

America's Military Pivot to Asia: Obama Wants Japan to be "Able to Wage War" against China

Japanese Prime Minister Abe and President Obama Want Japan to be able to Wage War

By [Colonel Ann Wright](#)

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Japan's Remarkable "No War" Constitutional Article under Strong Attack

After the end of World War II, the Japanese constitution, written in part by the United States for the defeated Japanese nation, rejected war as a solution for conflict. The Preamble to the Japanese constitution recognized the Japanese government's brutal actions in Asia during World War II, "...we resolve that never again shall we be visited with the horrors of war through the action of government," and continues

"We, the Japanese people, desire peace for all time and are deeply conscious of the high ideals controlling human relationship, and we have determined to preserve our security and existence, trusting in the justice and faith of the peace-loving peoples of the world. We desire to occupy an honored place in an international society striving for the preservation of peace, and the banishment of tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance for all time from the earth. We recognize that all people of the world have the right to live in peace, free from fear and want."

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."

Two weeks ago I was in Osaka, Japan as an international speaker at the Article 9 "No War" conference. I was also in Japan five years ago in 2008 at a similar conference, when George Bush was President of the United States and was undermining the spirit and intent of Article 9 of the Japanese constitution by urging the Japanese government to allow the Japanese Self-Defense forces to provide air and sea logistics assistance to Bush's war on Iraq.

One of President Bush's chief advisors, former Assistant Secretary of State Richard Armitage had complained that "Japan's Article 9 is an impediment to the US-Japanese alliance," an alliance the Bush administration wanted to use to spread the financial and military operational burden of the war on Iraq.

Over the objections of many Japanese citizens, the Japanese government did provide ships for resupplying American warships and logistic transport aircraft to fly supplies into Baghdad. A 2008 decision by the High Court of Nagoya found that Japanese Air Self-Defense Force missions into Iraq were unconstitutional as they violated Article 9.

Obama Administration Wants Japan to “Re-examine” legal basis for Article Nine

Five years later it is Barack Obama that is President of the United States, but the demand from the United States government has not changed—that Japan “modify” Article 9 and end its renunciation of war.

On October 3, 2013, the United States and Japan issued a “Joint Statement of the Security Consultative Committee: Toward a More Robust alliance and Greater Shared Responsibilities.” <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/10/215070.htm>

In the document, the United States “welcomes” the Abe government’s “re-examining the legal basis for its security including the matter of exercising its right of collective self-defense...” In other words, find a way to eliminate Article 9 that will then allow Japan to have a military policy that does not preclude its participation in wars of aggression.

The document puts countries in the region on edge, China, North Korea and even South Korea by touting the U.S. commitment for Japan’s security through nuclear, as well as conventional, military capabilities, by welcoming the Abe government’s “determination to contribute more proactively to regional and global peace,” and by announcing that the United States will strengthen its military involvement in the region. Japan and the United States state that their alliance must be ready to deal with “persistent and emerging threats to peace and security” including “coercive and destabilizing behaviors in the maritime domain, disruptive activities in space and cyberspace; proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), man-made and natural disasters and North Korea’s nuclear and missile programs.”

The statement also calls for “encouragement of China to play a responsible and constructive role in regional stability and prosperity, to adhere to international norms of behavior, as well as to improve openness and transparency in its military modernization with its rapid expanding military investments.”

America’s Military Pivot toward Asia and the Pacific

With President Obama’s military “pivot” of the United States toward Asia, the government of the United States is putting a heavy hand on the Japanese government to pay even more for the United States defending its security. Japan currently pays the U.S. over \$2 billion for the U.S. bases and military personnel stationed in Japan. In effect, the Japanese government is subsidizing the U.S. military.

American military exercises and deployment of strategic military equipment in Asia and the Pacific has increased substantially as the war on Iraq ended and the war on Afghanistan winds down.

For example, the United States will begin flying long-range Global Hawk spy drones from a base in Japan. Surveillance flights will begin in the Spring, 2014 and reportedly will primarily target North Korea. Additionally, the U.S. will construct a new radar system in Japan for its missile defense system.

A new generation of U.S. military equipment is being deployed to Japan, including the new P-8 anti-submarine planes, reportedly marking the first use of the aircraft outside the United States. The US has already sent the Osprey aircraft to Japan and its presence is causing Japanese citizen protests.

In the summer of 2012, the largest “war games” of military exercises ever held in the Pacific off Hawaii was conducted with 42 ships, including the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz, 200 aircraft and 25,000 personnel from 22 nations. The exercise involved surface combatants from the U.S., Canada, Japan, Australia, South Korea and Chile. China was excluded from observer status of the exercises, which it had had in the previous “war games.”

In 2012, the U.S. and Japan agreed to cut by half the controversial Marine Corps presence on Okinawa and redeploy about 9,000 Marines across the Pacific region, including a military buildup of about 5,000 Marines on Guam, the redeployment of thousands of Marines to Hawaii, and the rotation of forces through Australia. Between 4,700 and 5,000 Marines will relocate from Okinawa to Guam. The total cost includes an unspecified amount for possible construction of new training ranges in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, a U.S. territorial possession, that could be used jointly by U.S. and Japanese forces.

Conservations groups are already protesting the possible use of the islands of Pagan and Tinian in the Marianas Islands as an aerial bombing target. In the past twenty years, activists have forced the US Department of Defense to close down US bombing ranges on the Hawaiian Island of Kahoolawe and the Puerto Rican Island of Viequez.

On the mainland of Japan, citizen activism has forced the relocation of the Futenma airbase in a densely populated area on Okinawa. However, the U.S. plan to place the new airbase at a Marine base further north on the island, has generated fierce opposition from local residents, who do not want the habitat of unique marine mammals in the area destroyed by a runway that would be on a land fill into the pristine waters off Okinawa.

In Australia, Robertson Barracks is reported to be a future site of a United States Pacific Command Marine Air-Ground-Task Force rotational deployment. Military facilities in Darwin will become a base for a US Marine task force, airfields and training ranges in northern Australia will be used by American long-range bombers. The port in Perth will be visited by US warships and nuclear-armed submarines. The Australian armed forces are being structured at every level to function as an integral part of US operations in the region.

B-52 bombers will be deployed twice to Darwin this year and an American drone base is being constructed in the Cocos Islands, an Australian possession. A second rotation of more than 200 US marines deployed to Darwin in September, 2013, with plans to increase this force to about 2500 annually.

The Joint Defense Facility Pine Gap was established in central Australia near the town of Alice Springs in 1970. Pine Gap is one of three major satellite tracking stations operated by US intelligence agencies and the U.S. military.

Every day, agents of the US National Security Agency, the Central Intelligence Agency, the intelligence branches of the US Air Force, Army, Navy and Marine Corp, as well as Australia’s intelligence agencies, process vast amounts of data that is transmitted to Pine Gap by US spy satellites as they pass over the Middle East, Central Asia, the Indian Ocean, China and South East Asia and the Pacific Ocean.

In New Zealand in May, 2012, U.S. Marines conducted the first large-scale combat exercise involving New Zealand in 27 years. The combat training was the first conducted since the U.S. suspended ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand, U.S.) Treaty obligations with New Zealand in 1986 after the country's government passed anti-nuclear legislation that banned nuclear-powered U.S. Navy ships from New Zealand's waters.

Besides U.S. threats of building a military airport into the pristine marine environment in Okinawa, the United States missile defense system and its Aegis missile ships have already destroyed one of the most pristine marine environments in South Korea with the building of a huge, unnecessary military naval port on Jeju Island to homeport the Aegis missile destroyer fleet. The building of the new military base on an island closer to China is seen as a provocation by the Chinese government.

I visited Jeju Island in 2010 and was there in again in October, 2013. http://www.opednews.com/articles/America-s-Destructive-Pivo-by-Ann-Wright-American-Facism-American-International-Group_Asia_Disaster-131017-130.html

It was heartbreaking to see an unnecessary military naval base constructed in such a beautiful area. The activists on Jeju Island have used non-violent tactics to oppose the construction of the base, while the South Korean government has flown thousands of police and military forces from the mainland of South Korea to arrest and imprison many of the activists.

In the Philippines, the United States is in the midst of negotiations for broader access to military bases. A new security accord, called the Increased Rotational Presence (IRP) Agreement, would permit American forces to regularly rotate through the Philippines for joint U.S.-Philippine military exercises. This agreement would allow the United States to preposition the combat equipment used by its forces at Philippine military bases. The frequency of U.S.-Philippine exercises could increase to the point where there would be a near-continuous American military presence in the Philippines. U.S. military forces were removed from the Philippines in 1992 after citizen protests. Chinese claims over islands traditionally held by the Philippines has fueled the new U.S.-Philippines relationship.

President Obama's postponed visit was to solidify plans for the Philippines to sign on to the proposed Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), which would establish an 11-nation free-trade zone in the Asia-Pacific regions that would give unprecedented authority to international corporations to undercut domestic industries in those countries.

Does China Pose a Threat?

The United States has substantially increased its military involvement in Asia to counter China's increasing economic and military power in the region. Yet, China's military spending of \$129 billion is dwarfed by the \$628 billion spent by the United States. A comparison of military equipment demonstrates the dominance of US military power: the US has 10 floating military bases (aircraft carriers) to one for China; the US has 15, 293 military aircraft to 5,048 for China; 6,665 military helicopters to 901 for China. The disparity between the US and China in numbers of military personnel is striking. With a population 1, 344, 130, 000, China has 2,285,000 on active military duty and 800,000 in the active military reserves. The United States has less than one-fourth of the population of China, 313,847,500, but has 1,478,000 on active military duty and 1,458,500 in the active military reserves.

<http://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-comparison-detail.asp?form=form&country1=United-States-of-America&country2=China&Submit=Compare+Countries>

According to Chinese media, the Chinese navy includes 70 submarines, 10 of which are nuclear powered. At least four of those are capable of launching the JL-2 missiles with nuclear warheads which gives China for the first time strategic deterrence and second strike capability against the United States.'

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2484334/China-boasts-new-submarine-fleet-capable-launching-nuclear-warheads-cities-United-States.html#ixzz2jVzjmJmQ>

The United States has 73 nuclear submarines with 3 more under construction and 4 on order: 14 Ohio class ballistic missile submarines, 4 Ohio class guided missile submarines, 7 Virginia class fast attack submarines with 3 more under construction and an additional 4 on order, 3 Seawolf class attack submarines and 43 Los Angeles class attack submarines with 2 in reserve. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Submarines_in_the_United_States_Navy

The United States has a current stockpile of 5,113 nuclear weapons and missiles with a range of 9,300 miles when fired from land and 7,500 miles when fired from nuclear submarines.http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_weapons_and_the_United_States

In 2011, Georgetown University estimated China had as many as 3,000 warheads while in 2009 the Federation of American Scientists estimated the Chinese may have as few as 240 warheads.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Republic_of_China_and_weapons_of_mass_destruction

In 2011, China published a defense white paper, which repeated its nuclear policies of maintaining a minimum deterrent and became the first nuclear weapon state to adopt a nuclear "no-first use" policy and an official pledge not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states. China's deployment of four new nuclear-capable ballistic missiles has caused international concern. <http://www.nti.org/country-profiles/china/>

The United States continues to have "all options" open, including nuclear, as spelled out in the October 3, 2013 "Joint Statement of the Security Consultative Committee."

Caroline Kennedy-New U.S. Ambassador to Japan-Will She Challenge Obama Policies?

The United States will soon be sending a new Ambassador to Japan.

Caroline Kennedy, the daughter of former President John F. Kennedy, will be the new face of U.S. imperialism in Japan. As a private citizen, Caroline Kennedy stated that she opposed the U.S. war on Iraq.

An important question is whether she will recognize the desires of the people of Japan to retain its unique and important Article 9 "No War" section of its Constitution and convince the Obama administration not to undermine it.

To do so would be an incredible act of political courage as an American Ambassador, one that would be worthy to be included in an updated version of her father's book, "Profiles in Courage."

Ann Wright is a 29 year veteran of the US Army/Army Reserves. She retired as a Colonel.

She was also a U.S. diplomat for 16 years and served in U.S. Embassies in Nicaragua, Grenada, Somalia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Sierra Leone, Micronesia, Afghanistan and Mongolia. She resigned from the U.S. Department of State in 2003 in opposition to the war on Iraq.

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