

# Why Japan Will Not Go Nuclear (Yet)

Llewelyn Hughes

## International and Domestic Constraints on the Nuclearization of Japan

Japan's status as a nonnuclear weapons state remains of ongoing interest to policy analysts and scholars of international relations. For some, Japanese nuclearization is a question not of whether but of when; Japan has significant economic power and a sophisticated technological base, including a large civilian nuclear program with reprocessing facilities.<sup>1</sup> For others, Japan's reticence in security policy, of which its declaration not to manufacture, possess, or introduce nuclear weapons is a component, demonstrates the importance of normative variables in determining policy outcomes.<sup>2</sup>

This article reassesses the state of the evidence on the nuclearization of Japan. There are at least three reasons for doing so. First, changes in the regional and international security environment add credence to arguments that Japanese nuclearization will occur sooner rather than later. Most notably, the emergence of North Korea as a nuclear weapons state increases the threat to Japan, while the salience of the two central components of its strategy to defend against nuclear threats—multilateral regimes and the United States' extension of its nuclear deterrent to Japan—have been undermined.<sup>3</sup>

---

*Llewelyn Hughes is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Political Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.*

---

The author would like to thank J. Patrick Boyd, Peter Ennis, Kenji Hiramatsu, Sam Jameson, Richard Samuels, the MIT dissertation work in progress group, government officials who agreed to be interviewed either on or off the record, and anonymous reviewers for comments on earlier drafts.

---

1. Herman Kahn, *The Emerging Japanese Superstate: Challenge and Response* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970); and Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics," *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Fall 1993), pp. 44–79.

2. Peter J. Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security: Police and Military in Postwar Japan* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996); on nuclear weapons, see pp. 128–129; and Peter J. Katzenstein and Nobuo Okawara, *Japan's National Security: Structures, Norms, and Policy Responses in a Changing World* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 165–171. See also Thomas U. Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism: National Security in Germany and Japan* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); on nuclear weapons, see *ibid.*, pp. x, 102.

3. Graham Allison, "The Specter of Nuclear Proliferation," *Los Angeles Times*, February 17, 2005; Aaron L. Friedberg, "Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar Asia," *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Winter 1993/94), pp. 5–33; and Aaron L. Friedberg, "The Struggle for Mastery in Asia," *Commentary*, Vol. 110, No. 4 (November 2000), pp. 17–26. A number of senior current and former U.S. officials have also suggested that Japan may reconsider its position on nuclear weapons. They include Vice President Richard Cheney, former Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John Bolton, Republican Senator John McCain, and former Secretary of Defense William Perry. For details, see Kurt M. Campbell and Tsuyoshi Sunohara, "Japan: Thinking the Unthinkable," in Campbell, Robert J. Einhorn, and Mitchell B. Reiss, eds., *The Nuclear Tipping Point: Why States Reconsider Their Nuclear Choices* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings,

Second, a decision by Japan to pursue an independent nuclear deterrent would undermine the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) regime, which is already viewed by some as “teetering on the brink of irrelevancy.”<sup>4</sup> Such a decision would also worsen regional security relations, possibly leading China to bolster its nuclear weapons force and South Korea to reconsider its nuclear weapons policy.

Third, recent deployments of Japan’s Self-Defense Forces suggest that normative constraints on Japanese security policy are loosening. Despite ongoing constitutional limits on the application of military force, Japan has expanded the scope of Self-Defense Forces operations to include the Indian Ocean and Iraq; it has also acquired military equipment suggestive of a desire to increase its power projection capabilities.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, electoral reform has weakened Japanese political parties that have been strongly opposed to a more active role for Japan’s military. Further, centralization of authority in the prime minister and Cabinet Office has increased the institutional freedom of action of Japanese leaders, enabling them to overcome political opposition to changes in security policy to a degree not possible in the past.

The article has three main findings. First, support in Japan for the development of an independent nuclear deterrent remains negligible. Evidence demonstrates that Japanese political leaders, ministries, and agencies responsible for foreign and security policy have reacted to changes in the strategic environment by working to consolidate Japan’s existing insurance policies against nuclear threats<sup>6</sup>—that is, multilateral regimes and the United States’ extension of its nuclear deterrent to Japan—rather than rejecting their viability and seeking an indigenous nuclear capability.<sup>7</sup>

---

2004), chap. 9. The South Korean newspaper *Chosun Ilbo* also noted that “Japan’s nuclear armament is only a matter of time.” “Paving the Way for Japan’s Nuclear Armament,” *Chosun Ilbo* (English ed.), September 6, 2006, <http://english.chosun.com/w21data/html/news/200609/200609060030.html>.

4. Steve Andreasen, “Bush Must Strengthen Nuclear Weapons Treaty,” *Boston Globe*, November 20, 2004. Andreasen was director of defense policy and arms control on the National Security Council from 1993 to 2001.

5. On the U.S.-Japan alliance and changes since the end of the Cold War, see Richard J. Samuels, *Securing Japan* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2007), chaps. 2, 3; and Christopher W. Hughes, “Japan’s Reemergence as a ‘Normal’ Military Power,” Adelphi Paper, No. 368-9 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2004), pp. 79–83.

6. A senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs disarmament official explicitly describes enthusiasm for multilateral regimes and the U.S. extended deterrent as security “insurance.” See Yuji Miyamoto, “Beikoku no Ikkokushugi to Nihon no Kakugunshuku Seisaku” [American unilateralism and Japanese disarmament policy], *Ronza*, April 2002, p. 128.

7. On extended deterrence, see Earl C. Ravenal, “Counterforce and Alliance: The Ultimate Connection,” *International Security*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Spring 1982), pp. 26–43.

Second, the door to independent nuclearization remains ajar, even if no one is leading Japan through it. While Japanese diplomatic rhetoric refers to Japan's experience as the only country to suffer a nuclear attack during wartime as justification for its nonnuclear stance, Japanese political leaders have ensured that constitutional and other domestic legal hurdles do not significantly constrain Japan from developing an independent nuclear deterrent.

Third, although Japan maintains a significant civilian nuclear energy program, including plutonium reprocessing facilities, nuclear hedging has not been implemented as a coherent national strategy.<sup>8</sup> This implies that the outcome of any future debate over the merits of nuclearization is uncertain. Japan is a democracy, and public opinion polling and a recent Japan Defense Agency (JDA) assessment demonstrate that support for such a policy is unlikely to be unanimous, even if Japan's existing insurance policies are perceived as weak. Identifying organizational preferences, as well as institutional structures these organizations and political actors operate within, are therefore important components of any analysis of the propensity for future change in Japan's strategy to manage nuclear threats.<sup>9</sup>

These findings are in line with research demonstrating that although security incentives are important, they are rarely determinative.<sup>10</sup> Numerous schol-

---

8. This article does not address Japan's technological capacity to manufacture a nuclear device or delivery systems. For assessments, see Kuniko Ashizawa, "Nihon—Kakuho-yu no Sentaku" [Japan—The nuclear choice], *Kaigai Jijo*, No. 3 (1998), pp. 34–51; and Mataka Kamiya, "Nuclear Japan: Oxymoron or Coming Soon?" *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Winter 2002/03), pp. 69–71.

9. Following Douglass C. North, I distinguish between institutions and organizations. I define "institutions" as formal constraints, such as rules and laws. "Organizations," on the other hand, are defined as "groups of individuals bound by some common purpose to achieve objectives." See North, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 3–5.

10. Japan's stance toward nuclear weapons appears useful for testing realist and constructivist theories of security policy, yet Japan's existing policies can be claimed to support both theories. For those in the normative school, Japan's policy toward nuclear weapons can be taken as evidence of the importance of nonmajoritarian or antimilitarist norms. For those in the realist school, Japan's reticence on nuclear weapons can better be explained by ongoing U.S. security commitments that guarantee its security against nuclear and conventional military threats. On the overdetermined outcome of Japanese nonnuclearization, see Scott D. Sagan, "Realist Perspectives on Ethical Norms and Weapons of Mass Destruction," in Sohail Hashmi and Steven Lee, eds., *Ethics and Weapons of Mass Destruction: Religious and Secular Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 88. On the role of the norm of nonmajoritarianism in Japanese security policy, see Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security*, pp. 128–129, 146–147. For a different argument on the role of norms in Japanese security policy, see Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism*; on nuclear weapons, see *ibid.*, pp. x, 102. For a critical assessment of the utility of framing debates solely in terms of realist, liberal, or constructivist paradigms, see Peter J. Katzenstein and Nobuo Okawara, "Japan, Asian-Pacific Security, and the Case for Analytic Eclecticism," *International Security*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (Winter 2001/02), pp. 153–185.

ars have noted the role of domestic organizational and other variables in influencing states' decisions to develop (or reverse) their nuclear weapons programs, although the causal weight assigned to systemic versus domestic explanations typically varies. In the case of Pakistan, Samina Ahmed argues that although the perceived security threat from India was a necessary condition in Pakistan's drive to develop and test a nuclear device, the marginalization of the political leadership and dominance of the military in Pakistan's security policy architecture played a decisive role in nuclear decisionmaking across time.<sup>11</sup> David Karl notes that in the case of India, the military leadership was reticent about developing a nuclear weapons program because of fears it would enable greater civilian intervention in military decisionmaking.<sup>12</sup> The French decision to develop an independent nuclear deterrent has similarly been argued to be driven by national prestige as well as systemic variables.<sup>13</sup> Finally, Ariel Levite writes that domestic factors have been important causes of "nuclear reversal," that is, when states choose to abandon their nascent nuclear weapons programs.<sup>14</sup> The evidence presented here adds to this record, demonstrating the importance of including domestic organizational preferences into calculations of future nuclear choices, a point underscored by the repeated failure of predictions that Japan will introduce a nuclear deterrent.

The article proceeds as follows. First, it outlines changes in the regional and international security environment that have served to increase the threats against Japan while undermining its existing policies designed to ensure against nuclear threats. Second, it identifies how organizations likely to be involved in any decision to include a nuclear weapon in Japan's force structure have responded to these changes. Third, it considers whether nuclear hedging has been implemented as a national strategy, including by examining the do-

---

11. Samina Ahmed, "Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons Program: Turning Points and Nuclear Choices," *International Security*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (Spring 1999), pp. 178–204.

12. David J. Karl, "Proliferation Pessimism and Emerging Nuclear Powers," *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Winter 1996/97), p. 99. See also Scott D. Sagan, "Rethinking the Causes of Nuclear Proliferation: Three Models in Search of a Bomb," in Victor A. Utgoff, ed., *The Coming Crisis: Nuclear Proliferation, U.S. Interests, and World Order* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000), pp. 28–33.

13. Philip H. Gordon, "Charles de Gaulle and the Nuclear Revolution," *Security Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Autumn 1995), pp. 118–148. On the role of international and unit-level variables in China's decision to develop a nuclear deterrent, see Avery Goldstein, "Understanding Nuclear Proliferation: Theoretical Explanation and China's National Experience," *Security Studies*, Vol. 2, Nos. 3/4 (Spring/Summer 1993), pp. 213–255. On the South African case, see Peter Liberman, "The Rise and Fall of the South African Bomb," *International Security*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Fall 2001), pp. 45–86; and Mitchell Reiss, "South Africa: Castles in the Air," in Reiss, *Bridled Ambition: Why Countries Constrain Their Nuclear Capabilities* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1995), pp. 7–43.

14. Ariel E. Levite, "Never Say Never Again: Nuclear Reversal Revisited," *International Security*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Winter 2002/03), pp. 59–88.

mestic institutional constraints on the ability of Japan to manufacture a nuclear weapon.<sup>15</sup> The fourth section argues that the agenda-setting power of Japan's prime minister and cabinet has given them greater institutional freedom of action, should leader preferences change in the future.

### *Regional and International Security Environment*

Recent changes in the East Asian and international security environment have renewed speculation, primarily outside Japan, that Japan may choose to guarantee its security by developing an independent nuclear deterrent.<sup>16</sup> First, the spinning away of North Korea from the orbit of the former Soviet Union has caused it to emerge as a threat to Japanese security. North Korea is in the process of developing a deliverable nuclear device. It tested a ballistic missile over Japanese airspace in 1998 and carried out further missile tests in the Japan Sea in July 2006. In addition, North Korea has withdrawn from the NPT, and on October 9, 2006, it carried out a low-yield nuclear test. Further, North Korea appears to harbor aggressive intentions toward Japan, issuing bellicose statements threatening to turn it into a "nuclear sea of fire."<sup>17</sup> A major diplomatic initiative designed to halt North Korea's nuclear weapons program—the six-party talks involving North and South Korea, the United States, Japan, Russia, and China—has thus far failed to achieve its goal.

Second, the rise in Chinese military spending is increasing tensions between China and Japan that growing bilateral economic interactions show little sign of ameliorating. The Japanese national defense program approved by the cabinet on December 10, 2004, highlights Japan's concern with growing Chinese military power by identifying for the first time China's nuclear and missile weaponry and modernization program for its air and naval forces as developments requiring ongoing monitoring.<sup>18</sup>

---

15. Japan is subject to stringent examinations as a signatory to the Additional Protocol of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, and multiple actors are involved in Japan's nuclear energy program, making it unlikely that nuclear materials could be diverted without the public being alerted.

16. More recently, the conditions under which Japan should decide to develop a nuclear deterrent have begun to be debated domestically. See *Chuo Koron*, Vol. 121, No. 12 (December 2006); *Shokun!* Vol. 35, No. 8 (August 2003); Institute for International Peace Studies, *Nijjuisseiki no Kokkazo* [A vision of Japan in the twenty-first century], p. 5, <http://www.iips.org/j-kokkazou.html>; and Terumasa Nakanishi, ed., *Nihon Kakubuso no Ronten* [Debating Japanese nuclearization] (Tokyo: PHP Kenkyujo, 2006).

17. David Ibison and Andrew Ward, "North Korea Warns of 'Nuclear Sea of Fire,'" *Financial Times* (Asian ed.), September 24, 2004.

18. Japan Defense Agency, *Heisei17-nen Iko ni kakawaru Boei Keikaku no Taiko* [National defense program outline in and after 2005].

Third, the international regime designed to manage the flow of nuclear materials is under threat. The NPT has constituted a central component of Japan's strategy to manage the threat of nuclear weapons since the 1970s, yet verification and other mechanisms to ensure conformity with the treaty have been exposed as flawed by revelations in Iraq following the 1991 Persian Gulf War.<sup>19</sup> Further, the 1993–94 North Korean nuclear crisis, the subsequent withdrawal of North Korea from the nonproliferation regime, and its emergence (following India and Pakistan) as a declared nuclear power have undermined confidence that multilateralism can manage nuclear threats within the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>20</sup>

Fourth, the collapse of the Soviet Union altered the logic that underwrote the extension of the United States' nuclear deterrent to its allies. During the Cold War, the defense of Japan was determined to be integral to U.S. national interests, and this formed the bedrock under which U.S. security guarantees (including extended nuclear deterrence) were provided.<sup>21</sup> The end of the Cold War, however, undermined the rationale for the provision of security guarantees by the United States to its allies, including Japan, a fact recognized by the governments of both countries. The United States, for example, conducted reviews of its nuclear doctrine in 1994 and 2001 in response to the new strategic circumstances. The Japanese government also recognized the importance of the end of the Cold War to Japanese security in its National Defense Program Outlines for 1995 and 2005.<sup>22</sup>

### *Japan's Response to a Changing Security Environment*

Taken together, these changes in the regional and international security environment suggest that threats to Japan have increased in salience while

---

19. On the Iraqi nuclear program, see Khidhir Hamza, "Inside Saddam's Secret Nuclear Program," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 54, No. 5 (September/October 1998), pp. 26–33.

20. On proliferation threats to the NPT, see Chaim Braun and Christopher F. Chyba, "Proliferation Rings: New Challenges to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime," *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (Fall 2004), pp. 5–49.

21. NSC-68 names Japan as a state toward which economic support should be provided to ensure it remained in the U.S. sphere of influence. Secretary of State Dean Acheson noted that "were Japan added to the Communist bloc, the Soviets would acquire skilled manpower and industrial potential capable of significantly altering the balance of world power." Private memo from Secretary of State Dean Acheson to Oliver Franks, December 24, 1949, *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1949*, Vol. 7, p. 927, quoted in John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 77.

22. Japan Defense Agency, *Heisei 8-nen Iko ni kakawaru Boei Keikaku no Taiko* [National defense program outline in and after 1996]; and Japan Defense Agency, *Heisei 17-nen Iko ni kakawaru Boei Keikaku no Taiko*.



the two central components of its strategy to defend against nuclear threats—multilateral regimes and the United States' extension of its nuclear deterrent to Japan—are weakened. In this section I examine how Japanese decisionmakers and organizations have responded to this weakening of Japan's nuclear insurance policies. I begin with a discussion of multilateral nonproliferation regimes to which Japan is a participant and then consider Japan's alliance with the United States.

#### INSURANCE POLICY 1—MULTILATERAL NONPROLIFERATION REGIMES

Japan's strategy to deter nuclear threats while remaining a nonnuclear weapon state has centered on its security treaty with the United States. Strong support for multilateral nonproliferation and arms control regimes has complemented this policy. Indeed Japan has enmeshed itself in a web of international agreements both to enhance its own security and to signal its intention to refrain from developing an indigenous nuclear deterrent.<sup>23</sup>

Japanese officials cite Japan's ratification of the NPT in June 1976 as the moment at which the option of developing an indigenous nuclear deterrent was discarded.<sup>24</sup> Under its NPT commitments, Japan is prohibited from manufacturing, receiving the transfer of, or controlling directly or indirectly a nuclear device. Since ratifying the NPT, Japan has been a committed participant in international agreements promoting arms control and nonproliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. It supports the missile technology control regimes and other export control regimes, and since 1989 has hosted the UN Conference on Disarmament Issues.<sup>25</sup> Japan also continues to invest resources in training officials from developing countries in arms control and nonproliferation policies.<sup>26</sup>

---

23. Tetsuya Endo, *Genshiryoku no Heiwariyo to Genshiryokuiinkai no Yakuwari* [The peaceful use of nuclear energy and the role of the Atomic Energy Agency] (Tokyo: Atomic Energy Commission, 2002).

24. Senior official, Disarmament Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, interview by author, Tokyo, Japan, August 23, 2004. Japan balked at becoming a party to the NPT, arguing that it discriminated by allowing the five established nuclear powers to possess nuclear weapons while denying that same freedom to others. See Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Statement by the Government of Japan upon the Signing of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty," in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Nihon no Gunshuku/Fukakusan Gaiko* [Japan's disarmament and nonproliferation diplomacy] (Tokyo: Nihon Kokusai Mondai Kenkyujo, 2004), p. 280.

25. Michael J. Green and Katsuhisa Furukawa, "New Ambitions, Old Obstacles: Japan and Its Search for an Arms Control Strategy," *Arms Control Today*, Vol. 30, No. 6 (July/August 2000), p. 19.

26. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Japan's Efforts in Disarmament and Nonproliferation Education: Report Submitted to the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons" (Tokyo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 29, 2004).

Evidence demonstrates that in the 1990s Japanese officials strengthened Japan's commitment to arms control and nonproliferation, and began to engage in more prominent public diplomacy, increasing the reputational costs of unilateral withdrawal from the NPT. Japan ratified the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in 1997, and in 1998 became a signatory to the Additional Protocol of the NPT. The latter significantly extends its reporting responsibilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and enables inspections of declared and suspected undeclared sites at short notice. Japan undergoes a rigorous inspections program under this regime, reportedly accounting for up to one-third of the IAEA's budget.<sup>27</sup> Japan also maintains bilateral agreements with its nuclear suppliers banning it from using imported materials for purposes other than its civilian nuclear energy program.<sup>28</sup>

Japan has also increased its public rhetoric in support of nonproliferation. Since 1994 it has offered a resolution annually at the UN General Assembly calling for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. And since 2002 it has published a biannual white paper, in both Japanese and English outlining Japan's policy position on arms control and nonproliferation.<sup>29</sup>

Reflecting these changes, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), the lead ministry on disarmament and arms control issues, has increased the amount of organizational resources invested in the nonproliferation regime. Management of Japan's disarmament and arms control policy was initially subsumed within the United Nations Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Foreign Policy Bureau. Institutional reforms following the 1991 Gulf War, however, saw the disarmament and arms control policy functions shifted into a newly created disarmament and nonproliferation section. This new section included a department charged with ensuring Japan's compliance with international obligations regarding the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and one responsible for managing Japan's arms control and nonproliferation policies.

A second round of reforms in 2004 gave greater prominence to Japan's disarmament and arms control policy. The arms control and nonproliferation section was elevated to the divisional level, and within this division arms control and nonproliferation functions were given prominence over nuclear energy compliance functions. These organizational changes reflect two factors: first, the prominence of multilateral arms control and nonproliferation within

---

27. Yuri Kase, "Japan's Nonnuclear Weapons Policy in the Changing Security Environment: Issues, Challenges, and Strategies," *World Affairs*, Vol. 163, No. 3 (Winter 2003), p. 126.

28. Senior official, interview by author, August 23, 2004. See also Kaneko Kumao, "Japan Needs No Umbrella," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (March–April 1996), p. 48.

29. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Nihon no Gunshuku/Fukakusan Gaiko*, 2006.



Japanese foreign policy and increased administrative obligations to treaties to which Japan is now a party; and second, the completion of bilateral treaty negotiations associated with Japan's civilian nuclear energy program.<sup>30</sup>

#### INSURANCE POLICY 2—U.S.-JAPAN ALLIANCE

Japan's most significant insurance policy against nuclear threats is its bilateral alliance with the United States. Under the rubric of the Yoshida doctrine, Japan has relied on this alliance to provide security in the post-World War II period, while retaining limited defensive capabilities.<sup>31</sup> Official records do not show any apparent change in Japanese leaders' confidence in the U.S. commitment under this alliance to defend their country from conventional and nuclear threats. The Defense of Japan, for example, a report that is prepared annually by the Japan Defense Agency and represents the official record of Japan's defense posture and the agency's assessment of Japan's strategic environment, continues to note simply that Japan's alliance with the United States is crucial to the defense of Japan. Reviews of Japan's defense posture in 1995 and 2005 also state this, and note that Japan continues to rely on the United States to deter military threats.<sup>32</sup>

Since the end of the Cold War and the emergence of North Korea as a nuclear weapons state, Japanese policymakers have worked to ensure that the U.S. nuclear umbrella is not compromised. Although there was no significant difference between the governments of the United States and Japan during U.S. negotiations with North Korea over Pyongyang's nuclear program,<sup>33</sup> evidence suggests that Japanese officials lobbied the United States not to offer any concessions they judged could "punch a hole in the American nuclear umbrella."<sup>34</sup> Mitoji Yabunaka, director-general of the Asia-Pacific Bureau within MoFA, for example, urged U.S. Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly never to offer North Korea assurances that the United States would refrain from using nuclear weapons against it in return for concessions.<sup>35</sup>

---

30. Senior official, Disarmament Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, interview by author.

31. See Shingo Nakajima, *Sengo Nihon no Boei Seisaku: "Yoshida Rosen" wo Meguru Seiji/Gaiko/Gunji* [Japanese defense policy in the postwar era: Politics, diplomacy, military affairs, and the "Yoshida doctrine"] (Tokyo: Keio Gijuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2006).

32. Japan Defense Agency, *Heisei17-nen Iko ni kakawaru Boei Keikaku no Taiko*.

33. Robert Gallucci, telephone interview by author, December 1, 2006.

34. Leon V. Sigal, *Disarming Strangers* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 112. Concerns about undermining Japanese confidence in the alliance also played a role in determining the U.S. negotiating position toward North Korea. See "U.S. Retained First-Strike Option to Keep Japan under Nuclear Umbrella," *Japan Times*, March 6, 2005.

35. Katsuhisa Furukawa, "Making Sense of Japan's Nuclear Policy: Arms Control, Extended Deterrence, and the Nuclear Option," in Benjamin L. Self and Jeffrey W. Thomson, eds., *Japan's Nu-*

Preliminary evidence also suggests that following the North Korean nuclear test of October 9, 2006, calls by senior Japanese leaders to debate the merits of nuclearization were partially designed to elicit confirmation of the ongoing commitment of the United States to deter threats against Japan. Foreign Minister Aso Taro, who called openly for public debate on the conditions under which Japan should reconsider its nonnuclear stance, stated in a December 2006 interview that the most crucial action for Japan to take following the nuclear test by North Korea was to confirm the willingness of the United States to defend Japan from conventional and nuclear threats, and that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's visit to Tokyo in October 2006, which followed his remarks, achieved this objective.<sup>36</sup>

More fundamentally, new evidence demonstrates that Japanese defense officials recognized the implications of the end of the Cold War for Japan's alliance with the United States, and by extension for the continued robustness of the U.S. nuclear umbrella. The JDA addressed the question of how to manage this issue in a discussion paper prepared in 1994–95. The paper also considered whether it would be in Japan's interest to develop an independent nuclear deterrent.<sup>37</sup>

The JDA study is not the first of its kind. The director-general of the Defense Bureau within the JDA testified before a committee of the House of Councilors in 1972 that his office had concluded there was no justification for developing nuclear weapons, suggesting that a study of this question had been carried out by military officials.<sup>38</sup> Further, a group of analysts examined the technological and strategic constraints on Japanese nuclearization from 1968 to 1970, prior to Japan's signing of the NPT and the reversion of Okinawa to Japan. The group concluded that developing a nuclear weapon would not be in the national interest.<sup>39</sup>

---

*clear Option: Security, Politics, and Policy in the 21st Century* (Washington, D.C.: Henry L. Stimson Center, December 2003), p. 121.

36. Interview with Taro Aso, "Amerika ha Kaku no Kasa wo Kakuyaku Shita [America confirmed the nuclear umbrella], *Chuo Koron*, December 2006, pp. 54–63.

37. Some details of the discussion paper have been covered in the Japanese media. See, for example, "Nihon ha Kaku Hoyu ni Soguwazu, Boeicho ga Naibu Hokokusho" [Japan Defense Agency internal report: Possessing nuclear weapons unsuitable for Japan], *Asahi Shimbun*, February 19, 2003; and "Boeicho, Nihon no Kaku Hoyu ni Hiteiteki 'Bei ni Izon ga Sairyō' '95-nen ni Hokokusho" [Japan Defense Agency report in 1995: Opposed to Japanese nuclearization, relying on the U.S. is best], *Yomiuri Shimbun*, February 20, 2003.

38. John K. Emmerson and Leonard A. Humphreys, *Will Japan Rearm? A Study in Attitudes* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1973), p. 89.

39. "Reisengo, Towareru 'Hikaku'—Nihon no Kaku Seisaku ni Kansuru Kisoteki Kenkyū" [Questioning the nonnuclear status after the Cold War—Basic research into Japanese nuclear policy], *Asahi Shimbun*, November 13, 2004. For a detailed examination of the 1968–70 report, see Yuri

The 1994–95 discussion paper also does not represent a formal policy statement. Nevertheless, three factors suggest that it is aligned with JDA policy preferences. First, it was prepared at the request of the most senior JDA officials and implemented by senior military planners. Preparation of the discussion paper was requested by the former top bureaucrat within the JDA, Administrative Vice Minister Shigeru Hatakeyama. The group was backed by former JDA Administrative Vice Minister Nishihiro Seiki, a powerful voice on defense issues.<sup>40</sup>

Second, the discussion paper was prepared at a crucial time for Japanese security policy. Japan signed the permanent extension of the NPT in 1995, which increased the international legal constraints on Japanese leaders seeking an independent nuclear weapons capability. The mid-1990s was also a period of strained U.S.-Japan relations, and there were fears on both sides of the Pacific that the bilateral alliance would be rendered obsolete. The paper was written before these concerns were allayed with the April 1996 announcement of the Hashimoto-Clinton Joint Declaration on Security, which pledged the United States to maintain U.S. troop levels in Japan and a forward presence in Asia.<sup>41</sup>

Third, there was wide institutional commitment to the set of studies of which the discussion paper was one component. These studies were prepared in 1994–95 following the 1991 Gulf War and were designed to reexamine Japanese grand strategy. Participants in the studies were encouraged to engage in free debate, and Vice Minister Hatakeyama ordered all parts of the JDA to be involved in the project. Therefore, even though the discussion paper does not carry the weight of an official policy statement, these factors suggest that it is an important piece of recent evidence regarding the preferences of the JDA toward independent nuclearization.<sup>42</sup>

The discussion paper sought to accomplish three tasks: (1) analyze the impact of the end of the Cold War on U.S. and Russian nuclear weapons doctrine; (2) examine the threat posed by nuclear proliferation; and (3) consider the robustness of the U.S. nuclear umbrella, as well as examine the costs and benefits to Japan of developing an independent nuclear deterrent. It begins by noting that the collapse of the Soviet Union undermined the foundation of U.S. nu-

---

Kase, "The Costs and Benefits of Japan's Nuclearization: An Insight into the 1968/70 Internal Report," *Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Summer 2001), pp. 55–68.

40. The details on the process leading to the creation of the document rely on Peter Ennis, "'Ampo Minaoshi' Nichibei Sessho no Uchimaku" [Reviewing the alliance—The inside story of U.S.-Japan negotiations], *Shukan Toyo Keizai*, December 2, 1995, p. 75.

41. Joseph S. Nye, "The 'Nye Report': Six Years Later," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (January 2001), pp. 95–103.

42. See Samuels, *Securing Japan*, chap. 4.

clear strategy during the Cold War. Coupled with the weakening of former Soviet forces in the Far East, this raised the question of what Japan could expect from the extension of the United States' deterrent to Japan under their bilateral alliance: "In the post-Cold War environment, Japan only has the option of relying on the extended deterrent of the United States if a nuclear threat emerges from regional states, yet there is a danger that the elements that ensured its continued effectiveness have been lost."<sup>43</sup>

Rather than recommending that Japan reconsider its commitment to remain nonnuclear, the paper emphasizes the lack of strategic logic supporting Japanese nuclearization. It notes that backers of independent nuclearization within Japan commonly emphasize national prestige while not giving adequate consideration to the costs such a decision would entail, including accelerating the disintegration of the NPT, damaging the U.S.-Japan alliance, causing a domestic political furor, and incurring huge economic costs related to the infrastructure needed to develop and maintain a nuclear capability.

The paper also argues that Japan's high population density and small geographic area undercut the logic of mutually assured destruction (MAD), and that other rationales used to legitimate the decision for nuclearization during the Cold War are irrelevant. It notes, for example, that NATO's decision to employ tactical nuclear weapons to make up for the conventional arms deficit in Europe does not apply in Japan's case, given that it is surrounded by water and is likely to have adequate warning time to prepare before being attacked. It also argues that differing strategic circumstances mean the logic of freedom of escalation that drove nuclear decisionmaking in France and the United Kingdom does not apply in the case of Japan.

The discussion paper concludes by examining the utility of nuclearization under current conditions, and under conditions in which Japan's existing insurance policies against nuclear threats are no longer effective. In the former scenario, the report considers whether it would be in Japan's interest to develop a nuclear deterrent if the U.S.-Japan alliance remains robust and the multilateral nonproliferation regime remains in place, but neighboring countries seek to develop a nuclear capability.<sup>44</sup> It concludes that Japan should not

---

43. "Reisengo to iu kankyoka de, nihon no shuhenkoku ni oite kaku no kyoi ga hassei shita baai, beikoku no kakudai yokushi ha izen wagakuni ni totte yuiitsu kitai sezaruru wo enai mono de arinagara, sono kino ga hikitsuzuki yuko na mono dearu koto wo hosho shite kureru yoso ha ushinawarete shimatta osore ga aru." See Japan Defense Agency, "Tairyō Hakai Heiki no Kakusan Mondai ni tsuite" [On the problem of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction], unpublished report, p. 23 (translation by author).

44. The report was completed in 1995, after the 1993–94 North Korean nuclear crisis, but prior

develop an independent nuclear deterrent in this case, as it would serve to increase proliferation and weaken the U.S. nuclear umbrella. In what it terms a “worst-case scenario,” the paper then asks whether this conclusion would hold if the U.S.-Japan alliance no longer existed and the multilateral nonproliferation regime had disintegrated. It concludes that nuclearization would nevertheless not be in Japan’s national interest, given the geographic and population constraints noted above, as well as the likelihood that the international stability Japan relies on to prosper as a trading state would be undermined, rather than enhanced, by such a decision.<sup>45</sup>

As an alternative, the paper argues that Japan should support the permanent extension of the NPT and examine strategies for ensuring that the U.S. nuclear deterrent remains robust. As an example, the paper presents what it takes to be a successful attempt by Japanese leaders to influence U.S. policy. During U.S. negotiations with the Soviet Union over intermediate-range nuclear forces, Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone feared the United States would agree to a reduction in such forces in Europe while acquiescing to Soviet placement of SS-20 missiles in the Far East. By pushing for Pershings to be placed in Alaska in response, the report suggests that Nakasone successfully lobbied President Ronald Reagan’s administration to alter its negotiating position.<sup>46</sup> The paper notes that this incident serves as an important lesson for study not only because it reconfirmed the robustness of the U.S. deterrent commitment to Japan, but also because it sees this incident as an example of how Japan may influence U.S. nuclear strategy despite remaining a nonnuclear power.

Changes in Japanese security policy since the end of the Cold War appear to bear this strategy out. Most notably, the loosening of Japan’s self-imposed constraints on military participation in alliance activities has strengthened U.S.-Japan ties.<sup>47</sup> In announcing his government’s decision on December 9, 2003, to send Self-Defense Forces to Iraq, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi directly

---

both to the 1998 North Korean missile launch over Japanese airspace and to statements by North Korean leaders that they had developed a nuclear device.

45. This is in contrast to the Pacific war, when the Japanese navy and army ran parallel programs with the goal of manufacturing a nuclear device. See Walter E. Grunden, *Secret Weapons and World War II: Japan in the Shadow of Big Science* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), pp. 48–82.

46. For an outline of Japan’s position during the negotiations, see Shuichiro Iwata, *Kakusenryaku to Kakugumbikanri—Nihon no Hikakuseisaku no Kadai* [Nuclear strategy and the management of nuclear armaments—The question of Japan’s nonnuclear policy] (Tokyo: Japan Institute of International Affairs, 1996), pp. 142–148; and Tsuneo Akaha, “Japan’s Nonnuclear Policy,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 24, No. 8 (August 1984), pp. 863–871.

47. On the U.S.-Japan alliance and changes since the end of the Cold War, see Samuels, *Securing Japan*, chaps. 2, 3.

linked Japanese action with being a trustworthy partner to the United States and strengthening the alliance.<sup>48</sup> Foreign Minister Aso also directly linked Japanese actions in support of operations in Afghanistan and Iraq with the U.S.-Japan alliance.<sup>49</sup> Incremental changes, such as the agreement to participate in the U.S.-led missile defense system and increasing regionally oriented activities under revised guidelines governing U.S.-Japanese joint actions, have similarly served to strengthen the alliance.<sup>50</sup> Coupled with the April 1996 Hashimoto-Clinton agreement, these changes have renewed confidence in the bilateral security alliance.

Japanese leaders and ministries and agencies with responsibility for foreign and security policy responded to the worsening strategic environment in the 1990s, then, by working to consolidate Japan's existing insurance policies against nuclear threats rather than rejecting their viability and supporting the development of an independent nuclear deterrent. In particular, senior military officials within the JDA, the agency responsible for security policy, determined that nuclearization was not in Japan's interest despite changes in the international environment, and that policymakers should instead work to strengthen the U.S.-Japan alliance and multilateral nonproliferation regimes. They also concluded that independent nuclearization was not in Japan's national interest, even if its existing policies to manage nuclear threats were weakened. Meanwhile MoFA, as the ministry with primary responsibility for implementing Japan's nonproliferation and arms control policies as well as managing its alliance with the United States, has increased resources allocated to multilateral nonproliferation regimes.

### *Nuclear Hedging and Constraints on Japanese Nuclearization*

Japan's extensive civilian nuclear energy program, which includes plutonium reprocessing facilities, represents plausible evidence that Japanese decision-makers are engaged in a third strategy of nuclear hedging, in which they retain autonomy in nuclear decisionmaking even while acting to increase support

---

48. Public statement by Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, "On the Basic Plan Regarding Response Measures Based on the Law Concerning the Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq," December 9, 2003, <http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/koizumispeech/2003/12/09press.html>.

49. Interview with Aso, "Amerika ha Kaku no Kasa wo Kakuyaku Shita."

50. See, for example, "The Japan-U.S. Alliance of the New Century," joint statement issued by former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and President George W. Bush, June 29, 2006.



for nonproliferation and arms control regimes and strengthen the alliance with the United States. Such a strategy would echo Japanese defense technology indigenization programs, which have been implemented within the alliance structure partially as a hedge against abandonment by the United States.<sup>51</sup>

The weight of evidence, however, supports an alternative explanation for the program; the commitment to civilian nuclear energy is not designed to hedge against abandonment by the United States, but rather is embedded in a far broader portfolio of policies designed to decrease perceived risks associated with reliance on external energy supplies.<sup>52</sup> Japanese policymakers' energy supply concerns are a defining feature of Japanese energy policy and foreign policy.<sup>53</sup> Current policy provides support for Japanese firm participation in upstream exploration and production of crude, fuel diversification, and energy efficiency.

Japan's nuclear energy program is the most significant component of its fuel diversification strategy within this portfolio of energy policies. Utilization of nuclear energy for electricity generation commenced in 1966 and entered full commercial operation in 1969.<sup>54</sup> Japan's nuclear energy program has fifty-four nuclear power units supplying 29 percent of domestic electricity demand. Japan also maintains spent fuel reprocessing facilities. The first reprocessing facility went into operation in Tokai, Ibaraki Prefecture, in 1977. Another facility, located in Rokkashomura, has a reprocessing capacity of 800 tons of spent fuel annually and is scheduled to begin operations in 2007. Finally, Japan is developing a prototype fast-breeder reactor, which is overseen by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology. This ministry has responsibility for core components of Japan's nuclear research and development facilities; it is also responsible for meeting Japan's international reporting and

---

51. See Michael J. Green, *Arming Japan: Defense Production, Alliance Politics, and the Postwar Search for Autonomy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995). For a comprehensive review of the ideological roots of Japan's drive to indigenize defense technologies, see Richard J. Samuels, *"Rich Nation, Strong Army": National Security and the Technological Transformation of Japan* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994).

52. As part of their efforts to assuage international concern, managers of the civilian nuclear program have committed to maintain only enough plutonium to match Japan's needs. Delays in the construction of reprocessing facilities and reactors capable of using the mixed uranium oxide slated for use have meant this commitment has not been met.

53. Technological development and, more recently, environmental goals are also given as official justifications for the program.

54. Kazuya Fujime, *Nihon no Enerugii Seisaku—Sono Kihon Mokuhyo to Kongo no Kadai* [Japan's energy policy—Basic goals and future issues] (Tokyo: Institute of Energy Economics, Japan, 2000), p. 2.

notification obligations under the NPT and bilateral agreements with uranium suppliers.<sup>55</sup>

Although not a perfect substitute for crude, nuclear energy is justified in Japanese public documents both because it diversifies fuel used for electricity generation away from oil, thereby lessening the macroeconomic impact of oil price volatility, and because uranium suppliers are located in politically stable regions.<sup>56</sup> Nuclear power is also designated a quasi-domestic source of energy, as production can be indigenized through closing of the nuclear fuel cycle. By locating spent fuel reprocessing facilities domestically and developing fast-breeder reactor technology, Japan seeks to produce adequate plutonium through the generation of electricity to largely indigenize the supply of fuel.<sup>57</sup> This goal was set out in the first Long-Term Program for the Research, Development, and Utilization of Nuclear Energy, established by the Japan Atomic Energy Commission in 1956.<sup>58</sup> The civilian character of this nuclear energy program has been confirmed through repeated IAEA inspections, most recently in June 2004.

This centrality of energy security to Japan's civilian nuclear energy program implies that the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry and public and private organizations involved in this program are unlikely to support the diversion of nuclear materials or the requisition of components of the program for military use. Although not tested, bilateral contracts with uranium suppliers, for example, include clauses that imported materials must be used for peaceful purposes. Breaking these contracts would have a significant impact on Japan's nuclear energy program and therefore its energy security goals.<sup>59</sup> Planned reprocessing facilities also do not have adequate capacity to manage all spent fuel produced in Japanese reactors, meaning that this situation is unlikely to

---

55. Other ministries with regulatory competence over components of the civilian nuclear energy program are the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare; the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries; the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport; and the Environment Ministry.

56. Agency for Natural Resources and Energy (ANRE), *Enerugii Hakusho* [White paper on energy] (Tokyo: ANRE, 2003).

57. Susan E. Pickett notes that there was international consensus on the legitimacy of this strategy in the 1960s, although it was subsequently abandoned by other governments. Pickett, "Japan's Nuclear Energy Policy: From Firm Commitment to Difficult Dilemma Addressing Growing Stocks of Plutonium, Program Delays, Domestic Opposition, and International Pressure," *Energy Policy*, Vol. 30, No. 15 (December 2002), pp. 1338–1339.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 1338.

59. Yasuhiko Yoshida, "Nihon no Kakubuso: Uratsuke no Toboshii Kanjoron" [Japanese nuclearization: An emotional argument with little evidence to support it], *Asahi Shimbun*, December 19, 2006.

change. The likelihood of such opposition emerging was suggested in industry comments opposing the merits of conducting a debate on nuclearization following the October 2006 North Korean nuclear test, when it was argued that debating this question would be irresponsible because of its potential impact on Japan's spent fuel reprocessing planning.<sup>60</sup>

#### DOMESTIC INSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINTS—CONSTITUTIONAL

Despite the centrality of energy security to Japan's civilian nuclear energy program, evidence does not wholly reject the hypothesis that Japanese decisionmakers are engaged in nuclear hedging. Most notably, while Japan's constitution renounces war as "a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes," successive cabinets have explicitly stated that this does not prohibit Japan from developing a nuclear deterrent.

The degree to which Japan's constitution constrains its force structure and the application of military force remains contested.<sup>61</sup> Formally, two organizations have a role in interpreting Japan's constitution: the Supreme Court of Japan and the Cabinet Legislative Bureau (CLB).<sup>62</sup> The Supreme Court has *ex post facto* jurisdiction over legislation, as a challenge must be made on a constitutional matter before it has the authority to rule. The CLB, on the other hand, is a body within the administrative apparatus of the executive branch with authority for giving legal opinion on whether legislation proposed by the government contravenes existing laws. As such, it retains *ex ante* authority over constitutional issues. In practice the CLB, not the Supreme Court, has retained authority over constitutional interpretation.

The long-standing position of the CLB on the constitutionality of nuclear weapons stems from its determination that Japan's constitution prohibits offensive capabilities, but allows Japan to maintain military potential at a minimum level required to exercise its right to self-defense. The first statement that

---

60. "Gaishora Kaku Hoyu Rongi Yonin Hatsugen: Genshiryoku Gyokai ga Konwaku" [Foreign minister's and others' comments approving of debate on the possession of nuclear weapons: Bemusement from the nuclear energy industry], *Toa Nipposha*, November 11, 2006, p. 2.

61. For an overview of the constitutional debate over security policy, see J. Patrick Boyd and Richard J. Samuels, "Nine Lives? The Politics of Constitutional Reform in Japan," *Policy Studies*, No. 19 (Washington, D.C.: East-West Center, 2005).

62. For a view on the role of the Cabinet Legislative Bureau in Japanese security policy, see Samuels, *Securing Japan*, chap. 2. On the CLB, see Akira Nakamura, *Sengo Seiji ni Yureta Kenpo Kyujo—Naikakuhoiseikyoku no Jishin to Tsuyosa* [Article nine in postwar politics—The confidence and power of the Cabinet Legislative Bureau] (Tokyo: Chuo Keizaisha, 2001).

nuclear weapons are permissible under this interpretation was made by Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi in May 1957.<sup>63</sup> It was confirmed in December 1965 by the director of the CLB, who testified on the legality of nuclear weapons in a House of Councillors committee meeting.<sup>64</sup> In 1970 the Japan Defense Agency formalized this interpretation in doctrine, stating that it is possible in a legal sense to possess a small-yield nuclear weapon without violating the constitution if it is within the minimum force level required for self-defense and is not an offensive threat to other countries. This interpretation continues to form the basis for government policy. It was confirmed in May 2002 by Yasuo Fukuda, the chief cabinet secretary in the administration of Prime Minister Koizumi, in widely reported remarks,<sup>65</sup> and again by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in November 2006 in response to parliamentary questioning.<sup>66</sup>

The constitution may, however, place a limit on the type of nuclear device deployed. Japan's 2004 White Paper on Defense states that individual weapons systems exceed a minimum defensive level when, "by the nature of their performance, they are intended to be used only for the wholesale destruction of another country."<sup>67</sup> This is currently noted to exclude intercontinental ballistic missiles, long-range strategic bombers, and aircraft carriers. Where this line might be drawn in the future is unclear, however, as weapons classes prohibited through constitutional interpretation have in the past subsequently been deemed acceptable due to changed technological conditions. In 1952, for example, the National Safety Agency declared that it would be unconstitutional for Japan to possess fighter jets;<sup>68</sup> this decision, however, was later amended to allow possession of fighter jets if their air refueling and other components were removed, thus restricting their range. Japanese F-15s have also been removed from the list of previously banned systems due to changing technologi-

---

63. Nobusuke Kishi, House of Councillors Cabinet Committee, 26th Diet sess., committee minutes, May 7, 1957.

64. See House of Councillors Special Committee on the South Korea–Japan Treaty and Other Matters, committee minutes, December 3, 1965.

65. "Hikakusangensoku—Seifu shuno no Minaoshi Hatsugen ni Jimintonai kara mo Gimonsi no Koe" [Nonnuclear policy—Voices of doubt from within the LDP about senior government leaders' calls for reconsideration], *Mainichi Shimbun*, June 1, 2002.

66. Japanese House of Representatives, "Shugiin Giin Suzuki Muneo kun Teishutsu Kaku Hoyu wo Meguru Seifu no Kenpo Kaishaku ni Kansuru Shitsumon ni Tai suru Tobensho" [Reply to question from Member of House of Representatives Muneo Suzuki regarding the government's constitutional interpretation on the possession of nuclear weapons], *Naikakushushitsu*, November 14, 2006.

67. Japan Defense Agency, "Boei Hakusho 16-nen" [White Paper on Defense, 2004] (Tokyo: Kokuritsu Insatsukyoku, 2004), p. 79.

68. The National Safety Agency was the precursor to the Japan Defense Agency.

cal and international conditions.<sup>69</sup> Given the significant body of theory arguing that nuclear weapons lead to military restraint, a shift in existing policy enabling the development of a robust nuclear deterrent is plausible.<sup>70</sup>

DOMESTIC INSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINTS—THREE NONNUCLEAR PRINCIPLES

A second domestic constraint on Japanese nuclearization that is often cited is Japan's "three nonnuclear principles." These commit Japan to not manufacturing, possessing, or importing nuclear weapons, and were formalized as a Diet resolution in November 1971.<sup>71</sup> Successive cabinets have continued to confirm their validity.

The level of constraint these principles place on Japan's nuclear policy, however, is questionable. Most important, they do not represent a legal constraint, as Diet resolutions are passed as an expression of the will of the chamber and are nonbinding. Further, the third principle—that Japan will not allow the importation of nuclear weapons—was probably broken during the Cold War;<sup>72</sup> Prime Minister Eisaku Sato's envoy in initial negotiations over the return of Okinawa to Japan, Kei Wakaizumi, has asserted that a secret agreement existed allowing the United States to station nuclear weapons on Okinawa in the case of emergency, following consultation with the Japanese government.<sup>73</sup> Archival evidence also suggests that the USS *Midway*, a conventionally powered but nuclear weapons-capable aircraft carrier, may have been homeported in Yokosuka while armed with nuclear weapons, although these weapons were probably temporarily transferred prior to dry-docking so they would not be physically present on Japanese soil.<sup>74</sup>

---

69. James E. Auer, "Article Nine of Japan's Constitution: From Renunciation of Armed Force 'Forever' to the Third Largest Defense Budget in the World," *Law and Contemporary Politics*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (Spring 1990), p. 177.

70. See, for example, Bernard Brodie, "The Development of Nuclear Strategy," in Steven E. Miller, ed., *Strategy and Nuclear Deterrence* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984); and Robert Jervis, *The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution: Statecraft and the Prospect of Armageddon* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989). Stephen Van Evera follows Jervis in arguing that nuclear weapons in a MAD world are defense dominant. Van Evera, *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999), p. 246.

71. Minoru Kusuda, *Shuseki Hishokan: Sato Sori to no 10-nenkan* [Prime ministerial secretary: My ten years with Prime Minister Sato] (Tokyo: Bungei Shunju, 1975), p. 166.

72. Hans M. Kristensen, "Japan under the Nuclear Umbrella: U.S. Nuclear Weapons and Nuclear War Planning in Japan during the Cold War," Working Paper (San Francisco, Calif.: Nautilus Institute, July 1999).

73. Shinichi Kitaoka, *Jiminto: Seikento no 38nen* [Liberal Democratic Party: 38 years as the governing party] (Tokyo: Yomiuri Shimbunsha, 1995), p. 130.

74. Kristensen, *Japan under the Nuclear Umbrella*.

Indeed Prime Minister Sato's commitment to these principles is also doubtful. They were passed by parliament to break an impasse between the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and opposition parties over conditions for the reversion of Okinawa to Japan,<sup>75</sup> and Sato attempted to link them explicitly to Japan's reliance on U.S. extended deterrence. Sato's secretary, Minoru Kusuda, has stated that Sato's intention was to raise the nuclear issue to stimulate debate on how Japan should defend itself in the nuclear era, rather than to express his support for the principles.<sup>76</sup> Sato made clear his willingness to consider Japanese nuclearization following the Chinese nuclear test of October 16, 1964, stating in a meeting with U.S. President Lyndon Johnson that "if the Chicoms [Chinese communists] had nuclear weapons, the Japanese should have them." He made the same point to U.S. Ambassador Edwin Reischauer in a meeting on December 29, 1964.<sup>77</sup> Evidence also shows that Sato initially intended to establish principles against the manufacture and possession of nuclear weapons, but not their introduction into Japan. The third principle was added, for obscure reasons, during deliberations in the LDP General Council.<sup>78</sup>

New documentary evidence also shows that MoFA both supported the importation of tactical nuclear weapons into Japan and, although the language is ambiguous, may have advocated that this should be done clandestinely. The Foreign Policy Planning Committee, which commenced deliberations in secret in 1968, prepared a report in 1969 titled "An Outline of Japanese Foreign Policy." The committee, composed of the deputy directors-general from each ministerial division, met once or twice a month between May and September 1969. The report produced at the conclusion of these meetings was designed to form the basis for Japan's foreign policy planning into the 1970s.<sup>79</sup> It states that

---

75. Akihiko Tanaka, *Anzenhoshō: Sengo 50-nen no Mosaku* [National security: The 50-year postwar search] (Yomiuri Shimbunsha: Tokyo, 1997), pp. 224–225.

76. Kusuda, *Shuseki Hishokan*, p. 167.

77. Memorandum of Conversation, PM Sato and President Johnson, January 1965, National Security File, Country File, Japan, box 253, 1 of 2, Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, Austin, Texas, quoted in Francis J. Gavin, "Blasts from the Past: Proliferation Lessons from the 1960s," *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (Winter 2004/05), p. 117 n. 50. For Sato's position on nuclear weapons, see Akira Kurosaki, *Kakuheiki to Nichibeī Kankei: Amerika no Kaku Fukakusan Gaiko to Nihon no Sentaku 1960–1976* [Nuclear weapons and U.S.-Japan relations: Nonproliferation policies of the United States and Japan's choices, 1960–1976] (Tokyo: Yushisha, 2006), pp. 54–63, 187–222.

78. Tanaka, *Anzenhoshō*, pp. 222–223. Other postwar prime ministers, including Shigeru Yoshida and Hayato Ikeda, also expressed opinions at odds with Japan's three nonnuclear principles. See Yoshihide Soeya, *Nihon no "Midoru Pawa-" Gaiko* [Japan's "middle power" foreign policy] (Tokyo: Chikuma Shinsho, 2005), pp. 81–85. On Ikeda, see also Nakajima, *Sengo Nihon no Boei Seisaku*, pp. 198–200.

79. "Hibaku Haruka ni Uragiri no 'Kaku Kaado'" ["Nuclear card" clearly betrays victims of nuclear bombs], *Mainichi Shimbun* (Osaka ed.), August 1, 1994.



the importation of tactical nuclear weapons should remain a policy option: “While informing the people that [Japan’s] policy toward nuclear weapons generally should be calculated according to the costs and benefits in terms of international politics and economics, we should ensure that we avoid unnecessary domestic upheaval if we have to import tactical nuclear weapons in the future.”<sup>80</sup>

The report also demonstrates that support existed within MoFA prior to the enunciation of the three principles for maintaining the capacity to manufacture and possess a nuclear weapon, stating that Japan “would maintain a policy of not holding nuclear weapons for the present, but should take care to always maintain the economic and technological potential to manufacture a nuclear device, and not be restrained by others.”<sup>81</sup> According to an official involved in preparation of the report, this statement represented significant support within both MoFA and Japan’s parliament at the time it was written for retaining the option to independently manufacture a nuclear weapon.<sup>82</sup> This contrasts with public rhetoric, which cites Japan’s experience as the only nation to have suffered an atomic attack for its ongoing position toward nuclear weapons.

On the other hand, recommendations that Japan should formally relax the third principle to enhance the credibility of the U.S. deterrent have been ignored. Suggestions for the stationing of U.S. nuclear assets in Japan came during U.S.-Soviet negotiations over the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in the 1980s, due to concern that Soviet deployments of the SS-20 and Backfire bomber in the Soviet East were not taken up.<sup>83</sup> The achievement of strategic parity by the Soviet Union and the threat this was perceived to cause to the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence also resulted in domestic debate in Japan, including some who argued it meant Japan should develop its own nuclear deterrent or allow a U.S. deterrent on Japanese soil. Nevertheless,

---

80. “Kakuheiki ippan ni tsuite no seisaku ha kokusai seiji/keizaiteki na rigaisonshitsu no keisan ni motozoku mono de aru to no shushi wo kokumin ni keihatsu suru koto to shi, shorai manichi no baai ni okeru senjutsu kaku mochikomi ni sai shi muyo no kokunaiteki konran wo sakeru yo ni hairyo suru.” Seisaku Kikaku Iinkai, *Seisaku Kikaku Hokoku (Dai-ichigo): Wagakuni no Gaiko Seisaku Gaiko* (Tokyo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1969), p. 68 (translation by author).

81. “Tomen Kakuheiki ha hoji ha shinai seisaku wo toru ga, kakuheiki seizo no keizaiteki, gijutsuteki potensharu ha tsuneni hoji suru to tomo ni kore ni taisuru seichu wo ukenai you hairyo suru.” *Ibid.*, p. 67.

82. Kaneko Kumao, former Ministry of Foreign Affairs official and administrative aide in preparation of 1969 report, interview by author, Tokyo, Japan, June 10, 2005.

83. Shinichi Ogawa, “Problems of U.S. Extended Nuclear Deterrence for Japan,” Occasional Paper, No. 88-13 (Cambridge, Mass.: Program on U.S.-Japan Relations, Harvard University, 1988), pp. 17–18. For a summary of Soviet deployments in the East Asian theater, see Richard H. Solomon and Masataka Kosaka, eds., *The Soviet Far East Military Buildup: Nuclear Dilemmas and Asian Security* (Dover, Mass.: Auburn House, 1986), pp. 271–275.

these arguments failed to bring about policy change.<sup>84</sup> A report by the Foreign Policy Advisory Panel (a private advisory body to the minister of foreign affairs) in September 2001 concluded that Japan should explicitly relax the three nonnuclear principles to allow visits of U.S. vessels armed with nuclear weapons to Japanese harbors. It recommended redefining these as the “2 1/2 nonnuclear principles,” with the goal of strengthening the U.S. extended deterrent in the face of a worsening regional security environment. In response to questions about how MoFA would react to the recommendation, Minister of Foreign Affairs Yuriko Kawaguchi simply stated that it would study the issue.<sup>85</sup>

#### DOMESTIC INSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINTS—LEGISLATIVE

A third domestic legal constraint on Japanese nuclearization is the Basic Law on Atomic Energy, enacted in 1955 as the foundational law managing Japan’s extensive civilian nuclear energy program. Article 2 of the law establishes that the research, development, and utilization of atomic energy must be limited to peaceful purposes and carried out independently under democratic management. The Basic Law potentially constrains the development of nuclear weapons in two ways. First, amendments to the law must pass through normal parliamentary procedures, giving the opposition to any amendment an opportunity to block proposed changes. Second, the law establishes the Atomic Energy Commission as a body composed of civilians that is a formal part of the cabinet, reporting to a minister without portfolio within the Cabinet Office.

The Atomic Energy Commission is charged with creating policy and coordinating with other parts of the bureaucracy on nuclear budgetary issues. The most important policy role of the commission is drafting the long-term plan for the use of nuclear energy, and ensuring that nuclear energy planning conforms with the articles of the Basic Law. As such, the commission defines its role as making sure that Japan continues to limit its use of nuclear energy to peaceful purposes. Meeting records of the commission show that its members are united against the development of a nuclear deterrent. Following the 2002 comments by Chief Cabinet Secretary Fukuda on the constitutionality of nuclear weapons, for example, debate within the commission was dominated by

---

84. For a review of these debates, see Ogawa, “Problems of U.S. Extended Deterrence for Japan.”

85. Kyodo News, “Kaku Tosaikan no Ichiji Kiko Yenin wo: Gaisho no Shimon Kikan” [Foreign minister advisory body: Allow temporary port calls by nuclear-armed vessels], September 18, 2003.

the question of how to respond to what was judged by committee members as a transgression of the Basic Law. Nevertheless, discussions between committee members indicate that few regulatory tools are available to them to halt any drive to revise the law to allow the diversion of nuclear materials to a nuclear weapons program; the commission does not have the power to veto changes to the Basic Law itself. This suggests that if an effort was made to alter the law to allow the diversion of materials used in the civilian nuclear energy program to military use, the commission could do little beyond attempting to mobilize public opinion.<sup>86</sup>

#### DOMESTIC CONSTRAINTS—INFORMAL

Informal constraints present a more significant barrier to Japanese nuclearization. First, public polling in Japan consistently demonstrates an aversion to nuclearization that has not varied significantly despite the end of the Cold War and the emergence of North Korea as a nuclear weapons state. In 1968, polling carried out by the *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper found that 21 percent of the population answered affirmatively when asked whether Japan should obtain nuclear weapons. In 1978 and 1981, supporters had fallen to 15 and 16 percent.<sup>87</sup>

The end of the Cold War and the emergence of North Korea as a nuclear weapons state have not reversed this sentiment. A poll carried out in October 1999 by the National Institute for Research Advancement, for example, asked respondents what position in relation to nuclear weapons Japan should take in the event that the U.S.-Japan alliance was either dissolved or rendered meaningless. It found that support for independent nuclearization nevertheless stood at 7 percent. This result replicated a January 1994 poll asking respondents whether they would favor Japan developing its own nuclear weapon if North Korea did the same. Nine percent replied they “somewhat favored” or “strongly favored” such an outcome.<sup>88</sup> The October 2006 nuclear test by North Korea also appears not to have reversed public sentiment. In a poll conducted on November 11–12, 2006, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* newspaper found that 17.6 percent of respondents agreed with the statement that Japan’s commitment to re-

---

86. Atomic Energy Commission, Twenty-second to Twenty-fourth Atomic Energy Conference, conference minutes, Tokyo, Japan, June 4, 2002–July 2, 2002.

87. “Zenkoku Yoron Chosa no Ichiran, 1946–1995” [Summary of national opinion polls, 1946–1995], *Asahi Shimbun*. I am indebted to J. Patrick Boyd for these data.

88. Data collected by Central Research Services on behalf of the United States Information Agency. The data were obtained from the Japan Public Opinion Location Library, Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut.

main a nonnuclear weapons state should not be absolute, but rather Japan should reconsider its commitment to remain a nonnuclear state depending on changes in the international environment.<sup>89</sup>

Second, a feature of the postwar period has been the repeated inability of political actors to implement substantial changes to Japan's security policy in the face of opposition. Most notably, the Liberal Democratic Party, which has governed Japan for all but a handful of years since the party's creation in 1955, has suffered from a lack of intraparty cohesion on security policy, with both centrists and more hawkish groups coexisting within the party. Although the balance of power between these groups is dynamic, the equilibrium between them has historically been found in a reliance on the U.S. deterrent and limited domestic spending on autonomous defense.<sup>90</sup>

These intraparty divisions influenced nuclear decisionmaking in Japan. The initial response of the LDP to China's explosion of a nuclear device on October 16, 1964, for example, was hammered out through compromise between party members.<sup>91</sup> Divisions on nuclear weapons policy surfaced once again in a draft bill prepared by the LDP Constitutional Reform Committee in 2004, which recommended that Japan's three nonnuclear principles be written explicitly into the Japanese constitution. This would have significantly increased the domestic legal barriers to nuclearization by making constitutional revision a requirement of any decision to manufacture a nuclear device within the parameters of domestic law. Although removed from later drafts, this initiative demonstrates that significant numbers of LDP members remain committed to Japan's nonnuclear policy.<sup>92</sup> Members of the committee were drawn from across the LDP's factions, suggesting this preference is widespread within the government.<sup>93</sup>

Divisions also surfaced following remarks by Chief Cabinet Secretary Fukuda that were interpreted to suggest that the LDP was wavering on its commitment to eschew the development of nuclear weapons. Fukuda came

---

89. Support for a public debate on the conditions under which nuclearization should be considered, on the other hand, garnered greater support, with 45.9 percent agreeing that it is reasonable to debate the question, and 50.9 percent opposed. See "Opinion Poll: Nuclear Weapons and North Korea," *Yomiuri Shimbun*, November 2006.

90. This section focuses on the decisionmaking process within the Liberal Democratic Party, given its long-standing position as governing party.

91. For details, see John E. Endicott, *Japan's Nuclear Option: Political, Technical, and Strategic Factors* (New York: Praeger, 1975), pp. 56–60.

92. "Kaiken Soan he no Iken wo Boshu he: Jimin Chosakai" [LDP review committee: Move to elicit public comment on constitutional reform proposal], *Asahi Shimbun*, November 18, 2004.

93. The project team responsible for preparing the draft bill included factional members from the then Hashimoto, Kato, Kono, Mori, Komura, Horiuchi, and Eto factions.

under pressure to qualify his statement not only from opposition parties but also from senior members within the LDP, including Secretary-General Makoto Koga. More recent comments made by Foreign Minister Aso and Head of Policy Shoichiro Nakagawa supporting a public debate of the conditions under which Japan should consider developing an independent nuclear deterrent were criticized from within the party by Director-General of the Japan Defense Agency Fumio Kyuma and LDP Chairman of Parliamentary Affairs Toshihiro Nikai.

Data incompleteness makes it impossible to reach definitive conclusions on the extent to which these divisions are reflected in legislator preferences toward nuclearization throughout Japan's parliament, or how stable these preferences are over time. Nevertheless, a poll conducted in 1998 found that legislator opposition to nuclearization was dominant in the late 1990s despite changes in the international system. In the poll, which targeted legislators of both houses of Japan's bicameral parliament, just 4 percent of respondents were "in favor" or "somewhat in favor" of Japan developing a nuclear deterrent.<sup>94</sup>

### *Institutional Change and Policy Stability*

The weight of evidence suggests, therefore, that Japan has not employed nuclear hedging as a coherent national strategy: civilian energy bureaucrats have designed a nuclear energy program to manage the perceived risks associated with reliance on external markets for the supply of petroleum, rather than as a hedge against abandonment by the United States; documentary evidence shows that military planners do not see a strategic logic in nuclearization regardless of the status of the U.S.-Japan alliance; and stability in Japanese public opinion against nuclearization suggests there are few incentives for political leaders to push for policy change.

Nevertheless, institutional hedging by decisionmakers has ensured that the formal barriers to nuclearization are surmountable. In this section I examine the implications for Japan's ongoing nonnuclear stance on organizational and

---

94. Ikuo Kabashima, "A Nuclear Japan," *Japan Echo*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (August 2003), pp. 36–38. A hint of earlier legislative preferences is provided in a background paper prepared by the United States for the meeting of Prime Minister Eisaku Sato and President Lyndon Johnson, which argued that few legislators held the view that Japan should become a nuclear weapons state: "Sato recently indicated . . . that he believes it only common sense for Japan to have nuclear weapons. . . . Fortunately, Sato's 'common sense' view does not prevail outside a narrow circle of conservatives." "Japanese Security Situation—Visit of Prime Minister Sato, January 11–14, 1965," Secret, Background Paper, SAT/B-21, January 7, 1965, p. 34.

institutional changes in the 1990s. Organizational changes have increased the freedom of action of leaders in two ways. First, electoral and political funding reform have reduced the centripetal force of factions as organizational units within the LDP, giving the party president greater control over the distribution of party funding and appointment of candidates at election time. Both functions were previously managed by factional leaders and represented core components of factional power within the party.<sup>95</sup> This weakening of factions enables the prime minister to assign ministerial posts directly to influence policy, as Koizumi did in assigning the key defense post to more hawkish LDP members willing to stretch the constraints of Japan's security policy.<sup>96</sup>

Second, changes in the composition of the dominant LDP have led to a growing consensus within the party around policies associated with a more hawkish security position.<sup>97</sup> This has been echoed by a decline in the parliamentary strength of the Socialist Democratic Party of Japan (SDPJ), sharply reducing its influence in the political process. The SDPJ was the major opponent of a more assertive security posture for most of the postwar period, and its decline has served to shrink the ideological space between the ruling coalition and the major opposition party on national security issues.<sup>98</sup> Following a prolonged period of political instability, it has been replaced as the dominant opposition party by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), which is less dovish than the SDPJ, although it retains former members of the SDPJ and is divided on security policy.

Institutional reforms to the executive branch have served to further enhance the power of the LDP leadership. The reforms were implemented in 2001 under an extended economic downturn, and were designed to increase the authority of the prime minister and cabinet relative to bureaucratic organizations.<sup>99</sup> They have increased the resources available to the prime minister and

---

95. Harukata Takenaka, *Shusho Shihai: Nihon Seiji no Henbo* [Prime ministerial rule: The transformation of Japanese politics] (Tokyo: Chuko Shinsho, 2006), pp. 149–155.

96. Shinichi Kitaoka, "Koizumi Naikaku no Rekishiteki na Ichi" [Locating the Koizumi cabinet in history], *Chuo Koron*, October 2001, in Kitaoka Shinichi, *Nihon no Jiritsu* [Japanese independence] (Tokyo: Chuo Koron Shinsha, 2004), pp. 118–130.

97. For assessments of Japanese foreign policy that emphasize this emerging consensus, see Michael Green, *Japan's Reluctant Realism: Foreign Policy Challenges in an Era of Uncertain Power* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001); and Daniel M. Kliman, *Japan's Security in the Post-9/11 World: Embracing a New Realpolitik* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2006).

98. Mike M. Mochizuki, for example, relates the 1995 revision of Japan's National Defense Program Outline to the decline in SDPJ power, arguing that the JDA saw the weakness of the SDPJ as an opportunity to carry out such a revision. See Mochizuki, *Japan: Domestic Change and Foreign Policy* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1995), p. 71.

99. Headquarters for the Administrative Reform of the Central Government, "Establishing a Sys-



cabinet in three ways. First, the agenda-setting power of the prime minister, including in national security, has been strengthened through an amendment to the Cabinet Law. Prior to this, the prime minister was named as the head of the cabinet, but his agenda-setting power within the cabinet was not made explicit in law.<sup>100</sup> Second, the Cabinet Law has been amended to expand the role and authority of the Cabinet Secretariat, giving it the power to plan and draft policy as well as coordinate policies emerging from the ministries and agencies. This increased power has been consolidated by a reorganization and an increase in the number of staff serving the prime minister, with total staff expanding from 176 in 1993 to 680 in 2006.<sup>101</sup> Third, the establishment of the Cabinet Office in January 2001 gives the prime minister the power to appoint ministers within this office who can request materials from the ministries and make proposals to the prime minister, who then has the power to direct these ministries. A number of councils—most significantly, the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy—have also been established within the Cabinet Office that are presided over by the prime minister or chief cabinet secretary.

These changes add to a weapons procurement process that already constrains the prime minister and cabinet less than in other policymaking areas. The apex of the decisionmaking structure for defense policy, and the procurement decisions that flow from it, is the Security Council. Located within the Cabinet Secretariat, it is chaired by the prime minister and includes the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry; Finance Ministry; Land, Infrastructure, and Transport Ministry; Internal Affairs and Communications ministers; the director-general of the Defense Agency; chairman of the National Public Safety Commission; and chief cabinet secretary.

In practice, the Security Council makes decisions over the procurement of controversial or large weapons systems; the JDA takes the lead in less controversial procurement decisions.<sup>102</sup> As Michael Green notes, this chairmanship of the Security Council, and the National Defense Council that preceded it, has enabled prime ministers to exercise “considerable influence on procurement decisions that had reached a deadlock at the ministerial level.”<sup>103</sup>

---

tem with More Effective Political Leadership,” in *Central Government Reform of Japan* (Tokyo: January 2001), pp. 2–3.

100. Takenaka, *Shusho Shihai*, p. 158.

101. Kenji Hayao, *The Japanese Prime Minister and Public Policy* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993), p. 168; and Cabinet Secretariat, <http://www.cas.go.jp/jp/gaiyou/sosiki/index.html>.

102. Michael W. Chinworth, *Inside Japan's Defense: Technology, Economics, and Strategy* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 1992), p. 13.

103. Green, *Arming Japan*, p. 68.

The changes noted above have increased dynamism in Japanese security policymaking.<sup>104</sup> In both the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law that sent Maritime Self-Defense Forces to the Indian Ocean and defined Japan's response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the deployment of military forces to Iraq in 2003, the Cabinet Secretariat played the key role in organizing and implementing the policy response, typically circumventing the informal policymaking process within the LDP party structure.<sup>105</sup>

Although not tested, these changes imply that the freedom of action of the prime minister and cabinet in relation to Japan's three nonnuclear principles and the Basic Law on Atomic Energy has been enhanced. As noted, the former holds no legal power, whereas the Basic Law requires revision through normal parliamentary procedures. Control over political funding and appointments provides the party leader with greater ability to sanction party members threatening to vote with the opposition in the event the prime minister moves to initiate policy change. Further, the increased agenda-setting power available to the prime minister provides a greater range of tools through which to push for changes to the status quo; the prime minister can now formally propose policy changes in the cabinet, and has more institutional resources available to drive policy change. Coupled with the reduction in the power of the centrists on security policy within the LDP, the party president now has a greater ability to quell opposition to any decision to pursue nuclearization emerging from within party ranks.

Nevertheless, the outcome of future debates over the merits of nuclearization are not certain. Japan is a democracy, and public opinion and legislative polling, as well as the JDA assessment, demonstrate that support for nuclearization is unlikely to be unanimous even if Japan's existing insurance policies against nuclear threats weaken. Indeed the evidence presented here suggests that the elevation of the JDA to ministerial status in December 2006 will militate against future nuclearization.

The increased ability of the prime minister to push changes in security policy through the legislature also does not translate directly into an increased capacity to succeed in establishing a nuclear weapons program in the face of opposition. First, the long horizon for developing a robust independent nu-

---

104. For a parallel discussion of the effects of the rise of prime ministerial power on the likelihood of constitutional and security policy reforms, see Boyd and Samuels, *Nine Lives?*

105. For details, see Tomohito Shinoda, *Kantei Gaiko: Seiji Riidashippu no Yukue* [Foreign policy from the prime minister's office: The direction of political leadership] (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, 2004).

clear deterrent and associated systems would require an ongoing commitment to nuclearization even after the successful passing of legislative changes. This stands in contrast to recent international deployments of Japan's military forces, in which existing Self-Defense Forces units were deployed to new geographic areas. Second, a nuclear program would require the sustained cooperation of a wider range of actors than have recent security policy initiatives, which centered around the Cabinet Office, Japan Defense Agency, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>106</sup> Aside from the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry and other public and private sector organizations involved in Japan's civilian nuclear energy program, for example, the Ministry of Finance is also likely to play a role, given its centrality in the budgetary process.<sup>107</sup>

### Conclusion

The central insight of neorealist theory is that states are responsible for ensuring their security in an anarchic world. The response of Japanese political leaders and ministries and agencies with responsibility for security and foreign policy to end of the Cold War, and the emergence of new threats in Northeast Asia, demonstrate that they understand this. Japanese decisionmakers and organizations responded to these changes by reexamining the value of the country's existing insurance portfolio against conventional and nuclear threats. They concluded, however, that strengthening the status quo was both optimal and possible, and the strategy that has emerged from this has proven an unbridled success. While guaranteeing the continued efficacy of nonproliferation and arms control regimes is outside Tokyo's control, incremental increases in the Self-Defense Forces' roles and missions have ensured that Japanese political actors and organizations remain confident in the U.S. commitment to deter

---

106. Michael D. Swaine, Rachel M. Swanger, and Takashi Kawakami note, for example, seven groups of organizations that were involved in the decision to implement ballistic missile defense. Swaine, Swanger, and Kawakami, *Japan and Ballistic Missile Defense* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2001), chap. 3.

107. The Finance Ministry does not have veto power over budgetary decisions, however. Most notably, control for Japan's overall budget design has also been transferred from this ministry to the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy, located in the Cabinet Office, giving the prime minister greater control over budgetary processes. On the role of the Finance Ministry in budget design, see John C. Campbell, *Contemporary Japanese Budget Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); and Maurice Wright, *Japan's Fiscal Crisis: The Ministry of Finance and the Politics of Public Spending, 1975–2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). For an assessment of Finance Ministry interests in defense spending, see Samuels, *Securing Japan*, chap. 2; and Green, *Arming Japan*, pp. 20–22.

conventional and nuclear threats to Japan. Little wonder, then, that the evidence presented above demonstrates that elite opinion remains committed to Japan's existing set of policies toward nuclear weapons.

Given the preponderance of U.S. conventional and nuclear military power, Japanese policymakers are unlikely to push for an independent nuclear deterrent as long as they remain confident that this deterrent power is conferred on Japan. North Korea's nuclear test in October 2006 suggests that external threats alone are not sufficient to cause change in the status quo. Rather, it is likely to be policies that undermine decisionmakers' confidence in Japan's existing insurance policies to manage nuclear threats that will reignite debate within Japan on whether to rebalance the scales toward nuclear autonomy rather than protection.

If this occurs, policymakers and scholars should not dismiss the propensity for future policy change, regardless of diplomatic rhetoric asserting that Japan has forever renounced the desire to develop a nuclear deterrent. The evidence presented here demonstrates that even though the policy equilibrium remains centered on continued reliance on the protection of the United States, Japan's political leaders have ensured that domestic legal constraints are surmountable.

Nevertheless, a hollowing out of the U.S. deterrent is unlikely to automatically translate into the inclusion of a nuclear deterrent within Japan's force structure. Nuclear hedging has not been implemented as a coherent national strategy, and sustained political will and organizational cooperation would be required to independently develop a robust nuclear deterrent. The evidence suggests that support for such a policy among domestic organizations cannot be assumed. Japan's energy bureaucrats, for example, are unlikely to support the transfer of nuclear materials for military purposes, given the repercussions for the civilian nuclear energy program. Evidence also suggests that Japanese military planners believe that the costs of independent nuclearization outweigh any security benefits. Finally, polling shows that public preferences against nuclearization are stable, suggesting that Japanese public opinion is likely to remain a significant constraint on policy change even in the absence of Japan's bilateral alliance with the United States.