

to reflect changing defence requirements and the evolving relationship with the United States.³

Interpretations of Article IX vary, from belief that it prohibits Japan from possessing any means of, or potential for, military power to arguments that Article IX permits the possession of arms - up to and including nuclear weapons - for national defence.⁴ The current Miyazawa Administration eschews both extremes, but continues to impose the following restrictions to ensure that the Self Defence Forces are kept non-nuclear and their operational roles limited solely to national defence:

- the legitimacy of collective defence (permitted under the United Nations charter) is not recognized, although acceptance of the concept of "mutual security" ensures the continued legality of the Japan-United States security treaty;

- given the continuing overwhelming Russian/Commonwealth strategic capability, well-remembered horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and anticipated domestic and international outrage at a possible Japanese acquisition of nuclear weapons, the three non-nuclear principles continue to enjoy wide support. United States policy of neither confirming nor denying the presence of nuclear weapons, and the view of the Japanese Government that the United States would not violate Japanese policy, ensures the three non-nuclear principles do not have an adverse effect on the bilateral security relationship;

- there is a continuing "umbrella" prohibition on the dispatch of the Self Defence Forces abroad for military purposes (including participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations and disaster relief). Those who support this prohibition fear that such assignments could lead to the Self Defence Forces risking exposure to combat and that the dispatch abroad of the SDF would involve "the exercise of military power offshore", which is forbidden under both the Constitution and the Self Defence Forces Law. It is uncertain whether the Government will be successful in its continuing attempts to secure Diet approval for participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations, or whether the recent dispatch of MSDF mine clearing vessels to the Gulf will be repeated.

The Japan-USA Strategic Relationship

The major factor contributing to the stability and prosperity enjoyed by Japan since the end of the Pacific War has been the smooth functioning of the Treaty of Peace with Japan and Treaty of Security between Japan and the United States (the so-called old security treaty). This treaty was concluded in 1951, during the Korean conflict, when Japan's foreign interests were limited and when American forces enjoyed overwhelming global and regional air, naval, and qualitative ground superiority.