

Middle Power, Civilian Power, or New Power?: Comparing Underlying Factors of the Security Policy in Japan and Germany

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I. Introduction

When then LDP secretary general Ichiro Ozawa suggested in his 1994 book “Blueprint for a New Japan” the idea of Japan becoming a “normal state” (*futsu no kuni*), it triggered a debate that is ongoing to this day. What Ozawa meant by normal was a country that would be able to develop and pursue a foreign policy that was based on its own preferences and necessities, but in Ozawa’s view would mostly mean one that would often be pursued through or in cooperation with the United Nations.

Different authors have taken up this question and have debated what kind of “normal” state Japan could become, and to what degree it could make its own policy decisions, sometime with, sometimes without the United States.

This paper asks two questions: (1) Will Japan gradually develop into a “normal” state that is able and willing to use military force when it considers it necessary? And (2) what are the models for this kind of development? Will Japan go through a similar development Germany went through in the last twenty years? Might it, therefore, be better to find a different term for this development, such as “new power”?

Public opinion and constitutional constraints are widely considered the two major factors that constraint Japan’s foreign and defense policy and prevent Japan from taking over larger international responsibilities. These factors are important to consider in this regard, because public opinion and the memory of

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World War II also strongly influence the debate about Germany's international role. However, both countries went through changes of their defense posture and became more involved in humanitarian interventions and so-called "out-of-area" missions. Many of these changes were made possible because of gradual changes in public acceptance of these missions triggered by specific events, but also because of the increasing influence of norm entrepreneurs such as influential politicians or intellectuals.

In order to evaluate the changes over the last decades, this paper uses a comparative method and uses the United States as well as a selection of European countries. The comparison with the United States and Europe allows us to assess whether the above mentioned constraints are beginning to weaken and Japan will become more like the United Kingdom, as expressed in the 2006 Nye/Armitage Report, or whether the policy preferences in Japan resemble more those in continental Europe. The latter might then indicate that Japan might increasingly develop a foreign and defense policy which, in principle, considers itself a close ally of the United States (as most European countries in NATO) but which might also be able to develop a more independent stance along the lines of Germany and France.

Germany and Japan have both been called "civilian powers" (Mauss), because their foreign policy focus is predominantly on trade and to some degree development assistance, but not military power. Around the time Ichiro Ozawa demanded a rethinking of Japan's international role and his cry for a "normal state" (1994), a similar debate about the "normalization" of Germany and its new international role after the End of the Cold War was in full swing among German and European scholars and policy practitioners (Tackle 2002, Bach 1999). During the Cold War, Germany's foreign and defense policy was, as was Japan's, constrained by several factors. Germany shares with Japan the constitutional constraints, a strongly anti-militarist public opinion, a parliamentary system with either coalition governments (Germany) or weak or often short-term administrations (Japan), the presence of American troops on their soil, and a close alliance with the United States. The German postwar

foreign and defense policy has often been described as a “German special path” (Deutscher Sonderweg). While Germany developed to become the third largest economy in the world and the cornerstone of European integration, it differed from the United Kingdom and France in that sending troops abroad was not a viable option (and could hardly be imagined by most Germans), because the German public had a strong preference for diplomatic solutions.

II. Similarities and Differences between Germany and Japan

2.1 Domestic Structure

One of the weaknesses of Japanese foreign policy making is the frequent change of prime ministers and cabinet members. Just in the last 10 years, between 2002 and June 2012, Japan had seven prime ministers, eleven foreign ministers; ten defense ministers (January 2007 and June 2012), and eight heads of the Defense Agency (2002 to 2006). In the same time period, Germany had only two chancellors, three foreign ministers, and four defense ministers, while the United States had only two presidents, three foreign secretaries and three defense secretaries. In addition to the relatively short period in office in Japan (average for foreign ministers: 12 month, average for defense ministers: about 7 month), most were appointed without or with very little expertise or experience in the area of foreign affairs. Since the foundation of the (West-) German Ministry of Defense in 1955 until 2012, there have been fifteen ministers of defense, many of them serving for four or more years in that position. Since the foundation of the Japanese Defense Agency in 1952, seventy-two politicians served as head of the agency, and since the change into the Ministry of Defense in January 2007, it has seen ten ministers come and go.

A second structural factor that prevented a more independent defense policy was certainly the fact that until December 2006, matters of defense were organized within the Defense Agency, delegated under the Prime Ministers Office. Since January 2007, Japan has a Defense Ministry with its own budget, a defense minister and secretary of state. Germany had a full Defense Ministry since 1955.

Japan is a parliamentary democracy; hence the prime minister is elected by a majority of the members of the Diet. This makes the prime minister depended on constant support from his political party, and, therefore, limits his political maneuverability. Japanese prime ministers have traditionally also been the president of the LDP, which gives them a stronghold in the party and in government. However, between 1955 and the early 1990s, the decision-making process about the party president and hence prime minister has been far from transparent, and rather the result of backroom negotiations between inner-party faction leaders. After the first election loss in 38 years and time in opposition between 1993 and 1994, the selection process was reformed, and in the last decade LDP party presidents and hence prime ministers have been elected in a variety of ways, including an almost primary-type race in the case of Prime Minister Koizumi in 2001.

Traditionally, foreign policy has long been a policy area that was dominated by bureaucrats in the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry. There were only a few Japanese prime ministers that came to office with a clear foreign policy agenda, and initially, Koizumi was not one of them. His core policy objective was domestic, namely the privatization of the postal service. Apart from a few exceptions, the role of the prime minister in the Japanese political system has been rather weak. Only a few months after Koizumi had been elected the terrorist attacks of 9/11 happened, which fundamentally changed Koizumi's foreign policy outlook and Japan's relationship to the United States.

Another institutional aspect important in this regard is the strengthening of the power and influence of the cabinet office within the governing system. Until the mid-1990s, the prime minister was just the head of a relatively small prime ministers office and heavily relied on policy expertise from the respective ministries. With the new cabinet law enacted in 1996 under Prime Minister Hashimoto, the cabinet office was elevated and was put at the center of the governing system. The prime minister, if they had the personal ability and party backing, could now perform much more effectively and follow at least some of

their own policy objectives. Koizumi was the first who could effectively use all this new power of the cabinet office and push the decision to deploy Japanese SDF soldiers to Iraq against strong public as well as parliamentary opposition (Shinoda 2007).

A major constraint of Japanese foreign policy has certainly been the Japanese constitution of 1947. The so-called war-renouncing article 9 prohibits Japan from ever developing a “war potential” and interpreted literally, would have prohibited Japan from having its own defense infrastructure. Since 1952, when Japan signed the San Francisco Peace Treaty and joined the US-Japan Security Treaty, the Japanese government interpreted the constitution not as literally as it is written. Based on the rights given to member states by the United Nations Charter, Japan does not think that article 9 of the constitution limits the right of self-defense. Henceforth, the major political force in Japanese politics since 1955, the LDP, supports this interpretation. Since the mid 1950s, Japan has actively set up so-called Self Defense Forces whose only role was to defend the Japanese homeland. Since the signing of the US-Japan Security Treaty in 1952 and particularly after its first revision in 1960, the U.S. government has frequently urged Japan to become more actively involved not only in its own defense but also for regional security in East Asia. However, a strong sense of anti-militarism has long prevented the Japanese government to extend its security commitment outside its borders.

As a lesson of German militarism and expansionism of the first half of the 20th century, the German Constitution (Basic Law) includes Article 26, which calls all activities that could “*disturb peaceful relations between nations, especially to prepare for aggressive war*” unconstitutional. Although the German Constitution does not question the constitutionality of Self Defense Forces or the German Army (Bundeswehr), it still is a forceful reminder and guarantee to the world, that Germany is aware of its militarist history and is determined to never be the cause of aggressive militarist policies again.

2.2 International Factors

Japan and Germany enjoy an overwhelmingly positive image in the world. In the last three years, a BBC World Service opinion poll (BBC World Service, 2006-2012) Germany and Japan were considered the two countries that respondents in participating countries considered to have a rather positive influence in the world. In the most recent survey published in May 2012, Japan was considered to have a positive influence in the world by an average of 58% of the respondents, while an average of 56% shared the same opinion about Germany. This positive image could be used by these two countries to further their soft power and as a mediator in world affairs. The only two countries where Japan's image is overwhelmingly negative are the Republic of Korea (58% negative) and the PR China (63% negative).

Germany and Japan also share a strong dependence on trade exports. This has brought both countries unprecedented wealth and made them the second and third largest economies in the world, but it also influences and sometimes limits their foreign policy decisions. Both countries suffer from a lack of natural resources (Japan even more so than Germany) and the need to establish friendly and cooperate relationships with oil exporting countries in the Middle East. Japan developed a so-called omni-directional foreign policy that strictly distinguished between security policy and economic and trade policy.

Nevertheless, a major difference between Germany and Japan is certainly their different levels of regional integration. While Germany has been one of the founding members of the EEC and is now a core member of the EU, Japan is not integrated in any viable form of regional network. Apart from the annual ASEAN+3 meetings, Japan's focus has been on establishing bilateral relations including so-called economic partnership agreements (EPA), initially with a small number of ASEAN member states, and in 2008, with ASEAN itself. Nevertheless, Japan is not integrated into any political regional organization in the way Germany is. Japan can always negotiate from the position of an economically more advanced country, but other than with the U.S. or at G8 meetings, has comparatively little international experience in political

negotiations dealing with highly conflicting issues.

Unlike the close relationship that Germany has developed with former enemy states such as France and the UK, Japan does not have anything comparable as a basis to build a regional network. Public opinion in these areas is very clear. While the large majority of Japanese had strong sympathies and felt very close to China in the 1980s (between 50 and 70% felt close to China), the level fell to around 50% in 1990 and remained there until 2002. From 2003, hence shortly after Prime Minister Koizumi had taken over power and triggered Chinese anger with his visits to Yasukuni Shrine, the feeling of closeness rapidly declined from around 50% to just over 20%, while negative feelings increased from about 50% (2003) to 77% (2010). The assessment of Japan-China relations developed in similar ways. In 2002, 46% thought they were good, in 2010 only 8% held this opinion, while 88% had a rather negative impression of Japan-China relations. Similar, but not quite as extreme developments can be observed when Japanese assess their feeling towards Korea and their assessment of Japan-Korea relations (Government of Japan, Public Opinion Survey about Foreign Affairs, respective years)

In terms of their security arrangements, Germany and Japan are in two very different situations that give them different degrees of maneuverability. Since 1952, Japan is in a bilateral security treaty with the United States, while Germany joined the multilateral collective defense alliance NATO in 1955. Being a member of a multilateral alliance gives Germany more diplomatic maneuverability and the possibility to negotiate with individual member countries, particularly with France. The case of the run up to the Iraq War in 2003 has demonstrated that since the end of the Cold War, individual members have much more freedom to come to their own conclusions about questions whether to join the United States in their attack against Iraq than during the Cold War, when fear of a possible attack and the requirement to keep the show unity was much stronger than it is today.

Japan, on the other hand, is in some way trapped in a typical alliance dilemma, between entrapment and abandonment. During the Cold War and

continuing into the 2000s, one of the most important factors that prevented Japan from extending its international engagement and profile was the constitution and public resentment. Soon after the constitution with its article 9 had been announced in 1947, the first Prime Minister Yoshida and the American government realized that such strict wording might have been a mistake and that it limits Japan's role in playing a role in the Western alliance from the Korean War and throughout the Cold War. There have been many initiatives to revise the constitution, but not even the most popular or influential prime ministers were able to push the debate to a point that such a revision might have been feasible, and would have gotten the necessary public support in a referendum. Under Prime Minister Koizumi the LDP and later also the opposition parties have set up constitutional study commissions. After some public opinion surveys during the late Koizumi administration showed increasing support for a constitutional revision, between 2007 and 2012, support for constitutional change has declined again to levels below or far below parity.

III. Major Security Developments for Germany and Japan

3.1 Germany: Kosovo—The watershed event

Germany also did not actively participate in the Gulf War (1991) but chose to support the UN sanctioned mission only through financial contributions. Germany, just like Japan, was accused of checkbook diplomacy, which, just like in Japan, triggered a debate first between security analysts and politicians, but gradually also among the general public about Germans future international role. Only three years later, in 1993, Germany sent the first German troops to an “out of area” (meaning NATO area) mission to support US troops in Somalia. In the following years, the German army went through a reform process. It had to adapt to the changing security environment and gradually shifted from a defensive land-based army to a flexible intervention force.

In 1999, the German parliament, for the first time in postwar history, decided that the Bundeswehr would participate in a military humanitarian intervention to liberate Kosovo Albanians from an anticipated genocide. German

Air force planes were sent into combat mission as a part of the NATO mission, and after 9/11 German troops participated in the “Operation Enduring Freedom” in Afghanistan.

Because of the Holocaust, Germans are particularly sensitive when they suspect the possibility of genocide. While liberating countries from unjust and undemocratic regimes is met with a lot of skepticism and questions of means and ends, international law, and the general justification to use military means, the word “genocide” triggers a stronger sense of restitution. President Clinton called the situation in Kosovo a genocide and directly compared it to the Holocaust. This might be similar to the strong sense among Germans to help political refugees, which is why it was not only put prominently into the German constitution of 1949, but also made Germany a country with one of the highest levels of refugee inflow in the postwar period. Japan does not have such provisions and accepts only a negligible number of refugees.

However, the core point that I want to raise here is that the decision to send German fighter and reconnaissance airplanes into Kosovo in February 1999 was not made by a long-standing conservative party (CDU) under the Atlanticist Helmut Kohl, but under a left-of-center Social Democrat - Green Party coalition government. Joschka Fischer, the German Foreign Minister and leading Green Party politician defended this decision as necessary to prevent a possible genocide and more bloodshed in Kosovo against very strong opposition within his own party. Fischer was accused as a betrayer of pacifist and non-militarist party principles and was even physically attacked at a party conference. Nevertheless, to this day, he defends this decision as necessary and he certainly considers this a watershed decision in postwar German foreign policy. Germany became a player defending humanitarian principles, and it gave Germany the liberty to make future decisions on its own terms. This became clear, when under the same Foreign Minister Fischer and Chancellor Schroeder, Germany rejected any participation in the Iraq War. Its former participation in Kosovo brought Germany respect and in my interpretation, made it a “normal” Western state, because it can now decide more freely whether to join or not to

join humanitarian or active peacekeeping missions.

3. 2 Japan: The Iraq Mission — the first watershed event

While Germany resisted any participation in the Iraq War (2003/4), Prime Minister Koizumi felt the necessity to demonstrate to the United States, and to some degree the world community, that Japan was not the country that would always say “no”, but if it chooses to, it could indeed actively support U.S.-led allied mission by sending SDF Forces. Paul Midford (2008, 2011) has written extensively about the steps Koizumi took to increase support to a level that once the troops had arrived in Iraq, at least half of the Japanese would support the mission. After the November 2003 news conference where Koizumi made the mistake to stress alliance obligation too strongly, the mission statement was revised to focus exclusively on humanitarian aspects of this mission.

VI. Japan: Increased acceptance of a larger international role

4. 1 Public Opinion about Japans international role

Over the last decade, support for a larger international role of Japan has increased among the general public. In 2012, more than 60% of Japanese wanted their government to become more active in the peaceful solution of international or regional problems and conflicts including the deployment of Japanese personnel. In the same survey 56% demanded a more active approach towards environmental problems and global warming, 41% more efforts towards disarmament and nonproliferation (Government of Japan, Public Opinion about Foreign Affairs 2012). This shows that Japanese strongly support further involvement of Japan internationally, which, if necessary, might also include support for military-led humanitarian interventions.

4. 2 Support for PKO Missions

Germany began its first UN PKO Mission after the end of the Cold War. However, the German public was not ready to send German troops abroad, not even in blue barrette missions. This changed in 1991, when the German

parliament decided to send German troops to a UN PKO mission against a lot of protest and public debate. In the following years, Germany successfully participated in a number of PKO missions and has currently about 250 (May 2012) soldiers deployed in U.N. missions.

After not being able to send troops to participate in the liberation of Kuwait in 1991 and after being accused of checkbook diplomacy, Japan was quite quick in drafting and passing the PKO Law in 1992, which enabled Japan to participate in peacekeeping missions first in Cambodia and then in a number of missions in the following years. Although the actual number of SDF troops that were deployed long remained rather small, but in a similar range as those of Germany or Great Britain, the symbolic value for Japan and the Japanese should not be underestimated. In late 2011, slightly more than half of Japanese supported a continuation of Japans engagement in UNPKO activities on current levels, while another third even is in favor of extending them (Government of Japan, Public Opinion about Foreign Affairs 2012). This is a clear indication that the Japanese public strongly supports Japanese PKO activities and might be one reason why in mid 2012, almost 500 SDF forces serve in UN PKO operation, compared to less than 300 from Germany and the UK.

Because the UN peacekeeping missions were quite successful and were reported in both countries as necessary and as an important factor to provide peace and stability in other parts of the world, general public acceptance and then support in Japan and Germany for these missions gradually increased. In 2006 (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, Politbarometer West 2006), about two-third (66.1%) of Germans expressed support for military peacekeeping missions. In the same survey, 63% also criticized that the German army participates in too many missions.

V. Civil-Military Relations in Japan and Germany

5.1 Confidence in Armed Forces and Government

After a short period in the early 1950s, where Japan as well as Germany saw strong resistance against joining the US-Japan Security Treaty and the

formation of the Self Defense Forces, Germany saw similar resistance against the formation of the Bundeswehr and the immediate joining of NATO ten years after the end of World War II in 1955.

Just like in Japan, general acceptance about the existence of the Bundeswehr increased over the next decades. However, the debate about a possible nuclearization of Germany in the 1960s, protest against the US war against Vietnam, the NATO double-track decision adopted by the German parliament in 1983 to increase the number of Pershing Missiles in Europe including Germany all led to major protests against these government decisions but not against the Bundeswehr as a self-defense force. Comparative data in 2005 show, however, some difference in the confidence in each countries armed forces. While 75% of the Japanese have a lot of confidence in the SDF (“a great deal” and “quite a lot”), only half (50%) of the German public shares this level of confidence (World Value Survey 2005-2008).

Trust or confidence in armed forces has significantly improved in both countries since the end of the Cold War, which can certainly be attributed to the fact that armies are no longer considered as war potential or as a symbol of militarism. The reason for the broader public acceptance of the Bundeswehr and the SDF can certainly be attributed to their successful involvement in UN peacekeeping missions, humanitarian and reconstruction missions, or, as in the case of Kosovo, to prevent a possible genocide. Nevertheless, Germans are still more critical of their army than the Japanese are. While only about one quarter of the general public in Japan and Germany expressed trust (“trust a lot” plus “somewhat trust”) in their armed forces by the end of the Cold War, this significantly increased in both countries, but much stronger in Japan. Between 1995 and 2005, about half of the German population was confident, but the share increased to 75% in Japan in 2005 (World Value Survey 1995 and 2005-2008). In early 2012, 90% of Japanese have a generally positive impression of the Japanese SDF (Government of Japan, Public Opinion about Self Defense Forces and Security Issues, 2012). This demonstrates that distrust in armed forces or a lack of appreciation of their activities over the last 15 years is no longer a reason

that would constrain international involvement of the two armed forces.

5. 2 Low willingness to fight in war in Germany and Japan

Another factor that still severely constraints Germans and Japanese ability to use their armed forces is the overwhelming unwillingness to personally participate in combat activities. In the last decade of the Cold War, about 40% of Germans and Japanese expressed an unwillingness to fight in a war for their own country and this number stayed at about the same level throughout the 1990s (World Value Survey, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005). In the same period, only 20% of US Americans and about the same percentage of UK citizens shared this unwillingness. Between 2000 and 2005, the percentage of those who were unwilling to fight in a war for their country among Japanese and Germans increased from about 45% to almost 70% in the case of Germany and even 75% in the case of Japan. While we could also observe some increase in France, the UK and even the US, their levels of unwillingness remained below 40%.

This shows that after the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, with its increase of unconventional forms of combat and terrorist attacks against peacekeeping and combat troops including those of Germany, the willingness to personally participate has decreased and the willingness to solve these conflicts by other means (diplomacy, sanctions, etc.) has increased in Germany as well as in Japan. However, this is not a trend we can observe throughout the West. While only about 25% of Japanese and 35% of Germans are still willing to fight in a war (if necessary), the share is somewhat higher in Italy and Spain (both about 45%), significantly higher in the US (68%), and — somewhat surprisingly — very high in Poland and Slovenia (both 75%) and Finland (80%).

These numbers show that Japan is not so unique in its unwillingness to send its troops into harms ways, even if the cause and necessity of such a decision might be generally accepted. The peculiar history of both countries is reflected here; despite the fact that Germany has actually sent significantly more troops not only to U.N. peacekeeping missions, but also combat support missions such as those in Kosovo.

There is, however, one interesting difference between Germany and Japan. While young Japanese, hence those who would be asked to consider a career in the SDF, are significantly less likely to consider fighting for their country (20-49 year old: 20-30%) than their older age cohorts who had either experienced World War II as children or the hardship of the early postwar period (60-79 year old: 40-50%), the situation in Germany is exactly the opposite. In Germany, between 40% and 50% of those in fighting age could consider fighting in a war, whereas this decreases to between 20% and 30% for those over the age of 60.

These data support earlier data collected by the author (Vosse 2006, 2008), which showed a negative correlation between militarist attitudes and age in Japan. This seems counter-intuitive, since it is generally assumed that once those who have experienced World War II, the pacifist sentiment in the 1950s, and the anti-AMPO movements of the 1950s and early 1960s, are those who are opposed to a further international engagement of Japan, opposed to the revision of article 9, and are less willing to get personally involved to defend their own country. While, in fact, the opposite is true. This is a relevant finding because it shows that the fear that once the war generation has disappeared, normative constraints might weaken and Japan might become more militaristic, have little bases.

5.3 Defense as state priority

Given the choice between economic growths, strong defense forces, more say about things, and trying to make cities more beautiful, only 2.5% of Germans picked strong defense forces as the first priority of the state. However, a significantly higher share, namely 8.7% of the Japanese considered strong defense forces as the first priority for Japan. On the one hand, this higher share might be a bit surprising when we consider the strong focus on “anti-militarism” in the literature of Japanese security identity (Berger 1996, 1998, Katzenstein 1996), and indeed, even 8.7% is significantly lower than the 32% in the United States, but it also shows a coming to terms with a changing security environment and a certain “normalization” or re-evaluation of Japan’s international role (all

data WWS 2005).

Supporters of the two major political parties are quite close together in their general evaluation of the role of armed forces and their willingness to personally fight for their country. Although “strong defense forces” have a relatively low priority (8.7%) as a state goal for the majority of Japanese, there are some differences between supporters of Japanese political parties. Supporting the more general assumptions that the two major political parties in Japan tend to be moving towards the political center and the “median voter”, public support for “strong defense forces” as a state priority is very similar among supporters of the LDP (11%) and those of the DPJ (8.6%). The comparison with Germany is problematic because of the extremely low preference for strong defense forces among the German public (2.2%). The difference between almost all but one party “The Left” (Die Linke) is relatively equally distributed (World Value Survey 2005-2008).

VI. Conclusion

The original question was whether Japan, twenty years after the end of the Cold War, is on its way to become a more active international player. Considering the evidence presented above, we can certainly say that Japan has begun to be more active and to some degree, a more independent international actor than during the Cold War. This paper asked whether we could describe this development as “normalization,” and if we can call it that, whether Japan is following a specific path. The paper focused on domestic factor, particularly changes in public opinion, and compared them with those in post-Cold War Germany.

Overall, we could describe the changes in Japan’s foreign and defense policy in the Post-Cold War era as “normalization” if we consider the developments in Germany after 1990 as “normalization”. Japan and Germany have both gone through a “normalization” phase in the sense that their governments reacted to international demands from the United Nations after civil wars or humanitarian crises. Both the Japanese and the Germans have gradually begun to accept that

their countries have to play a larger role. Germany has certainly gone further in this regard, considering at times larger contributions to U.N. PKO missions to conflict or post-conflict regions, or NATO missions from Kosovo to border controls off the coast of Lebanon, and the security and reconstruction missions in Afghanistan (ISAF).

Apart from UN missions and the exceptional case of the Iraq mission, the LDP continued to have difficulties in convincing the Japanese public about the necessity to participate in more extensive international missions, especially those with a higher risk of possible fatalities. A sizable share of the general public in Japan as well as Germany consider the conservative parties as more closely affiliated with the military infrastructure and perhaps the military industry than left of center political parties. The CDU/FDP coalition government under Chancellor Helmut Kohl in the 1980s and the 1990s was often suspected as being too closely aligned with the United States government, and potentially too willing to deploy German armed forces.

In the case of Germany, it was only in 1998, when a Socialist-Green coalition government was in power that was generally perceived to be more sympathetic to pacifist norms and ideals, which, after weeks and month of inner-party and fierce public debate, decided to send German fighter and reconnaissance planes to Kosovo. Although this mission was fiercely debated in Germany at the time, in the end it was the watershed event that laid the groundwork for all the missions Germany is involved in today.

Because it might be better to have a political party in government that was not easily accused of always siding with the United States and that did not have overly close ties to the military forces, it should be assumed that the DPJ government in power in Japan since September 2009 might be better positioned than the LDP to pursue a more active security policy agenda and to “convince” the Japanese public, that it is now at a stage where the country has to accept larger international responsibilities. While each era is different and one cannot simply compare what the German left of center coalition decided in 1998 with decisions for Japan in 2011 or 2012, the suggestion by the Kan administration

in the spring of 2011 to consider sending SDF troops to South Sudan and the final deployment of SDF troops to join the UN PKO mission in January 2012 under Prime Minister Noda can be interpreted as a first indication that the DPJ administration is indeed able to make independent security policy decisions that include sending SDF troops into potentially more dangerous missions⁽¹⁾. There was very little public criticism, which might be an indication not only of public support for PKO missions in general, but also of less suspicion against a DPJ government. Overall, this could mean more support for Japanese burden-sharing in the future.

(1) It has to be said, that the DPJ has not been able to adapt the Japanese PKO law, which prohibits Japanese forces to carry heavy arms to protect themselves and troops from other countries. This is the reason why the Noda administration only allowed Japanese troops to be deployed to the South Sudanese capital of Juba.

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**Middle Power, Civilian Power, or New Power?:
Comparing Underlying Factors of the Security Policy
in Japan and Germany**

<Summary>

Wilhelm Vosse

Japan and Germany, two countries with very similar constraints concerning their defense and security policy, have often been described as middle power or civilian powers. While Germany has begun to increase its international role first in Europe and later in out-of-area missions, Japan seems to be somehow behind Germany and is often described as in the process of “normalization”. However, what does “normalization” mean for Japan? Under Prime Minister Koizumi, cooperation with the US was intensified and broadened, Japan became a partner in the “coalition of the willing” and agreed to co-develop and employ a missile defense system. Since 2001, it seemed that even the widely accepted belief in the general public support for anti-militarist values was weakening, while support to abandon article 9 of the constitution was rising. This article argues that Japan, despite some differences in terms of its alliance obligations as well as the structure and practice of its political system, has still many commonalities with Germany. While Germany has relatively quickly become more internationally engaged and has gradually abandoned its overly strong unwillingness to send troops abroad after the end of the Cold War, Japan has taken longer and is still at the stage Germany might have been in the mid 1990s, hence before the Kosovo War. For Japan, public support for its armed forces and pride about its achievements over the last ten to fifteen years might indicate an increased willingness to play a more active international role, without giving

up its still strong preference for non-military and diplomatic solutions in both Germany and Japan. Rather than calling them “normal” states, it might be better to call them new powers.