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**Civil-Military Relations in Japan**

by

**Timothy Charles Dunn, B.S.**

**Thesis**

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

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**The University of Texas at Austin**

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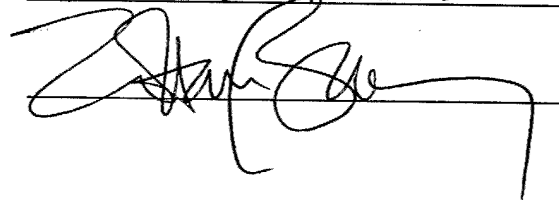
by

Timothy Charles Dunn

2003

**Civil-Military Relations in Japan**

**Approved by  
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May 2003

## **Abstract**

### **Civil-Military Relations in Japan**

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Over the course of the years following defeat in World War II, Japan's armed forces have been transformed from the militarist clique that lost the war and destroyed the country into an accepted instrument of Japanese foreign and domestic policy. My purpose in this thesis is to examine Japanese civil-military relations by tracing why and how Japan has successfully subordinated its armed forces to the civilian government and rehabilitated them into a domestically acceptable tool of the state.

Japan began rearming in the 1950s and laid the foundation for effective civilian control of the SDF with the laws and interpretations of the constitution that enforced it, but until the mid-1970s, the SDF was internally oriented and

ready to maintain public order rather than externally focused on national defense. Because the government did not deploy the SDF for riot control during periods of domestic unrest and reoriented the SDF to focus on external defense with the 1976 National Defense Program Outline, civilian control of the military was able to develop and grow strong. The 1995 NDPO reinforced the SDF's external orientation by reemphasizing the SDF's national defense mission and cooperation with the United States. The SDF's actions during two incidents of North Korean vessel incursions demonstrate the strength of civilian control.

Since the end of the Cold War, the Japanese government has expanded the roles of the SDF and gained domestic approval for new SDF missions. This was possible because the changes were gradual and in Japan's interest, they took place in open debates, the government emphasized civilian control, the SDF successfully performed its missions, and pressure from the U.S. and the United Nations prompted Japan to act.

Although the SDF appears more and more like an actual military, there is still tremendous resistance to admit this or to assign the SDF combat-like missions. Additionally, while the SDF is fully subordinate to the civilian government, there is no consensus on what civilian control actually means or requires of the civilian authorities. As a result, professional military input into defense matters is not viewed as legitimate, and defense policy and guidelines for SDF operations are often vague and up for interpretation. This will become increasingly problematic as the government continues to call on the SDF to perform operational missions.



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## Introduction

Since the end of World War II the armed forces of Japan have been transformed from the militarist clique who lost the war and destroyed the country into an accepted, if not respected, instrument of Japanese foreign and domestic policy. By the mid-1930s the military was very much involved in politics and virtually ran the country. In postwar Japan, the armed forces have almost zero political influence and are fully subordinate to the civilian government. Civilian control of the military is and has been a primary concern of the Japanese government and public, not to mention regional neighbors who still distrust the Japanese. My purpose in this thesis is to examine civil-military relations in Japan by tracing why and how Japan has successfully subordinated its armed forces to civilians and rehabilitated them into a domestically acceptable tool of the state.

Discussing civil-military relations in Japan is interesting and important for several reasons. First, Japan does not technically possess a military. The Allied Occupation demilitarized Japan after World War II and forced it to disband its armed forces. According to Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution implemented in 1947, the nation renounces the right to use force to settle international disputes and, to accomplish this, vows never to field air, land, or sea forces. For the following three years, Japan had no armed forces and in a sense exercised civilian control, although the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) still occupied Japan. The situation changed in 1950 with the outbreak of the Korean War and SCAP's order to Prime Minister Yoshida to form a National Police

Reserve to fill positions vacated by the U.S. Occupation Forces who had left to serve in Korea. The National Police Reserve grew into the National Safety Agency, formed in 1952 when the Occupation ended. In 1954, the Diet created the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (SDF) headed by the civilian-led Japan Defense Agency (JDA). The government charged the air (ASDF), ground (GSDF), and maritime (MSDF) branches of the SDF with the missions to preserve internal order and to repel external attacks.

While technically not a military, the SDF possess all the qualities of one – uniformed officers and troops under arms, a hierarchical chain of command, and a mission to defend the nation. By interpreting the constitution in a way that allowed Japan to field forces to defend itself and using euphemistic names and terms, Japan justified the creation and formation of its armed forces. This highlights a theme that will continue to appear in matters related to the SDF: the importance of constitutional interpretation. So, in short, the armed forces of Japan may not be a military in the strict sense of the term, but when referring to the military or armed forces in Japan, I am speaking of the SDF.

Secondly, the Mutual Security Treaty between Japan and the United States is often described as the linchpin for security and stability in the Asia-Pacific Region. Just as the NATO Alliance in Europe is described as having kept the Soviets out, the Germans down, and the United States in (Moisi 1999), it can probably be said to some extent that the U.S.-Japan Alliance in Asia kept the Soviets out, Japan down, and U.S. in. At its height, the Japanese empire stretched from Russia to the north, Burma and into India to the west, and Indonesia and

much of Southeast Asia to the south. Destroying and dismantling the instrument of Japan's domination, the military, calmed regional fears of a resurgent Japan. Additionally, the U.S. military presence in Japan and Asia acted as a balance against Soviet expansion in Asia during the Cold War and more recently against a steadily developing and sometimes threatening China. For Japan specifically, the treaty gave responsibility for its external defense to the U.S. and allowed Japan to concentrate on other matters, especially economic expansion.

Militarily, Japan has been kept down not only because of the alliance, but by choice as well. The so-called "Yoshida Doctrine," named for the prominent postwar Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru who developed it, provided guidance for postwar economic, security, and military policy (Pyle 1992, 20-41). The doctrine emphasizes economic development and growth, the alliance with the U.S. for military security and open markets, and the avoidance of foreign entanglements so as to separate politics and economics and keep all trade doors open. The Yoshida Doctrine continues to influence Japanese policy-making, as no one has developed a viable alternative (Green 2001). Even though the SDF has steadily grown into a formidable force, military matters have been a small part of the doctrine and a very sensitive political subject.

Finally, since the end of the Cold War, particularly since after the Gulf War, Japan has dispatched SDF units overseas to support United Nation (UN) missions and to provide support for U.S. and coalition military forces. These deployments provide opportunities to observe and analyze civil-military relations and civilian control of the military "in action." Before the dispatch of

minesweepers after the Gulf War, SDF units had been deployed overseas only for combined training and domestically only for disaster relief and humanitarian aid during and after earthquakes and typhoons. Changes in laws, JDA and SDF influence in policy-making, the degree and type of civilian control, and SDF relations with society are all topics to consider in this environment of expanding SDF roles and missions and overseas operations.

There have been several waves of literature concerned with whether Japan will remilitarize or build its SDF into a "normal" military on par with its economic strength. One of the central questions has been whether there will be a return to the 1930s when the Japanese military essentially ran the country, which ultimately led to war and defeat. Some studies often look at domestic and international constraints on Japan that prevent or dissuade it from becoming a military power (for example Burger 1993, Keddell 1993, or Katzenstein 1996), while other authors have predicted or expressed fear of a return to militarism (Pyle 1992, 11-19). Thus far, Japan has not asserted itself as a military power and continues to debate domestically what its place in the world ought to be. While interested in the direction of Japanese politics and foreign policy and the effects on the SDF and the alliance with the U.S., my focus is what role the JDA and SDF play in policy-making and whether the civilian government will continue to get the SDF to do what it wants.

In this thesis, I will explore Japanese civil-military relations, with an emphasis on civilian control of the military and the Japanese understanding of this principle. After all, Richard Kohn reminds us that civilian control is fundamental

for a democracy, and “while a country may have civilian control of the military without democracy, it cannot have democracy without civilian control” (1997, 141-142). Additionally, stories about the SDF or quotes from Japanese politicians, commentators, or academics often include references to efforts to uphold civilian control or comments on whether a particular activity, policy, or law contributes to or follows the principle of civilian control. Is this concern over civilian control warranted? Is there a danger of the SDF not following the orders of the elected and appointed civilian government officials or of becoming too influential in defense matters or areas outside the defense realm? Do regional neighbors who have benefited from the stability provided by the U.S.-Japan alliance have reason to fear that the SDF will not obey its civilian government or that the increased profile of the SDF necessarily means a return to militarism in Japan?

The larger question I want to answer is: what is the state of civil-military relations in Japan today? How has it changed over the course of the postwar period, especially during the 1990s when the role of the SDF expanded and overseas deployments began? Has civilian control of the military become a firmly imbedded principle in the Japanese government and the SDF? Why or why not? What is the Japanese understanding of civilian control of the military? What are the difficulties or potential problems in relations between the civilian government and SDF? Why has the Japanese government been able to expand the roles and missions of the SDF given the wariness of military influence in politics and Japan’s prewar military history?

Measuring and analyzing civil-military relations and the degree of civilian control requires a methodology. Thus, I will begin in Chapter 1 by presenting a theoretical framework that incorporates a number of assumptions and hypotheses presented in the literature on civil-military relations. First, I will provide a review of what others have written about civil-military relations in Japan and identify any potential answers to the questions I have posed. I will include studies written throughout the postwar years and examine how each author presents and analyzes the SDF, civilian control, and civil-military relations. Most authors agree civilian control is strong and that there is no danger of a coup, but they mostly focus on the structure of the Japanese government and the constitution and laws that enforce civilian control. This is important, but in addition, I think several other factors need to be taken into account and I will identify those through a review of the theoretical literature.

The broader literature on civil-military relations provides theoretical underpinnings for what I will argue in this thesis. Several authors I draw from are of particular interest because of their references to prewar Japan as evidence to support their theories. This information adds to my analysis because the prewar experience of an active, interventionist military strongly influenced postwar civil-military relations (Buck 1976 and Gow 1993). Samuel P. Huntington (1957), S.E. Finer (1962), and Michael Desch (2001) all examine prewar Japan and offer their theories as to why the military became a dominant authority in the state with little or no check on its power and activities. By putting together the Japan-specific and general theories, I will create a structure for presenting my arguments.



In Chapter 2, I will focus on the formation of the JDA and SDF and how SDF subordination to civilian leaders developed and became a catchword when speaking or writing about the SDF. I will show how civilian control of the Japanese military is strong due to the nature of the constitution and supporting laws. Additionally, the SDF's external focus and the scrutinizing media coverage of the SDF help ensure that the armed forces remain subordinate to the civilian leadership. But how and why did the strong tradition of civilian control develop? First, I will examine the establishment and origin of the SDF and the controls placed over it. Strong civilian control resulted from several government actions that may or may not have been intended to secure civilian control at the time. I will argue that the decisions not to deploy the SDF during domestic unrest, especially during the 1960 Security Treaty crisis, and the almost complete removal of the SDF from its internal public security mission since the mid-1970s, as seen in the first and second National Defense Program Outlines (NDPO), have all contributed to solidifying civilian control of the military in Japan. I will then examine the different interpretations of what civilian control means in Japan and the implications for civil-military relations.

In Chapter 3, I will demonstrate the strength of civilian control by presenting two case studies. In March of 1999 and December 2001, vessels from the Japanese Coast Guard (JCG)<sup>1</sup> and the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) responded to suspected North Korean spy ships sighted in Japanese territorial

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<sup>1</sup> The Maritime Safety Agency changed its English name to the Japanese Coast Guard in January 2000, and like the U.S., in peacetime the JCG is subordinate not to the Defense Agency, but to the Ministry of Transportation.

waters. How the MSDF (and JCG) reacted reveals not only the strength of civilian control, but also some limitations and potential problems with the Japanese understanding of it and with the practice of it by the civilian authorities. When the government only deployed the SDF to help clean up after earthquakes and typhoons, professional military advice to political leaders was probably not that essential. As the government continues to use the SDF for actual operations around Japan and further away, neglecting input from the professional military is a possible problem and may have a negative effect on SDF effectiveness and ultimately on civilian control.

Next, in Chapter 4, I will turn to the SDF's relationship with society. Why was the SDF able to gain growing acceptance in a country where the military and militarists shouldered most of the blame for the loss and destruction of World War II? Why and how did the SDF become a legitimate foreign policy tool of the Japanese government? Part of the explanation derives from the argument concerning civilian control, and in these case studies we will be able to see civilian control "in action." I will argue that the Japanese government has been able to make changes and expand the SDF role and gain domestic (political and popular) support for the moves because of several factors. First, the Japanese government has moved incrementally, introducing changes in the context of the current international situation and supportive of Japan's interests. As I will show, not employing the SDF during the 1991 Gulf War brought strong criticism on Japan, so moving gradually enabled the government to offset criticism and not arouse the fear in Japan and in the region of a return to prewar militarism.

Second, political debates over military issues have been in the open with extensive news coverage and editorializing. Politicians and bureaucrats are very wary of sparking controversy by keeping defense matters secret. In addition, the Japanese government has overtly displayed civilian control of the SDF through the whole process, again, to assuage domestic and foreign fears or claims of the uniformed SDF members wielding too much influence or of a return to militarism. As I will demonstrate throughout this thesis, this tight civilian control may in fact be too tight with little opportunity for professional military input into defense matters. Moreover, each mission has been relatively successful and brief, with Japan and the SDF earning praise internationally for its actions. Finally, *gaiatsu* or outside pressure from especially the United States and the United Nations has given both encouragement and political cover for Japan to adjust its policies.

I will conclude with a review of my arguments and an assessment of Japanese civil-military relations. A recent incident will serve as a focal point for discussion – the deployment of the high-tech Aegis destroyer in December 2002 to participate in Operation Enduring Freedom on the grounds that it was newer and had a better air conditioner than the ships currently deployed. What does this indicate about civil-military relations in Japan? How and why did the government make this decision? Does this indicate that military advice is reaching the top of the civilian hierarchy and is it necessary in Japan to couch military reasoning in “gentler” terms?

Civil-military relations play a role in both Japan's domestic and foreign politics and relationships. Japan's non-military armed forces, the Self-Defense Forces, have gained increasing prominence as the government continues to call on its services and add to its roles, missions, and responsibilities in regards to both its cooperation with the United States and United Nations and its own national defense. Although military and defense-related issues continue to be sensitive and controversial subjects, the foundation of civilian control of the military is strong and rooted both in law and practice. In this thesis I will demonstrate why this happened and how it has played a role in expanding the Japanese government's options for using the SDF overseas. This does not mean that relations are flawless; there are areas of potential difficulties. I think the main difficulty is that although the leadership and public do have an awareness of the importance of civilian control, there is no consensus on what it means and what responsibilities it entails from the civilian leadership. Most countries do have occasional problems, but Japan's case is different because instead of dealing with the trouble of too much military intervention in domestic affairs, Japan's problem may be one of *too little* military influence in defense matters.

## Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework

In order to create a framework to present my arguments, I begin with a review of the literature that analyzes the Self-Defense Forces and Japanese civil-military relations in light of the assumptions and hypotheses of the broader literature on civil-military relations. First, I will examine what other authors have written about the Japanese armed forces, civilian control, and relations with the government and society. Why has civilian control of the SDF become strong in Japan? What is the Japanese understanding of civilian control of the military? Are there any problems or potential challenges to civilian control or civil-military relations? Why has the Japanese government been able to expand the roles and missions of the SDF and gain public approval for the moves?

While the authors generally agree that civilian control is strong, they mostly look at the structure of the Japanese government and the constitution to explain this. That is one part of establishing civilian control, but I think that there is more to it. Several of the authors do highlight potential problems or challenges for good civil-military relations by focusing on a lack of understanding of what civilian control means. An interesting part of the civil-military literature is the focus on how to keep the military out of politics and to prevent it from wielding influence beyond its professional boundaries. In postwar Japan, the issue is almost the opposite – the military sphere is very narrow and there is an overriding concern about input into defense policies or programs that originate with the

military. The issue of too little military input receives some attention by the authors, but I will explore it more deeply in the chapters to come.

After reviewing the Japan-specific studies, I will introduce several theories on civil-military relations in order to fill in gaps left by the Japan-specific authors. First I will present the main arguments and points that apply to my thesis and questions raised. If the author uses prewar Japan as a case study, I will also present that information and point of view. Including examples from prewar Japan benefits my examination of postwar Japan because of the marked contrast between the periods and the influence of the historical experience on postwar civil-military relations. My goal is to bring together the Japan-specific and theoretical literature so I can identify the questions that I think are partially answered, incorrectly answered, or still unanswered.

#### **LITERATURE ON JAPAN AND THE SDF**

Why is civilian control strong in Japan? The Japan-specific authors provide a variety of reasons. In his 1958 article, "Significance of the Military in Post-War Japan," I.I. Morris argued that civilian control was solid and the military was kept out of politics because of several reasons. The factors included the attitudes of influential groups against military intervention, the improved position of the farmer in the rural areas where recruits traditionally came from, and the breakdown of prewar symbolism, such as the prestige brought by overseas victories (16-19). Morris acknowledged that the constitution and laws firmly supported civilian control, but because of the prewar military ability to eclipse civilian authority and the fact that laws can change, "to depend on Japan's legal

structure for a continuance of civilian control may be to lean on a reed" (16). This is an important point because as I will show below, strong civilian control involves more than just the laws that enforce it. Additionally, Morris wrote this article when the SDF was only four years old, and although right-wing and military-related groups failed to influence Japanese defense policy to that point, there was still a segment in Japanese society pushing for a more robust military with influence to match.

Nine years after Morris's article, James H. Buck argued that civilian control was true in theory and fact in "The Japanese Self-Defense Forces" (1967, 600). Not only did the defense laws and SDF oath of office prohibit political activity by uniformed members of the armed forces, Buck also sensed "a general acceptance of the principles of the 1947 Constitution" among the officers and men (602). Chief among those principles was the supremacy of the civilian government in Japanese politics. Buck contrasted the psychological orientation of the pre and postwar Japanese armed forces and concluded that the SDF significantly differed in ideological orientation and sense of responsibility from the prewar military, and that the SDF reflected and reinforced the core values of postwar Japanese society (605). A key factor for civilian control was not just the existence of the constitution and laws enforcing it, but also the acceptance of them by the military and public.

In a chapter of Claude E. Welch's *Civilian Control of the Military* (1976), Buck again addressed civilian control of the military and did it by comparing and contrasting the Meiji period with the postwar period. To explain why the military

was so influential from the Meiji period to World War II and why civilian control of the military took hold in the postwar era, he argued that “the type of civil-military relations depended mostly on pragmatic reactions to real problems and owed less to ideological preference or to a gradual evolution characterized by diminution of the role of the military” (152). Buck assessed civilian control in the postwar period as strong and described applicable articles of the constitution and laws that keep the military out of politics. In his argument, Buck drew attention to the importance of the transition periods in Japan during the 1860s and during the 1940s and 1950s. This helps explain why the different systems were set up, but it does not really address why they took hold and were generally accepted.

Ian Gow takes a similar historical approach by comparing and contrasting the pre and postwar militaries in his chapter, “Civilian Control of the Military in Postwar Japan,” from *Japan’s Military Renaissance?* (1993). He argues that civilian control is effective not only because of the laws and constitution, but also because of bureaucratic control (60-61). Because civilians from other elite ministries normally lead the Defense Agency and make defense policy, no one with military leanings, connections, or for that matter expertise, is in a position to determine policy. This in turn filters professional military input through several levels of civilians (who may or may not be well-versed in military matters) before reaching the prime minister, who is by law the commander-in-chief. Again, the laws are important, but another factor is the control of defense matters by the civilian bureaucracy.



Explaining the strength of civilian control in Japan boils down to several factors. One, the constitution and supporting laws enforce it. Two, these guards against military intervention into politics have become legitimate because both the general public and military accept them. Three, influential groups have opposed increased military influence in the government, and this may be an outgrowth of Japan's defeat in World War II and the Allied Occupation that followed. Finally, the structure of the civilian bureaucracy inhibits military influence from going straight to the top of the chain of command by filtering it through several levels of civilians. These are important facets of civilian control in Japan, but they do not explain how civilian control had a chance to develop and why the military never even had an opportunity to intervene in politics. I think what civilian control means in Japan and the potential obstacles to establishing civilian control need to be considered.

How is civilian control understood in Japan? Several of the authors provide insight into Japanese views of proper civilian control. Gaston J. Sigur's chapter from Buck's *The Modern Japanese Military System* (1975) addressed the idea of possibly "too much" civilian control in Japan. Civilians from several agencies have dominated policy making with some input from the JDA and almost none from the uniformed members of the SDF. Sigur observed some SDF dissatisfaction with having no impact on policy, but he reasoned that because of the fear among the Japanese of a return to militarism, politicians have steered clear of giving uniformed members "any semblance of policy-making power" (190). Related to the low priority of defense and the lack of military input inot

policy, Sigur listed some shortcomings that may be evidence of a lack of an effective military, such as the ranking of the JDA below ministry status, the lack of a mobilization plan or emergency laws, and no military court system to enforce SDF regulations (193). These points are still applicable today, but they there are also some historical explanations for these possible shortcomings that will be discussed below.

Gow makes similar observations in his discussion of bureaucratic control referenced above. He argues that the filtering of military advice through several layers of civilians may be excessive and “may actually impair military effectiveness or effective policy-making by the elected civilian officials responsible” (1993, 60-61). He concludes by noting that civilian officials and politicians have every right to disregard “purely military advice but the Director General [of the Defense Agency] and the C-in-C [sic] should have both [civilian and military] sets of advice and then decide” (61).

In “The Bankruptcy of Civil-Military Relations in Japan,” Tsuneo Watanabe takes a very critical view, as his title indicates (1996).<sup>2</sup> He argues that “both the left and right wings of Japanese politics have been irresponsible in their approach to civil-military issues, which has always been in terms of political gain rather than of national interest.” From the left, the Japanese Socialist Party (JSP) refused even to discuss SDF issues for so many years because of their refusal to recognize its existence. Most on the left think of resistance to increased military spending or to defense planning as civilian control. From the right, the Liberal

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<sup>2</sup> Watanabe’s article comes from the National Institute for Research Advancement’s website (<http://www.nira.go.jp/publ/review/96summer/watanabe.html>) and there are no page numbers.

Democratic Party (LDP) and the bureaucracy have failed to explain what they were doing and why with respect to the SDF and defense policy. They have defined civilian control as ensuring that civilian Defense Agency officials have administrative oversight of the SDF. This has resulted in what Watanabe calls a "hollowing out" of the security discussion, in which the public is "either misinformed on [sic] or uninterested in civil-military relations." The implication of these competing views is that the Japanese government and public are unprepared to deal with a crisis or other military issues and are unable to discuss matters straightforwardly.

These authors highlight two important points. First, excessive civilian control in Japan may negatively affect the ability of the SDF to accomplish its mission and of the civilian government to formulate effective defense policies. Second, there is a disagreement among the civilian leadership in Japan over what constitutes civilian control. The dividing line between the left and right seems to be between the Diet and the civilian bureaucracy, respectively. Left out by both sides are the positions of the prime minister as commander-in-chief of the SDF and the Director General of the Defense Agency as the primary advisor on defense issues (at least in theory). The division in views is emblematic of the larger debate in Japan concerning Japan's proper place in the world and what role the SDF should play. These are important observations that require further inquiry.

What are potential challenges to good civil-military relations? One is certainly the disagreement over what constitutes civilian control and the possible

negative impact on military effectiveness. Morris identified early on that the left-wing position of being entirely opposed to the SDF “tends to weaken the specific effectiveness of their support of civilian supremacy” (1958, 16). He also identified the primary opportunity for the military to gain prestige and influence as involvement in the internal suppression of the leftist and communists or in any internal crisis (19-21).

Martin E. Weinstein’s chapter from Buck’s *The Modern Japanese Military System* (1975) traced the evolution of the SDF from its beginning as the National Police Reserve in 1950 to the 1975 version. He highlighted the internal orientation of the SDF and the government’s unclear policy on how and when to employ it (49-52). So a potential problem area identified by Morris in 1958 still held true through the mid-1970s – the government’s possible internal use of the SDF and the lack of a clear orientation of the SDF.

I agree that the possible use of the SDF to quell riots and the SDF’s focus on its internal mission were potential problem areas for effective civilian control and for keeping the SDF out of domestic affairs. Buck’s two articles seem to take for granted the SDF’s external orientation, when in fact pressures for the SDF to deploy internally for riot control persisted until the 1970s (Katzenstein 1996, 88; and Weinstein 1975, 50-52). In the same sense, by the time Gow wrote his chapter, the SDF was training for and performing missions with a national defense or external focus. Missing from the literature is an explanation as to why and how this change occurred and how the government and SDF overcame this possible challenge to establishing solid civilian control.

Amid the backdrop of the tolerance of the state of civilian control, how and why did the Japanese government increase SDF roles and responsibilities since 1991 and gain public acceptance of it? Aminta Arrington argues that societal-military relations are improving because the values of society and of the SDF are converging as a result of the SDF taking on United Nation peacekeeping and humanitarian missions (2002). Arrington agrees somewhat with Watanabe's argument that the public has been ill-informed of military and security matters, and although the public came to accept the existence of the SDF over the years, they "did not understand the rationale for its creation or its importance to the country" (535). After the Gulf War showcased the limitations of the SDF (540), participation in U.N. missions has kept the public interested in the SDF and defense issues and has increased public awareness of the need for the SDF (541). The SDF is actually catching up to a society which has viewed "international" as good and "national" as bad ever since the defeat in World War II (545).

I think Arrington is correct in saying the U.N. missions have given the SDF a visible purpose that has increased its standing in Japan, but she overlooks other factors that contributed to the acceptance of increased SDF activities and responsibilities. Additionally, Arrington also makes it seem as if the Japanese public automatically accepted the SDF participating in overseas missions, where in fact public opinion went through several swings and the government spent many sessions drafting, debating, and voting on controversial bills that made SDF deployments possible as well as added to SDF responsibilities for national defense, which is counter to the international flavor of U.N. missions.

Written in 1993 when the expansion of the SDF's reach just began and concerned more with defense policy as a whole, Joseph P. Keddell, Jr. argues that gradualism and incrementalism are key components of Japanese defense policy in *The Politics of Defense in Japan*. He argues that incremental measures have ameliorated conflict over defense because of Japan's dependence on the U.S. security guarantee, the extended rule of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Ministry of Finance restraints on defense spending, political party movement toward the center, and structural constraints of public and media aversion to a larger defense role and the possession of war-making capabilities (7). This trend has continued and I think it has played a significant role in making the expansion of SDF missions acceptable to the public. Additionally, *Managing Internal and External Pressures* is the subtitle of Keddell's book and highlights another continuing trend the Japanese government has had to confront and one that has also played a significant role in shaping the SDF's missions. A point that both authors leave out is the role of the government and SDF demonstrating that civilian control is in fact practiced. On the other hand, a problem is that the civilian control exercised in Japan may help gain acceptance for SDF role expansion, but at the same time may hinder the SDF's ability to accomplish assigned missions.

These authors provide valuable observations and analyses of Japanese civil-military relations. I have identified some areas that require more attention to so I can answer why civilian control became strong and how the government was able to expand the SDF's roles and gain domestic support for them. What danger

does an internally oriented military pose and how did Japan overcome that? Japan made changes to the SDF mission gradually and the SDF has performed well, but what other factors help explain this? In the next section I will fill in these gaps by reviewing the broader literature on civil-military relations and identifying factors that should be considered in examining relations in Japan

### **THEORETICAL LITERATURE**

While the previous studies on Japanese civil-military relations provide a starting point for my thesis, I will now examine some of the theoretical works on civil-military relations to answer fully the questions I have posed. By integrating the Japan-specific arguments with their theoretical underpinnings, I will identify where I can apply the theories to inform my analyses of Japanese civil-military relations and fill in the gaps left by previous studies. From these works I will emphasize a number of assumptions and hypotheses that will enable me to present my arguments in the chapters to come. Again, I will focus on the same four questions stated above. Additionally, I will also include applicable analyses of prewar Japan if they are part of the authors' theories.

What factors contribute to strong civilian control of the military? In *The Soldier and the State*, Samuel P. Huntington rested his argument on military professionalism (1957). Huntington's main argument was that effective civilian control requires a professional officer corps with a military ethic that "holds that war is the instrument of politics, that the military are the servants of the statesman, and that civilian control is essential to military professionalism" (79). This theory has some problems. In the Japanese studies, the professionalism of

the SDF is largely taken for granted, and I doubt any of the authors would accept the explanation that because the SDF is professional, civilian control is strong. In fact, S.E. Finer identified professionalism itself as a possible motivating factor for the military to intervene in politics (1962, 24-27). This can happen in several ways – the military may see itself as servants of the state rather than to the government in power; the military may feel it is the only one competent to lead, organize, and equip the forces; and finally, the military is reluctant to be used to coerce the government's domestic opponents, which may lead to disobedience.

In *The Man on the Horseback*, Finer argued that the strength of civilian control and the likelihood of military intervention into politics depend on a country's level of political culture (20-22, 84-89). Finer defined political culture as the public attachment to civilian institutions. His conditions for determining the level of political culture were: is there wide public approval of procedures for transferring power and a belief that exercise of power outside the procedures is not legitimate; is there wide public recognition of a sovereign authority and a belief that no other is legitimate; and is the public mobilized into private organizations, e.g. churches, firms, unions, and political parties? (87-88) All conditions satisfied makes for a high level of political culture and strong civilian control, and lesser satisfied conditions makes for a lower level and weaker civilian control.

Their respective treatments of prewar Japan demonstrate the contrast between Huntington and Finer. Huntington argued that strong civilian control was impossible because the Imperial military was unprofessional and politically



oriented (126). To elaborate on the military's influence in politics, Huntington described the "dual government" of prewar Japan, in which the military was independent of civilian control (not including the Emperor), but the civilian government was not free of military influence and control (130). For example, the 1889 Meiji Constitution formalized the Emperor's position as commander-in-chief of the military with the authority to organize and to declare war, and the Imperial Ordinance of 1889 guaranteed the military freedom from civilian interference by giving the military direct access to the Emperor as his sole advisor on strategy, organization, and operations. Additionally, because active military officers almost always served in the cabinet as Ministers of War and of the Navy, they could use the threat to resign or resignation as leverage to force the civilians to change policies or to bring down the government (131-132).

On the other hand, Finer classified the prewar Japanese military as highly professional, but the principle of civilian supremacy was missing. The military was able to use its special position with the emperor to justify its standing and intervention into politics (1962, 28). Finer classified interwar Japan as a country of developed political culture, so military intervention would take the form of influence or pressure and blackmail, but actual displacement of the civilian government would be very difficult and meet much resistance (88-89). For example, "even at the height of its power...the armed forces of Japan spared the constitution and the political institutions it hallowed....The Diet continued to sit, and the former party men continued to sit in it and criticize the government throughout the war" (90). The military, civil bureaucracy, *zaibatsu* (or business

conglomerates) and political parties comprised the elite who struggled for influence and power within the system (91). Attempts by each group to establish their own totalitarian structure failed and demonstrated the difficulty of dislodging the existing political elite (Duus 1998, 227-229).

While Huntington's focus on professionalism alone in examining civilian control has no backers in the Japanese studies, Finer's reliance on political culture reinforces the arguments of Buck who emphasized the laws and constitution and the public's and military's acceptance of them (1967 and 1976). Although Gow writes of the importance of bureaucratic control of the SDF, he also emphasizes the constitution and laws that enforce civilian control (1993). I think Finer's argument is useful in examining civil-military relations at a point in time or over a short period of time, but explaining how the political culture and the military's place in it came to be requires further inquiry. Felipe Aguero's argument emphasizes the importance of initial conditions in newly democratic states and relates well to Japan.

Aguero bases his argument on Latin American and Southern European countries' transitions from authoritarian military rule to democratic civilian rule (2001). He argues that the initial conditions of the transition shape the power relationship between the military and the civilian elite and society and that this relationship is "strongly affected by the strength of the forces that [help] produce it" (195, 197). Subsequently, "how actors either reaffirm or change those conditions to their advantage is also of critical importance" (196). Based on his case studies, Aguero concludes that "differences in the manner in and the extent

to which military power constrains new democracies have been strongly influenced by the mode of transition from authoritarian rule” (218). Additionally, he finds that formal legal-institutional elements also play an important role in the transition.

Aguero’s argument appears to offer some explanatory power for Japan, but with modification for the transition periods of the Meiji Restoration and post-World War II. At first glance, the more militarily-gearred government possessed a military with a large amount of influence during the Meiji period and throughout prewar Japan, while in the postwar period, the civilian government, without a military initially, has sustained tight civilian control. The Meiji “transition” does not fully fit the model because Japan was not attempting to create a democracy, but former samurai from Choshu and Satsuma did make up a large portion of the new government and the military, which was autonomous and very influential once parliamentary politics began. As shown above by Huntington and Finer, even though the Imperial Rescript of 1882 prohibited the military from participating in politics, it still exercised considerable influence through other constitutional means (Buck 1976, 153).

In the case of postwar Japan, the theory applies more readily, but it is a little skewed because Japan’s military was disbanded and democratization was forced on Japan by the Allied Occupation. While Latin American militaries were still in the game to varying degrees at transition time, Japan had no military and the government and occupation authorities had made a concerted effort to discredit the military and blame the entrance into war and loss on them (Orr 2001,

19). But as Agüero's argument takes into account, what led to the transition and the disposition of the military at that time play roles in the transition to democracy. This argument provides a good base to start with in examining the SDF in the early postwar years, and several Japan-specific authors have made similar arguments.

Morris' article resembles Agüero's argument and provides insight into the early postwar period during the transition to democracy (1958). His main reasons for why civilian control was succeeding relied on factors brought about by the transition: civilians in charge did not want to let the military regain a foothold in domestic politics; the main breeding ground of recruits, the rural farm, was in a much better position because of Occupation reforms and farmers' sons had no reason to join the military just to improve their lot and to try to force domestic change; and the SDF had no acceptable legal way at that time to gain prestige through overseas victories. Buck's 1976 article also looked to the transition period to explain why civilian control took hold in the postwar period. Similarly with Gow's idea of bureaucratic control, the civilians continued to reinforce the military's subordination to civilian authorities brought about during the transition period (1993). Together, Finer and Agüero's arguments are very useful in examining Japan and back up what the studies of Japan argue.

In *Civilian Control of the Military* Michael Desch argues "that the strength of civilian control of the military in most countries is shaped fundamentally by structural factors, especially threats" (2001, 11). He examines others' definitions of what makes good and bad civil-military relations and concludes that civil-

military relations are good when the civilian leaders can get the military to do what it wants and "the best indicator of the state of civilian control is who prevails when civilian and military preferences diverge" (4). His assumption is that the threat environment (internal and external) should affect the character of civilian leadership, the military, state institutions, the method of civilian control, and civilian and military ideals and culture (13).

Desch's theory predicts that states facing high external and low internal threats should have stable military relations and the best civilian control (13-14), while states facing high internal and low external threats should have the worst relations and civilian control (14-15). Indeterminate threat environments (both low and both high external and internal threats) should have mixed or poor civilian control, respectively (16-17). Desch cites military doctrine as a possible determining factor in these environments (17).

Military doctrine shapes how and when military force will be used and the organization and orientation of the military (17-19). Doctrine can influence civilian control by indicating whether the military's orientation is internal or external. Desch's theory implies that externally oriented militaries will be easier to control than internally oriented ones. Doctrine can also affect organizational culture and whether the norm of civilian control is deeply embedded. Finally, doctrine can be a focal point for agreement or disagreement between civilian and military ideas about the use of force and the international environment.

Desch presents many case studies of countries from around the world and in different time periods in each of the proposed threat environments to prove his

theory. He examines Japan between 1922 and 1945 and determines Japan in 1922-1932 to be in a low internal and external threat environment and in 1932-1945 to be in a high internal and external threat environment, thus expecting mixed and poor civilian control (92-95). He sees the threat environment as more complicated than otherwise thought and disagrees with Laswell's garrison state theory that high external threats increase military influence and pose a challenge for civilian control (1-2, 94). Desch argues that the increased external threats increased civilian control, such as the threat from the West after Commodore Perry opened Japan or near the end of World War II when the external threat was highest, with both causing the rise of the Emperor's control over the military (93). Low threat periods and internal threat periods hurt civilian control. During the low threat period, politicians insensitive to the military came to power and disaffected the military by cutting forces and budgets and signing treaties against the army's wishes (94). He cites the internal threat of the 1930s from the radical right and army factions as contributing to the military looking inward. In regards to doctrine, the orientation of the military was unclear and contributed to the lack of a coherent strategy (95). Desch asserts that the Japanese case is compatible with his theory.

The Japanese case illustrates some problems with Desch's theory. His case studies seem to suffer from selection bias and his treatment of several cases is cursory and neglects other factors influencing civil-military relations and civilian control. Additionally, much of his analysis depends on his assessment of level of threat, and in some cases the information presented tends to be molded to

fit into one of his four possible scenarios and expected outcomes. Specifically in the Japan case, for instance, after 1936 the rightist assassinations stopped and it was during this period too that the leftist movements also lost steam with the mass conversions and denunciations by many of the leaders. With the internal situation secure, that would probably put Japan from the late 1930s until the end of war in the high external and low internal threat environment, which Desch predicts to be good for civilian control.

Despite the theory's shortcomings, Desch's emphasis on the importance of doctrine and the orientation of the military provides an insightful observation that the Japan-specific authors have failed to develop past Morris' and Weinstein's arguments that highlighted the SDF's internal orientation and unclear guidance on its use. As Desch states, internally oriented militaries are more likely to intervene in domestic politics and often it is doctrine that may lead them to intervene if it is part of the military training, organization, and expected behavior. The SDF's internal orientation was a challenge Japan faced, but no one has argued how Japan overcame this obstacle and established strong civilian control. Richard Kohn offers more insight into problems associated with an internally oriented military.

Richard Kohn's "How Democracies Control the Military" explores the common characteristics that have fostered civilian control and argues that the degree of civilian control often depends on the people and issues involved (1997, 141, 147). While I think this specific argument could be up for debate, Kohn touches on several principles that are important for establishing civilian control over the military. For instance, he covers four factors that lay the foundation of

civilian control in a democracy. The first essential is a working democratic government that clearly specifies a role for the military limited to external defense (144). Only in emergencies should the military be used internally because “tasking the military with everyday law enforcement...pits the military against the people [and leads to] a diminishing of civilian control” (145). Next, there must be government methods in place for the civilians to have authority over the military. Third, a countervailing power, such as police, a militia, or the knowledge that illegal acts are unacceptable and will be punished, is important. Finally, the military itself must have the principle of civilian control internalized.

Each of these factors reinforces what Finer, Aguero, and Desch argue and supports the arguments laid out by authors who concentrated on Japan and examined the laws, constitution, and transition period to explain strong civilian control. I propose that the theories and supporting evidence should be fused to explain why civilian control became strong in Japan. Before laying out my argument I will return to the theoretical examination of my remaining questions.

What constitutes the principles of civilian control of the military and how should it be practiced? Although Huntington's and Finer's central arguments are at odds, both offer insight into civilian control in practice. Huntington differentiates between subjective and objective civilian control. Subjective civilian control involves the exercise of power over the military “by one civilian group as a means to enhance its power at the expense of other civilian groups” (80). Without a professional military, this is the only type of civilian control possible, and “each group defined it as a distribution of power favorable to its



own interests" (83). For example, civilian groups who view civilian control in the subjective sense see steps to achieve military security as undermining civilian control (84). Huntington defines the opposite of subjective control as objective control, which relies on the civilian government granting the military autonomy to exercise control within its national defense sphere and relying on the professionalism of the military to be the guarantor of military subordination to the civilian leaders (83).

The terms objective and subjective control seem to have more staying power than Huntington's professionalism argument. When writing about civil-military relations many authors continue to refer to them, including Gow, who introduces his argument through Huntington's concepts of objective and subjective control applied to modern and postwar Japan (1993, 50-51). Gow argues that objective control in prewar Japan led to military intervention into politics, and that the postwar military may be excessively civilianized (a sign of subjective control), possibly leading to weakened military effectiveness. In line with Gow's argument, Richard Kohn points out that while objective control may in fact "minimize military involvement in politics, it also decreases civilian control over military affairs" (1997, 143). In prewar Japan, in a sense, depending on one's view of the Emperor's role as commander in chief and his actual influence and power, Kohn's statement rings true. Objective control mechanisms were in place with all control under the Emperor, but the military had significant influence in all facets of Japanese life while the civilians in the government had almost no influence in military policy or operations. In Huntington's view, the

lack of professionalism prevented this type of control and disrupted the exercise of objective control.

While objective control is a murky subject, Huntington's insights into the ramifications of subjective control relate to the way the Japanese view civilian control. The point relevant to postwar Japan is the "subjective" view that enhancing security necessarily undermines civilian control. Sigur's, Gow's, and Watanabe's arguments converge on the facts that any moves to increase the SDF's defense capability in terms of equipment or planning or to allow military input into defense decisions are viewed suspiciously by most of the government and public. Finer and Kohn support the premise that military influence in policy-making is not a breach of civilian control and is an essential part of defense policy and military effectiveness.

S.E. Finer identifies the levels of military intervention into politics: influence, which is constitutional and legitimate and consistent with civilian control; pressure or blackmail through a threat of some sanction, but still usually done through civilian channels; displacement by violence or threat; and supplantment or the complete take-over of the government by the military (1962, 86-87). Applicable to postwar Japan is Finer's explanation of the military's use of influence in politics and the difference between influence and blackmail. Influence takes place through normal constitutional channels and can also take the form of collusion or competition with civilian authorities (140). Trying to convert the civilian rulers to its point of view is a right and duty of the military, and this influence cannot be regarded as intervention (141). Influence turns to blackmail

with the use of threats of force or of disobedience. What constitutes "normal channels" and whether it includes the military mobilization of public or legislative support against the government makes the difference between influence and blackmail more difficult to determine.

Kohn identifies three key features of civilian control, which center on the responsibilities of the civilian leadership (1997, 147-149). "The challenge in democratic government is to exercise civilian authority while satisfying the legitimate needs of the military in its pursuit of national security," and this begins with a clear chain of command (148). Second, the decision to begin and end war must be in civilian hands. Third, civilians must make the decisions concerning military policy, including size, organization, weapons, and procedures. Of note for postwar Japan, Kohn states that civilians would be unwise to make decisions without consulting the professional military and that "military advice and cooperation are crucial to the quality and effectiveness of policy" (149).

Additionally, Kohn argues that the executive and legislative branches must cooperate to control and field an effective military force (149). The executive typically commands the forces and makes policy with the help of a department or ministry of defense headed by a civilian and staffed by a competent civilian bureaucracy. The role of the legislature is to approve actions of the executive, appropriate funding, and oversee the activities of the military (150). Both branches must insulate the officer corps from partisan politics and allow the military a certain amount of autonomy "because of the unique responsibilities of battle" (151). Thus, the theoretical literature validates the criticisms of Sigur,

Gow, and Watanabe and shows that the way Japan has exercised civilian control may be a potential problem area for civil-military relations.

What factors are potential challenges to the strength and exercise of civilian control? I think this can be answered briefly by referring to what I have identified above. First, the internal orientation and unclear doctrine of the SDF may have been a potential trouble area for the exercise of strong civilian control. Desch, Kohn, Morris, and Weinstein agree that an internally focused military may spell trouble for the civilian control process. And second, the conflict in Japan over what civilian control entails and what constitutes legitimate military input may have a negative impact on defense policy and military effectiveness.

The theoretical literature I have read does not address how a government can expand a military's mission and gain public acceptance for it probably because most militaries are expected to be able to accomplish the tasks Japan has only recently begun. But I do think I can extrapolate from the theoretical literature key points and ideas that apply to Japan and add to observations made by Arrington and Keddell. One main factor I have not addressed yet is the role of the media. Kohn stresses the importance of the press in maintaining civilian control. Civilian control must be accepted, understood, and supported by the military, government leaders, and the public because "without a vigilant press and widespread understanding of the nature and importance of civilian control, it can appear to be functioning properly but in actuality be quite weak" (1997, 153). In Japan's case, the media often comment on whether a policy or law conforms with

the principle of civilian control and I think the main effect has been to raise the public's awareness of the importance of civilian control and of defense issues.

Another point to consider is what factors influence the civilian authorities' leadership over the military. As Keddell emphasizes, the government has had to balance competing foreign and domestic demands in order to develop the SDF's capabilities and expand its roles and missions. Domestically, military leaders must have direct access to the executive to provide information and then accept the decisions, and civilians must learn about military affairs and perspectives but be tough enough to make those decisions (Kohn 1997, 153). As stated above, this requirement is not fully satisfied in Japan and may be a potential problem area. Thus, gradualism, openness with the press, civilian control, the success of high profile missions, and foreign pressure have all contributed to the expansion and acceptance of SDF missions.

## **FRAMEWORK**

Now I will bring together the two sets of literature with my views to set up the framework for the arguments I will make in this thesis. To explain why civilian control of the SDF developed and grew strong in Japan I will draw from the findings of all four questions. Important areas to examine include the constitution and laws, the transition period, and the SDF's internal focus. I will argue that Japan overcame the potential challenge to civilian control from the SDF's internal focus and unclear doctrine by deciding not to deploy the SDF domestically for riot control and by focusing the SDF on its external defense mission in the first National Defense Program Outline (NDPO) in 1976 and

reinforcing the external orientation in 1995 with the second NDPO. Militaries focused internally may not always intervene in domestic political matters, but I think the chances are much higher when an army's primary interest is domestic order rather than defense against foreign threats.

Additionally, the media have contributed to strengthening civilian control by making the public aware of its importance. Examining some of the coverage provides insight into the Japanese views of what constitutes civilian control and highlights possible challenges to civilian control not yet unresolved: the questionable legitimacy of military input into defense matters and the division in views over the role each body of the government plays in exercising civilian control. Military input is an essential part of forming effective defense policy, but a common factor among the differing views in Japan is that as long as civilians make the decisions and military input is excluded or at least minimized and diluted, civilian control is thought to be strong. I think that this view may negatively impact military effectiveness and government policy-making as well as present a challenge to good civil-military relations. Military personnel are the experts in defense matters and their advice and input are integral parts of security policy formulation. The civilian leaders must ultimately make the decisions, but they should hear from all sides of the debate.

To demonstrate the strength of civilian control and the challenges faced by Japan, I will present two case studies that highlight the points addressed in this chapter and Chapter 2. The cases of the intruding North Korean vessels are brief incidents but amplify the civilian control process, the subordination of the SDF to

the civilian authorities, and the implications of Japan not dealing with defense matters straightforwardly. Because of the various understandings of what civilian control entails, there is no consensus on the accepted roles of the executive and legislative branches. Although the defense laws designate the prime minister as commander-in-chief of the SDF and the Constitution designates the Diet as the highest authority in the land, there has never been agreement on the division of authority and responsibility for controlling the SDF. Nevertheless, the one area of agreement is that civilian authorities should have control.

In order to examine the domestic acceptance of the SDF's expanding role, I will draw from all four questions as well. I do agree that the U.N. missions have given the SDF a higher profile and contributed to its growing approval, but I think the focus is too narrow to explain the changes. Japanese incrementalism in defense policy adds to the explanation of how and why moves were made and gained acceptance. I think the fact that the government and SDF demonstrated civilian control in practice also played a significant role in bolstering public approval of the SDF and allaying fears of a return to militarism. And again, the process to expand the SDF's reach also showcases the opposing views of what constitutes civilian control. Additionally, open debate allowed the public and media to follow events and to keep a watchful eye on defense matters and SDF activities. Finally, this examination will show what factors influence defense decisions and provide insight into the civilian side of the civilian control process.

## Chapter 2: Creating a Tradition of Civilian Control

In this chapter I will examine civilian control of the military in Japan and explain why it developed and became strong during the postwar period. First, I will look at the transition from the authoritarian government dominated by the military to the democratic government formed after World War II under the Allied Occupation. Felipe Aguero argues that the initial conditions of the transition shape the power relationship between the military and the civilian elite and society and that this relationship is “strongly affected by the strength of the forces that [help] produce it” (2001, 195, 197). Subsequently, “how actors either reaffirm or change those conditions to their advantage is also of critical importance” (196). It was during this period that Japan formed the Self-Defense Forces, established the laws and practices that enforced civilian control, and defined the roles and missions of the SDF.

Authors who have previously written about civilian control in Japan generally do not go far beyond this point. They describe the constitution, laws, and structure of the government that enforce the supremacy of the civilian government over the armed forces as proof of solid civilian control (Buck 1967 and 1976, and Gow 1993). S.E. Finer argues that the strength of the public’s connection with the civilian government, or the level of political culture, will determine the likelihood and success or failure of a military’s intervention into domestic politics (1962, 84-89). By this standard, other observers are correct in stating that civilian control is strong in Japan because the government,



constitution, and laws that enforce it are legitimate and accepted by the public. Additionally, there is now almost a fifty-year tradition of civilian control. Not only is SDF intervention into domestic matters or politics highly unlikely, but it is also highly unlikely that almost anyone in Japan would accept it.

The constitution and laws are important parts of the whole process to ensure that the military is subordinate to the civilian leadership, but I think that offers only a partial explanation. When the SDF was four years old, I.I. Morris argued that "to depend on Japan's legal structure for a continuance of civilian control may be to lean on a reed" (1958, 16). Although influential groups were set against military involvement in politics, Morris identified the possibility of the SDF getting involved in and suppressing internal disorder as a way to gain domestic strength (19-21). Michael Desch and Richard Kohn both highlight the fact that an internally oriented military may hinder military subordination to the civilian government (2001 and 1997). The postwar Japanese Self-Defense Forces had an internal orientation (Weinstein 1975, 49-52), so how did Japan overcome this? I will argue that the decisions not to deploy the SDF during domestic unrest, especially during the 1960 Security Treaty crisis, and the almost complete removal of the SDF from its internal security mission since the mid-1970s, as seen in the first and second National Defense Program Outlines (NDPO), have contributed to solidifying civilian control of the military in Japan. Ironically, these actions were undertaken for other reasons, but the net effect has been to ensure SDF subordination to the civilian government.

Finally, the scrutinizing media coverage of the Japan Defense Agency and the Self-Defense Forces has also had a positive effect on promoting civilian control. Kohn writes, "without a vigilant press and widespread understanding of the nature and importance of civilian control, it can appear to be functioning properly but in actuality be quite weak" (1997, 153). This statement highlights the double edge of the media coverage. While the Japanese media cover defense issues, and editorials often comment on whether a particular policy or action follows the principle of civilian control, there are many competing ideas, as expressed by the dailies and by the civilian leadership, of what constitutes civilian control. So after going over what made civilian control stick, I will examine what is meant in Japan by civilian control and what implications it has for the future of civil-military relations.

#### **TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SDF**

Military defeat led to the transition to democracy in Japan, which in turn led to the military's disgrace and elimination. After Japan's surrender to the Allies on August 15, 1945 ended World War II, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP)<sup>3</sup> landed in Japan by September and embarked on the goals of democratizing and demilitarizing the country. The occupation forces demobilized and dismantled the Japanese Imperial Army and conducted a purge of military officers, rapidly eliminating tangible signs of "militarism" (Buck 1976, 166). Additionally, SCAP and the reconstituted Japanese government made a concerted effort to discredit the military and blame the entrance into war and loss

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<sup>3</sup> SCAP refers to both the Allied Occupation and its commander, General Douglas MacArthur.

on it (Orr 2001, 19). Former military members were despised for losing the war and when information on Japanese war crimes became known, most were assumed to have participated in them (Dower 1999, 60). The military's competition with politicians, bureaucrats, and big business for political power was over and the former generals and admirals had no place in politics.

The civilian politicians and bureaucracy also went through changes during the occupation, but emerged at the center of power in politics. In January 1946, SCAP purged all public officials who were in any way connected to promoting militant nationalism, and this opened the way for a new generation of politicians, including many former bureaucrats (Curtis 1988, 6-7). Although purged politicians were allowed back into politics when the occupation ended in 1952, over 70 percent of the politicians in the Diet before 1945 did not return to postwar politics (8). SCAP carried out the occupation indirectly through the civilian bureaucracy, so while subjected to the purge and forced to undertake some reform, the bureaucracy actually emerged from the occupation with enhanced power (Johnson 1982, 41). Although for several years the Diet largely rubber-stamped bureaucratic policies, the occupation reforms "established the political parties as the ultimate arbiters of political power" (Curtis 1988, 10).

Probably the most well known legacy of the Occupation is the Constitution, which vested political power in the Diet and renounced war as a means to settle international disputes. The renowned Article 9 states that "the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes." Furthermore,

“land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential will never be maintained.” Until rearmament began by order of SCAP at the outset of the Korean War in 1950, whether Article 9 permitted Japan to exercise the right of self-defense was not a major concern (Dower 1999, 398).

Adding to some of the ambiguity over whether an armed force was allowable under Article 9 are articles of the constitution that establish measures for civilian control of the military and guard against a return to militarism (Buck 1976, 167). Article 41 made the Diet the highest law-making body in the land, and Article 85 placed control of the budget with the House of Representatives. Under the previous Meiji Constitution, the same level of defense expenditures would be carried over to the next year's budget if the Diet did not approve military requests, and this essentially usurped the Diet's ability to restrain defense spending. Article 66 requires the prime minister and all members of the cabinet to be civilians, a word at the time with no Japanese equivalent, so they coined a new word, *bunmin* (Dower 1999, 397). This eliminated the prewar practice of military members holding cabinet posts, influencing the formation and break-up of governments, and making policy. In addition, interpretations of Articles 18 and 76 prohibit conscription and a military justice system, respectively (Gow 1993, 59).

During this period, Japanese leaders were trying to determine how to take care of their security needs. They reasoned that an alliance with the United States was Japan's best option because in Japan's view a U.S.-Soviet conflict was inevitable, neutrality or reliance on the United Nations was impractical, and the

greatest threat was a Communist-led insurrection or a Soviet attack from the north (Weinstein 1975, 42). Through an alliance, the U.S. military would deter a Soviet attack and Japan would handle its internal threats with a paramilitary police force. In 1947 Prime Minister Yoshida's Foreign Minister, Ashida Hitoshi, sent a memo to the U.S. with this proposal, but the plan sat untouched for several years until SCAP authorized the government to create a National Police Reserve (NPR) in 1950 to take over internal security responsibilities from the departing U.S. troops sent to fight in Korea (42-43).

So at the beginning of the Korean War and amid the controversy over whether or not Japan even had a right to self-defense, the Japanese government established the 75,000-strong National Police Reserve (Dower 1999, 395-398). Billed as a police force with "special vehicles," it was a nascent army with tanks and other military equipment (Gow 1993, 57 and Dower 1999, 547). Right from the beginning, the government used euphemistic expressions to allow the public to view the armed forces as something less than a military (Arrington 2002, 535-536). In the NPR, only civilians directly advised the Commandant, while uniformed officers were in effect the advisors to the NPR bureaucrats (Gow 1993, 60). In 1952 when Japan gained its independence and formalized its alliance with the U.S., the NPR merged with the Maritime Safety Force to form the National Safety Agency (NSA) with the primary mission of internal security (Weinstein 1975, 44). In contrast to NPR procedures and, as I will show, SDF procedures, both civilian and uniformed leaders had equal access to the top officials (Gow 1993, 60).

The NPR and NSA served as the predecessors to the Self-Defense Force, established by the 1954 Defense Agency Establishment Law and the Self-Defense Forces Law. In conjunction with these two laws, the Diet also passed the Ban on Overseas Dispatch, which prevented the SDF from being sent overseas for operational missions (Keddell 1993, 32-35). This law stayed in effect until the 1992 International Peace Cooperation Law allowed SDF overseas deployments. The principle of civilian control of the military was a point of emphasis in the creation of the SDF (Smith 1999, 75). The new defense laws placed the Japan Defense Agency (JDA), the bureaucracy in charge of the armed forces, under the prime minister's office and a step below "ministry" status. Like Article 66 of constitution requiring the prime minister and cabinet members to be civilians, this was another guard against the prewar capabilities of the military to influence policy directly and to make and break governments (Buck 1976, 170). The laws created three branches of the SDF (air [ASDF], ground [GSDF], and maritime [MSDF]) and charged them with the missions to defend against direct and indirect aggression and to maintain public order.

Organizationally, the prime minister is the commander-in-chief and the Diet has budgetary power, as stated above. Authority to mobilize the SDF differs for responding to internal public disorder and to external attacks (Buck 1976, 172-174). To maintain the public order, the prime minister may mobilize the SDF to assist police or to support a request from a governor of a prefecture. To respond to an external attack, the prime minister must consult with the cabinet, then obtain approval from the Diet. If the House of Representatives is dissolved, the House

of Councillors may provide provisional approval until the Lower House reconvenes and votes. The civilian Defense Agency and National Defense Council provide advice to the prime minister.

What Ian Gow calls bureaucratic control of the military is a form of civilian control in the Defense Agency, but it is also what stifles direct military input or advice (1993, 60-61). The top positions in the Defense Agency were originally staffed with bureaucrats with Home Ministry or police backgrounds and later from other ministries, especially Finance (MOF), International Trade and Industry (MITI), and Foreign Affairs (MOFA). Of the eleven top posts, four are reserved for other ministries and among the 25 division chiefs, again, at least four come from outside ministries (Katzenstein 1996, 106-107). For example, a MOF official usually runs the Accounting Bureau, a MITI official the Equipment Bureau, and a MOFA official the Counselor for Foreign Relations (Green 2001, 63). These practices prevent pure-defense bureaucrats from becoming too influential or assuming positions of authority, as well as filter professional military advice through several levels of civilians who may or may not be well-versed in defense issues (Gow 1993, 60-61). For example, the highest-ranking uniformed officers are the service chiefs that form the Joint Staff Council (JSC), which is headed by a fourth who is Chairman (Buck 1976, 171). The Chairman of the Joint Staff Council in theory is an advisor to the Director General of the JDA, but in reality is an advisor to the bureau chiefs (Gow 1993, 60).

A good example of civilian bureaucratic control in practice is the defense budget-making process. Ministries with the most power in making the defense

budget are MITI and MOF. MOF is the ministry charged with preparing the budget, and the JDA must submit procurement plans to both for approval during the process (Katzenstein 1996, 105). Additionally, as stated above, within the JDA, MITI and MOF bureaucrats head the Equipment and Accounting Bureaus. Because the Defense Agency lacks a national constituency, it has been susceptible to MOF budget cutting (Sigur 1975, 190). Throughout the 1960s MOF, MITI, and the Economic Planning Agency (EPA) successfully resisted JDA efforts to increase defense budgets higher than what the other ministries planned (Weinstein 1975, 54). In the early 1980s, defense and overseas development assistance were the only parts of the budget not subject to the zero-ceiling (Curtis 1988, 72), but even under significant U.S. pressure to increase defense spending, the JDA received less than half the increases it wanted (Keddell 1993, 88). The policy that the defense spending will be less than one percent of gross national product is another major control on the budget. The government officially implemented the one-percent ceiling in 1976 (although defense had been below one percent since 1967), but abolished it in 1987 and allowed defense spending to rise to 1.004 percent of GDP (Keddell 1993, 147). The symbolism of the one-percent ceiling continues to restrain the defense budget because of fears of adverse public reactions (196). According to the JDA's 2003 Budget Request, the average increase in spending over the past ten years has been only about 0.8 percent. Finally, although the defense budget does not include military pensions as most do, it does include payments to local communities near bases and, since 1990, the



full cost of hosting the U.S. military, in all about 10 percent of the budget (Katzenstein 1996, 108 and Keddell 1993, 155).

As another layer of civilian control, the Japanese government created the cabinet-level National Defense Council (NDC) in 1956 to oversee defense policy recommendations. The prime minister and his deputy, the foreign and finance ministers, the director general of the JDA, and the director general of the EPA made up the original NDC (Buck 1976, 169). In 1972 it was expanded to include the heads of MITI, the Scientific and Technical Agency, the cabinet secretariat, and the National Public Safety Commission (170). For the most part this body did not function as an oversight mechanism and merely approved whatever emerged from the Defense Agency (Gow 1993, 58). Since 1989 the NDC has been reorganized as the National Security Council, still with all civilian members.

The one important and lasting work produced by the NDC is the Basic Policy for National Defense in 1957 (Buck 1976, 167 and Keddell 1993, 37-39). This document has remained unchanged and has served as the foundation for all Japanese defense plans. Principles include supporting U.N. activities, promoting the public welfare, developing effective defense capabilities, and dealing with external aggression on the basis of the security alliance with the U.S. The vagueness of the plan allowed all political sides to interpret it to serve their own purposes (Keddell 1993, 38). The vagueness and use of interpretation has been a consistent theme of the policies surrounding the postwar defense forces and stems from some deep divisions that have only recently been somewhat reconciled with the opposition's acceptance of the existence of the SDF.

SDF members have not all been comfortable with the structure of civilian control, but there has been no successful attempt to undermine it (Katzenstein 1996, 107). In the early days of the SDF, officers rarely made open attacks on civilian control, but some did make clear that they resented "amateurish" control and that they should be free of civilian interference (Morris 1958, 17). By the 1970s the SDF did not openly question civilian control and some even welcomed it, but especially among younger officers, there was a belief that they were not given enough input into decisions involving military matters (Sigur 1975, 190). In the late 1970s and early 1980s, two generals who spoke openly and somewhat critically about defense issues were made to retire early (dismissed) for violating the principle of civilian control (Watanabe 1996 and Hino 10 Feb. 1981). On the other hand, civilian leaders have not totally discounted SDF input. An area where uniformed members have gained some influence over the years because of their expertise is in decisions on weapons procurement and development (Green 1995, 26-28).

While the conservative-led government passed the legislation and created the SDF, opposition was strong and "there were many who agreed with the Japan Socialist Party (JSP) that the creation of the SDF was in violation of the postwar constitution" (Smith 1999, 75). The JSP refused to recognize the constitutionality of the SDF until 1993 when it joined Prime Minister Hosokawa's coalition government, and the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) finally dropped its opposition in 2000 (Green 2001, 54). In fact, over the years there have been several lawsuits challenging the constitutionality of the SDF that have won at the

lower court level, only to be reversed by the Japanese Supreme Court (Allinson 1997, 61).

The refusal by the opposition to accept the SDF made any debate in the Diet over defense matters controversial and led to a focus on the constitutionality of the SDF, rather than substantive policy matters (Watanabe 1996). Because the political forces on the left mostly opposed rearmament entirely, it tended "to weaken the specific effectiveness of their support for civilian supremacy" (Morris 1958, 16). The Diet has never developed a system of civilian control other than its power over the budget and authority for approving mobilizations to meet external attacks or since 1992 deployments for U.N. missions (Gow 1993, 58-59). The principle of civilian control for the opposition forces is viewed in terms of resistance to spending or to defense planning (Watanabe 1996). This behavior resembles what Samuel Huntington terms the subjective view of civilian control, in which the "steps necessary to achieve military security are thus viewed as undermining civilian control" (1957, 84).

On the other side of the defense debate, right-wing and ex-service member groups did try to influence the development of the SDF and Japanese defense policy early on but failed for several reasons (Morris 1958). While opposition parties opposed even the existence of the SDF, conservative politicians and groups for their part did not want a politically strong military that could challenge their power and bring about a return to the prewar days, during which the military held the majority of political power (16). On the right, civilian control came to mean that as long as JDA bureaucrats had oversight of the uniformed members of

the SDF, civilian control was working (Watanabe 1996). So despite the differences over having an armed force, both sides of the political spectrum were wary of military intervention. On the other hand, because of the differences, substantive discussion of defense policy or contingencies did not occur until the mid-1970s (Keddell 1993, 31).

A good example of the conflicting views of civilian control and the negative effect on defense planning and possibly on military effectiveness also is the controversy over an SDF document titled the "Three Arrows Study." The secret study, completed in 1963 by the SDF, concerned SDF options if a war started in Korea. It was leaked to the Diet in 1965, and the opposition, led by the JSP, saw it as an opening to attack SDF constitutionality and a lack of civilian control (Smith 1999, 77-78, 91n19). The study proposed emergency measures to be taken domestically and controversy ensued as the Left contended it was not just a study but something to be incorporated into the defense plans (Keddell 1993, 40). On top of it, the prime minister and politicians were not aware of the study, but the bureaucracy and ruling party ended up trying to defend the study on the grounds that it was not an actual defense plan nor something to be introduced as legislation (Watanabe 1996). The defense was unsuccessful and amid the controversy, the government issued a joint report with the opposition that called for greater civilian oversight of the SDF, although no concrete proposals emerged during the following years. Additionally, because of the political uproar, the "incident prevented serious studies of defense contingencies for over a decade"

(Keddell 1993, 40). In the last section I will expound more on the different views of civilian control.

From its beginning, the SDF has structurally been under extensive civilian control. The laws and constitution provide strong backing for subordinating the armed forces to the civilian political leadership. After its defeat and then elimination, the military lost all credibility with the public, and political control has since been firmly in civilian hands. The missions of the armed forces include both internal and external security. With the U.S. military presence providing security from foreign threats, the government kept the focus of the SDF inward looking. The Japanese government did not even consider how to employ the SDF to assist the U.S. to repel an external attack and saw the main threat to the stability of the country and survival of the government as internal disorder and insurrection. So how did the government overcome this potential threat to stable civil-military relations?

#### **THE SDF AND INTERNAL UNREST**

The first part of the answer is that the government decided not to deploy the SDF to put down demonstrations and riots during periods of domestic unrest. In contrast to some views of Japan as a peaceful, harmonious society, the 1950s and 1960s were very turbulent times. Demonstrations in 1959-1960 brought out 4.7 million student protesters and between 1967 and 1970, 18.7 million (Katzenstein 1996, 59). The SDF did train to respond to domestic crises and the political leadership often considered using the SDF to support police to keep order (Weinstein 1975, 49-50 and Katzenstein 1996, 78). With the new mission to

defend the nation from foreign attacks, the SDF initially de-emphasized the internal security mission in order to develop an external defense capability, but the domestic deployment of the GSDF reflected the internal focus; nine of the thirteen divisions were stationed around metropolitan and industrial areas on Honshu and only four were in Hokkaido to repel a possible Soviet attack (Katzenstein 1996, 133).

The most notable and maybe most threatening of the demonstrations was in 1960 and surrounded the revision of the Security Treaty with the United States. The so-called Security Treaty Crisis transpired after Prime Minister Kishi pushed through a snap vote to approve the revised Mutual Security Treaty with the U.S. while the opposition was not present in the Diet chamber (Keddell 1993, 39 and Duus 1998, 288). The opposition parties and the public as well were outraged more at the "undemocratic" tactics of Kishi than at the U.S. or the treaty. Students fought with riot police, millions of workers went on strike, and while 300,000 protesters surrounded the Diet building, some LDP leaders urged for the prime minister to mobilize the SDF to put down the uprisings.

There are several accounts of how the decision not to deploy the SDF happened. According to one, part of the SDF did mobilize in Tokyo, but the director general of the Defense Agency refused to deploy the SDF against the demonstrators (Keddell 1993, 39-40). In a second account, Prime Minister Kishi pushed strongly to use the SDF, as he did have the authority to order the deployment, but the JDA director general, the chair of the National Safety Committee, and the commissioner general of the National Police Agency

successfully convinced him not to (Katzenstein 1996, 78). According to a third, a group of LDP lawmakers talked to the Defense Agency director general to see if he would use the SDF, but he surprised them by saying he would not unless the police were completely incapable of maintaining order or if it developed into an armed insurrection (Weinstein 1975, 51-52). In all of these accounts, the deliberations went on at the top of the civilian leadership with no military input, influence, or untoward actions. Regardless of how this played out, I think the civilian leadership's decision made a significant contribution to the continued development of civilian control.

At the time, keeping the SDF home did provoke criticism from the left and right (Weinstein 1975, 52). The left argued that the JDA and SDF wanted to intervene but did not only because the leaders did not want to damage the SDF's image. On the right, critics said the JDA bureaucrats were using the SDF only as a "toy" and were not really concerned with the safety and order of the country. The point of convergence of these criticisms was that the JDA was very concerned with a negative popular response to an SDF deployment.

As the critics complained, the political and defense leadership were extremely aware of the controversy surrounding rearmament and the possible public reaction to an SDF domestic deployment, so the government worked to protect and build the SDF's public reputation (Weinstein 1975, 51 and Katzenstein 1996, 117, 133). Instead of mobilizing to restore domestic order during riots, the SDF often provided assistance to the public during natural disasters, like typhoons and earthquakes. In one case, a battalion-sized unit spent

three months assisting during the typhoon season in western Japan (Buck 1967, 605). Additionally, the SDF's public information division employs 950 people all around Japan to woo the public (Katzenstein 1996, 108). These types of activities have helped the SDF gain public approval, but have also skewed the public view of the purpose of the SDF. "Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, about three-quarters of the poll respondents indicated that emergency relief in fact was the major function of the SDF" (Katzenstein and Okawara 1993, 101-102). This attitude toward the SDF's mission has carried on to the present day although now almost 60 percent also recognize its national defense mission (Arrington 2002, 542).

Another factor that kept the SDF out of domestic matters has been police competency in handling riots and demonstrations. The police have had primary responsibility for keeping the public order, and they were adamantly opposed to the SDF mobilizing to assist with riot control (Katzenstein 1996, 88). By developing the police capabilities and techniques to handle domestic unrest, the chances of SDF domestic intervention decreased significantly. For example, the police alone were able to handle the 990 days of mass protest between 1967 and 1970 without a single death (88). Additionally, working to the advantage of protecting the SDF's image, it was the police whose public approval hit the all-time low in 1960 (Katzenstein 1996, 80), while the SDF's public approval continued its slow but steady climb (Arrington 2002, 535).

The period of domestic unrest passed without the government ordering the military to maintain order. While ostensibly to protect its image and reputation, I



think the more important result for civil-military relations was to strengthen civilian control. Whether or not the SDF would have disobeyed orders or pushed for more influence, by not deploying the SDF, the government removed the possibility of putting the SDF in a position where it might have happened. Consistent throughout this period though was the internal orientation of the SDF, which still left open the possibility of internal action. Despite the economic growth and apparent political stability, the government continued to take the internal threat seriously (Weinstein 1975, 49). By the mid-1970s the SDF had continued to gain more acceptance, and a political consensus on defense and the SDF's role developed (Keddell 1993, 31). As a result, the Diet approved the National Defense Program Outline (NDPO) in 1976, which substantially changed the emphasis of the SDF from internal security to external security and cooperation with the U.S.

#### **ORIENTING THE SDF OUTWARD**

The shift from an internally oriented defense posture to an externally focused one is the other reason why strong civilian control developed in Japan and a challenge posed by the SDF's internal orientation was overcome. The first National Defense Program Outline in 1976 began the SDF's shift to concentrate on external defense, and the 1995 NDPO reconfirmed the external orientation. Various factors led the government to develop both Outlines and in each case discussion focused more on numbers of troops and budgets, but I think one of the overlooked benefits of the NDPO was to further solidify civilian control of the SDF.

In addition to being the first statement of goals and missions of the SDF approved by the Diet (Berger 1993, 144), the NDPO called on the SDF to develop capabilities to deter small scale, limited aggressions and stressed the importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance in Japanese security policy (Green 1995, 77). Following NDPO approval in 1976, Japan and the United States coordinated, then approved the Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation in 1978. Both the NDPO and the Guidelines laid the basis for Japan to assume more responsibility for its own national defense, to increase coordination and cooperation with the U.S. military, and also to introduce the SDF to combined exercises outside Japan (Keddell 1993, 72). All of this has added up to refocusing the SDF outward for responding to external threats instead of inward to possibly putting down demonstrations.

Prior to the introduction of the NDPO, the SDF's national security mission of "exclusive self defense" was on the books, "but the requirements for maintaining this defense posture were not quite so clear" (Smith 1999, 76). As shown in the previous section, until the NDPO opened the door for fulfilling Japan's external defense role, the SDF's primary job was to be ready to back up the police. Because of the Security Treaty, the U.S. had been assisting in the development and training of the SDF (72), but as seen by the controversy over the "Three Arrows Study," the government had avoided national debate or decisions over actual SDF operational planning or coordinating its defense with the U.S (76).

Several factors led to the development of the NDPO: shrinking budgets because of a slow economy due to the oil crisis; internal opposition to continued rearmament; U.S. détente and calls for greater burden sharing; and the concern over whether the U.S. would honor the security treaty (Smith 1999, 72-85 and Green 1995, 72-77). In other words, the assumptions behind the influential 1947 Ashida memorandum that shaped Japan's defense posture were changing (Katzenstein 1996, 133). The purpose of the NDPO was to cap the size and capability of the SDF to a "standard defense force" able to repel minor aggression (132). Previous attempts by the ruling LDP to restrain costs and limit force levels met stiff resistance because opposition parties complained that the plans originated from the Defense Agency, and they also realized that acceptance of limits may have been seen as acceptance of the SDF (Keddell 1993, 50). The consensus that eventually formed resulted not from extensive debates, but more from more a tacit understanding that force levels and budgets should maintain the status quo (60-64).

The interesting part of the NDPO was that as the proposals and criticisms centered on the numbers and quality of troops and equipment and spending levels (Keddell 1993, 64-65), it transformed the focus of the SDF's doctrine from maintaining the public order to defending against external attacks. The NDPO also allowed for the discussion of defense policy to gain support and legitimacy and for the JDA to coordinate military training and operations with the U.S (Smith 1999, 80). The bilateral talks resulted in the Defense Guidelines, which emphasized Article V of the Mutual Security Treaty (U.S. assistance in Japan's

defense) and led to joint studies and exercises. The training and deployments of the SDF reflected the changed defense posture suitable for external defense. For example, the GSDF shifted half of its firepower to Hokkaido and instead of preparing reserves to counter internal disorder, training took place in cold climates (Katzenstein 1996, 134). The SDF began participation in regional exercises, but to make it politically acceptable the government argued that the purpose of the exercises was to improve tactical expertise, not to participate in collective defense (Smith 1999, 92-3n27).<sup>4</sup>

The revision to the NDPO in 1995 reconfirmed the SDF's external orientation. By 1995, the SDF had been focusing on its national defense mission for almost 20 years, and for the past three years forces had been deploying for United Nation peacekeeping and humanitarian missions. Also by 1995, the Socialist Party had dropped its categorical denial of the SDF's existence. In the mid-1990s, Japanese politicians were generally in favor of continuing Japan's involvement in international peacekeeping (Mulgan 1995, 1105), and the U.S. continued to press Japan for continued participation. In 1994, Prime Minister Murayama of the Socialist Party expressed government support for continuing peacekeeping operations within the limits of the 1992 International Peace Cooperation Law and the constitutional prohibition against the use of force. The Murayama government approved the revision of the NDPO in November 1995 with an eye toward incorporating the peacekeeping mission and "the gains from

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<sup>4</sup> The government has interpreted self-defense against direct attack as allowable under the constitution, but not collective defense, or assisting an ally under attack (Howell 1999, 214).

military coordination within the U.S.-Japan alliance over the course of the 1980s” (Smith 1999, 85).

The new NDPO deleted the reference to the SDF planning for a small-scale and limited attack and “the notion that national defense planning is separate from military coordination between the U.S. and Japanese military forces” (85). It “reaffirms Japan’s reliance on the U.S. nuclear deterrent...and also limits Japan’s military responses to crises ‘in the areas surrounding Japan’”(Dixon 1999, 148). The goal of the NDPO was “to integrate the accomplishments of the studies and exercises conducted between the two militaries, and to explore the mechanisms through which the United States and Japan could expand their cooperation in regional and global security forums” (Smith 1999, 85).

The 1995 NDPO led to the 1996 U.S.-Japan Joint Declaration on Security, which reaffirmed the alliance and called for a review of the 1978 Defense Guidelines. Cooperation during the Cold War was constrained by Japanese domestic politics, and the alliance was not designed to fight (Giarra and Nagashima 1999, 99). The Guidelines review was a transparent and public process and its purpose was “to establish new benchmarks for what would be considered legitimate alliance security cooperation” (100). The new Guidelines were issued in September 1997 and increased Japan’s responsibilities with respect to its own defense and regional security, as well as laid out expectations for the U.S. By mid-1999 Japan amended its defense laws to implement fully the changes.

Although the intentions of the National Defense Program Outlines of 1976 and 1995 were to cap defense levels and articulate SDF responsibilities with respect to the Mutual Security Treaty, the net effect was to reorient and then confirm the SDF's outward focus and therefore take away a potential trouble area for strong civilian control. These processes made it possible for the SDF to train and prepare for its national defense mission as well as the newest task of supporting the U.N., all reinforcing the external orientation. The combination of the constitution, laws, and outward focus make a good environment for strong civilian control of the military. Another important part of maintaining civilian control is a free press, which acts as a watchdog on defense issues.

#### **UNDERSTANDING CIVILIAN CONTROL THROUGH THE MEDIA**

Japanese news coverage of military matters has contributed to the development and strengthening of civilian control by keeping a critical eye on defense matters and by often addressing how a particular policy adheres to the principle of civilian control of the SDF. These stories and articles in the press have made people aware of the importance of the principle. As Kohn states, a vigilant press is important for maintaining civilian control of the military and for fostering an understanding of it among the public (1997, 153). Kohn's emphasis on keeping a close eye on civilian control because "it can appear to be functioning properly but in actuality be quite weak" (153) highlights a key point for Japan. Although the political elite, media, and public are keen to possible breaches of civilian control, there is no consensus over what civilian control actually means.

Thus, in Japan's case, I think that more often than not, civilian control can appear to be weak but in actuality be quite strong.

I think the best way to explore this is to examine several media reports that reveal the awareness of the importance of civilian control as well as the criticisms of possible problems that stem from the various interpretations of what civilian control actually means. As I have referenced above and in Chapter 1, one main difference of opinion concerns where civilian control rests. These positions roughly equate to a difference over whether sufficient civilian control entails full Diet approval of SDF actions or executive branch approval of actions. The major dailies mirror this divide; for example, the *Asahi Shimbun* generally writes stories and editorials favorable to Diet control, while the *Yomiuri Shimbun* seems to favor executive control. The implications of these understandings are threefold: one, these varying interpretations contribute to the difficulty of professional military advice making its way directly to the top of the political or bureaucratic ladder; two, attacking the exercise of civilian control has become a way for politicians to criticize policies they do not agree with, whether or not civilian control is actually being challenged; and three, they also contribute to the vagueness of policies to satisfy various interpretations of what is actually meant. Watanabe's idea of a "hollowing out" of defense policy appears also to apply to civilian control because people know that it is part of the Japanese democratic system, but what it means is up for interpretation. The net result is that each of these factors can negatively impact SDF effectiveness, especially as the government continues to call on the SDF to operate more extensively.

Most authors agree military input into defense matters is important and even necessary, and it does not constitute a breach of civilian control (Finer 1962, 141, Gow 1993, 60-61, and Kohn 1997, 151). Uniformed members of the armed forces do their job everyday and have developed an expertise in security matters that can aid the civilian leaders in formulating policies and making defense-related decisions. In Japan's case, channels available and opportunities for SDF input into defense policy are very narrow. This state of affairs is indicative of the continued political and public sensitivity to the appearance of too much or even any military influence and the still highly charged nature of defense issues. On the other hand and in a positive light, I think the continued emphasis on civilian control (in any manner) made the Japanese public aware of its importance and probably has had a positive impact, especially when the SDF had no clear guidance. In line with Aguero's words, the conditions of the transition to democracy still affect Japanese civil-military relations.

A classic example is the one expounded on above, the "Three Arrows Study" controversy. The press and opposition parties were all over the story of a possible breach of civilian control. The uproar over the study reinforced the negative view of the appropriateness of military input into defense matters and highlighted the use of claiming a lack of civilian control for opposition purposes. The furor resulted in no serious strategic planning or coordination for national defense or emergency situations for ten years. It is probably not very productive to go through hypothetical or "what if Japan did get attacked" situations, but in



some respects Japan was lucky that it has never had to deal with attacks and that eventually it did draft more substantive defense plans.

As the SDF became more visible in the 1980s and 1990s with its increased activities, there are more examples that show the divisions over the meaning of civilian control, and the opposition parties have not been the only ones to complain about civilian control. During the period of increased cooperation between the SDF and the U.S. military, conservative politicians complained that SDF influence in defense policy was growing too strong, to the detriment of the ruling party's influence (Kuboniwa 23 Nov. 1985). An LDP official complained that Prime Minister Nakasone was just "parroting what the men in uniform tell him" with respect to the strategy of air defense on the high seas. Another striking complaint was that only the chairman of the Joint Staff Council fully understood the Japan-U.S. strategic plan. A few months later, LDP politicians expressed concern over the quality of Defense Agency bureaucrats because in their view the bureaucrats were not exercising sufficient civilian control and were being lazy (Kuboniwa 31 May 1986). The stories did keep the public alert of issues surrounding civilian control, but it also highlighted possible shortcomings of the civilian leadership and/or disagreements with defense activities.

These criticisms beg several questions. What has the Diet done to exercise its oversight and control of the SDF? As the Kuboniwa article indicates, most in the LDP rely on the civilian bureaucracy to exercise civilian control. In that respect, what did the politicians expect to happen to a bureaucracy whose top levels have almost always been filled from the outside by the other elite

ministries? Additionally, with the prospect that the defense budget might soon break the one percent-ceiling (Keddell 1993, 140), there might have been an element of political jockeying within the LDP to blame any potential criticism on the Defense Agency. In any event, the coverage did serve the purpose of alerting the public to concerns of civilian control issues, whether warranted or not.

Rules of engagement (ROE) are another issue related to civilian control that has implications on SDF effectiveness. According to a *Kyodo* article, because the SDF established ROE for its joint exercise, a source expected it to spark controversy because of the Constitution's prohibition of the use of force (30 Dec. 1993). The article explains that ROE govern the use of force and are usually written by military authorities under the direction of the civilian governments, and in Japan's case, the only ROE Japan had established addressed responses to an invasion of Japanese airspace and the use of firearms by SDF personnel. Again, the coverage provides good information, but it also highlights a shortcoming of the civilian government in not establishing ROE for missions it tasks the SDF to perform. As the article and history indicate, even establishing guidelines may be interpreted and criticized as a plan for an attack or a lack of sufficient civilian control. Civilian control is a two-way process and that entails not only the SDF following civilian orders, but also the civilian authorities issuing them. I will highlight ROE again in the next chapter when examining the SDF responses to the North Korean vessel incursions.

Finally, the following case illustrates the conflict concerning what the responsibilities of civilian control entail for the executive and legislative branches

and the negative effect on SDF operations. In February 2001, an MSDF destroyer (or *escort ship*) departed for India for a flotilla event when news arrived of a major earthquake there (Maeda 1 Feb 2001). Under the direction of the JDA Director General and the MSDF Chief of Staff, the crew stopped in Okinawa and loaded relief supplies in case an order to deliver them was given, but before the prime minister and cabinet approved the move. The *Mainichi* does a good job of presenting both sides of the argument of whether this constituted a breach of civilian control, and despite the differences, criticism converged on Prime Minister Mori and the Foreign Minister for not responding quickly. So again, civilian control was a vehicle to view policy (or a lack of one), and seemingly “heads up” behavior could be construed as overstepping the bounds depending on where one thinks control of the SDF rests.

The media have contributed to civilian control by making people aware of its importance. By examining some examples, I showed some potential problems with the competing definitions and interpretations of civilian control. I do not think these shortcomings will pose a significant challenge to civilian control because as I have argued, I think it is ingrained in the SDF and in the public as a whole. But I do see challenges in the long run as the Japanese government continues to rely on the SDF as a foreign policy tool.

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have argued that civilian control of the SDF is strong in Japan. The foundation for this was built in the early postwar years during the transition to democracy in which civilians officials gained political power and the

military lost everything. Starting with the Constitution and then the laws put in place when rearmament began in the 1950s, maintaining civilian control has been a paramount concern. While the laws and constitution formed the basis for civilian control, there were two potential dangers ahead – the government's potential domestic use of the SDF and the internal orientation of the SDF because of this. Mostly as a way to protect the image of the SDF, the prime minister never ordered the SDF to quell riots or demonstrations. Finally in the 1970s, a consensus formed on defense and the Diet approved its first statement of missions and goals for the SDF, the National Defense Program Outline, which reoriented the SDF outward and emphasized cooperation and coordination with the U.S. Almost 20 years later, the government reconfirmed the external focus with the second NDPO.

The media have also played a significant role in promoting the awareness of civilian control and putting concerns of challenges to it out into the public. Reviewing some of the press coverage reveals not only criticisms of a lack of civilian control, but also the varied understandings of it. The lack of consensus in this regard may have negative implications on SDF effectiveness because there are limited ways for professional military input to be incorporated into policy, complaints of a lack of civilian control do not always seem sincere and may have other motives, and vague policies may leave the door open for political interpretation, but do not help the execution of missions.

Overall, despite these challenges, civilian control of the military is strong in Japan. With an almost 50 year tradition of SDF subordination to civilian

officials, any breach of civilian control would most likely prove unacceptable to the public, within the government, and even within the SDF. In the long term, as politically explosive as it might be, efforts must be made to address civilian control issues. When the only expectation of the SDF was to clean up after typhoons or earthquakes, the lack of professional military input or obstruction of defense planning did not have a major negative impact. As expectations, duties, and missions of the SDF grow, issues such as the acceptability of military advice, realistic defense planning, and the drawing up of suitable rules of engagement for expected and tasked missions must be addressed to ensure the continued effectiveness of the SDF and continued strong civilian control.

To test the strength of civilian control I will present two case studies in the next chapter. Since SDF deployments and overseas operations began in the 1990s, there is more data to examine whether the tradition of civilian control has taken hold and how much influence the SDF has in policy-making. Examining the responses in two incidents of North Korean vessel incursions will demonstrate the strength of civilian control and highlight potential areas of concern for the exercise of SDF control by civilian authorities. I will try to answer whether the current practices and legal backing measure up and whether consistent criticisms of the lack of civilian control are warranted.

### Chapter 3: The Strength and Limits of Civilian Control

In this chapter I will present two case studies of the Japanese Self-Defense Force in situations that have probably been the closest to combat the SDF has been in the postwar period. Viewing civilian control at work during actual operations is a valuable way to gain insight into the strength of it and also highlight deficiencies identified at the end of Chapter 2. In March 1999 and December 2001, the Japanese Coast Guard (JCG, formerly the Maritime Safety Agency) and the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) responded to suspected North Korean spy ships sighted in Japanese territorial waters. I will present the facts of each case during both the actual incident and its aftermath. I will also look at what lessons, if any, the Japanese government took from the incidents and how they were applied afterwards. Both of these cases will shed more light on the process of civilian control and on the views of it in Japan. I will end with an examination of the responsibilities civilian authorities usually have for successfully exercising control of the military and look at why Japan sometimes falls short.

#### **MARCH 1999: WARNING SHOTS<sup>5</sup>**

On March 23, 1999, an MSDF patrol plane spotted two suspicious ships off the Noto Peninsula in western Japan. The MSDF passed the information to the JCG, which has the authority under the Fisheries Law, the Ships Law, and the

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<sup>5</sup> The information on the chase is pieced together from various news reports, including: *Straits Times* 25 Mar. 1999, *Guardian* 25 Mar. 1999, *Yomiuri Shimbun* 3 Apr. 1999, 3 May 1999, 27 May 1999, and *Kyodo* 2 Aug 1999.

Immigration and Refugee Recognition Law to pursue intruding ships. After a JCG patrol plane failed to make the two vessels stop, JCG patrol boats began to pursue the vessels. The two suspicious vessels did not heed the calls to stop for inspection, so the chase continued. During the course of this event, the JCG vessels fired over 1000 warning shots but were unable to make them stop.

That afternoon the Cabinet met, formed an emergency task force, and held high-level meetings to decide on a response. Later in the evening the Transport Minister officially requested assistance from the Defense Agency under Article 2 of the National Government Organization Law. As it neared midnight, JDA and MSDF officials developed rules of engagement (ROE) for MSDF vessels in case the order was given for the MSDF to assist. These derived from training regulations and covered the measures to stop the ships, which included firing warning shots, spraying the vessels with water (without hitting people), sailing in the vessels' path, or ramming the ship. Because of the prohibition against the use of force, direct gunfire at the target ship was not allowed, unless under direct attack.

Meanwhile, MSDF ships and aircraft were trailing the ships, ready to assist the JCG. Finally at about one o'clock in the morning Prime Minister Obuchi ordered the MSDF under Article 82 of the SDF Law to stop and inspect the two suspicious ships. The JDA passed the order and ROE to the MSDF whose destroyers and aircraft took over the chase from the JCG. The two vessels did not respond to orders to stop and the MSDF ended up firing 25 warning shots and dropping 18 bombs from patrol planes. The MSDF had requested the JDA

Director General to loosen the restrictions on the use of force, but he denied the request. The two vessels passed outside Japan's air defense identification zone at about three in morning and the government called off the chase by six. Imagery intelligence indicated the two vessels originated from and returned to North Korea. Requests by the Japanese government to North Korea to hand over the vessels and crew were ignored.

This incident earned both criticism and praise for government, JCG, and SDF actions. The *Asahi Shimbun* criticized the government for acting too hastily and trying to instigate an international incident to help gain passage of pending legislation on U.S.-Japan security cooperation (Kin 25 Mar. 1999). Some opposition members in the Diet agreed with the government's actions, but pointed out the limitations on the SDF.<sup>6</sup> Some lawmakers in the ruling coalition demanded that a tougher response should have been taken, while government officials defended the actions as correct under the Constitution and laws (Watts 25 Mar. 1999). One high-ranking MSDF official complained the operation was a failure because the two ships were able to flee (*Yomiuri Shimbun* 3 May 1999).

The matter of drafting and implementing rules of engagement also drew attention. As referenced in the previous chapter, the drafting of ROE was controversial even in a training situation (*Kyodo* 30 Dec. 1993), and here in an operational situation, the JDA and MSDF had to scramble to put them together. Previous MSDF efforts to request the Diet and Defense Agency to draft formal ROE had failed (*Kyodo* 2 Aug. 1999). This highlights the problem that avoiding

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<sup>6</sup> By this time the "opposition" included former LDP members who had broken away in the early 1990s.



defense issues or keeping matters vague can cause. Instead of planning ahead for situations or emergencies, civilian officials put it off. Politically speaking, maybe avoiding defense issues helped smooth other issues in the cabinet or Diet, but security-wise, it opens the door for uniformed members to compensate and make their own rules if the government orders the SDF into operations not previously deliberated over or discussed.

Richard Kohn writes that all military decisions should derive from civilian authority (1997, 142), and in Japan they certainly do. On the other hand, neglect of civilian control on the civilian authority side of the process is a potential trouble area. Because of the sensitivity surrounding defense issues, this is not an easy matter to address, but it is one that only the civilian leaders have the authority and responsibility to do. For example, one aspect of the pending legislation concerned authorization of the SDF to perform inspections of vessels in Japanese territorial waters. This provision was eliminated from the new laws then shelved because the ruling coalition could not agree on whether firing warning shots by the SDF was constitutional (*Yomiuri* 27 May 1999). This was entirely in their power, but it places the SDF in a difficult situation when the government tasks the SDF with missions that are questionable or not thought out fully. And as the case above shows, the MSDF did follow orders and acted only after receiving approval and within the allowed limits. Illustrating this neglect, nothing changed until a similar incident occurred almost two and a half years later.

## DECEMBER 2001: THE SINKING<sup>7</sup>

An event very much like the one in 1999 took place in December 2001 when the JCG reacted to a vessel similar to the two spotted and chased in 1999, but this one took a different turn. On the afternoon of December 21, 2001, an MSDF patrol aircraft took pictures of a vessel off the coast of southwestern Japan that looked like the two vessels in 1999. During the day of December 22, 2001, JCG patrol ships searched for and then found the vessel. They attempted to stop the suspicious vessel for inspection, but it ignored the orders and a six-hour chase ensued. As three JCG ships closed in on the vessel, the vessel opened fire on one of the Coast Guard ships. Acting in self-defense, the Japanese ship returned fire and the suspicious vessel sank. It was unclear whether the crew scuttled the vessel or the JCG's return fire sank it. In the meantime, MSDF vessels had been alerted of the situation and departed toward the scene but only 10 hours after the JCG had begun its initial search for the suspicious vessel.

This event did not seem to spark much controversy for several reasons. The SDF was hardly involved and not involved at all in the firefight. The Coast Guard was the main participant and credibly defended its vessels against a direct attack. Finally, this incident took place just a short time after the 9/11 attacks and the Diet's approval to send MSDF vessels to support the U.S. military, and so the sense of security was probably higher than usual. In the aftermath of this event

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<sup>7</sup> The information on the facts of this case comes from various news reports, including: *Associated Press* 24 Dec. 2001, *Kyodo* 29 Dec. 2001, and *Yomiuri* 30 Dec. 2001, 15 Apr. 2002, 3 May 2002.

though, the government made some changes and contemplated others concerning the SDF.

By April the government created a new guideline to allow MSDF vessels to be dispatched immediately if a vessel suspected to be a spy ship is spotted in Japanese territorial waters (*Kyodo* 15 Apr.2002 and *Yomiuri* 3 May 2002). In a possible sign of the JDA being more willing to represent defense interests, which it has not done well in the past (Katzenstein 1996, 108), the Defense Agency presented several scenarios that identified shortcomings in this solution (*Yomiuri* 3 May 2002). On the other hand, a critic took no time in ridiculing the policy when in September 2002, the government dispatched an MSDF destroyer and fifteen JCG patrol ships in response to a suspect vessel that turned out being almost 300 miles off the Japanese coast (*Taoka* 7 Sep. 2002). Additionally, the Defense Agency considered seeking a change in the legal justification for MSDF patrols from a law allowing research (another example of a euphemism) to Article 82 of the SDF Law, which was used in the 1999 chase (for the only time) and covers maritime patrols authorized by the premier (*Kyodo* 15 Apr 2002). Critics saw this attempt as undermining civilian control because in their (somewhat circular) view the suggestion came from the JDA and so it therefore presupposes the prime minister's approval and usurps civilian control. The JDA awaited suggesting any further changes until the bills governing emergency actions in case of a foreign attack passed, which at this time are still in Diet deliberations.

The changes implemented after the December 2001 event point toward the civilian leadership trying to rectify some shortcomings of its civilian control

responsibilities, but I think the debate highlights the points I made in the previous chapter. The legitimacy of military advice reaching the top levels of civilian authority is still questionable, criticisms of civilian control are more just criticisms against a policy than an indication of an actual problem, and vague policies fail to clarify what the SDF should do during operations. As both cases show, the SDF strictly followed orders, but JDA initiatives to clarify the laws and guidelines sparked criticism and slowed changes. And these proposals came from the *civilian* bureaucracy in charge of the SDF no less.

#### **CIVILIAN CONTROL RESPONSIBILITIES**

What should the civilian authorities be doing to ensure that control of the SDF continues? I return to Richard Kohn to spell out some of the common responsibilities required of civilian leaders for exercising control over the military that seem to be neglected in Japan (1997). First, this is not an easy task because “the challenge...is to exercise civilian authority while satisfying the legitimate needs of the military in pursuit of national security” (148). The executive branch’s main responsibility is to exercise command and that includes creating strategy, drafting rules of engagement, and defining roles and missions (150). Usually this entails bargaining and negotiating with the uniformed service members, but as I have shown, this does not really happen in Japan. Instead, the process seems to revolve around top level civilians making decisions with little professional military input or expertise. While in most countries “the public expects ‘the experts’ will be involved and that their judgment...will receive proper weight” (149), in Japan the opposite is true; the public does not expect

SDF advice to be offered and the civilian leadership prefers to avoid the appearance (real or perceived) of granting the SDF or even the JDA any input. As I showed in the above cases, it took two actual operations until the executive branch actually drafted rules of engagement, and even those did not appear to take the JDA and SDF's views into account.

In addition to approving the military's existence and shaping the size and organization of the armed forces, the legislative branch's role is to oversee military activities and to approve executive actions. This is done through legislation and through oversight in open hearings in which military members must be required to express their professional opinions (151). In Japan, the suggestion of SDF members testifying in the Diet has caused furors and ad hoc committees formed in the Diet have all been consultative rather than policy committees (Gow 1993, 59).

In fact, the Diet has never been an important institution for policy-making because during the LDP's 38-year reign, the LDP's Policy Affairs Research Council (PARC) became the main body where LDP politicians and bureaucrats discussed and formed policy (Curtis 1999, 117). Negotiation with opposition party members took place to facilitate the passage of the legislation only after it had been submitted. The Diet's lack of an autonomous policy-making capability is a major problem especially for opposition parties because they do not have access to bureaucratic expertise or their own capability to form policy (231). The only exception occurred during the period of 1994 to 1998 when the LDP and Socialist Party coalition ran the government and coordinated policy in a Policy

Coordination Council, which was disbanded when the Socialists left the coalition (201-203).

I think this makes clearer why there is a division over where civilian control ultimately rests and why primarily opposition politicians complain of a lack of civilian control. In Japan's parliamentary system, the executive branch is led by the ruling party or coalition with the bureaucracy and PARC in its service, while the opposition is limited to the Diet where debate over bills already written takes place. For the opposition parties, the Diet is generally the only venue where they can exercise civilian control of the SDF, whereas the ruling coalition (primarily the LDP) has opportunities in both the legislative and executive branches and during the policy-making process. If mechanisms of civilian control and SDF oversight were more visible and powerful in the Diet, the ruling coalition would allow the policy-making process to be subject to opposition input, criticisms, and stalling tactics and would essentially lose some power. It might also cause a change in the public view of the SDF as something less than a military into something more like a military, which, as I will show in Chapter 4, is a view not supported by the public or even widely in the LDP.

What does this mean for civilian control of the SDF? As I argued in Chapter 2, the competing understandings of civilian control have led to inhibiting or minimizing military input into policy, suspect criticisms of civilian control, and vague policies. This ultimately has a negative effect on the SDF's ability to execute assigned missions. These two case studies demonstrate that the SDF does follow the orders of the civilian leaders and that civilian control is an accepted

and practiced principle in Japan's armed forces. Now it is up to the civilian leadership to fulfill its responsibilities for civilian control to continue, especially as the civilian authorities expand the SDF's roles and missions.

## CONCLUSION

Both of these case studies illustrate that civilian control does stand-up in the heat of "battle," and that criticisms aimed at the SDF possibly breaching civilian control do not seem to have merit. These cases showed that the SDF has internalized civilian control and that it strictly follows civilian orders, so I think criticisms of a lack of civilian control are unfounded. I am not suggesting that civilian control should be taken for granted, on the contrary it should be continuously checked, but I do think these cases show that the civilian side of civilian control comes up short. I also am not suggesting that the Diet should pass certain bills and let the SDF be more like a real "military," because those are decisions for the Diet, prime minister, and cabinet, including the JDA to make. Helping people prepare for a typhoon or assisting in the clean-up after an earthquake are noble causes, but putting the SDF in more dangerous situations requires more from the civilian authorities. There is no indication the SDF has not followed civilian control, and every indication that it will in the future.

So far I have focused on civilian control and its development and practice. In the next chapter, I will take a step back and examine how the government was even able to place the SDF in a position to undertake actual overseas missions and operations. In addition, examining the political side of civilian control will also provide more insight into why civilian leaders have chosen to avoid drafting

specific rules and continue to make vague defense policies. I have mentioned several times that the Japanese government and public are still very wary of the military and very much aware of the prewar militarism. How and why did SDF activity grow and gain acceptance during the 1990s? Because this process has been gradual and positive for the SDF, dealing with these potential trouble areas I have identified may become a little easier to address as this trend continues.



## **Chapter 4: Expanding the SDF's Roles and Missions**

Since 1990 significant military-related events have unfolded in Japan. Japan deployed its Self-Defense Forces overseas for the first time in 1991 after the Gulf War. Following this, in 1992, the Diet passed the International Peace Cooperation (PKO) Law, which set conditions for Japanese involvement in United Nation's peacekeeping operations. Soon after, the SDF deployed personnel and participated in UN-sponsored operations in Cambodia. The SDF has conducted several lower profile deployments since then. Between 1994 and 1997, Japan and the United States reaffirmed their security relationship and re-negotiated the Defense Guidelines for the first time in almost 20 years, placing more responsibility on Japan for its own defense and for supporting U.S. operations. Finally, since the 9/11 attacks, the Diet passed a law expanding SDF reach, and Japan again sent warships overseas in support of the U.S. and the war on terror. Clearly, the role of Japan's SDF has changed and expanded.

What prompted these changes? How did the Japanese government make these changes? And how has the public responded? To answer these questions, I will examine the political debate and eventual deployment of minesweepers to the Persian Gulf; the process of drafting the PKO law and making the first deployment under the law – Cambodia; the defense guidelines revision; and the current response to the war on terror. I will examine the interaction of the Diet, the JDA and SDF, and the public as expressed through editorials and opinion polls. While I focused on the SDF subordination to civilian authorities in Chapter

3, this chapter will provide more insight into the civilian side of civilian control and the factors that politicians and bureaucrats contend with in exercising that control. As the transformation of the SDF continues, these expanded roles and deployments continue to gain support among politicians and a cautious public. Why is this occurring in a nation that is still well aware of its militarist past and known for its postwar pacifism?

I will argue that the Japanese government has been able to make changes and expand the SDF role and gain domestic (political and popular) support for the moves because of several factors. First, the Japanese government has moved incrementally, introducing changes in the context of the current international situation and supportive of Japan's interests. Second, political debates over military issues have been in the open with extensive news coverage and editorializing. Government plans for SDF operations have not been secret, although vagueness still persists. Additionally, the Japanese government has overtly displayed civilian control of the SDF through the whole process in order to counter domestic and foreign fears or claims of a return to militarism. This can offer an explanation for why the civilian leaders are so cautious with respect to allowing military input into defense decisions or avoiding matters that may seem too "military," such as drafting rules of engagement. Fourth, each mission has been relatively successful and brief, with Japan and the SDF earning praise internationally for its actions. Finally, *gaiatsu* or outside pressure from especially the United States and the United Nations has given both encouragement and political cover for Japan to adjust its policies.

Concurrent with the expansion of SDF roles have been factors that resist change. One of the major factors has been the public's resistance to revising the Constitution and especially the war-renouncing Article 9. The Japanese people regard the Constitution as the foundation of their democracy and Article 9 as the symbol of a peaceful Japan (Arrington 2002, 534). In addition, as I will show below, there has been conflict over the use of the SDF not only among the political parties, but also within them as well. Furthermore, as discussed in the introduction, economic considerations have had paramount importance to Japanese foreign policy. During this period, the military facet of foreign policy has increased but still within strict limits. Finally, just as Japanese citizens are wary of anything military, so are regional neighbors who are also major trading partners, China, South Korea, Taiwan and the Southeast Asian countries.

#### **THE GULF WAR<sup>8</sup>**

On 2 August 1990, Iraq invaded and occupied Kuwait. The United States marshaled the United Nations coalition that ultimately expelled Iraq from Kuwait by March 1991. While under pressure from the U.S. to provide support, Japan contributed \$13 billion to the effort and sent MSDF minesweepers to the Persian Gulf after hostilities ended. How and why did the Japanese government form this response that led to the first postwar, operational overseas SDF deployment?

The primary domestic considerations guiding Japanese actions were public opposition to an SDF deployment, opposition control of the upper house, and Prime Minister Kaifu's dependence on public opinion for government survival

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<sup>8</sup> This section draws heavily from Purrington's two articles on Japanese responses to the Gulf Crisis and War.

(Purrington 1992, 167). After the invasion, Japan responded (against MITI reservations) with economic sanctions in line with U.S. and other nations' actions (Purrington and A.K. 1991, 307-308). Japanese paralysis over the next three weeks frustrated the United States. The U.S. had demanded that Japan contribute SDF personnel and equipment, provide money to multinational forces and aid to the countries in the Gulf region, as well as show plans for buying U.S. weapon systems, and increase financial support for U.S. forces in Japan (308). Additionally, Congress criticized Japan's free ride on security and threatened to withdraw American troops.

The Japanese reactions demonstrated the controversy over deciding on a contribution to the cause. The Kaifu government responded with an aid package of \$1 billion and pledges to loan planes and ships to transport food and medical supplies and to send a fact-finding and follow-on medical team of civilians to the region (309). Deciding not to dispatch the SDF, the government also announced a plan to form a U.N. Peace Cooperation Corps (UNPCC) made of non-SDF government employees and private citizens (312). Indicative of the domestic conflict in coming up with a plan, LDP members were divided on whether to assist further, and the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs clashed over money available to contribute. Opposition parties were also divided over the question of whether or not to create and dispatch a civilian corps. A *Kyodo* poll revealed 59 percent of Japanese surveyed were satisfied with the plan, 22 percent said it was too much, and 16 percent said it was not enough. Over 83 percent opposed sending the SDF to the Gulf. An *Asahi Shimbun* editorial

welcomed the plan and praised the government's decision not to send the SDF, while a *Yomiuri Shimbun* editorial argued that reexamining the constitution was a positive development (qtd in Purrington and A.K. 1991, 320 and *Asahi* 29 Aug. 1990). Additionally, LDP members, the JDA, and some MOFA officials opposed the UNPCC because of the exclusion of the SDF. In fact during this whole crisis, Kaifu did not allow the JDA to report directly to the cabinet because of a fear of military influence in decision-making (Berger 1993, 146).

Continued U.S. criticism and pressure reverberated in Japan to cause further action. Japan announced it would contribute another \$3 billion in aid and also agreed to share equally with the U.S. the cost of stationing U.S. troops in Japan (Purrington and A.K. 1991, 310-311). During deliberations of the UNPCC bill, the government's position on whether to include SDF members shifted several times (313). First, SDF members could join the UNPCC, but lose their SDF status. Then, SDF members could be part of the corps, but only temporarily. Finally, after LDP and JDA criticism, the bill proposed on October 9, 1990 allowed SDF members to serve on commission to the UNPCC and retain their SDF status. The way the draft was finalized illustrates the divisions within the LDP. When Kaifu was away visiting the Middle East and the U.S., LDP Secretary-General Ozawa Ichiro and other LDP members were able to push for and make the changes in the bill, which Kaifu approved because of his weak position in the party (316). While satisfying those who favored SDF involvement, the inclusion of the SDF shifted the focus of the debate over the bill to whether or not the UNPCC was constitutional (Ito 1991, 277). Moreover, inconsistent

statements by government leaders on the interpretation of the constitution and Article 9 and the meaning of the use of force meant did not help gain support among the public and moderate opposition parties (Purrington and A.K. 1991, 313). The government scrapped the bill in November with a promise to introduce another bill excluding the SDF (Kaifu's original proposal) during the next session. The attempt in an open debate to address the SDF role in Japan's response at least opened the door for more discussion later.

Editorials and public opinion continued to be divided with the public supportive of some response by the government, but only one that did not involve the SDF. During the UNPCC debate, the *Sankei* and *Yomiuri* editorials favored a reinterpretation of the constitution to allow collective defense and the deployment of the SDF, while the *Asahi* and *Mainichi* editorials favored a strict interpretation of the constitution with no SDF involvement (qtd in Ito 1991, 281-287). An *Asahi* poll in October showed 33 percent felt the government's response was appropriate, 40 percent were lukewarm, and 7 percent thought the government went too far (Purrington and A.K. 1991, 319). On the other hand, 67 percent favored a non-military contribution, and only 19 percent favored a response involving the SDF. Although the UNPCC bill failed, "a consensus was achieved among mainstream political parties that Japan can no longer simply contribute money to solve world problems, that it must play a more proactive roll in supporting the international order" (322).

After the defeat of the UNPCC bill and the return of hostages who had been held in Iraq, the Gulf situation fell off the radar screen for a short period.

After the shooting war started in mid-January, Japan moved quickly to express support for the U.S. and to consider more support for the coalition. After an initial offer of another \$5 billion of support, the U.S. countered with a \$10 billion request (Purrington 1992, 163). The Kaifu cabinet agreed on \$9 billion and then tried to downplay the effect of U.S. pressure when announcing the plan. In order to deliver the aid, the LDP had to make concessions to the Komeito to ensure passage of the spending bill in the Upper House (164-165). This included announcing the aid could only be used for non-lethal purposes. To pay for the contribution, the LDP agreed to double the oil tax, raise corporate taxes for one year, and decrease government spending by 200 billion yen. The LDP also had to drop its support of Tokyo Governor Suzuki who was up for election. Because these deals took time, the supplemental budget bill passed on 6 March – after the fighting war had ended.

Meanwhile, Japan had continued to plan for a way to send non-combat personnel to the Gulf. In January, Kaifu announced that Japan, if requested, would send five SDF C-130 aircraft to transport refugees, under the interpretation that the mission was legal as a “transport training mission done on request” (Purrington 1992, 166). Opposition parties attacked the plan and an *Asahi* poll showed 55 percent of the public opposed the SDF dispatch, while 33 percent supported it. In editorials, the *Asahi* argued against the government’s interpretation and plan to send aircraft, while the *Yomiuri* supported the decision to provide “a tangible contribution which other nations could recognize” (*Asahi Shimbun* 23 Jan. 1991 and *Yomiuri Shimbun* 24 Jan. 1991). Due to no request

being made and trouble with securing landing rights in the region, the government did not issue a dispatch order. This was the fourth concession to the Komeito (Purrington 1992, 167). Kaifu did not want to jeopardize the \$9 billion in aid by sending the planes and losing Komeito support.

With the major fighting over and the aid approved, the Japanese government moved to counter the negative views of Japan's monetary contribution. Criticism of Japan's selfishness, hostility to Japanese companies, and Japan's exclusion from victory celebrations prompted Japan to alter its "checkbook diplomacy" (Purrington 1992, 169-170). In April, Kaifu announced Japan would send the SDF on a minesweeping mission to the Gulf. The Nakasone cabinet's work on justifying a minesweeper deployment during the 1980s and a complete reversal in public opinion helped make this decision politically viable (171). An *Asahi* poll found 56 percent supported the dispatch and 30 percent opposed it. Lack of recognition for the \$13 billion in aid, and fear of international isolation and damaged relations with the U.S. led to the swing (171-172). Although most opposition parties and a plurality of the public opposed the government's interpretation of the SDF Law that minesweepers could operate anywhere, the fighting was over and a majority of the public supported a non-combat role for the SDF (173). Because of the opposition, Kaifu did promise to draft measures to restrict future missions, and Foreign Minister Nakayama said future overseas dispatches would be considered on a case by case basis.

*Asahi* and *Yomiuri* editorials on the dispatch decision continued their basic divisions, but the *Asahi* showed signs of some acceptance (*Asahi Shimbun* 24 Apr.



1991 and *Yomiuri Shimbun* 11 Apr. 1991). The *Asahi* argued against sending the MSDF vessels, but "if it cannot be avoided," the SDF Law needed revision because of the ambiguous geographic limits for not only minesweeping, but also for search and rescue and disaster relief missions. The editorial also reminded the government of the need to do something about contributing to U.N. peacekeeping operations (UNPKO). (Over the years, the *Asahi* received most of its wishes.)

The minesweeper action set the stage for the debate and eventual approval of the International Peace Cooperation Law. During the Gulf Crisis, the SDF's role expanded, but within limits. On the other hand, due to the fear of any military influence, let alone too much, the government excluded direct military input to the top leadership. Foreign pressure played a major role in prompting Japan to take action and do more than give money, but Japan ultimately acted when it was domestically feasible – combat had ended and the public changed its collective mind. The debates over the SDF were open and vigorous and the international criticism allowed the public to see the negatives of no action – what Purrington terms "Iraq Shock." The U.S. pressure did not end with the completion of the Gulf War though, and Japan responded by continuing the debate over the role of the SDF.

#### **THE INTERNATIONAL PEACE COOPERATION LAW AND CAMBODIA**

Between September 1991 and October 1993, Japan expanded the role of the SDF to include U.N. peacekeeping operations and sent SDF personnel to Cambodia to join the U.N. Transitional Authority (UNTAC). While not a crisis like the Gulf situation, the *gaiatsu* for change persisted, and as mentioned above,

a consensus formed in Japan to move beyond "checkbook diplomacy." The question now was how to do that, not whether it was possible. Through the process of drafting the PKO Law and successfully sending SDF troops to Cambodia, Japan was able to alleviate international pressure, satisfy domestic interests, and gain support for SDF deployments. Incremental changes, open debate, stress of civilian control, mission success, and *gaiatsu* mark this period of SDF transition.

From September 1991 until June 1992, the Japanese Diet debated the International Peace Cooperation Law amid calls by the U.N. and Cambodia to provide forces to UNTAC (*Jiji Press* 24 Sep. 1991 and *Kyodo* 23 Mar. 1992). The Kaifu government submitted a revised version of the UNPCC bill that included the SDF and allowed them to carry light arms (Purrington 1992, 174). To obtain Komeito approval, five conditions were included for SDF participation: the U.N. force remains neutral, a cease-fire is in effect, there is agreement of all parties for Japan's participation, the SDF has the right to withdraw if the first three conditions are not met, and Japanese forces can use firearms only to defend themselves. The initial bill also authorized the cabinet to decide on whether to deploy the SDF with the requirement only to inform the Diet of its decision. (*Yomiuri Shimbun* 27 Sep. 1991)

In November, the government leadership changed hands to Miyazawa Kiichi, and the deliberations continued. The LDP initially pushed the bill through the Lower House, but because of divisions over whether Diet approval was necessary for SDF deployments, Komeito and Democratic Socialist Party (DSP)

support faltered and the Diet carried the bill over to the next session. After six more months of negotiations, the Diet passed the PKO Law in June 1992. The opposition Social Democratic Party of Japan (SDPJ, the renamed JSP) boycotted the vote, and the JCP were the only members to vote against it (*Jiji Press* 15 Jun. 1992).

The new law expanded the SDF role to include U.N. peacekeeping operations (UNPKO) and humanitarian operations, but with many limitations and restrictions. Of sixteen listed missions, the Diet froze approval for the most dangerous of missions (being part of peacekeeping *forces*), such as patrolling buffer zones or cease-fire lines and most actions dealing with weapons (Dixon 1999, 155-156). The bill called for a review of the freeze by 1995, but the restrictions continued until they were lifted in December 2001 (*Japan Times* 3 Jan. 2002). Under the freeze, allowable missions included medical care, transportation and construction, supervision of elections, distribution of food, and repair of facilities necessary for daily lives of people, among others. As a result of the law, the JDA then began a push to include UNPKO in the NDPO and included a recommendation in the 1992 Defense White Paper for changing the NDPO to reflect the new mission (*Kyodo* 16 Jun. 1992 and *Yomiuri Shimbun* 8 Aug 1992). Indicative of the slow process and gradual change, this does occur three years down the road.

The law's limitations and restrictions reflected public opinion that continued to show signs of approval for sending the SDF overseas, but only for non-combat operations. In a November poll, the *Asahi* found 58 percent opposed

SDF participation in peacekeeping operations, while 33 percent supported it, but 50 percent approved of SDF deployment for disaster relief, and 24 percent disapproved dispatch for any reason (11 Nov. 1991). By April, another poll showed over 50 percent thought SDF participation in UNPKO was constitutionally questionable, but 47 percent favored it, and 41 percent opposed (*Asahi Shimbun* 30 Apr. 1992). A *Jiji* poll in August revealed support for the SDF to join UNPKO still remained above 50 percent but had dropped from 61 percent a year before (20 Aug. 1992). Of interest, 20 percent felt Japan was under a security threat, and the number one among them was the U.S. at 31 percent. This helps explain why the government downplayed the importance of U.S. pressure (George 1993, 564). While public approval played a role in drafting and approving the law, "the historically poor turnout in the 1992 House of Councilors election attests to the low electoral salience of the PKO decision" (George 1993, 569).

For the first time, the SDF would be allowed to conduct operations on foreign soil. The expanded mission gave the SDF greater legitimacy, and the law opened the "door to a whole new sphere of international activity befitting the post-Cold War era" (569). On the other hand, the law still did not allow the SDF to participate in "sovereign military operations merely authorized by the U.N., such as the Gulf War" (qtd in George 1993, 565). So with this law in hand and Diet approval, the Japanese government may not have been able to respond militarily to another Gulf War, but was able to respond to calls for providing help in Cambodia by sending the SDF.

Deploying the SDF to Cambodia was not a spur-of-the-moment decision reflecting Japan succumbing to pressure. Japan had been active in the peace process in Cambodia since 1987 (St John 1995, 675-677). Japan had contributed money and sponsored conferences in exercising its U.N.-centered diplomacy. Additionally, Akashi Yasushi, a Japanese U.N. official, became head of UNTAC in June 1992. After debates concerning whether the conditions for sending the SDF were met, on 8 September 1992 the Miyazawa cabinet approved the plan to send over 1800 personnel for 14 months to Cambodia to monitor the cease-fire, act as civilian police, and repair roads and structures (*Yomiuri Shimbun* 9 Sep.1992). The contingent included eight SDF cease-fire monitors, 75 police officers, two groups of 600 SDF troops for repairs and logistical support (one for relief), and 520 MSDF and ASDF troops for transportation.

Overall, the mission succeeded in monitoring the elections in the spring of 1993 and repairing roads, bridges and facilities. SDF personnel received praise for their work from UNTAC (of course the leader was Akashi) and returned home on schedule by the next October. The deaths of two Japanese marked a period of great tension and debate, and the opposition called to withdraw the SDF immediately (*Yomiuri Shimbun* 9 Apr. 1993 and 5 May 1993). There were even some cleavages in the LDP after the second death, with Minister of Posts and Telecommunications Koizumi Junichiro (future prime minister) agreeing with the opposition that the five conditions for SDF deployment were no longer met and calling for the SDF to return home (*Asahi Shimbun* 7 May 1993). The Japanese government responded to the deaths by announcing individual SDF members

could protect election monitors in their areas, and then allowed the SDF to go on patrols to protect election monitors, although the government termed them information gathering missions (*Kyodo* 21 May 1993). That ignited another firestorm of debate, calls for withdrawal, and debates over the use of force (*Yomiuri Shimbun* 18 May 1993 and 22 May 1993).

Throughout the Cambodian controversy and then the fall of the LDP in mid-1993, the government kept the SDF in Cambodia "and took the position the SDF had to fulfill its mission" (Mulgan 1995, 1112). Over the course of the Cambodia mission, public opinion remained generally positive toward the SDF's overseas role with a drop in approval during the period of the two deaths and debate over the use of force. A September 1992 poll showed 52 percent favored the dispatch of troops to Cambodia, and 36 percent opposed (*Asahi* 28 Sep. 1992). After the deaths and debates over the use of force, a May poll by *Asahi* revealed 46 percent thought the SDF in Cambodia was a good thing and 33 percent did not, while 60 percent did not want further SDF participation in UNPKO, and only 21 percent approved of more missions (*Yomiuri Shimbun* 1 Jun. 93). Once the Cambodia mission ended successfully and SDF troops had embarked on another UNPKO to Mozambique, a *Yomiuri* poll showed increased acceptance for the SDF and the UNPKO mission (9 Jun. 1994). Fifty-three percent had a positive view of the SDF against only 14 percent with a negative view – the highest positive and lowest negative views since the annual poll started in 1984. Seventy percent thought SDF participation was necessary in UNPKO or necessary if Japan had no other choice, and 22 percent thought it was unnecessary. In addition,

almost 50 percent supported continuing the freeze on the more dangerous missions. The public seemed to be on board with the changes, but again only up to certain limits.

The PKO Law expanded the SDF role and participating in UNTAC provided the first chance to execute the new mission. Despite the controversy over the deaths and the use of force, Japan made a tangible international contribution, the public support continued to grow, and the door was open for more missions and continued debate on the role of the SDF. A small incident in January 1993 pointed toward the growing acceptance of the SDF's new roles. As Japan was deciding on the UNPKO in Mozambique, the JDA began collecting information and making plans for a possible deployment (*Keizai Shimbun* 28 Jan.1993). There was no controversy surrounding this act of preparation by the JDA – quite a contrast from the “Three Arrows Study” controversy in the 1960s and Kaifu shutting the JDA out of the Gulf response deliberations. On the other hand, while the government demonstrating civilian control (and the SDF adhering to it) helped the SDF gain acceptance, there was little adjustment in how the government exercised its control to account for the SDF's growing tasks. Nevertheless, with positive momentum behind the SDF and more opportunities to deploy, the next step was to codify the expansion and connect it to the U.S.-Japan alliance.

#### **THE REVISION OF THE DEFENSE GUIDELINES**

I argued in Chapter 2 that the revision of the NDPO in 1995 and the review of the Defense Guidelines two years later reconfirmed the SDF's external

orientation and contributed to the strength of civilian control. In this section, I will focus on the domestic debate over approving new laws and revisions to the SDF Law needed to implement the changes reflected in the new Defense Guidelines. Again, these changes came gradually, were fully reported in the press, and there was an emphasis on civilian control. Additionally, these changes built on the SDF's successes in executing its new missions.

During the mid-1990s, public support of the SDF and its new missions was very high according to a government poll in July 1995 published in December 1995 (*Kyodo* 9 Dec. 1995). The timing of the release and the context of the questions asked notwithstanding, over 70 percent supported SDF activities in Cambodia, Mozambique, Zaire, and in future missions, and less than 20 percent disapproved of these and future missions. Domestic disaster relief missions also continued to gain the SDF good reviews; over 88 percent thought SDF disaster relief activities during the Hanshin Earthquake in January 1995 were beneficial and only 8 percent disagreed. Seventy-six percent supported the SDF's role in responding to the March 1995 sarin gas attack, while 16 percent did not. Of note, this data, combined with the reversal after the Gulf War and wavering during the Cambodia at the time of the two deaths, suggests public opinion can swing significantly according to what is currently "hot" in the news.

With the Guidelines released in September 1997, the Diet took up the proposed measures to expand the roles of the SDF. Consistent with the slow movement of military related matters, after a six-month period the Hashimoto government introduced three bills to the Diet in April 1998 (*Yomiuri Shimbun* 9



Apr. 1998 and *Keizai Shimbun* 13 Apr. 1998). One bill called for Japanese logistical support to U.S. forces during emergencies in the areas surrounding Japan, which included search and rescue of U.S. troops, inspection of suspicious ships, and transportation duties. The second bill was to amend the SDF Law concerning Noncombatant Evacuation Operations (NEO) and authorize the use of helicopters and ships. The third bill was to amend the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ASCA) so Japan would be able to supply fuel and food to U.S. vessels during peace and war. Editorials over the proposals took the usual slant – the *Asahi* called for solid definitions of “areas surrounding Japan” and “emergency,” while the *Yomiuri* advocated the passage of the bills and stressed the importance of the U.S.-Japan relationship (*Asahi Shimbun* 9 Apr. 1998 and *Yomiuri Shimbun* 12 Apr. 1998). The *Asahi* also stressed the need for Diet approval prior to cooperating militarily with the U.S. to assure civilian control.

The bills went through several modifications as the debate moved forward and public opinion remained split until after the March 1999 spy boat incident (discussed in Chapter 3). As negotiations continued, new Prime Minister Obuchi announced his willingness to amend the bills to satisfy the coalition and some of the opposition parties because their support was needed to obtain approval in the House of Councillors (*Kyodo* 26 Jan. 1999). The main issue included determining when and for what Diet approval should be required. Among the public, polls in early March 1999 and in April 1999 indicated that the North Korean boat incursion probably heightened people’s awareness of security issues and support for the new laws (*Kyodo* 18 Mar. 1999 and 27 Apr. 1999). In March, 37 percent

approved of the new measures, while 43 percent were against them, but by April, the supporters grew to over 65 percent.

After over one year of open debate and a change in leadership, in May 1999 the three bills passed with modifications to gain the support of the New Komeito, the LDP's coalition partner (*Mainichi Shimbun* 25 May 1999 and *Straits Times* 28 Apr. 1999). The changes included dropping the inspection of the suspicious vessels clause and requiring Diet approval for SDF actions in an emergency, and if time is critical, allowing the prime minister to obtain approval after action is taken. The Japanese government was able to uphold its part of the Guidelines, expand the SDF mission, and reaffirm the U.S. military commitment to Japan. Additionally, definitions of emergency and areas around Japan were left vague.<sup>9</sup> Gradualism in Japan's interest, open debates, civilian control, successful performances of the SDF, and pressure from the U.S. all contributed to making this happen. These factors again come into play in shaping Japan's response after the terrorist attacks on the U.S.

#### **THE CURRENT WAR ON TERROR**

After the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. requested assistance from Japan for the war on terror and Japan responded by sending MSDF ships to the Indian Ocean

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<sup>9</sup> Korea was certainly included in the definitions, but at the time the concern was whether or not an emergency in the area surrounding Japan included Taiwan. After the Guidelines were issued, the government went back and forth several times, with Prime Minister Hashimoto stressing the meaning was situational and not geographic, and thereby adding more ambiguity (Green 2001, 92). Maybe in this case vagueness was appropriate because events (the March 1996 Chinese missile launches and exercises off Taiwan, the August 1998 North Korean missile launch over Japan, and the March 1999 shooting incident with the North Korean vessel) between 1995 and 1999 probably helped to heighten Japanese awareness of uncertainty in the region and to be flexible.

for refueling and replenishment operations. The main contingent of MSDF ships departed after the Diet expanded the SDF reach with a new anti-terrorism law and the Cabinet drafted a basic plan for SDF operations. Over a year and a half latter, Japan maintains its military and political support of the U.S. as it continues to consider new defense bills that address SDF actions in cases of military attacks on Japan. Incremental changes to the SDF mission, increased approval of the SDF, and increased cooperation with the U.S. paved the way for the quick response and the out of area role for the SDF.

In response to U.S. calls for support and assistance, Prime Minister Koizumi announced Japan's plan of action that called for assisting the U.S. by deploying the SDF, strengthening security at U.S. bases, gathering intelligence, providing aid for India and Pakistan, assisting Afghan refugees, and making efforts to help the international economy (Heginbotham and Samuels 2002, 101). SDF assistance was to include logistical support and intelligence collection with Aegis-equipped destroyers and P-3 aircraft, and humanitarian assistance. The domestic political environment looked like it would enable Koizumi to deliver – apparent support in the Diet, and support from four of the five major dailies and the public but it was the LDP that limited the response. The LDP General Council vetoed the early dispatch of vessels a week after Koizumi's September 19, 2001 announcement (102). Reasons for opposition included concern over damaging Japan's economy and its relations with Arab nations. Concern over Arab relations and oil resembled the concern during the Gulf response when Japan waited to make its second aid assistance announcement until after most

Arab nations had joined the U.S.-led coalition. These cases illustrate the importance of economic factors in Japan's security. The conservative party turned out to be conservative and wanted to limit SDF involvement to humanitarian, transportation, and medical missions.

Despite the departure from Koizumi's announcement, the law did extend past limitations on the SDF and clarified the ambiguity of "area around Japan" that arose during the 1999 Guidelines deliberations. The Diet passed the anti-terrorism law at the end of October 2001 and it provided a framework for sending the SDF overseas during on-going armed combat (*Asahi Shimbun* 30 Oct. 2001). The law allows the SDF to provide logistic support to U.S. forces, conduct search and rescue operations, and provide humanitarian relief anywhere the SDF receives permission to be. The restriction on the use of force only for personal protection changed to allow the use of force to protect anyone under the care of the SDF, such as refugees. The new law includes a two-year time limit that can be renewed with Diet approval, and consistent with the previous non-combat roles, prohibits SDF operations where armed conflict is taking place or may take place.

The passage of this new law highlights a couple of points concerning the state of civilian control. For one, the use of force guidelines changed and seems to indicate that SDF input did make it to the top civilian authorities. Before the new law came into effect, Koizumi had dispatched MSDF vessels to escort the Yokosuka-based U.S.S. Kitty Hawk to the Indian Ocean under the Defense Agency Law permitting research and study – the same one used to justify sea

patrols around Japan (*Japan Times* 28 Sep. 2001). JDA and SDF officials complained about the restrictions on the use of force because they may be put in positions not planned for or considered because of where they may be. As stated above, the law addressed this concern. One piece of the law drew the most criticism and continued the debate over whether civilian control means Diet control or executive control (prime minister, cabinet and/or bureaucracy). The passage of the law by the Diet authorized the prime minister to send the SDF overseas after cabinet approval of a required "Basic Plan" that lays out the where, what, and how long of the SDF deployment. An editorial in the *Asahi Shimbun* criticized this part of the law because the Basic Plan does not require prior Diet approval as a means of civilian control (31 Oct. 2001). The opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) voted against the law because of this provision (*Jiji Press* 15 Nov. 2001).

Over the course of the next year, several other developments and changes have taken place. In December, the Diet voted to lift the ban on the more dangerous peacekeeping missions that was enforced since the passage of the 1992 PKO Law (*Japan Times* 3 Jan. 2002). At the start of the new year, the government introduced and debated three new emergency bills that deal with SDF and government responses to an armed attack on Japan, but deliberations continue through April 2003. The three bills grant the prime minister power to coordinate a response in case of an attack, allow the SDF to take private land in order to fulfill its duties, and change the make-up of the National Security Council to include more ministers from the Cabinet (Kruger 4 Jul. 2002). Concern for the

protection of civil rights and the vagueness of an emergency and of SDF roles has stalled the bills (*Asahi Shimbun* 10 May 2002 and 26 Jul. 2002 and *Yomiuri Shimbun* 30 Jul. 2002). Like other legislation and decisions, this built-in vagueness allows multiple interpretations and is probably meant to help the bills' passage. I think the government has a dilemma because getting more specific may ultimately smooth out command and control and operations, but at the same time may create more opposition because the SDF image as a military would become more clear. As seen throughout this process, the expansion of SDF roles has gained approval, but roles in actual combat still meet resistance and public opposition to the bills has been fairly high.

The decision in December 2002 to send a high-tech Aegis-equipped destroyer as part of the MSDF contingent demonstrates the balancing of government wishes and critics' opposition. As stated above, Prime Minister Koizumi initially wanted to deploy the Aegis right away, but he did not due to LDP and coalition objections. Over the course of the 2002 the MSDF lobbied the government through its U.S. counterparts to deploy the Aegis for military reasons, but were unsuccessful and drew suspicion from critics (*Asahi Shimbun* 7 May 2002). By November, the Defense Agency and SDF shifted the focus for justifying an Aegis for military reasons to comfort reasons (*Asahi Shimbun* 4 Dec 2002 and *Yomiuri Shimbun* 16 Dec. 2002). Because the Aegis destroyer was newer and had a good air conditioner, the health and welfare of the deployed SDF troops would be much improved. This reasoning worked and on December 16, the Aegis was underway (*Asahi Shimbun* 17 Dec 2002). Making the decision

before U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage visited Japan on December 8 also helped deflect criticism and coalition opposition that the government had succumbed to U.S. pressure (*Yomiuri Shimbun* 16 Dec. 2002).

In contrast to the Gulf War in 1991, the government was able to make changes to the law fairly quickly and deploy the SDF to support the U.S. war on terror. Although economic considerations tempered the initial plans, this change has been consistent with the gradual moves made in the context of the international situation. Although public opinion favored a response that included the SDF, actual combat roles have consistently been viewed unfavorably. Debate over further defense changes continues, but is bogged down. Additionally, there seems to be evidence that the civilian leadership is considering uniformed advice, but military advice is still seen as suspicious. I think the Aegis deployment decision based on its good air conditioner reinforces this and reveals that military advice in non-military terms may be the way to overcome the resistance against it.

#### CONCLUSION

Japan's post-Cold War response to military matters has resulted in the expansion of SDF missions, roles, and responsibilities. The public allergy to the SDF before 1990 has slowly gone away as the SDF has become a regular part of Japan's international contribution. Because changes to the SDF have been slow, military-related debates have been in the open, civilian control is emphasized, missions have succeeded, and *gaiatsu* can find domestic allies, the Japanese have increasingly accepted the SDF's new roles. As of September 2002, Japan has deployed 3200 SDF troops in 16 foreign missions since the PKO Law passed in

1992 and 80 percent of the public support SDF involvement while only 2 percent oppose (*Asahi Shimbun* 18 Sep. 2002).

In the Gulf War, Japan was divided and unable to act with its SDF. After the war ended, minesweepers deployed to the Gulf when public opinion did a complete reversal and lack of appreciation for \$13 billion in aid made “checkbook diplomacy” a costly practice. To adjust policies and to be able to make a greater contribution, Japan enacted the International Peace Cooperation Law, but limited the missions to logistical, medical, or engineering ones. The first use of the new law saw the SDF deploy to Cambodia for over a year to monitor the elections and repair roads and bridges. Two deaths of Japanese civilians prompted an outcry in Japan, but the forces completed the missions and returned home in good shape.

Adjusting the SDF role to the post-Cold War world and taking into consideration new peacekeeping missions resulted in a new NDPO and the Defense Guidelines revision. Another set of laws cleared the Diet and made changes to permit closer cooperation with the U.S. and to increase SDF responsibilities. Japan’s response to the war on terror extended the reach of the SDF and has met many of the U.S.’s requests. The debate over the response and role of the military is a reminder that pacifism or concern for the constitution is not the only consideration Japanese leaders take into account when pressured into action. Economic factors and relations with other countries also play a role.

Although Japan has moved toward becoming a “normal” nation, this does not suggest its politicians or public are ready or willing to expand the SDF role to include involvement in actual combat. While there is a consensus for



participation in peacekeeping and support operations, there is still resistance to the SDF being a "regular" military and engaging in combat. The defense developments over the course of 2002 reinforce this. Emergency legislation is still being considered and justification for adding an Aegis-equipped destroyer to the MSDF contingent was made in non-military terms. Overall, this points to the need for the government to reconcile SDF activities with the laws and interpretations that expand its roles and area of responsibility. There is a dilemma though because while talking specifically about SDF potential activities may help operational plans, it may also thwart efforts and opportunities to employ the SDF. Still missing are the notions that allowing military input does not constitute a breach of civilian control and drafting rules of engagement or making specific plans does not mean you are planning to fight or returning to militarism. Nevertheless, the SDF has become a legitimate and credible policy tool for Japan, and its subordination to civilian authorities is assured.

## Conclusion

When I began this thesis I posed several questions and in each chapter I have attempted to answer them. To answer my overall question of what is the state of civil-military relations in Japan, I examined the principle of civilian control and the expansion of Self-Defense Force roles and responsibilities. In this chapter I will review my arguments and answers. Then I will assess Japanese civil-military relations using the decision-making process that led to the deployment of the Aegis destroyer in December 2002 as a focal point because I think this event epitomizes the strengths and weaknesses of Japanese civil-military relations and civilian control of the SDF. Finally, I will offer some observations on where Japan will go from here and what it means for such issues as constitutional revision and national security in the long term.

In Chapter 1 I laid the foundation for my arguments by presenting a review of the Japan-specific literature and of the theoretical works on civil-military relations and civilian control. By incorporating a number of assumptions and hypotheses presented in the literature, I formed my framework for examining Japan and raised four questions to guide this thesis. Why is civilian control strong? Most authors on Japan agree that civilian control is solid in Japan, but they mostly focus on the structure of the Japanese government and the constitution and laws that enforce civilian control. These arguments highlight important factors but fail to explain why civilian control took hold and became strong in Japan. What is the Japanese understanding of civilian control? The

Japan-specific authors identify several interpretations, which I elaborated on in the ensuing chapters. What challenges has Japan faced and will face in the future with respect to civilian control? Again, the authors who have written on Japan identify several, and I argued why Japan has been able to overcome some and put off or avoid the others. Finally, why has the SDF role been able to expand and gain approval? Arrington and Keddell offer some key observations, and I added my own thoughts to the analysis. Huntington, Finer, Aguero, Desch, and Kohn all add insight into examining civil-military relations, and I applied their theories and arguments to expand on what has previously been written on Japan and to support my arguments.

I argued in Chapter 2 that civilian control of the military in Japan is strong because of several factors, but I also identified some potential challenges Japan faces. During the transition to democracy, the military had no place in society and the government enacted laws that enforced civilian control and formed a base for postwar civil-military relations. A potential problem during the first 20 years of the SDF was its internal orientation and the government's intention to deploy the armed forces for riot control. Because the government did not deploy the SDF to quell internal disorder and changed the SDF's emphasis to externally oriented missions in the two National Defense Program Outlines, civilian control took root and became strong in Japan.

The media have played a significant role in promoting the principle of civilian control by making people aware of its importance and commentating on whether a particular activity or policy upholds the principle of civilian control.

They have also provided a window to view the different interpretations of what civilian control really means. There is no consensus on what constitutes the appropriate division of responsibilities among the Diet, prime minister, cabinet, Defense Agency, and the uniformed SDF. This may have negative implications on SDF effectiveness because of several factors. First, there are limited ways for professional military input to reach the top civilian leaders. Second, complaints of a lack of civilian control are sometimes used to counter disagreeable policies and do not usually indicate a lack of civilian control. Finally, vaguely worded policies may help get defense legislation passed, but they hinder strong civilian guidance for missions the government expects the SDF to execute.

In Chapter 3, I examined the Coast Guard and MSDF responses to two incidents of North Korean vessel incursions into Japanese territorial waters to demonstrate the strength of civilian control and highlight potential areas of concern. Both of these cases illustrate that civilian control does stand-up in the heat of "battle," and that criticisms aimed at a lack of civilian control do not seem to have merit. These cases also show that the SDF has internalized civilian control and that it strictly follows civilian orders, but in the aftermath of each case the civilian side of civilian control seems to come up short in fulfilling its responsibilities to plan for operations, to exercise oversight, and at least to listen to military input. A brief review of the policy-making process provides one explanation for why the opposition parties generally view the Diet as the main players to exercise civilian control and why the ruling parties (primarily the LDP) view the executive branch as the primary civilian authority. Ultimately, the SDF

is under strict civilian control, and it is up to the civilian leaders to fulfill their end of the process. Assigning the SDF more dangerous missions requires more from the civilian authorities in the form of dealing directly with defense issues, especially in cases such as these that involve national defense. Military input into defense policies and practices does not hinder or obstruct civilian control. Making plans for operations or drafting rules of engagement is smart preparation, not a sign of militarism in the government or the SDF.

Finally, I examined how the government was able to expand SDF roles and put the armed forces in a position to undertake actual overseas missions and operations. How and why did SDF activity grow and gain acceptance during the 1990s? I argued that the SDF's roles and missions have expanded and gained approval because changes have been gradual and in Japan's interest; military-related debates have been in the open, and civilian control emphasized; missions have succeeded; and *gaiatsu* has prompted the Japanese government to act. I examined the political debate and eventual deployment of minesweepers to the Persian Gulf, the process of drafting the PKO law and making the first deployment under the law to Cambodia, the defense guidelines revision, and the response to the war on terror to highlight my argument.

These cases also provided insight into the civilian side of civilian control and highlight the factors that politicians and bureaucrats contend with in exercising that control. The process by which the government was able to expand the SDF's reach has also made it difficult to provide specific direction to the armed forces or for the SDF to be able to offer professional military advice that is

seen as legitimate. Again, missing in Japanese civil-military relations are the notions that allowing military input does not constitute a breach of civilian control and drafting rules of engagement or making specific plans does not mean that the SDF is planning to fight or gaining too much influence that may lead to a return to militarism.

I think the December 2002 decision to deploy the MSDF's most capable ship for Operation Enduring Freedom because of its excellent air conditioner embodies many aspects of civil-military relations in Japan. In terms of classifying this deployment as an expansion of SDF's roles, I think it qualifies because this is the first ever out-of-area deployment of one of the Aegis-equipped ships. Ultimately this was a gradual move; it took over a year from the time Prime Minister Koizumi expressed his intention to send one until he actually did. Additionally, up to that point the SDF had performed well and there was no negative news concerning SDF actions overseas. *Gaiatsu* was present, and like actions throughout the decade, government officials tried to downplay U.S. influence by making the decision before Undersecretary of State Armitage visited Japan. Furthermore, the Diet passed the law that gave the prime minister the authorization to dispatch SDF troops and equipment for anti-terrorism support. Although Koizumi had the power to make the decision he did not until the coalition partners approved. On the other hand, attempts by the Defense Agency and SDF to influence the decision did not work by arguing in military terms. To bring the coalition partners aboard for this deployment, the defense officials and government had to argue in terms of comfort and health.

This decision reinforces several of the points I have raised in this thesis. First, civilian control of the SDF is strong. Even though politically there is disagreement over where ultimate control exists, there is every indication the SDF will strictly follow orders from the commander-in-chief (the prime minister), and from the Diet when it passes laws expanding or restricting activity. Second, professional military advice reaching top civilian decision-makers is difficult and not viewed as legitimate, but the Aegis decision and the amendment to the use of force restriction indicate some progress is being made. This highlights the third point; speaking or justifying actions in military terms may make the SDF seem too "military," and there is still substantial resistance politically and publicly to admit that the SDF is in fact a military force. This point illustrates the difficulty the civilian leadership has in accepting military input or dealing directly with defense issues, such as drafting rules of engagement and enacting emergency legislation.

Allowing uniformed members of the SDF to provide input into Japanese defense policy will enhance Japanese security on several counts. For one, SDF members have professional expertise and experience in combined exercises with the U.S. and in U.N. operations. Past experiences and expertise in defense matters can be combined with civilian objectives and concerns to form realistic policies in Japan's national interest. In addition, when the government plans to deploy the SDF for operations, it is proper to take into account military perspectives and experiences. Lessons from previous operations can be invaluable in the planning for future operations. Finally, there is a common

saying that one of the most important duties of a leader is to take care of his or her troops. When military members know their civilian and military leaders are giving them the resources, direction, and consideration for successful mission accomplishment, this significantly enhances performance and effectiveness. In many respects, the Japanese government treats the SDF very well, but when it comes down to actual operations, I think professional military input is neglected.

So to use a technical term, overall civil-military relations in Japan are pretty good. Civilian control is strong; the SDF is definitely subordinate to the bureaucratic and political leadership. Relations with society are also positive; a strong majority of the public approves of the SDF and the missions it conducts. So far the SDF has successfully completed the missions it has been asked to carry out. The biggest challenges I see are sorting out the political conflict over what constitutes civilian control and legitimizing professional military input into defense matters. These will become increasingly important as the government tasks the SDF with more operational missions and expects the SDF to execute them successfully.

Where does Japan go from here? In 1986 Chalmers Johnson wrote that Japan faced a defense dilemma because on one hand Japanese rearmament was seen domestically and internationally as a possible revival of Japanese militarism and on the other hand Japan's small contributions to the common defense led to the criticism that Japan was taking a "free ride" on the backs U.S. and other countries in the region who provided military security (1995, 265-270). Today, these criticisms persist to some extent, although the free ride argument has



tapered off because of the SDF deployments and operations in support of the U.N. and the U.S. With respect to civil-military relations, I think Japan has had a free ride in dealing directly with civilian control issues by avoiding them or putting them off because in the end the Mutual Security Treaty guarantees the U.S. will defend Japan if it is attacked. What I have argued in this thesis is that whatever course the government decides to take, the SDF will continue to subordinate itself to civilian control.

An important process currently taking place in Japan that may have an effect on civil-military relations is the deliberations discussing revisions of the constitution. Various polls indicate that the public favors this, but few favor the revision of Article 9. There is still an aversion among the public and many political leaders in Japan to showing any signs of possessing an actual military, even though the SDF resembles one in every respect excepts its name. Because of this aversion and, related to it, the fear of a return to the militarism of the 1930s, the legitimization of military input into defense policy will be difficult to accomplish. In addition, possessing an actual military may require Japan to deploy its SDF more frequently because of United Nation and Security Treaty obligations. This would upset the course Japan has chosen to take in the postwar era of emphasizing economic matters and avoiding military commitments and foreign entanglements, as guided by the Yoshida Doctrine.

On the positive side, the constitutional debate has opened an opportunity for the discussion of defense related matters in an environment not actually connected to day-to-day civil-military relations. This may provide a less

contentious forum for Japanese political leaders to examine what direction to take in security issues and how to shape the role of the SDF to meet those needs and be in line with the constitution, whether Article 9 is amended or not. In fact, one argument against revising Article 9 focuses on the fact that government interpretations have allowed the SDF to be sent to war zones, so there is no need to revise it (*Japan Times* 26 Feb. 2002). If this turns out to be the case, there still needs to be some type of consensus on how civilian leaders execute control of the SDF and take into account applicable military concerns that can affect mission performance and success.

In a roundabout way, political squabbles on the civilian end of controlling the SDF have led to either very restrictive or very vague direction provided to SDF – maybe too little civilian control, but the end result is the SDF has to wait for continuous orders from the civilian leadership to deal with new situations – maybe too much civilian control. As I have argued, the SDF is absolutely under the control of the civilian authorities, but I think the civilian authorities have done only a fair to poor job of exercising that control. The policy-making process I described in Chapter 3 tends to validate Watanabe's criticism that defense policy seems to emerge from a "black box" and hinders public and opposition party understanding of the issues considered and questions raised during that process (1996).

Just as transparency in economic matters and business deals are seen as good and keep everything in the open, I think transparency not only in Diet debates which already happens, but also in the policy formulation process, will

help promote a more widespread understanding and approval of defense issues. Japan will be able to continue to make its international contribution and demonstrate that a return to militarism is not imminent. Even the *Asahi Shimbun* admits that the SDF has performed well overseas and its role in U.N. operations has become an institution in Japan (18 Sep. 2002). The SDF has shown itself committed to civilian leadership, and now it is up to the civilian leadership to fulfill its duties.

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