
Japanese Neo-Conservatism: Coping with China and North Korea

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The Post-Cold War period has witnessed Japan's gradual move from a pacifist security posture. Behind this, the emergence of Japanese neo-conservatism (JNC) is important. The JNC attempts to resurrect Japanese traditions in contemporary Japan. During the Koizumi/Abe premiership (2001-7), the JNC experienced its heyday. The JNC upheld a pro-US security policy, distinguished from Japanese 'old' conservatism, and justified a hard-line policy towards China and North Korea. Even when the Democratic Party of Japan came to power (2009-), the JNC would not disappear because of its assertion of Japanese national pride as the Japanese people lose confidence in Japan's economic might.

Japan's gradual distance from its post-war pacifist posture in the 1990s-2000s was accompanied by the rise of Japanese Neo-Conservatism (JNC) at the domestic level. The JNC, whose political base is the rightist factions of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), emerged in the mainstream of Japanese politics in the late 1990s and saw its heyday during the Koizumi (2001-06) and Abe (2006-07) LDP governments. Koizumi's hard-line security policy towards China and Abe's policy towards North Korea reflected the JNC's increasing political and intellectual influence. What distinguishes the JNC from other Japanese security perspectives is its concern with Japan's national pride. In its discourses, the JNC constructs a Chinese and North Korean threat in terms of their military capabilities and Japan's national pride. It justifies a hard-line policy towards both countries and emphasises a pro-US security orientation.

How did the JNC raise the issue of national pride in Japan's security relations with China and North Korea in the 2000s? This article will examine the JNC's construction of the Chinese and North Korean threat during the Koizumi/Abe premierships (2001-07) by focusing upon the issue of national pride, and will examine possible directions for Japan's security policy orientations in the post-Koizumi/Abe period. The plan of this article is as follows. First, the article outlines the rise of the JNC in the post-Cold War period. Secondly, it examines the JNC's construction of the Chinese and North Korean threat which has justified a hard-line policy towards China and North Korea. The issue of Japan's national pride and its significance for the JNC will be specifically analysed. In 2009, Yukio Hatoyama of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) was elected as Prime Minister and the first DPJ government began with a turn towards the centre and left. Has the JNC

lost its significance in the post-Koizumi/Abe era? This article presents a perspective on the role and impact of the JNC after the DPJ came to power.

The Rise of the JNC in Japanese Politics

POST-WAR JAPANESE CONSERVATISM

Post-war Japan's security policy was characterised by a pacifism which was institutionalised in the post-war Japanese constitution. In the pacifist constitution, war and military forces are renounced as a means to settle international disputes. This constitutional pacifism was introduced by the Supreme Commander of Allied Powers in the occupation period (1945-52). The Japanese people's anti-war feelings derived from their sufferings and miseries during wartime. During the Cold War, constitutional pacifism worked as a normative constraint upon Japan's security policy. While the leftists sought absolute demilitarisation by 'directly' applying Article 9 of the constitution to Japan's security policy, the liberals and the centralists, by a relative reading of this article, allowed minimal and conditional self-armament. The Japanese Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) and the US-Japan Security Treaty (USJST) were justified and institutionalised according to this approach. This became the mainstream security policy in post-war Japan's security policy and was called later the Yoshida line.¹

In post-war Japanese politics, Japanese conservatives played a limited role in security policy.² Japanese conservatism sought to resurrect Japanese traditional ideas and systems in the post-war context. It placed the priority upon the continuity between pre-war and post-war Japan, invoking an idealised past.³ Post-war conservatism started with the formation of 'conservative' parties by pre-war lawmakers in 1945.⁴ The influence of conservatism upon Japanese politics, however, was limited. In 1946, the Supreme Commander of Allied Powers purged key pre-war conservatives from official positions and promoted democratisation in post-war Japan. Subsequently, 'conservative' parties were led by the liberals and the

¹ Prime Minister Yoshida's policy of light armaments, the negotiation of the (US-Japan Security Treaty) USJST, and an emphasis upon economic development in the 1940s-50s was called the Yoshida doctrine by Masataka Kousaka in the 1960s. See, for example, Kenneth B. Pyle, *The Japanese Question: Power and Purpose in a New Era*, 2nd edition (Washington DC: AEI Press, 1996), pp. 25-6.

² See, for example, Gerald Curtis, *The Japanese Way of Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 44.

³ Thomas Berger uses the term of 'the Right-Idealists' to describe this point. See, Thomas Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism: National Security in Germany and Japan* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), pp. 56-8.

⁴ Kenzo Uchida, 'Hoshu santo no seiritu to henyō [The establishment and transformation of three conservative parties]', in Yoshikazu Sakamoto and Robert E. Ward (eds), *Nihon senryo no kenkyū [Study on Allied Occupation of Japan]* (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1987), pp. 207-42.

centralists such as pre-war diplomatic elites, bureaucrats, and moderate conservatives who were exempted from the purge.⁵

After the termination of the 1946 purge, some pre-war conservatives came back to join 'conservative' parties and became the key members. Examples of comeback conservatives are ex-Prime Minister Shinsuke Kishi and Ichiro Hatoyama who were ministers in pre-war Japan. Both envisaged the revision of the pacific constitution and full-fledged armament as well as a security policy autonomous from the United States.⁶ Despite holding the premiership until 1960, however, they could not implement this conservative agenda. In the intra-party politics of the LDP which was established in 1955, the liberals and the centralists remained dominant. Due to their strength inside and outside the Diet, the revision of the pacifist constitution was infeasible and not on the political agenda. At the policy level, conservatives were required to compromise their policy programmes with their liberal and leftist rivals.

In the 1970s-80s, Japan's security policy remained under the control of the liberal-centralist mainstream.⁷ While the defence budget increased and military equipment was modernised in accordance with Japan's new status as an economic power, legal constraints were imposed which only allowed for a defensive posture. A political consensus was established over limiting defence spending to one percent of GDP. In 1976, Japan's National Defense Program Guidelines [*Bouei Taiko*] (NDPG) was announced and the concept of *Kibanteki Bouei Ryoku* (Basic Defence Force) became the basis for defence policy and determined the development of Japan's military capabilities within the confines of the pacifist constitution.⁸

During this period, Yasuhiro Nakasone was noted for his conservatism in security policy. At the beginning of the 1970s, then-Director General of the Defense Agency Nakasone asserted a vision of Japan's autonomous militarisation and military build-up, reflecting conservative views in the LDP. At the outset of his premiership (1982-87), he advocated the US-Japan alliance by using the provocative language of "Japan as an unsinkable aircraft carrier".⁹ He upheld conservative policy programmes such as the revision of the pacifist constitution, the Basic Act on Education, and official

⁵ Curtis, *The Japanese Way of Politics*, pp. 6-8.

⁶ See, for example, Bert Edström, *Japan's Evolving Foreign Policy: From Yoshida to Miyazawa* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1999), pp. 28, 41; Walter LaFeber, *The Clash: U.S.-Japanese Relations throughout History* (New York: Norton, 1998), pp. 315-6; Yoshihisa Hara, *Kishi Nobusuke shougen roku* [*The Memorandum of Nobusuke Kishi*] (Tokyo: Mainichi Shimbun, 2003), pp. 86, 94, 136-7, 145-6.

⁷ See, for example, Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism*, pp. 45-6.

⁸ Christopher W. Hughes mentions the role of the NDPG in restricting the JSDF build-up not because of 'the pacifist constitution' but 'limited domestic support'. See: Christopher W. Hughes, *Japan's Re-emergence as a 'Normal' Military Power* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), pp. 67-9.

⁹ *Asahi Shimbun*, 21 January 1983, p. 1.

visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. Nakasone promoted the modernisation of the JSDF to meet rising threats from the Soviet Union in the 1980s, and removed the 1 percent-of-GDP cap for defence spending only in the 1987 fiscal year.¹⁰

At the policy level, however, the achievement of Nakasone's conservatism in security policy was modest in comparison with his original position.¹¹ Due to oppositions by the liberal-centralist mainstream in the LDP and a lack of public support, his policy choices were limited. When he was Prime Minister, Nakasone maintained, in line with the mainstream policy, a policy of limited military armament and a low-profile security policy towards Asian neighbours. Until the end of the Cold War, post-war conservatism remained a political idea in the LDP rather than a working policy programme for the Japanese government.

THE 1991 GULF WAR

The post-Cold War era shook the liberal-centralist mainstream position by posing two new security issues for Japan: security co-operation within a multinational context and rising military threats from China and North Korea. These issues compelled changes in Japan's security policy dialogue. The 1990-91 Persian Gulf crisis and the following international criticism of Japan's too-late and financial-centred contribution were a turning point.¹² The idea of '*Futsu no kuni*' (normal state) was asserted by Ichiro Ozawa, who was then a new-generation LDP leader.¹³ After the crisis, LDP governments institutionalised the use of the JSDF in UN peacekeeping operations and multinational security co-operation though participation in military affairs was strictly limited. Japan redefined the Guidelines of the USJST and enacted and revised some domestic laws to enable Japan's defence co-operation with the United States in the case of a crisis, though its posture remained one of pacifist defence.

JAPANESE CONSERVATISM AND THE JNC DISTINGUISHED

The JNC appeared gradually in a post-Cold War Japanese political scene. Like post-war 'old' conservatism, national pride is the key issue for the JNC. The JNC seeks the resurrection of Japanese traditions and national values and full-fledged rearmament by the revision of the pacifist constitution. It maintained a pro-US posture in the 1990s-2000s like some 'old' conservative

¹⁰ However, the excess was only about 0.004 percent. Eventually, the 1987 defence budget was equivalent to about 1.004 percent of Japan's GNP.

¹¹ See, for example, Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism*, p. 97.

¹² See, for example, L. William Heinrich, Jr., Akiho Shibata and Yoshihide Soeya, *United Nations Peace-keeping Operations: A Guide to Japanese Politics* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 1999), pp. 19-21; Jeffrey Kingston, *Japan in Transformation 1952-2000* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2001), pp. 63-4.

¹³ Ichiro Ozawa, *Nihon Kaizou Keikaku [The Revision Plan of Japan]* (Tokyo: Koudansha, 1993).

leaders such as Nakasone in the 1980s.¹⁴ There are, however, two points which can distinguish the JNC from the post-war 'old' conservatism. The first is that the JNC is a reactionary movement against post-war liberal-led and leftist-led democratisation and demilitarisation.¹⁵ National pride is used to rebuke the liberals and leftists who are accused of denying Japan's traditions. Most of the key members of the JNC are postwar-born lawmakers, journalists and intellectuals, and did not experience pre-war and war-time Japan. They were brought up in 'affluent Japan' and experienced 'Japan as the second-largest economy in the world' and 'Japan as an Asian leader'. The JNC showed its dissatisfaction with post-war liberals and leftists and defined them as its enemy.¹⁶ It blamed them for increasing political and social problems in contemporary Japan such as deteriorating social morals and insensitivity to external threats.

Because of its post-war pedigree, the JNC has a tendency to make light of the political meaning of Japan's post-war democratic and pacifist turn.¹⁷ This should be contrasted with the pre-war 'old' conservatism that directly experienced and was brought up in the pre-war era. The JNC has conceptualised pre-war Japan more idealistically. A very simple black-and-white conception of 'idealised pre-war Japan' and 'denounced post-war Japan' is dominant in the JNC. Pre-war Japan is idealised by the JNC in terms of imagination and ideals, and is detached from the reality of the pre-war era. Former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's phrase "*Sengo Rejimu kara no dakyaku*" (overcoming the post-WWII regime) and Terumasa Nakanishi's "*Sengo Seishin*" (post-war spirit) are constructed upon this black-and-white conception of pre-war and post-war Japan.¹⁸ In this regard, the post-war old conservatism is more cautious about the past.

The second point is that the JNC combines a pro-US stance with an anti-China one. While the JNC was the most enthusiastic proponent of strengthening the USJST over 1990-2000s, it was most vocal in its anti-China views as well. Unlike the post-war 'old' conservatism of the 1940s-50s, which regarded Japan's autonomous security policy in the Western camp as the final goal, the JNC is more dependent upon the United States.

¹⁴ See, for example, Ian Neary, *The State and Politics in Japan* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002), p. 74.

¹⁵ Jerry Muller, upon the distinction between 'the conservative' and 'the reactionary', allows for a category of Radical Conservatism as a halfway house between 'the conservative' and 'the reactionary': Jerry Muller (ed.), *Conservatism: An Anthology of Social and Political Thought from David Hume to The Present* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 27-31.

¹⁶ See, for example, Terumasa Nakanishi, *Nihon no teki [Enemy of Japan]* (Tokyo: Bugei-shunjyu, 2001).

¹⁷ Jiro Yamaguchi criticises the shallowness of Abe's political view and other post-war-born conservative lawmakers in terms of their political background as a post-war generation. See, Jiro Yamaguchi, *Sengo seiji no houkai: demokurashi wa doko e yukuka [The Collapse of Post-war Politics: Where will Democracy go?]* (Tokyo: Iwanami, 2004), pp. 49-55.

¹⁸ For Abe's '*Sengo Rejimu*', see Minutes of the Diet, the Committee on Budget of the House of Representatives, 1 February 2007, <<http://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/>> [Accessed 29 May 2010]. For '*Sengo seishin*', see Nakanishi, *Nihon no teki*, pp. 108-31.

At the same time, the JNC's US dependence is closely tied with a hard-line and non-concessional policy towards China, including the revision of post-1972 Sino-Japan relationship. This point is different from post-war old-conservative postures towards China as found in Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda's views in the 1970s and Nakasone's approach towards China in the 1980s.¹⁹ The JNC may be closer to the rightist nationalists such as Shintaro Ishihara (Tokyo Governor) because of its radicalism against China.

In the 2000s, the JNC's members mainly belonged to the rightist factions of the LDP such as the Machimura faction, the Ibuki faction, and the Aso faction. They produced five prime ministers from 2000 to 2009 consecutively: Mori, Koizumi, Abe, Fukuda, and Aso. Among them, Koizumi and Abe were actively involved in asserting and implementing JNC policy programs externally and internally. The examples of JNC's key lawmakers are former prime ministers: Shinzo Abe and Taro Aso; and also the late Shouichi Nakagawa (ex-Minister of Finance) and Takeo Hiranuma (ex-Minister of the Economy, Trade and Industry). Besides, there are other conservatives who support part of JNC's security policy and its revision of Japan's domestic institutions. The examples are Yasuhiro Nakasone (ex-Prime Minister) and Shintaro Ishihara (Tokyo Governor).

On the other hand, JNC discourses are found in some nation-wide monthly opinion magazines such as '*Seiron*' (Just Opinion), '*Voice*', and '*Shokun*' (All of you), and major newspapers such as *Sankei* and *Yomiuri*, and other journalistic publications.²⁰ The examples of core JNC advocates are: Terumasa Nakanishi (Professor of Kyoto University, the brain of the Abe government), Ryoko Sakurai (Journalist), Hisahiko Okazaki (ex-Japanese ambassador to Thailand), Yoshihisa Komori (Journalist of *Sankei Shimbun*), Tadaei Takubo (Visiting Professor of Kyorin University), Tsutomu Nishioka (Professor of Tokyo Christian University), and Hidetsugu Yagi (Professor of Takasaki Keizai University). Some academics such as Mineo Nakajima (President of Akita International University) and Toshio Watanabe (President of Takushoku University) support the JNC's Asian policy. Some JNC advocates such as Sakurai, Takubo, Nishioka, and Watanabe established the Japan Institute for National Fundamentals in 2007, which is a new leading group in the JNC.

China's Rising Power and North Korea's Nuclear and Missile Development

RISING THREATS

China's rise is a regional security concern in Northeast Asia even if it may be peaceful. Along with its economic growth, its military spending marked a

¹⁹ Nakasone's friendship approach towards China is still maintained. He criticised Koizumi's Yasukuni visit in 2005. See: *Asahi Shimbun*, 4 June 2005, p. 4.

²⁰ *Shokun* ceased publication in 2009.

double-digit increase for twenty-one consecutive years in 2009. In addition to its modernised military equipment, China's military strategy in East Asia provokes serious concern in the United States and Asian countries. For Japan, China's naval build-up and active deployment around the South-China Sea and the East-China Sea are immediate concerns.²¹ From 1997, Japan's Defence White Paper began to refer with concern to China's oceanographic research within Japan's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the East-China Sea, and later to its research within Japan's territorial waters around the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands and the Okinotori islands.²² From 1999, the Defence White Paper referred to the active passage of China's naval fleet through Japan's key international straits and around Japan.²³ From 2005, it pointed to China's exploitation of gas fields in Japan's EEZ in the East-China Sea.²⁴

Post-Cold War North Korea has continued to develop nuclear weapons and missiles despite the 1994 Agreed framework and the six-party talks. The Defence White Paper has listed North Korea's military and nuclear development in the most detailed manner since the first North Korea crisis of 1993-94.²⁵ North Korea conducted tests of the Taepo-dong I in 1998 and the Taepo-dong II ballistic missiles in 2009, both of which flew over the Japanese archipelago. And, it undertook two tests of nuclear weapons in 2006 and 2009. In addition, North Korea's abduction of Japanese civilians in the 1970s-80s was gradually revealed from the late 1990s and North Korea's espionage in Japan became a Japanese security concern.

Japan's conventional low-profile policy towards China started with the 1972 normalisation of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations in which both countries agreed to the principles of mutual prosperity, non-intervention in domestic affairs, and friendship. While strengthening bilateral economic ties, Japan has avoided political controversies with China and upheld the friendship- and economy-first approach.²⁶ On the other hand, post-war Japan had no diplomatic relationship with North Korea. Non-official political channels have worked for limited political interaction. Despite the Cold War confrontation, Japanese governments were not necessarily antagonistic toward North

²¹ The examples of Chinese threats in Japanese public opinions and Japanese literature are illustrated by Reinhard Drifte. See: Reinhard Drifte, *Japan's Security Relations with China since 1989: From Balancing to Bandwagon?* (Abingdon: Routledge Curzon, 2003), pp. 80-3.

²² See, for example, Boueicho, *Boei Hakusho [Defense of Japan]*, 1997, pp. 68-9; Boueicho, *Bouei Hakusho*, 2009, p. 57.

²³ Boueicho, *Boei Hakusho*, 1999, p. 68.

²⁴ Boueicho, *Boei Hakusho*, 2005, p. 59.

²⁵ See, for example, Boueicho, *Boei Hakusho*, 1994, pp. 49-56.

²⁶ See, for example, Hidenori Ijiri, 'Sino-Japanese Controversy Since the 1972 Diplomatic Normalization', in Christopher Howe (ed.), *China And Japan: History, Trends, and Prospects* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 60-82; Ming Wan, *Sino-Japanese Relations: Interaction, Logic, and Transformation* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2006), pp. 84-5.

Korea.²⁷ A North Korean population in Japan exists and low-tier business linkages between Japan and North Korea continue.

IDEALISING JAPAN'S PAST AGAINST CHINA AND NORTH KOREA

In the face of the new regional security environment, this conventional low-profile policy was severely criticised by the JNC for degrading Japan. The JNC points out that the post-war leftists have lacked a concern for Japan's national interest and have not shown responsibility to the Japanese people. They may have misguided Japan into a pro-China and pro-North Korea orientation. According to Abe and Okazaki, the leftists have disregarded the significance of the state and Japanese traditional moral values. They have discredited Japan's national security, and weakened Japan's national will so that it cannot do what it should do for its own security.²⁸

For the JNC, national pride is the key security concept derived from a resurgence of Japanese state-nationalism. It guides Japan's security debates rather idealistically. Some JNC proponents such as Sakurai dare to advocate a hard-line and a non-concessional policy towards China and North Korea as an expression of Japan as a strong state.²⁹ Abe and Nakanishi attempt to build Japan as a strong state upon the basis of nationalistic morals and norms, and also upon Japan's excessively idealised past of the pre-war period.³⁰ In the JNC, Chinese and North Korean military challenges to Japan are translated into normative and emotive language because they deny Japan's idealised past. The past glory of Japan guides and supports the JNC's self-assertive national pride.

The significance of the linkage between past-glory and national pride in the JNC can be well illustrated by the historical controversies that have erupted between Japan and China. From the 1980s, WWII-related historical issues, such as the Yasukuni Shrine, Japanese history textbooks, the comfort women issue, and the Nanking massacre, were sources of political tension between Japan and China, and South Korea. China criticised Japan's conservative lawmakers' sporadic nationalistic remarks denying Japan's 'guilt'. Previous Japanese governments conceded to China's claim and avoided excessive politicisation.³¹ In 1994, this concessional attitude was formalised and expressed in the 1994 Murayama statement which officially acknowledged Japan's guilt. The JNC disavows this conventional

²⁷ See. Glenn Hook, Julie Gilson, Christopher W. Hughes and Hugo Dobson, *Japan's International Relations: Politics, Economics and Security*, 2nd edition (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), pp. 202-3.

²⁸ Shinzo Abe and Hisahiko Okazaki, *Kono kuni o mamoru ketsui [The Will to Defend this Country]* (Tokyo: Fuso-sha, 2001), Ch. 3-6.

²⁹ See, for example, Ryoko Sakurai, *Nihon yo tuyokikuni to nare [Japan, Be a Strong State]* (Tokyo: Daiamondo-sha, 2007).

³⁰ See, for example, Shinzo Abe, *Utsukushii kuni e [To the Beautiful State]* (Tokyo: Bungei-Shunjuu, 2006).

³¹ Ijiri, 'Sino-Japanese Controversy Since the 1972 Diplomatic Normalization', pp. 64-73.

concession by Japan, deploring Japan's apologies, and denounces China's political manoeuvres in using history to intervene into Japan's domestic affairs.³² It claims that Japan's international political status has been degraded. The JNC proposes revised interpretations over key historical issues to justify Japan's wartime Asian expansion and military actions. Nakanishi and Yagi regard them as the main front in the 'fight' against China's and Korea's intervention in Japan's domestic affairs.³³ For the JNC, the historical issues are related to its identity. Any concession to these countries is regarded as an ideational defeat for the JNC. It is clear that the JNC's stance provoked further historical controversies and criticism from Asian countries.

Koizumi's China policy reflects the JNC's attitude to these historical issues though he is not an ideological member of the JNC. The Koizumi government (2001-6) was the first LDP government after 1972 which clearly showed Japan's non-concessional attitude to China over history. Koizumi's stance was provocative for the Sino-Japanese relationship. He visited the Yasukuni shrine several times during his premiership despite China's and South Korea's repeated protests. He justified his visit by hinting that China's protests contradicted the principle of non-intervention in domestic affairs and the Yasukuni visit was a matter of Japan's sovereignty and culture.³⁴ Koizumi continued to pay indifference to the deterioration of the Sino-Japanese relationship despite hints of reconciliation presented by the Chinese side. Though Chinese President Hu Jintao called for moderation in the bilateral relationship based upon a rethinking of China's Japan policy, Koizumi refused any concession and did not attempt to prevent the negative spiral of the bilateral relationship.³⁵

EMOTIONS AND LIMITED CHOICES

The JNC's emphasis upon national pride in Asian relations entailed the neglect of China and the two Koreas. The JNC's construction of the Chinese and North Korean threat often goes beyond rationality. It is likely to use

³² See, for example, Terumasa Nakanishi, *Nihon no teki*, pp. 180-98; Terumasa Nakanishi, *Nihon no shi [The Death of Japan]* (Tokyo: Bungei-shunjyu, 2005), pp. 134-51, 171-7; Ryoko Sakurai, *Ikei no Taikoku Chugoku [China as Alien Great Power]* (Tokyo: Shincho-sha, 2008), Ch. 1.

³³ See, for example, Terumasa Nakanishi, *Nihon no teki*.

³⁴ As to Koizumi's remark on China's violation of Japan's sovereignty: *The Japan Times*, 17 May 2005, p. 2; Minutes of the Diet, the Committee on Budget of the House of Representatives, 16 May 2005, < <http://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/> > [Accessed 30 March 2010]. About his statement on the 'Yasukuni visit as Japan's culture', see *Nichu kankei shiryoushu* [Materials of the Sino-Japanese relationship] in *Nihon seiji, kokusai kankei detabaisu* [Japanese politics and International Relations database], <<http://www.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~worldjpn/documents/index.html>> [Accessed 3 April 2010].

³⁵ Yomiuri Shimbun Seiji bu [The division of political affairs of the Yomiuri Shimbun], *Gaikou o kenka ni shita otoko: Koizumi gaikou 2000nichi no shinjitsu* [The man who made diplomacy a quarrel: the fact of the 2000 days of Koizumi diplomacy] (Tokyo: Shincho-sha, 2006), pp. 249-62.

negative adjectives to denote the Chinese and North Korean threats as did the old Japanese conservatives and rightists. Some JNC proponents such as Sakurai and Komori point to a Chinese conspiracy behind the historical issue and Chinese malicious intentions behind the military build-up.³⁶ Sakurai is also active in unveiling the dark aspect of North Korea's regime and depicting it as evil.³⁷ In the JNC, China is depicted in terms of its different history and civilisation in comparison with Japan. The distorted nationalism in China which leads to anti-Japanese protests is criticised. Nakajima dared to link the traditional China-centric worldview to China's contemporary 'expansionist' intentions.³⁸

China and North Korea are also criticised by the JNC in terms of their lack of western values as well. China's undemocratic practices and oppression of domestic minorities are frequently noted by the JNC. In this vein, China's transgression of international laws is evidenced by referring, for example, to its exploitation of natural resources within Japan's EEZ in the East-China Sea.³⁹ North Korea's Kim Jong-il regime is emotionally denounced for its authoritarian domestic practices and oppression.⁴⁰

In this line of thinking, China and North Korea are identified as enemies of Japan. Enemies are predetermined in the very fixed worldview adopted by the JNC. The JNC view should be contrasted with Realism which is flexible in accordance with the actual power distribution. An easy-linkage between the issue of national pride and actual security policy narrows the range of Japanese security policy choices. The issue of North Korea's abduction of Japanese civilians in the 1970s-80s symbolises this. For the JNC, this issue is relatively simple as a policy proposal: without resolving the abduction issue, Japan will not start any negotiations for diplomatic normalisation, and this issue should be resolved only by coercion.⁴¹ Sakurai, Nakanishi, Nakajima, and other JNC members severely criticise Koizumi's visit to Pyongyang in 2002 and the Pyongyang Declaration which resulted from it because they were too concessional to North Korea.⁴² Moreover, the JNC criticises the six-party talks for their ineffectiveness and recommends Japan's withdrawal from them, and it demands economic sanctions and countermeasure against North Korea.⁴³ In 2006, the Abe government

³⁶ See, for example, Ryoko Sakurai, *Ikei no Taikoku Chugoku*; Yoshihisa Komori, *Nichu saikou [Rethinking of Japan and China]* (Tokyo: Sankei-shimbun, 2001).

³⁷ See, for example, Ryoko Sakurai, *Watashi wa kinshounichi tono tatakai o yamenai [I will never give up the fight against Kim Jong-il]* (Tokyo: Bungei-shunju, 2008).

³⁸ See, for example, Mineo Nakajima and Hei Seki, *Nichu taiketu ga naze hituyouka [Why the Sino-Japanese confrontation is needed]* (Tokyo: PHP, 2009).

³⁹ See, for example, Sakurai, *Ikei no Taikoku Chugoku*, pp. 309-10.

⁴⁰ See, for example, Sakurai, *Watashi wa kinshounichi tono tatakai o yamenai*, p. 212.

⁴¹ Shouchi Nakagawa, *Nihon o mamoru tameni nihonjin ga kangaete okubeki koto [What the Japanese must think for the defense of Japan]* (Tokyo: PHP, 2008), p. 83.

⁴² Sakurai, *Watashi wa kinshounichi tono tatakai o yamenai*.

⁴³ Terumasa Nakanishi, 'Rokkakoku kyogi no Akumu' [Nightmare of the Six-Party Talks], *Voice*, January 2004, pp. 130-9.

decided upon the toughest economic sanctions among the six-party-talk members, including the prohibition of port visits to Japan by North Korean vessels, entry into Japan by North Korean people, and imports from North Korea.⁴⁴ The JNC refused to follow later US policy changes towards North Korea. Sakurai criticises US concessions in trying to restart negotiations by saying that “this is a proof of weakness”.⁴⁵

THE TERRITORIAL ISSUE AS A ZERO-SUM GAME OVER NATIONAL PRIDE

China’s active naval deployments and North Korea’s armed spy ship intrusions into Japan’s territorial waters from the late 1990s brought the issue of national pride closer to the policy-level. Those naval challenges were severely denounced and military counter-measures were vocalised by the JNC as well as other conservatives.⁴⁶ Before that time, Japan had not sufficiently institutionalised military counter-measures against foreign naval activities around its territory. Military measures have been avoided out of consideration for the friendship-first approach which characterised Japan’s policy towards Asian neighbours. The JNC denounced the lack of will on the part of the Japanese governments and their unwillingness to resort to military measures to defend Japan’s territorial waters and islands. According to the JNC, this lack of will gave rise to these security challenges which would entail the humiliation of Japan’s national pride.⁴⁷ JNC proponents advocate the renouncement of legal constraints upon the use of force to activate counter-military measures.⁴⁸

The LDP drifted towards this JNC stance though it remained cautious. In 1999 when North Korea spy boats intruded into Japan’s territorial waters, the LDP government ordered the first naval security operation in the JSDF’s history under Article 82 (Maritime Security Operations) of the JSDF Law.⁴⁹ The Japanese Navy fired warning shots and dropped warning bombs around the vessels.⁵⁰ In 2001, in cooperation with the JSDF and with US reconnaissance information, the Japanese Coast Guard was ordered to quarantine a North Korea armed boat and fired warning shots towards it.⁵¹ When Chinese protesters attempted to land on the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands in 2004, the Koizumi government dispatched Coast Guard helicopters and Police, and arrested several Chinese as illegal immigrants.⁵² After that, the

⁴⁴ *The Japan Times*, 12 October 2006, p. 1.

⁴⁵ Sakurai, *Watashi wa kinshounichi tononataakai o yamenai*.

⁴⁶ Ryoko Sakurai, *Kuni uritamou koto nakare* [Do not sell the state] (Tokyo: Daiamondo-sha, 2005), pp. 152-4.

⁴⁷ Nakanishi frequently refers to this point for asserting the JNC. See, for example, Nakanishi, *Nihon no teki*; Nakanishi; *Nihon no shi*.

⁴⁸ Abe and Okazaki, *Kono kuni o mamoru ketsui*, pp. 74-97.

⁴⁹ Boueicho, *Bouei Hakusho*, 2005, p.158.

⁵⁰ *The Japan Times*, 24 March 1999, pp. 1-2; *Asahi Shimbun*, evening edition, 24 March 1999, p. 1.

⁵¹ After an exchange of fire, the armed boat blew up with its crew on board. The nationality of the boat was later confirmed as North Korean. See, Boueicho, *Bouei Hakusho*, 2003, p. 142.

⁵² *The Japan Times*, 25 March 2004, pp. 1, 3.

Coast Guard strengthened the deployment of vessels to defend a lighthouse on the island which was originally constructed by a group of Japanese rightist activists as a private asset.⁵³ In response to passage of a Chinese Han nuclear-powered submarine under Japan's territorial sea in 2004, the Koizumi government ordered naval security operations under Article 82 of the JSDF law in order to chase the submarine.⁵⁴ In response to the intrusion of North Korean armed vessels, the Coast Guard introduced new large- and small-sized patrol vessels from 2001 and the Japanese Navy began to deploy six remodeled high-speed missile boats from 2002.⁵⁵ To meet the needs of the defense of the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, the Coast Guard introduced several middle-sized new patrol vessels with helicopter platforms. These vessels can work as mother ships for small patrol boats. The NDPG 2004 and the 2005 Mid-term Defense Program, for the first time in the JSDF's history, included provision against an invasion of Japan's offshore islands and intrusion by special operations vessels.

After 2004, however, the Japanese government's counter-measures stepped back from the JNC's position. Though China's naval activism still continued in the form of unannounced oceanographic research in Japan's territorial waters and its EEZ, and though Chinese vessels continued to pass around the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands and through Japan's international straits, the Japanese government avoided the provocative use of military measures.⁵⁶ In the face of China's continuing challenge, tit-for-tat naval actions were avoided. Instead, the Japanese government, through diplomatic channels, repeated the claim that China had infringed Japan's sovereignty and international law. Moreover, the threat of North Korea's intrusion into Japan's territorial waters has not been resolved. Even under these security conditions, the budget for the JSDF decreased since the 2003 fiscal year while naval defence of Japanese maritime territory against intrusion by

⁵³ Kaijyo hoan cho [Japan Coast Guard], 'Kaijyo hoan repooto [Japan Coast Guard Annual Report] 2005', <<http://www.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/info/books/report2005/tokushu/p018.html>> [Accessed 22 May 2010].

⁵⁴ Boueicho, *Bouei Hakusho*, 2005, pp. 165-8.

⁵⁵ Boueicho, *Bouei Hakusho*, 2008, p. 154; Kaijyo hoan cho [Japan Coast Guard], 'Kaijyo hoan repooto [Japan Coast Guard Annual Report] 2007', <<http://www.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/info/books/report2007/honpen/p052.html>> [Accessed 22 May 2010].

⁵⁶ The year 2010 witnessed reemerging tension between Japan and China over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands and the EEZ in the East China Sea. In May and September, a Chinese survey vessel entered Japan's EEZ without notification and approached a Japanese Coast Guard survey vessel and demanded the suspension of the Coast Guard survey. In September, off Kubashima island, a part of the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, a Chinese fishing trawler, which was suspected of conducting illegal fishing in Japanese waters, ignored repeated orders to stop by the Coast Guard and hit two JCG vessels [rammed into them]. The Chinese captain and fourteen crew members were arrested by the Coast Guard for obstructing the performance of official duties and for suspected illegal fishing. This arrest was carried out in accordance with Japanese law. The Japanese government released the crew but decided to detain the captain for investigation and a criminal trial. China demanded the release of the captain, which led to the serious tension between the two countries. This incident was an opportunity for the JNC to reassert its hard-line China policy, and to criticize the DPJ's low-profile China policy.

armed spy boats was prioritised in the annual budget.⁵⁷ This low-profile attitude of the Japanese government was severely criticised by JNC advocates such as Sakurai as inappropriate attitude for China's naval expansion.⁵⁸

STRENGTHENING THE USJST TO COUNTER CHINA AND NORTH KOREA

The JNC asserts that Japan must take a decisive stance in relation to China and North Korea by strengthening the USJST. Most security experts may agree that strengthening the USJST is strategically mandatory for Japan in the face of the regional military build-up. The JNC shares the view that strengthening or 'enlarging' the USJST is the most realistic security measure at present though it may increase Japan's military dependence upon the United States. Abe and some JNC proponents dare to affirm 'normative similarity' between Japan and the United States. For them, the USJST is an alliance sharing the same values such as democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and free market economy to counter the non-democratic countries in East Asia.⁵⁹ This is a typical pro-West attitude found in the JNC.

The JNC's support for the USJST is constructed upon a rather single-minded belief. This optimism is observed in some JNC proponents' idea of countering Chinese and North Korean threats. Abe and Okazaki share the belief that China can be managed if the USJST is stable. They assert that Japan should approach its regional security only by paying attention to the maintenance of the USJST which, they optimistically assume, reflects normative similarity between Japan and the United States.⁶⁰ In their thinking, the USJST is normatively correct.

This optimistic belief may come from Japan's experience of the USJST during the Cold War period when US deterrent power in relation to China and North Korea was stable. The JNC's justification of the USJST in post-Cold War East Asia is simply built upon the Cold-War logic of drawing a line between the western liberal-democracies and China and North Korea. The JNC is, interestingly, linked to pro-Taiwan lawmakers and advocates. Nakanishi and Sakurai call for the defence of Taiwan by a trilateral alliance among Japan, the United States, and Taiwan against China.⁶¹ Their distrust of communist China is clear in this approach.

In this line of thinking, it is clear that the JNC's expectation of the USJST goes beyond what the United States itself would do. The Koizumi

⁵⁷ See, for example, the 2005 Mid-term Defense Programme.

⁵⁸ See, for example, Sakurai, *Kuni uritamou koto nakare*, pp. 152-4.

⁵⁹ Abe, *Utsukushii kuni e*, p. 129.

⁶⁰ Abe and Okazaki, *Kono kuni o mamoru ketsui*, p. 174.

⁶¹ See, for example, Yoshiko Sakurai, *Kuni uritamou koto nakare [Never Sell our own Country]* (Tokyo: Daiyamondo-sha, 2005), pp. 124-6; Terumasa Nakanishi, 'Nihon yo tsuyoikuni tonare: 2008nenkiki o norikoeru tameni [Japan, be a strong state to conquer the 2008 crisis]', *Serion*, November 2006, pp. 65-9.

government's attempt to include mention of the Chinese threat in the 2005 US-Japan Joint Statement during the 2+2 meeting failed due to US opposition.⁶² The Abe government's proposal for quadrilateral security co-operation among Japan, the United States, Australia, and India, which hinted at the containment of China by the 'liberal-democracies', did not obtain clear support from the United States and Australia.⁶³ Aso's grandiose geopolitical idea of the "arch of liberty and prosperity" stretching from Japan to Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and to Europe similarly did not obtain full support from the United States and Australia.⁶⁴

COLLECTIVE SELF-DEFENCE AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The JNC calls for the removal of the prohibition on the exercise of the right of collective defence.⁶⁵ By removing this, it seeks to realise more realistic or practical defence co-operation without the self-imposed restrictions upon Japan's military operations. The non-use of the right of collective defence has restricted the range of Japan's defence co-operation in the USJST. Japan's co-operation with the United States is allowed for self-defence purposes, but not for collective defence purposes. For example, Japan cannot attack an enemy only targeting US military forces. Japan's counter-attack against the enemy would be constitutional only after recognising that the object is also targeting Japan or Japanese forces.

North Korea's ballistic missiles are an immediate threat to Japan's security and have accelerated Japan's military preparation. The JNC has linked the North Korea's missile threat, together with that of China, to their overdue policy program of constitutionalising the use of the right of collective defence. North Korea's case has influenced actual policy. The Abe government and

⁶² Yomiuri Shimbun Seiji bu, *Gaikou o kenka ni shita otoko*, p. 271.

⁶³ For Australia's view of the Abe's proposal, see: William Tow, 'The Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation and Asia-Pacific Strategic Geometries', 6 September 2007, <<http://www.globalcollab.org/Nautilus/australia/apsnet/policy-forum/2007/>> [Accessed 21 May 2010]; Australian News Net, 'US, Japan ask Australia to include India in quadrilateral security arrangement', 15 March 2007, <<http://www.australiannews.net/story/234534>> [Accessed 21 May 2010]; Alan Boyd, 'US, Japan in Security Overdrive', 17 March 2007, <<http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Japan/IC17Dh04.html>> [Accessed 21 May 2010]. For the US stance in 2007, see: Tobias Harris, 'Bush Talks sense on China', 1 September 2007, <<http://www.observingjapan.com/2007/09/bush-talks-sense-on-china.html>> [Accessed 21 May 2010].

⁶⁴ For Aso's idea, see: Taro Aso, 'On the Arc of Freedom and Prosperity', 12 March 2007, <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/pillar/address0703.html>> [Accessed 21 May 2010]; Taro Aso, *Jiyuu to hanei no ko [The Arch of Liberty and Prosperity]* (Tokyo: Gentousha, 2008), pp. 33-101.

⁶⁵ The concept of the right of collective defence was initially introduced into Japan's security debates by the Japanese governments in the early 1970s, two decades after the first ratification of the USJST. Its aim was to justify the USJST under the pacifist constitution and the UN charter. According to Japanese governmental official statements, Japan 'has' the right because it agreed to the UN Charter which stipulates it. However, while the UN charter allows UN members to participate in alliances according to the right, Japan cannot 'use' it due to the pacifist constitution which only allows for the right of 'self-defence'. Under this domestic legal constraint, the USJST can be justified as far as Japan's defence co-operation is within the right of self-defence, not the right of collective defence.

the JNC justified the right of collective defence for Japan's defence cooperation in US-Japan Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD).⁶⁶ US-Japan cooperation on the BMD officially started in 2003 under the Koizumi government after a decade-long research at the ministry-level.⁶⁷ In 2007, the Abe government institutionalised procedures for the BMD under Article 82-2-3 (Order of destruction) of the JSDF law, which permitted anti-missile attacks against missiles approaching Japan.⁶⁸ In 2009, for the first time in the JSDF's history, the Aso government issued this order in the face of North Korea's missile flights over Japan.⁶⁹

In 2006, some ministers and LDP leaders in the Koizumi government hinted at the possibility of Japan's preemptive attacks against North Korea's missile sites.⁷⁰ Because the present BMD system may not be a perfect defence system against North Korea's ballistic missiles, Japan may require an alternative such as pre-emptive attacks against North Korea's missile sites as self-defence.⁷¹ While the then-Prime Minister Koizumi was cautious, Abe was active on this point. In 2009, a Council on Security and Defense commissioned by Prime Minister Aso submitted a research report allowing for preemptive attacks as well as the revision of the right of collective defence.⁷²

North Korea's nuclear blackmail provoked the JNC camp to place on the agenda Japan's nuclear armament which had been a post-WWII taboo.⁷³ The JNC attempts to renounce the leftist pacific constraints on Japan's nuclear armament and to include it in a range of possible options. Some JNC political figures such as Nakagawa, Abe and Aso officially advocated or hinted at starting a domestic debate on Japan's nuclear armament.⁷⁴ On 8

⁶⁶ See, for example, Abe and Okazaki, *Kono kuni o mamoru ketsui*, pp. 91-7; *The Japan Times*, 21 November 2006, p. 1.

⁶⁷ Japan's initial interest in US-led Ballistic Missile Defense can be traced back to the middle of 1980s when Reagan's SDI plan was proposed. From the 1994 North Korean nuclear crisis, the Japanese government endorsed a commitment to the US-led missile defence plan despite its reserved language and the lack of a full domestic support.

⁶⁸ The JSDF law was revised in 2005 to institutionalise anti-missile attacks against ballistic missiles. The Abe government institutionalised a detailed procedure for the law. See *Asahi Shimbun*, 8 March 2007, p.4.

⁶⁹ *The Japan Times*, 28 March 2009, pp. 1-2.

⁷⁰ In the Koizumi government, Director General of the Defense Agency Shigeru Ishiba hinted at the possibility of Japan's preemptive attacks against North Korea. See: Minutes of the Diet, the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense of the House of Councilors, 26 March 2003, <<http://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/>> [Accessed 30 March 2010]. Former Director General of the Defense Agency Fukushima Nukaga expressed a view that preemptive attacks were necessary and Japan should consider the deployment of Tomahawk Cruise Missile. See: *Asahi Shimbun*, 3 May 2007, p. 4.

⁷¹ See, for example, Abe and Okazaki, *Kono kuni o mamoru ketsui*, pp. 93-4.

⁷² See, for example, *Asahi Shimbun*, evening edition, 4 August 2009, p. 1; *The Japan Times*, 5 August 2009, p. 1.

⁷³ Christopher W. Hughes, *Japan's Remilitarization* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), p. 111.

⁷⁴ For Nakagawa's statement, see: *The Japan Times*, 15 November 2006, p. 2. For Aso's, see: Minutes of the Diet, the Committee on Security, Lower House, 18 October 2006, <<http://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/>> [Accessed 3 April 2010].

November 2006, then-Prime Minister Abe said that not allowing discussions on Japan's nuclear armament was too excessive.⁷⁵ JNC advocates, such as Nakanishi and Takubo, asserted that Japan should decide on nuclear armament to contain China in the long term.⁷⁶ Despite this, the proposal for Japan's nuclear armament in the face of the North Korean threat failed to obtain support from Japanese policymakers and public opinion. It provoked severe criticism not only from North Korea and China, but also from South Korea. It is clear that this policy idea does not meet US interests in East Asia and would disrupt the military balance and challenge the conventional order in this region.

Post-Koizumi/Abe

THE EMERGENCE OF THE DPJ GOVERNMENT

The year 2009 was a turning point for the JNC. After almost fifty-four years, the LDP lost the 2009 national election and the Hatoyama DPJ government came to office. Hatoyama upheld the idea of '*Yua*' (fraternity) as the symbol of his new policy program. In security policy, Hatoyama had a vision of an East Asian community in which Japan, China, Taiwan, two Koreas, and other East Asian countries were expected to form the core of a regional collective security grouping, one which would unite as a political and economic community. Hatoyama attempted to reduce Japan's military commitment to the US-Japan alliance while not denying the importance of the bilateral relationship. He ceased the JSDF's refuelling naval operation in the Indian Sea and increased economic assistance to Afghanistan. He pledged to maintain the ban on the right of collective defence and to maintain other constitutional and legal constraints on Japan's use of force externally.

Was this the end of the JNC? DPJ's low-profile and friendship-first approach to China works for relieving the tension between the two countries. Most Japanese people today are a little tired of the Koizumi style of provoking nationalistic sentiments because they finally recognised the emptiness of his language such as '*Kaikaku*' (reform). In this context, Japanese people today would be temporarily satisfied with DPJ's policies towards China and North Korea despite increasing domestic dissatisfaction with his lack of leadership and unclear policy direction.

Moreover, the JNC's hard-line policy in regard to Chinese and North Korean threats is conflicting with trends outside Japan. Its single-minded conception of threat is gradually increasing the distance from US policy. Under Obama, the US-China relationship is moving towards dialogue rather than

⁷⁵ Minutes of the Diet, the Committee on Fundamental National Policies (Joint meeting of both Houses), 8 November 2006, <<http://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/>> [Accessed 3 April 2010].

⁷⁶ See, for example, Terumasa Nakanishi (ed), *Nihon kakubusou no ronren* [*The points of Japan's nuclear armament*] (Tokyo: PHP, 2006), pp. 46-50.

containment or confrontation though the issue of Taiwan remains provocative. The Obama administration wants to encourage North Korea to re-join the six-party talks and downplays confrontation with Pyongyang. Obama's participation in the 2009 G2 summit between the United States and China, and Bill Clinton's visit to North Korea in the same year, revealed the distance that had developed between the new US administration and the JNC.

JNC'S CONTINUING ROLE AND SECURITY ORIENTATION

Despite those changes, it can be pointed out that a JNC role in Japanese security will remain in the post-Koizumi/Abe period as a policy alternative to the liberal line. There are four points to be noted. First, unless North Korea's nuclear-armament can be effectively reversed, the JNC's proposal to strengthen the USJST to deter North Korea's nuclear weapons will continue to be a practical and rational choice. It is not clear whether the six-party talks will resume or whether they will obtain North Korea's renunciation of nuclear weapons. In this context, the JNC's insistence on BMD will continue to receive domestic support to some degree.

Second, China's strengthening military and its increasing power in East Asia will easily provoke Japanese nationalistic sentiment if the liberal camp fails to answer to the issue of Japan's national pride. Japan's power is declining relative to that of China and its status as Asian leader will soon be lost. With the nationalistic language of Japan's ideational supremacy, the JNC will continue to appeal to the Japanese people who are losing confidence in the supremacy of Japan in Asia. The JNC's state-nationalism and traditional values are an easy way to maintain Japan's supremacy at the ideological level. The JNC will use the nationalistic nostalgia of Japan's pre-WWII and post-WWII strong state and dominance over Asia to deny the present uncomfortable reality. China's continuing infringement of Japan's EEZ in the East China Sea and its disavowal of Japan's sovereignty over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands will stimulate the JNC to ignite Japanese nationalistic reactions. If China's present behaviour does not change, the relative decline of Japan's power to China might result in increasing support for the JNC.

Thirdly, DPJ Hatoyama's approach to East Asia was only based upon the naïve image of community-building in East Asian security relations. His unclear stance in relation to the USJST, especially over the relocation of US military base in Okinawa, hinted at Japan's disentanglement from the alliance with the United States. Policy-level turmoil is appearing. The JNC asserts that DPJ's pro-Asia orientation and mismanagement of the relocation issue have weakened the US-Japan alliance while the China military build-up and the North Korean threat are obvious. If the US-Japan relationship is weakened, the JNC will emerge as a practical choice to maintain the USJST. In this sense, the JNC continues to be the alternative even in a DPJ government.

Finally, within the LDP, the influence of liberals or centralists is weakening. They are losing power in intra-party politics. They have failed to provide a clear vision for Japan's post-Cold War military security. In contrast to their ideological ambiguity, the JNC upholds a clear view. Its security policy proposals are gradually becoming the mainstream LDP view which used to include components of rightist, centralist, and liberal views during the Cold War.⁷⁷

PROBABLE DIRECTIONS OF JAPAN'S SECURITY POLICY IN THE FACE OF CHINA'S RISE

What would be the probable direction of Japan's security policy in the face of China's rise? Considering the DPJ's turmoil and the probable role of the JNC in Japan's security policy, there are two possibilities. One would be Japan's further strengthening of the USJST to counter China's rise. This could be done by the JNC. And it might be possible even by a DPJ government albeit at a lower level of defence co-operation. For the JNC, this would entail the development of Abe's and Aso's justification for strengthening the USJST in terms of the Chinese threat. During the Koizumi and Abe premiership, the JNC was a political and intellectual partner with the hard-liners and neoconservatives in the George W. Bush administration. If the US administration swings back to the conservative camp, this 'partnership' role of the JNC would be sure to emerge again. For the DPJ, further strengthening of the USJST is not necessarily a favourite option, but, if the DPJ fails to prevent China's military build-up, the options would be limited to the USJST. The DPJ will be pressed to change and will grudgingly prepare for a strengthened USJST.

The other possibility is an independent security policy with less reliance upon the United States. This was the goal of post-WWII 'old' conservative security policy which was seen in the Hatoyama and Kishi governments in the 1950s. Both leftists and rightists in the 1950s-60s called for an autonomous security policy in opposition to the mainstream Yoshida line, though their ideological bases were different. Some groups of Japan's rightists today continue to hark back in this direction. For the JNC, a move in this direction would be possible if Japan's national pride was humiliated by the alliance partner, the United States. If the emerging G2 framework between China and the United States becomes a prominent security mechanism in East Asia and leads to US neglect of Japan, this would be sure to prompt a move towards an autonomous security policy. The JNC, which has sought to protect Japan's

⁷⁷ The defeat of the LDP in the elections of 2007 and 2009 does not mean the end of the JNC. The key issues in the national elections in the 1990s-2000s were Japan's stagnated economy, welfare systems in the aging society, or the reform of the Japanese government, all of which were separated from the issue of the JNC. For example, public opinion researches over national elections in the 2000s by the *Yomiuri Shimbun* and *Jiji Tsushin* show a trend that more than (or around) half of voters considered that stagnated domestic economy, welfare systems in the aging society and the reform of the Japanese government are the key issue for national elections (in the 2000, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007 and 2009 election).

national pride by strengthening the USJST in the 2000s, may go back to this old conservative stance. Nakanishi, in a recent book, identified JNC's dissatisfaction with the development of US relations with China.⁷⁸ The JNC may advocate an expansion of naval capability to match the Chinese military build-up, and an air capability to strike North Korean missile sites. For the DPJ, an independent security policy would be possible if it discovers that the idea of East Asian Community is premature or a fantasy, or if a strengthened USJST is too great a burden for Japan. At this stage, however, the only ideological basis for an independent DPJ security policy would be an 'idealised United Nations' which post-WWII Japanese leftists and liberals have enshrined.

Conclusion

This article has shown that the JNC will not disappear as a security-policy option for Japan even in the DPJ period. The Northeast Asian regional security environment as influenced by China and North Korea will continue to stimulate JNC efforts to resurrect Japan's national pride and hard-line policy proposals under the language of practicality. Despite the LDP's decline, ex-Prime Minister Abe has led a JNC lawmaker group in cooperation with Takeo Hiranuma and continues to uphold conservative ideas as the basis for a new LDP identity. In the face of DPJ's clumsiness in policy-making and its loss of domestic support, JNC advocates continue to assert themselves. Leftist and liberal alternatives have been weakened in contemporary Japan. The leftists are now a minority in Japanese security policy dialogues, and their ideas and policies are distant from the Japanese people. The liberals do not necessarily have a consistent policy program to cope with the present Northeast Asian security situation. They have no answer for Japan's security problems. How to manage Japanese national pride will be an important political issue for Japanese leaders as Japan faces economic decline. At this point, the JNC has influence in Japan because it creates a national myth for the Japanese people and encourages nationalism by presenting China and North Korea as enemies.

Despite JNC's strengths, however, the weaknesses of the JNC stand out. The JNC will face limitations through its excessive dependence upon the United States, which has a different agenda towards China and North Korea. The feasibility of the JNC's hard-line policy towards both countries rests upon US attitudes to them. Under the Obama administration, US policy towards both countries is moving in another direction, which weakens the JNC's main support. Domestically, the JNC's hard-line policy towards the two countries has caused a conflict with other groups in Japan such as business community and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. China has been Japan's largest trade partner since 2004. The Japanese business

⁷⁸ See, for example, Terumasa Nakanishi and Hideji Yagi, *Hoshu wa ima nani o subekika* [What conservatives should do now] (Tokyo: PHP, 2008), pp. 142-8.

community wants stable relations with China. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is composed of liberals or centralists, seeks pacific relations with China and a moderate resolution of the North Korean problem. There is no doubt that the JNC will face strong domestic opposition from those groups if it asserts a hard-line policy. The JNC will continue to insist upon its political and ideological presence in the Japanese political arena to some extent, but policy implementation will be a different matter. It is unlikely to come to power at present, but it will not quit the political arena. Its support would be conditional upon the probable trajectory of US policy to China and North Korea and the degree of Japanese people's dissatisfaction with Japan's political status in East Asia.

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