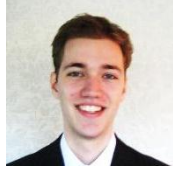


Japan in the International Community -
Is Japan a normal state in terms of its foreign policy?

To what extent is Japan now a normal state in terms of its foreign policy?



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After World War II, Japan lost its independence to the Allied Powers which were led by the United States. On 28 April 1952 the US-Japan Security Treaty went into effect and Japan regained its independence. This treaty, however, allows the US to have military bases in Japan, while on the other hand Article 9 of the revised Japanese Constitution, forbids Japan to use forces for settling international disputes and maintaining an army. Since 11 September 2001 this anti-militaristic norm is challenged by the US and policy-making agents, with the result of the ‘hollowing out’ of Article 9 (Hook et al. 2005, 163). Still, it is hard to think of another major country that has pursued a more successful foreign policy-one that brought prosperity and security for its own citizens with minimal costs. (Mochizuki, 2007). Therefore, it is interesting to investigate the following question: To what extent is Japan now a normal state in terms of its foreign policy? As the term ‘normal’ can be interpreted in many ways, I will define it as a state which makes full use of its state power, including the military, and material capabilities, economical and political, to provide public goods and uphold the multilateral global institutions.

First of all, I would like to consider the fact that Japan is not a permanent Security Council member of the United Nations. Even though Japan contributes a considerable amount of money each year, “...it gives the second largest scale of assessment among member countries, after the United States.” (MOFA, 2001), Japan does not belong to one of the veto-wielding permanent members. Japan claims 14.4 percent of the global gross domestic product (GDP), while “...the United States pays 22 percent of the U.N. budget even though it represents 30.3 percent of global GDP.” (U.N. Wire). This shows that while the global GDP of the US is more than twice as high compared to Japan, it only contributes a very small amount extra, namely two percent. In other words, “Japan is grossly over-assessed.” (Schaefer and Smith 2006). Even

though the other members pay considerably less, they are permanent members which makes Japan stand out. While Japan uses its economical and political material capabilities, it seems to fail to provide its people with the right of veto power concerning international peace and security, which makes it arguably less 'normal' when looking at the other countries.

The anti-militaristic norm of Japan could function as an example for other countries, but not only this norm makes Japan stand out. The way it uses its norm of economism combined with the developmentalistic norm can also very well be used as an example. Economism prioritizes economic activity and imputes it with positive value, with on the other hand post-war developmentalism being supported by this very economics-first policy, while still being able to pursue a non-military, mainly economic, foreign policy. The Official Development Assistance (ODA) program as early as the mid-1980s has become one of the most central policy tools for Japan's contribution to the international community (Mochizuki, 25). In this respect Japan uses its economy to the fullest regarding internationalism, also when you consider that "Japan provided regular reserve funds to assist the UN when funding was in short supply." and that Japan is "the second largest contributor to the peacekeeping budget" (Hook et al. 2005, 378).

While most other countries in the UN and all the permanent members of the UNSC are using its capabilities on demographic, economic and military level, Japan is, due to article 9, not engaging with its military. The earlier mentioned domestic economic and developmentalist norms have been in constant tension with these internationally embedded political, economic and security dimensions.

This brings us to next reason why Japan cannot be considered a normal state; the way it uses its military. In 2004, Lind wrote an article concerning Japanese security policy and its antimilitarist norm, while focusing on its military. While the article is written with a rather materialistic view she provides useful and detailed information regarding Japan's military force. After thorough investigation she concludes that "Japan is clearly one of the world's leading defence spenders" and "...analyses of the Japanese military show that Japan is a world leader in air and naval power" (Lind 2004, 96, 101). While these could be arguments that Japan is a normal state, since it has at least potential military capabilities, it is the way it uses the military that makes it rather unusual compared to most other countries. The 1990-1991 Gulf War is a

good example. Because of Article 9, Japan did not send the SDF to the Gulf area. Instead it made a financial contribution of US\$ 13 billion and when the war ended, mine sweepers of the MSDF were dispatched (Inoguchi 2005, 22 Hook et al. 157). In other words, Japan used its norm of economism to make up for the restraints that are caused by Article 9, the norm of anti-militarism, although they got little recognition by other countries that were involved for taking this stance.

More recently, a similar thing can be seen when looking at the deployment of GSDF to Iraq. The main activities were purifying water, reconstruction projects and providing humanitarian aid. In 2004, General Tsumagari Yoshimitsu admitted that the ASDF used transporters to carry US armed military personnel (Hook et al. 166). Transporting military personnel is beyond simple transport of supplies and can be considered military cooperation. Ofcourse, Japan is not actively participating, but this increasingly proactive role of the SDF along with the way it uses economical means regarding war activities, can be thought of as an indirect participation.

What seems important though is the symbolic nature of the despatch to Iraq. It is Japan's "...most ambitious military operation since World War II..." (Hwang 2004) and proves that Japan is taking a more international proactive role together with a strong bilateralism since its position, concerning Iraq, is "...more tightly aligned with the United States." (Inoguchi 2004, 4). Japan was certainly not involved in any military actions, therefore not being a normal state since it did not use the deployed troops to the fullest of their capabilities, but on the other hand it "modified its behaviour" (Inoguchi 2004, 22) to conform to the internationalism norm and seems to be heading towards a more normal statehood. Japan now acts as global civilian power, committed to the causes of anti-terrorism and peace-building.

When we take a closer look at the relations with East Asia, we can see another reason of why Japan is not a normal state. Japan faces difficulties, due to for example memories of WWII and the legacy of colonialism, as it has a particular need to reassure its neighbours, along with broadening its global security role (Mochizuki and Tsuchiyama 2007, 98). Visits of prime ministers and other officials to the Yasukuni Shinto Shrine and for example history textbook controversies still provoke East Asian countries. (Hook et al. 2005, 195) However, former DPJ prime minister Yukio Hatoyama, decided not to visit the Yasukuni Shrine. This implies that the norm of Asianism is becoming more important. During the Cold War the anti-militarist norm together with the legacy of colonialism, prevented Japanese policy-making agents

from making direct contributions to the military security in East Asia. Mainly through the framework of the US-Japan alliance system contributions are being made to East Asia. However, in order not to rely too much on the US, Japan adopted a more active diplomacy in the form of ODA and economic cooperation. (Hook et al. 2005, 251-252) While the above mentioned problems concerning legacies of colonialism can be seen in a lot of countries, Japan deals with it in different way than other states which makes full use of its state power. We can derive that Japan uses its developmentalist norm and norm of economism in order not to be dependent on military security means, which East Asian countries are wary of. Japan has the military capabilities to support the East Asian region but she is reluctant to use it as a means for improving relations. In exchange, the norm of developmentalism is used in combination with the belief that economic progress is the ultimate guarantor of peace and security. Japan adopted a comprehensive security agenda towards the East Asian region (2005, 268; Katzenstein 1998, 3), meaning that Japan is uniquely equipped to deal with the regional, East Asian security agenda.

When we look at the East Asian region, there are implications that Japan is heading to a more normal statehood. Though Inoguchi discusses the ambition of Japan becoming a normal statehood with a different definition of normal, namely the Westphalian manner (a normal state has basic authority and can exercise autonomy in the management of its economic and security affairs), he points out the leadership Japan tends to take in the East Asian region regarding free trade. (Inoguchi 2004). Indeed, Japan seems to be taking a more international, proactive role according to its needs in making full use of material capabilities. An example is the Japanese governments' proposal of the AMF in 1997. "...drawing on their attachment to developmental and increasingly Asianist and internationalist norm", Japan proposed the AMF as a solution to the crisis in the East Asian region (Hook et al. 2005, 240). While it did not succeed, it clearly shows that Japan was after better financial and policy cooperation in the region along with improving economic relations. Japan is also working on better security relations with East Asia. The JDA and MOFA started in the late 1980s with exchange visits of defence ministers and for example training ships. This progress has been further boosted with the SDF's participation in UNPKO in Cambodia in 1993 and in East Timor in 2002-4 (2005, 230). Japan made the first symbolic contributions to the bilateral security relations with the region, ever since the end of the Pacific War.

The altering anti-militaristic norm might be another indicator of a possible normal statehood. After the September 11 attacks, the Japanese government adopted on 29 October that year the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law and revisions to the Self Defence Forces Law in order to give the SDF more freedom in the range of possible activities (Hughes 2002, 2). Noteworthy in this matter is the speed of the passage of this law, considering Japan's bureaucratic nature. Though the International Peace Cooperation Law took nine months, the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law took less than three weeks. Furthermore, when you take into consideration that Japan has "...one of the most powerful military forces in the world with potent offensive and defensive capabilities." (Lind 2004, 120) in combination with the so-called 'hollowing out' of Article 9 and an increased role for the SDF, arguments of Japan heading towards normal statehood seem much more viable. (Hook et al. 2005, 163; Jain 2009)

From the 90s on, however, one could argue that Japan is, through the years, becoming a more normal state. Good examples are the proposal of the AMF in 1997, which would look after a better financial and policy cooperation in the East Asian region and therefore improving economic relations in the region, the stunning increase of defence spending in the 1990s and the increased role for the SDF which, in other words, relates to the 'hollowing out' of Article 9. Since the government under Hatoyama, Japan also seems to value the norm of Asianism more, since he pledged for example not to visit the Yasukuni Shrine, which has a big symbolic value. Japan is taking a more international proactive role according to its needs in making full use of material capabilities. Therefore it is interesting to look at how this changes Japan as a state itself because from within Japan, as well as from outside, different notions exist what Japan can and should do. Though I acknowledge that there are important alterations of Japan heading towards normal statehood, at this moment, with the above stated arguments taken in consideration, I conclude that Japan is not a normal state.

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