

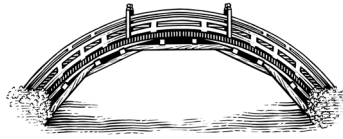
BOOK REVIEW ROUNDTABLE

Andrew L. Oros's

*Japan's Security Renaissance:  
New Policies and Politics for the Twenty-First Century*

New York: Columbia University Press, 2017

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*Kenneth B. Pyle*

*Yuki Tatsumi*

*Nicholas Szechenyi*

*James E. Auer*

*Andrew L. Oros*

## A Renaissance or a Revolution?

*Kenneth B. Pyle*

During the past half century, the return of Japan to great-power politics has been predicted many times—wrongly. Especially in the 1970s, as Japan’s industrial and financial power grew, many foreign observers expected the country to soon become a great military power. Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai feared that Japan was on the verge of resuming a militarist course. Herman Kahn, the preeminent futurist and founder of the Hudson Institute, concluded in his book *The Emerging Japanese Superstate* (1970) that the “Japanese will almost inevitably feel that Japan has the right and duty to achieve full superpower status and that this means possessing a substantial nuclear establishment.”<sup>1</sup> The year before his election as president, Richard Nixon wrote in *Foreign Affairs* that it was past time for Japan to rearm: “It simply is not realistic to expect a nation moving into the first rank of major powers to be totally dependent for its own security on another nation, however close the ties.”<sup>2</sup> Nixon recalled Japan’s past reluctance to involve itself in world affairs, but said he would not be surprised if “in five years we didn’t have to restrain them.” The Japanese had gone through a traumatic period since Hiroshima, he mused, but “now they are going to do something.”<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, in the face of such expectations, foreign observers were puzzled when Japan still didn’t “do something.” On the contrary, its leaders continued to neglect, and in fact deliberately avoid, developing an infrastructure to take responsibility for defense of Japan’s security. Instead, depending on the U.S. security guarantee made possible by the Cold War order, they adopted self-binding policies to ensure that Japan would stay out of political and military involvements, interpreting Article 9 of the constitution to mean that there could be no overseas deployment of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF), no participation in collective defense,

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<sup>1</sup> Herman Kahn, *The Emerging Japanese Superstate: Challenge and Response* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1970), 165.

<sup>2</sup> Richard M. Nixon, “Asia after Viet Nam,” *Foreign Affairs*, October 1967, 113–25.

<sup>3</sup> Memorandum from the President’s Special Assistant (Buchanan) to President Nixon, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976*, vol. 1, *Foundations of Foreign Policy, 1969–1972* (U.S. Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C., 2003).

no power projection capability, no possession of nuclear arms, no arms exports, no sharing of defense-related technology, no spending of more than 1% of GNP for defense expenditure, and no military use of space. Japan defined itself as a trading state and depended on the United States to provide its security, paying billions of dollars annually to help defray the expenses of U.S. protection. This grand strategy left Japan ill-prepared for the post-Cold War era. Exclusive concentration on economic growth left the nation without political-strategic institutions, crisis-management practice, intelligence gathering, or strategic planning. Incredibly, the Japanese had no plan or legislation that would allow the government to deal with national emergencies. Japan, supposedly a sovereign country, had in effect no plans for ensuring its national security. Dependence had become the foundation of the nation's foreign policy.

Only when the Cold War and the automatic U.S. security guarantee ended did Japan begin to change slowly in order to accommodate an emerging and threatening regional environment. Domestic politics, first, had to change, which it did in response to the new international circumstances. The mainstream Yoshida school of conservative politicians disappeared. The Socialist Party collapsed. Left standing was the nationalist right wing of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which became its new mainstream and has taken the lead in incrementally rolling back the self-binding policies that have kept Japan out of international military-strategic involvements.

Andrew Oros's excellent book *Japan's Security Renaissance* focuses on the decade from 2006 to 2016 in which the results of this transformation began to play out. In a careful, meticulous analysis, Oros traces the steady evolution of Japanese attention to the development of new policies to overcome the neglect of past decades. His extended comparison of Japan's renewed security concerns to the fourteenth-century European Renaissance at the outset is a bit jarring and incongruous. But reading past this section, I found the book to be a solid, trustworthy, and commendable study of the innovations in Japan's security policy. Oros provides a virtual handbook of the new Japanese policies, practices, institutions, and capabilities that constitute the "renaissance." He covers changes in domestic politics that led to the rise of the once anti-mainstream conservatives in the LDP. He is careful to show that new departures were not simply the result of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's policies but also occurred during the Democratic Party of Japan's administrations from 2009 to 2012. He also treats the important changes in the regional environment that have prodded reform.

After such fulsome coverage of all the factors producing the renaissance, what then is Oros's conclusion? What is the main argument that he leaves with the reader in looking toward the future? Throughout the book, Oros stresses the significance of three historical legacies that have constrained the emergence of a wholly new security policy. There is first the militarist past that continues to be divisive in both domestic and foreign politics. Japan has yet to achieve a consensus on its modern history that will satisfy the need for national pride and at the same time not rile the nationalist emotions of its neighbors. Second, he stresses the postwar legacy of pacifism, isolationism, and anti-militarist sentiment that has dominated domestic opinion and remains strong. Oros rightly draws a distinction between elite views, which favor a more assertive foreign policy, and mass views, which cling to isolationism. Third, he treats the legacy of Japan's long subordination to the United States in the hegemonic alliance, which has frustrated the natural desire of Japanese for a more independent and sovereign position in the world and has continued to worry many Japanese that the alliance may draw Japan into unwanted foreign entanglements. The importance that Oros assigns to the weight of these legacies leads him to what I regard as an overly cautious conclusion. He argues that these legacies are likely to continue to inhibit a radical break with the past: "Many constraints on the JSDF and on Japan's political leadership to utilize Japan's military power remain firmly in place, and...like the European Renaissance, the past continues to deeply inform Japan's security future—and to limit Japan's strategic options" (p. 169).

For a number of reasons, my own sense is that Japan is on the cusp of a revolutionary change in its foreign policy that will overcome the legacies that Oros emphasizes. First, Abe is in full command of his party, which has approved the possibility of a third term lasting to 2021. He not only will likely become the longest-serving prime minister in Japanese history but also has the potential to be the most influential leader since Shigeru Yoshida. Second, the domestic political opposition is weaker than at any time in the last 70 years and shows little sign of mounting a strong resistance to Abe's agenda. Third, although still short of his goal of revising the constitution and Article 9, Abe has laid the groundwork for a continuing expansion of Japan's security role. By achieving a formal reinterpretation of Article 9 in 2015 through a cabinet decision to allow collective self-defense, as Christopher Hughes recently emphasized, Abe set "a new precedent and flexibility for his and other administrations to expand Japan's role in [future] collective self-defence and other

international military operations.”<sup>4</sup> Apart from Abe’s many successful initiatives to roll back restraints on international political and military involvements, what was truly revolutionary was the relative ease that he had in reinterpreting Article 9 and making possible “much more expansive forms of collective self-defence and collective security options if deemed necessary in the future.”<sup>5</sup> Fourth—and most important—the international environment is in unprecedented flux. With the American world order eroding under a new and unpredictable U.S. president with a nationalist agenda, the foundations of U.S.-Japan relations are uncertain. Facing an increasingly menacing regional environment, Japan will be forced by this flux to take much greater responsibility for its security.

The eminent political theorist Masao Maruyama once observed that a pragmatic tendency to conform to the environment is a key aspect of Japanese political psychology. Foreigners, he observed, are often baffled by two contradictory tendencies in Japanese politics: the difficulty of making change and the rapidity with which change takes place. Maruyama’s explanation is that a characteristic reluctance to break with the past is set off by the readiness to accommodate the realities of the time, which, he wrote, is the hallmark of Japanese conservatism. Therefore, in Japanese politics it is difficult to break with the past, but once change is underway, it spreads rapidly.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Christopher W. Hughes, *Japan’s Foreign and Security Policy Under the “Abe Doctrine”: New Dynamism or New Dead End?* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 55.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>6</sup> Masao Maruyama, *Senchu to sengo no aida* [Between Wartime and Postwar] (Tokyo: Misuzu shobo, 1976), 347–48.

## Japanese Security Policy—An Uncertain Future after Abe

*Yuki Tatsumi*

Andrew Oros's recent book *Japan's Security Renaissance: New Policies and Politics for the Twenty-First Century* is a much-needed update on the recent changes in Japanese security policy. Described by Oros as addressing the period "from Abe to Abe," the book focuses on the policy evolution and institutional adjustments that have accompanied the changes in Japan's national security policymaking between 2006 and 2016. By providing detailed accounts of both domestic political shifts within Japan and external security developments, *Japan's Security Renaissance* analyzes the small and incremental steps that have cumulatively resulted in substantial changes in Japan's national security policymaking.

The book divides the "from Abe to Abe" years into two periods: 2006–12, which spans Shinzo Abe's first term as prime minister (2006–7), the transition of the ruling party from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) in 2009, and the end of DPJ rule in December 2012; and 2012–16, with Abe returning as prime minister and solidifying governance by a ruling coalition of the LDP and Komeito (the left-of-the-center political party supported by Soka Gakkai). In the discussion of the first period, Oros gives a much overdue acknowledgement to the changes in Japanese national security policy made under DPJ rule. Such changes include the 2010 National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG) in which Japan took the first step toward reorienting its defense posture from that of a garrison state focused on a Soviet/Russian invasion attempt from Hokkaido to one with greater operational flexibility to address the requirements for the defense of remote islands in the southwestern part of Japan. This improved flexibility includes the "dynamic defense force" concept and the government's decision to apply the comprehensive exception to Japan's acquisition of F-35As from the "three principles of armed exports," which paved the way to establish the "three principles of defense equipment" in April 2014. It is often the case that the incumbent Abe government is wholly credited for the reorientation of Japan's defense posture and the relaxation of the weapon export rules. Oros sheds light on

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the concrete groundwork that the DPJ government laid for these changes, which is often underappreciated.

In his discussion of the above two periods, Oros introduces three “historical legacies”—Japan’s inability to reconcile with its neighbors over its behavior during World War II, the antimilitarist sentiment that emerged after the war and still persists strongly to date, and the complex nature of Japan’s alliance with the United States—as the critical factors that set the parameters for Japan’s national security policymaking (see chap. 2). In his discussion of the period between 2006 and 2012 in chapter 4, for example, Oros makes a convincing case that the DPJ leaders’ initial desire to alter some of the fundamental principles of Japan’s foreign policy, including equalizing Japan’s relations with China and the United States, was frustrated by the complex nature of the U.S.-Japan alliance. In chapter 5, he illustrates the constraining power of another historical legacy—postwar antimilitarism in Japanese society—in his examination of the various concessions that Abe had to make in his efforts to reinterpret Article 9 of the constitution and the government’s follow-on efforts to pass the new peace and security legislation.

The book’s conceptual framework of the three historical legacies goes a long way in helping explain postwar Japan’s security policy choices. The persistent antimilitarist sentiment and the resistance to any move by the government that could be perceived as limiting civil liberties have been on full display several times since Abe returned to power in December 2012. Protests against the Specially Designated Secrets Protection Law in December 2013 and large-scale demonstrations against the Peace and Security Legislation in 2015 show that such sentiment is so strong that even Abe has not been able to overcome it. I concur with Oros’s assessment in his concluding chapter that the underlying forces he frames as historical legacies will continue to exert influence in limiting security policy choices, barring catastrophic damage to Japan’s security by external actors (pp. 183–85).

While I agree with much of what the book argues, there are a few points that would have benefited from further discussion. For example, all the elements identified as historical originated in Japan’s failure to come to terms with its defeat in World War II through national debate, including on who ultimately bears the responsibility for such complete destruction. This is relevant because Japan’s failure to do so in the immediate aftermath of World War II was not necessarily of its own making; rather, the United States bears at least some responsibility for this state of affairs. But it is

precisely because of Japan's inability to achieve a national narrative regarding World War II in the immediate postwar years that security policy choices continue to be constrained by the three interconnected legacies that Oros describes. While the discussion of war accountability really belongs to scholarship by historians, and is certainly not the focus of this book, the study still would have benefited from limited discussion on the origin of the legacies.

Indeed, the resilience of antimilitarism in Japan remains formidable. As Oros argues in chapter 4, the response and selfless work of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) in the aftermath of 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and nuclear meltdown at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant have boosted the JSDF's popularity among the Japanese people. The Cabinet Office opinion poll released in January 2016 shows that over 90% of respondents have a positive view of the JSDF—an all-time high since the Cabinet Office began this biennial poll in 1969.<sup>1</sup> However, as Oros discusses in chapter 5 (pp. 154–58), the most recent version of the same poll finds that, even though approximately 75% of respondents think Japan faces an increasing risk of being “dragged into the war,” support for the strengthening of the JSDF capability stayed at slightly below 30%. These seeming contradictions of the public's attitude toward the JSDF cannot only be explained by the persisting sense of antimilitarism in Japan.

One possible explanation, although scarcely discussed because it is extremely difficult to quantify, is the Japanese public's mistrust in the ability of the country's civilian leadership (bureaucrats and politicians alike) to make prudent judgements on the use of military force. A country's national security policy can be destructive when political leaders utilize the military for their own political gain. Such misuse of force is destructive not only because of the obvious damage the consequences of war bring to a nation but also because it undermines public confidence in the military as a politically neutral entity that exists to protect the nation.

In fact, one issue that is fundamental to Japanese national security policy that is underdiscussed in the book—primarily because it is not the book's main focus, but also because it is an underdiscussed subject in Japan—is the relationship between the civilian leaders and the JSDF. In Japan, the concept of civilian control of the military has long been understood as management of the JSDF by the civilian officials in the

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<sup>1</sup> “Jieitai boei mondai ni kansuru yoron chosa” [Public Opinion Poll on the JSDF and Defense Issues], Cabinet Office (Japan), January 2017 ~ <http://survey.gov-online.go.jp/h26/h26-bouei/gairyaku.pdf>.



Internal Bureau of Ministry of Defense. Since the end of the Cold War, this conventional understanding has been evolving, and it is evolving even more quickly as Abe proceeds with defense reform, including the further empowerment of the National Security Secretariat, to create greater room for political leaders to exert influence over JSDF operations. While further discussion on the development of civil-military relations in Japan was beyond the scope of Oros's book, it is nonetheless an important area for further scholarly research.

Finally, I agree with Oros's argument that recent changes in Japanese security policy in the direction of proactive international engagement, the deepening of defense relations with the United States, and the pursuit of a more robust defense capability of its own are driven by the sense of urgency regarding Japan's own relative decline. However, a greater force for these changes may be Japan's increasing anxiety about the United States' relative decline as a dominant global superpower and its willingness to stay actively engaged as the security guarantor in the Asia-Pacific. Many in Japan began to worry about the United States' willingness to stay engaged when it became clear that, even though the U.S. administration acknowledges that its long-term strategic interest lies in the Asia-Pacific, it will remain deeply engaged in the Middle East and in the battle with Islamist terrorist organizations. These concerns have deepened in recent years when the United States, despite its declaratory "rebalance" to the Asia-Pacific, was not forthcoming in its response to China's increasingly assertive behavior in South China Sea. Although the United States has repeatedly tried to assure Japan of its defense commitment under Article 5 of the U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty, such concerns linger today, particularly given the "America first" policy inclination articulated by the Trump administration. The book could have benefited from further discussion of the debate within Japan about declining U.S. power in the region. Nonetheless, *Japan's Security Renaissance* is an extremely useful scholarly work that greatly contributes to analysis of Japanese national security policy in the last decade.

## Japan's Security Renaissance: To Be Continued

*Nicholas Szechenyi*

Andrew Oros's book *Japan's Security Renaissance: New Policies and Politics for the Twenty-First Century* details advancements in postwar Japanese security policy, identifies variables that have influenced government decision-making in response to changes in the international security environment, and assesses the implications of recent policy initiatives for regional and global security. This informative monograph gives the reader a window into current policy debates and the strategic vision for Japan's future.

Oros focuses in particular on the period from 2006 to 2012, a time when two power transitions helped generate what he describes as “a broad consensus on Japan's appropriate military security policies and practices” (p. 96). The first transition was China's military and economic rise, notably its superseding Japan as the world's second-largest economy. The second was the political transition in Japan from the traditionally dominant Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to the relatively inexperienced Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) and then back to the LDP. Analyzing what is aptly dubbed a tumultuous period in Japanese domestic politics, Oros lays out the elements of a more public and practical discussion of Japan's security needs, the cementing of a security “renaissance” that set the stage for a range of policy initiatives under the current government led by Shinzo Abe. This period is bookended by Abe, who first served as prime minister in 2006–7, and Oros presents a comprehensive narrative of the journey “from Abe to Abe” as he calls it, with detailed observations on the era of DPJ rule (2009–12) and the priorities of the second Abe administration (2012–present).

Oros notes that the DPJ introduced important initiatives in security policy—such as a shift in strategic posture from the Cold War-era focus on the Soviet threat to the emerging maritime threat from Chinese coercion in the East China Sea, a commitment to increase the capabilities of the Japan Self-Defense Forces, the relaxation of restrictions on arms exports and joint weapons production, and the strategic use of official development assistance for military-related purposes—that were later developed further during the second Abe administration (pp. 110–23). The book also notes that despite

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initial concerns that the DPJ might tweak the LDP's traditional emphasis on the U.S.-Japan alliance as the cornerstone of Japanese foreign policy, the alliance was ultimately strengthened during this period. But the transition to DPJ rule was marked by great uncertainty under the party's first prime minister, Yukio Hatoyama, who carelessly promised to relocate a U.S. military facility on Okinawa (Marine Corps Air Station Futenma) outside the prefecture, only to conclude several months later that the existing plan developed by the U.S. and Japanese governments to build a new facility in a less-populated area of Okinawa proved most feasible. Hatoyama's antics created tension with Washington and a perception of drift in the U.S.-Japan alliance, an important source of stability in the Asia-Pacific region. Oros is generous in his summation of Hatoyama's tenure (2009–10), documenting the challenges he posed to the U.S.-Japan alliance but emphasizing his ultimate embrace of the bilateral security relationship. Nevertheless, his review of the DPJ's imprint on Japanese security policy is an important contribution to our understanding of the period.

The book also explains new security policies enacted since 2012 under the second Abe administration. Developments included the creation of a National Security Council housed in the prime minister's office for the purpose of centralizing policy coordination; the adoption of Japan's first formal national security strategy outlining priorities for strengthening Japan's own security, the U.S.-Japan alliance, cooperation with other partners, and Japan's global leadership role; increased defense spending; new guidelines for U.S.-Japan defense cooperation; and legislation reinterpreting the constitution to allow Japan to exercise the right of collective self-defense with the militaries of other states in limited circumstances. Abe's security policy reforms generated controversy among lawmakers and the public, but a package of legislation cleared the Diet after considerable debate and compromise, which the book depicts in detail. Complicated political dynamics notwithstanding, the reforms are strategically significant in facilitating interoperability with the U.S. military and other partners to enhance deterrence in a region where the balance of power is increasingly contested. Overall, Abe's policy agenda—centered on economic revitalization, regional diplomacy, expanded defense capabilities, and security cooperation with the United States and other like-minded countries—suggests a pragmatic approach to enhance Japan's own security and the stability of the region. Ultimately, the realization of this vision will depend on whether Japan can forge a path to sustainable growth, and the results of Abe's economic strategy thus far are mixed. Oros outlines Japan's

relative economic decline to underscore the importance of economic power as a prerequisite for fully realizing the proposed security policy reforms. Benefiting from a relatively stable domestic political environment, Abe could remain in power until 2021, but he will be under pressure to deliver economic results while leading a debate on security that is likely to intensify in the years ahead.

What of the future? A new round of security policy reforms could be in store, as evidenced by Abe's recent announcement of plans to revise the constitution by 2020 and public entreaties by lawmakers for Japan to consider acquiring a counterstrike capability in response to the threat posed by North Korea's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs. These and other new policy initiatives could be subject to moderation, consistent with a pattern of incremental policy innovation in the postwar period also addressed in this book. But there is little doubt that the "renaissance" will continue as Japanese leaders confront a broad and increasingly complex array of security challenges that could create pressure for rapid reform of security policy. Oros concludes this stimulating volume by observing that the "interactive dynamic between the international environment and Japan's domestic politics will shape both Japan's security future and the future security environment in East Asia and beyond" (p. 188).

Oros dedicates the book to "the next generation" who will surely benefit from the context this important research provides when looking for elements of continuity or change in Japan's strategic trajectory. *Japan's Security Renaissance* is a valuable resource for understanding the evolution of postwar security policy, recent initiatives meant to enhance Japan's own defense capabilities and cooperation with other partners, and the variables that could shape both Japan's future decision-making and its leadership role in the international system.

## Renaissance?

*James E. Auer*

“**I**n the area of military security, ‘Japan is back.’” So begins *Japan’s Security Renaissance*, Andrew L. Oros’s impressively detailed and nuanced account of Japan’s post–Cold War security. It is a welcome, scholarly work. I have admired the author’s academic achievements for well over a decade and do not disagree with many, if any, of the facts he lays out. His presentation is so detailed that a number of the findings were beyond my knowledge, and I learned a lot by reading this book.

I am a former U.S. naval officer who sailed with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) from 1963 to 1978 and who analyzed Japan’s status as a U.S. military ally from 1979 to 1988 from an American perspective in the Office of the U.S. Secretary of Defense at the Pentagon. From 1988 to 2014, I was a researcher and instructor of U.S.-Japan relations at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, but I still consider myself more a sailor than a scholar. Since I am also a staunch supporter of the U.S.-Japan alliance, I was very pleased to find my view of the increasing sophistication in Japan’s defense policy during the second Abe administration reinforced in the book. While I very much hope Professor Oros is correct that this past decade constitutes a renaissance, I am not yet ready to so characterize the evolution of Japanese defense policy and capability overseen, if not engineered, by Prime Ministers Junichiro Koizumi, Yoshihiko Noda, and Shinzo Abe. Even though it might be true that Japan is (a little more) “back” as a military power, I am reluctant to say that the developments of the past decade, or at least the past four years of the Abe administration, are as or more significant than key events of the previous six decades.

I could not agree more with Professor Oros’s statement that what he labels Japan’s security renaissance is not about Japan becoming more “normal” (p. 10). I also agree that what Japan has done over the last 50 years is “normal for Japan” (p. 10), although I would insert “only” prior to “for.”

Quality academic scholarship may well trump my biased analysis as an American who believes strongly in the importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance to both countries. But looking back over the last 65-plus years, I see Japan’s national security policy and defense capabilities as considerably improving in fits (hindered or overseen by, among others, the *Asahi Shimbun* and Prime

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Ministers Takeo Miki, Toshiki Kaifu, Yukio Hatoyama, and Naoto Kan) and starts (thanks to Diet member Hitoshi Ashida, who later became prime minister, and by Prime Ministers Nobusuke Kishi, Yasuhiro Nakasone, Junichiro Koizumi, Yoshihiko Noda, and Shinzo Abe). The quality of the three Japan Self-Defense Forces, especially the JMSDF with which I am most familiar, is slowly but steadily improving, despite restrictions on defense spending. Although Chinese provocations have emboldened Prime Minister Abe to increase defense spending slightly in the last four years, the Japanese defense operations and defense budget increases of the 1980s were in my mind the most significant to date. As far as national security policy itself is concerned, the impressive developments of the last four years under Abe have strong precedents going back as far as the adoption of Article 9 of the Japanese constitution.

Professor Oros might not agree, but I believe that Article 9 is not abnormally restrictive, even though a significant number of Japanese believe that it is. Perhaps few of them realize that General Douglas MacArthur's 1946 directive to his government section that Japan would have no armed forces for any purpose "including self-defense," which he claimed was suggested to him by then Prime Minister Kijuro Shidehara, was modified by Hitoshi Ashida in the House of Representatives before the constitution was adopted to include a loophole for self-defense. MacArthur's legal adviser told him that if the revised wording were allowed to stand, Japan would be able to legally justify armed forces for self-defense. MacArthur not only allowed the revised wording, which has never been amended since, to stand. He also ordered still-occupied Japan to establish a national "police" force consisting of 75,000 mostly Imperial Army veterans, the predecessor of today's Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF), following North Korea's attack on the South in 1950. And in 1959, the Japanese Supreme Court upheld the legality of self-defense under Article 9. Former defense minister and current Liberal Democratic Party leader Shigeru Ishiba has regularly stated that Article 9 does not restrict Japan from doing anything it needs to do. (As early as 1957, Prime Minister Kishi stated that Japan could possess nuclear weapons legally but voluntarily chose to forgo them in favor of security arrangements with the United States.)

Japan's self-declared prohibition of collective self-defense dates not from 1947, when the constitution with the Ashida-version of Article 9 went into effect, but from 1972. Without amending the constitution or passing a law, a cabinet advisory committee issued a policy statement denying Japan the legal right to exercise collective self-defense. The Tanaka cabinet

politically decided to accept that legal position, and that prohibition stood until Abe legally changed part of it, though less than he probably desired, through another political statement of policy. As far as defense budget increases and operations are concerned, the small increases that Abe has carried out since he returned to power are relatively dwarfed by those that Prime Minister Nakasone authorized from 1982 to 1987, which froze virtually all other government expenditures but allowed the defense budget to grow at over twice the annual rate of inflation. The United States highly appreciated Koizumi's decision in 2001 to send JMSDF tankers to the Indian Ocean, Japan Air Self-Defense Force transports to the Middle East, and JGSDF engineers to Iraq to provide logistic support (though they were supposed to return to Japan if the area became too dangerous). However, these actions pale in comparison to the extraordinary sophistication of the patrols coordinated by the JMSDF and the U.S. Seventh Fleet in the final decade of the Cold War. Working together, the two allies monitored and virtually neutered the strategic significance of the activities of around one hundred Soviet submarines in the northwest Pacific Ocean.

The book does not state or even imply that Prime Minister Abe is currently leading Japan on the dangerous course that took hold in the 1930s. I certainly agree about the significant but nonextreme nature of the Abe administration's new security strategy—the first since 1957—and the partial lifting of the ban on collective self-defense. But even Abe has been unable either to fund defense as much as would be needed to help deter China more effectively together with the United States or to remove Japan's still highly restrictive rules of engagement, particularly regarding collective self-defense.

The concluding chapter states that Japan's future security contributions, either in peacetime or during a regional and global crisis, are far from certain (see, for example, pp. 185–87). Unfortunately, I must agree; thus, I wonder if the word “renaissance” could still be employed accurately to describe the last decade if Abe and the LDP were to fall from power, as happened in 2009, or even if a follow-up LDP administration were led by a dovish leader.

That being said, I am bullish on the U.S.-Japan alliance, as I believe Professor Oros is. However, if a future administration makes some of the same unwise choices that the Democratic Party of Japan made when it took power in 2009 and terminated Japan's logistic support for the United States and allies in the Indian Ocean, and if some opposition elements succeed in threats to repeal the Abe administration's modest national security

laws by declaring them unconstitutional, progress of the last decade could be reversed. But if the positive developments of the past decade continue to mature for another five years under the Abe administration and are maintained or even strengthened by his successors, I would be happy to state that Japan's security renaissance, which began from humble origins nearly seventy years ago, is continuing to prosper.



## Author's Response: Next Steps in Japan's "Security Renaissance"?

*Andrew L. Oros*

The range of interpretation expressed in this book review roundtable about Japan's recent security policy innovation mirrors other responses I have received since *Japan's Security Renaissance* was released earlier this year. Scholars and policy analysts from countries almost ranging from A to Z (Australia to Vietnam) have shared reactions with me, particularly to my core framing of the past decade as something importantly new for Japan, a "security renaissance." Both the book and the phenomenon itself have generated great interest worldwide, and a wide array of reactions both negative and positive. Some readers object to what they see as the implication that prior to this renaissance something was wrong with Japan: the "Dark Ages" critique, which I seek to address in chapter one. Others, like James Auer in this set of reviews, are not quite convinced that there is something new to this decade that is different from what I describe as "the gradual awakening" that has characterized Japanese security policy for at least two decades prior to 2006. And still others, like Kenneth Pyle, see this renaissance as only the start of what they expect to be much more dramatic change to Japan's security policies in the near term.

I am pleased to read that the reviewers here endorse the core messages of the book: that substantial change in Japan's security policies has taken place, including during the period of Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) rule; that this is not all due to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's leadership (although that does play a role); and that dramatic change in Japan's international environment, led by China's steady rise, is a principal driving factor of this policy innovation. And I am gratified that they collectively found my description of the many new Japanese security policies that have emerged in the past decade as clear and useful—what Nicholas Szechenyi describes as giving the reader "a window into current policy debates and the strategic vision for Japan's future."

My reply to this set of critiques will seek to explain further why I see the decade from 2006 to 2016 as a renaissance in Japan's postwar understanding and action on its security needs, as well as to explore the likely direction of future developments in Japan's security in the new Trump-Abe era based on

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the argument I developed in the book. In addition, I will address a few other points of critique and disagreement about Japan's security past and present raised in this set of reviews.

I welcome Auer's underscoring of the important security role that Japan played in the latter years of the Cold War, a time I refer to as the gradual awakening of Japan's security engagement, which is summarized in chapter two. Auer's own scholarship on this period—as well as Pyle's—greatly informed the book; their published works offer much greater nuance and detail on this earlier period, and I highly recommend them to readers who wish to learn more about the precursors to Japan's security renaissance.

I see the past decade as different for numerous reasons explained in the full volume. One especially important aspect is the growing practicality of security discussions across the political spectrum in three notable areas: the primary opposition party's ultimate embrace of the U.S.-Japan alliance, an expanded operational role for the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF), and reform of a large number of restrictive security practices. When the DPJ came to power in the historic August 2009 election, this was a watershed time in Japan's postwar development. Auer worries about a return to past policies in a post-Abe world. However, I would maintain that there is no going back because there is no longer a large group of elites in any major party who advocate for a militarily weak Japan with limited contributions to Japan's only alliance (with the United States). Both the DPJ and the back-in-power Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) have demonstrated through their policies that they support increasing capabilities for the JSDF, more practical institutional operations for managing these forces, a strengthened U.S.-Japan alliance, and new security partners for Japan in the region. This was not the case before the past decade.

Auer also stresses the wide range of activities that Japan can already carry out under the postwar constitution as currently interpreted, a view with which I agree. This is likely why Abe recently surprised his own party by appearing to endorse a different revision of the postwar constitution than what his own party proposed in 2012. Abe now seems willing to accept a revision that preserves the full text of Article 9, but adds to that article that the JSDF is constitutional. In my view, this recent development—delivered in Abe's Constitution Day speech on May 3, 2017—shows the continuity of the policy approach of both Abe and his predecessors in the DPJ: to preserve the best practices of the past while making necessary adaptations to Japan's security policies to ensure the country's future security.

Japan's development of its first formal postwar national security strategy document and the creation of the National Security Council, both in 2013, are likely to be understood years from now as a critical turning point for Japan. At the time I completed the book, we only had a short glimpse of the shape these institutions may take once entrenched. Japan still has had only one national security adviser heading its National Security Council, and only one prime minister at the top of this new pyramid. Comparison with the United States and other countries shows that these institutions tend to evolve in important ways under different political leadership. The evolution that will take place in Japan is still unknown, but I seriously doubt that the institutions themselves will be abolished.

The Asian security environment is rapidly changing. Chapter three of *Japan's Security Renaissance* focuses on this important trend. Both economically and militarily Japan is experiencing relative decline. The region has become truly multipolar and has broadened in the minds of security planners to encompass the Indo-Pacific. As noted by several reviewers here, this rapid change continues. In particular, North Korea has begun testing new missiles at an alarming pace in 2017, and the United States has elected a president who routinely questions the value of the United States' worldwide alliance network. Although the U.S.-Japan alliance seems to be something of an exception, in that President Donald Trump and his senior officials have repeatedly touted its value, naturally many Japanese are at least privately worried about the United States' future commitment both to Japan and to a broader U.S. presence in the region. Still, true alternatives to the alliance for Japan are not attractive.

But what about going forward—the “revolutionary change” hypothesis advanced by Pyle in his review? What would such a security revolution look like, and what would spark it?

Pyle writes that “Abe has laid the groundwork for a continuing expansion of Japan's security role.” He states that Abe was able to reinterpret Article 9 of the constitution with “relative ease.” I explain these important developments differently in my book, and view recent developments also within this framework: that Abe repeatedly compromised on his stated goals in order to achieve some degree of reform, and that the extent of achievable reform was largely reached by the time the new security legislation was passed by the Diet in the fall of 2015. I view Abe's renewed talk of constitutional revision through this lens—to the extent that his goal of revision by 2020 is achievable, which it may not be, it will only happen through the sort of compromise on preserving Article 9 that he set out in his

Constitution Day speech in May 2017. I would not view such a development as revolutionary change.

In another key area of possible revolutionary change, in the time since collective self-defense activities have become possible through the new legislation, Japan has increased the scale and frequency of training with the United States and other new “security partners” in the region but has not actually been involved in a collective self-defense operation. Moreover, Japan’s much-touted participation in a UN peacekeeping operation in South Sudan was ended earlier this year when the situation on the ground became too dangerous. It is unclear to me what “continuing expansion” Pyle envisions is on the horizon beyond the sorts of activities described in *Japan’s Security Renaissance*: in particular, limited security partnerships with several Asian neighbors, the development of further capabilities within the constraints of limited defense spending, and deepened alliance cooperation with the United States.

Revolutionary change for Japan would seem to imply things such as new alliances with other states (in which Japan would pledge to militarily aid those other states), foreign bases for the JSDF (beyond the limited presence in Djibouti), greatly expanded capabilities enabled by substantial increases in defense spending, and, most importantly, Japanese soldiers engaging and, sadly, dying in combat. Not a single Japanese soldier, sailor, or aviator has died in combat in over seventy years. Absent a serious shock to the system, I do not foresee these sorts of revolutionary change in Japan’s security future.

However, there may well be a shock to the system, as there seems to have been every few decades in the past century of international politics. Yuki Tatsumi also adds a qualifier to her expectation of continuity—“barring catastrophic damage to Japan’s security by external actors”—which is similar to the framing in the conclusion of my book (pp. 182–83). The question is, what shock? A North Korean missile attack? A unified Korean Peninsula? A dramatic change in the status quo between China and Taiwan, such as reunification by force or by usurpation? A gray-zone or outright invasion of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands by China?

Pyle asserts that “the international environment is in unprecedented flux.” He then argues that “Japan will be forced by this flux to take on a much greater responsibility for its security.” I agree that this scenario is imaginable if there is a dramatic shock to the system—but absent that, I expect that Japan will see the new roles it has assumed in the past decade as sufficient. Certainly this is the view of the Japanese public, as

Tatsumi notes. Who are the Japanese leaders who will steer Japan in a bold new direction, if not Abe? And what about after Abe? Where is the public support for a bold new direction? The lack of a formidable opposition party gives the LDP and its leadership a degree of leeway, to be sure. Constitutional change would be another important development, even if achieved through compromise.

Turning briefly to this question of public vs. elite opinion, I largely agree with the richness and nuance Tatsumi adds to the factors that influence Japan's recent security policy evolution. She appears to concur with my argument that there continues to be a degree of disconnect between public and elite views, but adds two factors. First, Tatsumi rightly notes that there is widespread distrust of government and politicians, which limits public support for a stronger military role for Japan regionally and globally. Second, she expands on the interplay between the three historical legacies that continue to constrain Japan's security future. I discuss this interplay only briefly in chapter two, arguing that Japan's difficulty in coming to terms with its imperialist and militarist past is linked to its unequal relationship with the United States, especially in the immediate postwar years. I also agree with her that our understanding of the potential innovation and continued limitations of Japan's security role would benefit from a deeper exploration of the concept of civilian control in Japan at a time when the JSDF is playing a larger role both in policy formulation and in actual military operations. The richness of developments in these areas is not adequately described by the historical legacy of anti-militarism alone.

Europeans in the late fourteenth century scarcely could have imagined what their renaissance would lead to as it was just beginning. By evoking the analogy of the Renaissance in the title of my book, I sought to signal the dramatic possibilities for Japan in this new era: that Japan is at the cusp of something new, but also that this something new will continue to be shaped by Japan's past, just as the European Renaissance continued to be shaped by Europe's past (including its distant past). Much more dramatic change in the coming years is certainly possible, as Pyle suggests—particularly if driven by an even more dramatic change to Japan's security environment. In just the year since I completed this book, we have seen potential harbingers of dramatic change, from North Korea's much-escalated weapons tests to greatly increased concerns about future U.S. leadership in the region after the election of President Trump (as Tatsumi stresses).

Japan today is not the Japan of even a decade ago. My constructive critics in this exchange agree on this point. They disagree, however, about what this signals for Japan's future. My goal in *Japan's Security Renaissance* was to give readers the context and the tools to understand how Japanese security policies have adapted to what I see as a new era for Japan. Both Japan's changing international environment and the response of domestic politics to it will determine the country's future security policy direction. ◆



