Chapter One

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to analyse to the extent to which Japan's security policy has changed in the post-11 September 2001 global order. Japan's response as having not crossed the nuclear threshold to the exigency of the changing global order requires attention. The study attempts to historicise Japan's security behaviour and seeks to explain Japan's security policy in the post-11 September global order.

The post-World War II US grand strategy of global dominance was based on the following pillars: (a) containment – preventing the Soviet Union from exercising its power position to gain ascendance and disturb the existing global order (b) a collection of ideas about open markets, social stability, political integration, international institutional co-operation and collective security.

The implosion of the Soviet Union has brought about a systemic change in Global Politics. The bipolarity was reversed and the emerging global order defied simplistic description. The United States emerged as the pre-eminent power in the international system. The former communist European states gradually transformed into democracies and became additional members of the European Union (EU). The victory of US-led coalition forces over Iraq in the First Gulf War secured the US, a permanent base in the region. This facilitated the US to influence the politics of the region.

In the East Asian region, the US extended its alliances with Japan whilst continuing its co-operation with South Korea. The United States also engaged People's Republic of China (PRC), though North Korea remained recalcitrant. Nonetheless, the US through the 1994 Agreed Framework brought North Korea to the negotiation table. The United States propagated and pursued democracy and free market economy with vigour to expedite its influence.

The neo-conservative George W. Bush administration that came to power in 2001 was critical of previous Bill Clinton administration's policies. It was of the view that the Clinton administration had subordinated American national interests to the 'interests' of
an illusory international community. The American military power has been squandered in nation-building efforts to the detriment of military readiness and morale. Clinton administration's fixation with multilateral agreements and institutions was also questioned. Therefore, the Bush Jr administration proclaimed a 'distinctive American internationalism' i.e. the United States should act only when its vital interests were at stake.

The US national security was defined in terms of material interests than broader abstract values such as democracy or freedom. The Bush Jr administration also repudiated multilateralism and abandoned Kyoto Protocol, Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the enforcement provisions of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The Bush's security concept was concerned with strategy than economics. The national security strategy signified a clear friend or foe distinction in order to rebuild its alliance network.

The 11 September 2001 attacks on the US had given an impetus to its grand strategic calculations. Counter-terrorism under the banner of 'war on terror' has become the single point agenda to the near exclusion of other priorities. The exposure and vulnerability of the US homeland to unspecified threats from global terror networks and unfriendly regimes, which support and harbour them, was the precipitating factor.

The modus operandi of this new strategy is to hunt down the terrorist groups. The unfriendly regimes would be contained or deterred from assisting and harbouring terrorists, failing which, the US would resort to preventive military strike. This preventive strategy is camouflaged as 'pre-emptive' strike. The United States armed with the preventive military strike option would not only attack a state that was about to launch an attack but also against a state that might, at some future point, could threaten the US security.

The Bush Jr administration also announced its decision to revive and adhere to Missile Defense (MD) programme. Subsequently, the US withdrew from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM), which was regarded as the cornerstone of modern arms control agreements. Therefore, the US assured itself of a missile shield as well as the choice of renewing and accelerating the production of more advanced missiles.
The possibilities of nexus between nuclear proliferators and terrorist movements necessitated the US to actively garner support for its counter-proliferation measures. The goal of the initiative is to counter proliferation by states or non-state actors. This equipped the United States and the member states of Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) to interdict and seize suspicious ships carrying Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) on the high seas.

The repositioning of US grand strategy not only influenced states such as North Korea and Iran that were declared ‘Axis of Evil’ by the Bush Jr administration but also its allies and partners. Therefore, the shifting of priorities and changed strategies had complicated its relations with its allies in the East Asian region. The uncertainty and apprehension about the US fulfilling its role as a security provider and stabiliser of the region has grown among its allies. The allies and partners were compelled to reprioritise and reshape their policies. At this juncture, Japan being an ally of the US had to respond and change its policies accordingly.

Alliances have always been contextual and contingent, as they are rooted in particular historical circumstances. Any change in the circumstances alters the shared objectives of allies. Changed priorities and objectives can bring alliances to an end or get restructured. Japan shares a special relationship with the US as an economic partner and a security ally. Besides, Japan had always dealt with the outside world in varied ways. Domestic order and external environment have influenced these decisions.

The economic exigencies of post-World War II Japan and Cold War calculations of the US necessitated them to become allies. Japan’s security requirements were addressed with the presence of US nuclear umbrella and the US troops stationed in Japanese bases against possible Soviet threat. Although Japan developed a military force, it was limited in scope and power due to constitutional constraints.

The end of the Cold War not only negated Soviet threat but also diluted the rationale of the US-Japan security arrangement. The economic crisis ensuing real estate market crash had also put Japan in a predicament. As Japan was negotiating with these changes, it had to deal with emerging security threats as well. North Korea withdrew from Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and announced its clandestine nuclear weapons programme. In addition to that, North Korea test fired long-range missiles
capable of carrying Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) over Japan’s air space. Besides North Korean threat, the emergence of China as an economic and military power was a cause for concern to Japan.

As Japan’s vulnerability to security threats has increased, there are different views about the way Japan’s security policy would take shape in response to deal with the situation. Structural realists, especially Waltzian realists like Christopher Layne argues that Japan would emerge as a great power. The reasons are: (a) the unipolarity, because it is structurally untenable as other powers would attempt to balance the hegemon sooner or later to restore balance in the system; Japan is one such power to challenge the US dominance (b) it is a structural anomaly for Japan not to emerge as a great power because Japan possess the prerequisite economic power and technological capability to become a great power and it was an issue of political decision than capability (c) Japan’s increased vulnerability in the face of North Korean nuclear and missile threats and the economic and military emergence of China as a challenger to Japan in the region would precipitate Japan to take the nuclear path as nuclear weapons would guarantee its security.

Constructivists like Peter Katzenstein and Thomas Berger argue that systemic explanation is incomplete and emphasise on domestic variables, identity and culture in explaining Japan’s behaviour. Japan’s international and domestic political experiences following the defeat in the Second World War and nuclear bombing have produced a norm or culture of anti-militarism among the Japanese. It is an aversion to the military establishment and the use of force to settle disputes, which becomes entrenched through the development of institutions and laws. Therefore, any attempt to expand Japan’s military capabilities or increase the roles of Self-Defense Forces (SDF) would confront opposition from general public and political groups which espouse the cause of peace and anti-militarism. Besides, any such attempts to militarise or nuclearise would also confront institutional and legal restraints that have developed in the post-World War II period.

On the other hand, liberal theorists like Moravcsik argue that it is neither just structural factors nor domestic variables alone that determine Japan’s behaviour. Instead, it is the interests of the dominant domestic groups or individuals that translate into preferences, when Japan interacts with other states in the transnational context, which would determine Japan’s behaviour. Japan had a clear preference of rebuilding its
economy with a minimal spending on defence in the aftermath of World War II. But in
the post-11 September 2001 period, there was no such pronounced preference, although
making contributions to attaining international peace has been proclaimed as an
objective.

These attempts have so far used mono-causal explanations such as systemic logic,
domestic norms or preferences to explain Japan’s behaviour. Besides, state behaviour is
rarely shaped by a single factor as inter-state interaction is complex. Any phenomenon
that warrants a ... explanation has to have multi-causal explanations. This study purports
to fill that void by explaining Japan’s behaviour through multi-causal explanations.

This study raises the following questions:
(i) To what extent Japan’s security policy has changed in the post-11 September global
order
(ii) What are the factors that have influenced the shaping of Japan’s security policy in the
contemporary global order
(iii) What explains Japan’s behaviour in the post-11 September 2001 global order. The
following hypotheses are tested in this study:
(i) Japan’s security policy has undergone an incremental change, which reflects in the
sending of Self-Defense Forces (SDF) to war zones and augmentation of its power
projection capabilities
(ii) the increasing vulnerability of Japan in the post-11 September 2001 global order has
led to a shift in Japan’s security policy
(iii) Although Japan moved in the direction of becoming a great power status through
rearming its military, it has not crossed the nuclear threshold despite increased
vulnerabilities.

Chapter two titled ‘Evolution of Japan’s Security Policy’ attempts to historicise
the development of Japan’s security policy. It begins with Japan’s interaction with China
and Korea in the inception and Japan’s place as suzerain in the Chinese world order.
Japan’s attempts to resist Chinese dominance and assert its place in the international
system is also mentioned. The post-occupation Japan’s pre-occupation with economic
recovery and ambiguous nuclear posture along with the US nuclear umbrella have been
brought here for discussion. This chapter also elaborates the changes that had taken place in Japan’s security policy in the post-11 September 2001 global order.

Chapter three ‘US Grand Strategy and Global Order’, deals initially with the hegemonic ambitions of the US in the Western Hemisphere prior to the World Wars. Thereafter, the chapter accounts for the US role in the World Wars and its involvement in the European continent. The Cold War, containment and the US attempts for global dominance is also discussed here. The post-Cold War strategy of maintaining the unipolarity and the changes that had taken place in the US grand strategy following the 11 September 2001 attacks on the US is elaborated in this chapter.

The chapter four titled ‘Structural Logic and Japan’s Security Policy’ elucidates structural logic in detail and then explains Japan’s increased vulnerability in the face of North Korean threat and China’s rise. It also briefly accounts for the changes that had taken place in Japan’s security policy in the contemporary global order. Subsequently, the chapter analyses to what extent vulnerability explains Japan’s security policy in the post-11 September global order.

Chapter five begins with a detailed account of liberal international theory and how preferences are formed and the role played by domestic players in it. An account of Japan’s domestic institutions, players and the process of preference formation are given. Finally, the chapter analyses the extent to which preferences have shaped Japan’s security policy in the post-11 September 2001 global order.

The sixth chapter is ‘Conclusion’. The concluding chapter starts with the advancing of research questions that are driving this study. The research design of the thesis is elaborated in the way they reflect in various chapters. The hypotheses and their results at the end of the study are also discussed in the conclusion.