

Introduction

There is a palpable fear among many that Japan is on the verge of a major break from the past sixty years of peaceful security practice, that recent incremental changes in long-standing policy—such as the dispatch of Japan’s military forces, the Self-Defense Forces (SDF), abroad for the first time, and the creation of a Ministry of Defense (MOD), to name just two—foretell even greater changes in the near future. The fear is that Japan is being “normalized” into developing military capabilities and approaches in line with its great power status.

Such fears are misplaced at best and at worst stand to inhibit solutions to the real security problems faced by Japan and the East Asian region as a whole. In the larger global context Japan faces no shortage of substantial security contingencies, including conventional and nuclear weapons proliferation, tense standoffs over the divided states of China/Taiwan and the Koreas, Islamic-related terrorist activity in a number of Southeast Asian states, and widespread concerns over the “rise” of China. Japanese security practice is evolving to respond to new threats, but it is evolving along a predictable path—one guided by the same central tenets that have shaped Japan’s security practice in the past fifty years. Contestation over these tenets has been a basic fact of politics in Japan for half a century and will continue to be in the foreseeable future. This is what is “normal” in Japan.

This book seeks to explain how such normal politics have evolved to allow Japan’s security practice to adapt to new challenges within a framework deemed acceptable by Japanese citizens and the complex system that determines security policy. Within the framework of such central principles—Japan’s postwar “security identity”—policy evolution is possible and indeed common. The likelihood of

a substantial departure from these central tenets—an identity shift—is a central question addressed in this volume, utilizing a general theory of policy change that builds on existing theory and is supported by evidence gathered through an examination of several important cases illustrating the evolution of Japan's security practice in the past half-century.

Japan is not nearly the security outlier it is often mischaracterized as being; it has one of the largest military budgets in the world,¹ and by many measures of military capability ranks among the top few states in the world (Lind 2004). Still, observers of Japanese security practice have noted a series of shifts in Japanese policy in the past decade, most dramatically the contrast between a hamstrung Diet (Japan's parliament) unable to dispatch troops for the 1991 Iraq War to SDF participation in the coalition led by the United States in the 2003 Iraq War—albeit still in a noncombat and largely humanitarian role.² By 2005, the SDF had been dispatched abroad to fourteen countries or areas since its first overseas deployment to Cambodia in 1992.³ The SDF also has expanded its defense cooperation and training with the United States military in other areas, reflected in new defense “guidelines” issued in 1997 and other areas of increased cooperation in response to the global war on terrorism. At home as well, the extent of SDF activity in disaster relief and other domestic assistance is a striking contrast to the delay experienced in authorizing the SDF to help respond to a devastating earthquake in the Kobe area in 1995. Beyond the issue of deployment, SDF capabilities also have risen in the past decade, including the controversial areas of surveillance satellites and missile defense detailed in this volume.

Yet a number of Japan's security policies continue to depart from expected standards. The much-referenced dispatch of the SDF abroad has taken place only in conjunction with other international forces, and only in a very limited manner—at their peak, troop rotations to Iraq of about 1,100 members at a time (200 ASDF, 600 GSDF, 330 MSDF) of a total force of over 240,000 at home.⁴ Japan refrains from pursuing most offensive military capabilities, including nuclear weapons, which it has the technological and economic capability to produce. Despite possessing one of the world's most advanced manufacturing bases, which produces the majority of weapons for Japan's own SDF, Japanese firms export no weapons abroad: in part due to this absence of arms exports, only one Japanese defense manufacturer ranks in the top twenty defense producers worldwide, despite Japanese industrial firms generally being among the largest and most competitive in the world.⁵ Further, despite adhering zealously to a “defensive defense” military posture, Japan's stated policy regarding the use of outer space has precluded—until very recently—the use of military surveillance satellites to balance its lack of offensive weapons capability, and even today Japan's intelligence

capabilities are quite limited and activities highly constrained. By contrast, the consensus among security specialists is that states pursuing a defensive military posture require greater intelligence resources. More broadly, many intellectuals and opinion leaders in Japan continue to encourage a role for Japan that differs from that of a typical “great power” or “normal nation” (as this term generally has come to be understood). In particular, the idea of Japan as a “civilian power” or “middle power” continues to attract significant attention.⁶

The appropriate level of Japan’s future militarily related global engagement first and foremost will be determined by Japanese seeking to make sense of their state and their view of Japan’s appropriate position and role within the evolving international environment. The question is not what is “normal” in the abstract, but what is considered normal by Japan, and by Japanese. Thus, although the substance of this book focuses on Japan’s evolving security practices, at its core this study attempts to reveal and to benchmark Japan’s self-perceived security identity: how it is envisioned, how it has been institutionalized and reproduced over time, and how this factor continues to affect the politics and practice of external defense in Japan today. This is not a question of a security “strategy”—in the sense of an approach to the world developed by political elites—but a resilient identity that is politically negotiated and comprises a widely accepted set of principles on the acceptable scope of state practices in the realm of national security. It is within the framework of these core principles that specific policy practices are developed and will be developed in the years to come. As such, both specific policies and the broader principles upon which they are based must be examined to consider Japan’s security future.

A Shifting Wind in Japan Today?

If we compare national power to a strong wind, national identity is the weather vane that tells us which direction this wind is blowing (Nau 2002, p. 6)

Which direction will the wind blow in Japan in the early twenty-first century? Will the nascent nationalism apparent for the past several decades suddenly burst more into the open, capitalizing on Japan’s incremental rearmament, perhaps reversing a deepening military alliance with the United States, perhaps sparking a further arms race—or even open military hostilities—in East Asia? Or will the power of pacifism, or at least “antimilitarism”—long a powerful constraining force in Japan’s security policies—persuade a new generation of supporters to continue to thwart the efforts of those seeking the reemergence of Japan as an independent, fully armed great power in East Asia, a so-called normal nation? The popular press is full of articles warning of rising Japanese nationalism, militarism, or “real-

ism." Japanese political leaders' visits to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine—which enshrines the souls of fourteen Class A war criminals and along with its accompanying museum openly celebrates Japan's militarist rise in the 1930s and 1940s—in particular have fueled articles in the press about a future, more muscular and robust Japan.

The answer to these questions will be determined in part by the international security environment in East Asia and the world in the coming decades—either conventional warfare or nuclear conflagration on the Korean peninsula, or interstate warfare in the Taiwan straits certainly would affect Japan's conduct profoundly; the outbreak of the "Long War" on global terrorism already has led to a shift in Japanese policy. The decisions of individuals and groups of political actors inside Japan and pressure exerted by the United States and others on Japan will also form the basis for which direction the wind will blow in Japan's future. Already a charismatic, popular leader—Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi—has taken Japan quickly down a path of increased military activities surprisingly quickly in the early twenty-first century. His successor, Shinzo Abe, sought to lead Japan further down this path—though he encountered significant resistance that led, in part, to his abrupt resignation in September 2007. American pressure for Japan to "normalize" its security practices has been powerful—captured in former Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage's counsel to the Japanese to "show to the flag" after the September 11 attacks on the United States—notwithstanding past U.S. efforts to "contain" Japan. To some degree these efforts have been quite successful.⁷

To understand the way in which Japanese security practice is evolving, however, it is not sufficient to look at changes in the past few years; one must instead consider how Japan has responded to previous changes in its international environment. Contestation over the content, and later the contours, of Japan's security identity has been an enduring facet of postwar Japan, experiencing ebbs and flows in line with substantial changes in Japan's domestic and international environment—despite continuity in the core principles upon which the identity is based.

A security identity is not a static phenomenon, however, but rather a set of principles that must be reinforced and conveyed through human action. The gradual and contentious formation of Japan's postwar security identity is central to Japan's understanding of its present and future. It is not just a matter of "history"—in terms of a scholarly reexamination of Japan's past.⁸ The contemporary debates in Asia over history drive major political and diplomatic contests in Asia in the early twenty-first century. This volume therefore focuses on both aspects of Japan's security identity—the content of the identity as well as contestation over

this identity over time. The origins of what would become the three central tenets of Japan's postwar security identity—no traditional armed forces, no use of force by Japan except in self-defense, no Japanese participation in foreign wars—and examples of each are the subject of Chapter 2 of this volume. Also in Chapter 2, the critically important question of why these three tenets and not others is addressed. Despite a greatly changed international and domestic political environment in the twenty-first century, these tenets continue to fundamentally shape Japan's security practices today. They are therefore worthy of sustained reconsideration vis-à-vis previous characterizations of Japan's postwar security practice.

Security policy making in Japan is a deeply political process. Throughout the postwar period, Japanese political activists have spanned the full gamut from principled pacifists who believe that Japan should possess no armed forces at all (as opposed to being one of the largest military spenders in the world, after the United States and perhaps China, Britain, or France⁹) to those who argue for Japan once again to play the role of an independent military power, including the possession of nuclear weapons.¹⁰ Between these extremes lie the majority of Japanese voters and political leaders, often espousing foreign policy positions that are driven less by worldview than by attempts to further their political or material interests. In the immediate postwar period (1945–60), Japanese politicians, party supporters, and the general public devoted significant time debating security questions, which played a formative role in the ideological shape of the newly forming democratic party politics.¹¹

Since roughly 1960, Japan's security policy making has been filtered through a set of guiding principles which were negotiated in the preceding fifteen years and which greatly limited the scope of Japan's postwar security practices. These principles specify the degree to which Japan's reconstituted armed forces can become involved in domestic and international politics and are embodied in the new postwar security identity of "domestic antimilitarism."

Domestic antimilitarism is not a "pacifist" security identity in that it explicitly incorporates some role for a postwar military. The idea of a "pacifist" Japan, one that is disappearing as Japan faces new security threats, is in fact a double fiction. First, as carefully and correctly argued by Thomas Berger (1998), while believers in pacifist principles helped to shape Japan's security identity of domestic antimilitarism, this group alone never determined foreign policy outcomes in postwar Japan. Second, believers in pacifist—or antimilitarist—principles to ground Japanese security practice are not disappearing in Japan today, though they also are not the dominant intellectual force. Neither is this identity entirely "antimilitarist," in that it is openly accepting of military activity on the part of other states, including Japan's military ally and supporter, the United States.¹² Rather, the security

identity is one of *domestic* antimilitarism—focusing on limits to the reemergence of militarist elements at home, yet still accepting as legitimate a defensive role for a military at home.

Policy practitioners who help formulate Japanese security policy as well as handlers of the U.S.-Japan security relationship are confronted daily with the effect of security identity on Japan's security policy-making process. In the world of scholarship, however, there is a wide gap between those who studiously endeavor to explain how such an identity is "constructed" and maintained, and those who seek to explain Japan's position in the international system as well as the strategic choices it faces based on shifting international power dynamics driven by such factors as divergent economic growth rates, technological progress in military hardware, and exogenous factors such as the recent U.S.-proclaimed outbreak of "the long war on global terrorism," to name but a few. This study brings these two approaches and concerns together, offering a unified study of Japan's view of its appropriate security role as well as the forces that help determine this view and resulting policy.

The early postwar origins of what would become Japan's security identity, and how this identity is institutionalized into the political process, has been a subject of intensive scholarship.¹³ Three important questions remain largely unaddressed, however: First, how can we explain change, or lack of change, in security practice despite a stable security identity—change evident in Japan today? Second, what has been the effect of continued opposition to the long-standing security identity in terms of identity reproduction and actual security practice? Finally, the predictive question of the likely longevity of Japan's domestic antimilitarist security identity remains an important question: What makes this identity so resilient? Answers to these questions form the core of this volume.

While some argue that Japan today is on the verge of developing a new security identity manifesting a true "normalization" of Japanese security practice, this study suggests that it is more likely that Japan's existing security identity will continue to exert a predictable and measurable influence on Japan's security behavior for many more years to come. Indeed, for most Japanese the past fifty years of security practice is "normal," and they are not keen to depart dramatically from policies which have successfully kept a single Japanese soldier from dying in combat for over sixty years and have seen Japan literally rise from the ashes to the second-largest economy in the world today.

The Argument in Brief

The argument of this book has two fundamental pieces. The first examines the political process filtered through a postwar security identity that shapes Japanese

security behavior and decision making, incorporating domestic political actors and international environmental variables to explicate change in security practices over time. It is not only in the post-Cold War period that significant changes in Japanese security practice took place—despite a stable security identity. Such change demands attention. In contrast to previous scholarship, this study employs case-based analysis to explore the nature of policy change over time. By examining a few areas of security practice in greater detail, an explanation for policy shift despite a fairly stable security identity is formulated.

The second piece of the argument may appear counterintuitive on the surface: that despite apparent new security policy innovation in Japan in recent years, constraints on security policy imposed by this security identity remain largely unchanged from the Cold War era. While it would appear that much-hyped new security practices Japan has adopted must be a result of dramatic new thinking about security, in actuality what better explains the evolution of security practice—what some perceive as a rising “militarism” or, more neutrally, a rise in “realist” thinking in the post-Cold War period—is the changed international strategic environment and changes in the relative power of different domestic political actors (such as the major political parties and other domestic interest groups), filtered through the long-standing security identity of domestic antimilitarism. While systematic polling indicates some shift in public and elite attitudes toward security issues (a topic addressed in Chapter 7 of this volume), change in the area of security identity does not constitute the primary explanation for new security practices in Japan in recent years. Thus, in addition to investigating Japan’s security identity of domestic antimilitarism, it is important to examine the constellation of domestic political forces, and pressure put upon them by changes in Japan’s international environment, to explain the evolution of Japanese security practice today. A framework for understanding such change is set out in Chapter 1 of this volume.

Here Robert Lieberman’s (2002) observations about political change are instructive. He writes, “where friction among multiple political orders is more prevalent, the likelihood of significant, extraordinary political change (as opposed to normal variation) will increase” (p. 703). Japan today is a society where much such “friction” is apparent—leading many to question the future course of Japanese security decisions. While it can be a challenge empirically to identify and measure “friction among orders,” this task is aided by careful extant scholarship about numerous aspects of Japanese security policy in the postwar period, much of which focuses on political contestation. Chapter 2 of this volume utilizes a large body of scholarship to illustrate the politics surrounding the creation and maintenance of the security identity of domestic antimilitarism. Subsequent chapters consider this “friction” more explicitly in relation to specific security practices

that chafe against the hegemonic security identity of domestic antimilitarism: arms exports, the military use of outer space, missile defense, and other recent developments such as deployment of the SDF abroad and practices related to a closer military alliance with the United States.

Although it would be convenient to tell a simple causal story of the decline of pacifist ideas and the party that supported such ideas in postwar Japan along with the concomitant rise of realist thinking and new political actors to support it (a story often seen in mass media accounts), such a story is deeply misleading. Moreover, such an account is too superficial to be useful both in hypothesizing about Japan's future security direction and in explaining the nature of security policy innovation that already has taken place in recent years.

The changes that have occurred in contemporary Japan are not simply the values of key "independent variables" such as public opinion about the use of force abroad or over constitutional revision, or elite opinion about the same, resulting in a change in a "dependent variable" of security policy. Rather, the relationships have changed among the factors and processes by which a set of underlying conditions generates a set of policy outcomes.¹⁴ Thus, this study is not designed around individual, testable "variables" but rather examines varying configurations of actors, institutions, and beliefs; it seeks to examine and explain friction and overlap among ideational and institutional elements. Careful attention to the evolving relationships among actors, institutions, and identities is necessary to explain the important political change that is taking place in Japan today in the area of security policy.

The much-discussed debate over constitutional revision in postwar Japan is illustrative of this point. It is often noted that support for revision now regularly reaches a majority of those polled, even supermajorities among elected officials (Kliman 2006, p. 46). The association of constitutional revision with "militarists" and those of the political right, however, has changed in the post-Cold War period. Today, those seeking the maintenance of Japan's postwar security identity of domestic antimilitarism also may support constitutional revision—in order to codify principles of the existing security identity for future generations. Support for constitutional revision no longer signifies support for identity shift, an attempt to change the famous Article Nine "no war clause" of the "peace constitution." Measurement of this "variable," therefore, has no meaning divorced from analysis of this changed context.

This book was written with three groups of readers in mind. First are those who follow Japanese security policy closely and are concerned with key determinants of the policy-making process, the content of specific policies, and the likely future direction of Japan's security policy. Such readers will find new insights from

a reconsideration of past Japanese security practice as well as new empirical detail about several important cases of Japan's security policy past and present based on both archival and interview research conducted in Tokyo and Washington, D.C.

A second group of targeted readers are those interested in the active debate among international security specialists on the role of normative constraints and ideational factors on policy formulation, and how together with material factors policy outcomes are determined. This study seeks to build on important work published on the security policies of a number of advanced industrial democracies as well as other "great powers" in the international system, work discussed in the following sections of this introduction and in further detail in Chapter 1. In short, this volume seeks to move beyond important earlier studies which demonstrated both that security norms shaped the nature of Japanese security practice and, in separate work, how Japanese security practice has been constrained by several domestic and international factors, by setting out a framework for understanding the politically negotiated basis for Japan's security norms, and further how ideationally based security identity shapes and is shaped by political interaction.

A third group of targeted readers are general readers of foreign policy decision making. Although this study is designed around the question of security identity and its role in security practice, it also seeks to explain how security policies are actually formulated, including in particular the role of domestic politics and a changing international environment in this process. These policy case studies are illustrative of general policy-making practice, not just in Japan but in most advanced industrial democracies.

Defining Security Identity

In order to utilize such a potentially vague concept as identity in political analysis, it is important to be clear about basic issues of definition, measurement, and competing explanations. Indeed, Rawi Abdelal et al. (2005) argue that without such clarity, as well as a convergence of terminology and more rigorous methods, identity-based explanations for political outcomes will lose favor. Thus, such issues must be addressed directly at the outset of this study.

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. Once (or if) such an identity becomes hegemonic in the polity, it serves as a structure in which all future policy decisions must operate, providing an overarching framework recognized both by top decision makers and by major societal actors under which a state shapes its security practices. A security identity, by definition, enjoys broad

legitimacy at the level of the general public—it is not merely a creation by political elites—but should not be conflated with amorphous “public opinion.” Rather, attention to the political bargain of Japan’s postwar security identity allows one to understand that what is often mistaken for “public opinion” is in fact the result of a political negotiation among major domestic actors who traded off contending foreign policy preferences.¹⁵ Likewise, a security identity is neither an ideology nor a set of beliefs about legitimate state action held by individuals;¹⁶ though, of course, *some* individuals within the state may share such beliefs, and indeed many may do so.

Central to determining the role of a security identity in policy outcomes is the *content* of the collective identity as well as the *level of contestation* over this content.¹⁷ The *content* of Japan’s security identity of domestic antimilitarism can be summarized in three central tenets—no traditional armed forces, no use of force by Japan except in self-defense, no Japanese participation in foreign wars—that reflect both unwritten and institutionalized barriers to action beyond these limits. The *contestation* element of Japan’s security identity similarly is both explicit (self-referential) and implicit (hidden from public discourse). It involves society-wide discourse on “Japaneseness” (the so-called *nihonjinmon*) as well as covert practices of intimidation and political activism—both sides of which must be measured and examined to understand how security identity affects security practice.

Simply arguing that multiple political actors had to cooperate to codify a particular security identity which then affected subsequent security practice in itself is not an ideational argument. If the identity, even a compromise one, reflects the interests of the politically powerful—even those powerful only in a coalition—the “identity” in question is merely the result of material political factors. The argument of this study begins with such material considerations but then demonstrates how these material factors are influenced directly by the security identity, which generates a new political vocabulary, provides a focal point for public opinion, and enables cooperation among diverse political actors who would not have acted together absent the identity; moreover, the security identity indirectly influences policy outcomes through institutionalization into the policy-making process.¹⁸

Thus, the conception of security identity developed here differs from previous work employing the terms *norms*, *ideas*, *ideology*, *political culture*, and *strategic culture*—although this study draws on the insights of much of this previous work. Among the many identity-based terms recently employed in political research, *ideology* comes closest to the term *security identity* which is employed in this volume. To the extent that an ideology, as Richard Samuels (1994) writes, constitutes “the ways in which history and political structure conspire to constrain the strategic choices of nations” (p. x), *ideology* is quite similar to *security identity* as employed here. However, more often writers have conceptualized an ideology as more like

an “idea” or a “belief,” both of which are individually held and affect the preference structures of individual political actors.¹⁹ For the purposes of this study, *security identity* is not comparable to *ideology* in this sense—the three central tenets of the security identity of domestic antimilitarism are not argued to be universally shared beliefs among postwar Japanese. If they were, the role of political contestation over security practice would be greatly diminished, and substantial change in security practice would be difficult to reconcile with a stable security identity.

Ideas overlap with a security identity conceptually, however, where they establish a type of worldview or framework for understanding a state’s position or role in the international system—as discussed by Henry Nau (2002) and Jeffrey Legro (2005). Ideas—and, in this study, a security identity—can provide a *focal point* for strategic situations with multiple equilibriums, such as the way in which decision makers sought to enact a common market among members of the European Economic Community (Garrett and Weingast 1993). Similarly, a state’s security identity provides a sense of coherence to foreign policy decision making by making certain policy options more desirable than others would be absent the overarching identity.²⁰

Some argue further that ideas provide a “road map” for policy decisions by informing one’s *causal or principled beliefs* about a given situation—such as how an adversary is likely to respond to a reduction in the number of troops deployed on a border or how the economy will respond to increased government spending (Goldstein and Keohane 1993, p. 12). Recent scholarship demonstrating this point for the Japanese case makes an important contribution to understanding the nature of recent policy change in Japan (e.g., Midford 2006, Vosse 2006). This is *not* a role ascribed to security identity in this study, however—though clearly many Japanese hold causal beliefs about the ineffectiveness of military power to attain state goals, which reinforce the postwar security identity of domestic antimilitarism. The security identity of domestic antimilitarism does set boundaries for appropriate action in the foreign policy arena, but this does not rise to the level of a uniformly held causal or principled belief.

Also similar to the role of ideas, a security identity can act both to change the terms of political debate and discussion, as well as to affect political outcomes through its institutionalization into the political process. In addition, a hegemonic security identity influences “organizational design,” affecting the policy-making process in another important, though distinct, manner. What Judith Goldstein and Robert Keohane (1993) write about the role of ideas, which they define as beliefs held by *individuals*, can be extended for the purposes of this discussion to an overarching security identity:

Regardless of how a particular set of beliefs comes to influence politics, use of those ideas over time implies changes in existing rules and norms. Ideas have a lasting influ-

ence on politics through their incorporation into terms of political debate, but the impact of some set of ideas may be mediated by the operation of institutions in which the ideas are embedded. Once ideas have influenced organizational design, their influence will be reflected in the incentives of those in the organization and those whose interests are served by it. In general, when institutions intervene, the impact of ideas may be prolonged for decades or even generations. *In this sense, ideas can have an impact even when no one genuinely believes in them as principled or causal statements.* (Goldstein and Keohane 1993, p. 20, emphasis added)

The final sentence of the above quotation deserves underscoring: as with Goldstein and Keohane's view of ideas, a security identity can influence security practice even if an individual political actor does not believe in the underlying principles of the identity, because the security identity has been institutionalized into the policy-making process.²¹

Also related conceptually, Berger's (1998) view of the power of "culture" in Japanese security practice is far broader than is ascribed here to Japan's postwar security identity. In contrast to Berger, security identity here does not provide the "goals and norms" for individual political actors, but rather it sets such goals for the state as a whole, and in doing so sets boundaries for the appropriate political action of individual political actors.²² Crossing these boundaries requires substantial political capital and subjects those who attempt such to substantial political costs, similar to the costs of violating a "norm" as Peter Katzenstein conceptualizes them.

Katzenstein (1996b) defines *norms* as "social facts" which "inform how political actors define what they want to accomplish" (p. ix). By contrast, the security identity of domestic antimilitarism is concerned not with *what* political actors seek to accomplish but rather with *how* they will attempt to accomplish their goals given the overarching framework (and content) of the security identity of domestic antimilitarism. For example, given a corporate interest to export weapons, the security identity of domestic antimilitarism can shape the strategy a corporate actor employs to achieve this goal, or at an extreme, lead to the abandonment of this goal as too costly or unattainable; it does not, however, alter such a firm's desire to export weapons but does limit its ability to achieve this aim and may increase the costs of doing so. Despite the focus of this volume on security practice, it should be stressed at the outset the important contribution the norms-based literature makes to our understanding of political outcomes. As Katzenstein (1996b) correctly argues, "to disregard norms and take the interests of actors as given is thus to short-circuit an important aspect of the politics and policy of national security" (pp. ix-x). Previous examinations of norms related to postwar Japanese security practice are central to Chapter 2 of this volume, and to the study overall.

Methods, Cases, and Evidence: Measuring Security Identity and Policy Shift

This volume examines three important cases of postwar Japanese security practice that are critical components of previous identity-based scholarship and that also have special relevance to recent security discussions in Japan: restrictions on the export of weapons, the limitation on the use of outer space to peaceful purposes, and military cooperation with the United States in the realm of missile defense. Together with a broader examination of other important changes in Japanese security practice—such as SDF deployment abroad, the expanding military capabilities of the SDF, and the deepening alliance with the United States—the three core cases of this volume present the most often cited, crucial cases of Japan's "abnormal" security practices and therefore are most often discussed in the context of Japan's imminent "identity shift."

Careful examination of these cases demonstrates two important points. First, in none of these cases has there been a dramatic break with past practice in recent years—despite much media hype to the contrary. Only incremental change—much like what has taken place in preceding decades—has occurred to date. An unusual level of continuity is apparent over time, continuity best explained by reference to Japan's long-standing security identity. Second, neither ideational nor material explanations alone can explain the policy evolution that has taken place.

Case Selection

The cases presented in this volume can be conceptualized on three levels. First, the evidence collected and presented here is about a single case—the case of postwar Japan. Following a number of other single-country studies in research areas related to security identity (e.g., Friedberg 2000, Johnston 1995a, Kier 1997, Katzenstein 1996a, Nau 2002), the goal is to link specific observations from a single case to a larger research agenda.²³ Second, however, this volume presents findings from three temporal cases of "critical junctures" in Japanese security policy, seeking to explain and conceptualize instances of identity shift. Thus, despite a single-country analysis, methodologically the volume does not constitute a single case.²⁴ Finally, this volume presents findings from three detailed cases of evolving Japanese security practice, demonstrating the effect of a consistent security identity on security practice, within a changing material political environment. Examination of these three detailed cases illustrates commonalities that can be used to examine policy change more broadly.

The dearth of scholarly attention to Japan's postwar arms export and outer

space policies is notable, since in many ways it is these policies that most demand explanation.²⁵ First, they are among the most puzzling of Japan's postwar security policies in that existing theories uniformly predict a different outcome. Second, the cases are studied infrequently in the literature despite their importance both as discrete and important issues in themselves and for their potential contribution to theory building. Third, the two policies are of particular interest in the post-Cold War period due to their influence on major new security policy decisions, such as the decision to manufacture and deploy domestically produced surveillance satellites (explained in this volume within Chapter 5) and the decision to participate with the United States in joint research on a missile defense system for East Asia (the final case study examined in Chapter 6).

Despite common reference to the arms export "ban" and the peaceful-use-of-space policy in relation to surveillance satellites and missile defense, little focused research has been conducted on the origins of these Cold War-era policies, and their continued relevance today. By contrast, a great deal of attention has been paid in recent years to the broader issue of defense production as well as to issues related to the SDF, particularly the issue of foreign deployment of the SDF as part of UN Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO).²⁶ Findings from these existing studies therefore can be combined with new research from the three case studies developed in this volume to provide a broader picture of the direction of Japanese security policy in the twenty-first century, the topic of Chapter 7.

Japan's individual security policies are not formulated in isolation, however. Rather, they are closely connected by political actors seeking to balance contending political objectives and interests within the framework of Japan's postwar security identity of domestic antimilitarism. Accordingly, the outcome of one policy case is often contingent on the outcome of another. For example, as discussed in later chapters, Japan's policy decisions to support its U.S. ally in its war in Vietnam and to aggressively pursue the reversion of Okinawa to Japanese administrative control (two policies which themselves are linked) led to countervailing policies such as restrictions on nuclear weapons and arms exports, the formal declaration of a policy regarding the peaceful use of outer space, and restrictions on defense spending overall. It is impossible to fully explain one of these policies without reference to several others. This interaction among cases parallels the central thesis of Kent Calder (1988a), who argues that conservative elites "compensated" in certain policy areas when "crisis" was evoked in other areas.²⁷ Like Calder, this study follows an integrated approach, utilizing detailed analysis of several important cases of postwar Japanese security policy but also embedding these cases in a broader theoretical and empirical context.

Strict positivists and methodological purists will quickly shout "tautology" to

this approach. It is not. The argument here is that guiding principles apparent in an early stage of institutionalization and political debate over an emergent security identity help determine the acceptability and political viability of future policy decisions. These future policies themselves do not determine the identity, though they can help delineate guideposts and do serve to reproduce the identity over time. Chapter 1 delves further into the methods by which one can employ the concept of security identity in empirically based explanations for the evolution of Japanese security practice.

Sources of Data and Measurement

Lieberman (2002) identifies three “clusters of order” to aid in a case-based analysis that takes the ideas of friction and contestation seriously: (1) “*governing institutions*” such as legislatures, executives, courts, and bureaucracies; (2) the “*organizational environment*” such as political parties, interest groups, and nongovernmental organizations; and (3) “*ideological and cultural repertoires*” that organize and legitimate political discourse (p. 703). This study similarly focuses on the role and institutionalization by the *governing institutions* of the prime minister, the Diet, and relevant bureaucracies such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), the Japan Defense Agency (JDA),²⁸ the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI, later METI), and the Cabinet Legislation Bureau (CLB). As well, it considers the policy positions of the actors within what Lieberman calls the *organizational environment*—the major political parties of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the Japan Socialist Party (JSP), Komeitō (KMT), and the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), and important interest groups such as the Federation of Economic Organizations (Keidanren) and labor unions. The *ideological repertoire* is examined through evaluation of newspaper editorials, articles from the popular press, statements of major intellectual figures, and even representations in popular culture such as films, novels, and songs.²⁹

At its heart, the battle over a security identity is a political process involving both public debate and private negotiations. As Legro (2005) writes, “By their very nature, foreign policy ideas will be in the public realm. They cannot be reproduced unless all have access to them” (p. 22). Public opinion polls provide one measure of the level of subscription to competing identities, but they show only part of the picture.

The role of specific actors is discussed in each case chapter below, but each case shares in common categories of evidence collected from government documents and policy statements, newspaper accounts (particularly those collected by the National Diet Library and, more recently, archived in computer databases), political party platforms, and a number of secondary sources published in English and

Japanese. In addition, supplementary case evidence for this study was collected in over two hundred interviews conducted in Tokyo and Washington, D.C., with state actors in both countries as well as representatives from political parties and associations, private corporations, the media, and academic analysts.³⁰

As with Nau (2002), Lieberman focuses his analysis on the “directionality” of these clusters of order—whether they are in harmony with one another or in tension. He stresses:

When stable patterns of politics clash, purposive political actors will often find themselves at an impasse, unable to proceed according to the “normal” patterns and processes that had hitherto governed their behavior. Political actors in such circumstances will often be induced to find new ways to define and advance their aims, whether by finding a new institutional forum that is more receptive to their ideas or by adapting ideas to take advantage of new institutional opportunities. . . . The result of these moves is not that old orders are jettisoned but that elements of them are recombined and reconfigured into a new set of political patterns that is recognizably new and yet retains some continuity with the old ones. (Lieberman 2002, p. 704)

Japan in the immediate postwar period offered one such opportunity to reconfigure a “new set of political patterns,” and one taken—leading to a dramatic recrafting of Japan’s security identity from military expansionism to domestic antimilitarism in the period 1945–60, the subject of Chapter 2 of this volume. A second opportunity was presented after the end of the Cold War in Europe and the death of the Showa emperor (Hirohito) in 1989, and this is the subject of Chapter 3. In this period, despite substantial institutional reform (of political party structure, electoral system, and bureaucratic governance) and widespread public debate, no new security identity emerged. Japanese are confronted with a third opportunity today. Observers at home and abroad are witnessing daily how the friction among Japan’s clusters of order is playing out in practice—between bureaucrats in the MOD and MOFA seeking to implement new defense cooperation with the United States and politicians and other bureaucrats seeking to justify such cooperation using dated legislation and terminology, among political parties seeking to quell new public security concerns yet respecting past security identity boundaries and preferences, and within civil society institutions such as the left-leaning media and nongovernmental organizations. Given the degree of tension and contradictions within and among these different nodes of order, the possibility for a shift in security identity away from domestic antimilitarism is real. An examination of the potential for such a shift—and why ultimately such a shift is unlikely in the foreseeable future—is the subject of Chapter 7, but it is foreshadowed in the following section and in the theoretical framework set out in Chapter 1.

Prediction and Falsification

The argument developed in this volume—based on Japan's long-standing security identity and its effect on security practice—leads to the following hypotheses about the future evolution of Japan's security practices. First, policy initiatives that conform to existing interpretation of the security identity of domestic antimilitarism should proceed quickly and be relatively unhindered, absent other intervening factors such as bureaucratic politics, alliance politics, or personal executive leadership effectiveness. Japan's humanitarian-based initial response to the September 11 attacks on the United States is a good example of such "normal politics."

Second, and as a corollary, policy initiatives that conflict with the existing interpretation of the security identity should take more time, require extensive use of political capital, and often necessitate substantial political concessions to the initial intent of the policy in order to proceed. Here one could contrast the speed and ease with which multiple humanitarian-based responses to the September 11 attacks were enacted (all of which fell clearly within the boundaries of the security identity) to the debacle of Prime Minister Kaifu's efforts to extend the boundaries of the security identity at the time of the first Gulf War in 1990–91.

Finally, interpretation of the security identity may evolve over time to some extent, based on a changing domestic or international environment, but even such change often requires political capital. Moreover, there are clear limits beyond which the security identity cannot be extended—as is evident in the case chapters that follow.

To the extent that these hypotheses are disconfirmed, the argument can be considered falsified. If in Japan's future, policies regularly pass which conflict fundamentally with the three central tenets of domestic antimilitarism, it will be an indication either of identity shift in Japan (in which case new central tenets could be identified) or of the failure of an argument based on security identity to explain policy change in contemporary Japan. In such an event—a shift away from the security identity of domestic antimilitarism—one would see a much more accelerated change in Japanese security policy, and in ways that are unpredictable until a new security identity is crafted and negotiated, a process that likely would take several years (if not a decade or more) and thus could have significant ramifications for regional stability.

Absent the existing security identity, Japanese security policy could fluctuate unpredictably in the years to come, stymieing U.S.-Japan alliance cooperation and vexing Japan's close neighbors, perhaps leading to increased military tensions or even outright military conflict—such as over disputed territories, territorial incursions, or preemptive strikes to slow weapons development in hostile states.

TABLE 1

Indicators of Possible Breaches of the Security Identity of Domestic Antimilitarism

Tenet One	Centralization of defense policy management solely within the Ministry of Defense Creation of a national security council to advise the prime minister that includes SDF officers
Tenet Two	Statements of threat of use of force in international discourse Development of explicitly offensive military capabilities
Tenet Three	Creation of offensive military plans or posture Commitment to the use of the SDF in active overseas conflicts Unilateral use of the SDF in overseas military activities

Such policy outcomes are extremely unlikely under the current security identity of domestic antimilitarism.

What would it take to produce a different security identity for Japan? Or might the existing security identity be altered to an extent that it no longer meaningfully represented the central tenets of the past security identity? The empirical research presented in this volume, together with the theoretical framework offered in Chapter 1, provides a detailed answer to these two important questions. This introduction will conclude with a few specific thresholds for measuring possible movement away from the central tenets of Japan's postwar security identity of domestic antimilitarism, as summarized in Table 1.

Successful revision of the constitution that includes a constitutional basis for SDF *military* activities overseas and poses no obstacles to Japan exercising its sovereign right of collective self-defense would signify a shift away from the security identity of domestic antimilitarism. The enactment of legislation that took advantage of these new constitutional entitlements would signify the crossing of a threshold away from this security identity toward something else. Such change is unlikely, though, divorced from growing evidence in public discourse about new underlying principles for Japan's security future, new coalitions among political and social actors, and new proposals for institutional rules and legislation in line with this "something else." As argued in Chapter 1, the presence of alternative visions to ground new general principles for state action and of political entrepreneurs to articulate these visions in socially salient ways is critical to the consolidation of a new security identity. Such alternative principles and actors to articulate them are evident in today's Japan (Samuels 2007) and must be considered carefully. In the area of constitutional revision, the creation of numerous task forces—public and private—to propose alternatives and to advocate for new grounding principles is evidence of such a vibrant ideational environment. Thus, the potential for identity shift certainly is present, but at the earliest it is several years away.²¹

Constitutional revision is not the only route to security identity shift. It may be possible to enact legislation in a number of areas that departs from the core principles of domestic antimilitarism without following this path.³² Indeed, conservatives seeking a more “normal” Japan may choose to follow this route of nonrevision given the obstacles to enacting constitutional revision along the lines they seek. The elevation of the JDA to the MOD would appear to be an example of the crossing of such a threshold. It seems likely in the years to come that the MOD will begin to exercise new powers and authority in line with its new status that could lead to the negation of the first tenet of domestic antimilitarism, which prohibits active military involvement in policy making. Some would argue that this threshold has already been crossed, as the *de facto* status, functions, and institutional capabilities of the JDA were increased in the late 1990s in preparation for elevation of the agency to ministry status, and the role of the uniformed SDF members in the JDA bureaucracy increased.

Certainly the visibility of the SDF has increased markedly in recent years—from coverage in the media and appearance of uniformed SDF officers in public places to the shiny new headquarters of the MOD in Ichigaya, Tokyo. More substantively, a greater SDF presence has been visible in policy-making institutions within the JDA for several years, and equally so—though not yet *more* so—within the MOD. Still, MOFA continues to play a leading role in the management of one of Japan’s principal security issues—its alliance with the United States—and the prime minister and members of the Diet have limited direct contact with the SDF or even the MOD. Discussions are under way to set up an upgraded National Security Council (NSC) in Japan to advise the prime minister, though current proposals do not include uniformed officers of the SDF (as the U.S. NSC does, in the form of the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff), and the civilian MOD will be just one voice among many. If in Japan’s future, the SDF and MOD begin to play a leading role in planning and implementing Japan’s security strategy—as the individual military services and the Department of Defense (DOD) do in the United States—it should be seen as an example of the abandonment of the first tenet of domestic antimilitarism.

Similar indicators can be imagined for the resilience of the other two central tenets of Japan’s security identity, as summarized in Table 1. For example, regarding the second tenet of no use of military force to resolve international disputes, public acceptance of explicit threats of the use of Japan’s formidable military to achieve state objectives would indicate an abandoning of this tenet.³³ As well, development of explicitly offensive military capabilities—as opposed to capabilities that might incidentally have some offensive applications in principle—would provide further evidence of a crossing of a threshold that would signify the col-

lapse of a core principle. Creation of new military plans or “contingencies” that included offensive action would also violate a principle central to the existing security identity. Other indicators are also imaginable for this tenet, and for others.

The third tenet of domestic antimilitarism—no Japanese participation in foreign military conflict—has already been pushed close to the limit of reasonable implementation of the principle through the deployment of the SDF to participate in counterterrorism activities in the Indian Ocean and areas in and around Iraq. Still, the activities of the SDF overseas are almost exclusively humanitarian in nature—though Maritime Self-Defense Forces (MSDF) activities in the Indian Ocean to refuel warships and Air Self-Defense Forces (ASDF) resupply activities from Kuwait get perilously close to violating this principle. Consistent with the argument of this volume, however, this policy is deeply contested politically. Moreover, at the time of publication of this volume, the future of this “special measure” is uncertain, as political opposition has become emboldened. Future such activities seem to be on hold for now as well—following the long-standing pattern of “reach, reconcile, reassure” discussed in Chapter 1—but routine participation in such activities could well signal an abandonment of this principle. Such abandonment could come both from the number and frequency of such activities or from future “mission creep.” Public statements by former Prime Minister Abe and former Foreign Minister Aso clearly indicated that their government would have liked to have seen this happen. But, to date, such statements do not reflect mainstream opinion in contemporary Japan (Oros 2007b). That these officials served less than a year in office also suggests their views were not politically viable.

Is there a security identity beyond domestic antimilitarism in Japan’s near future? Historically speaking, one can observe a “fifteen-year rule” in Japanese historical development.³⁴ The forced opening of Japan in 1853 by U.S. naval force led fifteen years later to the 1868 Meiji “restoration” of imperial authority—a dramatic reshaping of political order. The 1945 defeat in the Second World War led fifteen years later to the 1960 renewal of the U.S.-Japan security treaty and codification of the security identity of domestic antimilitarism. Will the 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the bubble economy (on the heels of the 1989 death of the Showa emperor) lead to the codification of a new security identity for Japan in a multipolar Asia in 2006 or soon after? To answer these important questions, one must look to the broader theoretical arguments for policy change developed in Chapter 1 and illustrated empirically in subsequent chapters.

Primary Alternative Explanations

It is useful to briefly consider at the outset two primary alternative explanations to the argument presented here, with more detailed discussion of alternative and complementary theories to follow in Chapter 1. One alternative explanation is that changes in material factors largely account for changes in security practice to date. Material factors in this sense would include both the domestic configuration of political power and the international environment. While on the surface this basic explanation has some traction, detailed examination of multiple cases of Japanese security practice provided in following chapters demonstrate clearly that such materially based explanations alone cannot account for more than the surface evolution of Japan's security practice over time.

A second alternative explanation concedes the past role of the security identity of domestic antimilitarism but argues that this identity has since disappeared in favor of a more realist orientation in post-Cold War, post-Taepodong, and post-9/11 Japan. This explanation as well cannot account for the substantial limits still evident on a large swath of Japanese security practice today, including SDF deployments abroad, the tortured pace of missile defense codevelopment, capability restrictions on surveillance satellites, and consecutive declines in overall defense spending in recent years. Instead, the evolution of security practice in Japan clearly is still shaped fundamentally by a security identity whose central tenets were negotiated decades ago but which continue to be reproduced, reinterpreted, and reified regularly in new security legislation and overall practice.

Such a framework for Japan's security outlook seems fairly certain for the medium term, absent a dramatic external or internal shock to Japan. Even such a shock does not necessitate a broader shift in security identity, as seen in the 1990s after a series of international and domestic security shocks failed to lead to a recrafting of the long-standing security identity of domestic antimilitarism. Still, the possibility of identity shift must be considered carefully. This, together with an explanation for general policy change within an existing security identity, is the focus of the next chapter.