

# 平和活動「内と外」： 日本の国内・海外国際平和協力活動

ギャレン・ムロイ

## Peace Operations Within and Without: Japanese International Peace Cooperation at Home and Overseas

Garren Mulloy

### Abstract

この論文は20年間の日本国際平和協力活動（IPCA）のいろなミクロまたはマクロ、国内や海外の緒元を取り調べる。湾岸戦争以降の初期段階 IPCA は国連平和維持活動（PKO）だが、21世紀に入って、非国連防災または多国籍軍の活動が増したが、2012年から IPCA 活動が減少になった。3.11 東日本大震災の影響で自衛隊のオバーストレッチ問題が一つの基因だが、日本の安全保障政策が冷戦に寄って中国に中心するな 21 世紀になることだ。これからの日本の IPCA とアジアの安全保障に検討する。

This article evaluates Japanese International Peace Cooperation Activities (IPCA) related to domestic and overseas, micro and macro security developments. From peacekeeping operations (PKO) in the aftermath of the Gulf War, through post-9.11 allied operations and disaster relief missions, such as after the 3.11 Tohoku earthquake, IPCA have declined in recent years as East Asian security issues have come to the fore. This article correlates IPCA, domestic, and regional security activities to indicate how Japan is attempting to build new partnerships to buttress its seemingly insecure position.

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## Introduction

Amid recent global ‘re-centring on’ or ‘pivots toward’ Asia, the primary actor has been assumed to be from ‘without’: the United States. Asian actors ‘within’ have been largely regarded as reactive subjects with the obvious exception of China, since the mid-1990s often characterised in security terms as negative and insidious. Japan, by contrast has usually been regarded as a cautious, reactive, minimalist security actor constricted by conflicted imperial legacies, US alliance, and public pacifism, scarcely a transformative actor. Recent Abe administration policies and rhetoric have only mildly altered that perception.

This characterisation neglects the gradual transformative shift in Japan’s peace operations since the 1990s. In the 21st century, Japan’s position on multinational peace operations has been increasingly influenced by developments in East Asian security, in parallel with significant changes in self-perceptions of national security. This article draws together elements of Japan’s International Peace Cooperation Activities (IPCA *Kokusai heiwa kyoryoku katsudo*) over two decades and examines the interplay of micro and macro, domestic and overseas concerns. While dispatches of Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) personnel appear to indicate an expanding and assertive military profile, there have been more nuanced shifts in Japan’s IPCA. The initial enthusiasm for Overseas Dispatch Operations (ODO) soon waned, and the proliferation of post-9.11 ODO was followed by retrenchment, indicating that macro IPCA policy was either inconsistent or shifting. Examination of the JSDF also reveals mixed and varying priorities and enthusiasm for ODO, reflected in micro IPCA developments. The East Asia territorial disputes and the 2011 Triple Crises (earthquake, tsunami, nuclear accidents) clearly indicated that IPCA policy regards international engagement as vital for Japanese domestic security both in terms of natural and human threats, with the building of IPCA partnerships and operational capabilities designated as key JSDF aims.

The range of Japanese IPCA/ODO will first be examined for their instigation, conduct, and perception domestically and internationally. The second stage examines learning from IPCA/ODO, and how Japan developed its policies, laws, and operational capacities. The third stage concerns the post-9.11 period when the Japanese government adjusted to the changing global security environment and elevated US expectations. The fourth stage involves the 2011 3.11 Triple Crises, and how international partnerships and IPCA/ODO experiences impacted upon crisis management. The fifth stage relates to the security situation in East Asia from 2012, particularly

the intensification of Chinese territorial challenges and Japan's defence transformation and defence partnership building. This allows an assessment of how Japan's IPCA/ODO experience has aided its domestic security, and to what degree security partnerships are converging or diverging.

## 1. First Steps Abroad

Established in 1954 and primarily tasked with traditional national security duties, the JSDF were selected in 1992 as Japan's representatives in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UN-PKO). Not only were there strong sections of opinion existentially opposed to the JSDF 'military', but lawmakers focused on how Japan could participate in UN-PKO without dispatching JSDF personnel overseas. JSDF overseas missions began with Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) training cruises in the 1950s, but IPCA/ODO only emerged in the aftermath of the Gulf War, with MSDF minesweeping. This was the only response immediately available to allay allied criticism concerning Japan's lack of contribution to international burden sharing, but did little to assuage negative critiques of Japan's 'chequebook diplomacy'.<sup>1</sup> JSDF ODO had been avoided from the first conscious decision in 1958 (against Japanese participation in a Lebanon UN-PKO) for fear of contravening the spirit of the constitution, as defined by the Cabinet Legislation Bureau (CLB), and the SDF Law.<sup>2</sup> A 1966 peacekeeping bill was drafted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) but never submitted due to domestic sensitivities, and the first UN-PKO dispatch only involved two diplomats in 1988, with more sent on electoral observer missions up until the 1990 invasion of Kuwait.<sup>3</sup> The Kaifu administration's 1990 Peacekeeping Cooperation Bill proposed 2000 'Peacekeeping Contingent' volunteers in order to avoid JSDF ODO, and Socialist Party opposition rather than the innate impracticality of dispatching assorted 'civilians' led to its downfall. Eventually the Diet (and CLB) approved the International Peace Cooperation Law (IPCL) in 1992, controversially appointing the JSDF as primary state representatives.<sup>4</sup> 'Piggybacking' the IPCL with Disaster Relief Reform and the ODA Charter framed IPC/ODO within a palatably liberal internationalist context.<sup>5</sup> The IPCL embodied the maximum possible perceived 'stretch' of public tolerance and interpretation of the constitution, defining three missions: UN-PKO, Humanitarian Relief Operations (HRO), Disaster Relief Operations (DRO), and from 2001 Allied Support Operations (ASO). ODO have experienced incremental legislative and operational 'mission creep' beyond their highly circumspect IPCL origins.

UN-PKO are notoriously difficult to define. UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's 1992 *An Agenda For Peace*, described five variants, while the 2000 Brahimi Report identified only three, Peacemaking, Peacekeeping, and Peacebuilding, but the JSDF are barred from conducting most 'Brahimi Peacekeeping' tasks under the IPCL.<sup>6</sup> JSDF 'PKO' mandates have all been explicitly

Peace Support Operations (PSO), emphasising infrastructure duties and supporting ‘human security’ services over overtly ‘military’ roles. However, this general characterisation has masked additional PKO roles conducted on an *ad hoc* basis. In Cambodia (UNTAC) 1992-93, the Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) gradually assimilated PKO practices, such as patrolling, into their duties by imaginative interpretation. This PSO-centric ‘human security’ approach melds with broader Japanese human security policies, and JSDF units have been noted for their sympathetic manner, combining military operations with human security initiatives, as one of the three pillars of human security initiatives.

Japan has been a significant yet low-key human security innovator, dovetailing with its pacific image and an impressive ODA record. The 1992 IPCL drew heavily on ODA legislation for its lexical base in order to cast it within an international liberal image to overcome significant opposition. Since Prime Minister (PM) Obuchi’s 1998 Human Security declaration, Japan has funded the UN Trust Fund on Human Security, proposed the UN Commission on Human Security, and integrated the concepts into its ODA Charter.<sup>7</sup> This approach is sympathetic to Japan’s ‘pacific’ image, most obviously represented by its constitution, Article 9 of which clearly states that Japan shall not possess a military and rejects “the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.” It also states that “land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.” Article 9 is unique for having remained unaltered since 1947, and yet has been so liberally re-interpreted as to raise serious doubts as to its fundamental legitimacy. The JSDF are clearly a ‘military equivalent’, with a global top-five defence budget. It is also clear though that the majority of Japanese people largely accept the JSDF, wish to retain them, and yet also greatly value Article 9. As Paul Midford has illustrated, Japanese pacifism has been nuanced, able to assimilate pragmatic and neo-realist elements of principle and practice, perhaps better understood as a rejection of aggression with a fine appreciation of peace.<sup>8</sup>

This constitutional and social conundrum has greatly influenced the scope of JSDF operations. The desire of politicians to enhance Japan’s international role, primarily for the ‘holy grail’ of a permanent UN Security Council seat, through UN-PKO and other demonstrations of burden-sharing led to growing support for IPCA/ODO and thereby consequently enhanced JSDF legitimacy.<sup>9</sup> This drive for recognition has been complicated by constitutional interpretation precluding the exercise of collective self-defence (other than through the US alliance), and this also explains the efforts made in 2014 for a re-interpretation.

The IPCL was necessarily based upon perceptions of social and political acceptability (acceptable limit) rather than utility (operational optimal). Five seemingly strict conditions were prescribed, as the ‘Peacekeeping Principles’, which required a ceasefire, consent of all parties,

impartiality of the mission, force used only in strict self-defence, and suspension or termination of operations if any conditions were breached. There were also three ‘frozen activities’ which JSDF personnel were to be temporarily precluded from conducting, being regarded as too belligerent: disarmament processes, disposal of weapons, stationing or patrolling in buffer zones monitoring disengagements. 9.11 prompted a pragmatically opportunistic revision of the IPCL in November 2001, ‘thawing’ the frozen activities. However, the Five Principles remain, although loosely interpreted and Japan’s ODO restrictions should be carefully assessed in the context of common operational practice and principle before being judged as overly restrictive. Japan’s limitations are not unique, but they have been notable for lacking cogent doctrine, and for rapid-reaction to crises being limited by legal processes, reflecting domestic contingency planning procedures.

The SDF Law until 2007 listed IPCA under ‘miscellaneous duties’, “characterized as an incidental, not a primary, mission”. However, from the 2007 establishment of the Ministry of Defense (MOD), IPCA became a basic JSDF role.<sup>10</sup> PM Abe stated that “Japanese will no longer shy away from carrying out overseas activities involving the SDF, if it is for the sake of international peace and stability.”<sup>11</sup> The aim was that “international peace cooperation activities as the primary mission will send a message not only to the Japanese public but also to the international community,” but this ‘primary mission’ was actually of “second priority”, national defence naturally remaining the “first priority”. This is one example of government policy simultaneously stating different priorities to different audiences.<sup>12</sup>

While Japanese security investment has been largely traditional, focused on ‘modern-industrial’ military roles, JSDF IPCA/ODO have illustrated non-traditional security capacities, characteristically encompassing non-traditional, ‘post-modern’ security initiatives: multinational, non-combat, human security-focused missions. JSDF IPCA/ODO are often called ‘PKO’, but examination of all four IPCA/ODO variants suggests diverse JSDF capabilities, illustrates expansion of non-traditional security roles, and persistent limiting factors of JSDF capacity, legislation, policy, and perception. JSDF IPCA/ODO performance has all too often been judged by criteria detached from operational issues, particularly the avoidance of risk and casualties.

Up to 1992, 40 Japanese civilians participated in five UN missions, and since then almost 10,000 JSDF personnel have participated in nine UN-PKO, with only one mission current in 2014, the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) from late November 2011, an engineering role with approximately 350 troops. Mission selection is under Cabinet Office direction, through the International Peace Cooperation Headquarters (IPCH), but up to 2007 MOFA held primacy, the MOD latterly exerting increasing influence. Since 1994, Mission Investigation Team (MIT) assessments have assumed greater significance in dispatch approvals, but there is not a clear systematic process of selection. Japan’s second UN-PKO, ONUMOZ Mozambique during UNTAC,

was limited by the IPCL ceiling of 2000 total ODO personnel, leading to only 53 personnel dispatched, greatly limiting the scope of operations and how security measures were implemented. Operations from Somalia to Sudan were rejected as not meeting the 'UNTAC 3S Qualities' of 'Short-Safe-Significant' missions.<sup>13</sup>

Since MOFA advanced the cause for ever greater JSDF UN-PKO participation in order to enhance Japan's international status, its advice was often considered cynical, with overly optimistic MOFA briefings concerning local conditions, contrasting with reality and the excellent support provided by local MOFA staff. The JSDF were also culpable of investing little in ODO-specific training for personnel, and made little effort to utilize the experiences of others. Military observers were dispatched to PKO training centres in Scandinavia but otherwise only US operations in Sinai (unilateral, non-UN missions) were studied in depth, while the vast experience of other nations, particularly of neutral and developing states, was largely ignored.<sup>14</sup> Japan also invested little in lessons-learned capabilities, the GSDF Ground Research and Development Command providing the only 'knowledge repository' until the small PKO Training Center was established in 2007 as a GSDF rather than joint venture. UNTAC and ONUMOZ overlapped, yet there was no operational analysis, cross-posting, or best-practice cultivation, nor were experiences utilized or systematically gathered in the 1990s. The first contingents passed on lessons to their (overlapping) replacements, but there was no discernable input from the GSDF Staff. After action reports were limited and not circulated. This was not activity with the aim for consolidating learning for best practice.

Pre-dispatch training was initially rotated between GSDF Regional Armies, effectively nullifying operational lessons-learned. While 'Dispatch Histories' were drafted they were not used in training and have never been published, with researchers generally denied access. From the mid-1990s, PKO-related matters were marginalised as the initial enthusiasm dissipated and traditional security priorities were reasserted.<sup>15</sup> Contingent commanders were clearly directed that the main priority was to be seen to be professional and to avoid casualties, some politicians attempting to micro-manage ODO, leaving professional military planners with little room to exercise their competences. Considering these factors it is surprising that the JSDF achieved all that they did, and managed to display such flexibility and adaptability in challenging environments while satisfying their sometimes conflicting orders and directions.

## 2. Lessons Learned

Japan slowly began an incrementally expanding process of learning from its own experiences and from those of selected international partners, originating in the IPCH and Ground Staff Research Section. The Golan Heights (UNDOF) mission became the de facto JSDF UN-PKO 'school',

and from 1998 increased efforts were made to train troops prior to dispatch for the specific and unusual mission tasks. UNDOF witnessed the first major innovations in Japanese ODO, such as the dispatch of ASDF and MSDF personnel to roles previously filled by the GSDF, the purchase of overseas equipment for mission-specific training use in Japan, and the clear placement of the JSDF contingent as an integral part of the UN mission (with a collective defence ethos). The benefits of this could be seen in the deployment to East Timor from 2002, for not only was it the largest ODO but also was the first to include women (six support personnel) and translators for communication with another contingent (two Korean speakers to cooperate with Korean units). This was the first systematic UN-PKO defence diplomacy effort in aid of traditional security goals (the improvement in Japan-Korean military to military relations), and a micro example of ODO reinforcing regional and domestic security.

The Iraq ASO first recycled such UN-PKO experience, and was the first to use a realistic rehearsal training area ('mini-Samawah') prior to dispatch. Colonels Sato Masahisa and Bansho Koichiro were carefully selected for the Iraq mission as the first JSDF ODO contingent commanders to be 'fully recycled' through UN-PKO commands, and made significant efforts to study the language and culture, including cultivating moustaches. Their use of Arabic, friendly and respectful manners, and the JSDF PSO-centric approach proved successful, despite the harsh security environment, and significant domestic opposition.<sup>16</sup>

The first (potential) extraction force capability only emerged with the Central Readiness Force (CRF) from March 2008, and even this faced the usual rapid-reaction ASDF logistic bottlenecks and legal restrictions. Air and sea-lift limitations persist to the degree that even movements of forces within Japan are extremely limited, and the front-loading of combat capabilities has made the ASDF and MSDF rather unbalanced contributors to Japan's overall security. The need to learn from overseas partners was one driver for the JSDF to be more internationally engaging, and also with the hope that partners' capabilities can complement those (and cover some limitations) of the Forces. Partnerships developed slowly, but grew largely from engagement in African and South-East Asian ODO, and also were encouraged by the sense of an emerging imperative that Japan required more partners than the US allies.

### 3 Japan, Allies, and the 'War on Terror'

The events of 9.11.2001 required hurried responses from US allies, and corresponding to NATO's declaration of solidarity with the US PM Koizumi declared that Japan would support its primary ally in every possible way. The assumption was that Japan would rapidly deploy forces in support of emerging missions, but the reality was that two MSDF warships were sent to the

US base of Diego Garcia in an underwhelming and somewhat puzzling display of unity.<sup>17</sup> However, with a gradual expansion of JSDF ODO from 2002 partnerships began to develop in a partly unconscious reorientation of security policy, adopting more of an EU-like comprehensive approach, prioritising international engagement on defence matters as not only intrinsically worthy, but also having broader value for diplomacy and security.

The MSDF Indian Ocean refuelling mission was an Anti-Terrorism Support Mission (an ASO variant) under the 2001 Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law, whereby 22 MSDF vessels refuelled ships of 11 navies in addition to transporting relief equipment for Afghanistan. Up to October 2007, the MSDF provided approximately 480,000kiloliters of oil, as well as aviation fuel, water, and stores, proving naturally popular with recipient navies. The operation was discontinued, then resumed from January 2008 for two years under restricted terms, due to opposition parties' criticism of accounting errors, supplying military stores, and general opposition to 'The War on Terror' (TWOT), but operational utility and efficiency received little attention. Despite MSDF portrayals there were no Japanese boarding missions, and terrorist arms and drug-money to Afghanistan flowed primarily through Karachi port, rather raising the question whether funding would have been better spent on Pakistani law enforcement rather than on refuelling Pakistani and other naval vessels in the Indian Ocean?

The MSDF mission reflected the 1991 situation, whereby the government felt it had to dispatch forces overseas and only naval options appeared credible and low risk. The first JSDF ODO was MSDF Persian Gulf minesweeping, supporting coalition naval forces in dangerous, traditional security tasks, but hampered by technology gaps and extended transit. Since then, overseas training deployments, such as for the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), have been complemented by anti-piracy measures. Attacks on Japan-related shipping increased from one to 35, 1989-1999, and Japan hosted the first Regional Conference on Combating Piracy in 2000. The proliferation of piracy around Somalia prompted Japan and other nations to dispatch warships to the Gulf of Aden from March 2009. An even more notable dispatch of MSDF P3C patrol aircraft followed, signifying the first overseas JSDF facility, with GSDF CRF security in a unique joint-effort. By mid-2012 the aircraft had conducted 689 missions, and in 2014 an MSDF officer took command of the multinational naval forces.

Japan has participated in only one non-UN-PKO/PSO ASO, the Japanese Iraq Reconstruction and Support Group of approximately 600 GSDF troops from February 2004 to July 2006, with an ASDF Kuwait detachment withdrawing in 2009 (due to a court ruling). Configured with armoured vehicles and substantial force protection was atypical of JSDF ODO, although the GSDF camp within 'allied military areas' was standard practice. The additional security provided by Dutch, Australian, and British forces was generally interpreted as mollicoddling by the international



community, even though it was intended as a further extension of ODO-defence diplomacy. There was also tension with Dutch forces due to war legacy and operational issues. Colonels Sato Masahisa and Bansho Koichiro were carefully selected, and their sympathetic manners and the JSDF PSO-centric approach proved successful, despite the harsh security environment, and significant domestic opposition. There is a sense that the GSDF rescued PM Koizumi from the tight corner of supporting US Iraq policy, perhaps indicating that the JSDF increasingly resembled other national militaries, such as the British.

#### 4. 3.11 Domestic Crises and International Engagement

Consideration of JSDF performance following the 11th March 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear crises entails examining the 1995 Hanshin-Awaji earthquake, the largest since the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake. The response of PM Murayama Tomiichi was slow and indecisive, compounding the responses of certain Hanshin-area local governments. The government would not order JSDF assistance for fear of being seen as imposing a ‘military’ solution upon municipalities controlled by ‘allies’. While private companies and even *yakuza* criminal gangs mobilised to lend support, in the first critical days the GSDF were extremely limited in what aid they could provide. That they were able to later provide tremendous assistance to local communities was widely recognised and appreciated, and this work, together with UN-PKO, did much to improve the JSDF image with its own citizens.

Generally, Socialist-led authorities held the JSDF in such general disdain that they refused to prepare disaster rescue and relief plans that included the JSDF, or to consult with the Japan Defense Agency (JDA) due to political disputes over JSDF legitimacy. The JSDF struggled to escape the ‘unconstitutional’ label, or denunciation as “tax thieves” within anti-militarist socio-political norms. As one commentator noted, “for decades the Self-Defense Forces were considered people who live under a rock.”<sup>18</sup> In the 1970s, JSDF members were often discriminated against, with such a low sense of public esteem that when asked in 1975, “Do you feel the work of the SDF is meaningful?” over 48% answered in the negative.<sup>19</sup> In the post-UNTAC environment, the JSDF have improved their recruitment, their capabilities, and have been trusted with increasing responsibilities. This sentiment also led to a pre-occupation with ‘civilian control’ of the JSDF, preventing any ‘reversion’ to earlier militaristic patterns that almost became an obsession.<sup>20</sup>

After 1995, the JSDF assisted with diverse disaster relief duties, including sarin gas and nuclear decontamination tasks (following the 1995 Aum Shinrikyo attacks and the 1998 accidents at the Tokaimura nuclear facility), and developed proficiency and public support for DRO. The JSDF had long performed such roles since their founding, but it was only in the mid-1990s that Japanese

gratitude matched that from overseas. The first JSDF joint operation was conducted in response to the 2004 South-East Asian Tsunami, and despite problems due to unfamiliarity of the three Forces working together, their efforts were highly appreciated.<sup>21</sup> Elevation of the JDA to Ministry of Defense status in 2007 was in recognition of the elevated status and roles of the Forces, with civilian-control pre-occupations somewhat displaced by operational-utility demands.

The contrast of the JSDF disaster response of 3.11 2011 with 1995 was stark. Not only was the earthquake far stronger, and the effects of the tsunami unimagined, but the emerging nuclear crisis at the Dai-ichi facility, Fukushima made the work of the JSDF much more complex than in Hanshin-Awaji. The numbers of personnel immediately deployed were unprecedented, with Defense Minister Kitazawa Tomichi ordering units into affected areas from the first hours of the crisis, and together with PM Kan Naoto, and Chief Cabinet-Secretary Edano Yukio, Kitazawa was one of the three primary leaders of the rescue effort.

From approximately 240,000 personnel, by 13th March, 100,000 JSDF personnel were mobilized, with thousands more in support, including the first ever mobilization of GSDF Ready Reserves (RR) and Volunteer Reserves (VR). VR were particularly valued for their foreign language and technical skills, 506 being mobilised by 31st March.<sup>22</sup> The JSDF have been relatively inflexible in the utilization of civilian skills for IPCA/ODO, whereas the US, UK, Australia, and others have utilised reservists and civilian contractors to provide niche expertise and resources. This has been notable in Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) and PSO/PBO duties in non-traditional security missions, in the Balkans, Timor, and Afghanistan.<sup>23</sup> Japan has very small reserve forces, only within the GSDF, relatively poorly resourced, which cannot be dispatched overseas, and on the one occasion they have been mobilised only 17% reported for duty.<sup>24</sup> In the worst disaster for Japan since 1945 this is very poor, even if those who did respond proved invaluable, particularly for communications.

The initial JSDF rescue phase extracted 19,247 people, including a man floating 14km offshore on the roof of his home.<sup>25</sup> By 31st March, 70,000 GSDF, 15,100 MSDF, and 21,300 ASDF personnel were active within the relief area, and a further 500 attached to the Dai-ichi nuclear crisis management group. They contributed 50 ships, 323 fixed-wing and 217 rotary aircraft, and vast quantities of equipment and supplies.<sup>26</sup> Despite long-standing weaknesses in ASDF heavy air-lift, and GSDF/MSDF inshore amphibious capabilities, the JSDF were well-prepared for their disaster relief tasks, with extensive water-purification, bathing, cooking, and logistical equipment developed for these tasks. Only at the end of April did Kitazawa announce that half of ASDF/MSDF and 30% of GSDF units would stand-down from operations, eight weeks of intense operations having taken their physical and mental toll. Practically every evacuation shelter had a JSDF contingent, with JSDF vehicles becoming the main means of supply. The GSDF

even operated free 'service stations' for civilians unable to buy petrol, and more than at any time since 1945 the armed forces became integrated into civil society. These included efforts to cheer-up evacuees, by concerts and sports activities, that could be characterized as reflecting "less masculine, and civilianized identities."<sup>27</sup>

On the evening of 11th March, PM Kan requested US assistance through Ambassador Roos, and Marine Corps (USMC), Air Force (USAF), and US Navy (USN) units were immediately dispatched.<sup>28</sup> US and JSDF operations were closely coordinated with *USS Tortuga* transporting GSDF units from Hokkaido to Mutsu, Aomori, and the combined Joint Task Force-Tohoku (JFT-TH) was established at GSDF North-East (Tohoku) Regional Army HQ, an innovation with all US efforts designated within *Operation Tomodachi* (friend).<sup>29</sup> This arrangement was the culmination of decades of increased Japan-US security cooperation, from the 1978 Guidelines to TWOT and UN-PKO efforts.

The naval aspect of combined operations was evident, with *JDS Hyuuga* and *USS Ronald Reagan* as respective flagships, each exchanging three flag personnel, and both providing air lift and air-traffic control capabilities on the Tohoku coast. This was a continuation of a strong tradition of close US-Japan naval cooperation, but it seems the MSDF was overwhelmed by the scale of the disaster, with delays in response compounding MSDF investment decisions. While no navy could match USN capabilities, the MSDF has only three *JDS Oosumi-class* amphibious vessels each able to operate two-three helicopters, and four 500tonne-class coastal craft. The MSDF also operates only four AOE/AOR Combat Support Ships, able to deliver fuel, stores, and provide local power and water to coastal communities, as did *JDS Tokiwa* in Cambodia.<sup>30</sup> With 48 warships, the MSDF has consistently been 'front-heavy tail-light', with less emphasis upon capability-multiplying support vessels than combat hulls.

Both the MSDF and USN were hampered by the vast amount of debris drawn out by the receding tsunami, and the five MSDF Landing Craft Air-Cushion (LCAC) hovercraft deployed required transporting from Kure, Hiroshima, aboard *Oosumi-class* vessels. LCAC had specialised in such disaster-response drills since 1998, and proved capable of traversing most of the debris-clogged waterways and damaged slipways to access the worst affected communities.<sup>31</sup> Naval limitations left communities with little fuel, power, or fresh water that ships could have provided, the first oil being delivered by the MSDF on 19th March.

The USN appeared to have learned lessons from Hurricane Katrina in 2005, where naval assets provided immense relief capability.<sup>32</sup> The USN provided more airlift and amphibious sealift than the entire MSDF, and transported over 3,000 Marines from Okinawa.<sup>33</sup> However, initial expectations of two carriers operating as mobile helicopter and hospital bases were dashed by *USS George Washington* retreating from Yokosuka to western Japan, and the *USS Ronald Reagan*

maintaining *F/A-18* flights, and not evacuating or treating Japanese aboard, contrasting with otherwise excellent USFJ assistance. US special-forces teams managed to clear enough runway at Sendai Airport, Miyagi to allow *C-130* and later *C-17* aircraft to operate within the disaster zone within weeks, Japanese authorities having “written this airport off”.<sup>34</sup> ASDF personnel concentrated upon re-opening their Matsushima base on 16th March, while US unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) flights from Guam, mapped the tsunami-related devastation and monitored radiation levels.<sup>35</sup>

One of the thorniest issues souring US-Japanese relations has been the controversy over USFJ bases in Okinawa. Despite accounting for less than 1% of Japanese territory Okinawa hosts 75% of USFJ bases and more than half of personnel, and safety, environmental, and crime concerns have fuelled protests, prompting the 2006 Futenma-Nago relocation plan and partial redeployment of USMC units to Guam, at Japanese expense. Many Okinawans rejected the plans, prompting PM Hatoyama Yukio to attempt to push more USFJ facilities outside of Okinawa and Japan, but his failure and downfall left Japanese policy in disarray.<sup>36</sup> USFJ *Tomodachi* recovery efforts were demonstrations of both capability and fraternity, deflecting much nascent negative publicity.<sup>37</sup> After more than 18,000 US personnel had participated, *Operation Tomodachi* was wound down from 2nd May 2011, with continued USFJ logistical support and much goodwill generated.

The support provided by a wide range of international civilian and military actors was coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Among the first to respond were Korean and Australian air force units, Australian *C-17* aircraft transporting GSDF units from Okinawa to Tohoku. Of the military forces dispatched one of the least likely was the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) Medical Aid Delegation in Minami-Sanriku, Miyagi. The IDF team being the only foreign medical team allowed to operate in Japan based upon a local contact. In 1995, international medical teams were also refused entry visas, MOFA explaining that communities “will be very surprised if a foreign medical team arrived out of the blue”, as though surprise were fatal. A Health Ministry official insisted that the IDF would only provide “minimum necessary” care.<sup>38</sup> Thankfully, locals ignored the Ministries. The Israeli’s donated their clinic and equipment to the town, illustrating the value of disaster relief work and defence-diplomacy in international relations.<sup>39</sup>

Foreign civilian teams provided 890 Search and Rescue personnel with 37 dogs from 18 countries by 21st March, with most then withdrawing as the rescue phase moved into recovery.<sup>40</sup> These teams usually combined with fire, police, or JSDF personnel, and worked well, despite the diverse backgrounds, with Chinese, Taiwanese, Korean, Indian and European groups making significant contributions. This was mirrored by international NGO in Tohoku, such as *Peace Winds*, and the MOD and JSDF were able to cooperate far more effectively with them due to overseas experience in the 1990s and the 2000 founding of *Japan Platform*, a civil-military framework for public-private-voluntary sector cooperation.<sup>41</sup> In one of the legacies of 1995, a peak of over 130,000

Japanese volunteers joined in the recovery efforts over the 2011 Golden Week holidays, and these, combined with international civilian, military, and JSDF personnel made the Tohoku recovery effort truly collectively cosmopolitan.

The JSDF provided support during the crisis at the Dai-ichi reactors, with evacuations, and the CRF ground-spraying and 'water-bombing' (from helicopters), a move seemingly instigated by US pressure. Both the US and Japanese governments were underwhelmed by the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) leadership, which on 14th March asked Kan to put the JSDF in charge of the plant, a move vehemently rejected.<sup>42</sup> The JSDF provided logistical support to TEPCO operations, with more than 500 personnel and equipment including *Type-74* tanks to clear debris from access roads. US civil and military teams were dispatched, but were initially hampered by US restrictions that no personnel approach within 80km of the reactors. Additional support has been provided by General Electric, and the Russian and particularly French atomic industries to the extent that a renaissance of Franco-Japanese relations has been founded on post-3.11 nuclear cooperation.

The overall effects of JSDF operations would appear to be obvious, capable of quantitative analysis: lives saved, goods transported, bodies recovered. However, the impact of JSDF efforts on Japanese society, politics, and geo-politics is less easily quantified or qualified. Tohoku, in contrast with Hanshin, was relatively positively disposed towards the JSDF and provided many recruits. Among affected citizens the general feeling was that the Japanese government had largely overlooked them, but this antipathy did not apply to the JSDF, which were often the only official body present. Despite the prevalent anti-militarist norms in society the restrictive civilian-control regime has certainly been loosened, or, in the words of several scholars 'normalized', with the JSDF increasingly regarded as a normal military, as in European countries. Indeed, the JSDF appear to be so well appreciated as they appear to be 'less normal', rather, less martial, than other armed forces, conforming to their status as 'special civil servants' rather than *de facto* soldiers/sailors/airmen. It is unthinkable that any Tohoku community would protest against JSDF bases, and the same might well be said for USFJ. *Operation Tomodachi* was also a huge success, both for its relief impact but also for the image of USFJ, which were previously often seen but rarely valued. While many countries aided Japan, their combined effort was overshadowed by US military aid, and it was notable that the JSDF and USFJ worked so well and so closely together, with the Japanese clearly in control, even though JSDF hardware capabilities were often lacking. Goodwill will not solve the Okinawa base issue, but will provide an added incentive to find an amicable solution.

*Operation Tomodachi* was a vindication of Japanese security policy: aspire to a fraternal United Nations, but keep the US and its military power in a warm embrace. The most valued ally is one that provides maximum assistance at the time of greatest need, and the US clearly attained that

standard. The assistance of Korea, China, and Russia, could also have provided a basis for warmer East Asian relations but events since 2011 generated little optimism.

## 5. Crisis Management Close to Home

Undoubtedly the greatest immediate security challenge facing Japan today is the rise of China and its effect upon the status quo of East Asia. The most obviously pertinent aspect of this challenge has been China's territorial claims in its littoral area, those in the East China Sea (ECS) directly confronting Japan, and those in the South China Sea (SCS) constituting a threat to Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) regional stability in a vital area for Japanese trade and shipping. Japan's attempts to manage this China challenge have been of limited success, and like its US ally Japan has found itself falling between the stools of containment and engagement policies and able to effectively achieve neither. Previously relatively cordial relations were affected by the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident and reductions in Japanese ODA. The gradual realisation that Japan's flat economy and China's ballistic growth rates were no mere temporary aberration focused minds on the future of the region, but Chinese naval manoeuvres around Taiwan in 1995-1996 and 1998 nuclear tests triggered fundamental changes in Japanese approaches. The Taiwan issue provoked Japan and the US to take their alliance more seriously and to actually make preparations for regional contingencies, particularly on the Korean peninsula and, for the first time, Taiwan. This explicit reference that the US-Japan Security Treaty had a relevance to the Taiwan issue prompted severe comments from China, and a deterioration in relations which has since seen only mild deviations from a downward course, greatly worsened by ECS natural resource disputes and PM Koizumi's Yasukuni Shrine visits.<sup>43</sup>

Japan has sought to compete with China in some aspects of international engagement, even through maintaining UN-PKO troop contributions at a 10:1 ratio with those of China. Japanese ODA has become increasingly focused upon emerging markets in Africa and Asia where Chinese interests have grown, particularly related to natural resources, and it is no accident that the one remaining JSDF UN-PKO is in South Sudan, where Chinese oil investment has been so significant. The outreach to the disaffected of Asia, particularly the states in dispute in the SCS has been notable, with Vietnam, the Philippines, and other ASEAN states systematically courted, particularly following SCS maritime confrontations in 2013 and 2014. Previous ASEAN reluctance to engage with such obvious Japanese efforts has softened as the Chinese provocations have escalated, mirroring the burgeoning security relationships developing between India and Japan. The gradual progression to a more engaging international approach on security gathered pace from 2012, and Japan experienced its own unstated and partly unsystematic process of 'pivoting.' Japan's

‘pivot to Asia’ embraced south and south-east Asia while also engaging in a comprehensive ‘pivot to the west’ of partnerships and with western democracies. Among these Australia and Britain have clearly become the most important, with the Australia relationship rapidly developing with Visiting Forces and Free Trade Agreements as part of a ‘whirlwind romance’ between fellow US-ally middle powers concerned with the state of Asian security.<sup>44</sup>

These new relations are intended to complement and buttress the US-Japan alliance, in a form of Japanese hedging against a potential future US pivot away from East Asia. It also has the potential to raise the ire of China ever further, with Beijing fears of containment having some foundation. However, it is the corresponding fear of Chinese expansionism that has driven Japanese policy, primarily related to the Senkaku Islands (Daiyou in Chinese). The response of China to their nationalisation (forestalling Tokyo Governor Ishihara) in 2012 was provocative, out of proportion (the sovereignty of the islands had not altered), and with scant regard for international conventions or law. Chinese ships intruded into Senkaku waters twice in 2011, but 188 times in 2013, with 38 Chinese aircraft intercepted by the ASDF in 2009 rising to 415 in 2013, the majority in the south-western maritime area, and there have been radar ‘lock-on’, and air and sea ‘near miss’ incidents between rival patrolling craft, risking collision and even conflict.<sup>45</sup> Most nations have avoided comment upon the dispute, and even the US attempted to equivocate upon the matter until Chinese provocation overreached itself with the declaration of an ECS Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) in November 2013.

There appears to be a complimentary symbiosis between Chinese actions and Japanese reactions which has driven many of the security reforms proposed by PM Abe and denounced so vehemently by Beijing. Japanese defence budgets have been in general decline since 1998, with very modest rises recently proposed, but the focus of spending, particularly on developing amphibious capabilities, is surprising in its speed and extent. The Abe administration’s efforts to re-interpret the constitution allowing the exercise of the right of collective self-defence (*shudanteki jiken*) have been rather confusing for allies and detractors alike. Such expressions as “(to) contribute even more proactively to the peace and stability of the international community under the policy of "Proactive Contribution to Peace" based on the principle of international cooperation, it is necessary to develop domestic legislation that enables seamless responses”, fail to clarify.<sup>46</sup> Chinese media has asserted that such policies constitute “Abe’s coup against the Constitution”, that “Japan doesn’t deserve being treated as a normal country” while “China needs to expose the Japanese rightists’ evil intent.”<sup>47</sup> Such extreme discourse further sours relations and also provides a basis for PM Abe to portray China in an aggressive light requiring bolstering of Japan’s defences and diplomatic relations.

Korea has distanced itself from the ECS dispute, and Taiwan (with its own claim) has been

reserved. Japan has refused to officially recognise that a dispute exists, a situation that generates great frustration in Beijing, while Tokyo experiences the same frustration that Korea refuses to recognise a dispute of sovereignty over (Korean controlled) Dokdo (Takeshima). Japan refuses to allow the Senkaku issue to be referred to international arbitration, while demanding such arbitration for Dokdo (which Korea refuses), thus trying to prevent an 'internationalization' of the ECS issue while simultaneously build international partnerships to counterbalance China.<sup>48</sup> There can be no surprise that while Japanese citizens are concerned about China they also readily recognize the dispute exists and are more amenable to international arbitration than their government.<sup>49</sup>

## Conclusion

Most of the security challenges facing Japan appear to be primarily related to recent events. The rise of China, piracy, terrorism, the aftermath of the 2011 earthquake: all seem very much of the post-Cold War world. However, the continuing effects upon Japan of the consequences of defeat in war and the establishment of a new post-war order continue to dominate much policy and thought. The constitution is not only legally significant but has become so contested as it symbolises so much of the recast Japanese identity in peacetime. The Yoshida Doctrine, of concentration upon economic growth and minimising defence efforts while embracing the US alliance and western liberal values, has become such a dominant norm that only the most radical would propose any other alternative. Even the slightest revisions to these post-war legacies bring trepidation regarding Japan's security, and yet it is the apparent rise of Japanese insecurity that is driving such revisionist agenda.

Japanese policy has not become militarised, despite fears at home and abroad, and the degree of tolerance to Chinese incursions of contiguous Japanese waters and airspace is notable. But the changes in Japanese public and political perceptions concerning national security, the relative positions of Japan and China, and the roles of the JSDF and Japan Coastguard over a relatively brief period are even more notable. Despite the increased emphasis upon military investments and deployments to counter Chinese ECS assertions the drive toward a broader international security engagement is the real innovation in Japanese policy. Part of this has been built upon micro-level, functional engagement in IPCA/ODO, both military and civilian, and partly through related ODA activities. Diplomatic initiatives have also become much more carefully focused upon and coordinated with such IPCA and ODA efforts, and the cultivation of seemingly 'western' powers in Asia, notably India, Australia, and the Philippines, have been intended to reinforce the fundamentals of US-alliance and economic partnership. Thus the new security policies of the Abe era are very much part of the old pattern of the Yoshida era.



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