CHAPTER- 1
JAPAN’S CONSTITUTIONAL DEBATE FROM IR PERSPECTIVE

The pacifist Constitution of Japan has been one of the main factors in determining the state policy in international affairs and has held the normalization of Japan in check. Following the enactment of peace Constitution in 1947, Japanese administration had tried to adjust its foreign and security policies by interpreting Constitution. Starting from using the pacifist clause as leverage against US demands for Japan’s militarization, the interpretation of the article 9 has gone to a stretched interpretation justifying, the SDF deployment in non-combat zone. And now it is being debated the need for a new interpretation so that Japan could engage itself in Collective self defense or collective security. Japan’s constitutional pacifism has led the state to adopt different strategies to adjust its security policies. This chapter in this context discusses Constitutional amendment debate in Japan and state’s behaviour from International Relations Theories’ perspective.

Early Phase of Constitutional debate: Yoshida Doctrine to Buck Passing

Japan which was debating to amend the pacifist Constitution so rigorously in the post Cold War period had not shown much interest to this effect during the occupation period and thereafter. Rather it used the war renouncing clause of US drafted pacifist Constitution as leverage against US demands for reaming Japan.

The debate in the Diet during the postwar period regarding the pacifist clause of Constitution reflects to the fact that the then Japanese leadership and mainly Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru was never interested to renounce the pacifist clause. Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru’s remark that the “propoition to recognize the legitimacy of a war” in the name of “self defense of a state” as a “harmful idea” *(Japan’s Imperial Diet, 90th Session 28 June 1946: 15) is an indication to that effect. Yoshida made this remark in response to a suggestion by a Parliament member who insisted that “we should

* Indicates Primary Resources.
renounce aggressive war instead of war in general”.

On another occasion while debating Japan relations with the UN, in his reference to Article 43 of the UN Yoshida opined that “....when Japan becomes a member of the organization, after it receives its independence, then it will be protected by this Charter.” (Dore 1997:56) On being pointed out by the Diet members that according to Article 43, of the UN Charter, Japan would not only be protected but would also be required to contribute troops, Prime Minister Yoshida’s response was bit evasive - “the first and most important thing we are required to do is to restore our national rights and independence. The government is now devoting its time and efforts for the attainment of this important object” *(Japan’s Imperial Diet, 90th Session 28 June 1946: 15).

The statements above suggest that Yoshida has adopted a policy of evasion on the Constitution amendment. It is also reflective from the fact that he completely ignored MacArthur’s letter in which the SCAP commander conveyed Allied Powers decision that Japan could “reexamine, review, and if deemed necessary amend the constitution in the light of experience it gained from its actual operation” (Shoichi 1997:243). Yoshida merely replied to MacArthur of having “carefully noted the contents”.

Thus it is obvious that Yoshida wanted to avoid entering into a long debate on Constitution. Yoshida’s strategy to focus much on economy and paying less attention on military was later termed as Yoshida doctrine, which successive administrations also followed. It certainly served Japan during the Korean and Vietnam War as it used the pacifist constitution and Japanese people’s psychological aversion to the military developed after the tragic pacific war, as leverage for not contributing through personnel in these wars. However, in international security debate Japan’s strategy of paying much on economy and relying upon US military has been termed as “buck passing”- theory of international relations which defines that a threatened states try to get another state to check an aggressor while they remain on the sidelines. (Lind, 2004:92-221)
However there is another way of seeing Japan’s strategy. Japan’s alliance with the United States created a dilemma that almost all small states aligned with superpowers have experienced since the Peloponnesians Wars - the dilemma between entrapment and abandonment. During the post war Japan feared that the US, the larger state in the alliance, will dictate its internal and international affairs and that will result to an “entrapment”. But at the same time Japan was worried that if it (a smaller state) tries to maintain distance it will lose utility as an ally. To escape this dilemma and empower itself within the alliance it has three options; establish its own military capabilities, broaden relations with other countries, or strengthen its own economic capability. Japanese government and Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru particularly, did not choose first two strategies but opted the last one because it has potential to do that without antagonizing the superpowers. To escape entrapment from American Cold War adventure, Yoshida looked on Article 9 of the Constitution as the most important insurance Policy. (Green 2003:12).

Yoshida’s legacy to pay less attention on military and use Constitution as leverage against US demand for Japan’s militarization was carried over by his successors or the so called doves who took rein of the LDP after him. But serious efforts to amend the constitution were made under the leadership of then Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke in 1957 who formed a committee to review the Constitution. But the committee could not come up with a clear finding due to internal factionalism within the party as dovish faction was in favour of retaining it while the hawkish led by Nobusuke was for its abolition.

**Constructivism, militarization and Constitutional debate**

After Yoshida’s regime, Constitutional debate and movements against militarization can best be defined by Constructivism—the international relations theory- which defines that the social movements (social constructivism) influence state’s International affairs by
mobilizing citizens to press their governments through appeals and measured proposals, to adopt a policy which they deem fit for their country. (Fierke: 1990:166-181) Later this social constructivism - concerned about the prospect of nuclear war - turned its objective towards bringing an end to the nuclear arm race, and the groups concerned called the US and Soviet Union to stop the development, testing and the deployment of nuclear weapon.

At the international level, the social constructivism mainly emerged amid the Vietnam War protests across the borders, generated concerns against war and mobilized public opinion against it, when masses across the globe urged the concerned parties to stop war.

In case of Japan the social movements took roots during the prewar period and left a remarkable impact on Japanese society but Social constructivism got impetus following enactment of postwar constitution which provided public greater democratic rights, form political organizations and more importantly the "renunciation of war". The social constructivism flourished further in Japan amid the Korean War (1951) and Vietnamese War (1962) protests and following US nuclear tests in 1954 at the Bikni islands, which coincided with these wars. The anti nuclearisation movement took form of the mass movement following this incident as the Gensuikyo (Japan Council against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs) spearheaded the anti-nuclear weapons movements.

The peace groups not only talked about preservation of Constitutional pacifism rather urged the government through their protests and agitation to adopt policies which could reflect the Constitutional pacifism. The pacifists and the peace movements such as Heiwa Mondai Denwakai and Beherein wanted Japan to adopt policy of "peaceful coexistence and "unarmed neutrality" which later became ideal policy of the opposition Japanese Socialist Party (JSP).

Yet another organization the National Union of Constitutional Defense (Kenpo Yogo Kokumin Rengo) formed in late 1954 - was an umbrella organization of 135 together having total membership of 5 million (Kataoka, 1991:136) left a remarkable imprint in
Japanese Social constructivism, which is reflected from the fact that opposition to Constitutional revision which in 1955, was up to 42% touched to 52% by 1957, while the percentage of those supporting revision came down to 32%. (Kataoka, 1991:74)

The result of these pressure groups on the policy decision is immense and is reflective from the fact that the successive governments due to their consistent pressure to take decisions while formulating Japan’s defense policy such as the denial of the collective self-defense, prohibiting deployment of the combat troops overseas, the three non-nuclear principles, a 1% of GNP ceiling on defense spending and ban on export of weapon related technology. All the core policies stem out of this constitutional pacifism.

**Japan towards Realism:**

After reaching to its climax in late 1970s, social constructivism-the anti militarist norms-against remilitarization and constitutional revisionism started waning in Japan. Various factors can be attributed to this change. First and foremost was the generational change in Japan,- a generation by now had occupied key central positions in the government, ministries and bureaucracy, but had not witnessed devastation of World war and therefore were less receptive to pacifism. They seemed more willing to unshackle Japan from long held pacifism. Masses in Japan also gradually accepted the existence of SDF as well the US Japan security arrangement amid surging Star war between US and USSR and considered SDF a legitimate organization for defending the country from external security threats.

Second, by 1980s the opposition political parties baring the JCP had started shedding their long held anti militarist policies and adopted more accommodative stance towards defense and security policies pursued by the ruling party. The Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) decision and call to the public to support greater defense expenditures and accepted a role for Japan in securing the Sea Line of Coordination (SLOCs) and Komeito Party's acceptance the continued maintenance of Security Treaty with the US terming it unavoidable, can be sited as example to this political change. (Hook 1996)
Thirdly, Prime Minister Nakasone’s own nationalist goal to make Japan an “international Japan” and “unsinkable aircraft carrier for the West” also led to the greater change of Japanese pacifist policies it has adhered to up till now.

Gulf War was yet another turning point in Japan’s pacifist policies. Its non-participation in Gulf War and contribution through Check book diplomacy only drew flak form the world community and this initiative of Japan was seen as equating loss of blood with money. Later when its effort of sharing major financial burden of the war was not recognized by the international community, Japan felt betrayed and let down.

As a result of these events the feeling among the Japanese establishment started growing that Japan can not get recognition through its soft power contribution alone, which is reflective from the statement of Hatano Yoshi- the Japanese ambassador to the UN during the Gulf War, who stated that “not being a permanent Security Council member had deprived Japan of an opportunity to react more appropriately to the crisis and instead has exposed Japan to serve international criticism and loss of face” (Drifte, 1990:66). It is evident from the statement that Japan wanted to utilise this opportunity to gain permanent membership in the UN and clubbed the Constitutional amendment issue with that of getting permanent membership.

Certainly, the Gulf war experience pushed Japan to seek greater international Security role, which resulted in adoption of legislation in the diet to pave way for SDF participations in UN missions overseas – a measure it was earlier reluctant to take citing Constitutional ban on it.

However, it can not be said that international community’s pressure alone has resulted in its changed security policy. Japan’s own aspiration to achieve a permanent seat in the expanded UNSC has led to the liberal interpretation of War renouncing constitution which bans deployment of its troops overseas. The statements by the Japanese leadership
that "Japan is prepared to do all it can do to discharge its responsibilities" (Hiroshi Fujita 1995:437-442) in a reformed UN and the "role that Japan played (‘to the maintenance of international peace and security’) provides a solid basis for its assumption of permanent membership on the Security Council."

Thus this is obvious that constitutional amendment debate in Japan is aimed also towards achieving a new security role in UN and among the international level. Prior to its participation in UN led peace missions, Japan has been citing its contribution to UN budget, its effort to non-proliferation and arms reduction as well as its Official Development Assistance (ODA) for poverty alleviation to strengthen its claim to get a permanent seat in the UNSC. Now personal contribution by Japan to the UN missions is presented on top of its lists for claiming permanent membership in the UNSC.

A paradigm shift towards Japan’s international role can be noted among the Japanese people. Public opinion in Japan which was averse to Japan’s SDF participation in UN missions also started changing following its first deployment in Cambodia. In 1990 when Japan was enacting law to send SDF abroad, an Asahi survey showed that 67% of the respondent considered the dispatch of SDF overseas as unconstitutional (Dobson, 2003:68). However a year after Japan’s first participation in UNPKO, public opinion poll conducted by Cabinet Office reflected that support to PKO rising to 48% while 31% were opposed to the move. *(Japan’ defense white paper 2003: 264)* The ratio of those who supported SDF’s participation in UNPKO rose to 70% by 2002, while those opposed slide down to 13% *(Japan’ defense white paper 2004: 264).*

**Towards Balance of Power and Collective Defense**

After a decade of Constitutional amendment debate in the wake of Japan’s non-participation in the Gulf War, Japanese administration has been successful in enacting

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Constitutional referendum Bill in 2007 and has set a time frame on deciding the issue by 2010. But consensus eludes among the political parties on this issue and in the wake of plummeting graph of public opinion which has is not in favour of an amendment, the fate of a revision hangs in balance.

However, Japan has adopted recourse, modernizing its military capability without addressing Constitutional constraints. The Defense Agency has been upgraded to Defense Ministry unveiling plans to make SDF an organization capable of coping with crises and contributing to world peace – a departure from its role of “building deterrence against invasion”. The US forces in Japan is being realigned with an aim to better deal with changes in the security environment in the Asia-Pacific region. Both the countries have launched joint missile defense research in 1999 following North Korea test fired long-range missiles. The US is considering deploying a new X-band radar system for missile defense in Japan, where they will install Patriot PAC-3 and SM-3 missiles.

In yet another move to strengthen Air defense System, both the countries are in a process to establish a joint air defense Command center at the US Air Force’s Yokuta base in western Tokyo, which is aimed at strengthening ability to detect and deal with enemy missile launches (The Japan Times, Sept 26, 2005).

All these efforts to balance regional security and to contribute US to a “collective defense” will not be actualize until Japan reviews its Constitutional interpretation which considers that Collective self-defense is not permissible as per the Article 9. In this regard Abe government set up a panel tasked with discussing ways how could Japan engage itself in collective Defense with its allies. The panel headed by Shunji Yanai – a former Japanese ambassador to the US- recommended that Japan should be allowed to intercept intercontinental ballistic missiles fired at the United States, indicating the Constitution would need to be reinterpreted so the country could come to the defense of an ally under attack. Shinichi Kitaoka, a Tokyo University professor on the panel, said that “There was overall consensus that it is absurd to have a legal system where Japan can’t do anything. There was no objection to the idea that we should intercept” a missile aimed at the U.S.
These developments in Japan and further strengthening of US-Japan Security arrangements, hints to the fact that Japanese administration during the Koizumi period adopted a strategy of balance of power- an International Relations theory which defines that states within the international system tries to balance any dominant power. The Koizumi government sought ways to provide legitimacy to the defence mechanism through Constitutional interpretation.

The Security Dilemma in the Region:

There are two theories that are running parallel to justify the emergence of regional Security dilemma. Security experts of International relations have defined the Security dilemma as the paradox that occurs when a state seeks to improve its own security resulting in the decreased security of other states. Providing assurances to the contrary is not effective, given the lack of trust between actors in a self help world. One theory argues that the Chinese military might and North Korea’s nuclear and missile tests are core driving forces behind the rise of militarism in Japan and has resulted in strengthened Japan-US military cooperation. The second theory on the other and puts counterargument that the US and Japan are trying to disseminate the idea of a “threat” from China’s economic Rise and military build up to justify the revamp of their military cooperation. The ongoing security dilemma and passing blame on each other can be understood through their official statements.

In defense of on going security build up it claims that it is building “modest defense capability under the Constitution” adding that “it is purely for defense purposes without becoming a military power” (Japan’s defense whitepaper 2007, chap2.1p.4) and criticizes China for increasing its defense expenditure and conducting anti-satellite missile tests. The Japanese Defense White paper notes “... China a regional power with tremendous political and economic influence, has been continuously boosting its defense spending and modernizing its military forces drawing international attention to its presence.” Casting apprehension about China’s anti-satellite test the Japanese Defense White paper
notes that “....the destruction of one of its own satellites in a test of January this year (2007) has made other countries, including Japan apprehensive with regard to peaceful use of space and their own security.”

Regarding North Korea, Japan’s Defense white paper 2007 says “concerns over North Korea’s nuclear weapon and ballistic missiles have grown more serious” and as regards to North’s ballistic missile tests and claims to conduct underground nuclear tests in 2006 the Defense White paper terms these actions as “clear threat to peace and security of not only Japan but also the rest of the world”.

China on the other hand expressed concern in its Defense white paper (2006) stating that “Japan seeks to revise its Constitution and exercise collective defense” adding that Japan’s military posture is becoming “more external oriented”. Reacting over the passing of the Constitutional revision bill, China’s official news agency Xinhua, termed it as yet another “substantive step” in Japan’s path towards “amending the peace charter”.

North Korea - yet another prewar colony of Japan- reacting over the effort to revise the Japanese Constitution termed it as a step aimed at turning Japan into a “war state”. A signed commentary carried by the leading official newspaper Rodong Sinmun stated that “the Japanese reactionary’s moves to retrogressively revise the Constitution at any cost are aimed to turn Japan into a war state for aggression”.

South Korea an ally of the US as well as Japan under Sanfrancisco system, also expressed concern over the Japanese parliament’s approval of the referendum bill to revise the constitution and termed it as a step towards militarism asking it to “stop the move to return to militarism”.

Meanwhile, South Korea has gone on launching its first Aegis destroyer equipped with advanced air and sea weaponry and two successive launching in 2010 and a third in 2012
is in the offing. South Korean Navy officials have been quoted as saying the new vessels
are being acquired with military developments in China and Japan in mind. (The Japan
Times, June 5, 2006).

Regarding the US-Japan defense buildup both China and Russia has expressed strong
concerns. To the US-Japan defense developments the Chinese Defense white paper 2006
terms it as aimed at “operational integration” and is apprehensive that “the United States
is accelerating its realignment of military deployment to enhance its military capability in
the Asia-Pacific region,” (The Japan Times, October 16, 2007), while Russia has opposed
US-Japan-Australia Security arrangement. The Russian Defense Minister Sergei Lavrov
opposed the missile defense system, saying “we are opposed to the construction of a
missile defense system aimed at securing military superiority”. He expressed that “a
closed format for military and political alliances”. Lavrov also warned that the Japan-
U.S. defense system could lead to a regional arms race.

A close examination of these statements suggest that while Japan faces situation of
prisoners dilemma over North Korea’s missiles and nuclear ambitions, China, North and
South Korea and partly Russia doubts Japan’s moves to amend the Constitution, growing
US-Japan defense buildup and establishing an anti-missile defense system close to their
geographical proximity. The growing trust deficit among the countries in the region has
pushed these nations into a security dilemma which is fueling arm race.

An Era of Neo-Realism

The Structural realists had predicted that in the international relations states actions
would be constrained primarily by the Structural balance of power. According to this
theory the states compete among themselves either to gain power at the expense of others
or at least to make sure they do not lose power. For long Japan has not seriously adopted
this approach in international relations. During the Shinzo Abe’s regime Japan adopted
this strategy when he proposed to form a quadrilateral forum of Asia pacific democracy consisting of the US, Australia Japan and India. In an effort to realize the goals of the quad, the U.S., Japan, Australia and India have moved forward to strengthen their diplomatic tie and security cooperation. However, the proposed quadrilateral security arrangement as not taken a proper shape because of India’s reluctance to be part of contain China strategy and a change of government in Australia.

**Economic Interdependence:**

In the wake of erosion of pacifism in the region and ongoing security dilemma, the economic interdependence has helped checked the situation from going out of hand. When the economic relations between China and Japan was touching the lowest ebb due to resurgence of Japan’s nationalistic policies during Koizumi regime, the Keidanren Chief Horoshi Okuda made a secret visit to China in September 2005 and held talks with Chinese President Hu Jintao, where Hu reportedly urged leader of the biggest business lobby group to use his influence to persuade Koizumi not to go with his nationalist agenda like making official trips to Yasukuni’s war shrine if he wishes to spur development of bilateral relations. (The Japan Times, October 23, 2005).

After passing through a phase of downward shift of Sino-Japanese economic and diplomatic relations during Koizumi regime, the relations seemed taking upward shift during Fukuda’s term as he shelved some of nationalistic policy adopted by his predecessors such as Yasukini visit and Constitutional amendment process. During Fukuda’s regime both the countries were engaged in various Confidence Building Measures like develop means for joint exploration of energy resources in South China sea which would help develop economic interdependence between the two countries. The recent economic crisis has pushed the region to seek ways to further their economic interdependence and Japan including member countries in ASEAN+3 are looking to revive Chinag Mai Initiative- which aims at addressing short-term liquidity difficulties in the region. Thus crippled by economic crisis, Taro Aso who is considered hawk has shelved the constitutional revision issue and focusing at reviving the economy.
Will North Korea propel Japan to revisit its Nuclear option?

Security analysts of Japan has often argued that commensurate with its economic superpower status Japan will try to become a military superpower, amend its Constitution and will ultimately become a nuclear weapon state (John J. Mersheimer1990 and Keneth N.Waltz 1993). The statements by the political elites also suggests towards that ambition. The present Constitution denies Japan for possessing war potential and the government also interprets this clause as denying possession of WMDs which goes beyond minimum self defence limit. But the nuclear and missile tests by North Korea in 2006 and 2009 triggered the nuclear debate in Japan. However, judging Japan’s future nuclear strategy mere on statements and the events would be deceptive and foolhardy. The issue should be judged whether Japan has the delivery capability, second strike capacity and most importantly strategic significance of nuclear weapon.

The debate that Japan sooner or later can opt for nuclear weapon for its defence, stems from the fact that it has large number nuclear reactors and enriched nuclear fuels which could be converted to nuclear weapons. But even if Japan opts this option, it does not have a delivery capability. It is crippled by US drafted Constitution which bans possession of “war potentials” and denies right of “belligerency of the state”. The government interprets the Constitution of allowing maintaining defense capabilities but only those that does not go beyond minimum self defence limit. Japan also admits that procuring WMDs and those characterized, as offensive weapons would exceed the minimum self-defense limit. Japan’s defense whitepaper also admits to the fact that its defense force is “not allowed to possess Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs), long range, strategic bombers, or attack aircraft carrier”. Thus Japan does not have a declared long-range missiles capability and had not gone for acquiring them from any other countries. Japan’s defence whitepaper admits of having only Standard Missile 3 (SM-3) and Patriot Advanced Capability 3 (PAC-3), surface-to-air short to medium range missile that can track and hit incoming targets. PAC-3 has a range of about 12.4 miles while SM-3 has range of about 60 miles.
There are various signs on which it could be argued that Japan could go nuclear or not. First whether Japan would pursue to acquire long and short range missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads. In the recent pasts the countries which acquired nuclear capability - India, Pakistan, and North Korea, or Iran which is considered to have this ambition, had gone through these exercises. But Japan does not belong to this category of nation and does not seem entering into this race. It may be argued that it may buy these missiles from its ally, the US. But the US is unlikely to strengthen Japanese defence by long-range missiles or nuclear weapon because it is geographically as closer to the US as North Korea and if in the future Japan-US Security alliance is dissolved the US might perceive a security challenge. The US-Japan Security Treaty has a provision that either party can terminate the treaty with one year prior notice. There had been growing demands by Japanese pacifists groups to terminate this treaty. The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), the main opposition party, which has come very close to wrest power from the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), is in favour of a Security alliance with the US without permanent bases on Japan's territory. In case the DPJ manages to wrest power from the LDP, there would be certain pressure from its electorate to renegotiate the present treaty. Thus the US would neither wish nor encourage Japan to acquire nuclear weapon and long range missiles to avoid any future concern to its security.

Second Japan has adopted a three non-nuclear principle of not to produce, possess or introduce nuclear weapon on its territory and had been advocating for denuclearisation and elimination of WMDs from the world. Based on its commitment to promoting international disarmament and non-proliferation, it has been asking more diplomatic weightage in the UN bodies including the UN Security Council. In the event of Japan going nuclear it would have lost much of its legitimacy in campaigning for international disarmament.

The strong resistance against nuclearisation in Japan comes from within, its nuclear allergic people and pacifist group who keep reiterating their pledge of not letting go Japan nuclear each year during Hiroshima and Nagasaki days when the entire nation commemorate anniversary of the atomic bombing. We should not ignore that Japan’s
social constructivism has been an important factor in influencing affairs of the state by mobilizing citizens for an anti-nuclear policy.

Finally, the most important factor which has held Japan’s nuclear ambition on check is that it falls under the category of nations that have small geographical area and cannot develop "second strike capacity". It is widely agreed that the countries which cannot have second strike capacity; nuclear weapon would have no "strategic significance" for them.

Then Japanese Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro who was considered hawkish because of his effort to unshackle pacifist Japan strengthened Japan’s defence by breaking 1% GDP cap on defence spending. However he did not argue for having nuclear weapon. On the contrary, he only favoured three non-nuclear principles. In his book "Japan, a State Strategy for the Twenty First Century" published in 2003, he argues:

"In terms of geopolitics, Japan a long chain of island does not have a second strike capacity. It is widely acknowledged that without a second strike capacity the possession of nuclear weapons has no strategic significance."(Nakasone 2003: 113).

Nakasone further argues

"...the nuclear superpowers continued to throw massive amount of money at increasing their nuclear capacity until eventually they reached the stage where building anti-ballistic missiles. It would be imprudent for Japan to follow this path... I believe that Japan must act as a middle ranking state pursuing an independent, Japanese strategic plan adhering to the three non-nuclear principles". (Nakasone 2003: 113).

The argument by the hawkish Prime Minister favouring non-nuclearization for the country demonstrates the strategic thinking of the country. Even though his pronouncement came in recent past, or much before North Korea conducted nuclear tests, the reality remains the same. It geographical area which has checked its ambition cannot be stretched; it will remain the same.
Given the strong resistance against nuclearisation by the pacifist groups, constitutional restraints and not having strategic significance of nuclear weapon (discussed above), the viable option for Japan to secure itself from a nuclear attack is further improving anti-ballistic missile defence and to remain within the US nuclear umbrella. The ongoing realignment of the US forces in the name of easing the burden of Okinawa to different parts of Japanese archipelago can prove a blessing in disguise for Japanese in the wake of North Korean nuclear threat. To secure its forces that are now being realigned to different place in Japan, which was earlier concentrated in Okinawa, the US would have to provide security cover to its forces, besides guarantying security to Japan.

Conclusion:

The state’s behaviour has gone through various phases viz buck passing during the Yoshida regime-- as Yoshida’s policy was to benefit from US security alliance and contributing minimum from its part--, Constructivism till the end of Cold war-- as the country adopted various measures to realize the ideals of pacifism because of public pressure and popular movements--, “band wagoning and balance of power” in Koizumi period, as the Prime Minister toed the US lines ignoring the public concerns and Constitutional constraints--, Structuralism in Abe period where Japan tried to maximize its security strength by forming quadrilateral alliance, and Economic Interdependence mixed with Constitutional pacifism during Fukuda period, which Taro Aso also continued as the Country was struggling with economic crisis and put the Constitutional revision on the back burner.
Japanese Foreign Policy, pacifist Constitution and IR Theory

Figure 1