



JUNE 2023

The National Security Strategy of Japan: An Analysis

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Edited by Aryan Gupta

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IB2306003

A New Emerging Landscape

The world as it is now, faces challenges and changes that define the dawn of a new era where concepts such as co-existential interdependence and multilateral globalisation cannot act as prime guarantors of peace, stability, and development. With the rising powers and influence of global superpowers, shifts in power balances across the globe and the ever-increasing geopolitical skirmishes, paired with the onslaught of global issues such as climate change, global warming and border conflicts, the free and open international order now finds itself at risk. Today, international relations can be characterised by the overlapping ideals of cooperation and head-to-head confrontations. As a result, many democratic, developed countries have made a commitment to uphold universal values including liberty, democratic government, respect for fundamental human rights, and adherence to the law. They have assumed a prominent position in efforts to build a world society where people may live in harmony and flourish alongside one another. One of these esteemed countries is Japan.

As a part of the Indo-Pacific, Japan finds itself within the epicentre of geopolitical issues and its security environment remains to be dynamically intricate. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine showcases the volatility of the geopolitical landscape. Moreover, it sheds light upon the actions of Russia, a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, breaching the very foundational principles of the organisation it stands for, all the while distorting the norms that help shape the world order. For Japan, this only increases the possibility and tangibility of a similar conflict, especially within East Asia. Furthermore, all around Japan, superpowers continue to expand their militaries, advance technologically, and bolster nuclear arsenals. Against the backdrop of such a complex security environment, paired with persistent domestic issues such as a declining and aging population and low fertility rates, Japan, in order to act for its national interest, including the peace and prosperity of the country and the safety of its people, works towards the harmonious coexistence of the international community. It has committed to achieve this by boosting its diplomatic endeavours and enhancing its military capabilities to back its diplomatic prowess. Inherently, Japan has introduced its National Security Strategy as a means to pursue this endeavour.

The National Security Strategy of Japan

The National Security Strategy of Japan starts with outlining the nation's interests as a basis for creating a security strategy. The Strategy outlines essential ideas about Japan's national security, which are based on its national interests and have been formed by the nation's postwar security history, experiences, and people's priorities. It also gives a general summary of the difficulties Japan is now facing in terms of its security. Based on these considerations, the Strategy sets the goals for Japan's national security and proposes tactical options for accomplishing them while using its vast national power. The foundations upon which these strategic approaches are carried out are also covered in the document of the National Security Strategy (National Security Council 2023).

The National Interests of Japan

Within its national interests, Japan vows to profusely defend its sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence while securing the safe lives of its nationals. Respecting its diverse history and flamboyant culture, Japan strives to uphold its peace and security through grounds of economic upliftment and work with other countries of the world for the establishment and functioning of a free and open economic platform to promote peaceful coexistence of all. Japan also strives to respect and safeguard the building blocks of the international society, namely: democracy, freedom, fundamental rights, the rule of law and the functioning of an international order based on the global rule of law. Furthermore, Japan also strives to build up its self- respect in the global spectrum , so that its citizens shall be regarded favourably around the world. It also drives the effort of a free and open international order, works for its stability, and uplifts the quotient of peace and co-prosperity, especially focusing upon the Indo-Pacific region (National Security Council 2023, 4).

Principles Regarding Japan's National Security

Through the policy of “Proactive Contribution to Peace” on international cooperation, Japan, depending upon itself as its main defender, announces the reinforcement of its defence capabilities to face the constantly evolving situations of the volatile world order. In that endeavour, it will keep making imperative changes to its policies and work further to protect the interests of the country as well as its citizens proactively. Furthermore, it advocates the ideal of upholding the international values of peace and harmony and respecting elements such as freedom, democracy and human rights while executing its security plans, acting as a model for other countries to follow in its footsteps to act the same way. Japan also reiterates its policy of adhering to maintaining an exclusively national defence-oriented program, eradicating any intentions or beliefs for its uprisal to a military power onto the global platform. Observing and accepting the existence of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles of non-possession, non-production, and non-introduction of nuclear weapons first imposed by Douglas MacArthur during the Allied occupation of Japan following the Second World War, Japan reiterates its willingness to create robust alliances and cooperate with like-minded countries wherein it has placed the US-Japan relations to be of paramount importance (National Security Council 2023, 4-5).

National Security Objectives of Japan

By fortifying its defence capabilities and security roles, Japan, paired with its primary ally: the USA, along with other allied states shall work to protect its sovereignty, freedom, and territorial integrity. Moreover, in case any threat breaches the boundaries of Japan, it shall paralyze and vanquish the threat itself while minimising the damage and try to bring the end to the conflict in such a way that protects and uplifts its national interests. Furthermore, through its security ideals, Japan seeks to create an international forum where it can grow its economy wherein the economic growth shall inherently improve the security environment of the nation, while maintaining its overwhelming technological advantages over other nations. Japan also emphasises its commitment to thwart the inception of a situation where a power can single-handedly shape the status quo of the world order, even more so in the Indo-Pacific region, promoting the creation and stabilisation of a free, open, and predictable international platform that adheres to the international rule of law. In order to tackle issues of climate change and the onslaught of infectious diseases, it wishes to

encourage and participate further in bilateral and multilateral cooperations and collaborations to formulate an environment where harmony is prevalent (National Security Council 2023, 10-11).

The Tactical Approaches Prioritised by Japan

Utilising the Main Elements of National Power

The main elements of the comprehensive national power of Japan remains to be its diplomatic prowess, and it continues to uphold its sentiment to create a diplomatic architecture where it can maintain trustworthy relations with its allies. Backing up the diplomatic dimension, Japan also has the element of its defence power with a concrete will to defend the nation against any threats to its national integrity. Being the third largest economy in the world, Japan advocates its economic growth to be the foundation of its security strategy and vows to undertake free and fair trade and investment activities. Through its advanced technological capabilities, it wishes to improve its security agendas and use them to tackle global issues such as global warming. Furthermore, Japan fortifies its intelligence department by relying on the human resource to ensure robust analysis and punctual information for accurate decision making by the government. Moreover, it is also working on the dimension of information security to prevent any kind of leaks of confidential data that could potentially endanger the security of the nation (National Security Council 2023, 11-12).

Maintaining Ties with Allies and Like-Minded Nations, Efforts for Non-Proliferation, and Arms Control

Japan also ensures the promotion of a free and open Indo-Pacific by enhancing cooperation with like-minded nations as well as through joint multilateral efforts. The Japan-USA-India-Australia partnership within the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue to enhance communication, connectivity, and expand free and fair economic zones builds upon Japan's goals of maritime security. Furthermore, Japan intends to bolster its relations with developing nations along with maintaining close ties with members of key regional organisations such as the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation), and the EU (European Union). Moreover, Japan, having suffered the atrocities of the World War 2 atomic bombings,

reiterated its intentions to spearhead efforts to inculcate a world without nuclear weapons. In its attempts to control arms, promote disarmament and non-proliferation, Japan seeks to curb the expansion of arms, including nuclear weapons or WMD's (Weapons of Mass Destruction), in order to prevent the manifestation of circumstances involving the threats of nuclear weapons. With the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty acting as the linchpin, Japan will uphold and fortify the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime (National Security Council 2023, 12-15).

Supporting National Security Through Bolstering Domestic Bases

Japan seeks to achieve a beneficial cycle of economic growth and security wherein both the factors go hand in hand and promote each other.. In case of any fortuities, Japan will encourage cooperation between its public and private sectors to sufficiently secure resources such as food and energy and build infrastructure, paired with constructing supply chains for supplying parts required for security. As a result, Japan focuses upon incessantly working to reinforce the economic, monetary, and fiscal bases of the nation since they serve as the foundation of its national security.

Japan also stands to engage in efforts to familiarise the working and cooperation of national security among the citizens of the nation, both inside and outside the Japanese Government. It also ensures efforts to bolster the appreciation and noticeability of the hard work put in by workers belonging to hazardous jobs such as members of the SDF (Special Defence Forces) who work for the upliftment of peace and security of Japan. Furthermore, in a world where information and technology acts as the pillar of national security, Japan ensures efforts to enhance the intellectual base to provide, use, and modify the information and technology, while countering cyber-attacks as well as the spread of misinformation (National Security Council 2023, 34-35).

Strengthening of Japan's Military Architecture

Ever since its controversial defeat in the Second World War, Japan, in Article 9 of its constitution, had adopted the clause of “no war” and inherently, a stance of pacifism; focusing a tremendous

amount of its budget towards its economic development. In light of the overlapping world order, and after having advocated the policy of pacifism for more than seven decades, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, on 16th December 2022, formally announced Japan's biggest military build-up ever since the Second World War, and along with it, introduced the world to the dawn of a new era.

Why Has Japan Decided to Expand Its Military Arsenal?

Japan has followed through with this strategy in response to rising and heated tensions with its neighbours. China has been declared as the biggest strategic challenge to Japan and its security by the latter itself. Russia, with its invasion of Ukraine, has set a precedent and can be seen as a catalyst for encouraging China to attack Taiwan, putting many nearby Japanese islands at risk (AlJazeera 2022). Russia has also been observed conducting military activity towards the far east of its territory, which is of paramount importance to the security of Japan. The threat of North Korea looms over Japan like a Damocles' Sword with its nuclear prowess as well as multiple missile tests, one of which had invaded Japanese air space and landed in its waters or its exclusive economic zones. Furthermore, Japan has also found itself straggling behind in the arms race, owing to its pacifist constitution. Across the world, nations have steadily worked on their defence efforts and have been able to establish stalwart military arsenals created from the most brilliant of minds, offering inhumane accuracy, swiftness, and impact. In this regard, Japan has viciously fallen behind, where it has found itself, in some ways, quite vulnerable to such mighty military powers (Smith 2022).

How Will the Military Build-Up Take Place?

This military expansion has been laid out and guided by three documents: Firstly, a new National Security Strategy has been established, that identifies and assesses the threats to the country and lays out the many diplomatic, military, technological and economic tools it can use to address any threats that have been identified; Secondly, a National Defence Strategy has also been adopted, that lasts for ten years and provides details and gives insight into the many military improvements that are required to help improve and sustain the Japanese Special Defence Forces wherein, the

procurement of longer range missiles has been highlighted profusely; Thirdly, the Defence Build-up Program has also been set into motion, which sheds light on the priorities during the initial stages of this entire strategy, taking budget allocation into mind quite thoroughly (Smith 2022).

Keeping these neighbouring threats and a multitude of issues in mind, the Japanese government has decided to overhaul its special defence forces and policies. With these new changes, Japan leaves behind its commitment to allocate 1% of its GDP towards its defence; a clause they had formulated and adhered to post the end of the Second World War. Through its new policy, Japan has committed to doubling its expenditures on defence, targeting to dedicate 2% of its GDP on it, following in the footsteps of the NATO. Establishing a new five-year plan, it has allocated 320 billion dollars on the build-up of its Special Defence Forces. This change will make the country the third biggest spender on defence, after the United States of America and China (McCurry 2022).

A mountainous chunk of that budget is being allocated to the Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, a Japanese military equipment maker, to lead the development of many new long-range missiles that Japan has planned to add to its new missile arsenal. Moreover, the Mitsubishi Heavy Industries will also be collaborating with weapon industries from Britain and Italy on a joint project to engineer and build new fighter jets. Furthermore, Japan has also stated its intentions to import the United States Tomahawk cruise missiles to further bolster its missile armaments which will provide a much longer range of more than 1,000 miles, in contrast to the missiles that the Japanese forces has been previously using, that had a maximum range of not more than 125 miles. Great emphasis and attention have been put onto the indigenous production of military technology within the nation (Smith 2022). Japan is already a pioneer nation when it comes to technological prowess. A huge chunk of the budget will be specially invested into the research and development institutions of the country to slowly but surely, stop its dependence of military equipment from other nations and bring forth robust weapon innovations so as to become self-dependant in the future.

Conclusion

Under the guidance of the National Security Council of Japan, the organisation in charge of national security, the measures based on the National Security Strategy are proposed to be tactically and sustainably introduced and implemented with punctuality. The Council also possesses the integral job of frequently evaluating the security environment and executing the measures listed in the document of the Strategy. However, if any notable changes are expected, the Council has the authority and obligation to revise and make the requisite changes (National Security Council 2023, 35-36).

Though Japan has been following a policy of pacifism and inherent non-violence, the fact remains that a large chunk of the citizens is growing wary of the imminent threats posed to the country, mostly by China. Hence why, these reforms, which flow in the completely opposite direction of the strategy Japan has been adhering to up until now, have not been met with anguish or discontent. The plans of the government have been accepted in stride with positivity. The citizens of the country recognise the need for change, improvement, and development for the survival of their nation. China continues to rise exponentially as an economic and military power and poses a threat to not just Japan but great powers like the United States of America and India. The new security strategy of Japan only signifies change and a policy of proactivity. It showcases the will and willingness of the Japanese to act when its needed and be ruthless when it does so. Japan has recognised its need to move forward within the rampant vortex of the world order, and through the help of its firm democracy, diversely rich culture, stable economy, and a respectfully established rule of law, it gives shape to a new world order through promoting policies that advocate universal values and reinforce the global order with devoted perseverance.

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