PREFACE

The present study attempts to analyze Japan's defence policy as was pursued during the prime ministership of Nakasone Yasuhiro i.e. from 1982-87. It examines the major decisions that were taken during that period, the major trends that were discernible and the future directions that the defence policy was likely to take.

In the realm of international relations, Japan offers an interesting example, in the sense that it was an enemy nation that was converted into a pro-western democracy under the U.S. occupation authorities. The emergence of communism in East Asia along with the looming threat of the Soviet Union compelled the occupation authorities to revise their strategies and turn Japan into a 'bastion against communism'. The occupation authorities initiated the programme of demilitarization and democratization of Japan along with the promulgation of the Peace Constitution. The Korean war compelled the occupation authorities to ask the Japanese Government to create a 75,000 strong National Police Reserve which was subsequently turned into the Self Defence Force (SDF). This marked the beginning of prolonged discussion in Japan on the defence question.

The anti-war and anti-nuclear mood of the people helped the occupation authorities in their efforts at demilitarization and democratization. But people looked
with suspicion upon at any efforts that talked of defence build ups. Successive Japanese governments formed by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), sensing the strong domestic antipathy to any growth in the defence capabilities of Japan, strictly went by the war renouncing clause of the constitution, i.e., Article 9. Subsequently, a series of legal and political constraints were imposed on the Government to reinforce public sentiments. These include prohibition of the right of collective self-defence, ban on the maintenance of offensive weapon systems, the “Three conditions for the Employment of the SDF”, the “Three Principles on Arms Export”, the “Three Non-nuclear Principles” and the one per cent of gross national product (GNP) ceiling on annual defence sending etc. Japan had to rely heavily on the U.S. for its security including security against nuclear threats. Thus, Japan followed a “minimalist” security policy.

This minimalist approach was possible because of the so-called Yoshida Doctrine that called for maximizing economic interests and stabilizing domestic social foundations with minimum international political involvement and reliance on the U.S. for its own defence. Successive Japanese Governments made efforts to separate economics from politics maintaining as low a political profile as circumstances would permit. “Economy first” came to be the guiding principle for the successive governments. Japan had renounced the right of belligerency traditionally recognized as a sovereign right of any independent nation. Japan in the process became a unique
state without any parallel in history. The wartime experiences, the nuclear catastrophe, and the final defeat etc. created a strong pacifist sentiments among the Japanese people. Thus, the structural constraints in the form of the peace constitution and the popular pacifism put a check on the growth of the military and facilitated the task of economic reconstruction. Some politicians, however, considered this development an act of abnormality and hence Japan an abnormal state. Nakasone Yasuhiro was one such politician. The manner in which the Japanese constitution was promulgated and the 'apologetic' status of the SDF were the issues that agitated Nakasone the most. A strong nationalist, Nakasone had reservations to these issues that compromised with Japan's status as a sovereign nation. Nakasone had committed himself to correct the abnormalities of the Japanese state.

Following the establishment of a quasi-military framework, an ongoing debate on the role, size and capabilities of the forces started. Three types of views were mostly seen in this regard. The first group comprised of the followers of the Yoshida Doctrine who rejected Japan's undue involvement in international politics. The second group comprised of the "idealists" or leftists who propagated unarmed neutrality or variants of it. The third group differed considerably from these two groups. In contrast to them, this group attached importance to the need for Japan to develop military capabilities and called for the expansion of the SDF and close Japan-U.S.
military cooperation. This group is known as the "realists" or "military realists". Nakasone belonged to this group of thinkers.

Japan enjoyed U.S. military protection under the provisions of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. The treaty was first signed in 1951 and then revised in 1960. It was allowed to continue for an indefinite period after 1969. The Defence Agency of Japan (IDA) was established in 1954 to look after the defence issues confronting the nation. The 1960s was a period of speedy reconstruction of the Japanese economy. The successful holding of the Tokyo Olympics in 1964 and proper implementation of various economic measures boosted the confidence of the people. The 1970s witnessed two oil crises, which Japan successfully overcame. The successful economic reconstruction was possible because the 1960s and the 1970s were greatly calm and peaceful as compared to the 1950s. Internationally also it was a favourable period for Japan as the U.S. and the Soviets were engaged in a prolonged detente following the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1963. The continuation of the detente in to the 1970s helped Japan to maintain its low profile on the defence question, and hence commit less money into it. But a qualitative change came in the international politics following the Kampuchean crisis in 1978-1979 and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1980. The growing military involvement of the Soviet Union in Asia and the Indo-Chinese region was a reality that the Japanese had to encounter.
Nakasone was appointed as the Director General of the Japan Defence Agency (JDA) in 1970. Being a "hawk" on defence issues, his appointment at that time was seen as conforming to the then growing Japanese confidence of playing a greater political role that was considered a natural corollary to its miraculous economic success. It was interpreted as Japan's readiness to discuss the issues hitherto considered taboos, more openly and to assume a greater sharing of defence burdens. Under him, the JDA issued its first ever Defence White Paper whose aim was to inform and educate the public on various aspects of Japan's defence. However, the series of economic crises of the 1970s and the detente that was obtained due to a decline in international tension kept the defence issues on the back side. Thus, there was very little change in the defence areas in the 1970s.

Security thinking underwent a change in the 1980s. The 1981 Defence White Paper discussed Japan's role as a member of the west while the 1986 White Paper outlined its responsibilities. Defence preparedness came to be recognized as important as the need to maintain western solidarity. Nakasone played an important role in bringing about this change in Japanese security perception. Non-conformist by Japanese standards, Nakasone worked single mindedly, sometimes deliberately crossing the limits of national consensus, to give new directions and create new trends in Japan's defence policy.
Nakasone's accession to the post of Prime Minister of Japan in 1982, however, brought in a qualitative change in the discussions of national defence. Nakasone himself was determined to make a new beginning in this field. Nakasone's task was made easier due to the collapse of the detente following the Soviet intervention of Afghanistan. This event had a profound effect on the Japanese people and for once the Soviet threat to Japan appeared more potent. Thus, Nakasone's attempts at appropriate defence build ups did not attract that much criticism as it would have done in the earlier period.

Nakasone's objective was to make a transition of Japan from a “peace country” (Heiwa Kokka) to an “ordinary country” (Zairai-gata Kokka) or a “normal state”. Normalization was an attempt to remove the image of Japan as a unique country. The uniqueness was a result of the constitutional and various self-inflicted policy constraints. The image continued to persist because that was based on various constraints (discussed earlier) and still continuing with the same image as a result of post-war consensus that emphasised economic concerns while neglecting political issues. Nakasone held that Japan as an economic power had certain interests and defence of those interests required it to possess the requisite capabilities. It was important to shed the unique status and become a normal state with a more balanced power potential. Nakasone, thus, sought to achieve a balance between political and
economic goals and reinstate Japan as an equal member in the international state system, with a political role commensurate with its economic power.

The present study has been divided into six chapters. Chapter I provides a broad introduction to the subject deleniating the parameters that have governed Japan’s defence policy in the post Second World War years. It is very important to understand Nakasone’s ideas on Japan’s defence so that one could assess the extent to which he was able to implement those ideas after becoming the Prime Minister of Japan. Chapter II makes a detailed analysis of the evolution of Nakasone’s defence outlook from the very beginning of his political career. Nakasone, immediately after becoming the Prime Minister of Japan, tried to start a discussion on some controversial issues related to Japan’s defence. Chapter III gives an account as to how Nakasone tried to bring the issue of defence to the forefront of public debates and discussions. Chapter IV and Chapter V discuss the various important areas where Nakasone tried to initiate changes and examine to what extent he succeeded. Finally, a conclusion has been drawn up in Chapter VI.

In this dissertation the names of the Japanese personalities have been written the way the Japanese themselves write with the surname first followed by personal name.