

# Japan's emerging role as a 'global ordinary power'

Takashi Inoguchi<sup>1</sup> and Paul Bacon<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>*Graduate School of Public Policy, Chuo University, Room 31221, 1.13.27, Kasuga Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 112-8551, Japan and* <sup>2</sup>*School of International Liberal Studies, Waseda University, 1-7-14-4F, Nishi-Waseda, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 169-0051, Japan.*  
*Email: inoguchi@ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp and pbacon@waseda.jp*

## Abstract

In this article we argue that since 1945 Japanese foreign policy has evolved through five phases, which will culminate in Japan's re-emergence as a global ordinary power. We then discuss three potential models of ordinary power that are ideal-typical in nature, but which share some qualities with the respective political circumstances of France, Germany, and Britain. We also consider the legitimacy and capacity deficits that Japan possesses, and the way in which recent electoral developments may contribute to the addressing of these deficits. We argue that Japan is using the British model as a foundation for the acquisition of ordinary power status. In doing so it is increasingly binding itself to the United States. But such a move can also provide a platform from which to develop the possibilities that lie beyond bilateralism (plus), in the realm of the German model, and wider regional cooperation.

## 1 The contours of Japanese foreign policy: adjusting every 15 years

Henry Kissinger has suggested that Japan is slow to respond to significant political developments. In the past, he argues, it has often taken some 15 years for Japan to respond decisively to a major political transformation (Kissinger, 2001, p. 123). He cites three examples: Commodore Perry's visit to Japan in 1853; the comprehensive defeat of Japan by the Allied Powers in 1945; and the collapse of the bubble economy in 1991. It took 15 years for the Japanese to put an end to internal debate and strife and start *de novo* in 1868. It took

15 years for the Japanese to firmly commit themselves to the United States, before they announced the income-doubling plan in 1960, and indicated that they would focus on wealth accumulation. It has taken roughly 15 years after the collapse of the bubble economy for the Japanese to decide how many employees to layoff and how to deal with bad loans. The Japanese economy started to pick up at long last towards the end of 2003. The substance of Kissinger's basic observation seems to ring true.

Bearing Kissinger's argument in mind, we first study the basic contours of Japanese foreign policy since 1945. Kissinger's argument is interesting and valuable, because it is often argued that post-war Japanese foreign policy has been unchanging. In fact, Japan has been making substantial adjustments to its foreign policy every 15 years. These periods can be characterized as follows. The first entailed an internal battle between pro-alliance and anti-alliance sections of Japanese society (1945–1960). The second period was characterized by adherence to the Yoshida doctrine (1960–1975). The third period saw Japan tentatively emerge as a systemic supporter of the United States (1975–1990). The fourth period saw Japan attempt to pursue the role of global civilian power (1990–2005), and the fifth, we argue, will see a gradual consolidation of Japan's emerging role as a global ordinary power (2005–2020).

### *1.1 The contest between pro-alliance and anti-alliance sentiment: 1945–1960*

During the first period, between 1945 and 1960, there was extensive discussion of whether Japan should work closely with the United States or not. The die was cast in 1960 when Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi passed the revision of the Japan–US Security Treaty, despite vigorous resistance, and submitted his resignation to the National Diet (Packard, 1966). The 'Yoshida doctrine' was effectively pursued from the day of his resignation. The term 'Yoshida doctrine' refers to the policy of seeking protection under the US military umbrella, and focusing Japan's national energy and resources on economic regeneration, and wealth creation and accumulation (Kosaka, 1968). There was vigorous internal debate about whether to adopt the Yoshida doctrine during the period between 1945 and 1960. Many Japanese were unable to come to terms with the humiliation of delegating national security to a foreign country. They were also concerned at the potential contradiction between the provisions of the Japan–US Security Treaty and the provisions of the Japanese Constitution. The Yoshida doctrine was only embraced after Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda announced the income-doubling plan of 1960–1970. In 1960 it became clear that no significant internal or external opponents of the Yoshida doctrine remained.

## 1.2 *Yoshida doctrine or free ride?: 1960–1975*

During this second 15-year period Japanese income levels rose so steadily that Japan became the target first of envy and then of enmity. Internally, cumulative economic, social and demographic changes were undermining the political base of the governing party, the Liberal Democratic Party. President Charles de Gaulle unkindly observed that Japan was a nation of 'transistor salesmen'. This remark caricatured Japan's decision, in accordance with the Yoshida doctrine, to focus on economics rather than politics and military affairs. De Gaulle's observation attempted to strip away the valour and pride of the visionary politician, Shigeru Yoshida, and expose what he believed to be the unsatisfactorily self-serving nature of his doctrine. De Gaulle claimed that Japan was a free rider who had no sense of responsibility for the management of world politics, even though it possessed the world's second largest economy. This perception of Japan as a free rider prevailed for more or less the duration of this second 15-year period.

## 1.3 *Systemic supporter of the United States: 1975–1990*

Towards the end of the second period the oil crisis erupted, and war broke out in the Middle East. Japan wavered between pro-American and pro-OPEC positions, as the accusation that Japan was a free rider echoed back and forth from both sides. This criticism prompted Japan to shift its position slowly but steadily from that of a free rider to a 'systemic supporter' of the United States (Inoguchi, 1986). The term 'systemic supporter' refers to an actor who helps to maintain the United States-led international system. It is important to note that Japan's support was mostly of an economic nature, as exemplified by Japan's positions on free trade and energy security. Towards the end of this period, however, Japan's support began to assume a more political and military complexion, as exemplified by support for the United States on issues such as SS-20 missile deployment. However, Japan also highlighted the concept of 'comprehensive security' during this period. It did so first to emphasize its limited support for the US-led system, and second to highlight the importance of other aspects of security, whereas the United States focused excessively on the military aspect of security. This third period can therefore be characterized as one during which Japan played the role of a systemic supporter. Japan prosecuted this role in the spirit of Machiavelli's dictum that we should provide support to our friends, but project our neutrality to enemies. Despite all the difficulties associated with the constitutional ban on the use of force for the settlement of international disputes, there was no shortage of rhetorical freedom. Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone went so far as to characterize Japan as 'an unsinkable aircraft carrier' towards the end of this period.

### 1.4 *Global civilian power: 1990–2005*

The start of this fourth period is marked by a steady decline in the frequency of wars among major powers, and by the end of the cold war (Fukuyama, 1991). These developments set the stage for what have been called ‘global civilian powers’ to play a more significant role (Maull, 1990; Funabashi, 1991). Before and during the Second World War both Japan and Germany had been revisionist, militarist and expansionist powers. However since 1945 both have been exemplary pacifist countries, and both Japan and Germany were delighted to be ascribed the role of civilian power after the Cold War. Germany and Japan had both suffered as a result of their quest for expansion prior to 1945, but both have emphatically relinquished this quest in the many years since (Schwartz, 1985; Katada *et al.*, 2004). Both are populous, large, and wealthy; both are pacifist; and both are good allies of the United States. However the legacy of the past and the ban on the use of force remain as a burden for both countries. Despite these constraints, it was still possible for both countries to play a significant role in post-Cold War international relations. Using the emerging concept of human security as a guide for their actions, both countries engaged in peacekeeping operations and economic reconstruction projects in many parts of the Third World. Japan, in particular, was very generous in offering official developmental assistance to the Third World, with a focus on health, education, agriculture, manufacturing, and industrial infrastructure.

During the early 1990s the United Nations, under the leadership of Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali played a proactive role in the promotion of these activities. However, substantial problems began to emerge in the post-Cold War Third World. Global market integration deepened the predicament of poverty-stricken and strife-riddled countries. The end of US–Soviet cold war confrontation meant that both had a reduced stake in many Third World countries. This contributed to the creation of failed states and bankrupt economies. Addressing these tasks is beyond the self-proclaimed global civilian powers, the United Nations, other international organizations, and non-governmental organizations. These conditions provided the context within which 9/11 took place, which in turn led to a re-appraisal of US foreign policy. Subsequent developments ended the fourth phase in Japanese postwar foreign policy, during which it had aspired to be a global civilian power. This also paved the way for Japan’s re-emergence as a global ordinary power.

### 1.5 *Global ordinary power: 2005–2020*

Japan has chosen to define itself as an emerging global ordinary power. It is in the process of consolidating this role for itself. First, there is greater support for the use of force, provided that this force is used for solely defensive purposes. To defend Japan effectively against terrorism requires a number

of courses of action. In an incident which took place in 2002, the Maritime Safety Agency used force on the Sea of Japan against an unidentified vessel which fiercely resisted the Japanese coastguard's attempt to investigate its actions. Public opinion was broadly supportive of this use of force. Furthermore, the Self Defense Force already has permission to use force, more specifically rifles, once it is attacked or it suspects that an enemy is about to attack, in the context of United Nations peacekeeping operations. This legislation was passed in 1991. The 2003 legislation which permits troops to be sent to Iraq also contains a permission for the Self Defense Forces to use force, more specifically anti-tank weapons. Second, the non-provocative use of force needs to be developed. In other words, strictly defensive methods must be practiced. If it is necessary to use force to such an extent that this goes beyond strictly defensive purposes, then it will be necessary to revise the Constitution.

To conclude this section, although there have been substantial continuities in Japanese foreign policy since 1945, a closer look enables one to discern clear 15-year phases, and concomitant adjustments and shifts of emphasis to address emerging threats and conditions in world politics. It is important to stress that Japan has started a major transition in the direction of ordinary power. It is also necessary to elaborate further on what Japanese ordinary power might entail.

## 2 Three models of ordinary power, Japanese style

It is likely that the Pax Americana will endure for some time to come (Nye, 2002; Nau *et al.*, 2002). As such, any discussion of the extent to which Japan can regain ordinary power status must be located firmly in the context of its relationship with the United States (Armitage *et al.*, 2000; Vogel, 2002; Ikenberry and Inoguchi, 2003). Here, alliance has arguably been replaced by partnership. As Francis Fukuyama (1995) argues, fundamental differences in values and institutions have vanished since the end of the cold war. In post-cold war global politics, trust has gained increasing salience. If trust is ascertained, then partnership can be created. When the US–Japan relationship is referred to, the idea of a transition from alliance to partnership should be kept firmly in mind. The following three models are useful in surveying and illustrating the range of partnerships with the United States that Japan might consider. We will look in turn at the following models: (1) French, (2) German, and (3) British. Each of these models invokes a different ideal-typical approach.

### 2.1 *The French model*

The key idea here is that of autonomy. Japan is a close ally and partner of the United States. But this alliance has its roots in an ultimatum, an all-out war,

complete disarmament, occupation, and regime change. Given Japan's economic performance since the Second World War it is only natural that it should seek more autonomy. France has also recently asserted itself against the United States. It has accomplished this through Jacques Chirac's deft and adroit manoeuvring in the debates surrounding the passing of UN Security Council Resolutions permitting the use of force against Iraq. This French self-assertion is something Japan is quietly envious of, but also very apprehensive about. French self-assertion divides Europe, divides the West, and renders the United Nations less effective, and the United States more unilateralist (Keeler and Schain, 1996).

Japan and France share some significant commonalities:

1. Both are close allies of the United States.
2. Both have a strong interest in peaceful and prosperous regional relations. Japan is sandwiched by China and the United States, as is France, by the United States and the United Kingdom on the one hand, and by Germany and Russia on the other hand.
3. Both seek to cultivate a diverse range of diplomatic partners from outside their immediate spheres of activity, using such concepts as comprehensive security and the Francophone group, respectively.

Gaullism is attractive to Japan as it essentially boils down to an assertion of autonomy. Through its tight alignment with the United States, Japan has placed all of its diplomatic eggs in one basket. This excessive alignment has generated a significant body of dissenting argument suggesting that Japan should strive for greater autonomy. I will briefly note three examples of such dissent. Morita and Ishihara (1989) famously published a book entitled *The Japan That Can Say No*. Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, in a speech in Washington DC, suggested that converting all the Japanese-owned US government bonds back into Japanese yen might lead Americans to think again about taking Japan for granted. Eisuke Sakakibara, Vice Minister for International Affairs at the Ministry of Finance, was openly defiant when his idea of setting up an Asian Monetary Fund in the wake of the Asian financial crisis was flatly rebuffed by his American counterpart, Lawrence Summers. Summers wryly noted that he thought wrongly that Sakakibara was a true friend. When the first author of this chapter interviewed Sakakibara in 1997, his office was dominated by a big picture of a militant Islamic Mujahedeen fighter brandishing a sword. The alleged beauty of the French model is that, in the words of Jacques Chirac, France is a true friend, in the sense that true friends will often give you advice that you do not want to hear, before ultimately offering you their support. He also noted that sycophants will not do this, alluding perhaps to Tony Blair's United Kingdom.

The problem with the French model is that the Japanese leadership style is poles apart from that of the French. Japanese elites have not produced a Jacques Delors, a Pascal Lamy, a Jacques Attali, or a Francois Giscard D'Estaing. These men all exercise a strong leadership role in an articulate, aggressive, and adroit fashion. The Japanese political system, as an essentially decentralized consensus-oriented system, tends either not to create, or perhaps more importantly not to reward, such a leadership style at the highest level. Potential Japanese Gaullists endure great frustration as a result. However, Koizumi's articulate message and decisive response in support of the war against terrorism, and his dramatic Pyongyang summit are not inconsistent with the French model of leadership, and the French preparedness to pursue initiatives which might upset the United States.

From a US perspective, France and Japan are different, and as such should not be expected to attempt to achieve similar levels of autonomy from the United States. The key intermediary variable is the perceived value to the United States of the roles they both play in their respective regions. France is critical to the aggregation of unity and stability in Europe, with the United Kingdom psychologically semi-detached from the Continent, and Germany hampered by the institutional and historical constraints placed on its foreign policy initiatives, especially in the absence of a countervailing Soviet threat. France is perceived to be sufficiently critical to unity and stability in Europe that the United States is prepared to grant it considerable autonomy in its diplomatic affairs. However, one might also argue that the Gaullist policy of seeking autonomy not only for France but also a greater Europe stretching to Estonia and Cyprus does undermine the interests of the United States. Such a policy also undermines the interests of North Atlantic Treaty Organization and, to a lesser extent, those of Germany in Central Eastern Europe, the Baltic, the Balkans, and the East Mediterranean.

Japan's role in East Asia is very different. Other than Japan, there is no country that the United States can count on as a key stabilizing power. China does not share core values and norms with the United States and the other leading, largely Western, liberal democracies who manage the international system. Korea is too small for the United States to count on. ASEAN is not only too small but also too fragmented and vulnerable. Hence the degree of autonomy the United States can afford to give to Japan is measurably smaller.

## 2.2 *The German model*

The key idea here is regional embeddedness. Germany has been concealing itself within regional and international institutions such as the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, adroitly aligning its national interests with broader regional and international interests. With

its technocratic competence, rule-based steadiness and economic surplus deployed in pursuit of higher purposes, Germany has been quite successful in rehabilitating itself within a context where it does not regenerate old security concerns. This notwithstanding, Germany is also able to take initiatives which suit its own purposes within the broader context of European governance. This can be seen in the European Union's eastern expansion and in the introduction of the single currency (Eberwein and Kaiser, 2001).

Japan and Germany share some significant commonalities:

1. Both have past experience as revisionist powers. In the words of Hans-Peter Schwartz (1985), Japan and Germany have progressed from *Machtbesessenheit* (self-aggrandizement before 1945) to *Machtvergessenheit* (an abstention from power politics after 1945). This experience, combined with significant economic strength, rendered both Japan and Germany significant global civilian powers throughout the 1990s (Maull, 1990).
2. Both have strong alliances with the United States, sustained by a substantial American military presence.
3. Both have strong economic ties with and an economic embrace of their respective regional hinterlands.

Despite its firm economic embrace of Asia, at least until the Asian financial crisis of 1997 (Pempel, 1999; Hagaard, 1999; Noble and Ravenhill, 2000), Japan has not been characterized as strongly embedded within the region. First, Japan's traditional approach has been to conceive of itself as somehow external to Asia. For 'Britain and Europe' read 'Japan and Asia' (Inoguchi, 1995a). Second, China, which does not necessarily share basic norms and values with maritime East and Southeast Asia, has been on the rise, both in terms of economic might and military power. If Japan is to embed itself within Asia, then it has to reconcile itself to much deeper linkages to and alignment with China. This is a possibility which Japan is not willing to consider seriously at present, given its predominant emphasis on freedom, democracy, human rights, free trade, market economics, and strong alliance with the United States. Until 1997 Asia could be characterized as 'in Japan's embrace' (Hatch and Yamamura, 1996), but since 1997 can more aptly be characterized as 'lured by the China market' (Inoguchi, 2002a). China's offensive to lure foreign direct investment and conclude a regionwide free trade agreement has intensified since its accession to the World Trade Organization. Third, Japan's way of handling its historical legacy has not always been to the liking of other countries in the region. Japan's adherence to the US-certified interpretation of its modern history has been solid, but has in recent times been partially diluted, owing to both the passing of time and the rise of nationalism. Japanese nationalism should not be exaggerated. However, it should be noted that Japanese are much less likely than other Asians to conceive of

national identity as their primary source of identity. About 80–85% of South Koreans and Thais depict national identity as their primary source of identity, but only 60% of Japanese do the same (Inoguchi, 2002b).

In the war against terrorism in Afghanistan, Japan, and Germany, like most others, did their best to support the United States. They disregarded precedents, bent interpretations and sent military personnel to the Indian Ocean and Afghanistan, respectively. As the prospect of an American war with Iraq increased, Gerhard Schroeder announced that Germany would not participate. On 17 September 2002, Junichiro Koizumi visited North Korea, one of the members of the 'axis of evil', and concluded a communiqué with Kim Jong Il. In this communiqué Japan acknowledged historical issues and pledged to extend compensation once diplomatic normalization was complete, while North Korea undertook to demonstrate its peaceful intentions, declaring that it would not seek to develop and maintain missiles and weapons of mass destruction. (One month later, Kim Jong Il admitted to James Kelly, US Under Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific, that North Korea has been developing nuclear weapons until recently, which is quite contrary to what he had said to Koizumi.) Depending on your view, the actions of Schroeder and Koizumi could be interpreted in two ways. They could be interpreted as constructive attempts to reduce tension and facilitate peaceful accommodation with axis of evil countries, or as maverick self-interested acts which undermine the focus and integrity of America's policy of seeking disarmament, and ultimately regime change, in axis of evil countries.

One should also bear in mind the fact that the greater a state's regional embeddedness, the less straightforward its process of preference ordering. This is especially so when domestic anti-militarism norms are so strong, and especially in countries where the legacy of war has played such a pervasive role in the construction of contemporary national identity. The United States is mildly apprehensive that if Germany and Japan become more regionally embedded, this will push their foreign policy preference ordering still further out of kilter with American concerns. Schroeder's flat refusal, during the election campaign, to participate in the war on Iraq, and Koizumi's blitz summit diplomacy in Pyongyang were both in broad disharmony with the evolving American campaign against the axis of evil (Iraq, North Korea, and Iran). As stated previously, the United States ascribes differing degrees of significance to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Japan–US Security Treaty. After 9/11 the United States found Europe decreasingly problematic in terms of strategic priority. Its policy towards Europe has become more benign, if only because of the lack of threat from Russia and from its strategic nuclear forces. Instead the United States finds the Middle East and East Asia much more problematic and volatile, with each region having the

potential to destabilize the peace and stability of the entire world. For this reason Germany has more latitude to pursue policies of which the United States does not approve. East Asia has greater strategic importance to the United States compared to Europe. Accordingly, Japan has less latitude to adopt anti-US policy than Germany, because of East Asia's greater contemporary significance for international peace and security.

### 2.3 *The British model*

The key idea is that of a special relationship (Inoguchi, 1986; Thakur and Inoguchi, 2004). Japan conceives of itself as having special bilateral relations with the United States. Slightly more than a decade ago, the US Ambassador to Japan, Mike Mansfield, characterized the US relationship with Japan as its 'most important bilateral relationship – bar none'. This phrase was often deployed as the defining concept of Japan–United States relations during the 1990s. The United Kingdom also conceives of itself as having a special relationship with the United States. In policy recommendations proposed by Richard Armitage the US–UK model was recommended as the best model on which to build future partnership between Japan and the United States (Armitage *et al.*, 2000).

Japan and the United Kingdom share some significant commonalities:

1. Both conceive of themselves as distinctive and somewhat distant from their respective Continental neighbours.
2. Both have high levels of economic interdependence with the United States and are embedded in the American complex of economic relations.
3. Both have significant alliance links with the United States.

Since 9/11 the United States has drawn on the cooperation of a very wide-ranging number of partners from the anti-terrorist coalition, rather than on a few close allies hitherto distinguished by their perceivably special relationship with the United States. It is true that the United Kingdom and to a lesser extent Australia have been regarded as reliable allies by the United States on many occasions since 21 September 2001. The United Kingdom and Australia are indeed qualitatively distinct from Japan, in that they can take military action without being subject to the same constraints. It can sometimes seem as if the United Kingdom and Australia act like America's mercenaries. This has provoked Japanese diplomats to remark that Japan is not as small as the United Kingdom (whose population size is one half of Japan's), and does not feel it to be quite as necessary to fall into line so unquestioningly. Such observations suggest that the US–UK model might not be so appropriate to the governing of the US–Japan partnership.

The prospect of American war with Iraq initially drew an ambivalent response from Japan. Japan was mostly silent about the prospect of war

with Iraq until after France and Germany took a very different position from the United States with regard to the postponement of the United Nations inspections in Iraq. As a result of this, in a speech given at the United Nations, Japan made explicit the fact that its position was more tightly aligned with the United States (Inoguchi, 2003). There is of course an element of contradiction in Japan staying out of a war which is so clearly important to America, and yet still aspiring to be recognized as its most important bilateral partner. Sending SDF forces to Iraq aroused opposition at home. But sending state-of-the-art Aegis destroyers into the Indian Ocean, if not into the much closer Persian Gulf, was also argued by some to be both a prudent and gallant strategy for Japan to adopt. There is also a contradiction between the deftness and decisiveness of the initiatives taken on the Korean Peninsula and the indecisiveness and ambivalence demonstrated over the issue of potential war with Iraq. What is more, Japan acted on the North Korea issue after little consultation with the United States. North Korea wanted to extract concessions from Japan bilaterally while Japan wanted to create a diplomatic success domestically.

### **3 Overcoming legitimacy and capability deficits in pursuit of ordinary power**

Embracing defeat in 1945 resulted in two kinds of deficit which Japan must overcome as it attempts to become and behave like an ordinary power. Japan has a legitimacy deficit with regard to the use of force, and a capability deficit in using force as an instrument of defense, deterrence, and diplomacy.

#### *3.1 Japan's legitimacy deficit*

This deficit manifests itself in a number of ways. First, Article Nine of the Japanese Constitution forbids Japan from using force to settle international disputes. The preamble of the Constitution also declares that Japan renounces war forever. The Constitution has played a strong role in shaping Japanese politics, and the public have been tenaciously and overwhelmingly pacifist for more than a half a century. The Yoshida doctrine, which advocated military reliance on the United States and the prioritization of wealth accumulation at home, was accommodated at the elite level with little difficulty as early as the 1950s. But at the mass level the Yoshida doctrine was not accepted during the 1950s, and anti-Americanism was an undeniable feature of Japan's domestic politics. Communists and socialists opposed alliance with the United States, and the Conservatives advocated alliance with the United States. Even in the 1960s when the debate had been won and lost, and the focus had by and large turned to wealth accumulation, the security arrangements intermittently triggered large-scale anti-Americanism. In other

words, of the two components of the Yoshida doctrine, the military reliance provided for in the Security Treaty was not fully embraced by a majority of the public.

The principal source of concern with regard to the Security Treaty for the public during the 1950s and 1960s was the possibility that Japan might be press-ganged into war by the United States. Elite sentiment with regard to the Security Treaty was the opposite of that of the electorate. The elites were concerned that unless Japan could demonstrate its willingness to abide by the provisions of the Security Treaty, it might be abandoned by the United States. Prevailing public sentiment was also to be a great hindrance to elite attempts to reposition Japan as a systemic supporter of the United States in later years. Economic, political, and military burden-sharing were all debated extensively during this period. But acceptance of the possibility that Japan could legitimately use force in observance of its commitments under the Security Treaty was slow to emerge.

Japan's rapid economic penetration of world markets led it to reappraise its responsibilities, interests, and role in the international political economy. Japan's manufactured products and financial assets were ubiquitous, and yet Japan's capacity to influence the political and military forces that affect world markets was comparatively limited. Japan decided to support the United States and voice its demands from within the US camp. This would be more effective than going it alone, and would make it less likely that the United States would interpret Japanese criticism as irresponsible or hostile. However, for some the fact that Japan was making it clear that it was a systemic supporter of the United States increased the possibility that Japan would be dragged into wars neither of its making nor vital to its own national security.

The 1990s saw the end of the cold war and the further deepening of globalization. UN peacekeeping operations were a feature of the first-half of the 1990s. As Japan assumed a greater peacekeeping role, this created a new set of problems associated with the use of force in the execution of peacekeeping operations. The newly legislated Peacekeeping Operations Law that permitted Japanese troops to participate in UN peacekeeping operations only mandated troops to carry small-scale weapons such as rifles, to indicate that their involvement in peacekeeping was not aggressive in intent. This legislation also stipulated that weapons could only be used when troops were attacked, or were about to be attacked, in the judgment of a troop leader. Because Japan conceived of itself and promoted itself as a global civilian power, it was necessary to address such operational matters.

Japanese have invested a vast amount of time and effort, both inside and outside of the National Diet, to ensure that the participation of Self Defense Force troops in United Nations peacekeeping operations has been

constitutionally appropriate. When this legislation was passed it was hailed as a major step toward Japan's re-assumption of ordinary power status, although retrospectively this was only a comparatively minor step forward. This legislation stipulated that the overseas dispatch of troops for peacekeeping purposes could only be mandated by an appropriate United Nations Security Council resolution. It remained necessary for the overseas dispatch of troops to be legitimated by the United Nations (Inoguchi, 1995b; Fukushima, 1999).

There were further developments in the 2000s. Japan's participation in the Afghan war of 2002 was limited to the prosecution of two tasks in the Indian Ocean. First, Japan's state-of-the-art Aegis-equipped destroyers patrolled the Indian Ocean and monitored maritime traffic. Second, Japan supplied gasoline to the combat aircraft of the United States and the United Kingdom. It was not necessary to legitimize these support activities with a UN Security Council Resolution, because the Indian Ocean was designated as a non-combat area. The stipulation of the Peace Keeping and Other Operations Law that Self Defense Force troops can only be sent to non-combat areas was not relevant for the same reason. Japan was able to avoid incurring casualties and fatalities in undertaking these support operations, unlike the United Kingdom and Germany, which both sent troops to Afghanistan.

With regard to the Iraqi war, Prime Minister Koizumi indicated to the United States that Japan supported the war in Iraq shortly before the outbreak of hostilities in March 2003. The divisions between the members of the Security Council emerged as it became clear that the UN Security Council would not agree a resolution authorizing the use of force in Iraq. The United States and the United Kingdom wanted such a resolution, while France, Russia, China, and Germany were strongly opposed. Defying the preferences of the three other permanent members of the Security Council and Germany, the US–UK Coalition forces attacked Iraq in March 2003. This complex and sensitive situation required Japan to perform a careful diplomatic balancing act. Japan justified its support for the coalition forces by referring to the fact that Iraq was in breach of numerous existing Security Council resolutions which had been passed since 1991. However, Japan did not make reference to the WMD issue in justifying its support for the intervention. By not invoking the WMD issue, Japan was simultaneously able both to sustain its argument that military action requires a United Nations resolution, and to remain a close and demonstrably reliable partner of the United States.

The legislation mandating the dispatch of Self Defense Force troops to Iraq was passed in October 2003, shortly before Koizumi announced that elections to the Lower House would take place that November. There were some problematic aspects to this legislation. First, it stipulated that troops should be sent to non-combat areas. However, the United States had clearly neither

pacified the country nor eradicated militant terrorism. Second, the SDF mission was to be prosecuted within the context of a United Nations resolution that was passed after the conclusion of the war, as a result of sensible compromise diplomacy on the part of the United States. The purpose of the mission is to conduct peacekeeping operations and facilitate economic reconstruction. However, dissidents and terrorists continue to attack not only United States troops and troops from other coalition countries, but also the personnel of international organizations such as the United Nations and the International Red Cross. In view of the likelihood of attacks by dissidents and terrorists, it was stipulated that land troops be equipped with anti-tank weapons.

### 3.2 *Japan's capacity deficit*

It is clear that overcoming the legitimacy deficit is of major importance if Japan is to become an ordinary power. However, Japan's capacity deficit in the use of force is no less serious. This deficit stems from the fact that the Self Defense Force was established on the assumption that it would operate for strictly defensive purposes. The Constitution has effectively constrained and dictated the SDF's force structure up until the present time. Only in the mid-1990s has there been a general recognition that the most important function of the SDF is the protection of national security. Legal, institutional, and public opinion have typically placed constraints on the kind of weapons and forces with which it has been felt appropriate for the SDF to be equipped. These constraints have contributed to the emergence of Japan's capacity deficit.

Within the context of perceived cold war security needs and restrictions, the SDF built a world class army based on fighter aircraft, tanks, and submarines. Even though the SDF has periodically upgraded its forces since the end of the cold war within this context, new types of weapons and new modes of force structure have also become necessary. Acquisition of the following capabilities and weapons has been deemed necessary by sections of the mass media and the National Diet: long-range fighter, bomber, and transport aircraft; nuclear submarines; aircraft carrier(s); a missile defense system; an intelligence gathering satellite; destroyer vessels; and a greater capacity to conduct peacekeeping operations.

This list enables one to understand the extent to which constitutional and other constraints have contributed to the Japanese capacity deficit. The National Diet had previously stipulated all manner of constraints, specifying the nature and number of weapons that can be deployed. The guiding principle has been that the function of the SDF is strictly and exclusively defensive. One problem for the Japanese government is that weapons technology is constantly evolving, and therefore even armed forces configured in an

exclusively defensive manner are periodically forced to upgrade their weapons and revise their force structures to keep pace with new developments. Military configurations and threat perceptions have changed, and, as a result, so has Japan's alliance with the United States.

## 4 Domestic politics and ordinary Japanese power

We have traced the evolution of Japan's foreign policy since 1945, and examined the two deficits which Japan must overcome if it is to become an ordinary power. The constitutional issue remains unresolved, but in the last three decades three other important elements of Japanese foreign policy have been addressed. There has been a gradual strengthening of the SDF, a consolidation of the alliance with the United States, and a more substantial engagement in peacekeeping operations and disarmament. Japan's military development has kept pace with that of other countries in the region which are seeking to enhance their military capability. Alliance consolidation has been adroit and smooth. Japan has vigorously supported peacekeeping and disarmament initiatives. It is necessary to consider ways in which recent developments in domestic politics could impact on Japan's transition towards the exercise of ordinary power.

### 4.1 *The Lower House Elections of November 2003*

An important outcome of the 9 November 2003 general election appeared to be that a two-party system had emerged. (Although, as we shall see below, the outcome of the September 2005 election has raised serious doubts about this.) Both of the two major parties, the LDP and the DPJ, support the idea of constitutional revision in the near future. The LDP supports a policy of *kaiken* (constitutional revision) while the DPJ supports a policy of *soken* (Constitution-creation). Since the LDP has unmistakably moved in the direction of Constitutional revision, it is necessary to discuss what sort of Constitutional revision it might promote. The LDP focuses on Article Nine, arguing that with respect to the use of force in the settlement of international disputes Japan should revert to the ordinary status enjoyed by all other sovereign states. The LDP has already announced that it will propose a draft of a revised Constitution. It is likely that this draft will be published whilst Koizumi is still in power. In justification of this position, the LDP argues that there has been a steady arms build-up in Japan's vicinity, and direct military threats have even been made. Furthermore, there is a new regional and global terrorist security threat and an ongoing need to consolidate the alliance with the United States. A number of specific incidents have persuaded the LDP to support constitutional revision. These include North Korea's infringement of Japan's state sovereignty and human rights, and its claim to be in possession of nuclear

weapons. China has also conducted frequent investigative sorties in areas surrounding Japanese territories, is involved in a steady military build-up, and has successfully launched a manned space vessel. There is an increasingly ominous terrorist threat in Southeast Asia. And, importantly, and as discussed, there is the ongoing need to keep up with United States global strategy by upgrading existing weapons and developing and/or purchasing new ones.

#### *4.2 The Lower House Elections of September 2005*

Nationwide elections to the House of Representatives, the more powerful Lower House of the National Diet, also took place on 11 September 2005. These elections resulted in a landslide victory for Koizumi and the LDP, with the party winning 296 seats, the largest share in post-war politics. Together with its partner, New Komeito, the governing coalition now commands a two-thirds majority in the Lower House, allowing them to pass bills without the consent of the Upper House, and to approve amendments to the Constitution, which are then submitted to the Upper House and a national referendum. The opposition DPJ suffered a devastating loss, winning only 113 seats against the 175 seats that it held going into the election. The scale of the defeat called into question the DPJ's ability to provide a plausible electoral alternative to the LDP in the future.

On domestic policy there was a little difference between the ruling bloc and the DPJ. However, there was speculation as to what impact the election might have on international relations, since there were substantial differences over foreign policy expressed in the context of this particular election. Koizumi had supported President Bush and the Iraq war, and had sent SDF troops to Iraq in spite of public opposition and the pacifist Constitution. Sino–Japanese relations had also deteriorated in early 2005, amongst other things as a result of the visits of Koizumi and other conservative Japanese politicians to the Yasukuni shrine. In contrast, Okada, the leader of the DPJ, stated that he would pull Japanese troops out of Iraq by December 2005, and also pledged that he would not visit the Yasukuni shrine, a move which would considerably improve foreign relations with both Korea and China. However, foreign policy issues drew little attention from the public during this particular campaign, partly as a result of Koizumi's specific election strategy (Asahi Shimbun, 2005).

### **5 Japan's emerging role as a global ordinary power**

Japan has adjusted its foreign policy roughly every 15 years. Each time, some unforeseen combination of domestic and international factors has led it to metamorphose, albeit within the broader framework of alliance with the

United States and the non-use of force in the settlement of international disputes. The tensions inherent in military alliance with the United States and a constitutionally stipulated non-use of force afford considerable space for metamorphosis. That is why it is very important to realize that Japan has been changing much more dramatically each and every 15 years than it appears at first glance.

What will be the emerging nature of Japan's ordinary power from 2005 to 2020? The legacy of pro-alliance orientation will remain firm. First, there is an emerging consensus on foreign security policy based on the three key components; alliance, pacifism, and a pro-UN orientation. The two large parties, the LDP and the DPJ, agree on these matters, and these three issues will be the pillars of Japan's global ordinary power. Differences between the LDP and DPJ foreign policy stances are likely to be a question of emphasis with regard to each pillar, rather than disputes over fundamental issues. The LDP is likely to give greater weight to the pro-alliance orientation than the DPJ, and attach less significance to the pro-UN and pacifist orientations. These three components aside, the LDP contains a bulk of legislators who talk tough on self-strengthening. The LDP is more likely to endorse the overseas deployment of troops than the DPJ, and less concerned than the DPJ about whether such a dispatch is authorized by a UN Security Council Resolution or not. The LDP would countenance the dispatch of Japanese forces to join a coalition not authorized by the United Nations, whereas the DPJ would not. The DPJ has been trying to differentiate itself from the LDP by giving greater weight to the pro-UN and pacifist orientations. It is also important to stress here that the new Komei party, a coalition partner of the LDP, takes its strong pacifist and pro-UN orientations very seriously. In light of its influence within the current LDP–Komei coalition, the Komei factor remains imponderable with regard to the issue of the overseas dispatch of troops.

Second, constitutional revisions are more likely to take place during the 2005–2020 period. If the LDP continues to hold power in one way or another, as it seems set to in light of the recent election results, constitutional revisions are likely to take the following form: endorsement of the ordinary use of force in the settlement of international disputes; greater empowerment of the Prime Minister in the direction of the 'Presidential Prime Minister' model, and an associated reduction in bureaucratic power; greater restraints on the scope, nature, and expense of social policy; and a greater inculcation of nationalism and patriotism. It is important to note here that the LDP's coalition partner New Komei is unlikely to be comfortable with the first, second, and third of the four possible revisions that we have identified. This is important because the LDP would need the thirty-one votes of New Komei to constitute the two-thirds majority that would enable it to effect constitutional reform. The DPJ

would also be especially unhappy about developments with regard to the third and fourth revisions, relating to social policy and patriotism.

In this article we have argued that since 1945 Japanese foreign policy has evolved through five phases, which will culminate in Japan's resumption of ordinary power. We then discussed three potential models of ordinary power, Japanese style, which are ideal-typical in nature, but which share some qualities with the respective political situations of France, Germany, and Britain. We also considered the legitimacy and capacity deficits that Japan possesses, and the way in which recent electoral developments may contribute to the addressing of these deficits.

The events of the last decade, and in particular events since 11 September, have highlighted the need for a reappraisal of conventional national security strategy. Japan must decide precisely what role it intends to play in international relations, as it gradually comes to acquire the status of a global ordinary power. It has been argued elsewhere that the German model may be a more appropriate basis for US–Japan relations (Ikenberry and Inoguchi, 2003), but perhaps an opportunity to move emphatically in this direction was lost during the period of alliance drift during the 1990s, when Japan had the opportunity to present and develop itself as a civilian power. It seems reasonably clear that of the three models we have discussed, Japan is moving in the direction of the British model and, as was suggested in the Armitage Report, towards tighter alliance coordination with the United States, and the further cultivation of a special relationship in the region.

Two further important points need to be made. The first is that 'the bilateral alliance [between the United States and Japan] is the most critical element ensuring regional stability and order in East Asia. There are no obvious alternatives to the alliance system on the horizon that are sufficiently credible and operable' (Ikenberry and Inoguchi, 2003, p. 2). The second is that 'the alliance is more than simply a military pact aimed at protecting the two countries from an external threat. The alliance is also a political partnership that provides institutional mechanisms that support a stable relationship between the countries within the alliance' (Ikenberry and Inoguchi, 2003, p. 2). In other words, it is mistaken to assert that bilateral relations are always 'thin' and instrumental in opposition to 'thicker', more constitutive commitments to regionalism and multilateralism. As we suggested earlier, it is more appropriate to consider the alliance as a partnership based on shared values.

What this also means is that fears of resurgent Japanese nationalism and adventurism, perhaps fuelled by Koizumi's large majority and his commitment to constitutional reform, are misplaced. It is true that Japan is becoming an ordinary great power in East Asia, and increasingly an ordinary global

power. But it is doing so firmly in the context of a deepening relationship with the United States which places increasing constraints on its autonomous action in the security sphere. This closer alliance partnership that is developing need not preclude regional dialogue and collective action, as is sometimes argued (for example by Hughes, 2005). It is more accurate to suggest that only a secure and binding alliance can provide a credible basis for such political progress as is possible in the region. It is mistaken to assume that it is necessary to choose between bilateralism and multilateralism, and that there is a zero-sum relationship between the two types of approach. Perhaps the most appropriate way to characterize the current state of Japan's international relations is one of bilateralism-plus, or supplementalism, as a number of commentators have suggested (Hughes and Fukushima, 2003; Ikenberry and Mastanduno, 2003). To put the point in terms of the models we have suggested here, Japan is clearly using the British model as a foundation for the acquisition of ordinary power status. In doing so it is increasingly binding itself to the United States. But such a move can also provide a platform from which to develop the normative possibilities which lie beyond bilateralism, in the realm of the German model and wider regional cooperation.

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