

Domestic sources of Japan's foreign and security policy

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at
The Australian National University

February 2019

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Declaration

I declare that the material contained in this thesis is my own original work and that it contains no material previously published or written by another person except where otherwise acknowledged.

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Word count: 99,716

Acknowledgements

A wise man once told me that he never did anything of value on his own. The completion of this thesis is testament to this advice and the great assistance I have received from many kind people. It is my pleasure to thank them here.

First and foremost, this thesis would not have been possible without the incredible advice, support and wise counsel of Professor Peter Drysdale and Dr Shiro Armstrong. I am deeply indebted to them both beyond what words can describe. When I first played basketball with Shiro when I was an undergrad student and he was writing his PhD thesis, and when Shiro recruited me to work with him and Peter at the East Asia Forum, I never could have imagined the amazing academic journey before me that they made possible.

I benefited greatly from the advice of Professor Bill Tow and Professor Hugh White. They were generous with their time despite their own busy schedules and their advice has helped improve the text and argument.

I was fortunate to receive helpful feedback during a presentation from Dr Amy King and Dr David Envall which has helped improve the text.

My understanding of Japan and Japanese foreign policy issues has been tremendously deepened thanks to my boss and mentor at the Japan Center for International Exchange, Mr Hitoshi Tanaka, and my supervisor during my MA study at Waseda, Professor Chikako Ueki. Thank you for your continuing guidance.

I owe a big thank you to the support of the Japan Foundation which enabled me to conduct six months of field work in Tokyo and to Professor Yoshihide Soeya of Keio University for hosting me during this time. I also owe a big thank you to the National Parliamentary Fellowship Program and the offices of Motohisa Furukawa and Takemi Keizo who hosted me during my three months working at the Diet.

Thank you to Yusuke Ishihara, Ryosuke Hanada, Yuma Osaki, Giridharan Ramasubramanian and the many other PhD students at ANU who I shared enlightening discussions with.

Thank you to my friends and family for their support and understanding as I devoted countless hours to writing.

Finally, thank you to my darling wife Noriko for your love and support which kept me sane through the writing process. I look forward to the exciting years we share ahead.

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Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFVKN	Association of the Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea
AOSS	Association of Shinto Shrines
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASDF	Air Self-Defense Force
ATSMML	Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CDP	Constitutional Democratic Party (2017-)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CENTCOM	United States Central Command
CLB	Cabinet Legislation Bureau
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia
DOD	Department of Defense, United States
DP	Democratic Party (2016-2018)
DPJ	Democratic Party of Japan (1996-2016)
DPRK	Democratic Republic of Korea
DSP	Democratic Socialist Party (1960-1994)
EU	European Union
FEFTCL	Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Control Law
GDP	gross domestic product
GSDF	Ground Self-Defense Force
ICG	International Crisis Group
JDA	Japan Defense Agency (1954-2007)
JDP	Japan Democratic Party (1954-1955)
JINF	Japan Institute for National Fundamentals
JIP	Japan Innovation Party (2014-2016)
JSP	Japan Socialist Party (1945-1996)
KCNA	(North) Korean Central News Agency
LCPACJ	Law Concerning Procedures for Amendments of the Constitution of Japan
LCSMHRA	Law Concerning Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party (1955-)
LP	Liberal Party (1950-1955)
LSMCIPESS	Law for Special Measures Concerning Interdiction of Ports Entry by Specific Ships
MOD	Ministry of Defense, Japan (2007-)
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan
MSDF	Maritime Self-Defense Force
NARKN	National Association for the Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea
NDPG	National Defense Program Guidelines
NPR	National Police Reserve
NSA	National Security Agency
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PFG	Party for Future Generations (2014-2015)
PFJK	Party for Japanese Kokoro (2015-2018)
PKO	(UN) peacekeeping operations

PLA	Chinese People's Liberation Army
ROK	Republic of Korea
SASL	Shinto Association of Spiritual Leadership
SDF	(Japan) Self-Defense Forces
SDP	Social Democratic Party (1996-)
SIASJL	Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan Law (1999)
SPT	Six Party Talks
UN	United Nations

1 The power of the Japanese right

In February 1957, the former prime minister of Japan Shigeru Yoshida addressed the first ever graduating class of the National Defense Academy, the school that trains officers for the Japan Self-Defense Forces (SDF), Japan's de facto military. He advised them that: 'It is possible that many of you may finish your career at the SDF without ever being thanked or welcomed by the people...because it is only when our nation is facing crisis and confusion, when we are attacked by foreign forces or when necessity arises for you to embark on disaster relief missions, that the people will appreciate and praise the SDF...I want you all to bear with the life in the shadows' (Stavale 2017, p. 223; Martin 2011).

More than 70 years on since the end of the Second World War in 1945, Japanese policymakers are still grappling with the challenge of how far and in what form Japan's foreign and security policy activities can credibly emerge from the shadows. The reputational challenge that Japan faces and the question of what role the country should play in contemporary regional affairs continue to be sensitive issues of debate. This stems in large part from differing perceptions of how the country has come to terms with its history and the lessons Japanese society has taken away from its disastrous war campaign and wartime transgressions.

A minority of Japanese never came to terms with the post-war developments and Japan's adoption of a peaceful posture under the Article 9 'peace clause' of the 1947 Constitution, which forswears war as an instrument of the state and the use of force as a means of settling international disputes. For instance, the award-winning writer and Nobel Prize in Literature finalist Yukio Mishima infamously led the formation of the right-wing militia group Tatenokai (Shield Society). Devoted to studying military principles and pledging to protect the Emperor of Japan, Mishima and his four disciples attempted a coup d'état in 1970. Their ostensible aim was to persuade the SDF to overthrow the government and restore the power of the Emperor, but they succeeded only in drawing the scorn of soldiers upon themselves and Mishima committed ritual *seppuku* (suicide by disembowelment) at the Ichigaya military headquarters in Tokyo (Nathan 1974, pp. 274-281; Kakutani 1985, p. H1). A number of right-wing groups continue to stake out a role in Japanese politics today sharing, to varying degrees, similar Emperor-centric state militarist ideologies with Tatenokai, though without

the paramilitaries. For instance, Issuikai (First Wednesday Association) continues to commemorate Mishima's failed coup (Issuikai 2018, p. 1; Perez 2013, p. 336).

In contrast to these right-wing groups, the Japanese mainstream largely came to embrace the 1947 Constitution, Article 9 and the newfound prosperity the nation achieved under this political institutional framework. From the ashes of defeat, a focus on economic reconstruction enabled Japan to rebuild itself into the second largest economy in the world in less than 25 years. The combination of Article 9 and the US-Japan alliance has meant that no Japanese soldier has fired a shot at another nation's troops in the post-war era. The enduring popularity of Article 9 is reflected in a number of civil society groups as well as public opinion polling. For instance, the Article 9 Society campaigns for the protection of the 'peace constitution' and counts Nobel Prize in Literature winner Kenzaburo Oe among its founding members. Oe's writings critique the 'enduring imperialist, belligerent mindset that lived on in democratic, post-war Japan' (Mason 2017). The efforts of the Article 9 Society and other similar groups were recognised with the nomination of 'Japanese people who conserve Article 9' for a Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 (Hagström 2014). The majority of Japanese people have continued to support Article 9 throughout the post-war era (Asaoka & Teraoka 2016; Okonogi 2018).

The question

The emergence of a new coalition of right-wing domestic political actors in Japan seeking to escape the post-war regime raises a number of questions for the future direction of Japanese foreign and security policy. First, to what extent does domestic politics matter as a determinant of foreign and security policy? Or, in other words, what is the relative importance of endogenous versus exogenous factors in the state's formulation of foreign and security policy? Second, assuming that endogenous factors are of at least some import, how significant is the coalition of right-wing domestic political actors in Japan with regard to Japan's foreign and security policy? How precisely do they exert influence? And what are the limits and constraints on their influence?

It is hypothesised that elements of Japan's right wing exercise outsized influence through a number of special interest groups with a shared commitment to escape the post-war regime through two key factors: the cultivation of linkages and influence among right-wing politicians and through opportunistic narrative building around shock events. This influence,

disproportionate to the size of their support base and counter to mainstream public opinion, has enabled the right wing to partially realise its objectives, but it is not so significant that the post-war regime is likely to be easily overturned in the short or medium term.

Why domestic politics?

The inclusion of domestic politics speaks to the debate within International Relations and political science about the relative importance of endogenous and exogenous determinants of foreign and security policy. Does foreign and security policy agenda setting begin with a pre-existing desire for change rooted in the power and preferences of influential domestic political actors? Or, conversely, does foreign and security policy agenda setting begin with an appreciation of the international circumstances of the state and the need to maximize security in response to the exigencies of the external security environment?

Realist theories of international relations tend to emphasise the importance of exogenous factors, such as threats emanating from the external security environment (Waltz 1959, 1979; Mearsheimer 2001). Thus when Japan implements security policy reform it is often explained by realists as being primarily a response to the rise of China or North Korean aggression (Hornung 2014; Hughes 2016; Koga 2016). Realists will not necessarily deny the occurrence of internal jockeying in the domestic political arena. However, since realism emphasises survival in the anarchic international system as the paramount goal of all states it is argued that this objective will supersede domestic political imperatives. In other words, realists espouse the maxim that ‘politics stops at the water’s edge’ (Cherny 2008, pp. 113-118) and expect that domestic political actors will find sufficient overlap in their mutual interest of countering external threats. Through this lens of the world, opening up the black box of domestic politics becomes an unnecessary distraction in the analysis of foreign and security policy.

On the other hand, political scientists, comparative politics and country specialists and actor-specific theorists tend to emphasise the importance of endogenous factors (Rosenau 1967, 1969; Putnam 1988; Hudson 2005). For instance, James Rosenau argues that ‘domestic sources of foreign policy are no less crucial to its content and conduct than are the international situations toward which it is directed’ (Rosenau 1967, p. 2). He identifies a number of domestic sources of foreign policy including: ‘sources located in the individual actor — his personality, attitudes, and social position’ (Rosenau 1967, p. 8), ‘instruments

through which action is taken — the mass media, voting, and interest groups’ (Rosenau 1967, p.8) ‘sources operative at sites where individual and group actions converge — the urban community and the national political system’ (Rosenau 1967, p. 8), the ‘activities of countless interest groups, which...are...among the critical mechanisms for conveying foreign policy attitudes to officialdom’ (Rosenau 1967, p. 9), the ‘activities and outlooks of officials’ (Rosenau 1967, p. 9), ‘governmental behavior as it is shaped by the anticipation of future elections and the memory of past elections’ (Rosenau 1967, p. 9) and ‘the processes through which officials establish governmental machinery for making foreign policy’ (Rosenau 1967, p. 9). Rosenau further argues that the underlying ‘forces at work in society’ (Rosenau 1967, pp. 4) demand attention as domestic sources of foreign policy. This includes ‘the shared values, the unresolved conflicts, the irrational drives, the memories of the past, the ever-changing dynamics of group life, the shifting composition of cities and classes, the ups and downs and changing structure of production and trade, [and] the profound alterations in work and leisure patterns induced by technology’ (Rosenau 1967, pp. 4-5) that may end up being ‘articulated in the in the actions of decision makers’ (Rosenau 1967, p. 5).

Keeping such domestic sources of foreign policy in mind, it seems unlikely that domestic political actors will in all cases be able to find sufficient overlap in their mutual interest of countering external threats given the different perspectives that shape the way they view the world. For instance, a domestic political actor may be willing to put its own parochial interests ahead of that of the state. A domestic political actor may even be willing to see a deterioration of the state’s position in the international political system if it serves its own specific interests at home, such as an accumulation of power, resources or prestige. From this point of view, for the vast majority of the time when the state is not facing an immediate existential threat, foreign and security policy may be considered to be fair game as a realm for domestic political battles.

The debate over the relative significance of endogenous and exogenous influence on foreign and security policy was characterised by Rosenau as two paradigms trapped in conceptual jails and unable to engage with one another (Rosenau 1969, pp. 8-10). Rosenau criticised realists for explaining everything in terms exogenous determinants, in particular the structure of the international security environment. By black boxing domestic politics and ‘regarding every national system as acting to enhance or preserve its basic interests...the foreign policy analyst can focus on the international actions themselves and is relieved of having to treat

them as responses to variable internal sources as well as external stimuli' (Rosenau 1969, p. 9). By the same token, Rosenau criticised political scientists and comparative politics specialists for explaining everything in terms of endogenous determinants. By 'viewing national systems as the ultimate masters of all that transpires within their borders, students of such systems need not be concerned about variations in the international environment and instead can treat it as an undifferentiated condition that operates equally upon the domestic processes and institutions that interest them' (Rosenau 1969, p. 9). Thus, Rosenau concludes, concerted efforts are needed to develop linkage theory — theory which explains the 'complex linkages between national and international systems' (Rosenau 1969, p. 3). This requires not just facilitating communication between the two fields of political science and International Relations but consciously engineering a jailbreak from the walls which limit thinking within each field (Rosenau 1969, p. 11).

Why Japan's right wing?

The question of the influence of Japan's coalition of right-wing domestic political actors speaks to the debate about the future direction of the country's foreign and security policy framework and the posture of the SDF. How far should the roles and missions of the SDF be constrained or expanded? Should Japan revise Article 9 of the Constitution to 'normalise' the legal ability of the SDF to resort to the use of force? Or should Japan maintain Article 9 as a mechanism to avoid exacerbating the security dilemma with its regional neighbours and as a blockade against militarism? How closely should the SDF cooperate with the US military and to what extent should it participate in US-led military operations around the world? What is the nature of the threats against Japan emanating from China and North Korea? And to what extent should those threats constrain possible Japanese diplomatic outreach and cooperation with China and North Korea?

As Japan has maintained Article 9 and exclusively defence-oriented security as the anchor of its policy framework throughout the post-war era and enacted a series of incremental reforms over the post-Cold War years, it has found itself criticised from both sides for not doing enough and for doing too much. On the one hand, Japan has been criticised for its chequebook diplomacy, security free-riding or cheap-riding, and failing to take sufficient responsibility for its own defence. On the other hand, Japan has been criticised for failing to atone for its wartime past and harbouring ambitions of a return to the pre-war right-wing militarist and ultra-nationalist ideologies. The conflation of Japanese expressions of

nationalism (from Olympic Games cheer squads through to prime ministerial visits to Yasukuni Shrine) with a full-scale resurgence of right-wing militarism or ultra-nationalism, as well as the overemphasising of statements or actions by right-wing groups that do not represent the Japanese mainstream, have become something of a hazard of Japanese post-war social psychology. This would seem to suggest that Japan has encountered some difficulties with regard to public relations surrounding its post-war identity and role in regional and global affairs. At the same time, it is evident that post-Cold War shifts in the Japanese political environment have seen a discernible shift to the right in Japanese politics relative to the Cold War period (Nakano 2014; 2016, pp. 23-41).

On one side of the debate is the coalition of domestic political actors on the left who hold strong concerns regarding the rigour of civilian control rooted in ‘collective Japanese memories of the militarist takeover in the 1930s’ (Berger 1993, p. 120) and advocate in favour of the maintenance of at least some form of restrictions of the SDF’s legal right to resort to the use of force. This includes a small minority of pacifists who continue to advocate for unarmed neutrality and argue against the constitutionality of the SDF. The majority of actors within this coalition, however, recognise the constitutionality of the SDF while advocating for the maintenance of varying degrees of restrictions on SDF activities. Core to this is the recognition of the right to individual self-defence based on the principles of *senshu boei* and restricting the use of force to the ‘minimum necessary’ level for the individual self-defence of Japan. These principles are rooted in both Article 9 and the 1957 Basic Policy on National Defense, which stipulates the objective ‘to prevent direct and indirect aggression, but once invaded, to repel such aggression, and thereby, to safeguard the independence and peace of Japan’ (MOD 2016). Beyond this there is also a broad recognition of the legitimacy of SDF roles and missions for disaster relief, humanitarian operations and UN PKOs (Midford 2011, pp. 82-109). There is also some recognition of limited forms of collective self-defence since the passage of the security-related bills in September 2015. Yet the left often characterises moves to loosen restrictions on the SDF’s use of force as a ‘slippery slope...to reverting to wartime authoritarianism’ (Samuels 2015).

Internationally, Japan has been criticised for failing to atone for its wartime past and harbouring ambitions of a return to the pre-war right-wing militarist and ultra-nationalist ideologies. Such criticism is most common among Japan’s regional neighbours China, South Korea and North Korea (Kelly 2015; McCurry 2015; Jennings 2017; Ryall 2018).

In China, criticism of Japanese foreign policy has at times become enmeshed with the domestic political legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Since the end of the Mao Zedong era and the beginning of the economic opening and reform period, CCP domestic political legitimacy evolved away from praise of Mao and his leadership of communist forces to include a broader set of pillars. These pillars of domestic political legitimacy include, in addition to rapid economic growth, a focus on defence, the protection of China's independence, and never repeating the 'national humiliation' of foreign control at the hands of the European powers (Lovell 2011) and then the Japanese (Coble 2007, pp. 394-410; Wang 2012; King 2017). The patriotic nationalist narrative in which the CCP resisted Japanese aggression during the Second World War (which is referred to in China as the Anti-Japanese War of Resistance, 1937-1945) helps the CCP to 'divert attention from its domestic governance shortcomings, focus public frustrations on an external enemy, and thereby achieve domestic cohesion' (Tanaka 2013).

China has shown a tendency to portray Japanese actions that it perceives as weakening Article 9 as a violation of the post-Second World War settlement. For instance, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs suggested that the Abe cabinet's July 2014 'constitutional reinterpretation raised doubts about Japan's commitment to peaceful development' (King 2014). When the Japanese Diet passed the security-related bills in September 2015, which implemented this reinterpretation to recognise the legal right of the SDF to conduct limited forms of collective self-defence, China's state-owned Xinhua News Agency criticised Japan and its 'warlord prime minister' Shinzo Abe for jeopardising 'peace in the Asia-Pacific region' (Liu 2016; McCurry 2016). China has also linked the dispute over the Senkaku Islands to discourses of Japanese aggression against China from the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 to the end of the Second World War in 1945 and to Japan's 'incorrect view' of history (Yang 2012; Xinhua 2012; Drifte 2014; Jash 2016).

In South Korea, Japanese foreign policy behaviour and moves to expand the roles of the SDF have been linked to Japan's history of colonial aggression against the Korean peninsula. South Korean media criticised Prime Minister Abe and the passage of the September 2015 security-related bills for killing Japan's pacifist constitution, 'threatening to throw the region into flux' and for putting Japan on a warpath (Oh 2016). The semi-official Yonhap News Agency (2015) urged Japan to show transparency in implementing the security-related bills,

reflecting a widespread misperception in the country that the SDF could potentially be dispatched to the Korean peninsula in a crisis scenario under these new laws. It noted 'Japanese boots on the peninsula are one of the last things South Koreans want to see due to painful memories of Japan's colonial rule of Korea from 1910 to 1945' (Yonhap 2015). South Korean accusations of a lack of Japanese contrition for wartime transgressions and suspicion of Japan's latent right-wing intentions have undermined Japan-Republic of Korea (ROK) cooperation in other areas including efforts to resolve the 'comfort women' issue and the territorial dispute over the Takeshima (Dokdo) Islands, which is seen by South Koreans as the beginning of Japanese colonial conquest (Berkshire Miller 2012; Kim 2012). South Korean distrust of Japan has also complicated Japan-ROK bilateral and US-Japan-ROK trilateral security cooperation vis-à-vis North Korea (Tanaka 2012; Park 2016). For instance, the Trilateral Coordination Oversight Group, which was established in 1999 out of the Perry Process, 'floundered over still powerful historical...differences between Washington's two Northeast Asian allies (Tow 2018, p.6) and 'ceased to function by the beginning of the Bush administration' (Sahashi 2011).

A number of commentators in the international media have also expressed concern that Japan's right-wing domestic political actors are gaining increased influence, and risk turning Japan back toward its pre-war militarism and aggression. This trend of opinion reporting intensified after the return of Abe as Japan's Prime Minister in December 2012 and tends to emphasise the link between members of the Abe government and right-wing lobby groups such as Nippon Kaigi (Kato 2014; Carney 2015; Gelernter 2016). This includes Abe himself who has served a number of key roles in the Nippon Kaigi Parliamentary Discussion Group (Asia Policy Point 2014a, p. 67; 2014b, p. 65; 2015, p.76).

On the other side of the debate over the future direction of Japan's foreign and security policy are those in favour of expanding the roles and functions of the SDF. In Japan this includes the Japanese right wing itself and its mission to escape the post-war regime. It also includes more moderate right-leaning actors, such as some of the so-called Gulf War generation, who have promoted calls for Japan to revise Article 9 and 'normalise' its ability to use force abroad but stop short of advocating for other tenets of escaping the post-war regime. A number of countries around the region have also called for Japan to play a bigger role in regional security affairs, most notably the United States, Australia and a number of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries.

The United States has urged the expansion of SDF roles and missions since the early days of the Cold War. This position is based on the assumption that Japan continues to act within the framework of the US-Japan alliance. In the immediate post-war years, Japan was considered to be a latent threat and ‘an unpredictable actor whose policies need to be stabilized from the outside’ (Temerson 1991, p. 11). It was from these origins that the US-Japan alliance was born with the objective of ‘double containment’. Namely, the alliance served the double purpose of containing the Soviet Union and communism on the one hand, and containing a remilitarised Japan on the other (Temerson 1991, p. 2). Even decades later, when US-Japan cooperation had come to underpin security in the Asia-Pacific, doubts still lingered in the minds of some US foreign and security policy elites over the extent to which democratic ideals had taken root in the Japanese public consciousness (Brzezinski 1972; Iriye 1975, p. 161; Temerson 1991, p. 80). Despite lingering US concerns, the communist victory in the Chinese civil war in 1949 and the outbreak of the Korean War (1950-1953) meant that fears of a revival of Japanese militarism came to be outweighed by those about the spread of communism. As such the United States moved to reinvent Japan as an ally and has urged its rearmament, within in the contours of the alliance relationship, including loosening the restraints of the Article 9 peace clause (Ascione 2015).

US pressure on Japan intensified during the 1980s and 1990s with the ‘Japan bashing’ phenomenon (Brock 1989, pp. 29-40). After Japan’s economy grew to become the second largest in the world, overtaking West Germany in 1967, and after Japan’s trade surplus with the United States skyrocketed, Japan came to be seen as a threat to the economic primacy of the United States (Vogel 1979). Accusations that Japan was free-riding or cheap-riding on the US security guarantee for its own economic prosperity, including by a number of prominent representatives of the US Congress, came to the fore. While the economic issues were dealt with through Japan adopting voluntary export restraints and the 1985 Plaza Accord under which Japan agreed to appreciate the yen, the situation surrounding the 1990–1991 Gulf War and criticism of Japan’s chequebook diplomacy further intensified US pressure on Japan to expand the roles and missions of the SDF commensurate with its economic means (Mann 1991; Kurosawa 1998, pp. 196-208). This US pressure, as well as the ‘Gulf War shock’, helped pave the way for the series of incremental defence reforms Japan undertook after the end of the Cold War.

Australia, as another US ally in the Asia-Pacific region, has also encouraged Japan to play a more prominent role in Asia-Pacific security affairs. Security cooperation between Japan and Australia has developed to the point that each country is each other's most important security partner after their treaty ally, the United States. Australia's encouragement of Japan is, similar to the United States, based on the assumption that Japan will continue to work within the US-Japan alliance framework, gradually deepen Australia-US-Japan trilateral security cooperation, and expand its contributions and cooperation with Australia in UN PKOs. In this context, former Australian foreign minister Julie Bishop stated that 'it is time for Japan to assume a place at the global security table, with a "normal" defence posture' (DFAT 2013). After the Abe administration issued a cabinet decision in July 2014 to recognise limited forms of collective self-defence, the United States and Australia jointly 'welcomed Japan's efforts to make a greater contribution to international peace and stability' (DFAT 2014). And after the Abe government passed the security-related bills in September 2015, Bishop welcomed the new laws saying they 'will make it easier for [Australia] to work with Japan overseas on peacekeeping operations, and humanitarian and disaster relief' (DFAT 2015).

A number of Southeast Asian states concerned by China's rise have also urged Japan to play a greater security role in the region. Given the asymmetric nature of the relationship between China and Southeast Asian nations, 'many see Japan-Southeast Asian strategic partnerships and Japan's multifaceted relationship with the US as interrelated, synergistic and a boon to their security anxieties' and a way to avoid overreliance on the United States (Nagy 2017). The Philippines and Vietnam in particular, whose territorial disputes with China in the South China Sea have flared in recent years, have shown the greatest enthusiasm toward Japan (Sato 2013; Heydarian 2016; Grønning 2018). The uncertainty over the future security role of the United States in the region since the election of Donald Trump as US President in November 2016 has further increased the perceived importance of cooperation with Japan to many in Southeast Asia. Japan has provided maritime security capacity building assistance to Southeast Asian nations both on a unilateral basis as well as trilaterally with the United States and Australia (Jimbo 2015, pp. 61-75; Funabashi 2016). Yet ASEAN countries are not unified on their stance toward Japan. For instance, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad urged Japan not to revise its constitution (*The Japan Times* 2018).

Defining the right wing

A clear left-right heuristic divide emerged in post-war Japanese politics between the two biggest political parties with the JSP (and later the DPJ) on the left and the LDP on the right ‘sharply demarcated on issues of security and constitutional revision’ (Jou 2010, p. 370; Otake 1990). Further to the right on this spectrum, beyond the centre-right mainstream conservatives, is the Japanese right wing. Naoto Higuchi defines the right wing in Japan as those social groups that adopt some combination of four key characteristics: ‘strong faith in emperor-centred nationalism’, ‘anti-communism’, ‘historical revisionism’ and ‘nativism’ which places them ‘to the right of mainstream conservatives’ (Higuchi 2018, pp. 682-684). Such social groups include ‘survivors of prewar fascist organizations’, ‘the religious right and groups of war veterans (and their families)’, and more recently formed nativist groups (Higuchi 2018, p. 683). Some examples of right-wing groups include: Nippon Kaigi (Japan Conference), the Japan Institute for National Fundamentals (JINF, Kokka Kihon Mondai Kenkyujyo), the Association of Shinto Shrines (AOSS) (McNeil 2013; Larsson 2016), the National Association for the Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea (Sukuuikai, hereafter abbreviated as NARKN), Ganbare Nippon (Do your best Japan), Channel Sakura, Issuikai, and Zaitokukai (Association of Citizens against the Special Privileges of the Zainichi).

Core to the world view of the right wing is the idea that the post-war political institutions introduced by the US-led Allied powers are ‘based on denial of the prewar regime, in which the emperor and Shinto, the state religion, were primary principles of national integration’ (Higuchi 2018, p. 683). This is ‘embodied in the movement to restore political authority to the hereditary emperor ... which culminated in the Meiji Restoration of 1868’ (Szymkowiak and Steinhoff 1995, p. 267). As such ‘the main interest of the postwar ... right has been to resurrect the glorious history of the Japanese Empire’ (Higuchi 2018, p. 683). To this end, revising the Constitution is key for the Japanese right wing for two reasons. First, to give greater emphasis to the role of the Emperor in Japanese politics. Second, to transform the SDF into a military that (in the view of the right) has the autonomy to protect Japanese citizens and in which Japanese citizens can be proud of.

In other words, the right wing in post-war Japan can generally be described as those domestic political actors who maintain a shared commitment to escape the ‘post-war regime’ (*sengo rejiimu*). The leitmotif of the commitment to escape the post-war regime is to overcome the constraints imposed on Japan as a result of its defeat in the Second World War, its occupation

by the Allied powers and the choices made by Japan's first post-war prime minister Shigeru Yoshida, which resulted in Japanese foreign policy following the Yoshida doctrine. This includes overhauling the post-war political institutional framework installed by the Allied occupation forces between 1945 and 1952 and especially the 1947 Constitution. The post-war regime is perceived by Japan's right wing as inculcating alien Western values and norms and they are committed to replacing it with institutions that are aligned with their own conception of indigenous Japanese norms and values.

As outlined in Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's book *Towards a Beautiful Country* (2006), escaping the post-war regime entails three key aspects: overcoming irresponsible pacifism (Abe 2006c, pp. 123-125), moving past undue humiliation and restoring national prestige (Abe 2006c, p. 206), and overcoming the selfish egocentrism of post-war Japanese democracy (Abe 2006c, p. 65; Togo 2014, 2015, p. 5).

Japan's so-called irresponsible pacifism is considered objectionable by the right wing because of their perception that it was the intention of the US-led Allied powers occupation reform program to weaken Japan and curtail its foreign and security policy autonomy (Fukui 1970, p. 198). The right wing argues that legal restraints on the Japanese state's right to use force, and especially Article 9, are irresponsible as they leave Japan vulnerable and unable to protect its sovereignty adequately at a time when the regional security environment is becoming more dangerous. They assert that these restrictions force Japan into a position where it has no option but to maintain dependence on the United States for its security through the US-Japan alliance system, and they associate this situation with a sense of humiliation.

In seeking to overcome so-called irresponsible pacifism, the right wing has made overturning constraints to autonomous Japanese defence capabilities, perceived and real, a central objective. Most prominently, this includes rescinding or formally revising Article 9. It further includes transforming the SDF into a military without legal restrictions on its use of force and restoring Japan as a military power of which the people can be proud. These are controversial propositions. Throughout the post-war period until the present day, the question of Article 9 continues to be a sensitive question. The criticality of Article 9 in Japanese post-war politics is demonstrated by the fact that it is often used as a shortcut to identify if somebody is left wing (pro-Article 9) or right wing (pro-revision).

A key argument used by the right wing to justify its call for the removal of restrictions on Japan's use of force is the need to defend Japanese territory. This includes taking a hard line approach toward defending outlying territories also claimed by other states such as the Senkaku Islands (referred to by China as the Diaoyu Islands), the Takeshima Islands (referred to by the Koreans as the Dokdo Islands) and the Northern Territories (referred to by Russia as the southern Kuril Islands). These protracted and unresolved territorial issues Japan faces are in part the result of the terms of peace settlement between Japan and the Allied powers under the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty, which 'specified neither final designation nor precise boundaries of the territories that Japan renounced' (Hara 2015, p. 3).

The idea of escaping undue humiliation stems from a historical revisionist world view which is common among Japan's right-wing domestic political actors. The right wing tends to downplay, whitewash or deny Japan's colonial era and wartime transgressions and seeks to beautify the history of Japanese imperial institutions. Any foreign policy that acknowledges Japan's colonial or wartimes transgressions is generally perceived as besmirching the honour of the Japanese colonial authorities, the Imperial Japanese Army and by extension the institution of the Emperor. Victoria, for instance, has described this right-wing revisionist view of history 'as a "parallel universe" where war criminals are martyrs' (Victoria 2015). At the same time, Japan's right wing tends to hold a hostile view toward communist regimes, especially China and North Korea, emphasising those countries' transgressions while neglecting Japan's.

The idea of overcoming the selfish egocentrism of post-war Japanese democracy is coded language for the subordination of individual rights to the state, social order and the Emperor. The right wing invokes a mission of protecting Japan, Japanese tradition and culture, and the prestige of the Emperor (the abstraction rather than the man) as justification for promoting this conception of social order. The right-wing factions of the LDP continue to advance such ideas, including notably through the LDP's 2012 draft constitution (LDP 2012; George Mulgan 2013; Hamilton 2016).

The definition put forward here is intended to define the contemporary right wing with regard to foreign and security policy issues and to serve as reference point for the present analysis. It must be acknowledged that the classification of what constitutes moderate, right-wing and

left-wing politics in Japan has undergone redefinition throughout the course of Japan's modern political history since it was cajoled from its international isolation by US Navy Commodore Matthew Perry's gunboat diplomacy in 1853. As a relative concept these political labels have shifted in juxtaposition to the dominant political actors. At the same time, the ability of any domestic political actor — right-wing, left-wing or moderate — to exert power or influence is significantly shaped by the domestic political environment that they must operate in.

Ascendancy of the right and the road to war (1853-1945)

During the Meiji Restoration (1868-1912) Japanese political elites promoted the rapid import of foreign institutions and technology under the banner of 'rich nation, strong army' (*fukoku kyouhei*) and 'Japanese spirit, Western technology' (*wakon yousai*) in order to catch up to the West. As Japan's modernisation progressed, the country's politics was hijacked by right-wing authoritarian and militarist actors (Orbach 2017; Tsuchiyama 2017). The new goal became the establishment of Konoe's New Order and the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere to liberate Asia from Western colonialists and to bring Asia under the Japanese Imperial order (Samuels 2007, p. 14).

As explained by noted scholar of Japanese political thought Masao Maruyama, Japanese society in the pre-war and wartime era was but for 'an extremely small number of heretics' pervaded by right-wing thought (Maruyama 1974, p. xvii). In particular, Maruyama listed 10 characteristics of pre-war Japanese society:

- (1) precedence of loyalty to the nation over every other form of loyalty;
 - (2) hostility towards any extension of democratic rights and towards international socialism;
 - (3) support for militarism and opposition to pacifist movements;
 - (4) glorification of a national 'mission';
 - (5) appeal to protect national traditions and culture from sinister outside influences;
 - (6) emphasis on duties as opposed to rights, on order as opposed to freedom;
 - (7) stress on the individual's family and birth place as fundamental bonds of social cohesion;
 - (8) tendency towards the authoritarian regimentation of all human relationships;
 - (9) integration of the national spirit in support of orthodox ideas;
 - (10) tendency to be especially vigilant and suspicious in regard to intellectuals and members of the free professions on the grounds that they are apt to become disseminators of subversive thoughts
- (Maruyama 1974, pp. xvii-xviii).

These tenets were inculcated into the population through the ‘official education of *chuukun aikoku* (loyalty to the Emperor and love of country) which the power elite of Imperial Japan had systematically imposed on the people since the Meiji Period’ (Maruyama 1974, p. xviii). The deep permeation of these ideas in the national consciousness denied any legitimate grounds for ‘frontal resistance’ to military authoritarian rule through the system of *kokutai* (national polity) under which ‘all national agencies were agencies of the Emperor and the authority of every single official received its sacred validity from the Throne’ (Maruyama 1974, p. xx). In this conception Emperor Hirohito and the Imperial Japanese Army led Japan down its disastrous war path (Bix 2000, p. 12, pp. 318-319).

The post-war occupation and transition (1945-1960)

In the immediate post-war years, the US-led Allied occupation forces under Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) General Douglas MacArthur set about reorganising Japanese society. One of SCAP’s key objectives, significantly for the future of Japan’s foreign and security policy, was the demilitarisation of the Japanese state. This was intended to ensure Japan would never again wage a war of aggression. The Japanese government of the day was reluctant to make significant changes to the Meiji Constitution, so MacArthur delegated the task of drafting a new constitution to a small team of mostly American military lawyers under his direct supervision. MacArthur, with a guiding hand from then prime minister Kijuro Shidehara by some accounts (Schlichtmann 1995; Boyd & Samuels 2005, p. 5), resolved that in addition to the restraining hand of democratic institutions, the new constitution should include a formal prohibition on remilitarisation and the right to belligerency. It was from these origins Article 9 was born.

Japan’s post-war constitution was enacted in 1947, and the Allied powers returned sovereignty to Japan and ended the occupation in 1952. This opened the door for a political battle between the left and right over whether and how Japan might rearm. On the left end of the spectrum were pacifists who advocated that the US-Japan Security Treaty and the maintenance of any Japanese armed forces, even for the purpose of self-defence of the homeland, should be considered a violation of Article 9 and thus unconstitutional. They advocated that Japan should put its faith in neutrality, the international community and the United Nations (UN). The middle ground was occupied by those who supported the maintenance of Article 9 or some mechanism to prevent Japanese entanglement in US-led wars while at the same time approved of Japan siding with the United States against the

communism of the Soviet Union. And on the right end of the spectrum, including a number of pre-war elites, were those who advocated for the abolition of Article 9 and the re-establishment of 'an independent, full-spectrum Japanese military that could use force' internationally (Samuels 2006, p. 117).

Prime minister Shigeru Yoshida skilfully engineered a balancing-act compromise with the establishment of the SDF in 1954 under the framework of Article 9. The mission of the SDF was strictly regulated so that it was only permitted to use force to repel direct attacks against the Japanese homeland, and on the proviso that the SDF would not be allowed to possess military capabilities constituting 'war potential' (Samuels 2007, p. 46). This balancing act held as the right yielded out of fear that failure to cooperate with Yoshida would allow the JSP to take power, while the left was kept on side by Yoshida's commitment to maintain Article 9.

Japan's right-wing domestic political actors, notably Ichiro Hatoyama (who succeeded Yoshida as prime minister from December 1954 to December 1956) and Nobusuke Kishi (grandfather of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, munitions minister under the wartime cabinet of General Hideki Tojo, a former war criminal suspect and prime minister from February 1957 to July 1960), sought to undo Yoshida's balancing act. In contrast to Yoshida, 'Hatoyama and Kishi represented a more traditional, nationalistic conservatism. Their vision for the restoration of Japan was one in which it would once again emerge as a great power, with all the normal levers of power' (MacDougall 1998, p. 67).

When the Liberal Party (LP) (formerly led by Yoshida until December 1954) and the Japan Democratic Party (JDP) led by Ichiro Hatoyama merged to form the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in 1955, Kishi, who was a key founder and financier, was instrumental in insisting that the LDP include constitutional revision as a founding objective of the party. Haruhiko Fukui explains that the LDP's 'Mission of the Party' statement, which was adopted at its inaugural party meeting in November 1955, lamented the mistaken policies of the occupation authorities and the Constitution for 'the weakening of the nation' through 'the unwarranted suppression of the ideal of the state and patriotism and excessive fragmentation of the powers of the state' (Fukui 1970, p. 198). It was on this basis that 'revision of the constitution' was 'defined as one of the six basic missions' of the LDP (Fukui 1970, p. 198). Hatoyama and Kishi also oversaw a reinterpretation of Article 9. This enabled the SDF

greater military capabilities that might constitute 'war potential' so long as SDF capabilities and SDF use of force was limited to the 'minimum necessary' level to defend Japan (Samuels 2007, p. 47).

When Kishi ascended to the prime ministership in 1957 he was determined to abolish Article 9 and restore Japanese security policy autonomy. However, given the widespread public popularity of Article 9, as well as the opposition having enough seats to block the LDP from the two-thirds majority needed for constitutional change, the best Kishi could do was to initiate a research commission on the Constitution. At the same time, Kishi resolved to focus his efforts on revising the asymmetric nature of the US-Japan alliance by revising the US-Japan Security Treaty (Samuels 2001).

To this end the Kishi government 'renegotiated a more equitable' (Bix 2000, p. 662) US-Japan Security Treaty. This included the removal of a provision whereby US forces in Japan could quell internal riots and disturbances, added language that the United States would consult with Japan 'before US troops became involved in a crisis outside Japan' (Packard 1966, p. 6) and obligated the SDF to aid US forces in the event of an attack by a third nation on US bases in Japan (Bix 2000, p. 662). At the same time, it was understood between the two governments that beyond helping to defend US bases in Japan, the SDF would not come to the defence of the United States due to constitutional restrictions under Article 9.

The events in the first half of 1960 in the lead up to the ratification of the treaty unleashed a groundswell of public opposition (Passin 1962, p. 391). The treaty revision was unpopular with the general public who distrusted Kishi's intentions, with some nationalists on the right who saw the security treaty and dependence on the United States as a national humiliation, and with the left which supported unarmed neutrality and perceived the revision as a stepping stone to further security policy changes including to Article 9. Over 130 disparate but mainly left-wing protest groups united to form the People's Council to Stop the Revised Security Treaty (Anpo Joyaku Kaitei Soshi Kokumin Kaigi) under the leadership of Sohyo (The General Council of Trade Unions of Japan), Zengakuren (All-Japan League of Student Self-Government) and the JSP (Bernhardt 2010, p. 4).

Kishi was intent on having the treaty ratified in time for a visit to Japan by US President Dwight Eisenhower in June 1960. The approval of the revision on 19 May was all the more

controversial as Kishi resorted to having members of the opposition JSP locked out of the Diet during the vote (Packard 1966, pp. 237-242). This meant that approval of the treaty revision by the lower house was passed by more than two-thirds of the members present, and with that threshold passed the treaty would automatically be ratified in 30 days without the approval of the upper house as per the terms of Article 61 of the Constitution (Nish 1960, p.11). Kishi's undemocratic trick triggered a national outrage, he was widely condemned by the newspapers and there was a deluge of calls for Kishi to resign as prime minister (Packard 1966, pp. 242-251). Public protests flared on 4 June with a nationwide strike led by Sohyo (Packard 1966, pp. 258-270), on 10 June with the mobbing of President Eisenhower's press secretary James Haggerty outside Haneda Airport during a preparatory trip (Packard 1966, pp. 285-291), and on 15 June with the death of student protester Michiko Kamba during protests out the front of the Diet building (Packard 1966, pp. 291-299). Ultimately, Kishi was forced to cancel the Eisenhower visit and to resign as prime minister over the issue, but not without the treaty revision coming into force.

Eschewing military power (1960-1990)

As a result of the events relating to the 1960 US-Japan Security Treaty protests, the infallibility of Article 9 was cemented throughout the rest of the Cold War. When Kishi's constitutional commission delivered its final report in 1964, his successor prime minister Hayato Ikeda decided to shelve the report to avoid aggravating public opinion (Wada 2010, p. 406). The LDP subsequently transformed itself into the party of economic growth under Ikeda's 'plan to "double" the nation's income within a decade by increasing its GNP by 9 percent annually' (Bix 2000, p. 667). For the next three decades the LDP eschewed controversial foreign and security policymaking and focused on economic growth. Opinion polling throughout these decades shows that the public supported the maintenance of the SDF under the framework of Article 9 (Stockwin 1987, pp. 114-119). Until the 1990–1991 Gulf War, it was considered hawkish simply to suggest that revision of Article 9 should be debated (Soeya 2011, p. 77).

With the mainstream conservatives in the LDP back in control, Japan developed an exclusively defence-oriented security (*senshu boei*) policy anchored in Article 9. This was complemented by the adoption of a number of measures to prevent Japan from becoming a military power. For instance, in 1967 the government of Eisaku Sato adopted the Three Non-Nuclear Principles (no possession, no production and no passage of nuclear weapons)

(MOFA 2014d) and the Three Principles on Arms Exports (no weapons exports to: communist bloc countries, countries subject to UN Security Council resolution arms embargoes and countries in or likely to be involved in international conflict) (MOFA 2014a). In 1976 the government of Takeo Miki further strengthened the Three Principles on Arms Exports, effectively banning all weapons exports (MOFA 2014a), and passed a cabinet decision establishing a limit on defence spending of 1 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) (Wright 2016, p. 4). This limit was symbolically breached by the government of Yasuhiro Nakasone, which passed a defence budget equivalent to 1.004 per cent of GDP in 1987 (Haberman 1987). The limit has been challenged once again by the current Abe government, but it still remains in place as a widely respected norm to the present day. In 1980 the government of Masayoshi Ohira adopted a policy of comprehensive security, which postulates that security should be pursued not only through military means but also through economic and diplomatic means. This includes ‘three levels of national security measures for Japan: (1) self-help or self-defense; (2) efforts to render the whole international system conducive to Japan's security; and (3) intermediate-level efforts to build a favorable security environment in the region’ (Akaha 1991, p. 325)

Post-Cold War shifts and incremental reforms (1990-present)

In the post-Cold War era, there have been three key shifts in the Japanese political environment that have once again redefined how left-wing and right-wing politics is understood in Japan. First, there has been a change in the composition of Japan's political opposition. Second, previously taboo security-related issues have been reopened for debate. And, third, right-wing actors have come to take a more significant role in Japanese politics, which they were denied during the Cold War years. As a result of these shifts, the door was opened for a series of incremental foreign and security policy reforms. At the same time, for the first time since the end of the Kishi government in 1960, serious efforts toward revising Article 9 have been led by Kishi's grandson Shinzo Abe since he became prime minister between September 2006 and September 2007 and again from December 2012 to the present.

Since the end of the Cold War the composition of Japan's political opposition has become less left wing. During the Cold War the largest political opposition party was the JSP. While the JSP did not successfully position itself to develop Japanese politics into a true two-party system, it would regularly win enough seats (up to 30 per cent), along with other smaller

opposition parties, to deny the LDP a two-thirds supermajority needed to revise the Constitution (Nakano 2016, p. 23).

After the LDP lost power for the first time since its establishment in 1955, for a period of 11 months between August 1993 and June 1994, it formed a coalition with the JSP to return to government (Curtis 1999). As part of the negotiations the LDP agreed that the leader of the JSP, Tomiichi Murayama, would be prime minister of the coalition government, only the second socialist prime minister in Japanese history after Tetsu Katayama in 1947–1948. However, in his role as prime minister, Murayama ‘recognized the constitutionality of the SDF and the legitimacy of the US-Japan alliance, thus destroying his party’s long-standing *raison d’être*’ (Soeya 2011, p. 78) and precipitating its demise. In its current incarnation as the Social Democratic Party (SDP), the party has struggled to maintain relevancy and its seats in the Diet have dwindled to less than 2 per cent.

The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) emerged in place of the JSP/SDP as the main opposition party in the late 1990s. When the DPJ was officially launched in 1996 it was a predominantly left-leaning party and counted among its ranks a significant number of former JSP lawmakers. In an effort to forge a united opposition against the LDP, the DPJ absorbed a number of smaller parties in 1998, and merged with Ichiro Ozawa’s centre-right Liberal Party in 2003. As a result the DPJ contained an eclectic ideological mix of left- and right-leaning factions. With regard to foreign and security policy, many DPJ lawmakers with expertise and responsibilities in those areas (such as Seiji Maehara, Akihisa Nagashima, and Shu Watanabe) tended to be more right-leaning than the left-leaning party core (such as Yukio Hatoyama, Naoto Kan, Katsuya Okada, Yukio Edano and Renho).

The DPJ won government for a period of three and a half years between August 2009 and December 2012. During this time it was widely expected that Japan might develop into a two-party political system with more genuine electoral competition, policy choice for voters and more regular changes in government. However, due to a combination of ineptitude, bad luck and a failure to reconcile policy positions among its factions, the DPJ’s time in government proved a disaster for the party and it suffered a loss of public confidence from which it never recovered (Curtis 2016). The party got off on the wrong foot by starting a rift with the bureaucracy as it advocated for politician-led policymaking and pushed bureaucrat-bashing rhetoric (Tanaka 2010). Prime ministers Yukio Hatoyama and Naoto Kan both found

their time in the top job short-lived as they were each forced to resign after about only a year. Hatoyama sealed his downfall by promising to relocate the US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma outside of Okinawa prefecture without adequate prior consultations with Japanese bureaucrats or counterparts in the United States (Tanaka 2010). Kan was forced out as he was blamed for the government's poor response to the 11 March 2011 earthquake-tsunami-nuclear triple disaster that devastated the Tohoku region (Tanaka 2011).

As the DPJ sought to win back public trust and build a united front against the LDP, its lack of ideological cohesiveness caught up with it. The merger between the DPJ and the centre-right Japan Innovation Party (JIP) in March 2016 to establish the Democratic Party (DP) furthered this trend. The DP failed to make up its mind whether it was 'a second conservative party that offers moderate alternatives to LDP policies or a "progressive" party that stands on the other side of an ideological divide' (Curtis 2017). In the lead up to the October 2017 lower house election, DP leader Seiji Maehara's decision to cooperate with the Party of Hope, led by Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike, caused a rift and the DP ultimately split up into the Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP) and the Democratic Party for the People (DPFP) (Ascione 2017). As a result, Japan's political opposition is the weakest it has ever been in the post-war era.

The change in the composition of Japan's opposition parties precipitated a shift in its foreign and security policy discourse. Issues that were once considered taboo gradually opened up for debate. This includes the questioning and further reinterpreting of Article 9. It also includes a shift in the focus of security policy beyond SDF roles and missions focused on defence of the Japanese homeland and the espousal of 'proactive contributions to peace' (Akimoto 2018, pp. 9-33).

The beginning of this shift was triggered by the end of the Cold War and the first post-Cold War test of US-Japan alliance cooperation in the form of the 1990–1991 Gulf War. Despite the fact that Japan was the largest extra-regional donor contributing US\$13 billion to the effort to liberate Kuwait from Iraq, it was criticised for its 'chequebook diplomacy' and failure to make a physical boots-on-the-ground contribution to the UN coalition forces. In an incident symbolic of Japan's financial contributions being overlooked, which the Japanese foreign policy and defence establishment still refers to sorely today, the Kuwaiti government neglected to mention Japan in a series of full-page advertisements taken out in *The New York*

Times and other major newspapers thanking dozens of countries under the UN coalition (Nakanishi 2011).

In response to this Gulf War shock, a number of different conceptions for the future direction of Japan were proposed and slowly began to be debated. One of the most significant contributions to this debate came from Ichiro Ozawa who argued in his book *Blueprint for a New Japan* (1994) that Japan should add an amendment to Article 9 to permit the SDF to actively participate in UN peacekeeping operations (PKOs). Other ideas included: 'normalising' the SDF's right to use force abroad, proactive contributions to the maintenance of international peace and order, becoming a civilian global power (Funabashi 1991), a middle power (Soeya 2011), a normal NATO ally (Nishihara 2006), and a UN-centred power (Dore 1997, pp. 95-125), as well as the SDF as a humanitarian and disaster relief providing organisation (Yoshizaki 2011). These debates also tended to emphasise how Japan could be a dependable alliance partner to the United States and promote a more symmetric alliance relationship.

Over the course of the post-Cold War years Japan passed a series of incremental security policy reforms and the SDF has taken on an increasing number of missions abroad. This included the 1992 PKO Law to enable the SDF to participate in non-combat missions in UN PKOs and the first dispatch of SDF units abroad to Cambodia under the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia between September 1992 and September 1993. In 1997 Japan and the United States revised the US-Japan Defense Cooperation Guidelines and Japan passed the enabling 1999 Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan Law (SIASJL), which permits the SDF to provide limited forms of rear-area support to the US military. Japan also passed the 2001 Anti-Terror Special Measures Law (ATSML), which provided a temporary legal basis for the dispatch of the Maritime Self-Defense Forces (MSDF) to the Indian Ocean for the refuelling of US military ships en route to Afghanistan. This was followed by the passage of the 2003 Iraq Humanitarian and Reconstruction Special Measures Law (LCSMHRA), the dispatch of GSDF units to Samawah in southern Iraq, helping to rebuild schools and purify water, and the dispatch of the Air Self-Defense Forces (ASDF) to Kuwait to conduct airlift operations in and between Kuwait and Iraq.

Escaping the post-war regime

For Japan's coalition of right-wing domestic political actors, the above incremental security policy reforms, within the framework of Article 9, were inadequate. In order to give action to their shared ambition to escape the post-war regime, some of Japan's right-wing domestic political actors, such as Nippon Kaigi, Ganbare Nippon and NARKN, sought to establish close linkages with politicians and to promote opportunistic narrative building around shock events. Other groups such as Issuikai and Zaitokukai, however, have not cultivated linkages with politicians in the same way and thus have not been as influential.

Nippon Kaigi is perhaps the most influential right-wing lobby group in Japan today with about 40,000 members nation-wide and deep political connections. Nippon Kaigi serves as an umbrella group for a number of right-wing causes including constitutional revision, restoring the central role of the emperor in Japanese politics, rescinding Article 9 (Tawara 2017; Saito et al. 2018) and protecting Japanese territories such as the Senkaku Islands (Nippon Kaigi Jigyo Sentaa 2011). It promotes the narrative of a foreign imposed constitution that needs to be revised to protect Japanese nationals and to have a military that the Japanese can be proud of (Nippon Kaigi 2018)

Ganbare Nippon was co-founded by Satoru Mizushima, a right-wing playwright and filmmaker, and Toshio Tamogami, an ASDF chief commander who was forced to retire after writing a historical revisionist essay denying Japanese aggression during the Second World War (Spitzer 2014). Ganbare Nippon has cultivated links with right-wing politicians, especially cooperating with former Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara. It espouses similar rhetoric to Nippon Kaigi about escaping the post-war regime. One of its main areas of focus has been protecting the Senkaku Islands including organising protests from 2010 onwards at a perceived lack of government action to protect the islands (Smith 2015, p. 225) as well as sending members on trips to the islands to demonstrate Japanese sovereignty (Balfour & Ma 2012; Smith 2015, pp. 216-217).

NARKN was established in April 1998 by Katsumi Sato as a special interest group with the specific mission of securing the return to Japan of Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea in the 1970s and 1980s. It works closely with the Association of the Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea (AFVKN). NARKN is a 'radical right group motivated by anti-North Korea sentiments rather than sympathy with victims' and it works 'hand in glove to urge the government to adopt hard-line policies toward North Korea' (Higuchi 2018, p. 686).

NARKN's leadership group long held hostile views toward North Korea and the Kim family regime before the establishment of NARKN, including advocating for regime change. Further, the NARKN leadership has admitted that it believes that the only realistic way to secure the return of Japanese abductees, which North Korea claims are either deceased or never entered North Korean territory, is to instigate regime change in North Korea.

These three right-wing groups have sought to work closely with right-wing politicians and cross parliamentary study groups who share their cause and form a key target of analysis in this thesis. The politicians these groups have cultivated links with includes prominent right-wing politicians such as Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (Katz 2014) and a number of his supporters especially within the LDP's Seiwakai faction, members of the now defunct Party for Future Generations (PFG) and the Party for Japanese Kokoro (PFJK), and former Tokyo governor Shintaro Ishihara. Cross-parliamentary study and advocacy groups include the Nippon Kaigi Parliamentary Discussion Group (Nippon Kaigi Kokkai Giin Kondankai), Japan Rebirth (Sousei Nippon), the Parliamentary League to Promote Research on the Constitution (Kenpou Chousa Suishin Giin Renmei), the Shinto Association of Spiritual Leadership (SASL)¹ (Sieg 2014) and the Parliamentary League for Enacting a New Constitution (Shinkenpou Seitei Giin Doumei), all of which give priority to rescinding Article 9 (Penney 2013). Another key right-wing cross-parliamentary study and advocacy group is the Diet Members Association for the Rapid Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea (Rachi Giren).

The case studies

Given the emergence of right-wing groups seeking to influence Japanese foreign and security policy by cultivating linkages with politicians and by promoting alternative narratives around shock events, clarification is needed regarding the true intentions of Japan's right wing, the scope and means of their influence, and the ramifications this holds for Japan's future security posture and regional relations. To this end, the investigation of the influence of Japan's coalition of right-wing actors on foreign and security policy will be conducted through three case studies. These case studies are: (1) the drive to revise Article 9, (2) Japan's North Korea policy and (3) Japan's Senkaku Islands policy. Case studies were chosen as a

¹ The official name of SASL in Japanese, Shinto Seiji Renmei, literally means Shinto Political League, but SASL eschews the word 'political' in its official English name.

methodology given the need to thoroughly delve into the black box of domestic politics in order to most effectively investigate it as an influence on foreign and security policy.

The first case study investigates the legal strictures of the SDF and the right wing's efforts to reinterpret and formally revise the Article 9 peace clause of the Constitution. This includes investigation of the right wing's efforts to enable unrestricted collective self-defence and to formally revise Article 9 as well as the passage of September 2015 security-related bills which, among other things, permits the SDF to engage in limited forms of collective self-defence. It is argued that the final form of the bills that was passed was a watered down version of the original intentions of the right-wing coalition, particularly the Abe government and right-wing lobby groups connected to it. This watering down occurred in stages, most significantly during negotiations with the LDP's junior coalition partner, Komeito, as well as from strong public opinion against the bills. Nevertheless, the passage of the security-related bills and the recognition of limited forms of collective self-defence has been described as the most significant development affecting the SDF since its establishment in 1954 (Sieg 2015).

The second case study explores Japan's North Korea policy. Since North Korea first declared its intention to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty in 1993, denuclearising the country has been a critical concern for Japan as well as the international community. However, after prime minister Junichiro Koizumi's visit to Pyongyang in 2002, and North Korean leader Kim Jong-il's bombshell revelation admitting to and apologising for the North Korean abduction of a number of Japanese citizens, Japan's North Korea policy has been hijacked by the abduction issue. The right wing has successfully steered and locked Japan into a hard-line policy vis-à-vis North Korea that conditions any kind of diplomatic carrots, including economic cooperation and diplomatic normalisation, on an ill-defined 'full' resolution of the abduction issue. As a result, Japan's available policy options for cooperating with the international community in working toward the denuclearisation of North Korea have been significantly constrained. Through the abduction issue, the Japanese right-wing has sought to portray Japan as a victim country for the first time in the post-war era, neglecting the broader history of Japanese colonial transgressions. The right wing has in turn sought to use this victim narrative to further its advocacy efforts for Japan to bolster its overall defence posture.

The third case study examines Japan's Senkaku Islands policy. During the 1970s Japan and China established a tacit agreement to shelve the issue for future generations. The Japanese right-wing has sought to orchestrate an increased public focus on the defence of territories claimed by other states, including the Senkaku Islands. They have denied the existence of a tacit agreement to shelve the issue, advocated for Japan take a more muscular posture in defending the islands, and sought to increase the substance of Japan's effective control. The right wing has seen some success stirring tensions in Japan-China relations and disrupting, but not overturning, the policy of shelving the issue. Most notably, in 2012 then Tokyo governor Shintaro Ishihara forced prime minister Yoshihiko Noda into a position where he felt forced to nationalise three of the Senkaku Islands in order to prevent Ishihara from overturning the tacit agreement and from triggering a possible armed clash between Japan and China. As a result of these efforts by the right wing, it has become increasingly difficult for Japanese politicians and policymakers to propose any diplomatic compromise or creative resolutions of the issue without risking a public backlash (Baldacchino 2017).

These three case studies were selected for two reasons. First, each of these case studies are important and well-known issues for Japanese security. Exactly what roles and missions the SDF should be legally permitted to engage in is perhaps the most critical and controversial security policy question Japan faces today. The controversy surrounding the question stems from the differing perceptions of the nature of threats facing Japan. It has become an oft-heard mantra among the Japanese foreign policy establishment that the security environment surrounding Japan is 'worsening' and becoming 'severe'. This trend has especially intensified under the Abe government. Among advocates for expanding SDF roles and missions, it is argued that the current legal restraints would prevent Japan from adequately defending itself if it actually came under attack (Middlebrooks 2008). Further, China and North Korea are typically invoked as the two biggest threats to Japanese security. As such, these countries could be expected to have a significant influence on the posture of the SDF. On the other hand, others argue that external threats do not justify the dismantling of the legal strictures governing the SDF that were put in place after the Second World War to prevent a recurrence of the military takeover of the government in the 1930s. There is also debate among academics as to whether the current security situation is actually worse than the ostensible certainty of the Cold War. In any case, few are willing to argue that Japanese security policy vis-à-vis China and North Korea does not require careful handling. How policy in the three case study areas is handled has the potential to significantly impact upon Japan's security, for

better or worse. Moreover, given the prominence of these issues, how they are handled will likely set the tone for the shaping of the future direction of Japan's foreign and security policy framework over the longer term.

Second, all three case studies represent areas of priority for Japan's right-wing domestic political actors on foreign and security policy. Abolishing Article 9 of the Constitution is a central pillar in the coalition of right-wing actors' shared mission to escape the post-war regime. It is a long-cherished goal of the right wing ever since the Constitution was enacted in 1947, and it is a founding mission of the LDP since its establishment in 1955. It carries top priority because in the right-wing world view Article 9 is perceived as a blight on Japanese independence and autonomous foreign policy that begets national weakness.

The Japanese right wing advocates a hard-line position vis-à-vis communist countries. North Korea and China are the two countries most prominently invoked as threats as part of the narrative of a dangerous security environment surrounding Japan. This narrative is intended to undergird advocacy efforts for a bolstered SDF. Overturning the tacit agreement with China to shelve the Senkaku Islands issue is an objective for the right wing as it represents a symptom of the post-war regime under which it is perceived that Japan is constrained from being able to adequately defend its sovereign territory. North Korea has been a useful enemy for Japan's right wing as it has used the abduction issue as an example of a violation of Japanese sovereignty to portray Japan as a victim country that cannot protect itself under the framework of the post-war regime. The North Korean threat to Japan has also been 'supersized' as 'a catch-all proxy threat to justify changes in security policy' (Hughes 2009, p. 311). Given the Japanese right-wing's prioritisation of these three areas, the case studies can be said to be a good test of right-wing influence over Japanese foreign and security policy.

Significance of the question

Determining the influence of Japan's coalition of right-wing actors is significant for at least three reasons. First, theoretically, the investigation of the influence of the right-wing in Japan as a domestic political actor contributes to the debate about the determinants of foreign policy and the importance of exogenous versus endogenous factors. It is not the intention of this thesis to deny the role of exogenous factors, such as threats emanating from the external security environment, as a determinant of foreign policy. Instead, the investigation aims to

contribute to further understandings of the relative importance of exogenous versus endogenous factors on the foreign and security policymaking process, how this relative importance might change depending on particular political and international circumstances, and the complex nature of linkages between national and international systems.

Second, the thesis also aims to shed light on how domestic political actors operate in democratic societies in order to wield influence, including under circumstances when their agenda is at odds with mainstream public opinion. Recent global trends have seen populist, isolationist, anti-globalisation, nationalist and right-wing politics increase in strength (Youngs 2018a). Such trends have been demonstrated most notably through the 'Brexit' referendum in which the United Kingdom elected to withdraw from the European Union (EU) in June 2016, the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States in November 2016, the rise of anti-EU and Islamophobic politicians in Eastern Europe such as Viktor Orban in Hungary, the rise of Hindu nationalist organisations such as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh in India (Swamy 2018; Adeney 2018), and the rapid rise and election of the far-right politician Jair Bolsonaro as President of Brazil in October 2018 (Youngs 2018b). Uncovering how the right wing in Japan operates can help provide new insight into right-wing movements in other countries.

Third, the thesis is significant empirically in helping to predict the future trajectory of Japan's foreign and security policy framework. Understanding the degree and manner in which the Japanese right wing wields influence in the domestic political battles that shape Japan's foreign security policy will help us to predict the future evolution of Japan's military posture either within or outside of the framework of Article 9. This carries important implications for the future of the US-Japan alliance, the extent to which Japan will seek to cooperate with the United States in the future, and the extent to which Japan will either continue to rely on the United States for its defence or take greater responsibility for its own defence. How these developments transpire will in turn have important knock-on effects for the future of Japan's place within the Asia-Pacific regional order and Japan's own contributions in shaping the character of the regional and international order.

A less militarily constrained Japan would have greater potential to cooperate with the United States and other security partners around the region in making what the Abe government refers to as 'proactive contributions to peace'. However, at the same time, perceptions of a

right-wing resurgence in Japan have the potential to damage relations with Japan's neighbouring countries. It is thus hoped that an increased understanding of both the influence and the limits of the Japanese right wing will enable more effective cooperation between moderate mainstream actors in Japan and its regional neighbours.

2 The analytics

Japan has often been considered a puzzle for international relations theory. In contrast to neo-realist predictions that the state is expected to maximise its security in an anarchic security environment, Japan continues to exercise self-restraint under the Article 9 peace clause of its post-war Constitution, and has commonly conducted foreign policy in a low-key manner vis-à-vis regional neighbours out of recognition of its wartime history while maintaining a relatively low defence budget. Since the end of the Cold War Japan has incrementally increased the roles and missions of the Japan Self-Defense Forces and at times explored a more independent and assertive foreign policy, but has continued with an exclusively defence-oriented defence framework.

What accounts for this Japanese behaviour and the pace and the scope of its change? To what extent will Japan continue to exercise self-restraint? And what is the relative importance of exogenous versus endogenous determinants of changes in Japan's foreign and security policy? The three analytical frameworks which dominate international relations theory — realism, liberalism and constructivism — have all put forward different answers to these questions. Realist and liberal studies have tended to emphasise exogenous sources of Japanese foreign and security policy while constructivist studies have been more open to examining both exogenous and endogenous factors. The literature on domestic political groups influencing Japanese foreign policy covers areas such as the farm lobby's influence on international trade (George Mulgan 2011; 2013) and NGO's influence on aid policy (Jain 2016, Ohashi 2016). Few studies, however, have specifically considered the role of domestic politics and the battles between coalitions of domestic political actors with regard to Japan's foreign security policy.

Realists emphasise the role of the state as the most important actor in international relations and argue that the state behaves as a unitary rational actor. Realist schools of thought have come to be dominated by neo-realism, which emphasises the anarchic structure of the international system as responsible for the perpetual struggle for power and survival. As such, realist explanations tend not to prioritise the effects of domestic politics on foreign and security policy. In particular, neo-realism has never been able to fully explain the restraint in Japan's post-war foreign and security policy anchored in Article 9. A number of subvarieties

of realism have been put forward to fill this gap. They all corroborate the view that Japan is restraining itself, in one manner or another, against the grain of conventional realist behaviour.

Liberalism rejects realist power politics as the only possible form of international relations and emphasises the possibility of mutual cooperation between states. Liberal studies of Japanese foreign and security policy embrace the idea of Japanese security policy restraint, which they explain as a product of rational thinking. However, like realists, liberals tend to conceive of the state as a unitary actor and thus tend not to investigate competition between coalitions of domestic political actors over foreign and security policy.

Constructivists emphasise the role of ideational factors and identity in international relations. They argue that the manner in which states interact is significantly determined by historically and socially constructed norms, ideas and identities, rather than being simply a result of human nature or the structure of the international system. This approach allows greater freedom for the investigation of domestic phenomena as a determinant of foreign and security policy. Most constructivist studies of Japan focus on the anti-militarist culture among Japan's left wing, but relatively few have investigated the domestic political battles that the left wing faces against moderate and right-wing coalitions of domestic political actors.

This chapter is divided into three sections. First, it gives an overview of how the big three theories of international relations have sought to explain Japanese security policy. This includes the neo-realist contention that Japanese security policy restraint is an anomaly (Kahn 1970; Waltz 1993, pp. 64-67), as well as a selection of the most prominent subvarieties of realism specifically seeking to explain Japanese behaviour. These subvarieties include: mercantile realism (Heginbotham & Samuels 1998), post-classical realism (Kawasaki 2001), reluctant realism (Green 2001), realist buck passing (Lind 2004), attitudinal defensive realism (Midford 2011) and resentful realism (Hughes 2016). Liberal explanations of Japanese security policy can be divided into economic liberalism (Rosecrance 1985, p. 16; Mueller 1988, p. 73, Mayer 1996, p. 54) and institutional liberalism (Kolmaš 2010, pp. 46-47; Berger 2007, pp. 259-291). Finally, constructivist accounts of Japanese security policy can be divided into 'norm constructivists' (Berger 1993, 1998; Katzenstein & Okawara 1993; Katzenstein 1996) and 'relational constructivists' (Hagström & Gustafsson 2015).

The second section outlines the importance of endogenous sources of foreign and security policy. Despite the importance of endogenous sources they are often overlooked in international relations theory. A vital contribution to the Japanese security policy literature, which accounts for domestic politics as an influence on foreign and security policymaking, is Richard Samuels' explanation of Japan's Goldilocks consensus (Samuels 2006, 2007). However, there is a gap in the literature with regard to analysis that focuses specifically on the question of the influence of the coalition of Japan's right-wing domestic political actors who seek to escape the post-war regime and establish a big and active SDF autonomous of the United States and free of domestic constraints.

The third section considers processes of influence and the mechanisms by which Japan's coalition of right-wing domestic political actors seek to influence foreign and security policymaking as part of the domestic political battle against rival coalitions. In particular, how do Japanese right-wing groups, such as Nippon Kaigi, Ganbare Nippon, and NARKN, cultivate ties with foreign and security policy decision-makers? And how do Japanese right-wing groups make use of narratives around shock events?

Realism

The first of the big three theories of international relations is realism. According to the realist viewpoint, the state is the primary locus of action in international relations. This is because there is no higher entity above the sovereign state capable of regulating action. As a result, international relations take place between sovereign states that are not regulated by any higher entity and the international system is characterised by anarchy. In this anarchic international system the paramount goal of the state is survival. The state has no responsibility to other states except itself and ultimately can only rely on itself for survival. The primary means by which the state can safeguard its survival is through the accumulation of material military capabilities. The accumulation of military power is measured in relative terms vis-à-vis other states. For realists, it is not enough to simply possess sophisticated material military capabilities to defend the state but to have relatively superior capabilities vis-à-vis rival states.

Through this lens, realism tends to prioritise exogenous determinants of foreign and security policymaking and to overlook endogenous factors. In the words of Chalmers Johnson, 'since realism either does not inquire at all into the domestic responses to and constraints on foreign

policies or else assumes that such responses are homogeneous across all states facing similar international pressures, the cases of pre-war and post-war Japan directly challenge realist theory' (Johnson 1993, pp. 202-203). While neo-realists continue to maintain that Japanese foreign and security policy self-restraint and the Article 9 peace clause of the Japanese Constitution are an anomaly, a number of qualified subvarieties of realist thought specifically seeking to explain Japan have been advanced.

Neo-realism/normalisation

As Japan achieved rapid economic growth, it was proclaimed to be an 'emerging superstate' (Kahn 1970). Indeed, Japan's rapid economic growth saw it overtake West Germany as the second largest economy in the world in 1967, less than a quarter of a century after it began rebuilding from the devastation of the Second World War. Given its economic power, Kahn argued that in the coming decades Japan should be expected to bolster its military power in a manner commensurate with its economic power, both in terms of material capabilities and legal recourse to utilise them (Kahn 1970, p. 152). This line has been repeated by other neo-realists over the years. For instance, Kenneth Waltz has argued that the pressures of the international system will see Japan inevitably shift its behaviour toward becoming a military superpower (Waltz 1993, pp. 64-67). The typical neo-realist response to retorts that Japan still exhibits self-restraint is to emphasise 'the artificial nature of that policy, seeing it as a product of American hegemony and the removal of Japan from the security dilemma through American guarantees. The domestic "constraints" of memory and opinion are eminently malleable; they will shift with changes in Japan's environment' (Mayer 1996, p. 53).

After the end of the Cold War, realists scholars have argued more prominently for the lifting of restraints on Japan's defence capabilities. Mike Mochizuki, for example, argued for 'a new strategic bargain between the United States and Japan and a more comprehensive and integrated approach to alliance restructuring' (Mochizuki 1997, p. 2) in line with realist expectations. In Mochizuki's conception 'Japan would expand its security horizons beyond defending its homeland and assume more of the diplomatic and military risks for maintaining peace in the region' (Mochizuki 1997, p. 8). This would include Japan revising its Article 9 peace clause and taking on collective defence and security missions. The United States would reduce its troop numbers in Japan, especially in Okinawa which bears the brunt of the burden, and would also be required to consult Japan more rigorously about how US forces stationed in Japan are used abroad, such as in Southeast Asia and the Middle East. In sum, Japan would

evolve to become more like a NATO-style ally. The opportunity for this kind of development, Mochizuki argued, is there because of the threats to Japan posed by the rise of China and North Korea's nuclear weapons development program.

Mercantile realism

Mercantile realism involves the organisation of foreign policy around the goal of advancing the state's 'techno-economic position' (Heginbotham & Samuels 1998). According to this view of the world, while 'national supremacy was once a product of military power, it is now decided primarily by economic power. Economic power is, for its part, decided primarily by the ability to generate technology' (Makino 1990, p. 111; Heginbotham & Samuels 1998, p. 201). There is of course a military aspect to techno-economic security interests as economic power and technological innovation enable the acquisition of superior military capabilities. However, threats to techno-economic security interests are not only military in nature, such as a direct attack by one state's armed forces against another, but also economic, such as 'deindustrialization or dependency' (Heginbotham & Samuels 1998, pp. 191-192).

As such, 'when trade-offs must be made, techno-economic interests may be pursued at the expense of political-military interests' (Heginbotham & Samuels 1998, p. 191). While Japan has not ignored military security, it has prioritised its techno-economic position by avoiding foreign penetration of Japanese markets, social dislocation through excessive competition and technology transfer to economically advanced trade partners. It has also been argued that Japan has been able to exercise power through its techno-economic position. For instance, 'production of the micro-chips used in sophisticated weapons systems abroad gives Japan leverage over even the world's strongest states' (Ishihara & Morita 1989, p. 14; Heginbotham & Samuels 1998, p. 201).

Post-classical realism

Tsuyoshi Kawasaki argues that Japanese foreign and security policy is best explained by post-classical realism rather than the neo-realism that has come to dominate the field (Kawasaki 2001). He argues that neo-realism 'sees states driven by the pressure of international anarchy to arm themselves with offensive weapons for their worst-case scenarios' (Kawasaki 2001, p. 223). This, he continues, 'generates poor predictions, and a wide gap emerges between its predictions and actual Japanese policy behaviour' (Kawasaki 2001, p. 223). Post-classical realism, by contrast, construes of states as actors with sensitivity

to the economic costs of defence and ‘maximizing their security without threatening others in a situation of the security dilemma’ (Kawasaki 2001, p. 223). Japan has therefore organised its foreign and security policy in order to ‘reduce the intensity of the security dilemma in Northeast Asia’ (Kawasaki 2001, p. 223). In particular, this is done through the maintenance of the US-Japan alliance and the acquisition of relatively ‘modest and defensive military capabilities’ (Kawasaki 2001, p.223). A more offensively oriented SDF posture would risk triggering a security dilemma — that is a situation whereby country A’s attempt to increase its own security encourages its adversary, country B, to engage in counter efforts to bolster its security, and as a result country A’s net security cannot be enhanced or is worsened. At the same time, increased defence spending would also increase the financial burden to Japan’s economy and risk weakening the country over the longer term.

Reluctant realism

Michael Green argues that while ‘normative and institutional constraints on the use of force remain strong’ (Green 2001, p. 5), Japan has become increasingly sensitive to external security threats and started to embrace a more proactive and independent realist posture in what he terms ‘reluctant realism’ (Green 2001, p. 8). During the Cold War Japanese strategy primarily emphasised the US-Japan alliance and economic independence, and these facets continue to remain core to Japanese strategic calculations. Japan, Green explains, no longer maintains ‘facile assumptions’ (Green 2001, p. 32) that these two factors alone are sufficient to defend its position in international society. Japan’s move toward reluctant realism, Green contends, was propelled by changes to Japan’s material circumstances. Namely, the relative decline in Japanese economic power assets (Green 2001, p. 34), particularly after the burst of Japan’s asset price bubble and the Nikkei index plummeted by about 40 per cent between July and October 1990 (Green 2001, p. 17). Additionally, the collapse of the Soviet Union (the original *raison d’être* of the US-Japan alliance), US criticism of Japan’s chequebook diplomacy during the 1990–1991 Gulf War and China’s military modernisation further compelled Japan to take on more active security roles.

In a critique of Green’s conception of reluctant realism, David Arase argues that Green’s writing is the result of his professional policymaker and think-tanker background. He contends that Green’s argument is rooted in ‘a plea for active US engagement with Japan in building a common approach to the region’ (Arase 2004, p. 254). Arase criticises Green for viewing Japanese foreign policy ‘primarily in relation to US regional and global interests’

and his one-dimensional 'desire to harness Japan to better serve US agendas' (Arase 2004, p. 257). He concludes that Green's argument fails to address 'academic concerns such as Japan's puzzling passivity and anomalous dependence on the United States' (Arase 2004, p. 257).

Realist buck passing

Jennifer Lind argues that Japanese foreign and security policy restraint is a result of a buck passing strategy (Lind 2004). Buck passers adhere to the realist precepts of an anarchic security environment and survival as the paramount goal of the state, and 'recognize the need to balance against a threat' (Lind 2004, p. 103). However, the buck passer will seek to 'do as little of the required balancing as possible by relying on the efforts of others' (Lind 2004, p. 103). The justification for such a strategy is that balancing is 'costly and may undermine one's own long-term security through depletion of manpower and wealth' (Lind 2004, p. 104). Passing the buck 'transfers as much of these costs as possible to other states' (Lind 2004, p. 104). Japan is well positioned to buck pass, Lind argues, because as an island its geography makes it 'less vulnerable to immediate invasion' and in the United States it has a 'powerful [ally] that can contain foreseeable threats' (Lind 2004, p. 104).

Lind rejects the constructivist argument that domestic politics, in the form of the anti-militarist culture, is the source of Japanese restraint given the advanced military capabilities that the SDF possesses. The constructivist argument, Lind contends, is based on the misconception that Japan is a military pygmy (Lind 2004, p. 93). While she recognises that anti-militarist norms are deeply embedded among the Japanese public, Lind argues that they have not proven effective in restraining the SDF from becoming one of the world's top aggregate defence spenders and a world leader in air and naval power (Lind 2004, pp. 95-101).

Attitudinal defensive realism

Paul Midford argues that restraint in Japanese foreign and security policy is the result of the influence of public opinion, which he terms 'attitudinal defensive realism' (Midford 2011, pp. 19-20). On the basis of a detailed analysis of public opinion polling, Midford explains that 'Japanese public opinion was never pacifist or as opposed to all forms of military power as has often been claimed' (Midford 2011, p. 2). His analysis accepts that the Japanese public continues to be suspicious of the SDF's ability to act wisely and engage in operations that

risk entangling Japan in violent conflict and ‘remains overwhelmingly opposed to deploying the Japanese military overseas for combat operations’ (Midford 2011, p. 3). However, he suggests that the Japanese public draws a ‘sharp and enduring distinction...between humanitarian and reconstruction missions on the one hand and combat missions on the other’ (Midford 2011, p. 4). As a result, the Japanese public is comfortable with the SDF using force for the purpose of defending the Japanese homeland as well as the SDF participating in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations both at home and abroad. Midford cites the ‘extremely modest and noncombat nature’ (Midford 2011, p. 3) of the SDF deployments to the Indian Ocean and to Iraq as evidence that ‘rather than hawkish elites moulding public opinion, public opinion has moulded and constrained the overseas deployment plans of hawkish elites’ (Midford 2011, p. 3). The ‘ambivalent and conditional support that Japanese public opinion gave’ (Midford 2011, p. 3) to these deployments ensured that Japanese politicians did not attempt to have the SDF conduct more ambitious operations. Ultimately, Midford warns, ‘Japanese politicians defy public opinion at their peril’ (Midford 2011, p. 8).

Resentful realism

Christopher Hughes argues against the numerous Japanese-specific variants of realism, as well as liberal and constructivist explanations, which ‘corroborate the consensus on Japan’s lack of propensity to diverge from its post-war security stance’ (Hughes 2016, p. 112). Hughes rejects the notion that Japan will continue to maintain a restrained military posture and instead claims that it is shifting towards resentful realism against China which entails ‘active soft and incipient hard balancing’ (Hughes 2016, p. 148). This resentful realism, Hughes argues, is ‘driven by fear of China, lack of trust in the USA, and a desire to reassert national pride and autonomy...[and] may generate impulses towards more independent national military action by Japan, facilitated by new autonomous capabilities’ (Hughes 2016, p. 150).

Hughes argues that this shift is being propelled by the deterioration of the conditions that previously enabled Japan to maintain a restrained military posture. Namely, Japan’s ‘waning confidence in the benign nature of China’s intentions’ (Hughes 2016, p. 131), ‘declining confidence in its capacity to effect any malleability in [Chinese] intentions’ (Hughes 2016, p. 131) and ‘an evolving domestic consensus at elite and societal levels’ (Hughes 2016, p. 133) of the threat posed by China. Further, Japan perceives ‘shifts in the offence–defence capabilities balance...that serve the immediate asymmetric warfare ends of anti-access area

denial (A2/AD) in the sea and airspace surrounding China' (Hughes 2016, p. 136) in favour of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA).

Liberalism

The second of the big three international relations theories is liberalism. In contrast to realism, liberalism emphasises the possibility for cooperation between states. Whereas realism underscores anarchy as the defining characteristic of the international system, liberalism counters that the effects of anarchy on limiting cooperation between states has been overstated. While realism takes a zero-sum approach and obsesses over relative gains vis-à-vis rival states, liberalism takes a positive-sum approach focusing on absolute gains in the distribution of resources in the international system. Moreover, while realism focuses primarily on political and military interactions between states, liberalism also recognises the importance of economic and cultural interactions in shaping state behaviour. It is argued that the state can attain security through cooperation which promotes a stable international system, economic interdependence and shared prosperity. Different branches of liberalism highlight particular means of promoting cooperation as the most important, such as government type (democratic peace theory) (Kant 1991), economic interdependence (commercial peace theory) (Drezner 2005), as well as institutional mechanisms (institutional peace theory) (Keohane & Nye 1972, 1977).

Liberal theories came to prominence in the wake of the First World War. After the devastation of the war, liberalism was seen as the answer to establishing a global order where peace would reign. A prominent manifestation of this was the pronouncement of US president Woodrow Wilson's 'Fourteen Points' and the establishment of the League of Nations (Steigerwald 1994, p. 113). Critics of liberalism, however, charged that its excessive idealism was to blame for the failure to prevent the outbreak of the Second World War.

After the Second World War, neo-liberalism (or institutional liberalism) came to prominence (Keohane and Nye 1972, 1977). This approach emphasises institutional functionalism and argues that networks of 'specialized institutions regulating specific areas of international relations...foster habits of cooperation' (Richardson 2008, p. 223). Examples of such international institutions include the UN, the Bretton Woods institutions and the EU. In the Asia-Pacific, examples include ASEAN, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Classical economic liberalism

Classical economic liberal explanations of Japan's post-war security policy argue that the maintenance of Japanese restraint and Article 9 are a product of human rationality. It 'sees Japan as rationally unable to accept the risk and cost of war because of the material benefits that derive from peace' (Mayer 1996, p. 54). In this view of the world, 'Japan is a prime example of a post-modern state, one that has overcome the use of military' (Kolmaš 2010, p. 46). This has been described as a so-called 'Hollandization' whereby countries like Japan which were 'once warlike and militaristic, have been quietly dropping out of the war system to pursue neutrality and, insofar as they are allowed to do so, perpetual peace' (Mueller 1988, p. 74; Kolmaš 2010, p. 46). Or, in other words, Japan has settled into a world of 'peaceful trading states without military threats' (Mayer 1996, p. 54; Rosecrance 1985, p. 20).

The emphasis on rationality dismisses the significance of structural factors in the international system, such as the stability facilitated by the US-Japan alliance and the US security guarantee. Instead it emphasises that post-war Japanese security policy is based on a conception of good that springs from the 'economic benefits of peace' (Kolmaš 2010, p. 46). The biggest shortcoming of the classical economic liberal explanation of Japanese foreign and security policy is that it does not account for the incremental security policy reforms that Japan has implemented since the end of the Cold War.

Institutional liberalism

Institutional liberalism explains particular aspects of Japanese foreign policy. For instance, Japan is a world leader as the fourth largest provider of ODA (Rix 1990; Nishigaki & Shimomura 1999) with an annual budget of US\$10 billion (Jain 2016). Japan has emphasised the importance of the UN (Dore 1997) and has been its second largest financial contributor between 1986 and 2019 (McDermott 1999, pp. 64-88; King 2018). Japan also played an instrumental role in the establishment of the ADB and worked together with Australia to establish APEC (Terada 1998, 1999) and ASEAN-led initiatives such as the ARF and ASEAN+6 (Terada 2010; Ashizawa 2013).

Thomas Berger puts forward an extension of the institutional liberalism explanation called 'pragmatic liberalism' (Berger 2007). Berger argues that Japan's behaviour, a balance of restraint and international contributions to peace, is conditioned through the institutional

framework of the US-Japan alliance. Thanks to the overwhelming military power of the United States and its role as the guarantor of Japanese security, Japan has the luxury of maintaining its pacifist attitudes while possessing a technologically sophisticated military posture that eschews power projection. At the same time, Japan's international contributions are a result of its 'devotion to international security order and cooperation', its 'connection to the United States' (Kolmaš 2010, p. 47) and the need to make sufficient alliance contributions in order to avoid risking abandonment. Japan's post-9/11 dispatches of the SDF to the Indian Ocean and Iraq under prime minister Junichiro Koizumi, it is argued, can be seen as part of Japan's international contributions, at the same time as a continued eschewing of non-combat missions (Berger 2007, p. 277). This shows, Dobson (2010) argues in a review of Berger's work, that 'the Japanese state and its people have adapted to the more fluid circumstances of the post-Cold War international environment by creating a liberal consensus about Japan's proper role in the world' (Dobson 2010, p. 167). Given this balance of restraint and international contributions, Berger concludes that Japanese foreign policy has become pragmatic, neoliberal and adaptive (Berger 2007, pp. 284-291).

The institutional liberal explanation of Japanese foreign and security policy helpfully sheds light on Japan's balance between restraint and making proactive contributions to peace. However, if we were to imagine that Japan followed a more pure institutional liberal approach to its foreign and security policy, Japan could have been expected to have devoted more effort to military confidence building institutions. For instance, we might expect more military-to-military dialogue and confidence-building measures with its regional neighbours, greater efforts toward the realisation of institutions such as an East Asia Community or an Asia Pacific Community, more vigorous diplomatic efforts toward trilateral cooperation with China and South Korea (Brummer & Zhang 2018), and more proactive engagement in the Six-Party Talks toward negotiations to denuclearise North Korea before they stalled in 2009. Institutional liberal explanations also do not account for the drive by Japan's right wing to rescind Article 9 fuelled by its historical revisionist world view.

Constructivism

The third of the big three international relations theories, constructivism, rose to prominence in the 1990s after the end of the Cold War. Constructivism distinguishes itself from realism and liberalism by emphasising ideational factors. Ideology, identity and norms are important, constructivists argue, because they serve as constraints on state behaviour and shapers of state

preference. Moreover, 'notions like anarchy and sovereignty are not...timeless truths...but instead constitute social inventions that human beings have fashioned themselves' (Houghton 2007, p. 28). According to this view of the world, interactions between 'agents' occur within given 'structures'. Structures can be defined as 'the institutions and shared meanings that make up the context of international action' between agents (Hurd 2008, p. 304). Agents can be defined as 'any entity that operates as an actor in that context' (Hurd 2008, p. 304).

Constructivists further argue that interactions between agents are not dictated exclusively by the structure of the international system but instead may either reinforce the status quo of the structure or transform it. With regard to material power, it is not just the relative distribution among states that counts, but also the socially constructed meaning given to the agent that possesses it. For instance, the material power possessed by wartime Japan and post-war Japan are perceived very differently by the United States and Australia due to the socially constructed relationship between the agents. Similarly, nuclear weapons possessed by North Korea are perceived as threatening by the international community, while those possessed by the United Kingdom or France, in even greater numbers, are not. In sum, the constructivist paradigm is a key departure from realism and liberalism because it does not conceive of state interests as determined by rational actor logic (Wendt 2002).

Norm constructivism

Norm constructivists focus on how socially constructed norms and culture influence foreign and security policy. They counter the inability of realism to explain Japanese restraint and Article 9 through their explanation of the post-war development of Japan's anti-militarist culture. Perhaps the most famous 'norm constructivist' accounts of Japanese foreign policy are those by Thomas Berger (1993, 1998), Peter Katzenstein and Nobuo Okawara (1993) and Peter Katzenstein (1996).

Berger argues that post-war Japanese society is characterised by a culture of anti-militarism, which 'has its roots in collective Japanese memories of the militarist takeover in the 1930s and the subsequent disastrous decision to go to war with America' (Berger 1993, p. 120). This historical experience, it is argued, led the Japanese public to the conclusion that 'the military is a dangerous institution that must be constantly restrained and monitored lest it threaten Japan's post-war democratic order and undermine the peace and prosperity the nation has enjoyed since 1945' (Berger 1993, p. 120). In other words, the Japanese people

must also be protected against their protectors, the SDF, lest they stray from their defined roles.

Katzenstein and Okawara similarly argue that Japan's non-violent state behaviour in the post-war era is the result of collective legal and social norms, which have been institutionalised through a process of political battles. Japan's conception of security norms go 'far beyond traditional military notions. National security is viewed in comprehensive terms that also include economic and political dimensions' (Katzenstein & Okawara 1993, p. 84). These norms condition security policy in broad terms emphasising its 'social, economic, and political aspects...rather than focus more narrowly on the explicitly coercive dimensions of state policy. Japan's security policy is, thus, part and parcel of its quest for social stability through economic growth' (Katzenstein 1996, p. 3). Moreover, these norms are applied not just to the roles and missions of the SDF but also to the police, which are reluctant to deploy physical violence or repression against domestic opponents of the state or to enforce state security (Katzenstein 1996, pp. 59-98).

Relational constructivism

Relational constructivists emphasise that identity is constructed vis-à-vis other actors. This can be in relation to both external and internal actors. In the case of Japan, external actors include 'the West, Europe, the US, Asia, China, North Korea and South Korea' while internal actors include the Burakumin, Ainu, Okinawans and the Korean minority in Japan (Hagström & Gustafsson 2015, p. 5). In this sense, Japan's anti-militarist culture could be said to have been constructed in juxtaposition to the wartime military elite and their military imperialist identity.

In contrast to norm constructivist assertions that Japan's anti-militarist culture is entrenched and resistant to change, relational constructivists argue that Japan's anti-militarist identity is susceptible to influence by identity entrepreneurs and national emotions. According to this argument, 'previously dominant discourses on North Korea and China as "victims" of Japanese aggression during the war have largely been replaced by discourses in which North Korea and China are constructed as "aggressors" or "bullies" that make "unreasonable demands", and Japan is portrayed as the "victim"' (Hagström & Gustafsson 2015, p. 9). Moreover, China's failure to recognise Japan's peaceful post-war posture under Article 9 'presents an opportunity for Japanese conservatives to argue that the "peaceful" identity

should be exchanged for the identity of a “normal” state, which in turn enables a revision of Article 9 and the strengthening of the Japanese military’ (Hagström & Gustafsson 2015, p. 15; Gustafsson 2011, 2014). Hagström and Gustafsson’s (2015) description of identity entrepreneurs seeking to recast Japan as a victim vis-à-vis China and North Korea is a useful explanation of how Japan’s right-wing political actors are seeking to recast narratives to further their foreign and security policy objectives. Further research is needed to investigate how effective Japan’s coalition of right-wing domestic political actors with a shared commitment to escaping the post-war regime are at influencing foreign and security policy, and this thesis aims to fill this gap.

Domestic sources of foreign policy

While endogenous sources of foreign and security policy are just as crucial to its content and conduct and exogenous ones (Rosenau 1967, p. 2), theories of international relations have often overlooked endogenous sources such as domestic politics. As James Rosenau has argued, there is a tendency that scholars of international relations focus primarily on exogenous sources of foreign policy and scholars of political science and comparative politics focus primarily on endogenous ones. This tendency has become so entrenched that the two disciplines have become trapped in conceptual jails and unable to meaningfully engage with one another (Rosenau 1969, pp. 8-10). Rosenau further argues that concerted efforts are needed in order to break free of these conceptual jails and to develop theory which addresses the ‘complex linkages between national and international systems’ (Rosenau 1969, p. 3).

As one small step along the road toward this objective identified by Rosenau, this thesis takes an approach of analysing how different coalitions of domestic political actors understand the external security environment in the Japanese context with a focus on the influence of Japan’s right wing on Japanese foreign and security policy. Rather than conceptualising of the state as a unitary actor, when accounting for domestic politics it is evident that domestic political actors within the state form competing coalitions in order to implement their policy visions. The formation of coalitions and how they work together or compete against each other will depend on the distribution of power and preferences among relevant actors (Putnam 1988, p. 442). In situations where there is a consensus on policy objectives among relevant or dominant actors, a coalition may be so large that it in effect mimics a unitary actor. In such a scenario, black boxing domestic politics and utilizing unitary actor theories such as realism and liberalism can be a useful shortcut in explaining policy formulation and behaviour. On

the other hand, in situations where there is a lack of consensus, coalitions will compete to implement their mutually exclusive policy visions. Under such a scenario there will necessarily be winners and losers.

According to unitary actor theories, while the formation of preferences may entail some form of internal jockeying in the domestic political arena, it is assumed that domestic political actors will find sufficient overlap given the anarchic international security system and the need to guarantee the survival of the state. Realists consider examining domestic politics to be an unnecessary distraction. However, this proves not to be the case with regard to foreign and security policy in post-Cold War Japan. A contest has emerged between the coalition of right-wing actors seeking to escape the post-war regime and the coalition of left-wing actors seeking to preserve it. This is not to deny that coalition preferences are determined in part by the exigencies of the external security environment and the need to respond to it. However, short of an imminent attack, as the current case of Japan shows, different actors will interpret and respond the international security environment in different ways.

A vital study investigating the relationship between Japanese foreign and security policy and domestic politics is Richard Samuels' study on the Goldilocks consensus (Samuels 2006, 2007). Samuels identified two key fault lines around which Japan's domestic political actors are organised. The first fault line is over how big and active the SDF should be. This includes factors such as what sort of budget the SDF should be afforded, what sort of technological capabilities it should be permitted to possess and the scope of its roles and missions under domestic law. Customarily Japan's defence budget has been capped at 1 per cent of GDP, the SDF has eschewed offensive power projection capabilities and maintained military capabilities at the minimum necessary level for individual self-defence, and SDF roles and missions have evolved from a pure focus on homeland defence to also include non-combat humanitarian, disaster relief and logistical support missions, both at home and abroad.

The second fault line is over how close or how autonomous the SDF should be vis-à-vis the US military. Throughout the post-war era Japan has maintained a security alliance with the United States under the US-Japan Security Treaty. This treaty was signed on the same day, 8 September 1951, as the San Francisco Peace Treaty under which the Allied powers returned sovereignty to Japan after the war. In the early post-war period unarmed neutrality was a relatively more popular position among many in Japan compared to today. The main

opposition JSP was not only opposed to the maintenance of the SDF, but also argued that the SDF, the US-Japan Security Treaty and the maintenance of US military bases in Japan was a violation of Article 9. After the JSP changed its position on these issues in order to form a coalition government with the LDP in 1994, serious political support for this position became limited to the much smaller JCP and is essentially a fringe argument today.

The bulk of contestation over the second fault line revolves instead around how much the SDF should contribute to the alliance relationship, and what roles and missions it should play within the alliance framework. This can be conceived in terms of the entrapment and abandonment dilemma common to most alliance relationships (Snyder 1984, p. 466). If Japan does not contribute enough to the alliance it risks being abandoned by the United States. However, if it overcommits Japan risks being entangled in US-made skirmishes or wars not in the Japanese national interest. The maintenance of Article 9 continues to provide a powerful brake on any risk of entrapment. The core bargain of the alliance, whereby the United States pledges to guarantee the security of Japanese administered territory in exchange for the use of land, sea and air facilities in Japan for US military bases, remains unchanged to this day (despite uncertainty precipitated by US President Donald Trump).

According to these two fault lines, Samuels identified four coalitions of domestic political actors in Japan competing to implement their different foreign and security policy visions. Namely, neo-autonomists, normal nationalists, middle-power internationalists and pacifists (see table 1 below).

Neo-autonomists advocate for a big and active SDF and distance from the United States. This means building ‘an independent, full-spectrum Japanese military that could use force’ (Samuels 2006, p. 117). Their distrust of the United States mean neo-autonomists seek to prevent Japan from being entangled in US military adventurism, and over the long term they would ideally seek to nullify the US-Japan Security Treaty and the US military bases in Japan that it accords. However, given the current geopolitical reality, they have as a practical matter been forced to work within the US-Japan alliance framework to achieve expansion of SDF roles and missions (Envall 2018, p. 18). Neo-autonomists also often hold a revisionist view of history that beautifies the history of the Imperial Japanese Army and fails to face up to Japan’s historical aggression and transgressions. This has considerable overlap with the definition of Japan’s right wing as put forward in Chapter 1.

Normal nationalists advocate for a big or unrestrained SDF and a close relationship with the United States. They believe that the ‘statute of limitations for Japan’s mid-twentieth-century aggression expired long ago; it is time for Japan to step onto the international stage as an equal of the United States’ (Samuels 2006, p. 117). This entails Japan removing legal restrictions preventing it from using military force as a ‘normal’ nation, including Article 9, and establishing a more symmetrical alliance relationship along the lines called for by Mochizuki (1997).

Middle-power internationalists favour a small SDF and a close relationship with the United States. They argue that ‘Japan must remain a small power with self-imposed limits on its right to belligerency’ and that ‘Japan’s contributions to world affairs should remain non-military’ (Samuels 2006, p. 117). They recognise the United States as ‘Japan’s most important source of security’ given ‘the extent of US power and the limits of Japanese capabilities’ and the freedom this gives Japan to make non-military contributions to the regional and global good. Middle-power internationalism is synonymous with the path Japan followed during the Cold War under the Yoshida doctrine.

Pacifists favour a small to non-existent SDF and distance from the United States. They adhere to an interpretation of Article 9 that Japanese war potential, including the SDF, the US-Japan Security Treaty and US military bases in Japan, are unconstitutional. Pacifists instead argue for unarmed neutrality and putting faith in the international community and the UN to defend Japan from external threats (Samuels 2007, pp. 117-119).

Table 1: Japan’s Strategic Options

	Less active military	More active military
Embrace US	Middle-power internationalists	Normal nationalists
Distance from US	Pacifists	Neo-autonomists

(Source: Samuels 2006, p. 117)

Samuels concludes that Japan is heading toward ‘a “Goldilocks consensus” that positions Japan not too close and not too far from the current hegemon and protector [the United States], makes Japan stronger but not threatening, and also affords new comprehensive

security options' (Samuels 2006, p. 121). Samuels' account of the Goldilocks consensus continues to hold valuable explanatory power today. Yet, at the same time, the coalition of right-wing domestic political actors in Japan seeking to escape the post-war regime, which is largely synonymous with Samuels' description of neo-autonomists, have pushed harder and made a more concerted effort to influence Japan's foreign and security policy outcomes than may have been expected at the time Samuels put forward the Goldilocks consensus. As such, this thesis intends to build on the work by Samuels and to analyse the influence of Japan's coalition of right-wing domestic political actors.

The influence process

As the coalition of right-wing domestic political actors in Japan sets out to realise its objective to reorganise Japanese foreign and security policy and escape the post-war regime, how do we conceptualise the process by which it seeks to exert influence on decision-makers? To this end a number of questions must be considered. What is influence? Who are the groups that seek to exert influence? Who are the decision-makers that groups seek to influence? What are the domestic political institutions which determine the decision-making process? And what are the hurdles for groups influencing decision-makers? In conceptualising this process this thesis will borrow from Lester Milbrath's theoretical model of lobbying as a form of communication (Milbrath 1967, pp. 231-251).

Milbrath defines 'the influence process as a subcategory of the communication process' (Milbrath 1967, p. 232). That is, 'not all communication transmit influence...but all transmissions of influence constitute some form of a message' (Milbrath 1967, p. 232). In order for any particular group to exercise influence, 'the influencee must receive *and consider* a message from the influencer' (Milbrath 1967, p. 232). Groups can be defined as 'intermediaries in communication between citizens and governments as those governments make foreign policy decisions' (Milbrath 1967, pp. 232-233).

In order for the Japanese right wing to exert influence, the right-wing groups representing it must find a way to influence the relevant decision-makers. In the Japanese context, right-wing groups with an interest in foreign and security policy can be divided into inside and outside groups. The inside groups such as Nippon Kaigi, Ganbare Nippon and NARKN have at the very least sought to cultivate linkages with political decision-makers. The outside groups such as Issuikai and Zaitokukai have tended to remain on the fringe away from

decision-makers and the decision-making process. It is the inside groups (Nippon Kaigi, Ganbare Nippon and NARKN) which form the target of the analysis of this thesis.

Who decides?

Decision-makers can be defined as the individual or group of individuals ‘who is legally charged to make a final choice from among two or more alternatives on a policy question’ (Milbrath 1967, p. 235). In post-war Japan, foreign policy is the prerogative of the cabinet as stipulated in Article 73 of the Constitution. This means that the most direct method for groups to influence foreign and security policy would be through the prime minister, the foreign minister, the defence minister and their advisers.

In the past Japan has been described as a bureaucratic polity (Johnson 1975; Stockwin 1999, pp. 93-112). In pre-war Japan, the bureaucratic system established under the Meiji era reforms was built in such a way that a great deal of power was concentrated in the hands of bureaucrats to facilitate the rapid modernisation of the state. Despite the democratisation reform efforts of the Allied occupation authorities, it has been argued that elements of the Meiji-era bureaucratic structure survived and the bureaucracy has generally been a prestigious and powerful actor in Japanese policymaking (Johnson 1975, p. 12). Politicians would even often defer to bureaucrats during questioning in the Diet over policymaking (Gannon & Sahashi 2015, p. 14). Japanese prime ministers were generally considered to be weak and uninteresting figures (Krauss & Nyblade 2005, p. 357) due at least in part to the factional system of the LDP and the preference towards consensus-style decision making. In some cases, ‘when the political leadership sought to promote policies that diverged from those backed by the bureaucracy, bureaucrats would even undermine — and frequently defeat — their political masters’ (Gannon & Sahashi 2015, p. 14). By one anecdote, bureaucrats worked ‘to sabotage the policy line of their [minister]’ by preparing ‘a secret briefing for a TV talk-show host on how to attack him on the air’ (Gannon & Sahashi 2015, p. 27; Curtis 2002, pp. 3-4).

Institutional changes since the 1990s have altered the balance of governmental power back in favour of politicians. The government of Morihiro Hosokawa passed electoral reforms in January 1994 that changed most of Japan’s multi-member electoral districts into single-member districts so that parties could only nominate one candidate per district. As argued by Amy Catalinac, this reform shifted the electoral strategy of politicians away from pork

barrelling material benefits to a core base of loyal constituents and toward focusing on more substantive policymaking issues, including a greater focus on foreign and security policy (Catalinac 2013, 2016).

The so-called presidentialisation of the prime ministership in Japan in the early 2000s (Kraus & Nyblade 2005; Shinoda 2007) has seen the power of the bureaucracy further diminish. The Ryutaro Hashimoto administration (1996-1998) passed a number of administrative reforms that came into effect from 2001. This included the establishment of the Cabinet Office, which increased the number of staff and special advisors at the prime minister's disposal and provides prime ministers with greater organisational power to pursue their own agenda independent of their political party (Iizuka 2017).

More recently, the Abe government enacted further reforms to strengthen the power of the prime minister's office. The establishment of the Cabinet Bureau of Personnel Affairs (CBPA) in May 2014 means that the prime minister, through the chief cabinet secretary, 'has the power to evaluate, elevate or side track Japan's top 600 bureaucrats' (Cucek 2016). This serves to create a political environment under which bureaucrats are increasingly unable to oppose government policy, and their career prospects depend on loyalty to the elected government rather than their individual ministries. With regard to foreign and security policymaking, the Abe government led the establishment of the National Security Council in 2013, which was modelled after the US institution of the same name, and established the National Security Secretariat as its administrative office and to coordinate between ministries (Takahashi 2013; Iizuka 2017). This has enabled 'the Prime Minister to play a more central role in the formulation of foreign and security policy' (Sakaki & Lukner 2017, p. 144).

It is thus evident that the primary target for lobby groups in Japan seeking to influence foreign and security policy in Japan should be the cabinet, and especially the prime minister. The main exception to this is amending the Constitution and its Article 9 peace clause, which is one of the key objectives of the right wing seeking to escape the post-war regime. In this case influencing the cabinet alone is insufficient. Constitutional revision requires a two-step process. First, two-thirds of Diet members from each house must agree on a proposal. Second, the revision proposal must be approved by the public in a national referendum. As such the obstacles to exerting influence over this process are higher compared to most other foreign and security policy decisions.

Hurdles to influencing decision-makers

Milbrath identifies three hurdles for groups seeking to influence decision-makers. First 'it is essential that group leaders know the identity of the actors involved in a decision and the stages through which their deliberations must pass' (Milbrath 1967, p. 238). In the Japanese context, identifying the prime minister, foreign minister, defence minister, and other members of the cabinet is a simple matter. Further identifying other politicians and advisors whose advice the members of cabinet rely on may be more difficult.

Second, after the identification of the relevant decision-makers, groups must then establish a channel of communication with the target who they intend to influence (Milbrath 1967, p. 238). This might most effectively be achieved through the cultivation of personal ties with a decision-maker. However, this is relatively difficult to achieve and such a basis for influence may be fleeting in the event that the person holding the office of the decision-maker loses that job. For those lacking personal ties, direct lobbying efforts through letters, emails, phone calls or meetings to the official office of the decision-maker is another approach. However, nearly all such attempts at communication 'are screened for legitimacy and credibility' (Milbrath 1967, p. 240) and 'Busy public officials bombarded by a myriad of messages tend to select those that they wish to hear or to distort them so that they fit preconceptions' (Milbrath 1967, p. 240).

Third, 'how does the group achieve favorable reception of the import of the message by the decision-maker?' (Milbrath 1967, p. 240). One way is through the quality of the argument. 'A message may attain credibility by the sheer force of the idea or argument it contains' (Milbrath 1967, p. 241). Another way is to show the decision-maker that they will benefit. 'The surest way to do this in the case of an elected official is to show him how he will protect himself or gain politically by listening. Demonstration that a given measure is in the public interest or would serve the cause of justice also stimulates attention and concern' (Milbrath 1967, pp. 241-242).

To this end, demonstrating that public opinion supports the group's agenda is useful. 'To help compensate for this difficulty, some interest groups have turned to "lobbying at the grassroots". They become propaganda agencies working on the opinion of their members or on public opinion in general' (Milbrath 1967, p. 242). This is a difficult task as 'Even on

questions where some direct interest is apparent...many persons directly affected by the proposed policy will not be aroused by it' (Milbrath 1967, p. 242). Given that foreign policy tends 'to have a diffuse rather than a specific impact on individuals, it is even more difficult for [groups] to mobilize attempts to manipulate attentive elites' (Milbrath 1967, p. 243) in relation to such matters.

One potentially powerful tool which can both constrain and aid groups seeking to shape public opinion is narratives. A narrative can be defined as a story, 'in which we construct disparate facts in our own worlds and weave them together cognitively in order to make sense of our reality' (Patterson and Monroe 1998, p. 315). This aids citizens 'in navigating the myriad of sensations that bombard us daily' (Patterson and Monroe 1998, p. 315). Narrative can thus be a powerful political tool for those who can shape it in the public imagination. 'Insofar as narratives affect our perceptions of political reality, which in turn affect our actions in response to or in anticipation of political events, narrative plays a critical role in the construction of political behavior' (Patterson and Monroe 1998, pp. 315-316). Where narrative plays an important understanding in underpinning shared societal understandings, the promotion of alternative narratives 'may become sites of...conflict when those common understandings are challenged' (Patterson and Monroe 1998, p. 321).

Mechanisms used by Japan's right wing

Two mechanisms used by insider Japanese right-wing groups as they seek to influence Japanese foreign and security policy are noteworthy. First, Nippon Kaigi, NARKN and Ganbare Nippon have proven adept at cultivating relations with political decision-makers. These political linkages give these three right-wing groups unparalleled access to influence Japan's foreign and security policymakers. Second, the Japanese right-wing groups have opportunistically promoted narratives surrounding shock events in order to further the implementation of their foreign and security policy agenda.

Nippon Kaigi has cultivated relations with politicians through the Nippon Kaigi Parliamentary Discussion Group. It boasts a membership of 220 out of 465 Diet members in the lower house (47 per cent) and 75 Diet members in the upper house (31 per cent) (Democracy Minibird 2018). Moreover, research by the think tank Asia Policy Point shows the high proportion of Nippon Kaigi Parliamentary Discussion Group members in the cabinets of the Abe government (Asia Policy Point 2014a; 2014b; 2018). For instance, the

fourth Abe cabinet reshuffle in November 2017 installed 15 members of the Nippon Kaigi Parliamentary Discussion Group into the 20-member cabinet (Asia Policy Point 2018, p. 16).

NARKN has worked closely with the politicians of Rachi Giren since its establishment in 1998 which unified a number relevant organisations following new evidence coming to light about the North Korean abductions of Japanese citizens. In 1997, Rachi Giren's 'first meeting included more than 120 legislators...an unusually large number of members' (Arrington 2016, p. 157) for a multi-partisan Diet members association. By 2004 its membership continued to grow to 188 members (*Yomiuri* 2004) and it continues to maintain a similarly high number of members to the present day. Many members of Rachi Giren also show their support for NARKN by wearing a blue pin it sells to raise awareness for resolving the abduction issue.

Ganbare Nippon, while not maintaining such a formalised network, maintains informal linkages with right-wing politicians. These are based on the personal networks of the groups founders, Satoru Mizushima and Toshio Tamogami. This was most prominent in the cooperation between Ganbare Nippon and former Tokyo governor Shintaro Ishihara as part of Ishihara's attempt to undo the tacit agreement between Japan and China to shelve the two countries' territorial dispute over the Senkaku Islands.

Even if these lobby groups successfully convince decision-makers that a particular course is desirable or necessary, as elected officials the cabinet members must also be wary of public opinion in the implementation of foreign and security policy. To this end, the narratives that shape the public's understanding of foreign and security policy can act both as a powerful break on change as well as a potentially powerful tool in convincing the public. Japan's right-wing groups have sought to counter the established narrative that arose in the wake of the Second World War and have opportunistically sought to promote narratives around shock events as part of their agenda to reshape public thinking on foreign and security policy.

A key narrative that established after Japan's defeat in the Second World War and the disastrous consequences this entailed, including the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, is the idea that 'the military is a dangerous institution' (Berger 1993, p. 120). Proponents of this narrative on the left of Japanese politics argue that the military 'must be constantly restrained and monitored lest it threaten Japan's post-war democratic order and

undermine the peace and prosperity the nation has enjoyed since 1945' (Berger 1993, p. 120). The power of this narrative has been well explained by norm constructivist studies of post-war Japan (Berger 1993, 1998; Katzenstein & Okawara 1993; Katzenstein 1996).

Subsequently, during the Gulf War shock (1990–1991) Japan was criticised for its chequebook diplomacy. This shock resulted in the widespread acceptance of the narrative that Japan needed to make greater contributions to international peace. These contributions are considered necessary for three purposes. First, for Japan to gain respect in international society, as demonstrated by the lack of international recognition and respect for its financial contributions to the Gulf War. Second, for Japan make contributions to enriching the stability of its security environment. Third, to demonstrate that Japan is a good ally to the United States in order to maintain the US-Japan alliance and keep the United States engaged in Asia.

Japan's right-wing groups, especially Nippon Kaigi, sought to build on top of the international contributions narrative and use the Gulf War shock to propagate a narrative that Article 9 was humiliatingly foreign imposed. In particular, Japanese right-wing groups have argued that Article 9 was deliberately designed to weaken Japan and to curtail its foreign and security policy autonomy. As such, under the right wing's narrative, Article 9 needs to be revised in order to establish an autonomous full-spectrum military to defend Japan in an increasingly dangerous security environment (Matsushima 2014).

Another shock event which Japan's right-wing groups, particularly NARKN, seized on was in 2002 when then North Korean leader Kim Jong-il made the astonishing revelation that North Korea abducted a number of Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s. The right wing worked to promote the narrative that the abductees would not have been kidnapped if Japan had a different Constitution (Lindsay 2014). Furthermore, the right wing argues that diplomacy with the 'evil' Kim family regime is not possible and that tough sanctions are needed in order pressure North Korea and secure the return of remaining abductees (Schoff 2006, p. 7; Sato 2002, pp. 206-208). Today the abduction issue remains the Japanese public's issue of greatest concern toward North Korea, even greater than the nuclear and missile issues (see Figure 2).

A third shock event Japan's right-wing groups have used is the September 2010 Senkaku Islands ship collision incident. This involved a Chinese fishing trawler that collided with a

Japan Coast Guard vessel in the vicinity of the disputed Senkaku Islands. Right-wing groups have tended to see the tacit agreement between Japan and China struck in the 1970s as a symptom of the post-war regime that prevents Japan from protecting itself and its territory adequately. After the 2010 collision incident, the right wing promoted a narrative that a weak Japan caved to China in dealing with this incident by releasing the captain of the trawler back to China and that the Japanese government has proven itself incapable of defending Japanese territory (Hagström 2012).

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the three main theories of international relations — realism liberalism and constructivism — and the explanations these theories have advanced in order to explain Japanese foreign and security policy. Next, domestic sources of foreign and security policy are explored by looking at the fault lines that divide domestic political actors in Japan into different coalitions. And, finally, the influence process is examined with reference to Lester Milbrath's theoretical model of lobbying as a form of communication and Japanese right-wing group's cultivation of linkages with politicians and promotion of narratives around shock events.

Neo-realists argue that Japanese foreign and security policy restraint under Article 9 is an anomaly and that ultimately Japan will become a military power commensurate with its economic strength. The problem with this argument is the lack of empirical evidence as Japan continues to maintain Article 9. Thus a number of subvarieties of realism have been put forward which help to explain Japan's relative restraint. Liberal explanations of Japanese foreign and security policy argue that Japanese self-restraint is a product of either rational thinking due to the economic benefits derived from peace or the institutional framework of the US-Japan alliance and the pragmatic need for Japan to make contributions to the alliance to prevent the United States from abandoning it while still eschewing combat roles. Realist and liberal explanations all tend to focus on exogenous factors, neglecting endogenous factors, but for a comprehensive understanding of the pace and scope of change in Japanese foreign and security policy endogenous factors cannot be neglected.

Constructivist theories of international relations explain Japanese foreign and security policy in terms of norms associated with the culture of antimilitarism prevalent on the left side of Japanese politics and the construction of this identity vis-à-vis imperial and wartime military

elites. These explanations allow for analysis of endogenous factors and helpfully shed light on the left side of Japanese politics in relation to foreign and security policy. However, there is a gap in the literature regarding Japan's right-wing groups and how they operate.

Before attempting to understand the mechanisms by which Japan's right-wing groups seek to exert influence, it is necessary to understand the fault lines which divide domestic political actors in Japan into different coalitions. In particular, as argued by Samuels (2006; 2007), the key fault lines are: (1) the size of the Japanese military and the scope of its roles and missions as well as (2) how closely the Japanese military should cooperate with the United States or whether it should pursue autonomy. The neo-autonomist coalition that favours the establishment of a full-spectrum military autonomous from the United States in Samuels' schematic overlaps significantly with the right-wing groups (Nippon Kaigi, NARKN and Ganbare Nippon) that form the target of analysis in the case studies (Chapters 5-7).

The theoretical framework to analyse how Nippon Kaigi, NARKN and Ganbare Nippon operate as they seek to influence Japanese foreign and security policy borrows from Lester Milbrath's theoretical model of lobbying as a form of communication. In particular, it is argued that these right-wing groups have sought to influence Japanese foreign and security policy through two key mechanisms: the cultivation of linkages with politicians and the promotion of alternative narratives surrounding shock events that accord with their pre-existing ideological world view.

Nippon Kaigi has cultivated links with politicians through the Nippon Kaigi Parliamentary Discussion Group. NARKN has cultivated links politicians through Rachi Giren. Ganbare Nippon has established more informal networks through founder Satoru Mizushima's Channel Sakura and former ASDF chief commander Toshio Tamogami and demonstrated cooperation with the far-right former governor of Tokyo Shintaro Ishihara.

These right-wing groups have also promoted narratives surrounding shock events. Building on top of the Gulf War shock they have argued that the Japanese Constitution was foreign imposed and Article 9 needs to be revised so that Japan can establish a full-spectrum military capable of defending Japan and in which Japanese people can be proud. The North Korean abduction issue, admitted to by North Korean leader Kim Jong-il in 2002, has been used to promote a hardline anti-communist policy in favour of regime change and in favour of

revising Article 9 of the Constitution under the dubious claim that the abductions could have been stopped if it were not for the current Constitution. The narrative surrounding the 2010 Senkaku Islands ship collision incident claims that a weak Japan caved to Chinese pressure and that the Japanese government is incapable of defending Japan's inherent territory and it seeks to overturn the tacit agreement established with China in the 1970s to shelve the dispute over the islands.

Next, Chapter 3 will examine the security elements of the post-war regime, known as the Yoshida doctrine, that the right-wing groups seek to overturn and escape from. Chapter 4 outlines the Gulf War shock and Japan's incremental post-Cold War security policy reforms which expanded the roles and missions of the SDF, but within the framework of Article 9 and while eschewing combat missions. The thesis will then proceed to the three case studies: the drive to revise Article 9 (Chapter 5), Japan's hard line on North Korea (Chapter 6) and Japan's Senkaku Islands policy (Chapter 7).

3 The Yoshida doctrine

This chapter outlines how the security elements of the post-war regime, known as the Yoshida doctrine, came to be established. Its three pillars — economic reconstruction, military reliance on the United States and light rearmament — guided Japanese foreign and security policy throughout the Cold War. It was the base from which Japan's incremental post-Cold War security policy reforms were formulated (see Chapter 4). It also continues to be an important anchor by which Japanese foreign and security policy is measured today by both the left who seek to preserve its spirit and the right who seek to overhaul it in their quest to escape from the post-war regime.

The Yoshida doctrine was established as a practical necessity. It enabled Japan to focus on the immediate and pressing task of rebuilding from the destruction of the war. It was a political compromise between the coalition of domestic political actors on the left — split between the pacifists who supported unarmed neutrality, and middle-power internationalists who advocated for self-restraint with some limited forms of military capabilities — and the coalition of domestic political actors on the right who advocated for rearmament and the removal of security policy restraints imposed by the US-led Allied occupation forces.

The Yoshida doctrine was established in the context of the regional security environment and the domestic political situation in the immediate post-war era after Japan's disastrous Second World War campaign and its surrender to the US-led Allied forces in 1945. Domestically, the main focus was on recovering from the enormous damage wrought by the war. Japan suffered a high death toll among the civilian population and its infrastructure was decimated. 'The immediate challenge for Japan was less an issue of regaining its power and status in the international community, but more toward the mundane concerns of clothing, feeding and securing its citizens' (Tang 2007, p. 119). Externally, the focus was on the emerging Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union as well as the memory of Japan's wartime aggression and the bearing this had on regional relations. The US-led Allied occupation and the establishment of the US-Japan alliance brought Japan into the orbit of the United States. This avoided any potential division of Japan between the United States and Soviet Union along Cold War ideological lines such as happened on the Korean peninsula. It also established Japan as an integral part in the US hub-and-spokes security system in the

Asia-Pacific and as a host of US military bases under the US military's forward deployment strategy.

Given this domestic and regional context, the three pillars of the Yoshida doctrine enabled Japan to simultaneously address its economic and security needs. The focus on economic reconstruction allowed Japan to devote its limited resources to the post-war reconstruction effort. It also gave tangible goals to a war-weary and war-torn nation and an outlet for the energy of citizens frustrated by the shock of defeat and the daily struggles and sacrifices made to a lost cause. Light rearmament enabled Japan to establish a 'cost-effective and non-threatening' (Tang 2007, p. 120) security posture given limited resources for reconstruction and consideration for regional neighbours who were victims of Japan's wartime aggression. Reliance on the US military for Japanese security served to enmesh Japan into the US-led capitalist bloc, to secure Japan from Soviet threats in the emerging Cold War regional security environment and to underwrite Japan's light rearmament strategy.

The longevity of the Yoshida doctrine surprised even Yoshida himself who believed that it would be reformulated once post-war reconstruction efforts were completed and Japan accumulated sufficient economic strength (Samuels 2007, p. 7). Yet even after Japan recovered and surpassed pre-war economic benchmarks, the Yoshida doctrine remained institutionalised throughout the Cold War. It set the course for Japan beyond recovery and toward economic growth and development, the attainment of East Asia's highest standard of living, economic superpower status and a new post-war identity as a peace loving nation.

The three pillars of the Yoshida doctrine

Economic reconstruction

Japanese cities were decimated by the war. It is common knowledge that the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 and 9 August 1945. However, it is less well known that the United States firebombed Tokyo and nearly every major Japanese city. This necessitated a massive infrastructure reconstruction effort after the war.

The two atomic bombs killed an estimated 105,000-120,000 people in the initial blast and resultant fires (70,000-80,000 in Hiroshima and 35,000-40,000 in Nagasaki) (DOD 1946, p. 42). Countless more died in the following months due to the effects of radiation. In terms of

infrastructure, over 62,000 out of 90,000, or 69 per cent, of the buildings in the Hiroshima urban area were destroyed, while an additional 6,000, or 6.6 per cent, were severely damaged (DOD 1946, p. 14). In Nagasaki the damage was comparatively limited to the complete destruction of 27 per cent of the city's buildings (14,000 out of 52,000) and the partial destruction of a further 10 per cent (5,400). This was in part due to the luck of the winds on the day (DOD 1946, p. 18).

Yet the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, memorable as the first and only use of nuclear weapons in war, are only part of the story of the destruction of wartime Japan. The choice of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as atomic targets was made in part to showcase the destructive power of the United States' newly developed atomic technology to the Soviet Union. They were two of only five cities (the others being Kyoto, Kokura and Niigata) that remained relatively unscathed. Other larger cities, which had already been thoroughly firebombed, would not fulfil that objective.

The largest and most destructive firebombing was carried out on Tokyo. Between 6 December 1944 and 13 August 1945 the United States carried out 65 air raids on Tokyo, which resulted in an estimated '137,582 casualties, 787,145 homes and buildings destroyed, and 2,625,279 people displaced' (Selden 2007). The most devastating of these air raids was carried out on 9-10 March 1945 during which 267,000 buildings were destroyed and roughly 100,000 killed (Long 2011). Some scholars, such as Mark Selden, argue that these figures were deliberately underestimated by both the US and Japanese authorities (Selden 2007). The destruction was part of a broad campaign that targeted 66 of Japan's 71 biggest cities. The magnitude of the destruction was immense, ranging from 50-60 per cent in Tokyo, Yokohama and Kobe, 60 to 88 per cent in 17 other cities, and over 98 per cent of Toyama (Kerr 1991, pp. 337-338; Selden 2007). By one estimate the overall impact of the firebombing campaign across Japan 'destroyed 40 percent of the 66 Japanese cities targeted' (Selden 2007). Given the scale of destruction that took place, it is no surprise that at least initially Japan prioritised its limited available resources to the rebuilding of its economic infrastructure.

The prioritisation of economic reconstruction was made easier given the security guarantee from the United States. The US-Japan Security Treaty means that Japan is the beneficiary of a security guarantee from the most powerful military in the world. This is not to say that

concerns about Japanese security policy autonomy did not linger both among the right who wanted greater autonomy in order to rearm, and among the left, which included some who distrusted the United States intentions and others who considered the US military bases to be unconstitutional. However, as a deterrent against threats from the Soviet Union, the US security guarantee served to free up Japan's limited economic resources and enabled its post-war reconstruction to advance at a pace that would almost certainly have otherwise been unachievable.

The focus on economic reconstruction was immensely successful and Japan grew into an economic superpower. In 1967, less than a quarter of a century after its surrender, Japan overtook West Germany to become the second largest economy in the world. Japan's economic rise was so successful that during the late 1970s and 1980s it was even considered to be a threat to the global economic primacy of the United States (Vogel 1979).

The advent of Japanese voluntary export restraints, the 1985 Plaza Accord under which Japan appreciated its currency and the bursting of Japan's asset price bubble in 1991 all served to slow down Japanese economic growth. In 2010 the Chinese economy overtook Japan as the second largest in the world and the largest in Asia. Nevertheless, Japan continues to maintain its status as a major economic power and the third largest economy in the world, and its citizens enjoy some of the highest standards of living in the world.

The legacy of this first pillar of the Yoshida doctrine is still felt today. Japanese public opinion today continues to favour a focus on economic growth. Opinion polling has consistently shown that economic growth is the top issue of concern among Japanese voters. The longevity of the Abe government itself — despite evidence of 'Abe fatigue' (Harris 2017) and his declining popularity among voters as well as anger over a number of political corruption scandals (Dudden 2017; George Mulgan 2017, 2018; Ascione 2018) — can be at least partially attributed to the Abe government having a concrete economic policy vision known colloquially as Abenomics. Despite the fact that Abenomics has failed to be implemented consistently, especially the third and most important arrow of structural reform (Armstrong 2016), opposition parties have failed to publicise an economic policy vision that is able to compete with Abenomics and capture the public imagination.

Another enduring legacy of the Yoshida doctrine's first pillar is that customary cap on defence spending of 1 per cent of GDP. As the Japanese economy grew so did Japan's capacity to invest in its military capabilities. At its peak, Japan's annual defence budget was ranked the third highest in the world. By the same token, when Japan's economy plateaued, so did Japan's defence budget. Japan's defence spending is now ranked eighth in the world (Tian et al 2018, p. 2). The SDF is still one of the world's foremost most technologically advanced military organisations, particularly in regard to its air and sea power (Lind 2004, pp. 94-101).

Since the 1 per cent cap GDP has largely been maintained, Japan is widely considered to punch below its weight with its potential military power not commensurate with its economic standing. The first serious attempt to abolish the 1 per cent GDP cap came from prime minister Yasuhiro Nakasone in 1987 (Haberman 1987). He declared his intent to increase defence spending to 2 per cent of GDP, but ultimately found his efforts thwarted. Instead he had to settle for an increase so minutely over the 1 per cent cap that the increase was nothing more than symbolic.

Prime Minister Abe has called for the 1 per cent GDP cap on defence spending to be scrapped (Fujiwara 2018). This is in line with his long-standing links to right-wing lobby groups as well as his long-stated desire to amend the Article 9. So far the Abe government has overseen a modest increase in defence spending since returning to power in December 2012. A senior Ministry of Finance official responsible for overseeing Japan's defence budget explained to me that Japan would likely continue gradual increases in defence spending and any increases would continue to be kept deliberately modest so as to not trigger anxiety among Japan's neighbours, especially China and South Korea. This can be interpreted as a deliberate strategy to avoid exacerbating the security dilemma in Northeast Asia.

Most proposals in recent years to break the 1 per cent cap are relatively modest. For instance, the Institute for International Policy Studies, a major Japanese foreign policy think tank that 'issued a set of recommendations to the government in preparation for its dealings with the Trump administration', recommended 'that Japan should spend at least 1.2 per cent of GDP on defence' (Kubo 2017). Ultimately, it remains to be seen whether future government's after Abe's tenure will continue to maintain the 1 per cent GDP cap as a political norm or not. Yet

we can imagine that without the cap Japan's military posture might have been much bigger than it is at present.

Light rearmament

The light rearmament of Japan entailed the maintenance of the Article 9 peace clause of the Constitution and the establishment of the SDF in 1954. Since Article 9 does not mention or otherwise affirmatively permit the maintenance of the SDF, its establishment involved reinterpreting Article 9 to permit some form of standing military in order to defend Japan against external attack, but with tight restrictions on its military capabilities, roles and missions. Over the decades, while the 1947 Constitution has never been amended, Article 9 has been continually reinterpreted as SDF roles and missions have been incrementally expanded. The light rearmament strategy was further solidified by a number of measures designed to prevent Japan from becoming a military power including the customary 1 per cent GDP cap on defence spending, the three non-nuclear principles and the three principles on arms exports.

The debate over Japan's rearmament is generally contested along three key lines. First, there are arguments about the constitutional status of the SDF. Its constitutionality tends to be premised on advice about how to interpret Article 9 by the Cabinet Legislation Bureau (CLB), which effectively functions as an in-house government lawyer. The Supreme Court has ultimate authority to judge what is or is not constitutional, but it has refrained from making definitive judgements regarding the constitutionality of the SDF. Second, the definition of 'light' rearmament is debated. On the one hand, it is argued that this is something which should be achieved primarily by restricting Japan from possessing certain kinds of offensive military capabilities in the first place. On the other hand, it is argued that light rearmament may be achieved through legal restrictions that limit the roles the SDF can legally engage in, rather than excessively limiting the military capabilities it may maintain. Third, the origins of blockades against rearmament are a source of controversy. Right-wing domestic political actors in favour of rearmament emphasise that the post-war Constitution was imposed upon Japan by the US-led Allied occupation forces. The left-wing actors who favour maintaining Article 9 point to the role of Japanese citizens in influencing SCAP General Douglas MacArthur, its popular appeal among Japanese citizens and that its maintenance in the ensuing decades has been a uniquely Japanese endeavour.

Judicial oversight: The constitutionality of the SDF and the US-Japan Security Treaty

Under Japanese law, as stipulated in Article 81 of the Constitution, the Supreme Court has the ‘power to determine the constitutionality of any law, order, regulation or official act’. However, the Supreme Court has continually sidestepped the issues of the constitutionality of the SDF and the US-Japan Security Treaty. As a result, the Supreme Court has ultimately maintained the status quo and eschewed its role of providing checks and balances on the legislative and executive branches.

The lack of judicial leadership has vested the CLB with unique importance in interpreting Article 9 (Samuels 2004). The CLB, however, is not intended to provide checks and balances on the legislative and executive branches. As a result, the government has had a relatively unfettered hand in crafting its interpretations of Article 9 to the extent it can persuade the CLB to back its stance and reconcile its position with previous CLB advice. Notably, the director-general of the CLB tended to be a career bureaucrat promoted from within the bureau, however, prime minister Abe broke this custom in 2013 when he appointed Ichiro Komatsu, who supported his plans to legalise collective self-defence, from MOFA (Yoshida 2014).

The first case to be filed with the Supreme Court on the question of Article 9 was in 1952. Mosaburo Suzuki, the leader of the JSP, made an application requesting confirmation that the maintenance of the National Police Reserve was unconstitutional (Umeda 2006). The Supreme Court dismissed the case deciding that ‘judicial review generally was limited to ex post facto consideration of concrete cases, in the American tradition, as opposed to permitting requests, either by private litigants or the government, for determination of hypothetical questions on the constitutionality of prospective events’ (Martin 2007). This limited the number of future cases brought before the Supreme Court involving Article 9, even as the government reinterpreted Article 9 over the decades.

The two most significant Supreme Court cases involving Article 9 are the Sunakawa and Naganuma cases. In the Sunakawa case in 1959, seven defendants were accused of trespassing on a US military base during protests against the expansion of the Tachikawa Airfield near the village of Sunakawa. The defendants argued that the US-Japan Security Treaty and the presence of US military forces in Japan was unconstitutional under the second paragraph of Article 9, which states that ‘land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war

potential, will never be maintained'. The Tokyo District Court acquitted the defendants on this basis under what became known as the 'Date decision' after the presiding judge Akio Date (Oppler 1961, p. 244). The government of Japan immediately appealed this decision to the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court reversed the Date decision and in doing so set two important precedents. First, the Supreme Court found that while Article 9 expresses the Japanese people's determination not to maintain war potential, Article 9 paragraph 2 does 'not in the least negate the inherent right of self-defence of this country as a sovereign state' (Oppler 1961, p. 247). In exercising this inherent right of self-defence Japan is free to 'take the measures necessary for the preservation of its existence, peace and security' (Oppler 1961, p. 247). Despite the Abe government's claims to the contrary in debates over the security-related bills in 2015, the Supreme Court did not comment on the distinction between the SDF's right to engage in individual self-defence versus collective self-defence in making its ruling. See Chapter 5).

Second, the Supreme Court established the precedent that the status of the US-Japan Security Treaty was a 'political question' unsuitable for judicial review unless 'obviously unconstitutional and void' (Martin 2007). The Supreme Court reasoned that the San Francisco Peace Treaty, which restored sovereignty to Japan, recognises Japan's right to enter into collective security arrangements. At the same time, because Japan would not have sufficient means to exercise its right to self-defence after the San Francisco Peace Treaty came into force, the US-Japan Security Treaty was signed on the same day as such a collective security arrangement. 'This background indicates, in the view of the court, the extremely significant bearing the Security Treaty has on the peace, security, and ultimately the existence of Japan as a nation' (Oppler 1961, p. 249). The Supreme Court further ruled that 'the United States forces in Japan are foreign troops and do not represent, therefore, Japan's war potential in the meaning of Article 9' (Oppler 1961, p. 249).

The second significant case related to Article 9 brought to the Supreme Court was the Naganuma case. This case was initiated in the Sapporo District Court in 1969 by a group of local residents from the small town of Naganuma in Hokkaido who sought to prevent the construction of an ASDF missile base. A key part of their case was to challenge the constitutionality of the SDF. In particular, the plaintiffs sought 'an injunction against the

government to prevent its changing the status of the forest, claiming that the establishment of a missile site in the national forest preserve was in violation of the Forestry Law, which specified that such a reclassification may be made only in the public interest. Since the SDF were unconstitutional, the plaintiffs argued, the base could not be regarded as being in the public interest' (Seymour 1974, p. 426). On top of this, the plaintiffs argued that the construction of the base would exacerbate land erosion by removing the flood control provided by the forest (Seymour 1974, p. 426) and that it would put the town in harm's way by transforming it 'into a high-value target in the event of armed conflict' (Martin 2007). The government responded to the plaintiffs' claims arguing that 'the reclassification of the forest was in the public interest; the government would establish dams and other facilities to protect the areas against floods; and delay in the construction of the missile base would seriously impair the defense capabilities of the nation' (Seymour 1974, p. 426).

In 1973, after much controversy including an attempt by the government to have the presiding judge Shigeo Fukushima removed from the case, the Sapporo District Court found in favour of the plaintiffs (Seymour 1974, p. 427). Judge Fukushima ruled that the SDF was unconstitutional under Article 9 and 'reiterated the view that there is no distinction between wars of aggression and wars for self-defense: all wars were prohibited by Article 9' (Seymour 1974, p. 429). As a result, it was found that Cabinet Order 1023, which reclassified the land of the forest preserve, did not uphold the public interest. As part of his judgement, Judge Fukushima 'attempted to provide alternatives to military forces' for Japan's self-defence including diplomacy, utilizing the police and the general population to repel an invasion, and confiscating the property of citizens of the invading country (Seymour 1974, p. 429).

The Sapporo District Court decision was overturned by the Sapporo High Court, and this in turn was confirmed by the Supreme Court. Ultimately, the Supreme Court dismissed the plaintiffs' application. The Supreme Court found that none of the plaintiffs had a direct legal interest in the reclassification of the forest because after the District Court judgement the government had 'taken special measures to ensure that there would be no harm to the water table' (Martin 2007). As a result, because it was found that the plaintiffs had no standing to make a claim, the Supreme Court neatly sidestepped the issue of the constitutionality of the SDF.

The government for its part never showed any concern that the Supreme Court might rule against the constitutionality of the SDF. Throughout the case, the Japan Defense Agency (JDA) was keenly aware of anti-SDF and anti-base sentiments, delayed the release of its annual Defense of Japan White Paper in 1973 and avoided acquiring any new land for missile bases for a number of years so as not to aggravate public opinion. On the whole, however, the government ‘considered the Naganuma case little more than a nuisance’ (Seymour 1974, p. 428) and continued with the construction of the base, which was completed in 1972 before the case finished, as well as plans for increasing the overall size of the SDF.

More recently, when the Japanese government dispatched the SDF to Iraq between 2004 and 2009, it was speculated that this might give potential plaintiffs standing to make a claim against a concrete action for the unconstitutionality of the SDF. This dispatch was enabled by the 2003 LCSMHRA. This law was sold to the public in terms of being a humanitarian and reconstruction mission. The most prominent aspect of this mission was the SDF activities to rebuild schools and to purify water in Samawah. At the same time, the ASDF was also dispatched to carry out air transport activities between Kuwait and Baghdad, something that was kept relatively low profile. The LCSMHRA itself restricted SDF missions in Iraq to non-combat areas in line with the prevailing government interpretation of Article 9. Yet prime minister Junichiro Koizumi brushed off challenges to the SDF Iraq missions by defining non-combat zones in a ‘cavalierly tautological way’ as ‘the area where the SDF is operating’ (Samuels 2007, p. 75).

Plaintiffs filed cases in 12 lower courts against the SDF dispatch to Iraq. In 11 of those cases, however, either the cases were dismissed or the plaintiffs lost with no significant ruling (*The Japan Times* 2008). In the Nagoya High Court, however, a significant ruling was made.

In April 2008, the Nagoya High Court presiding judge, Kunio Aoyama, found that Baghdad was a combat zone and that ASDF transport activities between Kuwait and Baghdad constituted ‘regular and reliable delivery of armed personnel of the multi-national forces’, which were ‘integral to other countries’ use of military force and can only be considered Japan’s own exercise of military force’ (Narusawa 2014). This left the government in an awkward position since the government’s own interpretation of Article 9 and supplementing laws (most notably the 2003 LCSMHRA and the 1999 SIASJL) bans the SDF from

conducting operations that form an integral part in the use of military force by other nations (*ittaiika*), even if the SDF itself is not exercising force.

Despite the Nagoya High Court's ruling, it rejected the plaintiffs' claim for a halt to the mission and compensation. The plaintiffs 'claimed damages for the psychological harm that was caused by the infringement of their right to live in peace' but the court reasoned that the plaintiffs did not 'have a direct legal interest that would be harmed by the ASDF operations' (Martin 2008). As such the defendant, the state, was technically the winner of the case, even though the judgement of the court that the ASDF operations were unconstitutional was an embarrassment to the government.

After the ruling the LDP government audaciously spun the verdict as nothing less than a government victory. The then chief cabinet secretary Nobutaka Machimura 'shrugged off accusations of illegality, quixotically arguing that Baghdad was "a noncombat zone"' (McNeil 2010).

SDF operations in Iraq were ultimately brought to an end in December 2008. While it was speculated that the Nagoya High Court ruling may have hastened this decision, the government explained that the termination was done in consultation with the Iraqi government, which was seeking to downsize the foreign military presence, that the mission had achieved its objectives (MOD 2008), and that UN Security Council Resolution 1790, which mandated the multinational forces in Iraq, was due to expire (ABC 2008). Later after the change of government to the DPJ, defence minister Toshimi Kitazawa released info that gave credence to the Nagoya High Court's decision. In September 2009 Kitazawa 'unexpectedly authorized the release of a short document under the Freedom of Information Act disclosing that about 67 percent of the 26,000 soldiers transported by the Air Self-Defense Forces between July 2006 and December 2008 wore US uniforms' (McNeil 2010).

Opponents of the SDF Iraq dispatch and other such potential future overseas SDF operations were momentarily encouraged that the Nagoya High Court ruling may force the Supreme Court to make a more substantial ruling on Article 9 and the constitutionality of the SDF. Ultimately, the opportunity for citizens to bring a case with standing is still severely limited. Setsu Kobayashi, for instance, explained that there are probably only two situations in which a case may be successfully brought regarding Article 9 and SDF constitutionality (Kobayashi

2015). The first situation would be if an SDF personnel refuses an overseas dispatch order on the grounds of constitutionality. The second situation would be if an SDF personnel were to be killed in an operation abroad and the bereaved family filed a case on the grounds that their relative was killed in an unconstitutional operation.

Interpreting the Article 9 peace clause

The Article 9 peace clause is the ‘primary formal restraint’ (Samuels 2007, p. 45) on Japan’s remilitarisation. It states that:

‘Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.

To accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized’.

Throughout Japan’s post-war history, while the Supreme Court has sidestepped the question, debates over Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution in the political sphere have hotly contested its original intent. Interpretations of Article 9 can broadly be split into the two categories of non-aggression and non-violence (Boyd & Samuels 2005, pp. 5-11). On the one hand, the non-aggression interpretation, often attributed to SCAP General Douglas MacArthur, renounces aggressive war and the maintenance of military capabilities for that purpose. Under this interpretation, Japan may retain ‘the right to possess and exercise military capabilities necessary to preserve its existence as a sovereign nation’ (Boyd & Samuels 2005, p. 6). On the other hand, the non-violence interpretation, often credited to Kijuro Shidehara (prime minister from October 1945 to May 1946), ‘forbade participation in any type of war, aggressive or defensive, as well as the maintenance of any type of military capabilities whatsoever’ (Boyd & Samuels 2005, p. 6).

The legitimacy of these two interpretations hinges on the significance one places on the first eight words of the second paragraph of Article 9, ‘To accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph’. These words are known as the Ashida amendment, named after the politician Hitoshi Ashida (prime minister of Japan between March and October of 1948) who claimed that it was he who insisted on their inclusion in order to give Japan some leeway to defend itself (Yoshida 2014).

If one assumes the original intent of the Ashida amendment was to proscribe the maintenance of land, sea and air forces only if they are geared towards behaviour forbidden in the first paragraph, then one can also assume that land, sea and air forces may be constitutionally maintained for other purposes, such as individual self-defence and humanitarian and disaster relief operations. If, however, one assumes that the Ashida amendment is not intended to subordinate the remainder of the second paragraph, then Article 9 can be interpreted as outright prohibiting land, sea and air forces for any purpose. In that case the establishment of any sort of standing military force, including the SDF itself, can be interpreted as unconstitutional.

After the Constitution was first enacted in 1947, and during the immediate first couple of years after Japan regained sovereignty between 1952 and 1954, Japan technically maintained no standing military forces. The predecessor organisation of the SDF, the National Police Reserve (NPR), had been established in 1950. In order to free up Allied Forces occupying Japan for transfer to the frontline in the Korean War, a replacement was needed to supplement regular police forces for the maintenance of domestic law and order. However, the NPR was legally considered a police force rather than military force.

The first reinterpretation of Article 9 by the CLB in 1952 facilitated the transformation of the NPR into the SDF in 1954. Given the dependence on the United States for Japanese security, especially in the case it was attacked, the Yoshida government sought to move to give Japan some sort of indigenous protection capability. However, Yoshida's room for manoeuvre was constrained by the domestic political situation. Not having enough support in the Diet (a two-thirds majority in each house) or wanting to go through the laborious process of a national referendum to amend the Constitution so soon after it was promulgated, 'Yoshida ordered the CLB to craft an interpretation that would allow some military capabilities and the use of such capabilities to repel direct attack' (Samuels 2007, p. 46). The CLB duly cooperated with Yoshida. It defined war potential as 'a force with the equipment and organization capable of conducting modern warfare' and further noted that this is dependent on the regional security environment, it must be determined relative to other states' capabilities and international conditions, and that 'it is neither unconstitutional to maintain capabilities that fall short of war potential nor to utilize these capabilities to defend the nation from direct invasion' (Samuels 2007, p. 46).

The legal standing of SDF roles and missions was further clarified by the CLB in 1954 with its advice on collective self-defence and collective security. It was advised that Japan was not permitted to engage in collective self-defence under Article 9. In other words, Japan prohibited itself from using military force to defend another nation that has come under attack. This is despite the fact that the right of all sovereign nations to exercise collective self-defence is enshrined in international law under Article 51 of the UN Charter. The CLB further advised that with respect to collective security — ‘cooperation with international organizations and other countries to enhance the security of non-allied countries that may or may not involve the use of force’ (Samuels 2007, p. 148) — Japan may participate in its economic and diplomatic aspects but is banned from using force under wholly multilateral auspices even such as the UN.

For most of the period between 1955 and 1960, the government was controlled by right-wing domestic political actors seeking to escape the post-war regime under the administrations of Ichiro Hatoyama and Nobusuke Kishi. While they desired to roll back the restrictions on the SDF, these governments never controlled a two-thirds majority in both houses of the Diet, meaning neither was ever positioned to rescind Article 9 through a constitutional revision. The previous CLB advice also denied a blank slate and constrained the way in which successor governments could reinterpret Article 9. Nevertheless, on the question of what military capabilities were permitted, the pro-rearmament factions found some success. Whereas military capabilities were previously restricted to those that did not constitute ‘war potential’, on the basis of new advice from the CLB, Article 9 was reinterpreted to permit military capabilities that constituted war potential so long as they were confined to ‘the “minimum necessary level” required to protect Japan from direct attacks’ (Samuels 2007, p. 47). Direct attacks were strictly defined as situations where Japan is ‘facing an imminent and illegitimate act of aggression; when there is no other means of countering this act; and when the use of force in self-defence is limited to the minimum necessary level’ (MOD 2013, p. 101; Samuels 2007, p. 47).

This new interpretation, however, left open the question of what constituted the minimum necessary level. This was partially because the concept of what constitutes the necessary minimum is dynamic vis-à-vis the military capabilities of an adversary with the potential to perpetrate an attack against Japan. In other words, the more sophisticated the military

capabilities an opponent might use against Japan, the broader the theoretical scope for the SDF to legally possess reciprocally sophisticated military capabilities to defend against them. Nobusuke Kishi, for instance, insisted that there were many varieties of nuclear arms and the possession of a nuclear deterrent could be considered within the scope of the minimum necessary level (Samuels 2007, p. 47).

After 1960, LDP moderates sought to address the open-ended nature of the definition of the minimum necessary level of defence capabilities. Most significantly, in 1968 they established the concept of exclusively defence-oriented security (*senshu boei*). The CLB issued a formal interpretation stating the SDF are only permitted to act 'when there is a sudden unprovoked attack on Japan and there are no other means available to protect the lives and safety of the people' (Samuels 2007, p. 47). Furthermore, it was understood that Japan's defensive capabilities should, in order to be purely defensive in nature, avoid the possession of power projection capabilities.

Despite losing control among the factions within the ruling LDP, the right-wing actors seeking to escape the post-war regime never gave up their ambitions. In an attempt to push back against the restrictive nature of the roles and missions of the SDF, the right-wing sought to emphasise what they characterised as the contradiction between Japanese domestic law, which prohibited collective self-defence, and international law, which permitted it under Article 51 of the UN Charter. Given that collective self-defence is enshrined in international law how could it possibly be illegal for Japan to exercise this right of all sovereign nations? The issue came to a head in the early 1980s. The government of the day, under prime minister Zenko Suzuki, had the CLB issue advice to clarify the matter. The CLB advice explained that 'Japan has the right of collective self-defence under international law but is forbidden to exercise it under Article 9' (Samuels 2007, p. 48). The reasoning behind this was that collective self-defence would exceed the minimum necessary level of the exercise of self-defence.

The Abe government has since further reinterpreted Article 9 through a cabinet decision in July 2014 and the passage of the security-related bills in September 2015 to permit limited forms of collective self-defence (see Chapter 5).

The origins of blockades against rearmament

While SCAP General Douglas MacArthur undoubtedly played a crucial role in the inclusion of Article 9 peace clause in the 1947 Constitution, the Japanese role in shaping and maintaining it has been neglected by the right wing as part of the argument that the Constitution is foreign imposed and thus should be rescinded. MacArthur has said that Article 9 was suggested to him by Kijuro Shidehara (Schlichtmann 1995, pp.43-67; Boyd & Samuels 2005, p. 5). SCAP accepted a number of proposals from Japanese civil society groups between late 1945 and spring 1946 (Takemae 2003, p. 273; Parisi 2002, p. 1), which they took on board where it suited their interests. At the same time, in the wake of Japan's wartime defeat, 'among the broad masses of the Japanese people the imperial armed forces had been totally discredited' (Welfield 1988, p. 60).

After the victory of the CCP in the civil war in China in 1949 and the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, it was the Americans who were at this point attempting to persuade the Japanese to rearm. During negotiations between John Foster Dulles and Shigeru Yoshida in January 1951, Dulles was given explicit orders to negotiate Japanese participation in US resistance to the expansion of communism and to bring it into the bloc of the free nations of the world. However, concerned that this would entangle Japan in US-led military misadventure, Yoshida refused US demands that Japan rearm (Welfield 1988, pp. 49-52). 'Yoshida was particularly anxious to avoid rearmament of the kind that would revive the influence of the old officer corps. He was also determined to avoid, as far as possible, the kind of rearmament that would bind Japan inextricably into the framework of American Far Eastern strategy' (Welfield 1988, p. 70). It was in this context that the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty and the US-Japan Security Treaty took place and subsequently Japan rearmed, not fully but lightly, by transforming the National Police Reserve into the SDF under the guiding influence of the Yoshida doctrine (Welfield 1988, p. 79).

The US-Japan alliance

The core bargain of the US-Japan alliance, under the terms of the US-Japan Security Treaty, is that the United States guarantees the security of Japanese administered territories (Article 5) and in exchange Japan provides the United States with land, sea, and air facilities in Japan for US military bases for the maintenance of international peace in the Far East (Article 6). Under this paradigm US bases in Japan form a critical component in the US forward deployment strategy enabling its status as a Pacific power. At the same time, the US military presence combined with the US nuclear umbrella provide overwhelming military deterrence

power against an attack on Japan. This arrangement has helped the SDF to maintain its exclusively defensive-oriented (*senshu boei*) security posture. This in turn has helped Japan avoid exacerbating the security dilemma in Northeast Asia as it struggles to overcome the legacy of the war in its relations with many of its regional neighbours, most prominently China and South Korea (Ascione 2015).

The origins of the alliance can be traced back to what Timothy Temerson terms ‘double containment’. This means the containment of the Soviet Union and communism on the one hand, and the containment of a remilitarised Japan on the other hand. In the context of the Cold War, the United States moved to reinvent Japan as an ally in the fight against communism and has urged its rearmament ever since. The intensification of the Cold War — with the fall of China to Mao Zedong’s Communist Party in 1949, the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, and the ever-looming Soviet threat — served to entrench the US-Japan alliance. As a result of the bipolar nature of the international security environment during the Cold War, Japanese policymakers strongly felt the need to maintain the US-Japan alliance and the US security guarantee, including the nuclear umbrella. In this way, ‘moves that would harm alliance relations were carefully avoided’ (Tanaka 2014). At the same time, given that it was in Washington’s interest to defend Japan during the Cold War, Japan realised that it could to some extent, in the words of former JDA director-general Shigeru Ishiba, ‘lay down on the job’ (Samuels 2007, p. 41), leave its security to the United States, and make the most of the cheap ride to strengthen its economy.

In order to prevent the aggressive remilitarisation of Japan, the US-led Allied occupation authorities under SCAP General Douglas MacArthur instituted a program of demilitarisation and democratisation. Even though Japan had been defeated and remoulded into an ally, it was still considered a latent threat and ‘an unpredictable actor whose policies need to be stabilized from the outside’ (Temerson 1991, p. 11). As the occupation wound down and even in the following decades as US-Japan cooperation was strengthened, doubts still lingered in the minds of a number of US foreign policy elites over the extent to which democratic ideals had taken root in the Japanese public consciousness (Brzezinski 1972; Iriye 1975, p. 161; Temerson 1991, p. 78).

The US-Japan alliance has at times been described as a cork preventing the resurgence of Japanese militarism. This analogy, however, perpetuates two misunderstandings. First, it has

furthered the mistaken belief that Japan is a military pygmy (Lind 2004, pp. 94-101). The reality is that even though Japan has not rearmed in a manner realists would have expected it to commensurate with its economic status, the SDF possesses some of the most technologically sophisticated defence capabilities in the world. Indeed, the SDF has the eighth-largest defence budget in the world and the MSDF is larger than the French and British navies combined (McNeil 2017). A retired MSDF admiral once quipped that the capabilities of the MSDF and ASDF made the GSDF unnecessary. According to the admiral, an invasion of Japan would be so decimated by the MSDF and ASDF that any surviving invading soldiers who slipped through the cracks would be so bedraggled that they could simply be dealt with by the police (Midford & Eldridge 2017, p. 5). While these comments may be better attributed to inter-service rivalry and bravado rather than a serious case to disband the GSDF, it demonstrates the world-class defence capabilities of the air and especially maritime branches of the SDF.

Second, the idea that it is the United States alone that stands in the way of a remilitarised Japanese society neglects the domestic sources of Japanese restraint as well as the US role in encouraging Japan to expand SDF roles and missions. Article 9, the three non-nuclear principles, the three principles on arms exports, and the limited roles and missions of the SDF (focusing on homeland defence and humanitarian and disaster relief operations, and eschewing warfighting) have been maintained in large part due to their popularity among the Japanese public. Rather than being the cork in the bottle, the United States has in fact sought to act as more of a filter to develop Japan's military capabilities and control them within the framework of the alliance relationship (Samuels 2007, p. 39). In this way it was hoped that Japanese capabilities could be geared toward upholding the US-led international order. Japan recognised and cooperated with this US strategy, but has tended to emphasise doing so within constitutional limits as a means of mitigating the alliance entanglement-abandonment dilemma. For instance, Japan has often been described as being an 'unsinkable aircraft carrier' for the United States in the Pacific through its provision of basing facilities; a phrase made famous by prime minister Yasuhiro Nakasone (Oberdorfer 1983).

The establishment of the Yoshida doctrine: a political compromise

In the immediate post-war years public opinion was split on the question of the need to revise the constitution (Tadokoro 2011, pp. 48-49). The question of Article 9 was the most divisive aspect of this debate. It was in these immediate post-war years that the split of domestic

political actors into two distinct coalitions can be traced with those in favour of maintaining Article 9 on the left and those in favour of revising or abolishing Article 9 on the right. Yet the establishment of the Yoshida doctrine was by no means a guaranteed outcome at the time it was being forged. Its longevity proved more durable than even Yoshida himself had anticipated (Samuels 2007, p. 7). Only after the end of the Cold War did Yoshida's legacy begin being incrementally reformed.

Right-wing actors, seeking to escape the post-war regime, were distrustful of the United States and sought to establish an autonomous foreign policy for Japan. They argued that distrust of the United States was justified on the grounds that it, in their words, deliberately sought to weaken Japan through its occupation-era reforms (Fukui 1970, p. 198). For them Article 9 is a *bête noire* that besmirches the honour of the country.

The coalition on the left included pacifist domestic political actors who advocated for unarmed neutrality. Political parties such as the JSP and JCP opposed the US-Japan alliance from the beginning and rejected the SDF's existence as unconstitutional under Article 9. Kijuro Shidehara, the independent prime minister from October 1945 to May 1946, advocated that 'Japan entrust its security to international society' (Boyd & Samuels 2005, p. 6).

The compromise that prime minister Shigeru Yoshida engineered was a reflection of this societal divide. The JSP, as the most prominent pacifist actor, refused to recognise the constitutionality of the SDF until 1994 when Tomiichi Murayama became the first socialist prime minister since 1948. The JSP was somewhat kept onside by Yoshida's commitment to maintain Article 9. The right-wing actors seeking to escape the post-war regime were brought into the same tent as Yoshida and his successors through the merger of the LP (led by Yoshida until December 1954) and the JDP (led by Ichiro Hatoyama). The right wing was forced to yield on the establishment and maintenance of the Yoshida doctrine for fear that if they were to split the ruling LDP they would risk handing over control of the government to the JSP (Samuels 2007, p. 36). At the same time, it later came to light that the United States, through the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), worked to keep the LDP together. In particular, the CIA made secret payments throughout the 1950s and 1960s to support the LDP, 'make [Japan] a bulwark against Communism in Asia and undermine the Japanese left' (Weiner 1994).

When the right-wing factions in the LDP, most prominently the Kishi government (1957-1960), sought to undo the Yoshida doctrine it proved highly unpopular and elicited public resistance. In the words of Yoshida himself, ‘the miseries and destruction of the Pacific War are still actualities for the large majority of the Japanese people; they remember only too vividly what the war was like and they want none of it again’ (Yoshida 1961, p. 192). The Kishi government only got as far as forcing through the 1960 revision of the US-Japan Security Treaty. Locking opposition politicians from the JSP out of the parliament during the vote, Kishi was forced to resign as prime minister over the matter (Packard 1966, pp. 221-302). Kishi’s successor, prime minister Hayato Ikeda, and subsequent LDP governments consolidated the Yoshida doctrine, ever wary of re-sparking the mass demonstrations surrounding the Diet during the 1960 US-Japan Security Treaty crisis (Wada 2010, p. 406).

Despite the right wing’s objections that Article 9 was imposed by the United States and that Japan needs to escape from the post-war regime, it is clear that this argument is based on an ideological agenda. The establishment of the Yoshida doctrine was a political compromise between the left and the right. Its continued maintenance throughout the Cold War — through public support, the LDP’s response to that public support by avoiding controversial security reforms and focusing on rapid economic growth, and through CLB reinterpretations — was a uniquely Japanese endeavour.

The argument by the right that the hurdles to revise the Constitution are too high is also a disingenuous one. A comparative study on constitutional revision around the world shows that Japan’s constitutional amendment process is slightly above average in terms of the difficulty of its process (Lutz 1994). Moreover, the United States Constitution and the German Basic Law are examples of constitutions with much higher hurdles required for revision that have nevertheless both been revised many times (Martin 2007). The right wing’s resort to this argument demonstrates the strong public opposition it faces in its quest to amend Article 9.

The diametrically opposed foreign and security policy visions of left-wing actors seeking to institute unarmed neutrality and right-wing actors seeking to escape the post-war regime played a large role in establishing the compromise that was the Yoshida doctrine. As well as the political institutions that the US-led Allied occupation bequeathed to Japan, the

experience of defeat in the Second World War had a profound impact on shaping public debate. Public opinion supported the declaration embodied in the 1947 Constitution that Japan must never again repeat its wartime mistakes of aggression.

The Yoshida doctrine thus came to be entrenched throughout the 1960s to 1980s. For these three decades, suggesting that the revision of Article 9 should even be debated was widely considered to be right wing (Soeya 2011, p. 77). It was only with the end of the Cold War, and the shift in the global and regional security environment it precipitated, that Japanese politicians and policymakers began to reassess the key assumptions underpinning the Yoshida doctrine, particularly after the Gulf War shock (see Chapter 4). Nevertheless, the Yoshida doctrine continues to be an important baseline by which Japanese foreign and security policy reforms are judged and fought out between coalitions of domestic political actors on the left and right.

4 Post-Cold War incremental reforms

The end of the Cold War came as a shock to Japan. Throughout the Cold War Japan's foreign and security policy, as guided by the Yoshida doctrine, was anchored in the US-Japan alliance, the light rearmament strategy and a focus on economic growth. The early 1990s saw two major shock events, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the collapse of Japan's asset price bubble, which undermined confidence in all three pillars of the Yoshida doctrine.

Countering the threat of the Soviet Union during the Cold War was the *raison d'être* of the US-Japan alliance. With this original purpose now gone, policymakers on both sides of the Pacific were forced to reconsider the core bargain of the alliance. Could Japan still rely on the United States to fulfil its security treaty obligations to defend Japan in a unipolar security environment? Would Japan begin to take on greater responsibility for its own defence and make contributions to the maintenance of regional stability? These questions, which were once considered unworthy of debate or deeper consideration, now required renewed attention. If Japan did not consider taking on greater contributions to the US-Japan alliance it was considered there was a risk that the United States might abandon its provision of the security guarantee to Japan.

At the same time, the cautious attitudes of the Japanese public toward the possibility of a more active SDF with expanded roles and missions meant that overhauling Japanese security policy and reforming the SDF into a major military player in the region and beyond was not a realistic short-term possibility. Japan's voters still consistently favour a focus on economic growth over security and baulk at the possibility of combat roles for the SDF.

As such, a battle played out between the right wing seeking to escape the post-war regime and the left wing seeking to prevent or limit changes to the status quo. The right wing managed to use the changes to the international security environment as well as a number of significant regional events to implement a series of incremental security policy reforms. Yet the right wing still to some extent lives in the shadow of Japan's wartime transgressions as well as the mass protests surrounding the US-Japan Security Treaty revision that forced Nobusuke Kishi to resign as prime minister in 1960.

The final shape that each of the incremental reforms took shows the importance of the role of domestic politics as Japan sought to deal with demands for increased alliance contributions from the United States and deal with shock events affecting its regional security situation. The influence of this domestic political standoff between the coalitions on the left and right also meant that the incremental defence reforms were generally reactive in nature. Events such as the 1990-1991 Gulf War, the first North Korean nuclear crisis (1993-1994), the Taiwan Straits missile crisis (1995-1996), and North Korea's first firing of a missile over Japanese airspace in 1998 were necessary to justify the reforms.

Each reform, taken on its own, was small enough to avoid too serious a public backlash that might jeopardise the continuity of LDP rule. When each of these episodes of reform is taken together as a whole, however, it is clear that it represents a significant shift in expanding the roles and missions of the SDF. As a result of this series of incremental reforms, the SDF started to undertake a range of new roles and missions abroad including participating in UN PKOs and conducting rear-area and logistics support for the United States. The SDF also undertook rear-area support and humanitarian and reconstruction missions outside the UN framework related to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Despite these changes, SDF operations continue to be subject to the moderating power of public opinion. The pattern of incremental reforms suggests that the SDF might continue to incrementally expand its roles and missions, gradually reduce dependency on the United States for its security and take on more responsibility for its own defence. However, for the foreseeable future SDF roles and missions will likely continue to be anchored by Article 9 and conducted within the framework of the US-Japan alliance. The scope for the SDF to take on combat missions beyond the immediate individual self-defence of the Japanese homeland appears to be limited.

These developments confound the predictions of realist scholars of international relations in so far as Japan is yet to 'normalise' the legal ability of the SDF to resort to the use of force. Similarly, these developments confound the explanations of constructivist scholars regarding the anti-militarist culture that has failed to prevent some forms of expansion in the roles and missions of the SDF. Instead what we have seen is a middle way shaped by domestic political battles.

The Gulf War (1990-1991)

The 1990-1991 Gulf War was the first test of the US-Japan alliance and how Japan might utilise the SDF in the post-Cold War world. International pressure mounted for Japan to make contributions to the Gulf War effort, most notably from the United States. However, as the Gulf War unfolded Japan still had not dispatched soldiers overseas in the post-war era and did not have the necessary legal framework to do so. Despite a number of attempts to find face-saving and tokenistic ways to make a boots-on-the ground contribution in response to international pressure, no official dispatch of Japanese personnel was made during active warfighting between 2 August 1990 and 28 February 1991. From the viewpoint of the participating nations in the UN coalition to liberate Kuwait, Japan's pacifist constitutional restraints on not only personnel contributions but also material contributions was 'somewhere between laughable and infuriating' (Green & Igata 2015, p. 165). It was only after the war had ended that Japan dispatched the MSDF on a minesweeping mission in the Persian Gulf to remove sea mines between April and October 1991 (Purrington 1991, pp. 171-173).

The Gulf War left many in the Japanese defence establishment feeling humiliated at the lack of international recognition for Japan's financial contributions. Rather than recognition, Japanese contributions elicited international criticism for so-called chequebook diplomacy. This is despite the fact that Japan was the largest extra-regional donor to the Gulf War effort. However, the international perception was that the efforts surrounding Japan's contributions were uncoordinated and prone to foot-dragging (Nakanishi 2011).

What tends to be remembered most lucidly in Japan today is the manner in which the Kuwait government overlooked its contributions, whether intentionally or by accident seems to be uncertain (Nakanishi 2011). In a story that is still recounted as a sore spot among the defence establishment in Japan today, after the war ended the Kuwaiti government took out a full-page advertisement in *The New York Times* and a number of other major newspapers to thank the nations of the UN-led coalition for liberating the country from Iraq. While the advertisement listed dozens of countries, Japan was omitted. The lesson taken away from this was that Japan would have to do more beyond financial contributions, and start to make physical contributions including dispatching the SDF abroad, both to maintain the stability of the US-Japan alliance and to earn the respect of the international community.

In the early stages of the Gulf War, after units of the Iraqi Republican Guard invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990, the Japanese government under Toshiki Kaifu did not predict the significance this event would take on, both in terms of the global security environment and for how it would shape perceptions of Japanese security policy. Rather, the Kaifu government believed that it had reacted quickly and decisively. On 3 August 1990 the Kaifu government had the Finance Ministry render 'administrative guidance to all Japanese banks to safeguard Kuwaiti assets in Japan' (Green & Igata 2015, p. 161). Subsequently on 5 August, 'the government announced its own economic sanctions against Iraq and Kuwait, consisting of an oil import ban, an export ban, discontinuation of capital and loan investments, and freezing economic cooperation with Iraq' (Green & Igata 2015, p. 161). On 10 August the Finance Ministry guidance to Japanese banks was supplemented with information 'to freeze all assets of Iraq and Kuwait and to stop all new loans and direct investments' (Green & Igata 2015, p. 161).

However, the United States was already making plans for a coalition force to take military action. On 8 August US president George HW Bush announced the dispatch of the 82nd Airborne Division and Air Force fighter squadrons to Saudi Arabia (Apple 1990). In a telephone call with prime minister Kaifu on 13 August, president Bush thanked Japan for supporting sanctions and requested Japan to support military operations against Iraq. Kaifu implored that 'because of our constitutional constraints...it would be next to unthinkable for Japan to participate directly in the military sphere' (NSA 2012). Bush responded that 'my bottom line is that when this chapter of history is written, Japan and the US and a handful of other countries will have stood side-by-side' and Kaifu promised to 'continue to explore how we [Japan] can contribute' (NSA 2012).

On 29 August the Kaifu government subsequently announced a four-point plan in order to assist in 'preventing further Iraqi aggression and restoring the *status quo ante* in Kuwait' (Green & Igata 2015, p. 161). This included transportation, equipment, medical assistance, and financial support (Green & Igata 2015, p. 161). Yet of the four points, only the financial contributions were ultimately realised.

SDF dispatch knocked back

A number of LDP politicians in favour of making a physical contribution, most notably the LDP secretary-general Ichiro Ozawa, had urged prime minister Kaifu to dispatch the SDF for

a boots-on-the-ground contribution. The LDP government under Kaifu introduced the Draft Law Concerning Peace Cooperation with the UN to the Diet on 16 October 1990. The draft law 'sought to circumvent constitutional constraints on the use of the SDF' and 'enable the SDF to cooperate not only with the United Nations, but also with United States-led coalition forces in the Gulf' (Shibata 1994, p. 315).

The draft law stated that 'activities carried out under it would not constitute threats of or the use of force' (Shibata 1994, p. 315) and the Kaifu government sought to downplay opposition party concerns by emphasising the 'peaceful nature of UN peacekeeping operations and the existence of cease-fires' (Shibata 1994, p. 315). However, the draft law defined permissible operations for the SDF as 'those carried out by the United Nations and other international organizations' as well as 'those carried out by other states' (Shibata 1994, p. 315). Thus any action that other nations under the UN coalition, including the United States, conducted, the SDF could also have engaged in. Further, the draft law 'did not clearly distinguish the activities of the coalition forces from traditional peacekeeping activities such as cease-fire monitoring, electoral monitoring, and logistical support' (Shibata 1994, p. 315). This distinction between the potential unconstitutionality of collective security operations under Article 42 of the UN Charter on the one hand, and the potential constitutionality of participation in UN PKOs with a non-belligerent and international character on the other hand, was identified as early as 1965 (Kozai 1965, pp. 10-21; Shibata 1994, p. 312).

During the course of Diet debate, the government was forced to admit it 'could not guarantee that the SDF would not use force while participating in the United States-led coalition' (Shibata 1994, p. 315). Ultimately, due to strong opposition from opposition parties and the public, the draft law was dropped before going to a vote. For instance, an opinion poll in the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* on the day before the draft law was submitted showed that 48.5 per cent of respondents opposed dispatching the SDF overseas, 28.4 per cent supported a dispatch on the condition that the SDF would not be permitted to carry weapons, and only 10.9 per cent supported a dispatch where the SDF would be permitted to carry weapons (*Nihon Keizai Shimbun* 1990, p. 1; Midford 2011, p. 71). As the debate progressed an opinion poll by the *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper showed that only 21 per cent of the public supported the draft law (*Asahi Shimbun* 1990, p. 1; Green & Igata 2015, p. 164).

The failure of the draft bill demonstrated the lack of an adequate legal framework to govern overseas dispatches of the SDF. It also reflected the fact that it was formulated in haste under American pressure without realistic consideration of both the domestic political hurdles (opposition parties and public opinion) and regard for consistency between the draft law and current laws (Hughes 2005, p. 42; Hook et al. 2013, p. 335). Having not dispatched a soldier overseas in the post-war era, Japan was unprepared for what the Americans were demanding.

Transport assistance bungled

Transport assistance to the UN operation was to be provided both in the air and the sea and was intended to be ‘the most visible part’ of the Kaifu government’s four-point plan ‘with full coverage from CNN and NHK (Green & Igata 2015, p. 164). This was immediately challenged by opposition parties as a violation of the Article 9 peace clause of the constitution as soon as the four-point plan was made public. As such the Kaifu government was forced to make requests to the private sector instead.

With regard to air transport the Kaifu government made an attempt to find a constitutional way to dispatch the ASDF. On 18 January 1991, ‘the Japanese government revealed that the SDF was considering sending transport planes to the Gulf to assist the coalition in rear-area missions. The [CLB] had determined the planes could be sent for “training” without challenging the Constitution or requiring an amendment to the SDF Law’ (Green & Igata 2014, p. 164).

The cabinet made a decision permitting ASDF planes to ‘transport refugees in the Gulf area if a competent international organization requested such aid from Japan’ (Shibata 1994, p. 316). This was based on an interpretation of the SDF Law ‘which permits the use of SDF aircraft to transport the Prime Minister and other national dignitaries’ (Shibata 1994, p. 316). However, because this was ‘clearly a distortion, if not a direct violation’ (Shibata 1994, p. 316) of the relevant article of the SDF Law, the opposition parties and the public were quick to criticise the move. In order to save face, Kaifu stated in the Diet on 6 February that ASDF planes ‘would only be sent if there was a request from the International Organization for Migration, something that was not expected and therefore provided a convenient excuse to pull the plug’ (Green & Igata 2014, p. 164).

The Japanese government also faced resistance in finding Japanese private sector planes to carry out air transportation operations. First, a request to deliver supplies was refused due to union objections from pilots and flight mechanics (Nakayama 2012, pp. 175-176).

Subsequently, Japan Airlines ‘reluctantly agreed to provide aircraft but imposed such strict conditions that the government decided it could not use them’ (Green & Igata 2015, p. 164; Iokibe et al. 2008, pp. 176-178). Ultimately, the Japanese government had to hire a private American airline company, Evergreen International Airlines, to carry out the delivery of supplies rather than using private Japanese planes (Green & Igata 2015, p. 164).

With regard to sealift manoeuvres, despite some objections and difficulties, the Kaifu government managed to arrange for two private commercial ships to be sent to the Gulf. However, there were two issues which meant this contribution did not fit the American criteria. First, ‘nobody seemed to notice the actual cable from Washington detailing what kind of ships the U.S.-led coalition needed. The Ministry of Transport chose to send “lift-on/lift-off” ships used in Japanese commercial ports, but [the US Central Command] CENTCOM actually required “roll-on/roll-off”’ (Green & Igata 2015, p. 164). Second, there were strict limits on what sort of cargo the Japanese ships could handle. Due to constitutional restraints, ‘weapons, ammunitions, and troops’ (Green & Igata 2015, p. 165) were not permissible. Ultimately, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had to persuade the Americans to accept the Japanese ships despite their unsuitability for the task at hand (Iokibe et al. 2008, p. 180).

Material and medical contributions

Material contributions also never came to fruition. The main reason for this was that many of the materials, including ‘construction materials for building runways’ and ‘trucks with reinforced hoods and tops’ which ‘could potentially mount heavy weapons’ (Green & Igata 2015, p. 165), were deemed to violate the Three Principles on Arms Exports (MOFA 2014a). Ultimately, it was left by the way side as the necessary coordination between the UN coalition forces and the Japanese bureaucracy, who had to navigate constitutional constraints, became too much of an inconvenience to navigate.

The question of medical assistance, while it appeared uncontroversial on the surface, also faced difficulties. The Kaifu government’s original plan was to send 200 Japanese doctors to the Gulf. However, ‘Japan’s Red Cross Society declared that it would not send any nurses for

the operations due to fear for their safety and underlying pacifist sentiments’ (Mikuriya & Watanabe 2002, pp. 81-82; Green & Igata 2015, p. 174, note 30). Ultimately six doctors did volunteer for the mission. However, they were not able to be utilised out of concern that it would violate Article 9 of the Constitution. The logic here was that ‘because the soldiers who were treated by these Japanese doctors could end up going back to the battlefield, it would be possible to interpret the treatment of wounded soldiers as part of exercising the right to collective self-defense’ (Green & Igata 2015, p. 165). This can be seen as a forbearer of the theory of *ittaiika* (actions that form an integral part in the use of force by another country), which was later included in the 1999 SIASJL.

Financial contributions underappreciated

In the end the only aspect of the Kaifu government’s four-point plan that came to fruition was the provision of financial assistance to the UN coalition. The sizeable nature of Japan’s financial contributions were underappreciated due to the staggered and seemingly reluctant manner in which the financial contributions were forthcoming. There was also a perception in the international community that Japan’s financial contributions were in lieu of physical or personnel contributions and Japan was criticised for exercising chequebook diplomacy. This is despite the fact that Japan’s ultimate financial contribution amounted to US\$13 billion. This made Japan the largest extra-regional donor; in fact the only donor that gave more was Saudi Arabia, which shares a border with Kuwait, could possibly have been targeted by Saddam Hussein’s regime next, and had relatively fewer constraints in handling its budget given its oil wealth and different political system.

The first announcement about Japan’s financial contributions came on 30 August, the day after the announcement of the four-point plan, with the Kaifu government pledging US\$1 billion. Even though this is the number that had already been on the table during internal government discussions, since it came the day after the four-point plan it left the impression that Japan was reluctant and a ‘country that would not contribute to international efforts without external pressure’ (Nakanishi 2011). Moreover, the announcement was ineptly executed with the chief cabinet secretary saying Japan would not commit ‘not a penny more’ (Green & Igata 2015, p. 162).

A second instalment of US\$3 billion was decided in September. On 7 September US president Bush sent his treasury secretary Nicholas Brady to Tokyo where he met with

finance minister Ryutaro Hashimoto to request a further US\$3 billion in funding (Sakai 2016). Hashimoto gave a non-committal answer to Brady who returned to Washington disappointed (Sakai 2016). Hashimoto later explained that the Ministry of Finance had ‘exhausted all reserved funds as Brady came to Japan in September 1990’ and was unable to immediately prepare a new budget and also blamed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ‘for not sharing information on US financial requests with the MOF in advance’ (Sakai 2016; Hashimoto 2013, pp. 34-35). Nevertheless, the Kaifu government announced on 14 September additional funding of US\$1 billion for the UN coalition and US\$2 billion for regional countries (Egypt, Turkey and Jordan) (Green & Igata 2015, p. 162).

The third instalment of funding was announced in January 1991. This came as the UN Security Council passed resolution 678 on 29 November, which demanded that Iraq unconditionally withdraw its forces from Kuwait before a deadline of 15 January. The resolution empowered states to use ‘all necessary means’ to expel the Iraqis. With the war already underway, Hashimoto met with Brady again, this time in New York. Hashimoto was ‘prepared to accept the amount proposed by Brady, no matter how high the price tag may be’, so when Brady asked for US\$9 billion Hashimoto accepted without clarifying how the payment would be calculated (Teshima 2006, pp. 314-321; Green & Igata 2015, p. 162).

This caused an issue because of shifts in the exchange rate between the yen and the dollar. The Kaifu government officially announced it would provide 1.8 trillion yen on 24 January a few days after Hashimoto and Brady’s meeting. However, it took the Japanese government until late March to pass the budget required for the 1.8 trillion yen and in the intervening time ‘the value of the yen in dollars had fallen almost US\$0.5 billion’ (Green & Igata 2015, p. 163). At the same time, in order to pass the budget the government was forced to acquiesce to demands from opposition party Komeito that ‘the money was used for purely non-military purposes’ (Green & Igata 2015, p. 163). Ultimately, CENTCOM ‘was desperate enough for the funds that it agreed to use them only for nonlethal “logistical support”’ (Green & Igata 2015, p. 163) and Japan made up the US\$0.5 billion shortfall with a further provision of funds for post-war reconstruction.

Despite the difficulties, Japan’s financial contributions were in fact important. For instance, General Norman Schwarzkopf, the commander of the UN coalition forces, later noted that ‘had it not been for the Japanese, Desert Shield would have gone broke in August 1990.

While Western newspapers were complaining about Tokyo's reluctance to increase its pledge of one billion dollars to safeguard Saudi Arabia, the Japanese embassy in Riyadh quietly transferred tens of millions of dollars into Central Command's accounts. We were able to cover our day-to-day operations before anybody in Washington could lay claim to the money' (Schwarzkopf & Petre 1992, p. 424). Moreover, Japan was not the only country that made a financial contribution without putting boots on the ground. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Germany provided financial contributions but did not attract the same accusations of chequebook diplomacy.

The SDF minesweeper mission to the Persian Gulf

After the Gulf War had ended the Japanese government did dispatch the MSDF to the Persian Gulf for a minesweeping mission at the request of the United States. Between April and October 1991 the MSDF cleared 34 mines. 'The government defended the constitutionality of the mission on the grounds that a formal cease-fire had been in effect, and that the purpose of the mission - to dispose of abandoned mines - did not require any use of force' as well as on the ground that Article 99 of the SDF Law 'permits the removal and disposal of explosive and dangerous materials from the sea' (Shibata 1994, pp. 316-317). However, legal experts consider this to be an 'unacceptably expansive interpretation' of the SDF Law as while there was not an explicit geographical limit 'the legislative intent behind the provision was clearly to limit minesweeping to the seas surrounding Japan' (Shibata 1994, p. 317).

The legacy surrounding the difficulties that accompanied Japan's Gulf War contributions, especially in the minds of the Japanese defence establishment, was that Japan would have to make physical and boots-on-the-ground contributions to international peace in the future to maintain the strength of the US-Japan alliance and the respect of the international community. For instance, US Secretary of State James Baker 'explicitly criticized Japanese diplomacy' (Akimoto 2005, p. 38) in response to the Gulf War 'as too narrow' (Ishizuka 2005, p. 68) in a speech at the Japan Institute for International Affairs in Tokyo in November 1991.

The battle to legalise SDF participation in UN PKOs

Throughout the Cold War Japan's contributions to UN PKOs were almost entirely financial. It is true that Japan did make some very limited civilian contributions to UN PKOs in the late 1980s, such as to Namibia, Nicaragua and Haiti as part of election oversight groups (Hook et

al. 2013, p. 334). Yet, as the difficulties in making a boots-on-the-ground contribution to the Gulf War demonstrates, there was no adequate legal mandate for dispatching SDF personnel overseas. The Gulf War shock helped trigger a number of changes to Japanese security policy and one of the first and most important of these changes was the passage of the PKO Law in 1992.

In the context of the Gulf War shock, which was still reverberating throughout the Japanese defence establishment, the government submitted the PKO Law to the Diet in September 1991. The passage of this law through the Diet in May 1992 was a watershed development as it would enable the overseas dispatch of SDF personnel for the first time in the post-war era. Importantly, the law was formulated within the framework of Article 9. This meant that this first reform that Japan enacted, as the beginning of a series of post-Cold War incremental defence reforms, was done keeping with the tradition of Japan's post-war identity as a peace-loving nation.

For right-wing actors seeking to escape the post-war regime the PKO Law was still seen as highly restrictive. It imposed stricter rules on SDF personnel than other nations also participating in the same PKOs. On the other hand, the legacy of the law has proved to be popular among the Japanese public with opinion polling showing tolerance of SDF participation in PKOs in non-combat roles (Midford 2011, pp. 95-102).

The PKO Law states that its purpose is to 'enable Japan to contribute actively to UN-centred efforts for international peace' (Shibata 1994, p. 318). Most significantly the PKO Law established five principles under which the SDF could participate in UN PKOs, which were intended to bring the law in line with Article 9 of the Constitution. Subsequently, the SDF have participated in a number of PKOs over the years in countries including Cambodia, Mozambique, Rwanda, the Golan Heights, Timor-Leste, Afghanistan, Sudan, Haiti and South Sudan (Cabinet Office 2011, pp. 11-38; Mulloy 2017).

What are the five principles?

The first three principles set preconditions on which type of PKOs the SDF can participate in: (1) PKOs must be in ceasefire areas, not active conflict zones; (2) all parties to the armed conflict must consent to the UN-led PKO and Japanese participation; and (3) participation must observe strict impartiality. The last two conditions apply after a dispatch has been made:

(4) the cessation of the above three conditions is grounds for Japan to terminate SDF operations there; and (5) the use of weapons is restricted to the minimum necessary to protect the lives of SDF personnel (Cabinet Office 2012). This is consistent with the distinction made by decades earlier Kozai between the unconstitutionality of collective security operations on the one hand, and constitutionality of non-belligerent and international PKOs on the other hand (Kozai 1965; Shibata 1994, p. 312).

The five principles have a range of implications in practice. First, the requirement of a ceasefire ‘intended to ensure that Japanese forces do not participate in combat’ (Shibata 1994, p. 326). This was originally meant to strictly mean both a de facto and de jure ceasefire were in effect, however the government soon stepped away from such a strict interpretation to requiring only an ‘overall cease-fire’ (Shibata 1994, p. 326). Yet the Japanese government interpretation is stricter than the UN interpretation of ceasefire agreements which ‘presupposes violations of cease-fire agreements’ and the entrustment of ‘restoring cease-fire conditions’ (Shibata 1994, p. 326). Second, consent of the armed parties under the PKO Law means that not only must relevant parties consent to the UN PKO itself but also specifically to Japanese participation in the operation. There is a potential for disagreement between Japan and the UN as to whether a receiving state has given consent as well as the possibility that a state may withdraw consent and prevent Japanese participation (Shibata 1994, p. 328). Third, in theory a UN PKO should be impartial by definition. However, there is debate between how this is interpreted in theory and realised in practice as UN decisions may inevitably favour one side, intentionally or unintentionally (Wiseman 1991, p. 42; Shibata 1994, p. 329).

Fourth, UN practice allows for countries to withdraw their troops from a PKO as long as reasonable notice is given, but the determination of whether the first three conditions have been breached and require a withdrawal of the SDF is a unilateral decision to be made by Japan. ‘During the Diet debates, the government argued that, if and when UN peacekeeping forces engage in the use of force, there is a danger that...even if they do not actually use force, the Japanese contingent, through participation in the operation, may be constructively considered an integral part of the action involving force’ (Shibata 1994, p. 333). This is so-called ‘participatory integration theory’ was later adopted as the government interpretation of Article 9 under the theory of *ittaiika* (banning actions that form an integral part in the use of force) in the 1999 SIASJL.

Finally, SDF personnel were restricted in their use of arms while participating in PKOs ‘within the limits considered reasonably necessary to protect the life or person of themselves or other SDF personnel’ (Shibata 1994, p. 330). This means that SDF personnel were restricted ‘from assisting UN peacekeepers from other states, even when they are in physical danger’ (Shibata 1994, p. 331). This is in contrast to UN policy, which permits PKO soldiers to use force ‘to protect their own lives and persons, other UN personnel, and UN posts, vehicles and other UN facilities, and to counteract attempts to prevent them from performing their UN duties’ (Shibata 1994, pp. 330-331).

How was the law passed?

The strict nature of the PKO Law was due to the fact that, while the LDP government had a majority in the lower house, it could not pass the law through the upper house without the help of opposition parties. The LDP initially intended to permit the SDF to participate in UN peacekeeping forces, which have more expansive missions more likely to result in the use of force such as ‘patrolling of buffer zones and the disposal of abandoned weapons’, but this plan was put on the backburner in order to maintain Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) and Komeito support (Akimoto 2005, p. 39). The opposition parties had also suggested that an organisation separate from the SDF should be established for Japanese participation in UN PKOs (Ishizuka 2005, p. 69). However, the LDP argued against this because of the cost as well as the logistical difficulties involved in effectively training such a force separately to SDF standards (Akimoto 2005, p. 39). Ultimately, the three parties found a compromise based on the DSP and Komeito’s bottom line that the law include the five principles (Akimoto 2005, p. 38; Dobson 2003, p. 72). For the LDP this was better than passing nothing at all.

At the same time, the debates that took place during the Gulf War in relation to the failed Draft Law Concerning Peace Cooperation with the United Nations and other measures the government attempted had a significant impact on public opinion. These debates ‘helped the Japanese people understand UN peacekeeping operations and generated popular support for UN efforts’ (Shibata 1994, p. 317). As a result, when it came time to passing the 1992 PKO Law there was considerably less public resistance given increased understanding on the topic and the collaboration with opposition parties to restrict PKOs to a non-combat nature and maintain the framework of Article 9 (Midford 2011, pp. 91-95).

Bolstering the SDF as a good ally

Responding to the shock of the Gulf War, however, was not just about bolstering Japanese contributions to peace through the SDF in the UN, but also about the implications for the US-Japan alliance. The alliance, both then and now, is after all still the backbone of Japanese security policy. However, the task of bolstering SDF roles and missions within the US-Japan alliance proved to be more controversial than the passage of the PKO Law.

With the end of the Cold War, given the change in the structure of the international security environment from the bipolarity of US-Soviet rivalry to the unipolarity of the United States as the sole superpower (Fukuyama 1989), questions were being asked whether the United States could be continued to be relied upon to fulfil its security treaty commitments. In other words, was the core bargain of the US-Japan alliance still worthwhile for both sides? With the threat of the Soviet Union gone did Japan need the protection of the United States? And with the prospect of the Soviet Union spreading communism in Asia gone, did the United States need its bases in Japan? As it turned out, the core bargain of the alliance continued to be beneficial for both sides.

First Korean nuclear crisis

In 1993, North Korea declared that it was withdrawing from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, sparking a regional security crisis. This development brought the legal framework governing the SDF back into the spotlight. The United States made a number of requests to Japan during this time including assistance in dealing with ‘refugee flows, non-combat evacuations, the enforcement of economic sanctions, the use of SDF and civilian base facilities, minesweeping and rear-area logistical support’ (Hughes 2005, p. 99). Yet, as Hitoshi Tanaka explains, ‘as the Japanese government considered its policy options, it became evident that it was woefully underprepared to deal with any escalation of the conflict on the Korean Peninsula or with other conflicts in its immediate surroundings’ (Tanaka 2014).

In the end, the first Korean nuclear crisis was resolved by former US president Jimmy Carter’s meeting with then North Korean leader Kim Il-sung. This set the course for US-DPRK negotiations, the establishment of the Agreed Framework in 1994 to freeze operations at North Korea’s indigenous nuclear reactor at Yongbyon, and the establishment of the

Korean Peninsula Economic Development Organization (KEDO) under which the United States, South Korea, Japan, the EU, Australia and others agreed to provide North Korea with two ‘proliferation resistant’ light water reactors (EAF Editors 2017). This event set the ball rolling by giving those politicians and policymakers in favour of further expanding SDF roles and missions a specific example of how they might do that in a way geared toward dealing with regional contingencies.

The Nye Report

On the United States side, the then assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs Joseph Nye was interested in identifying the scope of US-Japan shared interests in maintaining regional peace and security in East Asia under the post-Cold War security environment and began a series of bilateral consultations (Hook et al. 2013, p. 139). In 1995 the US Department of Defense released the *United States Security Strategy for the East Asia Pacific Region*, generally dubbed the Nye Report. It argued that while the Soviet Union had collapsed and the Cold War in Europe was over, it was still very much ongoing in East Asia given uncertainties surrounding the intentions of China’s military modernisation and North Korea’s nuclear weapons development program (US Department of Defense 1995). The Nye Report confirmed the United States’ commitment to the US-Japan Security treaty, the alliance as the cornerstone of its East Asia security policy and its determination to maintain at least 100,000 US troops in the region for at least the next two decades (Hook et al. 2013, p. 139).

Defining the SDF’s role supporting the US in the region

This was the context in which Japan was able to make some gradual expansions to the roles and missions of the SDF to support the US military in the region. In April 1996 during US president Bill Clinton’s visit to Japan, Clinton and then Japanese prime minister Ryutaro Hashimoto made a joint security declaration, the ‘US-Japan Joint Declaration on Security: Alliance for the Twenty First Century’ (MOFA 1996a) and signed an Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement (MOFA 1996b).

The joint declaration affirmed the two countries’ common democratic values, welcomed the maintenance of 100,000 US troops in the region, emphasised the importance of the alliance not just for Japanese security but also for the first time as a public good for the security of the entire Asia-Pacific region, pledged Japan to continue its host nation support to the United

States and committed Japan to joint research on ballistic missile defence (Hughes 2005, p. 99). The joint declaration further affirmed that the two countries would ‘initiate a review of the 1978 Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation to build upon the close working relationship already established between Japan and the United States’ (MOFA 1996). Most specifically they would conduct a study looking at how to promote ‘bilateral cooperation in dealing with situations that may emerge in the areas surrounding Japan and which will have an important influence on the peace and security of Japan’ (MOFA 1996).

The final recommendations for the revised guidelines were published in September 1997, the first revision since the document was first written in 1978 (MOD 1997). The guidelines gave life to the precepts outlined in the 1996 joint declaration by providing a framework for the SDF to engage in 40 specific areas. This included ‘relief work, dealing with refugees, and search and rescue; evacuation of non-combatants; activities to ensure the implementation of economic sanctions; offering the use of Japanese facilities to the US; logistical support in terms of supply of transportation; security of US military installations, communication and other areas; surveillance; and minesweeping’ (Hook et al. 2013, p. 141).

In order to implement the guidelines, the Japanese government passed the SIASJL as well as the revision of the SDF Law in May 1999. At the same time, the Acquisition and Cross servicing agreement was also revised. Overall, it was a complicated process as the ‘changes were made with the clear assumption that Japan’s role would be kept within constitutional boundaries and that Article 9 would continue to be interpreted so as not to allow the right to collective self-defense’ (Tanaka 2014). To this end, ‘the concept of rear-area support was established based on the argument that supporting the US military in non-combat zones would not constitute collective self-defense and is therefore permitted by the constitution’ (Tanaka 2014). Successive Japanese governments (until the Abe government reinterpreted Article 9 in July 2014) maintained that instances of rear-area support conducted in combat zones to ‘a state engaged in using force during a conflict’ (Hughes 2015, p. 41) form an ‘integral part in the use of force’ (known as *ittai*) (MOD 2003) and are thus unconstitutional.

The question of interpreting the scope of ‘areas surrounding Japan’ was a controversial issue. Notably, ‘the JDA has tended to view the range of activities to be geographically limited, whereas MOFA has tended to view the scope of activities as “situational”’ (Hook et al. 2013,

p. 141; Asai 1997, p. 175). Yet ‘the potential for the geographical expansion of the scope of the alliance was further hinted at by the deliberately vague definitions of the range of action in the revised Defence Guidelines’ (Hughes 2005, p. 100). Adopting a situational definition also gives the added flexibility to potentially avoid SDF participation in a situation involving a crisis in Taiwan and the questions this would raise surrounding Japan’s acceptance of the ‘One China’ policy (Hook et al. 2013, pp. 141-142; Hughes 2005, p. 101). As is discussed below, the situational definition later won out. The MSDF were dispatched to the Indian Ocean in relation to Afghanistan between 2001 and 2010 (Fackler 2010) and the GSDF and ASDF to Iraq between 2004 and 2009 under temporary special measures laws passed by the administration of prime minister Junichiro Koizumi.

Komeito support

Political cooperation between the LDP and Komeito ensured that the SIASJ Law ‘was passed without difficulty, and indeed without full debate’ (Hook et al. 2013, p. 141). While the LDP had a majority in the lower house with its then coalition partner, the now defunct Liberal Party (LP), it suffered a major setback during the February 1998 upper house election. Because of this the LDP was keen to acquire Komeito’s support to pass the bill.

But what motivated Komeito to support the law? Komeito had always been an opposition party and most of its supporter base came from members of the pacifist Buddhist organisation Soka Gakkai, an offshoot of Nichiren Buddhism, meaning it was traditionally considered a left-leaning and pacifist party. It has been speculated that one of the reasons that Komeito decided to back the legislation was in order to get the LDP to cease its campaigning against religious groups, including Soka Gakkai, which the LDP had stepped up in the wake of the 1995 Tokyo subway sarin gas attack by doomsday cult Aum Shinrikyo (Aoki 2014). If Soka Gakkai were stripped of its status as a religious organisation it would have to pay taxes on its significant accumulation of assets (*The Economist* 2014). This suggestion is something that Komeito has rejected.

The more likely reason that Komeito supported the SIASJ Law is that the LDP offered Komeito a seat at the table of government as a coalition partner (Wu & Lee 2011, p. 2). Just five months after the passage of the law, Komeito joined the government coalition. The two parties have managed to maintain this somewhat ‘odd couple’ coalition ever since (with the exception of the three years they were in opposition when the DPJ won power between 2009

and 2012). Despite substantial policy differences the coalition arrangement has proved to be beneficial for both sides. In the wake of the changes to the electoral system in 1994 under which multi-member districts were converted to single-member districts and a proportional list system, the electoral cooperation deal between the the LDP and Komeito has helped both to win single-member district seats. Even today ‘the LDP relies on Komeito for its majorities in both houses. Komeito voters supply anywhere from 5 per cent to 20 per cent of the votes an LDP candidate receives in single-seat districts’ (Cucek 2016). This is because of the voter mobilisation power of Komeito through Soka Gakkai, which has established ‘electioneering as religious practice’ (McLaughlin 2015, p. 9), and in return Komeito earns a seat at the table of power and influence over its much larger coalition partner.

SDF response to 9/11

Japan responded swiftly after Al-Qaeda perpetrated the 9/11 attacks against the Pentagon in Washington DC and the World Trade Centre in New York on 11 September 2001. The Koizumi government set up an emergency task force in the prime minister’s office within 45 minutes of the attacks (Midford 2011, p. 114) and enacted the ATSMML in October 2001. The first dispatch of the SDF was able to go ahead as early as November 2001. This time, Japan was determined that it would not risk damaging the alliance with the United States with an underwhelming response like during the 1990–1991 Gulf War.

One of the reasons it was able to respond so quickly was due to the framework established by the 1999 SIASJ Law, which provided a base from which to formulate the ATSMML. However, rather than being limited to providing rear-area support the United States, under the ATSMML the SDF provided rear-area support to a larger range of countries taking part in the war in Afghanistan against Al-Qaeda and the Taliban regime harbouring it. MSDF flotillas, comprising of fuel and transport ships and destroyers that were dispatched to the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea, provided fuel to ships en route to Afghanistan as well as logistical transport, medical and maintenance support to the United States and other forces (Hughes 2005, p. 126). The long list of countries that the MSDF provided fuel to includes not only the United States but also the United Kingdom, Germany, New Zealand, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Canada and Greece (Hughes 2005, p. 126).

In conducting this mission Japan had to deal with the complications of ensuring that it was not engaging in collective self-defence, which the government still deemed to be

unconstitutional. In formulating its legal justification for the MSDF dispatch to the Indian Ocean under the ATSMML, Japan ‘stressed UN resolutions that identify the 11 September attacks on the US as a threat to international peace, and which call on UN members, and by implication Japan as well, to counter terrorism’ (Hughes 2005, p. 128). The UN resolutions in turn were linked to the preamble of the Japanese Constitution, which states that Japan should cooperate with ‘international society striving for the preservation of peace’. Reference to Article 9 was deliberately downplayed, but the mission was justified as constitutional based on the same logic as the SIASJ Law that the SDF may provide rear-area support from non-combat zones that does not form an integral part in the use of force (*iitaika*).

Japanese public opinion reacted to the 9/11 attacks with shock. On balance the Japanese public supported dispatching the SDF to participate in humanitarian and rear-area logistical missions having become attuned to these issues during debates over the 1992 PKO Law and 1999 SIASJ Law. Yet there was ‘no greater willingness to use force overseas than had been the case during the Gulf War a decade earlier’ (Midford 2011, p. 111). While public support for humanitarian and rear-area logistical missions was high during the initial shock in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 ‘even this support proved to be fleeting, ambivalent, and situationally specific’ (Midford 2011, p. 111).

Initially, with Koizumi riding high on his cabinet approval rating and high personal popularity, the prime minister seemed intent on passing a law that would have significantly expanded SDF roles and missions in a much broader manner. Koizumi stated in late September that Japan ‘will no longer hold that the Self-Defense Forces should not be sent to a danger spot’ (*Asahi Shimbun* 2001, p.1; Midford 2011, p. 115). However, Komeito and ‘elements within the LDP, especially those linked to the rival Hashimoto faction, responded to public reservations and began to openly oppose the popular Koizumi’s ambitious plans’ (Midford 2011, p. 115). They criticised Koizumi’s rush, his lack of consultations within the LDP and opposition parties and the way he potentially linked a possible dispatch with the use of force by the SDF (Shinoda 2003, p. 30; Midford 2011, p. 115). Such direct criticism of Koizumi’s plan would almost certainly have not been possible without the support of public opinion adverse to the SDF taking on combat missions.

As a result, Koizumi compromised with Komeito and rival LDP factions and scaled back the scope of the ATSMML in four key ways. First, Koizumi dropped ‘plans to dispatch the GSDF

to Pakistan to provide humanitarian support to refugees' as well as plan for the SDF to provide 'medical support for the US military in combat zones' (Midford 2011, p. 116). Second, the duration of the ATSMML was 'limited to two years, with one extension possible' (Midford 2011, p. 116). Third, plans for SDF 'transport and supply of arms' (Midford 2011, p. 116) were dropped. Instead the MSDF focused on transporting blankets and tents. Finally, the number of SDF troops permitted to be dispatched at any one time through the ATSMML was limited to 1,200 (or 2,400 during rotation) (Midford 2011, p. 116).

The role of Komeito as the LDP's coalition partner was also once again decisive. Without Komeito's support the bills could not have been passed. As argued by Akimoto (2012) and Shinoda (2006, pp. 90-91, p. 128; 2007, p. 136), prime minister Koizumi prioritised persuading Komeito to pass the ATSMML by giving them assurances that it would not violate Article 9. During Diet debates in the ATSMML, Komeito's Natsuo Yamaguchi 'stated that the legislation would fill the gap between Article 9 as a prohibitive factor, and the Preamble and Article 98 as facilitative factors with regard to overseas dispatch of the SDF' (Akimoto 2012). If Komeito had refused any sort of compromise, however, it could have put the future of the coalition in jeopardy. 'As the linchpin of the ruling coalition...Komeito would have borne direct responsibility for the Japanese government's failure to visibly participate in the war on terror' (Kliman 2006, p. 79).

The SDF and the Iraq War

In the case of the 2003 Iraq War too, prime minister Koizumi was determined to respond to US president George W Bush's requests for assistance and have the SDF play a role. While it has never been publicly acknowledged, public officials later admitted in private interviews that both Koizumi and JDA director general Shigeru Ishiba 'pushed to dispatch the SDF during the initial full-scale fighting stage of the Iraq War' (Midford 2011, p. 129; Kliman 2006, p. 126, 142). Under early versions of a draft law to enable an SDF dispatch to Iraq, Koizumi envisioned the SDF engaging in a wider variety of missions, which would have set new precedents in expanding the scope of SDF roles and missions. In particular, Koizumi called for 'the SDF to participate in counterterrorism and stabilization missions and for the GSDF to provide direct logistical support to the US military by transporting weapons' as well as for the SDF to 'help search for and dispose of WMDs' (Midford 2011, p. 130).

Public attitudes toward the Iraq War were decidedly negative in comparison to the war in Afghanistan. Komeito faced backlash from segments of its Soka Gakkai supporters while Koizumi's rivals within the LDP were keen to 'to take advantage of the public's anti-war sentiments in order to cripple Koizumi' (Shinoda 2006, p. 80) before the LDP party president election that was coming up in September.

As a result, these abovementioned expansive missions were dropped. Similar to the ATSM, operations were restricted to non-combat zones and no transportation of weapons or ammunition was permitted. One of the few expansions that was permitted was that the GSDF was 'in addition to its normal armament on overseas deployment of pistols, rifles and machine...permitted to arm itself with recoilless rifles and light anti-tank munitions, as well as wheeled APCs and light armoured vehicles to counter the threat of insurgent suicide attacks' (Hughes 2005, p. 130). However, despite these upgrades, the SDF still routinely required the protection of foreign troops, from Australia and the Netherlands, to conduct its humanitarian and reconstruction missions. Ultimately, the Koizumi-led LDP and Komeito ended up going to great lengths to emphasise the humanitarian nature of the SDF's missions in Iraq.

After fact-finding missions and waiting for the passage of 'UN Resolution 1483 in May [2003] calling upon members to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq' (Hughes 2005, p. 128) the government moved to pass the LCSMHRA. Even the ultimately watered down version of the LCSMHRA may not have been possible if not for institutional changes. Shinoda (2006) argues that the passage of the law was made possible by earlier reforms to strengthen the institution of the prime ministership. 'Koizumi and his Cabinet took advantage of the strengthened authority of the Cabinet Secretariat to initiate policies, and successfully pushed the controversial national security legislation through LDP decision-making organs and the Diet by gaining support first from the coalition partners' (Shinoda 2006, p. 71).

Even after the law was passed, the deployment was held up until January 2004 by a number of factors. First, there was the November 2003 upper house election 'during which Prime Minister Koizumi watched for any adverse public reaction to the prospect of an Iraq deployment' (Hughes 2005, p. 128). Second, there were complications surrounding finding a suitable deployment site in Iraq that would not be too dangerous. The government was keenly aware that public opinion, which was already decidedly ambivalent, would instantly turn in

the case of any SDF personnel fatalities. 'Japan is believed to have rejected as too risky original US requests for GSDF deployment to Balad' (Hughes 2005, p. 129). Instead, Japan settled on a deployment of the GSDF to Samawah in southern Iraq near Basra, which was considered to be a relatively safe area. Third, there were questions about whether Komeito would support the dispatch under the LCSMHRA. In early January Komeito leader Takenori Kanzaki, during an appearance on NHK, stated that 'it will be fully possible that we'll oppose it if the security situation is so bad that the area cannot be recognized as free of fighting' (*The Japan Times* 2004). The final go ahead from Komeito only came after Kanzaki himself made a visit to Samawah after which he 'vouched for the safety of the site' (Hughes 2005, p. 129).

As the SDF was dispatched, the government emphasised the necessity of the mission for upholding the integrity of the US-Japan alliance. Concerns were expressed that if Japan did not make sufficient contributions to the alliance then it may not be able to count on the United States to defend it in the future. In Koizumi's own words, 'deployment to Iraq was essential for maintaining confidence in the US-Japan bilateral alliance, a vital mechanism for Japan's own security' (Hughes 2004, p. 129). The then JDA director general Shigeru Ishiba put it even more bluntly at the time of the dispatch in January 2004, stating that 'this is an operation to solidify confidence in Japan-US relations. The only organisation capable of doing this is the SDF' (*Nihon Keizai Shimbun* 2004, p. 1; Hughes 2005, p. 130). Koizumi also linked the need to be a good ally to the United States with the need to maintain US cooperation and support vis-à-vis North Korea (Midford 2011, p. 129).

Once in Samawah the SDF 'engaged in the provision of medical care, the purification and distribution of water, the repair of water supplies, and the reconstruction of public amenities such as schools and hospitals' (Hughes 2005, p. 130). This is the aspect of the SDF missions in Iraq that was also most prominently portrayed to the public back home. Often downplayed was the fact that the ASDF was also conducting transport missions between Kuwait and Iraq. Notably, this included transportation to Baghdad, which was argued to be a combat zone in violation of the LCSMHRA. Opponents of Koizumi within the LDP, such as Kono Taro, had earlier 'questioned if "non-combat areas" really existed in Iraq' (Shinoda 2006, p. 79). Koizumi brushed this off by defining non-combat zones in a 'cavalierly tautological way' as 'the area where the SDF is operating' (Samuels 2007, p. 75). Later after the change of government to the DPJ, then defence minister Toshimi Kitazawa in September 2009 'unexpectedly authorized the release of a short document under the Freedom of Information

Act disclosing that about 67 per cent of the 26,000 soldiers transported by the Air Self-Defense Forces between July 2006 and December 2008 wore US uniforms' (McNeil 2010). The ASDF operations in Iraq can thus be interpreted as both a violation of the LCSMHRA and the SIASJ Law on which it was premised as well as the government's own interpretation of Article 9 that SDF operations not form an integral part in the use of force (*ittaiika*) by other nations.

Conclusion

The end of the Cold War reopened questions about the core bargain of the US-Japan alliance where the United States guarantees to defend Japan in exchange for Japan's provision of land, sea and air facilities for the operation of US military bases in Japan. Given uncertainties surrounding the rise of China and its ongoing military modernisation and the development of North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile development program, the maintenance of this core bargain has continued to be beneficial for both nations. At the same time, the United States has made increased demands to Japan to expand the roles and missions of the SDF and to make greater contributions to the alliance. The first major test of the post-Cold War era to the US-Japan alliance, in the form of the Gulf War, was a major shock for Japan, especially among the defence establishment. This event shifted Japan's calculus in relation to the entrapment-abandonment dilemma. Japan could not 'lay down on the job' as Shigeru Ishiba described it (Ishiba 2005, p. 87; Samuels 2007, p. 41) and leave its security to the United States as it had done during the Cold War. Now Japan needed to find ways for the SDF to make greater contributions to the US-Japan alliance.

In response to the 1990-1991 Gulf War, Japan passed the 1992 PKO Law enabling the SDF to take part in UN PKOs under the strict conditions of the five principles. In the wake of the first North Korean nuclear crisis in 1993 and Taiwan Straits crisis of 1995-1996 Japan revised the US-Japan Defence Cooperation Guidelines in 1997 and passed the 1999 SIASJ Law enabling the SDF to provide the US military with rear-area and logistics support from non-combat areas. In response to the 9/11 terrorist attack by Al-Qaeda against the United States in 2001, Japan passed the ATSM Law and dispatched the MSDF to the Indian Ocean to provide support rear area and logistical support to coalition nations such as refuelling ships en route to Afghanistan. And in response to the Iraq War of 2003 Japan passed the LCSMHRA and dispatched the GSDF to conduct school reconstruction and water purification missions as well as the ASDF to Kuwait for transport operations between Kuwait and Iraq.

As the Japanese government sought to deal with increased US demands and shock regional events it could not escape the constraints of domestic politics, which played a decisive role in shaping the scope of the abovementioned laws. In each case laws that the LDP-led government attempted to pass were moderated or watered down. This watering down was due to a combination of public opinion, LDP factional politics and the LDP's need to gain the support of other parties to pass the laws, most prominently Komeito its junior coalition partner since 1999.

For the foreseeable future, the roles and missions of the SDF look likely to continue to be anchored by Article 9 and conducted within the framework of the US-Japan alliance. When Japan passed the ATSMML and the LCSMHRA there was debate among scholars over to what extent the post-Cold War changes up until that point represented a significant turning point. In other words, with the precedents of cooperation set under the ATSMML and LCSMHRA had Japan crossed the Rubicon (Hughes 2004, p. 429; Sakamoto 2002, pp. 1–28; Miller 2002)? Would it now continue toward becoming a so-called normal state, revise Article 9 and reserve the right to resort to the exercise of force to settle international disputes? Ultimately, the SDF dispatch to Iraq ended up 'becoming a negative example used in Japanese politics to argue against further deployments of the SDF, rather than a positive example for expanded deployments' (Midford 2011, p. 140). Public opinion in Japan was decisive in limiting the incremental reforms of security policy so that the SDF was limited to non-combat missions with a focus on humanitarian, reconstruction and disaster relief missions.

The competition between the left and right over the future of Japanese foreign and security policy means that to best gauge the future trajectory of possible policy reforms it is necessary to closely analyse the associated domestic political battles. As will be discussed next (see Chapter 5), the coalition of right-wing domestic political actors seeking to escape the post-war regime have not been content to defer to public opinion. The right-wing factions of the LDP have taken power under the governments of Shinzo Abe (from September 2006 until September 2007 and again from December 2012 until the present) and are engaged in a top down push to reform security policy, a concerted campaign to revise Article 9 and other efforts to dismantle the post-war regime. This has involved invoking threats from China (manifested prominently in the Senkaku Islands issue) and North Korea to justify security

reforms. Prime Minister Abe himself pledged to formally revise Article 9 before the 2020 Tokyo Olympics but faces a number of significant domestic political hurdles.

5 The drive to revise Article 9

In the wake of the Gulf War shock, while incremental reforms were being made to Japan's defence policy during the 1990s and 2000s as described in the previous chapter, the right wing also gradually opened the door to debating constitutional revision. Japan's right-wing groups, especially Nippon Kaigi, have sought to challenge the narrative that Japan can realize international recognition and prestige and national security through international contributions to peace and order building within the framework of Article 9. They have sought to promote an alternative narrative of Article 9 as a foreign-imposed humiliation that constrains Japan from adequately defending itself in an increasingly dangerous regional security environment. The right wing has subsequently sought not just to debate the issue but also to implement its vision for constitutional revision since the late 2000s. Leadership on this front has come most prominently under the governments of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe between 2006-2007 and from 2012 until the present as well as from Nippon Kaigi which has become 'deeply embedded in the Abe administration's efforts to revise the Constitution' (Saito et al 2017, 2018).

While the right wing has not accomplished its goals in relation to Article 9, it has made some progress. The July 2014 cabinet decision to reinterpret Article 9 to permit limited forms of collective self-defence, and the passing of the September 2015 security-related bills that implemented the reinterpretation were watershed moments. Additionally, the right wing has successfully put the issue of constitutional revision with a focus on Article 9 firmly on the national political agenda. On the 70th anniversary of the enactment of Japan's post-war Constitution on 3 May 2017, Abe declared in a message to right-wing lobby group Nippon Kaigi his intention to revise the Constitution by 2020 (Nippon Kaigi 2017, p. 29). As part of this process Abe emphasised his plan to add a third paragraph to Article 9 that explicitly recognises the constitutionality of the SDF (Osaki & Kikuchi 2017).

The Article 9 peace clause has been subject to greater discussion than any other issue relating to constitutional revision. This is true both among right-wing actors advocating to amend Article 9 and left-wing actors seeking to preserve it. This does not mean that other areas of the constitution have not received attention. A number of areas have been the subject of significant debate — such as the status of the Emperor (Higuchi 1990); the question of

female imperial succession (McCurry 2017); the balance between individual rights, state rights and social order (Repeta and Jones 2015); the educational system; the social welfare system and religious organisations (Hamilton 2016). Article 9 has been so controversial, however, because the question of amending it cuts to the heart of post-war Japan's national identity.

On the one hand, Article 9 is the anchor of Japan's post-war identity as a peace-loving nation. As argued by Thomas Berger (1993), in the wake of the militarisation of Japanese society in the 1930s, Japan's disastrous campaign during the Second World War and the suffering inflicted on other countries as well as on ordinary Japanese people themselves, post-war Japan developed an anti-militarist culture. The key lesson that the Japanese people took away from their experience of the Second World War was a resolve to maintain civilian control over and a suspicion of the military as a dangerous institution that must be 'constantly restrained and monitored lest it threaten Japan's post-war democratic order' (Berger 1993, p. 120). The majority of the Japanese public embraced the Constitution and Article 9 as a source of great pride, a guarantee against the remilitarisation of society, a ticket for the reestablishment of sovereignty and reacceptance by the international community, and a starting point to move forward and rebuild toward peace and prosperity from the ashes of defeat. Many Japanese take pride in the fact that no Japanese soldier has fired a single bullet at the troops of another nation for more than 70 years throughout the post-war era.

On the other hand, for the coalition of right-wing political actors seeking to 'escape the post-war regime' Article 9 is a *bête noire*. They view the Constitution as an alien provision based on the Western notion of natural rights rather than on indigenous Japanese values (EAF Editors 2016). They emphasise that the constitution was humiliatingly imposed by a foreign military power, the United States-led Allied occupation forces (Osaki & Kikuchi 2018). This argument by the Japanese right ignores the Japanese sources of thinking that helped formulate Article 9 (Schlichtmann 1995, pp.43-67; Boyd & Samuels 2005, p. 5). Nevertheless, on this (either disingenuous or misinformed) basis right-wing actors contend that Article 9 traps Japan in a subservient security relationship with the United States and curtails Japan's foreign and security policy autonomy. They also point to international criticism of Japan for freeriding on the US security guarantee and engaging in 'chequebook diplomacy'.

This chapter will analyse the objectives of the coalition of right-wing actors seeking to escape the post-war regime in relation to Article 9, the progress they have made on this front, and the domestic political constraints that have restricted and moderated them. In the first section, the actors that opened up the debate and sought to change the narrative on Article 9 will be outlined. Second, the objectives of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in relation to Article 9, which Nippon Kaigi has embedded itself into, will be analysed. As the political leader who has most prominently led the charge to revise the constitution, Abe's ambitions and relationship with Nippon Kaigi are important. Third, the groundwork that the right has laid in preparation to revise Article 9 will be examined. Fourth, the revision of Article 9 through reinterpretation by the Abe government, to permit limited forms of collective self-defence, will be scrutinised with reference to Abe's and Nippon Kaigi's original objectives and how his government was forced to moderate those objectives. Finally, the future prospects for the revision of Article 9 will be considered.

Pushing open the Article 9 debate

The debate on revising Article 9 of the Constitution was gradually pushed open by a number of actors including the politician Ichiro Ozawa, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* national newspaper, right-wing lobby groups such as Nippon Kaigi and the right-wing factions of the LDP. This development has served to remove the overriding sense of taboo surrounding the issue. Yet it should not be mistaken to mean that revising Article 9 is not a controversial or divisive issue. The question of revising Article 9 continues to be a key fault line in Japanese politics. One's position on Article 9 is a key signifier of their position on the political left or right and sits at the heart of the domestic political battle to determine the future vision of Japan's foreign and security policy.

Ichiro Ozawa's Blueprint for a new Japan

Although Ichiro Ozawa's advocacy for constitutional reform may be considered internationalist rather than right wing in character, he nevertheless played an important role in opening up the constitutional revision debate which had hitherto been taboo. In 1993, Ozawa released a bombshell book, *Nihon Kaizou Keikaku* [Plan for the Reform of Japan] (subsequently translated into English and published in 1994 as *Blueprint for a new Japan*). The book explained Ozawa's grand plan for political, legal and military reform to transform Japan into a 'normal country'. It was of such interest to those who wanted to understand the

future direction of Japanese politics that the CIA had its own private translation arranged, explains Henry Kissinger on the official English version of the book's dustjacket.

With regard to security policy, Ozawa's key recommendation was to add a third paragraph to Article 9. His inspiration for this seems to have come from his time as secretary-general of the ruling LDP from 1989 to 1993. His position at this time meant he was at the centre of the 'storm of controversy that surrounded Japan's failure to participate actively in the UN-sanctioned defense of Kuwait' (Johnson 1994, p. 380). Ozawa intended to legalise the active participation of the SDF in UN PKOs. This would include not just standard UN PKO missions in areas with ceasefires but also dispatches where the SDF could use force under the UN Command in the context of collective self-defence (Johnson 1994, p. 381; Berkofsky 2012, p. 195).

This would have represented a significant departure from the official understanding of Article 9 that had been inherited by successive administrations. However, in contrast to the right who sought to 'escape the post-war regime', Ozawa's conception of constitutional reform came from an international and UN-centric standpoint and eschewed collective self-defence outside of UN frameworks.

In the words of Chalmers Johnson, 'the source of this book is at least as important as its actual content' (Johnson 1994, p. 379). Ozawa, often referred to as a 'shadow shogun', was one of if not the most powerful politicians in Japan at the time of the book's release and possibly the most influential politician never to become prime minister (Shinoda 2000, p. 2). The fact that Ozawa put his name to these ideas meant they had to be given due consideration. This could be said to be the beginning of the end of the taboo on debating Article 9.

The Yomiuri Shimbun's editorial advocacy

Another key actor in opening the constitutional revision debate was the centre-right major national newspaper the *Yomiuri Shimbun*. It has consistently editorialised in favour of the 'necessity' of constitutional revision since the 1990s. This includes the newspaper's own draft constitution proposals including revisions to Article 9. In a watershed moment *Yomiuri* published its first draft constitution proposal on 3 November 1994 (*Yomiuri Shimbun* 1994, p. 17). *Yomiuri* criticised Article 9 for not permitting 'war potential'. As a result, *Yomiuri*

argues, the Diet has been forced into futile debates, the government has had to make unrealistic interpretations, and constructive discussion on Japanese security policy has been stifled. *Yomiuri* followed up with further draft proposals in 2000 and 2004, which similarly include revision of Article 9.

Yomiuri's advocacy has been described as bordering on indoctrination of its readership (Berkofsky 2012, p. 148). For instance, while the results of its polls have shown that a majority of respondents favour maintaining Article 9 specifically, *Yomiuri* has downplayed or hidden this fact and instead emphasised times when a majority of respondents favour constitutional revision in general. Furthermore, *Yomiuri* sought in its editorials to create a strong link between expanding Japan's contributions to UN PKOs and to the formal revision of Article 9. Yet despite these advocacy efforts, public opinion continues to favour expanding only non-combat contributions to UN PKOs and is not necessarily of the opinion that this needs to be accompanied by constitutional revision (Berkofsky 2012, p. 147).

Nippon Kaigi's political agenda setting

Nippon Kaigi, perhaps the most influential right-wing lobby group, has lobbied strongly in favour of constitutional revision since its establishment in 1997. Nippon Kaigi describes itself on its official website as 'a nationwide grassroots network' and 'a civic group that presents policy proposals and promotes a national movement for restoring a beautiful Japan and building a nation with pride' (Nippon Kaigi 2018). Also established in 1997 was the Nippon Kaigi Parliamentary Discussion Group, launched by Keizo Obuchi and Yoshiro Mori 'with the aim of fully backing up and linking to the Nippon Kaigi' (Tawara 2017). As of November 2015 the Nippon Kaigi Parliamentary Discussion Group boasted 281 members of parliament among its ranks, mostly hailing from the LDP, or about 40 per cent of the 717 members of the upper and lower houses of the Diet (Tawara 2017). The Democracy Minibird project calculated the number to be 295 Diet members after the October 2017 election (Democracy Minibird 2018).

Nippon Kaigi and the Nippon Kaigi Parliamentary Discussion Group have worked closely together behind the scenes to promote the Nippon Kaigi agenda, including the revision of the Constitution and Article 9 (Tawara 2017). Shinzo Abe has been a 'key person' (Tawara 2017) for the Nippon Kaigi Parliamentary Discussion Group having served a number of high-level positions and with Nippon Kaigi ideology forming a foundation for many of his

political stances. Nippon Kaigi even lists the formation of the Abe governments in 2006 and 2012 as key dates in a chronology of its history celebrating its 20th anniversary (Nippon Kaigi 2017, p. 23; p. 27). The Abe cabinets have also placed importance on ideology rather than simply just merit in picking ministers. For instance, in the third Abe cabinet 16 out of 20 ministers were affiliated with Nippon Kaigi, possibly the most right-wing cabinet in post-war Japan (Asia Policy Point 2014a; 2015; 2018).

Nippon Kaigi advocates a historical revisionist world view. It argues that ‘Japan has been unjustly criticized for its behavior as a colonial and wartime power’, that ‘Japan should be applauded for liberating much of East Asia from Western colonial powers’, ‘that the 1946-1948 Tokyo War Crimes tribunals were illegitimate’ and ‘that the killings by Imperial Japanese troops during the 1937 “Nanjing massacre” were exaggerated or fabricated’ (Chanlett-Avery et al. 2017, p. 8). Nippon Kaigi also asserts that the Constitution was humiliatingly foreign imposed by the Allied forces after Japan’s defeat in the Second World War (Nippon Kaigi Hyogo HQ 2019; Osaki & Kikuchi 2018).

On this basis Nippon Kaigi urges that constitutional revision is imperative for Japan to be reborn as a country that its citizens can have pride in (Kokumin no Kai 2014). To this end, Nippon Kaigi established a subgroup of its organisation in 2014 called the People’s Association to Create a Beautiful Constitution for Japan [Utsukushii Nippon no kempou wo tsukuru kokumin no kai; referred to as the Kokumin no kai or the People’s Association for short]. Nippon Kaigi describes the People’s Association as a grassroots network of people calling for constitutional revision and aims to expand this network by collecting 10 million signatures calling on the government to revise the Constitution (Kokumin no Kai 2014). Nippon Kaigi claimed to have collected 9,898,013 signatures (including 376 MPs) as of 10 November 2017 (Nippon Kaigi 2017, p. 13).

It was decided at the initial meeting establishing the People’s Association that it should ‘establish headquarters for amending the Constitution in all 300 election districts in order to attain half of the national referendum votes for amending the Constitution’ (Tawara 2017). By 2017 Nippon Kaigi had established headquarters in all 47 prefectures and over 253 local level offices (Nippon Kaigi 2017, p. 30). Nippon Kaigi also claims to have realized the passage of resolutions calling for a referendum on constitutional revision in 64 local assemblies in 36 prefectures (Nippon Kaigi 2017, p. 13). Propagandisation efforts were

further boosted through cooperation with AOSS. When worshippers went to visit shrines on the first day of the year (as is a common practice for many Japanese) in 2016 they found pamphlets were being distributed about constitutional revision. This was the result of AOSS which ‘reportedly encompasses 80,000 shrines nationwide who “aligned with the movement of the [People’s Association] and promoted a signature campaign based on the actual situation in each shrine’ (Tawara 2017). This should be understood as specifically geared toward garnering ‘public support for the Abe-led Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) initiative to revise the Constitution’ (Larsson 2016; Mainichi Shimbun 2016).

The linkages between the Nippon Kaigi-led People’s Association and the right-wing factions of the LDP are clear. For instance, the November 2014 edition of Nippon Kaigi’s flagship monthly publication *Nihon no Ibuki*, which it distributes to all members, proclaimed that ‘it is no exaggeration to say that the Abe Cabinet was founded for the ultimate purpose of amending the Constitution’ (Nippon Kaigi 2014; Tawara 2017). Moreover, the founding plenary of the People’s Association was well attended by Nippon Kaigi Parliamentary Discussion Group Diet members. Seiichi Eto, member of the upper house and a special adviser to prime minister Abe, gave a speech at this founding plenary where he remarked:

‘The time is upon us to press the final switch. The LDP, since its founding, has flown the banner of Constitutional revision, but in 2009, when the LDP fell from power, its leaders proposed that the party should remove the plank about establishing an independent Constitution from its platform. At that time, 10 young LDP members, including the late Nakagawa Shoichi and Abe Shinzo, argued heatedly against that in a party leaders’ study group of about 30 lawmakers. As a result, during the debate, arguments were made that if the LDP were going to drop its efforts to amend the Constitution, they should dissolve the party... ‘[Accordingly, the LDP decided to] draft a constitution that would be appropriate for the current era.’ (Tawara 2017).

With specific regard to Article 9, the People’s Association under the direction of Nippon Kaigi advocates for its revision to transform the SDF into a ‘National Defence Army’ (Kokumin no Kai 2014). This is not simply a name change. Under Nippon Kaigi’s thinking, a National Defence Army would not be restricted in its legal ability to use force under the government’s policy of *senshu boei* or the policy of limiting the SDF to the minimum necessary use of force for self-defence. Instead the National Defence Army would be permitted to engage in an unrestricted exercise of collective self-defence, to possess offensive military equipment with power projection capabilities, and would take an active approach to

defending disputed territories such as the Senkaku Islands (Nippon Kaigi Jigyo Sentaa 2011; Matsushima 2014). The thinking underpinning these objectives appears to be that it was only because of the unjust actions of the West that Japan has become militarily hamstrung and Japan should return to its pre-war position as a regional and global military superpower.

The importance of Nippon Kaigi as an advocate of constitutional revision was shown in the lead up to the 2016 upper house election. Nippon Kaigi dispatched its staff help support the campaigning efforts of struggling LDP candidates with the aim of securing a two-thirds majority of pro-revision parties who could initiate constitutional revision (Asahi Shimbun 2016). Moreover, when Prime Minister Abe announced that he would seek to revise the Constitution before the 2020 Tokyo Olympics in May 2017, he made the announcement on the 70th anniversary of the enactment of the 1947 Constitution in a video message to a group of Nippon Kaigi supporters, not a regular press conference (Nippon Kaigi 2017, p. 29). Abe again followed this up a year later in May 2018 with another video message to Nippon Kaigi supporters (Osaki and Kikuchi 2018).

The Liberal Democratic Party's right-wing factions

The LDP's 2012 draft constitution makes a number of radical proposals. These include 'enhancing the status of the Emperor, reducing the importance of the individual versus the state, increasing the power of the executive branch of government and ending the strict separation of church and state' (Hamilton 2016). Given the throwback of these changes to the Meiji era Constitution 'it is highly unlikely the public would swallow it whole' (Hamilton 2016).

The LDP's 2012 draft constitution proposes to amend Article 9 in a far-reaching manner similar to the suggestions of Nippon Kaigi. The first paragraph — 'Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes' — is maintained with minor edits and an addition. The word 'forever' is deleted and the words 'will not employ' are inserted before 'the threat and use of force as a means of settling international disputes'. The sentence 'The provisions in the preceding paragraph shall not prevent the exercise of the right to self-defence' is added as a second paragraph of the first clause.

The second paragraph — ‘In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized’ — is deleted in its entirety. In its place new second and third clauses are inserted, which read as follows:

Article 9-2

In order to secure peace and independence for our nation as well as the safety of the state and the people, the National Defence Army shall be retained with the Prime Minister as the supreme commander.

The National Defence Army, when carrying out tasks prescribed in the preceding paragraph, shall be subject to Diet approval and other controls, as provided by law.

The National Defence Army, in addition to the activities for performing the duties in the first paragraph, shall conduct international cooperative activities in order to secure the peace and safety of the international society and maintain public order, or conduct activities in order to defend the lives or freedoms of the people, as provided by law.

Other matters relating to the organization, regulation and security protection of the National Defence Army subject to the preceding two paragraphs shall be determined by law.

In order to conduct trials when crimes associated with official duties or confidential matters of the National Defence Army are committed by National Defence Army personnel or other public officials, a military tribunal shall be established in the National Defence Army, as provided by law. In this case, the defendant’s right to appeal to the courts is guaranteed.

Article 9-3

The state, in order to defend its sovereignty and independence, in cooperation with the people, shall maintain its territorial land, territorial waters and territorial airspace, and shall secure all resources therein (LDP 2012; Voyce 2015).

Without paragraph two there would be no need to limit military capabilities to the minimum necessary for self-defence. The phrase that the National Defence Army will ‘conduct international cooperative activities in order to secure the peace and safety of the international society and maintain public order, or conduct activities in order to defend the lives or freedoms of the people’ attempts to spell out the sort of activities the National Defence Army will be able to perform now that the limiting of force to the minimum necessary for self-defence is rescinded. These stipulations are vaguely broad and there is no hint about how these actions would be reconciled with the first section of Article 9 that the Japanese people ‘will not employ the threat and use of force as a means of settling international disputes’.

The final two sentences of section two appears to be inspired by the idea among the right wing that the Tokyo Trials in the aftermath of Second World War were illegitimate victor's justice. They can be seen as an attempt to ensure that Japanese defence personnel are only judged by the Japanese state itself in its own military tribunal. This is in line with Shinzo Abe's own statements that war criminals under the Tokyo Trials are not criminals under Japanese domestic law (Abe 2006c, pp. 69-71; Ryall 2013).

The similarities between Nippon Kaigi's rhetoric and the LDP's 2012 draft constitution proposal, suggest that Nippon Kaigi had a hand in the process of writing the text (*Sentaku Magazine* 2016). By another description, the LDP 2012 draft constitution looks as if sections of it have been 'ripped directly from the Nippon Kaigi homepage' (Weiss 2018, p. 12). When the managing director of Nippon Kaigi's Hokkaido headquarters was asked by the *Asahi Shimbun* what revisions he would like to see made to the Constitution he referred to the LDP's 2012 draft constitution as a starting point (Taketani 2017). While Shinzo Abe and Shoichi Nakagawa led the charge in having the LDP write a draft constitution proposal, Abe essentially outsourced the writing of it to Yosuke Isozaki (*Sentaku Magazine* 2016). Isozaki is the vice president of the Nippon Kaigi Parliamentary Discussion Group's policy deliberation council (Isozaki 2019).

It is thus evident that Nippon Kaigi has sought to operate using the two key mechanisms for influence as identified in Chapter 2. Nippon Kaigi has successfully cultivated political linkages with politicians, especially the right-wing factions of the LDP, through the Nippon Kaigi Parliamentary Discussion Group. And Nippon Kaigi has worked together with these politicians to promote an alternative narrative on the constitution. That narrative claims that the Constitution is a foreign imposed document designed to weaken Japan and that it needs to be revised so that Japan can establish an autonomous military that Japanese citizens can be proud of and that is capable of defending Japan in an increasingly fraught regional security environment.

Shinzo Abe's constitutional ambitions

The coming to power of Shinzo Abe as prime minister in September 2006 represented a new step in the constitutional revision debate. For the first time since 1960, when Abe's grandfather Nobusuke Kishi was in power, the LDP once again actively and prominently returned the issue of revising Article 9 and 'escaping the post-war regime' to its political

agenda. It is true that during the Cold War years, before Abe's rise to the top of the political scene, Article 9 had been reinterpreted over the decades (see Chapter 3). These conceptions of Article 9 included interpretations that do not allow any standing force whatsoever, that allow a standing force (the SDF) as long as it does not possess military capabilities that constitute war potential, and that allow a standing force that may possess limited forms of war potential so long as they are confined to the minimum necessary for individual self-defence. Abe has worked to change Article 9 in two ways.

First, the Abe government reinterpreted the ban on collective self-defence to permit it in limited forms. Second, the Abe government is pursuing a formal amendment of the Constitution. This is especially the case since the July 2016 upper house election, the result of which saw pro-revision parties hold a two-thirds supermajority in both houses of government for the first time in the post-war era. Yet in spite of Abe's strong conviction to overturn the post-war regime and the support his government has received from Nippon Kaigi in this endeavour, at every step of the way in his efforts to revise Article 9 he has had to contend with domestic political pushback from the public at large. In order to maintain his grip on power and avoid suffering a similar fate to his grandfather, Abe has had to adjust his strategy and ambitions accordingly.

Shinzo Abe has a reputation for being a foreign policy hawk as well as an enigma. He is well known for oscillating between his nationalist and historical revisionist views and more pragmatic manoeuvring; a reflection of the historical revisionist world view he shares with Nippon Kaigi and the need to defer to mainstream public opinion. For instance, after Abe succeeded Junichiro Koizumi as prime minister in September 2006, he refrained from visiting the controversial Yasukuni Shrine. During Abe's first stint in the top job (September 2006-September 2007) in the wake of the freeze Koizumi's annual visits had caused in Japan-China political relations, this served as a starting point in repairing the bilateral relationship at the time. Later, Abe would call his failure to visit the Yasukuni Shrine as prime ministership his biggest regret. He did eventually visit on the one-year anniversary of his second stint as prime minister on 26 December 2013, causing great controversy (Morris-Suzuki 2013; Envall 2014).

Abe has also been a politician primarily interested in nationalist issues throughout his career. For instance, in his book *Towards a Beautiful Country* (Abe 2006c) six of the seven chapters

are dedicated to issues that allow him to express his nationalistic sentiments, such as diplomacy, defence and education, while one chapter looks at Japan's low birth rate. Yet despite Abe's professed disinterest in economic policy issues he came to realise that in order to stay in power as prime minister for a long period of time he needed an economic policy vision (Abe 2013a; Abe 2014). Subsequently, Abe reinvented himself in no small part through the promotion of his Abenomics economic policy package and took back the prime ministership in December 2012.

Despite his enigmatic qualities, Abe has unwaveringly championed the issue of constitutional reform, in unison with Nippon Kaigi, including a focus on the revision of the Article 9 peace clause. Article 9 is, for Abe, symbolic of the Constitution as a whole and the need to 'escape the post-war regime'. Until Article 9 is revised, Abe believes that Japan will continue to lack full independence and sovereignty and the realisation of a Japanese expression of the framework of the state.

By Abe's own admission, his ideological disposition is heavily influenced by his maternal grandfather, Nobusuke Kishi. Abe 'confessed to feeling stigmatized as the grandson of' Kishi 'an ex-wartime industry minister who was arrested by the Allied Occupation forces' (Yoshida 2012). From a young age, Abe says, he was aware that his grandfather was referred to as the 'embodiment of reactionary conservatism' and a 'political backroom fixer' (Abe 2006c, p. 18). He was jeered as a high school student: 'Wasn't your grandfather a Class-A war criminal suspect?' (Abe 2006c, p. 18). However, he reacted to this stigmatisation by feeling a sense of pride in the word 'conservative' in spite of others associating it with imperialism. In Abe's eyes, his grandfather 'was a sincere statesman who only thought about the future of [Japan]' (Yoshida 2012).

Before Abe became a politician he worked as an aide for his father Shintaro Abe, who was the foreign minister from 1982-1986. 'The young Abe accompanied his father on some 20 diplomatic trips and directly witnessed Japan's talks with world leaders' (Yoshida 2012). This is also something Abe says reinforced his conviction of the importance of realising Japan's full independence and 'escaping the post-war regime'.

Abe's ambition to 'escape the post-war regime' is further underpinned by his world view. His 'Shinto concern for the purity and the inviolability of the imperial essence makes it difficult

for him to accept responsibility for Japan's wartime' misdeeds and atrocities (McCormack 2014, p. 77). This also affects Abe's thinking about the nature of relations between citizens and the state. For Abe, the duty of the state (*kokka*) to protect its people (*kokumin*) is its most critical mission (Abe 2006c, pp. 63-64) and the state and the people should have a complementary rather than conflictual relationship (Abe 2006c, p. 65). In Abe's mind, it seems 'the central dilemma of modern Western political philosophy — the search for a balance between liberty and security — does not exist' (Harris 2007). He characterises the left (progressives) as his domestic enemies who have an allergy to the state and nationalism (Abe 2006a, p. 40; 2006c, p. 124). Abe further argues that cosmopolitanism, which tends to be supported by progressives, is an unnatural and ideational concept because 'only the state can in effect secure individual rights and properties' and that the strong affinity for cosmopolitanism among the left is a mindset born out of the post-war regime and risks individuals bypassing the state (Abe 2006c, p. 95; Kuroki 2013, p. 176).

With this background in mind, Abe's arguments against Article 9 can be summarised into three key points. First, Abe argues that Article 9 and the Constitution as a whole was imposed on Japan during the Allied forces occupation (Abe 2006c, pp. 28-29). Abe seems to suggest that the Japanese people did not have any engagement with the occupation authorities as part of the drafting process. He also implies that the inclusion of Article 9 was imposed on the Japanese people against their will and that they would not have included such a peace clause themselves. For Abe, the Japanese people need to retake ownership of the Constitution by rewriting it themselves and forging their own bright future.

Second, Abe argues that Article 9 impedes Japan's foreign and security policy autonomy. In particular he notes that the US-led Allied forces occupation authorities wrote Japan's post-war Constitution, and especially Article 9, with a strong will in order to protect their own national interest and ensure that Japan would not challenge the Euro-American-centric order a second time (Abe 2006c, p. 121; Kuroki 2013, p. 166). And while Japan's sovereignty was 'formally' restored with the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1952, Japan could not be a truly independent nation until it escapes the binding post-war regime imposed by the occupation (Abe 2006c, p. 28; 2006a, p. 90).

Third, Abe derides Japan's post-war pacifism is idealistic, irresponsible and hypocritical. It is idealistic, Abe claims, because pacifism and Article 9 have not contributed to the peace Japan

has enjoyed since the end of the Second World War (Abe 2006c, p. 122; Kuroki 2013, p. 167). Rather it has been the SDF and the US-Japan Security Treaty that have ‘effectively protected Japan from regional turmoil’ (Abe 2006a, p. 134, 256; Kuroki 2013, p. 167). Post-war pacifism is irresponsible, Abe asserts, because it is ‘an evasion of the responsibility [of the state] to protect Japanese citizens’ (Abe 2006a, p. 85; Kuroki 2013, p. 167). With regard to North Korea, for instance, Abe remarked that ‘if we hadn’t had this kind of constitution, we may have been able to protect Megumi Yokota’ (*Asahi Shimbun* 2013), the most famous Japanese citizen abducted by North Korea. By ‘this kind of constitution’ Abe meant that it ‘did not allow Japan to react militarily to North Korea abducting Japanese citizens’ (Lindsay 2014). This is despite the fact that there was at best only tentative knowledge of the abductions when they were perpetrated. Post-war pacifism is hypocritical, Abe insists, because it is only concerned with the peace and security of Japan, but it fails to consider peace and security at the regional or global level (Abe 2006c, p. 132; Kuroki 2013, p. 168). He argues that this hypocrisy is unacceptable to the international community, evoking the memory of international criticism of Japan during the Gulf War for its chequebook diplomacy (Abe & Okazaki 2004, p. 75; Abe 2006c, p. 132; Abe 2006a, p. 46; Kuroki 2013, p.168).

Abe’s argument against Article 9 is one-sided and misleading. The assertion that the Constitution was a wholesale imposition ignores the significant engagement of the Japanese people in the process of drafting the Constitution. This includes engagement with SCAP by leaders such as Shigeru Yoshida and Kijuro Shidehara (Welfield 1988, pp. 60-88) as well as at the grassroots level (Takemae 2003, p. 273). For instance, SCAP received 12 submissions for constitutional revision from Japanese civil society groups between late 1945 and spring 1946 (Parisi 2002, p. 1). It is a matter of historical debate as to who was the originator of Article 9 whether it was Shidehara, MacArthur or Japanese civil society groups who lobbied these two key individuals (Samuels & Boyd 2005, p. 5). Yet what is clear is that a majority of the Japanese public has consistently supported maintaining the Article 9 peace clause as demonstrated by opinion polling (Asaoka & Teraoka 2016).

Similarly, Abe’s claim that Japan is not fully independent under the post-war political framework neglects the role of the Japanese government and people in maintaining the Constitution over the last seven decades. The logic that the because the Constitution was enacted during the occupation period Japan continues to not be fully independent ignores the

fact that it was passed into law by the Diet as an amendment of the old Meiji Constitution. Moreover, although Abe emphasises constitutional revision as one of the founding missions of the LDP, he ignores that this was taken off of the political agenda in reflection of public backlash against Nobusuke Kishi's constitutional revisionist ambitions and the public pushback to defend Article 9. The conclusion that Abe drew from his memories as a young child — visiting his grandfather Kishi during protests against the revision of the US-Japan Security Treaty in 1960, which had surrounded the Diet and the prime minister's residence, the Kantei — was that his grandfather was a statesman who gave his all for the good of the country, not that the democratic will of the Japanese people should be respected (Abe 2006c, pp. 21-23; Yoshida 2012). Abe insinuates that the thinking underpinning supporters of the Constitution and the majority of public opinion that supports Article 9 is due to their minds being warped by the post-war political framework. This indicates a serious lack of regard for the intelligence of the public and narrow-minded reluctance or inability to consider ideas outside his own world view on this issue.

Abe's argument against post-war pacifism also disingenuously characterises it as incompatible with the maintenance of the SDF, a non-mainstream interpretation supported by a minority of political actors on the left in favour of complete unarmed neutrality. By claiming that it is the US-Japan alliance and the SDF that have upheld Japan's security, and that post-war pacifism by contrast is irresponsible, Abe implies that the SDF are not compatible under the framework of Article 9. This ignores the mainstream interpretation of post-war pacifism and official understanding of Article 9 as developed through CLB interpretations and widely supported by the public that the SDF is constitutional, that it may resort to the use of force for individual self-defence, and that the SDF may engage in non-combat missions overseas. Abe's characterisation of post-war pacifism also seems to neglect the fact that the SDF are a technologically advanced military organisation (Lind 2004, pp. 95-101). Despite Japan's 1 per cent GDP defence spending cap, Japan is the 8th largest defence spender in the world (Tian et al 2018, p. 2) and the MSDF is larger than the British and French navies combined (McNeil 2017).

Essentially, the competing conceptions of post-war pacifism boil down to two questions. First, how much security is enough security? Second, how can civilian control be maintained in order to protect the people from their protectors? On the first count, assuming credibility in the US-Japan alliance, Japan has the most overwhelmingly powerful military organisation in

human history with a treaty guarantee to protect it. While Abe's pragmatic side as prime minister has emphasised the importance of the US-Japan alliance, it is clear he personally believes that Article 9 is a restraint impeding Japan from sufficiently securing itself. Abe wants Japan to reserve the right to exercise the right to collective self-defence without limitations as well as the right to pre-emptive strikes (such as against North Korean missiles). This line of thought, however, neglects the power of Article 9 as a mechanism to mitigate the security dilemma by avoiding arms races.

On the second count, Abe's thinking shows no signs that he recognises the potential for a dilemma in relations between people and the state, including between the people and military institutions. He has only emphasised that he believes relations between the people and the state should be thought of as complementary and criticises the left who characterise it as conflictual (Abe 2006c, p. 65). This is in contrast to Japanese public opinion for which the maintenance of civilian control is an issue of significant concern (Hikotani 2009). This difference can be accounted for by Abe's revisionist world view of history, which beautifies the conduct of the Japanese Imperial Army during the Second World War.

The ideological overlap between the thinking of Shinzo Abe and Nippon Kaigi is uncanny. This suggests that Nippon Kaigi's cultivation of linkages with politicians has generated significant influence. In Shinzo Abe, Nippon Kaigi have found a political leader who they can collaborate. This collaboration is compatible both in terms of propagating their shared belief that the Constitution was foreign imposed and in terms of the idea that it must be amended to remove the constraints on Japan's use of force.

The first Abe government (2006-2007): laying the groundwork

Upon becoming prime minister in September 2006, Shinzo Abe emphasised his ambition to revise the Constitution. Discussion of Article 9 became a hot and controversial topic from the very outset of his taking the top job. With the Prime Minister leading the charge, those in favour of constitutional reform felt the most free they ever had to push their arguments. At the same time, there was a strong push back from a number of citizens groups strongly in favour of maintaining Article 9.

In his policy vision speech (*shoshin hyomei enzetsu*) to the Diet on 29 September 2006, Abe stated:

‘It is the constitution which speaks to the ideals and shape of the country. The present constitution was enacted in the period while Japan was under occupation almost 60 years ago. In this new era, what type of constitution is appropriate is being actively debated. I hope that the debate between the government and opposition parties can be deepened and the direction will properly appear. First, I hope to conclude a draft law concerning the constitutional revision process at the earliest date. Our country, Japan, is a country which we can take pride in across the world, blessed with beautiful nature and a long history, traditions and culture. With that quiet pride in our heart, the time has come to move forward and build a new country’ (*Asahi Shimbun* 2006, p.4).

In his first interview since assuming office with a newspaper on 1 November 2006, Abe once again emphasised his constitutional ambitions. He told the *Financial Times* that the ‘Japanese people should themselves write a constitution that befits the 21st century’ ([Abe 2006d](#)). With regard to Article 9 specifically, Abe said, ‘I believe this article needs to be revised from the point of view of defending Japan’, while also emphasising that Japan is expected to play a role in international security and this is not compatible with its current constitution (Abe 2006d).

The passage of the constitutional amendments law

Article 96 of the Japanese Constitution stipulates that amendments to it shall be initiated by the Diet by a two-thirds majority in both houses and shall subsequently ‘require the affirmative vote of a majority of all votes cast thereon, at a special referendum or at such election as the Diet shall specify’. However, as no government had ever got that far in the process there were no laws or regulations specifying how a national referendum might take place beyond what is written in Article 96.

The Law Concerning Procedures for Amendments of the Constitution of Japan (LCPACJ) was passed by the Diet on 14 May 2007. The contents of the LCPACJ is as follows. First, the law stipulates how the Diet may initiate amendments. The LCPACJ amended the Diet Law to add procedures for the initiation of amendments. In particular, either 100 members of the lower house or 50 members of the upper house may propose an original bill of amendment or an amendment of an existing article (Mizushima & Takeda 2009, p. 56). The power of the cabinet to propose amendments is not mentioned.

Second, the law stipulates the regulations by which a national referendum should take place after the Diet initiates an amendment to the people. Specifically, a referendum shall be held after 60 days and within 180 days from the time that the Diet initiates it to the people (Mizushima & Takeda 2009, p. 57). Citizens who are 18 years or older have the right to vote. This is significant because the age of franchise in Japan was 20 until the Diet passed a law in June 2015 lowering the voting age to 18 to bring it in line with the LCPACJ (Sekiguchi 2015). No referendum on a constitutional amendment could have taken place before this discrepancy was resolved.

Most constitutional law professors in Japan opposed the enacting of this law, mostly out of concern for what revision to the Constitution would take place after the law came into effect rather than taking issue with the procedures it sets out (Mizushima & Takeda 2009, p. 58). However, as argued by Mizushima and Takeda (2009, pp. 58-59), there are a number of possible constitutional issues with regard to the LCPACJ.

First, the period of 180 days may be too short for the people to consider revisions and original amendment bills. This is especially so for broad-scale amendments that could completely alter the basis of Japan's legal framework. This timeframe does not distinguish between a minor amendment to change a couple of words and a wholesale overhaul that would change every article of the Constitution.

Second, 'the law provides that amendments shall be approved by referendum when it gets one half of all votes which are actually given in an effectual way' (Mizushima & Takeda 2009, p. 59). 'Given in an effectual way' means that illegibly written or otherwise invalidly cast votes would not be counted as part of the total number of votes. This would lower the bar for the number of overall votes needed for the referendum to pass. But is this compatible with Article 96 of the Constitution? There is debate among constitutional scholars about whether half of all votes should mean (1) half of all votes cast in an effective way, (2) half of all votes cast or (3) half of all votes of the number of registered voters. Mizushima and Takeda concede that the dominant view in constitutional scholarship leans toward the interpretation of half of all votes cast in an effective way. Although the final right of review on this is the prerogative of the Supreme Court. This is also typically lower than the bar for constitutional revision referendums in other countries. For instance in Australia, a referendum requires not

only a majority of votes to support it but also that a majority of states approve the change (Rheuben 2013).

The contents of the law appear to have been designed by the Abe government to make the possibility of constitutional revision more likely. The Abe government's intent in lowering the age of franchise appeared to be based on the assumption that younger voters would be more likely to support constitutional revision generally and an amendment to Article 9 specifically. However, opinion polling and voting analysis shows trends are somewhat mixed in this regard (Wallace 2016; Steel & Haruyama 2015; Nakatani 2017). The short time frame appears to be designed to expedite the process and ward off long-term research reviews, recommendations or watering down of the revisions. The threshold for votes to pass the referendum, which is set as 'half of all votes cast in an effective way', is the lowest possible threshold that could be established within the confines of Article 96 of the Constitution and democratic legitimacy.

The behind the scenes influence of Nippon Kaigi in advocating for this bill is not transparent. However, Nippon Kaigi lists the passage of this law by the Abe governments as key date in a chronology of its history celebrating its 20th anniversary (Nippon Kaigi 2017, p. 23; p. 25). Moreover, Nippon Kaigi lauds the passage of this law and encourages its members to take the opportunity it presents and convince the Japanese public of the necessity of amending the Constitution (Nippon Kaigi 2016).

The establishment of Abe's Advisory Panel on security

The Abe government established the Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security (hereafter, the Advisory Panel) in April 2007. The Advisory Panel was given a mandate to analyse legal bases on four topics: (1) the protection of US Navy vessels on the high seas, (2) the interception of a ballistic missile possibly directed at the United States, (3) the use of force in international peacekeeping operations and (4) logistical support for foreign forces participating in peacekeeping operations or other activities (Advisory Panel 2008; Nasu 2016, p. 255). A report by the Advisory Panel was subsequently issued in June 2008. It recommended 'an interpretation of Article 9 of the Constitution that would permit the exercise of the right of collective self-defense and a more proactive engagement in United Nations collective security actions' (Nasu 2016, p. 256; The Advisory Panel 2008, pp. 22-31).

However, no serious discussion was undertaken about the Advisory Panel's findings. In the words of one member of the panel, 'as Prime Minister Abe had resigned before the Panel could complete it, the report was submitted to Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda in 2008. Prime Minister Fukuda put the report on the back burner, and his administration did not consider its findings' (Kitaoka 2014, p. 11). As will be discussed below, however, the Advisory Panel and its report set the basis for a reconvened Advisory Panel during Abe's second stint as prime minister. This second panel in turn set the basis for the July 2014 cabinet decision to reinterpret Article 9 to permit limited forms of collective self-defence and the September 2015 security-related bills.

Downfall of the first Abe government

The public voted to punish the Abe government in the July 2007 upper house election. This resulted in the first 'twisted Diet' (the situation where the opposition controls the upper house and the government controls the lower house) since 1998. The DPJ earned a convincing win for the first time in its history taking a total of 109 seats in the upper house, up 28 from before the election. The LDP by contrast was bumped down to 83 seats losing a total of 27 seats.

While a board meeting of the LDP held after the election ultimately decided to let Abe remain on as president of the party and as prime minister, the defeat was a significant setback for Abe's leadership (*The Japan Times* 2007). This is despite the fact that the scale of the loss was worse than the 1998 upper house election loss that forced then prime minister Ryutaro Hashimoto to step down. Instead LDP secretary general Hidenao Nakagawa was scapegoated and stepped down to take responsibility for the defeat.

Much of the analysis in the aftermath of the election focused on gaffes that had plagued the Abe government and forced a number of ministers to resign (Reuters 2007) as well as Abe's excessive focus on revising the Constitution. The general consensus was that Abe was out of touch with ordinary Japanese. While Abe was focused on nationalistic issues, including patriotic education reform and revising the Constitution, voters were more concerned with bread and butter issues of the economy (CNN 2007; *The Economist* 2007). Abe's ambitions to revise Article 9 and the passage of the LCPACJ were symbolic of the perception gap between him and the public.

In addition to the poor election result, also reflective of the gap between Abe and the public was the plummeting cabinet approval rating. Abe's cabinet approval started out quite high at 65 per cent in October 2006 in the first opinion poll after he entered office. However, it soon fell to 37 per cent in June 2007 after the passage of the LCPACJ, and to a low of 29 per cent in August 2007 a month before he resigned on 26 September 2007 (after just over a year in the top job) (NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute 2006, 2007).

Abe was also criticised for the timing of his resignation, which came three days into the start of a new parliamentary session after a summer recess. Pressure was building on Abe to call a lower house election. He was accused of having lost the public's trust or having never having had it in the first place. After all, Abe came into the prime ministership by winning the election to be party president of the LDP on the back the resignation of Junichiro Koizumi. Abe himself had no popular mandate from the national ballot box. Yet in spite of the poor upper house election result, Abe had throughout the end of July and August steadfastly refused to resign or call a general election for the lower house (Onishi 2007). Moreover, Abe had also just reshuffled his cabinet two weeks earlier, a move that was sold to the public as giving his government a fresh start (Onishi 2007).

One scholar called the way in which Abe resigned 'unprecedented' and concluded that while 'other prime ministers resigned after putting up a good fight and made the reasons for their resignation very clear the way Abe resigned suggests he lacked the qualifications to be prime minister in the first place' (Onishi 2007). It must be noted that Abe suffers from a condition known as chronic ulcerative colitis, a type of inflammatory bowel disease. While Abe explained his resignation as a combination of having lost the trust of the people and hoping that a new prime minister 'would be better able to carry out his policies' (Onishi 2007), he also cited his health condition as a major factor. Whether his health condition was a legitimate part of the equation or simply a convenient excuse is still the subject of speculation today (*Japan Today* 2014), although the truth may be somewhere in the middle.

Article 9 on the backburner

Given the unpopularity of Abe's groundwork manoeuvring aimed at revising Article 9, future governments once again avoided the issue. Abe's successors in the LDP, Yasuo Fukuda and Taro Aso never visibly put constitutional revision on the agenda. Fukuda seemed more

inclined toward reinterpreting Article 9 but had an acute understanding of the weight of the political climate against revising Article 9 as Abe's immediate successor (Tanaka 2007, p. 3). Aso too is known to favour revising the constitution and Article 9. He is famous for a gaffe when he mentioned learning lessons from the Nazis and the quiet revision of Germany's Weimar Constitution during a speech at a right-wing think tank (Mishima 2014, pp. 1-5; Mitter 2013) and is one of Abe's core supporters in government today as his deputy prime minister. Yet Aso made no serious attempt to put it on the agenda during his prime ministership.

In August 2009, after the DPJ won government in a landslide election, constitutional revision was also knocked further down the political agenda. Ichiro Ozawa was secretary general of the DPJ under prime minister Hatoyama and seen as something of a 'shadow shogun'. After the release of his abovementioned book in 1993, he split off from the LDP, led his supporters through a maze of different opposition parties and found his way back into power masterminding the DPJ's electoral strategy. Given that Ozawa was one of the key actors that opened the constitutional revision debate and advocated adding a third paragraph to Article 9 to legalise the active participation of the SDF in UN PKOs including the use of force for collective self-defence under UN Command, there was some speculation about what direction the new government might take on defence policy. The DPJ's major contributions to defence policy were to emphasise the need to 'respond seamlessly' to 'grey zone' situations that lie 'between peacetime and wartime' (Nasu 2016, p. 256). This was in part out of a growing concern over increased Chinese activity in the vicinity of the disputed Senkaku Islands that Japan maintains effective control over (Nasu 2016, p. 256; Fouse 2011, pp. 6-8). In the end however, within the fractured ideological landscape that divided the party, Ozawa did not have the support of enough of the key DPJ policymakers to get such a nationally divisive agenda up and running so constitutional revision never made it onto the DPJ political agenda (Berkofsky 2012, pp. 171-172).

The second Abe government (2012-present): the battle for collective self-defence

After five years in the political wilderness, Shinzo Abe retook the leadership of the LDP in a party presidential election in September 2012 defeating Sadakazu Tanigaki. And three months later on 14 December 2012 the Abe-led LDP defeated the DPJ in the lower house general election and retook control of the government. Having learnt from his experience during his first stint as prime minister and realising that he could not rush the implementation

of formally revising Article 9, Abe did not rush as quickly as before to pursue his primary objective but still took careful and decisive steps.

During the LDP party presidential election campaign Abe was clearly the most hawkish candidate on defence policy. Abe stated during the campaign debate that ‘Japan’s beautiful seas and its territory are under threat...I promise to protect Japan’s land and sea, and the lives of the Japanese people, no matter what’ (McCurry 2012). In an interview with *Foreign Affairs* for their July/August 2013 issue, which declared that ‘Japan is back’, Abe argued that while he had ‘full confidence’ in the US-Japan alliance, Japan needed to take more responsibility for its own defence (Abe 2013b, p. 7). When asked about Article 9, Abe said that ‘I think that our constitution should stipulate that our Self-Defense Forces are military’ and that ‘even if we amended the constitution and were able to exercise the right to collective self-defense, we would still be in a...limited position’ (Abe 2013b, p. 8).

During the campaign for the lower house election and as his government started out, Abe emphasised the economy and his Abenomics economic policy package. Yet the Abe government did implement an array of significant defence policy changes in areas other than the Constitution, Article 9 and collective self-defence during its first year and a half. This included the establishment of a US-style National Security Council (Takahashi 2013a) and the passage of the Protection of Specially Designated Secrets Act to facilitate intelligence sharing with allies (which has been heavily criticised by critics as clamping media freedom) both in December 2013 (Takahashi 2013b; Umeda 2015). Japan also released its first ever National Security Strategy in December 2013, which emphasises increased security cooperation with partners beyond the United States such as Australia, India and Southeast Asian nations (Tatsumi 2014). In April 2014 the Abe government replaced the Three Principles on Arms Exports with the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology which loosened restrictions on Japanese arms exports (Shiraishi 2014; MOFA 2014c). In June 2014 ‘a panel of specialists under Japanese foreign minister Fumio Kishida submitted a report that recommended transforming Japan’s foreign aid policy into a “strategic” diplomatic tool’ (Furuoka 2014). This paved the way for Japan’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) Charter to be replaced by the Development Cooperation Charter in February 2015 allowing for ‘non-military’ support to foreign nations’ militaries and coast guards from the ODA budget (Furuoka 2014, 2016).

After a year in power Abe appeared to become more confident. This was symbolised by his trip to the Yasukuni Shrine on 26 December 2013, marking the one-year anniversary of his second stint as prime minister. Abe's stronger command of executive power has been aided by the 'erosion of the checks and balances on prime ministerial power due to changes in party politics, the media, and the balance of power between elected officials and the bureaucracy' (Tanaka 2018). Within the LDP there has been a decline in the importance of factions. Whereas ministerial portfolios used to be distributed to reflect the balance of power among LDP factions, and ministers had greater autonomy vis-à-vis the prime minister in pushing the direction of policy within their area, 'no rival leader within the LDP seems capable of seriously moderating Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's agenda' (Tanaka 2018). The media environment in Japan has also worsened considerably during Abe's prime ministership. Since Abe took office in December 2012, Japan's *Reporters Without Borders* press freedom ranking has dropped from 22 to 72 and to last among the G7. Abe unleashed attacks on the *Asahi Shimbun* and 'media reporting is polarized between those outlets, such as *Yomiuri Shimbun*, which consistently support the government, and those outlets, such as *Asahi Shimbun*, which consistently criticize it' (Tanaka 2018).

The Japanese bureaucracy has become more timid as politicians have taken greater control of policymaking. 'In May 2014, the Cabinet Bureau of Personnel Affairs (CBPA) opened its doors bringing all the previously autonomous personnel departments of the government's ministries, agencies and offices under one roof. The CBPA has the power to evaluate, elevate or side track Japan's top 600 bureaucrats. This gives it the means to enforce bureaucratic loyalty to the elected government, rather than to the ministry in which the individual bureaucrat serves' (Cucek 2016). While it is politicians who are elected by the people to decide policy, the new level of control over top bureaucrats means that they 'risk becoming "yes men" unwilling to offer serious advice or constructive criticism to political leaders for fear of their future career prospects' (Tanaka 2018). It is in this context that the Abe government began its pursuit to recognise the right of collective self-defence through a reinterpretation of Article 9.

The Advisory Panel on the Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security

In February 2013, Prime Minister Abe reconvened the Advisory Panel on the Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security (the Advisory Panel). The Advisory Panel consisted mostly of

security experts and lacked constitutional law experts. The one law expert who was included as a member, Osamu Nishi, is a member of Nippon Kaigi (Nishi 2016). This time the Advisory Panel was given a broader mandate compared with 2007. It was instructed to ‘examine actions Japan should take to maintain its peace and security, and to ensure its survival in the new and emerging security environment’ (Nasu 2016, p. 257; The Advisory Panel 2014, p. 3).

On 15 May 2014, the Advisory Panel released its report (the May Report) with its recommendations for the government. Rather than attempting to emphasise continuity with past precedents as previous reinterpretations of Article 9 had generally done, the May Report instead put forth its own interpretation for a legal basis on the use of force.

Table 2: A chronology of key events in the passage of the security-related bills

- 16 December 2012: The Abe-led LDP wins the lower house election and takes back power from the DPJ.
- 26 December 2012: The second Abe cabinet assumes office.
- 13 February 2013: The Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security is reconvened.
- 15 May 2014: The Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security submits its report to Prime Minister Abe.
- 20 May 2014: LDP-Komeito negotiations begin. (Six weeks).
- 1 July 2014: Cabinet decision made on the ‘Development of Seamless Security Legislation to Ensure Japan’s Survival and Protect its People’.
- 24 December 2014: The third Abe cabinet assumes office after a snap election.
- 13 February 2015: LDP-Komeito negotiations resume.
- 27 April 2015: Revised US-Japan Defense Cooperation Guidelines announced.
- 14 May 2015: The LDP and Komeito reach agreement on the security-related bills.
- 15 May 2015: The government submits the security-related bills to the lower house.
- 22 May 2015: Deliberations on the security-related bills begin in the lower house (116 hours).
- 16 July 2015: The security-related bills are passed by the lower house.
- 27 July 2015: Deliberations on the security-related bills begin in the upper house (100 hours).
- 19 September 2015: The security-related bills are passed by the upper house.

Collective Self-defence

If the May Report had have been adopted as the basis for the security-related bills, the right of the SDF to exercise collective self-defence would have been recognised without significant qualification. In particular, the May Report recommended that the SDF be permitted to exercise collective self-defence in the following situation:

‘When a foreign country that is in a close relationship with Japan comes under an armed attack and if such a situation has the potential to significantly affect the security of Japan, Japan should be able to participate in operations to repel such an attack by using force to the minimum extent necessary, having obtained an explicit request or consent of the country under attack, and thus to make a contribution to the maintenance and restoration of international peace and security even if Japan itself is not directly attacked’ (The Advisory Panel 2014, pp. 29-30).

There were only two real qualifications given by the Advisory Panel. First, ‘in the case that Japan would pass through the territory of a third country when exercising the right of collective self-defense, the Government should make it a policy to obtain the consent of that third country’. Second, the exercise of the right of collective self-defense ‘should require the approval, either prior or ex post facto, of the Diet’ (The Advisory Panel 2014, p. 30).

The key phrase here is ‘significantly affect’ (*jyudai na eikyo*) on the security of Japan. The May Report gives some guidance on what sort of situations this would include. In particular, five key criteria are given as listed below:

- whether there is a high possibility the situation could lead to a direct attack against Japan
- whether not taking action could significantly undermine trust in the Japan-U.S. alliance, thus leading to a significant loss of deterrence
- whether international order itself could be significantly affected
- whether the lives and rights of Japanese nationals could be harmed severely
- whether there could otherwise be serious effects on Japan (The Advisory Panel 2014, p. 30)

Choosing from this menu of significant effects on Japan would have given the government significant leeway to commit the SDF to a wide variety of operations involving the exercise of collective self-defence. Ultimately, however, these are only points for ‘consideration’ and ‘the Government should take responsibility for making a decision’ (The Advisory Panel 2014, p. 30).

The theory of ‘ittaika’

In addition to collective self-defence, the Advisory Panel also addressed the concept of *ittaiika*. This can be defined as actions by Japan that constitute an integral part in the use of force by another country and therefore those actions by Japan can be deemed to be a violation of the use of force under Article 9. For instance, ‘Japan’s logistics support, which does not in itself constitute the use of force, including supply, transportation and medical services, could be deemed to constitute the use of force prohibited under Article 9 of the Constitution if the logistics support forms an integral part of the use of force by the other countries to which the support is provided’ (The Advisory Panel 2014, p. 35).

The Advisory Panel recommended that the concept of *ittaiika* should be discontinued. In the Advisory Panel’s words, ‘there is no clear basis...in international law or domestic law for such theory, and neither have any judicial rulings by the Supreme Court been made on the subject’ (The Advisory Panel 2014, pp. 34-35). The Advisory Panel cautioned that ‘following this concept through in a logical sequence could in fact lead to the unreasonable conclusion that the Japan-US Security Treaty itself constitutes a breach of the Constitution’ (The Advisory Panel 2014, p. 35). The Advisory Panel further claimed there was confusion regarding ‘what circumstances logistics support is deemed to form an integral part of the use of force by other countries; who makes the decision about whether it is deemed or not; and what the criteria is for “combat areas” (where logistical support is not permitted) and “non-combat areas” (where logistical support is permitted)’ (The Advisory Panel 2014, p. 35). As such, if the May Report was adopted the SDF would have had unrestricted ability to perform logistics support irrespective of how it was used by other countries and where it was conducted.

Loosening PKO restrictions

The use of weapons by the SDF dispatched on UN PKOs under the 1992 PKO Law was limited to the minimum necessary to protect the lives of SDF personnel. This meant that the SDF could not even protect civilians under attack. This was part of the five principles on Japan’s participation in UN PKOs that Komeito negotiated before agreeing to support the LDP in the passage of this legislation. The Advisory Panel recommended that *kaketsuke keigo* (the use of weapons to come to the aid of geographically distant units or personnel participating in the same operations who are under attack or to remove obstructive attempts against its missions) should not be judged to constitute ‘the “use of force” and should

therefore be interpreted as not being restricted constitutionally' (The Advisory Panel 2014, p. 37).

Negotiations with Komeito

In order to actually implement policy, however, the Abe government was reliant on its junior coalition partner, Komeito. This meant that to pass any cabinet decision or pass any laws the LDP needed the support of Komeito. LDP-Komeito governments tend to have a Komeito Diet member as a member of the cabinet. Moreover, the LDP did not have the requisite 50 per cent majorities in lower and upper houses needed to pass the bills, so compromise with Komeito was a procedural necessity.

In addition to the procedural requirements, the LDP is also reliant on Komeito in a longer-term sense, despite the fact that Komeito is the junior partner with relatively few Diet seats. The LDP cannot afford to lose Komeito as a coalition partner because of their electoral cooperation agreement. Under this agreement, Komeito and the LDP do not run candidates against each other in the single member districts that form a large portion of the seats in both the lower and upper houses. Each party instructs its supporters to vote for the other party in districts where they do not run a candidate. While the Komeito core support group is relatively small it is also incredibly reliable due to the culture of 'electioneering as religious practice' (McLaughlin 2015, p. 9) among its Soka Gakkai supporter base. As such, 'Komeito voters supply between 5 and 20 per cent of the votes LDP candidates receive' and 'many LDP politicians' seats would be under serious threat if this deal came unstuck' (Cucek 2016).

Komeito did not accept the recommendations of the May Report given its ideological background. Komeito was established as a political offshoot of the Nichiren Buddhist movement Soka Gakkai. Its founders, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda, were arrested by the wartime military government for their 'absolute loyalty to the Lotus Sutra as expounded by the small Buddhist sect, Nichiren Shoshu. Consequently, they would not accept the Japanese government's requirement to place a talisman of the Shinto Sun Goddess, Amaterasu, on their Nichiren Shoshu altar' (Victoria 2016). This event as well as the fact that Makiguchi died in jail a martyr has been portrayed by Soka Gakkai and Komeito as evidence that Makiguchi and Toda were arrested 'for speaking out against the abuse of the educational process for militarist purposes' (Ascione 2016). As such, most Soka Gakkai members, who

make up the core supporter base of Komeito, tend to hold some form of pacifist political views and a conviction to protect Article 9.

Komeito successfully managed to convince its supporters to qualify their absolute pacifist stance (McLaughlin 2015). One tactic it has used to achieve this is to brand itself as the ‘the opposition within the government’ (*yoto no naka no yato*). The idea behind this is that Komeito’s position within the ruling coalition is critical to moderate LDP excesses.

Komeito supported a number of previous security legislation together with the LDP over the course of the post-Cold War years. This included Komeito supporting the LDP in passing the 1992 PKO Law after negotiating principles that limit SDF activities on UN missions to ceasefire areas rather than active conflict zones and curtail SDF use of weapons to the minimum necessary to protect the lives of SDF personnel. Komeito also supported the LDP to permit the dispatch of the SDF to the Indian Ocean to refuel US ships en route to Afghanistan under the 2001 ATSMML and to Iraq in 2003 under the LCSMHRA to carry out humanitarian operations such as building schools and water purification.

Komeito showed no intention to scuttle the May Report in its entirety. When the LDP-Komeito negotiations began on 20 May 2014, there were a number of LDP politicians who were hoping that the discussions would fail. In the words of Komeito Diet member Kiyohiko Toyama ‘if discussions had ended unsuccessfully, [the LDP] could use that as a major reason to justify their new movement to change the Japanese constitution itself’ (Fisker-Nielsen 2016, p. 15). In other words, Komeito politicians themselves viewed the successful negotiation of a moderated version of the LDP’s proposal in the form of the security-related bills as a move that would forestall momentum on constitutional revision of the radical nature proposed in the LDP’s 2012 draft constitution.

The leader of Komeito, Natsuo Yamaguchi, ‘stated at an early stage of the negotiations that Komeito would not leave the coalition because of disagreement with the LDP on the issue of the security legislation’ (Fisker-Nielsen 2016, p. 16). In this way he sought to kill off any hope that the negotiations would be deliberately sabotaged. Yamaguchi was immediately criticised by the media for giving away his trump card, the threat of withdrawing from the coalition, but Komeito politicians did not see it that way. In Yamaguchi’s own words, ‘the security bills were proposed by the LDP. Komeito responded in a realistic manner...our goal

was to impose limitations on the legislation while respecting the original intentions of the Constitution and emphasizing the legal stability that has developed over the years’ (Yamaguchi 2016; Fisker-Nielsen 2016, p. 16).

In response to the Advisory Panel’s recommendations in the May Report Komeito insisted on three key changes before it agreed to the cabinet decision in July 2014 and to submit together with the LDP the security-related bills for deliberation in the Diet in May 2015. First, Komeito insisted on limiting the recognition of the exercise of collective self-defence to ‘survival crisis’ (*sonritsu kiki*) situations. Second, Komeito demanded that the government retain the concept of *ittaika*. Third, it insisted that the use of force during UN PKOs under the concept of *kake tsuke keigo* (come-to-aid or rush-to-rescue missions) be limited to situations necessary to defend the PKO mission mandate.

Collective self-defence

The May Report’s wording about situations that have the potential to significantly affect Japanese security (*jyudai na eikyo*) was changed to survival situations (*sonritsu kiki*) in the July cabinet decision. Komeito also insisted on keeping the other conditions for the use of force as previously upheld by successive governments. Namely, that force should only be used when there are no other appropriate means available to repel an attack and limited to the minimum necessary for self-defence. The changes between the May Report and the July cabinet decision on the use of force for collective self-defence are as per below (underline added to show the contrast).

The May Report states that:

‘when a foreign country that is in a close relationship with Japan comes under an armed attack and if such a situation has the potential to significantly affect the security of Japan, Japan should be able to participate in operations to repel such an attack by using force to the minimum extent necessary’ (The Advisory Panel 2014, pp. 29-30);

By contrast, the July cabinet decision states that:

‘when an armed attack against a foreign country that is in a close relationship with Japan occurs and as a result threatens Japan’s survival and poses a clear danger to fundamentally overturn people’s right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, and when there is no other appropriate

means available to repel the attack and ensure Japan's survival and protect its people, use of force to the minimum extent necessary should be interpreted to be permitted under the Constitution as measures for self-defence in accordance with the basic logic of the Government's view to date' (The Second Abe Cabinet 2014, pp. 7-8).

Essentially, this resulted in the Abe government adopting a new interpretation whereby collective self-defence was divided into two distinct categories. On the one hand, there is 'collective self-defence purely for the defence of other countries' (Akimoto 2016, p. 161). This continues to be unconstitutional as before. On the other hand, there is 'collective self-defence for the defence of Japan' (Akimoto 2016, p. 161). This is considered constitutional under the reinterpretation of Article 9 under the July 2014 cabinet decision and the implementing September 2015 security-related bills.

A key example of this, as described by Daisuke Akimoto (2016, p. 160), would be a case where the SDF acts to protect a US Aegis destroyer that is operating in accord with the US-Japan Security Treaty, the US Aegis destroyer is preparing to intercept missiles by an aggressor that has already attacked a third country and is attempting to attack both the United States and Japan, and because the US Aegis destroyer is relatively occupied by preparation for a missile defence operation it is relatively vulnerable to attacks by fighter aircrafts. As Akimoto explains, 'if Japan protects the US Aegis destroyer, the action would be regarded as an exercise of the right to collective self-defence, but the purpose itself is the defence of Japan. If Japan does not take any appropriate measures in the situation, it is highly likely that the aggressor would launch another missile against Japan. In this sense, the protection of the US Aegis destroyer can serve the defence of Japan' (2016, p. 160).

Maintaining the concept of 'ittaiika'

Whereas the May Report argued in favour of discontinuing the concept of *ittaiika*, the July cabinet decision retained it with an important change. Previously, the government's position on *ittaiika* was that rear-area logistical support could only be conducted from 'non-combat zones'. Under the July 2014 cabinet decision this was changed to 'the scene where combat activities are actually being conducted' (The Second Abe Cabinet 2014, p. 4).

Additionally, the dispatches of the SDF to the Indian Ocean and to Iraq to engage in logistical support activities (refuelling of ships en route to Afghanistan and rebuilding schools and

water purification facilities respectively) required the Diet to pass special temporary measures laws. The passage of the new permanent law means that the SDF can be dispatched for logistical support missions without the passage of a temporary law each time. Komeito was also influential in shaping limits on this permanent law. In the deliberation process, Komeito proposed three conditions that were accepted by the government. First, SDF dispatches should be consistent with international law, such as through ‘UN resolutions adopted on the basis of the UN Charter as international law’ (Akimoto 2016, p. 145). Second, civilian control and public support should be maintained, meaning ‘the Diet should be involved in the decision-making process as a representative of the Japanese public...Komeito successfully persuaded the LDP to include Diet approval prior to the dispatch “without exception”’ (Akimoto 2016, p. 145). Third, the government will implement ‘necessary measures to ensure the safety of SDF personnel deployed’ (Akimoto 2016, p. 145).

This is an important development. Under the previous interpretation, for instance, information about the flight patterns of North Korean aircraft could only be provided if it was part of an established program of information sharing. This is because that information could potentially be used by the requesting country to shoot down the North Korean aircraft and this would violate *ittaika*. However, under the security related-bills, a request for information sharing outside of an established information sharing program could be provided without violating *ittaika*, even in response to a special request.

Table 3: The SDF’s Legal mandate to use force

	The pre-Abe interpretation	The Advisory Panel Report (May 2014) (recommendations)	Cabinet decision (July 2014) & the security bills (Sep 2015) (came into force March 2016)
Collective Self-defence	Not permitted	Essentially unrestricted. Situations with a significant influence on Japan’s security (<i>jyudai na eikyo</i>)	Limited to situations which threaten Japan’s survival (<i>sonritsu kiki</i>)
<i>Ittaika</i>	Support from ‘non-combat zones’	<i>Ittaika</i> concept discontinued	Support from ‘area where combat is not currently happening’
UN PKOs & <i>KakeTsuke Keigo</i>	Not permitted	Permitted	Permitted within the scope of a PKO mission mandate

PKO restrictions

The loosening of the restrictions on SDF dispatches for UN PKOs received relatively little public attention compared with other aspects of the security-related bills. Indeed, on this count ‘no serious objection appears to have been raised in the Diet during the legislative process or by the public at large’ (Nasu 2016, p. 159). The one change that Komeito insisted upon was that the use of weapons by the SDF on UN PKOs for the purpose of *kaketsuke keigo* should only be permitted in circumstances where it is necessary ‘for the purpose of the execution of missions’ (Akimoto 2016, p. 143) as per the particular UN PKO mandate. The use of weapons by the SDF, previously only permitted for self-preservation, was expanded to permit the protection of civilians under the SDF’s care without objection. The types of missions the SDF may engage in were also expanded to ‘include international peace and humanitarian operations undertaken by other international or regional organizations’ (Nasu 2016, p. 159) other than the UN.

The debate in the Diet

The main opposition party, the DPJ, adopted a position opposing the security-related bills in their entirety. The DPJ was divided internally. It was a mismatch of politicians from a number of disparate sources who had come together in the name of presenting a united front against the LDP. It included diversity of the political spectrum with former members of the now defunct JSP as well as former members of the LDP. The DPJ strategy came about due to the lack of agreement between the different factions within the party. A number of right-leaning party security specialists were mostly in favour of the security bills bar a few minor revisions (Nagashima 2015). Centrists could support many of the elements of the package but were opposed to recognising collective self-defence and left-leaning politicians were on the whole against the bills. Unable to come to an agreement on the content of the bills or any particular elements to debate substantively, emphasising that the bills were unconstitutional and opposing them wholesale ended up becoming the party position by default. The one thing they could agree on was opposing the LDP.

The DPJ’s opposition to the security-related bills was also despite the fact that some DPJ members had openly advocated in favour of collective self-defence. ‘During a campaign for the opposition DPJ presidency a decade earlier, Yoshihiko Noda, Abe’s immediate predecessor as prime minister, had...only openly called for [collective self-defence] to be made constitutional’ (Liff 2017, p. 159). The changes to security policy made under the DPJ government between 2009 and 2012, through the Council on Security and Defence

Capabilities in the New Era report ‘Japan’s Visions for Future Security and Defence Capabilities’ and the 2010 National Defence Program Guidelines, were also largely building upon the direction that the previous LDP government was facing.

The DPJ’s opposition to the security-related bills focused primarily on the argument that they were unconstitutional. This argument was presented with a divine wind when, on 4 June 2015, a committee examining constitutional change, unrelated to the security-related bills discussions, invited three constitutional scholar experts to testify at the Diet. The experts were Waseda University Professor Yasuo Hasebe, who was picked by the LDP, and Keio University Professor Setsu Kobayashi and Waseda University Professor Eiji Sasada, who were selected by the opposition. The DPJ seized on this opportunity to bring up the security-related bills. All three of the expert witnesses testified that in their opinion the security-related bills were unconstitutional (National Diet Library 2015). This turned out to be a pivotal moment and shifted the nature of the debate and the media focus. There was even talk, which was leaked in the media, that the LDP politician who selected Professor Hasebe as an expert witness should be punished, further tarnishing the Abe government’s embarrassing moment.

In Diet exchanges there was a focus on collective self-defence, which the opposition parties argued was an unconstitutional violation of Article 9. If the government wanted to exercise collective self-defence it would have to follow the proper procedure and amend the Constitution. If collective self-defence was permitted under the current Constitution, then it was argued that the rule of law in Japan would be destroyed. The government countered that the security-related bills were based on an extension of the accumulated legal understandings of the government, that it was the CLB that advised the government on legal issues regarding laws including constitutionality, and that the Supreme Court reserved the right to make the final judgment on the constitutionality of any law. Ultimately, rather than having a substantive debate over the actual contents of the security bills, or over what measures are necessary to ensure the security of Japan, much of the debate became a case of the government and opposition talking past each other.

The opposition also focused on the excessive scope of the right to exercise collective self-defence. Prime Minister Abe had often referred to a hypothetical example in the Strait of Hormuz in which Iran deployed sea mines. This was argued to constitute a threat to Japan

due to its energy supplies, a great deal of which are imported from the Middle East and pass through that shipping lane, being cut off. Ultimately, however, in the later stages of Diet deliberations Abe was forced to backpedal ‘on this remark, saying the government didn’t specifically assume that the SDF would actually engage in such operations’ (*Asahi Shimbun* 2018).

This is consistent with the Komeito understanding of the bills. Komeito guidance to the LDP on how to answer Diet questioning argued ‘that “a foreign country that is in a close relationship with Japan” is actually a country which is engaged in defending Japan from a potential enemy’ (Fisker-Nielsen 2016, p. 17). If the sea mines are not an attack against a foreign country ‘in a close relationship with Japan’ the right to collective self-defence could not be exercised. Moreover, the threat of energy cut offs via a blockage of the Strait of Hormuz should not be considered to constitute an attack that threatened Japan’s survival (*sonritsu kiki*). In other words, ‘the trigger for resorting to the exercise of collective self-defence should be read by both Japan’s neighbours and future Japanese governments as being related exclusively to defensive objectives. While some of the government explanations in the Diet debates may have been misleading — especially the example of a demining mission in the Hormuz Strait, which suggested that economic triggers such as an oil price increase would be permissible — Japan is still highly constrained in terms of pursuing collective self-defence as a tool to achieve any political or economic agenda’ (Tanaka 2015, p. 2).

Future revision prospects

Nippon Kaigi and Shinzo Abe had aimed to revise the Constitution so as to recognise the SDF’s unrestricted exercise of collective self-defence as under the LDP 2012 draft constitution proposal. However, the current approach adopted by the Abe administration has seen a marked watering down of ambition. This reflects a more realistic approach.

After the 2016 upper house election, the LDP along with Komeito and other micro-sized pro-revision parties held the two-thirds majority of seats needed in both houses of the Diet in order to initiate a proposed constitutional revision. The hurdle thus became what revision can the pro-revision parties agree on that is likely to also muster public approval at a national referendum. As such, the Abe government has adopted an approach where it proposes to add a third paragraph to Article 9 to explicitly recognise the constitutionality of the SDF for the defence of Japan. This approach would leave unaltered the existing first two paragraphs that

forswear war as an instrument of the state, the use of force as a means of settling international disputes and the maintenance of standing forces for those purposes.

This approach appears to have first been suggested by Tetsuo Ito, head of the Japan Policy Institute and director of the Nippon Kaigi policy committee (Ito 2017; Weiss 2018, pp. 21-22). It was then subsequently announced by Prime Minister Abe on 3 May, 2017 (which is a public holiday Constitution Memorial Day in Japan) in his video message to Nippon Kaigi supporters (Nippon Kaigi 2017, p. 29). Subsequently, this approach was sold by Abe to the LDP, and the LDP and Nippon Kaigi coordinated through the Nippon Kaigi Parliamentary Discussion Group (*Sankei Shimbun* 2018). Nippon Kaigi's Hokkaido headquarters managing director Yozo Taketani explained that while in his heart he truly wanted a more substantial revision of Article 9 he understood that as a political strategy this was the best approach to take and he hoped it would make it easier to revise the Constitution again in the future too (Taketani 2017).

The adoption of this approach by the Abe government is a testament to the power of public opinion cautious against tampering with Article 9. This approach was adopted because it is calculated as the most effective way to formally revise Article 9 with a possible chance of actually being accepted by the public at the necessary national referendum, which would be needed to formally revise the Constitution. At this juncture, it remains to be seen if the Abe administration will be able to get this revision through the Diet and a national referendum during his remaining time in office. However, passing such a revision of Article 9 under this approach it more symbolic than substantial. While it would have little to no effect on the actual day-to-day operations of the SDF, it aims to change public attitudes toward the SDF as an institution.

Conclusion

The political battles between the left-wing coalition seeking to preserve Article 9 and the right-wing coalition seeing to escape the post-war regime and rescind Article 9 show the importance of domestic politics in shaping the roles and missions of the SDF. The right wing was influential in particular through Nippon Kaigi. As Milbrath's model would predict, Nippon Kaigi's cultivation of deep linkages with Diet members through the Nippon Kaigi Parliamentary Discussion Group has enabled it generate influence. Nippon Kaigi has been able to successfully embed its ideology and objectives into the LDP's policy on the

Constitution. These linkages help steer and give confidence to the Abe government in the mission to revise the Constitution and escape the post-war regime.

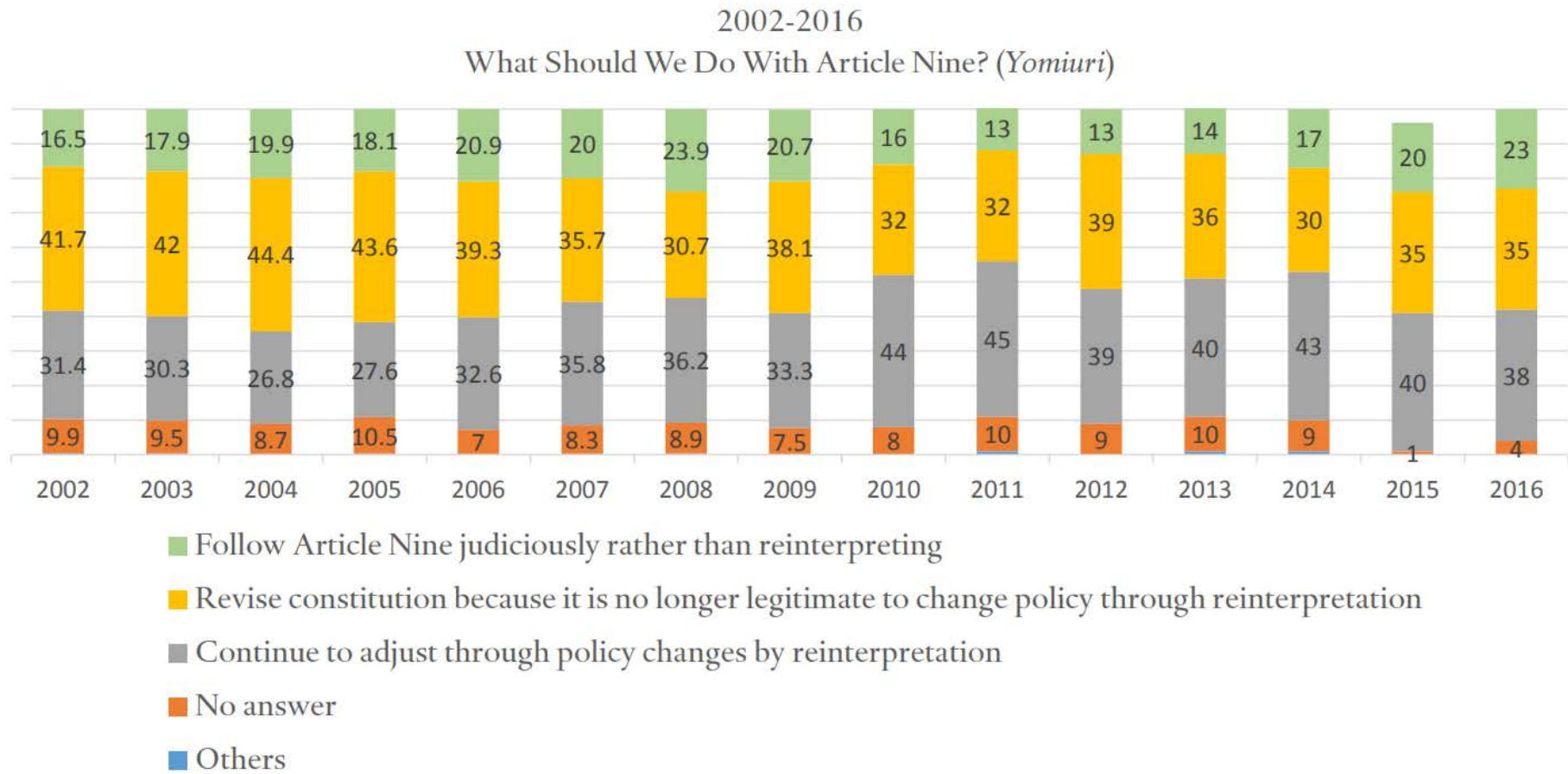
Ultimately, however, the influence of the right wing with regard to Article 9 has been decidedly mixed. This is because the revision of the Constitution requires a higher hurdle than simply influencing the cabinet as the relevant decision-makers. Rather, the difficult task of influencing public opinion is necessary. In the context of its objective of formally rescinding Article 9, Japan's right-wing groups such as Nippon Kaigi have found limited success through the reinterpretation of Article 9 to permit limited forms of collective self-defence. On the one hand, Komeito refused the proposal that the government adopt a new interpretation of Article 9 that would recognise the right of the SDF to engage in an essentially unrestricted exercise of collective self-defence based on situations with a significant influence on Japan's security (*jyudai na eikyo*) and insisted that the recognition of the exercise of collective self-defence be limited to situations that threaten Japan's survival (*sonritsu kiki*). As such it ultimately became a change that more truly maintains Article 9 as the anchor of Japanese foreign and security policy rather than overturning it. On the other hand, such a reinterpretation may have been considered unthinkable a decade ago, and has been described as the most important change to the SDF since its establishment in 1954.

Beyond reinterpretation, the right wing has managed to firmly put the question of formal revision of Article 9 on the national political agenda. However, the prospects of a revision of Article 9 passing a national referendum continue to be unlikely. The right wing has not successfully propagated its narrative that Article 9 is a humiliation and instead the narrative of the necessity of non-combat contributions to international peace and the US-Japan alliance continues to hold sway with the broader public (see Figure 1).

In summary, Nippon Kaigi's development of linkages with politicians and its coordinated effort to promote a new narrative on Article 9 has resulted in mixed outcomes. Political linkages have enabled Nippon Kaigi to embed itself into the constitutional revision policy of the Abe administration. This saw the successful reinterpretation of Article 9 in July 2014 and the passage of the implementing security-related bills in September 2015. Nippon Kaigi can also claim success in working together with the Abe administration to put the question of a constitutional referendum firmly on the national political agenda. However, its narrative that

Article 9 should be wholesale revised or abolished in order for Japan to escape the post-war regime has not been successfully propagated or accepted by the Japanese public.

Figure 1: Public opinion on Article 9 among *Yomiuri Shimbun* readers



(Source: Asaoka & Teraoka 2016)

6 A hard line on North Korea

North Korea has been a useful enemy for Japan's right wing. As the right wing seeks to escape the post-war regime and pursues its drive to revise Article 9 of the post-war Constitution, it has constructed a narrative of threats, perceived and real, in the regional security environment surrounding Japan. This includes the threat posed by the post-war regime and its irresponsible pacifism, which it is argued prevents Japan from protecting its territory and people. The North Korean threat to Japan is epitomised by the North Korea abduction of Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s. Japan's right-wing groups, especially NARKN, have sought to use the abduction issue to transform Japanese thinking about itself as a nation and to portray Japan as a victim country in the post-war era. In turn, Japan's right-wing groups have used this victim mentality to push the Japanese government, through cooperation with Rachi Giren, to pursue an unrealistically defined resolution of the abduction issue through a hardline policy of sanctions without engagement, and to advocate for the loosening or abolition of the legal restraints on the SDF's right to the use of force. This approach to the abduction issue neglects the broader history of Japanese colonial transgressions on the Korean peninsula and creates significant hurdles to Japan's constructive participation in North Korean denuclearisation negotiations.

The right-wing narrative to escape the post-war regime and the approach this demands toward North Korea is underpinned by the right's historical revisionist world view, which idealises and beautifies Japan's imperial and colonial past, and a preoccupation with recovering national pride (Takahashi 2010, p. 21; Akaha 2008, p. 157). North Korea's nuclear weapons and espionage activities, of course, constitute a level of threat to Japan. However, the right wing's absolute insistence on a hard-line approach toward North Korea is the result of its logic being bended through its ideological lens. This in turn has shaped and constrained Japanese thinking about the level and nature of the threat posed by North Korea and the strategic options available.

This chapter will analyse how the right-wing coalition of domestic political actors has corralled Japan's North Korea policy into a hard-line approach and used North Korea in its pursuit to escape the post-war regime. First, the historical background of Japan's relations with the Korean peninsula will be examined in relations to the right-wing historical

revisionist discourse. This shows that the right-wing construction of Japan as a victim vis-à-vis North Korea neglects the historical context. Second Japan-DPRK relations during the Cold War will be considered in relation to Japan's right-wing discourse. Third, Japan's post-Cold War attempts at engagement with North Korea and the attempt by the Koizumi government to realise a grand bargain to normalise Japan-DPRK relations will be scrutinised with reference to the interplay between international and domestic pressures. Fourth, the right wing's use of the abduction issue to foment national consensus on a hard-line approach toward North Korea will be analysed. Finally, the right wing's narrative of Japan as a victim and the use of North Korean threat discourse to advocate for the need to escape the post-war regime and revise Article 9 of the Constitution will be analysed.

Background

The narrative promoted by Japan's right-wing groups, particularly NARKN — that North Korea's Kim family regime is evil, that hard line pressure is the only way to rescue the abductees, and that the abductions are a clear-cut violation of Japanese sovereignty resulting from Japan's weakness under the post-war regime — is based on a revisionist understanding of history. This revisionist history beautifies Imperial Japan, the Imperial Japanese Army, Japan's colonial regime in Korea and the Institution of the Japanese Emperor as rooted in Japanese right-wing ideology. The right wing's historical revisionist world view denies Japanese transgressions against the Korean people, especially during the colonial period between 1910 and 1945. A key ingredient of this argument is to emphasise the quasi-legal nature of the annexation treaty, which Japan forced Korea to sign in 1910. This context has empowered the right wing to underscore the heinous nature of North Korea's abductions of Japanese citizens while emphasising Japanese victimhood and the 'evil' nature of the North Korean regime (Hagström & Hanssen 2015).

One claim by the Japanese right is that Japan's colonisation aided Korea's economic development. While Japan did invest in modernising the Korean economy and boost economic growth (King 1975, pp. 10-12), right-wing revisionists neglect the fact that this was primarily for Japanese benefit and did not extend to the majority of Koreans (Blomquist & Wertz 2015). For instance, while rice production in Korea increased by 38 per cent between 1912 and 1936, the 'export of rice from Korea to Japan increased by 800' per cent (Lee 2006, p. 2). During the same period, Korean per capita consumption of rice decreased from 0.72

sok to 0.40 sok and many Koreans were left starving (Lee Ki-baik 1984, p. 348; Lee 2006, p. 2).

The right ignores the coercive nature of Japan's colonial rule. Japan sought forcibly to assimilate the Korean population as subjects of the Japanese empire. Koreans were assigned Japanese names, forced to use the Japanese language exclusively in public, and banned from teaching Korean language and history (Caprio 2009, pp. 141-170). Many Koreans were coerced to relocate and engage in forced labour, especially as the Second World War intensified and workers were needed 'to work at jobs left behind by Japanese conscripts' (Blomquist & Wertz 2015; Caprio 2009, pp. 141-170). This includes Korean conscripts who were allocated to work in the coal mines of the family company of Deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso (Aso Mining Company) (Reed 2006; New Matilda 2006; Hongo 2008). It also includes the forcible recruitment of a large number of Korean women to serve as 'comfort women' for Japanese soldiers in brothels at military installations and on the battlefield (Hicks 1997). This alternative view of history has long been a *bête noire* for the Japanese right 'who believe that it besmirches the honour of the wartime Japanese military' (Morris-Suzuki 2014).

The right also ignores massacres of Koreans. The 1919 March First Movement, inspired by then US President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, which declared the right of self-determination for all nations, demanded Korean independence. By one count, in suppressing this protest the Japanese police and army killed 7,509, wounded 15,849 and arrested 46,303 Koreans (Park Eun-sik 2008). When Tokyo experienced a massive earthquake in 1923, false rumours of Korean revolt spread and over 6,000 Koreans in the vicinity of the disaster area were massacred (Yamada 2011). A typical response to this history from the right is from a commentator who labelled Japanese colonial rule as 'moderate' and 'almost fair' in comparison to the brutality dished out in European colonies in Africa and emphasised the role of Korean collaborators in cooperating with the Japanese (Sato 2011).

Japan's colonial rule also played a contributing role in shaping the future politics and geopolitical circumstance on the Korean peninsula. After resistance to Japan within Korea was no longer possible, a number of left-wing resistance guerrilla fighter groups formed in Manchuria in the late 1920s and 1930s. One of the most notorious of these groups was led by the future North Korean leader Kim Il-sung (Cumings 2005, pp. 160-161). Kim's resistance

to the Japanese occupation later became one of the key legitimating doctrines in the founding of the North Korean state under his leadership. According to North Korean propaganda, which forms an 'official' version of history, it was Kim Il-sung, not the Allied powers, which banished Japan from Korea. (Cumings 2005, pp. 160-161). The political system adopted by North Korea was not simply a copy of the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union that backed its creation but was also significantly influenced by Japanese fascism (Myer 2010). In effect, the North Koreans borrowed a number of elements of the Japanese wartime propaganda story, replacing the Japanese emperor with Kim Il-sung as the central and sacred figure of their new political regime (Myer 2010).

Korean grievances vis-à-vis Japan were left to fester after Japan was defeated in the Second World War. The San Francisco Peace Treaty, which was signed in September 1951 and came into force in April 1952, formally brought to a close the end of the war between Japan and the Allied Powers. However, as a system it failed to deal with the abnormalities in Japan's relationships with its regional neighbours. The argument that Korea was a non-combatant in World War II, and the uncertain status of the future of the two Koreas that were then fighting the Korean War (1950-1953), meant that both the Koreas were excluded as signatories from the Peace Treaty. The problem of how to 'liquidate Japanese colonialism and make sustainable peace between Japan and its...neighbours remained unresolved (Kim Dong-choon 2014, p. 98). 'As a "system" for confronting the new Cold War, it seemed that [the] San Francisco Peace Treaty sanctioned the past wrongdoings of Japanese imperialist power by alienating its past victims, Korea and China' (Kim Dong-choon 2014, p. 98). Given Japan's continued focus on the abduction issue, there is little to no place for nuanced discussion of the context of this historical sweep of events. The impact of historical issues on Japan-DPRK relations continues to be relegated to the margins in Japanese thinking.

The Cold War years

The narrative about North Korea promoted by NARKN is also revisionist in more contemporary history as it neglects the discrimination of ethnic Koreans in Japan (referred to as *Zainichi* Koreans) after the end of the Second World War. As such, the right-wing narrative about North Korea fails to accept any Japanese role in encouraging *Zainichi* Koreans to move to North Korea during the Cold War years.

With the end of the Allied occupation and the return of sovereignty in 1952, Japan's relations with the two Koreas were influenced by a sense of anti-Japanese nationalism among the Korean people and the emerging Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. Japan moved to normalise relations with South Korea under pressure from the United States, but the possibility of similar overtures toward North Korea remained blocked. The resultant Japan-ROK Basic Treaty of 1965, which normalised Japan's diplomatic relations with South Korea, had flow-on effects for the negotiation of Japan-DPRK normalisation negotiations that began after the end of the Cold War. Japan also enacted a number of discriminatory policies against the ethnic Koreans (referred to as *Zainichi* Koreans) who remained in Japan after the end of the war while helping facilitate their 'repatriation' to North Korea in a program supervised by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). This repatriation program has been cited by Japan's right wing as evidence of North Korea's proclivity for abductions despite the Japanese government's cooperation and eagerness to offload its *Zainichi* Korean population on North Korea. North Korea's perpetration of the abductions went largely undetected at the time, but a number of puzzle pieces emerged that would later help bring the issue to light.

Normalisation with South Korea

The impetus for Japan-ROK diplomatic normalisation came from the United States, which insisted the two countries start negotiations as early as 1952 given their status as key US allies in the fight to contain communism. The negotiations were hampered by a number of issues including deep animosities over Japan's colonial past (Hook et al 2005, p. 203). South Korea insisted that it be recognised as the only lawful government on the Korean peninsula, but Japan was reluctant to accept this position given the existence of the North Korean government. Japan also initially refused to respond to South Korean demands for compensation during the colonial period on the basis that Japan's annexation of the Korean peninsula in 1910 was recognised as legal under international law and that, as a colony, Korea was not a combatant in the Second World War (Welfield 1988, p. 92; Hook et al. 2005, p. 203). The territorial dispute over the Takeshima Islets further complicated the already tense negotiations. Ultimately, US pressure, the rise to power of the relatively Japan-friendly Park Chung-hee in South Korea and the influence of the pro-ROK Kishi faction in the LDP in Japan helped to realise an agreement in 1965 (Hook et al. 2005, p. 204). 'Japan recognized South Korea, in accordance with UN resolutions, as the only "lawful", although

not necessarily the only existing, government on the Korean peninsula' (Hook et al. 2005, p. 204).

The Basic Treaty provided no apology for Japan's colonisation of the Korean peninsula. Instead, in a separate agreement, Japan provided South Korea with 'economic cooperation' on a government-to-government basis in exchange for the waiving of the legal claims of individual victims for issues prior to Japan's withdrawal in 1945 (UPI 2005; Chosun Ilbo 2005). This included an outright grant of US\$300 million, a US\$200 million loan at a 3.5 per cent interest rate, and US \$300 million in private credit from Japanese banks and financial institutions (Manyin 2001, p. 5). This money was used by the Park Chung-hee government for national economic development.

The legacy of this agreement influenced the terms under which Japan and North Korea attempted to negotiate diplomatic normalisation. Tokyo insisted on following the same formula whereby the claims of individual victims for issues prior to Japan's withdrawal in 1945 are waived in exchange for economic cooperation (Manyin 2001, p. 1). This approach was subsequently reflected in the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration that was signed in 2002 when Junichiro Koizumi became the first Japanese prime minister to visit North Korea (MOFA 2002).

The Zainichi community and 'repatriations' to North Korea

The Japanese government was less than welcoming to the *Zainichi* Korean community in post-war Japan. At the time of Japan's surrender in 1945, there were about two million *Zainichi* Koreans in Japan. While a majority returned to South Korea and a limited few to North Korea, over 600,000 decided to stay in Japan due to the political and social turmoil on the Korean peninsula that ultimately led to the Korean War. After the end of the Allied occupation in 1952, the Japanese government interpreted the 1945 Potsdam Declaration to mean that Korean and Taiwanese peoples resident in Japan were foreigners despite the fact they came to Japan as colonial subjects and despite the US-led occupation authority's recommendation that they be allowed to choose between retaining Japanese citizenship or adopting that of their newly independent homelands (Morris-Suzuki 2011).

This put the *Zainichi* Korean population in a precarious position. Their access to education, employment and welfare was significantly diminished compared with that of Japanese

citizens. Moreover, the 1951 Migration Control Ordinance ‘gave the Japanese government the power to deport foreigners who had committed crimes with a sentence of over one year’s imprisonment, as well as those who were deemed subversive, were unable to provide their own means of subsistence, or suffered from mental or certain physical diseases’ (Morris-Suzuki 2011). Declassified documents show that the Japanese government was keen to deport a greater number of *Zainichi* Koreans but, on the advice of the MOFA, refrained from conducting mass deportations to avoid provoking the South Korea government (Morris Suzuki 2011, endnote 11). From October 1954, the South Korean government refused to accept such deportations. ‘As a result, the number of Koreans held in the Immigration Bureau’s Omura Detention Centre rose from 413 at the beginning of 1954 to 1,383 at the beginning of 1957’ (Morris Suzuki 2011).

The organisations that stepped in to represent *Zainichi* Koreans were the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (abbreviated as *Chongryon* in Korean and *Chosen Soren* in Japanese) with close ties to North Korea and the Korean Residents Union in Japan (abbreviated as *Mindan*) with ties to South Korea. Even though almost 90 per cent of the *Zainichi* Koreans came from the southern part of the peninsula, it was the North Korean government and Chongryon that ‘moved most quickly to attract the allegiance of [the *Zainichi*] Koreans, setting up a network of Korean-language schools, high schools, and a university in Japan, which lured not only ethnic Koreans with leftist sentiments, but also those who felt discriminated against and disaffected in Japan’ (Schoff 2006, p. 2). While it may seem almost unimaginable now, the North Korean economy was the stronger of the two Koreas in the 1950s and 1960s while the South Korean political system at that time was under a military dictatorship. So while Mindan is the more popular of the two *Zainichi* Korean resident organisations today, this was not the case in decades past. At its peak in the 1950s, Chosen Soren boasted 470,000 members (Schoff 2006, p. 2).

A key project on which the Japanese government, Chongryon and the North Korean government cooperated, with ICRC facilitation, was the repatriation of *Zainichi* Koreans to North Korea. Between 1959 and 1984, 93,340 people — ‘86,603 *Zainichi* Koreans together with 6,731 Japanese and six Chinese spouses or dependents’ — migrated from Japan to North Korea under the repatriation program (Morris-Suzuki 2007, p. 12).

‘Despite their profound ideological antagonisms and differences of objective, there had been a remarkable degree of collaboration between the Japanese and North Korean sides’ (Morris-Suzuki 2011) who sought to use each other for their own purposes. For the North Koreans it was a propaganda boon to show that *Zainichi* Koreans were choosing to go to the North and not the South. For the Japanese government it was a way to rid itself of the detainees in the Omura detention centre as well impoverished *Zainichi* Koreans who were considered troublesome.

As it later transpired, things did not go well for most of the *Zainichi* Koreans upon their ‘return’ to North Korea. According to the account of Kang and Rigoulot (2001), the *Zainichi* repatriates realised soon after they disembarked from the boat that they had been deceived by propaganda and that North Korea was not the ‘paradise’ they had been led to believe it was. Many of them ended up in North Korean hard labour camps (Kang & Rigoulot 2001).

In the context of Japanese national outrage over the abductions of its citizens by North Korea in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Japanese right wing has characterised the ICRC-supervised mass repatriation program of *Zainichi* Koreans from Japan ‘back’ to North Korea as additional evidence of the Kim family regime’s proclivity for abductions. It has described the repatriation program as originating from demands from Chongryon, the North Korean government and the Japanese government as simply responding to those requests. Moreover, the right credits the Japanese government’s insistence on ICRC surveillance of the free will of the returnees as having saved many *Zainichi* Koreans from tragedy.

Yomiuri Weekly journalist Yoshiaki Kikuchi criticises Tessa Morris-Suzuki’s research, saying that ‘the claim that moves towards a “mass repatriation” to North Korea originated on the Japanese side...is clearly a misinterpretation. One of the reasons why this kind of misinterpretation has arisen is because Professor Suzuki has relied too much on the documents of the International Committee of the Red Cross and has not sufficiently examined the repatriation movements of Minsen and of [Chongryon] in its early stages, or the moves on the North Korean side which are not dealt with in detail in those documents’ (Kikuchi 2009, p. 197; translation by Morris-Suzuki 2011). Such claims belie the readiness of the Japanese government to offload *Zainichi* Koreans without adequately investigating their likely fate after ‘repatriation’. Morris-Suzuki (2011) refutes Kikuchi’s claim and explains that it was the Japanese government that provided the initial vision for the mass scale of the

program as per the MOFA Asia Bureau's December 1955 draft 'Plan for Resolving the Problem of Sending Volunteers for Repatriation to North Korea'. This was the 'first...concrete and detailed proposal for a repatriation of ethnic Koreans to North Korea' (Morris-Suzuki 2011).

Gathering abduction puzzle pieces

NARKN and other Japanese right-wing groups promote the narrative that the Japanese abductees could have been saved if Japan had escaped the post-war regime and had a different Constitution. The historical evidence suggests otherwise. There was very little knowledge of the abductions at the time that North Korea perpetrated them. Even if Article 9 had been revised before the abductions took place, there is no evidence that this would have helped prevent them from taking place.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, North Korea abducted a number of Japanese citizens in order to train North Korean spies in Japanese language and culture. The Japanese government has officially identified 17 Japanese nationals as North Korean abductees. Of these 17, five have been returned to Japan, four North Korea denies ever having entered its territory and eight North Korea says are deceased. The National Association for the Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea (NARKN or *Sukuukai*) identifies a further six cases that have not yet been officially designated given insufficient evidence (NARKN 2018). NARKN further suspects numerous more Japanese, possibly over 100, have been abducted on the basis of information received from former North Korean spy An Myong-jin (NARKN 2006, 2018) and other unsubstantiated sources. Most of the abductees were abducted from Japan, especially from rural coastal areas along the Sea of Japan, while in other cases abductees were taken from third countries in Europe.

The first instance of the Japanese media reporting on the abduction issue came in 1980. The *Sankei Shimbun* published a front page story on 7 January 1980 about three couples who had gone missing (Shuichi Ichikawa and Rumiko Masumoto from Kagoshima prefecture, Yasushi Chimura and Fukie Chimura [née Hamamoto] from Fukui prefecture, and Kaoru Hasuike and Yukiko Hasuike [née Okudo] from Niigata prefecture). While the story did not mention North Korea by name, it reported that the police suspected the three cases of disappearances may have been carried out by a foreign intelligence organisation that had infiltrated Japan by

boat (*Sankei* 1980, p. 1; *Sankei* 2017; Johnston 2004). The *Sankei* report was dismissed at the time as sensationalist speculation given the lack of evidence.

In 1985, a North Korea agent was arrested carrying a Japanese passport with the name Tadaaki Hara. The real Hara had disappeared from a beach in Miyazaki prefecture in June 1980 (Johnston 2004). But still there was insufficient evidence to connect any of the dots.

The next clue came in 1987 with the arrest of North Korean agent Kim Hyon-hui who was responsible for the bombing of Korean Air flight KAL 858. Boarding a flight departing Baghdad for Seoul via Abu Dhabi on 28 November 1987, Kim Hyon-hui and her accomplice Kim Seung-il posed as a Japanese father and daughter who had been touring Europe — under the aliases Shinichi Hachiya and Mayumi Hachiya. They placed a bomb in a transistor radio in their luggage in the overhead locker and then disembarked in Abu Dhabi. The bomb exploded as the plane was flying over the Andaman Sea off the shore of Burma killing all 115 passengers on board. Meanwhile, Kim Hyon-hui and Kim Seung-il had made their way to Bahrain where they planned to escape back to North Korea. Bahraini authorities discovered the two were travelling on fake Japanese passports and arrested them (Willacy 2013).

During police questioning Kim Seung-il swallowed a cyanide capsule lodged in his cigarettes and died instantly. Kim Hyon-hui attempted to do the same but the interrogating officer slapped the cigarette out her mouth and revived her. Bahrain then extradited Kim to South Korea. There she kept up the façade that she was a Japanese tourist on her way home from Europe. Eventually Kim confessed after realising the prosperity of South Korea and the erroneous nature of the justifications for her mission, ordered by North Korea leader Kim Jong-il, for what she was told to be a necessary operation for the reunification of the Korean peninsula (Kirby et al. 2014, p. 297; Obordofer 1997, p. 184). South Korean authorities believe that the explosion of the plane was part of a plan devised by North Korea to discourage international athletes from participating in the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games (Associated Press 1988).

Japanese diplomat Hitoshi Tanaka, then the head of MOFA's Northeast Asia Division, flew to Seoul where he interviewed Kim Hyon-hui. 'He felt a shiver of fear upon learning that North Korea had attempted to entangle Japan in the sabotage. North Korean agents could

have posed as South Koreans if their sole aim was to blow up a KAL airplane, but they had impersonated Japanese so that the explosion would seem to be a Japanese terrorist attack on South Korea. Tanaka sensed in that attempt the deep-seated animosity that the Korean people felt toward Japan' (Funabashi 2007, p. 21). In the interview Kim explained that she had been taught Japanese language and customs by a Japanese woman, Lee Eun-hye. Japan's National Police Agency found in 1991 'that there was a strong possibility that Lee Eun-hye actually was Yaeko Taguchi' and in 1997 'the Japanese government officially recognized...Yaeko Taguchi as a victim of North Korean abduction' (Funabashi 2007, p. 21).

Those Japanese politicians and policymakers privy to Kim Hyon-hui's revelations were flabbergasted and began quietly looking into the question of the abductees. In a March 1988 Diet exchange LDP lawmaker, Seiroku Kajiyama, the nominal head of the investigation, stated that 'there was sufficient reason to believe the couples who disappeared in 1978 may have been kidnapped by North Korea' (Johnston 2004).

In September 1988, the parents of abductee Toru Ishioka received a letter with a Polish postmark, which Ishioka had slipped to a Polish visitor to North Korea. The letter explained that he was living in Pyongyang with Keiko Arimoto and Kaoru Matsuki and contained a photo of Ishioka and Arimoto with a baby presumed to be the couple's child (Johnston 2004; McCurry 2014; Kirby et al. 2014, p. 302). Ishioka's parents subsequently provided a copy of the letter to Arimoto's parents.

The abductees' families were unsure what to do next. Ishioka's parents did not want to go public out of fear for their son's safety. Other families had gone to the Japanese government for answers. 'On the one hand, the families were upset that more wasn't being done to raise awareness of the issue. On the other hand, [MOFA] was telling the families not to raise too much of a fuss, as it would make the job of ascertaining what had happened and locating their loved ones even harder' (Johnston 2004). Those in the know in the Japanese political world were divided on how to approach the issue, but it was often considered that not much could be done without getting more concrete evidence and normalising diplomatic relations could help with this.

Post-Cold War engagement

In the early post-Cold War period before 2002, before North Korean leader Kim Jong-il's shock admission to the abductions of 13 Japanese nationals, NARKN leaders were yet to widely promote their narrative on the necessity of a hard line policy against North Korea. As such, Japanese policymakers were relatively unconstrained domestically in efforts aimed at engaging North Korea. The end of the Cold War opened the door for Japan to enter into negotiations with North Korea to normalise diplomatic relations, settle past issues relating to the colonial period and resolve the abduction issue.

The lack of normal of diplomatic relations between the two countries made North Korea 'unique in that MOFA did not have a long history of involvement' (Schoff 2006, p. 1). Instead an informal web of linkages among groups sympathetic to North Korea provided the base from which engagement was forged. This included Chongryon as well as political parties such as the JSP, Komeito and the JCP. The ruling LDP is 'anti-communist and pro-American overall, but factions existed within the party that were considered pro-China, pro-Taiwan, pro-DPRK, or pro-ROK' (Schoff 2006, p. 1). Thus throughout the 1990s efforts to open negotiations and engage North Korea were spearheaded by political parties through the dispatch of political delegations. While officially the purpose of these delegations was to open normalisation talks to clear up Japan's legacy of colonialism and to help stabilise the regional security environment, it appears that intra-party rivalry within the LDP and securing financial gains for individual LDP factions was also a contributing factor (Hughes 2006, p. 470).

The Kanemaru delegation

In 1990, Japan sent a delegation led by the politicians Shin Kanemaru (LDP) — a man who held no official position but was considered a kingmaker behind a number of prime ministers including the incumbent Toshiki Kaifu — and Makoto Tanabe (JSP) (Johnston 2004; Oberdorfer 1997, p. 221). Kanemaru and North Korean leader Kim Il-sung held private talks with nobody else present but Kim's Japanese language interpreter and during this time Kim is said to have won Kanemaru's trust (Oberdorfer 1997, p. 221). Unbeknown to the public, the Japanese delegation raised the abduction issue to North Korea for the first time. 'The response was one that North Korea would continue to repeat in various forms for the next 12 years: there are no abductees... That response was more than satisfactory to Shin Kanemaru and other members of the delegation' (Johnston 2004).

North Korea proposed the immediate normalisation of Japan-DPRK diplomatic relations. This reversed North Korea's long-held objection to the acceptance of two Koreas, but its willingness to concede was undoubtedly out of the expectation that it would receive Japanese reparations or 'economic cooperation' in line with the precedent set by the 1965 Japan-ROK normalisation agreement (Oberdorfer 1997, p. 222). Subsequently, after negotiations 'from which the accompanying Foreign Ministry representatives were excluded, the Japanese delegation...issued a three-party declaration' between the LDP, JSP and the Korean Workers' Party (Oberdorfer 1997, p. 222). Japan promised to 'fully and formally apologize and compensate the DPRK' (Oberdorfer 1997, p. 222) for the colonisation period and abnormal relations post-World War II.

One reason why Kanemaru may have been willing to accept the North Korea denial of the abductions was out of financial self-interest for his Takeshita faction within the LDP. The Takeshita faction and its predecessor faction led by Kakuei Tanaka 'had long eyed North Korea ties as their factional property and the last great untapped source of political funds' (Hughes 2006, p. 470). Notably, prime minister Tanaka had one of his faction members, the LDP lawmaker Chuji Kuno, establish the Parliamentary Association for the Promotion of Japan-North Korea Friendship (Niccho Yuko Sokushin Giin Renmei, or Niccho Giren) in November 1971 (Ikeda 2015, p. 54; Hughes 2006, p. 470).

Kanemaru's willingness to pursue the opening of relations with North Korea was rumoured to have attracted payoffs from a number of sources. These include 'from the Chosen Soren...and associated businesses such as the pachinko industry; from the North Korean government; and from the construction industry, eager to gain access to cheap supplies of salt-free alluvial building gravels (*jari*) in the North' (Hughes 2006, p. 470; Johnston 2004). Moreover, if Japan were to provide 'economic cooperation' to North Korea, Kanemaru's Takeshita faction as 'the initiator of these funds, could have expected a "kickback" of at least 1 per cent, or ¥50 billion, from North Korea, and Japanese companies would have been awarded aid contracts, and that would have allowed it to prolong its domination of Japanese politics' (Hughes 2006, p. 470).

Evidence of these rumours emerged after Kanemaru was indicted in 1992 in the Sagawa Kyubin corruption scandal. In 1993 'police raided Kanemaru's home...and discovered unmarked gold bars valued at 600 million yen' (Johnston 2004). Subsequently, the second

generation *Zainichi* Korean Kenki Aoyama — who had gone to North Korea in 1959, worked as a spy for North Korea and returned to Japan in 1998 with MOFA assistance — testified at the DPJ headquarters in November 2002 ‘that “very important Japanese politicians” were given gold bars following the 1990 meeting’ (Johnston 2004; Takatsuki 2003). Plans for Aoyama to testify before the Diet were scuttled by the LDP possibly afraid of embarrassment for not having tougher on North Korea (Yamaguchi 2003; DPJ 2002).

In the wake of the Kanemaru delegation, Japan and North Korea’s foreign ministries conducted negotiations aimed at diplomatic normalisation between January 1991 and November 1992. A number of areas of disagreement hindered progress. North Korea demanded US\$10 billion in reparations in line with the Kanemaru delegation’s three-party declaration, but Japanese diplomats countered that this was a non-binding agreement and offered US\$5 billion in ‘economic cooperation’ in line with the precedent set in the Japan-ROK 1965 Basic Treaty (Hook et al. 2005, p. 212). Japanese requests regarding visits to Japan for the *Nihonjinzuma* (the Japanese wives of *Zainichi* Koreans who accompanied them to North Korea under the ICRC repatriation program) as well as demands that North Korea permit nuclear inspections by the IAEA further contributed to the failure of the talks (Hook et al. 2005, p. 212).

The abduction issue proved to be the final nail in the coffin. With Kanemaru no longer a political force after the 1992 Sagawa Kyubin scandal, ‘the Foreign Ministry bowed to pressure from the families and their few Diet supporters and agreed to ask the North Koreans if they had any information on [Kim Hyon-hui’s] mysterious Japanese teacher’ Yaeko Taguchi (AKA Lee Un-hae) (Johnston 2004). However, the North Koreans shocked the Japanese negotiators by walking out in protest (Johnston 2004; Endo 2011). It would be another eight years before normalisation negotiations were reopened.

The first North Korean nuclear crisis

The first North Korean nuclear crisis of 1993-1994 briefly saw external pressure come to bear on Japan. Japan resisted international calls for pressure and containment and maintained its pro-engagement posture. Ultimately, this contradiction between domestic and international preferences was resolved when the United States and North Korea concluded the Agreed Framework in 1994 and international society returned to a pro-engagement approach.

The crisis began in March 1993 when North Korea declared its intention to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Further adding to the tensions, in May 1993 North Korea conducted the first test of its medium-range Nodong missile with a capability to hit major Japanese cities (Sanger 1993, p. 7). The United States pressured Japan to consider 'participation in US-led sanctions against the North, including the cessation of remittances by the North Korean community in Japan, and the participation of the Japan Self Defence Forces...in a naval blockade' (Hughes 2006, p. 461).

The Japanese government was unprepared to deal with these international developments. Between 1993 and 1994 it 'indicated to the US that Japan would be hard-pressed politically and militarily to support the imposition of sanctions' (Hughes 2006, p. 461). The cessation of remittances was unpopular with those politicians seeking to reopen normalisation negotiations, including some politicians who were later accused of being in the pocket of Chongryon and North Korea. SDF participation in naval blockades was also politically problematic given the lack of a legal framework for the SDF to conduct such international support operations (Tanaka 2014) (See chapter 4).

Before this test of competing domestic and international pressures came to a crunch, the crisis was resolved by the intervention of former US president Jimmy Carter. With the United States and North Korea on the verge of war (McIntyre 1999), Carter forged an agreement with North Korean leader Kim Il-sung (Carter 2003). This agreement then paved the way for the conclusion of the 1994 Agreed Framework between the United States and North Korea.

Under the Agreed Framework, North Korea would freeze its plutonium reprocessing activity at the Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Centre, promise not to construct any new graphite reactors or reprocessing facilities, place the 8,000 fuel rods at Yongbyon in special cans for long-term storage, resume high-level talks with the South and permit regular nuclear inspections by the IAEA as per the terms of the NPT. In exchange, the United States promised not to use nuclear weapons against the North Korea, to remove political and economic barriers to contact between the two countries within three months, to organise for the financing and supply of two proliferation resistant light-water reactor systems with a target date of 2003 for completion, and to make up Pyongyang's energy shortfall in the meantime by arranging for shipments of heavy fuel oil to North Korea (Mazarr 1995, pp. 97-98). In order to support the implementation of the Agreed Framework, the Korean Peninsula

Energy Organization (KEDO) was established in March 1995 with Japan, South Korea the United States and the EU as executive board members (KEDO 2019).

Japan 'avoided moves towards containment because of domestic political conditions predisposed more towards tentative engagement, and because of an international system that first threatened to challenge but then reinforced this position' (Hughes 2006, p. 461). The right wing in Japan interpreted these events as further evidence, building on the Gulf War shock, that Japan needed to free itself from the shackles of the 'post-war regime' and the Article 9 'peace clause' of the Constitution. However, for the time being they lacked support to pursue a hard-line approach against North Korea.

Rising domestic constraints, persisting with engagement

Japan's North Korea policy throughout the mid and late 1990s continued on the whole to favour engagement. Japanese policy at this time was characterised by efforts to reopen diplomatic normalisation negotiations and its participation in the KEDO regime. At the same time, North Korea's test, without warning, of a Taepodong missile in 1998 that flew over Japanese airspace caused a major shock. Mounting evidence on the abduction issue saw an increase in domestic pressure to shift toward containment. Yet the domestic pressures in favour of containment were yet to reach a critical mass and the domestic coalition in favour of continuing engagement efforts, supported internationally, continued to hold sway (Hughes 2006, p. 461).

Mounting abduction evidence

Evidence of North Korean abductions of Japanese citizens mounted as chance brought together a North Korean spy turned defector, An Myong-jin, an Asahi Television producer, Kenji Ishitaka, and the former communist turned right-wing anti-North Korea lobbyist Katsumi Sato. After An defected in 1993, Ishitaka interviewed him in 1995 when conducting research for a documentary. An was considered a dubious source at this point and Ishitaka faced criticism that his story lacked evidence. However, Katsumi Sato, who headed the Modern Korea Institute lobby group (ostensibly a think tank), was willing to publish Ishitaka's story in the October 1996 issue of his *Modern Korea* magazine. Ishitaka described An's account (without revealing An's name) of a Japanese language teacher at his spy academy who was 'kidnapped from Japan when she was a teenager and had been carrying a badminton racket at the time of her capture' (Johnston 2004). In December 1997, Sato gave a

talk in Niigata about Ishitaka's report and a police officer in the audience 'instantly recognized An's description of the woman as Megumi Yokota' (Johnston 2004).

In January, Sato introduced Megumi Yokota's parents, Shigeru and Sakie, who agreed for their daughter's name to be publicly released. In February 1997, Megumi Yokota became the poster girl for the abduction issue cause and her case was widely reported, making the front page of most national newspapers. Subsequently, in March 1997, after the politicians Shingo Nishimura and Masaaki Nakayama updated the families of Keiko Arimoto and the three couples that had gone missing in 1978 on the new information from the Yokota's case, the families established the Association of the Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea (AFVKN or *Kazokukai*). In 1998, Sato established the National Association for the Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea (NARKN or *Sukuukai*) after Diet members established the Diet Members Association for the Rapid Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea (Rachi Giren) (Johnston 2004).

More delegations and the Taepodong shock

In order to reopen normalisation negotiations after the North Korean negotiators' 1992 walkout, Japan dispatched more political delegations and provided North Korea with aid. This included a March 1995 three-party LDP-SDP-Sakigake delegation led by LDP politician Michio Watanabe coupled with food (500,000 tons of rice) and humanitarian and medical aid in the hope that it would cultivate a more conducive environment for negotiations (Söderberg 2006, p. 451). Informal dialogue between foreign ministry representatives from Japan and North Korea in Beijing in early 1996 and August 1997 helped open an investigation into the Japanese abductees after Japan conceded on a change in terminology to the 'missing' Japanese (Hook et al. 2005, p. 213). Subsequently, in November 1997 Yoshiro Mori led another three-party LDP-SDP-Sakigake delegation to North Korea (Hughes 2006, pp. 461-462).

In 1998, it looked like tensions might come to bear. First, the North Korean Red Cross reported in June on the results of the 'missing' Japanese. North Korean media reported the DPRK Red Cross Society's findings that 'the results of the search finally proved that the persons wanted by Japan do not exist in the DPRK territory' (DiFilippo 2013, p. 139). Second, on 31 August North Korea conducted a test launch without warning of its Taepodong-1 missile, which overflew Japan (Gittings 1998). 'Tokyo responded to the launch

by immediately cutting off food assistance to the DPRK, announcing its intention to continue...to strengthen Japan's security relationship with Washington, which eventually included joint research...on missile defense, and by ending — but only for a short time — assistance to KEDO' (DiFilippo 2013, pp. 138-139; DiFilippo 2012, pp. 45-46).

Still, pro-engagement actors in Japan, with international support, resisted calls for containment. 'Japan was persuaded by US and South Korean policy makers to sign the KEDO agreements in October 1999 [and] to lift its other sanctions by December 1999' (Hughes 2006, p. 462). Moreover, in November 1999 former prime minister Tomiichi Murayama of the JSP led a delegation to North Korea. Subsequently, in December 1999 North Korea stated that 'it was willing to "continue the investigation as the case of missing persons"' (DiFilippo 2013, p. 140). Tokyo reciprocated 'in March 2000, though not without some resistance from the right, to resume the food aid to the DPRK that it had cut off because of the launching of the...Taepodong-1 in August 1998' (DiFilippo 2013, p. 140). The Japanese Diet approved two dispatches of rice aid to North Korea through the UN World Food Program, which were delivered in March and October 2000 amounting to a total of 600,000 tons of rice that year (Söderberg 2006, p. 451). The abductees' families were angered that so much aid was being given to North Korea while no progress was being made on finding their loved ones. In response, the family members staged sit-ins in front of MOFA and LDP headquarters in protest (Johnston 2004).

Prime minister Yoshiro Mori sought to reassure the families in a meeting in September 2000, promising them that 'there would be no normalization with North Korea unless the abduction issue was included in the talks' (Johnston 2004). Later, at the Asia Europe Meeting in Seoul on 20 October 2000 'in a meeting with the British prime minister, Tony Blair...Mori let slip that Japan had suggested in 1997 that these "missing Japanese persons" be "found" somewhere outside North Korea' (*The Economist* 2000). This led to calls for Mori to resign including from within the LDP. Japanese hawks were enraged and demanded that North Korea admit and apologise for the abductions. The public backlash was also palpable as a *Mainichi Shimbun* poll found the Mori cabinet's support rate dropped 15 per cent and that 79 per cent of respondents agreed that Mori's statement was a problem (*Mainichi Shimbun* 2000, p. 1).

Normalisation negotiations were reopened between April 2000 and October 2001, but again progress was fleeting. 'For Tokyo, the abduction issue was a critical obstacle that impeded the progress of rapprochement, while Pyongyang remained largely focused on issues pertaining to the history problem stemming from the Japanese colonization of the Korean Peninsula' (DiFilippo 2013, p. 140). At the same time, the inauguration of the Bush administration in the United States in January 2001 and its hard-line approach on North Korea meant the international environment was no longer conducive to engagement (Hook et al. 2005, p. 213).

Rice aid corruption?

One way in which the families of the abductees came to see the government response to their situation as lacking, the government as not on their side and the right-wing support groups as key allies, was allegation of Japanese government corruption through the provision of rice aid to North Korea. Over the years the LDP's agriculture tribe (*norin zoku*) had shown interest in North Korea when it presented an opportunity to dump rice. The suspicion was that 'their desire to provide rice aid was a measure designed to clear government stockpiles and thereby force up demand and the price of domestic rice for their supporters in the agricultural community' (Hughes 2006, p. 471; Inoguchi & Iwai 1987, p. 296; Aoki 2004, pp. 75-76). Japan's decision to provide North Korea with rice aid in 2000, for example, 'was critically backed by the *zoku* in PARC's Foreign Affairs Division' (Hughes 2006, p. 471).

It was later alleged by then Tokyo governor Shintaro Ishihara during a television appearance on 10 November 2002 and in the 25 November 2002 edition of *AERA* magazine that the provision of food aid in 2000 was a way for the North Korean regime to earn money (Johnston 2004; *AERA* 2002, p. 17). Ishihara alleged that half the Japanese rice 'was first sold in China, and then 250,000 tons of far cheaper Thai rice was purchased and sent to North Korea, where it was mixed with the remaining Japanese rice. Meanwhile, the difference between the amount received from the sale of the Japanese rice to China and the amount used to purchase Thai rice...allegedly went into the pockets of the North Korean government and their friends in Japan' (Johnston 2004). It is important to note that while corruption scandals in Japanese politics have over the years been somewhat commonplace, these allegations have never been established. The source of these allegations, the well-known right-winger Shintaro Ishihara who has long called for a hard-line approach to North Korea, means they should be treated with some caution.

Koizumi and Tanaka's push for a grand bargain

The relatively unconstrained capacity for policymakers to pursue engagement with North Korea — before the abduction shock and before NARKN's successful propagation of the narrative that Japan must take a hard line posture against North Korea — is demonstrated by the grand bargain pursued by Japanese prime minister Junichiro Koizumi and Japanese diplomat Hitoshi Tanaka. In April 2001, Koizumi won the LDP party presidential election and became prime minister of Japan. In September 2001, Hitoshi Tanaka was promoted to the post of director-general of MOFA's Asia and Oceania Affairs Bureau. The Koizumi-Tanaka pairing brought a new approach to negotiations with North Korea. With Koizumi's authorisation, Tanaka conducted negotiations secretly and reported directly to Koizumi rather than his superiors at MOFA. Tanaka's counterpart was a man who introduced himself as 'as Kim Chul, a high-ranking member of the National Defense Commission' (Funabashi 2007, p. 10). This was obviously an alias even though it was apparent that he had some sort of high-ranking military background and he came to be referred to as Mr X.

People who might have compromised the secrecy of the negotiations were excluded from the process. This included the foreign minister Makiko Tanaka who was engaged in a showdown with the ministry over personnel and budgetary issues as it was thought 'she might leak the information, making the negotiations impossible. The United States would intervene to kill the plan' (Funabashi 2007, p. 23). Deputy chief cabinet secretary Shinzo Abe was also deliberately excluded. If he were to get a whiff of it, 'it would be difficult to keep Abe out of the scheme, because he had been zealously tackling the abduction issue' (Funabashi 2007, p. 24). Abe (as the head of the special abduction issue taskforce) was instead briefed by chief cabinet secretary Yasuo Fukuda on 29 August 2002, the day before Koizumi publicly announced he would attend a summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong-il in Pyongyang on 17 September.

Making a deal

Tanaka was pursuing nothing less than a grand bargain between Japan and the DPRK. 'In his vision of the future, Japan and the United States would normalize diplomatic ties with North Korea in exchange for the latter's abandonment of its nuclear program. Negotiations for normalization between Japan and North Korea would be linked to the framework of regional multilateral processes, and the abduction issue would be settled within the context of those

processes. After both sides went through all the processes, they would suddenly realize that they had already gotten out of the maze of intransigence and hostility' (Funabashi 2007, p. 22). Throughout the negotiations, Tanaka emphasised to X that they were mutual stakeholders in a shared 'vision of regional order, in which both sides could coexist peacefully' (Funabashi 2007, p. 22). At the same time, Tanaka was acutely aware that without a resolution of the abduction issue, it would be impossible to normalise Japan-DPRK relations, which had gradually turned into a major public opinion issue since reporting on Megumi Yokota broke in 1997.

The major stumbling blocks were when North Korea would provide Japan with information about the fates of the abductees, if prime minister Koizumi would make a summit trip to Pyongyang, and X's insistence that Japan inform North Korea how much compensation (an exact dollar amount) it would provide after relations were normalised. Koizumi resolved that if the North Koreans provide Japan with information about the abductees he would go to Pyongyang (Funabashi 2007, p. 18). However, Koizumi instructed Tanaka not to mention any specific amount of compensation, vowing not to repeat Shin Kanemaru's mistake (ICG 2005, p. 3; Funabashi 2007, p. 19).

Ultimately, North Korea agreed to give Japan a full accounting of the fates of the abductees after Koizumi arrived in Pyongyang, but before the Koizumi-Kim summit meeting. Given the North Korean caution about providing information on the abductees, Koizumi and Tanaka strongly suspected that at least some of them were dead. With this in mind it was discussed whether Koizumi should in fact make the trip to Pyongyang at all. If Koizumi did not take advantage of this limited window of opportunity, the fates of the surviving abductees may never have been known (Funabashi 2007, p. 36). In the words of Fukuda, 'if we missed this chance, I didn't know when, or if, the next chance would come. A politician sometimes has to hit a ball even if he knows it is a bad ball' (Funabashi 2007, p. 38). Koizumi decided that if all the abductees were dead he would leave Pyongyang without signing the Pyongyang Declaration, which Tanaka and X had finalised.

The Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration

The Pyongyang Declaration consisted of four points. The first point states that both sides would 'make every possible effort for an early normalization of the relations' (MOFA 2002). The North Koreans suggested immediately normalising relations based on the 1972 Japan-

China Joint Declaration, but the Japanese refused this model in light of the need to resolve the abduction and nuclear issues (Funabashi 2007, pp. 25-26). 'Koizumi and Tanaka shared the...idea that if everything worked out...normalization could be accomplished within one or two years' whereas 'Fukuda was much more cautious' citing the 14 years it took Japan and South Korea to negotiate normalisation (Funabashi 2007, p. 26).

The second point included an apology from Japan over colonial rule, and states that Japan will provide economic cooperation to North Korea after diplomatic relations are normalised, and waives both sides property and other legal claims originating prior 15 August 1945 (MOFA 2002). This is in line with the model under which Japan and South Korea normalised their relations in 1965. This apology was very important to the North Koreans, and Tanaka modelled it after the 1995 Murayama Statement, which is considered Japan's gold-standard apology. A number of right-leaning policymakers and politicians did push back against the apology. For instance, Shin Ebiara (MOFA Treaties Bureau director-general) objected because the only country Japan had made an apology to in an official document was South Korea on the basis that 'we truly wished to build a future-oriented relationship with the Republic of Korea. Are you sure that North Korea deserves the same treatment?' (Funabashi 2007, p. 27). Tanaka simply retorted that he already had the prime minister's approval on this point.

The apology was anathema to the Japan's right-wing domestic political actors seeking to escape the post-war regime, and viewed as an example of the masochistic teaching of history which Japan needs to overcome. They claim that Japan's colonisation of the Korean peninsula benefitted the Korean people. This view is shared by the leadership of NARKN. For instance, NARKN chairman Tsutomu Nishioka is an historical revisionist academic who has written several books denying the coercive treatment of the comfort women (Nishioka 1998; 2012; 2014, p. 7). Nishioka (2004) called the Koizumi summit a failure, criticised economic aid to North Korea and lobbied for the government to apply economic sanctions.

The third point of the declaration addressed the abduction issue. 'X appealed to Tanaka that Japan not include such dishonourable behaviour as abductions in the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration, which will have a long life' (Funabashi 2007, p. 31). Tanaka insisted that 'Kim Jong-il squarely acknowledge the issue and apologize in person to Prime Minister Koizumi' (Funabashi 2007, p. 31). The final draft refers to 'outstanding issues of concern

related to the lives and security of Japanese nationals’ and the DPRK promises to ‘take appropriate measures so that these regrettable incidents, that took place under the abnormal bilateral relationship, would never happen in the future’ (MOFA 2002).

The fourth point addresses the nuclear issue. After Koizumi had resolved to go to Pyongyang and during the course of communicating to the United States its plans to normalise relations with North Korea, the Americans revealed to Japanese officials that North Korea was suspected of having secret highly enriched uranium (HEU) program. (Later in October 2002 the then US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia James Kelly would visit Pyongyang and afterwards make public the existence of North Korea’s HEU program). Koizumi still decided to go to Pyongyang, but Japan made sure the nuclear issue was adequately addressed in the Pyongyang Declaration (Funabashi 2007, p. 32). The final version states that ‘both sides confirmed that, for an overall resolution of the nuclear issues on the Korean Peninsula, they would comply with all related international agreements. Both sides also confirmed the necessity of resolving security problems including nuclear and missile issues by promoting dialogue among countries concerned’ (MOFA 2002).

The phrase ‘all related agreements’ was understood to include the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the International Atomic Energy Safeguards Agreement, the January 1992 North-South Joint Declaration on Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the 1994 Agreed Framework between the United States and North Korea (Funabashi 2007, pp. 31-32). The inclusion of the phrase ‘promoting dialogue among countries concerned’ was a nod to the Japanese vision of ‘a multilateral framework, such as the six-party talks, regarding peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula’ (Funabashi 2007, p. 32) not just of negotiations with North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons but also for confidence-building among the six countries in a forum akin to a Northeast Asian version of the ASEAN Regional Forum. This was significant because North Korea had previously insisted that the nuclear issue could only be resolved bilaterally with the United States.

The first Japan-DPRK summit

In March 2002, six months before Koizumi visited Pyongyang, a crucial piece of abduction issue evidence emerged. Emiko Kaneko (the wife of one of the Japan Red Army ‘Yodogo hijackers’ who commandeered a plane to North Korea in the 1970s) was arrested and put on trial after returning to Japan in 2001. One of the witnesses was Megumi Yao, another Yodogo

hijacker wife, who admitted that she had helped trick Keiko Arimoto into going to North Korea. Yao later made a tearful apology to Arimoto's parents (Johnston 2004). With this development only the most ardent defenders of North could continue to claim that the abduction issue was a conspiracy to frame North Korea. When Koizumi announced in August 2002 that he would visit North Korea, the Yao revelation was fresh in the public's mind and built expectations that the abduction issue would be thoroughly addressed.

On 17 September 2002 prime minister Koizumi met with North Korean leader Kim Jong-il in Pyongyang, the first summit meeting between the two countries. The North Koreans informed the Japanese of the fates of the 12 abductees identified by the Japanese government, and one further case that had not been on their list, just minutes before the summit. Five of the abductees were alive, but eight of them were said to be deceased (Funabashi 2007, p. 3). Kim Jong-il explained that against the background of 'decades of adversarial relations between our two countries', the abductions were 'initiated by special mission organizations...driven by blindly motivated patriotism and misguided heroism...to obtain native-Japanese instructors of the Japanese language...to penetrate into "the South"' (Funabashi 2007, p. 5). Kim continued 'I would like to take this opportunity to apologize straightforwardly for the regrettable conduct of those people. I will not allow that to happen again' (Funabashi 2007, p. 5). While the Japanese were shocked that so many abductees were no longer alive, Koizumi decided he would still sign the Pyongyang Declaration.

Getting the abductees back

The first priority after the summit was to get the five surviving abductees back to Japan. The urgency of this task was further catalysed by North Korea's suspected HEU program. On 6 October 2002, US assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs James Kelly met with chief cabinet secretary Yasuo Fukuda and foreign minister Yoriko Kawaguchi in Tokyo to brief them on his trip to Pyongyang, informing them that North Korea had admitted to its HEU program. 'If that news were to become known to the public, US-DPRK and Japan-DPRK relations might immediately become strained, which, in turn, might make it impossible for the five abductees...to return to Japan' (Funabashi 2007, p. 39).

Tanaka got in contact with X to negotiate their return but the two sides were only able to agree upon a temporary return for the five abductees to Japan (Funabashi 2007, p. 39). After a two-week visit to Japan the abductees would go back to Pyongyang where they would then

discuss with their family members whether to remain in North Korea or go to Japan permanently (ICG 2005, p. 11). On 15 October 2002, the five abductees arrived back in Japan to great fanfare (McCurry 2002). The next day the US State Department publicly disclosed North Korea's HEU program (State Department 2002). In a sense the agreement for a temporary return had to come about this way because the abductees and their family members could not freely indicate their will to return permanently to Japan while still in North Korea. At the same time, once the five abductees were in Japan, public opinion was loath to see them return to North Korea.

This caused an argument between chief cabinet secretary Yasuo Fukuda and deputy chief cabinet secretary Shinzo Abe. Fukuda pointed out that if Japan did not honour its agreement the remaining relatives of the five abductees could become hostages in North Korea. Fukuda argued in favour of negotiating another arrangement whereby the abductees and their families could return to Japan permanently (Funabashi 2007, p. 40). Abe argued that 'it would be abdication of a sovereign nation's responsibility to leave to the individuals the decision about whether they should go back to North Korea or stay in Japan permanently' (Yamagiwa 2003, p. 160; Funabashi 2007, p. 40). Fukuda instructed Abe to contact the abductees to find out what they wanted to do. Abe subsequently, contacted the abductees and informed Fukuda that none of them planned to return to Pyongyang (Funabashi 2007, p. 40). Prime minister Koizumi then backed the decision that the abductees should stay in Japan.

The abduction issue: Japan's North Korea policy hijacked

Kim Jong-il's admission shocked Japan. Rather than Kim's apology opening the way for the beginning of the Japan-DPRK diplomatic normalisation process, the abduction issue consumed Japanese thinking on North Korea. In the words of Masahiko Komura (then LDP vice president), the Japanese public response was 'driven much more by sorrow and anger over the deaths of abductees than by happiness that some abductees were still alive' (Funabashi: 2007, p. 38).

This shock served to empower the Japanese right in pursuing and implementing a hard-line containment policy against North Korea. After years of anonymity, the leaders of NARKN (working with AFVKN) were suddenly able to propel themselves into the spotlight as the undisputed champions of the cause to rescue the abductees and support their relatives. North Korean leader Kim Jong-il's shock admission provided NARKN with the opportunity to

establish a platform beyond its wildest dreams. With this platform NARKN was able to propagate its narrative on North Korea deep into the Japanese national consciousness and to establish linkages and influence with Japanese politicians through Rachi Giren. NARKN's narrative on North Korea includes the whitewashing of Japanese colonial and wartime history on the Korean peninsula, the evil nature of the Kim family regime, and the idea that hard line pressure is the only way to rescue the abductees. It also includes the idea that the abductions are a clear-cut violation of Japanese sovereignty resulting from Japan's weakness under the post-war regime.

In Milbrath's model of lobbying as a form of communication, as outlined in Chapter 2, Milbrath notes that one way to receive the favourable reception for the import of a message with political decision-makers is to influence public opinion. Lobby groups engaging in such behaviour 'become propaganda agencies working on the opinion of their members or on public opinion in general' (Milbrath 1967, p. 242). Due to the abduction issue shock, NARKN provides an incredibly successful example of such a lobby group. The resonance its message found in Japanese society gave it not only the ability to influence Japanese politicians as decision-makers, but in some case to make or break politicians' careers. Domestic political developments in Japan overwhelmed international pressure and tipped the scales against any form of rapprochement. From 17 September 2002 onwards, disputing the North Korean narrative promoted by Japan's right-wing groups became taboo.

The politicization of the abduction issue

NARKN and Rachi Giren took control of Japan's North Korea policy through mounting a concerted campaign. They actively organised lectures and public information sessions, disseminated their message directly through the Internet and by distributing pamphlets and publications, and achieved media saturation (Lynn 2006, p. 501). NARKN also became the de facto gatekeepers for the family members organised through AFVKN and were able to co-opt their voice. With this platform NARKN and Rachi Giren advocated sanctions, pressure and containment against North Korea. They co-opted television interviews by the abductees' family members with the coordinated message that 'without a "sincere" and "satisfactory" resolution of the abduction issue by North Korea, negotiations for normalization should not continue, food aid should cease, and economic sanctions should be implemented' (Lynn 2006, p. 501). The invocation of the North Korean threat also came to form a key ingredient in the right wing's drive to revise the Article 9 peace clause of the

Constitution through the argument that the weakness of the post-war regime made Japan vulnerable to violations of its sovereignty, as exposed by the abduction issue.

Key leaders of NARKN, such as Katsumi Sato and Tsutomu Nishioka, had long held an interest in pushing a hard-line approach against North Korea. Nishioka described North Korea as 'evil' (Schoff 2006, p. 7). Sato 'wrote that the abduction matter could not be solved so long as the Kim Jong-il regime lasted and that Japan should focus on steps designed to provoke the collapse of the Kim Jong-il regime. Only by "regime change", he argued, could the abduction problem be resolved' (Sato 2002, pp. 206-208; McCormack 2008, p. 10). Sato testified at the House of Representatives Security Committee in December 2002 that 'Japan should not negotiate with [North Korea], but by all means work to overthrow that government' (National Diet Library 2002; translation by McCormack 2008, p. 10). At its national conventions, NARKN consistently and repeatedly called for sanctions and pressure as the only formula to break the impasse and get back the unaccounted for abductees.

NARKN criticised the government for uncritically swallowing the information given to it by North Korea and asserted that it was 'not based on any objective grounds' (NARKN 2002; Funabashi 2007, p. 38). The official line of NARKN consistently emphasised an unwavering belief that the unaccounted for abductees are still alive. NARKN pointed out holes in the information provided by North Korea, which required North Korean explanation. The information that North Korea provided on the fates of the unaccounted for some abductees said to be deceased strained credulity given their ages, the unlikely nature of their circumstances and conflicting information (McCormack 2008, p. 10). Yet NARKN provided no definitive public evidence that the unaccounted for abductees were alive either.

NARKN's success in corralling politicians into a hard-line policy stance against North Korea was demonstrated in a survey it dispatched to candidates in the lead up to the November 2003 lower house election. Among the 84 per cent of candidates who completed the questionnaire, 93 per cent agreed that North Korean abductions of Japanese citizens constituted an act of terrorism. Additionally, 55 per cent agreed that 'stronger foreign currency legislation was needed to enforce economic sanctions that limited financial remittance and trade' while only two per cent opposed such legislation, and 52 per cent agreed that new legislation was needed to restrict North Korean ships from entering Japanese ports while 31 per cent opposed the idea (Wada 2004, p. 2).

Key figures in Rachi Giren saw their political stock rise. In the lead up to the November 2003 lower house election, politicians lined up in droves to join Rachi Giren, jump on the abduction bandwagon, and push a hard line against North Korea (Johnston 2003). The politician who benefitted the most was Shinzo Abe. He had been active in the abduction issue since the late 1980s and his long hours of meeting with the family members suddenly paid big dividends (Walsh 2006). Abe was transformed into a crusader against North Korea (Cucek 2006) and took credit for deciding that the five abductees would stay in Japan (McNeil & Hippin 2003a, p. 3). Riding this wave, Abe went from a virtual ‘nonentity’ in Japanese politics to ‘one of the most famous faces in Japan since [October 2002] by standing shoulder to shoulder with the families and their allies and pulling the rug out from the more conciliatory approach of other LDP politicians’ (McNeil & Hippin 2003b). His image as a staunch supporter of the families helped propel Abe to a number of promotions including secretary general of the LDP in September 2003 (McNeil & Hippin 2003a, p. 3) and chief cabinet secretary in October 2005. The platform of a tough posture against North Korea in his daily press briefings helped Abe launch himself into the prime ministership after Koizumi resigned in September 2006.

The families themselves were at times divided. Some showed hesitancy in closely associating themselves with NARKN. In the words of Megumi Yokota’s father Shigeru, ‘we know Sato is a right-winger, but we need all the help we can get from whomever we can get it from...we don’t agree with economic sanctions or anything like that. We just want the country to help us get our loved ones back’ (ICG 2005, p. 10; McNeil & Hippin 2003b). On the other hand, other family members embraced the tough line on North Korea and other right-wing causes. For instance, in a public hearing sponsored by a lower house committee studying the possibility of revising the Constitution, Hatsue Hasuike, the mother of abductee Kaoru Hasuike, ‘spoke of her frustration with the government over the abductions. The Constitution cannot protect Japanese people from such kidnappings, she said’ (Johnston 2003). Ultimately, NARKN was successful in turning around the Yokota’s initial hesitation ‘and both parents were gradually incorporated as central figures in the campaign to denounce and force the overthrow of Kim Jong-il’ (McCormack 2008, p. 9).

Media saturation

Public opinion polling shows the Japanese people have since 2002 prioritised resolving the abduction issue as their top concern regarding North Korea, even above missile and nuclear testing (see Figure 2). It has been argued that this public response is driven in large part by the mass media, which has ‘herded the public into a relatively constricted range of views through narrow, biased saturation coverage’ (Lynn 2006, p. 484; Abe 2009). In particular, mass media coverage focused on ‘the trauma and tragedy of families torn apart by agents from North Korea, and anger at North Korea and the Japanese government’ (Lynn 2006, p. 492).

The narrative is a simplified good versus bad story. On the one side, ‘Kim Jong-il, his dysfunctional extended family, and his “weird” country’ (Lynn 2006, p. 493) have been presented as plainly evil. The supporting cast of villains in Japan includes ‘the “conniving” and “weak-kneed” Foreign Ministry bureaucrats...and...“pro-North Korean” intellectuals and politicians detached from real tears and pain’ (Lynn 2006, p. 493). On the other side are ‘the grieving families most often represented by the polite...[Shigeru] Yokota and his wife Sakie, whose daughter, Megumi, remains the symbol of a tragic break-up of the family and a childhood lost’ (Lynn 2006, p. 493). The families’ supporters, including NARKN and prominent Rachi Giren politicians such as Shinzo Abe have also been portrayed as protagonists who have the best interests of the abductees and their families’ (Lynn 2006, p. 493). A former news director explained that in the battle for ratings, abduction issue stories ‘intentionally tried to arouse Japanese emotions, prejudices and anger towards North Korea’ (Abe 2009). Not only did this demonise North Korea in the eyes of the Japanese, but it also meant that other aspects of Japan’s relations with North Korea — such as the nuclear and missile issues, diplomatic normalisation, and the settlement of colonial era issues — were neglected and downgraded.

The sheer volume of abduction issue coverage also made it inescapable for Japanese news watchers. In 2002 the four main national newspapers published a total of more than 8,800 articles on the abduction issue, or an average of over six articles per day per newspaper (see Figure 3). The number of hours of news television focusing on the abduction issue also similarly exceeded saturation over the years. When the five surviving abductees returned to Japan on 16 October 2002, Japan’s big six television stations combined ran 30 hours of news coverage on the story on the day of the event. Similarly, prime minister Koizumi’s second trip to Pyongyang on 22 May 2004 generated 32 hours of news coverage. By comparison, the

9/11 terrorist attack by Al-Qaeda generated only nine hours of news coverage (Lynn 2006, p. 491).

Engagement as taboo

NARKN, Rachi Giren and AFVKN's capture of Japan's North Korea policy led to the fusion of consensus that engaging North Korea could not be tolerated. As Amii Abe argues, only one opinion was allowed: 'Japanese negotiators should not be "permitted" to compromise or even negotiate before the abduction is resolved to Japan's satisfaction. To express or support any other viewpoint, will invariably elicit the hostile question: "Are you a supporter of North Korea?"' (Abe 2009). As a result, the discourse was said to be set by 'politicians who manipulate domestic politics, the media who shamelessly seek market share, and the poor Japanese public, who have to make sense of it all' (Abe 2009).

Individuals who failed to toe this line were criticised or worse. The LDP politician Hiromu Nonaka 'who had been an advocate of food aid to North Korea in the 1990s, was harassed for days as sound trucks affiliated with right-wing groups circulated outside his house' (Hagström & Hanssen 2015, p. 76). He arguably retired from politics because of this (Hagström & Hanssen 2015, p. 76; Samuels 2010, p. 371) and even after retiring he was sent a threatening letter with a bullet by a far-right group (*The Japan Times* 2003a).

Niccho Giren 'which had been the main non-partisan association for promoting normalization with North Korea' was forced to disband soon after the 2002 Koizumi-Kim summit after its roughly 100 members were branded as 'traitors and "Pro-North" agents' (Lynn 2006, p. 500).

Hitoshi Tanaka, as one of the key architects of the Pyongyang Declaration, was lambasted for prioritising normalisation over resolving the abduction issue. The far right group Kenkoku Giyugun Kokuzoku Seibatsutai (Nation-Building Volunteers Corps to Conquer Traitors) placed an explosive device in Tanaka's home garage (*The Japan Times* 2003b). It was dismantled by the police after a telephone tipoff, but the act 'sent a strong message that North Korea was outside the confines of normal diplomacy' (Hagström & Hanssen 2015, p. 77). The then governor of Tokyo Shintaro Ishihara said that Tanaka brought the incident upon himself because he was at North Korea's beck and call (*Asahi Shimbun* 2003, p. 1, 4, 38; Takahashi 2003). Later Ishihara refused to retract his remarks as having the effect of supporting terrorism and explained that while setting bombs is not permissible, it was natural

that citizens' frustrations at Tanaka would be come out in an abnormal manner (*Asahi Shimbun* 2003, p. 2). Moreover, 'according to the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, more than 50 per cent of the 538 calls, e-mails and faxes it received in response to the incident were supportive of Ishihara's remarks' (Hagström & Hanssen 2015, p. 78).

When the LDP politician Taku Yamazaki made a 'private' trip to North Korea on 9 January 2007, which was seen as an attempt to reopen dialogue with the country, he was severely criticised as a 'spy' and 'traitor' by some sections of the media. Chief cabinet secretary Yasuhisa Shiozaki cautioned that the visit contradicted 'the situation when Japan is imposing stricter sanctions against North Korea' (MOFA 2007). MOFA spokesperson Tomohiko Taniguchi responded to press questioning saying that now is 'not the time for the Japanese Government to positively engage the nation for conversation. It is the time for the Japanese Government to pressurize North Korea even further' (MOFA 2007). Then prime minister Abe himself stated that 'I hope Yamazaki understands we are now trying to apply pressure to North Korea' (Abe 2009, footnote 14). As a result, of this tabooisation of the abduction issue, no national political leader has been willing to pursue any sort of substantial engagement with North Korea.

Chongryon and members of the *Zainichi* Korean community have also been the subject of periodic attacks. This included an arson attack against the Chongryon headquarters by the Kenkoku Giyugun (McNeil 2004, p. 1; McCormack 2004, pp. 122-123).

Policy constrained

As a result of the right-wing's successful propagation of its North Korea narrative and its capture of Japan's North Korea policy, the policy options available to the Japanese government on North Korea became highly constrained. Diplomatic normalisation, economic cooperation and aid of any variety are conditioned on an undefined 'full' resolution of the abduction issue (MOFA 2003). This stubborn position means that Japan is unable to utilise its most enticing carrot, economic cooperation for the settlement of past issues as agreed in the 2002 Pyongyang Declaration, as a diplomatic bargaining chip in any meaningful way to resolve the abduction or nuclear issues. Instead Japan has mostly relied on a stick-heavy approach.

Japan has thrown the ball entirely into North Korea's court. Japan essentially is expecting North Korea to fulfil all its obligations of under a comprehensive resolution (complete denuclearisation and a resolution of the abduction issue) before Japan offers anything in return. At the same time, Japan has failed to realistically define what a full resolution would entail. The former chairman of the Rachi Giren, Keiji Furuya, defined the minimum acceptable solution as 'making North Korea repatriate all the abductees to Japan alive' (Hagström 2009, p. 843). The Japanese government has also demanded that North Korea 'extradite to Japan those responsible for carrying out the abductions' (Headquarters for the Abduction Issue 2011) despite there being no extradition framework between the two countries. These Japanese demands put 'North Korea in the impossible situation of trying to prove a negative...that it no longer holds any Japanese citizens against their will' (ICG 2005, p. 13)

Sanctions preparation

Japan first considered sanctions against North Korea as early as 1998 after the sudden launch of the Taepodong-1 missile that overflowed Japan. This included the formation of the Council to Consider Strategic Diplomacy against North Korea in February 1999. Its members included Shinzo Abe, Shigeru Ishiba and Ichita Yamamoto from the LDP and Keiichiro Asao from the DPJ (*Yomiuri Shimbun* 1999, p. 5; Miyamoto 2006, p. 32). Japan's Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Control Law (FEFTCL) allowed it to impose sanctions multilaterally under international frameworks, such as UN Security Council Resolutions. Japan lacked a legal framework to impose sanctions unilaterally against another country. The council members wrote a draft bill in order to amend FEFTCL, which they were planning to submit in August 1999 but were blocked by the Cabinet and by MOFA who wanted to keep open channels for negotiating diplomatic normalisation with North Korea.

After Kim Jong-il's shock admission that North Korea had abducted Japanese citizens, support for the revision of FEFTCL within the Diet grew. In December 2002, a group of six young LDP lawmakers — led by Ichita Yamamoto and supported from the outside by Abe who was then deputy chief cabinet secretary — established the Council to Consider Diplomatic Cards against North Korea (*Tai Kita Chousen Gaikou Kaado Wo Kangaeru Kai*) (Kikuchi 2013; Yamamoto 2007). It compiled a new draft amendment of FEFTCL on 28 January 2003 (Miyamoto 2006, p. 35; *Mainichi Shimbun* 2003, p. 2; Arrington 2016, p. 165). The same council also later drafted a new law to reject the port entry of specific ships into

Japan, which became known as the Law for Special Measures Concerning Interdiction of Ports Entry by Specific Ships (LSMCIPESS). Again, as after the Taepodong shock, these moves to open the path to implementing sanctions were blocked by the cabinet. Prime minister Koizumi stated in a select lower house security committee meeting that ‘I don’t necessarily think that economic sanctions are appropriate now’ (Miyamoto 2006, p. 36).

Despite Koizumi’s opposition to these measures, his hand was eventually forced in the lead up to the November 2003 lower house election. On 31 October 2003, the main opposition DPJ included in its election manifesto a pledge to amend FEFTCL (Miyamoto 2006, p. 36; *Sankei Shimbun* 2003). The LDP comfortably won the election, but the DPJ in cooperation with a large cohort of LDP lawmakers outside the cabinet were able to pressure the Koizumi government successfully during the campaign and its aftermath. As a result, the LDP submitted a FEFTCL amendment bill to the Diet on 21 November 2003, which was then passed both houses on 9 February 2004 (Miyamoto 2006, p. 37). The revision enabled Japan to impose sanctions independently of the United States or the UN for the purpose of maintaining the peace and safety of Japan (Miyamoto 2006, p. 25). Ichita Yamamoto lauded the amendment saying that ‘a card making it possible to impose economic sanctions in case of necessity is very significant in terms of pressure and deterrence’ (Miyamoto 2006, p. 37). So while officially the purpose of FEFTCL was ‘to prevent illegal exports and illegal remittances, and thus keep Japanese products and capital from being used for weapons development in North Korea’ (Miyamoto 2006, p. 37), the greater impetus came from lawmakers’ desire to use sanctions as a means to give Japan a new diplomatic card to resolve the abduction issue (Miyamoto 2006, p. 34).

The passage of the LSMCIPESS took longer to navigate through the Diet as Koizumi continued to oppose it. The Council to Consider Diplomatic Cards against North Korea announced the outline of their version of LSMCIPESS on 27 December 2003. And LDP secretary general Shinzo Abe announced during the LDP conference on 16 February 2004 that the LSMCIPESS would be submitted to the Diet as soon as possible (Miyamoto 2006, p. 40; *Mainichi Shimbun* 2004a, p. 1). After a number of months of wrangling between the LDP and their coalition partner Komeito as well as with the opposition DPJ, they still could not agree on the exact contents of the bill.

Things came to a head on 25 May 2004 (just days after Koizumi had returned from his second summit in North Korea) when DPJ lawmaker (and future prime minister) Yukio Hatoyama confronted Koizumi during questioning. Hatoyama asked Koizumi whether he ‘would impose economic sanctions against North Korea if North Korea does not resolve the problem of the kidnapping of Japanese citizens. If it is impossible for you to make progress...I would declare that we in the Diet are determined to demand stronger responses from the government’ (Miyamoto 2006, p. 43). Koizumi replied ‘I have no intention of imposing economic sanctions against North Korea for the kidnapping of Japanese citizens at present’ (Miyamoto 2006, p. 43). Later that day the members of the LDP, Komeito and the DPJ overcame their disagreements (regarding limits on embargo periods and the scope of ships that could be interdicted) and came to a cross-party agreement in opposition to prime minister Koizumi and the LSMCIPESS was passed on 14 June 2004. This law enabled Japan to ‘prohibit port entry by specific ships’ in order to ‘maintain peace and safety in Japan’ (Miyamoto 2006, p. 25). Koizumi continued to oppose the utilisation of these laws. Yet the right-wing politicians had laid a foundation that would later enable the rapid implementation of sanctions.

The second Japan-DPRK summit and getting the family members back

A second Japan-DPRK summit was born out of the necessity to organise the return of the family members of the five returned abductees. Koizumi still held out the hope that, with the return of the family members and a resolution of the fates of the unaccounted for abductees, the domestic atmosphere in Japan and the dynamic between Japan and North Korea could be shifted onto a more positive footing. This in turn would open the door toward substantive diplomatic normalisation negotiations, the ability of Japan to use its economic cooperation card to incentivise denuclearisation and ultimately the implementation of the Pyongyang Declaration.

After Japan went back on the temporary visit agreement for the returned five abductees, the channel between Hitoshi Tanaka and X became severely strained. The North Koreans were furious that the Japanese went back on their word. North Korea demanded that before it would return the abductees’ family members that Koizumi must make another trip to Pyongyang. The matter was further complicated by the fact that none of the five abductees’ children had ever set foot in Japan, were said to not even know that their parents were Japanese and were mostly of adult age. Hitomi Soga’s husband, Charles Jenkins, was an

American who had defected from the US military while on patrol in the Korean demilitarised zone in 1965 and been trapped in North Korea ever since. Jenkins was afraid that he would be arrested and extradited to the United States and then jailed or executed (Jenkins & Frederick 2008).

The second Japan-North Korea summit took place on 22 May 2004. During the meeting Kim Jong-il informed Koizumi that the five children of Hasuikes and the Chimuras were free to go to Japan, and Charles, Mika and Brinda Jenkins were also free to go to Japan but that they had their own opinion. With regard to the unaccounted for abductees, Kim said to Koizumi 'if you are so insistent, I am willing to go back to the drawing board and order a reinvestigation of the fate of the ten missing persons. If you doubt our sincerity, you are welcome to participate in the investigation'. However, Kim added, 'I am tired of playing the role of the bad man in a poorly scripted play' (Funabashi 2007, p. 51). As well as pressing for more from North Korea in a bid to resolve the abduction issue, Koizumi also reassured Kim Jong-il of his commitment to normalise relations. He promised that so long as North Korea adhered to the Pyongyang Declaration, Japan would not impose sanctions (Wada & McCormack 2005, p. 9).

Koizumi left Pyongyang with the children of the Hasuikes and Chimuras. The Jenkins family also eventually made their way to Japan after a meeting was arranged for them with Hitomi Soga in Indonesia in July 2004 so they could decide their future together. In Japan, Charles Jenkins turned himself in to the US military for dereliction of duty and he was sentenced to a punishment of 30 days lockup before joining his wife and children on Sado Island (Jenkins & Frederick 2008).

Upon Koizumi's return to Tokyo he immediately held a press conference where he let AFVKN, NARKN and Rachigiren members heavily criticise him. Shigeru Yokota criticised the outcome as 'the worst possible result that we could imagine' (Funabashi 2007, p. 55). Takeo Hiranuma, the head of the Rachigiren, said 'this is unacceptable. This is far less than one should expect from a visit of the prime minister himself. It doesn't take a prime minister to achieve this outcome. Even I could have done it' (*Asahi Shimbun* 2004, p. 22; Funabashi 2007, p. 55). Despite (or maybe because of) the shellacking that Koizumi calmly endured for an hour from the families, public opinion rated the summit a success. Opinion polls showed that Koizumi's approval rating rose by 9 percentage points in an *Asahi Shimbun* poll and 11

percentage points in a *Mainichi Shimbun* poll (*Asahi Shimbun* 2004, p.2; *Mainichi Shimbun* 2004b, p. 1).

DNA disputes

The abduction issue was deadlocked between Japan demanding more information on the fate of the unaccounted for abductees and North Korea arguing that the abduction issue had been resolved. In an attempt to break this impasse, North Korea sought to provide Japan with the DNA evidence it requested. The results of the DNA testing then became a further source of dispute.

In 2002, North Korea provided what is said were probably the remains of abductee Kaoru Matsuki. However, DNA testing found that the remains most likely did not belong to him (*The Japan Times* 2002). Part of the jaw remained intact and a skeletal test showed that the bones belonged to a middle-aged female and not the male Matsuki (*Sankei Shimbun* 2017).

In November 2004 North Korea provided what it said was the remains of abductee Megumi Yokota. The remains were handed over to Japanese government officials who went to North Korea to collect them from Megumi Yokota's husband, Kim Chol-jun. He said that he had dug up the remains three years after the burial and subsequently cremated and kept them. The cremated remains were also incinerated to the extent that extracting a DNA sample from them appeared unlikely. The Japanese government harboured serious doubts. The explanation of his behaviour seemed 'exceedingly unnatural' (MOFA 2004). The Japanese also suspected that Kim Chol-jun had worked for the special mission organisation that Kim Jong-il had explained was responsible for the abductions in the first place (McCormack 2008, p. 12). It was also later revealed that Kim Chol-jun is a South Korean national known as Kim Young-nam suspected to have been abducted from the South to the North in 1978 (*The Japan Times* 2006; Park 2014).

The remains were divided into two groups for testing. One group of five samples was provided to the National Research Institute of Police Science (NRIPS), a research institute under the umbrella of Japan's National Police Agency. The other group of five samples was provided to a researcher from Teikyo University, Tomio Yoshii (ICG 2005, p. 12). The NRIPS analysis was unable to extract a DNA sample and thus made no meaningful conclusion. Yoshii, on the other hand, claimed to have extracted a DNA sample using a

technique called nested polymerase chain reaction (PCR), ‘which amplifies DNA twice instead of once as in conventional analysis’ (ICG 2005, p. 12). Yoshii then compared this with a DNA sample from Megumi Yokota’s umbilical cord, which was provided by her parents. Yoshii’s results were subsequently said to show that the DNA sample did not match that of Yokota’s. On this basis the Japanese government stated that the remains North Korea provided were not Yokota’s and described North Korea’s handling of the situation ‘deplorable’ and threatened ‘stringent actions’ against North Korea in retaliation (Cyranoski 2005, p. 445).

There are a great many unanswered questions about the accuracy of Yoshii’s tests, something that has been largely left unexamined in Japan due to the politicisation of the issue (ICG 2005, p. 12). Most notably the magazine *Nature* interviewed Yoshii who described the samples as like stiff sponges and admitted that he could not rule out the possibility that his DNA sample had been contaminated either before it reached him or during the DNA extraction process (Cyranoski 2005, p. 445). The method he used to extract a DNA sample, nested PCR, is considered especially susceptible to the risk of contamination. Yoshii, it later transpired was a relatively junior member of the faculty in a department that has no senior members and had no prior experience in the analysis of cremated specimens (McCormack 2005). Why had the samples not been given to a team of more senior scientists but instead to a relatively junior individual?

Nature’s questioning kick-started a heated exchange between the Japanese government and the magazine. The Japanese government unusually found the need to criticise the *Nature* article. Chief cabinet secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda referred to *Nature*’s article as inadequate and a misrepresentation of the government-commissioned analysis. In response, *Nature* published an editorial criticising the Japanese government for political interference in the scientific process. *Nature* argued that the Japanese government’s ‘interpretation of the DNA tests has crossed the boundary of science’s freedom from political interference’ and that ‘this suggestion [that the DNA sample may have been contaminated] is uncomfortable for a Japanese government that wants to have North Korea seen as unambiguously fraudulent’ (*Nature* 2005a, p. 257). *Nature* queried why ‘did Japan entrust [the DNA samples] to one scientist working alone, one who no longer seems to be free to talk about them’? Finally, *Nature* concluded that ‘Japan’s policy seems a desperate effort to make up for what has been a diplomatic failure’ (*Nature* 2005a, p. 257) and that the Japanese government ‘now needs to

either produce some evidence to back up its claims that the DNA tests were conclusive, or admit that they weren't' (*Nature* 2006).

Ultimately, the Japanese government produced no further evidence and stuck to its interpretation that Yoshii's tests were conclusive. This position was supported by NARKN and AFVKN, which 'organised press interviews and television appearances' by abductee family members on the DNA matter calling for economic sanctions (Lynn 2006, p. 502). While Koizumi still resisted sanctions, Japan did cut off all aid to North Korea, including half of the rice aid that Koizumi had promised in the second summit and was still to be delivered. Moreover, Yoshii moved to a plum job in the Tokyo Police Department under which he could not be compelled to testify in the Japanese Diet without his employer's approval. Critics such as Nobuhiko Suto of the DPJ who intended to call Yoshii as a witness allege that the job switch was engineered by the government to protect Yoshii (*Nature* 2005b, p. 685).

The powerful nature of NARKN's narrative on North Korea is demonstrated by the behaviour of the Japanese media and government in responding to the DNA tests. Most Japanese newspapers continue to report on the DNA testing as if it were an established fact that the remains did not belong to Megumi Yokota (ICG 2005, p. 12). The Japanese government has been able to maintain the narrative among the Japanese public that North Korea is entirely at fault for the lack of a resolution for the unaccounted abductees.

Imposing sanctions

Koizumi acted to veto the imposition of sanctions against North Korea for a number of years during his prime ministership. He stood firm in his ambition to normalise relations within the broader framework of a comprehensive resolution under the Pyongyang Declaration. However, after Yasuo Fukuda resigned as chief cabinet secretary in May 2004, and was succeeded by Hiroyuki Hosoda (May 2004-October 2005) and Shinzo Abe (October 2005-September 2006), Koizumi essentially ceded leadership on North Korea.

The public mood favoured implementing sanctions. A NARKN and AFVKN 'petition drive urging the government to cut off "people, money, materials, and information" to North Korea...submitted an unprecedented five million signatures to the Japanese government in February 2005' (Arrington 2016, p. 165). A majority of politicians outside the cabinet also supported the imposition of sanctions. Some did in the belief that NARKN's sanctions

formula could help to resolve the abduction issue. For instance, Abe was known to remark in 2002 that ‘in North Korea there is no food or oil, whereas Japan has both of these products. North Korea will submit to Japan after it learns that it cannot survive the winter’ (Wada 2004, p. 2; McCormack 2008, p. 8). Many other politicians realised that sanctions would most likely do little to actually bring back the abductees but supported them as a populist measure and as a means of Japan demonstrating its frustration and doling out some form of punishment.

In June 2006 the Diet passed the Japanese Abductions and North Korean Human Rights Act (revised again in July 2007). This law, which was likened to the United States’ 2004 North Korean Human Rights Act, ‘required national and local officials to raise public awareness about the abductions and North Korea’s other human rights violations, especially during a week in December every year’ (Arrington 2016, p. 166). It also ‘stipulated the government’s obligation to promote international efforts to resolve the abductions issue and oppose initiatives by international financial institutions to aid the DPRK’ (Arrington 2016, p. 166).

On 5 July 2006 after North Korea test fired seven missiles, the Japanese government responded by implementing unilateral sanctions that very day (10 days before the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1695). Since the missile test constituted a violation of the Pyongyang Declaration by North Korea, Koizumi ultimately kept his promise to Kim Jong-il to not implement sanctions so long as North Korea upheld the declaration. However, Koizumi no longer had a foothold to continue to pursue the grand bargain that the Pyongyang Declaration represented. The combination of domestic public opinion in Japan and the build-up of LDP lawmakers calling for a tough line on North Korea meant that Koizumi probably could not have resisted the push to sanctions even if he was inclined to after the missile test. The rapid speed with which the sanctions were announced and implemented was enabled by the earlier groundwork laid by the amendment of FEFTCL and the passage of the LSMCIPESS as well as the multiple meetings per month in 2006 between Rachi Giren lawmakers and NARKN and AFVKN in order ‘to coordinate their advocacy for enhanced sanctions’ (Arrington 2016, p. 166).

Japanese unilateral sanctions consisted of nine measures, the most significant being the prohibition of entry for the *Mangyongbong-92* into Japanese ports. This ferry connected Wonson in North Korea with Niigata in Japan and was suspected of carrying cash remittances

to North Korea, including money that was alleged to have been illegally taken from the Chogin Credit Associations (Miyamoto 2006, pp. 38-39). Other measures included banning the entry of North Korean officials into Japan and denying landing permission into Japan for charter flights from North Korea (Abduction Issue HQ 2011; NHK 2017; Miyamoto 2006, p. 22).

In September 2006, Koizumi resigned as prime minister after five and a half years in the top job. In the vote for the new LDP party president (who would take over as prime minister) Shinzo Abe won by a convincing margin. The image of Abe as ‘a staunch defender of the national interest through his hard-line stance on the abductions issue...contributed to his rising popularity among the Japanese public and support within the LDP’ (Mobrand & Williams 2010, p. 518). The media coverage of Abe standing together with the abductees’ families after Koizumi’s first summit in Pyongyang in September 2002 shot him into the limelight and helped propel him to a number of promotions from deputy chief cabinet secretary to secretary general of the LDP to chief cabinet secretary. The chief cabinet secretary is perhaps the second most powerful position in the Japanese government after prime minister (Kikuchi 2013), and generally ‘holds two scheduled press conferences a day, providing the, sometimes off the cuff, official word of the Japanese government’ (Cucek 2016). In this position Abe was able to showcase directly his credentials as a North Korean hard-liner, beaming into the public’s lounge rooms basically every day.

Abe immediately set about implementing new measures to respond to the abduction issue. Just days after taking office he transformed the Cabinet Office division he had established into the independent Abduction Issue Headquarters in order to ‘manage abductions-related policy and consult with abductee families’ (Arrington 2016, p. 167). Later in 2007, Abe increased its personnel to 35 people and its budget tenfold. In order ‘to raise awareness, the headquarters produced brochures, a multilingual documentary, and an animated film about the abductions and started transmitting radio broadcasts to North Korea’ (Arrington 2016, p. 167).

On 9 October, less than two weeks after Abe took office, North Korea conducted its first nuclear test. Once again with great speed the Japanese government announced new unilateral sanctions on 11 October (again pipping UN Security Council Resolution 1718.). This entailed banning the entry of all North-Korean flagged vessels into Japanese ports, banning the import

of all goods from North Korea (Abduction Issue HQ 2011; Kantei 2006), banning the entry of all North Koreans nationals into Japan (with the exception of *Zainichi* Koreans with residential status) and banning the export of luxury goods into North Korea (Hughes & Krauss 2007, p. 164; Arrington 2016, p. 166). Japan also ‘considered the option of backing a potential US economic blockade of the North...But the US soon made it clear that it needed to pursue diplomacy and was not prepared as yet to exert military pressure on the North’ (Hughes 2009, p. 301).

Under Taro Aso’s prime ministership, after North Korea’s second nuclear test on 25 May 2009, the Japanese government imposed a complete ban on the export of goods to North Korea (Abduction Issue HQ 2011) stamping out any last remaining trickles of trade that had already been reduced to virtually nil.

While Japan’s unilateral sanctions ‘were spurred by events that in themselves were unrelated to the abduction issue, the Japanese government has stressed that the implementation of the sanctions is a result of a “larger picture” in which the abduction issue has been emphasized’ (Hanssen 2011, p. 53). In the words of the Abduction Issue Headquarters, the implementation and maintenance of Japanese sanctions against North Korea ‘was taken in consideration of the international political climate...One of the factors that influenced the decision to implement these measures was the fact that North Korea had not acted in good faith to resolve the abduction issue’ (Abduction Issue HQ 2011).

Although over a decade has passed there has been little change in Japan’s unilateral sanctions framework other than some incremental loosening and tightening, and there has been little movement on the abduction issue. The hostile domestic political atmosphere toward North Korea was maintained on autopilot during the six years of revolving door Japanese prime ministers that ensued after Koizumi. Indeed, one scholar refers to the lack of progress in Japan-North Korea relations as a ‘lost decade’ (Maslow 2013).

It is unclear how the returned abductees and the abductees’ families evaluated the sanctions campaign. ‘Although they avoided publicly criticizing their loyal supporters in NARKN, some subsequently questioned the efficacy of sanctions and their ramifications for abductees still in the North’ (Arrington 2016, p. 166). Toru Hasuike, for instance adopted an increasingly conciliatory tone toward North Korea. He remarked that ‘the political left had

“faced a shock and fallen silent” (Hagström & Hanssen 2015, p. 79; Hasuike et al. 2009, p. 86) and was subsequently forced out from his position as AFVKN secretary general.

Japanese obstructionism in the Six Party Talks

After the effective collapse of the Agreed Framework, efforts to denuclearise North Korea turned to establishment of the Six Party Talks (SPT) between 2003 and 2009 involving North Korea, South Korea, the United States, China, Japan and Russia. Japan refused to cooperate because of its insistence that the abduction issue must be resolved first (Okano-Heijmans 2008, pp. 4-5). From the beginning China, Russia and South Korea conceived of the SPT as a forum to negotiate a comprehensive resolution encompassing diplomatic, political and economic normalisation, in line with the 2002 Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration. The United States and Japan took a harder line. The United States insisted that North Korean submission should come first before negotiations and refused to talk with North Korea for the first two years of the process. Japan supported this position. In fact, ‘the dominant faction in the Japanese bureaucracy seems to have assumed that there could be no reconciliation between the United States and North Korea and thus confidently constructed the unique stance in which the abductions would carry greater weight for it than the nuclear or missile concerns’ (McCormack 2008, p. 10).

Japan’s obstructionism was significant because it had agreed under the 2002 Pyongyang Declaration to provide North Korea with economic cooperation upon normalising relations. This means that Japan is recognised as the country that could play the most important role as a major donor to North Korea. This was arguably a large part of the rationale for the adoption of SPT’s multilateral approach and the inclusion of Japan (Ashizawa 2006, p. 422). The upshot of the Japanese position, under which the abduction issue had to be resolved first, was that ‘Japanese official development assistance (ODA) cannot be used as a real bargaining chip for facilitating a more lasting settlement of the nuclear issue’ (Hagström 2009, p. 839).

Around mid-2005 the United States began to shift away from its previous hard-line approach. ‘Fearful of becoming what Jack Pritchard, formerly the State Department’s top North Korea expert, described as “a minority of one...isolated from the mainstream of its four other allies and friends in the Six-Party Talks”, the US steadily modified its position’ (McCormack 2008, p. 15; Pritchard 2007, p. 120). However, as Japan-DPRK bilateral negotiations on the abduction issue continued unresolved, Japan failed to adjust to this new US position.

The fourth round of the SPT provided a breakthrough when the six countries agreed to the 'Statement of Principles' on 19 September 2005 to realise the goal of 'the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner' (State Department 2005). The optimism surrounding the agreement was soon shattered by a disagreement over the right to the provision of light water reactors. The United States ruffled feathers in Pyongyang when it announced that it was imposing sanctions on Banco Delta Asia of Macau for its involvement in assisting North Korea with illegal activities including narcotics trafficking and currency counterfeiting. This in effect froze millions of dollars of North Korean capital. North Korea asserted that it would not fulfil its part of the agreement unless the sanctions were lifted. Subsequently, in 2006, North Korea conducted its first nuclear test.

The SPT reconvened and made what looked like a breakthrough in February 2007 with the 'Initial Actions for the Implementation of the Joint Statement'. This included an agreement that the other five parties would provide 'emergency energy assistance to the DPRK...equivalent to 50,000 tons of heavy fuel oil...within the next 60 days' (MOFA 2007). Optimism was further boosted with another agreement in October 2007 entitled the 'Second Action Plan' whereby North Korea would shut down its main nuclear facilities and submit a complete declaration of all its nuclear facilities. In return, the United States acted to lift some of the sanctions on North Korea. This included the removal of the Trading with the Enemy Act (TWEA) in June 2008 and the removal of North Korea from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism in October 2008.

Japan refused to take part in the emergency energy provision on the basis that North Korea had not resolved the abduction issue. In the words of MOFA spokesperson, Tomohiko Taniguchi, 'because of the unsolved questions, like the whereabouts of some of the victims, including Megumi Yokota...we cannot take part in energy support' (MOFA 2007). China, Russia, South Korea, and the United States were forced to make up for Japan's energy contributions in order to maintain the integrity of the agreement. Nevertheless, the Japanese public supported Japan's position (see Figure 4).

Japan also attempted to persuade the United States not to remove North Korea from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list. As far as Japan was concerned as long as the abductees were not returned North Korea was still engaging in a terrorist act. If the abduction issue was not

addressed, North Korea reached peace with the other parties, denuclearised and was given a pathway to rebuild its economy, it may never have any incentive to resolve the issue in the future, the Japanese negotiators worried. Washington, however, became increasingly fatigued with Tokyo's 'insistence to deal with an issue of the past at the expense of making progress on North Korea's denuclearization' (Berkofsky 2009, p. 22). At the same time, it did not want 'to give Pyongyang any additional "excuse" to further delay its denuclearisation and the dismantlement of its nuclear facilities. That this undermined a joint US-Japanese approach towards North Korea was seemingly secondary to the outgoing US administration in October 2008' (Berkofsky 2009, p. 22).

While then prime minister Taro Aso attempted to play down the significance of these developments, saying it would not affect discussions to resolve the abduction issue, much of Tokyo raged. Finance minister Shoichi Nakagawa called it 'extremely regrettable', the head of AFVKN called it a 'betrayal', NARKN chief Katsumi Sato said the United States had yielded to 'a gangster's threats', a prominent academic wept that the United States was an unfaithful ally and another academic characterised the US action as appeasement (McCormack 2008, p. 19).

The ultimate collapse of the SPT in 2009 came down to many factors: an atmosphere of mistrust among the parties (particularly between North Korea on the one hand and the United States and Japan on the other), arguments over sequencing, and issues surrounding the verifiability and irreversibility of North Korea's actions toward denuclearisation. Nevertheless, after North Korea pulled out of the SPT, it was scathing in its assessment of Japan's role in undermining the talks. The state-owned (North) Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said that Japan was 'entirely responsible' for North Korea being forced to pull out of the talks and that 'whenever the talks opened, Japan raised issues completely irrelevant to the talks [read the abduction issue], deliberately throwing obstacles in their way and making desperate efforts to bring the talks to collapse' (Berkofsky 2009, p.4).

The Stockholm Agreement

Getting Pyongyang to reinvestigate the fates of the abductees unaccounted for had been a top priority for Tokyo ever since the abduction issue exploded, yet remarkably little progress has been made. After the controversy surrounding Megumi Yokota's DNA the investigations were put on hold for a number of years. In June 2008 the two sides agreed that Pyongyang

would resume its investigations into the abduction issue (Abduction Issue HQ 2017, p. 22). In exchange, Japan agreed that it would relax some of its unilateral sanctions after the investigation was reopened. This shift of tack by Pyongyang, which had hitherto insisted that the abduction issue was resolved, appeared to stem from its trust in the more moderate Yasuo Fukuda, who had succeeded Abe as Japan's prime minister in September 2007, as well as North Korea's wanting to show a conciliatory attitude to encourage the United States to remove it from the State Sponsors of Terror list (DiFilippo 2013, p. 149). After Fukuda suddenly resigned as prime minister in September 2008, his successor Taro Aso announced just days after resuming office that Japanese unilateral sanctions against North Korea would be extended for another six months. In response North Korea once again pulled the plug on the investigation. 'Pyongyang concluded that "by extending the sanctions the Aso government was following the previous Abe government's hostile policy" toward the DPRK' (DiFilippo 2013, p. 149).

In 2014, after almost six years without progress, North Korea agreed to reopen its investigation. In the intervening period North Korean leader Kim Jong-il had died of a heart attack in December 2011, and Japan cycled through three more prime ministers before Shinzo Abe returned for a second stint in December 2012. The May 2014 agreement, reached in Stockholm, saw North Korea agree to 'conduct a comprehensive and full-scale investigations on all Japanese nationals, including victims of abduction' (Abduction Issue HQ 2017, p. 23). This was followed through in July 2014 with the establishment of a North Korean Special Investigation Committee. This was considered encouraging as it was formed 'with special mandate' from North Korea's National Defence Commission and included officials from the Ministry of State Security, the Ministry of People's Security, the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces, the DPRK Cabinet and the Workers' Party of Korea (North Korea Leadership Watch 2014). Japan responded positively to the North Korean moves by relaxing restrictions on visas, remittance limits and entry of North-Korean flagged ships into Japanese ports for humanitarian purposes (MOFA 2015).

These conciliatory actions were met with some resistance in Japan. At a NARKN national conference in Tokyo in September 2015 attended by the author, NARKN leaders led the large crowd in chants to rip up the Stockholm agreement, demanded the immediate return of all abductees, and called for tough economic sanctions and pressure until all abductees were returned to Japan (NARKN 2015). The right-wing politician Shingo Nishimura criticised the

Stockholm agreement as Japan trading an action for easily reversible lip service rather than an ‘action for action’ approach (Nishimura 2015). Yet Abe’s credentials on the abduction issue and among the right wing in Japan gave him considerably more leeway to soften slightly Japan’s stance on North Korea than other prime ministers had.

The special investigation was derailed after North Korea conducted its fourth nuclear test on 6 January 2016 and launched the Kwangmyongsong-4 satellite on 7 February 2016, which was criticised by the international community as a missile test in disguise. Japan reacted by retightening its unilateral sanctions. This included a ban on North Koreans entering into Japan, banning remittances to North Korea except for those under 100,000 yen and strictly for humanitarian purposes, and banning North-Korean flagged ships and ‘any ship that has stopped in North Korea’ from entering Japanese ports (Pollmann 2016). Additional measures included a freeze on assets held by suspect individuals and organisations in Japan and a ban on ‘nuclear and missile-related foreign engineers who have been to North Korea’ from entering Japan (Yoshida 2016). North Korea responded by scrapping the Stockholm agreement and criticised Japan’s new sanctions as ‘little short of the declaration of its own scrapping of the Stockholm agreement’ (AFP 2016).

Escaping from this impasse where Japan insists North Korea resolve the abduction issue and denuclearise, and North Korea insists the abduction issue is resolved, may require Houdini-like ingenuity. As Andrei Lankov (2014) has argued, North Korea is in a no-win situation with Japan. On the one hand, if North Korea returns any abductees who are still living, Japan may not be convinced that all abductees are accounted for and the door to normalised relations between North Korea and Japan may still not open. ‘As the experience of 2002 clearly demonstrated, one should not expect that repatriations [would] be welcomed by the Japanese public as a sign of North Korean good will. On the contrary, the Japanese people are likely to be outraged if they learn more about the scale of North Korean espionage in their country’ (Lankov 2014). On the other hand, if there are not any abductees alive, it is extremely difficult for North Korea to provide credible proof of that. ‘The Japanese public has no reason to believe the statements of North Korean representatives...even if it acts in good faith’ (Lankov 2014).

Recasting Japan as the victim and revising Article 9

The North Korea narrative propagated by Japan's right-wing groups has sought not just historical revisionism, sanctions and pressure and facilitating the collapse of North Korea as the only means to recover the abductees, but also to escape the post-war regime and revise Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution. In pursuit of the objective of formally revising Article 9, North Korea has been a useful enemy for the right wing in two particular ways. First, North Korean abductions of Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s enabled the right wing to portray Japan as a victim country in the post-war era through a clear-cut violation of Japanese sovereignty. Second, the right wing has sought to argue that Japanese victimhood is the result of the country's so-called irresponsible pacifism and exclusively defence-oriented security (*senshu boei*) policy under the post-war regime. Japan's right-wing groups have dovetailed this portrayal of national weakness with advocacy for expanding the capabilities of the SDF and loosening or abolishing the restrictions on the SDF's right to resort to the use of force under Article 9.

Japan's right-wing groups have used the abduction issue as an instrument to advocate Japan's escaping the post-regime. They present the abduction issue as 'the gravest infringement on Japanese sovereignty in the post-war era, and the one concrete instance where post-war Japan's "abnormal" security posture most certainly has resulted in the loss of Japanese lives at the hands of a foreign country' (Hagström & Hanssen 2015, p. 83). In other words, the right argues that the abduction issue 'revealed once and for all that leaving Japan's "security and existence" at the mercy of the "peace-loving peoples of the world", as stated in the Japanese Constitution, is exceedingly naïve' (Hagström & Hanssen 2015, p. 83).

The LDP politician Katsuei Hirasawa argued, for instance, that 'if Japan had been a normal state [*futsu no kokka*], we would certainly have been able to prevent the abductions. We would also have been able to rescue them' (Hirasawa 2004, p. 133; translation by Hagström & Hanssen 2015, p. 83). The former secretary general of NARKN Kazuhiro Araki wrote that 'the entire post-war structure has obstructed a solution of the abduction issue' (Araki 2009, p. 141; translation by Hagström & Hanssen 2015, p. 83). Megumi Yokota's mother, Sakie Yokota, is said to have remarked that 'Japan does not deserve to be called a nation if it remains shamefully incapable of rescuing all of the abductees. What this nation needs...is revision of its post-war "peace" constitution — as soon as possible — to become a normal — and stronger — nation' (Sakurai 2012; Hagström & Hanssen 2015, p. 83). Shintaro Ishihara argued that it was thanks to Article 9 that Japan let the abduction victims die without helping

them (*Asahi Shimbun* 2012b; Hagström & Hanssen 2015, p. 83). NARKN head Tsutomu Nishioka urged ‘the SDF to devise plans for rescue operations in case of an emergency or a sudden change on the Korean Peninsula’ (Nishioka 2009, p. 137; Hagström & Hanssen 2015, p. 84).

Shinzo Abe, in his book *Towards a Beautiful Country*, laments the violations of Japanese sovereignty that the abduction issue represents and argues that Japan must escape the post-war regime to protect its national interest (Abe 2006c, pp. 44-66). ‘While speaking at a closed meeting of the Headquarters for the Promotion of Constitutional Revision in early 2013, Abe stated that “if we hadn’t had this kind of constitution, we may have been able to protect Megumi Yokota”. He was referring to the “kind of constitution” that did not allow Japan to react militarily to North Korea abducting Japanese citizens, despite at the time possessing tentative knowledge of the incidents’ (Lindsay 2014).

The main players who dominate the abduction issue hold a historical revisionist view of the world which makes it difficult for them to accept Japanese colonial and wartime transgressions as fact. As such they are ‘dissatisfied with Japan’s being called an “assailant” [*kagaisha*] when it comes to colonial rule and aggressive warfare, but now find relief in that Japan has become a “victim” [*higaisha*’ (Hasuike & Ota 2009 p. 54; translation by Hagström & Hanssen 2015, p. 85). This recasting of Japan as the victim in the post-war era and of North Korea as an unintelligible evil power has made North Korea a useful enemy for the right, who used the abduction issue to justify its drive to escape the post-war regime and revise Article 9 for the protection of Japan.

Conclusion

The shock event surrounding North Korean leader Kim Jong-il’s admission in September 2002 that North Korea abducted a number of Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s provided an opportunity of Japan’s right-wing groups. The abductions of Japanese citizens by North Korea provided a clear-cut example of a violation of Japanese sovereignty which had resulted in the loss of Japanese lives. The Japanese public was outraged by this and Japan’s right-wing groups sought to portray Japan as a victim country not just in relation to the abductions but more broadly throughout the post-war era under the post-war regime.

Japan's right-wing groups successfully propagated a new narrative on North Korea. This included a revisionist history of Japanese transgressions on the Korean peninsula during the colonial era and the Second World War. This historical revisionism was used to challenge the idea that Japan should provide North Korea with economic cooperation upon diplomatic normalization under the terms of the 2002 Pyongyang Declaration. The right-wing narrative on North Korea also propagated the idea that the Kim family regime is evil and, as a result, hard line pressure such as through sanctions is the only way to rescue the abductees. Further, the right-wing narrative on North Korea argued that the abductions are a clear-cut violation of Japanese sovereignty, which are the result of Japanese weakness under the institutional framework of the post-war regime, and that Article 9 needs to be revised.

Japan's right-wing groups successfully influenced public opinion and the government through Rachi Giren to pursue and implement a hard-line policy against North Korea. This includes the implementation of sanctions including a total cessation of trade and restrictions on remittances. It also includes the denial of aid, the cessation of engagement and negotiation efforts and the conditioning of economic cooperation promised in the 2002 Pyongyang Declaration on an unrealistically defined 'full' resolution of the abduction issue.

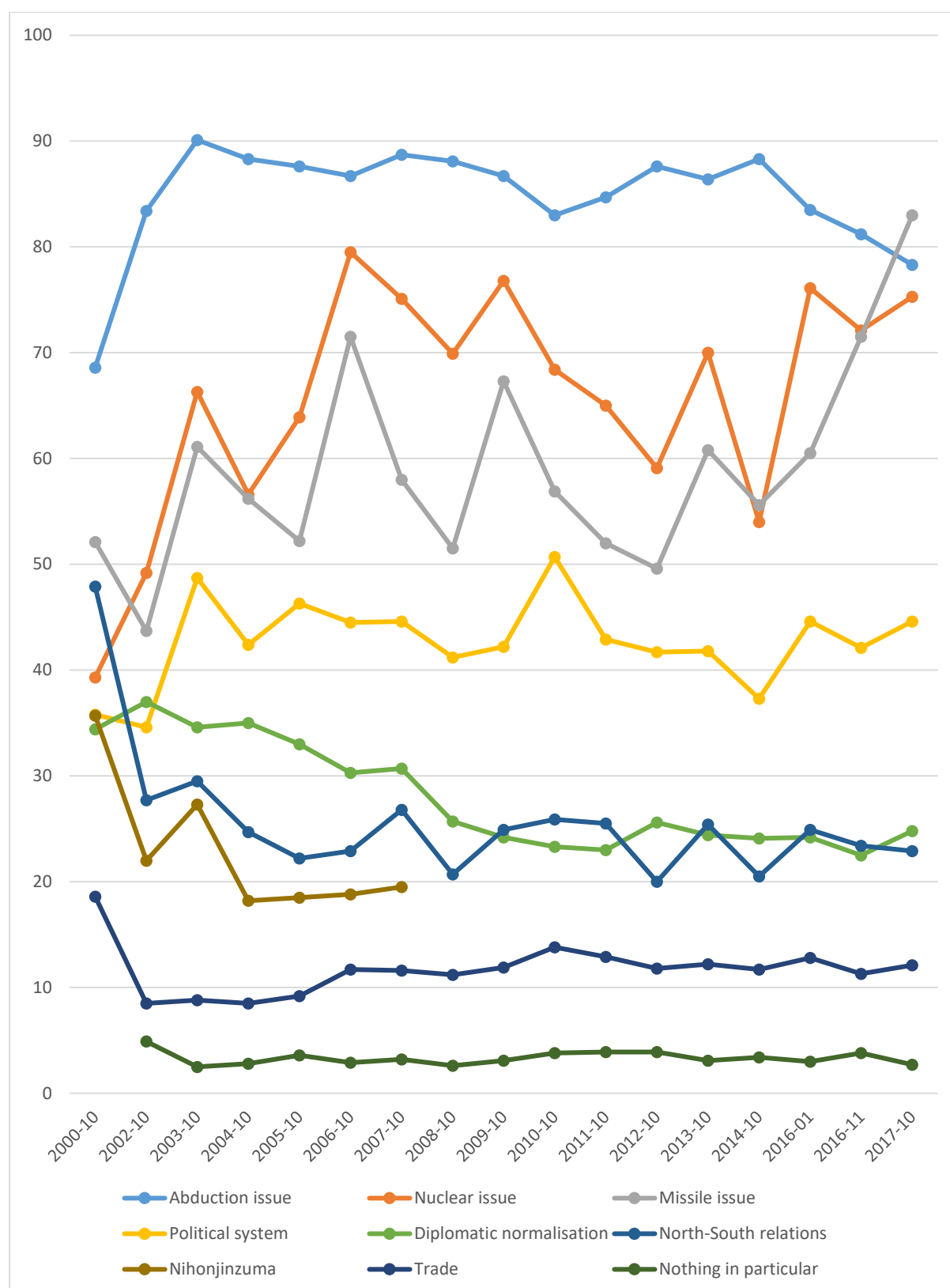
NARKN worked together with politicians through Rachi Giren and co-opted the voices of the abductees' relatives through AFVKN. This gave them a powerful tool, using the moral voice of the abductees' relatives, to shape a narrative for the Japanese public to understand North Korea-related events. The right-wing groups pushed their narrative that Japan needed to escape the post-war regime and the so-called irresponsible pacifism it represents. Japan's right-wing groups further connected their narrative with the shock event claiming that the abductions were the result of an abnormal Japan under the post-war regime which prevented Japan from adequately protecting its citizens. This narrative was pushed with great vigour across all imaginable mediums to a point of saturation.

As such Japan's right wing was successful in influencing Japan's North Korea policy in a number of ways. NARKN's media coordination has helped to sustain public anger over the abductions and has obscured any rational discussion of the broader context of Japan's historical relations with the Korean peninsula and Japan's colonial transgressions. Resolving the abduction issue became, and continues to be, the top priority for the Japanese public in relation to North Korea. NARKN and Rachi Giren have successfully ensured that Japan

sticks to its hard-line approach to resolving the abduction issue. This has included pressure to punish North Korea through sanctions. It has also included engagement with North Korea becoming taboo. This means efforts to resolve the abduction issue as part of the broader negotiations toward diplomatic Japan-DPRK normalisation has not been possible since prime minister Koizumi ceded leadership on the issue to his chief cabinet secretaries Hiroyuki Hosoda and then Shinzo Abe. Japan's constructive role in multilateral denuclearisation negotiations has also been made impossible. The economic cooperation Japan promised North Korea as part of the 2002 Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration is no longer an available option until the abduction issue is resolved. Conveniently for NARKN leaders this hard-line approach aligned with their pre-existing agenda to instigate regime change in North Korea.

While Japan's right wing found a great deal of success in influencing Japan's North Korea policy, there were limits to that influence. The imposition of unilateral sanctions and the blocking off of engagement efforts has been successful for Japan's right wing. However, the attempt by to concretely connect the abductions with Article 9 and the idea of Japanese weakness under the post-war regime has not been successful.

Figure 2: Japanese issues of concern regarding North Korea (selected items)



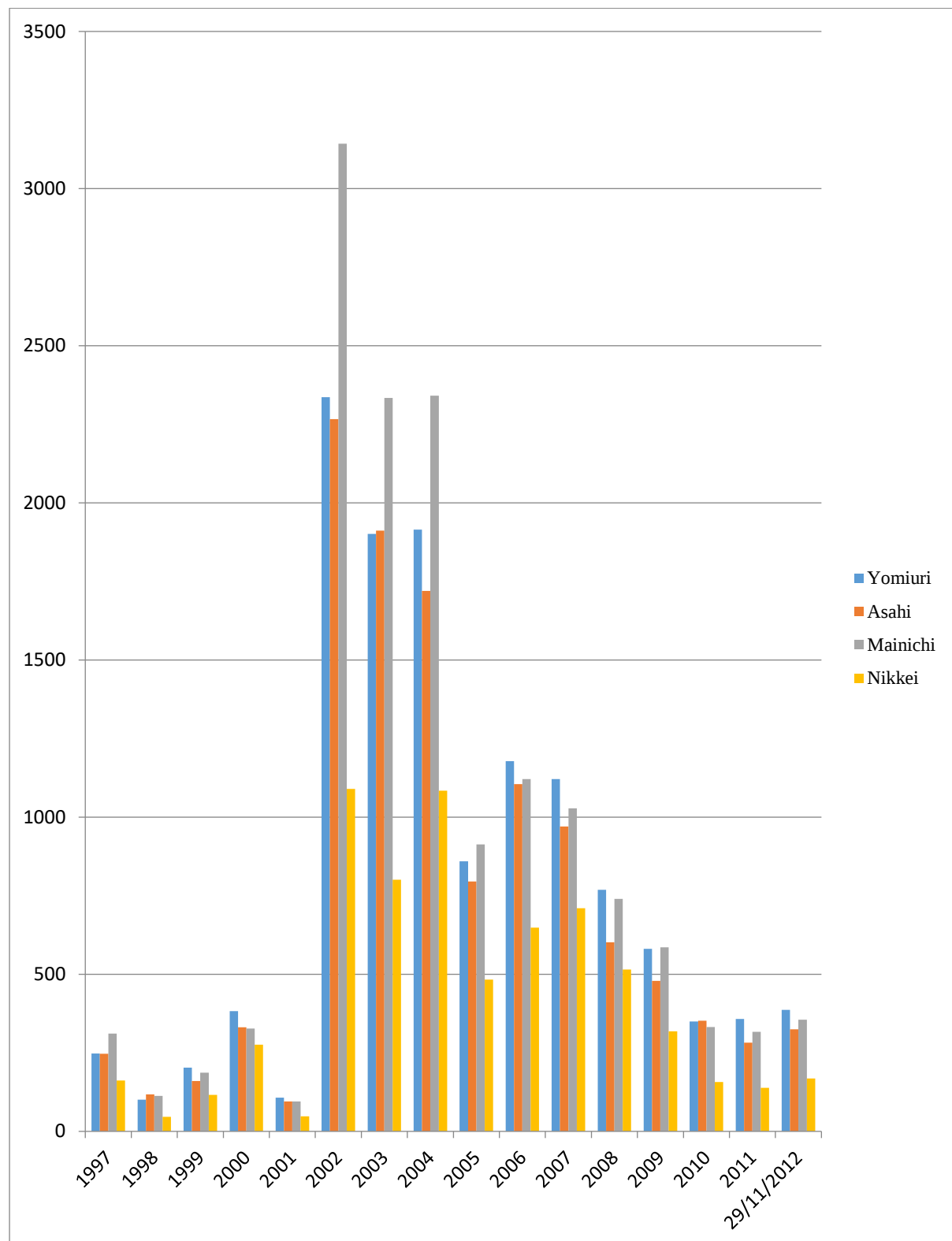
(Source: Government of Japan, Cabinet Office, Opinion Poll on Foreign Policy [Gaiko Ni Kan Suru Yoron Chosa]). Tabulated by the author.

Table 4 : Japanese issues of concern regarding North Korea

	2000-10	2002-10	2003-10	2004-10	2005-10	2006-10	2007-10	2008-10	2009-10	2010-10	2011-10	2012-10	2013-10	2014-10	2016-01	2016-11	2017-10
Abduction issue	68.6	83.4	90.1	88.3	87.6	86.7	88.7	88.1	86.7	83	84.7	87.6	86.4	88.3	83.5	81.2	78.3
Nuclear issue	39.3	49.2	66.3	56.6	63.9	79.5	75.1	69.9	76.8	68.4	65	59.1	70	54	76.1	72.1	75.3
Missile issue	52.1	43.7	61.1	56.2	52.2	71.5	58	51.5	67.3	56.9	52	49.6	60.8	55.6	60.5	71.5	83
Political system	35.8	34.6	48.7	42.4	46.3	44.5	44.6	41.2	42.2	50.7	42.9	41.7	41.8	37.3	44.6	42.1	44.6
Defectors								40.4	35.2	40.6	50.5	35.1	38.6	32.3	34.9	34.6	34.5
Diplomatic normalisation	34.4	37	34.6	35	33	30.3	30.7	25.7	24.2	23.3	23	25.6	24.4	24.1	24.2	22.5	24.8
North-South relations	47.9	27.7	29.5	24.7	22.2	22.9	26.8	20.7	24.9	25.9	25.5	20	25.4	20.5	24.9	23.4	22.9
Drug trafficking			45	36.5	36.3	46	44.1										
Food aid	50.5	37.6	42.4	47.1	41.2	35.7	38.9										
Unidentified vessels		59.5	58.7	43.1	38.7	43.8	36.7										
<i>Nihonjinzuma</i>	35.7	22	27.3	18.2	18.5	18.8	19.5										
Refugees	17.4	17	24.9	21.1	16.9	20.7	18.7										
Tourism	8.1						4										
So-called settlement of the past	24.6	21.8	20.7	16.9	21	18.6	18.5										
Trade, culture & sports exchange								11.2	11.9	13.8	12.9	11.8	12.2	11.7	12.8	11.3	12.1
Trade	18.6	8.5	8.8	8.5	9.2	11.7	11.6										
Sports exchange	9	7.4	5.9	4.9	7.6	7.3	6.1										
Cultural exchange	9.7	8	6.1	5.2	6.2	6.3	6.5										
Other	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.9	0.5	1.2	0.8	0.3	0.9	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.1
Nothing in particular		4.9	2.5	2.8	3.6	2.9	3.2	2.6	3.1	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.1	3.4	3	3.8	2.7
Don't know	0.5	1	0.9	1.2	0.6	0.9	0.6	0.5	0.3	1	0.8	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.9	0.9	0.3

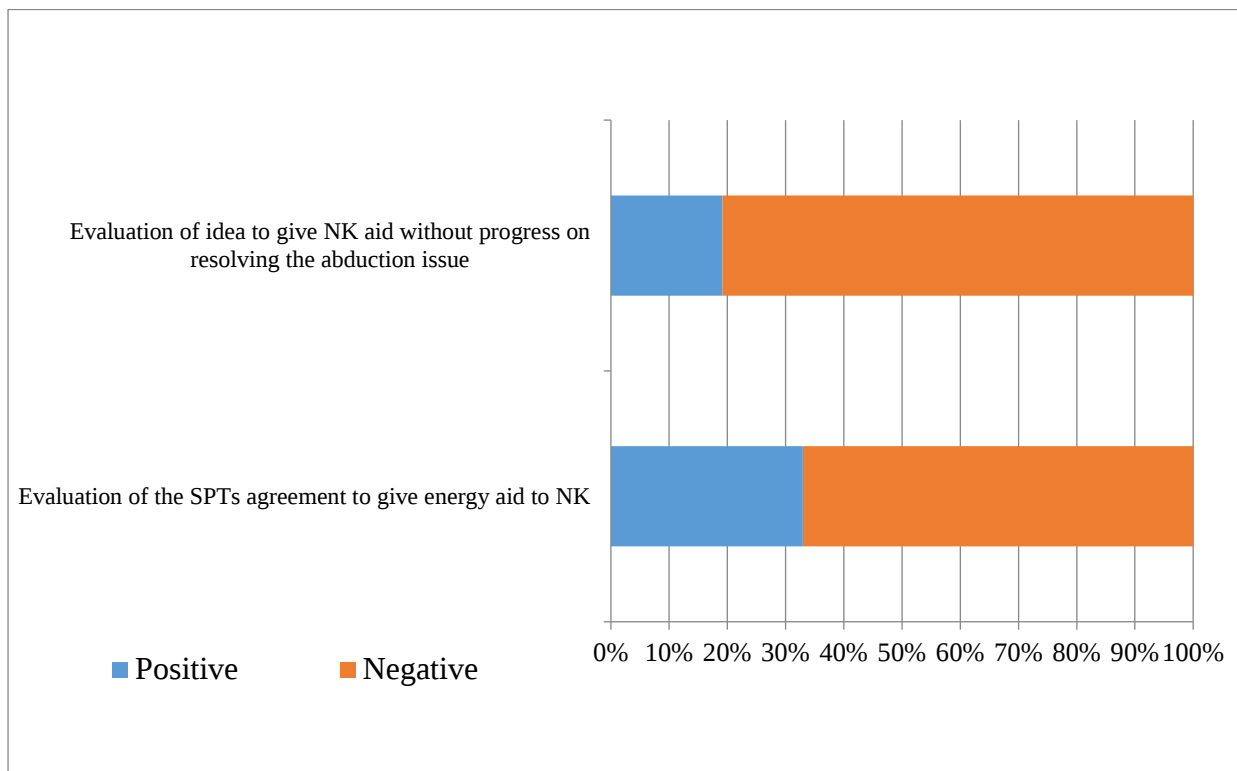
(Source: Government of Japan Cabinet Office, Opinion Polls on Foreign Policy [Gaiko Ni Kan Suru Yoron Chosa]).

Figure 3: Newspaper Articles Covering North Korean Abductions



(Source: Tabulated by author from respective newspaper databases).

Figure 4: Japanese public opinion on the provision of energy by Japan to North Korea under the SPT's 2007 'Initial Actions' agreement



Source: Mainichi Shimbun Opinion Poll, 27 February 2007, p. 5.

7 The Senkaku Islands and a rising China

The tacit agreement forged between Japan and China in the 1970s to shelve the territorial dispute over the Senkaku Islands is perceived by Japan's right-wing groups as a symptom of the post-war regime that they seek to escape. For Japan's right wing the tacit agreement is seen as an indication of Japan's weak security posture, inhibits its capacity to safeguard its sovereignty and harms national dignity. For a long time, the Senkaku Islands had been a relatively obscure issue in the Japan-China bilateral relationship and the domestic politics of both countries. In September 2010, however, a ship collision between the Japan Coast Guard and a Chinese fishing trawler saw tensions over the Senkaku Islands suddenly flare. This incident was seized upon by Japan's right-wing domestic political actors and it elevated protecting the Senkaku Islands to a symbolic mission. Protecting these far-flung rocky outcrops has been incorporated into the broader campaign to escape the post-war regime and overcome what the right wing sees as Japan's weak diplomacy and military posture.

Advocates of the tacit agreement have sought to emphasise that the Senkaku issue is simply one element within a broader and deeper relationship between Japan and China. For the sake of the higher priority issue of promoting shared regional peace and prosperity, the lower priority Senkaku issue was shelved and left for future and wiser generations to resolve. This approach forms a key part of the foundation on which Japan and China have built an interdependent economic relationship. The two countries have gradually increased their economic interdependence since normalising bilateral diplomatic relations in 1972, and since the opening and reform of the Chinese economy in the 1980s. China has overtaken the United States as Japan's largest trading partner, accounting for 21.7 per cent of Japan's two-way trade in goods in 2017 (JETRO 2017). The Japan-China trade relationship is the third biggest bilateral trade relationship in the world (after the US-Canada and US-China trade relationships). Japanese businesses 'have consistently acknowledged that the Chinese economy is "essential" to Japan' (King 2016). Yet to the right wing seeking to escape the post-war regime, cooperation with a so-called enemy such as China is anathema.

The mainstream narrative in Japan about its relationship with China has been characterised by the catch-phrase 'hot economics, cold politics'. The hot economic relationship has been juxtaposed against cold political relations due to disagreements over historical and territorial

issues and mutual distrust over future military postures. Frictions over history have been manifested prominently in tensions over Japanese prime ministerial visits to the Yasukuni Shrine that enshrines Japan's war dead. Yasukuni includes Japan's 14 Class-A war criminals who in 1978 were secretly enshrined in Yasukuni's list honouring the war dead, after which the Emperor of Japan quietly stopped visiting. Japanese distrust toward China's military intentions has been fuelled by rapid increases in Chinese defence spending, enabled by its rapid economic growth over the last 40 years, as well as complaints about a lack of transparency regarding China's People's Liberation Army (PLA). It was against this backdrop that the Senkaku tensions suddenly hit international headlines in September 2010.

The usefulness of the Senkaku Islands issue to the Japanese right wing is that it provides a clear manifestation of a Chinese threat to Japanese sovereignty. It is also an example that can be easily pointed to and understood by the public. Thus, when the 2010 Senkaku shock occurred, it was latched onto by Japan's right-wing domestic political actors to justify a China threat narrative and bolster arguments to escape the post-war regime. This includes advocating that Japan should not recognise the tacit agreement with China to shelve the Senkaku issue as well as denying that there ever was such a tacit agreement, promoting the idea of China as an adversarial nation with which shared regional peace and prosperity is not achievable, and advocating for expanded SDF capabilities, roles and missions to safeguard Japanese territory effectively from China.

This chapter analyses the Senkaku Islands territorial dispute between Japan and China in the context of Japan's right-wing domestic political actors seeking to escape the post-war regime. First, the background of Japan's and China's official positions on the territorial dispute will be sketched. Second, the formation of the tacit agreement to shelve the dispute in the 1970s will be outlined. Third, Japan's dual policy from the 1980s-2000s will be explored. Under this approach Japan officially denied the existence of a tacit agreement with China but restrained itself from taking actions which would be perceived by China as substantively increasing Japan's effective control of the Senkaku Islands. Fourth, the 2010 Senkaku shock will be analysed. It is argued that the right wing successfully established a narrative of a weak Japan caving to Chinese pressure and that the foundations of this narrative are exaggerated and challengeable. Fifth, the 2012 nationalisation of three of the Senkaku Islands will be examined. It is argued that the campaign to nationalise the islands was an orchestrated affair by Japanese right-wing political actors who sought to increase Japan's effective control over

the islands substantively and to demonstrate Japanese sovereignty over with indifference toward the broader diplomatic consequences of Japan's relationship with China.

Background

Japan, the People's Republic of China (China) and the Republic of China (Taiwan) have built competing claims for the Senkaku Islands 'by cherry-picking aspects of the historical record' (Choong 2014, p. 71). On the one hand, Japan's claims emphasise contemporary ideas of international law. This is furthered by the fact that Japan maintains effective control of the islands. On the other hand, China and Taiwan (which refer to the islands as the Diaoyu or Tiaoyutai) underscore 'concepts of historical title' (Choong 2014, p. 71) in their argument that the disputed islands are part of Taiwan and are thus part of China under their shared commitment to the one-China policy.

The government of Japan's basic position on the Senkaku Islands was set out by MOFA in 1972. It emphasises that the Senkaku Islands are Japan's inherent territory and that there is no dispute. Japan stresses that it undertook surveys of the islands from 1885 through the agencies of Okinawa prefecture and found the islands to be uninhabited or *terra nullius*. Subsequently, Japan incorporated the Senkaku Islands as Japanese territory through a cabinet decision on 14 January 1895 (Shaw 1999, pp. 22-23; MOFA 2014b, p. 4). Japan rejects the Chinese and Taiwanese assertion that the islands were transferred to Japan by China under the terms of the Treaty of Shimonoseki, which ended the 1894-1895 Sino-Japanese War, as this treaty was signed in April 1895 three months after the cabinet decision.

The government of Japan emphasises Japanese economic activity on the islands as part of its claim. In particular, the Japanese businessman Tatsuhiro Koga was given permission by the Japanese government in 1896 to develop the islands and ran businesses gathering albatross feathers and processing dried bonito (fish flakes) (MOFA 2014b, p. 6). The islands were subsequently sold by the government to the Koga family in 1932, but the business was forced to be abandoned with the start of the Pacific War 'because transportation expenses had become too costly as result of the war' (Shaw 1999, p. 31).

The government of Japan also emphasises that the Senkaku Islands have been recognised as Japan's unopposed sovereign territory under post-war arrangements. As evidence of this it references the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty, which lists the territories that Japan

renounced after World War II, including Taiwan and the Pescadores Islands, but does not include the Senkaku Islands (MOFA 2012a). Further, Japan asserts that ‘the fact that China expressed no objection to the status of the Islands being under the administration of the United States under Article III of the San Francisco Peace Treaty clearly indicates that China did not consider the Senkaku Islands as part of Taiwan’ (MOFA 1972). The government of Japan further argues that its sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands is demonstrated by the fact that they ‘were included in the 1972 Okinawa Reversion Agreement between the United States and Japan as part of the area over which the administrative rights were returned to Japan’ (MOFA 2014e). The government of Japan also references the fact that the United States leased some of the islands (Kuba and Taisho) from their Japanese landowner during the US administration of Okinawa from the 1950s (Tatsumi 2013, p. 109) and that Japan ‘has offered [Kuba and Taisho] to the United States since 1972 as facilities/districts in Japan under the Japan-US Status of Forces Agreement’ (MOFA 2016; Kato 2013, p. 1).

The government of Japan also asserts that the timing of Chinese and Taiwanese challenges came after it was revealed there were potential oil and gas resources under the sea near the Senkaku Islands. The UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) conducted a survey and then published a report with its findings in May 1969 including the conclusion that there were possible natural resources in the area. ‘After the announcement of the study’s results, China and Taiwan began to claim sovereignty over the islands for the first time. Neither state had made any claim to the Senkaku Islands whatsoever prior to this’ (MOFA 2014b, p. 8).

Despite the Japanese official position that there is no dispute, China and Taiwan both claim the islands as their own territory. These claims ‘are essentially identical since they are based on a shared historical past’ (Shaw 1999, p. 37). In particular, the governments of China and Taiwan assert that the Chinese ‘first discovered, named, and used’ the islands ‘as early as the 14th century’ (Shaw 1999, p. 38) rejecting Japan’s claim of *terra nullius*. They argue that in 1562 the islands ‘were incorporated into the Chinese costal defence system established by the Ming government to deal with intensified raids by...Japanese pirates’ (Shaw 1999, p. 38). China and Taiwan further argue that in the 18th century the Qing government placed the islands within the costal defence system of Taiwan (Shaw 1999, p. 38).

China and Taiwan also emphasise that Japan's delay in incorporating the disputed islands between 1885 and 1895 was due to Japan's knowledge that the islands were part of China (Shaw 2012). They emphasise that Japan acted in secret to incorporate the islands as Japanese territory while the two countries were engaged in hostilities during the 1894-1895 Sino-Japanese War (Suganuma 2000, pp. 89-97). Both China and Taiwan 'contend that China transferred the disputed islands [to Japan] in accordance to the 1895 Treaty of Shimonoseki' (Shaw 1999, p. 38) and claim that 'the disputed islands should have been returned to China as a result of Japan's renunciation of its claim to Taiwan and appertaining islands' (Shaw 1999, p. 38) under the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty. Further, China's position is that it 'constantly denounced' the US administration of the disputed islands under Article 3 of the San Francisco Peace Treaty 'as illegal since it was signed with neither the presence nor consent of China' (Shaw 1999, p. 41).

The hidden actor in the Senkaku dispute is the United States (Kato 2013). While the United States occupied the islands and used them for military training exercises for 27 years before returning them to Japan under the 1971 Okinawa Reversion Agreement, it has attempted to take a neutral position (Hagström 2012, p. 286). For instance, US secretary of state at the time of the reversion William Rogers stated that the reversion agreement 'does not affect the legal status of those islands at all. Whatever the legal status was prior to the treaty is going to be the legal situation after the treaty comes into effect' (Hagström 2012, p. 286). Japan was extremely dissatisfied with this neutrality. In 1996, the then US deputy assistant secretary of defense for Asian and Pacific affairs Kurt Campbell admitted in an interview with the *Yomiuri Shimbun* that the Senkaku Islands were covered under Article 5 of the US-Japan Security Treaty as Japanese administered territory (*Yomiuri Shimbun* 1996b, p. 1; Shaw 1999, p. 126; Hagström 2012, p. 286). Yet the United States still differentiates between the concepts of administration and sovereignty, and takes no position on the ultimate sovereignty of the islands, which it says is a matter for the countries involved to resolve.

Shelving the dispute

The ability of Japan's right-wing groups to build a narrative around the Senkaku Islands was relatively limited before the 2010 ship collision incident. For a long time tensions over the Senkaku Islands remained relatively off the public radar. Indeed, one article in March 2010 — just six months before the ship collision incident between the Chinese fishing trawler and the Japan Coast Guard that sent tensions soaring and put the islands into the international

headlines — posited the question of how to explain stability in the dispute (Fravel 2010). Taylor Fravel explains that:

‘despite the potential for armed conflict, the dynamics of the Senkaku dispute present a puzzle for scholars of territorial disputes and policymakers in the region. Although China and Japan have formally contested the Senkaku Islands since 1970, neither side has used force. Indeed, given the strategic and economic value attached to the islands and periods of tension in the broader China-Japan relationship, the absence of armed conflict or even tense military confrontations is nothing short of remarkable’ (Fravel 2010, p. 145).

Fravel outlines a number of factors that kept the dispute dormant for so long including the deterrence power of the US-Japan alliance, Japan’s continuous exercise of de facto control, and Japan and China’s desire to maintain a constructive regional reputation in the eyes of other neighbours within the context of regional rivalry (Fravel 2010, pp. 150-151). Moreover, Fravel notes that active dispute management has been a key factor in avoiding descent into unwanted spirals hostility and conflict. In particular, the two governments have limited the access of ‘citizen activists to land on the islands to demonstrate their countries’ sovereignty claims’ (Fravel 2010, pp. 151-152) and have ‘avoided mobilizing the public around the dispute’ (Fravel 2010, p. 153). In addition, while Japan has maintained effective control of the islands it has ‘limited their development and use’ and ‘not erected any military installations on the island that might be viewed as threatening in Beijing...especially for military assets that could be used in a conflict over Taiwan’ (Fravel 2010, pp. 155-156).

Arguably the mechanism underpinning this active management dispute is the gentleman’s agreement or tacit understanding (*anmoku no rokai*) forged by Japan and China during negotiations in the 1972 and 1978 to shelve (*tana age*) the issue for future generations to deal with in the interest of forging cooperation in other areas of shared interest. The Japanese government has subsequently denied that any such unwritten agreement was made to shelve the issue. Yet there is plenty of evidence to show at least some form of tacit agreement (Choong 2014, pp. 68-71).

Taiwan tensions subsumed

The period before the establishment of a tacit agreement between Japan and China was marked by tensions between 1970 and 1972. The United States and Japan began negotiations for the reversion of Okinawa to Japan in 1968 and signed the Okinawa Reversion Agreement

in June 1971, which took effect in May 1972. This presented Taiwan with a dilemma as the United States included the Senkaku Islands as part of the territories to be returned to Japan.

In July 1970, Taiwan granted exploration and exploitation rights for resources near the Senkakus to a US oil company Pacific Gulf (Oka 1971, p. 8) and 'prepared legislation concerning the exploration and drilling for oil and gas' (Eldridge 2014, p. 166). On 17 July 1970 'the Japanese ambassador in Taipei delivered a note to the ROC Ministry of Foreign Affairs asserting Japan's sovereignty over the disputed islands and stating that any unilateral claims of the ROC government over the islands and its underlying continental shelf were void under international law' (Shaw 1999, p. 13). Ultimately, Pacific Gulf was forced to withdraw from exploration in 1972 in the face of Japanese protests and 'after the US State Department had warned...that it would not be advisable to explore for oil in the disputed area' (SIPRI 1974, p. 132). Subsequently, after a number of public remarks in mid-1970, 'the first official protest filed by the ROC against Japan took place in February 1971' (Shaw 1999, p. 37).

Taiwan attempted to convince the United States not to return the Senkaku Islands to Japan. For instance, on 16 September 1970 Taiwanese ambassador Shukai Chow sent a memo to US assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs Marshall Green outlining Taiwan's objections and urging the United States not to include the disputed islands in the reversion 'and to keep the sovereignty issue open' (Drifte 2014, p. 7; FRUS Vol. XVII, footnote 6). Further, on 15 March 1971 Chow sent a note to the US State Department again outlining its claim to sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands. It explained that 'for regional security considerations the [government of the Republic of China] has hitherto not challenged the US military occupation of the Senkakus under Article 3 of the San Francisco Peace Treaty. However, according to international law, temporary military occupation of an area does not affect the ultimate determination of its sovereignty' (FRUS Vol. XVII, p. 296; Drifte 2014, p. 8). The note concluded with the request that the United States respect Taiwan's sovereign rights to the Senkakus and restore them to Taiwan upon the termination of the US occupation of the Ryukyu Islands.

Taiwan's ability to protest the inclusion of the Senkaku Islands as part of the Okinawa reversion was complicated by other international events happening at the time. 'In October 1971, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 2758, permitting the PRC to occupy China's seat as Permanent Member of the UN Security Council, and compelling the

ROC government to withdraw entirely from the organization’ (Shaw 1999, p. 15). In February 1972 US president Richard Nixon made a week-long visit to China as part of the US-China efforts to normalise their bilateral relationship (which saw the US set up a liaison office between 1973 and 1978 and eventually normalised relations in 1979). At the same time Japan was also preparing to switch its diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing, which was realised with the signing of the Japan-China Joint Communiqué on 29 September 1972. Thus Taiwan ultimately downplayed the islands dispute in order to avoid further deteriorating relations with Japan and with the United States (Shaw 1999, p. 15).

A ‘tacit understanding’ with China

China too had incentive to play down the significance of the disputed islands in light of its diplomatic normalisation negotiations with both the United States and Japan, and its quest to be recognised as the sole legitimate representative government of China. Following Taiwan’s moves, China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs made its first official statement laying claim to the disputed islands on 30 December 1971 (Peking Review 1972, p. 12). Yet during Japan-China diplomatic normalisation discussions in 1972 China declined to discuss the issue.

In July 1972, Yoshikatsu Takeiri, the head of Japanese opposition political party Komeito ‘who served as an important go-between for the Japanese government to prepare the visit [to China] by Prime Minister Tanaka’ (Drifte 2014, p. 12), mentioned that in entering into a peace and friendship treaty ‘there will be some small problems that remain’. Chinese premier Zhou Enlai replied:

This is right. There is no need to touch on the Senkaku [Diaoyu] Islands issue. I gather that you did not have interest in the issue either. I also did not have interest in the matter, but historians have made it into an issue in relation to oil...It is unnecessary to place too much emphasis on this issue. Taken within the context of the reestablishment of diplomatic relations following the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, then this is not an issue. The writings in the newspapers are only interruptions butting in’ (MOFA 1972).

Subsequently, in September 1972 during negotiations between Japanese prime minister Kakuei Tanaka and Zhou, the issue of the Senkakus was raised by the Japanese side by Tanaka (Drifte 2014, p. 11; Zhai 2014; MOFA 1972). Tanaka asked: ‘What are your thoughts on the Senkaku [Diaoyu] Islands? There are many people who ask about this issue’ (MOFA 1972). Zhou responded: ‘I do not want to discuss the Senkakus at this time. It is not right to

discuss this matter now. Because there is oil, it is a problem. If there was no oil, neither Taiwan nor the US would make an issue' (MOFA 1972). Tanaka's reaction to Zhou's declining to discuss the islands was considered too sensitive and thus deliberately removed from MOFA's records by Hiroshi Hashimoto who was the then head of MOFA's China Division (Drifte 2014, p. 12). Yet subsequent interviews with relevant officials reveal and corroborate that Tanaka reacted by saying, 'Let's discuss it another time' (Drifte 2014, p. 12).

Thus it is clear that both sides were aware that there was a territorial issue at play and both were content to conclude the Japan-China Joint Communiqué on 29 September 1972 without discussing any details and without abandoning their respective claims to sovereignty. This is in contrast to the narrative by Japanese right-wing groups that there was no tacit agreement to shelve the issue (as will be discussed below).

Sabotage efforts by LDP right-wingers

The signing of the 1972 Joint Communiqué immediately normalised Japan and China's diplomatic relations, but in order to formally end Second World War hostilities and to take the bilateral relationship to a higher level of cooperation the two countries also subsequently pursued the conclusion of a peace treaty. During these negotiations the tacit understanding to shelve the issue of the Senkaku Islands was further solidified. At the same time, a number of right-wing politicians, particularly along factional divides within the LDP, were opposed to a peace treaty and sought to utilise Senkaku Islands issue as a way to scuttle the deal.

After a previous attempt in 1975 and a few months of preliminary discussions, informal Japan-China negotiations toward a peace treaty began in February 1978 in Beijing. For a time progress was slow going. 'From the perspective of at least some Chinese leaders the Japanese were dragging their heels' (Tretiak 1978, p. 1240). This is because the LDP itself was internally divided on the issue between pro-PRC and pro-ROC factions. Whereas prime minister Kakuei Tanaka and the faction he led were well known for their pro-PRC position within the LDP factions, prime minister Takeo Fukuda was the leader of a key rival faction and had been traditionally pro-ROC.

Yet Fukuda's leadership ultimately proved indispensable in realising the peace treaty. As Fukuda cautiously moved his administration through the negotiations, his 'opponents emphasized his seeming hesitation—which his supporters termed constituency building'

(Tretiak 1978, p. 1240). Fukuda's rationale to move forward with the peace treaty stemmed from three factors. First, 'Fukuda's weak position within the LDP needed the additional support that the treaty would provide' (Tretiak 1978, p. 1236) from the pro-PRC factions. Second, he calculated that a more stable power base within the LDP as well as the act of concluding the treaty would increase 'his popularity among the Japanese public' (Tretiak 1978, p. 1236). Third, 'the Japanese business community was strongly committed to the treaty' (Tretiak 1978, p. 1236) in order to expand Japan-China trade.

The pro-ROC forces within the LDP that were against concluding the peace treaty with China insisted that the issue be discussed more thoroughly. For instance, in March 1978 agriculture and forestry minister Ichiro Nakagawa demanded that it was necessary for Japan to address the Senkaku issue as part of the treaty negotiations (*Yomiuri Shimbun* 1978, p. 2; Tretiak 1978, p. 1241). Nakagawa was a member of the LDP's far-right and short-lived Seirankai (Blue Storm Group) faction, which was formed to oppose the Kakuei Tanaka government's 'policies of friendship to Communist China' and espoused slogans reminiscent of 'pre-war extreme nationalist groups' (Babb 2012, p. 75). Subsequently, in a 30 March meeting between government leaders and recalcitrant pro-ROC LDP members, participants demanded a range of issues be discussed more thoroughly, including 'Taiwan, Soviet reaction, and other foreign policy questions' and called for a 'prudent approach' (Tretiak 1978, p. 1240). This was interpreted by some as a stalling tactic and by others as an indication of the deep opposition that the Fukuda administration faced within the party to move forward with the peace treaty.

In a meeting on 7 April 1978 with foreign minister Sunao Sonoda, pro-ROC LDP members made the Senkaku issue stick. A group of 100 LDP anti-treaty members 'specifically proposed that the Senkaku matter be resolved as part of the treaty negotiations' (Tretiak 1978, p. 1241). The objective of this anti-treaty coalition was twofold. First, 'it had a good chance of scuttling the treaty talks' (Tretiak 1978, p. 1242). Second, it was intended that this would embarrass prime minister Fukuda, foreign minister Sonoda and Masayoshi Ohira. 'Ohira was a target because he allegedly authored the agreement to shelve the Senkaku issue in 1972 when recognition was extended. Embarrassing him now would not only weaken the pro-treaty forces but could reduce Ohira's chances for becoming Fukuda's successor' (Tretiak 1978, p. 1242).

This brought the Senkaku issue into public view and made dealing with it in some manner unavoidable. It was clear that Beijing did not want to discuss the Senkaku Islands as part of the peace treaty negotiations. At the same time, Beijing also had no intention of ‘implicitly ceding their claim’ (Tretiak 1978, p. 1242). On 12 April 1978 a flotilla of over 100 Chinese boats entered into the waters in the vicinity of the Senkaku Islands (Koo 2009, p. 217; Wakamiya 2014, p. 297; *Asahi Shimbun* 1978, p. 1). While ostensibly fishing vessels, ‘at least half of them armed, some with machine guns’ (Tretiak 1978, p. 1235) and ‘there is little doubt that the vessels were under formal PLA naval command or that they embarked with Politburo approval’ (Tretiak 1978, p. 1242). Many were ‘bedecked with Chinese national flags’ and ‘more than thirty of them entered the islands’ 12 nm [nautical miles] territorial sea’ (Koo 2009, p. 217).

There are two schools of thought in attempting to explain this action by China. One school posits that China sought to demonstrate its displeasure to Japan (especially its anti-treaty and pro-ROC politicians) for forcing the issue of the disputed islands into the public realm (Costa 2018, footnote 37). A second school posits that China’s action was part of a power struggle within China over the direction of its Japan policy. In particular, it is hypothesised that chairman of the Central Military Commission Hua Guofeng was attempting to use the disputed islands issue to oppose de facto leader of China Deng Xiaoping’s Japan policy and derail peace treaty negotiations. (Costa 2018, footnote 39).

In any case, the new circumstance left Japanese prime minister Fukuda with a stark choice on how to handle the situation. On the one hand, Fukuda could have attempted ‘to exploit the Chinese naval presence in and around the Senkakus...playing on Japanese nationalistic sentiment’ or he could ‘continue to try to build a pro-treaty coalition’ (Tretiak 1978, p. 1243). Fukuda chose the latter course, possibly because ‘signing the treaty had a better chance of strengthening his power-base within the LDP than playing the demagogue’ (Tretiak 1978, p. 1243).

On 14 April, Chinese vice-premier Keng Piao met with a group of Japanese MPs led by Hideo Den, the leader of a small pro-PRC opposition party, the Social Democratic Union (MOFA 2012b). Keng reportedly told Den that the incident around the islands was ‘accidental’ and that the two sides should not ‘delay the conclusion of the Japan-China friendship treaty’ nor ‘argue the island problem’, which should be left for future resolution

(Tretiak 1978, p. 1243). Subsequently, Fukuda ordered his cabinet not to speak publicly about the Senkaku issue without his prior approval, and foreign minister Sonoda ‘emphasized again that his ministry would treat the incident separately from the treaty negotiations’ (Tretiak 1978, p. 1244). This allowed Sonoda to criticise Chinese behaviour regarding the incident, which had garnered widespread coverage in Japanese media, while at the same time delinking it from the treaty process and the broader Japan-China political relationship.

Tacit understanding solidified

Tensions surrounding the incident were gradually de-escalated. In late April Fukuda welcomed a statement from Chinese politician Liao Chengzhi that Beijing ‘intended “to prevent conflicts caused by Chinese fishing boats around the Senkaku Islands”’ (Tretiak 1978, p. 1243). Despite continued opposition within the LDP, the Fukuda administration was able to craft a sufficient coalition to move ahead with treaty negotiations. With a threshold coalition in place Fukuda and his supporters were able to veto suggestions from the right wing within the LDP, which would have been perceived as discarding the tacit agreement to shelve the issue. For instance, chief cabinet secretary Shintaro Abe supported a plan ‘to build a typhoon-refuge on the Senkakus—an act which would probably have provoked another strong, negative Chinese response’ (Tretiak 1978, p. 1245) but was vetoed by foreign minister Sonoda.

Ultimately, the understanding to shelve the issue of the disputed islands came to be solidified. Treaty negotiations officially recommenced in July 1978 and were concluded in August 1978. One Chinese academic Zhai Xin (2014) reconstructs a discussion between Deng Xiaoping and Sunao Sonoda on 10 August as follows:

Deng: we should not touch it now. It won’t matter if we stay in line with the Peace and Friendship Treaty and put it off for several years. We might fail to achieve an agreement on this issue for several decades. But would our friendship thus be affected? I think we’d better put it aside and discuss it without haste in coming years. It’s not like there is no problem between us. We have different political system and are on different phase of development. We can’t be sharing the same view on every problem. But we do have a lot in common. We can seek common ground on major issues while shelving differences on minor ones. We need to find ways to cooperate and coordinate with each other. That is what the Treaty is, that’s the new starting point you talked about.

Sonoda: I have to say something as the foreign minister of Japan, otherwise I wouldn't be able to justify myself after coming back. Your Excellency knows well about Japan's position on Senkaku Islands. We really do not expect that incident (Chinese fishing boats entered the waters of Diaoyu Islands) to happen again.

Deng: Let us put it aside. Our generation won't be able to sort it out. Let's leave it to the next generation or our grandchildren. They will find a way (Zhai 2014).

A similar but less detailed summary of part of Deng's section of these remarks is given by a US academic, also based on Chinese language resources (Fravel 2012). The relevant records on the Japanese side appear not to have been released by MOFA.

After the peace treaty was signed on 23 August in Beijing, Deng Xiaoping made a trip to Tokyo in October 1978. During this trip Deng elaborated on the agreement to shelve the Senkaku dispute at a press conference on 25 October. Deng stated:

Our two sides agreed not to touch upon this question when diplomatic relations were normalized between China and Japan. This time when we were negotiating the Treaty of Peace and Friendship, the two sides again agreed not to touch on it...some people seek to pick faults on this kind of question in an attempt to hinder the development of Sino-Japanese relations...We call it Tiaoyu Island but you call it another name. It is true that the two sides maintain different views on this opinion...It does not matter if this question is shelved for some time, say, ten years...Our generation is not wise enough to find common language on this question. Our next generation will certainly be wiser. They will certainly find a solution acceptable to all (Shaw 1999, p. 17).

Some Japanese who did not like the rhetoric of shelving the issue sought to portray the tacit understanding as a one-sided agreement, yet it is clear that Japanese officials, both in MOFA and in Nagatacho, geared Japanese actions in such a way as to keep the issue on the shelf (Drifte 2014, p. 13). In particular, the government of Japan 'never allowed prospecting and drilling for oil or gas reserves around the islands, and showed restraint in allowing landing on or making economic use of the islands' (Drifte 2014, p. 14). Sonoda later acknowledged that China claims the islands as its territory but that it doesn't make sense to raise the issue as Japan maintain effective control. 'If Japan takes the trouble to bring up the subject at this occasion and...disturb[s] a bush only to let a snake out...it will be a total loss...for Japan' (Sonoda 1981, p. 184; translation by Drifte 2014, p. 10).

It is thus evident that despite the best efforts of the LDP's right-wingers Japan and China did establish a tacit agreement to shelve the dispute surrounding the Senkaku Islands. This tacit agreement was forged during the diplomatic normalization negotiations concluded in 1972 and solidified during the peace treaty negotiations concluded in 1978. These historical facts stand in contrast to the narrative propagated by Japanese right-wing groups that there is no tacit agreement.

Dual policy and restraint

Between 1978 and 2010 Japanese policy on the Senkaku Islands was characterised by a kind of dual approach. On the one hand, 'serving Japanese officials hold to the official position that Tokyo had never agreed to defer the island dispute' (Choong 2014, p. 70). On the other hand, Japan generally showed restraint in avoiding moves that the Chinese side could interpret as deliberately discarding of the tacit understanding on shelving the issue, and 'an increasing number of retired politicians and officials' (Choong 2014, p. 70) have made reference to the existence of a tacit understanding. At the same time, a number of right-wing lobby groups, at times with the backing of rightist elements within the government, have made the Senkaku Islands a focus in their activities with the aim to undermine the government's adherence to shelving the issue.

Right-wing groups such as Seinensha (the Japan Youth Association, affiliated with the yakuza criminal organisation Sumiyoshi-kai) have been involved in efforts to build structures on the islands ostensibly for the promotion of maritime safety but primarily in an effort to demonstrate the exercise of Japanese effective control of the islands. One academic alleges that in 1978 Seinensha members 'were clearly working with the support of anti-China / pro-Taiwan groups on the right wing of the LDP' (Deans 2000, p. 124). The Seinensha forged a relationship with the islands' private landowners, the Kurihara family, which facilitated the group's access to the islands (Smith 2015, p. 132). With the cooperation of an Ishigaki fisherman, Seinensha managed to build a lighthouse on Uotsurishima, the largest of the five islands, on 11 August 1978 while the Japan-China peace treaty negotiations were taking place (Seinensha 2008), although it was not reported in the Japanese media until the year after (Smith 2015, p. 130). In 1988, celebrating the 10th anniversary of the construction of the lighthouse, the Seinensha made repairs to it in order 'to meet the Japanese Maritime Safety Agency's (JMSA's) technical standards, and applied for official recognition' (Koo 2009, p. 219). The Seinensha built a second lighthouse on Kitakojima in July 1996 (Drifte 2008, p. 14;

Seinensha 2008). On 21 August 1996 the Senkaku Islands Defense Association built a World War II memorial for 75 people who died there in 1945 and planted a Japanese flag (Murakami 1996; Mondre 2015, p. 64). In September 1996, Seinensha returned the Kitakojima in order 'to repair the new lighthouse, which had been damaged by a typhoon' (Downs & Saunders 1998, p. 134).

These actions by Japanese right-wing groups aroused protests both from the Chinese government as well as from local activists from Taiwan and Hong Kong who made protest voyages to the islands. In response to the Senkaku Islands Defense Association memorial building, 'China stepped up its protest and connected its criticism on the island dispute to the general failure of the Japanese government to take responsibility for the country's imperialist past' (Mondre 2015, p. 64). One of the activists' trips ended in tragedy when a group from Hong Kong made a trip to the islands in October 1996, and group leader David Chan 'drowned after jumping in the water when Japan's Maritime Safety Agency prevented his boat from landing on one of the...islands' (Downs & Saunders 1998, p. 135). This in turn 'inspired large anti-Japanese protests and boycotts in Hong Kong and Taiwan, and prompted a second and more successful attempt by Hong Kong and Taiwanese activists to plant their national flags on the Diaoyu Islands on October 9' (Downs & Saunders 1998, p. 135).

This caused the Japanese government considerable difficulty in maintaining the shelving approach, and also aroused activists from the Japanese side to make landings to demonstrate Japanese sovereignty in protest of what they perceived to be weak Japanese government policy to protect the islands. The right-wing politician Shingo Nishimura notably made a landing on one of the islands on 7 May 1997. Nishimura proudly declared that 'after landing on Senkaku today, I was convinced the revival of a proud Japan and an awakening in people's consciousness definitely begin here' (CNN 1997).

Both the Japanese and Chinese governments still demonstrated an overall adherence to the shelving approach. Tensions surrounding the 1988 lighthouse repairs and application for official recognition largely subsided after the Kaifu government 'rejected the lighthouse application by...Seinensha' (Koo 2009, p. 220) in April 1991. Activists from Taiwan and Hong Kong who made protest voyages to the Senkaku Islands were turned away or detained by the Japan Coast Guard (JCG) but not arrested. After the wave of landings in 1996 and 1997, in order to deter activists and maintain the shelving approach, Japan and China both

took actions to limit activism surrounding the islands. For instance, on 3 October 1996 ‘the Japanese government arrested a senior adviser of the Seinensha for possession of guns and ammunition. ‘According to the *Yomiuri*, around this time also, the CCP issued an internal memo seeking to limit protest activities surrounding the Senkakus’ (*Yomiuri Shimbun* 1996a, p. 5; Smith 2015, p. 133). The then Japanese prime minister Ryutaro Hashimoto was quick to criticise opposition right-wing MP Shingo Nishimura’s landing on one of the islands, so while the Chinese government protested Nishimura’s actions its limited protests appeared to give a nod to the joint efforts to keep the dispute low-key (Zhai 2014). Moreover, ‘the desire of the governments of the PRC and Japan to downplay the dispute is clearly evident from the new fisheries pact treaty concluded in early November 1997 during a trip to China by the Japanese Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryutaro commemorating the 25th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations’ (Shaw 1999, pp. 20-21).

A key problem for the Japanese government was that four of the five islands were owned by a private landowner, the Kurihara family. One of those four was already on a leasing arrangement under the US Status of Forces Agreement as a military bombing practice range. The other three islands had no such arrangement. The private ownership aspect made it difficult for the Japanese government to outright ban the lighthouse-building activities of Seinensha because they were working with the permission of the private Japanese landowner as well as local fisherman who welcomed it as an aid to navigation. There were also concerns in the government about what might happen if the current owners were convinced to sell (Smith 2015, p. 142).

In order to resolve this difficulty, the Japanese government increased its ability to curtail activists — both Japanese right-wingers and Chinese, Taiwanese and Hong Kong citizen groups — with three key measures in the early 2000s. First, the government sought to lease the three islands from the private landowner, initiated discussions with the Kurihara family and came to a successful agreement. ‘The contract began in April 2002 for ¥22.56 million in rent per year (approximately \$180,000 at the time)’ (Smith 2015, p. 142). Second, ‘just one month after the first successful landing on the islands by Mainland Chinese activists in March 2004, the Japanese government decided to station two Coast Guard vessels near the islands in order to prevent individuals from landing on them in the future’ (Fravel 2010, p. 152). Third, while the government had previously refused to conduct maintenance on the lighthouses constructed by Seinensha, since it was now leasing the islands and not permitting Seinensha,

who had been conducting maintenance missions, to visit, a change in policy was required in this respect too. 'In February 2005, the Japanese government finally ceded to the demands of [Seinensha] to take over the Uotsuri lighthouse structure and its maintenance' (Drifte 2008, p. 14).

The outcome of these actions was twofold. On the one hand, these three actions were criticised by Beijing and Taipei 'as they were viewed as unilateral assertions of sovereignty over contested territory and consolidation of Japanese control. On the other hand, Beijing silently seemed to recognise that these measures served the broader purpose and 'lowered tensions by removing perhaps the greatest irritant in the dispute, the actions of activist citizens' (Fravel 2010, p. 152). Indeed, after these measures were put in place there was a noticeable decline in citizen activist groups being able to make their way to the islands successfully. In most cases the JCG 'has been able to intercept...ships rapidly through the deployment of...vessels in surrounding waters' (Fravel 2010, p. 153).

A key exception to this was a landing made by a mainland China protest group, the China Federation for Defending the Diaoyu Islands. The group made 'several reconnaissance trips' (Fravel 2010, p. 153) before making a trip in March 2004 and successfully evading JCG patrols and landing on Uotsurishima. This incident was notable for a three reasons. First, it was the first time that a mainland China group sought to land on the islands; previously only Taiwanese and Hong Kong groups had attempted such protest missions (Fravel 2010, p. 153). Second, it was the first time that the government 'proposed that the dispute be settled according to domestic laws' (Zhai 2014) and arrested the protesters. Third, while the Koizumi government referred to the exercise of domestic law, it also took a central and top-down approach in handling the incident, acknowledging that there was a diplomatic aspect involved, rather than simply leaving it to be handled by law enforcement institutions (Hafeez 2015, p. 75). So while the protesters were arrested, an escalation of Japanese control that irked China (Zhai 2014), they were also promptly released within 48 hours and deported back to China.

Another incident that showed Japanese goodwill in maintaining a low-key approach occurred in 2008. On this occasion 'a Taiwanese sport-fishing vessel sank after colliding with a Japanese patrol ship' (Hagström 2012, p. 283). The crew were all rescued and briefly

detained, but after review of the incident Japan apologised for sinking the boat and provided compensation (Hsu 2008).

The 2008 East China Sea agreement

Despite China being irked by the measures Japan took to increase its control over the islands in the early 2000s, there appeared to be an understanding that these measures were broadly speaking in accord with the tacit understanding to shelve the Senkaku Islands dispute. On the basis of this understanding, although there were challenges, the potential for Japan-China cooperation appeared to hold some promise. A number of positive developments in 2008 gave hope for the future.

Between 6 and 10 May 2008, Chinese president Hu Jintao visited Japan for five days. During this time president Hu and then Japanese prime minister Yasuo Fukuda signed a joint statement on the ‘Comprehensive Promotion of a “Mutually Beneficial Relationship Based on Common Strategic Interests”’ (MOFA 2008). This included the concept to ‘work together to make the East China Sea a “Sea of Peace, Cooperation and Friendship”’ (MOFA 2008). Off the back of this joint statement, Japan and China reached an initial agreement in June 2008 to ‘undertake joint development in the northern part of the East China Sea’ (MOFA 2008). This included joint development on the Chinese side of the median line at Shirakaba/Chunxiao oil and gas field.

For the purposes of this endeavour, the waters in the southern part of the East China Sea including in the vicinity of the Senkaku Islands were to be avoided. This can be interpreted as a continued silent commitment to maintain the tacit agreement to shelve the Senkaku Islands dispute. More broadly, the June 2008 East China Sea resource sharing initial agreement is an example of an alternative model for how the Japan-China relationship might have been managed and how cooperation might have been deepened if not for the intervention of the Senkaku Islands dispute. Formal talks toward thrashing out an official agreement began in May 2010, and a second round of negotiations was scheduled for mid-September 2010 until it was called off amid the diplomatic crisis generated from the 7 September Senkaku Islands fishing trawler collision incident (Green et al. 2017, p. 68). Momentum to revive joint resource development in the East China Sea has still not recovered from the fallout from this incident.

The 2010 Senkaku shock

Before the 2010 ship collision incident, both Japanese and Chinese behaviour regarding the Senkaku Islands broadly speaking conformed with the maintenance of the tacit agreement to shelve the dispute. However, after the shock of the ship collision incident, Japanese right-wing groups took the opportunity to challenge the tacit agreement and propagate a new narrative regarding the Senkaku Islands. This new narrative promoted the idea that Japan never actually agreed to a tacit agreement, that any mistaken notion of a tacit agreement was a symptom of the post-war regime that kept Japan weak and from properly defending its inherent territory, and that government's handling of the ship collision incident and its aftermath proved that the government was incapable of defending the islands.

The ship collision incident occurred on the morning of 7 September 2010 between a Chinese fishing trawler, the *Minjinyu 5179*, and a JCG vessel and sparked a diplomatic crisis between Japan and China. At just after 10am the JCG patrol vessel *Mizuki* found the *Minjinyu 5179* operating about 12 kilometres northwest of the Senkaku Islands and ordered that it to leave the area. The *Minjinyu 5179* then collided with the JCG vessel *Yonakuni*. The JCG ordered the *Minjinyu 5179* to stop for inspection, an order which the captain Zhan Qixiong refused, and the *Minjinyu 5179* subsequently collided with a second JCG vessel the *Mizuki*. Following the second collision 22 JCG personnel boarded the *Minjinyu 5179* to question the crew 'on suspicion of violating the fisheries law' (AFP 2010). The crew were then transported to Ishigaki Island where Zhan was handed over to prosecutors and arrested for 'obstructing the duties of public officials' and 'illegal fishing' (Hagström 2012, p. 272). It is suspected that Zhan was drunk at the time that the collisions occurred.

On 8 September the JCG's Ishigaki office charged Zhan 'and sent him to the Ishigaki branch of the Naha District Public Prosecutor's Office' (Hagström 2012, p. 272) and on 9 September Zhan's detention was extended by 10 days. The crew and the fishing trawler were released on 13 September, but Zhan continued to remain in custody. Zhan's detention was extended again on 19 September for another 10-day period. He was ultimately released on 24 September. He was welcomed back home to China as a hero, although has since remained out of the public eye.

Applying domestic law

The biggest difference between this incident and the Japanese government's handling of previous incidents was the way in which Japanese domestic law was applied. It can be argued that the decision of the Naoto Kan administration to apply domestic law and arrest the ship captain was done following the precedent set by the Koizumi administration in 2004 (Hafeez 2015, p. 79). However, the decision to 'send the case to the prosecutor's office, putting him into the Japanese legal process, did appear in the eyes of the Chinese authorities to be a departure from the past low-key practice on the part of Japan' (Tanaka 2010). In other words, China perceived this action as a violation of the tacit agreement to shelve the dispute. Whether this because the Kan government was setting a new precedent or whether it was because the nature of the actions by the captain of the fishing trawler, Zhan, constituted a more serious crime, 'obstructing the duties of public officials', which required a more serious response, became a matter of intense national debate in Japan.

Throughout the process the Kan government emphasised that the incident would be handled 'in accordance with domestic law [*waga kuni horei ni mototsuki*]' (MOFA 2010; Hagstrom 2012, p. 272). Unlike the Koizumi administration in 2004, the government did not publicly emphasise the diplomatic aspect of the incident as forming a basis of its response (Hafeez 2015, p. 75). When Zhan's release was announced by Naha vice-prosecutor Toru Suzuki, he explained that 'considering the impact on the people of our country and the future of Japan–China relations [*waga kuni kokumin e no eikyo ya, kongo no nicchu kankei o koryo suru to*], [we] judged that it would not be appropriate to continue the investigation any further while keeping the person [the captain] in custody' (Hagström 2012, pp. 272-273). Officially, the determination to release the captain was decided by the Naha District Public Prosecutor's Office. Yet because of Suzuki's reference to Japan-China relations in announcing the release, the impression was that the decision was made for diplomatic rather than legal reasons, and the application of domestic law, as previously emphasised by the Kan government, had been abandoned.

Rumours abounded that prime minister Kan or chief cabinet secretary Yoshito Sengoku had influenced the decision and compromised the independence of the Public Prosecutor's Office. Kan and Sengoku denied the rumour. Similarly, foreign minister Seiji Maehara was at pains to stress it was 'a decision taken independently by the prosecutors' (Maehara & Tahara 2010). However, the Japanese public suspected that there was more to the story than the Kan government was letting on.

Looking back on the incident, Sengoku explained that:

The Chinese position from the start was that there was no reason the Japanese government couldn't release the skipper immediately if it wanted to. Even in Japan, there's some leeway for a political decision in the first seventy-two hours after an arrest, but once the case has been sent to the public prosecutor and the court has placed the accused in custody, the administrative branch is absolutely prohibited from intervening in the judicial process. The Chinese don't seem to understand this (Sengoku & Kawashima 2017).

Sengoku further explained that the JCG 'was following a policy that, unbeknownst to us [in the DPJ government], had been drawn under the cabinet of [Taro Aso] [2008-2009]' and this policy failed to give 'detailed procedures for dealing with the situation after an arrest' (Sengoku & Kawashima 2017).

China's reaction

China reacted first by issuing a series of protests and critical remarks. Between 8 and 19 September the Chinese government summoned Japanese ambassador to China, Uichiro Niwa, 'on no less than six occasions — including a summon by State Councillor Dai Bingguo at 2 o'clock in the morning on September 12 — demanding the immediate release of the trawler and its crew and restating China's "historical claim"' (Hagström 2012, p. 272). After Zhan's release Beijing demanded an 'apology and compensation from Japan' for the 'illegal detention' of its fishermen (Song 2010). Furthermore, 'Beijing suspended intergovernmental talks on matters such as coal, joint gas development in the East China Sea and aviation rights, curtailed Chinese tourism to Japan, and cancelled several Sino-Japanese official and non-official exchanges' (Hagström 2012, p. 273).

In the lead up to Zhan's release two further complicating factors emerged that were 'widely interpreted as deliberately retaliatory measures taken by the Chinese in protest of the arrest' (Hafeez 2015, p. 77). First, on 20 September, the day after Zhan's detention was extended for a second time, four Japanese nationals employed by Fujita Corporation were detained in Heibei province for filming in a restricted military area (Bloomberg 2010). Fujita had won a contract with the Chinese government to 'reclaim World War II chemical weapons left by Japan's Imperial Army' (Lah 2010) and sent the four employees. Three of the employees were released on 30 September and the final employee was released on 9 October (Hagström

2012, p. 274). Second, Chinese shipments of rare earth metals to Japan were reportedly temporarily suspended for a period of two months between 21 September and 19 November 2010 (ICG 2013, p. 21).

The DPJ criticised as naïve

The milieu of Japanese domestic political and regional security environment trends combined in such a way as to aid Japan's right-wing groups in shaping the dominant narrative surrounding the 7 September 2010 Senkaku Islands ship collision incident and how it came to be understood by the public and to be known as the Senkaku shock. In a nutshell, the narrative was that a weak Japan had caved in to Chinese pressure to release the captain. Five key elements combined to support this narrative propagated by Japan's right-wing groups that the DPJ mishandled the incident and that a 'weak' Japan had caved in to pressure from a rising China.

First, the DPJ was criticised as naïve and inept in its handling of foreign policy. The DPJ's victory was considered by many to be a protest vote against the LDP as much as it was an endorsement of the DPJ government. Thus the public was already ambivalent towards the DPJ's untested capabilities in the foreign policy realm. This public ambivalence was worsened in the year leading up to the September 2010 Senkaku Islands ship collision incident. As part of his campaign promises, DPJ prime minister Yukio Hatoyama promised that he would relocate the US Marines Airbase Futenma outside of Okinawa prefecture (Tanaka 2010a). But he made this promise without adequate consultation with the United States or relevant experts within the Japanese bureaucracy (Tanaka 2010b). Ultimately, Hatoyama resigned in June 2010 after only nine months in the top job over his inability to enact this promise, and the DPJ's reputation for foreign policy ineptitude was cemented.

Second, there were questions over whether the DPJ was briefed by relevant bureaucrats about Senkaku Islands to the same extent as the LDP would have been and whether it had access to the same level of information that the LDP would have had were it still in power. Before the DPJ came to power in August 2009, the LDP had thoroughly dominated post-war politics. Since the LDP's formation in 1955 it had continuously held power that whole time with the exception of a short 11-month stint in opposition between August 1993 and June 1994. Japan has been described as a 1.5 party system given the weakness of Japan's opposition political parties (Scheiner 2006). The DPJ had no experience in navigating the tacit agreement to

shelve the Senkaku Islands dispute, which had been forged and maintained almost exclusively between the LDP in Japan and the CCP in China. In this sense — while some opposition parties had assisted the LDP as go-betweens with the CCP, especially in the 1970s when negotiating diplomatic normalisation and the Japan-China Peace and Friendship Treaty — the tacit understanding to shelve the Senkaku Islands dispute (which the LDP often officially denied under its dual policy approach) — could be said to resemble a party-to-party agreement rather than a country-to-country agreement. When the DPJ came into power in August 2009 it had promised to curb politicians' excess reliance on bureaucrats and implement politician-led policymaking. This initiative led the DPJ into a rocky and at times confrontational relationship with the bureaucracy. In the words of Hitoshi Tanaka, under the DPJ government 'the lines of communication for bureaucrats to make policy recommendations to the political leadership were almost entirely cut off, and bureaucrats were, on the whole, routinely ignored' (Tanaka 2010b). Whether the DPJ received all possible relevant information from the bureaucracy both in the lead up to, and when it was managing the fallout from, the 7 September 2010 Senkaku Islands ship collision incident remains doubtful.

Third, between the two main political parties, the DPJ had the reputation as the party that would cultivate more cooperative relations with Japan's Asian neighbours including China, whereas the LDP was considered overall to be pro-United States. It has been speculated that this perception put the DPJ under pressure not to appear weak in its initial handling of the Chinese fishing trawler captain. At the same time, the party was internally divided. The DPJ tended to lack a cohesive ideological standpoint. Due to its eclectic composition of politicians including former LDP members as well as former JSP members, the DPJ, in the words of Gerald Curtis, could not 'make up its mind whether it is a second conservative party that offers moderate alternatives to LDP policies or a "progressive" party that stands on the other side of an ideological divide' (Curtis 2017). Within this divide, many of the defence specialists within the DPJ, such as Seiji Maehara and Akihisa Nagashima, tended to hail from the more conservative and right-leaning factions within the DPJ. Thus without the same level of information as an LDP government might have received from bureaucrats with relevant expertise, with public pressure over its foreign policy capabilities and pressure to not be perceived as weak in the face of Chinese intrusion into Japan's sovereign waters, one can imagine how such elements might have contributed to the DPJ government's decision to

firmly apply domestic law and not intervene to have the fishing trawler captain released within the first 72 hours.

Fourth, anti-China politicians within the LDP, who would have been restrained in their criticism of the government's handling of relations with China had the LDP been in power, were unfettered in their criticism of the DPJ government's handling of the incident irrespective of the ramifications this would have on Japan-China cooperation efforts. Quashing Japan-China cooperation was arguably part of the calculus for some, while for others the emphasis was on the need to push Japan toward a tougher security posture unencumbered by the restraints of the post-war regime in order to safeguard Japanese sovereignty. For instance, during a House of Councillors Foreign Policy and Security Committee meeting on 28 September, LDP member and former colonel in the GSDF Masahisa Sato stated that '[i]t really looked as if Japan's stance was distorted due to Chinese pressure, and as a result Japan gave the world the impression that [it] caved in to pressure [*atsuryoku ni kushshite shimau*], just being squeezed just a little' (Hagström 2012, p. 278). Itsunori Onodera, then chairman of the LDP's Foreign Policy Section, said in the same meeting that 'this series of events is the greatest diplomatic defeat of the post-war period [*sengo saidai no Nihon gaiko no haiboku*]' (Hagström 2012, p. 278). Head of the LDP's Nukaga faction Fukushima Nukaga described the DPJ handling as "unprincipled" [*rinen o motteinai*], "lacking awareness" [*ninshiki busoku*], "lacking knowledge" [*chishiki busoku*], "superficial" [*hisoteki*], "naïve" [*chisetsu*] and "very incomprehensible" [*hijo ni wakarinikui* and *fukakai*]' (Hagström 2012, p. 278). Shinzo Abe led a group of over 100 right-wing politicians through the group *Sousei Nippon*, which he used 'to criticise the government's release of the captain' (Choong 2013). In a statement the group declared that, 'We hereby declare we will resolutely seek to overthrow the Kan administration, which has damaged our nation's interest, trust and dignity' (Choong 2013).

Right-wing agitators were also vocal in the Japanese tabloids and on the streets. For instance, then Tokyo governor Shintaro Ishihara said that '[w]hat China's doing is no different from gangsters. If Japan does nothing, it will suffer the same fate as Tibet' (Schreiber 2010). Ishihara also 'suggested that it may be time for Japan to begin "serious debate" on development of nuclear weapons' (Schreiber 2010). Prominent right-wing nationalist Yoshiko Sakurai wrote that '[i]f Japan gives in on the Senkakus, China will come to grab Okinawa next' (Schreiber 2010). Protests in the streets over the Senkaku Islands also

significantly contributed to the feeling of pressure on the DPJ government. The majority of these protests were organised and coordinated by Ganbare Nippon (Smith 2015, p. 225).

Fifth, these domestic trends, which served to underpin the narrative of a weak Japan caving to Chinese pressure, were also supported by developments in the regional security environment. China had undergone rapid economic development since opening up its economy in the 1980s, and in August 2010, just a month before the incident, China's economy overtook Japan as the second largest in the world (Barboza 2010, p. B1). China's defence spending has also undergone major increases as its economy has grown. China's official defence budget exceeded Japan's for the first time in 2008 (Bush 2009, p. 9) while the actual budget is believed to be higher. The Senkaku ship collision incident was thus portrayed as an early manifestation of how China would exercise its increased economic and military power in the future and that it was time for Japan to wake up to threat posed by this rising giant.

Overall, this narrative was convincing to the Japanese public. For instance, a public opinion poll by the *Yomiuri Shimbun* found that 84 per cent of respondents 'felt uneasy about the government's foreign and security policies under the DPJ-led Cabinet' (Tsuruta et al 2010; Horiuchi 2014, p. 42). Moreover, Japanese public opinion toward China took a nose-dive. This is evident in the Cabinet Office's Foreign Policy Poll. Japanese who indicated they had no affinity toward China rose from 58.5 per cent in October 2009 to 77.8 per cent October 2010. The number of Japanese who indicated they held affinity for China dropped from 38.5 per cent in October 2009 to 20 per cent in October 2010 (see Figure 5).

Was Japan really weak?

While the notion that a weak Japan caved into pressure from a rising China continues to be the dominant narrative by which the Japanese public understands events surrounding the Senkaku Islands in September 2010, there are a number of areas where this narrative can be challenged. Linus Hagström (2012) critically reappraises the series of events and argues that 'Chinese aggressiveness' and Japanese 'defeat' is not the most convincing interpretation of the Senkaku shock.

First, with regard to the arrest of the four Japanese employees of the Fujita Corporation, it has been widely interpreted that this action by China was a retaliatory move to punish Japan for its continued detention of the fishing captain Zhan Qixiong. The timing of the detention of

the four, on 20 September after Zhan's detention was extended for a second 10-day period, is cited as evidence of a deliberate strategy by China to pressure Japan, and the arrest was described by some in Japan as carried out on trumped up charges. However, was retaliation and pressure really the primary rationale for China's arrest of the Fujita four?

As Hagström explains, 'it seems beyond doubt that the four Japanese men actually entered a restricted military zone without permission and, moreover, videotaped their passage there' (Hagström 2012, p. 281). Thus there was a 'fairly solid case for taking the four Japanese nationals into custody' (Hagström 2012, p. 281). In sum, there is no solid evidence one way or the other to prove that this was a retaliatory action by China. It could even be concluded 'that Chinese authorities showed leniency in releasing the four relatively quickly and without pressing charges' (Hagström 2012, p. 281). The bottom line should be that the contributing factors in Chinese decision making to arrest the Fujita four are 'uncertain' (Hagström 2012, p. 281).

Second, the reported suspension by China of rare earth metals to Japan between 21 September and 19 November 2010 was almost universally accepted in Japan as a retaliatory act by China for the arrest of detention of the Chinese fishing crew, and the arrest of the captain. Paul Krugman even described the rare earths suspension against Japan 'as clear evidence that the Chinese government was "willing to wage economic warfare on the slightest provocation"' (Krugman 2010; King & Armstrong 2013).

Yet as argued by Linus Hagström (2012, pp. 282-283), and by Amy King and Shiro Armstrong (2013), this is also uncertain. The Chinese decision to cut rare earth metal exports originated before the Senkaku shock. 'Chinese industry newspapers and magazines, such as *Xitu Xinxi* (Rare Earth Information), suggest that in July 2010, two months before the trawler collision, the Chinese Ministry of Commerce announced its decision to reduce China's global rare earths exports by 40 per cent in the second half of 2010' (King & Armstrong 2013). This was also reported in Japan's *Asahi Shimbun* on 21 August 2010 (Kotoyori et al. 2010; Hagström 2012, p. 282). The publicly stated rationale by China for the suspension of rare earths exports emphasised environmental concerns related to the metals' extraction processes as well as 'fears of over-exploitation of resources' (Hagström 2012, p. 282). The suspension of rare earths exports was not targeted at Japan specifically. 'In mid-October China "quietly" halted some rare earth shipments to the United States and Europe as well' (Hagström 2012, p.

282; Bradsher 2010, p. B1). King and Armstrong conclude that while it is possible that ‘the Chinese government — and particular parts such as China Customs — became more enthusiastic about implementing an earlier decision to cut rare earths exports after the Chinese trawler captain’s arrest’ it is ‘odd that if any element in the Chinese system *had* intended to send a message to Japan, no link was publicly made through official or unofficial outlets’ (King & Armstrong 2013).

Third, when describing Japan’s release of the ship captain as an act of weakness, ‘one wonders: as compared to what?’ (Hagström 2012, p. 283). The baseline in the Japanese right-wing narrative of Japan’s weakness appears to be that Japan failed to apply domestic law in seeing this process through to the end. And if Japan is failing to apply domestic law then this is a form of recognition that a territorial dispute with China over the Senkaku Islands does exist and Japan is failing to protect its inherent sovereignty.

In judging the Kan government’s decision to enter Zhan into the Japanese legal system, taking the decision out of executive hands and putting it into judicial hands, it may make more sense to compare this with Japanese government decision making in comparable incidents. ‘In this context it is noteworthy that [the JCG] merely turned away Taiwanese and Hong Kong-based ships that tried to enter what Tokyo considers to be the islands’ territorial waters in 1996, 1997 and 2006, and arrested and immediately deported activists from the PRC on March 24, 2004’ (Hagström 2012, p. 283). Moreover, the long period of detention and the arrest of Chinese captain ‘arguably also contravened a secret understanding since 2004 whereby Tokyo agreed to refrain from making any arrests and Beijing agreed to prevent activists from going to the islands’ (Hagström 2012, p. 283). Thus it can easily be concluded that Japan’s initial actions towards the Chinese captain were stronger rather than weaker than past precedent.

The circumstances surrounding the release of the captain also strongly contributed to the Japanese right wing’s propagation of a ‘weak Japan’ narrative. ‘From the point of view of Japanese government policy, the reference to bilateral relations was clearly a mistake on the part of the prosecutors, but it is not in itself evidence of political intervention’ (Hagström 2012, p. 284). Moreover, all Japanese actions in relation to the captain were a demonstration of Japanese sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands including the decision to release him. In the words of Sun-won Park, ‘[s]etting the captain free without charge is a legal action, meaning

that Japan exercised its own jurisdictional power and in legal terms Japan will be able to claim that its sovereign jurisdiction over the islands is now *fait accompli*, which is one of most important factors if the International Court of Justice should consider the issue in the future' (Park 2010; Hagström 2012, p. 284).

Japan's bolstered security policy vis-à-vis China

In addition to refuting the narrative that a 'weak Japan' caved in to pressure from a rising China, Hagström (2012) further argues that Japan in fact secured gains from the incident in addition to demonstrating its exercise of sovereignty as a *fait accompli*. This includes US reassurances to defend the Senkaku Islands under the US-Japan Security Treaty and the acceleration of Japanese security policy change (Hagström 2012, pp. 286-290).

The United States has been a hidden player in the dispute over the Senkaku Islands. It administered the islands as part of its trusteeship over Okinawa between 1945 and 1972 and returned the islands to Japanese administration. However, the United States takes no stance on the ultimate sovereignty of the islands and argues that the inclusion of the Senkakus in the reversion of Okinawa bore no influence on the islands ultimate sovereignty. This had long been a source of frustration for Japanese policymakers with their alliance partner.

In 2010, it appeared that the Obama administration was walking back from the US stance that the US security guarantee to protect Japanese administered territory covers the Senkaku Islands (*The Japan Times* 2010; Hagström 2012, p. 287). In particular, the Obama government 'decided not to state explicitly that the Senkaku Islands...are subject to the Japan-U.S. security treaty' (*The Japan Times* 2010). The Obama government instead stated that the US-Japan Security treaty 'applies to territories under Japanese administration' and that 'the islands have been under Japanese administrative control since the 1972 reversion...but it did not directly state that the Senkakus are subject to the pact' (*The Japan Times* 2010) much to Tokyo's chagrin. However, after the September 2010 Senkaku shock, the United States made a number of statements to unambiguously clarify that the Senkakus are covered under Article 5 including in a joint conference between Japanese foreign minister Seiji Maehara and US secretary of state Hillary Clinton in October 2010 (US Department of State 2010).

Japanese security policy reform was accelerated and re-oriented in a way that more directly aimed at countering China as an influence after the 2010 Senkaku shock. Most notably this was done through the 2010 National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG). The September 2010 Senkaku shock ‘occurred about a year after the DPJ had come to power, in an environment where the new government was again deliberating a new, updated NDPG’ (Hagström 2012, p. 289). On the one hand, the drafting of the NDPG was already well under way before the September 2010 ship collision incident occurred and would probably have moved to bolster Japan’s security posture to some extent. On the other hand, however, it has been argued by ‘[a] Japanese professor who spent time with [Yoshito] Sengoku in the autumn of 2010 ... that the then chief cabinet secretary...changed his mind about China after the...Senkaku Islands incident and that this change was reflected in the NDPG’ (Hagström 2012, p. 290).

The changes achieved through the NDPG are noteworthy. First, before the 2010 Senkaku shock there was a sense of hesitancy in directly justifying changes to defence policy by referencing the emerging China threat. Where changes aimed at China did occur North Korea often served as a justifying cover (Hughes 2009; Hagström & Turesson 2009). The 2010 NDPG described China in harsher terms than any previous NDPG issued before referring to it as ‘a concern [*kenen jiko*] of the international community and the region’ (MOD 2010, p. 3; translation by Hagström 2012, p. 289). Second, the 2010 NDPG ‘rejected the long-held Basic Defence Force Concept [*kibanteki boeiryoku*], which epitomised Japan’s minimalist defence strategy in the post-war period, and introduced a ‘Dynamic Defence Force’ concept [*doteki boeiryoku*’ (Hagström 2012, pp. 289-290). Third, the shift to the dynamic defence concept served to shift the focus of Japanese security away from Hokkaido, where it was previously concentrated to deter and defend against a Soviet invasion, and down to the southwest Islands, which stretch from southern Kagoshima prefecture to western tip of Okinawa prefecture at Yonaguni (Liff 2010, p. 1; Hagström 2012, p. 290).

The 2012 nationalisation of the islands

In the wake of the 2010 Senkaku shock, Japan’s right wing had successfully propagated a narrative that a weak Japan caved to Chinese pressure in dealing with the September 2010 ship collision incident. This narrative saw Japanese public sentiment toward China hit record lows (see Figure 5). This presented an opening for Japan’s right wing to make use of it linkages with right-wing politicians and to leverage the Senkaku issue in its agenda to escape

the post-war regime. Most notably, the Japan's right-wing groups sought to undermine and abolish the tacit agreement to shelve the Senkakus dispute which is seen by the Japanese right wing as a symptom of the post-war regime. The issue was seized on by the then Tokyo governor and notorious right-wing nationalist icon Shintaro Ishihara who sought to buy the islands on behalf of the Tokyo metropolitan government so that he could upend the tacit agreement.

Ishihara's gambit

Shintaro Ishihara has long held anti-China views more at home in fringe right-wing groups than the Tokyo governor's office. Ishihara generally refers to China in a derogatory way as '*Shina*', a phrasing which harks back to Imperial Japan's racist wartime propaganda (rather than the standard Japanese name '*Chugoku*'). He had been actively advocating for Japan to increase its control over the Senkaku Islands for decades but had not previously made much headway. After the 2010 Senkaku shock, however, Ishihara found a Japanese public more receptive to his objectives. Ishihara's moves, which were designed to undermine the tacit agreement to shelve the Senkaku dispute, now came to enjoy a significant level of mainstream public support.

Ishihara had been attempting to purchase the Senkaku Islands from the Kurihara family since the mid-1970s. The Kurihara family, whose business is mainly concerned with real estate in Saitama prefecture north of Tokyo, bought the islands from their close family friends Zenji and Hanako Koga. The Kogas, a couple, who did not have any children of their own, requested that the Kurihara family protect the history of the islands (Ito 2012). To this end, in the words of family spokesman Hiroyuki Kuniyara, "Our fundamental rule is not to sell the islands to individuals or private companies, and that is why we had continued to decline his offer — because Mr. Ishihara is an individual," Kurihara said. "But this time, it's different because it is the Tokyo Metropolitan Government that wants to buy them" (Ito 2012). A more pressing reason for the Kurihara family to sell now was that it was in debt (Slodkowski 2012).

In 2011 Ishihara 'had begun to communicate closely with the owner who had become increasingly willing to sell the Islands to the Tokyo Governor' (Horiuchi 2014, p. 37). Subsequently, the conservative Washington think tank the Heritage Foundation gave Ishihara the international platform he needed to bring the issue back into the spotlight. During his

speech at the Heritage Foundation on 16 April 2012, 'Ishihara claimed that as governor of Tokyo, he was involved in negotiations with the Kurihara family, who owned the islands, to buy them' (Smith 2015, p. 218; Ishihara 2012). This put the central government in Tokyo on notice, now being led by the DPJ's third prime minister in three years, Yoshihiko Noda.

Using the publicity he was able to conjure from this international platform, Ishihara then put out a call for donations for funds for the Tokyo government to buy three of the islands from the Kurihara family. The success of this funding effort put Ishihara in a position to buy the islands not as an individual but on behalf of the Tokyo government, which was necessary to satisfy the Kurihara family's demands but also neatly bypassed the need for Ishihara to deal with permission from the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly by avoiding using Tokyo government funds. The donations reached 766 million yen (US\$6.7 million) by 18 May, 1.4 billion yen (US\$12.4 million) by 14 August and 1.47 billion yen (US\$13 million) by 13 September 2012 (Tokyo Metropolitan Government 2013; Smith 2015, p. 219; Horiuchi 2014, p. 37). The origin of the donations has been a source of debate. A large part of the donations were found to have been provided through nationalist organisations networked by Satoru Mizushima (Hayashi 2012; Horiuchi 2014, p. 37). Mizushima is a well-known right-wing nationalist who helped to establish the right-wing lobby group Ganbare Nippon in 2010, runs the TV production company Channel Sakura, 'which produces various nationalist TV programs' (Horiuchi 2014, p. 30) and is well connected to the right-wing lobby group Nippon Kaigi.

The large sums of donations that flowed in increased the pressure on the Noda government to act to counter Ishihara. The donations opened the possibility that Ishihara might actually be successful in purchasing the islands, and that was widely believed to be a disaster scenario for Japan-China relations. Ishihara had publicly stated that his intent behind buying the islands was not just to protect them more effectively from China, which the DPJ government had in his view proved incapable of doing, but also to increase the substance of Japan's control over the islands. This included 'plans to construct a port and send Tokyo government officials to live on the islands' (Smith 2015, p. 228). In other words, Ishihara deliberately sought to change the status quo and to dispose of any notion of the tacit agreement between China and Japan to shelve the issue.

Noda's reaction and public opinion

One month after Ishihara's Heritage Foundation speech, on 18 May 2012, Noda 'secretly gathered his top aides and other top officials of the Foreign Ministry in his office and instructed them to start preparing for the nationalization of the Islands' (Horiuchi 2014, p. 38). At the same time, Noda dispatched DPJ MP Akihisa Nagashima 'for secret meetings with the Tokyo Governor several times until the Islands were actually nationalized in September' (Horiuchi 2014, p. 38). On 7 July 2012, the Noda government publicly announced that it would consider nationalising the three islands (Horiuchi 2014, p. 38). This timing was said to have aggravated China as it is the anniversary of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, which marks the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) (Horiuchi 2014, p. 43).

The proposal to nationalise the islands was generally supported by the Japanese public. A poll by the *Yomiuri Shimbun* on 16 July found that 65 per cent of respondents supported the plan and 20 per cent opposed it (*Yomiuri Shimbun* 2012, p. 2; Horiuchi 2014, p. 40). Similarly, a poll by Jiji Press in August found 73.3 respondents in favour of Noda's nationalisation plan and only 10.8 per cent opposing (Jiji Press 2012; Horiuchi 2014, p. 40). The media largely backed the nationalisation plan too and acted as 'cheerleaders', abetting Ishihara in his quest to buy the islands. (*The Economist* 2012).

Hong Kong protestors compound Noda's woes

A number of factors subsequently pushed the Noda government to accelerate its plan to nationalise the islands. The first factor was protestors from Hong Kong. On 15 August, the anniversary of Japan's WWII surrender, 'a fishing boat full of Hong Kong-based activists landed on the Senkaku Islands' (Smith 2015, p. 227). After the 2010 Senkaku shock the Noda government sought to deal with the incident decisively, learning from the Kan government's mistakes. 'The Japanese government was prepared for [the protestors] and had stationed a group of thirty police and immigration officials on Uotsurijima' (Smith 2015, p. 227). The group of 14 protestors, five of whom were able to set foot on Uotsurijima, were arrested for violating Japanese immigration law. Two days later chief cabinet secretary Osamu Fujimura announced that all 14 would all be deported. The Noda government followed the precedent established by the Koizumi government in 2004 and nobody was indicted or entered into the Japanese legal system.

The Noda government also immediately released the relevant video of the incident recorded by the JCG to avoid it becoming a political issue like the video was during the September 2010 incident. ‘The director of the JCG’s Territorial Waters Guard, [Takahiro] Okushima, told reporters, “We decided to release the video to show that the Coast Guard took appropriate measures against the protestors”’ (Smith 2015, p. 228). Yet this attempt to thread the needle between upholding past precedent to maintain the tacit understanding to shelve the dispute with China and conducting a strong response that Japan’s right wing would not decry to the public as ‘weak’ proved futile. An opinion poll conducted by Waseda University’s Research Institute of Contemporary Japanese Systems found that 69.3 per cent of respondents ‘thought that the Japanese government’s response was weak-kneed’ and 72.8 per cent ‘believed that the government should have indicted the activists instead of just deporting them’ (Iida & Sakaiya 2012, pp. 4-5; translation by Horiuchi 2014, p. 42).

China’s leadership transition and miscommunication

Another reason the Noda government fast tracked the nationalisation of the Senkaku Islands was because the CCP was scheduled to have its leadership transition later in the year. The Noda government had calculated that nationalising the islands before the leadership transition from Hu Jintao to Xi Jinping ‘would allow both countries to “reset” their relations under the new Chinese leadership’ (*Asahi Shimbun* 2012a, p. 1; Horiuchi 2014, p. 39). The Noda government was in communication with the Chinese Foreign Ministry and informed it ‘of its intention to purchase the islands out from under Ishihara in June’, but reportedly this communication yielded ‘no indication of the reaction [from China] that followed’ (Hafeez 2015, p. 90).

This was obviously a miscommunication between the two governments as China vehemently objected to the nationalisation. This miscommunication seems to have stemmed from the fact that while China’s foreign ministry is considered ‘the only reliable line of communication open between Beijing and Tokyo’ (Hafeez 2015, p. 89), its place within the Chinese domestic political institutional setup is one of ‘relative weakness’ and over time there has been a ‘gradual erosion of [its] authority and leadership role’ (Hafeez 2015, p. 89). Due to the relative weakness of the Chinese Foreign Ministry within the Chinese government, issues relating to the Senkaku Islands and the tacit understanding to shelve the dispute had historically been handled through back channel diplomacy beginning with Zhou Enlai. ‘The last such channel lasted from the late 1990s until 2008 between former Japanese Chief

Cabinet Secretary Hiromu Nonaka and a former Politburo Standing Committee member and Vice President of China, Zeng Qinghong’ (Hafeez 2015, p. 89). The retirement of Nonaka in Japan in 2003 and Zeng in China in 2008, coupled with the change of government to the DPJ in Japan in 2009, saw the erosion of these back channels of communication between Japan and China. The DPJ had been primarily communicating with China’s foreign ministry and on this basis the Noda government appears to have believed it had ‘if not approval, certainly understanding of Japanese intentions’ (Hafeez 2015, p. 90).

At the same time, with the power struggle within the CCP being carried out behind closed doors, ‘President Hu Jintao was being severely criticized by other conservative leaders for having promoted better relations with Japan. Hu and other top leaders close to him including Li Keqiang probably could not accept the Japanese explanations on the nationalization, which could put them in an even more difficult position’ (Horiuchi 2015, p. 43; Sunohara 2013). The DPJ did attempt to conduct back channel diplomacy, but according to one DPJ official it was unsuccessful this time due to the fact that no compromise could be reached (Hafeez 2015, p. 88). Japan was attempting to keep communication channels open and give China updates about the nationalisation of the islands. This included a late August meeting between DPJ lawmaker Tsuyoshi Yamaguchi and Chinese state councillor Dai Bingguo (Horiuchi 2014, p. 38) and a message in early September to ‘Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Zhijun that the Islands would be nationalized very soon’ (Horiuchi 2014, p. 43). Yet ‘it is not clear whether the information was properly conveyed to top leaders in China’ (Horiuchi 2014, p. 43). By the time Chinese objections to the nationalisation, such as through Dai Bingguo (as well as earlier advice from Japanese ambassador to China Uichiro Niwa, which seems to have been ignored) were communicated to prime minister Noda, he seemed to have already made up his mind to go ahead with the nationalisation.

Ishihara’s demands

During secret meetings between Ishihara and DPJ lawmaker Akihisa Nagashima, one possible option that had been discussed was a secret agreement that the Tokyo government would purchase the islands and then hand them over to central government control (Horiuchi 2014, p. 38). Yet in order to maintain the tacit agreement and avoid unnecessarily antagonising China it was considered ideal to keep Ishihara out of the process entirely.

On 19 August 2012, prime minister Noda held a secret meeting with Shintaro Ishihara in his office at the Kantei. During this meeting Ishihara suggested ‘that he would consider withdrawing his purchase plan and supporting the nationalization if the government would strengthen Japan’s valid control of the Islands by nationalizing them and building some facilities for ships there’ (Sunohara 2013; translation by Horiuchi 2014, p. 38). Such a proposal was unacceptable to Noda who sought to explain to Ishihara his position that ‘constructing such facilities would be totally impossible as it would dangerously provoke China’ (Sunohara 2013; translation by Horiuchi 2014, p. 38). Infamously, Ishihara is reported to have replied to this by saying that ‘he would not mind even if it would lead to war with China’ (Sunohara 2013; translation by Horiuchi 2014, p. 38).

Noda’s rationale for the nationalisation

Japan’s right-wing groups had successfully put prime minister Noda into a position where he felt he had little choice but to nationalise the Senkaku Islands. Through the propagation of a narrative of a weak Japan caving to Chinese pressure in its handling of the aftermath of the September 2010 ship collision incident, Japan’s right-wing groups had successfully influenced public opinion in a manner that it was more receptive to stronger actions to defend the Senkaku Islands. Subsequently, the linkages and cooperation between right-wing groups (especially the Mizushima network centred on Ganbare Nippon and Channel Sakura) and Ishihara to fundraise to buy the islands on behalf of the Tokyo government put Ishihara in a position to actually buy the islands while bypassing the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. If Noda did nothing, the government was powerless to stop Ishihara from going ahead and purchasing the islands. Such a scenario could not be risked given Ishihara’s publicly stated intention to qualitatively bolster Japanese effective control of the islands and his nonchalance toward armed conflict with China. Thus, Noda’s rationale for nationalising the islands was threefold.

First, Noda had a duty as prime minister to avoid unnecessary provocation and a possible armed conflict. On this count the 19 August secret meeting with Ishihara appeared to be the final straw that convinced Noda not only that he needed go ahead with the nationalisation of the islands by the central government but also that he needed to accelerate the process. Ishihara’s cavalier remarks demonstrating scant regard for avoiding armed conflict with China all pointed to the possibility that ‘the Tokyo Governor’s purchase of the Islands would raise the possibility of an armed conflict with China’ (Horiuchi 2014, p. 38). His actions in

going ahead with the nationalisation but in a way in which the Noda government considered it had minimised potential backlash from China further backed this stance. For instance, ideas to use the nationalisation for anything other than simply selling the islands from the Kurihara family to the central government that were under consideration were abandoned. Noda was ‘particularly interested in making better use of the existing lighthouse on Uotsurishima...by changing the source of its light to the LED and pursued this idea until the last moment’ (Horiuchi 2014, p. 40). However, ‘concerned that it would dangerously provoke China...Deputy Prime Minister [Katsuya] Okada and Foreign Minister [Koichiro] Gemba eventually succeeded in persuading Noda to abandon the idea’ (Horiuchi 2014, p. 40).

Second, Noda needed to keep in mind the high level of Japanese public opinion, mobilised by Ishihara and supported by the media, which was in favour of the nationalisation. If Ishihara was left to go ahead with the purchase it would surely have ‘[led] to severe criticism of [the Noda] government for not properly protecting Japan’s territorial integrity’ (Horiuchi 2014, p. 44). At the same time, Noda seemed to hope that going ahead with the nationalisation would give his government’s flagging popularity a boost. His DPJ prime ministerial predecessors had left the party with a poor public image in the foreign policy realm and successfully nationalising the islands could simultaneously provide his government with a foreign policy victory as well as demonstrating that the DPJ was not weak vis-à-vis China.

Third, the risk that the Kurihara family would change its mind was also considered by the Noda government (Horiuchi 2014, p. 39). They had been reclusive and unwilling to sell for years and only became willing to sell sometime after the 2010 Senkaku shock. While their main reason to sell was because they were in debt, there was no guarantee they would remain willing to sell into the future.

Chinese president Hu Jintao made a last ditch plea to Noda when they met on the sidelines of the APEC leaders’ summit in Russia on 11 September 2012 where he ‘strongly urged Noda not to nationalize the Islands’ (Horiuchi 2014, p. 43; VOA News 2012). But Noda had basically already decided on the nationalisation, which was announced publicly just two days later on 13 September.

Ultimately, Noda was successful in subverting a worst-case-scenario whereby Ishihara purchased the islands and pushed Japan down a road to possible armed conflict with China. If

nothing else in this episode broke his way, Noda can at least claim he did what was necessary in a tough situation. Any hope that nationalising the Senkakus would provide the Noda government with a boost to its approval ratings proved to be empty. Noda was viewed by many as reactive in contrast to Ishihara who was the agenda setter. Moreover, the LDP had already pledged on 31 May to 'nationalize the Senkaku Islands as part of its updated party manifesto' (Smith 2015, p. 224). Thus the move to nationalise the islands did little to improve the standing of the DPJ vis-à-vis the LDP.

From Ishihara's point of view, while he was foiled in his attempt to buy the islands, he probably considers his manoeuvring to have been at least partially successful. Building a port and sending personnel to live on the islands remains an unfinished task that Ishihara has left for other right-wing groups and politicians to pursue. Yet he forced the government into a situation whereby it had no choice but to nationalise the islands, a move which China interpreted as undermining the tacit agreement to shelve the dispute. Moreover, the fallout from the nationalisation further strained Japan-China relations. Quasi-official exchanges between the SDF and PLA uniformed personnel that were supported by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation between 2001 and 2011 were halted for seven years due to tensions surrounding the nationalisation (even though they had survived the 2010 Senkaku shock) (Yamaguchi 2018).

A new atmosphere surrounding the Senkaku issue means that the right wing has become ever more vocal in asserting that the Senkaku Islands are Japan's inherent territory, that Japanese actions regarding the islands do not need to take China into account, and in denying the existence of a tacit agreement between China and Japan. Virtually no politicians are now willing to publicly advocate the utility of the tacit agreement to shelve the issue even if Japanese actions continue to refrain from sending personnel to the islands or building new structures there.

Conclusion

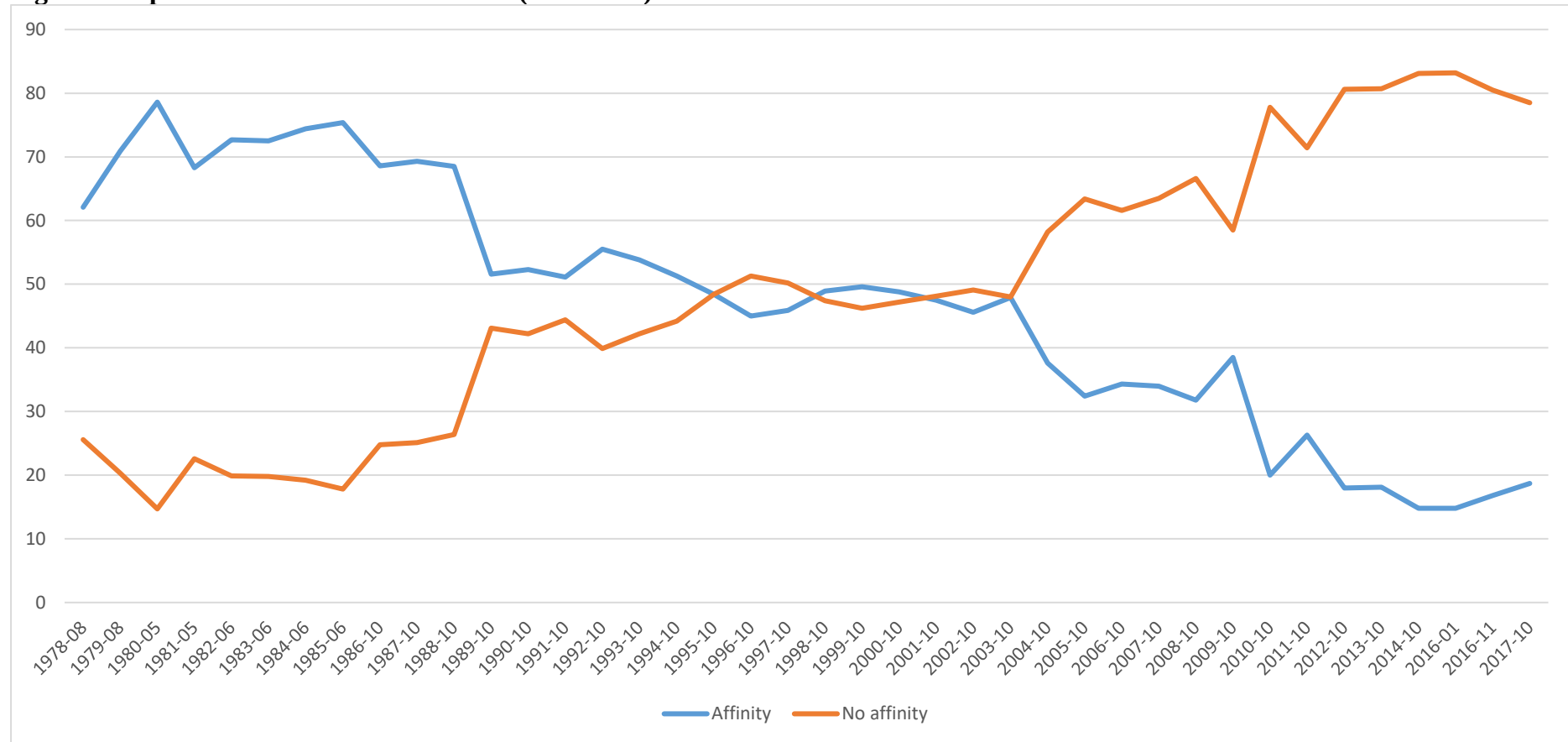
Japan's right wing successfully propagated the narrative that the Japanese government was weak and caved to Chinese pressure in dealing with the aftermath of the 2010 ship collision incident and that it could not be relied upon to protect Japanese territory. The successful propagation of this narrative served to create an atmosphere of pressure on the DPJ government. This atmosphere was one contributing factor in a direction already being

pursued in the drafting of the 2010 NDPG to shift Japan's defence strategy away from the long-held Basic Defence Force Concept and introduce the Dynamic Defence Force concept. Public acceptance of the right wing's narrative of a weak Japan also helped to create an atmosphere where the tacit agreement is more easily being actively denied by right-wing groups and politicians as well as an atmosphere of public support for Tokyo governor Shintaro Ishihara to pursue the purchase of three of the Senkaku Islands from their private landowner.

Linkages between Japanese right-wing groups and politicians also played a decisive role furthering right-wing influence. The link between Satoru Mizushima of Ganbare Nippon and Tokyo governor Ishihara was pivotal. Mizushima was instrumental in raising funds to Ishihara's appeal to buy the islands. This put Ishihara in a position to actually buy the islands without the oversight of the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly and forced prime minister Noda into a position where he felt compelled to nationalise the three islands.

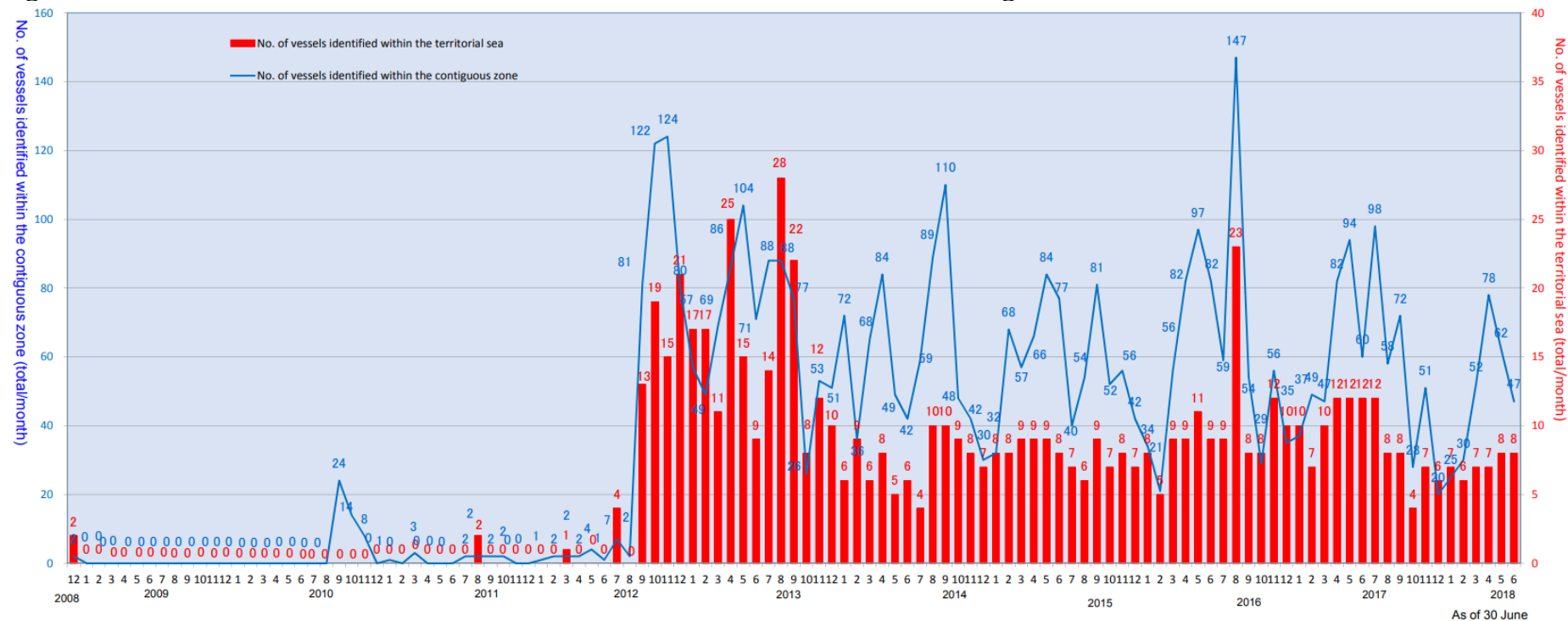
Overall, the right wing was somewhat successful through the mechanism of narrative building around a shock event and leveraging political linkages. Japan's right wing used this episode to bring a greater public focus on the islands and the issue of territorial defence. At the same time, the tacit agreement to shelve the Senkaku issue was temporarily undermined. However, the Japanese government continues to refrain from developing the islands by building infrastructure or sending personnel to live there. Thus the tacit agreement is still in place despite the best efforts of Japan's right wing to overturn it.

Figure 5: Japanese sentiment toward China (1978-2017)



(Source: Japan Cabinet Office Foreign Policy Opinion Poll, tabulated by the author)

Figure 6: Trends in Chinese Government and Other Vessels in the Waters Surrounding the Senkaku Islands



(Source: MOFA, Japan Coast Guard).

8 Conclusion

This study set out to investigate the influence of Japan's coalition of right-wing domestic political actors on Japanese foreign and security policy. This raised two key questions. First, what is the relative importance of endogenous versus exogenous factors in the state's formulation of foreign and security policy? Or, in other words, to what extent does domestic politics matter as a determinant of foreign and security policy? Second, assuming that endogenous factors are of at least some import, how significant is the coalition of right-wing domestic political actors in Japan with regard to Japan's foreign and security policy? How precisely do they exert influence? And what are the limits and constraints on their influence?

As discussed in Chapter 1, the right wing in Japan can be defined as those social groups which have adopted some mixture of 'strong faith in emperor-centred nationalism', 'anti-communism', 'historical revisionism' and 'nativism' (Higuchi 2018, pp. 682-684). The shared objective of Japanese right-wing groups to escape the post-war regime displays these characteristics. This includes escaping from irresponsible pacifism, escaping undue humiliation and escaping from the selfish egocentrism of post-war Japanese democracy.

Escaping from irresponsible pacifism is the most relevant of these objectives with regard to how Japan's right wing seeks to influence foreign and security policy. In particular, escaping from irresponsible pacifism means revising the Article 9 'peace clause' of the Constitution and establishing a full-spectrum military that can defend Japan and Japanese traditions and culture without constraints against hostile communist powers such as China and North Korea. Here there is an aversion to the restrained nature of the SDF under Article 9 among Japan's right wing as Article 9 is perceived as a foreign imposed measure that was deliberately designed by the US-led Allied occupation authorities to keep Japan weak.

The objective of escaping undue humiliation stems from the historical revisionist world view common among Japan's right-wing groups that is critical of so-called masochistic historiographies. Further, the objective of overcoming the selfish egocentrism of post-war Japanese democracy is a coded way of saying that the right wing aspires to give greater emphasis to the role of the Emperor in Japanese politics. This means that Japan's right-wing groups will oppose any foreign and security policy that acknowledges Japan's colonial or

wartimes transgressions because they are perceived as besmirching the honour of the imperial institutions and by extension the institution of the Emperor.

The investigation of Japan's right wing speaks to the debate about the future direction of Japan's foreign and security policy. Japan has often found itself accused from both sides. On the one hand, as Japan maintains its *senshu boei* security policy it has been criticised for free/cheap riding on the US security guarantee, for failing to take sufficient responsibility for its own defence, and for passing the buck by engaging in chequebook diplomacy. On the other hand, Japan has simultaneously found itself accused of failing to atone for its wartime transgressions and harbouring intentions of reviving the right-wing authoritarianism and militarism which drove its aggression during the Second World War.

Chapter 2 examined international relations theories that seek to explain post-war Japanese foreign and security policy behaviour and identified a gap in the literature with regard to studies focused on the influence of Japan's right wing. Although endogenous factors are often just as crucial as exogenous factors in the state's formulation of foreign and security policy, they have often been neglected in theories of international relations (Rosenau 1967, p. 2). This proves to be the case with regard to Japan. Japan has often been considered a puzzle for international relations theory. In contrast to neo-realist predictions that the state is expected to maximise its security in an anarchic international security environment, Japan continues to exercise self-restraint under the Article 9 peace clause of its post-war Constitution, and has commonly conducted foreign policy in a low-key manner vis-à-vis regional neighbours out of recognition of its wartime history while maintaining a relatively small defence budget. Since the end of the Cold War Japan has incrementally increased the role and missions of the SDF and at times explored a more independent and assertive foreign policy, but has continued with an exclusively defence-oriented defence framework (*senshu boei*).

So how can this Japanese behaviour and the pace and scope of its change be explained? The literature on Japanese foreign and security policy has formed a broad consensus that Japan continues to restrain its conduct of foreign and security policy and has tended to focus on exogenous factors in explaining this behaviour. Such studies that emphasise self-restraint due to exogenous factors include arguments that Japan is: prioritising its techno-economic position (Heginbotham & Samuels 1998); attuned to the regional security dilemma and sensitive to the financial burdens of defence (Kawasaki 2001); free/cheap-riding on the US

security guarantee (Lind 2004); prioritising the economic benefits of peace (Rosecrance 1985; Mueller 1988); and/or focusing on non-combat contributions to international peace in response to US alliance demands and in order to promote stable regional and international order building (Berger 2007). While Japan is sensitive to China's military modernisation and North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile development program it continues to adjust its foreign and security policy in cooperation with the United States and within the frameworks of the alliance and Article 9. Studies arguing that Japan is shifting towards or is already completely removing its self-imposed foreign and security policy restraints tend to be considered outliers (Hughes 2016).

A smaller number of studies have considered the role of endogenous factors. This includes a number of studies focused on the role of the anti-militarist culture among Japan's left wing (Berger 1993; Katzenstein 1996) and the restraining role of public opinion (Midford 2011). It also includes a vital study by Samuels looking at domestic politics and the battles between coalitions of domestic political actors (Samuels 2006, 2007).

There is, however, a gap in the literature of works specifically focusing on the role of Japan's right-wing coalition of domestic political actors. This thesis has sought to start to fill that gap by looking at the role of domestic politics in its formation and by examining how the coalition of right-wing domestic political actors have exerted particular influence. It looks at particular developments to delve into the black box of domestic politics and investigate the influence of domestic political actors on foreign and security policy. A case study methodology was employed in order to enable a deep investigation into the 'black box' of the state to examine the domestic politics of a number of important foreign and security policy cases in Japan, and the complexities of domestic politics-foreign policy linkages.

Specifically, Lester Milbrath's model of lobbying as a form of communication is utilised in order to analyse the mechanisms by which Japan's right-wing groups seek to exert influence on Japanese foreign and security policy. Two key mechanisms were identified. First, the cultivation of linkages with political decision-makers is necessary for lobby groups to get their message to decision makers in the first place and then to coordinate in the implementation of shared objectives. It is found that Japanese right-wing groups can be split into inside groups that have cultivated such linkages (such as Nippon Kaigi, NARKN and

Ganbare Nippon) and outside groups that have not cultivated such links (such as Issuikai and Zaitokukai). Second, the use of narratives to influence public opinion is of importance in cases where decision-makers may require public support to implement a decision. In the case of Japan's right-wing groups it is found that alternative narratives have been most effectively propagated when connected to external shock events, such as the Gulf War shock, the North Korean abduction shock and the Senkaku Islands September 2010 ship collision incident shock.

Chapter 3 explains the establishment of Japan's post-war foreign and security policy under the Yoshida doctrine. In particular, the three pillars of the Yoshida doctrine are outlined: reliance on the alliance with the United States for Japan's security, light rearmament with the establishment of the SDF under an exclusively defence-oriented security policy framework, and a focus on economic recovery and growth. The Yoshida doctrine forms the anchor of Japan's post-war foreign and security policy which Japan's right-wing groups seek to escape from. In particular, the right-wing considers light rearmament to be a form of irresponsible pacifism that abdicates the state's responsibility to maintain sovereignty and protect citizens and territory.

Chapter 4 examines Japan's Gulf War shock. In particular, Japan was criticised for its chequebook diplomacy and its failure to make a boots-on-the-ground physical contribution to the 1990-1991 Persian Gulf War. This resulted in the establishment of a narrative that Japan needed to make proactive contributions to international peace in order to gain international respect as well as to keep be a good alliance partner and prevent the United States from abandoning the US-Japan alliance. As such, Japan undertook a series of incremental reforms to expand the roles and missions of the SDF, but all the while staying within the framework of Article 9 and an exclusively defence-oriented security policy framework.

The three case studies — the drive to revise Article 9 (Chapter 5), Japan's North Korea policy (Chapter 6) and Japan's Senkaku Islands policy (Chapter 7) — investigate to what extent Japan's right-wing groups have been influential in three key areas of foreign and security policy. These case studies were chosen because they are widely considered to be among the most important security issues facing Japan. These cases also feature as issues of priority on the right wing's foreign and security policy agenda. As such, if the coalition of right-wing domestic political actors was not able to demonstrate any influence in these three

areas it could be reasonably concluded that they are not influential. Similarly, any influence the right wing is shown to exert in these areas can be considered to be a reasonable indicator of their capabilities and limits in affecting foreign and security policy change.

The investigation of these three case studies set out to contribute to the international relations and the Japanese foreign and security policy literature in three ways. First, it sought to contribute to the debate about the determinants of foreign policy and the importance of exogenous versus endogenous factors. Second, the thesis sought to shed light on how domestic political actors operate. And, third, by understanding how Japan's right-wing groups operate and the extent of their influence, the thesis sought to help predict the future trajectory of Japan's foreign and security policy framework.

Theoretical findings

The study serves to validate the proposition put forward by James Rosenau that 'domestic sources of foreign policy are no less crucial to its content and conduct than are the international situations toward which it is directed' (Rosenau 1967, p. 2). Studies which prioritise the importance of exogenous factors will generally assume that the formulation of foreign and security policy begins with the relevant decision-maker's appreciation of the international circumstances of the state. For instance, structural realists emphasise that the structural anarchy of the international system pushes states to maximise security and survival as the paramount goal of the state. Liberal theories counter realist's over-emphasis on international anarchy and emphasise rational thinking and the capacity for mutual cooperation between states. Constructivists emphasise ideational factors and the role of identity in international relations. However, looking at coalitions of domestic political actors, it becomes clear that different coalitions see the world and perceive the external security environment in different, and sometimes radically different, ways. The world view held by the Japanese right wing (a beautified revisionist history and the mission to escape the post-war regime) is diametrically opposed to that of the Japanese left (the military is a dangerous institution as evidenced by the history of the Second World War and must be restrained; non-combat contributions to international peace are acceptable as long as they remain within the framework of Article 9). Policies based on these world views are mutually exclusive.

In situations where there is a consensus on policy objectives among relevant or dominant actors, a coalition may be so large that it in effect mimics a unitary actor. In such a scenario,

black boxing domestic politics and utilizing unitary actor theories such as realism and liberalism can be a useful shortcut in explaining policy formulation and behaviour. On the other hand, in situations, such as post-Cold War Japan, where there is a lack of consensus, coalitions will compete to implement their mutually exclusive policy visions. Under such a scenario there will necessarily be winners and losers and the pre-existing policy preferences of the relevant coalitions of domestic political actors plays a significant role in shaping how external shocks are mediated.

The hurdles to be overcome for a coalition of domestic political actors to thoroughly overhaul an existing policy framework are formidable. The theoretical model of interest groups and foreign policy put forth by Lester Milbrath (1967) continues to hold important explanatory power regarding the formidability of those hurdles. However, as the analysis in this thesis shows, there are a number of mechanisms that can be deployed in order for lobby groups to successfully exert influence. The establishment of deep political networks with sympathetic politicians is a powerful mechanism which serves to assist in shaping political agendas and coordinating implementation efforts toward a given policy objective. The use of narratives can also be a powerful and complementary mechanism in order to exert policy influence. The hurdles to penetrating the national consciousness and successfully propagating a new narrative are high. The successful propagation of a new narrative will depend on many factors. However, the establishment of linkages with politicians as well as the relentless pushing of propagandistic messages does bear influence. The opportunistic linking of a pre-existing narrative and preferred policy course to external shocks as they arise provides a significant shortcut to effectively propagate a new narrative.

Empirical findings

Japan's right-wing groups have inserted themselves into Japan's foreign and security policymaking process in adaptive and innovative ways. In particular, Japan's insider right-wing groups have established linkages with politicians as a foundation in the pursuit of influence over foreign and security policy, such as Nippon Kaigi, Ganbare Nippon and NARKN. (This is in contrast to outside right-wing groups such as Issuikai and Zaitokukai). Japan's right-wing groups have also propagated new narratives to support their pre-existing policy preferences and objectives as well as opportunistically connecting these narratives to shock external events. This has enabled Japan's right-wing groups to exert some demonstrable influence.

Links with politicians

A key mechanism Japan's right-wing groups have used in order to influence foreign and security policy is the cultivation of linkages and networks with sympathetic politicians. The linkages Japan's right-wing groups have cultivated with sympathetic right-wing politicians are both cooperative and deep. Nippon Kaigi boasts links to 295 Diet members through the Nippon Kaigi Parliamentary Discussion Group (Democracy Minibird 2018). That amounts to a channel of access to over 40 per cent of all Diet members. Moreover, the cabinets of the Abe government have contained an even higher proportion of Nippon Kaigi Parliamentary Discussion Group members (Asia Policy Point 2014a, p. 67; 2014b, p. 65; 2015, p.76). NARKN also enjoys deep linkages with Diet members through Rachi Giren. Rachi Giren rapidly grew from 120 members at its first meeting after the North Korean abduction issue exploded in 2002 (Arrington 2016, p. 157) to 188 members by 2004 (*Yomiuri Shimbun* 2004) and continues to maintain a similarly high number of members to the present day. Ganbare Nippon maintains a more informal but nevertheless effective network of linkages with politicians. This was demonstrated most effectively by Ganbare Nippon's cooperative relationship with former Tokyo governor Shintaro Ishihara in relation to the Senkaku Islands.

This deep level of linkages with Japanese politicians has provided Japan's right-wing groups with a valuable channel of access to influence Japan's foreign and security policy decision-makers. They have made use of this channel by embedding their ideology and their objective to escape the post-war regime into the rhetoric and policy objectives of sympathetic politicians. For instance, through the Nippon Kaigi Parliamentary Discussion Group, Nippon Kaigi has successfully embedded itself into the constitutional revision objectives of the Abe government. Nippon Kaigi's constitutional revision objectives found their way into the LDP's 2012 draft constitution proposal through Shinzo Abe and Yosuke Isozaki (both members of the Nippon Kaigi Parliamentary Discussion Group) and help inform and propel Abe's prime ministerial objectives as he sought to revise Article 9.

NARKN leaders' pre-existing objective to instigate regime change in North Korea informed the hard-line approach that Japanese politicians implemented in Japan's North Korea policy. This has seen NARKN and Rachi Giren cooperate in implementing a hard line North Korean policy with a focus on unilateral sanctions against North Korea. It also seen the Japanese government prioritise an unrealistically defined resolution of the abduction issue to the point

that any form of positive engagement with North Korea has become a sort of taboo. Any approach which seeks to resolve the abduction issue as part of the broader process to normalise Japan-DPRK diplomatic relations has met with heavy criticism from NARKN and Rachi Giren members and has thus not been a possible policy option for the Japanese government to explore since the Koizumi administration was in power.

Ganbare Nippon's call to action for the Japanese government to take a hard-line approach in defending the Senkaku Islands informed its close cooperation with Tokyo governor Shintaro Ishihara who shared a similar view. The fund that Shintaro Ishihara created to raise donations so that he could buy the islands on behalf of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government depended on the efforts of the network of Ganbare Nippon co-founder Satoru Mizushima. This enabled Ishihara as governor to bypass the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and put him in a position to actually buy the islands and thus exert pressure on the Noda government. Without this pressure it is doubtful that the Noda government would have nationalised the three islands in question.

Narrative building

Another key mechanism Japan's right-wing groups have used is narrative building. Notably, Japan's right-wing groups have used narrative building as a means of challenging shared societal understandings related to foreign and security policy. The successful propagation of alternative narratives is a daunting undertaking. The idea of escaping the post-war regime is not a message that the Japanese public is necessarily well dispositioned toward. Attracting a large enough audience to subscribe to the narrative of the necessity of escaping the post-war regime is thus a difficult task. However, an innovative way that Japan's right-wing groups have sought to use to propagate their narrative more effectively is to opportunistically connect their narrative with external shocks.

In the wake of Japan's defeat in the Second World War, the lives lost on the battlefield and the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, a shared societal understanding was formed around the narrative that the military is a dangerous institution. This narrative emphasised that the public must be protected from the military by making sure it sticks to a defence-only role. This is in stark contrast to the Japanese right-wing understanding of history and their mission to escape the post-war regime and return Japan to its pre-war military power status and establish a full-spectrum military.

The 1990–1991 Gulf War shock, which saw Japan criticised by the international community for its chequebook diplomacy and its lack of a boots-on-the-ground contribution, proved to be a pivotal shock event. This shock event resulted in a narrative that Japan needed to make greater contributions to international peace in order to gain respect in international society and to maintain confidence in the US-Japan alliance. This shock saw Japan make a number of incremental defence policy reforms, but these reforms were made within the framework of Article 9 and the exclusively defence-oriented policy approach.

Japan's right-wing groups have sought with great vigour to push the Gulf War shock narrative further by propagating the idea that Article 9 was humiliatingly imposed upon Japan by the Allied occupation authorities and deliberately designed to weaken Japan and curtail its foreign and security policy autonomy. Japan's inability to contribute in the 1990–1991 Gulf War beyond financial means is, according to this right-wing narrative, the result of the foreign-imposed post-war regime and Article 9 and ignores the role of the Japanese people in maintaining Article 9 throughout the post-war era. In order to propagate this the narrative of Article 9 and the post-war Constitution as a foreign-imposed humiliation, Nippon Kaigi established a sub-group, the People's Association, specifically for the purpose of collecting 10 million signatures in support of constitutional revision. At the same time, Nippon Kaigi and the People's Association cooperated with AOSS in order to distribute propaganda pamphlets through Shinto shrines around the country urging constitutional revision and revising Article 9.

The bombshell abduction issue revelation in 2002, when then North Korean leader Kim Jong-il revealed that North Korea had abducted a number of Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s, provided a chance for Japan's right-wing groups. Before 2002, Japan had sought to negotiate the normalisation of diplomatic relations with North Korea and to deal with the settlement of historical issues, including the abduction issue, as well as security issues relating to North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile development programs, through this normalisation process. Indeed, Kim Jong-il's admission and apology was part of that process during the first Japan-DPRK leaders' summit in Pyongyang to conclude the 2002 Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration. After the abduction issue was publicly revealed, Japan's right-wing groups propagated a narrative that Japan is a victim country and that Japanese victimhood, as evidenced by the abductions, is the result of Japanese weakness under the

post-war regime and Article 9. They argued that the only way to secure the return of the abductees was through a hard-line approach toward North Korea through pressure as well as for the revision of the Constitution. NARKN was able to propagate this message throughout Japanese society to saturation levels because it acted as the gatekeeper for the abductees' relatives and the returned abductees through AFVKN and was able to co-opt their moral voice.

The 2010 Senkaku Islands ship collision incident again provided an opportunity for Japan's right-wing groups to build a narrative. Prior to the ship collision incident the Japanese public was largely uninterested in the Senkaku Islands. While maintaining effective control of the islands, Japan had followed a dual approach of following a tacit agreement with China to shelve the dispute for future generations while generally not openly acknowledging the tacit agreement. After the ship collision incident, Japan's right-wing groups successfully propagated a narrative of Japanese weakness in the Kan government's dealing with the aftermath of the collision and the release of the Chinese fishing trawler captain. They argued that Japan's inability to protect the islands was a symptom of the post-war regime. Ganbare Nippon led the organisation of a series of public protests to demand that the government take stronger measures to adequately protect the islands.

How much influence?

Japan's coalition of right-wing domestic political actors have achieved some success in attacking the foreign and security policy aspects of the post-war regime. However, despite their mixed successes, it is unlikely that they will be able to overturn the post-war regime in the short or medium term.

The right wing has succeeded in having Article 9 reinterpreted. The July 2014 reinterpretation and the September 2015 implementing legislation recognise the legal right of the SDF to engage in limited forms of collective self-defence where Japan's own survival is threatened. This, however, was a watered down version of the initially sought after objective of a reinterpretation that would enable an essentially unrestricted exercise of collective self-defence.

At the same time, while the right wing has been successful at forcing the revision of the Constitution onto the national political agenda, it has been unable to convince the public that

it is necessary to redefine the roles and missions of the SDF outside the framework of Article 9. At this point in time, the Abe government intends to pursue a national referendum to revise Article 9. However, as a practical matter the Abe government has decided to pursue an approach of simply adding a third clause to explicitly recognise the constitutionality of the SDF without altering the first two paragraphs.

This approach appears to have originated from Tetsuo Ito, head of the Japan Policy Institute and director of the Nippon Kaigi policy committee (Ito 2017; Weiss 2018, pp. 21-22) and has been coordinated with Nippon Kaigi through the Nippon Kaigi Parliamentary Discussion Group (*Sankei Shimbun* 2018). This constitutes a significant watering down from the objectives identified in the LDP's 2012 draft constitution proposal. However, this strategy is calculated to give revision of Article 9 the greatest chance of being navigated through a national referendum. Such a minimal change is considered to be the best option to not aggravate mass opposition and get a 'yes' vote. However, such a change would have little to any functional change in the way the SDF operates given that they are already recognised and broadly admired by the Japanese public and by almost all actors across the political spectrum (with the exception of the JCP and some constitutional scholars) (Cucek 2018). Overall, the public at large is content for the SDF to legitimately make non-combat contributions to international peace and the maintenance of the US-Japan alliance, however, they have not accepted the idea that Article 9 needs to be revised. Nippon Kaigi representatives have indicated their hope that an initial successful revision of the Constitution will make future revisions easier.

The right wing's influence is perhaps felt that most strongly with regard to Japan's North Korea policy out of the three case studies. Japan's right wing has successfully sustained negative public sentiment toward North Korea to the point that the Japanese public is consistently more concerned about the abduction issue (a past threat from the 1970s and 1980s) than North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile development program (an ongoing present threat). This public anger has prevented rational discussions that place the abductions in the broader context of the history of Japanese relations with the Korean peninsula, including Japan's own colonial transgressions. This has enabled Japan's right wing to successfully use the abduction issue to impose insurmountable barriers to Japan-DPRK diplomatic normalisation and to any sort of positive engagement with North Korea in order to help resolve the abduction issue or for Japan to play a constructive role in multilateral

denuclearisation negotiations. This means any form of aid to North Korea is off the table as is the economic cooperation Japan promised North Korea as part of the 2002 Japan-DPRK Pyongyang declaration. The removal of the possibility of providing this economic cooperation takes away the biggest role Japan would have been likely to play in any multilateral denuclearisation negotiations such as the SPT. Japan's right wing has also been successful in having Japan impose unilateral economic sanctions against North Korea more quickly and beyond UN resolutions. Although these sanctions were imposed after missile and nuclear tests, they were publicly extolled as a means of punishing North Korea over the abduction issue. It is convenient that such actions are consistent with the pre-existing objective of NARKN's leadership to instigate regime change in North Korea.

The right wing also found some success on Senkaku Islands policy. The successful propagation of the narrative that Japan was weak and caved to China by releasing the captain of the fishing trawler back to China helped to change the public mood toward the issue. This newfound public sentiment towards the Senkaku Islands has constrained leeway for the Japanese government to explore possible creative solutions to resolve the Senkaku Islands dispute (Baldacchino 2017) and emboldened the voices of right-wing actors who actively deny the existence of a tacit agreement with China to shelve the dispute.

As a result of the success of the propagation of this narrative Japan's right-wing groups were also able to realise a number of concrete achievements. First, the fallout over the ship collision incident and the right-wing narrative of Japanese weakness served as a contributing factor in an already ongoing process for the reorientation of Japanese security policy away from Basic Defence Force concept and toward the Dynamic Defence Force concept in the 2010 NDPG. Second, the narrative of Japanese weakness helped provide the supportive environment for Shintaro Ishihara to pursue his campaign to buy the islands on behalf of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. It was in this context that Ganbare Nippon co-founder Satoru Mizushima successfully fundraised donations for Ishihara's appeal through his right-wing networks, and Ishihara was able to put prime minister Noda in a position where he felt compelled to purchase three of the islands from their private Japanese landowner to prevent Ishihara from buying them and upending the tacit agreement with China to shelve the Senkaku Islands dispute. This manoeuvring by Japan's right wing sowed tensions in Japan-China relations and strained the mutual commitment of Japan and China to upholding the tacit agreement. However, Japan's right wing was ultimately unsuccessful in fully

overturning Japan's approach of shelving the dispute and Japan continues to limit access and refrain from developing the islands while maintaining effective control.

Policy implications

Since Japan's right wing has not convinced the broader public regarding the narrative that Article 9 is a humiliation, Japan is likely to continue to anchor its foreign and security policy in a *senshu boei* approach and the US-Japan alliance for the foreseeable future. This might change if there was a serious shock event or a fundamental loss of trust in the United States as a security guarantor (beyond the current loss of confidence since the election of Donald Trump as US President). The risk that Japan is easily going to backslide into pre-war militarist and fascist ideologies is negligible. There is the possibility, however, that continued incremental security policy reforms when taken together as a whole over the longer term will see a further significant expansion in the roles and missions of the SDF with further altering of the shape of the framework of Article 9. For Japanese policymakers looking at implementing new foreign and security policy, incremental policy reforms within the framework of Article 9 are the most likely to be realizable without serious public backlash. Similarly, for regional friends and allies of Japan — such as the United States, Australia, some Southeast Asian nations and India — attempts at deepening foreign and security policy cooperation will more likely be smoothly implemented if done in within the framework of Article 9. Expectations that Japan should deepen its cooperation beyond the framework of Article 9 are likely to be met with public backlash, political gridlock and disappointment.

The success of Japan's right wing in portraying Japan as a victim country and sustaining public anger over the abduction issue seriously complicates the possibility of Japanese engagement with North Korea. Any expectation of Japan playing a constructive role in North Korean denuclearisation negotiations should is likely to remain unrealistic until the abduction issue can be resolved. However, because of the manner in which NARKN has shaped the parameters of a resolution of the abduction issue to bringing back all abductees alive immediately, a resolution would appear to be highly unlikely in the short or medium term. A resolution of the abduction issue may require Houdini-like ingenuity. This is because North Korea is in the impossible position of proving a negative that there are no further Japanese in North Korea against their will. To break this impasse, Japan and North Korea might consider a jointly conducted investigation into the fates of the unaccounted for abductees within the

framework of diplomatic normalization negotiations under the 2002 Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration. A joint investigation would help overcome the problem of Japanese distrust of the results of an investigation. Conducting it within the framework of diplomatic normalization negotiations would also give North Korea incentive. However, NARKN is likely to block any efforts toward such an approach as its objective is regime change. It thus opposes any aid to North Korea, including the promise Japan made in the Pyongyang Declaration to provide economic assistance after relations are normalized.

The success of Japan's right wing in portraying the aftermath of the 2010 Senkaku ship collision incident as an example of a weak Japan caving to Chinese pressure, and the atmosphere this has created in Japanese society towards territorial defence, complicates efforts to manage and resolve territorial disputes. Creative policy suggestions to resolve the Senkaku Islands dispute are likely to be rejected unless the narrative toward the Senkakus is changed. This creates a challenge for Japanese and Chinese policymakers who need to manage the dispute in order to prevent it from spilling over and negatively affecting other areas of cooperation.

Limitations and further research

The analysis of the coalition of right-wing domestic political actors in Japan is focused on foreign and security policy. Given that the focus of the analysis is limited to foreign and security policy, its findings should not be taken to mean that right-wing actors in Japan are influential or not influential in other policy areas. Nippon Kaigi, Japan's largest right-wing lobby group, holds broader objectives other than those relating to foreign and security policy within the umbrella of escaping the post-war regime, such as those relating to family and gender roles, education and the role of the Emperor in Japan's political system. The analysis here does not attempt to quantify the influence of Nippon Kaigi or other right-wing actors in other policy areas. Further research is required to determine the influence of Japan's right-wing actors in these other policy areas.

The conclusion that domestic politics matters in the determination of foreign and security policy — especially when two competing coalitions hold mutually exclusive world views, objectives and policy visions — is strong. Yet further research is needed to determine under what conditions such diametrically opposed, competing coalitions are more or less likely to emerge.

There is also a need for further research, as identified by Rosenau (1969) regarding the many types of complex linkages between national and international systems or between the endogenous and exogenous factors that shape foreign and security policy. This study has identified the linkage between Japan's right-wing groups and the politicians they have built connections with in relations to narrative building and the mediation of external shock events. However, there are many other domestic-international system linkages worthy of future research which are yet to be explored.

Summary of the findings

First, it is found that endogenous factors are a significant determinant of foreign and security policy. The assumption of many studies of international relations that exogenous factors are of greater significance risks obscuring the full picture. This is especially the case when coalitions of domestic political actors hold mutually exclusive views of the world and policy objectives.

Second, the study has shown that Japan's right-wing coalition is a significant actor in influencing Japan's foreign and security policy through two key mechanisms. First, Japan's right-wing groups have cultivated linkages with political decision-makers. Second, Japan's right-wing groups have propagated alternative narratives to reshape both the public's and decision-makers' understanding of policy. The use of narratives has been amplified by connecting them opportunistically with external shock events.

The extent of Japanese right-wing influence is mixed overall. This influence has enabled the right wing to partially realise its objectives. The right of the SDF to engage in limited forms of collective self-defence is now recognised. Japan's right-wing groups, especially Nippon Kaigi, have successfully placed constitutional revision on the national political agenda, but it remains a controversial topic. The strategy of attempting even a minor revision of Article 9 still faces serious hurdles.

Japan's right-wing groups, especially NARKN, have successfully conditioned Japanese policy to prioritise an undefined 'full' resolution of the abduction issue. This continues to prevent Japan from constructive engagement in multilateral denuclearisation negotiations. Rather, Japan's right-wing groups have successfully locked Japan into imposing a hard-line

posture against North Korea, especially through unilateral sanctions, for the foreseeable future. Negotiations toward diplomatic normalisation continue to remain off the table.

With regard to the Senkaku Islands, Japan's right-wing groups, especially Ganbare Nippon were able to successfully propagate a narrative that a weak Japan caved to Chinese pressure in the aftermath of the 2010 ship collision incident. This enabled Tokyo governor Shintaro Ishihara to raise funds to purchase three of the Senkaku Islands from their private land owner on behalf of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government in a bid to abolish Japan's tacit agreement with China to shelve the island dispute. The cooperation of Ganbare Nippon founder Satoru Mizushima was critical in raising funds. This orchestration forced the Noda government into a situation where it felt compelled to nationalise the three islands contravening the tacit agreement to shelve the dispute with China.

Third, the mixed nature of the influence of Japan's right-wing groups, operating through their linkages with politicians and through the propagation of narratives surrounding external shock events, suggests that the SDF's posture is likely to only change incrementally. Gradual policy reforms within the framework of Article 9 are the most realistic option for policymakers to pursue. Japan's right-wing actors continue to be subject to significant constraints and it is highly unlikely they will come anywhere close to fully realising their objective to overturn and escape the post-war regime in the short or medium term short of a significant loss of Japanese public confidence in the US-Japan alliance.

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