).

Concerning this report, see the Comprehensive National Security Study Group " Report on Comprehensive National Security, " n. p. 2 July 1980; and Robert W. Barnett, *Beyond War: Japan's Concept of Comprehensive National Security* (New York: Pergamon Brassey's International Defense Publishers 1984).

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Tatsuo Yoshikawa, *Nihon no Boei:" Shoten to Moten"* (Japan's defense: Focal points and blind spots) (Tokyo: Daiamondosha 1981) 137-38.

Kiyofuku Chuma, *Saigunbi no Seijigaku* (Politics of rearmament) (Tokyo: Chishikisha 1985) 172-86.

Nagai, *Gendai to Senryaku* 182; and *Heiwa no Daisho* (Compensation for peace) (Tokyo: Chuo Koronsha 1967) 16-27 60-78.

[10] Yonosuke Nagai and Hisahiko Okazaki " Nani ga Senryakuteki Riarizumu ka" (What is strategic realism) *Chuo Koron*, July 1984 61.

[11] The following arguments in this section are based on Mike Mochizuki's observation. Mike M. Mochizuki " American and Japanese Strategic Debate: The Need for a New Synthesis, " *in Toward a True Alliance*, ed. Mike M. Mochizuki (Washington, D. C. : The Brookings Institution Press 1997) 43-82.

[12] Ibid. 56-68.

[13] Ichiro Ozawa, *Nihon Kaizo Keikaku* (Blueprint for a new Japan: The rethinking of a nation) (Tokyo: Kodansha 1994) 122-37

[14] Mochizuki " American and Japanese Strategic Debate, " 59-60.

[15] Ibid. 62-63.

[16] Ibid. 64.

[17] Ibid

[18] Ibid. 66-67.

[19] Ibid. 67-68.

[20] Ibid. 64-65.