

UNDERSTANDING SHINZO ABE'S VISION FOR JAPAN:  
A POLITICAL THEORY APPROACH

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## **Abstract**

Shinzo Abe won his second term as Japan's Prime Minister in 2012, and with his landslide victory intends to fulfill his ambitious plan to strengthen Japanese standing domestically, regionally, and internationally. As part of this plan, Abe proposes to amend Article 9 of the national constitution to permit the establishment of a Collective Security Defense Force, effectively reversing Japan's post World War II demilitarization and allowing it to extend military protections to its allies. This thesis provides an analysis of Abe's actions in the context of three political theories (Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism). Of the three, Constructivism provides the best framework for understanding the motivations and aspirations behind the move to re-establish an international military presence.

## **Introduction**

Japan is located in the Pacific Ocean and is surrounded by both allies and adversaries. After a period of U.S. occupation after World War II (1945–1952), Japan regained its independence, but was also forbidden by Article 9 of its Constitution to have a standing military or to wage war. Its Self-Defense Forces (SDF) have been limited to domestic security and non-combat missions, such as assisting in humanitarian efforts.

The Japanese Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has been the nation's major political party for nearly six decades. It is currently led, for the second time in the past decade, by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Abe has articulated his vision to strengthen Japan by reinvigorating its economy and increasing the country's regional and global interactions through an enhanced military force. Specifically, Abe supports an amendment to Article 9 to allow Japan to come to the defense of its allies.

This thesis assesses Prime Minister Abe's military policy through the lenses of three key political theories: Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism. Realism proposes that a state, acting in its own best interest, will utilize its military to achieve political ends. Liberalism, on the other hand, proposes that a state will work cooperatively with other states to attain mutually beneficial ends, with or without the need for military force. Constructivism focuses on shared ideas that define the identities and interests that determine a state's behavior.

## **What Is Realism?**

The Realism theory of international relations contends that a state will act in its best interest by maximizing its power and/or influence. In *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, William C. Wohlforth (2008) contends that Realism is based on four central propositions: anarchy, egoism, groupism, and power politics. Since the international system has no central authority to resolve disputes or enforce order, states, which are groups of humans, will act in their own self-interest and use their power in competing for the world's resources, including the use of military force. The political theorist and also father of Realism Carl von Clausewitz noted utilizing military means to achieve political ends is a foundational aspect of Realism. Christopher Bassford, an academic of Clausewitz analyzed Realism as follows:

The more powerful and inspiring the motives for war,... the more closely will the military aims and the political objects of war coincide, and the more military and less political will war appear to be. On the other hand, the less intense the motives, the less will the military element's natural tendency to violence coincide with political directives. As a result, war will be driven further from its natural course, the political object will be more and more at variance with the aim of ideal war, and the conflict will seem increasingly political in character (Clausewitz and Bassford 1996).

## **What Is Liberalism?**

Liberalism is based on the proposition that states cooperate for their mutual benefit. By acting ethically and morally, states, and other non-state actors, can collaborate and form interdependent relationships with or without the use of power, including military force. Andrew Moravcsik explains that a liberal state is “embedded in a domestic and transitional society, which creates incentives for economic, social and cultural interaction across borders. State policy may facilitate or block such interactions.

Some domestic groups may benefit from or be harmed by such policies, and they pressure government accordingly for policies that facilitate realization of their goals. These social pressures...define ‘state preferences’ – that is, the set of substantive social purposes that motivate foreign policy” (Moravcsik, 2010).

### **What Is Constructivism?**

Constructivism focuses on the identities and interests states develop from their social interactions. Shared ideas and meanings are socially “constructed,” and these constructions explain the interactions between states. Alexander Wendt (1999, 1) writes that “a fundamental principle of constructivist social theory is that people act toward objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them.”

Which of these three theories offer the best insight into the motivations and goals of Prime Minister Abe with respect to his intent to amend Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution? This thesis will first examine the key events that sparked the post-World War II move toward economic and military reform, then address Abe’s vision for Japan as articulated in his public statements and proposals. Wendt (1991, 1) offers the following analysis of constructivism:

Constructivism is a structural theory of the international system that makes the following core claims: (1) states are the principal units of analysis for international political theory; (2) the key structures in the states system are intersubjective rather than material; and (3) state identities and interests are in important part constructed by these social structures, rather than given exogenously to the system by human nature or domestic politics.

By understanding past affairs domestically regionally and globally, one can understand the process of policy and decision making. The factors that aid in present

policy making are determined from the past. State behavior and action are often found to be constructively based. This vision will then be analyzed in the context of the three political theories to determine which best explains Abe's policies and actions.

## **Chapter One:**

### **Historical Background to the Question**

#### **A “Recovery of Independence”**

Gavan McCormack suggests that Prime Minister Abe and the LDP’s recent aims in relation to foreign and domestic affairs have focused on “‘recovery of independence’ (*dokuritsu no kaifuku*)” (McCormack 2012). The LDP’s intentions to amend the Japanese Constitution predate Abe’s first term as Prime Minister in 2006 and 2007. The party’s goals have centered on the “simultaneous revision of all three of the country’s basic charters: Ampo (the security treaty with the United States), the 1946 Constitution, and the Fundamental Law of Education” (McCormack 2012).

The LDP’s November 2005 draft policy agenda had two core objectives: “‘normalizing’ the Japanese military (by revision of Article 9) and legitimating the Prime Minister’s visits to Yasukuni,” a national shrine commemorating those who died on behalf of the Japanese empire, thereby “providing an emotional and satisfying national story and generating volunteers for future wars” (McCormack 2012). The first step in accomplishing these goals was the successful passage of legislation in May 2007 defining procedures for constitutional revisions.

During Abe’s first term, the LDP faced political scandals ranging from the misuse of government funds to resignations and the suicide of one of Abe’s ministers. The LDP also took a beating in the upper parliament elections, and Abe was accused of bungling a cabinet reshuffle (Ryall 2007).

Abe abruptly resigned in September 2007, citing illness. After temporarily tabling his vision for Japan, Abe reentered the political realm and was reelected Prime Minister in 2012. At that time, Abe claimed to have attained a greater strategic understanding of Japanese society, stating in an interview with *Foreign Affairs* in July 2013 that when he previously served as prime minister, he failed to prioritize his agenda. “I was eager to complete everything at once, and ended my administration in failure” (Abe 2013).

### **Abenomics**

Abe has set up a new vision for his second term, focusing on the economy and a recovery of independence. Learning from his first-term mistakes, Abe approached his political mandate differently in preparation for his second term. He spent much time traveling the country to better understand his countrymen. “After resigning, for six years I traveled across the nation simply to listen. Everywhere, I heard people suffering from having lost jobs due to lingering deflation and currency appreciation. Some had no hope for the future” (Abe 2013). In Abe’s view, “recovery of independence” needed to address these domestic issues as well as international affairs. He and the LDP then developed a stimulation plan to increase economic independence. Matthew Boelser (2013) of

*Business Insider* states that the economic plan has three elements:

It involves a massive increase in fiscal stimulus through government spending, a massive increase in monetary stimulus through unconventional central bank policy, and a reform program aimed at making structural improvements to the Japanese economy.

This plan has been dubbed “Abenomics.” Xu Beina (“Abenomics,” 2014), of the Council on Foreign Relations, summarizes Abenomics by stating,

Abe's Keynesian-inspired plan, dubbed "Abenomics," takes a three-pronged approach to reflate the economy through monetary, fiscal, and structural policies. It includes a hefty stimulus package worth 20.2 trillion yen (\$210 billion), of which 10.3 trillion (\$116 billion) would come in government spending with a focus on infrastructure. The Bank of Japan (BOJ) also doubled its inflation target to 2 percent, and the government is aiming to create six hundred thousand jobs in a matter of two years. Lastly, structural changes—including industry liberalization, corporate tax cuts, and increased workforce diversity—aim to sustain the reforms long-term."

According to Paul Krugman (2013), Professor of Economics and International Affairs at Princeton University and Nobel Laureate, Abenomics is off to a good start—Japanese stocks have soared while the yen has fallen, making the country's export industries more competitive. With consumer confidence on the rise, Abe's policies suggest the beginning of long-term economic growth patterns. Krugman states

In a sense, the really remarkable thing about "Abenomics" — the sharp turn toward monetary and fiscal stimulus adopted by the government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe — is that nobody else in the advanced world is trying anything similar. In fact, the Western world seems overtaken by economic defeatism. (Krugman 2014)

### **A Return to Militarization**

Japan's post-World War II Constitution denounced violence in the international context. Specifically, Article 9 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. 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 (Constitution of Japan 1946).

This abolition of its national military forces left Japan with only its national police force.

In 1952, under terms of a mutual defense treaty between Japan and the United States,

Japan's police force was expanded and renamed the National Safety Forces (NSF). Under the treaty, the NSF would continue to address internal threats and natural disasters, while the United States pledged to defend Japan from external threats. Under this arrangement, the NSF could not contain land, sea, or air forces that would intervene in international disputes, but it could have such forces for defense purposes. In order to avoid the appearance of a return to militarism, these forces were subsequently renamed the Ground Self-Defense Force, the Maritime Self-Defense Force, and the Air Self-Defense Force, collectively known as the Self-Defense Forces (SDF).

Abe and the LDP have not been satisfied with Japan's inability to defend its allies under attack or to participate in collective self-defense alliances. Following his reelection, Abe convened a private advisory body to address the restraints contained in Article 9. These advisors subsequently recommended that Abe simply "reinterpret" the Constitution to permit Japan to carry out military missions as part of a "collective self-defense." On July 1, 2014, Abe announced a Cabinet decision that allows such military alliances, explaining that in the rapidly changing regional and global security environment, Japan cannot ensure its own national security. In the 2013 *Foreign Affairs* interview, Abe had stated,

Japan is the only country in the world that does not call its defense organizations a military. That is absurd, when the government is spending a total of 5 trillion yen [per year] for self-defense. I think that our constitution should stipulate that our Self-Defense Forces are military forces (as it currently does not) and should also stipulate the long-established principles of civilian control and pacifism. Even if we reactivated the right to have a collective self-defense or amended Article 9 of the constitution, that would only put Japan in the same position as other countries around the globe.

Although this “reinterpretation” of the Constitution effectively bypassed the Japanese legislature (the Diet), amendments to specific laws to implement this policy change will still need to be approved by the Diet.

### **Japan’s Post-WWII Recovery**

The defeat of Japan in World War II led to several important documents addressing the country’s post-war administration. In the Japanese Instrument of Surrender signed on September 2, 1945, Japan relinquished its imperial state status, ordering its civil, military and naval officials to obey and enforce all proclamations, orders, and directives issued by the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (the United States, China, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union). American General Douglas MacArthur, appointed the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces, was guided by the United States’ initial post-surrender policy, which included the demilitarization of Japan and the restoration of its economy for peaceful purposes.

The Constitution of Japan was promulgated on November 3, 1946, and became effective on May 3, 1947. Under its provisions, the Emperor was reduced to a symbol of the state, acting only as authorized under the Constitution with the approval of the Cabinet or the Diet. As mentioned above, Article 9 renounced war forever as a means of settling international disputes. Following establishment of the Japanese Constitution, the United States and Japan signed a Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security in 1951. In this treaty, the parties pledged to settle international disputes in a peaceful means and to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. However, it did grant the United States the use of Japan’s land, facilities, and areas in order to ensure the security of the country (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2014).

World War II devastated Japan's economy. Yet it rebounded quickly through a number of means, including the government's continued practice of protecting particular industries and discouraging foreign competition (e.g., through trade tariffs), the country's high savings rate (providing capital for industrial expansion), a stable political scene, and low military expenses (Ellington 2004).

Japan's economic prosperity lasted until the late 1980's, when the close relationship between the country's banks and its corporations resulted in an "asset price bubble" and rampant inflation. An uncontrolled supply of money and expansion of credit, even to poor quality investments, prompted the Bank of Japan to increase inter-bank lending rates in 1989, bursting the bubble and crashing the Japanese stock market. The following 20 years of economic decline and stagnation became known as the "Lost Decades." Justin Kuepper, an international investing expert, explains what happened:

Japan's lost decade was largely caused by speculation during its boom cycle. Record low interest rates fueled stock market and real estate speculation that sent valuations soaring throughout the 1980s.... When the Finance Ministry realized that the bubble was unsustainable, it raised interest rates to try and stem the speculation. The move quickly led to a stock market crash and debt crisis, as many debts fueled by the rampant speculation turned out bad. Finally, the issues manifested themselves in a banking crisis that led to consolidation and several government bailouts (Kuepper, 2014).

A number of economists, including Krugman, argue that the "Lost Decades" was a myth. Krugman, for example, contends that the economic decline must be considered in view of the rapidly aging Japanese population and a shrinking workforce (Investopedia, 2014).

Government stimulus spending in 2009-10 has helped the economy recover, although at a slow rate. Adjusting for price differences, Japan's economy was the fourth

largest in the world in 2013, surpassed only by China, India, and the United States. Andrew Bergmann of CNN states in terms of gross domestic product (GDP), it is currently in third place (Bergmann 2014).

According to Thomas Frohlich and Alexander Kent of the *Wall Street Journal*, Japan currently has the world's sixth highest level of military expenditures at \$59.4 billion (Frohlich and Kent 2014). Some of the recent increases can be attributed to Japan's 2012 nationalization of three islands (the Senkaku islands) in the East China Sea, to which China had laid claim. Subsequent incursions of the seas around the islands by Chinese ships and aircraft, and the double digit growth of China's military budget, have prompted Japan to pump up its own defense expenditures.

Of perhaps more concern, however, is Japan's fear that the United States will no longer be able to come to Japan's defense in the event of an external attack. Earlier this year, Yosuke Isozaki, a security advisor to Abe, was quoted as saying, "Truth be told, the US can no longer afford to play the world's policeman.... This is no longer an era when Japan is permitted to do nothing and count on America to protect us" (D.MCN 2014).

Yoshihide Soeya, Director of the Institute of East Asian Studies at Keio University in Tokyo, underscores the need for regional cooperation: "We want to build our own coalition of the willing in Asia to prevent China from just running over us" (Fackler 2012). Not all agree with Abe's vision of economic and military reform. Simon Tisdall, journalist at *The Guardian*, observed that "Abe's critics say it is his brand of unrepentant, rightwing nationalism that has helped push the region to the brink" (Tisdall 2013). This view was repeated by the Editorial Board of *The New York Times*, who wrote that "Abe's brand of nationalism is becoming an ever more serious threat to Japan's

relations with the United States. His use of revisionist history is a dangerous provocation for the region” (Editorial Board 2014).

Others critics believe that Abe’s policies to generate economic growth have only benefited big cities, large companies and the rich by increasing share prices and exporters’ profits (Reuters CNBC 2014).

## **Chapter Two: Present Affairs**

### **Japan's Regional and Global Relations**

In December 2013, Abe released Japan's first National Security Strategy. The document outlines three primary goals: ensuring territorial sovereignty, improving the security environment in the Asia Pacific region by cooperating with the United States and other regional partners, and participating in global efforts to maintain international order. Combined, these underscore Abe's plan for Japan to make a more "proactive contribution to peace" through international cooperation (Tatsumi 2014). Over the past few years, Abe has strengthened Japan's relationships with the United Kingdom, India, Australia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Myanmar, to name a few. However, its relationship with South Korea remains strained due to longstanding territorial disputes and disagreements over the interpretation of history. This conflict could limit Japan's ability to play a "robust and visible role in regional and global security issues" (Tatsumi 2014).

Sino-Japanese relations also continue to be tense, although there are small signs of improvement. China still harbors resentment over Japan's brutal occupation of the country during World War II, and it believes that the United States wrongly gave Japan control over the Senkaku Islands in 1972. Although the islands are uninhabited, they are close to important shipping lanes, offer rich fishing grounds, are near potential oil and gas reserves, and are strategically located between Japan, China, and the Republic of Taiwan. Martin Fackler of the New York Times claims,

the driver for Japan's shifting national security strategy is its tense dispute with China over uninhabited islands in the East China Sea that is feeding Japanese anxiety that the country's relative decline—and the financial

struggles of its traditional protector, the United States—are leaving Japan increasingly vulnerable (Fackler 2012).

Another source of regional conflict was Abe's controversial visit to the Yasukuni Shrine in December 2013. The shrine, located in central Tokyo, commemorates Japan's war dead, including several war criminals who were executed after Japan's defeat in World War II. Historically, some of Japan's neighboring states are concerned about the growing nationalism. Among Abe's other proposed Constitutional amendments, he has a plan to revise Article 20, which reads in full,

Freedom of religion is guaranteed to all. No religious organization shall receive any privileges from the State, nor exercise any political authority. 2) No person shall be compelled to take part in any religious acts, celebration, rite or practice. 3) The State and its organs shall refrain from religious education or any other religious activity. (Constitution of Japan 1946)

Abe has visited the Yasukuni Shrine, which goes against Article 20 by a government representative making a visit to a religious shrine. Yasukuni Shrine is a Shinto Shrine erected to honor all members of the Japanese military who have given their lives for the nation. In December 2013 Abe visited Yasukuni Shrine with the goal of paying his respects to the fallen Japanese military enshrined there. This was not seen by Abe as an act of foreshadowing, nor support for the war criminals who are among the soldiers honored there, but rather Abe believes it is to show his respects to the men who gave their lives for their country. Abe stated in the 2013 interview with the Council of Foreign Affairs,

About the Yasukuni Shrine, let me humbly urge you to think about your own place to pay homage to the war dead, Arlington National Cemetery, in the United States. The presidents of the United States go there, and as Japan's prime minister, I have visited. Professor Kevin Doak of

Georgetown University points out that visiting the cemetery does not mean endorsing slavery, even though Confederate soldiers are buried there. I am of a view that we can make a similar argument about Yasukuni, which enshrines the souls of those who lost their lives in the service of their country (Abe 2013).

By amending an additional article of the constitution Abe can allow officials to pay their respects from his perspective. The visit sparked condemnations by both China and South Korea, who accuse Abe of trying to cover up Japan's empire-building atrocities in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as well as those committed during World War II (Tabuchi 2013). As reported by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), "Seoul said it was furious with the 'deplorable' act, and Beijing labelled the visit 'absolutely unacceptable' and summoned Japan's ambassador. Japan's neighbours see the Yasukuni shrine as a symbol of the militarism of Japan during and before World War Two" (BBC News 2014). Even the new United States Ambassador to Japan, Caroline Kennedy, expressed disappointment over the visit.

Despite the saber-rattling, Abe recognizes that Japan is in no position at this time to engage militarily with China. During his first term as Prime Minister, he chose China as his first state visit. "On that occasion, I agreed with the Chinese leaders that both countries would strive for a mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests. I conveyed to the Chinese that Japan and China enjoy an inseparable relationship, especially in terms of economic ties" (Abe 2013). At the 10<sup>th</sup> Beijing-Tokyo Forum held in Tokyo in September 2014, Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida said that the Japan-China relationship is one of Japan's most important bilateral ties (Hong 2014).

In early November 2014, Japan and China announced that they would discuss their positions on the Senkaku Islands and would gradually resume diplomatic and security discussions (Perlez 2014). Three days later, Abe met with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing, although the visit was short and lacked the fanfare that normally is accorded to visits of heads of state. The meeting was not intended to achieve any substantive progress on issues dividing the two countries. Yang Xiyu, a senior fellow at the China Institute of International Studies and a former Chinese diplomat, observed that “the gaps between the two sides are too big to handle, let alone narrow” in such a short meeting (Perlez 2014).

Japan’s relations with Russia are also not on good standing. The two countries are technically still at war, albeit with a ceasefire. At the end of World War II, the Soviet Union refused to sign the Treaty of San Francisco, intended to be a permanent peace treaty between Japan and the Allied powers, due to the land claims over the Kuril Islands. These four small islands reach from the northernmost part of the Japanese island of Hokkaido to the southern part of Russia’s Kamchatka Peninsula in the Okhotsk Sea. The United States maintains that until Russia and Japan sign a peace treaty, the Kuril Islands are Japanese territory under Russian military occupation.

Overshadowing Japan’s relations with North Korea is the “abduction issue.” Japan contends that 17 Japanese citizens were abducted by the North Koreans in the 1970s and 1980s. In September 2002, the two countries signed the Pyongyang Declaration in which they acknowledged a “shared recognition that establishing a fruitful political, economic, and cultural relationship between Japan and the DPRK through the

settlement of unfortunate past between them” (Siddipui 2014). Yet this attempt to move beyond the issue was derailed when North Korea subsequently revealed that it had only abducted 13 Japanese nationals and eight had died. According to Sebastian Maslow, a political scientist focusing on Japan-DPRK relations, Prime Minister Abe is a key supporter of the “abduction lobby,” which has refused to accept North Korea’s explanations of its abduction of Japanese citizens. Abe then suspended formal dialogue with North Korea when the latter launched a long-range missile over Japan in December 2012. Informal meetings in the Chinese city of Shenyang in March 2014, however, broke the stalemate, and Abe is anxious to renew talks with North Korea (Fackler 2014).

### **Keeping State Interest in Mind**

State interest is defined by the *West’s Legal Dictionary* as “A broad term for any matter of public concern that is addressed by a government in law or policy” (West’s Encyclopedia of American Law). With the state’s security in mind, Abe and the Diet have recently worked with Japan’s National Security Council to enact a new law that will keep national interest secure from entering into the international area. The Protection of Specified Secrets (PSS) Act, also known as State Secrets Protection Law, supposedly aims to keep Japanese news regarding state matters, such as the Fukushima Crisis or the conflict over the Senkaku Islands, from leaking into the wrong hands. Toshiya Takahashi of East Asia Forums 2013 stated in an article discussing the matters of the Abe government “secret” policies that the policies should be understood as follows:

The specified secrets range over four categories: diplomacy, defence, counterintelligence and counterterrorism. The right to determine secrecy of information is vested in the executive. The law also imposes high

penalties: up to 10-years imprisonment, for both government officials who leak specified secrets and civilians who attempt to obtain it from them (Takahashi 2013).

The public offers opinions of support and concern, but the policy reminds individuals of a prewar Japan, one that closed free speech through the policy called the Maintenance of the Public Order Act. Others see the policies as enacted to maintain Japanese national interest, keeping speech pro-Japan and anti-slander, and claim that these measures were taken to ensure that the state and its people are secure. Simply put, Japan desires to modernize its security forces to meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century both at home and abroad. Takahashi ends the article by stating,

The PSS Act also comes in the context of an Abe government that is seeking to revise Japan's pacifist constitution and the role of the Japan Self-Defense Forces — something that has also been seen as moving away from Japan's postwar democratic values. But as the 2012 national election showed, the Japanese public supported the Abe-led Liberal Democratic Party not because of its conservative ideology or position on security policy but because of practical expectations that it would reinvigorate a stagnated Japanese economy. The Abe government's preoccupation with constitutional revision demonstrates the ideological division between present political elites and the public.

### **The Importance and Role of the Japanese Self Defense Force**

The Japanese Self Defense Force (SDF), established in 1952, has been both beneficial and controversial to the Japanese state through most of its existence. While the need for the SDF is essential to Japan in terms of national defense, its existence has sparked much contention over the decades. According to Louis Hayes in the text *Introduction to Japanese Politics*,

On September 7, 1973, the Sapporo District Court held the SDF to be in violation of Article 9. The particular case dated back to 1969 and also involved the Mutual Security Treaty, which opponents said violated the constitution (Hayes 2009, 268).

The factors deeming it to be unconstitutional were the large scale of soldiers under the SDF, and the Nike Hercules surface-to-air missile base that was created under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The unconstitutional aspect was violating the second paragraph of Article 9 in terms of scale, equipment, and capacity.

During the latter part of the 1980's and transitioning to the 1990's nations involved in the Persian Gulf War called upon the Japanese SDF for assistance. Then-Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu and the LDP offered assistance to the United States from 1989 to 1991. Kaifu intended to aid their key political ally in hopes of gaining a more substantial role in global affairs. The Persian Gulf affair marked one of the first instances where Japan was able to deploy its SDF beyond its borders. However, this involvement was subsequently deemed unconstitutional by the Japanese Diet under Kaifu due to the fact that sending a military force abroad in times of foreign conflict would breach Article 9 if was not to solely protect the state. However, this did not deter the Kaifu administration, as they were able to define the involvement in terms of economic aid and infrastructure rehabilitation. Cleverly deemed as "Checkbook Diplomacy," the Japanese were able to utilize soft power options in this effort – most notably economic sanctions on Iraq and economic support to the forces aligned to the United States. Nakanishi Hiroshi, a journalist for the online news source *Nippon*, identified the diplomatic risk regarding the Japanese Checkbook Diplomacy in the Gulf War: "Prime Minister Kaifu Toshiki's government imposed economic sanctions against Iraq on August 5—a day before the United Nations Security Council moved to do so. In retrospect, however, this early response already showed one of the weaknesses of Japanese diplomacy" (Hiroshi 2011). Hiroshi also notes that Japanese involvement in the Gulf War had its share of

opposition, yet in the long run this was a progressive action for Japanese international relations. Thus, instead of sending armed forces to fight, the Prime Minister and the LDP deployed the SDF in order to maintain peace during the time of Iraqi reconstruction.

Narusawa Muneo of the *Asian Pacific Journal* writes:

April 26, 1991: Dispatch of Minesweepers to the Persian Gulf. The SDF's first dispatch overseas: the sending of six minesweepers and auxiliary vessels to the Persian Gulf. After the Gulf War, they set about clearing the mines launched during the war. In the Diet, there was criticism that "the dispatch of SDF overseas is unconstitutional," but the Kaifu Cabinet forced through the rubrics of "police action" and "international contribution." This became one important step in the ever-growing overseas dispatch of the SDF thereafter (Narusawa 2004).

The SDF involvement laid the foundation for pressing Article 9 amendment that Abe attempted to incorporate with making the SDF into a Collective Security Allied Force. The SDF's interaction in global affairs illustrated to the global arena that the Japanese Security Defense Force could and should be utilized to aid their political allies. Such a resource caught the attention of the United Nations, which often is in need of boots on the ground for peacekeeping operations be they in Africa, the Middle East or Central Asia. There are still just causes that restrict the SDF to certain stipulations on engagement abroad and defense domestically, but this event marked a key benchmark for Japanese international involvement and interests and was a Constructivist reasoning to why Abe's Article 9 revisions should be implemented.

The next affair that the SDF became involved in was the Cambodian Rehabilitation Act in 1992. The involvement in this affair was a peacekeeping mission following the Cambodian civil strife where Japanese SDF was deployed by the United Nations Transitional Authority. Narusawa, translated by Richard Minear, continues his

Constructivist view on the global involvement and specifically on Japanese SDF objectives, stating:

September 1993 a total of 1200 soldiers undertook duties such as repairing roads and bridges. At the start there was opposition, but in Cambodia the repair of roads was entrusted to specialists outside the SDF, so it can be said that the rubric of “international cooperation” was intended to justify the overseas dispatch as an established fact (Narusawa and Minear 2014).

The significance of this continued utilization of the SDF illustrated to the United Nations that Japan could in fact aid states with their expertise in peacekeeping affairs. In the late 1990s, after proving the effectiveness of the SDF, Japan’s closest ally, the United States, agreed to a new policy beneficial to both states. This policy is known as the Regional Affairs Law and would become one of the major steps towards Collective Self Defense. Narusawa further claims the Constructivist background to this policy:

if the U.S. begins a war under “regional affairs”—even if Japan is not attacked, Japan too can take part automatically as “rear support.” This “regional affairs” means that “If matters take their course...Japan has the capability to have an important influence on our peace and security in Japan’s region”; it was formulated not as a geographical concept. It is clear that if Japan gives “aid” to the U.S. military during war even as “rear support,” this becomes the “exercise of military force”; and it easily links up with the right of collective self-defense (Narusawa 2014).

By working with Japan’s political allies, the state would need to eventually amend the Constitution, which is how Abe has found justification for his amendment proposals. By the turn of the century, the world faced a new global enemy – radical Islamic terrorists. Following the 2001 September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, as well as the attacks in Madrid and London, the countries affected and many of their allies declared war on these terrorist groups – primarily Al Qaeda and the Taliban. This declaration of war on terrorism also pushed for further utilization of the Japanese SDF. The SDF responded to this calling as

they did in Cambodia, yet this time the involvement was increased. Narusawa further describes the SDF involvement:

October 2001, one month after September 11, the U. S. military and NATO forces began the invasion of Afghanistan. In support, the Koizumi Cabinet enacted the Special Terror Law on October 29 and the following month dispatched three SDF ships to the Indian Ocean. Up to January 2010, 73 ships of the Maritime SDF (including those in the Arabian Sea) resupplied some 3,000,000 barrels of oil to ships from twelve countries, including the United States and Great Britain (75% of the ships resupplied were American). This meant that ships of the Navy SDF took part both in Afghanistan via carrier-based fighter planes and ship-fired cruise missiles and, contrary to the intent of the law, in the air campaign in Iraq that began in 2003. That is, the SDF lent its support to mayhem against innocent civilians (Narusawa and Minear 2014).

In 2004 the SDF eventually sent 9,600 ground troops to aid in the peacekeeping and reconstruction of the War on Terror in the Middle East. In 2008 this was deemed unconstitutional by the Nagoya Supreme Court because it aided in what was classified as aggression by the United States in the Middle East instead of its peacekeeping agenda. The use of the SDF was withdrawn and reserved solely for domestic Japanese affairs until Abe returned to office. Narusawa highlights key remarks during a press conference with Prime Minister Abe on May 15, 2014. Prime Minister Abe declared,

“The SDF will not join in attacks,” but following a governing party consultation, a policy was announced to do away with the restriction that targets of SDF dispatch be “non-battle zones,” up until then, that restriction had avoided “integration” into military operations. It is clear that should this happen, SDF activities in war zones will be broadened at one fell swoop and will develop into exchanges of fire with “enemies”; the Prime Minister is trying to make it a pretext for introducing SDF battle units (Narusawa and Minear 2014).

Since its inception, the Japanese Self Defense Force has sought to define its role within both the nation of Japan and the world community. From the Persian Gulf War, to Cambodian civil unrest, to the War on Terror, the Japanese government has tried to align

using this force with maintaining Japan's national interests abroad. While most of its tenure has been based on peacekeeping efforts, it is the recent efforts of Prime Minister Abe that have ushered in a new era for the SDF. Jeremy Bender of *Business Insider* illustrates this new era in his recent article of the eleven most powerful militaries, stating that "Japan increased its defense spending for the first time in eleven years in response to growing disputes with China. It has also started its first military expansion in over forty years by placing a new military base on its outer islands. Japan spends 49.1 billion dollars on defense, the sixth most in the world" (Bender 2014). This leads to the next area of this analysis, the future of the SDF, the dawn of a collective defense force, the reshaping of Japan under Abe and most importantly, which under political lens should one best define him.

## Chapter Three: The Proposed Vision

### The New Era of Japanese Collective Self Defense

On July 1, 2014, Prime Minister Abe announced his reinterpretation of his country's pacifist traditions and security treaties, with the aim to maintain a balance of power in the Asian Pacific region while retaining limitations on what exactly the military is capable of. The military is still founded upon the post-World War II Self-Defensive principle, which means it is not allowed to act aggressively but only in terms of defense and security-seeking measures. So with that being said, it leaves open questions of what pose as defensive or security-seeking measures. As Clint Richards (2014) reports in *The Diplomat*, an international current affairs magazine for the Asia-Pacific region, there are six conditions for exercising collective self-defense; three are conditional and three are procedural.

The first set of guiding elements are the "Conditional Requirements," mainly stating just the types of conditions that have to be met in order to utilize the force necessary.

- A close Japanese ally is under attack
- A grave or imminent threat to Japanese security or defense exists if force is withheld
- Another country under attack asks Japan for offensive military assistance

The second set of these restrictions and regulations for the New Allied Military holds "Procedural Requirements," typically being a more formal way of requesting Japanese aid.

- The Prime Minister decides to use force
- The Diet must approve the Prime Minister's Decision
- A third party country grants Japan permission to move troops through its territory en route to an affair or conflict

The introduction of this new proposal has prompted controversy around the world, but shockingly enough there are strong supporters of Abe's proposal for a "stronger Japan." It is not the first time that the nation has strived to make amendments and changes to their restrictions, in order to understand their perspective, that being at their geographical location may prove effective. The strategic location of the islands of Japan has always had benefits. United States Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel made his statement of support, claiming that the "U.S. and Japan should have new guidelines for defense cooperation by year's end. He said the reforms will allow Japan to be more active in missile defense, counter-piracy and peacekeeping." Japan, already faced with aggressive regional allies, will be able to act and defend an allied force that is undertaking turmoil or conflict unlike what they were able to do before this point. This marks the importance and reliance upon alliances in the Pacific, but will it be the cause or start of the next great war of picking sides? Hagel states that Japan will have more autonomy, but, at what cost? Will this lead to Japan increasing political tensions among various states due to the fact they are gaining more autonomy, while China has to sit and watch this happen.

### **Reactions Thus Far to the Constitution's Article 9 Amendment**

On September 3, 2014, the new Cabinet formed by Prime Minister Abe made several adjustments in order to attain more support for his defense policies in the LDP.

The collective security issue has raised much attention and awareness on the homefront, and as well Abe's hopes of attaining public support have been met with much criticism and opposition. According to the *Mainichi* newspaper, thousands gathered in Tokyo's Ginza District to march in protest of Abe's New Constitution. The newspaper reports that academics from local universities attended, including "Hosei University professor Jiro Yamaguchi [who] told some 5,500 participants...the best way to fight the Abe administration is 'to talk to friends about the importance of the Constitution and to work on changing public opinion'." This statement by Yamaguchi seems to contradict the previously mentioned Protection of Specified Secrets Act that is to deter citizens from speaking out about diplomacy, defense, counterintelligence, and counterterrorism. So it seems that Abe has taken precautions that could indeed keep the state's best interest in mind, but in doing so it seems that the public opinion volume should be lowered. Many Japanese citizens have given Abe either support or resentment for his Article 9 changes. One such group led by Yoshiaki Ishigaki has highlighted the importance of Article 9 and has pushed for more than four hundred thousand signatures in order to show Japanese yearning for peace versus entering a state that can engage in global conflicts. Ishigaki and his committee have pushed for the Nobel Peace Prize nomination in order to show that many Japanese do not want to see the Constitution changed in order for the state to act in its present interests. The results for their committee recently failed in attaining the Peace Prize, yet Ishigaki says this means they need to push and strive harder for next year. He lays out his reasons in an interview with Kazuaki Nagata of *Japan Times*: "many Japanese are unaware of the role that Article 9, which bans Japan from using force to settle international disputes, has played in protecting them, and that future peace may be

at risk under a government that wants to amend the Constitution to get around it” (Nagata 2014).

There will always be opposition to any policy enacted, yet the way that Ishigaki worded Article 9 as “protecting” the citizens of Japan is a view that has not been noted yet. Some have looked at the Article as weakening, deposing, and eradicating Japanese power; but to protect is making Japan reliant upon others in terms of global affairs. It would seem that citizens do not even view their Security force as being as effective as Article 9. One citizen discusses her children’s life and how it is impacted by Article 9: “January 2013, Naomi Takasu, a 37-year-old mother of two from Zama in Kanagawa, emailed the Norwegian Nobel Committee explaining that she supports Article 9 on the grounds that it helps to protect her children. Other people joined Takasu’s campaign and set up the Organizing Committee for the Nobel Peace Prize for Article 9 of the Constitution. The group had gathered around 24,000 signatures by August last year and sent a letter of nomination to the Nobel committee. Takasu originally had tried to nominate Article 9 itself but her bid was rejected because, the Nobel Committee said, the prize can only honor people or organizations. Takasu thus changed the nomination to all those Japanese people who have supported and continue to stand by Article 9.” (Nagata 2014). Abe has and will continue to meet opposition regarding his policies and the Article 9 amendment. Abe’s vision of the change is supposed to strengthen the state of Japan’s global standing and independence in the global arena.

Yet, as mentioned from the *Japan Times* article, the amount of citizen opposition towards Abe’s domestic and international policy is teetering. Takasu is striving for the state to maintain a sense of peace that the state has held on to for half a

century, striving for the Nobel Peace Prize would be a tremendous achievement for the state considering its past history of military affairs, yet this is not what is on the “Abe Agenda.” The ratings of the Abe administration and many other administrations have been viewed and rated critically. Professor Mataka Kamiya of the Japan Policy Forum states:

In the urgent poll by the Yomiuri shimbun conducted immediately after the prime minister reshuffled his cabinet on September 3 (September 3 to 4), 64% of respondents supported Abe’s new cabinet, a 13-point jump from the August poll. In postwar Japan, the public has generally been tough on the government of the day. Except in periods immediately after they are formed, cabinets rarely see approval ratings above 50%. However, Abe’s approval rating has barely fallen below 50% in any opinion poll for a year and a half since he took office towards the end of December 2012 to the cabinet decision on collective self-defense. The approval rating declined sharply after the cabinet decision but quickly recovered to around and over 50% in polls conducted by a number of media organizations. This shows that Abe’s popularity has not declined (Kamiya 2014).

Although Abe’s ratings and policies may be controversial, they should be taken with a grain of salt considering Abe’s vision for Japan. Abe has intentions to strengthen the state of Japan, but with the empowerment of the nation Abe finds the opposition to come from all sides: some citizens find that it would interrupt peace, others say that it will disrupt their relations regionally, as previously mentioned with Korea, China, and Russia. But, ultimately Abe’s intentions are for the state’s best domestic, regional, and international interests.

The various issues that Abe is facing are typical of what a politician may face when making such an amendment. The aims of Abe though have been falling into the Realism realm. By acting in the state interest, he has determined what is best for the country. The self-interest of the state, however, has taken a toll upon his approval

ratings but his policies are still met with encouragement from all over. What Abe has accomplished since his first term has strengthened the Japanese economy, built unity through opposition and support, but also has made Japan a country that can act domestically, regionally, and globally for its collected security interests.

## Chapter Four: Political Theory Application

### Which Theory Does Abe's Vision Best Fit?

The process now will be to determine to which of the political theories Abe's policies do not fully adhere. Seeking Abe's personal agenda for the Japanese state as well as Japanese people, by finding these reasons or call to action for Abe's government. Finding why the amendments to the postwar constitution are needed, why and how has the Japanese state interest changed will be at base a Constructivist view. The historical foundations of global and regional interaction have aided in forming the vision Abe has for Japan. From the Realist perspective Japan can attain the benefits of the state based causes for action, or conflict, without having to be concerned for the Constitution's restrictions. Utilizing Liberalism, Abe could work with other states in conflictual affairs and other military actions.

For understanding Constructivism, Liberalism, and Realism in regards to Japanese politics, it is important to understand what "Liberal Democratic" means and how the party has adapted and evolved to the times since it began in the 1950s. In one's opinion, being the prime party of Japanese politics for such a duration means that all of the members of the prime ministry have had to make agendas that fit that of the LDP. Abe coming from a lineage of politicians must have had some influence on the matter of what the LDP wants in terms of their political agenda. *Britannica*, an online encyclopedia, discusses the foundations and revisions of the party's views. After World War II the modern LDP was formed. On November 15, 1955, Japan's Democratic and Liberal parties formally united to form the Liberal-Democratic Party. *Britannica* states, "the LDP established itself as the conservative alternative to the growing power of the

socialist and communist parties”(Britannica 2014). The Marxist-inspired socialist and communist parties were the main Western ideological competition to the conservatives in the latter half of the twentieth century. We find Japan being the newest ally of the United States at that point in the region and from there it is important to understand how the Cold War shaped Japan’s future regionally and internationally in regards to economic and political affairs. The source continues to claim that in today’s time,

[the] LDP can best be described as conservative to moderate in its political ideology. It has a broad appeal similar to the Republican and Democratic parties in the United States; just as there are conservative Democrats and liberal Republicans in the United States, the LDP embraces a wide spectrum from right-wing nationalists to relatively liberal, progressive politicians.

When one mixes progression with nationalism it makes for an ambitious concoction of revision to current policy. Making these policies Abe and the LDP have the Japanese future vision in mind in terms of long run ambitious goals. In regards to the political theories, one can find that the LDP was formed off Western influence of a capitalist agenda, and throughout the decades the party has developed its idea of how the nation’s economic and political agenda should be led. The Constructivist theory plays a part in understanding how the LDP has shaped its domestic and global policy through the decades, and have incorporated state and allied interests throughout the Cold War to aid in their global affairs. Abe’s vision for strengthening Japan derives from this thought process. Pushing for enhanced Japanese nationalism and security, the state of Japan would go into a more self-reliant stage in terms of political affairs regionally and globally. This was what McCormack meant by “recovery of independence,” whereby with the creation of an allied army, a prosperous economy, and a revitalized state Abe can launch Japan into an era of state and allied reliance. With this form of state-allied

reliance Japan would be able to act in its interests by utilizing Realism to make the Japanese-Allied military and economy gain its political goals. Japan however, cannot act in this manner alone. Utilizing its allies will be crucial for Japan to make progress in the international realm. This method of state enhancement will rely on liberalism to achieve Abe's proposed vision of a self-supporting yet allied reliant state.

In breaking down the political theories in relation to Abe's vision, it is best to start off with Realism, and its subsets. Recalling Realism, it is for state interest in power maximization of the state.

**Factor I Realistic Groupism:**

When thinking of Japanese interests Abe has decided to go about by building upon the Japanese sense of nationalism. Abe wants the country to be collectively strong and united. Thus this form of realistic groupism comes into play. Wohlforth (2008), author in the *Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, claims Realistic Groupism is present when "Group solidarity is essential to domestic politics and conflict, and cooperation between polities is the essence of international politics." Abe and the Diet have made a substantial stance in Japanese politics since the 1950s, thus the group cohesion of a dominant part are at play, but Wohlforth (2008, 133) goes on to say, "today, the most important human groups are nation states and the most important source of in-group cohesion is nationalism." Shinzo Abe's agenda has stressed nationalistic values more than once, his aims of increasing the nationalistic attitude are by encouraging and empowering the nation economically, and politically.

**Factor II Realistic Egoism:**

When individuals and groups act politically, they are driven principally by narrow

self-interest. This egoism is rooted in human nature. Its expression, though, may be exacerbated, moderated, or even temporarily overcome by national and international political structures, institutions, and values (Wohlforth 2008, 133).

This aspect may be harder to pinpoint in terms of Abe's policies, and regulations; the one aspect that sticks out here is the mission to succeed in his second term. Abe, driven by ambitions and his new agendas, has the Japanese interest at heart, but his approaches to the matters are questionable. One thought in studying Abe's performance is noticing which policies are personally driven, which Diet or state driven, and which are society-driven. The inter-links between all of the variables are to play a part in a greater Japan.

**Factor III Realistic Anarchy:**

“The Absence of government dramatically shapes the nature of international politics. Anarchic political systems of self-help both impose distinctive constraints on the ability of international actors to achieve their purposes and exacerbate group egoism” (Wohlforth 2008, 133). This factor of the Realist perspective does not wholly play a part to the Abe government, actually quite the opposite comes into view. The Japanese Diet and Abe are striving for uniting Japanese national ideals to the people, but in doing so they must show the people how essential to the Diet and the Liberal Democratic party are for the Japanese citizens. By enacting new policies and regulations for the state as well as the people, they are achieving the opposite of anarchy. Abe wants the Japanese state to be known in the region.

**Factor IV Realistic Power Politics:**

The means to the end are always going to vary upon the situation. Scholars and politicians have to approach this theory with caution as to not make it seem as if the state

is solely based upon self-gain and self-interest. Some scholars and politicians place a sort of stigma associated with Realist practices; this theory is to be found in the roots of many political policies due to the fact state interest is always at hand. With a little background we find there are a few political theories that have a key role to play in this as well, and Realism or the Realist approach has several ways to interpret this theory. One method is by the political theorist and well known advocate of Realism, Clausewitz. Clausewitz stated that Realism is “a state achieving its military means to achieve political ends.” Or the less aggressive, more state-focused idea is that Realism is when a state will act in its best interest either domestically or internationally. Prime Minister Abe might have the best intentions for Japan and its people but at what cost will the wanted goal be met? By creating a Japanese allied army the questions arise of how will it benefit the state and how does plan to accomplish political ends by military means?

Prime Minister Abe’s actions towards the Article 9 amendment have illustrated various patterns of a Realistic mentality: his aims are to make Japan an independent, allied force of the Pacific, to make Japan a state that is not to be trifled with or contested. With the islands disputes of the Kurils, Senkaku, and other international affairs, Abe is projecting for Japan to gain strength through these certain Realism subsets. The most prevalent in his policy of gaining public support would be in the form of Realistic groupism, of the four subsets mentioned. Abe has utilized methods of public outreach in order to gain support, by going on his ventures like he did between his terms in office, or even working with controversial issues to illustrate his and Japan’s determination for change. The other subset most prevalent in Abe’s reforms is Realistic power politics. With Russia, China, and North Korea being Japan’s neighbors they have exhibited

aggressive behavior to achieve their political aims, the states have expressed their political and resource interests in the region with Japan. With Russia having practiced military drills and exercising political and military power in the Kurils, and the rising aggression of China over the Senkaku, Abe deems it best for Japan to expand its military capabilities in order to maintain the balance of power. Preventing these states from acting against Japan is the ultimate goal and thus will be Japan's key interest, but attaining the international recognition of doing so is one of Abe's largest obstacles.

### **Liberalism and Abe's Vision**

In relation to Liberalism, the factors of Abe's policy revision have multiple aspects that can adhere to Liberalism. Yet, one still finds the Article 9 amendment to be in relation to Realism versus Liberalism. The factors of Prime Minister Abe's vision in relation to Liberalism are as follows.

On Abe's playing field Japan's concerns should be achieving a mutual beneficial agreement to its regional allies, however, their regional allies may not be allied with the other international allies. So Abe's challenge in dealing with China is to protect the political and economic interests of Japan but also Japan's allies that do not want to disrupt relations with China or other states that are Japan's political rival. In an interview Abe stated his intentions with China:

I agreed with the Chinese leaders that both countries would strive for a mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests. I conveyed to the Chinese that Japan and China enjoy an inseparable relationship, especially in terms of economic ties. And I believe that it is wrong to close down all aspects of the bilateral relationship because of a single issue -- it would not be a smart move. That is why I always keep the door open for dialogue. I think China should come back to the starting point of the mutually beneficial relationship the two countries agreed on (Abe 2013).

Abe's statement is a clear illustration of a Liberal theoretical approach, by working with China to achieve a mutual beneficial relationship, but as relations and affairs go everything is subject to change. Other affairs in the Asian Pacific region that Abe and the state of Japan have to proceed cautiously with would be the affairs with North Korea. The North Korean missile threats to Japan have left the state to think about its northern borders, the affairs can lead to common opposing states making agreements to settle affairs with other states. Moravcsik claims that "resulting globalization-induced variation in social demands and state preferences is a fundamental cause of state behavior in world politics" (Moravcsik 2008, 234). If one believes what Moravcsik discusses, then factors can affect state interest in global politics. If the states do not see eye to eye then chances of policy progression to mutual benefit will be difficult to attain in order to state how fragile or sensitive the liberal theory can be. Abe has his agenda of what the Japanese state and Japanese people's preferences are; for much of their history Japan has tried to maintain a sense of self-sustainability and independence free from foreign influence. Following World War II the state needed to recover and rebuild from the war, and we find in doing so this is when allies were sought out, but the allies would be the United State and other Allied forces. The other Allied forces being of a Western background tried to incorporate Western political ideals and values into the Japanese system, and we find that this pattern has followed through to present day, but one thing that can change with Liberalism is the state interest, and so therefore, this one finds that the Japanese allies may have conflicting interests with Japan's new policies. The key element to understanding Liberalism on the international arena comes from a "theoretical foundation for a shared multicausal model of instrumental state behavior" (Moravcsik

2008, 235). It seems that Prime Minister Abe has proposed the allied military with liberal foundations, which make the use of Japanese force mutually beneficial for Japanese as well as their allies. By having this military now at the ready Japan can have more room to act in the international arena, thus this will be giving the state to make more decisions regionally and globally. This will in turn affect their economic and political interests in the Pacific. The problematic factors that Abe will face are possible conflict of interests between certain states' economic and political interests, as well as the social factors that will play in part of their actions. The flaw of Liberalism comes into play when one looks at allied-based relationships throughout history. The question of alliances and loyalties comes into play when dealing with a modern Japanese allied military. This one finds that historically, affairs, policies and wars have repeated themselves based upon the issue and constant conflict alliance decisions and following through to back up an ally that is in conflict with another allied state. The division of allies some claim to be the beginning of World War I: the death of Franz Ferdinand triggered all of the alliances to divide and unify to form the main fronts. Japan today has allies from all fronts; they can be economical or political, but what constitutes Japan from the other Asian states is its willingness to be an allied force rather than an autonomous force like the state had roughly seventy years prior.

### **Constructive Factors of Japanese Affairs**

The factors of Constructivism as mentioned before are in relation to past events and affairs that have led to the buildup of Abe's vision for Japan. This one will aim to show how the Japanese state is basing its regional, and international policies and decisions. In regards of the Constructivist approach, Abe has had to learn from previous

policy implementations of what works for Japanese interests. It is crucial to understand that this build up over the last decade has influenced Abe's vision for a Collective Security Defense Force. The affairs mentioned from the Gulf War, Cambodia, the U.S. Japan Regional Security Laws, and their involvement with the War on Terror has laid effective utilization of the SDF. The SDF has provided aid to its political allies before, thus what Abe is doing is enhancing and highlighting the issue so it cannot be deemed unconstitutional.

The multiple perspectives offered by Ian Hurd in *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, in his views of Constructivism, include elements of national interest, and state interest are points of view that are to be understood with the constructivist approach. Legro (2005, 4) "represents the constructivist view: new foreign policy ideas are shaped by preexisting dominant ideas and their relationship to experienced events." A Constructivist approach to Abe's intentions for Japan might be seen in the Prime Minister's utilization of previous political affairs that affect present-day political policies. These policies have a distinct correlation to Abe's Collective Defense Force. In terms of the Japanese military it has effectively aided the nation in terms of domestic nationalism, and on the global scale. The effective use of the SDF in the 1990s to the War on Terror has laid the foundation for these proposed amendments. In today's increasing global tensions Abe has deemed these factors to be more constitutional and in the best interest of the Japanese state, thus he has pushed for the Article 9 amendments. This is one of the key flaws and strengths in Constructivism: day to day situations can change and calls for measures to be taken in order to protect the nation's agenda..

*The Oxford Handbook* continues by stating, "In a socially constructed world

the existence of patterns, case-and-effect relationships, and even states themselves depends on webs of meaning and practices that constitute them (e.g. Kratochwil 1989).” Constructivist approaches can be constantly changing for some states that once held bad blood may have a reason to change their views. However, one of the flaws in Constructivism is how the state bases its modern policy may or may not have a political background; if there is nothing to be found one can search for a common relation between the affairs. The Constructivist perspective can mainly provide a foundation of the state and reasoning for decision making. Abe has once been in the seat of Prime Minister and now in his second term can say he’s learned from his previous experiences. So could this provide evidence for success with his plans or set Abe up for failure.

## **Chapter Five: Deciding Theory**

### **Conclusion**

While each theory can be applied to Abe's vision for Japan, one is the most pertinent to Abe's vision for Japan. Of the two theories to be ruled out, Realism was one of the first theories initially identified as applicable to Abe's amendments. Abe's utilization of constitutional amendments to the articles would make Japan actually maximize its power and global standing. But acting in the state's best interest is not necessarily what Abe has on his agenda. All of the above factors mentioned which play into Realism actually would have aided the nation as well as their allies. Having a Collective Security Defense Force would not only benefit Japan, but all of its allies as well. In finding this out we had to look at the sub-factors of Realism and Abe's agenda to further the research. Noting that groupism and power politics were the two most prevalent of the four sub-factors, it became clear that it did not fit Abe's vision. Utilizing military means to achieve political ends is definitely a factor that one can see in the creation of an allied army. But having this allied military would not benefit just Japan, but all of their political allies as well. Japan would still not be allowed to use the military in any way it deemed necessary without having the just reasons to do so. This ultimately was the downfall of the Realism theory and its relation to Abe's vision.

In regards to Liberalism, discussing the allied army and Collective Security Defense Force meant that Japan would be acting with its political allies in the utilization of the Defense Force in conflicts or other affairs. Yet when looking in the 1990s it was seen that the Japanese SDF actually was able to aid the states in terms of reconstruction and rehabilitation for nations in turmoil like Cambodia, and places in the Middle East.

But when doing so the SDF was there mainly as moral and economic support. Liberalism would benefit Japan and its political allies, yet when looking at who their political allies are economically and politically aligned with there is a conflict of interest. Such as the United States aligning with Japan could possibly jeopardize its relations with China, or other states that are reluctant to sign onto Abe's vision.

Constructivism has been the political theory that has been backed by all of the affairs and instances that have aided in Abe's vision for changing the Constitution. Going back to the late 1980s to the turn of the millennia this one ruled that based on the factors of SDF involvement for the creation of his Collective Security Defense Force. Liberalist factors do have a role in what Abe has in mind for Japan, yet if it was not for the Gulf War involvement, the Cambodia reconstruction, or the U.S.-Japan Regional Affairs Law, the Japanese SDF would not have had such a role to play in the global arena. The factors that have led up to this proposed amendment can be traced, thus why Constructivism is ruled as the primary political theory. Constructivism can be applied to policy and decision making through the various factors and incidences the state has encountered domestically, and internationally. Upon reaching the conclusion that the proposed constitutional amendments were in fact constructive, one must look at all of the affairs Japan was called to aid in post-WWII. There has been global cry for Japanese aid in terms of economic support, rehabilitation, and peacekeeping. The U.S. has allowed for Japan to come to their aid in regional affairs and where it deemed assistance necessary. The constitution of Japan was overseen by the Americans and Allied forces following the war, but presently with all the factors that have changed since the 1940's it has been understood that Japan could offer much more to their allies. This is what Abe has

caveated and is acting upon. Abe wants the Collective Security Defense Force to be an asset to Japan based on all of the incidences mentioned that called for Japanese aid.

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