

Chrysanthemum Withered: The Faded Yoshida Doctrine and the Shift in the Japanese Security Policy Under the Abe Cabinet

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Abstract In the post-war period, Japan adopted a deliberate and incremental approach in its security policy. To respect the post-war pacifist constitution and deeply rooted nationwide anti-militarism, Japan persistently adhered to the principle of “exclusively defense-oriented policy (senshu boei).” Such a minimalist approach to security policy was, in fact, the key to the Yoshida Doctrine, as it freed Japan from security burdens and brought about unprecedented economic growth. However, the rise of China caused Japanese elites to demand a stronger security policy, depart from the traditional engagement strategy toward China, and start balancing against the emerging threat. Such demand was particularly notable the Second Abe Cabinet. The cabinet decision to allow the exercise of collective self-defense and the security bills that followed signified a great change in Japan’s security policy and an end to the Yoshida Doctrine. This research focuses on the domestic developments that caused this shift, particularly in the Second Abe Cabinet.

Keywords Yoshida Doctrine · Collective Self-Defense · Abe Cabinet · Post-war Security Policy · Balancing · Liberal Democratic Party · Exclusively Defense-oriented Policy (senshu boei)

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Introduction

Background

Post-war Japan had been taking a deliberate and incremental approach in its security policy. Deeply rooted nationwide anti-militarism (Berger 1993; Katzenstein 1996) and the post-war pacifist constitution forced Japan to adhere to the principle of “exclusively defense-oriented policy (*senshu boei*).”¹ Japan sought to enact gradual change while keeping the essence of *senshu boei*. This concept served as the foundation for Japan’s security policy, which encompasses security-related, norms, laws, and institutions, as well as how the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) are structured and how they are equipped. Such a minimalist approach in the security policy freed Japan from security burdens and brought about economic growth. *Senshu boei* was in fact one of the central tenets of the Yoshida Doctrine along with U.S.-Japan alliance and economic growth (Shinoda 2016: 147-148). Indeed, there were many attempts to realize a proactive security policy, but they were made only within the boundary of the *senshu boei*. In the sense, the *senshu boei* itself was Japan’s post-war security policy.

However, the end of the Cold War spread concerns in Japan about the possibility of abandonment by the U.S. At the same time, the rise of China fueled Japan’s sense of the Chinese threat. As a result, discussions calling for strengthening the U.S.-Japan alliance and adopting proactive security policies to counterbalance China have become mainstream in Japan’s security discourse. In other words, the “normalization” of demanding stronger alliances and security policy began winning support from Japanese elites. This trend became particularly strong in the Second Abe Cabinet.

The gradual policy change, which Richard J. Samuels refers to as the “salami slicing” (2008: 87-89) experienced a significant boost when the Abe Cabinet decided to reinterpret collective self-defense (CSD) in 2014. With the Cabinet’s decisions to permit CSD in 2014, pass the security legislation, and make an agreement with the U.S. to revise the guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation, Japan virtually lifted its geographical and legal restriction on the use of force. While the right to exercise CSD was condition-based,² it was de facto a limitless one without legal and political brakes (*hadome*) as it hinged on the discretion and judgment of the Cabinet (Hughes 2017a).

Constitutional reinterpretation and the subsequent measures to establish legal grounds for national security policies were initially aimed at countering various threats surrounding Japan, but it was apparent that the decision was directly targeted toward China. They also signify that Japan’s China strategy has leaned toward balancing instead of engagement. In addition, the constitutional reinterpretation shows Japan’s ambition to become a more assertive nation by strengthening military capability. Such changes are noteworthy as they represent Japan’s

¹ Policy that allows use of force in self-defense, in the case of a direct attack on Japan.

² The exercise of the collective self-defense is permitted under the “three new conditions:” 1) When an armed attack against Japan occurs but also when an armed attack against a foreign country that is in a close relationship with Japan occurs and as a result threatens Japan’s survival and poses a clear danger to fundamentally overturn people’s right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness; 2) When there is no other appropriate means available to repel the attack and ensure Japan’s survival and protect its people; 3) Use of force should be limited to the minimum extent necessary (Cabinet Secretariat 2014: 7-8).

departure from the traditional notion of Yoshida Doctrine. While Yoshida Doctrine accepts lower status for Japan and promotes minimalist approach in national security, Japan today wishes to become militarily capable “tier one nation” conducting “even” role alongside the U.S (Hughes 2017b). This reflects a fundamental shift in Japan’s security policy and the end to the Yoshida Doctrine. Hence, the purpose of this research is to suggest a better understanding of the conspicuous change in Japan’s security policy, specifically answering the question, “Why did the change in Japan’s security policy, which had previously been a gradual process, experience a significant shift in the Second Abe Cabinet?”

This research focuses on the domestic dynamism that led to this shift in the Japanese security policy. It first explains how the domestic security discourse changed amid the structural shift caused by the rise of China. Next, the study analyzes ruling party representatives’ changing policy orientation regarding the China strategy, moving from engagement to balancing. Lastly, the research scrutinizes the institutional reform that realized the shift in the Japanese security policy.

Previous Research on the Shift

Discussions on the resilience of the Yoshida Doctrine surged amid an intense debate on post-Cold War national strategy. These debates were divided into two groups, one supporting the continuity and the other rejecting it. However, throughout most of the post-Cold War period, the former prevailed. Michael J. Green, for example, has persistently argued the resilience of the Yoshida Doctrine, while acknowledging Japan’s drive for greater realism in national security (Green 2003: 34; 2013: 2). Adam P. Liff contends that pace and scale of changes in Japanese security policy are overly exaggerated; instead, he sees any shift in Japanese security policy a gradual evolution (Liff 2015). Sun-Ki Chai argues that the Yoshida Doctrine has become entrenched through institutionalization (Chai 1997). While these proponents of the “continuity” all agree to changes in Japan’s security policy, they believe that those changes occurred within the boundary of U.S.-Japan alliance and post-war anti-militarism and pacifism.

However, another group of scholars denies the “continuity” of the minimalist approach to national security. Christopher W. Hughes points out great transformation in terms of Japan’s capability and policy and claims Yoshida Doctrine has significantly retreated (Hughes 2017b). Karl Gustafsson, Linus Hagström, and Ulv Hanssen shed light on the fundamental identity shift in Japan that enabled capability and policy change in terms of national security (Gustafsson, Hagström, and Hanssen 2019). They went even further than Hughes and sentenced Japan’s pacifism to death.

In addition to studies on policy and identity change with regard to Japan’s security policy, there are researches focusing on structural or agency actors. Studies that stress structure claim that Japan’s fading pacifism and emerging balancing strategy were a natural response to the rise of China (Mochizuki 2007; B. Park 2014; Suh 2017; Togashi 2017; Yun 2013). On the other hand, those who favor the agent factor contend that the change in Japan’s security policy was caused by Prime Minister Abe and key policy maker’s revisionist preference (Hughes 2015; C. Park 2014; Pugliese 2017; Roh 2014). While these traditional discussions based on structure- or agent-level analysis provide adequate explanations, they do not fully capture why there was

a significant shift. Specifically, they do not explain why the level of change in the Japanese security policy was particularly stark in the Second Abe Cabinet compared to previous ones. In fact, the balancing strategy was not only implemented by Abe but also by other prime ministers in the 2000s. On top of that, Abe was not the only one who held a conservative worldview in terms of national security. In fact, such a perspective was widely shared among Japanese elites.

In order to gain a better understanding of the factors that generated the significant shift in Japanese security policy and the subsequent demise of the Yoshida Doctrine, it is essential to examine Japan's domestic political conditions and the policy making process that links structure and agents. In other words, instead of merely focusing on structural change or agency factor, it is important to examine domestic variables such as how external factors such as the rise of China affect security discourse in Japan, how the decision-making process in domestic politics reflects a conservative policy orientation, and what kind of government led the overall policy making process. In the case of Japan, neo-classical realism provides a better explanation, as it looks at both the structure and domestic factors. Randall Schweller claims that balancing is a result of domestic factors: elite consensus, elite cohesion, and government vulnerability (Schweller 2006: 11-12). That is, states decide to balance, especially under a determined and strong government, when elites reach an agreement on the threat and concur on the need for balancing. In the case of Japan, this research argues that elites agreed on a particular external threat in the security discourse, ruling party representatives began accepting the need for balancing against the menace, and there was a strong government to realize the domestic demands for a stronger Japan.

Previous studies made valuable contributions to identifying the great transformation in Japan's security policy, focusing on agency, capability, identity, and structure. However, for there to be a change in security policy, there must be a "commitment" from Japanese politicians (Chai 1997: 410). Security discourse, policy preference change, and type of government influence politician's "commitment." This article agrees with previous researches on the significant shift but takes a different approach focusing on domestic politics that enabled strong commitment for change in Japan's security policy, particularly in the second Abe cabinet.

Change in the Security Discourse

While post-war Japan had been persistently adhering to anti-militarism and international cooperation for economic growth, it began pursuing a proactive foreign policy after the 1990s and the outbreak of the Gulf War. While Japan shunned sharing the burden of security in order to keep the momentum of their economic growth going, the United States and the rest of international society were expecting a contribution from the second greatest economic power. It was unacceptable for a nation maintaining the *senshu boei* not to take any action against an act of aggression. As a result, Japan eventually donated \$13 billion in support of U.S.-led multinational forces. However, mere financial support was far less than what was expected, and such an inept response led to international dissatisfaction. *The Economist* labeled Japan the "Scrooge of Asia" and Kuwait excluded Japan from its official expression of gratitude (Tanaka 1997: 310-311). Amid increasing domestic demand that Japan should benefit from and enhance its status with international contributions, the humiliation in the Gulf War remained a trauma

for the country (Soeya 2016: 71-73). With such disgrace as a stimulus, Japan started to rethink its national identity, and pondered on whether it was a “normal nation (*futsuno kuni*)” (Park 2006; Kitaoka 2000; Igarashi 1999; Samuels 2008). Japan was the most prosperous country during the Cold War, and it had to maintain the status quo in the post-Cold War era for sustainable success. To do so, it had to be more than a mere “merchant nation” (Kitaoka 1991: 57).

The nationwide debate on “normalcy” began by pointing out the abnormalcy of Japan (Kitaoka 2000: 104-105). Many offshoot definitions of the “normal nation” were created; however, it was Ozawa Ichiro’s definition that appealed to the Japanese who demanded a stronger Japan. In his book *Blueprint for a New Japan: The Rethinking of a Nation*, he defined a “normal nation” as a “nation that willingly shoulders those responsibilities regarded as natural in the international community. It does not refuse such burdens on account of domestic political difficulties. Nor does it take action unwillingly as a result of international pressure (Ozawa 1993/1994: 94).” The debate on the “normal nation” also led to discussions on the use of force, buttressing the realist approach in foreign policy and igniting the debate on the right of exercising collective self-defense in the Hata Cabinet. The coalition government promoted stronger security to cope with the changing security environment by appointing Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and Japan Defense Agency (JDA) heads who had been arguing for the need to approve the right to exercise collective self-defense (Sase 2014: 7-9). However, the Hata Cabinet soon dissolved and its ambition to respond to the new security environment by changing the constitutional interpretation of collective self-defense failed

In spite of the Cabinet’s failure to adopt stronger measures against newly emerging threats, discussions of the realist approach to security policy did not fade away. The electoral reform in January 1994 gave new life to the dwindling discourse for change in security policy. While in the multi-member district (MMD), where multiple winners are elected, the main debate was on how they could benefit the district, in the single member district (SMD), where only one winner is elected in a district, ideology and policies that aimed to differentiate candidates decided the result of an election. Security policy, in particular, has become a common agenda to differentiate one candidate from another. From that point on, Japan’s security-related discussions have become more mainstream (Catalinac 2016). Security discourse amid the rise of China and North Korean nuclear development strengthened logic for the need for a “normal nation.”

Therefore, endeavors to introduce stronger security policy were not fruitless. Normal nationalists’ efforts to strengthen the U.S.-Japan alliance and pursue defense buildup, as well as the Hata Cabinet’s attempt to approve the right to exercise collective self-defense to break the status quo in the security policy, eventually led to the U.S.-Japan Security Guidelines update in 1996 and the passage of the Law Concerning Measures to Ensure Peace and Security of Japan in Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan in 1999. In the end, security discourse in the ‘90s paved the way for the Koizumi Cabinet to strengthen its security policy. The idea that Japan should be reborn as a military “normal nation” and break away from the image of the “merchant nation” formed under the post-war policy had become mainstream in the Japanese security discourse. Japan tried to expand its influence as a “normal nation” in the international community by breaking away from U.S. protection, pursuing economic development, and reviewing its military means and related laws (Lee 2007: 443-446).

The main characteristic of Japan’s security policy in the 2000s was that Japan shared its perception of external threats with the U.S., once again confirming the effectiveness of the

U.S.-Japan alliance. With new threats emerging, the U.S. and Japan began to take steps to strengthen their alliance. The “Armitage Report” is a typical example of such efforts. The main point of the “Armitage Report” is that the U.S.-Japan alliance should be upgraded to the level of the U.S.-U.K. alliance to effectively respond to the changing security environment (INSS Special Report 2000). In addition, the “Watanabe Report,” written in Japan around the same time, stressed the importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance, arguing that the alliance needs to go beyond a contractual relationship and build peace and stability, not just in the Asia-Pacific region, but also in the world, as an ally that shares democratic values (Defense Strategy Research Council 2000).

Koizumi Junichiro’s foreign and security policy was basically focused on strengthening the U.S.-Japan alliance and continued efforts to reform the security policy, rather than just reacting passively in a given international situation. Koizumi actively engaged in security agendas by holding a number of security-related meetings and mobilizing a group of experts. A typical example of such efforts was the “Foreign Relations Task Force Report” of 2002. The report pointed out threats from China and North Korea and called for stronger and more realist counter-measures (Prime Minister’s Office of Japan 2002). Prime Minister Koizumi also launched the Advisory Panel for National Security and Defense Force in 2004 and ordered to renew the National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG) in response to the changing security environment (Park 2008: 264). Such discourse paid off; in December 2004, Japan announced NDPG 2004, announcing a new direction in Japanese security policy.

Similar to the 1995 version, the revised NDPG stressed the importance of the U.S.-Japan relationship, but it went further and stipulated the need to prepare for emerging and diversifying threats such as guerilla warfare, special warfare, ballistic missiles, Special-Type Disasters (Nuclear, Biological, Chemical, and Radiological), and international terrorism. Most importantly, the updated NDPG explicitly expressed concern over North Korea and China. While the NDPG 1976 developed during the Cold War referred to the threat posed by the U.S.-Soviet conflict, it was the first time that the NDPG pointed out particular countries and described concerns about potential threats they represented (Hughes 2009: 35). Furthermore, the new NDPG heralded Japan’s escape from the traditional Basic Defense Force Concept. The Basic Defense Force Concept “espouses the idea that, rather than preparing to directly counter a military threat, Japan, as an independent state should maintain the minimum necessary basic defense forces lest it becomes a destabilizing factor in the region by creating a power vacuum (Ministry of Defense 2004: 5).” NDPG 2004 stressed that Japan should be able to counter diversified threats. To do so, it stated that Japan should keep the essence of the Basic Defense Force Concept while introducing a multi-functional, flexible, and effective defense concept (ibid.: 5). In other words, it stated that Japan would no longer remain passive and only react to Soviet aggression; instead, it will actively participate in disaster prevention, humanitarian assistance, and international peace cooperation to promote a stable international security environment. This meant that Japan’s conventional role and scope of defense and national security have slightly deviated from the traditional Basic Defense Force Concept.

Abe Shinzo also promoted a stronger foreign policy in the 2000s. Upon assuming office, Prime Minister Abe made it clear that Japan would enhance cooperation with countries that share democratic values in order to carry out “Value-oriented Diplomacy” (Sahashi 2017: 186-187). He went on to improve relations with China, which his predecessor damaged after

his controversial visit to the Yasukuni Shrine. However, “Value-oriented Diplomacy” caused conflicts with countries that pursued other values. The core of the security policy under the Abe Cabinet was to strengthen the U.S.-Japan alliance, continue promoting balancing strategy in response to the changing security environment, and establish a legal basis for a stronger security policy. The first step for a stronger security policy was to lighten the restriction on the use of force. It was too obvious that forcing a constitutional amendment of the Article 9 would lead to nationwide backlash. Hence, instead of taking the standard tactics, Prime Minister Abe made a detour, launching an expert advisory panel (*Yushikisha Kondankai*), the “Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security,” to initiate a review on the issue of the right to exercise CSD. However, the advisory panel’s report did not pay off, as Abe unexpectedly stepped down for health reasons. Nevertheless, the advisory panel’s awareness of diversifying threats and the unstable security environment once again started a nationwide debate on the realist approach to security policy. With a clear external threat, realists expanded their influence in the national security discourse. This trend in the discourse continued not only in the Fukuda and Aso Cabinets, but also in DPJ Cabinets, which were expected to promote pacifist foreign policy.

Although DPJ successfully defeated LDP in the 2009 general election and became the ruling party, it did not have a blueprint for a security policy. DPJ belatedly embarked on devising security policy by launching the “Advisory Panel for National Security and Defense in the New Era.” In designing the security policy, many experts assumed that the DPJ would present an Asia-centered foreign policy and take a rather pacifist approach (Park 2011: 48-49). However, contrary to expectations, DPJ failed to escape from the shadow of LDP; instead, it adopted and further developed LDP’s security policy. Similar to LDP, DPJ’s policy making was bureaucrat-led, and it frequently involved intervention by a few select experts. The policy orientations of participating policy experts in DPJ cabinets were clear and nearly identical to those of LDP (Hosoya 2017: 227). In fact, DPJ was forced to adopt LDP’s realist policy as a result of the worsening external environment: the rise of China (Sahashi 2017: 184-185). NDPG 2010, which was updated during the DPJ Cabinet, directly reflects realist security policy.

The most important point made in NDPG 2010 was that it declared a departure from the Basic Defense Force Concept, maintaining that Japan should add dynamism to the defense concept instead of remaining static and passive against diversifying contingencies and threats. The new defense concept replacing the traditional Basic Defense Force Concept was the Dynamic Defense Force Concept, which pursues readiness, mobility, flexibility, sustainability, and versatility in defense policy (Ministry of Defense 2010: 6-7). With regard to China, NDPG 2010 stated that the expanding and non-transparent China presented a “concern” to the global security environment (*ibid.*: 4).

Surprisingly, the discussions on the exercise of CSD and the security policy shift did not suddenly stop in the DPJ cabinets, but continued to take stronger response against changing security environment. Thus, one noteworthy change that occurred in Japan was that security policies were no longer decided by the policy orientation of parties. Instead, they are designed upon objective analysis of the security environment in a given period (Hosoya 2017: 223). The rise of China, North Korean nuclear development, and international terrorism, all factors that have been undoubtedly influential since the 2000s, forced Japan to pursue realist security policy regardless of which party led the cabinet.

Prime Minister Abe pushed for a realist approach in security policy after leading LDP to a

landslide victory in the 46th general election. Among many accomplishments by Abe, ones that stand out are the establishment of the “National Security Strategy” and the renewal of the NDPG. The “National Security Strategy” analysis concluded that Japan was facing a series of threats, such as changes in the balance of power, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the rise of China, and North Korea’s military buildup and provocations. Subsequently, it suggested that Japan should actively practice “proactive contribution to peace based on the principle of international cooperation” (Cabinet Secretariat 2013). The updated the National Defense Program Guidelines 2013 introduced a “Dynamic Joint Defense Force,” replacing the “Dynamic Defense Force” of NDPG 2010, to better cope with new threats in the rapidly changing security environment (Ministry of Defense 2013). The “Dynamic Joint Defense Force” was meant to flexibly deal with various emerging threats such as “gray zone” situations, with particular emphasis on the integrated capabilities of the Self Defense Forces (SDF), and it suggested strengthening the mobility of the SDF as a future task (Park 2015: 66). To enhance mobility and enable island operations, the Japanese government announced its plan to introduce amphibious capabilities that includes 3000 amphibious troops, landing crafts, and Osprey helicopters (Hughes 2016: 144). Given Japan’s current defense-related norms and strategies and defense spending and the actual military capabilities of the SDF from the post-Cold War period to the Abe Cabinet, it is clear that Japan’s anti-militarism has weakened. Japan is evolving into a “normal nation” that can always use its military capability and dispatch troops overseas against potential threats (Park 2015: 83).

From Engagement to Balancing

The Dwindling Number of Pro-Chinese Moderate Conservatives

Counter-measures against a rising power are generally carried out through balancing and bandwagoning (Yang and An 2017: 238). According to Steven M. Walt, balancing refers to “allying with others against the prevailing threat” (1987: 17) and it is implemented in two forms. One is external balancing, a strategy strengthening one alliance or weakening an opposing one, and the other is internal balancing, a strategy enhancing national capabilities such as economic and military strength in response to the potential threat (Waltz 1978: 180). Bandwagoning, on the other hand, refers to a state behavior aligning with emerging potential adversary (Walt 1987: 17). However, it is not realistic to divide the national strategy against a rising power into a dichotomous distinction between balancing and bandwagoning. Unless there is a situation like an outbreak of war, states do not adopt an extreme position (Yang and An 2017: 238). Hence, Japan’s China strategy is not biased toward one side. However, in the case of Japan’s China strategy, there was a significant shift from engagement to incipient balancing (Hughes 2016: 139-140).

Japan’s movement toward balancing had been underway since the early 1990s, amid a conservative shift in Japanese elites (Lee 2018: 193). The 1990s were the period when moderate conservatives in the LDP were in the mainstream. In terms of the China strategy, they preferred engagement over balancing and promoted the reconciliation of historical disputes with neighboring countries. However, since the 2000s, the number of moderate conservatives (or doves) in LDP

that led engagement and reconciliation began to dwindle (Nakano 2015/2016: 108). Ten years of recession allowed conservatives (or hawks) such as Machimura Nobutaka and Hosoda Hiroyuki appeal to ideology and to gain strength and control of the party (Winker 2013: 201-212). Such tendencies for policy change became evident in the Koizumi Cabinet. In tandem with the rightward shift of Japanese foreign policy, pro-Chinese moderate conservatives represented by Kato Koichi, Yamazaki Taku, and Koga Makoto rapidly weakened in the party (Lee 2016: 259-284).

The decline of the doves in the LDP, coupled with the generation shift within Chinese politics, shrunk the Sino-Japanese channel of communication, leading to a situation that hindered Japan from understanding China's intentions and strategies. A similar situation was evident at the government-level. Since the end of the Cold War, amid the realignment of U.S.-Japan relations, the American-school expanded influence, while the China-school declined in MOFA. In addition, bureaucrats in favor of balancing over engagement, such as Yachi Shotaro, were appointed to key posts in the field of foreign and security policy and exerted a strong influence on policy making (Pugliese 2017). Less communication between elites created an environment that increased uncertainty, and Japanese elites had no choice but to embrace balancing behavior in response (Hughes 2016: 126-127).

While Japan had been gradually revealing tendencies for balancing behavior regardless of who controlled the cabinet since the 2000s, there had been no apparent shift in the security policy. Changes were made within the realm of the *senshu boei* and the Yoshida Doctrine. Indeed, the rise of China sparked fierce debate between engagement and balancing. However, the engagement strategy toward China continued because the pro-Chinese moderate conservatives remained strong until the early and mid-2000s, and prevented a rapid shift to balancing behavior.

Change in the Policy Orientation

Perception Change in the LDP

The Japanese elites' policy orientation on the right of collective self-defense is an appropriate indicator that shows Japan's noteworthy movement toward balancing behavior. As mentioned above, the decision to allow the exercise of the right of collective self-defense was an example of Japan's balancing strategy targeted at China, and it showed Japan's deviation from the *senshu boei* and the Yoshida Doctrine. Hence, analyzing the change of policy preference of Japanese elites is useful in understanding why the shift of the Japanese security policy was so stark in the Second Abe Cabinet.

Data used in this research to study the policy orientation change was obtained from the University of Tokyo-Asahi Survey (UTAS),³ which surveys politicians' policy preferences on key policies and enables the analysis of how their policy orientation changed, as the same survey is carried out in every general election. The survey also provided reliable data and improved the low response rate by collaborating with major press outlets. This research particularly scrutinizes LDP representatives' policy orientation from the 43rd general election of

³ The University of Tokyo-Asahi Survey (UTAS) is conducted jointly by Masaki Taniguchi (Graduate School for Law and Politics, University of Tokyo) and the *Asahi Shimbun*.

2003 to the 47th general election of 2014. As UTAS carries out a policy-oriented analysis of all candidates, this study first narrowed the list to LDP candidates for each election and then narrowed it even further to those who successfully made it to the Diet. The reason for analyzing only the LDP representatives is that the ruling party has always won a majority in the 1955 system (except for the 2009 general election) and the ruling LDP has had the strongest influence on forming security discourse and had de facto authority in policy making. The policy orientation of LDP representatives is summarized in [Figure 1].

Opinion	General Election (%)				
	43 rd (2003)	44 th (2005)	45 th (2009)	46 th (2012)	47 th (2014)
Agree	14.9	19.7	32.7	71.4	60.4
Tend to Agree	29.2	29	44.5	25	36.7
Abstain	36.1	28.6	20	3.3	1.8
Tend to Oppose	10.4	13.9	2.7	0.4	0.7
Oppose	9.4	8.9	0	0	0.4

Fig. 1 Policy Orientation Regarding the Reinterpretation of CSD

The analysis reveals three major characteristics. One is that representatives who were against allowing the exercise of collective self-defense almost disappeared between 2005 and 2009. In the 2005 survey, representatives against the reinterpretation were at 22.8 percent and the figure dropped to 2.7 percent in 2009. The near-absence of anti-reinterpretation representatives demonstrates the decline of moderate conservatives, who adhered to the principle of international cooperation and favored a minimalist approach to national security. Moving on, between 2009 and 2012, the poll shows that representatives who abstained almost disappeared. 20 percent among all LDP winners abstained to reveal their opinion on the reinterpretation in 2009; this number decreased to 3.3 percent in 2012 and was further reduced to 1.8 percent in the 2014 poll. This decline represents the change of the faction's character. Another phenomenon that drew attention was the generation shift within the LDP. In the 46th general election in 2012, when 96.4 percent of LDP representatives were in favor of permitting the exercise of CDS, 120 were first-term representatives, which accounted for 40.8 percent of the total 294 LDP representatives.

LDP's Loss of Power and the Decline of the Moderate Conservatives

As mentioned above, while opponents of the reinterpretation among LDP representatives were at 22.8 percent in 2005, their numbers dropped significantly to 2.7 percent in 2009. To be specific, 33 anti-reinterpretation Diet members failed to win in a seat in the Diet.

What is noteworthy here is the decline of pro-Chinese moderate conservatives. Although Japan's China strategy was gradually moving toward balancing, it was still more tilted to engagement. In fact, it was moderate conservatives in the LPD that kept the engagement strategy. However, Prime Minister Koizumi's controversial actions, such as his regular visits to the Yasukuni Shrine and the dumpling incident, triggered a series of anti-Japanese demonstrations in China and South Korea. Under Koizumi's call for structural reform, pro-Chinese representatives

became the subject of scorn as “they were classified as an old-fashioned politicians indulged in outdated thoughts who only yielded to neighboring countries” (Lee 2016: 270-273). As a result, the engagement strategy began to lose its appeal. Since then, the LDP has been dominated by the Machimura and the Hosoda factions, which represent the hawks in the party, and they appealed to ideology and stronger foreign policy. Japanese society responded to the rightward drive and punished the old generation. In accordance with the growing demand for balancing, Kono Yohei of the Kochikai faction and Yamazaki Gaku of the Yamazaki faction, representing the old era, lost seats in the Diet. While Kato Koichi managed to survive the 2009 general election, pro-Chinese moderate conservatives lost significant power during the Koizumi era.

Change in the Characteristics of the Faction

Another important change witnessed in the survey is that representatives choosing “abstain” almost disappeared in surveys between 2009 and 2012. LDP representatives who abstained in 2009 were 20 percent of the total winners, while the figure decreased to 3.3 percent in 2012 and further dropped to 1.8 percent in 2014. To be specific, 16 out of 22 LDP Diet members who abstained in 2009 changed their positions to “agree” in the 2012 survey.

Significant shift of the policy orientation may be the result of a simple act of compliance to the party platform, as the reinterpretation of the CSD was one of the main parts of LDP’s election manifesto in the 2012 general election. However, in a particular period tensions were running high over the security environment surrounding Japan. A clash between a Japanese Coast Guard patrol boat and a Chinese fishing boat in September 2010 initiated a new phase in the debate between balancing and engagement. After the incident, nearly 2,800 protesters at the Chinese Embassy in Japan staged a protest to denounce China’s actions. Meanwhile, former Tokyo Governor Ishihara Shintaro’s statement at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, D.C. in 2012 about Tokyo purchasing the Senkaku Islands added fuel to anti-Japanese sentiment (Smith 2014: 217-219). Ishihara’s radical speech served as an opportunity for the Japanese people to reflect on the government’s “powerlessness” and China’s “aggressiveness.” The perception that China is aggressive and Japan is weak led to more demands for stronger balancing (Lee 2018: 196). Therefore, the increase in support for reinterpretation between 2009 and 2012 reflects the changed threat perception among LDP representatives and the rising demands of Japanese society for a proactive response against China.

In addition, the rise of China changed the character of the factions, especially Kochikai, which represents the moderates in LDP. Being the most powerful faction in LDP for most of the post-war period, Kochikai was a faction that strictly adhered to Yoshida Doctrine, protected the pacifist Article 9, and pursued international cooperation. However, internal conflict within the party, the decline of pro-Chinese moderate democrats, and the rise of China triggered faction members to support stronger policies against the emerging threat (Zakowski 2011). As representatives leading the next generation of the faction such as Kono Taro, Nakatani Gen, and Kishida Fumio started favoring the balance strategy over the course of moderate conservatives’ decline, the party’s perceptions of the threat and of countermeasures have changed. In fact, in cases like Kono Taro and Nakatani Gen, they abstained from showing their opinion regarding reinterpretation. This may have been because despite refusing to reveal their preference, they demanded the full use of force through a constitutional amendment. In any

case, what was clear was that there was a considerable gap in terms of threat perception and external strategy between the traditional Kochikai and its' successors. Today, Kochikai shares the threat perception of Prime Minister Abe, who is pursuing a proactive defense policy.

LDP's Support of Collective Self-Defense

The 2012 UTAS survey shows a generational shift within the LDP. For most of the post-war period, the LDP was mostly led by the "mainstream conservatives (*hoshu honryu*)" mainly represented by the Kochikai, who pursued the principle of international cooperation. In other words, except for periods led by Fukuda Takeo and Nakasone Yasuhiro, it can be said that for 40 years since the Ikeda Cabinet, doves (moderate conservatives) continued to be at the center of Japanese politics. However, from the 2000s, the "conservative side-stream (*hosyu-boryu*)" or the hawks represented by Mori Yoshiro, Koizumi Junichiro, Abe Shinzo, and Fukuda Yasuo have mainly held power (Igarashi 2015). This rightward movement deepened in the 46th general election held in 2012, when first-term representatives accounted for 120 (40.8 percent) of the 294 LDP representatives elected. They were called the "Children of Abe" and brought about a major change to the LDP's personnel structure (Ibid.: 110). What is noteworthy here is that, leaving out 15 representatives (six elected representatives who abstained to answer on the constitutional reinterpretation issue and nine who did not respond to the survey), 105 first-term representatives supported reinterpretation.

First-term representatives may have reluctantly supported the reinterpretation of CSD simply to follow the party platform during the election. However, such an assumption is an oversimplification, as the first-term representatives share a distinct characteristic. Also called the Heisei generation, they are mainly from the younger generation who were born in the 1960s and 1970s and entered maturity in the Heisei era. Unlike the previous generation, the Heisei generation has not experienced the World War. Subsequently, they have no memory of war and have no guilt regarding Japanese imperialism. They are displeased with Japan's weakening international prestige (Pyle 2007: 358). For them, friction over the Senkaku Islands is not acceptable. Hence, they disapprove of a minimalist approach to national security, and they prefer balancing over engagement when coping with an external threat. The "Children of Abe" or the young members of the Diet representing the Heisei generation are trying to regain Japan's lost status as quickly as possible. To realize their wishes, they strongly support Prime Minister Abe's "proactive pacifism."

Kantei-led Policy Making in the Abe Cabinet

Kantei's Firmer Grip on Policy Making

Elite discourse and policy orientation would not lead to the desired policy if they do not echo in the policy making process at the government level. There must be a strong cabinet and a powerful prime minister to realize such demands in policy. However, Japan did not have a powerful prime minister to enforce a stronger security policy. Amid the rightward movement

both in the elite's security discourse and the LDP representatives' policy orientation toward demanding security reform since the 1990s, it was not until Japan established institutions to bolster the prime minister's authority that Japan began reflecting a realist approach to security policy.

Japan was widely known for having a strong ruling party and a centralized political system. On the other hand, the Japanese prime minister, who is the head of the ruling party, was generally perceived as weak and characterless. Such a powerless prime minister marks a stark contrast to Western European parliamentary democracies, where prime ministers wield power over the ruling party and have a firm grip on overall state governance (Krauss and Nyblade 2005: 358). As such, not much room was allowed for the prime minister in the Japanese policy making process. In other words, decision-making was not top-down, as in other parliamentary democracies; instead, it was bottom-up, involving multiple actors and interests. The Japanese prime minister's main task was limited to mediating between the various interests concerned (Shinoda 2004: 38).

Policy making in the past was led by bureaucrats and the ruling party's internal policy subcommittees. Policies were mainly drafted by the bureaucrats through an internal consultation process within their respective ministries, and cabinet decisions following ministerial reviews were a mere formality (ibid.: 38-40). In the LDP, it was in the subcommittees of the Policy Affairs Research Council (PARC) where the initial review on policy was conducted. Each subcommittee was composed of *zoku giin* or the policy tribes, who are LDP Diet members with expertise in a specific field; the policy tribes hold Policy Advisory Councils (*seimu shingikai*) to review the policy draft from the government. The draft is then passed on to the Diet for further review. However, PARC's decision influenced Diet's. Under the coalition government that has been in place since 1993, cabinet decisions tend to align with party member consensus. However, decisions are made with simple intra-party coordination when the LDP is in a dominant position (ibid.: 40).

It was Ozawa Ichiro who raised the issue of having a weak prime minister. In *Blueprint for a New Japan*, he proposed that Japan needs "a comprehensive and strategic decision-making apparatus (Ozawa, 1993/1994: 25)." Ozawa's wish was realized with the administrative reform led by Hashimoto Ryutaro. The extensive reform led to the emergence of institutions strengthening the Kantei (Shinoda 2004: 14). Administration reform disintegrated the function of MOF (Takenaka 2006: 77-78) and strengthened the Cabinet Secretariat (*naikaku kanbou*), Kantei's support body, to ensure the prime minister could fully exert his leadership. Indeed, the influence of bureaucrats, PARC, and intra-coalition politics could not be stamped out completely, but administrative reform and the Cabinet Secretariat-centered policy making process served as a trigger to deepen the transition from a bureaucrat-led to a Kantei-led policy making system (Nonaka and Aoki 2016: 235).

It was Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro who began capitalizing on the reinforced cabinet function. Koizumi capitalized bureaucrats from each ministries, outside experts, and the parliamentary secretary and the senior vice minister of the Cabinet Secretariat to cope with key national policies. He also established multiple policy councils, such as the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy, for effective and efficient policy making. With the reinforced cabinet function, Koizumi took the initiative in broader policy areas and utilized the elevated position of the prime minister. The passing of the Emergency Law and the Anti-terrorism Special

Measures Law were typical cases that indicated the presence of a stronger prime minister.

Cabinet Secretariat-centered Kantei-led politics was strengthened even further by Abe Shinzo. The Cabinet Secretariat has authority over general administrative support, including intelligence gathering and analysis, to support the prime minister and the cabinet secretary. It was in charge of the overall economy, foreign, and security policies. Prime Minister Abe took initiative in increasing the size of the cabinet secretariat to allow the Kantei to have a greater role in policy making (Mulgan 2017: 35). The total number of employees working for the cabinet secretariat under the Second Abe Cabinet exceeded 1000 individuals, which was ten times greater than 25 years ago (Nonaka and Aoki 2016: 14). Abe completely controlled the beefed-up cabinet secretariat. He also went even further and utilized policy councils to ensure the prime minister receives expert advice and strengthen the prime minister's ability to draft policies. One typical example of this was the National Security Council (NSC). With the establishment of the Japanese version of the NSC, the prime minister's decision-making authority increased in the field of national defense and security. Also, the "Four Ministers Meeting," consisting of the prime minister, cabinet secretary, and the ministers of national defense and foreign affairs, was established to ensure that the prime minister could make decisions quickly in case of any crisis (Jeon 2014: 91). On top of that, the National Security Secretariat was established as the standing body under the NSC (Nakakita 2017: 115) to ensure timely and effective responses to crises. These endeavors to streamline the policy making process and to reinforce the role of the prime minister and the cabinet secretariat solved the problem of a lack of coordination and bureaucratic inefficiency, particularly in the field of foreign and security policy.

Prime Minister Abe also sought firmer control over the bureaucrats, for example by installing the Cabinet Bureau of Personnel Affairs (Go 2017: 46). Traditionally, each ministry and agency had control over their organization. Instead, the cabinet secretary was granted the power to appoint 670 high- and working-level bureaucrats. The initial purpose of such a measure was to appoint the most capable and appropriate individual to each post, but the true intention behind the scenes was to select individuals that can help facilitate rapid decision-making by the Kantei (Mulgan 2017: 46). This deepening grip on bureaucrats enabled the Kantei and the secretariat to wield the bureaucrats to achieve their political agenda (Nonaka and Aoki 2016: 236). On top of the fact that Abe introduced a personnel system that allowed the prime minister direct control over appointments, Abe had a unique approach to personnel affairs. Unlike his predecessors, who had tendencies to exclude potential political enemies, Abe embraced his adversaries in order to remove any possible sources of conflict. Abe appointed potential candidates for party presidency, Tanigaki Sadakazu and Ishiba Shigeru, to critical posts: LDP secretary-general and Minister of Overcoming Population Decline and Vitalizing Local Economy (Mulgan 2017: 59). This tendency marks a stark contrast to Koizumi's style of excluding political adversity and showing exceptional favoritism to those who were loyal to him (Shimizu 2005: 363-364).

Another prominent feature of Kantei-led politics under the Second Abe Cabinet was that the prime minister made active and effective use of experts in the policy making process. Under the Abe Cabinet, experts do not merely provide policy advice; in fact, they tend to lead and dominate the policy making process. The Abe Cabinet has been carrying out closed-door policy making by organizing a personal advisory panel for the prime minister and referring the policy proposals derived from the panel to a cabinet decision (Mitani 2015: 66-68). Advisory panels

are composed of individuals backing up the prime minister's policy preference. A typical example of this closed-door advisory panel is the "Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security," which proposed to permit the use of collective self-defense and reexamine and improve relevant domestic laws (Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security 2014).

Removing the Obstacles

Prime Minister Abe made full use of the reinforced Kantei to realize his long-cherished ambition to allow the exercise of collective self-defense. However, to make this happen he had to persuade the Cabinet Legislation Bureau (CLB), which had been persistently refusing any form of revision or reinterpretation on the right of collective self-defense. On top of that, Abe also had to persuade the pacifist coalition party, Komeito. To take a leap forward, Abe's first move was to concentrate on economic policy rather than to bring up controversial security policy and trigger unnecessary political strife, at least until the party won the Upper House election and escaped "*nejire kokkai*." While keeping a low profile, Abe began persuading the CLB.

The CLB was often called the "guardian of legislation." Draft legislations or policies could not be referred to the cabinet unless they went through the CLB review. Concerning the interpretation of the right of collective self-defense in particular, the CLB had consistently adhered to the principle: "allowed in international law, not in the constitution (Sakata and Kawaguchi 2014)." In this sense, it is not an exaggeration to state that the CLB's *raison d'etre* was the interpretation of Article 9 of the Constitution. The CLB had been maintaining its ground that allowing the exercise of the right of collective self-defense would expand the definition of self-defense and eventually make the pacifist constitution futile (Asahi Shinbunsha 2015: 40). Therefore, the CLB was the biggest obstacle for Abe.

Instead of persuading the CLB through the democratic process, Abe decided to replace the CLB director-general with one who aligned with his interests. He appointed Komatsu Ichiro, a former diplomat and the Japanese ambassador to France, who served as the chief of international law back in the First Abe Cabinet as the next director-general of the CLB (ibid.: 42-44). Komatsu's appointment was a shocking and unprecedented one, as he was the first inexperienced outsider to be the CLB director-general (Asakura 2016: 174-175) and was a strong supporter of allowing the right of collective self-defense.

The effects of the replacement of the CLB director-general and the Kantei's dominance over the CLB were explicitly apparent in the cabinet decision-making process. The CLB had wrapped up the legislative review on the reinterpretation in just one day and had not left a single official document. Its prestige was reduced to an organization swayed by political machinations (ibid.: 173-174). CLB was no longer the guardian of the law.

Another obstacle that Abe had to overcome was Komeito, the coalition party, as the reinterpretation of the constitution regarding the right of collective self-defense required its consent. Based on the Buddhist organization Sokagakkai, Komeito promotes pacifism. Its founder had once been imprisoned for resisting the militarism during the World War, and it had a history of forming an alliance with the Japanese Communist Party and criticizing the LDP's foreign policy (Chun 2000: 238). Such a strong position of pacifism was consistent concerning the issue of collective self-defense, and Komeito kept denouncing the LDP's calls for

reinterpretation (Lee 2015: 13).

To suppress Komeito's resistance, Abe and the LDP touched on the issue of the separation of religion and politics. This was a threatening message to Komeito, as it implied that the government may reverse its' position that the relationship between Komeito and the Sokkagakkai does not violate the principle concerning the connection between religion and politics (ibid.: 16-17). Komeito failed to overcome pressure from Abe and finally agreed to a cabinet decision on allowing the exercise of the right of collective self-defense. The ruling coalition committee announced the "Cabinet Decision on Development of Seamless Security Legislation to Ensure Japan's Survival and Protect its People" on July 1st, 2014. It was the moment when Japan finally moved on from its post-war security policy.

Conclusion

Japan's post-war security policy was developed with the principle of *senshu boei*, which allows the use of only the minimum force necessary in an event of an attack. Policy changes were so gradual that they did not conflict with the traditional security policy. Immediately after the war, Japan did not even approve the right of self-defense, but it did incrementally expand the domain and conditions for the use of force by developing and revising the National Defense Program Guidelines, National Security Strategy, domestic security bills, and the guidelines with the U.S. in response to external threats.

Finally, Japan virtually lifted the ban on the use of force in a Cabinet decision to permit the right of collective self-defense. Cabinet aimed to limit the scope of Japan's actions regarding the right of collective self-defense so that it would be exercised only under particular conditions; that is, a crisis must escalate to an to a level that poses clear danger to Japan's survival. However, as defining the type of crisis is subjective, whether or not to exercise the right of collective self-defense depends on the government's discretion. The condition-based decision to exercise collective self-defense was, in fact, a limitless one after all. Japan can now use force in support of its allies anywhere with government discretion, allowing it to break away from the *senshu boei* and the Yoshida Doctrine.

The right to exercise collective self-defense is part of Japan's balancing behavior. Balancing requires elite consensus regarding an external threat, the elites' willingness to balance, and a strong government to push forward such a strategy. During the Second Abe Cabinet, all of these interests finally aligned. Prior to the Second Abe Cabinet, elites could not reach an agreement on the external threat, especially on the issue of China. Threat perceptions toward China varied; a significant number of elites considered China as a neighbor to engage with and ensure reciprocity. At the same time, however, normal nationalists, who perceived China as a threat, surged in response to the emerging menace. Normal nationalists preferred balancing and promoted a proactive defense policy against China. However, despite the effort to build up its defense capabilities, Japan was missing a legal basis to realize a strengthened security policy. The Second Abe Cabinet managed to break through this stalemate. With a powerful Kantei, Abe effortlessly removed the director-general of the CLB, who persistently opposed any form of reinterpretation of the constitution. Upon brief consultation with the coalition, the Diet, and the cabinet successfully enacted the reinterpretation of the constitution to allow the right to

exercise collective self-defense.

Following the decision to reinterpret the constitution, Japan has stressed that there is a *hadome* in the use of force and there is no change to *senshu boei*. Nevertheless, Japan has officially gained the freedom to use force in areas beyond Japan. Furthermore, conducting military operations all over the world is no longer “wishful thinking” for Japan, as it made clear that it will increase defense expenses and augment its assets, ensuring long-range operations.

Japan successfully broke from a prolonged status quo by de facto scrapping *senshu boei*, thereby putting an end to the Yoshida Doctrine. Japan at last virtually lifted restraints on the use of force and expanded its area of operation. Now it is buttressing its defense capabilities for national defense as well as for contributing to the international society by realizing “proactive pacifism based on international cooperation.” Nevertheless, the concept of pacifism accompanying military buildup is a double-edged sword that has the potential to increase regional instability rather than facilitate peace. Whether Japan will promote regional peace or increase instability remains to be seen. However, one thing seems to be clear based on Japan’s recent moves to become “assertive.” The chrysanthemum that once bloomed on the ashes of war has withered.

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