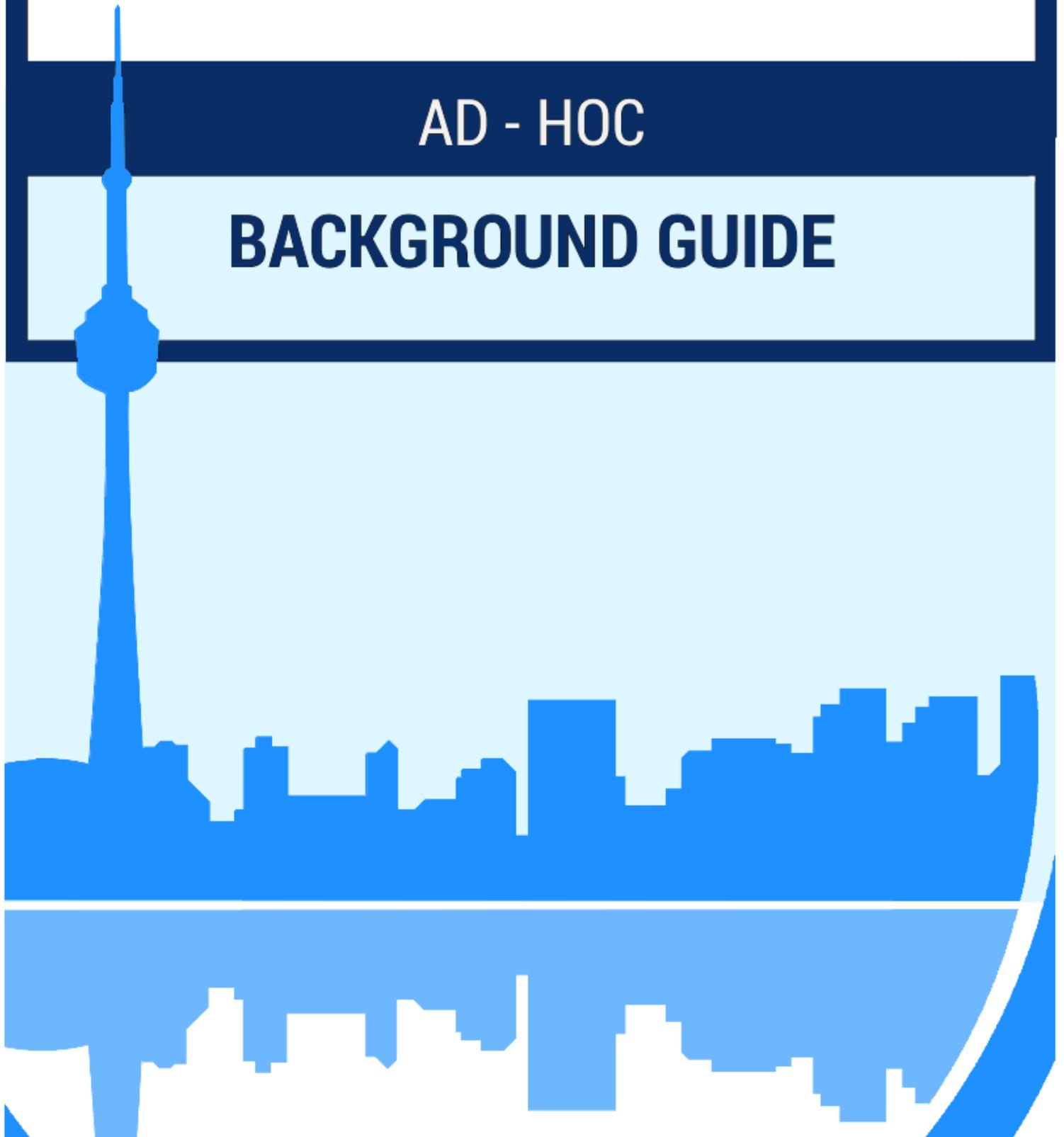


SSICsim 2017

AD - HOC

BACKGROUND GUIDE



Forward

Hello delegates,

I want to first thank you for your interest in our ad hoc committee. You're a truly brave and daring soul to want to plunge into the unknown for an entire weekend. After all this waiting, I will now tell you what this committee is about.

It's about the legacy of the Pacific War in Japan.

A bit about myself first though. My name is Benson Cheung, and I am the crisis director of Ad Hoc. While I am a graduate student doing an MA in European and Russian Affairs at the University of Toronto, I'm really a student of the world.

So if I'm studying Eurasian stuff, why am I directing a committee on Japan?

My interest in Japan stems from mostly three things: its food (sushi and ramen!), its cinema (go watch Akira Kurosawa's stuff if you haven't already), and its dark history during WWII. Unlike Germany, which is in perpetual penance for its Nazi sins, Japan's leadership does not readily acknowledge imperialism and innumerable war crimes before and during WWII even to this day. And to an extent, Japan is still paying the price of its stubbornness to acknowledge its past misdeeds, as this past often heightens relations with other Asia-Pacific countries. So, this committee will be about the contradictions between Japan's imperialist past, its current pacifist constitution and culture, and its changing role as a regional great power today.

This Ad Hoc committee will try to bring to life these rather academic issues about how history affects politics and society today in an exciting and rather experimental simulation. Although this committee will be centered on military issues, don't come expecting a traditional war game crisis or a crusty history lesson. We will challenge your ability to engage in serious ethical and logistical debates about your course of action.

You might be thinking, *wait a minute, you've been going on about everything under the (rising) sun except for what's actually in this committee! So what's this committee actually about?*

Well, this is an Ad Hoc, so I can't tell you everything here. You'll have to come to the conference on November 10 to find out. But I promise you this: if you read this background guide carefully, learn a bit more about the topic on your own, and come to SSICsim with an open mind, you will have a lot of fun. Trust me.

See you real soon!

Benson Cheung

Note: All the information in Parts 1-3 of this background guide, except where noted in footnotes, come from Elise K. Tipton's textbook Modern Japan: A Social and Political History.

Part 1: Rise of the Military¹

Since the Meiji Restoration in 1868 Westernized Japan's state and society through a change in government, Japan became increasingly strained from tensions that this rapid modernization process produced. Desperate to not be subjugated and humiliated by Western powers like China, Japan superficially adopted every piece of Western technology, governance, military organization, education, culture, and even clothing they could find. Within the Empire, the Meiji Emperor was elevated to a new, central status as a constitutional monarch uniting the nation. The most consequential adaption for its East Asian neighbours was a foreign policy belief that imperial expansion was directly correlated with power and prestige. Increasing military successes, such as the victorious 1904 Russo-Japanese War and Japan's involvement in the First World War, demonstrated the deadly effectiveness of Japan's Prussian-style military, and brought Japan new colonial possessions to a nominal equal footing with other Western empires.

But such a huge shift from feudalism to the modern industrial state within just a couple of generations produced some serious societal whiplash. As early as 1905, the expansion of the popular franchise and the civil unrest it brought led many Japanese observers to worry about the loss of Japan's civilizational essence. This concern was redoubled as mass consumerism, changing cultural mores (e.g. Japanese flappers), and an increasing urban-rural divide came to the forefront in the interwar period. Moreover, for all of Japan's efforts to follow Western norms and standards, Japanese elites became increasingly dissatisfied as they felt like they were treated unequally when compared to the other great powers. The post-WWI period was characterized by a series of diplomatic setbacks, as Japan failed to pass a racial equality clause at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference and was forced to scale back its naval expansion under the 1930 London Naval Treaty. You could say that, by the 1930s, Japan faced a looming "crisis of modernity".

The military stepped in with its own proposal for facing this crisis. As Japan struggled with the Great Depression after 1929, unstable parliamentary politics, and mass overpopulation, the military increasingly became prominent in political decision-making. Ultranationalist circles began advocating for militarism and a return to imperial rule as a response to controlling and co-opting the energies unleashed by the politicized masses. At the same time, totalitarian literature by thinkers like Ikki KITA and UESUGI Shinkichi circulated among military personnel, effectively radicalizing large segments of the military to rejecting the democratic-bureaucratic state and embracing fascism.²

¹ Tipton Chapter 7.

² Skya, *Japan's Holy War*.

Following a feudal martial tradition of Gekokujō (“overthrowing one’s superiors”), such radical Japanese officers took the initiative to invade Manchuria in September 1931 after setting up a false flag pretext, forcing Tokyo’s hand in handling the crisis. As the military installed the last Qing emperor of China, Puyi, as their puppet leader of Manchukuo in 1932, the League of Nations condemned the intervention and denounced Japan as the aggressor. This was the last straw in Japan’s history of international victimhood, and Japan withdrew from the League in March 1933.

Emboldened by their success in Manchuria, relatively junior officers waged a terrorist campaign between 1932 and 1936, in hopes of overthrowing the civilian government and Zaibatsus (corporate monopolies) and restore the Showa Emperor’s direct rule. Functionally led by Sadao ARAKI, this loose faction of radicals, the Imperial Way, was countered by the Control Faction of the military, who recognized the need to cooperate with existing institutions for mass mobilization. While the Imperial Way’s failed 1936 coup ended the terrorism campaign, they succeeded in shifting Japan’s policy window radically towards the far right, under the ascendant Control Faction. The militarist regime now firmly entrenched believed in the Emperor’s divine sovereignty over the Japanese nation, and for the spiritual and physical preservation of the Kokutai (national polity). The military regime’s controls and ideological demands on the Japanese nation became ever more onerous, such that for all intents and purposes, Japan was a fascistic state for the duration of the war.

Part 2: Japan at War³

Japan's turn to external expansion was triggered by a number of factors. Japan had borrowed its belief that colonies equalled national prestige from Western empires. Additional security imperatives, including a fear of Soviet communism, further encouraged Japan to look towards exploiting a weak China to create a buffer zone. But beyond geopolitics, as a volcanic archipelago nation, Japan was resource-strapped and severely land-strapped. Following the Great Depression, Japan's military began proposing a number of solutions: while the Imperial Way proposed a preemptive attack on the Soviets for ideological reasons, the Control Faction favoured expansion into China and Southeast Asia to secure resources.⁴

Although China was once Japan's tributary overlord, Japan had long set its sights on China as a potential colonial sphere of influence, in which they could exploit unlimited raw materials, cheap labour, and vast settlement spaces to relieve Japan of its overpopulation. Indeed, two million Japanese settlers moved to Manchuria after its creation. Naturally, these incursions led to tensions with the weak Nationalist government in Nanjing (the KMT). Years of skirmishes with the Chinese Nationalist government finally exploded into a full-fledged conflict in July 1937 at the Marco Polo Bridge in Beijing. As the war escalated, the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) swept into China proper, fighting brutal battles in Shanghai and Nanjing. Japan committed atrocities on a massive scale, including deploying poison gas, conducting human experimentation, committing wholesale massacres, and enslaving women as "comfort women"; in particular, the infamous "Rape of Nanking" (Nanjing) likely killed hundreds of thousands.

Such massacres provoked widespread international condemnation from democratic nations, but the one response that mattered most was the United States': US President Franklin D. Roosevelt slapped Japan with a crippling oil embargo in response to the invasion of China. With resources being drained from protracted war in China, the embargo thus forced Japan to turn elsewhere to get its much-needed oil supply; the military turned its gaze towards Southeast Asia, which had bountiful oil fields.⁵ But such an attack would necessitate attacking the US in a risky gamble to wipe out American naval strength, which was vastly superior to Japanese capabilities.

Although the military and political leadership was extremely divided on whether to attack Southeast Asia and the US, the final decision is well-known: on December 7, 1941, Japan launched a strike force on Pearl Harbor that crippled the US Navy, followed by a massive invasion of French Indochina, the US-controlled Philippines, Dutch-controlled Indonesia, and British colonies in

³ Tipton Chapter 8

⁴ The Imperial Way faction decisively lost the strategic debate after the crushing defeat at Khalkhin Gol in communist Mongolia by the Soviets, under Georgy Zhukov's command.

⁵ Ironically, the oil that Imperial Japan invaded Southeast Asia for was sitting in Manchuria all this time—this field was discovered only in 1959.

Malaya, Borneo, Singapore, and Hong Kong. As the Western colonial administrations throughout Southeast Asia disintegrated almost immediately after the invasions, Japan fostered nationalist movements for ideological and pragmatic reasons. Building on its establishment of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere in 1940, Japan portrayed its conquests as a pan-Asian national liberation, intent on humiliating the white empires and returning Asian peoples their sovereignty. Besides, Japan had few seasoned colonial administrators and the military was overstretched, allowing room for indigenous nationalists to fill collaborationist governments.⁶ It would soon become apparent that such efforts spelled the doom of European colonization in the region.

While the Japanese military exported this ideology of pan-Asian nationalism abroad, at home, the ideological focus was rather on the war's ability to forge a more cohesive and united Japanese national polity. The logic behind the Emperor's divine nature and Japanese racial supremacy necessitated its outward expansion to return Asia. Much of the propaganda at home extolled citizens to do their duties with relatively minimal attention given to the Allies, whom the regime portrayed as bullies keeping Japan down. In short, Japan saw war as a holy war for it to "overcome modernity" and become a purer nation.⁷ Despite its fascistic ideology and aspirations, the Japanese government was in practice a highly chaotic and often antagonistic coalition of politicians, military leaders, bureaucrats and Zaibatsu owners; such divisions extended especially to the near-irreconcilable rivalry between the Army and Navy commands.

Through 1942, the fulcrum of Japan's imperialist future shifted from land to sea, as the powerful Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) squared against the re-emerging US Navy. Japanese naval doctrine was centered on prevailing over the enemy in a single, decisive set piece battle, between large battleships. The IJN's fixation on winning the decisive battle became essentially the reason for its downfall. The IJN reserved use of battleships for important battles, had a confused submarine policy and failed to defend shipping lines, and failed to understand importance of aircraft carriers even after the Battle of Midway. Their overall strategic incoherence left Japan increasingly vulnerable to the US Navy, which not only had a powerful industrial base to support it, but also had an imaginative and flexible leadership who refused to let the IJN ensnare them.⁸

1942 was the turning point for Japan. The IJN's back was broken in the Battle of Midway between June 4-7, in which four Japanese carriers and a heavy cruiser were destroyed at little cost to American forces. Indeed, that battle proved that the future of naval warfare was not in prestigious battleships (as per IJN doctrine), but in aircraft carriers which could muster hundreds of planes for ranged attacks. Shortly afterwards, the IJN attempted to regain the distant (but incredibly strategic) island of Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands from Allied forces over six months, but they failed to recognize this battle as the decisive battle and consequently did not commit the core of their fleet. Their decisive defeats in these battles allowed the Allies the

⁶ *Race War*, by Gerald Horne

⁷ *Japan's Holy War*, by Walter Skya

⁸ *The Imperial Japanese Navy in the Pacific War*, by Mark Stille

offensive initiative to advance. Under American supreme command, the Allies began an island-hopping campaign, in which Allied troops captured tiny island after tiny island as stepping stones to put Japan within range of bombers, and a potential invasion force. The Americans began strategic bombings of Japanese cities beginning in 1944, culminating in the catastrophic Operation Meetinghouse in March 1945, in which an intensive firebombing raid on Tokyo incinerated 41 km² and 100,000 people in a single night. As the Americans came ever closer, Japan committed more and more of its troops and warships to suicidal defensive campaigns, in hopes of convincing the Allies to come to the negotiating table over mounting costs to both sides. Battles on Iwo Jima, Saipan, and Okinawa (in the South of Japan) led to the near complete destruction of Japanese garrisons there, and, fearing torture at the hands of Americans, hundreds of thousands of civilians on those islands committed suicide.⁹

Inherent divisions within the Japanese government became ripe again in the final months of the war, as government officials became increasingly split between pro-peace and pro-war factions. Pro-peace figures, including the final wartime Prime Minister Kantaro SUZUKI, hoped to negotiate a speedy end to the war, while the pro-war faction wanted to keep the war going to force the Americans to negotiate more favourable terms for Japan—as well as strong guarantees that the Emperor would be retained.¹⁰ This debate was moot, however, when the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, vaporizing many of the over 90,000 victims in seconds. The Soviet invasion of Manchuria on August 9 thoroughly destroyed the Kwantung Army (which had been the IJA's crown jewel and a fount of militarist ultranationalism) as well as any remaining hopes of Soviet arbitration, while the atomic bombing of Nagasaki hours later sealed Imperial Japan's fate. With all diplomatic and military options for a favourable negotiation closed off, Emperor Hirohito announced the nation's surrender on August 15. The war was finally over, but it had cost Japan dearly. It had killed some 3 million Japanese, laid waste to almost all major cities in Japan, and led to, for the first time ever, Japan's occupation by a foreign power.

⁹ While Japanese paranoia about mistreatment by Americans was certainly exaggerated, there was some kernel of truth to their fears. Fearing that the population was inherently disloyal, the American government ordered that all Japanese-Americans are to be rounded up and confined in internment camps very soon after the attack on Pearl Harbor (Canadians were even more enthusiastic about their version of Japanese internment). These internments made no distinctions between foreign-born Japanese and American-born Japanese, and today it is seen as motivated largely by anti-Asian racism that made no positive contribution to the war effort. Likewise, much American propaganda for the Pacific War relied on dehumanizing stereotypes of Japanese people, encouraging recruits to “Slap a Jap”. This ensured that Americans considered the Pacific Theatre a racially-charged war.

¹⁰ Delegates interested in the American plans and debates for ending the Pacific War (including the Potsdam Declaration) can refer to SSICsim's Operation Downfall background guide: (<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/573c756e859fd06a1f830223/t/575a50d3e32140bd67b97266/1465536725274/US-Unified-Combatant-Command-Background-Guide.pdf>)

Part 3: Postwar Japan¹¹

The Occupation administration under General Douglas MacArthur set up shop in Japan weeks ahead of the official Japanese surrender on September 15. MacArthur spearheaded reforms to dismantle the wartime fascist regime to prevent militarism from rising ever again.¹² As the old nobility system was dismantled, the Emperor himself was compelled to renounce his divinity in an imperial rescript, permanently losing whatever position of power he had even before the war, including being the armed forces' commander in chief. Japan's territorial empire was likewise dismantled; as European empires tried and failed to reassert their control over their Southeast Asian colonies, Korea was partitioned between Soviet and American occupying forces, while Taiwan was returned to the Republic of China. Japanese settlers in Manchuria and around the Pacific rim were forcibly repatriated to Japan, while millions of POWs from Manchuria died in Soviet gulags.

Like in Germany, Japan also had its military and political leadership put on war crimes tribunals. From 1946 to 1948, the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTFE), commonly called the Tokyo War Crimes Trial, operated to try the Japanese wartime leadership based on precedents set by the Nuremberg Trials, by a panel of judges from a number of Allied nations.¹³ The defendants were charged with crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, and were divided into three classes of war criminals, Class A (crimes against peace) being the most serious and reserved for 28 top leaders. Of these, seven defendants were sentenced to death (including Prime Minister Hideki TOJO), while the remaining eighteen were sentenced to life imprisonment (such as Sadao ARAKI) or shorter terms. However, this trial was controversial, as MacArthur had pardoned the entire Imperial Family from being in the docks, while others (including dissenting justice Radhabinod Pal) argued that the trials were victor's justice.¹⁴ Indeed, some of the most brutal war criminals, like biological warfare director and human experimentation advocate Shiro ISHII, escaped trial altogether, having struck a deal with the Americans to exchange military secrets for immunity.¹⁵

The most drastic of these changes to Japanese society was the rewriting of the Japanese constitution. MacArthur had already repealed authoritarian measures (such as the military police) and purged wartime leaders and began introducing measures to protect civil liberties and rights. To solidify these gains, MacArthur de facto repealed the Meiji constitution in 1946 and ordered a new constitution to be written, eventually approved on November 3, 1946 by the

¹¹ Tipton Chapter 9

¹² Delegates interested in this period of political history should check out movies *The Sun* (2005) and *Emperor* (2012), as well as the miniseries *Tokyo Trials* (2016).

¹³ <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/nuremberg>

¹⁴ Tipton 148-149, <http://www.dw.com/en/the-eternal-burden-of-the-tokyo-war-crimes-tribunal/a-18986976>

¹⁵ <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/03/17/world/unmasking-horror-a-special-report-japan-confronting-gruesome-war-atrocity.html>

Emperor. This constitution is notable for a few things: the Emperor's apolitical nature is confirmed as being the "symbol of the state and of the unity of the people". Most importantly, Article 9 not only forbids Japan from possessing its own military, but it goes farther in declaring that Japan renounces war as a foreign policy tool in perpetuity. It bears being quoted in full:

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.

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.¹⁶

It was in respect to this new article that Japan's new military force, the Japanese Self-Defense Force (JSDF), was created in 1954. A unified military force with three branches (Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF), the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF), and the Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF)), it is constitutionally limited to territorial protection, and forbidden to possess offensive capabilities such as nuclear submarines or aircraft carriers.¹⁷

As the Occupation officially ended in 1951 with the signing of the Treaty of San Francisco, Japan and the US also signed the Mutual Security Treaty that permits the continued presence of US forces on Japanese soil (including the continued US occupation of Okinawa until 1970). This treaty was renewed in 1960 as the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan. Continued American protection was recognized by the Japanese themselves as a necessity, especially in the face of a rising Communist tide in the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China and North Korea. For most of the Cold War, the JSDF sat passively on the sidelines of major Asian wars, while Japan allowed the US to use Japanese bases for the Vietnam War. It was not until the Gulf War that the JSDF saw a limited degree of action, and since then the JSDF has engaged in international peacekeeping operations.¹⁸

¹⁶ http://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html

¹⁷ <https://www.cfr.org/backgroundunder/japan-and-its-military>

¹⁸ <https://www.cfr.org/backgroundunder/us-japan-security-alliance>

Part 4: Japan's Changing Military Culture

Although ultranationalist groups persisted with around a hundred thousand members, bushido-inspired militarism and State Shintoism as mainstream ideologies perished in 1945. Nevertheless, the scope of public debate in Japan about its war guilt is considerably less critical of the WWII regime than Germany with the Nazis. Unlike the German situation, postwar Japan shunted public memories of the war into the dustbin of history, as the nation concerned itself with moving forward and prospering. As the Cold War heated up, the US and Japan became increasingly concerned about the Communist threat and less about distributing justice to yesterday's war criminals. Around 1954-1956, as the Cold War escalated in Vietnam, movements to parole war criminals sprung up, and many war criminals, including Sadao ARAKI, were released.¹⁹

Even leftists and socialists in Japan once considered the fascist era to be a historical anomaly for an otherwise "properly" modernizing Japan. This is to say nothing of the conservative perspective that exonerates Japan of war crimes by suggesting that all the great powers were equally imperialist.²⁰ Indeed, arguably the atomic bombings proved quite fortuitous for Japan's conscience regarding war guilt, because it allowed a plausible excuse for the country to frame itself as a victim of the war too.²¹ In a sense, shirking collective responsibility was a bipartisan consensus.

The general public amnesia did not preclude memorialization, though. One particularly thorny issue in Japan's relations with other East Asian countries is the Yasukuni Shrine. A Shinto shrine dedicated to memorializing all of Japan's war dead, the Yasukuni Shrine garnered international controversy and condemnation as it also enshrines 1000 war criminals executed by Allied war tribunals, including Hideki TOJO. Visitations by sitting Prime Ministers and important politicians have always sparked the ire of Japan's neighbours, who view such visitations as signs of Japan's refusal to repent for their wartime conduct.²²

Another arena of contested history is Japan's infamous textbook controversy. As the government screens and approves a small set of history textbooks, it has been accused as early as 1965 for trying to sugarcoat the events of the war. The accuser, historian IENAGA Saburo (who advocated for being more critical coverage of the war), launched a series of lawsuits over 30 years, garnering much international attention.²³ A history war brewed in Japan, as nationalist authors redoubled their efforts to promote a more pro-Japan line in national historiography. Instead, nationalists argue that a "balanced picture" of the war must be presented, which

¹⁹ <http://apjff.org/-Awaya-Kentaro/2061/article.html>

²⁰ Tipton 126

²¹ <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/05/30/the-bomb-didnt-beat-japan-stalin-did/>

²² <https://www.pri.org/stories/2013-12-26/why-yasukuni-shrine-so-controversial>

²³ http://spice.fsi.stanford.edu/docs/examining_the_japanese_history_textbook_controversies

includes downplaying the military's role in forced prostitution (comfort women), as well as denying that the Nanking Massacre killed hundreds of thousands.²⁴

Textbooks revisionism may hardly be a new phenomenon, but in the past decade the controversy has renewed political and even geopolitical relevance. Under his second term, incumbent Prime Minister Shinzo ABE is increasingly moving Japan towards a nationalist and pro-military direction. Undergirding Abe's view is that patriotic and moral education is fundamental to Japan's health as a nation.²⁵ Abe has been controversial for visiting the Yasukuni Shrine in 2013 (and sending representatives and ritual offerings when he cannot visit),²⁶ and even donating money to an ultranationalist school that reintroduced Emperor-veneration.²⁷ It is therefore unsurprising that the textbook controversy has re-intensified under his current tenure—and then some.²⁸ Recently in 2017, the Meiji Imperial Rescript on Education—a nationalist school oath that MacArthur had rescinded during the Occupation—has been permitted to be used in history curricula in schools.²⁹ Revisionism is condemned by China and South Korea as being revisionist, not only because of its historical insensitivity towards former colonial neighbours, but it conflicts directly with Chinese and South Korean claims on their respective disputed territories: Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and Takeshima/Dokdo Islands.³⁰

Another key plank of Abe's platform is the necessity of Japan to overcome its pacifist constitution and return to its former status as a military power. Increasingly, numerous geopolitical challenges in East Asia (in particular, North Korea's nuclear program and Chinese claims on the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands) have exerted pressure on Japan's pacifist culture, forcing the country to find creative measures to adapt to such security challenges. The incumbent Prime Minister, hardline conservative Shinzo ABE, has made extensive efforts to expand the JSDF's legal mandate and military capabilities. In 2014, unable to get the parliamentary majority to amend the constitution, Abe passed a resolution which officially "reinterpreted" Article 9 to permit the use of the military as part of "collective self-defence", and has subsequently promised to legitimize the JSDF in the Constitution by 2020.³¹

Even short of rewriting the constitution, Abe has made incremental changes to the military's scope of action. In July 2015, Abe's Liberal Democratic Party invoked the threat of China

²⁴ <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/29/world/asia/japan-fights-a-political-battle-using-history-texts.html>

²⁵ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-election-tradition/japan-pm-abes-base-aims-to-restore-past-religious-patriotic-values-idUSKBN0JP2E920141211>

²⁶ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-25518137>

²⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/23/shinzo-abe-wife-akie-accused-giving-cash-ultra-nationalist-school>

²⁸ <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/29/world/asia/japan-fights-a-political-battle-using-history-texts.html>

²⁹ <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/japan-will-allow-its-school-controversial-19th-century-imperial-text-180962825/>

³⁰ <https://thediplomat.com/2015/04/why-japans-textbook-controversy-is-getting-worse/>

³¹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-defense/japan-takes-historic-step-from-post-war-pacifism-oks-fighting-for-allies-idUSKBN0F52S120140701>

and ISIS to allow the military to participate in foreign conflicts, though with certain conditions (such as being required to cooperate with the US and being limited to logistical support).³² In August 2016, Abe further cited Chinese incursions into the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and recent North Korean missile tests over Japanese airspace to increase the military budget by 2.3%, in order to purchase new air force and naval equipment, which includes new land defence and antiballistic missiles. Although China condemned this move as Japanese aggression, Japan argues that its expanded missile range is just barely enough to deter North Korean missile threats.³³

Missiles may have a reach limited to the Sea of Japan, but the Japanese military is no longer under similar restrictions. Japan established its first military base abroad in 2011, placing 180 Japanese troops in Djibouti right next to the US base there. This base not only helps Japan with its contribution to international antipiracy in Somalia, it helps Japan to counter growing Chinese influence in the region.³⁴ Indeed, Japan is flexing its military muscles in other parts of Africa too as it sent a total of 3854 Ground Self-Defense Force soldiers to South Sudan between 2012 and 2017 to maintain a ceasefire and assist in rebuilding that country's infrastructure. However, because the military is permitted to be involved in peacekeeping missions for the sole purpose of upholding ceasefires, that the Japanese military continued to stay in South Sudan after live conflict resumed generated much controversy at home. Throughout its South Sudanese mission, the Japanese military pushed the envelope in what it is allowed to do during combat situations, from the aforementioned continued presence in non-ceasefire conditions to providing ammunition to South Korean troops (beyond sharing living necessities, as per the strict letter of the law).³⁵

The military at home is slowly regaining an offensive capability. Under Abe, the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force gained two new "helicopter destroyers" (the JS *Izumo* and JS *Kaga*), the largest Japanese-built ships since WWII, which are widely seen to be essentially aircraft carriers.³⁶ The JGSDF is currently scrambling to build a Marines-style force (the Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade), with help from the US Marine Corps, in time for its scheduled activation in March 2018. Such an amphibious force would be used for crises from humanitarian operations to retaking strategic islands if they were ever captured by an enemy...³⁷

Contemporary Japanese culture remains divided on the question of the military. Polls show that half of the population disagree with revising pacifist clause, and most of the public is

³² <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/17/world/asia/japans-lower-house-passes-bills-giving-military-freer-hand-to-fight.html?mcubz=0>

³³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/31/world/asia/japan-defense-military-budget-shinzo-abe.html?mcubz=0>

³⁴ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-military-djibouti/japan-to-expand-djibouti-military-base-to-counter-chinese-influence-idUSKCN12D0C4>

³⁵ <https://thediplomat.com/2017/06/what-did-japan-learn-in-south-sudan/>

³⁶ <http://cimsec.org/japans-izumo-class-helicopter-destroyer-aircraft-carrier-disguise/24130>

³⁷ <https://www.stripes.com/news/japan-preparing-amphibious-force-it-looks-a-lot-like-a-marine-brigade-1.437440#.WdwfY2hSw2w>

proud of the pacifist constitution. Critics of Abe's proposed constitutional revisions argue that Abe is in part appealing to his conservative base. At the same time, there are signs that the Japanese public is increasingly interested in all things military. The JSDF currently enjoys a 71% approval rating as one of the most trusted institutions in the country; the public flock to military drill shows and consume all sorts of entertainment that focus on the JSDF as protagonists.³⁸ There are some who argue that the constitution must acknowledge the reality of the JSDF being a powerful military force.³⁹ For a country that once considered the JSDF to be the object of ridicule during the Cold War,⁴⁰ this reputation change has been a remarkable turnaround for the rising military.

³⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/29/world/asia/korea-missile-japan-pacifism.html>

³⁹ <http://thediplomat.com/2017/05/abes-new-vision-for-japans-constitution/>

⁴⁰ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-34485966>

Part 5: Return Engagement?

Reactions to Japan's remilitarization is much less ambivalent amongst its neighbours. China has long condemned Japanese remilitarization by invoking memories of WWII. In response to Abe's reinterpretation of the constitution, China's Xinhua news agency denounced Abe as a "warlord" whose actions "pose a severe challenge to peace in the Asia-Pacific region."⁴¹

Of course, China has good reason to fear Japanese remilitarization. Tensions with China has likewise been rising over the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, which China insists is their territory wrongly assigned to Japan following its surrender. China insisted that the Diaoyu Islands had been under Chinese sovereignty since at least the Qing Dynasty during the 1800s but was lost to Japan as both sides signed the Treaty of Shimonoseki following the end of the 1895 Sino-Japanese War as part of Taiwan, but failed to assert its claims to recover these islands as part of Taiwanese territory after WWII.⁴² Japan naturally denies this. Instead, Japan argues that the Senkaku Islands have historically been part of Japanese territory that was unceded by the Treaty of San Francisco.⁴³ With the prospect of untapped natural resources under the islands growing, China and Japan have both escalated their military presences on these islands. Chinese and Japanese fishing boats have often entered Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands boundaries; Chinese boats have been accused of ramming into Japanese boats.⁴⁴

With territorial ambitions in those islands, as well as the South China Sea, China has increasingly expanded its own blue water navy to project power beyond its coastal waters. With "183 cruisers, destroyers, small surface ships and submarines", the Chinese navy is on the cusp of outmatching the US navy in fewer than 15 years.⁴⁵ Japan and the US are watching the rise of the Chinese navy with apprehension...

⁴¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/29/china-accuses-japan-of-threatening-peace-in-pacific-with-new-law>

⁴² <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-11341139>

⁴³ We strongly recommend delegates to read the comprehensive Q&A published by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding its sovereign claims over these islands: http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/qa_1010.html

⁴⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/05/china-v-japan-new-global-flashpoint-senkaku-islands-ishigaki>

⁴⁵ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-10-09/china-launches-overhaul-of-drug-approval-in-win-for-big-pharma>

Conclusion

On October 22, 2017, Shinzo ABE his fifth term in a landslide victory, retaining his party's two-thirds majority in parliament. His sagging popularity had received a bump during the North Korean missile tests on September 15, and Abe was able to capitalize on this rebound to secure a strong mandate.⁴⁶ With this supermajority, Abe soon announced his continued pursuit to revise Article 9 into the indeterminate future. At the activation ceremony for the Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade in March 2018, Abe announced that the amendment bill would be introduced in October 2018. North Korea has since threatened additional military exercises and missile tests in response to any signs of Japanese militarization; China has similarly issued a strongly worded announcement condemning Abe's declaration. The situation in East Asia cannot be tenses.

It is now May 2018. Japan participates in a joint training exercise with the US in the South Pacific, dispatching some of its latest and most advanced destroyers and carriers. As delegates step into their roles as JMSDF officers, they will constantly be faced with the question: can Japan be freed from its past and step up as a military great power? How they choose to answer this question will decide the fate of Japan—and the course of history.

⁴⁶ <https://www.economist.com/news/asia/21730551-mr-abe-wants-japan-be-normal-military-power>

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