Preface

Even though tensions due to escalation of military capabilities in turbulent areas remained at the peak, particularly during the Cold War, formerly militarist Japan was transformed into a pacifist state. Now, the victors and the defeated stand together, share the same platforms, pursue similar policies and assist each other during times of crisis. This does not however mean that the world is free from problems.

While the world community has witnessed the miraculous rise of Japan, the country has remained dependant on the US for its security needs. The US-Japan security alliance gets stronger with each passing day and in the midst of the dilemmas, paradoxes and controversies, Japan continues to enjoy the status of super-economic power. However, prosperity and technological advancement alone have not ensured a sense of security in Japan. New problems have emerged compelling policymakers struggle to find their solutions.

The present global order is shaped by several threats and Japan is not free from them. Like any other nation state Japan has its own share of problems and threats. This study is primarily focused on the equilibrium between the anti-militarism and militarization that Japan has successfully maintained for over five and a half decades after the end of the occupation. Anti-militarism is more than a feeling for Japanese. Military is the basic necessity of any sovereign nation. It can be said that Japan is the land of paradoxes. That is why both exist side by side.

Academics, theoreticians and policymakers are divided as far as their opinions are concerned. Constructivists believe that more than constitutional restraint, norms and culture of anti-militarism restrict the government from taking any assertive step. The conservatives, the nationalists and the realists/neo-realists, on the other hand, see no harm in getting rid of constitutional restraints and seeking normalcy. Pacifists always advocated unarmed neutrality and no-war. There exist several debates in the periphery of this central debate for the present study – whether anti-militarism, remilitarization/normalcy or both can stay in Japan.

It is against the backdrop of this major debate that the analysis in the present study is carried out. The first two chapters deal mainly with the historical background and the
theoretical concepts of militarism, militarization and anti-militarism in Japan. Unconditional surrender, occupation, reforms and the rise of anti-militarism in Japan and emergence of Japan as a pacifist nation are also discussed. The anti-militaristic discourse is discussed in the second chapter as also the Japanese experiences in Hiroshima and Nagasaki which cannot be alienated from Japan, citizen movements, peace societies, hibakusha and decline of the pacifist movements, socialists and diversification of the citizen movements.

The various approaches to the study of militarization and security discourse are the highlights of the third chapter. During the initial years of post-Occupation period, the momentum of militarization was comparatively lower and the prime focus was on reconstruction and economic growth. However, in the following phases, due to several threat perceptions, defense capabilities were strengthened speedily. Meanwhile, the security alliance with the US remained the cornerstone of Japanese security policy. The presence of different school of thoughts supporting and opposing militarization and foreign policy have diversified the security debate.

The fourth chapter deals with the constitutionality and legality of the SDF. The structure, organization and activities of the organization, both domestic and international, are critically analyzed and assessed. While the SDF has been accepted by the Japanese public, constitutional amendments will take more time. The awareness level about the necessity and activities of SDF has increased and policies are now framed in a way that people start acknowledging and accepting the need for the SDF.

The possible status of Japan as a remilitarized nation in case Japan attains normalcy is examined in the fifth chapter. The major problems at the domestic and international levels and their possible effects on the security policy of Japan form the main themes of the chapter. The quest for normalcy is studied while assessing the overall circumstances in the region and Japan’s contributions to the international community and agencies.

The concluding chapter proposes that Japan has the potential of becoming a military power if it regains normalcy. Both anti-militarism and militarization will coexist in the future but the balance is tilted more towards the latter. However, it is unlikely that Japan can adopt pre-war militaristic lines because of the prevailing circumstances, its own national interests and its economic stakes all across the globe.