

*Policy Studies 27*

# Japanese Public Opinion and the War on Terrorism: Implications for Japan's Security Strategy

*Paul Midford*



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by Paul Midford

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# List of Acronyms

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ASDF	Air Self-Defense Force
AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System
DPJ	Democratic Party of Japan
GSDF	Ground Self-Defense Force
JSDF	Japan Self-Defense Forces
JDA	Japan Defense Agency
JSP	Japan Socialist Party
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MSDF	Maritime Self-Defense Force
PKO	peacekeeping operations
ROEs	rules of engagement
SDF	Self-Defense Forces
SNTV	single nontransferable vote
UN	United Nations
U.S.	United States
UNPCC	United Nations Peace Cooperation Corps
WMD	weapons of mass destruction



# Executive Summary

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The Bush administration's controversial war on terrorism has large implications for friends as well as foes of the United States, not least of all for Japan. This war has tested the limits of Japan's postwar war-renouncing constitution, especially prohibitions on the deployment of military force overseas. In the hours immediately following the 9/11 attacks, Japan began making important policy innovations, suggesting to many observers a new willingness to use force overseas to pursue policy objectives, and even to fight alongside U.S. forces in distant conflicts. Some analysts see Japan emerging as a kind of "Britain of Asia," a loyal ally willing to back up U.S. foreign policy with its own contributions of military power.

The findings of this study challenge this view and demonstrate that Japan's deployments in support of the war on terrorism are more a symbolic departure than a substantive change toward lifting restrictions on the use of force overseas. The modest nature of these changes does not reflect reluctance on the part of Japan's top leaders. Indeed, Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō repeatedly expressed a desire to expand Self-Defense Force (SDF) operations into areas carrying the risk of combat. Rather, this study argues that public opinion, a variable often overlooked in the study of Japanese foreign policy, has significantly restrained overseas deployments.

Modifying defensive and offensive realism as descriptive categories useful for understanding public attitudes toward the use of force, this study finds that Japanese public opinion has become increasingly realist in the sense that it recognizes war as an ever-present possibility in international politics, and therefore increasingly supports military preparations to meet this threat. Japanese public opinion can also be described as defensive, and hence defensive realist, in the sense that it recognizes military

power as having utility for homeland defense, but for little else. Japanese public opinion is skeptical about the utility of offensive military power for almost any objective. In particular, the public believes that offensive military operations have little value for promoting democracy and human rights, destroying terrorist networks, or suppressing weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation. In sum, Japanese public opinion may be described as realist and defensive in the sense that it recognizes ever-present dangers to national security, but believes that military force only has utility for defending national territory.

Ironically, public support for overseas deployments of the SDF reflects a belief in the superiority of nonmilitary means, most notably humanitarian relief and economic development, for dealing with terrorism and other threats to peace and security. This belief, combined with skepticism about the utility of offensive military power, explains the extremely modest nature of Japan's overseas deployments to date in the war on terrorism. To be sure, Japan's decision to dispatch elements of its Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF), its navy, to provide rear-area logistical support (mostly by acting as a floating gas station) in the Indian Ocean for U.S. ships, is a symbolically significant milestone, representing the first time the country has provided logistical support for U.S. forces during combat in areas far removed from Japanese territory. Nonetheless, this deployment remained strictly noncombat, and Japanese vessels stayed far from combat zones. It also involved the delivery of humanitarian relief supplies to refugees in Pakistan, a mission fully consistent with the Japanese public's views about the use of force and with polling data showing that the SDF's disaster and humanitarian relief operations are consistently viewed as its most important mission.

The deployment of Japan's Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) to Iraq in the midst of a growing insurgency was also a symbolic milestone, as it placed the SDF in close proximity to combat for the first time. Nonetheless, the GSDF deployed to Samawah, a town in a relatively peaceful area of southern Iraq, where it enjoyed the protection of Dutch troops, and subsequently British and Australian forces, a fact reflecting the extremely cumbersome rules of engagement GSDF members operated under. These characteristics of the deployment reflected public opposition to any hint of involvement in combat. The SDF concentrated on its most popular operations: humanitarian relief and reconstruction. By rebuilding schools and purifying water, the GSDF carried out missions akin to what Western contractors do in Iraq, or what the Peace Corps does in other countries. Because the GSDF scrupulously avoided taking or inflicting casualties and engaged in these popular missions, its deployment to Iraq gained a measure of popular support. The public approved of the GSDF's

record of good works but strongly opposed all extensions of their deployment. Overall, the Iraq deployment was in many ways strikingly similar to the first overseas deployment of the SDF to Cambodia in 1992.

The broad consistency of Japanese overseas military deployments with the 1992 Cambodia precedent, even during the war on terrorism, reflects the stable and relatively immovable nature of public attitudes regarding the utility of military force. Over the intervening years there was remarkably little change in the public's overwhelming opposition to permitting the SDF to engage in overseas combat. In fact, there was only one significant change in public attitudes regarding overseas deployments during this period: the collapse of opposition to dispatching the SDF overseas to engage in disaster and humanitarian relief operations.

This study demonstrates the deep skepticism of the Japanese public regarding the utility of military force for suppressing WMD proliferation and terrorist networks, and for promoting democracy. However, the public did show greater understanding of the Afghanistan War than of the Iraq War. Despite skepticism about the effectiveness of the Afghan invasion for preventing future terrorist attacks, the public was less opposed to offensive military operations in direct response to an attack on national territory than to such operations absent an attack on national territory. Thus Japanese public was, from the beginning, overwhelmingly and consistently opposed to the invasion of Iraq.

Finally, this study finds that America's use of force for reasons viewed as dubious by the Japanese public has negatively affected perceptions of the United States, as it has in many other countries as well. In 2004 and 2005, an absolute majority expressed distrust in the United States in national polls. These findings suggest that far from being a stepping stone toward more active support of U.S. military operations in places far removed from Japanese shores, the Iraq deployment may in fact be the high-water mark for Japanese overseas deployments in support of U.S. global military operations. The Japanese public's deep skepticism about offensive uses of military force and the Iraq War, combined with a growing willingness to countenance military preparations to defend national territory, suggest that Japan may combine less support for U.S. global strategy with greater efforts to achieve autonomy in homeland defense. Those who predict that Japan is positioning itself to begin providing military support for U.S. global strategy will be disappointed.

# Japanese Public Opinion and the War on Terrorism: Implications for Japan's Security Strategy

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Whatever one thinks about the Bush administration's controversial "war on terrorism," it has become the crucial organizing concept of U.S. foreign policy, the most influential since the Cold War-era concept of containment. As the sole superpower, the emergence of a new, centrally defining concept in U.S. foreign policy has had important implications for foes and allies alike. For Japan, beginning in the hours immediately following the 9/11 attacks, the "war on terrorism" led to important policy innovations that appeared to challenge Tokyo's postwar prohibitions on the deployment and use of military force overseas (Hughes 2002; Midford 2003a).

While Japan has long demonstrated a commitment to militarily defend national territory, its refusal to "become a military power" that uses physical coercion overseas for foreign policy objectives has been a hallmark of Japan's postwar military posture of defensive defense (or *senshu bōei*) (Midford 1995; Twomey 2000; Midford 2002). Thus Japan's strong sup-

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*has become the crucial*  
*organizing concept of*  
*U.S. foreign policy*

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port for the Bush administration's war on terrorism, and its willingness to deploy naval (and briefly air) forces to the Indian Ocean, and ground, air, and naval assets to Iraq and surrounding countries for several years has become the most salient case for testing whether Japan is abandoning its postwar defensive defense posture and becoming a "normal" great power, willing to use military force overseas for foreign policy objectives.

Christopher Hughes suggests that Japan's "participation in the Afghan campaign and Iraqi reconstruction has set vital precedents for JSDF [Japan Self-Defense Forces] dispatch" that could presage Japan's being "drawn in radical new directions" (Hughes 2004: 131). Less cautiously, other observers claim that Japan has already crossed its security "rubicon" (Miller 2002) or believe that Japan is emerging as the "Britain of Asia," an ally that will fight alongside U.S. forces just as Britain does.<sup>1</sup> Others suggest that Japanese public opinion is becoming increasingly nationalistic, and that this is driving the country to play a more active military role overseas.<sup>2</sup>

The claim that Japan is emerging as a "normal" military power willing to deploy military force overseas begs the question, would the Japanese "mass public" support such a major shift in policy? The answer has big implications for U.S. foreign policy, global politics, and regional politics beyond East Asia, such as in the Middle East. Here I briefly summarize the implications of two contrasting scenarios. The first is that increasingly hawkish public opinion, or hawkish elites unencumbered by public opinion, will cause Japan to become, as Richard Armitage and others suggest, the "Britain of Asia," a military power willing to fight alongside U.S. forces in various conflicts far from Japanese shores.<sup>3</sup> The second is that hawkish elites, encumbered by a public that is deeply skeptical about overseas combat operations by the Self-Defense Forces (SDF), will consequently not be able to expand SDF operations beyond the noncombat humanitarian and logistical operations conducted in Iraq. Indeed, under this scenario Iraq may become the high-water mark of Japanese support for U.S. military operations distant from Japanese shores.

This study explores these two scenarios and their implications for U.S. foreign policy and global politics. It also explores the influence of an important yet understudied variable in democratic Japan: public opinion. Although much recent research has been done on how pacifist norms and antimilitarist political culture constrain and influence policy, very little has been published in English regarding Japanese public opinion on security since the 1970s.<sup>4</sup> Such a study is especially timely today, with international public opinion regarding the war on terrorism, the use of military force, and attitudes toward the United States grabbing headlines and generating large multinational comparative opinion surveys (see, for example, Kohut

and Stokes 2006). Thus this study not only sheds light on how public opinion affects Japan's security strategy; it also offers insights into how Japanese public opinion toward the war on terrorism diverges from or converges with that found elsewhere.

This study finds that public opinion matters and that the Japanese public remains overwhelmingly opposed to deploying the Japanese military overseas for combat operations. The ambivalent and conditional support of the Japanese public for recent deployments to the Indian Ocean and Iraq reflects not a change in public opinion, but rather the extremely modest and noncombat nature of these deployments. Rather than hawkish elites molding public opinion, public opinion has molded, or limited, the overseas deployment plans of hawkish elites.

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combat operations*

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### **Japanese Attitudes toward Security**

The policy attitudes of mass publics, the key causal variable of this study, are defined here as belief structures about cause and effect, the utility of certain policies or policy instruments, such as military force, and beliefs about capacity, such as the state's capacity to control and wisely employ its military. It is beyond the scope of this study to explain the origins of these beliefs or to comprehensively map their structure (for one attempt to do this, see Hurwitz and Peffley 1987). Nonetheless, this study distinguishes between soft policy attitudes that are relatively susceptible to elite molding and hard policy attitudes that are relatively immune from elite molding.

This study finds that Japanese attitudes toward security have two important dimensions: relatively soft beliefs about the state's ability to wisely wield the sword and harder beliefs about the utility of defensive versus offensive military power. Although this study sometimes uses the term pacifism, Japanese attitudes about the military and military force originate as much from what has been called a "culture of antimilitarism" as they do from pacifism per se. This culture of antimilitarism originates with the experiences of World War II (Berger 1993, 1998). Because of a widespread belief that the military hijacked the state and led Japan into a devastating and even irrational war, distrust of the military and the state's ability to control it has been deep-seated. Consequently, the mainstream of Japanese public opinion has ranged from opposing any military role for the SDF, to favoring as constrained a military role as possible; very few have favored

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a significant expansion of the SDF's military role. Support for small and incremental increases in security roles and missions have developed slowly and usually after the fact. Support for SDF's continued existence, such as it was, was predicated on the assumption that its primary role was domestic disaster relief (Welfield 1988: 415, 418–21, 424, 426–27; Hook 1996: 114; Asagumo Shinbunsha 2001: 749, 753–54).

From this core of distrust of the military grew several broader antimilitarist and even pacifist attitudes (Katzenstein 1996, 2003). These broader attitudes

inform the second crucial dimension of public attitudes toward security: beliefs about the utility of military force. This study identifies four major beliefs. First, there was the belief that all wars are equally unjustified and counterproductive; offensive and defensive wars cannot therefore be distinguished, and military force is essentially lacking in utility. Summarizing his 1989 study of Japanese public opinion on foreign affairs, Davis Bobrow finds “stable skepticism about the utility of the military instrument” (Bobrow 1989: 602).

Second, many desired to see Japan pursue, as the Japan Socialist Party (JSP) once advocated, unarmed neutrality.<sup>5</sup> Third, an unarmed or lightly armed Japan was believed the best way to discourage others from targeting or attacking the nation. This view implied that the more Japan armed itself or involved itself with supporting U.S. military power, the more likely it was to provoke military responses from others (Midford 2002; Midford 2001: chaps. 3 and 5). Finally, dispatching the SDF overseas for any purpose was believed to endanger civilian control (Berger 1993) and likely to provoke other nations, especially those in East Asia with memories of Japan's invasion and occupation (Midford 2002, 2001). This last view was most closely linked to antimilitarist distrust of the state's ability to exercise civilian control over the military, especially in the case of overseas deployments.

One important caveat should be made about these beliefs. Some of the ideas emerging from Japanese postwar antimilitarism and pacifism are not altogether inconsistent with some forms of realism (especially defensive realism). Most notably, the idea that an unarmed or lightly armed Japan that avoided bellicose or aggressive behavior would avoid provoking others to see Tokyo as a threat is consistent with a recognition of the security

dilemma, (Jervis 1978) and the tendency of other states to balance against those viewed as harboring aggressive intentions.<sup>6</sup> Given the historical legacy of Japan's invasion and brutal occupation of much of Asia up to 1945, many Japanese policymakers as well as the public at large recognized that full rearmament risked provoking other Asian states to counterbalance Japan, economically as much as militarily (Midford 2002). Nonetheless, the solution proposed by many Japanese pacifists, namely unarmed or lightly armed neutrality, went well beyond what defensive realism would predict. This view betrayed an unwillingness to see that military weakness, or a lack of deterrent capability, might provoke others to exploit the state just as surely as over-armament or aggressive behavior might provoke others to counterbalance.<sup>7</sup>

Although pacifist and antimilitarist norms never achieved unchallenged dominance, they exerted great influence during the Cold War and even post-Cold War decade of the 1990s. Nonetheless, over time, state efforts to reassure the public and changes in Japan's security environment have produced changes in public attitudes toward security. The Japanese public has gradually and incrementally come to have more trust in the state's ability to effectively and wisely employ the military, thereby overcoming antimilitarist mistrust of the SDF. At the same time, pacifist beliefs have gradually been supplanted, and belief in the disutility of all military force has slowly been replaced by a new belief that military force has utility for homeland defense, but not for much else.

In other words, the Japanese mass public has increasingly come to accept a central tenet of realism, namely that war is an ever-present threat that must be prepared for. According to one senior Bush administration official and Japan expert, "the Japanese people are coming to accept a Hobbesian view of international politics."<sup>8</sup> If Japanese public opinion can be increasingly characterized as realist, it can also be characterized as defensive realist, because it remains skeptical about the utility of offensive military power.

Although defensive and offensive realism are schools of thought within academic realism and have not before been applied to the study of belief structures in mass opinion, this study argues that defensive and offensive realism provide significant descriptive inference regarding foreign policy-related beliefs. Defensive realism asserts that defensive military postures are usual-

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ly optimal for achieving security. By contrast, offensive realism holds that offensive military action often contributes to security. The difference between these two positions stems in part from differing views about the balance of offensive versus defensive military technology, but also from differing views about other variables related to the efficacy of offensive versus defensive military action, such as the presence or absence of first-move advantages, the ease of conquest, and the cumulativeness of resources (that is, the degree to which conquest pays) (Van Evera 1999; Snyder 1991). Defensive realists contend that military technology and related variables favor the defense, and consequently assert that the state should pursue a defensive military doctrine. By contrast, John Mearsheimer, the acknowledged dean of offensive realism, summarizes the view of this school by claiming, “the international system creates powerful incentives for aggression” (Mearsheimer 1990).<sup>9</sup> Underlying the offensive realist view is the belief that the balance of military technology and related factors usually favor the offense.<sup>10</sup>

Although cast in terms of military technology and related factors such as the ease of conquest, for the purposes of analyzing the belief structures of mass opinion, this study uses the related, but more general, concept of utility. It therefore defines defensive realism as the belief that the utility of military power is limited to national defense in the face of imminent threats. By contrast, offensive realism is defined as the belief that offensive military power has utility for pursuing a wide range of state interests beyond defense of the homeland. These might include realist security objectives such as suppressing terrorist networks or weapons of mass destruction, or so-called offensive liberal objectives such as promoting democracy.<sup>11</sup> The common denominator is that offensive military action is seen as having utility for advancing national interest, however that might be justified.<sup>12</sup>

What has been labeled as Japan’s “reluctant realism” (Green 2001a) consists of several beliefs that represent a marked change from the pacifist

and antimilitarist beliefs discussed above and a convergence with defensive realism. First, wars can be distinguished according to whether they are (1) for the sake of national defense against an actual or imminent threat or (2) offensive wars for other purposes; the former are justified, the latter are not. As discussed later, Japanese reaction to the invasion of Afghanistan, which was seen by many as an inevitable

act of self-defense by the United States, was very different from that of the invasion of Iraq.

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***Japanese reaction to the  
invasion of Afghanistan...  
was very different***

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Second, because war is an ever-present possibility, Japan must prepare for it.<sup>13</sup> According to the well-known political commentator Yoichi Funabashi, “a form of realism is spreading, especially among the young, that because there is danger and instability in the world, for the sake of maintaining peace and stability it is necessary to maintain deterrent power, and therefore military power is essential.”<sup>14</sup> By voting to enact a legal framework for dealing with foreign attack in 2003, the approximately 80 percent of Diet members who so voted thereby signaled acceptance of this essential tenet of realism. This vote was backed by a large and stable opinion majority.

Third, a growing section of Japanese public opinion holds beliefs that correspond to a “defense-dominant” view of military force. In other words, military power has value for national defense, but not for much else. The Japanese public expresses skepticism about the utility of military force for fighting terrorism, countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, or promoting democracy.

Finally, coexisting with this belief is high and stable support for the dispatch of the SDF overseas for humanitarian and reconstruction projects. This position reflects support for the “internationalization” of what many Japanese have considered the SDF to be: a disaster relief organization. Ironically, support for SDF overseas dispatches reflects the belief that nonmilitary solutions have the highest utility for conflict resolution and ameliorating the root causes of terrorism.

This study argues that the 9/11 attacks and the ensuing American “war on terrorism,” although important shocks for Japan, did not fundamentally alter Japan’s world view. Konoh Yohei, speaker of the lower house of the Diet, represented mainstream Japanese mass opinion when he observed: “It is said that on 9/11 the world changed, but its structure has not changed. Poverty and inequality and Middle Eastern problems must be solved, this was true before 9/11 and it is still true... We must consider the reasons behind terrorism and how to solve them.”<sup>15</sup>

The war on terrorism and 9/11 at most contributed to modestly and temporarily accelerating the evolution of Japanese public opinion toward defensive realism. There has been no dramatic shift in Japanese mass opinion. Japanese policy has changed somewhat more than opinion, however, opening up a gap between opinion and policy. This is especially evident regarding the Iraq War. This gap has yet to close, and has important implications for Japanese policy and politics.

One caveat is in order: the conclusions reached in this study Japanese public opinion reflect opinion at the aggregate level of opinion as measured by opinion polls. I am not claiming that all or even most Japanese hold beliefs that approximate “defensive realist” views. Rather, Japanese

opinion is composed of distinguishable groups: pacifists who are in decline yet continue to exert influence; a small group of hawks who are relatively sanguine about the utility of military force; and centrists. It is the aggregated views of all these groups that approximate defensive realism.

### Does Japanese Public Opinion Matter?

It is common to dismiss the influence of public opinion on Japanese foreign policy. In contrast to American debates between elitists and pluralists, in Japan the elitist view has dominated.<sup>16</sup> Public opinion is often claimed to have had little influence on Japanese foreign policy, and public opinion is often seen as subject to elite molding.<sup>17</sup> According to one observer of

Japanese defense policy, Japanese public opinion “tends to follow the course of events rather than determine specific outcomes” (Keddell 1993: 4). By contrast, this study argues that public opinion does have an important influence on foreign policy. Public opinion acts as a crucial constraint on policy. This is

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*elite efforts to build support  
for the Iraq War have failed*

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not to say that elites and the state do not influence public attitudes about foreign policy. Elite influence over mass opinion, when it occurs, is gradual. In areas where it conflicts with underlying public attitudes, however, it is largely ineffective. For example, as discussed below, elite efforts to build support for the Iraq War have failed.

Elite influence over Japanese public opinion has been most effective at promoting the gradual erosion of antimilitarist mistrust of the Japanese state’s ability to wield the sword. Here, a clear pattern of rational reassurance, in which the state and elites gradually demonstrate to the public the state’s capacity to successfully control and manage a greater and greater range of military activities without experiencing a reversion to 1930s militarism, when civilian control and nascent democracy broke down and the military committed the nation to an unwinnable and disastrous war. This reassurance strategy, which is the domestic analogue of a foreign reassurance strategy aimed at neighboring Asian nations, has entailed a step-by-step expansion of Japan’s military role over the course of more than fifty years. In this respect public opinion has proven to be a soft and somewhat malleable constraint, one that slows down security policy change, but does not usually stop it.

Peter Woolley’s study of the gradual expansion in the roles and missions of the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) offers an excellent description of this process. Woolley shows a consistent pattern: a plan for

expanded naval operations is put forth; this generates domestic controversy, but eventually the mission is accepted and slips into obscurity as the MSDF grows incrementally into its new mission with professionalism and without incident.<sup>18</sup> In this way, the Japanese state reassures public opinion, and Asian nations, that the MSDF (and other branches of the SDF) can assume greater security roles without triggering a return to 1930s-style militarism. Woolley goes so far as to argue that “public opinion was just as likely to have reflected the development of missions by the JSDF as it was to have limited the JSDF” (Woolley 2000: 26). In this view, the impact of public opinion, if any, is to slow policy change.

However, other attitudes, most notably public opinion about the utility of offensive versus defensive military force, have proven much more resistant to elite-driven efforts to induce opinion change and therefore policy change. Elite efforts to gain public acceptance of overseas combat missions for the Japanese military have not been very successful. This lack of public acceptance in turn has prevented Japanese elites from implementing missions that would involve the SDF in low-intensity combat, security, and patrol missions. Although there is much speculation about Japan’s ending its ban on the exercise of the right of collective defense,<sup>19</sup> there is little indication that Japan will engage in joint combat operations with the United States anytime in the foreseeable future.

The following section outlines the factors that determine the impact of opinion majorities on policy outcomes.

#### When Large and Stable Opinion Majorities Exist

Opinion majorities that are well over 50 percent, persistent, and not much affected by changes in survey question wording have the greatest impact on policy. Narrow opinion majorities or pluralities, or those that are changeable in the face of new question wording or short-term developments, do not have much impact on policy.

Large and stable opinion majorities will affect policy in several ways: by emboldening and mobilizing politicians they support, and by restraining, immobilizing, or demoralizing politicians they oppose. These dynamics often operate at the interparty level, but just as often in Japan, they also operate at the intraparty level, especially within the faction-ridden Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).<sup>20</sup>

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*there is little indication  
that Japan will engage  
in joint combat  
operations with the  
United States*

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### When There Is Political Competition

Many observers view Japan as a nation with a seemingly oxymoronic “one-party-dominant democracy” where the LDP has ruled almost continuously since 1955.<sup>21</sup> According to this view, there is little political competition in Japan. Yet the reality of LDP dominance is frequently exaggerated. LDP rule has been precarious, often based upon extremely narrow majorities, as was the case in the 1970s.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, since 1989, the LDP has not controlled the upper house of the Diet, effectively preventing the LDP from passing normal legislation on its own.<sup>23</sup> This reality, reinforced by a decline in the LDP’s core voter base, its inability to obtain an outright majority in most of the recent lower house elections (2005 being a notable exception), and its increasing reliance on support from its coalition partner of the past decade, Komei, for electing LDP candidates, has made for a much more competitive political environment than the image of a “one-party-dominant democracy” would suggest, one in which the LDP constantly struggles to hang on to power. Under such conditions, it cannot easily ignore stable opinion majorities.

More important, the label of one-party dominance masks the crucial role played by political competition within the LDP, competition that has important policy implications. Through most of its history the LDP has been more a collection of competing factions than a coherent political party.<sup>24</sup> Although factions have not normally held consistent policy positions, policy positions have at times influenced competition among them. More important, the tendency for factions to polarize around “mainstream” (*shuruuha*) and “antimainstream” (*hanshuruuha*) groupings has often involved differences over policy. Indeed, the alternation of these two groups in power has sometimes had effects on policy comparable to those stemming from a change of party. To take the most recent example, the change of main and antimainstream sides between the premiership of Obuchi Keizō and that of Koizumi Junichirō (via the transitional figure of Mori Yoshirō) had far-ranging effects on domestic and foreign policies. In this way, the LDP was simultaneously able to play the role of both ruling and opposition party.<sup>25</sup>

This combination of the LDP’s precarious, if long, hold on power, combined with fierce internal competition within the LDP and the need to constantly negotiate with its key coalition partner, Komei, has meant that political competition has been the rule rather than the exception in Japanese politics. Nonetheless, political competition is a variable, not a constant. As discussed further below, during periods when political competition has appeared to wane, such as when the main opposition party stumbles, the government has shown greater willingness to defy opinion majorities.

### When a United Diet Opposition Has the Support of a Stable Majority

If the LDP can coax one or more opposition parties, especially the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), the largest opposition party, to support its policies, it can usually pursue those policies with little concern about public opposition. Consider an example from another parliamentary democracy: In Britain, Prime Minister Tony Blair had little reason to worry about public opposition to the war in Iraq since the other major party, the Conservatives, also supported the war. But when the opposition unites against a war, and has the support of a stable opinion majority, it has the opportunity to exploit this opposition to gain at the expense of the ruling coalition. As Kurt Gaubatz puts it, it is not public opinion itself, but the potential for it to be exploited by the opposition that motivates the ruling side to concern itself with electoral backlash, especially when an election is near (Gaubatz 1999: 55, as cited by Chan and Safran 2006: 149).

### When the Ruling Coalition Is Divided

Even when the opposition is not united, if important pieces of legislation, especially those in the same or a related issue area, are coming up for Diet consideration, coalition leaders have to worry about an opinion backlash derailing those other bills. This is especially true when the presence of a stable opinion majority coincides with divisions within the ruling coalition. For example, the Koizumi administration's desire to beef up its deployments in the Indian Ocean in the first half of 2002 in support of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan were restrained by an even greater desire to see the quick enactment of an Emergency Legal Framework law for responding to armed attack on Japanese territory. Opponents within the LDP and Komei exploited this situation to block beefed-up deployments.

Ironically, the desire of the LDP and the Koizumi administration to revise the constitution renders opinion majorities more influential for Japan today than at any time in the postwar era. Because constitutional revision is a long and difficult process requiring a two-thirds majority of the Diet plus a majority vote in a national plebiscite, the LDP and the government face an especially strong incentive not to defy stable opinion majorities. Bucking such majorities on security issues significantly increases the risk that constitutional reforms, especially those pertaining to the war-renouncing Article 9,<sup>26</sup> will fail to achieve a two-thirds majority in the Diet or will fail to achieve a simple majority in a national referendum.

### When Consensus Democracy Norms and Institutions Are Present

Consensus democracy norms encourage the view that simple majority votes are insufficiently broad to have democratic legitimacy. These norms therefore encourage supermajorities well beyond simple majorities of 50 percent plus one.<sup>27</sup> These norms enhance the role of public opinion, especially the views of vocal minorities and their representatives in the Diet. Peter J. Katzenstein sees Japan “as a non-majoritarian political community,” where “minorities have considerable veto power” (Katzenstein 1996: 32, 115–16). Similarly, Thomas Rohlen argues, “the Japanese preference is to avoid majority rule” (Rohlen 1989: 16). “The public need not unanimously approve of policies,” according to Bobrow, but “the great majority has to find them acceptable” with “the avoidance, or at least isolation, of dissent” (Bobrow 1989: 572). Akio Watanabe observes that the “ideal mode of decision making for the Japanese is one in which as many people as possible are duly consulted and not a single dissentient voice remains at the time of the final decision” (Watanabe 1978: 80).

Consequently, the LDP has often found it advantageous to avoid ramming legislation through the Diet even when it has had a single-party parliamentary majority. Instead, as T. J. Pempel notes, cabinets have often followed “the norm of cross-party consensus building. Usually, the LDP [tried] to ensure support for its proposals by at least one, and often more, opposition parties” (Pempel 1992: 11) or what is sometimes known as a strategy of “partial coalition” with at least one opposition party (Krauss 1984: 263; Lijphart 1999: 108).

On national security issues in particular, there is often a strong incentive for the ruling side to reach out to the opposition in order to achieve a wide consensus. For example, in 2003, Prime Minister Koizumi, despite having a secure majority for enacting landmark Emergency Legal Framework legislation, nonetheless chose to reach out to the opposition Democratic Party. In exchange for the Democrats’ support, Koizumi agreed to several DPJ amendments to the bill. This compromise reflects the political advantages of obtaining a supermajority in Japan, especially on security issues. Such dynamics clearly discourage a majority party from attempting to ram legislation through the Diet against the wishes of an opinion majority.

### The Consequence: Crafting Policy in Anticipation of Public Reaction

For all these reasons, the LDP-dominant governments tailor policies that avoid provoking the emergence of opposing stable opinion majorities.

Using polls and other means, the government attempts to anticipate the reaction of voters. According to Watanabe, “policy means accommodation before anything else. What is most required of political leaders...is not the power to decide but the power to compromise” (Watanabe 1978: 75). As Bobrow puts it, “A party alert to electoral support,” the LDP “will go to some pains to avoid defying public opinion....Polls enter into ‘defiance avoiding’ because...[ruling politicians]...have reasons to avoid bold, visible actions that run counter to them” (Bobrow 1989: 572).

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*the government attempts  
to anticipate the  
reaction of voters*

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When the ruling side wants to push policies that are unpopular, including those related to defense, it may go as far as to aim for voters’ indifference point, where support and opposition are evenly divided, or where a plurality or even a slim and unstable majority opposes a policy. Japanese cabinets avoid policies that go beyond this, and when a clear and stable opposing majority emerges, they back down.

### **Organization and Methodology**

The remainder of this study is divided into four parts. The following sections: (1) briefly introduce Japanese public opinion regarding overseas dispatch of the SDF before 9/11; (2) track mass opinion toward the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and Japan’s involvement; (3) consider Japanese attitudes about the utility of military force for achieving various objectives; and (4) spell out the long-term implications for Japan’s evolving security strategy and for Japan’s alliance with the United States and U.S. policymakers.

This study addresses these questions by using two qualitative methods: congruence procedures and process tracing. The first involves looking for congruence and incongruence between public opinion as measured by media and government polls and policies regarding SDF overseas deployments for the war on terrorism; congruence suggests public influence over policy (or vice versa), incongruence suggests a lack of influence over policy. Process tracing involves looking at how policy elites understood and responded to, or attempted to shape, public opinion on the basis of media accounts and interviews with elites. Using a qualitative approach known as triangulation, the study examines several different forms of data, including quantitative data, making deductive inferences and using rich case-study knowledge to initially establish causation via congruence procedures and then using process tracing to cross-check these inferences.<sup>28</sup>



### Pre-9/11 Views on Dispatching the SDF Overseas

Before the first Gulf War, the issue of dispatching Japanese personnel overseas had already been slowly welling to the surface in Japanese politics despite a 1954 nonbinding upper house resolution opposing overseas dispatch for any reason.<sup>29</sup> In a poll sponsored by the Prime Minister's Office in October 1986, respondents were asked whether Japan should cooperate with UN peacekeeping operations in disputed areas such as the Middle East or Cyprus by dispatching nationals and equipment and by extending financial aid within the limits of domestic legislation. In response, 39.2 percent said Japan should do so, 25.3 percent replied to the contrary, and 34.6 percent were unsure. Although not asked specifically about the participation of the SDF in peacekeeping, the willingness of a plurality to consider dispatching personnel to conflict zones (and the uncertainty of another third) suggests that as early as 1986 over two-thirds of Japanese were relatively open to considering this prospect.<sup>30</sup> A poll conducted by the Prime Minister's Office in August 1989 found that a mere 22 percent of respondents supported the possibility of SDF participation in UN peacekeeping operations, a plurality of 46 percent were opposed, and 30 percent did not know or could not answer. Nonetheless, 72 percent supported overseas dispatches of the SDF for "disaster relief activities," the SDF's main domestic role.<sup>31</sup> Thus, a year before the outbreak of the first Gulf War, the public, while suspicious of SDF participation in peacekeeping operations, was nonetheless already quite comfortable with the idea of the SDF playing a humanitarian and disaster relief role overseas. Subsequent LDP governments would gradually come to understand that they could gain public acceptance for SDF dispatches overseas by largely limiting these dispatches to humanitarian and reconstruction-type missions.

#### The First Gulf War

The 1990 Gulf crisis brought the issue to a head as a combination of real and imagined U.S. pressure and hawks within the LDP, most notably the party's secretary general, Ozawa Ichiro, conspired to promote legislation—the United Nations Peace Cooperation Corps, or UNPCC bill—for dispatching the SDF to Saudi Arabia. The UNPCC bill authorized the SDF to provide noncombat rear-area logistical support for the U.S.-led multilateral army assembling there, with the caveat that the SDF would withdraw in the event of hostilities. This mission

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*dispatching the SDF overseas  
even for nonmilitary  
purposes...generated  
considerable suspicion*

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appeared to implicate the SDF in overseas military operations. The idea of actually dispatching the SDF overseas even for nonmilitary purposes remained unfamiliar to the Japanese public and generated considerable suspicion, especially during a militarized crisis. Japanese and Asians alike were reminded of the Japanese state's reputation for being incapable of controlling a military, especially when deployed overseas. For some it reignited antimilitarist-based suspicion about the reemergence of an aggressive disposition toward the use of military power.

Even some within the LDP shared these misgivings. Gotōda Masaharu, a former head of Japan's Defense Agency and chief cabinet secretary under former Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro, expressed his opposition to sending the SDF to Saudi Arabia in a front-page *Mainichi Shimbun* interview. According to Gotōda, "if Japan uses this as an opportunity to start sending troops to other countries...the door will be opened for Japan to become a military superpower." Gotōda added, "Japan does not have a historical foundation for civilian control [of the military] like England and the United States."<sup>32</sup>

A large and stable opinion majority quickly formed in opposition to dispatch. Typical were the results reported by an *Asahi Shimbun* poll in early November 1990, which found that 58 percent of respondents opposed the bill and only 21 percent supported it. Dispatching the SDF overseas during a crisis seemed to be a major reason for opposition: 78 percent opposed overseas dispatch during a crisis, 15 percent supported it, and 7 percent were undecided.<sup>33</sup> Significantly, a poll conducted by *Nikkei* found that even most LDP supporters opposed the provisions of the bill.<sup>34</sup>

The formation of this large and stable opinion majority in opposition to the UNPCC influenced the centrist Komei Party to come out against the bill. Without Kōmeitō support, and with other opposition parties opposing the bill, the LDP had no chance of getting the bill passed through the upper house. Many LDP Diet members also worried about the consequences of voting for the UNPCC bill given the formation of a clear opposing opinion majority. One former member of the LDP, who considers himself to be a hawk on defense issues, had this to say about supporting the UNPCC bill: "I would have been worried about voting yes. Voters paid attention to this issue very closely, and they were against the dispatch of *Jietai* overseas."<sup>35</sup> Many other LDP backbenchers apparently began to worry that voters would punish them if they voted for the UNPCC bill.<sup>36</sup> In the face of Kōmeitō's opposition and growing opposition within the LDP, the UNPCC bill was dropped in early November 1990.

The failure of the UNPCC bill is thus an important example of an LDP government retreating from a desired policy initiative in the face of

a large and stable opposing opinion majority. Another example followed shortly thereafter during the Gulf War. In February 1991 the Kaifu cabinet

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***the Kaifu cabinet decided  
to dispatch ASDF transports  
to evacuate refugees***

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decided to dispatch Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) transports to evacuate refugees during the Gulf War. However, the responsiveness of Komei and other opposition parties to public opposition to this dispatch,<sup>37</sup> and their ability to prevent the dispatch from happening due to their control of the upper house, is another example of public opinion prevailing over Tokyo's desired foreign

policy (Heinrich 1997: 185; Ruufu Shuppansha 1992: 51–55).

The Minesweeper Dispatch

After the Gulf War had formally ended in April 1991, the Japanese govern-

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***the minesweeper dispatch  
proved to be highly popular***

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ment made a third attempt to dispatch the SDF to the Middle East. This time the Kaifu cabinet announced a plan to send a minesweeper flotilla to clear waters off Kuwait of Iraqi mines. Unlike the previous two attempts at dispatch, the minesweeper dispatch proved to be highly popular, with opinion majorities

in excess of 60 percent supporting it.<sup>38</sup>

Many observers see this as a shift in Japanese public opinion induced by American criticism and Japanese government attempts to mold opinion by exploiting this criticism (Heinrich 1997; Hook 1996; Weinstein 1993). Rather, the minesweeper dispatch enjoyed popular support because it had an important demonstration effect. It demonstrated that the Japanese military could conduct noncombat operations overseas with undeniable humanitarian as well as commercial value that did not take place in the context of a war; yet the operations undeniably required military expertise. As an objective, clearing the mines from waters off Kuwait and Iraq was simply unobjectionable. In effect if not form, the minesweeper dispatch resembled the domestic disaster relief operations that form the backbone of public support for the SDF at home. This salient example, complete with television and other media images of the minesweepers eliminating threats to peaceful shipping in the Persian Gulf, created important images of a new type of overseas dispatch, one that began to break “the historical link between overseas dispatch of Japanese military forces and their participation in aggressive wars” (Hook 1996: 123). Thus the minesweeper dis-

patch built trust in the SDF's ability to perform professionally and with discipline overseas and established the idea that overseas dispatch can be delinked from combat.

#### The 1992 PKO Law

Over the next year, efforts were made to enact a bill for overseas dispatch of the SDF that was far more modest than the 1990 UNPCC bill, one permitting SDF participation in UN peacekeeping operations. Although these efforts are often described as involving the "manipulation" of Japanese public opinion by Japanese elites, in fact public opinion changed little during this period.<sup>39</sup> What changed were the proposals of the elites. To achieve the enactment of the UN PKO bill in June 1992, the LDP had to water down the bill by freezing "front-line" peacekeeping operations, cease-fire monitoring, weapons collection, and other activities in favor of concentrating on construction, medical services, and relief operations. In other words, so-called peacekeeping dispatches for the SDF came to resemble the popular humanitarian and disaster relief missions that the SDF conducts at home, and which the Japanese public has supported as a reason for overseas dispatch since at least 1986.<sup>40</sup> In retrospect it is obvious that what the LDP sold to the Japanese electorate was the idea that the SDF "disaster relief corps" should go international. The LDP modified its proposals to ensure they would not again provoke an opposing opinion majority.

#### Cambodia and Beyond

The first dispatch of SDF troops overseas to Cambodia elicited clear public support as they performed humanitarian and reconstruction missions with professionalism and discipline. An *Asahi Shimbun* poll conducted just after Japanese troops arrived in Cambodia in 1992 found that 52 percent supported the dispatch and 36 percent opposed it. The same poll also found that 71 percent wanted to limit future contributions to nonmilitary fields.<sup>41</sup> A subsequent poll found that 66 percent of Japanese worried about the government expanding the role of SDF personnel in Cambodia beyond humanitarian and reconstruction missions.<sup>42</sup> The public thus remained wary about the SDF playing a military role overseas. The idea that Japan should dispatch the SDF to hotspots for the sake of allies or international stability remained unsupported by a stable opinion majority of Japanese. A CBS/New York Times/TBS poll conducted in November 1991 and June 1993 found that large majorities (63 percent and 74 percent) of Japanese did not believe their country had a responsibility "to give military assistance in trouble spots around the world when it is asked by its allies" (Ladd and Bowman 1996: 30).

A significant portion of the Japanese public continued to worry about the breakdown of civilian control and the reemergence of militarism. According to the June 1993 survey results of a CBS/New York Times/TBS poll, approximately 40 percent of Japanese worry that greater involvement in international peacekeeping operations could cause Japan to become too aggressive, whereas 54 percent disagreed that this could happen. Eighteen months later, in December 1994, the same poll found that Japanese respondents, by the same margin (40 percent), felt that if Japan increased its military power as part of its participation in international peacekeeping operations, there would be danger of the country's becoming too aggressive; again, a 54 percent majority dissented (Ladd and Bowman 1996: 38).

On the other hand, the Japanese public gradually began to delink fears of militarism from SDF participation in humanitarian relief and reconstruction activities overseas. In responses to a polling question asked repeatedly by the Prime Minister's Office between 1991 and 2000, support for international disaster relief operations grew from a bare majority to an overwhelming majority while opposition collapsed (see Table 1). The Japanese public increasingly recognized a distinction between overseas deployments for nonmilitary activities (*kaigai haken*) (such as humanitarian and reconstruction activities) and deployments for the sake of using military force (*kaigai hahei*). The domestic disaster relief corps had successfully gone international. The demonstration effect of the SDF performing humanitarian and reconstruction missions overseas with discipline and professionalism was reassuring.

However, growing support for SDF participation in nonmilitary humanitarian and reconstruction activities, even within a UN peacekeeping framework, did not translate into growing support for the use of force overseas, even within a UN peacekeeping framework. A May 1994 *Yomiuri Shimbun* poll found that 70.5 percent of Japanese supported SDF

**Table 1.** Japanese Public Opinion about SDF Participation in Disaster Relief Operations Overseas (Percent)

Date	Agree/agree somewhat	Can't say/ don't know	Disagree/disagree somewhat
February 1991	54.2	15.3	30.4
January 1994	61.6	16.4	21.9
February 1997	78.0	10.1	11.9
January 2000	86.3	8.3	5.4

Source: Poll conducted by the Publicity Office of the Prime Minister's Office, January 2000, as carried in *Bōei Nenkan Kankō Kaihen, Bōei Nenkan 2001 nenban*, p. 191.

participation in UN peacekeeping, but that 71.6 percent opposed expanding participation into peacekeeping operations involving the use of force.<sup>43</sup>

Although most Japanese firmly opposed military action to settle international disputes,<sup>44</sup> and did not want the SDF to become involved in overseas combat, even within a UN peacekeeping framework, a solid opinion majority accepted that military force was necessary to defend the nation's independence and territorial integrity. An August 1999 *Nikkei* poll found that 76 percent of respondents believed Japan should create a legal framework to prepare "for an attack by foreign forces," 14 percent did not think Japan should do so, and 10 percent did not know.<sup>45</sup> Even when respondents were told that enacting emergency laws for use in case of foreign attack might involve some sacrifice of civil liberties, a plurality was still supportive. A *Yomiuri Shimbun* poll found that 46 percent agreed that "a law should be passed to make it easier for the Self-Defense Forces to initiate military actions in case Japan is attacked by a foreign force, even if it means civil rights are somewhat restricted," 24 percent disagreed, and 25 percent responded "difficult to say."<sup>46</sup>

These results suggest that by the late 1990s clear majorities of Japanese recognized that war is an ever-present possibility under anarchy, and that military preparations to meet this contingency therefore have positive utility. Given that Japanese antimilitarism is first and foremost about mistrusting the state's ability to wield the sword, these results, especially those from the *Yomiuri* poll, suggest a significant retreat from antimilitarist beliefs. By voting to enact such legislation (albeit belatedly) in 2003, the approximately 80 percent of Diet members who so voted thereby also signaled their acceptance of the essential tenet of realism that war is an ever-present possibility that must be prepared for.

A Prime Minister's Office poll measured public perceptions of the SDF's most important missions a year before 9/11 (see Table 2). It makes clear that the SDF's most popular mission was disaster relief. A clear though much smaller majority recognized maintaining national security as a primary mission for the SDF, consistent with the emergence of a defensive realist view of military force. Because this poll did not ask about the utility of offensive military action for promoting various objectives, we cannot draw direct inferences about respondents' views on this question. Nonetheless, the fact that this question is not even asked implies that the idea of offensive military power having utility is beyond the pale of Japanese political discourse. "Making an inter-

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*the SDF's most popular  
mission was disaster relief*

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**Table 2.** Japanese Public Opinion Regarding the Most Important Mission of the SDF (Percent; multiple answers allowed)

Role of the SDF	Ensuring national security	Ensuring domestic order	Disaster relief	International contribution	Support civilian activities
Reason for existence	59.0	24.3	67.1	25.1	7.6
Secondary role	19.1	11.8	87.2	35.5	17.7
Future role	44.7	20.4	67.5	36.1	9.0

Source: Poll conducted by the Publicity Office of the Prime Minister's Office, January 2000, as carried in *Bōei Nenkan Kankō Kaihen, Bōei Nenkan 2001 nenban*, p. 190.

national contribution” tied or exceeded “ensuring domestic order” as the third most important role for the SDF. Since the SDF’s international “contribution” has mostly consisted of humanitarian relief and reconstruction activities, support for the SDF’s “international contribution” can be seen as a proxy for providing international humanitarian relief.

Thus a year before the 9/11 attacks, opinion majorities recognized the importance of the SDF for national defense as well as for humanitarian relief. The only overseas missions with significant public support were disaster and humanitarian relief operations.

### Japanese Responses to 9/11 and to the Invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq

Japan reacted with shock to the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and to the loss of more than twenty of its nationals at the World Trade Center. In a *Yomiuri Shimbun* poll conducted September 24–25, 2001, 82.5 percent of Japanese expressed great concern about the 9/11 attacks, and 15.5 percent expressed some concern, for an astoundingly high total of 98 percent. A mere 1.9 percent expressed little concern; and 0.1 percent expressed no concern at all. Notably, the number who expressed no opinion or did not answer registered at 0 percent. These extreme results reflect the deep initial impression that 9/11, graphic TV images and all, had on the Japanese public (*Yomiuri Shinbunsha Seron Chōsabu 2002: 338–39, 344–45*).

Polling results also reflected short-term anxiety: 38.4 percent expressed great concern that similar terrorist attacks could occur in Japan, while 47.6 percent expressed some concern that this could happen (86 percent in aggregate). Only 11.9 percent expressed little concern that such attacks could occur in Japan, and 1.7 percent claimed no concern about this possibility. Again, the no-answer rate, at 0.4 percent, was amazingly low. If the Japanese public felt threatened, they also felt unprepared. Asked if Japan

was adequately prepared to defend against a terror attack from terrorist organizations, only 3.6 percent answered that Japan was prepared, whereas a whopping 85.5 percent answered that Japan was not prepared. Ten percent responded that they could not say whether Japan was prepared or not, and 0.9 percent could not answer at all. On the other hand, 62.1 percent of respondents evaluated the Japanese government's initial response to 9/11 very (15.5 percent) or rather (46.6 percent) favorably; 32.6 percent rated the response somewhat (26.6 percent) unfavorably or very unfavorably (6.0 percent), and 5.3 percent gave no answer (Yomiuri Shinbunsha Seron Chōsabu 2002: 338–39, 344–45).

Asked whether Japan should actively cooperate with the United States in responding to the terror attacks, 24.7 percent of respondents answered yes, 62.4 percent answered to some extent (for a combined total of 87.1 percent); 12.0 percent answered that there was no need to cooperate and 0.9 percent did not answer. Among those who answered that Japan should cooperate, respondents were asked to choose from a list of possible types of contribution (no limit on the number of answers selected): rear-area support (including medical, transportation, and fuel services), 86.5 percent; financial support, 54.9 percent; information gathering and sharing, 55.8 percent; direct participation in fighting, 8.2 percent; others, 0.5 percent; and no answer, 2.0 percent (Yomiuri Shinbunsha Seron Chōsabu 2002: 338–39, 344–45). These results reflect growing Japanese familiarity and comfort with rear-area support missions over the course of nine years of SDF participation in UN peacekeeping operations and humanitarian relief missions (Midford 2003a). The 1997 Revised U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines and the 1999 Surrounding Areas Emergency Legislation (enabling legislation for the Revised Guidelines) also contributed by heightening awareness and producing debate about extending rear-area support operations beyond UN and humanitarian frameworks to embrace support for the U.S. military within an alliance framework. Despite the shock of 9/11 and a decade of SDF participation in humanitarian, reconstruction, and logistical missions related to UN peacekeeping operations, these results suggest no greater willingness to use force overseas than had been the case during the Gulf War of a decade earlier. The Japanese public had become more willing to support noncombat logistical support of U.S. military operations, but even this support proved to be fleeting, unstable, and situationally specific.

Although only a tiny minority of respondents was willing to countenance SDF participation in overseas combat, in response to a separate question, 62.7 percent supported the use of the SDF to help guard important domestic facilities and U.S. bases; 16.8 percent opposed this, 19.7 per-



cent could not decide one way or the other, and 0.8 percent provided no answer. Nonetheless, the one-third of respondents who either opposed or were ambivalent about the use of the SDF for domestic security missions indicated continued mistrust of the military by a substantial minority of the electorate (Yomiuri Shinbunsha Seron Chōsabu: 338–39, 344–45).

The shock of the 9/11 attacks quickly began wearing off in Japan. Asked to identify priority tasks for Japanese diplomacy in an October 20–21, 2001, *Yomiuri* poll, 42.9 percent chose international terrorism (multiple answers were allowed). Strikingly, global warming finished sec-

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*The shock of the 9/11 attacks  
quickly began wearing  
off in Japan*

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ond and in a statistical dead heat at 42.8 percent (Yomiuri Shinbunsha Seron Chōsabu: 347–48, 352). Another question in the same poll found 66.9 percent of respondents critical of Japanese diplomacy for being too U.S.-centric (versus 25.0 percent who did not think so). A small plurality, 45.1 percent, agreed that Japan pursued an Asia-passing diplo-

macy (that is, an Asia-ignoring diplomacy), 42.4 percent did not agree, and 12.5 percent did not answer. In a 1980 poll that asked the same question, the number answering that Japanese diplomacy was too U.S.-centric was 13 percent smaller.

Asked how Japan should cooperate with international society to eliminate terrorism, only 3.6 percent supported direct participation in combat, a drop of almost half from the poll results of a month earlier (multiple answers were allowed). This drop perhaps reflected the onset of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan. Rear-area support for the U.S. military was supported by 57.1 percent, a solid majority, but a far smaller one than had been registered a month earlier. Support for providing the U.S. with financial contribution also dropped off, with only 17.6 percent in favor. Thirty-one percent favored information gathering and sharing with the United States, again a significant decline from a month earlier. Assistance for refugees was favored by 63.3 percent; 36.5 percent favored reconstruction assistance for Afghanistan; 35.7 percent favored cutting off funding sources for terrorists; a mere 2.4 percent opposed all forms of participation; and 3.2 percent provided no answer (Yomiuri Shinbunsha Seron Chōsabu: 342, 344–45).

#### Dispatching the SDF

The Tokyo government wasted no time focusing on the implications of the attacks for Japanese security and the U.S.-Japanese alliance. Setting up an

emergency task force in the Prime Minister's Office within forty-five minutes of the attacks, Prime Minister Koizumi quickly decided on a series of responses. Japan made financial contributions directly to victims' families, and another to rescue and cleanup efforts in the United States. Emergency economic aid was earmarked for Pakistan and India, in an effort to ensure their cooperation in the looming war on terrorism. Koizumi announced a plan to amend the Self-Defense Forces Law to authorize the SDF to defend U.S. bases in Japan against unexpected terrorist attacks.<sup>47</sup> Finally, Koizumi, using the statutory authority of the 1992 PKO law, ordered the dispatch of six ASDF transport planes to deliver relief supplies to Afghan refugees in Pakistan.<sup>48</sup>

The centerpiece of Koizumi's response to 9/11 was the decision to dispatch the SDF, notably ships of the MSDF, to the Arabian Sea to provide rear-area logistical support for U.S. military operations against al-Qaeda and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Dispatch of the SDF had also been the major provision of the UNPCC bill, which was debated, but ultimately discarded, in the fall of 1990. The UNPCC bill differed from the Antiterrorism Special Measures bill that Koizumi had proposed in that the former did not permit logistical support for combat operations. Rather, it envisaged the withdrawal of the SDF should fighting break out. The antiterrorism bill also allows SDF personnel to use weapons not only to defend themselves, but also those who "have come under their control." In these ways, the Antiterrorism Special Measures bill represented a half-precedent, because it extended the definition of permissible noncombat operations for the SDF. The bill was enacted into law in October 2001.

An *Asahi Shimbun* poll conducted in late September 2001 asked respondents whether they supported Japan's cooperating with the United States to respond to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. By a margin of 37 percentage points (62 percent to 25 percent) they supported cooperation (13 percent answered otherwise or provided no answer). However, when asked whether, as one part of this cooperation, they supported Prime Minister Koizumi's proposal for a new law enabling the SDF to provide "rear-area support for the American military," only 42 percent approved, while 46 percent disapproved. This poll suggested that Koizumi's initial proposal to dispatch the SDF to the Indian Ocean was close to the indifference point of Japanese voters, with opposition slightly outweighing support.

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*the Antiterrorism Special Measures bill...extended the definition of permissible noncombat operations*

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Public reservations about Koizumi's plan to dispatch the SDF were reflected by Kōmeitō, the LDP's key coalition partner, and by the Democratic Party of Japan, the largest opposition party. In negotiations with Kōmeitō, internal critics within the LDP, and to a lesser extent the DPJ, Koizumi crafted a bill intended to increase public support. First, Koizumi dropped his initial plans to dispatch the Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) to Pakistan to provide humanitarian support.<sup>49</sup> Second, the life of the antiterrorism measures law was limited to two years, with one extension possible. Third, the transport and supply of arms were excluded from the range of permissible activities under the bill. Finally, the number of SDF personnel deployable under the bill was limited to 1,200, or 2,400 during rotation.<sup>50</sup>

These negotiations with critics both inside and outside the ruling coalition broadened support for the Antiterrorism Special Measures bill. By mid-October, support for the bill had increased substantially. Asked if they supported the Antiterrorism Special Measures bill, 51 percent said yes, 29 percent said no, and 20 percent were unsure or did not answer. This reversal might also have reflected substantial changes in the question's wording from *Asahi's* poll a few weeks earlier. The October question omitted any mention of providing rear-area support for the U.S. military. This big increase in public support paved the way for the Antiterrorism Special Measures bill to be enacted into law with lightning speed, demonstrating that the bill had been well placed to overcome the previous ambivalence of the public.<sup>51</sup>

A subsequent *Asahi Shimbun* poll conducted November 24–25, 2001, shows renewed public opposition to SDF overseas dispatches being linked to military operations, including noncombat rear-area support for the U.S. military. Asked if they supported the dispatch of MSDF destroyers to the Indian Ocean as called for in the Antiterrorism Special Measures Act, 44 percent expressed support, and 48 percent expressed opposition.<sup>52</sup> Growing opposition to the naval dispatch appears to have been linked to the growing perception that the dispatch was not “nonmilitary” in character. Discussions about dispatching an advanced Aegis air defense destroyer apparently added to this perception. Growing opposition to the prospect of an Aegis dispatch also appears to be behind a sharp reversal in public approval of the Japanese government's response to the 9/11 attacks. This result was found over the course of several *Yomiuri Shimbun* polls. The results appear in Table 3.

#### The Aegis Controversy

The Aegis dispatch controversy, and related controversies over dispatching P-3C planes and Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS)

**Table 3.** Japanese Public Opinion Regarding the Japanese Government's Response to the 9/11 Terrorist Attacks (Percent)

	Sep. 24 & 25, 2001	Oct. 20 & 21, 2001	Nov. 2–5, 2001
Very favorable	15.5	14.3	19.4
Rather favorable	46.6	51.1	29.1
<b>Aggregate favorable</b>	<b>62.1</b>	<b>65.4</b>	<b>38.5</b>
Rather unfavorable	26.6	23.8	27.3
Very unfavorable	6.0	6.1	16.0
<b>Aggregate unfavorable</b>	<b>32.6</b>	<b>29.9</b>	<b>43.3</b>
No answer	5.3	4.7	8.2

Source: Yomiuri Shinbunsha Seron Chōsabū (2002: 338–39, 344).

planes tested the limits of what the Japanese public was prepared to accept, even from a very popular prime minister. Although an opposing opinion majority was never measured on this issue, the growing controversy combined with declining support for the overall MSDF dispatch and for the Japanese government's response to 9/11 was enough to motivate both Kōmeitō and critics within the LDP to act preemptively so as not to provoke an opposing opinion majority.

A late September meeting of the LDP General Council (composed of the current and former secretary generals of the LDP) came out against an initial government plan for dispatching P-3C patrol planes, AWACS, and an Aegis destroyer to the Indian Ocean for rear-area support of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan. Provoking domestic opposition and provoking parallel Asian mistrust were cited as central concerns. Due to this opposition, plans to dispatch P-3C maritime patrol aircraft and sophisticated AWACS early-warning planes were dropped. Nonetheless, the Koizumi cabinet drafted a plan to dispatch an Aegis destroyer with advanced surveillance and information-gathering capabilities.<sup>53</sup>

Despite the elimination of the P-3C and AWACS from the debate, the inclusion of an Aegis in the government's dispatch plans continued to provoke opposition from within the ruling parties.<sup>54</sup> Former Japan Defense Agency (JDA) director Yamanaka Sadanori explained his opposition to the dispatch by alluding to the danger of provoking domestic mistrust: "Based

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*controversies over  
dispatching P-3C...[and]  
AWACS planes tested the  
limits of what the  
Japanese public was  
prepared to accept*

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upon fifty years of self-reflection about war we have shown restraint. We should not allow the Defense Agency to ride roughshod over this policy.”<sup>55</sup> Katoh Koichi, another General Council member and subsequently the head of the ad hoc lower house Counterterrorism Committee, was apparently thinking about ways to avoid provoking domestic opinion opposition when he again advised against an Aegis dispatch by saying, “We should not do something too showy.”<sup>56</sup>

Supporters of dispatching the Aegis recognized that continued popular mistrust of the military lay behind the opposition to doing so. According to a *Yomiuri Shimbun* editorial in favor of the dispatch, “The basis for opposition for the dispatch is, first of all, the idea that SDF overseas dispatch could lead to a resurgence of militarism.”<sup>57</sup> The fact that the editorial then felt compelled to reject this argument suggests how much weight it still carried among the public.<sup>58</sup>

Koizumi allies acknowledged that ignoring public opinion to the Aegis dispatch could be politically damaging. An unidentified aide in Prime Minister Koizumi’s administration admitted that if they “forced” the Aegis dispatch issue, “public support will drop [*yoron no shiji teika*].”<sup>59</sup> In the face of public opposition, a “majority pacifist view” suddenly emerged within the LDP to quash the dispatch.<sup>60</sup> It was a bit like the 1990 Gulf War dispatch debate all over again, albeit on a much smaller issue. Yamasaki Taku, LDP secretary general, a member of the General Council, and a Koizumi ally, cited public opinion as a reason for scrapping the Aegis dispatch. Noting with concern television coverage that asked questions such as, “Is Prime Minister Koizumi going to go too far?,” Yamasaki argued that the dispatch “will not be a plus” for Koizumi’s plans to pursue economic and structural reform.<sup>61</sup> This argument reflects the reality that defying public opinion on one issue can have negative spillover effects on other issues, especially when political competition is significant.

Yamasaki also argued that delaying the Aegis issue would make it easier to convince the DPJ to vote in favor of the dispatch plan.<sup>62</sup> This consideration reflects the continued importance of consensus norms in the Japanese Diet, especially on controversial defense issues. Although the ruling LDP-Kōmeitō coalition had the votes to pass the Indian Ocean dispatch plan without the Democrats’ support, the desire to achieve as wide a consensus as possible provided the LDP with an additional reason to drop the Aegis dispatch. At a mid-November General Council meeting, internal LDP opponents successfully used the specter of public opposition to quash the dispatch.<sup>63</sup>

Once settled, the Aegis dispatch issue did not remain so for more than six months. In early May 2002, as the first Indian Ocean dispatch

approached expiration, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz of the United States asked a visiting nonpartisan delegation of Diet members specializing in security to push for the dispatch of an Aegis destroyer to augment the MSDF flotilla in the Indian Ocean supporting U.S. operations in Afghanistan. In response, group leader Nukaga Fukushirou warned that because of a lack of public support, dispatching an Aegis under current conditions was “impossible.”<sup>64</sup> Former Defense Agency chief Kyuma Fumio, a member of the same defense delegation, told the Heritage Foundation that pushing the unpopular Aegis dispatch could endanger the enactment of the then pending Emergency Legal Framework bill.<sup>65</sup> Representatives from the other two ruling parties, Komei and even the New Conservative Party, were also reluctant to back an unpopular Aegis dispatch.<sup>66</sup> Wolfowitz’s even less popular idea of dispatching P-3C reconnaissance planes was not even met with a reply. Thus the Indian Ocean dispatch was extended for another six months without dispatching an Aegis destroyer or P-3C reconnaissance planes.

In November 2002, with the second dispatch plan approaching expiration, the issue of dispatching an Aegis destroyer and P-3C planes again resurfaced. This time the Koizumi administration pushed for the dispatch of an Aegis destroyer. Owing to renewed opposition from within the LDP and Komei, the third dispatch plan, extending the stationing of the MSDF flotilla, was approved without including the dispatch of an Aegis.<sup>67</sup>

However, less than a month later, Koizumi again resurrected the issue and quickly pushed through the Aegis dispatch. During a regular rotation in mid-December, an Aegis was dispatched, along with other MSDF ships, to replace ships stationed in the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea. Why the sudden reversal, when opposition from within the LDP had not lessened, and Kōmeitō remained firmly opposed?<sup>68</sup>

An important reason appears to be the weakening of the DPJ and Kōmeitō, two of the major opponents of dispatch. In November a small number of DPJ members bolted from the main opposition party and joined the Conservative Party, the smallest of the three ruling coalition partners and generally considered to be an appendage of the LDP. These defecting DPJ members were believed to be seeking eventual (re)admission to the LDP. There was even speculation that this defection marked the beginning of the disintegration of the DPJ, just as the New Frontier Party had disintegrated several years earlier. Moreover, this weakening of the DPJ reduced LDP dependence on the Komei Party. This increased Komei’s vulnerability and reduced its willingness to confront Koizumi over the Aegis issue. Thus the eventual dispatch of an Aegis destroyer to the Indian Ocean reflected not a change in public opinion, but rather the

temporary weakening of two major political parties who had been giving voice to the public's opposition. Put another way, the weakening of the DPJ temporarily reduced political competition, giving Koizumi an opportunity to ignore his critics within the LDP as well as Kōmeitō.

Despite the improved political environment for dispatch, the Koizumi cabinet limited the deployment in ways designed to minimize public opposition. Rather than justify the deployment on military grounds, chief cabinet spokesman Fukuda Yasuo emphasized that the Aegis dispatch was a way to enhance the amenities available for MSDF sailors. Because Aegis living quarters were supposedly plusher than those on other destroyers, sailors would "be thankful."<sup>69</sup> Moreover, the Japanese Aegis avoided any involvement in the March 2003 invasion of Afghanistan. After only nine months and the rotation of two Aegis destroyers into the Indian Ocean, the Aegis destroyers were withdrawn from further deployment.<sup>70</sup> The Aegis deployment controversy thus shows the influence of public opinion on actual policy decisions, and also the Japanese public's continued opposition, even after 9/11, to any overseas SDF deployment that carried the implication of military involvement.

#### Views on the Use of Force in Afghanistan

In contrast to a pacifist rejection of all wars as unjustified, the Japanese public showed relative understanding for the U.S. attack on the Taliban

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*the public showed relative  
understanding for the U.S.  
attack on the Taliban regime*

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regime in Afghanistan. A *Yomiuri Shimbun* poll conducted September 24–25, 2001, asked whether people supported American preparations to use military force against terrorist organizations in Afghanistan. Among the Japanese respondents, 44.1 percent (59 percent of men and 30 percent of women) supported such preparations; 26.7 percent (19 percent of men, 34

percent of women) opposed military preparations; 28.9 percent could not say one way or another; 0.3 percent were unable to give any answer.<sup>71</sup>

In a *Yomiuri Shimbun* poll conducted on October 20, 2001, 23.2 percent responded that attacking Afghanistan was appropriate, while 59.5 percent answered that there was no alternative but to attack under the circumstances (literally, "it can't be stopped"); 14.9 percent responded that the attack was unacceptable; and 2.4 percent did not answer.<sup>72</sup> An *Asahi Shimbun* poll conducted a few days after the start of hostilities found that 46 percent supported the military attack in Afghanistan for the reason of "eliminating terrorist organizations," while 43 percent opposed, and 11

percent were unsure or did not answer.<sup>73</sup> In answer to a similarly worded question in late November, a subsequent *Asahi* poll found a tie, with 46 percent supporting the use of force, 46 percent opposed, and 8 percent unsure.<sup>74</sup> Japanese respondents were thus relatively understanding, if still ambivalent, about supporting the U.S. use of force in Afghanistan as a direct response to the terrorist organizations and infrastructure that had launched the 9/11 attacks. Reflecting similar defensive realist inclination, 61 percent of the German public approved of the U.S. attack on Afghanistan while 31 percent disapproved.<sup>75</sup>

#### The Iraq War

Japanese opinion about the prospect of attacking Iraq was, from the beginning, overwhelmingly critical. Although the size of the lopsided majority opposing the Iraq War waxed and waned over the months, it never shrank to less than a clear majority. Regarding the reasons for waxing and waning, the results in Table 4 suggest that the return of UN weapons inspectors and U.S. cooperation with the UN between September and December 2002 might have temporarily increased support for the eventual prospect of an attack on Iraq. However, by December 2002, as it became clearer that the United States was going to attack soon without UN support or the completion of weapons inspections, support fell again. Table 5 reveals that the start of the war coincided with some increase in support for the war. Yet even during the first week, support quickly fell back close to prewar lows.<sup>76</sup>

Japanese opposition to the war was consistently and overwhelmingly dominant, and the reaction of the Japanese public was dramatically different than in the case of Afghanistan (see Tables 4 and 5). The Japanese public demonstrated a willingness to make distinctions between wars. Japanese tended to view the Afghanistan War as justified while overwhelmingly viewing the Iraq War as a mistake. Japanese opposition to the Iraq War reflected skepticism about the utility of military force in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the promotion of democracy.

**Table 4.** Japanese Support for the U.S. Attack on Iraq (Percent)

Japanese opinion	August 2002	December 2002	January 2003
Support	14	26	20
Oppose	77	65	69

Source: *Asahi Shimbun*, September 3, 2002, and January 27, 2003 (morning editions).



**Table 5.** Japanese Support for the War in Iraq and the War in Afghanistan (Percent)

Japanese opinion	War in Iraq			War in Afghanistan	
	March 20–21, 2003	March 29–30, 2003	April 19–20, 2003	October 2001	November 2001
Support war	31	27	29	46	46
Oppose war	59	65	63	43	46

Sources: *Asahi Shimbun*, October 16, 2001 (morning edition), p. 16; November 27, 2001 (morning edition), p. 4; March 22, 2003 (morning edition), p. 4; March 24, 2003 (morning edition), p. 4; and *Asahi Shimbun*, April 25, 2003 (morning edition), p. 35.

Only a small minority of the Japanese public had been convinced that the regime of Saddam Hussein was indeed a threat, despite the then widespread belief that Iraq had stockpiled weapons of mass destruction (WMD) (see Table 6). Iraq's violation of UN resolutions and Japan's solidarity with the United States figured as even less important reasons for

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***39 percent opposed the U.S. invasion [of Iraq]***

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Japanese war supporters. A large minority, 39 percent, opposed the U.S. invasion simply because they oppose war, a figure not much lower than the total percentage of Japanese opposed to the war in Afghanistan. By comparison, the 12 percent who said they opposed the war because there was no legitimate reason for war at the time signaled a willingness to accept

potentially legitimate reasons for going to war, thus distinguishing themselves from pacifists. Arguably, this group comes closest to defensive realist thinking. The 8 percent who opposed the war because of the absence of a new UN resolution also signaled a willingness to support war under some circumstances, and therefore are also reasonably close (albeit perhaps more legalistically inclined) to a defensive realist position.

Eighteen months after the initial invasion of Iraq, the view of the Iraq War as unjustified had grown to be embraced by 71 percent of the Japanese public. In its opposition to the war, Japanese opinion exceeded Canadian opinion (67 percent) and approached French opinion (77 percent). Only in South Korea did more respondents, 85 percent, believe that the Iraq War had been a mistake. Only 16 percent of Japanese respondents answered that the war in Iraq was "justified," versus 11 percent, 24 percent, and 18 percent in the Republic of Korea, Canada, and France, respectively.<sup>77</sup>

**Table 6.** Reasons Given by the Japanese Public for Supporting or Opposing the U.S. Invasion of Iraq (Poll taken March 20–21, 2003)

Reason	Percent
<i>Reasons for support (asked of the 31 percent who supported the invasion)</i>	
Because Iraq flagrantly violated UN resolutions	8
Because the Saddam Hussein regime was a danger	15
Because America is an ally	6
<i>Reasons for opposition (asked of the 59 percent who opposed the invasion)</i>	
Because there was not a new UN resolution	8
Because there was no legitimate reason for the war this time	12
Because of opposition to war	39

Source: *Asahi Shimbun*, March 30, 2003 (morning edition).

### Japan's Response to the Iraq War

Although consistently and clearly opposed to the Iraq War, the Japanese public was somewhat more supportive of the Japanese government's political and nonmilitary support for the war. Koizumi's statement of support for the Iraq War was more popular than the war itself: 36 percent of respondents supported Koizumi's position (see Table 7).

North Korea appears to be a significant reason; even among those who supported Koizumi's statement of support for the war in Iraq, only 2 percent thought U.S. assertions were persuasive. By contrast, the perceived need for U.S. cooperation and support on the North Korea issue loomed large among supporters of Koizumi's statement, suggesting mistrust of U.S. alliance commitments and fear of abandonment. By implication, however, the wide majority who opposed the war did not see the North Korean threat, or the fear of abandonment by the United States, as reasons to endorse Koizumi's support for the Iraq War. Moreover, when all respondents were asked how important North Korea was as a factor in evaluating Koizumi's statement of support for the U.S. war effort, 67 percent said it was a very (29 percent) or somewhat (38 percent) important factor in their evaluation.<sup>78</sup> This high number (about 1.5 times the rate of support for Koizumi's statement) means that many opponents of Koizumi's statement considered North Korea an important reason for their opposition.

Fear of encouraging an American preventive strike against North Korean nuclear facilities and entrapment in an ensuing war might have

**Table 7.** Reasons Given by the Japanese Public for Supporting Koizumi's Statement (in Support of the U.S. Invasion of Iraq)

Reason	Percent
Because U.S. assertions were persuasive	2
Because the United States is an ally	12
Because U.S. cooperation is needed on the North Korean problem	21
Other	1
<b>Total approving of Koizumi's statement</b>	<b>36</b>

Source: *Asahi Shimbun*, April 1, 2003 (morning edition).

been reasons for considering North Korea to be a reason to oppose Koizumi's statement. Polling data cited elsewhere in this study suggest significant Japanese skepticism about America's use of force. Despite growing perceptions of a North Korean threat, a large opinion majority favors a negotiated settlement with North Korea.<sup>79</sup> By late 2004, deteriorating relations with North Korea had still not translated into increased understanding of Koizumi's support for the Iraq War. A *Kyodo Tsushin* poll published in early November 2004 found that 64 percent of respondents thought Koizumi should stop supporting U.S. policy in Iraq, while a mere 31 percent thought Koizumi should continue supporting Washington's Iraq policy, a smaller minority than that registered in March 2003.<sup>80</sup>

As early as April 2003, a *Yomiuri Shimbun* poll asked respondents what Japan could do for Iraqi reconstruction. In response, 9.8 percent said Japan should only contribute financially, 14.1 percent said Japan should contribute only personnel, 61.2 percent said Japan should contribute both, and 10.7 percent said Japan should not contribute anything at all; 75.1 percent in total said Japan should contribute personnel. Of this 75 percent who supported a personnel contribution, 17.5 percent said only civil servants and private individuals should be sent, 14.2 percent said only the SDF should be sent, and 65.9 percent said civil servants, private individuals, and the SDF should be sent; a total of 80.1 percent of those who said personnel should be sent (or about 60 percent of all respondents) thought the SDF should be sent.<sup>81</sup>

However, by June, as the Koizumi cabinet was formulating a bill, the Iraq Reconstruction Special Measures Act, to allow the dispatch of the SDF to Iraq, public opposition began increasing noticeably. As Table 8 reveals, by June the public was almost evenly divided on whether to dispatch the SDF to Iraq.<sup>82</sup> By July a clear opinion majority had formed against dispatch. The publication of *Asahi's* June poll had an immediate

impact on the debate as the DPJ, which had previously been undecided about whether to support the Iraq Reconstruction Special Measures Act, came out a day later in opposition to the bill. A desire to make an international contribution was the most important reason given by supporters of dispatch; strikingly, very few cited loyalty to the U.S. alliance as a reason to support dispatch. Indeed, in an ominous sign for the alliance, by July slightly more respondents were citing American demands as a reason to oppose dispatch than to support it. Among those who were opposed, the issue of safety was paramount. This concern reflected the public's demand that the proposed SDF dispatch be nonmilitary and noncombat in nature.

In response to growing public opposition, the DPJ's opposition, and increasing objections by Kōmeitō, Koizumi agreed to several compromises designed to prevent an opposing opinion majority from consolidating. It was agreed that the SDF could not transport weapons or ammunition

**Table 8.** Japanese Public Opinion about Sending the SDF to Iraq (Percent)

<i>Question: The Japanese government has hammered out a policy for dispatching the SDF to Iraq. Do you support the SDF's dispatch? Are you opposed?</i>		
<b>Answer</b>	<b>June 2003</b>	<b>July 2003</b>
Support	46	33
Oppose	43	55
Other, no answer	11	12
<i>Question (to those who answered "support"): Why do you feel this way?</i>		
Because relations with the U.S. are important	6	6
Because it means making an international contribution	29	17
Because we need to support the SDF	8	8
Because Iraq has become safe	2	1
Other, no answer	1	1
<i>Question (to those who answered "oppose"): Why do you feel this way?</i>		
Because the demand for dispatch comes from America	4	7
Because this conflicts with the constitution	8	9
Because non-SDF support is sufficient	13	12
Because Iraq is still dangerous	16	25
Other, no answer	2	2

Source: *Asahi Shimbun*, June 30, 2003, July 22, 2003, and July 23, 2003, p. 4.

for U.S. troops, as the Antiterrorism Special Measures Act had specified. Similarly, the draft bill limited SDF operations to noncombat zones (*sentou kouji ga okanwarete orazu*).<sup>83</sup> Although not clearly written into the law, the government pledged that the SDF would not engage in policing or more ambitious stabilization missions. In response to concerns from the LDP itself about the possible unconstitutional exercise of collective defense, the government specified that the SDF would not be under the command of U.S. or British forces.<sup>84</sup>

Nonetheless, as Table 8 indicates, a clear opinion majority was forming against SDF dispatch to Iraq just as the bill approached a vote in the Diet. Nonetheless, Koizumi decided to ram the bill through the Diet, producing scuffles and wrestling matches in the upper house as the DPJ tried unsuccessfully to filibuster. Koizumi was able to do this because the DPJ remained weakened after the defection of several parliamentary members the previous fall; this in turn left Kōmeitō vulnerable as well. Koizumi had also succeeded in marginalizing outspoken critics within the LDP, such as former party secretary general Nonaka Hiromu, who were reduced to breaking party discipline and voting against the bill, abstaining, or walking out of the Diet during voting.

The ramming through of an unpopular bill, and resulting scuffles, consolidated the small opinion majority in opposition to dispatching the SDF.

In an August *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* poll, 28 percent supported dispatch, 52 percent were opposed, and 20 percent did not answer or were not sure.<sup>85</sup> Although only a narrow majority opposed dispatch outright, these polling results were enough to convince even the popular and determined Koizumi to shelve the SDF dispatch until after Iraq had become “safe.”

At the very least, Koizumi was going to

delay actual dispatch until after elections for the lower house in the fall.

In an *Asahi Shimbun* poll conducted approximately ten days before the November 9 lower house elections, when asked which issue would most influence the choice of candidate and party, a mere 4 percent of respondents answered that the Iraq problem would most influence their vote. By comparison, 6 percent listed reform of the public roads (expressway) corporations, 43 percent pension reform, and 45 percent economic policy. In short, Iraq was not a significant influence on voting behavior in this election.<sup>86</sup> This result reflects the fact that Koizumi and the LDP ran away from this issue during the election campaign, issuing vague statements

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***Koizumi [had] to shelve the  
SDF dispatch until after  
Iraq had become “safe”***

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about when, under what circumstances, or whether troops would actually be dispatched to Iraq. The opposition DPJ's concentration on domestic economic issues also drove down the salience of Iraq.

The LDP-Kōmeitō coalition survived the election, albeit with a somewhat reduced majority as the LDP lost nine seats. The DPJ made big gains, becoming the strongest opposition party in postwar history. Nonetheless, with the election past, Koizumi forged ahead with plans to dispatch the SDF to Iraq. Within LDP headquarters a security expert pointed to the experience of the PKO law from a decade earlier, arguing that the best response to public opposition to the Iraq dispatch was to ride it out and wait for opposition to evaporate.<sup>87</sup>

Nonetheless, the Koizumi cabinet had to respond to public concerns as voiced by Komei and some within the LDP to limit the risks of the SDF becoming involved in combat and suffering casualties. Notwithstanding U.S. demands that Japan dispatch the SDF to dangerous regions north of Baghdad, including Balad, and more generally share risks with the United States and other allies, the government decided to deploy the SDF to the relatively peaceful southern town of Samawah. Earlier plans to use the GSDF to provide rear-area logistical support for U.S. forces were also dropped in favor of concentration on humanitarian and reconstruction missions.<sup>88</sup>

The dispatch plan, which was announced in a nationally televised press conference by Koizumi on December 9, reaffirmed that the SDF would not engage in combat or transport weapons for other countries and would concentrate on humanitarian and reconstruction operations, most notably water purification. Nonetheless, Koizumi used rather hawkish arguments to justify the dispatch, claiming that the dispatch was for the sake of solidifying confidence in the U.S.-Japanese alliance. He also used a novel constitutional interpretation, suggesting that more important than the war renouncing Article 9 is the constitution's preamble, which obligates Japan to contribute to achieving high ideals in international society, such as the banishment of tyranny and oppression and the promotion of international peace. In making these arguments, and by refusing to set a time limit on the deployment, Koizumi appeared to be trying to sway public opinion to accept broader missions for the SDF in Iraq beyond humanitarian and reconstruction operations.<sup>89</sup>

A *Nikkei* poll taken a week after Koizumi's press conference again found a stable majority opposed to dispatch, with 33 percent expressing support for the SDF dispatch to Iraq and 52 percent expressing opposition. Koizumi's explanation had failed to move voters, as 63 percent of respondents in the *Nikkei* poll expressed dissatisfaction with Koizumi's

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***Koizumi's hawkish justification...appears to have been...counterproductive***

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explanation and a mere 23 percent expressed satisfaction. Indeed, in response to a subsequent question about how the Iraq dispatch plan affected their view of the Koizumi cabinet, a net of 10 percent of respondents answered that the Iraq dispatch plan had caused them to switch from supporting to opposing the cabinet.<sup>90</sup> Thus Koizumi's hawkish justification for the Iraq dispatch appears to have been, if anything, counterproductive.

A *Yomiuri Shimbun* poll in mid-December 2003 found similar results. It asked respondents whether they supported the immediate dispatch of the SDF to Iraq for humanitarian and reconstruction assistance, or only after the stabilization of the security situation. In response, 17.8 percent answered as soon as possible, 48.2 percent said as soon as the security situation stabilizes, and 29.8 percent answered that there was no need to dispatch the SDF (4.2 percent had no answer). The plurality answer on this question appears consistent with the view of the SDF as a disaster relief organization that only deploys to non-combat zones. Koizumi's justification for dispatching the SDF to Iraq was unconvincing to an overwhelming majority of Japanese, 85.7 percent, who answered that Prime Minister Koizumi had not provided a sufficient explanation (or needed to provide a better explanation) for dispatching the SDF to Iraq; 10.7 percent did not think a better explanation was needed (and 3.6 percent did not answer).<sup>91</sup> Following these dismal polling results, neither Koizumi nor other members of the cabinet repeated these hawkish arguments. Instead of suggesting that Japan had an obligation to send military forces overseas to promote peace and banish tyranny, the Iraq dispatch was justified purely as a humanitarian and reconstruction mission, much as the Cambodia dispatch of twelve years earlier had been.

#### The SDF in Iraq

The deployment of all three branches of the SDF to Iraq and neighboring countries from December 2003 through March 2004 proceeded smoothly. Once in place in their well-fortified camp in Samawah, the GSDF began its humanitarian and reconstruction work, including water purification and distribution, provision of medical care, and the repair of schools and hospitals. However, because of continued strong opposition to anything that smacked of military operations, especially in the event that the SDF suffered or inflicted casualties, the SDF relied on Dutch troops for defense against possible insurgent attacks. A related reason was that the SDF has very cumbersome rules of engagement (ROEs) that made effec-

tive response to an armed attack difficult at best. These require SDF members to issue a verbal warning first, then fire in the air, and only then are they allowed to fire at their attackers (Hughes 2004: 130, 156). The presence of such cumbersome ROEs itself reflects public opposition to the SDF entering into overseas combat.

Nonetheless, the GSDF's humanitarian and reconstruction projects created good press images in Japan as the SDF did in Iraq what it is most popular for doing in Japan itself. The combination of the SDF performing its most popular mission in close proximity to combat produced ambivalence among the Japanese public. The results of two *Asahi* opinion polls conducted in February and March 2004 reveal this ambivalence. In a February 2004 poll, 42 percent of respondents said they supported the dispatch of Self-Defense Forces to Iraq, while 41 percent of respondents were opposed. Asked the same question a month later, support for the dispatch had increased to 44 percent, but opposition had increased even more, to 48 percent, as the percentage of those undecided shrank from 17 percent to 8 percent. Beyond showing a hardening of opinion, these two polls reveal, above else, overall ambivalence about the presence of the SDF in Iraq.<sup>92</sup>

Reinforcing this picture of ambivalence are polling results asking respondents about extending the SDF mission in Iraq. When the SDF Iraq deployment was up for possible extension in December 2004, and again in December 2005, Nippon Television polls asked respondents whether or not they favored extending the SDF mission in Iraq. The results, as depicted in Table 9, show a consistent desire among the Japanese public to withdraw the SDF from Iraq at the earliest opportunity, with opposition to extension hardening over time. In late 2004, 53.9 percent opposed an extension; by late 2005, the figure was 59.8 percent.

In April 2004, after several Japanese civilians had been taken hostage, and the hostage takers had demanded the withdrawal of the SDF in return

**Table 9.** Japanese Public Support for Extending SDF Deployment in Iraq (Percent)

<i>Question (asked by Nippon TV): Do you support extending the SDF deployment in Iraq for another year?</i>			
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Nov. 2004</b>	<b>Dec. 2004</b>	<b>Dec. 2005</b>
Support	27.7	30.9	30.7
Oppose	53.9	58.3	59.8
No opinion/don't know	18.5	10.9	9.6

Source: Nippon terebi yoron chōsa, [www.ntv.co.jp/yoron/](http://www.ntv.co.jp/yoron/).



for the hostages' freedom, *Asahi Shimbun* asked respondents about their views on this issue. When asked whether the Japanese government had been correct in deciding not to withdraw the SDF from Iraq in response to the hostage incident, 73 percent said the government had been correct, 16 percent said this had not been the correct decision, and 11 percent did not know or did not answer. When asked whether Japan should continue to deploy the SDF in Iraq, 50 percent answered that the deployment should continue, 32 percent answered that the deployment should not continue, and 18 percent were unsure or did not answer. These results suggest not only that the Japanese public opposes making concessions to appease

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***the Japanese public  
opposes making concessions  
to appease terrorist[s]***

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terrorist threats (at least on the scale of a troop withdrawal), but also that the terrorist demands actually increased support for keeping the SDF in Iraq. When supporters of continued SDF deployment were given a choice of reasons, 28 percent selected the SDF's useful work for Iraqi reconstruction, 10 percent selected the importance of not giving in to crime or terrorism, 9 percent cited the importance

of relations with the United States, and 3 percent gave another answer or no answer. When opponents were asked their reasons, 3 percent answered that the SDF's reconstruction work is not useful, 15 percent cited the danger of becoming entrapped in combat or terrorism, 12 percent said the deployment itself was problematic, and 2 percent gave other reasons or did not answer. These results once again demonstrate the popularity of the SDF's reconstruction work in Iraq.<sup>93</sup>

On the other hand, terrorist or guerrilla attacks aimed at the SDF or their Dutch military protectors do tend to increase opposition to the SDF deployment in Iraq. An attack on Dutch forces in Samawah appears to have precipitated a sharp decline in support for the SDF deployment in Iraq (see Table 10). Poll results suggest that if the SDF actually did suffer or inflict casualties, the public backlash against continued deployment would be sharp indeed.

The public's ambivalence to negative view of the SDF deployment to Iraq became one of two top issues (along with pension reform) in the July 2004 upper house election and contributed to a stinging defeat for the LDP.<sup>94</sup> This result suggests that the prospect of the SDF becoming embroiled in military operations overseas remains a potent issue in Japanese politics. In a bow to public opinion, Koizumi's chief cabinet secretary subsequently suggested that if armed clashes were to occur

**Table 10.** Japanese Public Support for Continuing SDF Deployment in Iraq (Percent)

	<i>Question: The Koizumi cabinet is proceeding with the deployment of the SDF to Iraq. Do you support the continued deployment of the SDF in Iraq? Do you oppose?</i>	<i>Question: In Samawah, where the SDF is stationed, a Dutch soldier was killed while on patrol, and incoming projectiles have landed near the SDF base. Do you support the continued deployment of the SDF in Iraq? Do you oppose?</i>
<b>Answer</b>	<b>March 2004</b>	<b>May 2004</b>
Support	51.7	39.6
Oppose	39.9	52.2
No answer/ don't know	8.5	8.2

Source: Nippon terebi yoron chōsa, [www.ntv.co.jp/yoron/](http://www.ntv.co.jp/yoron/).

in Samawah, the GSDF would have to withdraw (Boyd and Samuels 2005: 47).

By positioning the SDF deployment in Iraq as a humanitarian and reconstruction mission, Koizumi managed to place this issue reasonably close to the indifference point of Japanese public opinion, with the aggregate reaction ranging from ambivalent to somewhat negative. The popularity of the SDF's good works in Iraq has been balanced by knowledge of their close proximity to the danger of combat; the public has consistently supported withdrawal at the earliest possible date. Koizumi, with his phenomenal popularity and political skills, has been better positioned than almost any other politician in the postwar era to ignore public opinion. Yet his tendency to push Iraq policy beyond what voters want cost him and the LDP politically, most notably in the 2004 upper house election.

More important, Koizumi was forced to drastically limit the SDF deployment to humanitarian and reconstruction operations, eschewing earlier ambitions to make logistical support for the U.S. and other coalition forces a main mission, and to engage in at least limited policing and stabilization operations. An attempt to skirt restrictions on transporting weapons for coalition forces by transporting armed U.S. troops met with public opposition, forcing the government to back away from this form of support.<sup>95</sup> Despite predictions from LDP headquarters that history would repeat itself, with opposition to the SDF dispatch to Iraq dissolving the same way opposition to SDF noncombat support for UN peacekeeping operations dissolved, this did not happen. Instead, public opinion

remained consistently opposed to the Iraq War itself and ambivalent, if not opposed to, the SDF deployment there.

As a consequence, there was virtually no movement beyond the overseas humanitarian and reconstruction operations paradigm in place since the 1992 Cambodia deployment. While the Iraq deployment at least extended this paradigm into a near-combat zone, the lack of public acceptance for this mission suggests that it will be politically difficult for a future Japanese government to repeat this precedent, much less extend it. Although two careful observers of Japan's recent security policy have argued that "it is hard to understand this [the Iraq deployment] as anything short of a turning point in Japan's postwar security policy" (Boyd and Samuels 2005: 46), it appears that Iraq is becoming a negative example used in Japanese politics to argue against further deployments of the SDF, rather than a positive example for expanded deployments.

Despite a landslide victory in snap lower house elections called in September 2005 over postal privatization, Koizumi nonetheless finally

bowed to public opposition to the Iraq deployment by announcing in late fall that the SDF would withdraw by summer 2006, a year before the law authorizing the dispatch was set to expire.<sup>96</sup> Given Koizumi's exceptionally strong political position following the September election, this bow to public opinion might seem surprising. However, he had good reason to end his defiance of a stable public opinion majority: Koizumi's desire to

see his successor successfully amend Article 9.

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***Koizumi...finally bowed  
to public opposition  
to the Iraq deployment***

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### **Views on the Utility of Military Force**

Japanese opinion on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq suggests a willingness to recognize the utility of military power for territorial defense, but not for overseas offensive uses of force, unless these are directly related to national defense. This section looks at polling data directly addressing the utility of offensive military force for promoting a variety of objectives, most notably suppressing terrorist organizations and WMD proliferation, and for promoting democracy and human rights. A final section addresses the implications of these views, and of views toward the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars, on Japanese opinion of American foreign policy and trustworthiness as an ally.

## Combating Terrorism

An October 2001 *Asahi* poll showed that a large plurality bordering on a majority, 49 percent, thought the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan would not be effective in preventing future terrorist attacks, while only 36 percent thought this invasion would be effective in combating terrorism (15 percent were undecided or did not answer).<sup>97</sup> Similarly, Table 11 indicates that Japanese are far more skeptical of the effectiveness of military force in suppressing terrorism than are Americans (see Tables 11 and 12).

The October 2004 poll results suggest that Japanese respondents are more skeptical than British respondents or even Korean respondents that the war in Iraq has contributed to the “war on terrorism” (see Table 12).

**Table 11.** Japanese Public Opinion about the Effectiveness of Military Force in Suppressing Terrorism (Percent; poll taken November 2001)

Opinion	Japanese respondents	U.S. respondents
Very effective	9.5	30.7
Somewhat effective	21.1	56.9
<b>Aggregate effective</b>	<b>30.6</b>	<b>87.6</b>
Very ineffective or not effective	33.3	8.3
Not effective	24.1	3.7
<b>Aggregate ineffective</b>	<b>57.4</b>	<b>12.0</b>
Don't know/no answer	12.0	0.4

Source: Yomiuri Shinbunsha Seron Chōsabu (2002: 343, 345–46).

**Table 12.** Public Opinion on Whether the Iraq Occupation (War) Contributed to the War on Terrorism (Percent)

Opinion	Japan	Republic of Korea	United Kingdom
Contributes very much	6	18	32
Contributes somewhat	36	39	20
<b>Aggregate contributes</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>52</b>
Does not contribute	43	37	21
Does not contribute at all	11	11	19
<b>Aggregate does not contribute</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>40</b>

Source: *Asahi Shimbun*, October 18, 2004, p. 9.

Japanese respondents were also more skeptical than Canadian respondents, 51 percent of whom answered that the Iraq occupation and invasion contributed to the war on terrorism, but less skeptical than French, Spanish, or Mexican respondents: 80 percent, 73 percent, and 74 percent of these respondents, respectively, answered that the Iraq invasion and war had not contributed to the war on terrorism.<sup>98</sup>

#### Suppressing WMD Proliferation

When asked in an April 2003 *Yomiuri Shimbun* poll about the effectiveness of the Iraq War in reducing the WMD proliferation threat, 16.5 percent responded that the threat would be reduced as a result, 57.8 percent responded that the Iraq War would have no effect, and 15.4 percent believed that the WMD threat would actually increase.<sup>99</sup> Similarly, Japanese mass opinion has, from the beginning, been skeptical about the legitimacy, and even the utility, of using military force to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (see Table 13). The gradual increase over time (from 57 percent in June 2003 to 66 percent in March 2004) in the view that weapons of mass destruction were not a legitimate reason for invading Iraq no doubt reflects the failure to find them. Nonetheless, the majority citing this as an illegitimate reason as far back as June 2003 suggests that most Japanese never saw suppressing WMD proliferation as a legitimate reason for attacking Iraq, even if Iraq had been in possession of these weapons.

**Table 13.** Japanese Public Opinion about the Legitimacy of the U.S. Invasion of Iraq (Percent)

<i>Question: America invaded Iraq because that nation was developing/possessed weapons of mass destruction. Do you believe this was a legitimate reason for the invasion?</i>				
<b>Answer</b>	<b>June 2003</b>	<b>July 2003</b>	<b>Feb. 2004</b>	<b>March 2004</b>
A legitimate reason	29	25	22	19
Not a legitimate reason	57	60	65	66
No answer/don't know	14	15	n.a.	n.a.

n.a.: not available. *Sources: Asahi Shimbun*, June 30, 2003, July 22, 2003, July 23, 2003, p. 4; and March 17, 2004, p. 4.

#### Promoting Human Rights and Democracy

An absolute majority of Japanese do not believe that preventing human rights abuses in another country is a legitimate reason for going to war (see Table 14). Only when the question is framed as preventing genocide does

**Table 14.** Japanese Public Opinion about the Legitimacy of Reasons for Going to War (Percent)

Reason	Legitimate	Somewhat legitimate	Not very legitimate	Not legitimate
To prevent human rights abuses in other countries	8.8	32.9	33.0	20.3
To prevent genocide in another country	13.9	36.8	25.0	18.8
When another country is suspect of harboring terrorists	7.6	29.8	34.8	22.5
When attacked	47.8	30.3	7.9	9.0

Source: U.S.-Japan Comparative Survey Regarding Concern with International Society, sponsored by International Christian University, Washington State University, and Central Survey Company, November 2004.

a razor thin majority of 50.7 percent consider this a legitimate reason for going to war.

On the related question of going to war to promote democracy, there is little evidence, but it is mostly negative. Given that the failure to find weapons of mass destruction led the Bush administration to place greater emphasis on democracy promotion as a reason for invading Iraq, the fact that Japanese pollsters have not asked Japanese whether they support the use of force to promote democracy is telling.<sup>100</sup> This omission suggests that the claim that military force should be used to promote democracy is outside the range of debate in Japan. Indeed, Japanese pollsters do not generally ask about promoting human rights as a reason for going to war.

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*that military force should be used to promote democracy is outside the range of debate in Japan*

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#### Overall Views on the Utility of Military Force

Although Table 14 frames the question in terms of legitimacy, not utility, to this author's knowledge it is the closest any polling question in Japan has come to asking directly about the utility of military force. It is reasonable to assume, albeit with some uncertainty, that most respondents would tend to link utility with legitimacy. With this caveat in mind, Table 14 supports the main claim of this study, namely that Japanese public opinion has become defensive realist. With the partial exception of pre-

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***78.1 percent of Japanese believe that going to war when attacked is legitimate***

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venting genocide in another country, solid majorities oppose going to war to promote human rights in other countries or going to war when another country is suspected of harboring terrorist suspects. By contrast, 78.1 percent of Japanese believe that going to war when attacked is legitimate.

This pattern supports the defensive realist hypothesis presented above: Japanese see military force as having value for national defense, but for little else.

Offensive military power is not seen as having much value for promoting objectives ranging from promoting human rights to suppressing terrorism to WMD proliferation. The only partial exception is offensive military action in direct response to an attack. The response of Japanese public opinion to the invasion of Afghanistan supports this interpretation, although opinion was more or less evenly divided about this attack. Also, the Japanese public was skeptical about the utility of this attack for suppressing terrorist attacks. This reflects the drawback of asking about legitimate reasons for going to war without specifying the country initiating the war. As other polling data in this study suggest, specifying Japan as the initiator of war, or even the United States, significantly reduces support for war.

#### Belief in Nonmilitary Approaches

Ironically, support for SDF overseas dispatches for humanitarian and reconstruction missions reflects the belief that nonmilitary solutions have the highest utility for conflict resolution and suppressing terrorism. Although there are no polling data directly relevant to this claim, it follows logically from the evidence presented here. Japanese support SDF overseas dispatches for humanitarian and reconstruction missions while simultaneously expressing skepticism about the utility of military force for combating terrorism or WMD proliferation. Taken together, these results suggest that the Japanese public views nonmilitary approaches to resolving these conflicts as more effective. And since SDF operations in Iraq, East Timor, Cambodia, and elsewhere have all entailed nonmilitary reconstruction and humanitarian relief operations, this leads to the ironic conclusion that the Japanese public supports SDF overseas dispatches precisely because they believe in the superiority of nonmilitary solutions for conflict resolution.

Table 15, which reports the results of a June 2004 *Yomiuri* poll, reflects both the finding that Japanese believe nonmilitary solutions to international conflicts have the highest utility and continue to be reluctant to

**Table 15.** Japanese Public Opinion about Overseas Activities by the Japanese SDF (Percent; multiple answers allowed)

*Question: Since the enactment of the 1992 UN Peacekeeping Operations Cooperation Law, in other words the PKO cooperation law, the SDF has gone overseas to participate in various forms of international cooperation and assistance. If the SDF participates in overseas activities, what sorts of activities do you think they should perform? Choose as many as you wish from the following list.*

Activity	Percent
Emergency relief operations in the event of a natural disaster	78.4
PKO operations based on a UN resolution after a conflict has ended	41.8
Even outside of PKO, humanitarian relief operations such as those the GSDF is performing in Iraq	39.1
Participation in a multilateral army based on a UN resolution	15.9
There is no need to participate in overseas operations	4.9
No answer	2.6
Other	0.1

Source: *Yomiuri Shimbun*, June 3, 2004, p. 24.

involve the SDF in overseas military conflicts. Emergency relief operations in the event of a natural disaster are the only mission that enjoys overwhelming support. Peacekeeping operations based on a UN resolution after a conflict has ended are the second most popular form of overseas dispatch, but still enjoy far less than majority support, apparently because of a residual implication of military force. Humanitarian relief operations outside of a PKO framework, such as those the GSDF is performing in Iraq, is almost as popular an option, but only half as popular as post-disaster relief operations. Close proximity to combat appears to reduce the popularity of humanitarian relief operations to around 40 percent. Again, only a small minority (about 16 percent) support the prospect of SDF involvement in overseas combat, even if included in a UN mandate.

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***Japanese believe  
nonmilitary solutions to  
international conflicts  
have the highest utility***

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#### America's Use of Force

Has America's use of force for reasons that are viewed with skepticism by most Japanese had an impact on Japanese views of the United States? The



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*Japanese have grown less trusting and more skeptical of American power*

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polling data suggest that it has had an impact. Like publics elsewhere, Japanese have grown less trusting and more skeptical of American power and the role that it plays in the world.

When asked about America's post-9/11 security policy almost one year after the event, Japanese responses were less than supportive. An *Asahi Shimbun* poll conducted in late August 2002 found that only 23 percent of respondents believed that America's post-9/11 policies had had

a favorable impact on global security, and 50 percent believed those policies had a negative impact.<sup>101</sup>

Eighteen months after the initial invasion of Iraq, a majority of Japanese continued to believe that America's "actions" did not contribute to world peace, although the margin had narrowed significantly; those with a positive view almost doubled, while those with a negative view grew only slightly (see Table 16). Comparing the results from this table with the 2002 *Asahi* poll discussed earlier should be done cautiously, however, since different question wording might have influenced the outcome. Respondents might have a more critical view of "American policies" than of "American actions since 9/11." The former might imply U.S. foreign policy, while the latter could implicate a broader set of actions, including nongovernmental actions.

**Table 16.** Public Opinion of U.S. "Actions" (Percent)

<i>Question: Do you think America's actions contribute to world peace?</i>			
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Japan</b>	<b>Republic of Korea</b>	<b>Canada</b>
Agree greatly	5	3	13
Agree somewhat	39	44	33
<b>Aggregate agreement</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>46</b>
Disagree somewhat	39	42	27
Emphatically disagree	14	7	25
<b>Aggregate disagreement</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>52</b>

*Source: Asahi Shimbun, October 18, 2004 (morning edition), p. 8.*

Table 17 shows a significant decline in the willingness of Japanese to trust the United States more generally. Just after the 9/11 attacks, and despite the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, trust in the United States peaked, with an absolute (if small) majority claiming to trust the U.S. This effect, albeit diminished, continued into 2002. However, by 2003, mistrust had clearly surpassed that found in December 2000, the last pre-9/11 *Yomiuri* poll to ask this question. Unlike the December 2000 poll, a plurality expressed distrust in the United States. This trend continued and deepened significantly in 2004, when an absolute majority claimed to distrust the United States. The timing of the 2003 and 2004 results suggests that the Iraq War was a factor in this increasing loss of trust. In 2005 the percentage of respondents who expressed distrust of the United States declined slightly in intensity. Nonetheless, the percentage of those trusting the United States also continued to decline slightly (in size and intensity). Overall, however, these poll results suggest that the majority of Japanese will continue to distrust the United States as long as the war in Iraq continues.

These results also reinforce the point made earlier, namely that Japanese public opinion was relatively understanding of the invasion of Afghanistan, but highly critical of the war in Iraq. In other words, the Japanese mass public distinguished these two wars as justified and unjustified respectively, and this judgment affected their propensity to trust the United States.

**Table 17.** Japanese Public Trust of America, 2000–05 (Percent)

<i>Question: Do you trust America? Do you distrust America?</i>						
<b>Answer</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>
Trust very much	7.8	15.2	8.4	8.0	8.9	8.2
Trust somewhat	36.7	35.7	40.4	32.5	28.9	28.4
<b>Aggregate trust</b>	<b>44.5</b>	<b>50.9</b>	<b>48.8</b>	<b>40.5</b>	<b>37.8</b>	<b>36.6</b>
Distrust somewhat	30.3	26.1	30.0	34.5	38.6	39.7
Distrust very much	11.5	8.9	9.1	10.4	14.1	12.8
<b>Aggregate distrust</b>	<b>41.8</b>	<b>35.0</b>	<b>39.1</b>	<b>44.9</b>	<b>52.7</b>	<b>52.5</b>
No answer	13.7	13.7	12.1	14.7	9.4	10.9

Source: *Yomiuri Shinbun*, December 29, 2000 (morning edition), p. 24; November 30, 2001 (morning edition), p. 26; December 5, 2002 (morning edition), p. 26; December 12, 2003 (morning edition), p. 14; December 16, 2004 (morning edition), p. 14; December 15, 2005 (morning edition), p. 16.

Table 18 reports the results of a cross-national poll from October 2004 that asked respondents whether their view of America had changed in the past three years. Overwhelmingly, Japanese respondents reported that their view of America had changed for the worse. The majority who claimed their view had worsened exceeded majorities who had reached the same conclusion in South Korea and the UK, and slightly exceeded this majority in France.

Does growing Japanese mistrust of U.S. foreign policy matter for Japanese policy, and if so, how? It matters by reducing the Japanese government's ability to sell future Iraq-type missions in which the SDF is dispatched to a U.S.-initiated conflict zone to provide noncombat humanitarian relief and logistical support. Growing distrust of the United States stems from, and reinforces, skepticism about the utility of military force for purposes other than homeland defense. At the same time, the U.S. mismanagement of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars, and revelations regarding torture and human rights abuses at prisons in Iraq and elsewhere, undoubtedly contribute to a lack of confidence in U.S. foreign policy and U.S.-initiated wars in particular.

In short, increased mistrust of U.S. foreign policy will contribute to an "Iraq syndrome" in the Japanese public, causing it to become more opposed to overseas dispatches of the SDF in support of U.S. military operations, and even of political support for U.S. actions. At the same time the prospect of expanding the SDF's role to include policing or even combat operations in support of U.S. forces is growing more remote. Even support for noncombat peacekeeping operations unrelated to U.S. military operations is likely to suffer, although majorities will probably continue to

**Table 18.** Public Opinion of America (Percent)

<i>Question: Has your view of America changed over the past three years?</i>				
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Japan</b>	<b>Republic of Korea</b>	<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>France</b>
It has improved	2	2	3	2
It has improved somewhat	15	23	11	12
<b>Aggregate improved</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>
It has not changed	5	—	33	13
It has worsened somewhat	53	49	27	39
It has greatly worsened	21	18	18	31
<b>Aggregate worsened</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>70</b>

Source: *Asahi Shimbun*, October 18, 2004 (morning edition), p. 9.

support such operations. At a time when many American observers look forward to Japan playing a larger role in support of the United States, a scaling back of Japanese support appears more likely.

### Conclusion

This study finds that the Japanese public has evolved away from an uncompromising pacifist opposition to all wars toward a more discriminating defensive realist view that recognizes military power as useful primarily for homeland defense. In addition, there is little evidence that Japanese opinion is moving to embrace an offensive realist view of the utility of military force. In particular, offensive military power is not believed to have much utility for destroying terrorist networks or suppressing WMD proliferation, or for “offensive liberal” objectives such as promoting democracy or human rights. Japanese public opinion tends to view nonmilitary means as more effective in promoting these goals.

This constellation of beliefs about the use of force accounts for the Japanese public’s reaction to the war on terrorism—namely, its understanding of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001 and its subsequent strong opposition to the invasion of Iraq. It also explains the limited and conditional support the Japanese public has given humanitarian and reconstruction operations being performed by the Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force in southern Iraq. Although other studies have argued that defensive realism explains Japanese grand strategy,<sup>102</sup> this is the first study to use defensive realism to explain overseas deployments of the SDF, especially those tied to the war on terrorism, and to find a link between defensive realist policies and domestic public opinion.

Contrary to the views of many observers, Japan’s response to the war on terrorism demonstrates that public opinion has a powerful impact on Tokyo’s security policy. Japanese policy elites are primarily split between offensive realist hawks who want to see Japan become a “normal military power” capable of using military force overseas, and defensive realists who believe the use of military force overseas has little utility and carries significant risks. Mass opinion has constrained hawks and empowered defensive realists. Although hawks, such as Prime Minister Koizumi, were able to deploy the SDF overseas to the Indian Ocean and Iraq, public opinion empowered defensive realists, allowing them to successfully delay, curtail, and

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*Mass opinion has  
constrained hawks and  
empowered defensive realists*

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block altogether roles and missions desired by the hawks. In particular, they were able to ensure that both missions were strictly noncombat deployments and provided no direct support for U.S. combat operations. In the case of Iraq, a mission initially conceived of as supporting the American military was redefined as a humanitarian relief and reconstruction mission; SDF operations in Iraq consequently ended up having more in common with U.S. Peace Corps operations than with military operations.

Defensive realists used public opinion surveys to strengthen their bargaining position within the Koizumi coalition cabinet and the ruling parties. To be sure, even stable opinion majorities are not almighty in Japan any more than they are in any other democracy. Opinion majorities are most effective at blocking new policies when there is significant political competition and ruling politicians have to worry about a backlash during election season or when other important issues are being debated in the Diet. In the short term, the influence of public opinion will grow stronger as the LDP tries to gain public acceptance for amending the constitution, including Article 9. The Japanese government is especially unlikely to endorse ambitious overseas deployments that might implicate the use of force, since this might provoke a resurgence of antimilitarist distrust. Indeed, public opposition throughout the Iraq deployment has already complicated efforts to amend Article 9, making an ambitious change, such as recognizing the right to collective self-defense, which would empower the SDF to conduct joint combat operations with U.S. forces overseas, increasingly unlikely.

The growing dominance of defensive realist views among the Japanese public has long-term implications for Tokyo's evolving security strategy, as well as its alliance with the United States and U.S. policymakers. First, Japan will continue to gradually reduce the constraints on, and increase the capabilities of, its armed forces for conducting operations related to territorial defense. Overwhelming Japanese acceptance of the legitimacy of war in case of attack suggests that Japan and its populace would show little hesitation in responding militarily to a North Korean attack or Chinese infringement on Japanese territory; tactical counterstrikes in response to either may well enjoy public support.

Second, as a consequence, Japan's defense dependence on the United States will, in many areas, gradually decrease as the SDF becomes less constrained in traditional national defense missions. Third, Tokyo is unlikely, indeed increasingly unlikely, to agree to play a military role in joint combat operations with U.S. forces or stand-alone security and stabilization missions, in theaters such as Iraq that are far from Japan and involve missions not directly linked to territorial defense. The most Japan

will likely commit to are humanitarian and reconstruction missions similar to those in Iraq.

Fourth, because of the perceived lack of legitimacy and success in the Iraq mission, and growing lack of confidence in American foreign policy, Japan will become more selective and less willing to involve its military in any way in future U.S. invasions of other nations; even humanitarian and reconstruction missions are becoming a harder sell. Just as growing evidence suggests the emergence of an “Iraq syndrome” in U.S. public opinion that will limit the U.S. ability to use force overseas for years to come (Mueller 2003), as was the case with the “Vietnam syndrome” of three decades ago, a parallel Iraq syndrome in Japan will limit enthusiasm for involvement in U.S.-led military operations far from Japanese soil. In short, far from becoming a precedent for more ambitious SDF deployments overseas, the Iraq deployment has become a negative example that the Japanese public, and by extension decision-makers, will seek to avoid repeating in the future.

Many American policymakers and observers have come to expect that Japan’s adoption of a more “realist” grand strategy and its deployments to the Indian Ocean and Iraq indicate that in the near future Tokyo will move to provide combat support for U.S. military operations in conflicts far from Japanese shores. They will be disappointed.

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*the Iraq syndrome in Japan  
will limit enthusiasm for  
involvement in U.S.-led  
military operations*

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# Endnotes

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1. For additional arguments along these lines, see Itō (2002: 297–98). The phrase “Britain of Asia” reflects the aspiration of several then-future Bush administration Japan hands, who claimed, “we see the special relationship between the United States and Great Britain as a model for the alliance with Japan.” This comment was made in a publication dubbed the “Armitage report,” published in October 2000. See Institute for National Strategic Studies (2000).
2. See, for example, Matthews (2003); and Anthony Faiola, “Japan-Taiwan Ties Blossom as Regional Rivalry Grows,” *Washington Post*, March 24, 2006, p. A12.
3. Another scenario, namely that an increasingly nationalist public causes Japan to pursue a more autonomous defense and distance itself from the U.S. alliance is not systematically addressed by this study. Nonetheless, the concluding section considers the implications of this study’s findings for such a scenario.
4. A major exception is Bobrow (1989). Another partial exception is Ladd and Bowman (1996: chap. 3). Notable studies from the 1970s include Mendel (1975); Mendel (1971–72a; and Mendel (1971–72b).
5. Even more mainstream centrists favored minimal rearmament and as little involvement in U.S. global strategy as possible. See Berger (1993).
6. This idea stems from an important strand of defensive realism known as the balance of threat theory. See Walt (1987).
7. Arguably, revelations about North Korean abductions of Japanese civilians from coastal regions of Japan drove home to many Japanese the lesson that a failure to secure national territory or deter threats can lead to others targeting the state and its citizens. The August 1998 North Korean missile test over northern Japan also contributed to the realization that Japan might be targeted by others.
8. As quoted by Yoichi Funabashi, “Japan sa-pashingu,” *Asahi Shimbun*, March 25, 2004, p. 15. Here, and throughout this study, all translations from Japanese to English are the author’s.

9. In his seminal work on offensive realism, Mearsheimer (2001), claims, “the international system provides great powers with good reasons to act offensively to gain power” (p. 19). For another recent work applying offensive realist logic, see Labs (1997).
10. It should be noted that this definition of the differences between defensive and offensive realism reflects more the defensive realist definition of the differences between the two schools, which focuses on differing beliefs about the balance of offensive versus defensive military technology, and more generally the utility of offensive military action. For the two contrasting views of these two schools, see Snyder (1991: 10–11); and Mearsheimer (2001: 19–21).
11. Christopher Layne (2005) sees liberal ideology as the genuine cause of America’s frequent resort to offensive military action, finding elements of offensive realism and liberalism present in an American grand strategy he characterizes as “offensive liberalism.”
12. Although differing views on the utility of offensive military action come close to capturing the divide between defensive and offensive realists, this should not be construed as meaning that offensive realists necessarily support all justifications for offensive military action. Mearsheimer, for example, has opposed the promotion of democracy and other justifications for the invasion of Iraq. Nonetheless, he regards liberal rationales for offensive military action as a device by which U.S. policymakers conceal their true offensive realist motivations and seek support from the American public. See Mearsheimer (2001: 25–27). When applied to public opinion, the key question is whether public opinion accepts the idea that offensive military power has utility for some set of purposes or whether it rejects this possibility.
13. This assumption is common to both defensive and offensive realism.
14. Funabashi, “Japan sa-pashingu.”
15. *Asahi Shimbun*, March 25, 2004 (chyōkan), p. 15.
16. The views of leading elitists can be found in the works of Lippmann (1925); Almond (1950); Bailey (1948); Converse (1964); Margolis and Mauser (1989); and Ginsberg (1986). The views of leading pluralists include those of Mueller (1973); Ninic (1992); Jentleson (1992); Page and Shapiro (1992); and Holsti (1992).
17. Hellmann (1969); Johnson (1995); Garon (1997); and Hook (1996). For the argument that public opinion does matter in Japanese policymaking, see Weinstein (1971) and Watanabe (1977). A mid-level career Japanese diplomat saw Japanese public opinion toward foreign policy as being composed primarily of nonattitudes: “foreign policy issues simply do not register” (personal interview conducted by the author, March 28, 1994).
18. Woolley (2000: chap. 2). Woolley builds a cultural model based on the role of *kata* (a Japanese word meaning model, pattern, or tradition) to explain this pattern. He argues that the MSDF gradually eases into new missions because the Japanese prefer incremental evolutionary change over dramatic change or spontaneous innovation. While this argument may have some merit, it is not well suited for explaining other examples of innovation and change in Japan, such as its prewar navy or its postwar economy. Instead of cultural constraints, a militarist image, a residue of the prewar military, has forced the SDF to limit itself to incremental expansion. Incrementalism is part of a reassurance strategy aimed at Japanese public opinion, and also at Asian nations. See Midford (2003b).



19. For a useful review, see Boyd and Samuels (2005).
20. Since the introduction of a new electoral single-seat plurality district system in 1996, LDP factions have arguably weakened. Especially since Prime Minister Koizumi came to power and permanently expelled party rebels in a dispute over postal privatization in 2005, the power of the party's executive to discipline members has clearly grown. Nonetheless, even after these events, LDP Diet members have continued to show considerable independence even toward the powerful and popular Koizumi. In early 2006, in the face of a revolt within his own party over changing the imperial succession law to allow a female emperor, Koizumi felt compelled to back down and shelve this bill.
21. See, for example, Herzog (1993); Zhang (2003: 60–71); and more generally, Van Wolferen (1993).
22. Indeed, the LDP has not won a majority of the popular vote in any lower house election since 1963.
23. Without majority support in the upper house, the lower house can enact a budget, ratify treaties, and select a prime minister and cabinet. However, for all other legislation, the majority support of the upper house is required, barring a two-thirds majority vote in the lower house (Japanese Constitution, Articles 59, 60, 61, and 67). Since the LDP has never controlled such a majority in the lower house, after it lost control of the upper house in the 1989 the LDP was forced to enter into coalitions with other political parties, initially informally, but by the late 1990s, formally.
24. Indeed, J. A. A. Stockwin referred to LDP factions as “parties within a party.” See Stockwin (1999: 148).
25. Indeed, until the mid-1990s, Japan's multiseat constituency system, by encouraging rival LDP factions to run candidates against each other in the same district, gave voters the opportunity to vote against the mainstream factions controlling the government while still voting for the LDP (that is, by voting for antimainstream LDP candidates).
26. Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution states: “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 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.”
27. On these norms, see Lijphart (1999: chap. 3). Although the concept of consensus norms may seem unfamiliar to many American observers, the same consensual norms are embodied in American political institutions; they prevent simple majorities from changing the constitution, ratifying a treaty, recalling judges, or impeaching a president. Many of the rules of the U.S. Senate, most famously the filibuster, are based upon consensus norms mandating supermajorities.
28. On the use of qualitative methods such as triangulation for examining quantitative political behavior data, see Brady (2004: 267–71).
29. In fact, MSDF ships had gone overseas for “training,” Antarctic exploration, and SDF officers had been dispatched to overseas embassies. Regarding the overseas dispatch of MSDF ships, see Woolley (2000). As early as 1952, the Cabinet Legislative

Bureau had ruled that SDF overseas dispatch for noncombat operations would be constitutional, but that an enabling law would be necessary. See Kotani (1963: 27–28); Heinrich (1997: 108–9).

30. Prime Minister's Office, "Public Opinion Survey on Diplomacy" (Tokyo: Foreign Press Center, March 1987), p. 13. Shin Jōhō Center conducted the survey, with a sample of 3,000, and an effective response of 2,385 (79.5 percent). Accessed from the Japan Data Archive, Roper Center, University of Connecticut. When first asked, in 1965, whether they supported the SDF's dispatch in order to cooperate with the UN in some way, a Prime Minister's Office poll found that 55 percent of Japanese expressed opposition and less than 10 percent approved. See Hook (1996: 114).
31. Prime Minister's Office, "Public Opinion Survey on Japan's Peace and Security" (Tokyo: Foreign Press Center, September 1989), p. 12.
32. "Jietai Kaigai Haken wo Shikaru," *Mainichi Shinbun*, October 21, 1990, pp. 1, 3. Also see Clayton Naff, "Japan's Plan to Send Troops to Gulf in Trouble," UPI, October 23, 1990. Also see Gotōda (1990). According to Nakatani Iwao, Gotōda was arguing that if Tokyo removed its familiar restrictions on sending troops overseas, Japan would "go wild" (*bōsō suru*). See Nakatani Iwao, "'Nihon mondai' ga shisa suru mono," *Kokusai Bunka Kaikan Kaihō*, October 1990, as cited by Pyle (1992: 15).
33. "Jietai Haken 78% ga Hantai," *Asahi Shimbun*, November 6, 1990, pp. 1, 3. Also see "Jietai Haken ni 'Hantai' 53%," *Mainichi Shinbun*, October 23, 1990, pp. 1, 3; "Jietai Haken 78% ga Hantai," *Asahi Shimbun*, November 6, 1990, pp. 1,3; "Heiwa Kyōryoku Houan mo Tatsuki Genin," *Yomiuri Shimbun*, October 25, 1990, p. 2.
34. Almost 40 percent of LDP supporters expressed opposition to overseas dispatch of the SDF, approximately 35 percent expressed support for overseas dispatch without weapons, and approximately 15 percent supported dispatch with weapons. "Kaifu Naikaku Shijiritsu," *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, October 15, 1990, pp. 1, 7.
35. Interview by the author with Asahiko Mihara, Diet member and chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the lower house, April 19, 1995. Mihara's reluctance to support the UNPCC is all the more significant since his district, which is located in Kita-Kyuushu, includes many defense industries. Consequently, according to Mihara, opinion in his district is relatively hawkish on defense issues.
36. On growing opposition within the LDP, see "Kenpō Shinkaishyaku ni Hantai," *Mainichi Shinbun*, October 21, 1990, p. 1; Tahara Soichiro, "Nippon no fumie," *Bungei Shunju*, October 1990; "Heiwa Kyōroku Hōan mo Tatsuki Genin," *Yomiuri Shimbun*, October 25, 1990, p. 2; "Sekkyoku Sansei, Jimin de Hansuu Waru," *Asahi Shimbun*, November 1, 1990, p. 1; and Sasaki (1992: 48).
37. According to an *Asahi Shimbun* poll, 55 percent opposed the plane dispatch, and 33 percent supported it. Fifty-eight percent of respondents said the ASDF plane dispatch made them worry about future overseas dispatches for the sake of using military force. *Asahi Shimbun*, February 5, 1991.
38. *Asahi Shimbun*, April 24, 1991, and June 19, 1991; *Mainichi Shinbun*, June 14, 1991.
39. Hook (1996: 114–16). Heinrich (1997: 189) argues that U.S. criticism produced a change in Japanese opinion.

40. The Gulf War appears to have suppressed support for humanitarian dispatches. A Prime Minister's Office poll conducted in February 1991 found a mere 54 percent supporting SDF participation in overseas humanitarian relief and reconstruction activities; in comparison, 72 percent expressed support when the same question was asked in 1989. See Hook (1996: 115), and the earlier discussion. Comparable results were found with a differently worded question in a *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* poll conducted in November 1990 and again in March 1991. In November 1990, 43.7 percent supported allowing the SDF to cooperate in "nonmilitary aspects of UN peacekeeping operations," with support beginning to rebound following the war; 47.2 percent of respondents expressed support for the same option in March 1991. *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, March 29, 1991.
41. *Asahi Shimbun*, September 15–16, 1992.
42. *Asahi Shimbun*, June 2, 1992.
43. As cited by Yasuhiro Takeda, "Redefining Japan's National Security," *Business Times*, August 27, 1994, p. 1.
44. In a November 1991 CBS/NYT/TBS poll, 70 percent of Japanese answered that it is not appropriate to use military force "to maintain international justice and order," and 26 percent found this appropriate (Ladd and Bowman 1996: 25).
45. *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, August 22, 1999, as carried by JPOLL, the Japanese Public Opinion Database, Roper Center, University of Connecticut, <http://roperweb.ropercenter.uconn.edu/cgi-bin/hsrun.exe/Roperweb/JPOLL/>.
46. *Yomiuri Shimbun*, July 20, 1999, as carried by JPOLL, the Japanese Public Opinion Database, Roper Center, University of Connecticut, <http://roperweb.ropercenter.uconn.edu/cgi-bin/hsrun.exe/Roperweb/JPOLL/>.
47. The law had previously only permitted SDF involvement after an attack on a U.S. base had begun, and only when the police could not handle the situation.
48. See "Statement by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi at the Press Conference," September 12, 2001, [www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/koizumispeech/2001/0912kaiken\\_e.html](http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/koizumispeech/2001/0912kaiken_e.html); Shinoda (2001: 1). Also see Leheny (2001); Itō (2002); and Uemura (2002: 195–206). For a pre-September 11 view of U.S.-Japanese counterterrorism cooperation, see Green (2001b).
49. Apparently willing to ignore public opinion despite, or perhaps because of his high personal popularity, Koizumi initially seemed eager to push the limits of SDF deployment, even if this meant exposing the SDF to danger. Thus he emphasized the possibility of the SDF being placed in a hazardous position. *Asahi Shimbun*, September 25, 2001.
50. "Coalition Leaders Split on SDF Bill," *Daily Yomiuri*, September 23, 2001, p. 3; *Asahi Shimbun*, October 2, 2001, p. 1; and *Asahi Shimbun*, October 10, 2001, p. 4; Tamura (2001: 42); and Hughes (2002: 3). This last condition paralleled the PKO bill of a decade earlier, which limited total deployments to 600 personnel, with a total of 1,200 during rotation.
51. The bill took less than three weeks and thirty-three hours of debate to pass (Hughes 2002: 4).
52. "Naikaku shiji, bizou 74%," *Asahi Shimbun*, November 27, 2001.

53. Regarding proposals to dispatch AWACS and P-3C planes, see *Yomiuri Shimbun*, September 21, 2001 (morning edition), p. 1; and September 23 (morning edition), p. 1.
54. *Kyodo News Service*, September 28, 2001. For an alternative analysis of intra-LDP opposition to the Aegis dispatch, one that stresses economic motives related to the Middle Eastern states, see Heginbotham and Samuels (2002: 102–3).
55. “Kenshou/E-jisukan no hakken miokuri,” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, November 18, 2001 (morning edition), p. 4.
56. “Kenshou/E-jisukan no hakken miokuri,” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, November 18, 2001 (morning edition), p. 4. Former LDP secretary general Nonaka Hiromu also raised questions about alleged American “gaiatsu” on Japan to dispatch an Aegis destroyer: “The U.S. is not demanding that Korea make a military contribution. Why are they demanding this of Japan?”
57. “Shyassetsu: Jieikan haken naze,” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, November 9, 2001, p. 3.
58. “Under today’s democratic politics, civilian control is assured, and the resurgence of prewar militarism cannot occur.” *Ibid.*
59. “Bei shien no E-jisukan hakken miokuri,” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, November 17, 2001 (morning edition), p. 4.
60. “Yamasaki’s Aegis Battle Lost to LDP ‘Pacifists,’” *Daily Yomiuri*, November 19, 2001, p. 2.
61. “Kenshou/E-jisukan no hakken miokuri,” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, November 18, 2001 (morning edition), p. 4. Also see “Bei shien no i-jisukan haken,” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, November 17, 2001 (chyoukan), p. 4.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 4. His prediction proved to be correct, as the DPJ, after voting against the Antiterrorism Special Measures Act, nonetheless voted for the actual dispatch.
63. “Kenshou/E-jisukan no hakken miokuri,” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, November 18, 2001 (morning edition), p. 4.
64. “‘Ae-jisukan haken ha muri,’ chyoukouha anpo giin danchou,” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, May 4, 2002.
65. “I-jisukan haken ‘Muzukashii’ Bei no shinpo de Iruma moto boueichyoukan,” *Asahi Shimbun*, May 1, 2002. Also see *Asahi Shimbun*, April 24, 2002. Enactment of this key piece of security legislation was eventually delayed anyway because of an unrelated scandal involving the Defense Agency.
66. “Bei ga I-jisukan to P3C haken wo youkyuu, Yotou 3 tou kanjichyou ni,” *Asahi Shimbun*, April 30, 2002; and Tsutomu Ishiai, “U.S. Makes Aegis Request Official,” *Asahi Shimbun*, May 1, 2002.
67. “E-jisu hakken mondai, ketsuron ha miokuri,” *Asahi Shimbun*, November 7, 2002.
68. “No problem with Aegis Dispatch: Koizumi,” *Japan Times*, December 6, 2002, p. 2; “E-jisukan hakken, Kōmeitō ha hantai kankunin ‘Shinchyou ni taiou,’” *Asahi Shimbun*, December 4, 2002; “E-jisukan souki haken no houshin setsumei jimin-yamasaki kanjichou,” *Asahi Shimbun*, December 5, 2002.
69. “Yōtōnai chyōsei tsukeba nennai hakken mo E-jisuhaken de shyushō,” *Asahi Shimbun*, December 3, 2002.

70. “E-jisukan, Indoyō kara Tesshyuu he, Nihon kinaki ‘kuuhaku’ kaihi,” *Asahi Shimbun*, July 3, 2003.
71. Yomiuri Shinbunsha Seron Chōsabu, *Nihon no Seron*, pp. 338–39, 344–45.
72. *Ibid.*, pp. 341–42; 344–46.
73. *Asahi Shimbun*, October 16, 2001 (morning edition), p. 4.
74. *Asahi Shimbun*, November 27, 2001 (morning edition), p. 4.
75. *Der Spiegel*, May 18, 2002, as cited by Rudolf (2002).
76. This was largely because the war became more and more unpopular among men and LDP supporters. See *Asahi Shimbun*, March 24, 2003.
77. *Asahi Shimbun*, October 18, 2004, p. 8.
78. *Asahi Shimbun*, April 1, 2003, p. 4.
79. See polls in *Asahi Shimbun*, May 24, 2004 (morning edition), p. 2; *Yomiuri Shimbun*, May 24, 2004 (morning edition), p. 2; and an NTV poll conducted in May 2004, [www.ntv.co.jp/yoron/2004\\_05/200405/index.html](http://www.ntv.co.jp/yoron/2004_05/200405/index.html).
80. “Most Oppose GSDF Extension: Survey,” *Japan Times*, November 5, 2002, p. 2.
81. *Yomiuri Shimbun*, April 21, 2003.
82. A *Nikkei* poll, also conducted in June, reached the same conclusion: 43 percent supported, and 41 percent opposed dispatching the SDF to Iraq. Data obtained by the author from the Japan Public Opinion Archive, the Roper Center, University of Connecticut.
83. “Diet Opens Debate on SDF, Iraq,” *Asahi Shimbun*, June 25, 2003.
84. “Koizumi Sidesteps Debate on Iraq War,” *Asahi Shimbun*, June 26, 2003.
85. Data obtained from the Japan Public Opinion Archive, Roper Center, University of Connecticut.
86. *Asahi Shimbun*, November 2, 2003, p. 1.
87. Interview conducted by the author, December 10, 2003.
88. Hughes (2004: 129); “Nihon ni iraku de no ‘kiken junin’ motomeru beikoku fuku chōkan,” *Asahi Shimbun*, June 11, 2003; “1,000 Strong SDF Division Eyed for Iraq,” *Daily Yomiuri*, June 25, 2003.
89. Hughes (2004: 130); *Asahi Shimbun*, December 10, 2003, p. 5; and Press Conference by Prime Minister Koizumi, December 9, 2003, [www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/koizumispeech/2003/12/09press\\_e.html](http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/koizumispeech/2003/12/09press_e.html).
90. Twelve percent of respondents said this plan caused them to switch from supporting the cabinet to opposing it, while 2 percent said the plan caused them to switch from being cabinet opponents to being cabinet supporters; in other words, there was a net movement of 10 percent toward disapproval of the cabinet. *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* poll conducted December 2003. Data obtained by the author from the Japan Public Opinion Archive, Roper Center, University of Connecticut.
91. “Koizumi naikaku, seitō seijiritsu no chōsa kekka,” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, December 16, 2003 (morning edition), p. 4.
92. *Asahi Shimbun*, March 17, 2004, p. 4.

93. *Asahi Shimbun*, April 17, 2004 (morning edition), p. 1; *Asahi Shimbun*, April 18, 2004 (morning edition), p. 2. Note that this snap poll was conducted immediately after the release of the hostages, on April 16. One might speculate about whether the result would have been substantially different had the poll been conducted before the hostages were released. This telephone poll had a sample size of 1,000, with a valid response rate of 48 percent.
94. The LDP's defeat was much bigger in terms of votes than seats, due to a substantial imbalance in how the seats are distributed relative to population in Japan's upper house. According to one calculation, had the same voting patterns held for a lower house election, the LDP would have ended up with 160 seats versus 233 for the Democrats. In other words, this would have marked the end of LDP-Komei rule. See Morgan (2004).
95. "ASDF Owns Up to Airlifting Armed U.S. Troops to Iraq," *Japan Times*, April 9, 2004, p. 15; Hughes (2004: 131); and "June Eyed for GSDF Iraq Pullout," *Daily Yomiuri Online*, May 21, 2006, [www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/world/20060521TDY01002.htm](http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/world/20060521TDY01002.htm).
96. "June Eyed for GSDF pullout," *Daily Yomiuri Online*, May 21, 2006.
97. *Asahi Shimbun*, October 16 (morning edition), 2001, p. 4.
98. *Asahi Shimbun*, October 18, 2004, p. 9. Germany and the United States were not included in this poll.
99. *Yomiuri Shimbun*, April 21, 2003, p. 2.
100. This is all the more striking since the Bush administration has cited postwar Japan as a prime example of the successful use of military force to promote democracy.
101. "Iraku kōgeki, Nihon de "hantai" 77% Bei ha "sansei" 57%," *Asahi Shimbun*, September 3, 2002.
102. See Midford (2002) and Twomey (2000). Michael Green's finding of an emerging "reluctant realism" in Japan is also consistent with defensive realism. See Green (2001a).

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## About this Issue

Japan has actively contributed to the Bush administration's war on terrorism, going far beyond the financial support it provided during the first Gulf War in 1991 and testing the limits of postwar constitutional prohibitions on the deployment of military forces overseas. This has led some observers to suggest that Japan might be positioning itself to become a more active supporter of U.S. global strategy, a "Britain of Asia." This study challenges this view and finds that less has changed in Japan's overseas deployments than is often claimed. This study identifies public opinion, an understudied factor, as the reason for the modest expansion of Japan's overseas deployments since 9/11 and brings to bear a wealth of data to back up this conclusion. Applying modified conceptions of defensive and offensive realism to public attitudes regarding the use of force for the first time, this study finds that the Japanese "mass public" has increasingly recognized the need to prepare to meet military threats, but views military power as useful only for homeland defense. The public has been consistently skeptical about the utility of offensive military power for promoting democracy or suppressing weapons of mass destruction proliferation or terrorist networks. The invasion of Iraq, for reasons viewed with great skepticism, has caused the Japanese public, like publics in many other countries, to become increasingly distrustful of U.S. foreign policy. This, combined with a growing willingness to provide for its own defense, suggests that Japan may be less willing to support far-flung U.S. military operations in the future and concentrate more on increasing its defense autonomy.

## About the Author

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