

Japan's Choice in the 21st Century-In Search of a Demilitarized and Neutral Japan

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Introduction

In July 2014, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe reinterpreted Article 9 of Japan's Constitution so that the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) would be able to exercise the right to collective self-defense. In 2015, he passed various laws related to security in the Diet to further implement his idea of revision of Article 9. In the summer of 2016, his party, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), won the elections of the House of Councilors. Now, the LDP, along with the Komei Party and two other minor parties, has two-thirds of the votes in each the House of Representatives and the House of Councilors which would be able to present to the Diet a motion to revise Article 9. In other words, there is a possibility in the near future that Japan might revise Article 9 if the majority of the Japanese people agree in the referendum.

If Japan revises Article 9, she would become a "normal state," which means that a state can use military forces to solve international disputes. Even now, Japan can exercise the right to collective self-defense without her changing Article 9. Currently, she is not allowed to have the right to wage a war or use force as a means of solving international disputes. Japan is the only state among the major states whose armed forces have not killed anyone or its members have not been killed in the war due to Article 9. The Japanese people should be very proud of this postwar tradition. However, this tradition is now at stake.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe challenged the past interpretation of Article 9 and is eager to revise it so that the SDF would be able to fight along with the United States Forces in the future. Therefore, Japan is now at a crossroad of whether she could keep Article 9 and maintain peace or exercise the right to collective self-defense and wage a war with the United States.

Therefore, it is important to examine Abe's security policy and his intention to revise Article 9. First, the paper will look into a recent security policy of Japan with the focus on territorial issues with China and the right to collective self-defense. The paper also explores Japan's diplomacy based on her own national interests. In other words, it will search whether Japan can become a demilitarized and neutral state. In conclusion, I propose new foreign policy which is different from the current policy depending on the Security Treaty.

Recent Security Policy, Territorial Issues, and the Right to Collective Self-Defense

Japan has territorial problems with Russia, China, and South Korea over the Northern Territories, the Senkaku Islands (Diaoyu), and Takeshima (Dokudo), respectively. In 1956, Japan and the Soviet Union

almost agreed to sign the Peace Treaty in exchange for the Soviet to return to Japan of two islands, Habomai Islands and Shikotan out of four islands, which the Soviet Union took at the end of World War II. However, John Foster Dulles stated that the United States would never return Okinawa if Japan signed the Peace Treaty with the Soviet Union. Therefore, Japan had to give up the treaty and began to argue for the return of all four islands which the Soviet Union would never agree. Japan's Foreign Ministry, at first, had demanded for only two islands, but after the United States asked for all four islands, Japan also began to ask for the return of all four islands. It was the United States that sowed the seeds of conflict between Japan and the Soviet Union that would last semi-permanently. (Hara: 2005, 146; Toyoshita: 2012, 104-106)

The United States is very shrewd in this respect. First, the United States imposed Article 9 on Japan although it was Kijuro Shidehara's thoughts as well and the majority of the Japanese people welcomed it. Secondly, the United States presented Japan with the Security Treaty to defend Japan since the latter was not allowed to have armed forces. It was the aim of the United States that would keep American Forces in Japan after Japan became independent. It is important to remember that John Foster Dulles stated in 1953 that until a sky over Okinawa became blue, United States Forces in Japan (USFJ) would stay in Okinawa. That is so-called blue sky position, which means that the United States would keep military forces in Okinawa as long as threats and tension continue in the region. Therefore, the United States needs threats, tension, or potential enemies in the vicinities of Japan in order to justify existence of USFJ. Territorial issues and North Korean missile and nuclear issues are cases in point.

As for the Senkaku Islands, both China and Japan lay claim to sovereignty over the islands, and nationalism increases in both countries. In 1895, Japan incorporated the Senkaku Islands into Okinawa. Since then, Japan has kept administrative rights and sovereignty over the islands. Up until 1971, China and Taiwan had not officially claimed sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands. However, after the United Nations made a report about a possibility of oil reserves in the vicinities of the islands in 1969, Taiwan and China began to assert their sovereignty. (Toyoshita, 32-36) In 2010, a collision took place between a Japanese Coast Guard ship and a Chinese fishing boat. In 2012, Japan nationalized three main islands. These events brought about China's strong opposition against Japan. Since then, the relations between the two countries have become sour and anti-Japanese movement often takes place in China.

Concerning Takeshima, President Syngman Rhee in 1952 unilaterally drew a territorial line, which was called Syngman Rhee Line and separated Takeshima from Japan. Since then, South Korea has exercised administrative rights over the islands. Both South Korea and Japan claim their sovereignty. Japan argues that Japan incorporated Takeshima into Shimane Prefecture in 1905 while South Korea has not accepted Japan's claim. According to Narahiko Toyoshita, it is because annexation of Takeshima into Japan took place in the process of Japanese colonization of Korea. Therefore, for the Koreans, it is not a problem of territory, but an issue of colonization and historical interpretation. Toyoshita criticizes the United States position on this issue saying that while the United States placed Takeshima as Japan's territory in San Francisco Peace Treaty, she acknowledges that Takeshima belongs to Korea in the United States Board on Geographic Names. The Board is in charge of names which all the United States government organizations use. (Toyoshita, 124-25, 134-36)

Under these circumstances, Abe tries to defend Japan with the exercise of the right to collective

self-defense. The right to collective self-defense means that even though Japan is not attacked, she has the right to retaliate against an enemy which attacked the United States. It is dangerous for Japan since Japan's exercise of the right to collective self-defense would constitute a first strike against the state which attacked the United States. In this way, Japan would increase the number of her potential enemies by exercising the right to collective self-defense and carrying out the first strike. However, it is Abe's intention that would revise Article 9. He wishes to increase Japan's bargaining position toward the United States by revising Article 9 and exercising the right to collective self-defense.

Ukeru Magosaki argues that the exercise of the right to collective self-defense would bring about terrorist attacks to Japan. It also violates Article 9. (Magosaki: 2016, 275-77) Motofumi Asai also argues that the right to collective self-defense would involve Japan into a war between China and the United States. He thinks that the right to collective self-defense is not self-defense, but defense of others or other countries. Therefore, it is unconstitutional. Asai contends that if the United States does not militarily involve herself into a conflict between China and Taiwan, there would be no war between China and the United States. If the United States does intervene, however, Japan would be also involved into a conflict. Asai asserts that since even exercise of the right to self-defense is a means of solving international disputes, which is therefore unconstitutional, providing the United States Armed Forces with bases in Japan itself is tantamount to exercise of the right to collective self-defense, which is also unconstitutional. (Asai: 2002, 66, 80, 175, 181)

The preamble of the Constitution reads: "... we have determined to preserve our security and existence, trusting in the justice and faith of the peace-loving peoples of the world." (House of Councillors: 1969, 3) According to Asai, Article 9 sent a message to the international society that a new born Japan put the basis of her security on a preamble of the Constitution. The Japanese people rejected an idea of balance of power which was a dominant idea in international politics, but expressed a new idea as written in the above preamble. He also argues that Article 9 stems from the Potsdam Declaration which required Japan to be a peaceful and demilitarized country. In the end, Asai asks the Japanese people whether Japan chooses her security based on the Security Treaty or Article 9 in the 21st century. (Asai, 161-63, 173)

As Magosaki and Asai argue, the right to collective self-defense violates Article 9 and puts Japan into dangerous situation. It is because the United States would ask Japan to help the United States Armed Forces not just in the Asia-Pacific region, but in a region far away from Japan. Now, since Abe changed interpretation of Article 9 on the right to collective self-defense, the SDF could go anywhere in the world according to the United States wish.

A Demilitarized and Neutral Policy and Article 9

From 1952 on, Japan's foreign policy has been based on the Security Treaty with the United States. Japan has relied on USFJ for her security and defense. However, USFJ does not fulfill its job. On the contrary, USFJ harms the Japanese people instead of protecting their lives and property. Therefore, it is the time for the Japanese people to change postwar Japan's foreign policy. In other words, Japan stops relying on the United States for her security and defense.

In more concrete terms, Japan should abrogate the Security Treaty and instead sign the Peace and Friendship Treaty with the United States. Almost all the Japanese people think that if Japan

abandons the Security Treaty, she has to increase the defense budget and reinforce the SDF. Some even argue for having the nuclear weapons. Given the fact that China often violates Japan's territorial water near the Senkaku Islands, although from the Chinese viewpoint their behavior does not violate Japan's territorial water since China regards the Senkaku Islands as her territory, it is understandable that many Japanese people are concerned about China's aggressive foreign and military behaviors in recent years. However, China is Japan's largest trading partner and it is important for Japan to improve her relations with China to keep Japan's security and defense. It is of vital importance to the Japanese people to realize that in the 21st century Japan cannot defend her own country with military forces even with the help of USFJ.

Concerning the issue of the Senkaku Islands, I propose an international joint control of the Islands. It is because China, Taiwan, and Japan claim for sovereignty over the Islands and there is strong nationalism in these countries. The International Court of Justice would not solve the Senkaku Islands issue. Of course, China and Japan can put the territorial issue on the shelf as they did in the past; however, this method would not solve the problem in the long run. Putting the Senkaku Islands under the international control, China, Taiwan, and Japan would receive the right to fish in the vicinities of the Islands and share the natural resources such as oil if any.

As for Japan's relations with Russia, it is important for Japan to sign a peace treaty with Russia to officially conclude a war with Russia in World War II. Japan should carry it out even if she gives up the Northern Territories if necessary. As Toshiaki Wada argues, Japan has no rights to claim her sovereignty over the Northern Territories since historically and legally these islands belong to Russia. (Wada: 1987, 155-60) By giving up the Northern Territories, Japan would receive the following points: peace and security, the right to fish in the vicinities of the Northern Territories, natural resources such as oil, natural gas, iron ore, and timber, and the right to develop Siberia. By promoting trade with Russia, Japan would be able to reduce the oil import from the Middle East.

Concerning the relations with South Korea, Japan should solve comfort women's issue by compensating and apologizing to the survivors individually and abandon Takeshima to improve her relations with South Korea. As for North Korea, Japan should apologize and pay compensation to the people of North Korea for Japan's colonial rule and establish diplomatic relations with North Korea. It is because Japan paid US\$500 million to the people of South Korea in 1965, but has not paid any compensation to the people of North Korea. Japan should also provide North Korea with economic assistance and promote trade with North Korea.

There are close relations between a demilitarized and neutral policy and Article 9. Kojin Karatani argues that Article 9 was not necessarily imposed on Japan, but it was an idea of Kijuro Shidehara. He further mentions that Japan would give renunciation of war in Article 9 to the international society as a present, which in turn Japan would gain pressure in the form of international public opinion. This pressure is stronger than the military might or the economic might. If a country invades Japan, such a country would be criticized by the international society, he says. Karatani further points out that Japan and the Japanese people have been protected against a war by Article 9. Among the majority of the Japanese people, war experience was alive at that time. The dead cannot speak, but Article 9 can. Article 9 is beyond the will of those Japanese who died or survived in the war. (Karatani: 2016, 24-26, 129, 184, 190) According to Karatani, Article 9 is unconsciously in the minds of the Japanese people. Therefore, the Japanese Government cannot revise Article 9. Article 9 carries the spirit

of peace and anti-war which those who lost their lives in the war wish to keep. He also indicates that public opinion in the international society would protect Japan if Japan were invaded, not the military forces. Karatani seems to support a demilitarized and neutral policy.

Masashi Ishibashi firmly believes that a demilitarized and neutral policy is the only policy that could prevent a war and rescue human beings from destruction. A spirit of Article 9 is that Japan would establish good relations with all the countries without relying on military forces or having military alliance with any states. That is the essence of Article 9 and Japan would go ahead of our time if she could materialize a spirit of Article 9 and establish such environment as mentioned above which secures Japan's security, Ishibashi argues. (Ishibashi: 1980, 77-78)

Since the 1980s, the Japanese people have become more conservative and tolerate about the Security Treaty, the SDF, and Article 9 as compared with those in the 1960s and 1970s. In June 1946, Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida stated that in the past a war was conducted under the name of self-defense. Therefore, it was the Japanese Government interpretation that Article 9 prohibited all the wars including a war of self-defense as a result of no right to wage a war or of having no armed forces. (Tanaka: 2005, 9-10) That was a policy of the Japanese Government and interpretation of the conservative politicians about Article 9 at that time. Time has changed. Now, seventy years later, the conservative politicians led by Abe argue that Japan has not only the right of self-defense, but also the right to collective self-defense. Neither the opposition parties, major mass media, or the Japanese people strongly criticize or reject Abe's policy on security. Japan is certainly heading toward a country that can wage a war.

Entering into the 21st century, those who support Article 9 including the Social Democratic Party are losing power and influence in domestic politics and people's support as well. As a result, a demilitarized and neutral policy which was very popular in the 1950s and 1960s has now lost influence and momentum among the Japanese people. Many people think that a demilitarized and neutral policy is unrealistic or irresponsible since it does not fit a current situation in North East Asia. Now, many people support the Security Treaty and the SDF.

As for deterrent, Ishibashi mentions that the effect of deterrent is that the larger the military forces you have, the less intention a potential enemy has to invade your country. It is because the enemy is afraid of retaliation of your country if you have large military power. Ishibashi further argues that since Japan alone cannot defend her own country, she signed the Security Treaty with the United States so that the United States would rescue Japan when the latter was attacked. However, a major problem is how long the SDF could hold an attack of the Soviet Union to defend Japan until the United States military come. According to the Japanese Government, the SDF could hold the Soviet attack only for the period of several days or a couple of weeks at the most, Ishibashi says. He means that even if the United States would come to help Japan when attacked, the SDF should defend Japan for a certain period of time. He thinks that even the United States would rescue Japan, by the time when the United States military arrive, Japan would be destroyed and suffer from tremendous casualties. Ishibashi continues that there is a question whether Japan can really rely on the United States help. It is very difficult for him to imagine that the United States would come to help Japan when there is a possibility that the United States herself would be also destroyed. Ishibashi further points out that Japan has a policy of exclusive defensive defense which means that the SDF could fight only in the Japanese territories, not in a foreign territory. It indicates that battle fields would be all over Japan which means

that not only the SDF, but also all the Japanese people must fight on their land. In any case, Japan herself would be a battle field which would bring about massive casualties and result in a ruined land. (Ishibashi: 1980, 88, 99-100, 102, 110, 134-37). Magosaki also mentions that Japan's military are useless against Chinese or Russian military. Even though Japan could have nuclear weapons, she would not have deterrent against these countries since Japan is too small to defend herself against a second nuclear strike. (Magosaki, 167-87)

If one replaces the Soviet Union with China, Ishibashi's argument is still effective. Nowadays, China is considered a potential enemy for Japan. In 2014, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe decided on the right to collective self-defense and reinterpreted Article 9 so that the SDF could help the United States Armed Forces. Abe tries to deter China with the exercise of the right to collective self-defense and intends to deal with China with military forces. However, Japan cannot rely on the United States which maintains a neutral policy over the sovereignty of the Senkaku Islands. Japan cannot rely on military forces either.

If deterrent fails and a war breaks out, Japan cannot win a war against China. The war with China would take place on the islands of Japan and it would take time for the United States military to come to help Japan if they ever come. In a mean time, the SDF should continue to fight for a couple of weeks. Therefore, one should anticipate that Japan would suffer from millions of casualties. Or in the worst scenario, the United States help might not come. In any case, for the first several weeks, the SDF should fight a war against China. In either case, Japan would suffer from tremendous casualties and cannot win.

It is better for the Japanese people to surrender to and be occupied by China without fighting rather than fighting and losing a war with millions of casualties and be occupied. It is not a wise policy for Japan to fight a war against an enemy which she cannot obviously win. The Japanese people learned a lesson at the end of World War II. It is better for the Japanese people to choose survival rather than honorable death. The Japanese people can enjoy human rights and democracy someday if they are alive. However, if they are dead, there is no meaning talking about human rights or democracy for them. Even though the Japanese people must live under the dictatorship of North Korea or the socialism under China, it is better than causing millions of casualties. The Japanese people could stand up and rebuild their own country someday if they are alive.

Ishibashi argues that in August 1945, the Japanese people surrendered to the United States and the Great Britain. They were taught by the Japanese Government that these countries were devils and demons. (Ishibashi, 109) Even if North Korea or China were devils and demons, it is better than death. The Japanese people could take a policy of non-violence and non-obedience advocated by Mohandas Gandhi against the occupiers. Resistance without military forces would also cause casualties, but the number of casualties would be fewer than the case of resistance with military forces. Many people including the Japanese people do not accept this idea since they think that surrender without fighting is defeatism. Facing attack of Nazi Germany, many people would agree to fight. However, in the 21st century, a war against a nuclear power is different from a war in the 20th century. Unlike the situation in the 20th century, a war is not accepted among the states even in North East Asia.

Ishibashi argues that a demilitarized and neutral policy is better than an alliance policy for the defense of Japan. A question is whether Japan should have military forces for her security and defense or whether Japan should take a neutral policy trying to keep good relations with all the countries for

her security and defense. Since Japan is surrounded by the seas, there is little possibility that Japan would be invaded by a foreign country unless Japan herself causes a conflict. In the past, a war took place when Japan invaded a foreign country. As of 1980, there is little reason that invites foreign invasion except for the Security Treaty which provides USFJ and bases in Japan. Moreover, Japan has to import the most of the food and energy from overseas. Therefore, it is almost impossible for Japan to wage a war, Ishibashi continues. Ishibashi gives an example of Switzerland which has a neutral policy with military forces. He says that the main reason why Switzerland has not been invaded is not because she has military forces and shows the will to resist, but because Switzerland has diplomacy which tries to keep good relations with all the countries and because an international society supports such a Switzerland. (Ishibashi: 1980, 103-104, 107-108, and 116)

Ishibashi concludes that it is important for Japan to establish bilateral agreement or collective security which endorses Japan's demilitarized and neutral policy by all the neighboring countries including China, the Soviet Union, the United States, South Korea, and North Korea. (Ishibashi, 1980, 123) Although Ishibashi wrote his book in 1980, many of his arguments are still effective in the 21st century. As compared with the situation in the 1980s, today's situation in North East Asia is more suitable to realize his idea of a demilitarized and neutral policy in spite of the fact that North Korea and China are flexing their muscles. Japan cannot solve the issues such as territorial ones with military means. Only diplomacy works.

Daizaburo Yui criticizes the argument in Japan that regards Japan's military cooperation toward the United States as international contribution and tries to revise Article 9. Article 9 is the result of combination of thoughts between Kijuro Shidehara and Gen. MacArthur and a part of current of pacifism in the 1920s, he explains. Yui thinks that the major reason why the Japanese people have maintained Article 9 is because they shared the same feeling that they had had enough of the war. He suggests that the Japanese people should not give up mission in world history of pacifism in the 1920s. They should also have courage to say "No" to the United States rejecting military contribution. Yui argues that Japan should make use of the East Asian Community to enhance Japan's position toward the United States. (Yui: 2007, 346-49) Yui is concerned about recent trend in Japan which is heading toward a state that can carry out a war. The younger generation does not have the same strong feeling as the older generation had. Many Japanese people had the feeling at that time that Japan should never fight a war again. Many Japanese including young ones, however, now think that Article 9 is out of date in today's world and therefore, it should be revised.

Conclusion

Japan has been relying on the United States since 1952 when Japan regained her independence. The bureaucrats of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the politicians of the LDP give the national interests of the United States priority over those of Japan. In order to do so, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs almost always thinks that keeping good relations with the United States is Japan's national interests. Therefore, it is important for the Japanese Government not to antagonize the United States. However, the United States ruined Japan's national interests in the past. For example, Japan had to give up the right for oil drilling in Azadegan oil field in Iran in the 2000s. Instead, China got its right.

The paper discussed territorial issues such as the Northern Territories, Takeshima, and the

Senkaku Islands. It is important to realize that Japan should not stick to these issues at the expense of trade, peace, and security. After all, Japan became the second or the third largest economic power in the world without territories discussed in the paper. Clinging to these islands is an idea of the 19th or the 20th centuries. In order for Japan to gain security and defense without military forces, it is very important to give up some minor territories.

Japan should not increase the SDF or rely on the Security Treaty to deal with the territorial problem. Antagonizing China with the increase of the defense budget and reinforcement of the SDF is not a wise policy for Japan. If Japan increases the SDF and her defense budget, China would also increase her military and defense budget. Japan cannot win competition for the military buildup with China. Instead, I support the idea of the East Asian Community which aims at keeping good relations with all the countries promoting trade, peace, and security in the region since the Japanese people cannot defend her country with military forces. Only diplomacy can promote Japan's defense and security. Many Japanese people think that USFJ defends Japan. However, it is the SDF that currently defends Japan. It is clearly written in the Guidelines for United States-Japan Defense Cooperation. For the meantime, Japan would keep the SDF since it is not realistic for her to abrogate the SDF now.

Many people argue that USFJ deters China or North Korea from attacking Japan. However, Japan has more than fifty nuclear plants and USFJ cannot defend them. USFJ cannot defend Japan against Chinese or North Korean missile attacks. The Marine Corps Troops in Okinawa are useless against missile attacks from North Korea or China. Patriot-3 or AEGIS defense system cannot shoot down incoming missiles from these countries. Most Japanese people and properties would be perished after the first nuclear strike. Therefore, it is useless even if the United States retaliated against the country which attacked Japan with missiles or nuclear weapons. USFJ and the Security Treaty can only work as deterrent, and deterrent is very vague and vulnerable. Once deterrent is broken, that is the end of Japan. Japan cannot survive against nuclear attacks or even missile attacks due to the size of the country.

North Korea can easily attack Japan without even using missiles or nuclear weapons. North Korea could send to Japan from Hokkaido to Kyushu a couple of hundred special troops with two or three men in each small boat in Japan Sea. Special troops look exactly like the Japanese and speak perfect Japanese. They could simply destroy a couple of nuclear plants and Japan would be covered with nuclear radiation. Nuclear plants in Japan are very vulnerable to such attacks and their security is not tight. Political and economic functions would be paralyzed. In this way, North Korea could easily destroy Japan without a single missile or nuclear weapon. If one looks at energy policy from the viewpoint of security, Japan should give up nuclear energy and switch to wind, solar, and geothermal power. Having more than fifty nuclear plants, Japan is very vulnerable to missile attacks or terrorist attacks which USFJ cannot defend.

Therefore, Japan should terminate the Security Treaty, let USFJ go home, and abolish Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). In this way, Japan including Okinawa could become an independent country. Okinawa had been an American colony from 1945 to 1972. Even after Okinawa was reverted to Japan, 74% of the areas of the United States military bases in Japan are still located in Okinawa. There are many problems such as crimes, accidents, and environmental destruction due to USFJ. In other words, Okinawa is still an American colony.

Japan should also reduce the SDF and eventually convert it into disaster relief troops. Japan's

Coast Guard and police forces would deal with terrorist attacks and territorial violation. It is because it is almost impossible to think that there would be a war among the states in North East Asia in the 21st century. If Japan is threatened or attacked, she could rely on the United Nations or the international public opinions rather than the Security Treaty and USFJ. Diplomacy is the only policy to save Japan. The Japanese people should remember that Japan accepted the Potsdam Declaration which required Japan to have no armed forces and endorsed Article 9 of the Constitution saying that “we have determined to preserve our security and existence, trusting in the justice and faith of the peace-loving peoples of the world.”

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