

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS OF JAPAN AMENDING ITS CONSTITUTION

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL RICHARD MATTON
United States Air Force

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Lieutenant Colonel Richard Matton
United States Air Force

Dr. Paul R. Kan
Project Adviser

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U.S. Army War College
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At the end of World War II, Japan adopted a Constitution that forever renounced the “threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes.” This Constitution has resulted in Japan fully relying on the United States to preserve peace in the region. On the surface, the notion of Japan removing the “no war” clause from its Constitution seems to be in the best interest of the United States. If Japan developed a bona fide military, however, the United States would be faced with a decision on what military forces should remain in country. Additionally, if Japan rescinded its “no war” clause and established a military, there would undoubtedly be a reaction from China, the traditional hegemon of the region. This paper begins by providing a history of Japan’s Constitution and the country’s resultant foreign policy decisions. Then, through the use of a scenario matrix, this paper examines strategic implications of Japan adopting a new Constitution. The matrix has two variables: 1) Chinese reaction to Japan revising its Constitution, and 2) United States force structure in Asia as a result of the new Constitution. The paper concludes with a recommendation for Japan’s national security strategy based on Constitutional revision.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS OF JAPAN AMENDING ITS CONSTITUTION

Washington must make clear that it welcomes a Japan that is willing to make a greater contribution and to become a more equal alliance partner.

—Institute for National Strategic Studies¹

In September 2008, a Japanese naval vessel spotted and subsequently tracked a foreign submarine operating in the territorial waters of Japan.² Although operating in Japanese waters, the submarine did not raise a national flag or surface. This action was a clear violation of international law, and Japan would have been within its rights as a sovereign nation to attack or seize the vessel. This did not happen, and the Japanese naval ship lost track of the vessel as it eventually made its way back into international waters before being identified. Although the country of origin of the intruding vessel has not been confirmed, the Japanese government is pursuing information through diplomatic routes.³

Regardless of the diplomatic findings, the incident highlights an issue with respect to Japanese national security. As it stands today, although it would have been within the bounds of international law for the Japanese vessel to have attacked or seized the intruding submarine, the Japanese Constitution would have prohibited that course of action. Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution states:

Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.⁴

Since the submarine did not pose a direct threat to the Japanese vessel, any use of force in this situation would likely have been deemed unconstitutional.

Japan is faced with similar dilemmas when it comes to the use of their self-defense force and these are creating increasingly politically awkward situations. One major dilemma occurs when there is a global crisis requiring collective security operations. The prevailing interpretation of Article 9 prohibits Japan from engaging in such operations since they do not directly involve the defense of the Japanese homeland.⁵

However, recent collective security operations have driven the Japanese government to modify its interpretation of Article 9. In December 2001, the Government of Japan deployed a fuel tanker ship from its Maritime Self-Defense Force. This vessel's mission was to supply fuel to United States and other coalition ships in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.⁶ These fueling operations continue to this day.

More recently, the Government of Japan provided forces in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). To be precise, during the early stages of OIF, Japan allowed approximately 600 Japanese Self-Defense Force troops to deploy to Iraq for the purposes of "support".⁷ The United States had been pressing the Japanese government to become more involved in collective security operations for quite a while.⁸ With this in mind, the Japanese government passed legislation classifying their OIF involvement as a "non-combat" operation and the troops were given strictly defensive rules of engagement.⁹ The rules of engagement under which these troops operated were so limiting that the Australian forces in the area were actually given the task to protect the Japanese forces.¹⁰ While it may have been a political imperative for the Japanese government to contribute forces to OIF, the Article 9 prohibitions against the use of force only served to lessen the Australian military's contributions to OIF since

they were forced to provide for the protection of the Japanese friendly forces in their area of responsibility.

Article 9, commonly known as the “No War Clause” of the Japanese Constitution, has allowed Japan to rely fully on the United States to provide an umbrella of security in the region. However, this Constitution was drafted by United States occupation forces and adopted by the Japanese government over 60 years ago.¹¹ As such, many government officials in both Japan and the United States feel that revising Article 9 is something that is long overdue.

While on first examination it may seem to be a necessary action, revision of Article 9 would have many second and third order effects that would need to be considered. For instance, if Japan “normalized” its military, the United States would be faced with a decision on what military forces should remain based in Japan and the East Asian region in general. Additionally, there would undoubtedly be a reaction from China, the traditional hegemon of the region.

This paper will address the strategic implications of Japan amending their Constitution vis-à-vis revision of Article 9. It will begin by providing the background behind the formulation of Japan’s Constitution and some of the country’s resultant foreign policy decisions. Then, through the use of a scenario matrix, the paper will examine the possible outcomes on East Asian regional security based on potential reactions from China as well as how the United States would restructure its forces that are currently based in Japan. Finally, the paper will conclude with a recommendation for United States policy based on Japan altering its Article 9 Constitutional restrictions on the use of force.

Background

Japan's Constitution in place at the termination of World War II was known as the "Meiji" Constitution and had been in place since 1890. This was the first time in the Japanese empire's history that a formal constitution existed. This Constitution was a direct result of the Meiji Restoration that restored political power to the Japanese Emperor for the first time in over a millennium. Under the Meiji Constitution, the Emperor reigned supreme over Japan and was "sacred and inviolable."¹² The Emperor's power did not, however, go unchecked. The Diet was also established under this Constitution, and it acted as the legislative authority under which the Emperor exercised his legislative power.¹³

Following the "unconditional surrender" of Japan in World War II, General Douglas MacArthur was put in charge of the United States' occupation of Japan. With that responsibility, came the daunting task of revising the Meiji Constitution to reflect the new world order. Acting more like a diplomat than a military general, MacArthur had to delicately balance the demands of Washington while maintaining some semblance of dignity for the Japanese people.¹⁴ This was particularly difficult for MacArthur because of his strong predilection for the sovereignty of the Emperor. MacArthur realized that the United States occupational force must recognize the Emperor as supreme in order to maintain the credibility required to preserve peace in Japan. This pragmatic and insightful post-conflict strategy was MacArthur's greatest contribution to the post-World War II situation in Japan.

That said, MacArthur was consistently at odds with the leadership back in the United States. The official Washington policy, known as "United States Initial Postsurrender Policy for Japan," proposed radical reforms of the Japanese government

to include the possible elimination of the Emperor's throne.¹⁵ This policy was drafted by the departments of State, War, and Navy in September of 1945, and soon became a primary reference for the newly elected President Truman as he sought advice on how best to manage the occupation of post-war Japan.¹⁶ As such, this policy became authoritative and created a rift between the commander on the ground, MacArthur, and his vision of post-war Japan and the politicians in Washington. Despite the "vicious efforts to destroy the person of the Emperor" by the Washington elite, MacArthur continued to act in a manner to preserve the Emperor.¹⁷

While he continued to preserve the Emperor, MacArthur also realized the importance of revising the Meiji constitution in order to satisfy Washington. Through much negotiation with top-level Japanese officials, MacArthur eventually reached a compromise that established a substantially revised Meiji Constitution that preserved the Emperor while adding an article (Article 9) that renounced war forever.¹⁸ This draft, although largely authored by MacArthur, was then presented to Yoshida Shigeru (now Prime Minister after being one of the few Japanese officials retained in the government by the United States occupation force). Although it must have been painful for him, Yoshida was put in a position to defend the draft Constitution as the "freely expressed will of the Japanese people."¹⁹ His saving grace in the defense of this draft was that the position of the Emperor was saved. While Japan was forced to swallow the bitter pill of disarmament and renunciation of war, there were no grounds for a legal complaint due to their "unconditional surrender" to the Allies. The major factor explaining the successes of disarmament and democratization during the initial stages of United States occupation is, indeed, the fact that the Emperor remained in a seat of power.²⁰

The result of the negotiations between MacArthur and the top-level Japanese officials finally resulted in a Constitution that was ratified by the Japanese Diet on November 3, 1946.²¹ This Constitution renounced war and prohibited the maintenance of any armed forces by Japan. During the next few years after the ratification of the Constitution, the United States provided protection over Japan. However, the Peace Treaty of San Francisco, signed by 49 nations on September 8, 1951, officially ended the occupation of Japan.²² This left the United States with a moral issue about how Japan would be able to defend itself after being rendered “toothless” by the 1946 Constitution. Provisions placed in the San Francisco Treaty by State Department Secretary John F. Dulles solved this moral dilemma. Dulles’ proposals mandated that the Japanese lease military bases to the United States who would in turn protect Japan. The United States would also be allowed to defend its interests in the Far East from these bases under the provisions written by Dulles. With the advent of the Cold War, this provision was especially useful to the United States. Having forward-based troops in Japan would form the backbone of its containment strategy vis-à-vis preventing the spread of Communism from China and/or the Soviet Union.

Additional provisions of the San Francisco Treaty allowed the United States to move its forces and nuclear arms in and out of Japan without consultation with the Japanese government.²³ Again, this policy would serve not only in the defense of Japan but also the United States in its containment strategy of the Cold War. To top it all off, the provisions allowing this “de facto occupation” of Japan by United States military forces had no time limits specified; the United States could remain in Japan indefinitely.²⁴ The revised Constitution imposed by the MacArthur occupation force

along with the San Francisco Treaty have formed the basis of the United States' relationship with Japan ever since and have not been altered significantly despite monumental shifts in the world order.

Despite the seeming inequality of the San Francisco Treaty, the Japanese people were elated that they were now technically free of occupation.²⁵ However, it would not be long until the next issue between the United States and Japan arose. With the Korean conflict in full swing by the time the San Francisco Treaty was signed, the United States began pressuring Japan to begin rearmament. Of course, doing so would essentially render Article 9 of the Constitution irrelevant, but as their forces were stretched thin, the United States felt it was time for Japan to start sharing some of the burden for collective defense of the Far East. This line of thinking by the United States was not without a sense of hesitation. There was certainly great concern that a rearmed Japan would soon revive its militaristic tendencies.

In the decade following the implementation of the 1946 Constitution, Japan quickly began reinterpreting Article 9 in order to fit the situation at hand. While initially interpreting Article 9 to prohibit even the right to self-defense, Prime Minister Yoshida, backed away from this approach after the United States occupation by reversing this interpretation in the 1950s.²⁶ Subsequent Prime Ministers of Japan and lawmakers continued the trend of reinterpreting Article 9's meaning throughout the Cold War. During the late 1970s, the Japanese government started setting itself up to be aligned with the United States by assuming responsibility (under the 1978 Guidelines for Japan-United States Defense Cooperation) to protect sea lines of communication up to 1,000 nautical miles from Japan.²⁷ While this may have seemed to fall under the realm of

collective defense, the Japanese government made the argument that this policy was made in the line of self-defense to counter the Soviet Communist threat of the Cold War.²⁸ As discussed previously, Japan's reinterpretation of its Constitution has continued to this day allowing its military's participation in operations that seemingly do not fall in line with the original intent of MacArthur and the Japanese authors. The next logical step is for a Japanese lawmaking authority to author and publish the actual amendment to the Constitution.

It's Time for Change

With the background behind the Japanese Constitution in mind, the time has come to encourage Japan towards "normalizing" its military and making the Constitutional change formally allowing it. The geopolitical conditions under which Japan's 1946 Constitution was crafted have changed considerably over the past 60 years. The Cold War is over, and there is currently no immediate or near term ideological Communist threat to the United States or its allies. While China may be a rising peer of the United States, the government of the People's Republic of China does not seek the ideological spread of Communism as the former Soviet Union did during the Cold War. The subsequent implication, therefore, is that even with China emerging as a rising peer, the United States need not concern itself with Japan falling into Communist hands. In addition, Japan has reaped the benefits of the umbrella of protection provided by the United States during this time. Meanwhile, Japan has used the money it did not spend on defense to build itself up to one of the world's strongest economies.²⁹

While much of the Constitution remains relevant to this day, the time has come for the Japanese government to amend Article 9 and “normalize” their military. As will be discussed in the next section of this paper, there are barriers that stand in the way of this change, but none of them are insurmountable. The fact is that the global responsibilities of the United States in this unipolar world demand an economy of force effort in Japan. The United States military can only support a finite number of operations. The relative stability of East Asia can therefore support a reduction in United States military presence in the region (economy of force). This would make more personnel available to support the ever-growing number of crises in other parts of the globe. This economy of force effort by the United States would subsequently mandate that Japan contribute more than just its money towards the collective security efforts of the 21st century.

In fact, Japan already demonstrates actions that are incompatible with Article 9 of its Constitution on many fronts. For example, Japan’s military expenditures are the fourth or fifth highest in the world (depending on the method used to calculate China’s defense spending.)³⁰ Much of these expenditures are being used for the development of a ballistic missile defense (BMD) system.³¹ Many critics argue that a BMD system is not purely defensive because it increases the vulnerability of states that do not possess such a system.³² Additionally, Japan has built up its Navy to the point where it is the most sophisticated naval force in Asia.³³ Finally, as previously mentioned, Japan has extended its reach well beyond its own territorial waters during recent participation in OEF and OIF. This type of activity is not necessarily compliant with the intent of Article 9 as written.

Barriers to Change

Despite these actions that are seemingly taking Japan down the road to remilitarization, many sectors of the Japanese government and populace do not favor the rearmament of Japan. From the signing of the 1946 Constitution until today, the debate on whether to amend Article 9 to allow Japan to field a “normal” defense force has raged on. Thus far, there has been no public mandate in Japan to allow that to happen. The reasons for this are both internal barriers within Japan as well as external barriers, from Japan’s neighbors and the United States. The primary internal barrier preventing Japan from amending Article 9 is its politics. The traditional ruling party in Japan (Liberal Democratic Party, or LDP) espouses a conservative platform that promotes the amendment of Article 9. Their line of thinking is that Japan is a major world power, and thus, should be able to have a “normal” military capable of joining in collective security outside of Japan. As long as the debate over Article 9 has been going on, however, the LDP has been unable to attain the two-thirds vote in the Diet that would be required to affect the change that they desire.³⁴

The opposition to the LDP vis-à-vis Article 9 amendment comes mainly from moderates and liberals within the Diet as well as religious organizations who support those politicians. Even though the Komeito party is typically a political ally of the LDP, they oppose any amendment of Article 9. The Komeito party is backed by a Buddhist organization known as the Buddhist Soka Gakkai.³⁵ Together, the Komeito and Buddhist Soka Gakkai have been able to successfully block the LDP movement towards “normalizing” the Japanese military.

In addition to the political barriers that currently prevent amending Article 9, Japanese public opinion has also played a role in maintaining the status quo. Under the

leadership of Prime Ministers Junichiro Koizumi (2001-2006) and Shinzo Abe (2006-2007), the movement to amend Article 9 picked up steam in the public realm. At its peak in 2005, the issue of amending Article 9 enjoyed well over 50 percent approval from the Japanese public.³⁶ In fact, a leading Japanese newspaper, the Yomiuri Shimbun, published a poll taken in April 2005 that indicated a 65 percent approval of the following statement: “Because a limit has been reached in applying interpretations of Article 9, it should be changed.”³⁷ Unfortunately, after building support to amend the Constitution, Prime Minister Abe abruptly resigned in 2007 amidst scandals unrelated to his Article 9 ambitions. His successor, Yasuo Fukuda, only lasted a year in office before resigning as well. Fukuda’s resignation, again unrelated to Article 9 issues, only served to exacerbate the turbulence within the Japanese political system. This turbulence within the LDP contributed to a steady decline in the Japanese public’s support of Article 9 amendment. More recent surveys conducted in December 2007 indicate that only 46 percent of the population now supports Article 9 amendment while 39 percent oppose it. This survey marks a nine point drop in support over the previous year while the opposition increased by seven points.³⁸

In addition to the turbulence within the LDP, a national campaign being waged by an organization known as “The Article 9 Association” has more than likely contributed to foundering support for Article 9 amendment as well. This organization was founded in 2004 and by the end of 2007 had 6,800 chapters nationwide in Japan that support its goal of maintaining the pacifist clause in the Constitution.³⁹

While the internal barriers preventing amendment of Article 9 certainly pose a formidable obstacle, there are external barriers as well. The United States government

has pressured Japan to assume their share of the burden of collective security since the onset of the Cold War.⁴⁰ While the Bush administration has continued this trend, there is certainly some degree of opposition to the idea of Japanese Constitutional amendment from America. The opposition to having Japan assume a greater role in collective security contends that the United States currently enjoys great value in the security that they provide Japan on a continuous basis. In 1995, the annual cost of having United States military forces stationed in Japan was \$7.6B. Of this amount, the government of Japan shouldered \$4.25B of the cost.⁴¹ While the United States military provides direct protection for Japan, forward-basing of their troops enables them to protect vital American interests in the region as well.⁴² Having the balance of power in East Asia largely funded by the Japanese government makes for an excellent bargain when it comes to the security of United States' interests.

While the United States has some reason to maintain the status quo with respect to Article 9, other countries in the region are also hesitant to encourage Japan to give up their pacifist status. Japan invaded China, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, and the Korean peninsula at some point during the first half of the 20th century. These invasions were accompanied by atrocities of immense scale. For example, Japanese troops slaughtered nearly 150,000 men, women and children after seizing the Chinese capital of Nanking (now Nanjing), in 1937.⁴³ The Japanese government has been slow to apologize for these and other atrocities. In fact, with respect to the "Rape of Nanking", the Japanese government still approves of several books being sold in bookstores that completely deny the allegations surrounding the incident.⁴⁴ Countries invaded by Japan in the early 20th century will not soon forget how they were treated by

the Japanese military or the Japanese reluctance to accept responsibilities for their war crimes. These countries are therefore more than a bit reluctant to react positively to any thoughts of a “normal” Japanese defense force.

As with any proposal that attempts to overcome a status quo that has been in existence for decades, the proposal to amend Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution has encountered barriers, both internal and external to Japan. However, these barriers are not impenetrable. In fact, the Japanese Diet approved a plan for Article 9 reform in 2007 which could come up for vote as early as 2010.⁴⁵ Even if that specific plan for reform should fail, the issue of amending Article 9 will be an enduring issue and it is arguably inevitable that its revision will occur. It is for this reason that the United States should consider the strategic implications of such a reform for the East Asian region and beyond.

Scenario Matrix

One method of analyzing such implications is to use a scenario matrix. A scenario matrix is a tool used by strategic planners to envision how a decision, such as Article 9 revision, may be played out. The scenario matrix describes a number of alternative environments based on a number of variables. These environments are neither predictions nor strategies. Instead, they are “hypotheses of different futures specifically designed to highlight the risks and opportunities involved in specific strategic issues.”⁴⁶ While there are an infinite number of variables involved in any given strategic issue, the scenario matrix is most effectively employed by considering the two most important (read, relevant) and uncertain variables. This technique ensures that the

study of the strategic issue at hand does not get bogged down by unimportant detail yet is still thoroughly analyzed.

The use of a scenario matrix is helpful when studying the issue of Japan amending Article 9 of its Constitution. The two most relevant and uncertain variables involved with this issue are: 1) China's reaction to such reform and 2) United States force structure in the region after Article 9 amendment. Such a matrix is illustrated in Figure 1. The vertical axis of the matrix shows the range of China's reaction to Japan "normalizing" its military through Article 9 revision while the horizontal axis shows how the United States would reassign their Japan-based forces as a result of the Article 9 revision. Thus, the matrix illustrates four different scenarios based on the two variables mentioned above. These four scenarios are named: Imperial Dragon, Hidden Dragon, Powder Keg, and Déjà Vu. Before discussing the four scenarios, it is important to make some valid assumptions to further keep the variables at a minimum for the purpose of discussion. The first assumption is that if Japan remilitarizes as a result of amending Article 9, then the Japanese government will demand the withdrawal of most United States forces from the country. This would, in fact, be one of the contributing reasons to the success of passing a proposal in the Japanese Diet. The Japanese government routinely expresses its distaste at having its country "occupied" by United States forces and the accompanying irritations to the local populace that occur all too regularly. For example, the Okinawan government recently drafted a plan to have all the United States bases on the island returned to Japanese government custody by the year 2015.⁴⁷ The idea of having Japan free of United States forces is a significant attraction to many Japanese people when considering Article 9 revision.

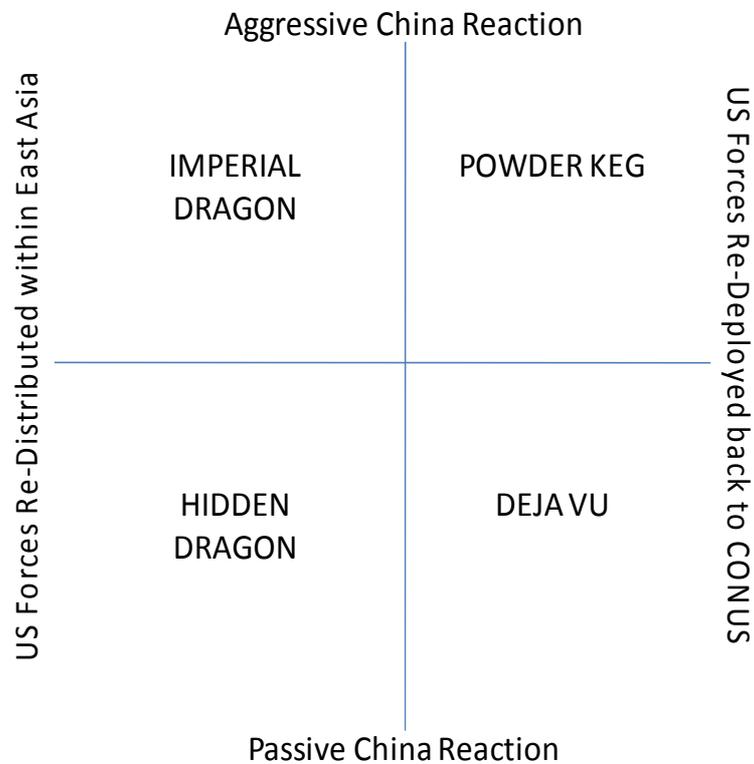


Figure 1. United States and China Reactions to Japan's Revised Constitution

A second assumption is that Japan will not pursue nuclear armament as part of its remilitarization efforts. This assumption is made in order to limit the scope of the scenario matrix analysis. Additionally, the United States and Japan would likely agree on the maintenance of a United States-provided nuclear deterrent force capable of protecting Japan in the event Japan amends Article 9 of its Constitution.

Imperial Dragon. The first scenario examines the possibility that China reacts belligerently to Japan's remilitarization and the United States redeploys its currently forward-based forces from Japan back to the Continental United States (CONUS). Chinese belligerent actions would most likely stem from China's deep-seated suspicions of a Japan that rampaged her country only 60 years ago.⁴⁸ These suspicions would

certainly be magnified if Japan were to remilitarize. Additionally, an even more dangerous scenario could erupt if the United States and China are unable to come to terms with nuclear proliferation issues. In that case, China's belligerent actions would likely be further exacerbated if the United States were to summarily withdraw its forces from Japan and the East Asian region altogether.⁴⁹ This would subsequently serve to swing the balance of power in favor of China who would most likely not turn away from an opportunity to increase its hegemonic influence over the East Asian region. Chinese nationalists are omnipresent in the Chinese government, and if they are able to stabilize their domestic situations vis-à-vis human rights issues they will undoubtedly turn to neighboring countries to maximize their power in the region.⁵⁰ This aggressive action from China would then drive Japan to accelerate its remilitarization efforts in an attempt to redistribute the balance of power. While the United States would provide Japan's nuclear deterrent force, the Japanese government would undoubtedly pressure the United States to share its missile defense technology as an additional insurance policy against Chinese nuclear attack.⁵¹ This scenario clearly has China with the upper hand in the region, and is ultimately the scenario to be most feared because a nationalistic Japan would begin to feel boxed into a corner.

Powder Keg. This scenario has China again acting belligerently against a remilitarized Japan, but the United States forces stationed in Japan would be redistributed within the region to help maintain the balance of power. While these forces would not remain in Japan, they would be reassigned to other forward-based locations within East Asia. This scenario is similar to Imperial Dragon with the exception that China would be deterred from overly aggressive, hegemonic actions due

to the fact that United States forces of considerable size and capability remain in the region. This scenario may result in an arms race between China, Japan, and the United States due to the added military capabilities of Japan that upset the balance of power.

Hidden Dragon. This scenario would take place if China's reaction is passive to the remilitarization of Japan and the United States redeploys its Japan-based forces back to CONUS. In this instance, China will continue on its rising path of economic success peacefully. China would not feel the need to increase its nuclear capability, so it would maintain its nuclear weapon inventory at current levels.⁵² Meanwhile, Japan will increase its military capabilities enough to counter any perceived threats from North Korea as well as posture itself to participate in collective security arrangements.

Déjà Vu. While the previous scenario titles are self-explanatory, the *Déjà Vu* nomenclature requires a brief explanation. This scenario examines the possibility that China will assume a passive stance to Japan's remilitarization, but the United States will reassign its Japan-based forces to other locations within East Asia. These conditions describe a familiar geopolitical situation in East Asia that existed pre-World War II: a peaceful China, a militarized Japan, and a United States with no military presence in Japan. This is the derivation of the title: "Déjà Vu." This scenario is similar to the *Hidden Dragon* scenario, but maintaining the United States forces in East Asia further curbs any Chinese belligerent ambitions. An added benefit of having the United States forces remain in the area would be the increase in opportunities for mil-to-mil engagement between the United States and China as well as Japan. Creating bilateral training opportunities between the United States and China and between Japan and China would serve to further alleviate tensions that may arise due to Japan's

remilitarization. These cooperative arrangements would subsequently set the conditions for these three huge powers to form strong coalitions and operate effectively during crisis situations, such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts that are all too common.

Of the four previously described scenarios, the most desirable to the United States is the Déjà Vu scenario. Although a more expensive option for the United States than Hidden Dragon, maintaining a more robust forward-based presence in this volatile area of the world is a strategically sound decision. The question then turns to what strategy the United States should employ to set the conditions for achieving the scenario described in Déjà Vu after Japan declares its intentions to amend Article 9 of its Constitution. The first priority must be to maintain a stable and peaceful China. Additionally, the United States must have a well thought out plan to realign its force structure in the region if Japan amends its Constitution. This paper will now address these two key variables vis-à-vis policy recommendations with specific emphasis on each recommendation's feasibility, acceptability, and suitability.

Policy Recommendations

The United States has many tools at its disposal to help ensure that the rise of China continues to be stable and peaceful. Diplomacy should be the first tool of choice for this objective. A good place to start diplomatically would be to increase efforts to reunify the Korean peninsula. Currently, China uses North Korea as a puppet state to exercise its will over the region.⁵³ A reunified Korean peninsula would hopefully be a stable, democratic state similar to South Korea that would not be as easily influenced by China. Each year, more and more North Koreans become disgruntled with the regime

due to scarce food and other resources.⁵⁴ Additionally, the North Korean regime's leader is presumably ill. These two factors make the current government of North Korea particularly vulnerable, and thus, an agreement on reunification is that much more feasible. While this option is certainly acceptable (the reunification of Korea is already a stated goal of the United States), there is some risk involved. If the two Koreas become one, then China becomes more isolated in the region because her main puppet state will have been taken away. This leaves the opaque government of China with fewer strategic choices when it comes to power projection in East Asia.

The second option to consider is also diplomatic in nature. Many countries in East Asia and the Pacific Rim have either fledgling or unstable democracies in place. In order to curb China's influence in the region, the United States must engage and actively support these countries. Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand are countries that teeter between success and failure vis-à-vis democracy. The more democracies that are in place, the higher the likelihood that peace will be an enduring theme. The United States must ensure the success of democracies in countries throughout East Asia and the Pacific Rim. This success will occur through persistent diplomatic and economic efforts. As they represent "soft" power, these efforts are likely to be both feasible and acceptable. Paradoxically, the proliferation of democracy in East Asia and the Pacific Rim does carry some risk. As with Korean reunification, the option of ensuring democratic governments in the region serves to further the isolation of China. If China feels too isolated, then the government is more likely to act aggressively towards its neighbors out of fear.

The third option for consideration deals largely with the military instrument of power. Currently, the United States knows comparatively little about the Chinese military and its operational capabilities. Knowledge of the Chinese military would be extremely beneficial to the United States, as it would aid in determining overall Chinese national objectives. Possessing this knowledge would subsequently lead to an overall weakening of the Chinese position in East Asia. One way to increase transparency is to actively engage the Chinese military through bilateral exercise participation. This option would serve to not only gain operational knowledge of the Chinese military, but also it would engender trust between the two nations. The United States would need to be careful about employing this option in order to maintain its feasibility. The recommendation is to use a stepping stone approach with respect to the scale of exercises. By starting with limited objective exercises and working up to ones of larger scale, the United States would ensure that they maintained China's trust. There is certainly some risk associated with this option. The main allies of the United States in the region, Japan and South Korea, may question our motives as to the reason we are engaging in bilateral exercises with China. This second order effect must be mitigated through skillful diplomatic efforts with those countries.

While the previous options involved diplomatic or military elements, the fourth option uses the economic element of power. The Chinese government is able to keep a tight grasp on power due largely to a strong, vibrant economy.⁵⁵ China's poor record on human rights would likely result in populist revolt if it were not for a robust economy that keeps its people at bay. The United States, Japan, and the European Union (EU) are China's top three trading partners and are, therefore, largely responsible for China's

economic success.⁵⁶ These trading partners should exert economic pressure that links future trade and foreign investment to China's improvement in human rights.

Encouraging positive action towards human rights ensures China remains a peaceful, stable country, even possibly proceeding towards democracy. This option would need a unified front in order to be most effective although unilateral action by the United States would have some effect. Because of the desire for involvement by a large number of countries (each with their own economic self-interest at stake), this option is questionable as to its feasibility. If employed, however, the risk for this option is relatively low. The Chinese government depends on a strong economy not only for its continued control on power, but also to ensure continued funding of its military advancements. They are likely to make many concessions on human rights issues to ensure continued trade with its three biggest trading partners.

If Japan were to amend its Constitution and develop a "normal" military capability, China's East Asian influence must be counterbalanced in order to maintain stability in the region. Certainly, there is no single solution to this complicated issue, but through application of each of the four previously described options in a well-orchestrated manner, the United States will have a comprehensive strategy that maximizes the opportunity for success.

The second variable to be considered in attaining the conditions of the *Déjà Vu* scenario involves how the United States would redistribute its military forces within the East Asian region in response to the Japanese amending their Constitution. This has actually already begun due to political pressure from the Japanese public on the island of Okinawa. In response to various incidents of military misconduct, the United States

has already withdrawn many of its forces from the island and repositioned them to Guam.⁵⁷ The island of Guam is an excellent option for force redistribution as it retains a strategically important location to protect United States interests.

Another option for redistributing forces would be to work with the government of the Philippines to reestablish United States presence there. Recent discussion between the two governments has indicated that this is a real possibility.⁵⁸ Like Guam, the Philippines would give the United States a strategically important forward-based location from which to not only prosecute the War on Terror but also to protect the Taiwan Strait as well as the Korean peninsula and Japan. A distinct advantage that the Philippines would give the United States would be that the cost of stationing thousands of troops there would be considerably lower than in Japan, one of the most expensive countries in the world. Even if the Philippine government were not as generous as the Japanese in subsidizing United States presence, chances are the costs to the United States would be much lower.

Finally, when considering United States force redistribution as a result of a militarized Japan, serious consideration must be put into maintaining a nuclear deterrent force in Japan. Even though one of the assumptions made for the matrix was that Japan would require most of the United States military to leave the country, a nuclear deterrent force must remain behind in order to dissuade Japan from any thoughts of nuclear armament.

Conclusion

While it is in the interest of the United States for Japan to amend Article 9 of its Constitution, the strategic implications of such a change are enormous. Just as

importantly, the issue of amending Article 9 has come up with increasing frequency in the Diet. It is not a matter of “if”, but “when” the change will come, and the United States must be ready to assist Japan in this venture when it happens.

For these reasons, the process of amending the Japanese Constitution must be executed in a pragmatic manner. The United States authored the 1946 Constitution and pressured the Japanese government to accept it as part of their “unconditional surrender” ending World War II. The subsequent effort to amend the Constitution must be a bi-lateral effort to ensure acceptability to both countries.

While the United States must be a key player during the amendment process, Japan’s neighbors must also be convinced that Japan does not harbor any imperialistic notions as it did in the past. The most effective method Japan can use to assure its neighbors is through strategic communications. In addition to clearly articulating its peaceful intentions in remilitarizing, Japan should unequivocally apologize to each of the offended nations for the atrocities committed during the first half of the 20th century.⁵⁹ As recently as November 2008, high-level officials within the Japanese government continue to raise suspicions about their future ambitions. The Japanese Air Self-Defense Force Chief of Staff antagonized both China and South Korea by publishing an essay that said Japan was not an aggressor in World War II.⁶⁰ The essay went on to urge an end to the Constitutional restraints on the military. This type of rhetoric must be stopped in order for the Japanese to be successful in lifting the Article 9 military restrictions.

If Japan is capable of getting beyond its chauvinistic and nationalistic tendencies, the amendment of Article 9 could result in Japan being an equal partner in collective

security without upsetting the balance of power in the region. A peaceful and more prosperous East Asia may emerge.

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