

# JAPAN'S *FUKOKU KYOHEI*: A CONTINUOUS PURSUIT OF ECONOMIC AND MILITARY POWERS

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## ABSTRACT

This research presents the roots of modern Japan, specifically the challenges it encountered which paved way to the pursuit of the slogan *fukoku kyohei*– “Rich Country, Strong Army”. Through archival and historical analysis, it highlights Japan’s modern and contemporary history since the Tokugawa and Meiji eras until the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It likewise delves into the internal and external factors or pressures Japan has faced since the 19<sup>th</sup> century which are relevant to the realization of *fukoku kyohei*. It provides insights on Japan’s domestic politics as well as its relations with other countries, particularly the United States, Russia, China, and Korea. It analyzes the correlation between *fukoku* and *kyohei* or economic and military power, which are essential factors in assessing a nation’s might. The study contends that *fukoku* is continuously being pursued in Post-War Japan until the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, when it comes to *kyohei* and contemporary global events related to peace and security, it points out Japan’s persisting dilemma of whether or not to amend Article IX of the “Peace Constitution”, which denies its right to declare war and forbade the establishment of a large army or navy.

**Keywords:** *fukoku kyohei*, modernization, militarization, security, economy, international relations

## INTRODUCTION

There are exceptional catchphrases in national histories designed to mobilize and transform society such as the ideals of “*liberty, equality and fraternity*” of the French Revolution, promises of “*bread, peace and land*” for the Russian peasantry, and calls for freedom from “*taxation without representation*” by the Americans. In Japan, the phrase *fukoku kyohei* – “Enrich the country, Strengthen the military” or “Rich Country, Strong Army” – became the slogan of

the Meiji government (Samuels, 1994, p.34-35). It was meant to strengthen Japan's economic and industrial foundations, so that a strong military could be built to defend Japan against outside powers. This was a response by the reformers who rallied around the Meiji Emperor when confronted by the threat of Western imperialism during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was used to catch up with the West in order to avoid being overrun by it.

The fruits of *fukoku kyohei* can be gleaned from the following events: Japan defeated China in 1894, and became the first Asian state to defeat a European power when it overpowered Russia in 1904; the advantages it gained in the Versailles and Washington Disarmament Conferences and its boldness when it attacked Pearl Harbor. However, Japan's ultra-nationalism as manifested in its intense militarism during the Second World War, led to disastrous consequences for Japan and the region as a whole, thus, most of the Japanese public found acceptable Article IX of the Japanese Constitution that renounces war as a national policy. By mid-1970s, a growing number of people believed that Japan's military and diplomatic roles should reflect its rapidly growing economic strength. In November 1982, the Self Defense Force Agency was under strong pressure from the United States and other Western nations to move toward a more assertive defense policy in line with Japan's status as a major world economic and political power.

With the complexities of the challenges the said nation faced at the turn of the 21st century, there has been a need for Japan to remake itself just like during the Meiji Restoration and after World War II when revolutionary changes had to be undertaken. In his article, *Japan at the Crossroads*, Gerald Curtis discussed how the major pillars that support Japan's post-war system (e.g., public consensus on national goals, presence of large integrative interest groups, high-prestige bureaucracy and one-party dominance) have weakened or crumbled. He also noted the bursting of the so-called bubble economy in the early 1990s, the stagnant economic growth, the near collapse of its banking system, and the pressures from an uneasy electorate and from worried Asian neighbors and the U.S.

In the light of the aforementioned Post-war events, including Japan's virtual bankruptcy during the collapse of the American and Western European economies, as well as contemporary global issues on peace and security, the following questions are posed: Has Japan's *fukoku kyohei* persisted during the

Post-World War II era up to the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Is the said slogan, specifically *kyohei*, being followed by Japan despite Article IX of its "Peace Constitution", which includes a "No War Clause" that denies Japan the right to declare war and to maintain a large army, navy or other war potential?

Through archival research and historical analysis, the roots of modern Japan are presented, specifically the challenges it encountered which paved way to the pursuit of *fukoku kyohei*. The research is seen in the context of a mutually supporting relationship - the economic foundations of military power and the military foundations of economic power. Such framework echoes the views of Adam Smith, a classical theorist, who asserted that "because the military is expensive to maintain, only an otherwise rich and productive nation could defend itself in modern times" (Ibid, p.5). Friedrich List, a 19<sup>th</sup> century German-American economist, also opined that strong armies and national survival depend on national wealth. Their views are similar to the contention of Japanese intellectuals like Takashima Shuhan, a Japanese samurai and military engineer who posited that modern artillery was essential to protect Japan and international trade must be promoted to generate the wealth necessary for arms manufacture and national defense. Dazai Shundai, an important Confucian scholar and economist opined that national wealth (*fukoku*) is the basis of national strength (*kyohei*). Furthermore, Sakuma Shozan, a prominent royalist and internationalist who introduced the idea of combining foreign technology with Japanese values stressed that "only international trade could provide Japan access to the technology and resources to become a military power" (cited in Samuels, 1994, p.36). A Japanese bureaucrat, likewise declared in 1922 that "the degree of development of a nation's military industry not only tells the strength of its military preparations, but also serves as an indicator of the progress of its general industry and its economic status..." (Ibid, p.34)

## MEANING AND ROOTS OF FUKOKU KYOHEI

*Fukoku kyōhei* , the foundation of modern Japan's modernization and militarization, first appeared in the writings of Shang Yan, a political leader and philosopher of the Qin Dynasty (338 BCE). The phrase comes from four Chinese characters: rich (*fu*) nation (*koku*) strong (*kyo*) and army (*hei*) (Ibid, p.35). It was Japan's national slogan during the Meiji Era which directed the course of the nation for decades to come. It is related to two other national ideas that emerged

after the opening of Japan: *Sonno Joi*, which means “Revere the Emperor, Expel the Barbarian”, and the idea of *Bunmei kaika* or “Civilization and Enlightenment”. The foremost proponent of the former slogan was Yoshida Shoin who wanted to revive Japanese history and keep their traditional values. Likewise, he recognized the notion that Japan could not become powerful nor defeat the West without Western technology. Japanese leaders who were for *Bunmei kaika*, like Yamagata Aritomo, the founding father of the Japanese army, believed that while keeping their traditional values, change was good for Japan which could be powerful with modernization and knowledge from more advanced nations. Said idea spread and led to the *fukoku kyohei* ideology (Murthy, 1973; Beasley, 1995; McClain, 2002).

*Fukoku kyohei* necessitated the formulation of far-reaching policies to transform Japanese society in an all out effort to catch up with the West. Originating from the Iwakura Mission to Europe, the phrase demonstrated national objectives, and the nature of international politics. Both Okubo Toshimichi and Ito Hirobumi who heeded the advice of German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck convinced the Meiji leaders of the need for a militarily and economically strong Japan and nationalism in order to preserve its independence.

Japan started its modernization and rose to world power during the Meiji era that ended in 1868 the 265-year-old feudalistic Tokugawa shogunate, which is also known for its seclusion policy that expelled foreigners, outlawed Christianity and controlled trade. To understand the dynamism of the Meiji years, one must begin with the factors in the Tokugawa era (1600–1868) which allowed Japan to move smoothly toward modernization: First, the emergence of wealthy merchants, intelligent samurais and professionals eager for new knowledge and political participation due to the stable development of agriculture, commerce and handicraft industries backed by effective transport and communication infrastructure (Banno & Ohno, 2010, p.35). Second, achievements in education-Nativism (*kokugaku*) and the Mito School which examined the unique aspects of Japanese culture and promoted the importance of the emperor as the symbol of unification and the "Dutch studies" (*rangaku*) which exposed the Japanese to Western technology and ideas, activated nationalism and facilitated the transition of Japan to a modern country in the Meiji period (Gordon, 2000; McClain, 2002).

*Fukoku*, equated with maximum prosperity and *kyohei*, associated with maximum security, became the focus of political struggle during the final years of

the Shogunate, with emphasis on its mercantile and military components. The young oligarchs, former samurais and nobles of the clans, supported by the merchants of Osaka and Kyoto, embraced the slogans *fukoku kyohei* and *kuni no tame* (“for the sake of the country”), a commitment to national strength, regardless of what customs or ideologies had to be violated in pursuit of that goal (Huffman, 2008).<sup>1</sup>

## TOWARDS MODERNIZATION AND MILITARIZATION

### A. On the Way to “Maximum Prosperity”

When the Meiji emperor was restored as Japan’s head in 1868, the nation was controlled by hundreds of semi-independent feudal lords, was a militarily weak country, primarily agricultural, had little technological development and forced by the Western powers to sign unequal treaties. Having experienced the pressure of Western imperialism, Japan immediately embarked on modernization or the transformation of a traditional and feudal society into a progressive and modern one, in order to fight foreign encroachment or aggression and to achieve recognition and equality with Western nations. The Meiji Restoration can also be called Westernization for Japan learned from the West; it borrowed what it could borrow as it changed its institutions along the lines of the models provided by powerful Western nations. For example, the limited constitutionalism was patterned after the Prussian/German model, the whole civil service system was re-organized on the German model, British and North American forms of free enterprise capitalism were adopted, the Japanese navy was based on the British model while the army followed the German model. Besides the study of foreign military systems, Japan’s modernization was hastened by the employment of over 3,000 foreign experts (called *o-yatoi gaikokujin* or 'hired foreigners') in various field of specialization such as teaching English, science, engineering, the army and navy etc.; and the dispatch of many Japanese students overseas to Europe and America, based on the fifth and last article of the Charter Oath of 1868:

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<sup>1</sup> The emperor was 14 year old Mutsuhito while the major samurai power-holders from Satsuma and Choshu domains ranged in age from the upper 20s to 40s unbound by the networks and mores of traditional leadership; they developed policies without the restraints of ideology or custom—or of any overriding vision of where Japan should go.

*'Knowledge shall be sought throughout the world so as to strengthen the foundations of Imperial rule'* (Fairbank, Reischauer & Craig, 1978, pp.503-4).

The Meiji leaders responded to the Western challenge by creating a civic ideology centered on the emperor and geared towards the attainment of *fukoku kyohei*. They sought to create a nation-state capable of standing equal among Western powers. In fact, as another slogan *oitsuke, oikose* ("Catch up, Overtake") suggested, they even wanted to outdo their models. The following were specific motives and measures undertaken by the Meiji leaders to attain economic modernization:

1. Defense against foreign threat - establishment of military-strategic industries, shipbuilding yards, gunpowder and munition factories, and artillery works
2. Economic independence from western economic imperialist - development not only of heavy industries but also light industries (textiles and clothing) and manufactured domestic products or consumer goods (e.g., silk, glass, chemicals, cement works, cotton, and sugar) which could compete with foreign goods and reverse the unfavorable balance of trade; importation of needed raw materials and machinery for industrialization.
3. Creation of employment opportunities for the people, especially for the discontented and jobless former samurai - establishment of major corporate conglomerates called *zaibatsu*, which controlled much of Japan's modern industrial sector (e.g. Mitsui, the Mitsubishi, the Sumitomo and the Yasuda).
4. Improvement of the economic conditions of the peasants - pacification of rural discontent when incomes of farmers were raised with new lands opened and farming methods utilized.
5. Increase of government's income- agricultural taxation and economic reforms which included a unified modern currency based on the yen, banking, commercial and tax laws, stock exchanges, and a communications network. (Lehman, 1982; Fairbank, Reischauer & Craig, 1978; Asia for Educators, 2002)

After the first twenty years of the Meiji period, the industrial economy rapidly expanded until about 1920 with inputs of advanced Western technology

and large private investments. Stimulated by wars and through careful economic planning, Japan emerged from World War I as a major industrial nation.

### **B. On the Way to “Maximum Security”**

Military modernization was carried out in the early 1870s to defend Japan against any possible foreign military threats and any domestic rebellions or disorder. A primary goal underlying the entire Meiji movement was to match the Western military and naval power, which had humiliated the Shogunate. Japan's long militarist tradition made it easier for the people to accept military reforms and for the government to carry them out. An Imperial Guard was formed, when a few western clans put their troops under the direct command of the Emperor. In place of the samurai class, a massive national army was created by drafting conscripted (mostly peasant) troops. Modern western weaponry was purchased, and the Japanese leaders also sought to gain the technical ability to produce such weaponry. Japan's modern army reflected Prussian/German discipline and structure. Based on the 1873 Conscription Law, all Japanese males over 23 years old were required to serve a 7-year military service in the regular army, with 4 more years in the reserve. The spirit of the bushido was reintroduced to the troops. The army became a stronghold of authoritarian and militarist traditions.

In 1872, a Navy Ministry was formed. Japan borrowed heavily from Britain's naval technology, organization, and naval system of chain of command. By 1894, the fleet already had 28 modern ships, together with many torpedo boats and dockyard facilities were also modernized (Levin, Moline, & Redhead, 2007). Within the space of about 30 years, Japan had created a modern land and naval force which strengthened the Meiji state, brought indirect gains to industries and other business undertakings, and through conscription, political consciousness increased as the Japanese were drawn out of their village to come in contact with urban life.

The enrichment of Japan eventually led to a stronger military force. With combined traditional spirit and imperial nationalism, Japan's modern military was eager to prove that it was the equal of any European nation by success in war and the acquisition of an empire. She defeated China in 1895, and Russia in 1905, and thereafter, Korea became a Japanese protectorate. Success in competing with the European powers in East Asia reinforced the idea that Japan could, and should, further expand its influence on the Asian mainland by military force. In 1914, Japan declared war on Germany, and acquired more lands through the Versailles and Washington Disarmament Treaties- proofs of the realization of fukoku kyohei.

Apparently, Japan was prosperous enough to finance a series of wars and had a strong military machine that could engage in expansionist and imperialist actions.

Despite her lack of natural resources (oil, iron, coal) and the continual rejection of her expansionist attempts by the West, Japan pursued an aggressive military campaign throughout Asia, and in 1941, bombed Pearl Harbor. Indeed, the results of Japan's rapid modernization turned the nation into a regional, and then, as a world economic and military power.

#### FUKOKU: ALIVE IN POST WAR JAPAN

Japan's defeat in the Second World War led to much loss of lives, disastrous atomic bombing, cession of conquered territories, destruction of industrial infrastructure, dismantle of the militarist complex, execution of military leaders as war criminals, humanization of the emperor, and the occupation of the vanquished nation by the Allied powers led by the United States. With a quarter of Japan's buildings in ashes and the economy in desperate state (GDP was only one-third of its prewar level), the occupation authorities embraced economic democratization as their primary policy. Land reform was introduced and the *zaibatsu* was initially broken up and later reintegrated during the late '50s. The groups of affiliated companies were now called *keiretsu*, and banks, rather than rich families, stood at their core.

Deprived of its war machine, Japan devoted its energies to the economic arena. With the rise of the Cold War, a new priority known as the *reverse course* was adopted to make Japan into a strong ally of the United States. The latter poured \$2 billion into the Japanese economy, provided financial assistance and opened its markets to Japanese goods in order to promote economic growth. With the outbreak of the Korean War, US aid was very helpful to the rebuilding of the economy, and so too were procurements from the Korean War of 1950–53, which created a huge demand for Japanese goods. Hence, economic recovery burst to 12 % growth per year from 1950 to 1952, the year when the U.S. occupation of Japan ended and Japan regained its sovereignty. In 1956 Japan was the largest shipbuilder and car manufacturer in the world (Mayer, 2012). From 1955 until the

oil crisis of 1973, Japan's GDP annually grew an average of 9% (Ndiath, 2011; see also Greenhouse, 1990).<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, it was achieved through close cooperation between a stable government and well-organized industry, and a sincere nationwide determination to become 'Number One'. The 1970 living standards had tripled. By late 1980s some Japanese companies had more wealth than many nations' entire GNP. Japan became renowned for its high-quality steel, ships, cars, refrigerators, color televisions, petrochemicals, and air conditioners, instead of easily broken toys and "dollar blouses" (Katz, 1998; see also Hunsberger, 1997). Despite economic setbacks of the '70s and '80s, Japan's growth rate was the highest of the major industrialized countries. It consistently ran huge trade surpluses, became the world's largest creditor while the United States was becoming a debtor nation. Japan's financial and banking industries grew at unprecedented rates; the international assets of Japanese banks were estimated to be more than two and a half times as large as the U.S. banks (Terrell, Dohner & Lowrey, 1989). During the '80s, Japan became a financial center, the world's largest stock exchange and a world leader in technological research and production. Imports and exports totaled the equivalent of US\$ 4S2 billion in 1988.

Having grown beyond a sustainable base, Japan's so-called 'Bubble Economy' burst from within in the early '90s. Though it remained an economic superpower, with the world's second largest gross national product, there were severe consequences such as a 10-year recession, an almost zero growth, increased unemployment, and drop of land prices. The economy started to recover from around 2002, partially due to increased demand from China. Although exports drove an economic recovery in the mid-2000s, Japan faced another recession as exports plunged, especially exports of cars (Toyota posted their first loss ever), in response to the financial crisis of 2008 (Taniuchi, 2014).

Moreover, in March 2011, Japan experienced a "triple disaster" which is referred to as its "most dramatic crisis since World War II" and "the most expensive disaster in human history". The mega-earthquake, tsunami and

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<sup>2</sup> In response to the oil shocks of 1973 and 1979, Japan conserved on energy. It also shifted much of its manufacturing from resource-intensive products such as steel to more capital-intensive and knowledge-intensive products such as cars, consumer electronics, and computer chips.

nuclear crises caused \$360 billion in economic losses and inflicted a massive toll not only on Japan but also on many other countries. As a consequence of 3/11, Japan experienced a trade deficit of \$78 billion in 2012 (Ferris & Solís, 2013; Kaufmann & Penciakova, 2013).

In December 2012, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who also led the country from 2006-2007 announced a plan known by the moniker “Abenomics” to revive the sluggish Japanese economy, increase Japan’s global competitiveness and reduce the costs on the working population. This three-pronged economic stimulus policy combines fiscal stimulus, monetary expansion, and structural reform (McBride & Xu, 2013). The ultimate objective of Abenomics is not merely economic but to restore Japan’s geopolitical influence which is essential in counterbalancing China’s power in Asia and the world. Abe and his people re-invoke the Meiji slogan *fokoku kyohei* – only a wealthy Japan can defend itself and be able to meet China’s challenge (The Economist, 2013).

Its fate is still unclear. Nonetheless, Japan’s economic track record from the Meiji Restoration until the Post-War era shows Japan’s remarkable ability to rebuild its economy despite seemingly insurmountable odds, how its people have properly channeled their energies in continuous pursuit of *fukoku*, and taking pride in it.

#### POST WAR KYOHEI: A DILEMMA

Besides democratization, a period of demilitarization was also implemented after World War II by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) under the direction of General Douglas MacArthur. Japan's Army and Navy Ministries were abolished, munitions and military equipment were destroyed, and war industries were dismantled and converted to civilian uses. On May 1947, the New Japanese constitution came into force, which reintroduced Western-style liberalism, the emergence of a stable parliamentary system and the controversial Article IX, a very significant deterrent to the growth of Japan’s military capabilities. The first paragraph of its "No War Clause", states that “the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes”. The second is that "land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained” (Hikotani, 2009).

Japan signed three major defense treaties with the United States: 1) 1951 Peace Treaty of San Francisco, enabled Japan to maintain its peace constitution,

to keep defense spending at about 1% of Gross Domestic and to allow the U.S. troops to remain indefinitely, even permitting their use against domestic disturbances; 2) Mutual Security Assistance Pact of 1954 involved a military aid program that provided for Japan's acquisition of funds, material, and services for the nation's essential defense, and for the United States forces stationed in Japan to deal with external aggression against Japan while Japanese forces, both ground and maritime, to handle internal threats and natural disasters (Kapoor, 2008); and 3) Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security of 1960 underlined the U.S. and Japan's common concern in the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far-East, included general provisions on the further development of international future economic cooperation, and renewed the United States role as military protector of Japan.

To prevent a semblance of a revival of militarism, Japan's leaders underscored the constitutional guarantees of civilian control of the government and armed forces. It used nonmilitary terms for the organization and functions of the forces. Tanks were called "special vehicles", and instead of the army, navy, and air force, the armed forces were designated the Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF), the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF), and the Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF). The Japan Self-Defense Forces, JSDF or SDF, is an all-volunteer force; law forbade conscription. By 1992, it had a total strength of 250,000 with a total of 46,000 reservists attached to the three services, a ratio of military personnel to its population lower than those in any member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (Wilborn, 1994; see also GlobalSecurity.com).

Prohibited from possessing nuclear weapons or other offensive arms, for the most part of the post-war period, JSDF was usually confined to the islands of Japan and not permitted to be deployed abroad<sup>3</sup> although, it has been engaged in international peacekeeping operations.

Contemporary global events related to peace and security, external threats or pressures on Japan, and Japanese internal sentiments or national interests have raised the dilemma of whether or not to amend Article IX of the "Peace

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<sup>3</sup> Twenty-five years after the atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japan signed on 3 February 1970, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Constitution”. Arguments for and against rearmament, remilitarization or “normal militarization” have been brought up.

### External Challenges

The following are the foremost countries which have a great influence on Post-War Japan’s kyohei:

**USA** – The United States and Japan have been allies since 1951, and has survived many changes in history, including postwar reconstruction. Said alliance is considered to be one of the main pillars of Japan’s security policy. The United States provided the defense and deterrence to protect Japan, and Japan provided bases for US forces especially during the Cold War when the primary interest of the United States was the containment of the Soviet Union. Gained from the alliance with the US were technology transfers (including military), economic and defense assistance and external political support for some level of rearmament. According to Mike Rogers (2006), the US security umbrella that has covered Japan in six decades often hampers relations between Japan and her neighbors who complain that Japan accedes to the USA’s every wish and whim; that it is at the beck and call of the American Empire.

Ironically, the United States, which imposed the Peace Constitution, has long been pressuring Japan to take a more assertive military posture, to take greater responsibility for its own defense as well as an expanded regional and global security role. By the second half of the 1990s, The United States regarded the US–Japan alliance not only in terms of the defense of Japan but also as key to the stability of the Asia-Pacific region. Pressures from Washington have likewise increased since the September 11 attacks. Japan signed the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law of 2001, which permitted the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) to provide logistical support to the United States and other countries conducting counter-terrorism activities in the Indian Ocean. The United States put pressure on Japan to contribute assistance to the UN-backed coalition forces. Despite spending \$12 billion dollars to assist in the Persian Gulf War, its monetary contributions were disparagingly labeled as “checkbook diplomacy”, and the United States criticized Japanese support for the war effort as “too little, too late” (Tanaka, 2007). Japan’s reluctance to send troops in 1991 disappointed U.S. leaders, and led to greater pressure from Washington for proactive defense policies. The Armitage-Nye Report I of 2000 mentioned that Japan’s prohibition against

collective self-defense is a constraint on alliance cooperation (Chanlett-Avery, 2008; Nishihara, 2007; Martin, 2007).<sup>4</sup>

As reactions to the increased demands from Washington, a joint declaration on security and new defense cooperation guidelines were passed, along with increased focus on joint development of missile defense. Besides providing guarding operations and international disaster relief, Japan also signed in 2003, the Armed Attack Situation Response Law and the Special Law for Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance. There were objections to the financial strain on Japan by the reorganization of 50,000 US troops in Japan, the shift of 8,000 marines from Okinawa to Guam in 2014 and the building of new facilities and infrastructure in the said U.S. territory. Furthermore, the credibility of the US as a protector of Japan has been corroded by “continuing economic friction, political Japan bashing, and cutbacks in American military power” (Halloran, 1995).

**RUSSIA** – Japan’s relations with the Soviet Union continued to be problematic long after the Second World War. Japan was led to develop a program to modernize and improve the SDF in the 1980s due to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and its buildup of military forces in the Far East as SS-20 ballistic missiles were deployed to the Siberian far east and the Russians closed on nuclear parity with the United States. Also, there has been a dispute over the Soviet occupation of what Japan calls its Northern Territories, the two most southerly islands in the Kurils (Etorofu and Kunashiri) and Shikotan and the Habomai Islands (northeast of Hokkaido), which were seized by the Soviet Union after Japan’s surrender. Japanese are also concerned about the Soviet atomic arsenal, the sale by former Soviet republics of modern weapons to other nations, especially China. Russia is likewise perceived to have a brigade of troops supported by helicopters and MiG-23 fighters stationed on the larger two islands of Kunashiri and Etorofu.

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<sup>4</sup> Collective self-defense is authorized, along with individual self-defense, by Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. Put simply, if a country in the international system has suffered an armed attack, then any other country has the right, but not the duty, to use armed force against the aggressor in reliance upon the principle of collective self-defense Japan asserts that “Although Japan possesses the right to collective self-defense, it cannot exercise it.”

**CHINA** – China has been integrating its civilian and military infrastructure. It is the only Asian nation with strategic nuclear forces, and maintains the world’s largest military of 3.2 million troops, thus in a position to affect a major change in the strategic environment in the region.

The Japanese Annual Defense White Papers dating from the late 1990s, expressed concern about Beijing’s increased military spending, which was twice as much as Japan’s defense budget in 2005. China’s missile and naval developments as well as its shopping spree for advanced weapons system are threats for Japan. Among the recent additions to China’s arsenal are seventy-two Russian SU-27 fighters.<sup>5</sup> Taiwan has also launched its own arms build-up to match its Chinese counterpart. Furthermore, Tokyo reacts strongly to intrusions into its territorial waters by Chinese maritime survey ships and China’s claim to Japan’s Senkaku Islands.

**KOREA** – Due to North Korea’s threat, Japanese defense planners have gradually strengthened Japan’s conventional military capabilities, especially its ballistic missile defenses, and expanding air and sea forces with high technology to enable long-range warfare. The Korean peninsula with its 1.8 million troops deployed along the 155- mile long Demilitarized Zone is deemed as the most ominous security problem in Northeast Asia. A nuclear-tipped missile fired from North Korea could reach Tokyo in less than 10 minutes. North Korean missile splashed down in the Sea of Japan in May 1993. A longer-range missile passed over Japanese airspace in August 1998, and the Taepodong-2, crashed in the Sea of Japan in July 2006. North Korea has issued warnings that any attempt of Japan to shoot down its satellite would be reason for their attack (BBC, 2009; Shanker & Sang-Hun, 2009).<sup>6</sup> There have been reports of North Korea having a number of agents planted in Japan some of them in sleeper cells that have been trained to carry out sabotage or terrorist activities. Adding to this fear, Japan’s regional

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<sup>5</sup> China’s surface fleet presently comprises 64 vessels including 21 destroyers and 43 frigates, while its underwater fleet consists of 57 vessels including 51 diesel submarines and six nuclear powered attack submarines. China now has the world’s third largest shipbuilding industry.

<sup>6</sup> Japan has dispatched three Aegis destroyers, two of them fitted with ballistic missile interceptors, to waters around its islands, as well as Patriot guided-missile units to select locations in the country.

neighbors sustain bitterness because Japan has on many occasions ignored their militaristic history and have not recognized nor apologized for its wrongdoings.

Japan is also affected by the security situation on the Korean peninsula that has been heavily influenced by South-North Korea relations, U.S.-North relations, and ROK-U.S. relations. The military of the Republic of Korea has expanded accordingly with its economic growth. It has one of the highest defense budgets in the world, in the top fifteen as of 2008. It has many sophisticated American and European weapon systems and has taken advantage of the local shipbuilding industry (Hellmann, 1972; See also GlobalSecurity.org).

### Conflicting Domestic Sentiments

Not only the aforementioned external pressures and foreign threats have influenced Japan's policymakers in its military decisions, but also public opinion and nationalist sentiments of the Japanese. For more than 60 years, following its devastation in World War II, Japan has manifested intense fear of militarism and hatred of war. Succeeding generations have lived with the notion that never again will their country be a cause of war, and have expressed approval with the existing security arrangement- a combination of the US security guarantee and the Japanese Self-Defense Force. Since 1964, there have been ongoing debates among the government bureaucracy, political parties, the big-business community, and the relatively voiceless masses on whether there is a need to amend the Constitution and its Article IX. Opinions are mixed, with some Japanese supporting remilitarization, while others are only for a broader role of the SDF in the global community. The right-wing Japanese politicians have objected to Japan's "Peace Constitution", seeing it as an imposition by the Allied powers, hence they would like a more independent role for Japan's military. The left-wing politicians, on the other hand, are also opposed to increase military cooperation with an aggressive US, for they see it as an abandonment of Japan's pacifist policies (Kernacs, 2004).

In a published research entitled *The Japanese Self-Defense Force: Its Role and Mission in The Post-Cold War Period*, the Japanese philosophies or thoughts are categorized into "mainstream," "nationalist," and "pacifist. The "mainstreamers" come from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), the Defense Agency (DA), the SDF, and the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. Negating the historic perception of Japan as an aggressor and preventing the possibility of remilitarization, they support the maintenance of the US-Japan Security Agreement, the retention of U.S. forces and security umbrella in Japan, plus the

accompanying financial burden of the alliances. They are for the reinterpretation of the Constitution as an “active” form of pacifism consistent with Japan's use of force in international peacekeeping operations (Songjaroen, 1995; Hellmann, 1972).

Although they are not affiliated with any significant institutional foundations, the “nationalists” are spread throughout the Japanese society and gaining momentum. They believe that Japan should revise its constitution and be able to defend itself without relying on the Americans. Without clearly spelling out what Japan’s defense posture should be, they propose that Japan withdraws from the US-Japan Security Alliance or insists on equal partnership. They object to Japan’s “checkbook diplomacy” or financial contributions to war, just to gain international respect. In fact, they consider as foolish Japan’s blind submission to pay \$13 billion for the Gulf War; they deemed that their military troops should have gone into combat with the UN forces. While the “pacifists”, largely from within the academic community and the Socialist Democratic Party of Japan (SDPJ), are for the termination of Japan’s security agreement with the US and support the United Nations as a global nonmilitary force for peace. Instead of sending troops for combat, they believe that Japan has to remain a peaceful power and erase her image of a future military threat, particularly among her neighbors (Songjaroen, 1995).

A democratic divide between the postwar generation and the more nationalistic younger generations is pointed out by both Miller and Krauss who think that the Japanese in their twenties and thirties ask these questions more than the older generation: “Why shouldn't we be like any other country and have a military? Why shouldn't we have peacekeeping forces?” These are in line with the arguments for remilitarization or military “normalization”, a term used by many proponents (Teslik, 2006). For former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, revising Article IX would make Japan a “normal country” that can share responsibilities and cooperate with the world. The “neo-autonomists” prefer that Japan maintain a great distance from the US and build an independent military that could use force. The “normal nationalists,” contend that “every normal country has a military”, and “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 and to be treated also as an equal by her Pacific neighbors” (Samuels, 2007, p.129). The “normal nationalists” seek to equalize the

alliance to build an even better military shield. Their idea that Japan should become normal is associated with the wish that Japan becomes a great power again (Ibid).

In 2014, faced by changes in the Asian balance of power and threats of terrorism and nuclear proliferation, Minister for Foreign Affairs Fumio Kishida (2016), justified Japan's assumption of greater responsibility in promoting "peace and safety" in its region and the world. Prime Minister Abe and his ruling party also called for a hike in the military budget and the amendment of Article XI. He submitted two bills to expand the legal scope of the SDF's overseas operations – to use the right of collective self-defense or the right to attack a third party that has assaulted an ally if three conditions are met: Japan's survival is threatened, there is no alternative, and the use of force is kept to "the minimum necessary" (Yoshida & Aoki, 2015). Based on the Asahi Shimbun's 2015 survey, only 29% of the Japanese supported the proposals; Abe's security reforms even incited protests.

#### PERSISTING SLOGAN: ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

No doubt the catchphrase "Rich Country" or *fukoku* has persevered even in Post-War Japan as attested by its remarkable recovery from war and devastation, most especially by its "economic miracle". But what about *kyohei* or "Strong Army", the other half of the slogan?

In spite of demilitarization, demobilization, disarmament and dismantle of military equipment/facilities including 'military factories' that constituted the economic infrastructure of the garrison state, the ban on research/ development activities concerning war capability, and the reduction of the army into a Self-Defense Force, *kyohei* was not really erased. Throughout its postwar reconstruction, Japan pursued the declared strategy of Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru (2007), "that Japan should naturally reinforce its defensive power, as the nation's economy recovered." While devoted in its pursuit of building the economy, the US has protected Japan, which in turn provided bases for US forces. Despite its "Peace Constitution", the US has long pressured Japan to take a more assertive military posture, not only for financial considerations but also in the light of regional and global threats. Secretary of State Colin Powell and Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage called on Japan to renounce Article IX because a nation that wishes to be a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council must be ready to deploy military forces in the interests of the international community. Even Powell's successor, Condoleezza Rice (cited in

Symonds, 2005) stated: “Japan has earned its honorable place among the nations of the world by its own effort and by its own character. That is why the United States unambiguously supports a permanent seat for Japan on the United Nations Security Council”.

Even with the prohibitions of Article IX, Japan has one of the strongest militaries in the world, with 240,000 personnel under arms. Its military expenditures for 2006 were \$43.7 billion, fifth largest in the world after the U.S., Britain, France, and China. In particular, rated high by experts for its sophistication is its formidable navy. Its air force is currently working with the United States to develop a Theatre Missile Defense system, and is also considering expanding its long-range precision missile technologies (Teslik, 2006). Although in 1976 it has ratified the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and has reiterated its intention never to “develop, use or allow the transportation of nuclear weapons through its territory,” Japan is generally considered to be “nuclear capable”. With its high technology level and large number of operating nuclear plants, it could develop a usable weapon in a short period of time (Klinger, 2008; Hellmann, 1972). According to Richard Halloran (1995), “Japan has the people, technology, industry, and funds to assemble an armed force of one million men and women equipped with modern conventional and nuclear weapons.” Moreover, Japan was the world’s fourth nation to launch a satellite into orbit (its first in 1970). It recognizes the need to develop space-based systems for military purposes. How could a country with a world-class technology that could transform into military equipment be not capable of sustaining kyohei?

A closer look at events will show that Article IX has not been strictly followed by Japan as attested by the sinking of a North Korean spy ship in Chinese waters done in 2001, and sending of troops to support the American-led campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. For the first time since 1945, although seen as controversial and unconstitutional, 600-strong non-combat contingent was deployed in 2004-2008 without UN cover to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq. Japanese forces have worked around the law by providing logistical and refueling support, sharing of intelligence and by extending humanitarian and economic assistance to nations on the frontline of the war on terrorism. It has earlier sent peacekeeping troops to Cambodia in 1992, later to Rwanda and the Golan Heights in Israel, to Mozambique in 1993 as well as in Nepal. In June 1992, the Diet passed a UN Peacekeeping Cooperation Law, which allowed the SDF to be involved in UN medical, refugee repatriation, logistical support, infrastructure reconstruction, election-monitoring, and policing operations under strictly limited conditions. In 2004 the Japanese military also sent ships and two hovercrafts loaded with trucks

and medical equipment and 970 personnel to Aceh Indonesia which was hit by a tsunami (Reuters, 2005). It engaged in the disposal of a large quantity of World War II explosive ordnance, especially in Okinawa, took part in Antarctic expeditions, and conducted aerial surveys to report on ice conditions and geographic formations. In the local scene, as per request of prefectural governors in 1984-98, the SDF assisted in approximately 3,100 disaster relief operations, involving about 138,000 personnel, 16,000 vehicles, 5,300 aircraft, and 120 ships and small crafts. To maintain harmonious relations with communities near defense bases, the SDF built new roads, irrigation networks and schools besides soundproofing homes and buildings near airfields (Hikotani, 2009).

Even if Japan has shed off its imperialistic image to one of peace keeping, it does not mean that the notion of a “Strong Army” has really been done away with. To heed the call of the times, armies of other nations are also engaged in nation building and civic action that enhance civil- military relations, and these are not signs of weakness. The strength of an army is not only measured in times of warfare. Moreover, what a nation lost in war could possibly be gained in peace, like in the economic arena.

Japan has been the second-largest financial contributor to, among others, the United Nations, the Asian Development Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. To the IMF alone, Japan pledged in March 2009, a \$100 billion loan. It has also provided billions of dollars through the world’s largest Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) to 42 developing countries. Japan also pledged billions in aid and loans to Iraq and promised to exonerate some of the debts that Iraq owed. It likewise pledged to pay the salaries of 80,000 Afghan police officers for six months to help stabilize security in Afghanistan and to build 200 schools and 100 hospitals (U.N. Security Council, 2009).

Japan’s economic superpower status and impressive economic diplomacy should not be belittled. It may be argued that issuing checks is not a substitute for security policy, nevertheless, it is definitely a sign of a country’s wealth and strong potential to build military capabilities.

In the late 19th century after a long period of national seclusion and at the end of World War II in 1945, Japan was able to rise from the humiliation and damage brought about by the West, and to attain a remarkable economic growth. In both cases, she framed a constitution - the Meiji Constitution of 1889 and the “Peace Constitution” of 1947 and has held on to the essence of the slogan *fukoku*

kyohei. With its economic foundations and military foundations mutually supporting each other, and by pursuing both economic and military reforms, Japan has experienced decades of prosperity and security. In the 21st century, she is again faced, by challenges and threats foremost of which are: a rising China, a hostile regime of North Korea, the possibility of abandonment by the United States, and the relative decline of the Japanese economy together with the global financial crisis. Japan's ability to deal successfully with these challenges cannot be underrated, more so the persistence or perseverance of their inspiring slogan that has mobilized, transformed, and enabled Japan to become a prominent economic and political player in the global arena. Indeed, from the opening of Japan to the West 155 years ago, up to the present, fukoku kyohei has served as a thread of continuity that has pulled together the Japanese people.

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