# Japan, a Normal State?

## *Japão, um Estado Normal?*

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## Abstract

This article seeks to demonstrate that Japan throughout time has made gradual adjustments throughout time to increase its military capacities, in order to regain autonomy in relation to its defence. With this process of "adjustment", without constitutional reforms, Japan presently possesses military capabilities that are similar to those of the primary global powers in terms of budget, technologically advanced military resources, manpower, and it masters the entire cycle for the production of a nuclear weapon. In an unstable regional scenario, entwined with the rise of threat to Japan's strategic and economic security and with the increase of the possibility of being abandoned by the United States, what is preventing Japan in claiming its defence autonomy and taking collective security actions? The first part of this reflection introduces some concepts that indicate the contradictions, paradoxes, and fundaments that underpin the construction of the Japanese security identity. The second part concentrates on the analysis of the tendency of revision or of reinterpretation of the Japanese Constitution with regards to possessing Armed Forces as a foreign policy instrument.


**Keywords:** Japan; Normal State; Militarization; Pacifism; Japan-USA Alliance.


## Resumo

Este artigo propõe demonstrar que o Japão aplicou ao longo do tempo ajustes graduais de crescimento das suas capacidades militares para recuperar autonomia em sua própria defesa. Com este processo de "ajustes", sem reformas constitucionais, Japão detém atualmente capacidades militares similares às das principais potências mundiais em termos de orçamento, recursos materiais tecnologicamente avançados, contingentes humanos e domina todos os


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ciclos para produção da arma nuclear. Em um cenário regional instável, com a emergência de riscos à sua segurança estratégica e econômica e com aumento da possibilidade de ser abandonado pelos Estados Unidos, o que falta para o Japão assumir sua autonomia em defesa e atuar em ações de segurança coletiva? O texto avalia, na primeira parte, alguns conceitos que apontam as contradições, paradoxos e fundamentos que embasam a construção da identidade de segurança do Japão. E, na segunda, concentra-se na análise da tendência de revisão ou de reinterpretação da Constituição Japonesa no que tange ter Forças Armadas como instrumentos de Política Externa.

**Palavras-chave:** Japão; Estado Normal; Militarização; Pacifismo; Aliança Japão-EUA.

## Introduction

Different contributions with focus on East Asia have concluded that in spite of its economic-commercial interdependencies, the region is marked by the lack of institutions which would be able to create even a modest sense of security. The regional security architecture is basically embedded in military alliances with the United States (USA), and the physical presence of its troops.

Apart from the fact that Asia is the region with the strongest presence of nuclear states, – a circumstance which is further exacerbated by North Korea´s recent demonstration of possessing nuclear capabilities – an extensive series of contentious issues also became apparent, which generates an environment of continued tension and relative instability. The Korean Peninsula and Taiwan are the most important locations regarding such matters, and, when it comes to Japan, the territorial disputes with Russia, China, and South Korea should also be noted, as well as the historical resentments related to the country´s imperialist past.

Confronted with this unstable scenario, and with the worst safety environment during the Cold War (CW), Japan considers that in the post-CW period, four menaces that threaten its strategic and economic security have become evident: i) the Chinese emergence; ii) the North Korean regime's aggressiveness; iii) the possibility of being abandoned by the USA; and iv) the relative decline of its economy (SAMUELS, 2007, p. 258-60).

The big question which Japan faces (without Armed Forces and nuclear capacities) relates to what and who should guarantee its security. What certainty does the country have that the USA effectively would protect it in case of a conventional or nuclear attack? Should Japan recover its sovereignty within

the strategic-military dimension by directly assuming the responsibility for its own defence? Are nuclear capabilities indispensable? How can economic power be transmuted into political power? Are military capabilities a pre-requisite for political capabilities?

These issues have become more pressing with the current USA president´s emphasis on defending the "America First" strategy, thus making clear that his primary interest is self-preservation with the country´s institutions and intact values, but in order to accomplish this, it is necessary to avoid nuclear war with China (ALLISON, 2017).

In order to guarantee its security, since 1945 Japan has applied a gradualist strategy of increasing its military capabilities according to the i) varying increase or decrease of the feeling of security or insecurity; ii) the different stages in its economic growth; iii) the changes in the interests of the domestic coalition in power, and; iv) the external possibilities.

With this process of "adjustment", without constitutional reforms, Japan presently possesses military capabilities that are similar to those of the primary global powers in terms of budget, technologically advanced military resources, and manpower. Furthermore, it masters the entire cycle for the production of nuclear weapons, as well as nuclear launching capabilities (PARIS, 2016). What else is required in order to officially announce its offensive capabilities, assume its autonomy in defence-related matters, and act in collective self-defence?

The term "normal state", or "normal country", was introduced by the Prime Ministers Hatoyama Ichiro (1954-1956) and Kishi Nobusuke (1957-1960) as a "traditional nation-state", in the defence and expectation of Japan´s reassessment of its autonomy and national power (IOKIBE, 2011, p. 213-14). Hook (1996, p. 2) states that Japan's normalization process has begun in the end of the 1940s as a result of the intensification of the CW, therefore still during the period of Allied Occupation (1945-1952).

The definition of a new national security strategy is understood, in this regard, as the process of transformation of the Japanese Self Defence Forces (JSDF) into an army with the ability to act in offensive missions, and it also means to avoid an imminent attack or to take part in collective security arrangements outside the Japanese national territory. In other words, it corresponds to the jargon which often has been used in relation to "normalization", or rather "a country able and willing to defend itself with military force, with or without U.S. assistance" (BERKOFSKY, 2011, p. 9).

"Normalization" comprises two crucial moments; the first relating to the demilitarization during the Occupation, while the second concerns the (re) militarization as a process of restoring the legitimacy of the military as a public policy instrument (HOOK, 1996, p. 173). The flexibilization of the traditional pacifist posture does not necessarily imply a militarist and offensive tendency, but simply that the responsibility of self-defence is assumed.

Without being able to preview how these trends of change will continue in the future, Pyle (2007, p. 17) affirms that after more than half a century of distancing from international politics, "Japan is revising its domestics institutions and preparing to become a major player in the strategic struggles of the twenty-first century". These tendencies became much more pronounced during the mandates of the PMs Junichuro Koizumi (04/2001-09/2006) and Shinzo Abe (09/2006-09/2007 and 12/2012-...).

On the external level, the uncertainties are centred on the continuance or the disruption of the Japan-USA Alliance and to the reactions of the countries in North East Asia (China and the Korean Peninsula). *A priori,* the very hypothesis of normalization already creates tension, with China and Korea positioning themselves very negatively towards such normalization. If Japan seeks autonomy in order to guarantee its security, will the maintenance of the Alliance with the USA as it is today not eventually frustrate the Japanese aspiration towards sovereign independence? (HUGHES, 2015).

The objective of this article is to demonstrate that Japan has accepted the Constitution of Peace, but never abdicated from the right to recover its plain sovereignty, with autonomy to maintain its own defence. Through a continuous and consistent strategy of adjustment, based on different constitutional interpretations, Japan has become marked by conditions which permit the affirmation that it nowadays possesses Armed Forces and no longer an SDF. Yet, confronted with a hostile regional scenario, it seeks to maintain and consolidate a military alliance with the USA, yet, from a position of equality and not of subordination.

The first part of this reflection introduces some concepts which indicate the contradictions, paradoxes, and fundaments that underpin the construction of the Japanese security identity. The second part concentrates on the analysis of the tendency of revision or of reinterpretation of the Japanese Constitution with regards to possessing Armed Forces as a foreign policy instrument. It concentrates on the analysis of the specific instruments developed in order to guarantee its security and on their adjustments throughout time.

## Japanese Security Identity

The Japanese security identity[2], which was defined upon its surrender in 1945, was related to domestic anti-militarism, moulded by the principles of i) not possessing a traditional Armed Force; ii) abstaining from the use of force unless in self-defence; and iii) not participating in foreign wars. These are central principles within its security identity that serve as a basis for policy formulation, and especially foreign policy (OROS, 2015, p. 139-141).

The Japanese Constitution (the Peace Constitution), and particularly in its preamble and Article 9, is a symbol of the post-CW pacifism. In popular and academic perception, a profound belief in the "Japanese pacifism" can be detected – even if imposed by the victors. This is how the Japanese are seen and how they would like to be seen among themselves. In spite of recognizing the presence of innumerable and convinced pacifists in the country, Almog (2014) criticizes the general perception of the Japanese state as pacifist. In his perspective, the Article 9 was not inserted in the constitution with a pacifist motivation, but rather in order to avoid that Japan would become a threat to the USA in particular, and to the world one more time.

Although the Article 9 states that "land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained", the existence of Japanese troops, euphemistically denominated as "self-defence" forces, is nonetheless mentioned. Hook et al. (2012: p. 3-7) refer to this as a "metaphor of contradiction" and in the same line of argument highlight how the Japanese international insertion raises a series of conflictive interpretations and "has evinced, and continues to evince, metaphors and polemics of change, challenge, contradiction and capriciousness".

In the specific case of nuclear threats, the notion of a pacifist Japan presents a profound ambivalence. A staunch defender of global nuclear disarmament, Japan is nonetheless very keen to stay below the USA nuclear umbrella and to preserve its warranty of extended deterrence (VAN DE VELDE, 1988; WALTZ, 2000). On the other hand, Japan has maintained its nuclear weaponry option since the late 1950s, and has the knowledge to develop nuclear weapons because of its

2 "A security identity is a set of collectively held principles that have attracted broad political support regarding the appropriate role of state action in the security arena and are institutionalized into the policy-making process … providing an overarching framework recognized both by top decision makers and by major societal actors under which a state shapes its security practices"(OROS, 2008, p. 9; OROS, 2015, p. 145).

technological expertise. However, the country has made it very clear that it will only develop such weaponry if it were to be abandoned by the USA (HOEY, 2016; PARIS, 2016; OROS, 2017; ROEHRIG, 2017).

Objectively, Akimoto (2013) considers that "Japan's security identity has been constantly changing and elusive". Or rather, it presents "schizophrenic tendencies", as it has changed from a militarist ultra-nationalist state to a pacifist state after its defeat. As a disarmed state, it appears to want to preserve its security "by trusting in the justice and faith of the peace-loving peoples of the world"; participating in a military alliance, it refuses to take part in the Korean and Vietnam wars.

Paraphrasing Coulmy´s work (1991, p. 8-9), Martre underlines the high degree of contradiction within Japan´s defence policy, which in practice can be translated as a permanent ambiguity. These contradictions thus become apparent as one accepts that Japan is "a society in movement, with long term objectives, departing from a disastrous initial situation, resulting from the capitulation in 1945".

Amongst these contradictions, the Japanese-American relationship as the basis for the Japanese defence policy can be highlighted, as well as the role of the Japanese society. For the USA, Japan has always held the role of a defeated nation, but still constituted an ally in the confrontation with the Soviet Union (today with China); a vassal, but also a technological powerhouse. On the internal level, a population which is "allergic to all kinds of military engagement and nuclear armaments" should be highlighted, yet, it is still conscious of the vulnerabilities resulting from the lack of resources and dependency of sources and external markets, and also recognizes the threatening presence of nuclear powers within this unstable region.

Nevertheless, this relationship with the USA can also be interpreted, not as a contradiction, but as a result of a continued pattern of international insertion moulded by the adhesion to, and support for, the leading world power, "whether this is the Middle Kingdom of China, imperialist Great Britain, revanchist Germany, the hegemonic USA, or the post-9/11 USA conducting war on terror" (HOOK et al. 2012, p. 35).

In this regard, the Japanese narratives about sovereignty and autonomy are normally correlated with its hierarchic relations, no matter if it is towards Asia, the West, or the USA in the post-war period. Its identity is therefore constituted by the practice of comparison with the "others" (KOLMAS, 2018), or by differentiation in relation to the other, seen as either superior or inferior (HAGSTRÖM and GUSTAFSSON, 2015).

The reflections regarding the different approaches to identity in relation to Japan show that the first one regards an identity which is constituted by norms and a domestic culture, and comprises of interests that define norms, while the other regards processes of differentiation vis-à-vis to "others", – Hagström and Gustafsson (2015, p. 1) conclude that the second, relational approach is more theoretically solid as it permits that continuity and change be treated within the same relational structure, and the authors also indicate that Japan tends to assume "a political agenda centred on strengthening Japan militarily".

For Japan, Asia remains a reified entity with multiple meanings. On the one hand, it is a space in which Japan can exercise leadership, – generating economic opportunities – and on the other, it contains potential threats, not less likely to the resurgence of territorial disputes with its neighbours (TAMAKI, 2015). Gustafsson (2015) pinpoints that as long as China recognizes the Japanese identity as pacifist, Japan is more disposed to maintain this idea of itself. Yet, when the anti-Japanese feeling grows, the Japanese actors seek to distance themselves from this identity and to "normalize" itself.

In this regard, if the regional security environment continues to evolve in a dramatic way, the security identity of domestic antimilitarism "will grow even more disconnected from the previous environment under which it was crafted, which could result in a much more 'proactive' version of the articulated policy of 'proactive pacifism'" (OROS, 2015, p. 157).

It thereby becomes essential to question whether pacifism or antimilitarism represents an identity reality which is moulded by culture and norms (OROS, 2008), or an imposed, yet, pragmatic pacifism and antimilitarism?

For Green (2010, p. 485) the idea that culture and norms determine security practice is evidently problematic as the surge of antimilitarism is intrinsically connected to Japan's devastating defeat in the war. The author broadens this reflection considering that the realists can use "the constructivists' insights as intervening variables and still maintain a focus on the distribution of power as the primary driver for change or non-change in Japanese security practice".

Meanwhile, there is still a profound rift between those who seek to explain "how identity is created and maintained (using identity as a 'dependent variable') and those who seek to explain how identity affects policy-making (using identity as an 'independent variable')" (OROS, 2015, p. 159). Merging constructivist and realist perspectives, Komine (2014, p. 91) underscores that although constructivism does not manage to fully comprise of the changing process in defence policy, "the

public culture of anti-militarism in Japan can be a useful lens for understanding the trade-off between external military requirements and internal normative restraints".

In line with the perspective of "a society in movement", although the rebirth of security in Japan represents a rejuvenation of thinking and conceptual approaches, it does not constitute an outright rupture with the past. Old ideas and memories of elites and societies in general continue to influence the Japanese thinking on security and to generate obstacles for the establishment of defence policies. These "legacies from the past" are i) the memories of its colonist past until the Pacific War; ii) the more than sixty years of antimilitarism (or pacifism); and iii) the unequal and continued security alliance with the USA (OROS, 2017, p. 24-25).

Taking such legacy into consideration, it becomes possible to infer that adjustments or changes in Japanese security or defence policies depend on the Japanese identity and are permeable to the regional or international scenario. In other words, the Japanese international military agency "cannot be understood fully without taking into account the complex interaction between the people, the state and international society in defining 'identity' and 'normality' in the process of determining defence and security policies" (HOOK, 1996, p. 1-2).

This rationale is reinforced by the consideration that international politics can, and does present a broad variety of failures and misperceptions "but rarely is it the simple product of shifts either in external balances of power or in domestic debate" (SAMUELS, 2007, p. 294). In this perspective, the modern Japanese history is characterized by long periods of polarized debate, culminating in a grand consensus around the implementation of a national security strategy.

On three different occasions the Japanese leaders, on basis of internal legitimacy and consensus, managed to device a coherent and broadly implemented national security strategies (SAMUELS, 2007, p. 297-303). The first, the Meiji Revolution, was related to the construction of a "rich country, strong army"; the second, in the beginning of the 20th century, focused on Japanese hegemony in Asia; and the third, in the CW, presented Japan as a pacifist trading state. According to Samuels (2007), Japanese politics nowadays is, once again, going through a process of defining a new national security strategy.

In these historical moments of consensus construction, *autonomy* and *prestige* were the central values related to achieving national objectives, and *vulnerability* the enduring reality. Recognizing the importance of vulnerability, Samuels (2007, p. 287) defends that "Japan has evolved a "strategic culture" and a national identity in which vulnerability has long been a central feature".

In spite of the defeat and the forced reforms of the post-war, the Japanese surviving political leaders maintained the objective of reaching national power, yet this time with focus on economic development, characterizing a "mercantile realism". Nonetheless, the economic-commercial emphasis did not imply a radical distancing from military security. The agenda with focus on economic and technological security included the military and diplomatic spheres (HEGINBOTHAM and SAMUELS, 1998).

Obviously, confronted with the proliferation of the feeling of vulnerability, every amendment or reinterpretation of the Constitution is strongly focused on Article 9. Furthermore, this dilemma is far from recent, it has emerged in different moments since the post-war period. Nixon (1958) for example, publically declared that the imposition of Article 9 and the disarmament of Japan were "mistakes" (PYLE, 2007, 229). Coulmy (1991) highlights that it was an unrealistic decision and that Article 9 quickly led to a series of problems. PM Hatoyama's declaration, in 1956, exemplifies this line of criticism, stating that "it is unreasonable to think that the purpose of the Constitution is that Japan has to sit and wait for death when it comes under attack by missiles and other weapons" (KITAOKA, 2018, p. 2).

There is a consentual perception that as a result of the defeat, the nuclear attacks, and the pressures from the occupying forces, Japan adopted the principle of renouncement of war (Article 9), accepted to deactivate all its military contingencies and, with the guarantee provided by the USA-Japan security treaty, assumed a pacifist attitude. This is basically the history of a defeated country forced to submit itself, it eventually accepted submission as a strategy for economic recovery.

As the Security Treaty by its very nature is asymmetric and relegates Japan the role of a dependent partner, "the fear of abandonment has been a more constant aspect associated with the alliance security dilemma than the fear of entrapment" (ASHIZAWA, 2014, p. 71-73). This makes room to the emergence of two different movements: one of anxiety and insecurity regarding the USA commitment; and the other, constituted as a pressure to ensure continuance of the USA´s presence in Asia. Azhizawa later adds that that this fear became even stronger after the defeat of the USSR.

The Japanese anti-militarism has never been "a pacifist security identity", as it both leaves room for the existence of an army in the post-war period; and brings Japan closer to a military alliance (OROS, 2017). Furthermore, it is important to consider, despite popular support to its pacifist ideal, Japanese Constitution

has been imposed. In this sense, Article 9 "far from representing a pacifist ideal, amounts to no more than the victor disarming the defeated" (LUMMIS, 2013, p. 3).

Although the Japanese society is permeated by pacifist norms that shape its identity, Japan should not be viewed as a "military pygmy". On the contrary, during the CW "Japan transformed itself from a burned-out ruin to one of the world's foremost military powers" (LIND, 2004, p. 93). In the post-war period, Japan was sometimes seen as a military super power, sometimes as a dwarf, or a state with an unusual and reactive foreign policy, ignoring the fact that the country "had one of the largest defence budgets in the world, and also one of the world's most technologically advanced defence forces" (HAGSTRÖM and GUSTAFSSON 2015, p. 12-16).

On the basis of such complexity, when regarding the perception of the role and the intentions of Japan, – recognized as pacifist and antimilitarist, yet participating in a military alliance and with technologically advanced weapons – different analysts point to the impossibility of one single theory explaining its insertion in a region without institutionalized security mechanisms, and in which insecurity is a present and continuous issue (AKIMOTO, 2013; INOGUCHI, 2014b). Oros' theoretical framework, for example, is positioned in the intersection between a realist[3] and a constructivist approach, as it accepts the realist paradigm, but still considers the concept of Japanese security identity, which is "the collectively held principles that have attracted broad political support regarding the appropriate role of state action in the security arena and that are institutionalized in the policy-making process" (LINDGREN, 2017, p. 575).

Inoguchi (2014b) defends that varying aspects of Japanese foreign policy are explained by different traditions. The objectives of survival and of maintaining the status quo are shaped by classical realism: the transformative pragmatism seeks to capacitate the Japanese state to act with strength and without being dependent of the USA. Liberal internationalism, by its turn, would explain the aspiration to strengthen international norms and institutions, cooperating with other states in a multilateral fashion.

Akimoto (2013) recognizes that alternative theories or alternative conceptual branches alone are not enough to Japanese reality, but mutually complementary

3 A symbolic example of the difficulties of a dissociation from the realist perspective was Nye´s (2001, p. 95) statement about the reactions to his analysis of the East Asian security context in 1995, "Friends have sometimes remarked on the irony that someone so closely associated with the concept of transnational interdependence should have helped produce a report that rested heavily on Realist thinking".

within an analytical eclecticism. The author suggests that Japan embodies three types of pacifisms: the *pacifism against war* in the immediate post War of the Pacific; the *realist pacifism* during the CW; and the *international pacifism* since the end of the CW, Together they correspond to the three traditions of the English School of International Relations: the Kantian Idealism, the Hobbesian Realism and the Grotian Institutionalism. The author complements this line of reason speculating that absolute pacifism (the negation of all types of war, contrary to the relative pacifism which justifies the need for war or the use of violence in some circumstances) works negatively both in relation to individual as well as collective self-defence (AKIMOTO, 2014).

Lind (2004) argues that pacifism and antimilitarism correspond to the constructivist norms, while Japan, when recognizing threats, employs a realist strategy of buck-passing, or rather, the transference of the costs of balancing to others. In this regard, it becomes evident that Japan is under pressure to normalize its behaviour. And, although this normalization might be in its interest, it is still convergent with the maintenance of Japan-USA alliance, recognizing that China already is stronger than Japan, but that the two (Japan and the USA) are stronger than China (NISHI, 2018, p. 908).

## The structure of the Security System

A widespread and often highlighted interpretation about Japanese behaviour sees the country as a free-rider which, by delegating its security to the USA, has been exclusively focused on its process of economic recovery. The present analysis, though, operates with the presumption that the Japan-USA Security Treaty is rather a bargain. The USA would defend and guarantee the Japanese security while Japan would concede installations, and bases for the USA operations in the Far East (SMITH, 2011).

Secondly, we also seek to demonstrate that Japan always has nurtured the intention, and has been forced to amplify its military capacities in order to guarantee its security, although it is not possible to identify a specific moment of change (OROS, 2017, p. 35). On the contrary, this trend has constituted a response to the need to confront possible threats (vulnerability), and also to enhance its standing within the international system (prestige).

Thirdly, this regards a Treaty which is marked by an unequal relation which, as it institutionalizes a mode of cooperation, has been transformed into an alliance, and as Japan has assumed the control of military operations, it has become more akin to a partnership with mutually beneficial and symmetric positions.

For Oros (2017), the surge of new threats in the post-CW period has spurred a "gradual awakening" with regards to the imperative of enhancing military capabilities. Shinoda (2011, p. 13) thus highlights that in the post-CW "Japan was forced to review its asymmetrical alliance with United States to become a more active player for international peace and security".

The analysis in this section focuses on two moments, the CW and the post-CW, due to the changing nature of the threats. We consider that the end of the CW interrupted a period which might be characterized as "the golden age" (1972-1989), when the Sino-American approximation made it possible for Japan and China to establish diplomatic bonds and maintain friendly relations with the USA vis-à-vis the USSR (VOGEL et al., 2002). Put differently, the end of the CW broke with the dynamic of the security architecture in North East Asia, which was based on the logic of bipolarity, thus requiring a new structure in order to confront novel threats (BUZAN, 2003).

## The Cold War

This tendency of "continuous change" in the definition of Japanese security was initially a consequence of the fact that the Occupation Forces (1945-1952) did not have a plan for how to maintain Japanese security.

Contrary to Roosevelt´s (1943) intentions of "unconditional surrender", the Potsdam Declaration (July 1945) reverted this disposition and thus avoided a direct military occupation, with the unconditional surrender explicitly maintained in relation to "all of the Japanese armed forces". In any case, we can identify the first contradiction, as we cannot speak of an unconditional surrender, but rather of "an unconditional acceptance by the loser of conditions provided by the victor" (IOKIBE, 2011, p. 22).

Demilitarization, democratization, and breaking the foundations of the Japanese industry were MacArthur´s objectives. The demilitarization was immediate, with the total demobilization of the military and police contingencies, and the destruction of their weapons. The reformulation of the Meiji Constitution

was likewise a very hasty process[4], as it was formulated by MacArthur´s staff and approved in October 1946, and implemented in May 1947, with the demilitarization (Article 9) incorporated to the Constitution.

Had it been laid down after the beginning of the CW, Article 9 would probably not have been inserted. The Japanese weaknesses, defenceless and demilitarized as the country was, became clear with the beginning of the Korean War, which pointed towards the urgency of certain adjustments; i) the rearmament and participation in military operations; ii) the creation of a police force for defence; iii) the definition of Japan´s security; and iv) the resumption of the industrial arms production.

With the advance of the CW, Japanese identity changed significantly, from being a subordinated enemy, towards being maintained in permanent submission as a member of the alliance led by the USA against communism, with a capitalist emergent economy and a liberal democratic political system. From the beginning of 1948, Japan´s role was thereby to serve as an advanced base for the USA military with its nuclear arsenal. "Japan was also to act as a symbol of the benefits of capitalism and as a beacon of democracy in communist Asia" (KELLY, 2015, p. 55).

The signature of a peace treaty in order to define Japan´s security thus became imminent. Hereby, in September 1951 the San Francisco Peace Treaty, and the Japan USA Security Treaty were signed. This unequal treaty maintained USA troops on Japanese territory and permitted the projection of military power on third countries. Yet, it did not include the commitment and the obligation to defend Japan (PYLE, 2007). For the USA, the treaty served two purposes: to construct a fortress against communism and to control Japan (CHA, 2009).

In 1950, Foster Dulles pressured Japan to rearm, re-establish the Armed Forces and participate in the Pacific Pact led by the USA (CHOONG, 2015). Apart from Article 9, the Japanese denial considered the negative popular reactions and the priority of economic recovery. So, following an order from MacArthur, the National Policy Reserve was created with 75.000 members and, in 1952, was transformed into the National Security Force (COULMY, 1991; PYLE, 2007).

Because of the Japanese opposition, the Mutual Defence Assistance Agreement (MDA) signed in 1954 maintained the USA forces in the country and forced Japan to assume greater responsibilities for its defence. Interpreting that Article 9 would

4 MacArthur was in a hurry as he sought to rush back to the USA in order to present himself as a republican presidential candidate (CHA, 2009).

not veto self-defence, permitting "the necessary minimum" for defence in the case of an attack, the Japan Defence Agency (JDA) and the JSDF were created, with a contingency of 152.000 men, much inferior to the 350.000 demanded by the USA (MASWOOD, 1990; PYLE, 2007). Would the MDA, thus, not answer the main question: what is the reason for foreign troops to be stationed on Japanese territory if these would not act in Japan´s defence?

With Kishi´s pressures for a more direct commitment from the USA in the defence of Japan, the Security Treaty, which was revised in 1960, defined the obligation of the USA to intervene in case of hostilities on Japanese territory (SHIMAMOTO, 2015), yet, without any reference to the question of extended nuclear dissuasion or the nuclear umbrella (ROEHRIG, 2017). The Basic Policy for National Defence was also established with the objective of developing defence capacities in accordance with the country´s resources, but within the limits imposed by self-defence.

Yet, towards the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, the two sides felt the need for further adjustments in their relations. The USA increased its pressures on Japan to assume a more active role, not only in its own defence, but also in the region within the political, economic, and security dimensions.

The announcement of the probable retreat of the American forces from Asia (the Nixon Doctrine) and the Sino-American rapprochement in 1971 intensified the Japanese feeling of abandonment. Consequently, the country sought to strengthen the JSDF, qualitatively and quantitatively, and to reinforce its national security policy in a more independent manner (KOMINE, 2014).

Thereby, the National Defence Program Outline (NDPO, 1976) and the Guidelines for USA-Japan Defence Cooperation (1978) were implemented. With the NDPO, Japan should maintain minimum levels of defence with capacity to resist a limited external attack without foreign assistance. The USA also made the insertion of Japan below the nuclear umbrella official (ROEHRIG, 2017). In order to avoid an elevated rise in defence spending, a ceiling of 1% of GDP was established (Nakanishi, 2011, p. 121). With the Guidelines, Japan and the USA agreed to broaden their military cooperation, with hitherto unprecedented measures in the joint defence planning, as a response to the armed attack and cooperation in relation to East Asian security questions that could potentially affect Japanese security (SHIMAMOTO, 2015).

With these new guidelines, Japan did not only permit the continued presence and support for American forces on its territory, but it also guaranteed a direct

military contribution for the implementation of an American security strategy in the Asia Pacific (HOOK, 1996). Effectively, this took form much more as an alliance than merely as an instance of security cooperation, which justified the change in rhetoric in referring to the Japan-USA Security Treaty as a Japan-USA Alliance. According to Maslow (2015), these innovations concluded the process of the formation of Japan´s security system in the post-war.

In order to supply the forces involved in the Korean War, the USA officially authorized the production of weapons (03/1952) and returned 859 military installations to the Japanese, "among them 314 aircraft factories, 131 military arsenals, 25 aircraft and weapons research centres and 18 shipyards" (DRIFTE, 1986, p. 9).

The production and the prohibition of weapon exports (1967) were fundamental to the revitalization of the economy and for the advancement of dual technologies upon the transfer of USA military technology to Japan (COULMY, 1991, 111). While the USA saw the production as a way to consolidate the JSDF, the Japanese industries took advantage of this in order to gain a more central position within the general process of economic reconstruction, and particularly in relation to weapon production (DRIFTE, 1986, p. 10).

As dual technology can be applied to both civil and military sector, the weapons production has been designated to the most qualified of the large Japanese industrial conglomerates, without the investments being registered within the JDAs budget (COULMY, 1991, p. 177-183).

Thus, through a conventional understanding, it might be claimed that there are no weapon industries or military-industrial complexes in Japan. Although in practice all of the large conglomerates were involved in direct production or supply of components, few were registered as JDA producers, even though with the export prohibition, this is the only client (DRIFTE, 1986, p. 86).

Based on the Directives of 1978, and the MDA of 1954, Japan ceded to American pressures in 1983 and flexibilized the "three principles of arms exports" that restricted the American access to technology and equipment. As it transferred technology, the Japanese demands for access to the secret American defence patents were met through the participation in the Strategic Defence Initiative Programme (SDI) in 1988 (DRIFTE, 1986; CHIEH-LIN, 1989; COULMY, 1991; MURATA, 2011; GRONNING, 2018). It is worthwhile to note Reagan´s description of the SDI as "an alternative to the system of nuclear deterrence" (KATZENSTEIN and OKAWARA, 1993, p. 114).

With the approval of the Atomic Energy Basic Act (1955), Japan reinitiated its nuclear development research from the period of the Pacific War, yet now for peaceful purposes. Even so, Kishi declared in 1957 that the Constitution did not veto the possession of nuclear weapons, an official interpretation which has been maintained by different administrations since then (CHOONG, 2015).

With the considerable resources that were invested in mastering the complete nuclear cycle, it becomes possible to affirm that Japan has the sufficient material resources and knowledge to quickly develop a nuclear weapon (PARIS, 2016). Financial costs and possible negative domestic and external reactions would dissuade the production of nuclear weapons, but in case of a rupture of the USA commitment to extended deterrence, Japan does possess the necessary conditions to quickly resume its development (ROEHRIG, 2017).

It can thereby be concluded that Japan does not have the intention of possessing nuclear weapons while still enjoying the protection of the USA nuclear umbrella.

Based on its economic and technological capacities, during the 1980s Nakasone sought to transform Japan into an international actor that would play a political role that corresponded to its economic power, with the military also serving as a legitimate instrument of state power (HOOK, 1996). Consequently, towards the end of the CW, Japan had become a sophisticated producer of technologically advanced weapons, and it maintained a similar arsenal to that of the main powers, as well as a scientific-technological cooperation with the USA. It also played a significant role within international security by possessing high technology, which constituted a critical resource in terms of international security matters, meaning that its interests in reassuming a position of power were not restricted by technology, but only by politics (VOGEL, 1992, p. 56-57).

## Post-Cold War

The end of the CW and of the bipolar international system represented, on the one hand, a movement towards its restructuring, and on the other, changes which would compromise global stability, and/or the confidence in existing international regimes. In the specific realm of security, the disappearance of bipolar conflict did not spur, – as was otherwise presumed – a long era of peace and economic

development, but rather the surge of new threats, also within the field of nuclear development.

By reaffirming its hegemonic position, the USA adopted a strategy of pressuring for a higher degree of division of responsibilities, with different states participating in the maintenance of international stability and prosperity (IKENBERRY, 1998).

Some trends which already had become evident in Japan were exacerbated, such as the deepening of Japanese-American cooperation, or the reaffirmation of expectations to reacquire plain sovereignty, and thus, to normalize itself on the basis of a growing nationalism.

The aspirations towards regional leadership due to the relative distancing of the USA, eventually clashed with the rapid Chinese emergence in the beginning of the 21st century, but also with the USA policy of maintaining its presence in the region. Confronted with the new status of China and the growing North Korean nuclear threat, Japan resumed the strategy of strengthening its military alliance with the USA.

In the immediate post-CW, due to the belief that Russia – with its reduced capabilities – was the only threat, the revision of the NDPO (1995) emphasized international cooperation (especially military cooperation), approved the reduction of personnel and heavy material, and scheduled further reductions, including even the probable termination of USA military presence in Japan (OROS, 2017; NISHI, 2018).

The eruption of the War in Iraq (1990) pressed Japan to review its policies of international insertion. After strong critique of Japan´s "check book diplomacy" during the Gulf War, the pressures for normalization grew, and Ozawa[5] began to call out for participation in international peacekeeping operations (PKOs) (YASUTOMO and ISHIGAKI, 2017, p. 958).

The debate about participation in PKOs was marked by three different positions: i) respecting the Constitution, with participation in multilateral operations restricted to civil assistance; ii) reinterpreting the Constitution in order to permit the assumption of greater international responsibilities, and iii) that the Constitution already did permit such action in the case of sufficient political will and leadership (NEWMAN, 2006, p. 331-32).

5 Ichiro Ozawa, at the time the General Secretary of the LDP and author of the work *Blueprint for a New Japan: The Rethinking of a Nation* (Tokyo & New York: Kodansha International, 1994), apart from introducing the term of a *normal state* also defended that Japan should assume a more active role within international politics and within the international peace operations.

In fact, the absence of a Japanese contribution to the Gulf War reflected an incapacity to recognize the emerging norms that stipulated the involvement of UN members in military issues, independently of their domestic policies (KURASHINA, 2005).

The approval of the International Peacekeeping Operations Law made it possible to send troops to Cambodia in 1992 and, more importantly, generated "a new security role for the SDF, namely expanding the SDF's identity from a force with a national defence mission to one that incorporated an international dimension" (SINGH, 2010, p. 443).

The North Korean nuclear development (1993-1994) and the Chinese missile tests (1995-1996) in the Taiwan Strait demonstrated the importance and the weakness of the Japan-USA Alliance and constituted the basis for the Hashimoto-Clinton Declaration (IOKIBE, 2011, p. 230), which resulted in the revision of the Japan-USA Guidelines for Defence Cooperation in 1997.

With this reformulation, the Alliance´s character of self-defence was reaffirmed, but its operational scope was widened to include the broader region, or the "areas surrounding Japan". In practice, the JSDF assumed the role of containing foreign troops (FUKUSHIMA and SAMUELS, 2018), yet, under the USA command (PARIS, 2016, p. 6). Nonetheless, the rather vague character of the concept of "surrounding areas" generated much questioning and impeded its implementation.

The offensive North Korean escalation with the launching of the Taepodong 1 (1998) and the War Against Terror in the post-9/11 period removed the constraints and permitted the approval of the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law (10/2001) and made it possible to send Maritime SDF for logistic support for USA and coalition troops in Afghanistan (KAWASHIMA, 2005; OROS, 2017).

Inoguchi (2008) considers that these measures and Japan´s support to the USA in the fight against terrorism marked the beginning of a period of transformation into a "global ordinary power". With the continuity of the external threats, and the growing mistrust in relation to how the USA would react in the case of an attack on the Japanese territory, the Koizumi and Abe governments made great efforts to increase military capabilities, reinforcing the Japan-USA Alliance and defining a greater global role for the JSDF, and more objectively, made an amendment to the Constitution which legitimized the JSDF and collective self-defence.

The creation of the Ministry of Defence (2007) and the establishment of the General Chief of Staff (2010) with authority over the three branches of the JSDF (land, sea, and air), and the reforms proposed by Abe in 2013 for the establishment

of an autonomous operational command, demonstrated that Japan advanced significantly in the direction of acquiring greater autonomy (PARIS, 2016).

Re-elected in December 2012, Abe declared that he had returned in order to rejuvenate Japan, to surpass the long period of economic stagnation and restore pride and national power (INOGUCHI, 2014a, p. 102). With high prestige due to the initial success in reviving the sluggish Japanese economy, Abe introduced the doctrine of "proactive pacifism" in a clear demonstration of the changes that would mark his mandate.

The proactive pacifism implied that Japan would change its traditional reactive posture and seek to anticipate concrete threats. The creation of the National Security Council, resulting from the National Security Strategy and the State Secrets Protection Law, was a clear sign of this ambition. Considered as "a potential watershed in Japanese strategic policy-making" these sought, – starting with the centralization of security policies – to develop a sophisticated scheme for crisis management with the objective of controlling alliances and reducing the dependence on the USA. Amongst other motivations, the most threatening was the fact that "the USA military had lost exclusive control of the air and sea near the Chinese coast, a portentous geostrategic shift" (FUKUSHIMA and SAMUELS, 2018, p. 773-778).

The revision of the Guidelines (2013/14) assured the maintenance of the extended nuclear deterrence for the Asia Pacific, and by including the right to collective self-defence, broadened the role of Japan within regional security, while still maintaining the principle of the use of "minimal necessary force" (KOMINE, 2014; KIM, 2015). In March 2016, the constitutional reform became effective, after having been approved in the Lower Chamber and the Senate (in July and September 2015), thus legitimizing the deployment of Japanese troops in combat situations abroad and allowing Japan to assume a greater strategic weight in the international scenario.

With these changes, it is possible to affirm that Japan today possesses armed forces and that it already has become a normal state, but still maintains its adherence to pacifism, by renouncing war and by the eradication of nuclear weapons.

Hughes (2015, p. 11) sustains that Abe acted aggressively by imposing Japan a more radical external agenda, minded upon subordinating the Yoshida Doctrine to the Abe Doctrine "in seeking recognition of Japan's standing among the first rank (...) of capitalist powers, recovery of its autonomy as an international player, recognition as a crucial USA partner and leader in Asia".

Although the deepening of this constitutional revision has occurred during the Abe government, this ideational framework, defined by Kishi Nobusuke and by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) from the point of its creation in 1955, has not been previously implemented due to the lack of internal and external political conditions, and due to the recognition of the country´s weaknesses and the inherent costs of a radical change. Most of these reforms were initiated by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), reflecting a consensual moment between the leadership of the LDP and the DPJ on the restoration of the country´s security policy (ROSS, 2015, p. 7).

What is more profoundly novel, and spurring a more thorough reassessment of the institution, decision-making procedures and the revision of Article 9, is the intensification of the tensions between Japan and China, especially because the dispute for the Senkaku/Diaoyu has raised a new dilemma for the USA: "for the first time in the alliance's history, a conflict that begins between Japan and another power seems possible". Until then, Japan imagined using force only for defensive purposes, and possibly in conflicts related to the Korean Peninsula and the Strait of Taiwan. With the new scenario of possible conflict between Japan and China, what would Washington´s capacity to demote tensions between these two countries amount to? (SMITH, 2016, p. 259).

The Chinese emergence was already a preoccupation for Japan. Yet, in the second decade of the 21st century, it became viewed as a concrete threat not only because of the claims over the Senkaku Islands, but also due to the investments and the modernization of the Chinese military capacities and increased aerial and maritime control of the first chain of islands, as defined in its maritime strategy.

Washington worked with the consensus that the Chinese engagement simultaneously with the strengthening of the Japan-USA Alliance would maintain a favourable balance of power in Asia, and at the same time legitimize its regional military presence (GREEN, 2011). Nonetheless, this strategy seems to have collapsed due to the increased Chinese assertiveness.

As continuous and cumulative adjustments have occurred since the promulgation of the Constitution, the present debate about the Japanese intent to normalize constitutes an anachronism, because "Japan has made the transition toward becoming a normal country, while holding on to some of its old and "abnormal" characteristics of the antimilitaristic propensity" (KIM, 2015, p. 223-24).

Considering what is normal or abnormal, Soeya et al. (2011, p. 9) speculate that changing Article 9 is not a high priority, as "Japan has managed to live with

the contradiction of Article 9 for more than fifty years and could probably do so for another fifty if necessary". Furthermore, "it is probably more important for Japan to carry more of the regional and global security burden than to try to iron out a symbolic constitutional anomaly".

Japan has always sought to strengthen the Alliance, partly in order to maintain its pacifist image, and in part because it does not possess nuclear weapons and considers extended nuclear deterrence as indispensable. The Japan-USA Alliance is still the main security anchor and Japan will only withdraw from this in case that Washington fails as an ally (GREEN, 2007).

Even so, in the doubt of whether the USA will maintain its commitment or whether the Japan-USA Alliance will be sufficient to maintain a favourable military balance within the region, Japan is establishing new regional partnerships with India and Australia, thus strengthening capacities with ASEAN countries, intelligence cooperation with South Korea, and taking advantage of points of convergence with Russia in order to neutralize China (SAMUELS and WALLACE, 2018).

In line with these preparations for an eventual drastic change in the security structure, Japan has taken precautions to master the different stages of production of a nuclear weapon, lacking only the conduction of a nuclear test (PARIS, 2016, p. 5).

## Final Considerations

The recent reinterpretations of Japanese security policies, with legal approvals from the Diet and revisions in the Japan-USA Alliance, reformulated the pacifist system of the Peace Constitution. Japan can already participate in military operations, with or without the USA, to defend friendly countries or to contribute to the maintenance of international security inside or outside its region.

The tendency towards the formation of new alliances complements this new status, especially the 'Free and Open' Indo-Pacific, as well as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, with strategies to contain China or to compete with the Belt and Road Initiative.

The initial question can thus be raised again: why does Japan avoid officially recognizing the armed forces, and not the SDF, as is its foreign policy instrument?

In spite of the Japanese emphasis on highlighting that these changes do not represent an intention of aggressive militarisation, but rather a responsible

contribution in accordance with its economic and technological capabilities to pursue international collective security, these are viewed with much scepticism.

In this regard, the maintenance of Article 9 in the Constitution can be interpreted as an unmistakable strategy of demonstrating the continuity of its pacifist intentions.

An example related to this strategy was the nuclearization of India which merged the Nehruvian pacifism with a significant dose of realism: a foreign policy instrument, but also a way to assure a more stable strategic region. A noticeable result, in spite of its negative consequences for the nuclear non-proliferation, was the rapprochement with the USA and the signature of the Accord for Civil Nuclear Cooperation.

As the changes have been mainly concentrated on the security cooperation guidelines between Japan and the USA, there is no reason to expect a dismantling of the Japan-USA Alliance. However, such changes reinforce the Alliance and are aligned with each party´s wishes. It might even be claimed that in order to maintain security in East Asia, the USA needs Japan in much the same way that Japan needs the USA, being the concern with the maintenance of the extended nuclear deterrence the main difference between their aims. Under this nuclear umbrella, Japan will not pursue the development of nuclear weapons, as India did when it lost the Soviet protection and found itself confronted with the growing Chinese military capacities and the Pakistani nuclear advances.

Due to the fear of abandonment, Japan retains sufficient technological knowledge and material resources to quickly develop a nuclear weapon, but it will only take this step in case that it would no longer be able to count on USA guarantees.

Even though the Japanese population is strongly opposed to militarization and the presence of nuclear weapons on its territory, it is nonetheless aware of the country´s vulnerabilities to growing threats. Consequently, it tends to support measures to maintain the country´s security.

Thus, in practice, today Japan is a country with military capacities that are relatively similar to those of the main powers, with operational freedom to participate in collective self-defence. The non-revocation of the Article 9 strengthens its pacifist identity and its opposition to, and renouncement of war, while the references in the Preamble of the Constitution to “international cooperation” and to “its place within the international society in the struggle for international peace” justify and impose a greater Japanese contribution in the process of maintenance of international security.

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