

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

From the preceding chapters, it is evident that Japan's security policy has changed and its attitude has become more involved in international security affairs. As a country which is bound with legal constraints stipulated in Article 9 of the constitution, Japan's progress toward becoming a 'normal state' is accelerating in the post Cold War era.

Chapter 1 explained Japan's status after the end of WWII and compared post war security policy, military power and military budget with those in the post Cold War period. After the end of WWII, Japan was weak and did not have a traditional military force to defend itself. Therefore, Japan's security policy focused on seeking cooperation from the UN and the US for national defense. After signing the Security Treaty with the US, Japan was then provided with security guarantee which facilitated Japan to focus mainly on economic issues. The effort to change the security policy appeared after Japan recovered from the war and became economically strong; however, this effort did not cause the significant change in Japan's security policy. The change in Japan's security policy became apparent after the end of the Cold War when country encountered diverse security challenges. For this reason, Japan's security policy was changed due to numerous factors involved. The change in Japan's security policy in the post Cold War era was also contributed by the motivation to make international contribution which moved Japan towards becoming a 'normal state'.

"Normal state" was first mentioned by Owada Hisashi, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs in 1991 but it attracted great attention when it was mentioned in "*Blueprint for a New Japan: The Rethinking of a Nation*" written by Ichiro Ozawa, a leader of Democratic Party of Japan, in 1994. Owada focused on the importance of military power which he believed that it could support Japan to become a 'normal state' whereas Ozawa focused on making international contribution.

According to Ozawa, ‘normal state’ is the state that willingly supports the responsibilities regarded as natural in the international community. ‘Normal state’ implies a country which is able to possess the military power and has the legitimacy to exercise the military power to preserve and enhance its national interest. ‘Normal state’ has the following advantages to Japan. First, it ensures the national security of Japan meaning that Japan can defend itself and be less dependent on the US which has influenced Japan’s security policy since the Japan-US security alliance was established in 1952. According to Robert Jackson and Georg Sorensen, there are five basic values of a state system that states should uphold¹ and security is one of those values. In this regard, ‘normal state’ will enable Japan to effectively insure security which is a necessity of states to provide for their citizen. In addition, the primary purpose for becoming the ‘normal state’ is to actively play an international role and make an international contribution meaning that Japan will have freedom and legitimacy to play the role on the international stage and make international contributions.

Secondly, ‘normal state’ provides Japan with an opportunity to gain national prestige. The Self-Defense Forces are instrumental in assisting Japan to increase national prestige from international humanitarian relief operations. Since the enactment of the 1992 International Peace Cooperation Law, the responsibility of SDF has not been limited to national defense but expanded to include the overseas humanitarian operations. The dispatch of SDF to participate in the UN peacekeeping operations in countries namely Cambodia (1992), Mozambique (1993), East Timor (1999),² enhanced Japan’s international status. Japan did not only focus on developing its own economy but also considered the importance of humanitarian issued. In this regard, ‘normal state’ will further national prestige of Japan since the SDF which would turn to be a national military will freely provide humanitarian assistance which would not be limited to noncombatant zones.

¹ Robert Jackson and Georg Sorensen, *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 3-4.

² Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, “Diplomatic Bluebook 2004,” <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/2004/chap3-a.pdf>.

The SDF's expanding role is a result of the change in Japan's security policy and at the same time it contributes to Japan's move toward becoming a 'normal state'. In the post Cold War era, more factors appear to stimulate Japan to change its security policy. Those factors can be classified as domestic factors, regional threats and international factors.

Domestic Factors

Domestic factors that stimulated Japan to change its security policy were the need to revise the constitution and expand the role of Self-Defense Forces. The constitution is a major obstacle for Japan to play a role on international stage regarding security affairs. Article 9 of the constitution prohibits Japan from building up its military which made international contributions more difficult. Japan was strongly criticized by the international community after the Gulf War as it did not contribute any personnel to assist the US in the Iraqi war. Therefore, the Gulf War could be perceived as motivation for Japan to reconsider its constitution and its role on the international stage. After the end of the Gulf War, laws concerning security were promulgated to expand the role of SDF which were instrumental to making international contributions.

The issue of constitutional revision emerged in Japan in the 1960s. It did not gain much attention until during the post Cold War period when Japan faced difficulties in dealing with security threats but the constitution proved to be a highly controversial topic. The LDP which was the dominant party in Japan strongly supported the constitutional revision. The main point regarding constitutional revision was the amending Article 9 which aroused the debate among proponents and opponents. The constitutional revision achieved the concrete development when the Constitutional Research Council was set up in both Houses of Japanese Diet.

Regional Threats

Regional threats to Japan's security came from China and North Korea. These two countries conducted missile tests which threatened Japan's security and at

the same time pushed Japan to strengthen its Self-Defense Forces. In addition, China and North Korea were a major drive for Japan to participate in the US TMD project which strengthened Japan's capabilities to deal with missile threats. The suspicious ship incidents were a major factor that pushed Japan to change its security attitude. Japan promulgated the Emergency Laws or the so-called "Three Laws regarding Response to Armed Attacks" to set up a framework for responding to a wide range of emergency situations. According to these laws, some restrictions on the SDF were relaxed.

International Factors

Japan was stimulated to change its security policy by the pressure from the US, the permanent seat on the UNSC and terrorist attacks in the US in 2001. First, the pressure from the US was perceived from the SDF's overseas deployment. Japan was pressured by the US to make a 'human contribution' during the Gulf War but the constitutional limitation prevented Japan from granting the US request during the Gulf War. In response to this pressure and domestic push by some politicians, the Japanese Diet passed the International Peace Cooperation Law which would allow Japan's SDF to be dispatched overseas for the first time.

Secondly, Japan wished to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council. This would enhance Japan's capability to make international contribution and increase Japan's international prestige. Moreover, Japan needs to have a military force which is one of the requirements for members of Security Council to perform missions effectively.

Third, Japan's response to the terrorist attacks in the US in 2001 was remarkable and showed the important change in Japan's attitude towards international security issues. Japan enacted the Anti-terrorism Special Measures Law within two months after the terrorist attacks. The determination of the Japanese government to assist the US in war against terrorism and the rapid response toward these incidents were evident from a statement by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on the passing of

the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law by the Japanese Diet in October 2001.³ In addition, Japan played a significant role in countering terrorism which included the bilateral, trilateral, regional and global cooperation.

The theory that best explains Japan's nature after the end of the Cold War is neo-realism. In the post Cold War era, Japan's security role has changed in response to international security situations including the Gulf War, the US-led war in Iraq, terrorist attacks and the regional instability caused by military buildups of China and North Korea. Therefore, the change in Japan's security role is consistent with the concept of neo-realism that the structure of the international system determines the state's behavior. Japan was motivated by those international security affairs to review its role on the global stage and enacted the laws to enhance its capability to respond to the international situations.

In addition, Japan's apprehension of China's and North Korea's missile tests which stimulated Japan to participate in the US Theatre Missile Defense project can also be explained by neo-realism. According to neo-realists, states can create security dilemmas if they perceive other states as potential enemies and threats to their national security.⁴

In addition, neo-realism also explains the importance of power which is more than just military resources and the ability to use that power to force and control other states in the system. Power is the combined capabilities of state.⁵ In this regard, Japan's perception toward military was not only to employ power to influence other countries but also to use it as a means to complete its responsibility towards the international community. In other words, Japan wants to have a military power in order to effectively make international contributions.

Neo-realists point out that differences in policy can be explained by the differences in power or capabilities.⁶ Japan's military power was constrained by the

³ Statement by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on October 29, 2001, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/terro0109/speech/pm1029.html>.

⁴ John Baylis and Steve Smith, *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 186.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.185.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.186.

present constitution. When situations regarding security arose Japan could not deal with them effectively because of its fundamental lack of military power.

Neo-realism can explain the change in Japan's security policy and Japan's reaction to the potential enemies and threats. Moreover, it can provide an explanation to Japan's perception towards military power which is important component for a 'normal state'. Therefore, neo-realism can rationalize Japan's move towards becoming a 'normal state'.

Strategic realism is another theory that can explain Japan's foreign policy decision making. The central concept of strategic realism is how to deal with threat. In this regard, the change in Japan's security policy which leads to a 'normal state' comes from many factors including threats. Therefore, strategic realism is able to explain the move of Japan to become a 'normal state' and provides rationale for Japan's action and reaction to security situations which leads to a 'normal state'.

According to strategic realists, a leader of state is obliged to think strategically when he confronts military issues.⁷ This theory explains Japan's decision to join the theatre missile defense project with the US in 1998. The then Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto decided that the government would participate in the US TMD project after China and North Korea conducted long range missile tests.

Since strategic realism focused on foreign policy, it can explain the relations between Japan and North Korea and Japan and China. Japan's relations with these two countries were not smooth due to the historical and territorial issues. After North Korean missile test in 1998, the Japanese leader had to think strategically and thoroughly in order to deal with North Korea's aggressive acts and to defend the country. However, Japan had tried to establish the diplomatic relations with North Korea and China. The Japanese prime minister had to play important role to conduct the foreign policy as a leader of state who has to think thoroughly and strategically.

Since the implication of 'normal state' is a state that is able to possess the military power and has the legitimacy to exercise the military power to enhance its national interest thus making international contribution, Japan's security attitude is changing consistently with this implication. Japan's role on the international stage

⁷ Jackson and Sorensen, p. 81.

regarding security has changed in response to domestic, regional, and international factors. Therefore, the finding conclusion for the thesis is that Japan is gradually moving forwards to become a 'normal state'.

The study of changes in Japan's security policy after the end of the Cold War which contributes to the emergence of Japan as a normal state rationalizes the hypothesis which is the preparation of Japan to remilitarize and assume a status of a 'normal state' in the near future due to the domestic factors, the pressure from the US, a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, the threat from PR China and North Korea and the response to terrorist attacks in the US in 2001.