

Title	Beautiful Japan and its Future Security Policy : An Early Observation of Prime Minister Abe Shinzō's Plan
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Citation	国際公共政策研究. 2007, 12(1), p. 207-223
Version Type	VoR
URL	<a href="https://hdl.handle.net/11094/10288">https://hdl.handle.net/11094/10288</a>
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# **“Beautiful” Japan and its Future Security Policy**

## **An Early Observation of Prime Minister Abe Shinzō’s Plan**

**BARA Xavier\***

### **Abstract**

Since 1945, Japan has been castrated of its politico-military power and paralyzed by dogmas. However, post-Cold War Japan is proceeding to a still unclear transformation of its National Defense. The purpose of this survey is to observe the mutation of Japan’s security policy in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, highlighted by the vision of Prime Minister Abe Shinzō that illustrates the views of the ruling elite. The analysis is underpinned by Abe’s manifesto: *Toward a Beautiful Nation*. Based on the study of these policies and their achievements, the survey concludes that, in spite of some successes, this pattern of transformation is perhaps not fully relevant and could be dangerous for Japan’s interests and Asia’s security.

**Keywords :** National defense, alliances, Asian policy, vision, relevance

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## A Visionary Leader for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century's Japan?

Post-war Japan is tortured by a crisis of its security policy. For decades the crisis was masked by freezing the doctrine behind comfortable but irresponsible taboos. However, since the end of the Cold War, Japan started to awake and to question and debate these taboos. Even if there has not yet been a big transformation, National Defense is already no more the same. Following the 1992 PKO Law, small reforms are accumulating and simultaneously Japan is increasingly taking a more active role in security affairs. Nevertheless, in spite of these steps, the final shape is still very uncertain because Japan is lacking a real roadmap and vision.

For the moment, the transformation is marching slowly, but it seems to advance blindly and could lead Japan in the wrong direction. In 2006, the man who was presented and presented himself as the visionary who would end the post-war regime was elected at the supreme office of Prime Minister: Abe Shinzō. Could it be that Japan had finally found its leader toward a new age?

Abe Shinzō grew in a cradle of power that offered him the keys to rule Japan, and he had in fact very few political experiences before being rapidly propelled to the top. His fame is mainly based on his genealogy, on firm nationalist statements, and on his strong stance that he took against North Korea. But, who really is Abe Shinzō?

Abe Shinzō, born September 21, 1954, in Nagato, is the crown prince of a mighty household from the Japanese political caste. His roots are from a samurai and landlord family at the service of the Chōshū Domain that was one of the leading powers for the Meiji Restoration. His paternal grandfather, Abe Kan, was a popular member of the House of Representatives who received the nickname of *New Shōin* or *Shōwa Shōin* as an ideological heir of Yoshida Shōin, a nationalist martyr and leader from Chōshū during the early Bakumatsu period<sup>1)</sup>. His maternal grandfather, Kishi Nobusuke, was a high ranking civil servant for the industrial development of Manchukuo, the Japanese puppet state, during the 1930's, and rose to the office of Minister of Commerce and Industry under the Tōjō Cabinet and until the surrender of Japan. After being imprisoned as a Class A War Criminal by the victorious allied powers, he was released in 1948 and returned to public affairs from 1952. Only five years later, he was elected Prime Minister. The granduncle of Abe Shinzō, Satō Eisaku, was a pre-war bureaucrat in the Ministry of Railways, elected to the Diet in 1949,

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1) Literally "*End of the Tent Government*", which are the last years of the Shogunate between the end of the policy of seclusion in 1854 and the reestablishment of the imperial regime in 1868.

promoted to Chief Cabinet Secretary of Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru, named Minister of Construction in 1952 and Minister of Finance during the successive Kishi and Ikeda cabinets, and finally prime minister three times between 1964 and 1972. The father of Abe Shinzō, Abe Shintarō, led a mighty conservative LDP faction called the *Seiwa Seisaku Kenkyukai*, became General Secretary of the LDP, and held various Cabinet offices too: Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Minister of International Trade and Industry, and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Among the mighty members of that family, Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru, founder of post-war Japan, and grandfather of Asō Tarō, Minister of Foreign Affairs and cousin of Abe Shinzō, should also be mentioned.

In 1977, Abe graduated in political science at the Seikei University, and studied afterwards at the University of Southern California. However, he never finished his studies in the USA and returned to Japan in 1979 to work as an executive at Kobe Steel Ltd. In 1982, he left the private sector to pursue bureaucratic posts as executive assistant to the Minister for Foreign Affairs who was his father, as well as private secretary of the Chairman of the LDP General Council and, from 1987, of the LDP Secretary General. Abe Shinzō really started his political career in 1993 when he was elected to the House of Representatives by his native Yamaguchi Prefecture. After that, he was successively elected five times by his district of the prefecture. His first post in the Cabinet was as Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary of Prime Minister Mori Yoshiro in 2000 and of Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro in 2001. The next step was in 2005 when he was promoted to Chief Cabinet Secretary and Minister of State. In parallel, he continued his ascension within the LDP and rose in 2003 to the second rank: the function of Secretary General of the LDP. Finally, on September 26, 2006, he was elected Prime Minister by the Diet. Only six years after his first post of Cabinet member, and without having experienced the responsibility of minister, except as Minister of State for a short year, Abe Shinzō was already crowned with the supreme executive power and was the new master of Japan. Before 2006, there was only the rhetoric of his ideology to define him in national and international politics, and he started his Cabinet with a mysterious and immaculate image. The golden prince of Japan's ruling elite must now prove that he is a skilled and visionary leader, and this task is hard.

First of all, Abe describe himself as a *fighting politician who speaks for Japan*, stands for the nation and the people, and does not fear criticism<sup>2)</sup>. He also claims that he has the same foresight and determination as Winston Churchill who was the first to smoke out the

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2) ABE Shinzō, Utsukushii Kuni he (*Toward a Beautiful Nation*), Bungeishunjū, 2006, p.4-5



threat of Nazi Germany and who, even when Britain was alone at war, never gave up and led the allied powers to victory<sup>3)</sup>. Politically, his ideology is liberal but in an *open conservative* spirit<sup>4)</sup>. He is very proud to declare himself a liberal. Finally, Abe Shinzō claims to have a kind of holy mission with the objective of forging a great nation, an ideal Japan that he has envisaged. His duty is a familial legacy and he had this consciousness since his childhood. In 1959-60, his maternal grandfather, Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke, reworked the US-Japan security cooperation in spite of violent opposition and demonstrations, to make the partnership more equal and more respectful to Japan's sovereignty. Kishi knew that the country was not able to defend itself and still needed the USA for its security, but also that the first treaty of 1951 compelled its official sovereignty. For Japan to be reborn from the ashes of defeat and war as a real independent nation, that treaty had to be changed. Then, until the achievement of the new 1960 treaty, Kishi did not yield to the massive anti-treaty movement that shook Japan and was driven by anti-conservative forces. Only after the ratification of the treaty by the Diet, he resigned from his Prime Ministerial office and ended his public political career, a sacrifice to the manipulated people's anger. Abe Shinzō also believes that his granduncle and his father died because they sacrificed their health to their national duty, and that he must also dedicate his life to Japan and to achieve the buildup of an ideal Japan started by his ancestors.

### Roadmap towards National Transformation

The vision of Abe Shinzō is summarized into his book *-Utsukushii Kuni he-* that was published shortly before the 2006 national election as a manifesto.

In the first chapter *-Watashi no Genten* (My Origins), he describes his political and familial background, his upbringing as a great leader at the service of Japan. The second chapter *-Jiritsusuru Kokka* (Independent Nation)- firmly argues that Japan should show to the world that it is a strong and independent nation that is able to protect its interests and citizens, and that is proud of its identity and does not fear its past. The third chapter *-Nachonarishumu to ha Nani ka* (What about Nationalism?)- is a direct continuation of the second one and tries to define Japanese nationalism, and argues that there is no shame to be nationalist. Furthermore, he says that there exists a positive nationalism to build, strengthen, and care of the country and its institutions. Abe would like to promote the nationalism

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3) *ibid.*, p.40-41

4) *ibid.*, p.18

in a positive spirit to give a new impulse to Japan's pride and might. The second and third chapters represent the first pillar of his vision: to be a proud and responsible major power. The fourth chapter -*Nichibei Dōmei no Kōzu* (Composition of the Japan-US Alliance) - is his second pillar: to review the US-Japan security cooperation with the objective to conclude a third treaty that would strengthen and equalize the alliance. The fifth chapter -*Nihon to Ajia soshite Chōgoku* (Japan and Asia, then China) - defines a third pillar: the Asian policy. This pillar is closely linked to the first and second ones. Abe would like to emphasize the Asian role and identity of Japan. On the one hand, Japan should develop and maintain friendly as well as peaceful relations with China. On the other hand, Japan should be the leader and the center of a new Asian order or community, and should build up special partnerships with India and Australia. The last pillar of his program, domestic harmony, is divided between the sixth chapter -*Shōshi Kokka no Mirai* (Future of a Small Birth Rate Nation) - and the seventh chapter -*Kyōiku no Saisei* (Renewal of Education). Abe plans to deal with the problems of small birth rate and demographic decrease by creating a Japanese model of Providence-State in which there would be strictly controlled social insurance, and in which the citizens, the local communities or authorities, and the companies, would have to become responsible for their own welfare and take initiatives under the supervision of the national government<sup>5)</sup>. That concept is named *chiisai seifu to jiritsushita kokumin*<sup>6)</sup> (Small Government and Independent Citizens). In addition, Abe would like to launch a new social policy to encourage an increased birthrate. That policy would be based on a balance between job and private life, governmental sponsorship to the matrimonial agencies to help the people to found couples, and renewing the positive image of the family. His labor policy would complete the social policy to counter the estimate of future demographic decline: more women and aged persons at work, increasing the level of technology used within the society and the economy, and attracting foreign workers especially from Asia. The third major focus of Abe's domestic policy is education. He wishes to build new generations proud of their national identity, to reform the school books to give them more content, to add school programs especially in Japanese language and sciences, to make a national evaluation for targeting the schools most in need of assistance and the necessary reforms of the educational system, and finally to establish civic activities for the students contributing to the society. In conclusion, Abe's vision for the new Japan seems to be based on four pillars: namely, Japan as a normal major power; equalized and strengthened

5) *ibid.*, p.164-170

6) *ibid.*, p.170

alliance with the USA; an Asian policy articulated between a peaceful relationship with China and a new regional order centered on Japan; and a wealthy and harmonious Japanese society.

## Forging New Principles for Security Policy

We can define four principles for the future security policy envisioned by Japan's ruling conservatives and their spokesman, the Prime Minister. These principles cross-cut the pillars concluded from *Utsukushii Kuni he*, but will probably survive to the Abe Cabinet.

### First Principle

Japan must protect its national interests: it is the real meaning of a sovereign nation. Abe said: "...Starting with the representatives of companies, there are many active Japanese citizens overseas. In order to protect the overseas economic activities of the Japanese people it is necessary to show to the criminals and the terrorists that if they touch the (Japanese) citizens, Japan will not remain silent..."<sup>7)</sup>. Abe also refers to the case of the USA during the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979, when they dispatched special operations forces and other elite troops to protect and evacuate their citizens who became hostages, and when they imposed economical sanctions on Iran. He advocates that Japan should do the same actions in similar crises. Then, Abe shows that he is the man with the spirit and the fortitude to lead such actions for Japan when it is necessary: "...On July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2006, North Korea launched missiles one after another. In reality, our government (Japan) predicted this incident well before that it happened. This is why I think that the government reacted with promptitude. For example, starting with Ambassador Schieffer, we cooperated together with the USA to decide the response and arrangements. Among other actions, early that morning, Ambassador Schieffer visited the Prime Minister's Official Residence, and met with the Director of the Defense Agency, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and myself. The strength of the US-Japan intelligence's exchanges and cooperation, and of the US-Japan Alliance, were demonstrated domestically (Japan) and overseas, and especially to North Korea. Moreover, my response group secretly contributed to the collection and analysis of data, and to the counter-measures. This cooperation went through the offices of the Prime Minister's Official Residence, and the matters under examination were numerous. The

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7) *ibid*, p.52-53

agenda consisted not only the efficiency of the response to multiple missile firings, their possible ranges and targets, and the sanctions, but also the methods to inform the citizens, the recommendations to the Security Council and the Cabinet, and, among others, the views from inside North Korea. Of course, the problem of the abductions was also examined..."<sup>8)</sup>

Abe has based a large part of his reputation on his firm stand to reveal and resolve the affairs of Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea, and on his vigilant watch over the Korean Peninsula crisis. He models his public image as a fighting and foreseeing national leader, and his actions during the missiles crisis of 2006, when he was Minister of State and Chief Cabinet Secretary, speak for themselves. But, he is enclosed by the current constitutional framework that limits his efficiency as a leader. To really be able to protect Japan and its national interests, even overseas, he needs to review the Constitution for allowing Japan to act as a responsible and independent power. It is his major argument.

He wrote about what he calls the *senryoku naki guntai no mujun* (contradiction of the armed forces without military force) that: "... at that time (when the Constitution was made under allied occupation), it was said that the Government Section making the draft (of the Constitution) had on the one hand the restrictions of the Article 9 of the Constitution, and on the other hand came to the point of lacking the fundamental condition of being a sovereign State..."<sup>9)</sup>, and "...In 1954, when the Self-Defense Forces replaced the Safety Force, the government demonstrated the view that in the case of dealing with an armed attack against the homeland to use force as a means to defend the territory would not violate the Constitution, and moreover concerning the military force that is forbidden by Paragraph 2, Article 9 of the Constitution, the self-defense capacities under the necessary minimal limit for self-defense are not a military force. As a result, the Self-Defense Forces are not unconstitutional..."<sup>10)</sup>. On the contrary, Abe demonstrates that Germany, also defeated at the end of World War II, "... at the same time recovered its sovereignty, founded its national armed forces, and joined NATO in 1955..."<sup>11)</sup>. A country cannot be sovereign without maintaining its own military forces as one of the necessary pillars for the National Defense. In 1945, Germany was also disarmed by the allied powers and had to rebuild its economy devastated by the total war but, contrary to Japan, had a responsible behavior of sovereignty concerning its security and reformed its own military power. To prepare the return of sovereignty and the confidence of the people within the military, Konrad

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8) *ibid.*, p.53-54

9) *ibid.*, p.123

10) *ibid.*, p.125

11) *ibid.*, p.126-127

Adenauer, first post-war chancellor of Germany made a speech in 1952 in front of the Bundestag<sup>12)</sup>: "... Based on the tradition of a noble army, we admire all our soldiers who fought on the land, the sea, or in the air. We trust that the honorable and great merit of the German soldier is that during the past years he received every blame but still he stands and will stand again. Moreover, I believe that we will resolve as our common duty the assimilation of the German soldier's moral value with the democracy...<sup>13)</sup>". Abe also underlines the words of Theodor Heuss, first post-war Federal President of Germany, who declared that "...the duty of National Defense is the *legitimate child* of the democracy..."; and that in Germany the conscript soldier is named a *Citizen in Uniform*<sup>14)</sup>. In the post-war regime, Japan followed a different path, but Abe would like to input a strong and independent spirit of National Defense into the new Japan, and in harmony with democracy, like Germany did immediately in 1955.

## Second Principle

This principle corresponds to the second pillar of Abe's vision for a strengthened and equalized Japan-US Alliance. In his view, the USA is both the most necessary and ideologically-linked ally for Japan. By consequence, this alliance is the vital axis for Japan's security strategy, and should inevitably be maintained and upgraded: "...the USA is necessary as an ally because Japan cannot provide alone its security. Nowadays, this situation is not changed...Considering the nuclear deterrence and the stability of Eastern Asia, the alliance with the USA is essential, and if we count their influence, economical power, and mightiest military power within the international community, this alliance is the best choice. Moreover ... Japan and the USA share the fundamental values of freedom and democracy, human right, rule of the law, and free competition and market economy...<sup>15)</sup>"

However, the obstacles to the strengthening of the Alliance are one more time the constitutional restrictions. The Article 9 of the Constitution imposes that: "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 belligerent-

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12) "Federal Diet": parliament of Germany established by the Constitution of 1949.

13) *ibid.*, p.127-128

14) *ibid.*, p.128

15) *ibid.*, p.129

cy of the state will not be recognized". The interpretation of Article 9 is that in case of an armed attack against Japan the right of individual self-defense would be used to repel the aggression, but because Japan renounces to the right of belligerency, it will not fight overseas, even not in collective self-defense. Then, the Alliance is unequal because, as it is declared in the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation between Japan and the USA, Article V, 1960, the collective self-defense is applied only by USA at the benefits of Japan, but without reciprocity: "each Party recognizes that an armed attack against either Party in the territories under the administration of Japan would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional provisions and processes". The deal made between post-war Japan and the USA was not to share the same risks and responsibilities within an symmetric relationship, but to exchange the maintain of American bases in Japan against a protectorate over the archipelago. As mentions Abe, this inequality means that: "... for example, when a missile is launched by a foreign power against Japan, to avert a second shot, or to intercept the missile, it is not the Japanese but the American air fighters that would strike the launching bases... It is the American young people that would spur their life to protect Japan... Why must the American troops who risk their life, their family, and their nation be satisfied about this situation?! For this reason, relations of confidence must be built between the two countries. The former Secretary of State Kissinger said that an alliance is not a paper but a sense of solidarity...<sup>16)</sup>".

In the plan of Abe, the strengthening of the Alliance: "... is related to strengthen the bond of confidence and to build a more equal relationship... In 1956, Japan joined the UNO, but within the Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations it is clearly specified that a member of the UNO has also solely the right of collective self-defense... it is also legitimate for Japan to retain the right of collective self-defense as a natural right...<sup>17)</sup>". It supposes that a new and third treaty of security should be concluded on the ground of mutual confidence, collective self-defense, and pro-active doctrine. Such a trusted, equal and active Japan-US Alliance would be the successor and improved concept of the former Anglo-Japanese Alliance, and is often compared in Japan to the *special relationship* between the USA and Britain, in that case with Japan in the role of the *Asian Britain*. This achievement would be in the spirit of former Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru whose Meiji diplomat's ideal always believed in the greatness of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and

16) *ibid*, p.130-131

17) *ibid*, p.131-132

dreamed of its post-war revival, but with the USA as the new dominating Anglo-Saxon and maritime power.

### Third Principle

China is a rising major power with a decisive influence over the security of Japan and the stability of Asia. Simultaneously, it is also a weak giant due to increasingly domestic problems, such as the difficult supply in energy to sustain the economical growth, the socio-economical gaps within the Chinese population, or the lack of democracy. But, these domestic challenges of China affect also Japan: if China is unstable, the entire Asia risks being unstable. Moreover, Abe insists particularly that because China is *the factory of the world*, the wealth of Japan depends of the wealth of China. For these reasons, the third principle of Abe is to recover the Sino-Japanese relations that were damaged especially during the recent years.

Abe drew some guidelines for the achievement of that goal. His first guideline has for purpose to resolve the bilateral disputes and reduce the potential crisis: "... this reciprocal relationship is hurt by the political problems... Then, from now on, to stabilize the Sino-Japanese relations it is necessary to establish as early as possible the rule of splitting political and economical affairs between the two countries...<sup>18)</sup>". The other major problem being the anti-Japanese feelings within the Chinese people, Abe thinks that it is absolutely necessary to show how Japan has completely changed since 1945, and that it is now a democratic and peaceful country welcoming positive relations with China. In response, the second guideline of Abe's Chinese policy is: "... because we must deepen the understanding and the sensibility about Japan... we should enlarge the number of Chinese students (in Japan)... and we need to put more efforts to multiply the job opportunities for them in Japan...<sup>19)</sup>".

### Fourth Principle

Japan emerged as a modern nation in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, during an age dominated by the Western World and when the declining Eastern World was overwhelmed. To differentiate itself from the backward and colonized Asia of that time, Japan followed the triumphing pattern of the westernization for its modernization, and became a lonely hybrid defined as *neither East nor West*. That process excluded Japan from Asia.

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18) *ibid.*, p.152

19) *ibid.*, p.155



Nowadays, the Eastern World is rising again, and there is an enthusiastic and proud feeling to be Asian that is flourishing again; while this regional buildup attracts Japan, refreshes its Asian identity, and affects the primal impact on its security and wealth. The fourth principle of Abe's grand strategy is to return Japan into Asia, as a regional pole: "... To become a country opened to Asia, it is necessary for Japan to enter in the view of Southeast Asia, (South) Korea, Southwest Asia, and also Taiwan as a region... the aim is that (Asian people) will come to Japan and will desire to work and invest (in the country)... We must open the door to resound with this ideal and the national character of Japan, for (the Asian people) wish to educate their children in Japan, and perhaps to become Japanese...<sup>20)</sup>", and "... in the case of the dialogue for the security of Asia... also to promote the dialogue about the Asia-Pacific energy cooperation, why not to conceive a new Asia-Pacific dialogue between the ASEAN, Russia, India, China, (South) Korea, the USA, and Japan...<sup>21)</sup>".

The development of the Asian region and the *Asianization* of Japan clearly means for Abe to merge Japan as the center of the Eastern World: "... it is necessary that Japan exercise the leadership...<sup>22)</sup>".

In this Asia centered on Japan, India is expected to become a special partner: "... India is particularly noticed as a new partner in Asia... the population is more than one billion of people... In India, there are numerous industriously brilliant people, and it is one of the most advanced nations in Asia in the IT field. The strengthening of the relations with India is important to flourish the interests of Japan...<sup>23)</sup>". This task is another familial legacy to Abe, since Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke visited India in 1959 with the expectation to impulse such a special relationship, was warmly welcomed over there because India considered pre-war Japan as a model of Asian liberation against Western colonial powers, but that after the resignation of Kishi as a Prime Minister the following year, the project was abandoned: "... Once, when my grandfather Kishi Nobusuke visited India, Prime Minister Nehru addressed toward a crowd welcoming the future India... (and said) until now it (Japan) cannot be compared to the suzerain power of Britain, but it was Japan that defeated Russia during the Russo-Japanese War. Me too, I made the resolution to sacrifice my lifetime to the Independence of India. In India's public opinion surveys, the number one friendly country is always Japan. However, (after the visit of Kishi Nobusuke) unfortunately the exchanges with Japan were thin, and the economic relations were weak...<sup>24)</sup>".

20) *ibid.*, p.157-158

21) *ibid.*, p.160

22) *ibid.*, p.160

23) *ibid.*, p.158-159

24) *ibid.*, p.159



Abe plans to give a new start and to achieve this strategic cooperation, and even envisions that India could become the first economic partner of Japan: "...But, ten years before, non one did predict that the Sino-Japanese trade including Hong Kong will exceed the Japan-US one, and it would not be absurd that ten years later the Indo-Japanese relations would exceed the trade of Japan with China or the USA...<sup>25)</sup>".

Nevertheless, the special relations would not be limited to India, and Abe expects to encourage and strengthen strategic partnerships also with the USA and Australia: "... The (previously mentioned) pro-democratic power of India, and Australia that successfully opened the Japan-USA-Australian strategic dialogue of 2006 at the Cabinet level, share with Japan the universal values of freedom, democracy, fundamental human rights, and rule of the law. It would be wonderful if we could conduct consultations from a strategic perspective, about the possibilities of cooperation, to open Japan-USA-India-Australia summits or ministers of foreign affairs level meetings and, especially in Asia, on how to contribute for joining with other countries moved by such universal values...<sup>26)</sup>".

### Achievements of Abe's Security Policy

It is too early to fully estimate the final consequences of Abe's policies, but it appears that he already has a lot of positive results during the first year of his cabinet: the upgrade of Japan Defense Agency to a Ministry<sup>27)</sup>, the project to modify the concept of civilian control by the assignment of uniformed Self-Defense Forces officers among the defense councilors<sup>28)</sup>, a draft to allow the Japanese troops dispatched in PKO to preemptively use their weaponry to ensure their mission even if they are not directly under attack, another draft for the exercise of the right of collective self-defense in stipulated situations within constitutional limits<sup>29)</sup>, the continuation of the reorganization of the Self-Defense Forces towards a *Flexible and Mobile Force Concept*<sup>30)</sup> as it was already started under the Koizumi Cabinet, a *Central Intelligence Unit* will be established with joint and reinforced capacities<sup>31)</sup>, the realignment of the American troops that continues to be discussed and proceeded, the study

25) *ibid*

26) *ibid*, p.160

27) *Defense Ministry Inaugurated*, The Yomiuri Shinbun, January 10, 2007

28) *Kyuna to Review Civilian Control*, The Asahi Shinbun, January 11, 2007

29) *Japan to Consider Fighting for Allies under Attack*, DefenseNews.com, April 7, 2007

(<http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?F=2672284&C=asiapac>); *Government Forms Panel with Eye on Easing Ban on Collective Self-Defense*, Kyodo News, April 26, 2007

30) *Nippon no Bōei* (Defense of Japan), *Heisei 17 Nen Bōeihakusho* (2005 Defense White Paper), Bōeichōen, 2005

31) *GSDF to Create Central Intelligence Unit to Boost Info-Gathering for International Missions*, The Yomiuri Shinbun, December 31, 2006

for a pro-active and more detailed version of OPLAN 5055 to improve the response of the US-Japan Alliance in case of crisis or war in the Korean Peninsula or in the Taiwan Strait<sup>32)</sup>, the new *Basic Maritime Law* and *Law on Establishing Safety Areas for Maritime Structures* to response to contingencies and to protect the national interests in Japan's EEZ<sup>33)</sup>, regular statements and bilateral talks with China to move toward more stable and friendly relations<sup>34)</sup>-<sup>35)</sup>, firm involvement in numerous bilateral or multilateral discussions with Asian countries to develop a new Asian order -the *East Asian Community*- expected by Tokyo to be centered on Japan<sup>36)</sup>, and so on.

Two other decisive moves were made in late 2006 and early 2007. On December 15, 2006, Japan and India agreed on a further deepening of their *Global Partnership* toward a *Strategic Partnership* promoting an Asian Economic Community as an *Arc of Advantage and Prosperity*, to work bilaterally for the reform of the UNO to admit Japan and India as new permanent members of the UN Security Council and support their mutual candidature<sup>37)</sup>, and to deal with the challenges of regional and global security by enhancing bilateral security dialogues, military-to-military talks, and service-to-service exchanges, and various other security affairs<sup>38)</sup>. The second crucial recent move was made with Australia. In 1957, Kishi Nobusuke signed the Japan-Australia Trade Agreement, and nowadays Japan is the first trading partner of Australia. Fifty years later, Abe, grandson of Kishi, has expanded the Japan-Australia relations toward a security partnership when the *Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation* was finalized at Tokyo, March 13, 2007<sup>39)</sup>. The agreement defines nine categories of joint activities: law enforcement, bor-

32) *Japan, US Upgrading Military Emergency Plan*, The Asahi Shinbun, January 5, 2007

33) *Diet Passes Bills to protect Japan EEZ*, The Asahi Shinbun, April 21, 2007

34) Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, What's up Around the Prime Minister, *Prime Minister Visits China*, October 8, 2006 ([http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abephoto/2006/10/08china\\_e.html](http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abephoto/2006/10/08china_e.html))

35) *ibid*, *Startup Meeting for Japan-China High-Level Economic Dialogue, Reception to Welcome Premier Wen Jiabao's Visit to Japan*, April 12, 2007 ([http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abephoto/2007/04/12china\\_e.html](http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abephoto/2007/04/12china_e.html))

36) *ibid*, *The First day of the ASEAN+3, Japan-ASEAN and East Asia Summit (EAS) Summit Meetings*, January 14, 2007 ([http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abephoto/2007/01/14asean\\_e.html](http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abephoto/2007/01/14asean_e.html)); *ibid*, *Prime Minister Visits Vietnam*, November 19-20, 2006 ([http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abephoto/2006/11/19vietnam\\_e.html](http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abephoto/2006/11/19vietnam_e.html)); *ibid*, *Japan-Indonesia Summit Meeting*, November 28, 2006 ([http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abephoto/2006/11/28indonesia\\_e.html](http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abephoto/2006/11/28indonesia_e.html)); *ibid*, *Prime Minister Visits the Philippines*, December 8-10, 2006 ([http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abephoto/2006/12/09philippines\\_e.html](http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abephoto/2006/12/09philippines_e.html)); *ibid*, *Japan-Kiribati Summit Meeting*, February 1, 2007 ([http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abephoto/2007/02/01kiribati\\_e.html](http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abephoto/2007/02/01kiribati_e.html)); *ibid*, *Japan-Mongolia Summit Meeting*, February 26, 2007 ([http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abephoto/2007/02/26mongolia\\_e.html](http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abephoto/2007/02/26mongolia_e.html)); *ibid*, *Japan-Singapore Summit Meeting*, March 19, 2007 ([http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abephoto/2007/03/19singapore\\_e.html](http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abephoto/2007/03/19singapore_e.html)); *ibid*, *Japan-Thailand Summit Meeting*, April 3, 2007 ([http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abephoto/2007/04/03thailand\\_e.html](http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abephoto/2007/04/03thailand_e.html))

37) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan, *Japan-Indian Partnership in a New Asian Era: Strategic Orientation of Japan-India Global Partnership* (<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/india/partner0504.html>)

38) Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, What's up Around the Prime Minister, *Japan-India Summit Meeting*, December 15, 2006 ([http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abephoto/2006/12/15india\\_e.html](http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abephoto/2006/12/15india_e.html)); Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, *Speeches and Statements by Prime Minister, Joint Statement Towards Japan-India Strategic and Global Partnership*, December 15, 2006 ([http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abespeech/index\\_e.html](http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abespeech/index_e.html))

39) Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, What's up Around the Prime Minister, *Japan-Australia Summit Meeting*, March 13, 2007 ([http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abephoto/2007/03/13australia\\_e.html](http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abephoto/2007/03/13australia_e.html))

der security, counter-terrorism, counter-proliferation of WMD<sup>40)</sup>, peace operations, exchange of strategic assessments and related information, maritime and aviation security (counter-piracy), relief operations, and contingency planning (including pandemics)<sup>41)</sup>. In this regard, Japan and Australia will conduct exchanges of personnel, as well join training, exercises and operations. The joint training would probably happen in the wide areas and bases of Northern Australia<sup>42)</sup>.

However, these first successes should not be overestimated. First, the development of these policies is still in its initial stage and we cannot know yet if Abe will fulfill his goals. Second, some of his achievements are in fact continuations of policies initiated by previous cabinets: for examples, the reorganization of the Self-Defense Forces, the realignment of the US Forces in Japan, or the partnership with India. Third, Abe already counts some failures in security policy. Some of his statements destroy the efforts of his friendly diplomacy with the other Asian countries, especially with China and South Korea, like when he denied that the former Japanese imperial army and navy forced foreign women to sexual slavery during the Great Eastern Asian War<sup>43)</sup>. Moreover, the Six-Party Talks on North-Korean issues, as well the role of Japan in these negotiations, are rather sterile for the moment. Fourth, Abe seems to reproduce in soft versions some of the pre-1945 most fundamental strategic quests and are not from his originality: Japan as a responsible major power resembles to the *Fukoku, Kyōhei*<sup>44)</sup> (Rich Nation, Strong Army) motto of the Meiji Era; the equalized and strengthened US-Japan Alliance seems to be the improved pattern of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance (1902-1923); and the East Asian Community or *Arc of Advantage and Prosperity* led by Japan appears as an ambiguous revival under a new formulation of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere that Japan has dreamed since the Meiji Era and that was short-lived in 1940-45.

The principles of Abe's security policy remember some of the guidelines recommended by his ancestor Yoshida Shigeru into the memorandum of April 27, 1928, just before his appointment as vice-foreign minister of the Tanaka Cabinet (1927-1929): Japan could not survive without an empire from which to extract raw materials and control large markets, a legal framework of overseas expansion and particularly positive treaties with China, mili-

40) Weapons of Mass Destruction

41) Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Australia-Japan Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation*, March 13, 2007 ([http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/japan/aus\\_jap\\_security\\_dec.html](http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/japan/aus_jap_security_dec.html))

42) The Australian Defence, *Pact Lets Diggers Train with Japanese*, March 14, 2007 ([http://theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,20867,21378290-31477,00.html?from=public\\_rss](http://theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,20867,21378290-31477,00.html?from=public_rss))

43) *Abe Rejects Japan Files on War Sex*, The New York Times, March 2, 2007

44) That concept aimed the rising of Japan as an autonomous major power.

tary deterrence or actions to protect the special rights and the national interests of Japan, and *cooperative imperialism* for the politico-military interventions and constabulary in Asia (at that time, at the South of China's Great Wall) jointly with the Anglo-Saxon powers or after consultation with them<sup>45)</sup>. These pre-war recommendations of Yoshida reflect the very classical Meiji ideas for the Grand Strategy of Japan, and Abe's vision seems largely enlightened by that political tradition. Abe hold that kind of *imperial consciousness*, as it was said of Yoshida too, but not necessarily the same skills. The future will tell us.

### Relevance of Abe's Security Policy

To conclude this survey, a pragmatic question has still to be asked. Is Abe's vision, which is in fact extremely representative of a majority within the conservative ruling circle, a relevant plan for the future of Japan?

The current reorganization of the Self-Defense Forces and even a constitutional revision in the future would maybe not be enough to build up a power capable of defending the national interests. The constitutional revision concerns the recognition of a military status for the Self-Defense Forces and a normal use of force. It would probably not signify the rising of Japan as a military power. *Military normalization* and *military power* must not be confused as concepts. The objective of the new Japan is a military normalization. But, one of the instruments that Japan will need to protect its interests is a military power and a full-spectrum National Defense to deal with the various threats. In spite of some difficulties, Japan, with its giant economical, industrial, and demographic (even with the estimation for a future decline of the population) resources, has the potential to forge this autonomous National Defense. If South Korea plans to achieve such a self-reliance defense for the horizon 2020<sup>46)</sup>, Japan, with more potential power, can certainly do it too. However, the option of military power is rejected by the Japanese rulers and citizens in their immense majority. As a result of this principle, not only the new Japan would not have the capacities required for its policy of responsible power and would remain a *military dwarf* but, moreover, to compensate for its lack of conventional military power, it could increasingly be seduced by the nuclear power, especially if it is surrounded by other nuclear powers. Already, this dan-

45) DOWER John, *Empire and Aftermath: Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience 1878-1954*, Harvard University Press, 1988, p.78-83

46) FINNEGAN Michael, KIM Jiyul, *The Republic of Korea Approaches the Future*, Joint Force Quarterly, Institute for National Strategic Studies, USA, Spring 2002, p.33-40; MND, *2004-2005 Defense White Paper*, Seoul, 2005; BENNETT Bruce, *A Brief Analysis of the Republic of Korea's Defense Reform Plan*, Prepared for the Republic of Korea Ministry of National Defense, RAND Corporation, 2006

gerous temptation to get its own nuclear arsenal is germinating in Japan's ruling class, and enters into the debate in spite of the nuclear taboo still firmly implanted in society.

Nowadays, Japan relies mainly on the USA for its security and, considering its poor defense capacities, the alliance with the USA is vital and should be improved, as it is also argued by the Japanese rulers. But, reliance on this alliance is dangerous for Japan, even if it is equalized and strengthened, because there are no guarantees that the American sword and shield would be there in case of attack against Japan's homeland or interests. There are three uncertainties. First, the USA would probably consider their national interests in the specific environment of that attack, and it would not necessarily be evaluated by the White House's rulers of that time to be in the concrete American interests to intervene alongside Japan. Second, if the USA decided to protect Japan, maybe the necessary military capacities would not be available on time if the USA were already involved in other theaters of operations, as the difficulties to mobilize military resources for the operations in Iraq are proving. Third, even if the USA did choose to join Japan and would have enough available forces, considering the time of response necessary to prepare and project their troops and equipment, particularly if the enemy were to launch a surprise attack, there is a possibility that Japan would already be defeated before any major American deployment on the theater of operations. War is unpredictable, even by the best plans and simulations. It is a decisive reason why Japan should not only review the Constitution but also develop an autonomous military power, in respect of the regional military balance, and in addition to multiply its allies. Abe desires to promote and strengthen military partnerships with India and Australia, and maybe it could be later upgraded to military alliances when Japan would give itself the full right to use the collective self-defense. However, the rising of this Japan-USA-India-Australia entente could easily disrupt the balance of power in Asia, especially with the three major powers of Japan, the USA, and India combining their forces on one side, and China alone or with Russia or some minor Asian powers on the other side. This pattern remembering the situation in Europe at the eve of 1914 could destabilize Asia into an escalation of crisis until it crashes into a generalized and total war. Japan should be careful regarding the exact nature of its relations with the other major powers and in its choices of strategic partners or allies.

Another major criticism concerning the relevance of this security policy is that the future of Japan' and Asia's security relies more on geopolitical parameters than on policies, principles, and statements. Japan must take various measures for its diplomatic, defense, economical, and other outcomes, to deal with the challenges and threats to its security and

prosperity. But, there are limits to what can be peacefully resolved by such measures, because the natural rule of geopolitics is pitiless and inexorable, and mightier than any good will, laws, or mechanisms of international institutions. We are in a world where the most fundamental actors of international relations, the states, are strategically defined by their geopolitical environment. Permanent factors generally related to the geography dominate the geopolitical order, and impose space, terrain, resources, and various other limits to each state governing their people living in a fluctuating territory. There are also non-permanent but secondary factors such as ethnic, demographic, ideological, and technological changes. In the strategic equations of all these factors, each state is condemned to roam in a confined spectrum of situations, as in a cycle of destiny. War and peace occur when the geopolitical cycle turns to the combined parameters that produce these issues. Inevitably, China will struggle and wage war against Japan in some of the future situations. The same fatality is true for Japan too. By consequence, there is no certitude of peace, even when some rulers decide that a peaceful policy is in the national interest. No situation is eternal, neither the state of war nor the state of peace. Japan should sincerely promote a friendly relationship with China and the other powers as long as it is possible, but should also optimally prepare itself for any other situations than peace, even the most extreme ones. It is the duty of the state. Unfortunately, the strategic calculations made by Japan for its security policy seem to be too much based on ideology and not enough on geopolitics.

Finally, a last problem remains: will Japan have enough political maturity to develop and use wisely and efficiently the power planned by its rulers?

At the conclusion of this survey, the future National Defense of Japan, behind its mask of illusory strength, risks appearing as a *paper tiger*.