INTRODUCTION

Anti-militarism, the continuing faith in the war-renouncing constitution by the Japanese people, has played a vital role in Japanese policymaking and in the emergence of Japan as economic superpower following the end of World War II. This, along with its reciprocal, remilitarization, is among the most debated topics in the postwar Japan. This study endeavours to analyze terms like militarism, militarization, and demilitarization in order to understand them better in the context of Japanese society and politics.

Japan, as a nation has gone through various phases — militarization, demilitarization and remilitarization. Military adventurism and the expansionist policies prevailed in Japan before World War II because of militarism under a virtual monarch and European influence. This eventually led to complete disaster and the Japanese surrender ended the War. The Supreme Commander of Allied Powers (SCAP), Gen. Douglas MacArthur, in the process of demilitarizing and democratizing Japan, forced a pacifist constitution on Japan, requiring it to denounce war forever.

During the early post-Occupation Period, the biggest challenge of reconstructing Japan was dealt on a priority basis, leaving the military and defense completely to America. Yoshida Shigeru, the most influential and visionary Prime Minister of Japan in the post-War era, laid emphasis on making Japan an economic superpower. This status was achieved through exclusive focus on the economic path, rather than taking the military line. Various policies like the income-doubling plan, seikei bunri (the separation of politics and economics), pacifism and dependence on the US for defense helped the Japanese endeavour of reemerging as an economic superpower.

During the occupation era, SCAP not only tried to implement its policy-related decisions but also to study the basic causes of Japan's militarism, from the masses to the Emperor, from military to the parliament, from history to the present, from religion to faith, from the peasantry to shogun or samurais. Gradually, attempts were
made to uproot the fundamental factors and to democratize Japan through western education and institutions.

Skepticism about Japan’s defense capabilities exists throughout the world. Japanese militarization remains a serious concern for its neighbours, China and South Korea. Conversely, the United States wants Japan to enhance its military power, despite the Japanese constitution renouncing war. The existence of the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) in Japan, and other related issues like their gradual upgradation, huge budget and participation in missions abroad are serious matters debated and discussed in academic as well as other circles.

Militarism essentially refers to excess, both quantitative and qualitative. Pre-World War II Japan was the best example of militarism at its highest stage, both domestically and internationally. The post-World War II scenario of Japan was drastically different. The extended and disastrous war made the people suffer so much that the anti-militarism feeling went deep into people’s hearts and minds and became impossible to be rid of. This feeling has been backed up and fortified by the ruling, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) as well as the opposition Japanese Socialist Party (JSP) and Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ).

Militarization is a dynamic process of increasing military influence. This concept can be employed to study a society where militarism has not yet started, like in present-day Japan where there is now an erosion of anti-militaristic structures, attitudes and norms constraining the use of the military as a legitimate instrument of state power.

Remilitarization in Japan is a process that started, almost immediately after the demilitarization of Japan. During the occupation era when the Korean War broke out, the US forced Japan to re-arm itself. Yoshida Shigeru, when told by MacArthur to create a 75,000-man National Police Reserve, publicly went on the defensive stating that it would require a change in the constitution. However, he later differentiated ‘war-making potential’ from ‘potential self-defense.’ Eventually, the SDF came into existence and today, Japan has one of world’s most sophisticated defense capabilities.
Article 9 of the Japanese constitution, is much-contested in Japan and international politics for its essence and constitutionality. Japanese Prime Ministers from Yoshida to Junichiro Koizumi, Shinzo Abe and now Yasuo Fukuda have bypassed it to get their policies and plans through. Without amending the constitution, Japan has built up major air, maritime and ground self-defense forces. US strategic interests in the region, continued pressure from pro-revisionists and conservative factions within Japan, the North Korean threat, Japan's own economic and strategic interest and international terrorism paved the way for the remilitarization of Japan. Although, the debate for amending the pacifist constitution has tilted towards the pro-revisionist factions, it is not free from severe criticism from supporters of pacifism and from neighbouring countries. This shows the success of democracy in post-WWII Japan.

This chapter covers the historical background of militarism in Japan. Japan during and after World War II, when it was demilitarized and democratized after the humiliating defeat, and the American influence on it during the rebuilding process are dealt with here. The chapter also gives an overview of the different approaches of militarization in Japan. However, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and its impact on the general psyche of the people and policymakers are covered in the following chapter.

Militarism

The word militarism is used in a variety of ways. However, common to all usages is a critical approach to military, most plainly seen in an analysis of the military’s excessive influence on society. A universal definition of militarism is difficult to formulate due to the diversity of phenomena that emerge as a result of the military and its influence on state and society. In addition, context and historical experience have a fundamental impact on militarism, thereby complicating the defining process even more. Luckham observes that “Militarism refers to the pervasiveness in society of symbols, values and discourses validating military power and preparation for war” (Robin Luckham 1994: 24). Militarism in industrialized

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1 For a detailed discussion on constitution amendment see Chapter 5.
2 Chapter 3 covers the debates over militarization in Japan.
countries is different from that in agrarian societies but military dominance over the private and public sphere remains conspicuous. Volker R. Berghahn (1981: 124) argues that there are two types of militarism: one in countries in transition from agrarian to industrial socio-economic structures, and another in modern, high-technology, and consumer oriented societies. Industrialization, urbanization, technology advancement and many other factors determine the socio-economic and political transitions and interrelationships within a society.

Usually it is said that the rise of ultra-nationalism in any society results in the rise of militarism. Militarism promotes expansionist policies, often with tension at a large scale as an end-result. In addition to imperialistic or expansionist designs, there are many other reasons behind the state following militaristic lines. These include national pride, political motives, economic policies, resource crunch and so on. Militarism is the policy implemented by the process of militarization (Yoshikazu Sakamato 1988: 38 and Hook 1996: 15). The study of militarism is not only confined to the academic sphere but also has a practical relevance. For instance, the defeat of Germany and Japan meant that the Allied powers faced the practical question of how to deracinate the roots of militarism from the body politic of these former enemies, at least in the early post-1945 years. It involved not only legal and political reforms to prevent the military from again becoming politically powerful, but also educational reforms to prevent the school from once again inculcating militaristic values in future generations.

Militarism is a one-sided determination of political decisions with military technical considerations replacing a comprehensive examination of what is required by raison d'état, which unites both the military aspect of state policy as well as the moral code. Militarism is the one sided predominance of militant and martial traits in a statesman’s or nation’s basic outlook to the extent that the most important task of the state, which is to create durable order of law and peace among men, to promote general welfare and mediate continuously in the eternal struggle among divergent

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3 Militarism as defined by Jim Zwick, is the policy of 'direct military intervention in the people's lives and behaviour or indirect structural involvement in political and economic affairs'. It is responsible for 'creating or enforcing highly repressive policies and structures within the country'.
interests and claims in domestic affairs and between nations is neglected (Hook 1996: 17).

In terms of the Western outlook (or the liberal critique), there are wide variations in scope and emphasis. For example, certain authors stress the size and role of the armed forces in society, while others emphasize values and attitudes. Another group of scholars are primarily concerned with the economic underpinnings of the military apparatus. However, despite this variety of interpretations, there seems to be one common agreement among Western writers critical of, and concerned about, militarism, which is the idea of excess. Militarism is seen as the expansion of the military beyond certain bounds, which are usually not very well defined, and its encroachment over civilian institutions, with a corresponding decline in individual freedoms and democratic forms of decision-making.

Marxists do not provide a general theory of militarism, but have rather theorized on the links between the specific aspects of militarism, civil society and the economy. Marxists termed militarism as a ‘social phenomenon’ occurring because of the existence of the classes in society and the exploiter-state. Under capitalism, militarism reaches the level never attained before and assumes a portentous character. According to this school of thought, militarism is used to justify the use of military means for the protection of ownership patterns in capitalist societies. The development of military technology is similarly the result of the efforts by the ruling class to maintain its hegemonic position. It ultimately results in the rise of the Imperialism (Lenin, 1939). 4 Karl Liebknecht (1973), a German socialist and one of the first scholars to define militarism and anti-militarism and raise his voice against the German militaristic policies has observed,

Modern militarism wants neither more nor less than the squaring of the circle; it arms the people against the people itself; it is insolent enough to force the workers . . . to become oppressors, enemies and murderers of their

4 Imperialism, on the other hand, i.e., monopoly capitalism which matured in the twentieth century, is by virtue of its fundamental economic traits, distinguished by a minimum fondness for peace and freedom, and by a maximum and universal development of militarism. In his work “Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky,” Lenin writes that imperialism was distinguished by a minimum fondness for peace and freedom, and by virtue of its economic, i.e., fundamental traits. Business based on war follows the basic economic law of capitalism which manifests itself in the urge of capital owners to get maximum profit and to broaden the sphere of their expansion.
own class comrades and friends, of their parents, brothers, sisters and children, murderers of their own past and future. It wants to be at the same time democratic and despotic, enlightened and machine-like, at the same time to serve the nation and to be its enemy.

Broadly, three dimensions of militarism can be studied. The first is the socio-economic structure of capitalist society, the second, the legal and political system of the state and the third, the attitude of the citizens towards the ideology and values of the military. There are mainly two approaches namely – Marxism and Liberalism. The former focuses mainly on the first dimension, the latter on the second and third dimensions (Hook 1996). The militarism in Germany was an outcome of the very historical development of Germany’s social and economic structures. In the case of Japan, Maruyama Masao (1969), a leading political theorist defined militarism as a condition where the political, economic, educational and cultural parts of the people’s life are subordinated to military considerations.

Tatsumi Okabe (1974: 1) provides the most workable definition of the militarism – “a tendency in a nation which places highest priority on military values and on war preparations, to the extent that the nation does not hesitate to take military actions abroad in order to protect its overseas interests.” He further stressed that pre-War Japan apparently had this tendency, which can be called ‘Japanese Militarism.’

Militarization

Militarization, in comparison to militarism, does not imply the formal supremacy of the military or the dominance of a particular ideology. It is a process, historical in nature that comprises a dynamic set of relationships between military and society. However, as Ross points out, there is substantial conceptual confusion surrounding the use of the term, with most definitions tending to be value-laden. In response to his own criticism, Ross identifies two types of militarization (AL Ross 1987: 561-578).

The first type of militarization is a process that contributes to militarism, namely the excessive use of violence and increased importance attached to militaristic ideologies, values and beliefs about human nature and social relationships. The
second type of militarization is characterized by increases in military spending, the
size of armed forces, and arms imports and production. It is also distinguished by the
military’s rising demands upon society and the economy, and, consequently, by a
possible accompanying increase in the military’s political role and influence and its
actual appropriation of the state apparatus. Luckham (1994: 23-27) has defined
militarization as:

a multi-dimensional process through which a number of elements - such as
military coups and regimes, authoritarian government, the dominance of
patriarchy, powerful military and state apparatuses, war and armed conflict,
rising military spending and arms imports, and external military intervention -
become dynamically interlinked, both to each other and more widely to capital
accumulation and projects for national and international hegemony. Yet these
elements have not always correlated, nor have they been on the increase.

Militarization does not occur in a vacuum. It is a function of the nature of the
state and of relations between states. It is not a singular, unified process that pervades
society but is uneven and sectoral and differs from nation to nation, and region to
region. It is the process of using the military, the security forces or the political police
to suppress the peoples’ just demands for a humane society. It logically connotes
human rights’ violation by the physical presence or even saturation of soldiers and
policemen, a situation which, to the general perception, implies and results in
coercion.

The main pretext of militarization is the achievement or maintenance of
‘political stability,’ ‘national security’ or other similar goals, but whose real purpose
is the maintenance of the regime in power. ‘National security,’ among other reasons,
provides the ideological vehicle through which militarist tendencies are given public
legitimacy.

This is most often expressed in ‘developmental terms,’ whereby the military
affirms that it is the only institution capable of ensuring and protecting rapid
economic growth. The means of militarization include the increase of military forces,
the combining of police forces, para-military forces, intelligence units and even
criminal gangs into one system of security; and the overt and covert use of the
educational system, the mass media and other such institution to instill fear in the
people and to convince them of the invincibility of the military and its good
intentions. Even the legislature is used. All kinds of laws that, in effect, flout the basic principles of the respective constitutions or internationally agreed upon conventions on human rights are enacted to legitimize the reign of terror by many regimes.

The resources that fuel militarization include not only domestic resources but international links among militarized regimes, which exchange intelligence information and aid, give shelter to foreign military bases and installations, trade in armaments and technology; and conduct training, tactical as well as strategic, in counter-insurgency, interrogation, torture, and so on (Sakamato 1988: 38).

Any study of the rise of the Japanese militarism will require several volumes. Therefore, only few important events relevant to this study are taken into account. The link between the pre-War militarism as a basis of post-War anti-militarism clubbed with many other factors like unconditional surrender, total devastation due to atomic bombs, reforms during occupations with far reaching goals, wide-spread poverty and diseases, high targets of reconstruction can be established.

Demilitarization on the other hand is a process that reacts to stimuli. More specifically, it is determined by context and historical experience. That is, a process of demilitarization in a particular country or region is likely to be successful only if internal and external enabling environments exist. In Japan and Germany, demilitarization was witnessed by the world community in the wake of the World War II.
Figure 1.1, explains the trajectory of the types of political and value systems in Japan during various phases. Beginning with the post-War militarism, followed by the unconditional surrender, Japan lost its sovereignty for around seven years during the occupation period. It was the time when Japan was demilitarized and democratized. All the pre-War institutions were destroyed or reformed. The reforms in a way gave rise to anti-militarism in Japan. Because of low defense spending and high growth rate, within a short span of time, Japan emerged as Super Economic Power. With its increasing economic stature, Japan is expected to play a prominent role to ensure global security in commensuration with its economic status. Japan has to rely on the US nuclear umbrella for its own security needs. Therefore, issues like constitutional amendment, security dilemmas and increasing international pressure provide justification to seek normalcy.
Japanese Militarism

End of Sakoku

Japan's self-imposed isolation from the outside world, Sakoku, for almost two and a half centuries remained a serious problem for western imperialist powers (Ronald P Toby 1984: 12-22). Owing to increasing western pressure, Japan finally gave in when Commodore Matthew C Perry, special envoy of US president Millard Fillmore, arrived at Ugara in July 1853. With the conclusion of the 'Treaty of Peace and Amity,' two ports were made accessible to American ships for fuel and provisions. England, Netherlands and Russia soon acquired the same privileges. These Treaties reflected the helplessness of Bakufu. Soon the smaller Samurais started asking for restoration of Imperial rule, which resulted in the civil war and ultimately surrender of Bakufu to the Imperial House. The new rule was established in 1868 and named Meiji or Enlightened Reign (Toshio Nishi, 1982: 7-8). In the first two decades after the Meiji restoration, the position of the emperor underwent drastic transformation. By 1890, the emperor was no longer the repository of divine authority; the authority was becoming part of his own person (Wilbur M Fridell, 1970: 824).

This was followed by the beginning of an era of industrialization, modernization and expansion. Many Zaibatsu or 'financial cliques' were developed who dominated the market through oligopoly. Through their slogans of Fukoku Kyohei (Rich Country, Strong Army), Bunmei Kaika (Civilization and Enlightenment) and Wakan Yosai (Western Science and Eastern Values), Japan was emerging as a major Asian power. The main aim of these slogans was to modernize and westernize Japan by maintaining the basic values of Japanese culture (Isamu Fukuchi, 1993: 469-488). They could maintain their Eastern ethics because of vertical class structure based on Confucian ethics imbibed during the Tokugawa period by the Japanese

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2 Bakufu literally means tent government. Military rule of the country by a hereditary shogun, as opposed to rule by the imperial court and the emperor. There have been three periods of bakufu government in Japanese history: Minamoto Yoritomo established the Kamakura bakufu (Kamakura period) at the end of the 12th century, Ashikaga Takuji established the Muromachi bakufu (Muromachi period) in the early 14th century, and Tokugawa Ieyasu established the Edo bakufu (Tokugawa period) at the beginning of the 17th century. The Edo bakufu was the most successful, a time of peace and prosperity that lasted over 250 years.
people (Toshio Nishi, 1982: 8-9). The rapid industrialization and westernization due to state policies and the introduction of western political and economic institutions influenced all walks of the life, particularly in the cities. This increased the challenges for the Meiji government. As Richard H. Mitchell (1976: 19), points out, “the basic problem of the new Meiji regime (1862-1912) was the creation of unity in order to promote rapid modernization.”

Industrialization and expansionary nationalism were not the Meiji Restoration’s only revolutionary aims. Meiji restoration was unique in many ways, especially when compared with the revolutions taking place in other countries like the Glorious Revolution of Great Britain or the French Revolution. The debate about whether the revolution in Japan was state-led or masses-led still prevails in the academic circles (Germaine A. Hoston, 1991: 539-581). The dichotomy can best be understood after analyzing the accounts of various scholars and can be summed up by saying that the demand for the constitution or the popular government did not come from the general masses but it was implemented as the Tokugawa Shogunate was overthrown by the leaders coming from the masses. Even as early as 1868, after establishing Imperial rule, the emperor’s Charter Oath of Five Articles (go kajo no goseimon) publicly promised democracy from above. After the Iwakura Inspection Mission, the Meiji restoration’s fundamental principle insisted on framing a constitution to embody the charter oath in detail. In short, productive industry, expansionary nationalism and guided democracy became the basic ideals for nation building (Junji Banno, 2001: 1-2).

In its determined endeavour to build a paradise with splendid standards of morality and modern technical sciences, insular Japan grew into Imperial Japan. Their firm belief that Japan, in order to deal with Western countries on equal terms, needed to know more about them and adopt some of their ways, made them send some learning missions to North America and Europe. These missions were supposed to observe Western culture and report back to the Japanese people. The theme of wisdom through the world inspired the remarkable Iwakura mission, a twenty-one-month world tour by fifty well-placed governmental officials that embarked in 1871 for the purpose of inspecting the leading centers of nineteenth century civilization (Marius B. Jansen, 1980: 53-63). These missions also introduced Japan and Japanese
culture to an outside world that knew little about Japan because of its isolation during the Tokugawa period. During the same period, many more Japanese students studied abroad, as reflected in the 11,248 passports that were issued for this purpose between 1868 and 1902 (*Ibid*: 64).

The glorious empire expanded with every war. It is often said that in the game of conquest, peace became a misfortune. The defeat of China in 1894 and Czarist Russia in 1905 by Japanese acted as fuel to the burning ambition of Japan to expand its territories. The Chinese defeat in 1894-95 in the Sino-Japanese war also provided a reason to the Chinese to continue the build-up of their defensive and offensive capabilities (Hans van de Ven, 1997: 354). The Chinese build-up of military was seen as a potential threat to the Japanese security. There is no doubt that the acknowledgement by the west that Japan was one of the world’s great powers, especially after the Russian defeat, made Japan more arrogant. By now, Japanese foreign and domestic policies were dominated by militarism. Its growing strength made western powers more apprehensive. Annexations of Korea and Manchuria were indigestible to the western powers.

The education and values inculcated among the people, partly because of the policies and partly to check the threat of communists and critics of the *Kokutai*, a word with multiple meanings basically used to denote emperor and the imperial system, also played equally important roles in building-up militaristic attitudes ((Richard H. Mitchell, 1976: 20 and John Toland, 1971: 53)). Through the 1868 Charter Oath, the 1889 Imperial Constitution and the 1890 Imperial Rescript on Education, Imperial Rule tried to inculcate uniformity in education, behaviour and attitude of the masses. In simple words, education was to promote militaristic values. Questions, objections and criticism were taken as serious offences and treated with suspicion (Junji Banno, 2001: 18-22).

When the Shogunate collapsed in 1867-68, Japan had no constitution apart from the fiction that the shadowy figure of the emperor conferred legitimacy on the leaders of the revolt, as it had on the Tokugawa dynasty itself from 1603 (L M Cullen, 2003: 8). With the Meiji restoration, the unanimous acceptance of the Emperor and subsequently strict state control brought the whole nation under centralized rule. New
avenues for industrialization were opened. Despite the majority of the conservationists and traditionalists, Japan could not undo the influence of the western world. The temptation and need for expansion led Japan to follow policies that resulted in the demise of the only imperialist power of Asia in the twentieth century.

The Rise of Japanese Militarism

The social and political base of the Meiji restoration was provided by a small traditional elite which had been running the country before and now continued to run it within a different constitutional framework. These elite rested upon a system of military clans, among which the Chosu and Satsuma clans held the key positions. These clans used the taiken, the absolutist powers of the tenno (emperor). They enjoyed monopoly in the political sphere by concentrating powers in the hands of the cliques to which they themselves belonged. Their ethos continued to be that of the samurai of the feudal period enshrined in the concept of bushido, a ‘code of militarism.’ While this code pervaded the political attitudes and the thinking of the cliques, their influence was buttressed by the structure of the constitution. Under the Constitution of 1889, the Emperor held the supreme command of the army and the navy. In effect, it meant that the military sphere was removed from the rest of political system and became an independent element, the other half of what was called the ‘dual government.’ Japan thus had two governmental spheres, unified only by the person of the Emperor. It was an arrangement which virtually guaranteed the military a decisive say in policymaking (V R Bergahn, 1981: 60-61).

Instead of focusing on the expansionist policies immediately after the Meiji restoration, the Japanese government devoted their energy on modernization and industrialization to catch up with the western industrial powers. At the same time, they were aware of the advantages of having a say in international matters. The Meiji oligarchs’ handling of Saigo Takamori’s recommendation to invade Korea in 1873 reflects this philosophy. Although the Meiji oligarchs did not disagree in principle with Saigo’s proposal, they prudently decided against the invasion because of its excessive cost, the need to focus investments on economic modernization, and the

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6 Popularly, Bushido also means “Way of Samurais.”
expected negative reaction from Western powers. The Meiji oligarchs’ early leanings toward militarism and imperialism can be seen by the Conscription Law of 1873, which required all males to serve active duty in the military for three years and reserve duty for an additional four years, and by several small territorial acquisitions in the 1870s, such as the Ryukyu Islands, Bonin Islands, and Kurile Islands (Bill Gordon, 2000).

Japan’s political journey from its quasi-democratic government in the 1920s to the radical nationalism of the mid 1930s, the collapse of democratic institutions, and the eventual military state was not an overnight transformation. Japan was preparing for war for at least a decade before 1941. This did not justify prevalent view that Japan had decided before to make war upon the United States or the British Commonwealth. There was no coup d’etat. Instead, it was a political journey that allowed a semi-democratic nation to transform itself into a military dictatorship. The forces that aided in this transformation were the failed promises of the Meiji Restoration that were represented in the stagnation of the Japanese economy, the perceived capitulation of the Japanese parliamentary leaders to the western powers, a compliant public, and an independent military (George Sanson, 1948: 544).

Emperor Taisho (1912-26), was comparatively weaker and it was during his reign the right wingers’ criticism of the Japanese pursuit of the western culture and institutions became prominent. Although, there existed left wingers as well, they were not in favour of the Japanese desire to follow western capitalism as they believed in a class-less society (Germaine A. Hoston, 1991: 541). In WWI, Japan joined the Allied powers, but played only a minor role in fighting German colonial forces in East Asia. Arrogance and racial discrimination towards the Japanese had plagued Japanese-Western relations since the forced opening of the country in the 1800s. This was again a major factor for the deterioration of relations in the decades preceding WWII.

Japanese militarism and imperialism grew due to many conspicuous reasons. Although all the reasons existed from the early Meiji period to the start of war in China in 1937, the relative importance of these reasons differed depending on the time period. Japan no doubt wanted to play a prominent and visible role in the international affairs and had even gone to the extent of advocating ‘new order in Greater Asia’ by
proclaiming a leadership role for itself (John Toland, 1971: 62). Japan’s belief in its leadership role for Asia and Japan’s frequent provocations by Western powers, gave rise to an expansion of militarism and imperialism from 1905 to the 1930s.

Japan’s economic interests rose in the decade of the 1930s. During the same time, the military acted with great freedom and mushrooming military societies further ignited the already burning militaristic fuel. Over the same period of time, already well-established institutions, educational as well as religious, provided the raw material for war in the form of well-educated and nationalist soldiers. The larger Japanese population was reluctant to publicly oppose what was happening. The factors behind the rise of Japanese militarism had roots in history as well as traditions, culture and religion. Thus, social, economic, political, military, educational and other reasons can also be critically analyzed in order to study the Japanese militarism.

Western Imperialism, Prejudicial Treatment and Security Concerns

Western imperialism played an important role in Japan’s belligerence toward foreign countries. Japan’s quest for power, as projected by the Meiji leaders, ‘to make Japan a first-rate nation’ (itto koku), included the prestige and power associated with foreign territorial possessions. The western powers made various overseas territorial acquisitions, often through military means. Calculating the gains of overseas territorial acquisitions, the Japanese government decided to catch up with the western powers. To realize their ambitions, the Japanese government started to create a superior disciplined and stronger army.

On the other hand, Japan continuously felt humiliated as the US and the UK tried to contain Japan. The termination of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1922 had an extremely unsettling effect. For two decades, the Alliance has been regarded as ‘the cornerstone of Japanese foreign policy’ and its abrogation led to a widespread feeling that Japan was an isolated country surrounded by hostile Western Powers. The termination of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, together with the American exclusion Act, helped to produce the type of national persecution mania and paranoia that became very pronounced in the 1930s. The Tripartite Alliance with Germany and
Italy served to fill the vacuum for a number of years, but crumbled when it became clear in 1944 that Japan had backed the losing side (I. I. Morris, 1960: 14).

Unjust and unequal treatment of Japan by the international community eventually affected Japanese pride (Shields Warren, 1977: 97-99). Japan’s signing of unequal treaties with America, France, Holland, and Russia in 1858 placed restrictions on Japan’s national sovereignty, such as extraterritoriality, which meant that foreigners in Japan had immunity from the jurisdiction of the Japanese legal system. The 1921-22 Washington Conference naval treaties forced on Japan an unfavorable battleship ratio of 5: 5: 3 for the US, Britain, and Japan respectively, and the Western powers at the London Naval Conference of 1930 coerced Japan to accept the same ratio for its heavy cruisers.

Racial prejudice significantly hurt the sentiments of Asians in general and Japanese in this case. However, few western scholars wrote after the war was over that the main reason for such prejudice was the lack of knowledge of oriental philosophy and way of life. In 1919, at the Paris Peace Conference, Western countries rejected the simple Japanese request to have a racial equality clause included in the League of Nations Covenant. The League remained predominantly European (Ian Nish, 2000: 18 and Kenneth B Pyle, 1999: 255). In 1905, California passed an anti-Japanese legislation and in the following year, the school board in San Francisco ordered Japanese and other Asian children to attend segregated schools. In 1924, America passed the Japanese Exclusion Act barring Japanese from immigration to the US (John Toland, 1971: 55). There were a number of incidents of outrageous behaviour towards Japan by the western powers.

Despite the fact that Japan was strengthening its army for a long time, reaching western standards required Japan to speed up its military build-up. Although Japan won the Sino-Japanese War in 1894-95 and consequently, acquired Formosa and a huge indemnity from China, Japan had to give in when Russia, Germany, and France compelled Japan in the Triple Intervention to give up the Liaotung Peninsula captured during the war. Eventually, the Japanese military expenditure escalated (Morinosuke Kajima, 1965: 26-27). Japan’s militaristic attitude intensified as government leaders recognized the need to ensure the defense of the country against
Russia and other Western powers. Observing the advanced technological achievements and superior military and naval power of the West, Japan had fears of being invaded by a Western country such as Russia. Economically and militarily weak, China was vulnerable to western imperialistic designs and hence a major concern for Japanese security (Bill Gordon, 2000).

Control over Korea represented an essential element in the protection of Japan against Western countries due to the two countries' geographical proximity and because the Korean peninsula had borders with both China and Russia. Japan's control over the Liaotung Peninsula, following the Treaty of Shimonosheki after the defeat of China in the 1894-95 war also reflected Japanese security concerns in the region (Morinosuke Kajima, 1965: 26). After Japan gave up the Peninsula, Russia moved into Port Arthur at the tip of the Peninsula in 1898, which further increased Japan's sense of insecurity. The Anglo-Japanese Alliance was the only relief for Japan. The proximity with the British, however, could not prevent the Russo-Japanese War in 1904-5, which was the outcome of the continuing tensions with Russia. Subsequently, a peace treaty, Portsmouth Treaty was signed on September 5, 1905, recognizing Japan's paramount, political, military and economic interests as well as its rights of guidance, protection and control in Korea (Morinosuke Kajima, 1965: 37-40).

Once Japan started moving on the path of militarism, it found that because of its technological edge, it could defeat other Asian powers. This increased Japan's sense of superiority and fed the fires of nationalism. These fires grew as following the 1931 Manchurian incident, Japan invaded Manchuria, and then most of the China. In South East Asia, Japan quickly expanded, breaking up British, Portuguese, and Dutch colonialism. Japanese militarism occurred not by an organized plan but rather through passive acceptance by the Japanese public. A compliant Japanese public coupled with

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7 It is believed that Yamagata Aritomo, known as the father of the modern Japanese army, advocated expansionism more for security reasons rather than for conquest as an end in itself or for other reasons. Yamagata recommended that Japan not only protect its line of sovereignty (shukensen) but also strive toward its line of advantage (riekisen), which meant that Japan should extend its influence and control beyond its national borders in order to ensure its security.

8 The Russo-Japanese War established Japan's undisputed position among the foremost powers in the world, greatly heightening her national glory.
an independent army were two factors that pushed Japan toward militarism in the
1930s (George Sanson, 1948: 547).

In 1937, a skirmish at the Marco Polo Bridge near Peking (now Beijing) gave
Japan a reason to launch a full-scale attack on the Chinese government of
Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. Between July and December, Japanese forces
occupied Beijing, seized the southern port city of Shanghai, sank an American
gunboat *Panay* on the Yangtze River, seized a British gunboat *Ladybird* and overran
the upriver capital of Nanjing where at least 200,000 civilians were slaughtered (John
Toland, 1971: 42-50). Contrary to Japanese hopes for a quick victory, the Chinese
refused to give up and moved their capital further west to remote Chungking (now
Chongqing). New offensives in 1938 gave Japan control of virtually all of China’s
major cities and rail centers. Yet, two million Japanese soldiers proved incapable of
pacifying China’s vast interior, where guerrilla resistance was kept up by both Chiang
Kai-shek’s Nationalist Army and communist fighters under Mao Tse-tung. The
Western powers criticized this Japanese move and withheld diplomatic recognition
from the puppet government, which the Japanese had set up in Nanjing to rule
occupied China.

The Japanese got away with their aggression, the first major act of war the
League had faced since its early years, because only the two great powers, USA and
Britain could take serious action against it. The USA did not want to get involved as it
had important trade relations with both Japan and China. Neither country wanted to
damage trade even when the effect of the Depression was still at its height. Britain
was more concerned about relations with Japan than with China and did not want to
overstretch its forces at a time of economic crisis and when a threat was emerging in
Germany, a leader determined to reverse the Treaty of Versailles. Britain was worried
that Japan might attack its East Asian colonies, including the valuable ports of Hong
Kong and Singapore. Britain was not capable of defending them against Japan, and so
was keen to solve the dispute diplomatically.

By 1939, Japan was desperate to end the military stalemate by isolating China
and starving its people into submission. Military operations were shifted back to the
coastal zone to cut off any foreign supplies from flowing into Chinese ports. The
Japanese Army and Navy also began planning joint operations against British and French possessions in the south, in order to sever China’s final land links with the outside world via the Burma Road and the Haiphong Railway in Vietnam. Alarmed by escalating Japanese aggression against China, the US government responded by canceling a bilateral trade treaty that had guaranteed Japan regular delivery of American raw materials, including oil. Tokyo and Washington were on a collision course now, which would lead to Pearl Harbor (George Sanson, 1948: 547-48).

On September 27, 1940, Japan signed the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy (John Toland, 1971: 64). Western countries started equating Japanese militarism with Fascism and Nazism. The Japanese occupation of French Indochina (Vietnam) intensified Japan’s conflict with the United States and Great Britain and resulted in an oil boycott. The oil shortage and failure to solve the conflict diplomatically forced Japan to capture the oil rich Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) and to start a war with the US and Great Britain.

Nazi Germany’s spectacular successes in Central Europe enchanted the Japanese military and their civilian cohorts. The Japanese government abrogated the Washington Naval Agreement in December, 1934 and the London Naval agreement in January, 1936. In October, the Ministry of Army printed 1.3 million copies of *Kokubo no hongi to sono kyoka no teisho* (Principle of national defense and proposal for its reinforcement), the well-known army pamphlet. Its first sentence read, “War is the father of creation and the mother of the culture” (Toshio Nishi, 1982: 11).

In December 1941, Japan attacked the Allied powers at Pearl Harbour and several other points throughout the Pacific. Japan was able to expand her control over a large territory that expanded to the border of India in the West and New Guinea in the South within the following six months. 

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9 The prominent reasons behind the Pearl Harbour attack, included first, Japan’s desire to be the master of the Pacific; second, the fact that during the Sino-Japanese war, the US sided with China by giving logistical and moral support; third, the imposition of oil embargo on Japan infuriated Japan and led it to take the extreme step; and last but not the least, General Tojo’s takeover and his very aggressive designs against the US.
**Economic Reasons**

The Meiji restoration accelerated the growth of economic development of Japan as Japan emerged as a major exporter of light industry products like rayon products, bicycles, looms and light machinery etc.\(^\text{10}\) However, the Japanese imperialistic designs mainly based on the military build up and expansionist designs forced Japan to shift towards heavy industries. Furthermore, this shift resulted in a resource crunch and military adventures overseas. Yasukichi Yasuba (1996: 553) argues that,

The shortage of a domestic supply of raw materials and fuel due to rising population pressure, a rise in protectionism in foreign countries, and the recession of the domestic economy after 1929 are said to have been the economic causes of Japanese military expansion. To be sure, the military used the logic of “have-not” to justify imperialistic expansion and military buildup. Such an expansion, however, was not only internationally unwarranted but economically disastrous.

After WWI, Japan’s economic situation worsened. The Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 and the worldwide depression of 1929 intensified the crisis. The economic depression of late 1920s especially hurt farmers and workers in small shops. Entering the decade of the 1930s, economic motives for Japan’s imperialism became very strong in order to ensure continued foreign trade. Military dominance was foreseen as a solution for financial and other problems within Japan as well as in Mongolia and Manchuria (Warren I Cohen, 2000: 306-310).

Economic growth required strong export markets for Japanese textiles and other goods. Other Asian countries, especially China, provided the best market opportunities for Japanese export products. Therefore, the Japanese government needed to ensure that this trade would not be interrupted, by obtaining commercial and transportation rights in China. Japan’s economy also required imports of raw materials to supply its manufacturing industries. Manchuria’s extensive land area and abundant natural resources such as iron and coal provided a ready solution to Japan’s overpopulation problem and its need for raw materials to support its heavy industries, which focused on military equipment buildup. Japan seized Manchuria in 1931. Japan

\(^{10}\) The volume of exports increased at a rapid pace of 10.7 percent per annum between 1929 and 1935 when the terms of trade deteriorated and the relative price of exports (relative to GNP deflator) rose by 7 percent annually between 1935 and 1940 when real exports stagnated.
later moved into other countries in Southeast Asia to ensure sufficient resources to maintain its self-sufficiency. For example, Japan needed oil from the Dutch East Indies in order to keep its industry and military supplied.

The Depression had a big impact on Japanese politics and foreign policy. Japan lost valuable export markets when world trade fell and trade barriers were erected. This undermined confidence in the system of government. There was a shift in power to the military leaders who believed aggressive expansion would restore the Japanese economy by taking over areas which offered both markets and raw materials. Japan already had special trading rights and an army in China, in the province of Manchuria. China had a very weak government in the early twentieth century. However, by 1930, Chinese nationalism was growing and the government, gradually taking more control, opposed Japan’s special interests in Manchuria (Warren I Cohen, 2000: 307-10).

_A Free Hand for the Military_

During the 1930s, the military established almost complete control over the government. Many political enemies were assassinated, and communists persecuted. Indoctrination and censorship in education and media were further intensified. Navy and army officers soon occupied most of the important offices, including the one of the prime minister. Earlier, Japan had followed the example of Western nations and forced China into unequal economical and political treaties. Furthermore, Japan’s influence over Manchuria had been steadily growing since the end of the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05. When the Chinese Nationalists began to seriously challenge Japan’s position in Manchuria in 1931, the _Kwantung Army_ (Japanese armed forces in Manchuria) occupied Manchuria. In the following year, ‘Manchukuo’ was declared

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11 After World War I, a prosperous Japan experimented with Western style parliamentary democracy and civilian control of the military. In the depression decade of the 1930’s, however, the troubled island nation sought military solutions to its economic problems. In 1931, a bomb planted by Japanese agents blew up a small section of railway track near Mukden; the Japanese Army in Manchuria used this phony incident as an excuse to conquer most of the resource-rich Chinese province which was made into a puppet state and renamed, Manchukuo. At home, Japanese militarists exploited samurai “warrior” traditions and the Shinto cult of emperor worship to undermine the authority of civilian politicians. A bloody coup attempt in 1936 by fanatical Army officers was put down, but future governments were too afraid to stand up to military plans for expansion at the expense of Japan’s neighbours. Criticism from the Western democracies was also met with scornful defiance by Tokyo.
an independent state, controlled by the *Kwantung Army* through a puppet government. In the same year, the Japanese air force bombarded Shanghai in order to protect Japanese residents from anti-Japanese movements (Warren I Cohen, 2000: 339-42).

In 1933, Japan withdrew from the League of Nations since it was heavily criticized for its actions in China (Stewart Brown, 1933). Stewart Brown reports,

> The Japanese delegation, defying world opinion, withdrew from the League of Nations Assembly today after the assembly had adopted a report blaming Japan for events in Manchuria. The stunned international conclave, representing almost every nation on earth, sat in silence while the delegation, led by the dapper Yosuke Matsuoka, clad in black, walked from the hall. The crowded galleries broke into mingled hisses and applause. Japan’s formal resignation from the league is expected to be filed later. “We are not coming back,” Matsuoka said simply as he left the hall.

In July 1937, the second Sino-Japanese War broke out (Herbert P. Bix, 2004). A small incident was soon made into a full scale war by the *Kwantung Army* which acted rather independently from a more moderate government. The Japanese forces succeeded in occupying almost the whole coast of China and committed severe war atrocities on the Chinese population, especially after the fall of the capital, Nanjing. However, the Chinese government never surrendered completely, and the war continued on a lower scale until 1945.

Japan’s decision to take Nanjing and the ensuing bloodbath marked the strategic and symbolic turning points in a war of conquest, for which no solution short of withdrawal would ever be in sight. But Nanjing might not have become a symbol which withdrew from the League of Nations and became a founding member with Hitler’s Germany of the Anti-Comintern Pact.

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12 On March 27, 1933, Japan ended its fourteen years of collaboration with the League on Nations. Japan sought freedom of action in Manchuria and more widely in East Asia.

13 The roots of the Japan-China War (1937-45) can be traced back to the surprise attack that Japanese army officers launched, in September 1931, on Chinese forces in Manchuria. Initially carried out in the name of self-defense, the Manchurian takeover was later justified as a step toward establishing a new status quo in Asia. A long series of clashes alternating with truces followed between Japanese forces and Chinese un-reconciled to Japanese rule. Starting with the battle of Shanghai, a port city at the mouth of the Yangzi River in early autumn 1937, the war began in earnest. During fighting near the foreign concessions, Japanese forces started killing Chinese prisoners of war on the spot. Three-months later, after they had completely encircled and isolated Nanjing, Chinese resistance crumbled and the capital of Nationalist China fell. Frustrated and exhausted Japanese army units, their discipline frayed by fierce fighting, went on a rampage. The news of killing, pillage, arson, and rape was widely reported and spread quickly throughout the world. Chinese anger increased; nationalist resistance hardened and a “fight Japan” attitude spread. Herbert P. Bix (2004).
of massacre in the West, had the interests of the Great Powers not been served by remembering it. This was because the Japanese sinking of the US gunboat *Panay* and the British gunboats *Lady Bird* and *Bee*, occurred in the midst of the attack on Nanjing. News of these incidents overlapped with reporting on the massacre and highlighted the seriousness of the challenge that Japan was mounting on Anglo-American imperialism in China.

By late 1938, the Japanese imperial armed forces were bogged down. They had been constantly treating the Chinese as a conquered people, underestimating the hatred that their brutal behavior had engendered. Now, they could neither win the war nor, for domestic political reasons, acknowledge having lost it. They could only go on winning battles, occupying coastal cities and their hinterlands, and setting up puppet governments with Japanese officers in the background, running the show. Hoping to break the stalemate, Tokyo spread the fighting to Southeast Asia, and then escalated again by attacking Pearl Harbor. The road to diplomatic failure and calamity that Japan’s leaders had embarked on in 1931 ended fourteen years later in August 1945, with the unconditional surrender of a nation in ruins from American bombing.

In the period between the beginning of the Showa Era and the end of the Pacific War, especially after the Manchurian Incident, the balance of power within the Japanese elite had gradually shifted toward the military. Military leaders acquired political power and could act independently from the civilian government. There were no effective checks on the power of military leaders who could command as they saw fit and were free to lead the Japanese people into the misery of war. The question that arises is that why did the military emerge as a strong political force in the early days of the Showa Era. The questions that follow include why and through what processes, ordinary Japanese came to blindly obey the military?

The answers lie in the fact that the military’s acquisition of political power was achieved gradually and was tied to wars overseas, beginning with the war in Manchuria which spread to China and on to the Pacific War.
Growing Military Interference in the Civilian Affairs

The peculiar construction of the Constitution was to assume growing significance in the interwar period when a party system established itself and civilian leaders succeeded in having a voice in the cabinet. This development made the army and navy leadership more aware than before of the need to shield the military command sphere from civilian control and to preserve their influence on government policies through the nomination of high-ranking officers as ministers for the armed forces. Tensions between the military and the politicians were the inevitable consequence. By the early 1930s, conflict between the two spheres of the government had become so serious that the Army was making plans, within its own domain, for foreign military expansion as a means of preventing the existing constitutional system from sliding into parliamentarianism. The idea was to erect soryokusen taisei or a total war order (V R Bergahn, 1981: 63-64).

The increasing intervention of the military in government affairs was accompanied by a mushrooming of military societies such as, Futaba-Kai, Isseki-Kai and Sakura-Kai, created by like-minded people conspiring with young officers who advocated a remodeling of the state. These unsavoury groups developed into a great force capable of carrying out coups d'état, for instance, the May 15 Incident, the February 26 Incident and the Ketsumai-dan Incident. These groups contributed in the eventual creation of a dictatorship of military leaders in place of a representative government. These military groups were called Gunbatsu. Although there existed a strong and fairly well-organized counter-movement within, as well as outside the socialist organizations, it was pushed back step-by-step, and by the end of 1930s,

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14 The 15 May Incident: On 15 May 1932, Tsuyoshi Inukai, Prime Minister of the 29th cabinet was assassinated by a group of young army and navy officers. They assassinated him because of his criticisms of the unrest caused by young terrorists and Army groups and because he opposed the recognition of the puppet state of Manchukuo, which had been established by the Kwangtung Army.

The 26 February Incident: In the early morning of 26 February, 1936, three Army battalions consisting of 1483 men attacked the PM’s office and the residences of several senior statesmen, assassinating three of them and heavily wounding one of them. This was the last and the biggest of several incidents instigated by the army and groups of young terrorists since the assassination attempt on Osaji Himaguchi in 1930.

The Ketsumai-dan Incident: The assassination of Baron Takuma Dan of the Mitsui Concern on 5 March 1932 by a young member of an ultra-right terrorist group called Ketsumai-Dan, literally ‘bloody Corps’.
Japan was for all practical purposes a highly militarized society in which the army and the navy called the shots (V R Bergahn, 1981: 64).

There were also revolutionary changes both within Japan and in its relations to the outside world. The introduction of a mass conscript imperial army, the creation of extended formal and informal empire and the development of a constitutional polity were the three most far-reaching changes (Stewart Lone, 2000: 1).

The independence and decentralization of the military allowed it to act largely on its own will as characterized in the Manchurian incident in 1931 and the Marco Polo bridge explosion in Shanghai. Because these incidents went unpunished and the Japanese public rallied around them, the military was able to push for greater militarism and an increasingly active role in government and eventually, the entire government was run by the military. The London Treaty and Japan's rejection by large European powers at the Versailles conference angered many in the military who felt that Japan was being denied its place at the table with the great powers. This led to disenchantment with the parliamentary government, which, the military felt, had capitulated to the western powers in treaties and by stopping its colonial expansion during the 1920s.

It was the military which had the greatest influence on the civilian bureaucracy in the pre-War days. The military was devoted to the national defense and military affairs. In Article 11 of the Meiji Constitution, there existed a royal prerogative which stated that, "The Emperor is the chief commander of the army and navy (Generalissimo)." In practice, he did not have right to command them. It was the general chief of staff and the general chief of the military command who had that right to advise the Emperor, while the internal affairs of the army and navy were controlled by the ministers of the respective departments. During the war years, the integration of national affairs and the command of military forces were strengthened. The Imperial Headquarters was established as an organization to give guidance on the war and plan invasion tactics and strategy. Where war-related and other matters considered confidential were concerned, the cabinet ministers were bypassed and matters were reported directly to the Emperor. This was called 'Jaku Joso.' 'Jaku' means a makeshift shack surrounded by curtains. National affairs and the military
command were entirely independent, a state of affair that continued till the end of Pacific War (Warren I Cohen, 2000: 10-11).

**Social Reasons**

The basis for Japanese militarism was a compliant Japanese public. This public was created through a variety of factors. Beginning in the 1890s, the public education system indoctrinated students in the ideas of nationalism, loyalty to the emperor and traditionalist ideas of self-sacrifice and obedience. In the words of Richard Boyd Ballou (1952: 230),

> When the Japanese set out on their pattern of conquest several decades ago; they had behind them a powerful tradition of their importance as a superior people which provided the activating element in the economic, commercial, financial, and colonial motives behind the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity movement. The key to that element lay in the body of Shinto doctrine which provided a rationale, however mythical, for the peculiarly feudal patterns of Japan. It helped persuade the people of the Emperor’s divinity, and endowed with powerful national sanctions the complex web of paternalistic patterns in family life, social relationships, education, economic activity, and local and national politics, to mention a few of the key areas.

The very concept of loyalty was deep-rooted among the people from all sections of the society. All the imperial rulings and orders were followed without questioning as the emperor was believed to be a godly figure.

The means to disseminate Shinto teachings, with the aim of organizing support for the Meiji government were directed to form broad support for militarism. Japanese society also continued to have many of the remnants of feudal culture, such as strong Confucian beliefs that stressed support for social order and a lack of emphasis on individualist values. These values taught obedience not to a democratic order but to the emperor; so the fact that the militaristic government of the 1930s ruled under the emperor meant that the Japanese were loyal to this government just as they had been to the government of the 1920s.
The Japanese public in general was so receptive and adaptive to following the orders of hierarchical superiors that they seldom questioned or protested the reason and intention behind implementation of programmes like strong media control, a thought police, and community organizations. Furthermore, Shintoism as stated above, provided a religious justification for nationalism and support for the militaristic government. Shintoism before the 1930s was primarily a native religion which stressed nature and harmony. However, during the 1930s it was used as a tool to create a feeling of superiority among the Japanese. They were taught about their right to expand and the divine status of the emperor.

In 1925, The Peace Preservation Law was passed in order to repress public opinion and anti-war feelings. Richard H Mitchell (1976: 11-13) calls it ‘thought control,’ which could be equated with ‘fascism.’ During the 1930s, critical scholarship on the Peace Preservation Law was forbidden by the authorities, who seized offending publications. After Japan’s defeat, the scholarly world imposed a kind of self-censorship. He says, “the thought-control system was bad and interwar officials were fascists.” He further states that, “Japan handling of subversives was a great success as was manipulation of public sentiment. Anti-war and anti-state protest was silenced, with nearly everyone strongly supporting the war effort. Naturally, the question arises as to whether this was due to socio-cultural reasons or to the effect of enacted law, or to the efforts of police, procurators, judges, education officials and others within the thought control bureaucracy. The answer is that both the socio-cultural and the administrative mechanisms played important roles, and that one without the other would not have been nearly so successful.”

Pre-War Japan had a comparable or better literacy rate than the western powers. The education system always promoted the values and feelings of nationalism, which further enhanced and endorsed the militaristic designs of the government. All the officials were graduates from Tokyo Imperial University (now Tokyo University). Even the soldiers of lower ranks were educated and had passed out of various military schools and colleges (Warren I Cohen, 2000: 10-11). Hierarchy in the military ranks was strictly followed.
The Surrender and Occupation of Japan

The turning point in the Pacific War was the battle of Midway Islands in June 1942. From then on, the Allied forces slowly won back the territories occupied by Japan. In 1944, intensive air raids started over Japan. In spring 1945, US forces invaded Okinawa in one of the war’s bloodiest battles (Warren I Cohen, 2000: 360).

On July 27, 1945, the Allied powers requested Japan in the Potsdam Declaration to surrender unconditionally, or destruction would continue (Toshio Nishi, 1982: 29 and Charles L Kades, 1989: 216-17). However, the military did not consider surrendering under such terms. The Japanese government neither fully comprehended nor accepted these provisions and the Soviet Union, which was initially hesitant, entered the war against Japan on August 8. Interestingly no mention could be seen of the institution of the Emperor or the treatment that he was going to have after the surrender. The omission was deliberate and was intended to increase the possibility of Japanese acceptance of the declaration.

On August 6, 1945, an atomic bomb reduced Hiroshima to debris. On 9 August, picturesque Nagasaki burned in a second scorching wind. The only imperial power of Asia was ruined and made to surrender unconditionally. Nationalism and patriotism suffered serious jolts. Japan capitulated on August 15, 1945. The Emperor issued an Imperial Rescript to all the Japanese people stating that, “After pondering deeply the general trends of the world and the actual conditions obtaining in Our Empire today, We have decided to effect a settlement of the present situation by resorting to an extraordinary measure. We have ordered our government to communicate to the Governments of the United States, Great Britain, China and the Soviet Union that our Empire accepts the provision of their Joint declaration....” (Kashiwa Heiwa Kekyujo and “The Voice of the Crane”: The Imperial Rescript of 15

15 The Potsdam Declaration contained explicit Allied objectives for the defeated empire; punishment for “those who had deceived and misled the people of Japan into embarking on world conquest”; complete dismantlement of Japan’s war-making powers; and establishment of “freedom of speech, of religion, and of thought, as well as respect for the fundamental human rights” under the Allied military occupation.

16 On August 14, 1945, the Emperor of Japan sent a message to the NHK which was broadcast on the following day.
August 1945 Japan Surrender) The Emperor’s wish was faithfully carried out while the Emperor kept following the orders of the US government.

On August 29, 1945 the US government announced the “United States Initial Post-Surrender Policy for Japan,” a document approved by the president and drafted by the SWNCC (State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee), an interdepartmental group engaged in planning postwar policies for occupied areas. The policy declared:

The ultimate objectives of the United States in regard to Japan, to which policies in the initial period must conform, are
(a) To insure that Japan will not again become a menace to the United States or to the peace and security of the world.
(b) To bring about the eventual establishment of a peaceful and responsible government (which) should conform as closely as may be to principles of democratic self-government but it is not the responsibility of the allied powers to impose upon Japan any form of government not supported by the freely expressed will of the people (“Decision of the Far Eastern Commission Concerning Basic Post-War Policy in Japan, June 19, 1947,” International Organization 1948: 207-13 and Charles L Kades, 1989: 217). 17

Japan’s formal empire lasted the fifty years between 1895 and 1945 (Stewart Lone, 2000: 3). The regime, which had become classified as militaristic in much the same way as Nazi Germany collapsed. On September 2, the Japanese delegates signed the terms of surrender on the USS Missouri (“Decision of the Far Eastern Commission Concerning Basic Post-War Policy in Japan,” June 19, 1947, Far Eastern Commission Press Release, July 10, 1947).

In around the middle of January, the Far Eastern Advisory Commission (FEAC) came to Tokyo. The commission, which has been organized in October 1945 under the auspices of the US State Department, consisted of representatives of ten of the eleven nations that had been at war with Japan; the USSR had declined to join. The FEAC was about to become the Far Eastern Commission (FEC), which had been

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created by the Moscow Agreement of December 27, 1945 between the foreign ministers of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the USSR, and was to have its headquarters in Washington. The FEC included the Soviet Union as well as the ten members of the FEAC and acted by majority vote with the US, UK and USSR and China having the power to take any action. The Moscow Agreement provided that the FEC would formulate policies, principles and standards in conformity with which the fulfillment by Japan of its obligations under the terms of surrender may be accomplished and it was entrusted with power to review any directive issued to the supreme commander for the allied powers or any action taken by the supreme commander involving policy decisions within its jurisdiction (Charles L Kades, 1989: 218).

The Far Eastern Commission (FEC) met for the first time in February 1946. By its terms of reference, the FEC was to formulate the policies, principles and standards of conformity with which the fulfillment by Japan of its obligations under the Terms of Surrender might be accomplished. After over a year of consideration, the FEC finally adopted the basic surrender policy for Japan on June 19, 1947. Thus, the unilateral policy of the United States was presumably replaced by an international policy of the eleven-member FEC (Philip H Taylor, 1950: 142).

The Japanese government at this point was obsessed with preserving the kokutai. Japanese leaders did not believe that imperial sovereignty could, or should, disappear merely because of defeat in one war. At the same time, they trembled in the fearful anticipation that the death of the Emperor would surely give birth to communist anarchy (Toshio Nishi, 1982: 32). For their part, the Americans led by MacArthur had, even during the war trials, advocated and supported the continuation of the institution of the Emperor.

18 The ultimate objectives of the Far Eastern Commission were to ensure that Japan will not again become a menace to the peace and the security of the world, to bring about the earliest possible establishment of a democratic and peaceful government which will carry out its international responsibilities, respect the rights of other states, and support the objectives of the United Nations. Such government in Japan should be established in accordance with the freely expressed will of the Japanese people.

19 On January 25, 1945, MacArthur, in a lengthy secret cable to the War Department, warned that "[the Emperor's] indictment will unquestionably cause a tremendous convulsion among the Japanese people, the repercussions of which cannot be overestimated... Destroy him and the nation will disintegrate. If the Allied Powers tried the Emperor the hatreds and resentments of the Japanese people will
The allies set out to demolish Japanese militarism and introduce Western political values and institutions. As in Central Europe, there existed a number of plans for dealing with the defeated nation and its leaders. The American approach was more selective and tended to focus on the question of what should be done with the Japanese elites and above all the Emperor himself. In particular, the Americans were less inclined to administer the country collectively together with their Allies.

Disagreements which resulted from this attitude were ultimately resolved by the appointment of General Douglas MacArthur as the Supreme Commander of allied power, SCAP. He got the "Basic Initial Post Surrender Directive to SCAP for the occupation and Control of Japan", which was the American directive to him to conduct the occupation, better known by its serial number JCS 1380/15 (Theodore Cohen, 1987: 3-4). It was the American master plan to transform Japanese society, and to do it during the military occupation in the interest of durable peace. Within a month of the initial landings of the occupation forces at Atsugi and Yakohama on August 30, occupation Head Quarters plunged into an unprecedented drive to remake 70 million Japanese, until that time 'feudalistic' and violently 'militaristic' into a democratic and peaceful nation (Theodore Cohen, 1987: 6). General MacArthur, for the next five years and with US President Harry Truman's backing, was to rule absolutely in Japan and to disregard almost all suggestions from other allied governments (V R Bergahn, 1981: 60-61).

Although the Allies approached the two defeated countries, Japan and Germany differently, the psychological situation of the Japanese was not dissimilar from that of the Germans in 1945 as they looked back upon their history and tried to interpret their past. Miles Fletcher (1979: 40) comparatively analyzed the political
thought of the leading academicians in the Showa Japan such as Professors Maruyama Masao, Toyama Shigeki, Fujiwara Akira, Imai Seiichi and Ouchi Tsutomu. He argues that,

the analyses of fascism by Maruyama, Toyama, and Ouchi reveal just how difficult it is to apply the concept of fascism to pre-war Japan at the level of political institutions. Because the regime was oppressive, all three scholars agree that Japan was fascist. But they admit that what they call Japanese fascism bore little institutional resemblance to the rise of the Fascist Party in Italy or the Nazi Party in Germany. Indeed, in order to make the label of fascism fit, they have to argue that the Japanese pattern constituted a special case.

Scholars like Hayashi Kentaro argued that there were no similarities between the institutions of Nazi Germany and those of early Showa Japan. No single mass party in Japan served as an analogue to the National Socialist Party in Germany, no dictator seized power, and no one ideology became dominant. Richard H. Mitchell (1976: 190-91) has noted, for example, that although Japan’s thought control policies during the 1930s were severe, they did not compare with the Nazi policies of violent suppression of dissent.

From the outset, there was a much greater preparedness to ask fundamental questions about Japan’s development and to respond positively to the reforms, which began to affect all spheres of life. Especially in the universities, the forces opposed to an unreconstructed conservatism were much stronger than in Germany and the works of Hisao Otsuka and Masao Maruyama enjoyed considerable authority (V R Bergahn, 1981: 63).

The initial US policy demanded that,

Japan will be completely disarmed and demilitarized. The authority of the militarists and the influence of militarism will be totally eliminated from her political, economic, and social life. Institutions expressive of spirit of militarism will be vigorously suppressed... Japan is not to have an army, air force, secret police organization, or any civil aviation.

To implement this policy, the Basic Directive specified which Japanese personnel would be arrested and detained, and organizations that would be abolished. Eager Japanese compliance made such a policy easy to carry out (Toshio Nishi, 1982: 50).
Demilitarization, in view of Japan’s lack of resources and complete disruption of its economy presented no problem. MacArthur wished to persuade the Japanese people themselves to denounce the fanatical militarism that had pervaded their daily life (Herbert P. Bix, 1995: 321). Demilitarization was a psychological task of persuasion, which the government section of GHQ characterized as “moral disarmament.” The first step was political purge and the first target was Tojo Hideki, a former prime minister. He was proclaimed as the first war criminal by MacArthur. Many of the top brass, including war time ministers and Army and Naval ministers committed suicide, known as seppuku in Japan while the Americans called it harakiri. The political purge then went on to all Japanese who had been “active exponents of militarism and militant nationalism.” They were slowly removed from and excluded from public office and from any other position of public or substantial responsibility. As part of the reforms, national elections for the House of Representatives were held on April 10, 1946. All men and women above 20 years voted and for the first time in Japan, women contested elections and as many as 39 won. MacArthur had called it a plebiscite on the new Japanese draft constitution and Yoshida Shigeru became the new Prime Minister.

As a natural sequel to moral disarmament, MacArthur issued an order on “Abolition of Governmental Sponsorship, Support, Perpetuation, Control and Dissemination of State Shinto (Kokka Shinto, jinja Shinto).” By this, he intended to destroy the psychological foundation of imperial sovereignty. Specifically, he condemned “the doctrine that Emperor of Japan is superior to the heads of other states because of ancestry, descent and special origin.” Later, public institutions were told to refrain from memorial ceremonies for war dead.

The aircraft industry was banned in Japan, big business houses were dissolved, and provisions were made for wider distribution of income and of ownership of the means of production and trade. This was done to encourage the development, within Japan, of economic ways and institutions of a type that would contribute to the growth

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20 The task of demilitarizing and demobilizing the seven-million-strong army and navy became easier with the Emperor’s message of surrender to the Japanese public and further asking them to cooperate. Even the Highashikuni cabinet and the SCAP, in order to save emperor from prosecution, brought provided a common cause to work in proximity.
of peace and democratic forces. Land reforms were carried out and food items were imported from the US and distributed to the starving Japanese people who were living in extremely poor conditions. All things related to war, the military or war-making were abandoned.

Occupation Era Reforms

Reforms initiated during 1945-1952 did shape Japan’s postwar history. No study of intellectual, social, political, or economic developments of the postwar period can afford to ignore the massive changes forcefully undertaken by the military occupiers. The occupation authorities changed the basic institutions and values of Japan, which they believed had inclined the Japanese to aggressive war. This was part of the comprehensive American effort to change Japan ‘from a group-centered to an individual-centered society.’ The three broad policy objectives were demilitarization, democratization, and the determination of a self-sustaining economy for Japan. The first in order was the first in accomplishment (Philip H Taylor, 1950: 145). According to the US Department of Army sources, the Herculean task was to disarm the huge Imperial Japanese Forces totaling 6,983,000 troops out of which roughly half were on the home islands (SCAP, Reports of General MacArthur, 1966).

Japan’s postwar leaders were forced to draw lessons from the lost war. The Japanese people, exposed for the first time to eyewitness testimony and photographic evidence presented at the Tokyo international war crimes trial learned the truth about some of the atrocities and war crimes that their soldiers had committed. Other crimes, such as the sexual slavery of ‘comfort women,’ would remain hidden for decades. But after the American occupation of their country had ended, and throughout most of the Cold War, official denial of mass atrocities and the repetition of lies rather than the clarification of facts dominated Japanese government responses to the Nanjing massacre. This suggests that the deep wounds inflicted by war on the Japanese people penetrated their conservative political class, the least.

The intensification of the Cold War in the late 1940s and early 1950s meant that the process of Japan’s normalization commenced during the Allied Occupation
(1945-52) (Glenn D Hook, 1996: 2). When the Americans landed in Japan under the command of MacArthur, the Japanese people were ready to do what they were told. This readiness facilitated American efforts to convert the Japanese politically. American policies were not isolated from the broader American postwar strategy in Asia, which closely influenced MacArthur’s behaviour. The vacuum left by the fall of Japanese empire attracted the United States. Since Asians were against European and Japanese imperialism, they appeared not to have any problem in the American-led Allied takeover of Japan. According to one American estimate, around eleven million Japanese were saved by the grain and other canned food items imported from the US (GHQ/SCAP, History of the Non-Military Activities of the Occupation of Japan, 1945-51).

During the seven years of Occupation, the US attempted to write into Japanese daily life, such ideals as individuality, ‘liberty,’ ‘freedom,’ and ‘equality.’ The US occupation authorities labeled this attempt the ‘political reorientation of Japan.’ Armed with tremendous executive powers and surrounded by his devoted entourage, MacArthur from his General Headquarters (GHQ) in Tokyo, tried to lead the Japanese people to the threshold of democracy. His title ‘Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers’ (SCAP) accurately depicted the absolute supremacy with which he administered the entire administration.

American policymakers at GHQ believed that democracy would come after a sweeping purge of the undesirable element among the Japanese people. The undesirables were the ‘right wing,’ the militarists and ultranationalists who had ‘caused and lost’ the war. The vacuum the purge created was readily filled by the young, less experienced but enthusiastic people, including members of the ‘left wing’ – Liberals, Socialists and Communists. To be sure, GHQ did not openly encourage the Japanese leftists; but did condone their vigorous political activity. This policy of non-interference complemented the public freedom of thought and action, which was one of the most cherished American means of teaching the Japanese people democracy. Despite all rhetoric, however, it was only a guided democracy, as American press censorship showed.
According to the results based on the findings of a study group, in order to prevent Japan from following the expansionist policies again, some measures should essentially be taken into consideration. The study suggested that,

If a repetition of the present catastrophe is to be prevented, Japanese militarism must be destroyed, in spirit and in deed; and an essential preliminary to this destruction will be the relegation of the armed forces to their appropriate influence in the State through constitutional reform. But it is very doubtful if the militarist obsession of the Japanese imagination can be removed by external pressure, since this is a symptom of a national disease which demands pathological, rather than surgical treatment. Once again, the most effective antidote will be the liberation of thought, and the re-education of the younger generation, in an atmosphere of social and economic security.²¹

The survival of democracy, however, was not possible without effective control of the education system. Therefore, the US Education Mission to Japan was invited to make recommendations for reform. The Mission proclaimed in March 1946, "We do not come in the spirit of conquerors" (Toshio Nishi, 1982: 3-4). The Mission's recommendations became the blueprint for Japanese educational reform, which was a clear-cut shift from the 1890 Imperial Rescript on Education. By subduing the voices of discontent, reforms were carried out in all walks of life.

The Japanese imperial regime that invaded and colonized large parts of Asia was disarmed and democratized by the US occupation army. Following full debate and significant revision in the Diet, the new Constitution of Japan was promulgated eight months later (November 3, 1946) and went into effect on May 3, 1947. Harold S. Quigley, while comparing the Meiji constitution with the Showa observed that,

The new constitution is unique in history in its renunciation of war and of the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes. The right of self-defense is not renounced, but will be ineffective without military forces, all types of which will never be maintained (1979: 869).

²¹ A Chatham House study group, meeting during the earlier part of 1944, engaged in discussion and analysis of the problems involved in the treatment of a defeated Japan. The results of this examination were submitted by the Royal Institute of International Affairs to the Hot Springs conference in the form of a lengthy data paper, entitled "Japan in Defeat." "Factors in the Settlement With Japan," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 18, No. 1, March, 1945: 48.
Emperor Hirohito, formerly, the highest commander of all the imperial forces, was exempted from war responsibility by the US Occupation Authority in expectation that his charisma would help the new rule to be accepted by Japanese people. However, there was serious implication to the fact that no one could really be responsible for the crimes committed under the name of Emperor.

The Emperor remained as a mere symbol of the state and all his powers, finances and Imperial offices were brought under the control of civilian government (Herbert P. Bix, 1995: 339). Yoshida Shigeru, in his memoirs, wrote that it was the emperor himself who made the sacred decision to accept MacArthur's draft (Herbert P. Bix, 1995: 339). The democratic Constitution, which had one of most progressive provisions of human and civil rights was prepared under the US occupation and eagerly supported by Japanese people who were tired of long years of wars and suppressive military rule (Ray A. Moore, 1981: 317-328). On April 11, 1951, President Truman dismissed MacArthur for his repeated acts of insubordination in the conduct of the Korean War (Herbert P. Bix, 1995: 358).

Writing about the attitudes of the Japanese people, Shigeru Nambara described that the Japanese acceptance of the western institutions and values would be seen as a blend of western values and systems and Japanese attitudes. Nambara said that Japan's present (then) existing attitudes based on the Confucianism and Buddhism could penetrate Japanese psyche through the period of thousands of years. Japan's interaction with the western countries and Christianity was hardly a hundred years old at the time of surrender. Therefore, western values would also take time to come to stay in the Japanese psyche, permanently (Shigeru Nambara, 1946: 294).

An overwhelming majority also welcomed the pacifism of Article 9 of the Constitution to abolish all military forces and the state's right to declare wars as a way to address international conflicts. This was something that had no precedence in world history. However the US soon disappointed democratic parties when it replaced this idealism with the relentless power politics of the Cold War (I. I. Morris, 1960: 7-20). Japan was quickly integrated into the liberalist military bloc, and the SDF, in contradiction to the aims of the Constitution, was set up under the US occupation, as the two superpowers jockeyed for strength in East Asia. However, the major military
role of Japan in the bloc was to provide military bases for the US, and the SDF remained a non-combatant army. While many Asian countries were already in stable economic relationships with Japan, their distrust of a Japan that had never fully addressed its responsibility of invasions and colonization was strong enough to prevent the Japanese government from actively expanding its military forces even though the US urged it to do so.

Article 9 states that,

Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as sovereign right of the nation and the threat of use of force as means of settling international disputes.

In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, 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.22

The sufferings of the people during the war years and the strong socialist groups within Japan ensured that they remained against the pre-war, war-principles thus, paving the way for the strong anti-militarism, anti-war and pro-peace movements in the post-occupation Japan. Even the conservatives, barring a few, remained vociferous in opposing any attempt of militarization. On one of the visits of the emperor to the ancient capital of Japan, Kyoto, the emperor faced an embarrassing situation. Over a thousand students from Kyoto University convened a peace assembly to protest the San Francisco Peace Treaty and the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, which the Yoshida government had signed on September 8. The students issued an ‘open letter’ appealing to the ‘human emperor’ and focusing on the issue of rearmament.23 The next day’s newspapers announced that an “unprecedentedly disgraceful incident” had occurred at the university, and sided with the police against the students. Eight students were expelled for peacefully protesting. The student association was dissolved. For weeks, the reined-in Japanese press sensationalized the

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23 They declared, “We are obliged to recognize that with the unilateral peace and the rearmament of Japan you have once again, just as in the past, attempted to play a role as a pillar of war ideology.” When the emperor arrived at Kyoto University, on November 12, a huge placard in Japanese saluted him: “Because you were once a god, our predecessors were murdered on the battlefield. Please, never become a god; never again have us shout Harken to the Ocean’s Voice (Kike wadatsunti no koe).” Over 2,000 students welcomed the emperor on campus by singing peace songs instead of the traditional national anthem, “Kimigayo.” Shocked by their symbolic action and breach of etiquette, about 500 armed riot and regular police stormed onto the campus and started skirmishing with the students.
incident, treating it as an act of lese majesty. Nationally and locally, many condemned the students as ‘heartless Reds’ or as juveniles lacking in moral etiquette. Their equally numerous defenders, however, either expressed antipathy toward the emperor or declared their total disinterest in him (Herbert P. Bix, 1995: 358).

On May 3, 1952, Japan regained its formal independence, ending almost seven years of military occupation. Three months later, its new armed forces, introduced in August 1950, were reorganized and lifted to a new level (Herbert P. Bix, 1995: 359). The government claimed that Article 9 did not deny the right of self-defense and possession of the minimum level of forces to react to imminent acts of aggression against Japan, although a majority of Constitution researchers did not agree with that view.

**Objectives and Research Questions**

The following chapters are based on the systematic attempt to find out some of the vital factors and their causal relationship with the ongoing debates in the academic, diplomatic and political circles in Japan. Since the present global order does not allow viewing any domestic matter in isolation, the inter-relationship among several world political and strategic matters is also explored. In order to have a deeper insight of the problems and to analyze the reactions and resolutions, the following objectives and research questions were conceived at the outset of this research. The present study analyzes the domestic and international factors responsible for anti-militarism in Japan, and the causes for co-existence of anti-militarism and remilitarization in Japan. The study also tries to explain Japan’s current defense status and the prevailing anxiety and suspicion in Japanese society and among its neighbours. The study also attempts to understand the changing public response regarding defense policies and the SDF. It also analyzes the impact of international crises on both defense and foreign policies of Japan and also examines the gains and losses if Japan expands militarily.

How far can anti-militarism and remilitarization co-exist in Japan? Which concept has contributed more in Japan’s overall growth – anti-militarism,
remilitarization or both? How has current public opinion responded on these issues? How extensive are the changes from 1945? Is it the right time for Japan to open up militarily in order to satisfy its quest for normalcy? In the process, will the anti-militaristic feelings of its citizens be repudiated? On issues like reinterpreting the constitution, will Japan find an easy way out? Where does Japan stand today? What lessons has it learned from handling issues like Gulf War I and II and the Tokyo subway attacks? How far will Japan go in making use of opportunities provided by situations of international crises like September 11 and co-operate with other countries?

**Methodology and Sources**

The descriptive, critical and analytical approaches are followed. The study is carried out through perusal of literature such as books, articles, policy documents, public speeches and government releases (white papers, blue books etc.) and commentaries in the media. Opinions of the strategic analysts and experts about the latest developments are also sought in the process. Intensive use of libraries and archives in India and Japan has been made in order to answer research questions and to test hypotheses perceived at the outset of this research work. Interviews of Japanese researchers and SDF officials are also incorporated to understand the perception of Japanese people working at different levels.

**Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses are tested through the course of this study.

1. Militarization has come to stay in Japan despite the strong anti-militaristic feelings and pacifist constitution.
2. The September 11 attacks and Gulf War II provided opportunities to use prevailing threats to enunciate Japanese interests, and for Japan to play a reactive role in international affairs.
3. Sustained fear among Japan’s neighbours will continue to impact its bilateral relations and the issue of military expenditure.

4. The anti-militaristic posture of Japanese society will continue to have an impact on its defense and security policymaking.

The results are discussed in the concluding chapter.

In the following chapter titled, “The Rise, Impact and Strength of Anti-Militarism in Japan,” the experiences of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, of how World War II memories and their impact on public sentiment led to denouncement of war and the relevance of Article 9 of the constitution in the changing security circumstances are the main topics of discussion.