

JAPANESE NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY:
CHANGING PERCEPTIONS AND RESPONSES

Synopsis

Japanese strategic planning is conducted within the framework of Article IX of the Constitution, and the 1960 Japan-United States Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security and companion Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). Recent increases in Japan's defence budget (necessary to provide increased host nation support for American forces deployed in Japan) have been criticized by China, South and North Korea, and debates in Tokyo over possible Japanese participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations are viewed suspiciously and commented on disparagingly by many countries in Asia Pacific.

The deconstruction of the Soviet Union and the disappearance of a near to mid-term strategic threat has robbed Japan of the raison d'être of its defence policy. Under the gaze of suspicious and fearful neighbours, Japan will have to design a national security policy which contributes to regional security and stability while making clear to domestic and international observers that Japan has no intention of replacing the United States as the guarantor of regional stability.

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