

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR “CONTEMPORARY SECURITY CHALLENGES TO JAPAN”

A DISCUSSION WITH PROFESSOR ADAM LIFF

- Organizing Questions
- Why does Japan depend on the United States for its security?
 - How have Japan’s security concerns changed since the end of the Cold War, and how has Japan responded to this new environment?
 - How can Japan balance its constitutional commitment to avoiding military conflict with the need to ensure its security?

Introduction

During the Cold War, Japan’s main security concern was tension with the Soviet Union, and its alliance with the United States was essential for ensuring its defense given the limitations on using military force in Japan’s Constitution. Since the Cold War, Japan’s security environment has changed dramatically, and it now faces a number of security challenges. This lesson explores how Japan’s security concerns, alliances, and self-defense and offensive capabilities have shifted to address Japan’s contemporary security environment.

- Objectives
- In this lesson, students will
- enumerate Japan’s four principal security challenges;
 - evaluate the best way for Japan to balance its security needs with its constitutional prohibition on military force;
 - articulate the advantages and disadvantages for the United States and Japan in maintaining a security alliance; and
 - analyze the effects of a more active Japan military role on key neighbors and partners (United States, South Korea, Japan, Australia, North Korea, China).

Materials

Video Lecture, “*Contemporary Security Challenges to Japan*,” online at <http://spice.fsi.stanford.edu/multimedia/contemporary-security-challenges-japan>

Projection 1, *Definition of National Security*

Projection 2, *Voting on Japan’s Security Options*

Projection 3, *Changes to Voting on Japan’s Security Options*

Handout 1, *Video Lecture Prompts*, 30 copies

Handout 2, *Key Dates in Japan’s Security History*, 30 copies

Handout 3, *Debate on Japan’s Security Options*, 30 copies

Answer Key 1, *Video Lecture Prompts*

Answer Key 2, *Key Dates in Japan’s Security History*

Teacher Information, *Video Lecture Transcript*

- Equipment** Computer with Internet access and a Flash-enabled or HTML5-supported web browser
- Computer projector and screen
- Computer speakers
- Scissors and adhesive material (tape, glue sticks, etc.) to cut out and reorder list of events on Handout 2
- Teacher Preparation** Instructions and materials are based on a class size of 30 students. Adjust accordingly for different class sizes.
1. Make the appropriate number of copies of handouts.
 2. View Video Lecture, “*Security Challenges to Japan*,” by Adam Liff (duration: 14 minutes, 23 seconds).
 3. Become familiar with the content of the projections, handouts, answer keys, and teacher information.
 4. Set up and test computer, projector, speakers, and streaming video lecture. Confirm that you are able to play the video lecture and project sound audibly to students.
- Time** Two 50-minute class periods
- Procedures** **Day One**
1. Inform students that this lesson centers on Japan’s changing security situation and one issue unique to Japan: ensuring its security in a dynamic region of the world while remaining true to a clause in its Constitution that renounces the use of force in settling international conflicts.
 2. Display Projection 1, *Definition of National Security*, and ask students to name some security threats they believe their country faces. Bring up terrorism, cyber attacks, and prevention of transportation of key resources if students do not mention these.
 3. Distribute one copy of Handout 1, *Video Lecture Prompts*, to each student and instruct them to read through the questions and key terms on the handout.
 4. Begin viewing Video Lecture, “*Security Challenges to Japan*.” Remind students to take notes related to the questions on Handout 1.
 5. After the video lecture, inform students that understanding the timeline of key events related to Japan’s security will help make sense of the lecture. Distribute one copy of Handout 2, *Key Dates in Japan’s Security History*, to each student. Provide students time to match the dates to the events, and then cut out each row and reorder them chronologically. You may allow students to work in groups if they find it difficult to put the events in the correct order.

6. Collect Handout 2 for assessment.
7. Display Projection 2, *Voting on Japan's Security Options*. Ask each student to vote on one of the four options. Write down the number of votes per option in column 2.
8. Distribute one copy of Handout 3, *Debate on Japan's Security Options*, to each student. Inform students that they will be arguing for the option they voted for in the next class period. As homework, they need to read the handout and write down points they want to make in favor of their option. (Note: as an alternative, you can divide the class into four or eight groups and assign each group one of the four options.)

Day Two

1. Play the video lecture a second time, informing students that this is their chance to complete their answers to the questions on Handout 1, *Video Lecture Prompts*. (Note: as the video plays, transfer the data on number and percentage of votes from Projection 2 to the "pre-debate" columns of Projection 3. You will refer to this later in the class period.)
2. Inform students that they now have 10 minutes to prepare for the debate. Group students together with others who chose their option (e.g., all students arguing for Option A will join one group), and ask each group to choose one student as a spokesperson.
3. After 10 minutes, ask the spokesperson from Group A to argue for why this is the best security option for Japan. Remind him/her that there is a three-minute time limit, and use a timer to enforce this limit.
4. Repeat the previous step for the other three groups (B, C, and D).
5. Once all four groups have presented, display Projection 3, *Changes to Voting on Japan's Security Options*. Ask each student to vote for the option they believe is best now that they have heard all arguments.
6. Record the votes in the "post-debate" columns on Projection 3. Determine which group convinced the greatest percentage of voters to move to their option; this group is the winner of the debate.
7. Use the following questions to lead a class discussion related to the debate:
 - Were you surprised about the top vote-getter? Why or why not?
 - If your vote changed, what convinced you to choose a different option?
 - What did you find to be the most convincing piece of information as you made your decision?
 - How would your vote have changed, if at all, if Japan's Constitution did not have a prohibition on the use of force?
8. End the lesson by asking students to write their responses to the questions on Handout 1, *Video Lecture Prompts*, as homework. Collect these as the beginning of the next class period.

**Optional
Activity**

One option for extending this lesson is to imagine that Japan amends its Constitution to allow for a normal military capable of undertaking offensive operations and that Japan removes U.S. bases and troops from its soil (i.e., Option A on Handout 3). Assign students to the role of ambassador to Japan from one of the following countries: China, North Korea, South Korea, and the United States. In this role, students write a press release with its government's response to this constitutional amendment in which it highlights its country's hopes and concerns.

Assessment

The following are suggestions for assessing student work in this lesson:

1. Informally evaluate student responses to Handout 1, *Video Lecture Prompts*, using Answer Key 1, *Video Lecture Prompts*, as a guide.
2. Use Answer Key 2, *Key Dates in Japan's Security History*, to evaluate students' ability to properly order the events on Handout 2, *Key Dates in Japan's Security History*, and match them with the correct dates.
3. Evaluate arguments in the class debate, assessing how accurately and appropriately students reference the video lecture and primary sources included in Handout 3, *Debate on Japan's Security Options*.
4. Assess student participation in group and class discussions, evaluating students' ability to
 - clearly state their opinions, questions, and/or answers;
 - provide thoughtful answers;
 - exhibit sensitivity toward different cultures and ideas;
 - respect and acknowledge other students' comments; and
 - ask relevant and insightful questions.

DEFINITION OF NATIONAL SECURITY

National security is “the ability of a state to cater for the protection and defense of its citizenry.”

Source:
United Nations: <https://unchronicle.un.org/article/national-security-versus-global-security>

VOTING ON JAPAN'S SECURITY OPTIONS

Which of the following four options do you think is the best choice for Japan to balance its desire to avoid military conflict with the need to ensure its security?

	# of Votes	% of Votes
Option A: Japan should amend its Constitution to allow for a normal military with offensive capabilities, allowing U.S. bases on its soil to close		
Option B: Japan should continue to depend on the United States for its security, but should pay the United States more in exchange for its commitment to defending Japan		
Option C: No change to current situation		
Option D: Japan should overturn the 2014–2015 reinterpretation of the Constitution, returning to the pre-2014 arrangement in which Japan could not use any force unless in self-defense		

CHANGES TO VOTING ON JAPAN'S SECURITY OPTIONS

	Pre-Debate		Post-Debate	
	# of Votes	% of Votes	# of Votes	% of Votes
Option A: Japan should amend its Constitution to allow for a normal military with offensive capabilities, allowing U.S. bases on its soil to close				
Option B: Japan should continue to depend on the United States for its security, but should pay the United States more in exchange for its commitment to defending Japan				
Option C: No change to current situation				
Option D: Japan should overturn the 2014–2015 reinterpretation of the Constitution, returning to the pre-2014 arrangement in which Japan could not use any force unless in self-defense				

VIDEO LECTURE PROMPTS

Lecture Title: “**Contemporary Security Challenges to Japan**”

Lecturer: **Adam Liff**

Adam P. Liff is Assistant Professor of East Asian International Relations in Indiana University’s new School of Global and International Studies. At SGIS, Adam is also the founding director of the “East Asia and the World” speaker series, faculty affiliate at the Center on American and Global Security, and senior associate at the China Policy Research Institute. He holds a Ph.D. and M.A. in Politics from Princeton University and a B.A. from Stanford University. Professor Liff’s research and teaching focus on international relations and security studies—with a particular emphasis on contemporary security affairs in the Asia-Pacific region; the foreign relations of Japan and China; U.S. policy toward the Asia-Pacific (esp. U.S. security alliances); the continuing evolution of Japan’s postwar security policy profile; and the rise of China and its impact on its region and the world.

Questions

Please keep the following questions in mind as you listen to the lecture. After the lecture, answer the questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. How did the end of the Cold War change Japan’s security relationships?
2. What are some of the reasons that Japan has adopted a more proactive approach to its defense and security since the Cold War?
3. What are the four main security challenges that Japan faces today?

Defined Terms (in order of mention):

Cold War—a term used to describe the state of tension between the non-communist and communist blocs after World War II; the two great superpowers engaged in this conflict were the United States and the Soviet Union. The Cold War ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)—Japan’s largest political party, which has held power almost continuously since its formation in 1955. Considered a politically conservative party, the LDP has generally worked closely with business interests and followed a pro-U.S. foreign policy.

“checkbook diplomacy”—a term used to describe, often negatively, Japan’s relative lack of involvement during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Due to the restrictions on use of military force its 1947 Constitution, Japan limited its involvement in the war to financial contributions despite U.S. pressure to contribute troops and equipment.

National Security Council (in Japan)—an inter-agency body that coordinates Japan’s national security policies. It was formed in December 2013 and is modeled after the U.S. National Security Council.

U.S.–Japan Guidelines for Defense Cooperation—a set of parameters that outline how the United States and Japan will cooperate in matters of defense under normal circumstances, in case of an armed attack against Japan, and in situations in areas surrounding Japan. These

Guidelines were originally articulated in 1978, and have since been updated twice: first in 1997, and again in 2015.

intercontinental ballistic missile—a guided missile that can deliver weapons to targets at least 5,500 km (3,400 miles) away

Senkaku Islands (in Japanese) / Diaoyu Islands (in Chinese)—an archipelago of uninhabited islands in the East China Sea controlled by Japan but claimed by Japan, China, and Taiwan. Conflict between China and Japan over the islands has escalated since September 2012.

1960 Security Treaty, Article Five—portion of the security treaty between the United States and Japan stating that the United States would respond to any attack on Japanese territory

Peace Clause of Japan's Constitution—nickname for Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, which came into effect in 1947. The article formally renounces the sovereign right of belligerency and aims at an international peace based on justice and order. The article also states that, to accomplish these aims, armed forces with war potential will not be maintained.

People's Liberation Army (PLA)—the national army of the People's Republic of China

destroyer—a long-distance naval warship

fire-controlled radar—a radar system designed specifically to direct weapons toward their targets

Aegis capabilities—a U.S. combat system designed to intercept and shoot down enemy ballistic missiles

PAC-3—a system of surface-to-air missiles that can be used to shoot down ballistic missiles

Alliance Coordination Mechanism—a bi-lateral coordination mechanism designed to enhance cooperation between the United States and Japan during a crisis

KEY DATES IN JAPAN'S SECURITY HISTORY

The lecture mentions several key dates related to Japan's security historical and contemporary security challenges. These 14 dates are listed in chronological order in the following box. Match these dates with the appropriate event as mentioned in the lecture, then cut out the strips and arrange them in chronological order.

Dates (listed in chronological order)

1945-1952	1991	2011	2014-2015
1947	1997	2012	2015
1947-1989	1998	2013	
1960	2006	2014	

Date	Event
	Persian Gulf War breaks out. Japan contributes money to alliance fighting to remove Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait, but does not contribute any personnel or military power.
	Japan signs its Constitution, still in effect today.
	North Korea launches a two-stage intercontinental ballistic missile that crosses over Japanese archipelago.
	The United States and Japan sign a security treaty.
	Era of the Cold War, in which Japan sides with the United States as part of the Western Bloc, opposing the Soviet Union-led Eastern Bloc
	Japan establishes a National Security Council for the first time.
	The United States confirms that the U.S.–Japan Security Treaty applies to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands.
	U.S. Occupation of Japan after World War II
	North Korea tests first nuclear weapon.
	Japan's Cabinet and legislature agree on a reinterpretation of Japan's Constitution, allowing Japan to respond militarily to attacks on its allies.
	U.S.–Japan Guidelines for Defense Cooperation revised for the second time
	U.S. forces join with Japanese forces in recovery efforts related to the March 11th earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disaster.
	China begins more incursions into waters surrounding Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, raising tensions with Japan.
	U.S.–Japan Guidelines for Defense Cooperation revised for the first time

DEBATE ON JAPAN'S SECURITY OPTIONS

Instructions: Prepare an argument designed to convince your classmates why Japan should pursue a particular option for ensuring its security. The group that gets the greatest proportion of the class to change its vote from before the debate will be declared the winner.

The four options under debate are as follows:

- Option A: Japan should amend its Constitution to allow for a normal military with offensive capabilities, allowing U.S. bases on its soil to close
- Option B: Japan should continue to depend on the United States for its security, but should pay the United States more in exchange for its commitment to defending Japan
- Option C: No change to current situation
- Option D: Japan should overturn the 2014–2015 reinterpretation of the Constitution, returning to the pre-2014 arrangement in which Japan could not use any force unless in self-defense

You will have up to three minutes to present your argument verbally to your classmates. To prepare your argument, do the following:

- 1) Review the primary sources on the following pages.
- 2) Jot down below the main points you want to make in support of your argument and the most effective ways to make them.
- 3) Bring this handout to the next class period.

Primary Sources:**1) Japanese Constitution: Article 9**

Promulgated on 3 November 1946; entered into effect on 3 May 1947

CHAPTER II: RENUNCIATION OF WAR**Article 9.**

1. Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes.
2. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.

Text from: http://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html

2) Japanese-U.S. Security Treaty: Article 5

Signed 19 January 1960

TREATY OF MUTUAL COOPERATION AND SECURITY BETWEEN JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**ARTICLE V**

Each Party recognizes that an armed attack against either Party in the territories under the administration of Japan would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional provisions and processes. Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall be immediately reported to the Security Council of the United Nations in accordance with the provisions of Article 51 of the Charter. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security.

Text from: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/q&a/ref/1.html>

3) Reinterpretation of Japan's Constitution: excerpt

1 July 2014

Cabinet Decision on Development of Seamless Security Legislation to Ensure Japan's Survival and Protect its People

“ ... the Government has reached a conclusion that not only 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, and when there is no other appropriate means available to repel the attack and ensure Japan's survival and protect its people, use of force to the minimum extent necessary should be interpreted to be

permitted under the Constitution as measures for self-defense in accordance with the basic logic of the Government's view to date."

Text from: http://www.mofa.go.jp/fp/nsp/page23e_000273.html

4) Reactions to Japan's July 2014 Cabinet Decision

From the Chinese government:

"Beijing opposes Japan's act of hyping the China threat," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said at a daily briefing. The new policy "raises doubts about Japan's approach to peaceful development."

From the South Korean government:

South Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman Noh Kwang-il said: "The South Korean government views it as a significant revision to the defense and security policy under the postwar peace constitution, and is paying sharp attention to it."

From the U.S. government:

In Washington, State Department Deputy Spokeswoman Marie Harf said the U.S. welcomes Japan's new policy. "As you know, the U.S.-Japan alliance is one of our most important partnerships, security partnerships. And we value efforts by Japan to strengthen that security cooperation," Harf said.

Source: NDTV, 14 July 2014, <http://www.ndtv.com/world-news/japans-cabinet-eases-post-wwii-limits-on-military-587356>

VIDEO LECTURE PROMPTS

1. How did the end of the Cold War change Japan's security relationships?

Japan's main security alliances, and first and foremost the U.S.–Japan Security Alliance, were conceived as anticommunist, so the end of the Cold War required a shift in Japan's security focus. Rather than one clear adversary (such as the Soviet Union during the Cold War), Japan's security threats are more complex, and this has required changes to Japan's partnerships.

2. What are some of the reasons that Japan has adopted a more proactive approach to its defense and security since the Cold War?

Since the end of the Cold War, there has occasionally been sentiment in both Japan and the United States for Japan to shoulder more of the burden for its own defense. This began during the 1991 Persian Gulf War, when Japan was criticized for not providing more support beyond money to the coalition forces opposing Saddam Hussein. Within Japan, some groups have argued for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Japanese soil, especially in Okinawa, where the majority of U.S. military bases are concentrated. On the other hand, some groups in Japan worry that the U.S. commitment to defending Japan in potential disputes with China is delicate, and thus Japan should be more assertive in using military force.

However, the strict limitations on use of force in the Peace Clause of Japan's Constitution mean that Japan continues to rely on the United States as a crucial security partner.

3. What are the four main security challenges that Japan faces today?

Japan faces two concrete threats and two abstract threats. The two concrete threats are North Korea's advancing nuclear missile program, and the rapid rise of China as a military power in East Asia.

The two more abstract threats are the general instability in the balance of power in East Asia. The rapid rise of China and ongoing territorial disputes in the East China and South China Seas create an unpredictable security environment that warrants watching closely. The second issue is determining how Japan should adapt its military and security postures to meet the other three challenges. Japan's Constitution forbids the use of force in all cases except for self-defense or defense of its allies, and Japan still depends heavily on the U.S. military to protect its interests. Pressure has been building to allow the Japanese military to conduct operations that are more aggressive and assertive in nature, and it remains to be seen if and how Japan's security institutions will shift.

KEY DATES IN JAPAN'S SECURITY HISTORY

Date	Event
1945–1952	U.S. Occupation of Japan after World War II
1947	Japan signs its Constitution, still in effect today.
1947–1989	Era of the Cold War, in which Japan sides with the United States as part of the Western Bloc, opposing the Soviet Union-led Eastern Bloc
1960	The United States and Japan sign a security treaty.
1991	Persian Gulf War breaks out. Japan contributes money to alliance fighting to remove Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait, but does not contribute any personnel or military power.
1997	U.S.–Japan Guidelines for Defense Cooperation revised for the first time.
1998	North Korea launches a two-stage intercontinental ballistic missile that crosses over Japanese archipelago.
2006	North Korea tests first nuclear weapon.
2011	U.S. forces join with Japanese forces in recovery efforts related to the March 11th earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disaster.
2012	China begins more incursions into waters surrounding Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, raising tensions with Japan.
2013	Japan establishes a National Security Council for the first time.
2014	The United States confirms that the U.S.–Japan Security Treaty applies to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands.
2014–2015	Japan's Cabinet and legislature agree on a reinterpretation of Japan's Constitution, allowing Japan to respond militarily to attacks on its allies.
2015	U.S.–Japan Guidelines for Defense Cooperation revised for the second time

VIDEO LECTURE TRANSCRIPT

Adam Liff

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So before we talk about the contemporary security environment, I think it's important, to just to provide context, take a step back in time and briefly discuss some of the ways in which Japan's security environment has evolved since the end of the Cold War. After all, it's the case that many aspects of Japan's security policy, and very importantly its relationship with the United States, were shaped in a Cold War context, particularly during the U.S. occupation from 1945 to 1952.

So when we come to the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union forced a lot of important debates within Japan about its role in the region and the world, its domestic political institutions, and its relationship with the United States. So the collapse of the Soviet Union really ended the bipolar international system. And so the alliance had been defined as an anticommunist alliance immediately after the end of World War II. And so it needed to adapt to this change. And it wasn't smooth sailing. Early on after the collapse there was a sense that the alliance was adrift, it was in search of a purpose. And Yoichi Funubashi, former Editor-in-Chief of *Asahi Shimbun* coined this term "alliance adrift," which I think really captures the search for a purpose in the early post-Cold War environment.

So from the perspective of Japan's security policy, the Cold War was in many ways a simpler time. There was a clear existential threat by what was perceived to be an expansionist and ideological adversary in the Soviet Union. So adapting to this new complexity without that new threat in the post-Cold War period is one of the major challenges that faces Japan today. And debates continue 25 years later about how best to do that.

So the 1991 Persian Gulf War, after Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, provided a very early test. To many Japanese leaders then, but also now, Japan's response revealed how Japan's political system and institutions seem to be ill-equipped to respond to crises and in the eyes of many LDP leaders, the hit that Japan's international image took as a result of criticism of its primarily financial contributions, so-called "checkbook diplomacy." This provided a significant impetus for major reforms. So this reform push, born after the end of the Cold War, but also in response to the Persian Gulf War, was a major driver of a lot of the changes in the 1990s to Japan's security policy and institutions as well as the alliance itself. And so that push that began a long time ago has continued under Prime Minister Abe [today], and is reflected in some of the new institutions like Japan's new National Security Council, its first ever, which was established at the end of 2013, and also major revision to the U.S.-Japan Guidelines for Defense Cooperation which were revised in April 2015, after an earlier revision in 1997.

What security challenges does Japan face today?

There are a lot of security challenges that Japan faces in the contemporary international environment. Ask different people, they may point to different numbers or even define them a little bit differently. Myself, I would point to four. Two of them are concrete, either concrete threats or concrete potential threats. And two are more abstract but still important. And all four of them interact in really interesting and important ways.

So, first and foremost is North Korea's rapidly advancing nuclear missile programs. And so though the rise of China gets much of the press, it was actually revelations of North Korea's nuclear program that originally drive the U.S. and Japanese allies, drove those concerns about regional stability in the early and mid-1990s. And the potential threat to Japan of North Korea's missile program became abundantly clear on August 31, 1998, as you see in the map. This is when North Korea abruptly lobbed a two-stage intercontinental ballistic missile over the Japanese archipelago. And fast-forward to October 2006, when North Korea tests its first nuclear weapon, showing that it had this capability, and coupled with intermittent rhetorical threats from Pyongyang, North Korea has become a clear and present danger in the eyes of many defense planners in Japan and beyond, and certainly in Washington. And this has been one of the major drivers of some of these reforms that we've seen, as well as procurement decisions such as heavy investment in joint development of ballistic missile defense with Washington. But also more advanced intelligence collection capabilities, such as satellites.

Now that all said, second, the China factor's absolutely a big one. There's robust debate within Tokyo about the effect that China's rise has on Japan's security environment, and there's no clear consensus in this regard. But it's definitely a topic of debate. So most importantly in our view, most fundamentally is this objectively measurable shift in the military balance within the region over the past 20 or so years. And coupled with what's seen as China's relatively opaque decision-making process and relative lack of military transparency, that's ground for abstract concern. What does China's rise mean? Where is it headed, and what are its intentions? But particularly salient since roughly around 2010 or so is what Japanese leaders see as China's maritime advance but also its more increasingly assertive, both rhetorically and operationally, posture toward the Senkaku, or in Chinese, Diaoyu Islands, which Tokyo, of course, considers its own sovereign territory. Now it's important to note, when we're thinking about things in a historical context, how rapidly the situation has changed. Eighteen years ago in 1997 neither China's military modernization nor its policies and rhetoric towards sovereign, de-sovereignty claims in the East and South China Seas were major concerns, at least in Tokyo. China's official defense budget in 1997 was \$10 billion. At that moment in time it was roughly the same as Taiwan and one-fourth that of Japan's. Now fast-forward to today in 2016, Beijing's official defense budget is \$146 billion. It's more than three times Japan's and 13 times that of Taiwan. So that's fundamentally changed the strategic environment in the region.

The third factor, and more abstract, is this uncertainty about where the region is headed. It's a very dynamic region. But that means rapidly changing. And so how things are going to play out economically, militarily, diplomatically—these are all open-ended questions that we can't know the answer to today. In this regard, one issue that hasn't been talked about too much, but maybe we should be talking about a little bit more, particularly in the current campaign context, the presidential campaign, is the fact that over a period of decades, U.S. basic fundamental strategy toward the region has been largely consistent and bi-partisan. But there have been in Tokyo intermittent surges of concern about the credibility of the U.S. commitment to Japan's defense. This manifests most recently in repeated requests from the Japanese side for President Obama to state clearly and explicitly that the 1960 Security Treaty, Article Five, applies to the Senkaku Islands. He ultimately did in April 2014. But more recently, comments by some influential voices, including presidential candidates, at least raise questions about how the U.S. role is likely to evolve in the future. And in the midst of all this uncertainty, one of the fundamental questions facing Japanese leaders is, what role should Japan play? How can it best assure its own security in this dynamic context? And so more conservative leaders like Shinzo Abe, the current Prime Minister, advocate a more assertive posture, what he refers to as "proactive pacifism." And this is basically the idea that to ensure the peace, to ensure Japan's peace, Japan can no longer be

what he would consider relatively passive but must more actively, more assertively contribute to international peace and stability.

And, finally, in the background of all these other three issues that I've mentioned, is a fundamental dilemma that Japan's leaders have faced since 1947 when the Constitution was promulgated, but that continues to today. So from a realist standpoint Japan faces a number of seemingly obvious security challenges. But for a lot of complicated reasons, including the so-called Peace Clause of Japan's Constitution, which has never been revised, and also widespread popular opposition to the use of military force, there are limitations, at least so far, pretty significant ones, on what role it can play.

This fourth challenge is a bit abstract, but how Japanese leaders respond to it inevitably shapes Japan's response to those other challenges I was referring to. So over the past couple decades, Japan has adopted a number of significant reforms. But especially as it concerns, again, this use of military force, this fundamental question, major constraints still exist. Even after those changes that have made global headlines, many of which have been pushed through by the current administration. So that's why I've argued that many of these changes are best thought of as evolutionary as opposed to revolutionary because it's also important to note what hasn't changed.

Is there a risk of conflict between China and Japan over the East China Sea?

So as it concerns the issue of a possible conflict in the East China Sea, first I'd just like to stress the fact that we're even discussing this, or that policy makers have even started discussing this in the last couple of years, is pretty disturbing. At the end of the day we're talking about the world's second and third largest economies. And as the statement by President Barack Obama in April 2014 shows, the U.S., the first largest economy, would also be involved if, God forbid, a conflict were to occur. So conflict is unlikely but it's something that we do need to take seriously. And in this regard it seems pretty clear that neither Xi Jinping or Shinzo Abe or whoever their successors are seek a conflict. But my concern here is that some of China's policies, particularly since 2012, have effectively raised the risk that we'll see one even if we don't want to. It's still low, but it's something that we need to take seriously. So in this regard, the major concern is the possibility of a miscalculation or escalation as a result of a low-level incident. And in this regard, since September 2012, China's operations in the waters and airspace surrounding the islands leaves some grounds for concern. We've seen a historic and unprecedented rise in the frequency of Japanese air self-defense force scrambles in approaching Chinese planes. We've also seen, particularly since September 2012, an upsurge in the, from Japan's perspective, de facto territorial incursions into Japan's territorial waters by Chinese government vessels. Both the ships and planes are operating in relatively close proximity. There's always the risk of a possible clash.

Beyond that, there's also some concerns about reported incidents, such as the use in January 2013, by the Chinese side, of a PLA Navy destroyer, of what's called fire-controlled radar against a maritime self-defense force destroyer and a helicopter. And there have also been some relatively close encounters in the airspace by fighter jets. So that's something that we need to be paying attention to. And you want to make sure that the institutions and crisis management mechanisms are in place so that if something were to happen, even unintended, political leaders can respond rapidly and ensure that we don't see a war that no one wants to, no one wants to in the first place.

How has the U.S.–Japan alliance evolved in the face of a changing security environment?

There have been a lot of changes, some of them at the margins, some more significant, and many of them under the radar, metaphorically speaking. In response to North Korea's threat we've seen, as I mentioned earlier, a significant investment in joint development of ballistic missile defense, reflected in Aegis capabilities in the water, the Maritime Self-Defense Forces, new intelligence satellites, but also PAC-3 and more—other aspects of ballistic missile defense. There's been other joint development and collaboration in military technology as well. We've seen closer interoperability, we've also seen the co-location of forces, U.S. and Japanese forces, on bases in Japan.

Perhaps the most famous recent development is the July 2014, so-called reinterpretation of Japan's Constitution that was pushed through by the Abe Administration and Cabinet Resolution. And this allows Japan to exercise, a limited exercise of the U.N. Charter Sanction right of what's called "collective self-defense." And so what this means, in effect, is that under certain circumstances Japan might, for the first time, be able to come to the defense, using military force, of a U.S. or other allied naval vessel, or something else that comes under attack. And this is something that Japanese conservatives have been pushing for a relatively long time. And Abe was able to, with significant caveats, able to push through limited reinterpretation.

There's also been, as I mentioned earlier, the April 2015 revision of the U.S.–Japan Guidelines for Defense Cooperation. And there's a lot of things we could talk about there—expansion and cooperation in a new domains such as cyber and space. But also there's a new mechanism called the Alliance Coordination Mechanism. Now the meat needs to still be put on the bones of this—it's unclear what exactly it will entail—but many of the folks I talk to in Washington and Tokyo show that in 1997, the last time the Guidelines were revised, they created a bi-lateral coordination mechanism designed to enhance the cooperation in a crisis between the U.S. and Japan. But it was never actually utilized, even in some pretty significant crises such as 3/11, the nuclear disaster—tsunami, earthquake, and nuclear disaster, March 11th, 2011, in which the so-called Operation Tomodachi, or Operation Friendship, was one of the most significant developments in U.S.–Japan operational cooperation since the end of—since the Cold War, actually. But also was the largest mobilization of Japan's self-defense forces in history. And so what they're trying to do is develop more effective ways of cooperating. And that is relevant, not just in possible natural disaster responses, but also, hopefully won't happen, but a possible military conflict.

Another thing that's happening is that, in addition to bilateral tightening of the relationship, we also see Japan, with U.S. encouragement, expanding its cooperation and interoperability with some other countries, most notably Australia. So this is definitely a trend line that we should keep an eye on in the future.