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THESIS

**LEADERSHIP MATTERS: PRIME MINISTER KOIZUMI'S
ROLE IN THE NORMALIZATION OF JAPAN'S POST-9/11
SECURITY POLICY**

by

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December 2008

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NORMALIZATION OF JAPAN'S POST-9/11 SECURITY POLICY**

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ABSTRACT

For many years following the end of World War II, Japanese leaders followed the Yoshida Doctrine, which placed the nation's priority and resources on economic recovery and growth at the expense of defense spending. Tokyo was able to do this through the U.S.-Japan alliance during the Cold War years. The end of the Cold War and the "checkbook diplomacy" of the first Gulf War forced Japan's leadership to rethink how it approached foreign policy and marked the beginning of the end for the doctrine and a beginning of normalization of Japan's security policy.

It would take another ten years and another Gulf crisis before Japan would cross the threshold of deploying its armed forces overseas during wartime conditions for the first time since the end of the Pacific War. Prime Minister Jun'ichiro Koizumi was the leader who orchestrated this remarkable achievement to expand Japan's security policy to better align Japan's international contributions to its economic status as the second largest economy in the world. This thesis will analyze Koizumi's specific contributions to the normalization of Japan's post-9/11 security policy and discuss why it took his specific brand of leadership to allow Japan's security policy to expand.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASDF	Air SDF
ATSML	Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law
BMD	Ballistic Missile Defense
CCS	Chief Cabinet Secretary
CEFP	Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy
CGR	Central Government Reform
CLB	Cabinet Legislation Bureau
DPJ	Democratic Party of Japan
DPRI	Defense Policy Review Initiative
GSDF	Ground SDF
GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
ISML	Iraqi Special Measures Law
JDA	Japan Defense Agency
JCG	Japan Coast Guard
JCP	Japan Communist Party
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
MITI	Ministry of International Trade and Industry
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MSDF	Maritime SDF
NPR	National Police Reserve
NSF	National Safety Force
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
PKO	Peace Keeping Operations
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
SACO	Special Action Committee on Okinawa
SCAP	Supreme Commander Allied Powers
SDF	Self Defense Force
SMD	Single Member District
UN	United Nations
USCG	United States Coast Guard
USN	United States Navy
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

Prime Minister Jun'ichiro Koizumi¹ of Japan, who served as premier from April 2001 to September 2006, has been the subject of many studies. He was the third longest serving postwar prime minister, in a post where the average length in office has been roughly two years.² Only Prime Ministers Shigeru Yoshida and Eisaku Sato served longer in the position. Prime Minister Koizumi was somewhat of an enigma in Japanese politics due to the fact that he was not the leader of his own faction (although there was precedence for this, it was certainly a rare occurrence) and exhibited an independent style of leadership by forming a cabinet largely of his own choosing, with little regard to factional loyalties and party politics. This fact would play a significant role in how Koizumi ultimately ruled the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). He quickly established a reputation as a strong and dependable ally to President George W. Bush in the global war on terrorism (GWOT) as well as Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).

The basic research question that this thesis will ask is: "What specific actions did Prime Minister Koizumi take in the normalization of Japan with regard to security policy in the post-9/11 era and how much weight did his personal leadership carry in carrying out these actions? Does individual leadership really matter in a country like Japan, where individual prime ministers are often thought to be overshadowed by powerful party power-brokers and entrenched bureaucratic policymakers?" This thesis argues that the assertive actions that Japan took to normalize its defense/international security policies since 9/11, and, more specifically, its active support of the United States and the United Nations in carrying out GWOT and OIF, were largely due to the efforts of then-Prime

¹ Japanese personal names will be presented in Western order; first name, last name.

² Naofumi Fujimura, "The Power Relationship between the Prime Minister and Ruling Party Legislators: The Postal Service Privatization Act of 2005 in Japan," *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 8, no. 2 (Aug 2007), 245.

Minister Koizumi. This thesis will provide evidence that Koizumi's personal leadership carried the most weight in comparison to the other alternatives and that it can take the leadership of one man to force a shift in Japan's foreign policy paradigm.

In order to answer the basic research question, alternative arguments must be explored. Were institutional reforms such as the strengthening of the *kantei* (the prime minister's official residence and Japan's version of the White House) the primary reason for Japan's actions? Or was it purely a result of situational factors like 9/11 and American pressure for Japan to respond? Are the changes being driven by powerful bureaucrats in ministries like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) or the Ministry of Defense (MOD)?

B. IMPORTANCE

In recent years, there have been many studies conducted by scholars of Japanese politics and the U.S.-Japan security alliance on the "normalization" of Japan. Although there are many ways to define normalization, these studies largely focused on what Japan has done in recent years to contribute to international affairs, both politically and economically, in a manner commensurate with its economic power. For many years following Japan's defeat in the Pacific War, Tokyo had followed the Yoshida Doctrine, named in honor of the first postwar foreign minister and third postwar prime minister, Shigeru Yoshida. The doctrine basically focused Japan's resources and efforts on economic growth at the expense of defense spending. Japan was able to do this through its alliance with the United States. In exchange for the use of military bases on Japanese soil, Washington agreed to provide defense for Tokyo and placed it under the American nuclear umbrella. As a result of this arrangement, among other geopolitical factors such as the economic booms associated with the Vietnam and Korean conflicts and the opening of the American market to Japanese products, Japan experienced unprecedented economic growth leading to its current position as the second largest economy in the world.

Despite the great prestige Japan enjoyed as a result of its economic prowess, Tokyo was largely seen as a political lightweight when it came to international affairs, especially on security issues. This view was reinforced by Tokyo's lack of assertive

actions during Operation Desert Storm in the first Gulf War. Despite paying over 13 billion U.S. dollars to support the coalition in its efforts to drive Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait, Japan failed to provide actual troops to support the operation. Japan was heavily criticized by the international community for its “checkbook diplomacy” and failure to provide a human contribution to the efforts.³ Tokyo’s unwillingness to risk blood and treasure like the other coalition partners was largely seen as unacceptable for a nation with Japan’s economic stature. When Japan finally deployed minesweepers to the Persian Gulf after the hostilities had ended, this action was largely seen as “too little, too late.”⁴ Even the Kuwaiti government failed to acknowledge Japan’s contributions when it took out a one-page ad in the New York Times to thank the coalition partners who assisted in driving Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait.⁵

For many years following the end of the Pacific War, Japan had been able to simply use its American-drafted Constitution, specifically Article Nine, as an excuse for not participating in any action that required the use of its armed forces, known as the Self Defense Forces (SDF) or *jieitai*. Article Nine is the so-called peace clause that forbids Japan from using military force as a means to settle international disputes. Prime Minister Yoshida and subsequent prime ministers used Article Nine as a tool to focus on economic issues rather than security issues. This was the foundation of the Yoshida Doctrine.⁶ However, the ridicule that Tokyo suffered in the aftermath of Operation Desert Storm demonstrated that checkbook diplomacy was no longer an acceptable foreign policy option for Japan in the post-Cold War era.

Prime Minister Koizumi was inaugurated as prime minister in April 2001. Five months later, the terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington D.C. occurred. Before long, the United States would launch attacks against the Taliban in Afghanistan. By 2003, the United States, along with a new coalition, would be at war with Iraq. How

³ Richard J. Samuels, *Securing Japan : Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 67.

⁴ Tomohito Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy : Japan's Kantei Approach to Foreign and Defense Affairs* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), 51.

⁵ Ibid., 55.

⁶ Kenneth B. Pyle, *Japan Rising : The Resurgence of Japanese Power and Purpose*, 1st ed. (New York: Public Affairs, 2007), 241-277.

would Japan react to this new crisis? Would it revert to the use of checkbook diplomacy as it had during the first Gulf War? Would it attempt to participate but take too long to make a decision and miss out on the opportunity to show the world that it can contribute to international security issues with more than just money? Or would Japan rise to the occasion and take decisive action in support of GWOT and OIF by providing actual “boots on the ground”?

Japan obviously chose the latter option. Prime Minister Koizumi provided the much-needed strong leadership to steer Japan on the right course with regard to the post-9/11 security policy. Under his leadership, the Diet quickly passed laws that enabled the Maritime SDF (MSDF) to provide fuel and ammunition to allied warships in the Indian Ocean and send the Ground SDF (GSDF) to a war zone for the first time since the end of the Pacific War.

Why did Japan choose this option? Although there is little doubt as to the importance of Japan’s normalization from both the American and Japanese perspectives, it is crucial to understand who or what is driving these changes. It is important to understand this because it will help U.S.-Japan alliance scholars and policymakers have an idea of what kind of behavior to expect from Japan in the future. Will Japan be an ally that the United States can count on in future crisis on a consistent and regular basis or will its support from Japan come intermittently based on who its leader is? U.S.-Japan alliance policymakers must understand that the future trajectory of Japan’s security policy does indeed depend a great deal on Japan’s leader. It is the intent of this thesis to provide evidence that Koizumi’s personal actions drove these changes. While the arguments in favor of institutional, bureaucratic and situational reasons have their valid points, these factors did not drive the prime minister’s decisions and actions. Rather, he skillfully manipulated and used these alternative factors to his fullest advantage to accomplish his foreign policy objectives. This thesis will demonstrate that it took Koizumi’s style of leadership to force the Japanese government to provide the necessary

military support to the coalition to protect Japan's delicate credibility in international affairs. A typical Japanese politician who is unwilling to take risk and would rather build consensus before acting would not do. In short, it took "Koizumi Magic."⁷

The continued normalization of Japan's security policy will clearly strengthen the alliance between Japan and the United States. Having the ability to utilize the SDF in a manner commensurate with Japan's economic power will provide greater flexibility and more options for the political leadership of Japan. However, the issue of whether collective self defense is permissible or not under the constitution continues to be a major sticking point within the U.S.-Japan alliance. The Japanese government believes that collective self defense is a right of any sovereign nation. However, the Cabinet Legislation Bureau's (CLB) official position is that under Article Nine, Japan may not practice collective self defense.⁸ The CLB is neither an elected group of politicians nor a group of justices like the Supreme Court. Rather, the CLB is a group of powerful bureaucrats who make foreign policy by defining "war potential" as well as ruling collective self defense unconstitutional.⁹ This is a major problem from the perspective of war fighters on both sides of the alliance and perhaps the most direct example of bureaucratic influence over foreign policymaking and an example of one of several obstacles that Japan must confront in order to take normalization to the next step.

C. METHODS AND SOURCES

This thesis will utilize both a historical and case study method. The initial goal is to establish the historical context of normalization to thoroughly understand what it is, why Japan is normalizing its security policy, and some of the constraints associated with it. In order to accomplish this, historical study of the Japanese postwar constitution as well as the Yoshida Doctrine, which has guided Japan's postwar foreign policy for so many years, is necessary. Arguably, these two items are among the biggest obstacles to Japan's present day normalization efforts. When available, primary sources such as the 1947 Constitution will be referred to. Other primary sources, such as articles written by

⁷ Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy : Japan's Kantei Approach to Foreign and Defense Affairs*, 7.

⁸ Samuels, *Securing Japan : Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia*, 46-51.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 46.

political leaders such as former Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa¹⁰ and opposition Leader and former LDP power-broker Ichiro Ozawa,¹¹ as well as speeches of various prime ministers, will be analyzed to determine any trends or changes with regard to foreign policy.

Additionally, this thesis will study the position of the prime minister and the reforms that were implemented to strengthen the *kantei*. This is necessary to determine how much influence institutional reforms had on Koizumi's tenure. This section will briefly compare the Japanese prime minister to some of his counterparts in other political systems in order to analyze how much power he has relative to other leaders, and how this affects his ability to influence foreign affairs. This thesis will also study political leadership in general and determine if Koizumi exhibited some of the common traits associated with successful political leaders.

This thesis will also study the role of the bureaucracy and its influence in directing foreign policy. How much influence does it have on elected officials? Is there a power struggle between bureaucrats and politicians? If so, is it a zero sum game where one side's power increases or decreases at the expense of the other? This will be necessary to eliminate the argument that the bureaucracy really drives Japanese foreign policy.

A case study method will be utilized to study Koizumi's domestic reforms, specifically the actions that he took to pass postal reforms. This case study will also determine how much influence bureaucratic and institutional factors exerted in Koizumi's successful postal reform. Studying Koizumi's domestic success is important to identify whether there is a link between success in domestic politics and success in foreign affairs. Does leadership in one require a different type of leadership in the other or do the skills for both go hand in hand? Election result data and public opinion polls will be analyzed as applicable.

¹⁰ Morihiro Hosokawa, "Are U.S. Troops in Japan Needed?" *Foreign Affairs* 77, no. 4 (07//Jul/Aug98, 1998), 2-5.

¹¹ Ichirō Ozawa, Louisa Rubinfiel and Eric Gower, *Blueprint for a New Japan : The Rethinking of a Nation [Nihon kaizō keikaku.]*, 1st ed. (Tokyo ; New York; New York: Kodansha International; Distributed in the U.S. by Kodansha America, 1994), 208.

Since the fiasco of the first Gulf War was considered by many to be the catalyst that drove Japan to reconsider its foreign policy toward taking on a more assertive role in international affairs, a case study of how Prime Minister Kaifu managed the first Gulf War crisis will be necessary to determine the lessons learned and to establish a baseline to compare what Koizumi did differently during post-9/11 and the second Gulf War. Did Kaifu perform poorly because he was less of a leader than Koizumi, or were there other factors involved? Was there a link between his attempts to reform domestically and his performance in foreign affairs? Did the structural reforms that took place since 1991 such as the 1994 electoral reform¹² and the 1999 cabinet reform really stack the deck in Koizumi's favor or were these reforms overrated? These are some of the questions that can be addressed with a case study of the first Gulf War and how Kaifu handled his responsibilities. Studying this case will allow this thesis to eliminate institutional reasons as the main distinction between Koizumi and Kaifu's leadership.

The thesis will then focus on Koizumi's specific contributions to the normalization of Japan's security policy. An area of particular concern is Koizumi's influence on the expanding role of the SDF, particularly the laws passed by the Diet, such as the Anti-terrorism Special Measures Law (ATSMML) to support GWOT and the Iraq Special Measures Legislation (ISML) to send ground troops to Iraq. The goal is to study why Koizumi was able to pass this through the Diet so quickly despite the lack of support from within the LDP and the opposition.

Since Koizumi's departure from office in 2006, three men have held the position of prime minister. Shinzo Abe was Koizumi's immediate successor and was in the job less than one year before resigning to take responsibility for the LDP's loss in the upper house election. Yasuo Fukuda replaced Abe in 2007 but also stepped down with less than one year in office. Both men served in Koizumi's cabinet as Chief Cabinet Secretary, a powerful position roughly equivalent to the White House Chief of Staff within the United States government. The third post-Koizumi prime minister is the

¹² Margarita Estévez-Abe, "Japan's Shift Toward a Westminster System: A Structural Analysis of the 2005 Lower House Election and its Aftermath." *Asian Survey* 46, no. 4 (Jul/Aug, 2006): 642.

incumbent, Taro Aso, who took over the position in September 2008. The importance of Koizumi's role in shaping of Japan's post- 9/11 security policy cannot be thoroughly analyzed without asking whether his successors have been able to maintain momentum with regard to these issues. In short, have Koizumi's reforms endured? Have these men demonstrated strong leadership as a result of the new and improved *kantei*? An analysis of Koizumi's successors' performance will demonstrate that institutional reasons alone will not make the position of prime minister stronger or more effective.

The literature reviewed for this thesis provides a solid background on the various arguments that claim to be the driving factors in the post-9/11 security policy. Ever since Japan regained its independence in 1952 upon the conclusion of the American occupation, U.S.-Japan alliance policymakers and scholars who lived through the Yoshida Doctrine years and the Gulf War fiasco have not believed that Japan would ever deploy the SDF out of Japan during wartime conditions. When this barrier was finally breached with the deployment of the SDF to the Indian Ocean and Iraq, the same scholars and policymakers gave credit to the reforms that strengthened the *kantei* rather than to the leader who actually pulled the trigger to make this happen. It is the intent of this thesis to demonstrate that although these arguments are certainly important factors and had a part in the normalization of Japan's post-9/11 security policy, they were not driving the policy. Rather, this thesis argues that Koizumi was driving the policy. A simple analogy can be used to demonstrate this point. An automobile represents Japan's post-9/11 security policy. Someone (a leader) must drive the policy. The automobile engine represents the bureaucracy. A strong, well-maintained engine will help the driver arrive at his destination (the direction in which the policy is driven; in this case, the path of normalization). On the same note, a poorly maintained, weak engine could hinder the goal of arriving safely at the destination (For example, the CLB's interpretation that collective self defense is not permissible under the constitution). A state's rules of the road and infrastructure such as well-maintained roads and signal lights represents institutional factors such as the new and improved *kantei* and electoral reform. Improper functioning of the infrastructure and rules could lead to accidents. On the other hand, properly functioning rules and traffic lights will help the driver reach his destination. The

weather/driving conditions represent situational factors like the first Gulf Crisis and 9/11. A storm can be viewed as both an obstacle and an opportunity. An average driver may view it as an obstacle and decide to wait out the storm (slow response) or attempt to drive through it and end up in an accident (bad response). This example would characterize Kaifu in Gulf War One. On the other hand, a good driver may view it as an opportunity to drive through the storm quickly to avoid the traffic (quick, decisive response) or view it as an opportunity to show his superior driving skills in challenging conditions (superior political prowess). This characterizes Koizumi's actions both domestically and internationally since 9/11. The point of this analogy is that although all factors have a role in getting the car from point A to point B, it takes a skillful driver to operate the car, ensure it is properly maintained, and make decisions regarding navigation. In other words, bureaucratic, situational, and institutional factors all play a role in post-9/11 normalization, but Prime Minister Koizumi was without question the driving factor. He was able to do this because of his popularity (which translates to political capital), his superior use of the media (newspapers, sports *shimbun*, wide shows, internet), his commitment (whether to personal vision such as postal reform or loyalty to an alliance partner like the United States), and his willingness to take risks to do what he believes is right for Japan.

D. ORGANIZATION

This thesis will consist of five chapters, including this introductory chapter.

Chapter II will provide brief history/background to establish the historical context of normalization and will include discussions on the postwar constitution, the Yoshida Doctrine and the constraints associated with normalization. It will also discuss the position of prime minister and how the *kantei* has changed since the Cabinet reform of 1999 and its impact on Koizumi's tenure as prime minister. The section will also cover general leadership qualities necessary for success within Japanese politics and Koizumi-specific leadership skills that helped him navigate through over five years of stability in a highly unstable environment that is Japanese party politics. This chapter will also include a discussion on bureaucratic power, especially the CLB, as it relates to policy making.

Chapter III will provide arguments for and against Koizumi's leadership. The first part will focus on the argument in favor of Koizumi's leadership and will discuss Koizumi's foreign/security policy and the actions that he specifically took after 9/11 to normalize Japan's security policy. The second section will introduce alternative arguments and will focus on bureaucratic, institutional and situational reasons as the driving factors in Japan's normalization since 2001.

Chapter IV will consist of case studies. The first will discuss Prime Minister Kaifu during the first Gulf War and will attempt to link Kaifu's failure in domestic policy with his failure in foreign policy. This case will also be used to determine how much of an impact bureaucratic, institutional, and situational factors played in the relatively poor performance of Prime Minister Kaifu. The second case study will be on Koizumi's domestic reform, specifically with postal reform. As with Kaifu's case, the same factors will be analyzed to determine their influence on Koizumi's success with postal reform. This study will attempt to link Koizumi's success in domestic politics with his success in foreign policy. Finally, post-Koizumi prime ministers will be analyzed to determine whether reforms to the electoral system and the *kantei* have resulted in stronger leadership from the office of prime minister.

Chapter V will conclude. It will provide the author's views on whether we can expect to see more strong and assertive leaders like Koizumi who will continue to take normalization of Japan one step further and how this will impact the U.S.-Japan alliance.

II. HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Article Nine of the Japanese Constitution: Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.

In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.¹³

A. BRIEF HISTORY AND ORIGIN OF THE U.S.-JAPAN ALLIANCE

There are two main factors that have driven Japanese foreign policy since the end of the Pacific War. One is Article Nine of the Japanese Constitution, quoted above, and the other is the Yoshida Doctrine. In order to understand the U.S.-Japan alliance in general and especially in the context of normalization, one must have a firm grasp of these two concepts. Article Nine is the peace clause built into the constitution that renounces the use of force as a means of settling international disputes. The Yoshida Doctrine, named in honor of Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida, describes the doctrine of placing economic recovery of Japan as the main goal of the government at the expense of defense related spending. The following paragraphs will provide a brief history and explanation of the article and doctrine.

1. Postwar Constitution

General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP), along with then-Prime Minister Shidehara, rewrote Japan's constitution and the process began as a draft submitted by the prime minister to the SCAP in February of 1946. This draft was by and large, just a revision of the Meiji version, with some minor changes to prevent future abuses of the constitution through amendments, and was presumably a major contributor to the military gaining power and General Tojo's eventual rise to the position of prime minister, which directly led to Japan embarking on its' path of

¹³ Japan Constitution, art. 9.

destruction. According to Jim Auer, a leading expert on the U.S.-Japan security alliance, there is some dispute over the actual origin of Article Nine. MacArthur stated in his memoirs that Shidehara suggested it to him, and MacArthur agreed that it was an excellent idea, but Yoshida Shigeru, then foreign minister and future prime minister, believed that MacArthur suggested it and Shidehara agreed.¹⁴ In any case, the clause was included and submitted to House of Representatives in July 1946. When the constitution became effective on May 3, 1947, Japan's war-weary citizens did not want anything resembling the Imperial Army or Navy for their country, even for self defense, although the language of the article was specifically drafted in a way to allow for the buildup of armed forces for self-defense purposes.¹⁵ MacArthur also wrote in his memoirs that although he agreed with the wording of the peace clause, it was never his intention that Japan not be allowed to defend itself from attack.¹⁶ Article Nine quickly became an issue in 1950 at the outbreak of the Korean War. MacArthur wanted Prime Minister Yoshida to develop a 75,000-man National Police Reserve (NPR),¹⁷ the direct predecessor of the SDF, as a means to maintain internal security in Japan when the U.S. military ended its occupation and began to shift its focus to the Korean peninsula. Clearly, U.S. interest in the development of the NPR and eventual rearming of Japan was to develop a strong ally in containing communism and to resist the Soviet Union, not just to defend Japan proper. It was clear as early as 1950 that the peace clause would create unplanned problems for the U.S. strategy in the Far East. The NPR eventually became the National Safety Forces (NSF) in 1952 with a ground and maritime element. Finally, in 1954, with the establishment of the Defense Agency Establishment Law, the SDF was formed with a ground, maritime and air component.

¹⁴ James E. Auer, "Article Nine of Japan's Constitution: From Renunciation of Armed Force "Forever" to the Third Largest Defense Budget in the World," *Law and Contemporary Problems* 53, no. 2, The Constitution of Japan: The Fifth Decade: [Part 2] (Spring, 1990), 173.

¹⁵ Ibid., 175.

¹⁶ Ibid., 173.

¹⁷ Samuels, *Securing Japan : Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia*, 46.

The point of this brief history is twofold. First, the ambiguity in the origins of the peace clause suggests that from the American perspective, MacArthur wanted Shidehara to take credit so that the Japanese people would take ownership of their new status as a peaceful democracy and not use the fact that it was an American invention as an excuse for not supporting it. From the Japanese perspective, Yoshida clearly intended to use the American authorship of the constitution to implement the Yoshida Doctrine and focus fully on economic recovery, and to leave defense to the United States. And finally, the old adage of “be careful of what you wish for because it might come true” became a reality for MacArthur, because when he needed a strong ally in East Asia to support his war efforts on the Korean Peninsula, it was no easy task to convince Japan to build up the SDF, arguably the first step for normalization of the Japan’s security policy, and to take more responsibility for its own defense. Furthermore, Japan has no experience revising its constitution, even the Meiji Constitution. Thus, the historical aspects of how and why the peace clause was included are important factors in determining how much any prime minister, including Koizumi, can accomplish in terms of normalization of Japan’s security policy, whether revision or reinterpretation is feasible, and just how challenging this is in domestic politics.

2. Yoshida Doctrine

The idea of the Yoshida Doctrine survived for many years, was the dominant school of thought with Japanese foreign policy makers, and had a direct impact on the U.S.-Japan alliance throughout the Cold War years. It essentially placed the Japanese in a free riding, bandwagoning alliance with the United States that was simultaneously used to balance against the Communist threat from the Soviet Union and China. Throughout the Cold War years, this was a win-win situation for both Japan and the United States. Washington gained an ally in the fight against communism as well as real estate to forward deploy U.S. forces in Asia. This was crucial in the aftermath of the Second

World War, when American foreign policy was based on Kennan¹⁸ and Nitze's¹⁹ strategy of containment. Japan clearly had the potential to become strong militarily and economically, and it was important from Washington's perspective that the alliance that would eventually become the linchpin for American foreign policy in Asia was anchored by a nation friendly to the United States and shared the same basic principles, such as democracy and a capitalist economic system. Additionally, Japan's valuable strategic location made it an especially attractive location at which to base American troops. After the devastating defeat in the Second World War, many Japanese placed the blame of suffering, both Japanese citizens as well as the victims of Japanese aggression, squarely on the shoulders of the Imperial Army.²⁰ As a result, the Japanese public's trust in the military was non-existent. Prime Minister Yoshida would use this sentiment to his advantage to focus on spending every available yen to rebuild the economy and leave the defense of Japan to the United States.

The Yoshida Doctrine proved successful for many decades beyond the end of the war and the regaining of Japanese sovereignty. One could argue that Japan's rise to the second largest economy in the world with virtually no natural resources was due largely to the doctrine. It took the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the first Gulf War fiasco to show the leaders of Japan that the doctrine was no longer applicable. Now that Japan had become an economic superpower, the nation would have to learn to participate in a world where it must balance conflicting *gaiatsu* (foreign pressure) from the United States to do more in security issues and to use extreme caution toward the rest of Asia in deploying the SDF overseas. The historical aspects of how and why the peace clause was included and the foundation of the Yoshida Doctrine are important factors in analyzing the shaping of the alliance throughout the stages of postwar, Cold War and post-Cold War years.

¹⁸ X., "The Sources of Soviet Conduct." *Foreign Affairs (Pre-1986)* 25, no. 000004 (Jul 1947), 566.

¹⁹ National Security Council (U.S.) and others, *NSC-68 : Forging the Strategy of Containment* (Washington, DC: National Defense University : For sale by the Supt. of Docs., U.S. G.P.O., 1994), 137.

²⁰ John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat : Japan in the Wake of World War II*. 1st ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999, 58.

Many U.S.-Japan alliance policymakers and scholars have argued that the doctrine has created a Japan that has become a reactive state.²¹ In other words, Japanese foreign policy simply consists of the government reacting to *gaiatsu* from the West or from Asia like a feather being blown about by the wind. Others further argue that Japan does not have a foreign policy of its own but rather simply follows American foreign policy. This sentiment was evidenced by many political cartoons, even during the Koizumi-era, depicting the prime minister as simply a tool or an extension of American foreign policy.²² These characterizations were clearly unfair. Koizumi took actions he believed were the right ones for Japan, not necessarily the United States. In many cases, what was right for Japan overlapped with what was right for the United States. This, after all, is a necessary ingredient for a successful alliance: an overlap of national interests. This natural overlap of national interests may give the impression to the casual observer that Japan is simply doing whatever the United States asks for. The reality in the post-9/11 era is that Japan is clearly moving away from the Yoshida Doctrine and becoming more assertive within the context of Article Nine.

3. Changing Security Environment in the Post-Cold War Era

Japan had the opportunity to renew and reaffirm the security alliance with the United States in 1960. Although there was a significant controversy surrounding the renewal of the security treaty, the LDP wisely chose to continue with the alliance. Unlike in 1951, Japan now had a real opportunity to choose whether to continue with the alliance or not. The world had changed significantly in the nine years since the alliance first went into effect. The Soviet Union was now just as powerful and influential in world affairs as the United States. The world was no longer unipolar with the United States on top alone: it was now a bipolar world with two superpowers. Essentially, the world was now separated by ideological differences, mainly communist against capitalist. In this regard, Japan was clearly in the capitalist group and would benefit more by continuing its

²¹ Thomas U. Berger, Mike Mochizuki and Jitsuo Tsuchiyama, *Japan in International Politics : The Foreign Policies of an Adaptive State* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers : Published in association with the Japan Forum on International Relations, 2007), 2.

²² Samuels, *Securing Japan : Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia*, 96.

relationship with the United States. Furthermore, nothing had changed with regard to the article which outlawed the use of force to settle international disputes so Japan still had to depend on the alliance for protection. Although there was no clear strong side or weak side during this period, Japan clearly chose to balance with the United States against the perceived threat, the Soviet Union. However, Japan was still bandwagoning with the United States, in the sense that it was in the alliance in order to free ride so that it could spend more money on economic growth at the expense of defense spending.²³ Japan became the second largest economy in the world due in large part to the Yoshida Doctrine, as well as to the general stability of East Asia due to the presence of the U.S. forces in the Pacific.

In any case, the Soviet threat and the containment of communism ensured that the alliance between the United States and Japan remained very important on both sides of the Pacific. In a sense, things were fairly simple in the Cold War era because of this. However, policymakers from both Japan and the United States would have to ask some hard questions regarding where to take the alliance in a world where the Soviet threat no longer existed.

The late eighties and the early nineties were a turbulent time in world affairs. The Berlin Wall came down, the Soviet Union collapsed and the Cold War came to an end. Francis Fukuyama infamously declared the “end of history”²⁴ and President George H.W. Bush declared a new world order. Many U.S.-Japan alliance policy makers and scholars began to question the need for an alliance in the post-Cold War era in which the main justification had been to balance against the menacing Soviet threat and the spread of communism.²⁵ If continued, what shape would the alliance take now that the world was unipolar?

²³ Samuels, *Securing Japan : Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia*, 57.

²⁴ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York : Free Press ; Toronto; New York: Maxwell Macmillan Canada; Maxwell Macmillan International, 1992), 418.

²⁵ Christopher W. Hughes, *Japan's Re-Emergence as a 'Normal' Military Power* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 41.

Clearly, there were many bumps along the road of the post-Cold War alliance. The first test came after Iraq invaded Kuwait and the world united to oust Saddam's army out of the small, helpless country. The international community expected Japan, as the second largest economy in the world, to make real contributions to the effort. However, then-Prime Minister Kaifu flopped significantly, was unable to demonstrate decisive leadership, and was ridiculed by the world community when all Japan could do was contribute money and eventually sent minesweepers to the gulf after the hostilities had ended.²⁶ To be fair to the prime minister, the 13 billion dollars that Japan provided was far more than what any other nation provided monetarily, although what the coalition wanted and expected were actual boots on the ground. Japan learned the lesson that in the post-Cold War era of international politics, the "checkbook diplomacy" that had been a sufficient foreign policy option for Japan for decades since the end of the Second World War was no longer acceptable.

In any case, this embarrassing chapter in Japan's history had a tremendous impact on the evolution of the U.S.-Japan alliance. A combination of checkbook diplomacy and the lack of a single, credible threat weakened the foundation for the alliance. The world was unipolar again with one strong hegemon. The end result in Europe appeared obvious, but what would the situation look like in East Asia? It did not take long for the answer to become apparent. The security situation in Asia did not become more stable as a result of the Soviet collapse. Communism was still alive in Asia, as two of the last three remaining communist regimes in the world were in Asia (China and Vietnam), albeit communist in name only as both countries acted more capitalist than communist. Nevertheless, China was beginning to flex its military muscle, intimidating Taiwan in 1996 by conducting missile exercises during the Taiwanese presidential elections.²⁷ North Korea was also behaving belligerently with its nuclear programs and testing of ballistic missiles.²⁸ Clearly, the post-Cold War situation in East Asia had the potential to become unstable and volatile rather quickly. In short, a strong alliance between the

²⁶ Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy : Japan's Kantei Approach to Foreign and Defense Affairs*, 56.

²⁷ Berger, Mochizuki and Tsuchiyama, *Japan in International Politics : The Foreign Policies of an Adaptive State*, 197.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 48.

United States and Japan was as important in the post-Cold War era as in any other time in its history. Recognizing this fact, President Clinton and Prime Minister Hashimoto reaffirmed the alliance in 1996,²⁹ and the Bush-Koizumi years of the alliance have been the strongest since Reagan-Nakasone.

B. NORMALIZATION

1. Defining Normalization

In the years since the first Gulf War of 1991, Japan has undergone many changes with regard to foreign policy. Japan was heavily criticized and ridiculed by the international community for her “checkbook” diplomacy despite the fact that the financial contribution of Japan, at 13 billion U.S. dollars, was significantly higher than most countries’. The lesson learned by the leaders of Japan was that willingness to place a nation’s troops in harm’s way carried more weight than providing money to help support a major combat operation. Eventually, the Japanese sent minesweepers to the gulf, but these efforts were generally deemed too little, too late. As stated earlier, President Clinton and Prime Minister Hashimoto met in Tokyo in 1996 and reaffirmed the mutual defense treaty and ensured the relevance of the security relationship between Japan and the United States in a post-Cold War world where many questioned the validity of the relationship since the main threat to Japan, the Soviet Union, was no longer in existence. This reaffirmation between Clinton and Hashimoto was a key factor in ensuring Japan’s foreign policy would be closely linked to American foreign policy for the foreseeable future. Additionally, the 1998 North Korean Taepodong missile launch over Japan and the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon ensured that Japan could no longer afford to play a passive role in international affairs. “Normalization” became the buzzword in Japanese politics. Specifically, the

²⁹ Yoichi Funabashi, *Alliance Adrift* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations; September 1999), 94-120.

“normalization” of the SDF had become a critical issue in order for Japan to not suffer the same kind of humiliation it suffered from the international community in its response to first Gulf War.

Determined to not repeat the mistakes of his predecessors, Prime Minister Koizumi swiftly took action to ensure Japan’s active participation in the war on terrorism. Unlike some of his predecessors who failed to identify a crisis situation, Koizumi immediately recognized the 9/11 attacks as an urgent situation requiring his immediate attention. He immediately set up a headquarters with himself in charge. He kept the Japanese public informed through press conferences the following day denouncing terrorism and expressing his support for President Bush. Japan also provided significant financial aid to the victims.³⁰ However, Koizumi’s most important action was his ability to quickly push through the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law (ATSML).³¹ This was an important achievement for Koizumi because of the speed at which the law was passed. He passed a major piece of legislation authorizing the deployment of Japan’s SDF during a time of war in three weeks. This was a remarkable achievement when one considers that it normally takes the Diet months to pass a bill dealing with security issues. He knew he had to act immediately to ensure his window of opportunity did not close from either a domestic perspective (public support) or an international perspective (to avoid another “checkbook” diplomacy fiasco). Arguably, Prime Minister Koizumi’s actions to ensure Japan’s use of the SDF to contribute to Japan’s international responsibilities to the world (*kokusai koken*)³² have been the most effective of any prime minister since the end of the Second World War.

Normalization of Japan implies that Japan is not normal. Japan is “abnormal” because normal states “have control over their own constitutions and are defined by a monopoly over the use of violence, both internally and externally.”³³ Andrew Oros

³⁰ Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy : Japan's Kantei Approach to Foreign and Defense Affairs*, 92.

³¹ Ibid., 86-98.

³² Berger, Mochizuki and Tsuchiyama, *Japan in International Politics : The Foreign Policies of an Adaptive State*, 5.

³³ Marilyn Ivy, "Trauma's Two Times: Japanese Wars and Postwars," *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 16, no. 1 (2008), 171.

discussed the “fear among many that Japan is being ‘normalized’ into developing military capabilities and approaches in line with its great power status.”³⁴ According to Richard Samuels, the critics of the normalization of Japan define “normal nation” as a “nation that can go to war.”³⁵ Ichiro Ozawa argues that there are two requirements for a nation to become normal. First, a nation must “willingly shoulder responsibilities that are regarded as natural in the international community and must not refuse such burdens on the account of domestic political difficulties.”³⁶ By “domestic political difficulties,” Ozawa is clearly referencing Japan’s unwillingness to practice collective self defense and refusal to revise or reinterpret Article Nine. Ozawa has been among the most vocal members of the Diet in expressing the importance of Japan’s becoming a “normal” nation so that it could contribute to the international community commensurate with economic status. The final condition that a nation must meet to be considered normal is to “cooperate fully with other nations in their efforts to build prosperous and stable lives for their people.”³⁷ For the purposes of this thesis, the definition of “normal” will be the ability to use the SDF to influence international affairs commensurate with economic power and the ability to practice collective self defense, as the two issues go hand in hand. As the second largest economy in the world, one can argue that Japan has not influenced international security issues commensurate with its economic power, and the official position of Japan on collective self defense is that it is not permissible under the current constitution.

2. Constraints to Normalization

Although this thesis suggests that Japan’s security policy must continue evolving to ensure that Japan is able to practice credible leadership in world affairs, there are obstacles that must be overcome to continue on the path of normalization. The obstacles can be broken down into roughly three separate categories: constitutional, domestic and foreign constraints.

³⁴ Andrew Oros, *Normalizing Japan : Politics, Identity, and the Evolution of Security Practice* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2008), 1.

³⁵ Samuels, *Securing Japan : Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia*, 277.

³⁶ Ozawa, Rubinfiel and Gower, *Blueprint for a New Japan : The Rethinking of a Nation*, 94.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 95.

a. Constitutional/Bureaucratic

The first obvious constraint to normalization is constitutional. After all, if one were to take Article Nine literally, one could argue that the existence of the SDF is unconstitutional. This is the position of the Japan Communist Party (JCP), the political left and some on the right of the spectrum. However, one does not necessarily have to have this extreme view to understand that Article Nine does indeed pose a problem for anyone who desires an expanded role for the SDF, something this thesis suggests is necessary for the continued normalization of Japan

No discussion of constitutional/bureaucratic constraint is thorough without discussing the role of the CLB. As discussed by Samuels, the CLB has had a tremendous role in shaping security policy through its narrow definition of “war potential” in 1952, its 1954 ruling that collective self defense is unconstitutional and its 1981 ruling that “recognized Japan’s right of collective self defense but declared its exercise forbidden.”³⁸ The CLB’s rulings were seen as beneficial to supporters of the Yoshida Doctrine, because any time the United States wanted Japan to participate in a crisis with more than just money, the Japanese government could always fall back on the excuse of unconstitutionality based on the ruling by the CLB. In the post-Cold War era, as various Japanese leaders have attempted to increase Japan’s role in international affairs, the CLB has continued to rule against collective self defense, against the wishes of the leadership. Although a reinterpretation of Article Nine by the CLB would seem to be the simplest solution to the ban on collective self defense, this is unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future, and Japan cannot afford to not participate in world affairs because of it. As long as the CLB continues to rule that Japan is forbidden from practicing collective self defense, it will continued to be marginalized by the Normal Nationalists³⁹ (a group described by Richard Samuels as pro-normal nation, including such members as Ozawa) who will be forced to pursue the issue of normalization through other means, such as continuing to pass legislation such as the ATSMML and ISML.

³⁸ Samuels, *Securing Japan : Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia*, 76.

³⁹ Ibid., 124.

b. *Public Opinion (Domestic Pressure)*

The importance of public opinion when dealing with reform cannot be overstated, whether one is talking about campaign finance reform, postal reform, or constitutional reform. Koizumi's success with postal reform would simply have not been possible without the support of the public. Likewise, Prime Minister Abe's priorities of constitutional reform did not coincide with the public's greater concerns over the economy. As a result, the LDP lost control of the Upper House in the Diet, Abe's health deteriorated from the stress and he stepped down to take responsibility.

When dealing specifically with normalization, public opinion is especially crucial, as it can actually go against normalization rather than support it or be indifferent to it. Constitutional reform provides an excellent example to illustrate the point that public opinion can go against further normalization. Unlike Abe, Koizumi demonstrated that he was aware that the public did not support revising the constitution. As a result, Koizumi based his plan to normalize the SDF within the context of the constitution and Article Nine. He succeeded in normalizing without changing or reinterpreting the constitution. Abe, on the other hand, swung too far to the right by making constitutional revision one of his priorities.⁴⁰ Had he succeeded, there is no doubt that it would have been one of the most significant victories for a prime minister in the postwar period. Unfortunately for Abe, not only was the public uninterested in constitutional reform as a means to further normalization, but many citizens also believed he was going too far to the right on this particular issue. In short, he was opposed because he failed to read the pulse of the public, which had other priorities such as economic and social issues.

c. *Asian Gaiatsu (Foreign Pressure)*

Gaiatsu, which translates to external or foreign pressure, also plays a major role in Japanese foreign policy. In Japan's case, there are two types of *gaiatsu*, each pulling foreign policy in opposite directions. On one hand, there is Asian *gaiatsu* from Japan's neighbors such as China, Russia, and the two Koreas, who oppose an

⁴⁰ J. A. A. Stockwin, "From Koizumi to Abe: Same Bed, Different Dreams?" *Japanese Studies* 27, no. 3 (2007), 228.

expansion of the SDF's role in international affairs. On the other hand, there is American *gaiatsu* that encourages Japan to expand its role in international affairs by using the SDF to conduct more regional security duties and not only peace keeping operations (PKO). This is especially true in the context of the alliance, specifically on the issue of collective self defense. The fact that the alliance is not equated with "an attack on one is an attack on all" does not sit well with many U.S.-Japan alliance policy makers on both sides of the Pacific. Japan has been encouraged in recent years to do more by senior U.S. government officials such as former deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and former assistant Secretary of Defense Joseph Nye.⁴¹ The two officials recommended, in what became known as the Armitage Report, that the U.S.-Japan alliance model itself after the "special relationship" between the United States and Great Britain.⁴² Clearly, the implication was to do more militarily and with security issues. A 2007 version of the report also makes recommendations to further strengthen the alliance.⁴³

Clearly, the *gaiatsu* that constrains on further normalization of Japan's security policy is the Asian form of *gaiatsu*. Although the United States presumably would like to see a more assertive Japan that is willing to take more responsibility for security in the Asia Pacific region and relieve some of the burden from U.S. forces, it is unlikely that the other major powers in the region are willing to see Japan expand the SDF, because this would more than likely require the Japanese government to reinterpret the constitution to allow for collective self defense. It goes without saying that nations such as China and both Koreas, which suffered the brunt of the Imperial Japanese Army's atrocities both during and before the Pacific War, are not interested in seeing any expansion of Japan's military, even in a peacekeeping role, much less an expanded military role required of a collective security environment. When the leaders of the PRC need support at home for an important issue, the quickest way to unify the country and gain support is to use nationalism. The easiest method to exploit nationalism is through

⁴¹ Kenneth B. Pyle, *Japan Rising : The Resurgence of Japanese Power and Purpose*, 1st ed., 350.

⁴² Richard L. Armitage et al., "The United States and Japan: Advancing Toward a Mature Partnership," *INSS Special Report*, National Defense University, Washington, D.C. (October 2000).

⁴³ *CSIS Report: U.S.-Japan Alliance: Getting Asia Right Through 2020*, February 2007.

Japan-bashing techniques.⁴⁴ Even Russia would rather not see an expanded role for Japan's self defense forces for a number of reasons, including territorial disputes with Japan over the Northern Territories and, perhaps most important of all, a lack of a peace treaty with Japan formally ending the Pacific War. All these factors contribute to the fact that although it has been over 60 years since the end of the Second World War, Japan's neighbors are still sensitive about the revival of Japanese militarism, due to factors such as the perceived lack of sincere apologies from Japan, controversy over Japanese history textbooks' whitewashing Japanese atrocities and perhaps most troublesome irritant has been Prime Minister Koizumi's continued visits to the Yasukuni Shrine which enshrines 14 class "A" war criminals, including Prime Minister Tojo. All of these actions contribute to the lack of trust among the major powers of Asia with regard to Japan. Distrust of Japan will likely continue to constrain any efforts to further normalize Japan's security policy.

C. CONSTRAINTS ON PRIME MINISTER INVOLVEMENT

It is generally a safe assumption that most non-Japanese would have a difficult time identifying who Japan's prime minister is. As Kenji Hayao once said, the Japanese prime minister is the one leader who appears to be the odd man out, gazing out at the scenery alone in the group photo of the leaders of the G-8, while the other leaders huddle together into groups to discuss business.⁴⁵ Perhaps the position of the Japanese prime minister simply does not gain the respect of his German chancellor or French president counterpart because the Japanese prime minister is viewed as a "weak" leader. If so, why is he viewed as "weak," and why was Koizumi different from other prime ministers, both before and after his time? Before one can analyze this, it is important to briefly discuss the position of the Japanese prime minister.

The system of government in Japan is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system similar to Great Britain. Japan has an emperor who is essentially a

⁴⁴ Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China : From Revolution through Reform*. 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004), 49.

⁴⁵ Kenji Hayao, *The Japanese Prime Minister and Public Policy* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993), 4.

figurehead with no real power.⁴⁶ Unlike in Great Britain, where the Queen is the head of state, the Japanese emperor is merely a symbol.⁴⁷ Only two men have been emperor since the end of the Pacific War; Hirohito, the wartime emperor who died in 1989, and his son and successor, Akihito. Hirohito was required to denounce his divinity after Japan's defeat in the Pacific War and was retained strictly for symbolic reasons and to help American occupation forces govern Japan immediately following the war.⁴⁸ The head of government in modern Japan is the prime minister. The prime minister is generally the president of the ruling political party and is elected into office by a majority of Diet members. Every postwar prime minister since the formation of the LDP in 1955 has been a member of the LDP, with the exception of three: Hosokawa, Hata, and Murayama. Table 1 lists all postwar prime ministers and the length of their respective tenures.

⁴⁶ According to Article One of the Japanese Constitution, "The emperor shall be the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people, deriving his position from the will of the people, with whom sovereign power resides."

⁴⁷ Patrick H. O'Neil, *Essentials of Comparative Politics*, 2nd ed. (New York, N.Y.: W.W. Norton & Co., 2007), 337.

⁴⁸ For a more detailed look at Emperor Hirohito, see Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2000), 800.

Table 1. List of Postwar Prime Ministers.[From The Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet website. Modified by author]⁴⁹

Prime Minister	Years	Length in Years ⁵⁰
Naruhiko Higashikuni	1945-1945	1
Kijuro Shidehara	1945-1946	1
Shigeru Yoshida	1946-1947	1
Tetsu Katayama	1947-1948	1
Hitoshi Ashida	1948-1948	1
Shigeru Yoshida	1948-1954	6
Ichiro Hatoyama	1954-1956	2
Tanzan Ishibashi	1956-1957	1
Nobusuke Kishi	1957-1960	3
Hayato Ikeda	1960-1964	4
Eisaku Sato	1964-1972	7.5
Kakuei Tanaka	1972-1974	2
Takeo Miki	1974-1976	2
Takeo Fukuda	1976-1978	2
Masayoshi Ohira	1978-1980	2
Zenko Suzuki	1980-1982	2
Yasuhiro Nakasone	1982-1987	5
Noboru Takeshita	1987-1989	2
Sosuke Uno	1989-1989	1
Toshiki Kaifu	1989-1991	2
Kiichi Miyazawa	1991-1993	2
Morihiro Hosokawa	1993-1994	1
Tsutomu Hata	1994-1994	2
Tomiichi Murayama	1994-1996	2
Ryutaro Hashimoto	1996-1998	2
Keizo Obuchi	1998-2000	2
Yoshiro Mori	2000-2001	1
Jun'ichiro Koizumi	2001-2006	5.5
Shinzo Abe	2006-2007	1
Yasuo Fukuda	2007-2008	1
Taro Aso	2008-present	

Due in large part to the way prime ministers were selected in the postwar years until Koizumi's tenure, prime ministers were largely considered weak and lacking authority. Large and powerful factions had a major influence on who became prime

⁴⁹ Data from the official website of the Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/archives_e.html, (Accessed 5DEC08). Table modified by author's addition of "length in years".

⁵⁰ Years are rounded up to the nearest full year for prime ministers with less than one year in office. For example, if a prime minister only served for 2 months, he is still credited with serving a year. The purpose is to show how short a typical prime minister's tenure is and how rare it is for one to serve more than 4 years, the length of one term for the American president. Those who served four years or greater are bolded.

minister. The end result in a system where the factions had tremendous leverage was that the best person for the job was not necessarily the one who got the job. To put Lord Bryce's 1888 question⁵¹ "why great men are not chosen presidents?" in the context of Japanese politics, this is precisely the reason why great men were not chosen as prime ministers in Japan.

However, this is not to say that some capable men did not perform well and demonstrate strong leadership in foreign policy. In addition to Yoshida, men such as Kakuei Tanaka presided over the normalization of relations with China after the Nixon Shock of 1971,⁵² and the longest serving postwar premier, Eisaku Sato, was the driving force who negotiated Okinawa's return to Japanese sovereignty after being in American hands since the end of the Pacific War.⁵³ Although strong leadership was rare in the postwar years, it did exist in a select group of prime ministers even before the institutional changes that strengthened the *kantei* in the nineties.

Max Weber defines authority as "the legitimate exercise of power."⁵⁴ The three categories of political leadership that he describes are traditional, rational-legal, and charismatic. Traditional authority refers to power achieved through custom and tradition, such as a king's ruling over his kingdom. Power is usually passed on through patrimonial means on to other family members. Some examples would include France and Russia before their respective revolutions. The key point is that allegiance is owed to the person, not necessarily the position. Rational-legal authority refers to power achieved through rules and regulations characteristic of modern democracies in which the leader is elected by the people and is backed by a government bureaucracy of some sort. In this case, allegiance is owed to the office held and not necessarily the person occupying it. Leadership in this system will not necessarily pass to relatives automatically as is generally the case in the traditional authority. And finally, Weber describes charismatic

⁵¹ Stephen Hess, *Presidents & the Presidency : Essays* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1996), 33.

⁵² Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy : Japan's Kantei Approach to Foreign and Defense Affairs*, 19.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵⁴ Reinhard Bendix, *Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait*, New ed. (London: Methuen, 1966), 522.

leadership as the “power legitimated by the ability of an individual to inspire devotion and obedience on the basis of extraordinary characteristics.”⁵⁵

In Japan’s case, although emperors have ruled for many centuries, the shogun ran the country in the emperor’s name until the Meiji Restoration. Following the restoration, a prime minister continued the tradition of governing in the emperor’s name. This tradition was changed after the Pacific War, with the emperor denouncing his divinity. As a result, the postwar years have clearly been rational-legal rule where the emperor was merely a symbol of the state and held no power and the government was operated under the leadership of a democratically-elected Diet. It is also clear to scholars of the alliance that Japan has not produced many charismatic leaders in the postwar era. When one thinks of the charismatic leaders as Weber defines it, names such as Mao, Hitler, Mussolini, Gandhi, and Mandela probably come to mind. Washington, Lincoln, and Roosevelt among the great American presidents, also come to mind. Not many postwar Japanese prime ministers are easily identified as charismatic; perhaps Yoshida and Nakasone at the national level and outspoken Tokyo governor Ishihara at the local level. This thesis argues that Koizumi’s name belongs on the very short list of postwar leaders who used charismatic leadership to successfully make his vision a reality.

One must keep in mind that it is tempting to assume that Koizumi’s success as a leader has been due to the strengthening of the *kantei* as a result of electoral and cabinet reforms and that anyone could be as effective under the new system. One need not look further than Abe and Fukuda to realize this is a losing argument. Despite electoral and cabinet reforms, factions, bureaucrats, and opposition parties remain strong and can lead to the downfall of an administration if the leader does not use the various tools available to his advantage. The main advantage created by the electoral and cabinet reforms for a prime minister have to do with his ability to gain grassroots support and popularity to take power away from the factions and to give that power to the people. Koizumi proved that popularity was his greatest political capital and asset and used this capital to his advantage. When post-Koizumi leaders rely on the old school factions and the traditional way of doing business in leading their administrations, they tend to be as ineffective as

⁵⁵ Bendix, *Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait*, 522.

the pre-reform prime ministers. Until future leaders understand how to lead using the Koizumi playbook, they will likely continue to perform ineffectively.

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III. ARGUMENTS

A. IN FAVOR OF KOIZUMI LEADERSHIP

As was stated in the previous chapter, this thesis argues that all else equal, Koizumi's personal leadership and sharp political skills had the most significant impact on the expansion of Japan's post-9/11 security policy. The first half of this chapter will present the argument in favor of Koizumi's role and provide the evidence to support this claim. The second half will focus on the alternative arguments.

Although a few postwar leaders can be characterized as charismatic, this thesis argues that Koizumi can be included in the very short list of postwar Japanese leaders who relied on charismatic leadership, as well as rational-legal leadership skills, to successfully lead reforms that resulted in the expansion of Japan's security policy and, ultimately, greater prestige in international affairs.

There is little doubt that Japan has been on the path of normalizing almost immediately since the end of the Cold War in 1991. Some may even argue that Japan has been on the path of normalization since the day the SDF came into existence almost immediately following Japan's regaining sovereignty after the occupation. However, there is no doubt that the SDF's role has expanded significantly in the years following the first Gulf War. In any case, how much it has normalized and how much further it can normalize is certainly open to debate. The first overseas deployments of the SDF occurred in the aftermath of the first Gulf War when Japan sent minesweepers to the gulf. Not long after this deployment, ground SDF troops began PKO in Cambodia.⁵⁶ However, what set Koizumi apart from other prime ministers such as Kaifu was his ability to recognize a crisis situation and respond accordingly in a decisive manner.

Prime Minister Koizumi ensured that Japan was an active participant in international affairs following the September 11, 2001 attacks and did not repeat the same mistakes of Kaifu during the first Gulf War. The first step in the process was the Diet's approving the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law (ATSML) in October of 2001. This

⁵⁶ Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy : Japan's Kantei Approach to Foreign and Defense Affairs*, 5.

law made possible the SDF's participation in noncombat roles such as peacekeeping on the ground and support of combatants of other nations logistically by providing supplies and fuel. Predictably, the left argued that the law was unconstitutional because it sent the SDF overseas and its actions would violate the ban on collective self defense by providing fuel and ammunition to the combatant forces. The right argued that this law demonstrated the inability of the ruling coalition to push through constitutional reform. In any case, the message that Koizumi sent to the United States and to the world was that the Japan of 2001 would not resort to the checkbook diplomacy of the 1991 version of Japan and would put boots on the ground to support the war on terrorism. Koizumi did not stop here. He pushed through emergency legislation bills to the Diet in April 2002,⁵⁷ and in 2003, the Diet passed the Law Concerning Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance which authorized the dispatch of SDF soldiers to Iraq.⁵⁸ Koizumi's critics will argue that any prime minister could have passed these bills after the terrorist attacks. This thesis argues that this argument is valid only if the terrorist attacks occurred in Tokyo. Koizumi had the sense to understand that this was an international crisis that required action from the Japanese government. Many of Koizumi's predecessors demonstrated an inability to characterize an international incident as a crisis situation that required action from Tokyo. This inability to recognize a crisis inevitably led to a slow and weak response from Tokyo. Having the ability to recognize a crisis is only half of the equation. The other half is taking action on it. Koizumi articulated the crisis to the Japanese public and pushed through the necessary legislation rapidly to ensure that Japan participated with the SDF and not just with money. This is an important distinction that sets Koizumi apart from other Japanese leaders.

All else equal, Koizumi's leadership drove the foreign policy expansion of Japan in the post-9/11 security environment. Although situational reasons may provide a conducive environment, institutional reasons may provide some helpful tools, and a strong bureaucracy working with the leader and not against him are all important, this

⁵⁷ Berger, Mochizuki and Tsuchiyama, *Japan in International Politics : The Foreign Policies of an Adaptive State*, 47.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 48.

thesis argues that all of the factors mentioned are meaningless without a strong leader willing and able to use the tools available to him. He must also have the ability to gauge the pulse of the public and have the sense of timing necessary to make his move at the most opportune time to maximize his chances for success. Many writers, both American and Japanese, have published a great deal of literature about Prime Minister Koizumi's various reforms during his time in office. Although the majority of the material may not explicitly state so, the fundamental argument is that leadership matters and Koizumi was able to accomplish many of his reforms because he was Koizumi. The general theme underlying the pro-Koizumi school of thought is that Koizumi was a masterful politician who expertly orchestrated some major reforms that were heavily resisted not only by the opposition parties but by the members of his own party as well. Clearly, Koizumi was a maverick who vowed to change the LDP and was willing to destroy the party in order to accomplish his goals. He was willing to put his job on the line. In short, he had political courage. Through his own popularity and charismatic leadership, he went directly to the people to obtain a mandate to push through the reforms.

Kabashima and Steel emphasize the influence of Koizumi as an individual in changing Japan both internally and externally.⁵⁹ They believe that although Koizumi has been compared to other leaders such as Britain's Tony Blair,⁶⁰ "Koizumi ended his tenure with an electoral majority that would be the stuff of dreams for Blair."⁶¹ The implication here is that as a "revolution," his tenure had more impact than a "restoration" such as the Meiji Restoration when Japan experienced a rapid change from an isolated, backward country to a modern nation that could compete with other industrial and

⁵⁹ Ikuo Kabashima and Gill Steel, "The Koizumi Revolution," *PS, Political Science & Politics* 40, no. 1 (Jan, 2007), 79.

⁶⁰ As two of George Bush's closest supporters, many in the media (domestic as well as international) have made comparisons between the difficulties that Koizumi and Blair had with regard to building support within their respective countries to join the United States in removing Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq. Blair used a Bush-like approach and tried to sell to the British public that it was important to find Saddam's WMDs. Koizumi approached the issue from the angle that assisting the United States was important in order to receive reciprocity on dealing with the North Korean problem. Although Koizumi's critics argue that he appeared indecisive and did not practice strong leadership, this thesis argues that Koizumi gauged the pulse of the Japanese public more accurately than Blair did with the British public and therefore, not only accomplished his goal of supporting the United States, but also made it through this potential mine field in a strong enough position to remain in power and push through his domestic reforms.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 79.

imperial powers.⁶² In other words, Koizumi's reforms were nothing short of the unprecedented changes that occurred during the Meiji Period. Although the use of the term "revolution" to describe the reforms that Koizumi championed is clearly an exaggeration, Koizumi did make a difference by expanding Japan's security policy further than any other postwar prime minister and as a result, became the most influential Japanese prime minister since Shigeru Yoshida.

Additionally, Kabashima and Steel studied the role that television played in Koizumi's victory in the 2001 LDP presidential election.⁶³ They analyzed the effect that the media and various television programs played in exploiting Koizumi's personal popularity like no other politician in Japan before him. Just as television played a major role in electing John F. Kennedy to the U.S. presidency in 1960, it played a significant role in Koizumi's election in 2001. However, the authors acknowledge that there was more to this than just a great media personality. Television appearances, combined with the political reforms of 1994, and a desire for change by a public tired of economic stagnation, were instrumental in providing a positive image of a highly energetic leader who promised to push through various reforms. Although there is no doubt that these factors and institutional reforms helped him gain power, Koizumi's use of the media was a major contributor to his ability to gain grassroots level support - not only to gain power, but also to wield it once elected as LDP president. Koizumi revolutionized the way a Japanese leader uses the media to gain support. In other words, Koizumi's political as well as media savvy were responsible for his success.

One of Koizumi's greatest strengths as a political leader was his ability to gauge the pulse of the public and to use public opinion to his advantage in pushing through various reforms. Another factor to consider was the prime minister's ability to use time to his advantage if public opinion was not as solid as he would have preferred. For example, when it was still not clear whether the Japanese public would support the plan to send the SDF overseas to participate in GWOT, Koizumi simply made the

⁶² James L. McClain, *Japan, a Modern History*, 1st ed. (New York, N.Y.: W.W. Norton & Co., 2002), 119-154.

⁶³ Ikuo Kabashima and Gill Steel, "How Junichiro Koizumi Seized the Leadership of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party," *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 8, no. 1 (Apr 2007), 95.

commitment to President Bush that Japan would support the United States and reported this to the public after the fact. This was a clear demonstration of his strong leadership.

Koizumi's task in the aftermath of 9/11 was to find a balance between not violating Article Nine and simultaneously taking action with the SDF to demonstrate to the United States and other allies that Japan had learned its lesson from the first Gulf War and intended to participate in GWOT militarily. He demonstrated exceptional political skill and courage in the successful expansion of Japan's security policy during this challenging period in international affairs.

1. Koizumi's Popularity

The importance of popularity on a leader's ability to get the job done is something that is not unique to Japan. This is an important factor for any leader of a democratic nation to consider if he or she wants to get re-elected or ensure his or her party remains in power. If popularity were not important, there would be no need to take public opinion polls or for political analysts and strategists to study approval ratings of a leader. One can argue that the Republican nominee for the 2008 presidential elections lost the election by a rate of two to one in the electoral college due largely in part to the low approval ratings and general unpopularity of the incumbent Republican president. Clearly, popularity does matter in a democracy.

Patterson and Maeda studied the impact of how the personal popularity of a prime minister impacts an election. Their study indicated that popularity does indeed have a "modest but definite impact" on how well the LDP has done in the postwar period.⁶⁴ In this work, the authors examined data on postwar elections and determined that having a popular leader does help the LDP do well in lower house elections. They concluded that an effective prime minister from an electoral perspective is someone who is a "strong, proactive leader who does far more than search for a consensus."⁶⁵ The key word here is "consensus." For many years, especially during Japan's bubble years, a strong stereotype

⁶⁴ Dennis Patterson and Ko Maeda, "Prime Ministerial Popularity and the Changing Electoral Fortunes of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party," *Asian Survey* 47, no. 3 (May/Jun, 2007), 415.

⁶⁵ Patterson and Maeda, "Prime Ministerial Popularity and the Changing Electoral Fortunes of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party," 431.

existed in the United States that the Japanese cared mainly about consensus building. In order for a decision to be made, all parties involved had to agree to a consensus. In Western societies, the ability to confront others and to have the “courage” to follow one’s own convictions, even if they aren’t popular was viewed as a character trait that exhibited strength. “Mavericks” who were willing to take on their own party were viewed as strong and those who tried to reach a consensus were viewed as weak, or worse yet, appeasers.

When one studies the leadership traits of the postwar prime ministers, it is safe to say that the consensus builders did not do well in terms of both popularity and effectiveness. And being a maverick will not necessarily make one more popular or effective. It truly takes a special breed to challenge the bureaucracy and the party and remain popular and effective. In Koizumi’s case, was he popular because he was a maverick or was he effective because he was popular? Clearly, he was not popular because he was a maverick. If this explanation were true, Abe should have been able to ride on Koizumi’s coattails and push through some of the reforms he was interested in pursuing. Clearly, Abe lacked Koizumi’s charisma, sense of timing, and, perhaps most important, the ability to gauge the pulse of the public. As for the second part of the question, there is no doubt that Koizumi was able to effectively govern as a result of the mandate that he received from the public. In short, he used his popularity as political capital to use against the Diet members who opposed him.

However, as we will discuss in the case study on the first Gulf War, popularity or general support for a particular administration’s cabinet does not necessarily mean that the incumbent prime minister will get his way when it comes to pushing through political reforms or going against the wishes of the opposition parties. Prime Minister Kaifu was unable to achieve the political reforms that he staked his career on, despite a 57.9 percent support level for his cabinet, when he announced his reform proposal to the Diet only several months following Japan’s checkbook diplomacy fiasco.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Alisa Gaunder, *Political Reform in Japan : Leadership Looming Large*, Vol. 12 (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon ; New York: Routledge, 2007), 55.

In Koizumi's case, he capitalized on his popularity through his relationship with the media. This relationship was a win-win situation for both Koizumi and the media. In exchange for more access to the prime minister than at any other time in Japanese history from the mass media's point of view, Koizumi was able to exploit this to his advantage by showing up on "wide" shows, news programs, and sports *shimbun* (newspapers) to gain support from the public.⁶⁷ He looked different from the typical politician with his wavy, "lion" hair. He spoke differently from the typical politician. He often spoke colloquially in a manner more easily understood by the general public. He used the internet to get his message out to the public. In short, Koizumi valued the importance of the media like no other politician before or since and used the mass media to exploit his great strength and the source of his political capital, his popularity.

2. The Impact of Domestic and International Crisis

How a leader responds to a domestic or international crisis will make or break his legacy. One need not look further than Prime Ministers Kaifu or Mori⁶⁸ to understand how a lackadaisical attitude in dealing with a crisis can lead to the downfall of an administration. Likewise, one need not look further than Prime Minister Koizumi's decisive actions immediately following the 9/11 attacks to see how strong leadership will be rewarded with a long and prosperous reign that will likely end on the incumbent's own terms.

The impact of a crisis on political leadership is something that is not unique to Japan. The great American presidents mentioned earlier in this chapter were "great" precisely because they were able to demonstrate such strong leadership in times of crisis. In other words, it is difficult to judge a leader's effectiveness until one has had a chance to see him perform under pressure. Without the Civil War, Lincoln may have been average and not great. Without the Gulf War fiasco, Kaifu may have been average and not below average. Likewise, without 9/11 and GWOT, Koizumi may have been unable to expand Japan's security policy to the level he was able to expand it to. There is no

⁶⁷ Ikuo Kabashima and Jeffrey Broadbent, "Referent Pluralism: Mass Media and Politics in Japan," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 12, no. 2 (Summer 1986), 329-361.

⁶⁸ Stockwin, "From Koizumi to Abe: Same Bed, Different Dreams?" 225.

doubt that situational factors played a significant role in Koizumi's success. However, there is also no doubt that without Koizumi's initiative and leadership, the window of opportunity would have rapidly disappeared. The following section will study Koizumi's specific actions to expand Japan's security policy.

3. Immediate Actions in Response to 9/11

Prime Minister Kaifu failed to recognize Gulf War One as a major crisis that required strong leadership at the highest levels of the Japanese government. Rather, he saw it as an issue for bureaucrats in MOFA to deal with. Likewise, Prime Minister Mori failed to see the Ehime-Maru incident as a crisis that required his immediate attention. He reportedly continued with a golf game⁶⁹ upon hearing the news that a U.S. nuclear submarine had surfaced underneath a research vessel carrying young Japanese students, killing nine passengers.⁷⁰

Prime Minister Koizumi, on the other hand, immediately recognized the 9/11 attacks as an international crisis and responded accordingly. Within 45 minutes, the Situation Center of the Cabinet was activated to gather information and within 2 hours of the attacks, he upgraded the Situation Center to an Emergency Anti-Terrorism Headquarters with the prime minister personally in charge.⁷¹ Unlike his predecessors, Koizumi identified the situation as a crisis and determined that this was a situation that could not be delegated to subordinates. Koizumi also took action to ensure Japan provided monetary assistance, including \$10 million to the families of the victims as well as \$10 million for cleanup and recovery efforts in New York and Washington⁷². Had Japan not learned its lesson from checkbook diplomacy, it might have stopped with monetary contributions. On September 12, 2001, Koizumi publicly expressed his condolences to the victims of 9/11, and, more importantly, he pledged his full support to

⁶⁹ Stockwin, "From Koizumi to Abe: Same Bed, Different Dreams?" 225.

⁷⁰ NTSB website Marine Accident Brief 0501, <http://www.nts.gov/publictn/2005/MAB0501.htm>, (Accessed 4DEC08).

⁷¹ Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy : Japan's Kantei Approach to Foreign and Defense Affairs*, 90.

⁷² Paul Midford, "Japan's Response to Terror: Dispatching the SDF to the Arabian Sea," *Asian Survey* 43, no. 2 (Mar. - Apr. 2003), 331.

the United States for any cooperation deemed necessary to combat terrorism⁷³. In this statement, Koizumi outlined specific actions that the National Security Council of Japan, with the attendance of all cabinet ministers, agreed to do. Specifically, Japan agreed to provide security for U.S. facilities in Japan such as military bases, housing areas, consulates and the embassy; take necessary action to prevent “confusion in the economic systems” throughout the world; and, perhaps the most significant policy item of all: “Japan will respond in cooperation with the United States and other concerned nations to combat international terrorism.” Many policymakers questioned the meaning of this statement. What could Japan possibly do with Article Nine still in place? Koizumi did not take long to answer that question.

Koizumi immediately took action and demonstrated that in order for Japan to gain any credibility from the international community, especially the United States, he had to send a message to the world by rapidly orchestrating a SDF deployment overseas under wartime conditions, something that had been taboo in both Japanese politics and society since Japan’s defeat in 1945. Koizumi’s mission was to break this taboo and to do it as quickly as possible. Koizumi’s actions indicated that time was of the essence; that the longer he took to act, the more difficult it would be to pass any legislation to make it possible; that this would make it nearly impossible for Japan to regain credibility lost in the first Gulf War.

In order for Koizumi to fulfill his promise to President Bush, he needed to ensure the ATSMML was pushed through the Diet as quickly as possible. This law would legally allow the dispatch of the SDF overseas in wartime conditions for the first time since the end of the Second World War. The ATSMML clearly outlined the actions permissible and not permissible as the SDF carried out its first “real” operations overseas in over a half a century. Some of the specific actions allowed under the law included providing logistics, maintenance and repair services, transportation services, communications, and medical services.⁷⁴ Specifically, the law forbids the SDF to provide fuel and ammunition to

⁷³ The Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet website:
http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/koizumispeech/2001/0912kaiken_e.html, (Accessed 4DEC08).

⁷⁴ The Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet website:
http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/policy/2001/anti-terrorism/1029terohougaiyou_e.html, (Accessed 6NOV08).

aircraft taking off on offensive sorties.⁷⁵ The free fuel provided to the coalition by the MSDF in the Indian Ocean would become a major controversial issue in the coming years as the Diet in the post-Koizumi years failed to pass an extension before the expiration of the law, which caused some tension in the U.S.-Japan alliance. Additionally, the government's inability to account for the fuel provided to the coalition, which was necessary to ensure that the SDF did not violate the ATSMML with regard to providing fuel to ships and aircraft en route to offensive sorties, became a major issue that contributed to the lapse in the refueling mission.

In any case, one can safely assume that based on the lessons of history from the first Gulf War, Koizumi understood the importance of sending the SDF overseas to support Bush's coalition and this would not be possible without passing the ATSMML. The ATSMML would allow Koizumi to normalize the SDF mission further than any other prime minister both before and after his tenure. The significance of Koizumi's success in passing the ATSMML lies not only in the fact that it was passed but also in how rapidly he convinced the Diet to pass it. There is little doubt that Koizumi's popularity and high approval ratings gave him the mandate to push through this legislation rapidly. According to the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, 70 percent of the respondents supported Japan's support of the United States in the GWOT.⁷⁶ Furthermore, Koizumi's cabinet approval ratings were at 79 percent.⁷⁷ These numbers suggest that Koizumi was able to sell the importance of the mission to stand with the United States in the war against terrorism. Some would suggest that any prime minister would have been able to pass the ATSMML with the numbers that Koizumi enjoyed. This thesis argues that the Koizumi enjoyed the high approval ratings and public support for GWOT because his administration made it a priority and sold it to the public as a necessary action to fulfill Japan's responsibilities to the international community. This was not something that any prime minister could do. Most of his predecessors and all of his successors, with the exception of the incumbent

⁷⁵ The Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet website:
http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/policy/2001/anti-terrorism/1029terohougaiyou_e.html, (Accessed 6NOV08).

⁷⁶ Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy : Japan's Kantei Approach to Foreign and Defense Affairs*, 93.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 93.

prime minister,⁷⁸ have repeatedly demonstrated that by and large, they prefer to pass bills through the Diet in the traditional method through the normal bureaucratic channels, attempting to reach consensus. In short, the process would have taken too long to have a positive impact on Japan's international image. It took someone like Koizumi who could identify what a crisis was and was willing to take risks to do what was right for Japan. Clearly, the Diet had little choice but to support the extremely popular prime minister, and, as a result, the bill was enacted into law on October 29, 2001, after less than 3 weeks of debate.⁷⁹ The significance of how rapidly this law was enacted cannot be overstated. In a country where laws rarely get passed in less than a month, especially on matters related to security or constitutional issues,⁸⁰ this was a remarkable achievement driven by the strong leadership of Prime Minister Koizumi.

4. Expanding Role of the SDF and JCG

Japan deployed minesweepers to the Persian Gulf after the checkbook diplomacy incident to attempt to regain some credibility from the international community and to fulfill what Japan saw as its obligation to the international community. Although largely seen as "too little, too late," this deployment was still considered a major step forward for the normalization of Japan's security policy, after years of passive behavior exemplified by the Yoshida Doctrine. The deployment was rationalized as a maritime safety deployment, rather than a deployment to support combat operations, albeit post-hostilities. This distinction was important to gain the support of the public as well as to prevent any major political backlash from Japan's former enemies and colonial possessions. The last thing Japan needed as it attempted to contribute to the international community was an adverse public reaction domestically and conflicting *gaiatsu* from the rest of the world. In any case, the MSDF's successful deployment to the Persian Gulf

⁷⁸ With only three months in office as of this writing, there is not enough data to assess how Aso would perform in a similar situation.

⁷⁹ Midford, "Japan's Response to Terror: Dispatching the SDF to the Arabian Sea," 333.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 333.

paved the path for future SDF operations overseas such as the UN PKO deployment to Cambodia. The success of this UN operation further solidified the SDF's growing positive image, both domestically and abroad.

Another factor to consider in Japan's expanding role in international security is how Japan has used its Coast Guard in recent years. The Japan Coast Guard (JCG) or the *kaijo hoancho* is officially under the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, similar to the way the United States Coast Guard (USCG) was under the Department of Transportation prior to the creation of the Department of Homeland Security. Another similarity is the way the USCG falls under the Department of Defense during wartime and how the JCG also falls under the MOD in an emergency.⁸¹ To borrow David Leheny's term, the Japanese government has been using the JCG as a "canary in the coal mine" rather effectively.⁸² Because the JCG is a police agency rather than a military force, it has much looser rules of engagement when it comes to firing at vessels that illegally enter Japanese territorial waters. Prime Minister Koizumi revised the Coast Guard Law in October 2001 to "allow the outright use of force to prevent maritime intrusion and to protect the Japanese homeland."⁸³ Additionally, Koizumi increased the budget of the JCG, leading to more roles and responsibilities, since he could not increase the defense budget. Just as it is easier to allow more leeway for the JCG to conduct its mission of "securing the safety of the sea lanes" and "maintaining order on the seas,"⁸⁴ it is easier to provide more money to the JCG rather than the MSDF. The factor that allows this is the distinction between "military" and "police" force. This is necessary to minimize Asian *gaiatsu*. Senior officials at the MOD are quick to point out that the JCG is not a fourth branch of the military. And although the relationship between the JCG and the MSDF has been getting closer in recent years, it is important to make sure the two organizations keep some distance. The perception that they are part of the same organization will undermine the JCG's ability to do what they can do because they are a

⁸¹ Samuels, *Securing Japan : Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia*, 78.

⁸² Richard J. Samuels, "'New Fighting Power!': Japan's Growing Maritime Capabilities and East Asian Security," *International Security* 32, no. 3 (2008), 95.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁸⁴ Samuels, *Securing Japan : Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia*, 78.

police force and not a military one. The expanding role of the JCG shows that Koizumi and the LDP were thinking out of the box and expanding “militarily” in a way that does not alarm Japan’s neighbors. As John Bolton once said, the buildup of the JCG was “a way for Japan to avoid going through tortured constitutional constraints and to build its capabilities.”⁸⁵

Koizumi’s critics may argue that the expansion of the JCG may have happened on Koizumi’s watch but he did not necessarily drive it. This statement is simply untrue. Things did not “just happen” on his watch. Koizumi deliberately made increasing the JCG budget a priority. This was evidenced by his appointment of Komeito lawmaker, Kazuo Kitagawa, as the minister for Land, Infrastructure and Transport. Initially, Komeito, as well as the JCP, would not support increasing the MOD’s budget. By appointing Kitagawa as the minister overseeing the JCG, Koizumi was able to get the Komeito to support increasing the JCG’s budget.⁸⁶

Koizumi did not stop with his emphasis on the JCG by just increasing its budget. In April 2005, he also used the JCG as an instrument to balance against China’s rising power by joining forces with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in announcing a new global partnership emphasizing “enhanced security cooperation on a sustained basis between the two nations’ navies and coast guards.”⁸⁷ And furthermore, Koizumi became the first prime minister of Japan to ever attend a JCG Academy graduation in March 2006. All of these actions provide solid evidence that Koizumi placed great importance in the role of the JCG as an instrument to further normalize Japan’s security policy while simultaneously respecting the various constraints that prevent him from expanding SDF too rapidly.

Notwithstanding the expanding role of the JCG, it is still considered a police force and not a military force. In order for Koizumi to continue normalizing Japan’s security policy, he had to expand the role of the SDF. What did Koizumi specifically do to

⁸⁵ Samuels, ““New Fighting Power!": Japan's Growing Maritime Capabilities and East Asian Security,” 99.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 98.

⁸⁷ Samuels, ““New Fighting Power!": Japan's Growing Maritime Capabilities and East Asian Security,” 105.

expand the SDF's role to further Japan's international contributions during the post-9/11 era? The following paragraphs will attempt to answer this question with regard to Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).

a. *Deployment in Support of OEF*

In order for Koizumi to dispatch SDF troops to support the coalition against the war on terror, the first step he had to take was to get the Diet to pass the ATSMML. Without this law, he could not legally deploy the SDF. As was stated earlier in this thesis, Koizumi was able to turn this bill into a law in less than a month. This achievement is unprecedented in Japanese history. Why did this bill become a law so rapidly?

Midford argues that Japan's sensitivities to the conflicting *gaiatsu* (concerns over a rise of Japanese militarism from Asia and pressure to do more from the United States) and a strong record of responsible deployment of the SDF on UN missions are among the more important reasons why Japan was able to deploy the SDF in support of OEF.⁸⁸ He also acknowledges Koizumi's high approval ratings by the public as a major factor. He observes that his predecessor, Mori, with approval ratings as low as 15 percent, would have had a difficult time accomplishing what Koizumi did.⁸⁹ Having high approval ratings and favorable signals from Asian neighbors are meaningless unless the leader has the ability to recognize the situation as the time to take decisive action. Koizumi was clearly the driving factor in getting the ATSMML passed and deserves the credit for the contributions that Japan made to OEF.

Unlike in the first Gulf War where Japan's monetary contributions and post-hostilities minesweeping operations were largely unacknowledged, Japan's refueling operations in OEF have been praised by almost all participants in the war on terror.⁹⁰ In the era of rising fuel costs, the MSDF tankers are essentially free, floating gas stations in the middle of the ocean. JMSDF's presence in the Indian Ocean provided the Japanese

⁸⁸ Midford, "Japan's Response to Terror: Dispatching the SDF to the Arabian Sea," 337.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 337.

⁹⁰ For a detailed list of countries acknowledging Japan's contributions, visit Japan's Ministry of Defense website at http://www.mod.go.jp/e/d_policy/ipca/pdf/fight_terror.pdf.

an opportunity to “show the flag” and a tangible piece of evidence that Japan is in on the fight against terrorism. This was the result of Koizumi leadership.

b. Deployment in Support of OIF

Once again, Prime Minister Koizumi demonstrated strong, decisive leadership rarely found in a Japanese prime minister. Unlike in 2001, where he had a significant amount of public support, many citizens opposed a deployment to Iraq in 2003. Polls taken by the *Asahi Shimbun* from December 2002 to June 2003 indicated that anywhere from 60 to 80 percent of those who responded were against the U.S. military invasion of Iraq.⁹¹

The 2003 Iraq Special Measures Legislation was a crucial piece of legislation that the Diet had to pass in order for Koizumi to expand the SDF’s role as he planned to. Without this law, he could not legally deploy the SDF to Iraq. Although many Japanese citizens did not necessarily agree with Koizumi on the need to send the SDF to Iraq, as evidenced by several polls taken throughout 2003,⁹² the LDP-Komeito coalition still won the majority of the seats in the lower house Diet election of November 2003. Ishibashi provides several reasons⁹³ why the LDP was successful despite public support for a deployment to Iraq but despite these reasons, the victory gave Koizumi the mandate necessary to do what he believed was the right thing to do. This demonstrates that Koizumi is not a “yes” man who is afraid of going against the constituents if and when he believes that Japan’s best interests are at stake. His specific contributions to this process were to have the vision necessary to understand that Japan had to place actual “boots on the ground” in Iraq. Despite unfavorable polling data from the public, he pushed this legislation through rapidly in the Diet. He was able to do so by emphasizing that the SDF would be providing a “reconstruction” mission rather than a combat

⁹¹ N. Ishibashi, "The Dispatch of Japan's Self-Defense Forces to Iraq - Public Opinion, Elections, and Foreign Policy," *Asian Survey* 47, no. 5 (SEP-OCT, 2007), 768.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 769-770.

⁹³ For example, domestic issues social security and the economy took precedence over international issues, the role of the *kantei* in deemphasizing the issue prior to the election, the opposition party, DPJ, lacked the credibility as an alternative to the LDP, the role of the media in framing the issue, the North Korean issue and the importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance to the public.

mission. Ultimately, the GSDF troops served on the ground in Iraq from January 2004 to July 2006 and the mission was a success by all standards. Any time the SDF successfully completes a “real” deployment overseas, it improves the SDF’s reputation abroad, especially with Japan’s former enemies. This results in less *gaiatsu* and less resistance to Japan’s continued normalization. Koizumi should receive a great deal of credit for this successful mission.

5. Relations with Asian Neighbors

Japan’s relations with its Asian neighbors play a significant role with regard to Japan’s ability to expand its security policy. The amount of *gaiatsu* that Japan receives from China and the Koreans has had an inverse relationship to the expansion of Japan’s security policy. The less *gaiatsu* from neighbors resulted in greater expansion of security policy. As discussed in the section on constraints, Asian *gaiatsu* is generally directly related to how well a leader interacts with neighboring heads of state.

Japan has had a difficult relationship with China for decades. Following the end of the Pacific War and until the normalization of relations between China and the United States following the “Nixon Shocks,”⁹⁴ Japan had very little contact with China. In the years that followed, the relationship can be generalized as one of economic interdependence but competition in terms of regional leadership, political influence, and military tension as the PLA grows with a perceived lack of transparency from Tokyo and Washington’s perspective. From China’s perspective, the perceived lack of a sincere apology from Japan concerning wartime aggression, history textbook controversy, and territorial disputes with regard to the Diaoyutai/Senkakus⁹⁵ remain a sticking point in any attempt to completely normalize relations.

⁹⁴ “Nixon shocks” refers the Japanese government’s reaction to the secrecy of Kissinger/Nixon negotiations with China to normalize relations without Japanese consultation. Japan viewed itself as the main U.S. ally in Asia and believed it should have received the courtesy of consultation by the U.S. on this issue. For more on this, see Berger, Mochizuki and Tsuchiyama, *Japan in International Politics : The Foreign Policies of an Adaptive State*, 231-237.

⁹⁵ Michael J. Green, *Japan's Reluctant Realism: Foreign Policy Challenges in an Era of Uncertain Power*. 1st ed. New York: Palgrave, 2001, 78.

Another important episode in recent China-Japan relations relevant to Japan's normalization was China's missile tests during the Taiwan Strait crisis of 1996.⁹⁶ Although the missile tests were clearly used to intimidate Taiwan, Japan's vulnerability to Chinese missiles was also exposed as a result of the test. Some have argued that Japan's use of the North Korean missiles as its primary threat and excuse for a more robust military posture and cooperation with the United States on BMD is actually in response to Japan's real threat, China.⁹⁷ Regardless of whether this statement is true, the cliché of "perception is reality" appears to be the driving factor in China's predictable resistance to the project. China's reaction to BMD in East Asia is comparable to the Russian resistance to BMD in Europe, although in both cases, the reported threat is not China or Russia. In any case, there is no doubt that China's provocative behavior toward Taiwan, as well as recent bumps in Sino-Japanese relations, such as a Chinese submarine penetrating Japanese territorial waters, has had a positive impact on the Normal Nationalists' cause.

Japan has had a difficult relationship with the Korean peninsula long before the twentieth century. Meiji oligarch Aritomo Yamagata famously declared that the Korean peninsula was a "dagger pointed at the heart of Japan."⁹⁸ Japan fought wars with China (1894-1895) and Russia (1904-1905) for influence over the peninsula.⁹⁹ With South Korea, historical issues and territorial disputes with Dokdo/Takeshima¹⁰⁰ also contribute to tension between the two nations; however, Japan and South Korea are de facto allies by virtue of their respective alliances with the United States.¹⁰¹ From this perspective, it

⁹⁶ Yutaka Kawashima, *Japanese Foreign Policy at the Crossroads : Challenges and Options for the Twenty-First Century* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institutions Press, 2003), 95.

⁹⁷ Green, *Japan's Reluctant Realism: Foreign Policy Challenges in an Era of Uncertain Power*, 92.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 113.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 113.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 130.

¹⁰¹ Victor D. Cha *Alignment Despite Antagonism : The United States-Korea-Japan Security Triangle*. (Studies of the East Asian Institute, Columbia University. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999), 36.

is even more crucial that Japan maintain a close, working relationship with South Korea to help maintain stability on the Korean peninsula, which is in the best interest of all nations involved.

Japan's relationship with North Korea is full of complications. Despite Japan's financial contributions to Kim Jong Il's regime, Tokyo receives little cooperation from North Korea on resolving the abduction issue. The North's nuclear ambitions¹⁰² have long caused the Japanese a great deal of concern and were the catalyst for Japan to engage in missile defense with the United States. The JCG's first ever real world engagement and sinking of a "spy" ship turned out to be of North Korean origin.

With regard to the abduction issue, Koizumi is often not given the credit that he deserves in getting Kim Jong Il to confess to something that the Japanese had suspected for decades. In 1992, during normalization¹⁰³ talks, the North Korean delegation walked out on the Japanese when this issue was brought up.¹⁰⁴ The fact that Koizumi was able to obtain this confession from Kim is remarkable. Abduction of citizens by a foreign state entity can be interpreted as an act of war and result in war from one end of the spectrum to international criticism on the other end. Imagine what the United States government would have done if it had become public knowledge that Soviet KGB agents were abducting American citizens off of the beach in Florida and taking them back to the Soviet Union to use as English language instructors and American culture teachers for Soviet agents. This is essentially what North Korea was doing to Japan. Koizumi was the one who made this stunning confession possible by convincing Kim that it was in his best interests to own up to this.

Under Koizumi's leadership, Sino-Japanese relations with China and both Koreas, became extremely lukewarm. Many argue that this was due in large part to Koizumi's hawkish views and insistence on visiting Yasukuni Shrine¹⁰⁵ despite protests from China

¹⁰² Green, *Japan's Reluctant Realism: Foreign Policy Challenges in an Era of Uncertain Power*, 120.

¹⁰³ Normalization in this case refers to the normalization of relations between Japan and North Korea, not normalization of Japan's security policy.

¹⁰⁴ Kawashima, *Japanese Foreign Policy at the Crossroads : Challenges and Options for the Twenty-First Century*, 81.

¹⁰⁵ For more information on Yasukuni Shrine, visit its official website at <http://www.yasukuni.or.jp/english/>.

and the Koreans. The shrine, located in Tokyo, has been the source of a great deal of controversy with regard to Japan's relations with Asian neighbors who suffered the brunt of Japan's military aggression in the first half of the twentieth century, because it enshrines the spirits of Japan's war dead, including 14 Class "A" war criminals¹⁰⁶ who were included in 1978.¹⁰⁷ War-time Prime Minister Hideki Tojo is among those enshrined in Yasukuni. There are two conflicting viewpoints with regard to official visits to Yasukuni by a sitting Japanese prime minister. On the one hand, one could argue that protesting against a prime ministerial visit to Yasukuni is like protesting an American presidential visit to Arlington National Cemetery. On the other hand, if a German chancellor visited the grave site of Adolph Hitler, it would more than likely spark an international outrage. The problem with Yasukuni is that it represents a situation somewhere in between the two extremes. Yasukuni enshrines all of Japan's war dead, most of whom were honorable soldiers that gave their lives for their country and emperor and were following the orders of their superiors. However, the war criminals, as defined by the Tokyo war crimes tribunal, are also enshrined there. Unfortunately, the war criminals receive the bulk of the publicity when it comes to official visits to the shrine by senior government officials. In other words, the prime minister cannot pay his respects to the millions of other war dead without giving the appearance that he is glorifying Japan's militaristic past. Although there is little doubt that these visits did cause tension in Japan's relationships with Asian neighbors, there is little evidence that Koizumi visited Yasukuni to antagonize the other nations. It is safe to assume that, as a strong leader, Koizumi was unwilling to allow other national leaders to dictate whether he should or should not be allowed to pay his respects to Japan's war dead. Just as Chinese leaders view issues such as Taiwan or Tibet as internal matters that are not subject to debate from foreigners,¹⁰⁸ Koizumi likely believes that his decision to visit the shrine is his own personal choice that is not subject to debate from foreigners. In any case, the fact that Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni caused a great deal of tension between Japan and

¹⁰⁶ Oros, *Normalizing Japan : Politics, Identity, and the Evolution of Security Practice*, 4.

¹⁰⁷ Stockwin, "From Koizumi to Abe: Same Bed, Different Dreams?" 227.

¹⁰⁸ Kawashima, *Japanese Foreign Policy at the Crossroads : Challenges and Options for the Twenty-First Century*, 99.

China/Koreas indicate that the actions of one man can indeed make a difference in foreign policy, in both positive ways as well as negative.

How did Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni affect normalization? Did it hurt normalization or did it proceed despite Koizumi's visits? The evidence in this thesis suggests that normalization continued despite these visits. Koizumi's critics, both domestic and foreign, have criticized him for his reckless behavior and blatant disregard for the ramifications of these visits. His critics may also argue that since normalization continued despite Koizumi's causing strain in Asian relations, he was not as important as his supporters claim. The simple answer to the question of why normalization continued despite Koizumi's "reckless" behavior is that he was a strong enough leader to simply ignore Asian *gaiatsu* as an obstacle to normalization. In short, Asian *gaiatsu* is an obstacle to normalization only if a leader allows it to constrain him. Similar to Gerald Curtis' argument that Koizumi did not necessarily change the existing political structure and that he simply ignored it,¹⁰⁹ this thesis argues that Koizumi simply ignored the *gaiatsu*. One man's perception of "reckless" behavior can be viewed by another man as political courage to take action based on principle rather than cave in to external pressure.

6. Koizumi's Relationship with President Bush and Its Impact on Foreign Policy

The relationship between Prime Minister Koizumi and President Bush was clearly the closest between the leaders of the two nations since the "Ron-Yasu" relationship¹¹⁰ between then-Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone and then-President Ronald Reagan. During Koizumi and Bush's first meeting in Camp David in June 2001, the two leaders took the opportunity to get to know each other on a personal basis and agreed to work together on strengthening the alliance to promote peace and stability throughout the region, economic partnership for growth, and cooperation on global challenges such as

¹⁰⁹ Gerald Curtis, Izuru Makihara and Hiroko Ota, "Will Koizumi's Reforms Endure?" *Japan Echo* 33, no. 5 (Oct,2006), 44.

¹¹⁰ Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy : Japan's Kantei Approach to Foreign and Defense Affairs*, 29-32.

global warming.¹¹¹ This first meeting between the two leaders would provide a solid foundation for a close relationship and cooperation not only between two men but between two nations for the next five years.

During Koizumi's final tour of the United States prior to stepping down as prime minister, President Bush hosted a dinner in honor of Koizumi in the State Dining Room at the White House. During his speech, the president told the prime minister that "our strong friendship has grown out of the strong alliance between our two nations."¹¹² This thesis suggests that a stronger alliance has grown out of the strong friendship between Bush and Koizumi. The following day, President Bush took the prime minister on a tour of Graceland. Koizumi is well known for his love of Elvis Presley. He famously serenaded the president with an excellent imitation of the King of Rock and Roll. Bush even compared Koizumi to a famous Japanese baseball star, Ichiro Suzuki of the Seattle Mariners, saying that like Ichiro, Koizumi can hit anything that is thrown at him.¹¹³ This close relationship is clearly something that cannot be easily duplicated by just any group of leaders due to the genuine friendship between Koizumi and Bush. Although many scholars believe that Japan had no choice but to support the United States if it hoped to receive reciprocal support on the North Korean abduction and nuclear issues or that Koizumi was a leader that would have provided the same kind of support to any U.S. president as this thesis suggests, the role of this strong bond between the two men is something that must not be dismissed when analyzing the strong nature of the alliance during the Bush-Koizumi years.

What impact did the Bush-Koizumi friendship have on the normalization of Japan's security policy? Critics claim the relationship was too close¹¹⁴ and argue that if it were not for the close friendship between the two leaders, Japan would have never sent

¹¹¹ The Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet website:
http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/koizumispeech/2001/0630anzen_e.html, (Accessed 4DEC08).

¹¹² George W. Bush, "Remarks at a Dinner Honoring Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan," *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* 42, no. 26 (Jul 3, 2006).

¹¹³ Howard W. French and James Brooke, "Bush Plays Ball with Japanese Premier," *New York Times*, Feb 20, 2002.

¹¹⁴ Michael J. Green, "U.S.-Japanese Relations After Koizumi: Convergence Or Cooling?" *The Washington Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (2006), 101.

the SDF to Iraq. The essence of the argument is that “Japan is like the 51st state in the union”¹¹⁵ and that Koizumi would simply do whatever Bush tells him to do. This is an unfair statement and an inaccurate characterization of the Bush-Koizumi relationship. Furthermore, the two statements, made by opposition party member Fukushima are conflicting in nature. Did Koizumi send the SDF to Iraq because of his close friendship with Bush or did he send the SDF to Iraq because he was in a subordinate relationship with Bush as the “51st state” argument suggests? Clearly, the latter argument is simply left wing propaganda. The former argument is a bit too simplistic. There is no doubt that the close friendship and personal chemistry between the two leaders provided an environment of close cooperation and directly resulted in a “closer strategic, ideational, and economic convergence of the United States and Japan”¹¹⁶ and this situation made it much more likely that a strong leader like Koizumi would step in and ensure he supported his close friend while simultaneously ensuring the country that he led contributed more to international affairs as the world’s second largest economy can and should be expected to. In short, the close relationship of two men who happened to be leaders of two nations with overlapping national interests gave the appearance that one was simply doing as the other wished. In reality, both were doing what was best for his respective nation.

Despite the fact that Koizumi was doing what was in Japan’s best interests, there is little doubt that his close friendship with George Bush made it easier for Koizumi to sell his plan to the Japanese public that this was an investment into gaining Bush’s personal support for future assistance from the United States in dealing with East Asian issues such as the North Korean problem. And clearly, the Japanese public was concerned about East Asian instability caused by Kim Jong Il’s regime. In short, although both men were doing what was best for their respective nations, Koizumi’s close friendship with Bush enabled him to sell his plan to the Japanese public much easier than if they had not had a close relationship. In this sense, their friendship was

¹¹⁵ Green, "U.S.-Japanese Relations After Koizumi: Convergence Or Cooling?" 101.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 109.

another factor that made expanding Japan's security policy a less stressful experience for Koizumi compared to another prime minister who may not have enjoyed this close relationship to the American president.

B. ALTERNATIVE ARGUMENTS

Many of Koizumi's critics argue that Japan has been on the path of normalization no matter who occupies the office of prime minister. In other words, the leadership of the prime minister does not matter and other factors such as institutional rules, a powerful bureaucracy or situational reasons drive normalization.

1. Institutional

The institutional school of thought argues that Koizumi was simply the fortunate leader who happened to occupy the office of prime minister after many reforms had already transferred the office from a relatively weak position into something much more powerful and presidential or Westminster-like. Prior to the implementation of the Cabinet Reform Law of 1999, the office was indeed much weaker than it is today. Consensus building was the norm within the cabinet and the non-elected bureaucracy made government policy with the politicians simply rubber-stamping anything the "experts" submitted. Prime ministers were often at the mercy of the powerful factions that helped them get into office in the first place. This sentiment was clearly reflected by senior government officials such as Ichiro Ozawa who once said that the prime minister was "nothing more than a master of ceremonies for the ritual at hand."¹¹⁷

Prior to 1999, several prime ministers expressed a desire to make the *kantei* stronger. Prime Minister Nakasone was among those who believed that the office should be more "presidential."¹¹⁸ Prime Minister Hashimoto was also concerned about the weakness of the *kantei* and one of his goals was to strengthen it and the cabinet.¹¹⁹ What were some of the reasons for these concerns? Clearly, there were several major crisis

¹¹⁷ Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy : Japan's Kantei Approach to Foreign and Defense Affairs*, 11.

¹¹⁸ Berger, Mochizuki and Tsuchiyama, *Japan in International Politics : The Foreign Policies of an Adaptive State*, 6.

¹¹⁹ Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy : Japan's Kantei Approach to Foreign and Defense Affairs*, 11.

situations in which the central government was ineffective in taking action because of weak leadership which resulted in a slow response. Among the more high profile of these events include the first Gulf War, the Tokyo subway gas attacks and the Kobe earthquake. The prime minister was severely limited in his ability to take action in a timely fashion because of the difficulty in reaching a consensus or gaining support from the various factions in order to move.

Tomohito Shinoda is among the leading scholars on Koizumi's "top-down leadership." Through several case studies, one on the antiterrorism legislation¹²⁰ and another on the deployment of ground troops to Iraq,¹²¹ he argues that Koizumi was the beneficiary of institutional changes that some of his predecessors implemented when the government was seen as weak by the Japanese public. Specifically, Prime Minister Hashimoto was driving force in some changes to strengthen the cabinet secretariat in the aftermath of the Kobe earthquake and the Tokyo subway gas attacks. The Japanese government's inadequate response to these situations was a great concern from the public's perspective. Although Shinoda acknowledges the role of Koizumi's personal leadership, he addresses in detail the changes that took place to strengthen the *kantei* to transform it into a more of a counterpart to the White House. These are the changes that Shinoda argues that Koizumi benefited from to effectively practice his top-down leadership. Once again, there is no doubt that Koizumi was assisted by a system more favorable and suited to his style of leadership. However, it is clear that institutional changes alone do not guarantee success for the leader of the new and improved *kantei*. After all, if institutional reasons alone drove Japan's post-9/11 normalization, how does one explain Prime Ministers Abe and Fukuda's relative ineffectiveness under the same system that Koizumi succeeded in? This question will be analyzed in greater detail in the case studies section.

Chris Hughes, like Shinoda, argues that in addition to Koizumi's immense popularity with the public, he utilized the tools available to him through the

¹²⁰ Tomohito Shinoda, "Koizumi's Top-Down Leadership in the Anti-Terrorism Legislation: The Impact of Political Institutional Changes," *SAIS Review* 23, no. 1 (2003), 19-34.

¹²¹ Tomohito Shinoda, "Japan's Top-Down Policy Process to Dispatch the SDF to Iraq," *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 7, no. 1 (Apr 2006), 71.

improvements in the *kantei* to successfully deploy troops overseas in support of OEF in Afghanistan as well as OIF.¹²² He specifically gives credit to the Cabinet Law of 1999 which “clarified the prime minister’s authority to propose key policies at cabinet meetings, with the effect of strengthening the prime minister’s top-down executive leadership while diluting the traditional bottom-up style of Japanese decision-making.”¹²³ Although Hughes gives Koizumi some credit, like Shinoda, he clearly places more weight on institutional changes rather than personal leadership with regard to normalization.

Additionally, the Central Government Reform (CGR) in January of 2001 also increased the power of the prime minister and his cabinet by introducing a system of senior vice-ministers and parliamentary secretaries and clarification of the prime minister’s legal authority for proposals to the cabinet, among other measures.¹²⁴ Perhaps most significant of all in Koizumi’s case was the CGR’s measure to create the Council on Economic Fiscal Policy (CEFP), as Koizumi demonstrated his willingness to make economic policies and decisions from the top-down and not from the bottom-up.

It is important to note that although the bulk of the literature covered in this section on institutional argument focuses on improvements to the *kantei* as a result of electoral and cabinet reforms, the constraints associated with Article Nine are also very much an institutional issue that provides a counterbalancing effect to the strengthening of the *kantei*. In other words, although the *kantei* has indeed become a more powerful entity, it has not been sufficient to override the self-imposed constraint that the article provides.

This thesis does not dispute the relevance of the institutional changes that have strengthened the *kantei*. The prime minister has, without question, gained more powers as a result. This thesis argues that these changes and improvements are meaningless without the right kind of leader in charge who knows how to take advantage of these improvements. Koizumi’s style of leadership demonstrates a successful method of using

¹²² Hughes, *Japan's Re-Emergence as a 'Normal' Military Power*, 156.

¹²³ Ibid., 63.

¹²⁴ Ko Mishima, "Grading Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi's Revolution: How Far has the LDP's Policymaking Changed?" *Asian Survey* 47, no. 5 (Sep/Oct 2007), 735.

the new and improved *kantei* to effectively govern. Post-Koizumi leaders have yet to demonstrate the ability to effectively govern under this new system because they appear to lack the same leadership skills that Koizumi possesses.

2. Bureaucratic

The bureaucratic school of thought argues that the bureaucracy in general trumps the power of any single leader in Japanese politics, including the prime minister. In other words, the bureaucrats draft and implement policy from the bottom-up and the elected politicians simply nod their heads and rubber stamp anything that the subject matter experts forward to their desks. This school of thought was especially dominant during Japan's bubble years when the conventional wisdom was that the bureaucrats at the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) were driving Japan's economic policies. The developmental state school of thought was made famous by Chalmers Johnson. In the context of normalization of Japan's security policy, the key bureaucratic players represent the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Ministry of Defense (MOD), formerly known as the Japan Defense Agency (JDA). These bureaucrats have participated significantly in U.S.-Japan security alliance issues throughout the Cold War and post-Cold War years in issues such as base realignment, host nation support, etc. Although these bureaucratic functions and tasks are indeed very important "nuts and bolts" issues with regard to the maintenance of the alliance, this thesis argues that when it comes to expanding Japan's security policy as defined by the author, it takes strong leadership by the prime minister to do so. For example, the bureaucracy is not capable of deploying the SDF overseas during wartime conditions. It takes the leadership of a strong prime minister who has the political capital and the communications skills required to convince the Japanese public that it is the right thing to do.

Although most literature available on the power of Japanese bureaucracies tends to focus naturally on economic issues, the information is nevertheless important to review in order to gain a solid understanding of how powerful and influential non-elected but highly educated career bureaucrats are in policy making from the bottom-up. Is there a power struggle between bureaucrats and the elected politicians with regard to policy

making? If so, is the struggle a zero sum game where the power of the prime minister is diminished at the expense of a strong bureaucracy or can a strong prime minister co-exist with a powerful bureaucracy? Johnson is among the best known advocates of the school of thought that focuses on the effectiveness of large bureaucracies such as the MITI and MOFA. Johnson argues that the bureaucrats of MITI were largely responsible for Japan's rapid economic growth in the postwar period.¹²⁵ The main problem with the developmental state school of thought is that it focuses its attention mainly on how things appear to be on automatic pilot when things are going well but does not address how things would be without strong leadership during times of crisis.

In order to understand the power of the bureaucracy, one must understand its origins and how it was originally staffed. To accomplish this, it is necessary to look at Japan during the Meiji Restoration. The Meiji Restoration was a period of major changes in Japan essentially resulting from the forced opening of Japan by Perry in 1853.¹²⁶ The Shogun, who ruled Japan on behalf of the emperor (this arrangement was deliberately made by the House of Tokugawa in the seventeenth century to maintain legitimacy for the government),¹²⁷ began to lose his grip on power when the people saw that the samurai were unable to defend Japan against the powerful and modern warships that Perry brought with him. The black ships represented superior technology and industry that Japan did not possess. The leaders of Japan were aware of China's demise at the hands of Western colonialism¹²⁸ and knew the only way to prevent being cut up and colonized by the foreign powers was to modernize and industrialize to become a colonial power themselves. This eventually resulted in the end of the Tokugawa era and the samurai class and the beginning of Japan's modernization.¹²⁹ The goal for Japan in the Meiji era was to become a "rich nation" with a "strong army."¹³⁰

¹²⁵ Chalmers A. Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle : The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1982), 393.

¹²⁶ McClain, *Japan, a Modern History*, 119.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 131.

¹²⁹ Peter Duus, *Modern Japan*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), 80.

¹³⁰ McClain, *Japan, a Modern History*, 207.

The Japanese samurai of the Tokugawa era was not only a warrior but also a scholar and an artist.¹³¹ Many outsiders mistakenly assume that samurai were warriors only and had no other productive skills but this was simply not true. Most were very well educated. Once the Meiji Restoration occurred and the samurai's military services were no longer required, a large number of samurai traded their sword for a pen and became Japan's first modern bureaucrats.¹³² This process of bureaucratizing the samurai class had actually begun earlier in the seventeenth century during the relatively peaceful era of the Tokugawa Period¹³³ but the Meiji Restoration made it official by disarming them of their swords. The point of this brief history is that the roots of Japan's bureaucracy lie in the samurai class and the bushido ethos.¹³⁴ They are used to being well respected and having the power to make a difference in Japanese society.

An important factor in the economic success of Japan was the architects of Japan's successful industrial policy, the elite bureaucrats that led the MITI. Unlike in other countries where public service does not necessarily attract the best and brightest college graduates, a position in MITI is considered to be an elite position, worthy of only the top graduates of the best universities in Japan. Meritocracy was the rule when it came to recruiting for bureaucratic positions and the very best students from Japan's top universities such as the University of Tokyo were offered the lucrative job of civil servants in ministries such as MOFA, MITI or MOF.¹³⁵ As a result, there were many smart bureaucrats making decisions on how to run the economy. The *Amakudari* system¹³⁶ (translates to "descent from heaven") also provided a crucial link between the government and the private sector, similar to the U.S. military industrial complex with its many former military officers become defense contractors and provide a means to a close working relationship between business and government. With the *Amakudari* system, senior government officials move into management positions within private Japanese

¹³¹ McClain, *Japan, a Modern History*, 30.

¹³² Duus, *Modern Japan*, 97.

¹³³ McClain, *Japan, a Modern History*, 78.

¹³⁴ Duus, *Modern Japan*, 30.

¹³⁵ Hayao, *The Japanese Prime Minister and Public Policy*, 8.

¹³⁶ McClain, *Japan, a Modern History*, 575.

companies and continued to have major roles in the economic policy of the country. This is obviously not an all inclusive list, but the point is that a strong bureaucracy, with highly educated civil servants with close ties to the government, contributed significantly to Japan's unprecedented economic growth.

Pempel and Muramatsu describe the role of bureaucrats in "*The Japanese Bureaucracy and Economic Development: Structuring a Proactive Civil Service*."¹³⁷ Like Johnson, they stress the importance of the civil service and the role it played in Japan's economic growth. In particular, factors such as the bureaucracy's ability to create an environment conducive for economic growth, the competitive factors built into the system for recruitment as well as inter-agency and intra-agency competition, and its ability to use its power and influence in growth-producing ways were instrumental in this regard.

Similarly, John Campbell discusses bureaucrats as elites and describes the recruitment and organization of the typical bureaucracy in Japan.¹³⁸ Like Pempel and Muramatsu, Campbell stresses the high education and meritocratic recruitment of the civil service. In Japan, very high achieving students want to enter civil service because it is viewed as an elite profession. This work demonstrates how as a result of their elite education and high level of professionalism, Japanese bureaucrats enjoy a level of trust from the people that is difficult to find or duplicate elsewhere. This trust and professionalism is arguably a major reason for the strength of the bureaucracy.

Some of Japan's stronger prime ministers have significant ties to the bureaucracy. Leaders such as Ikeda, Sato and Nakasone have something in common besides serving four years or longer as prime minister. They also happen to have been former elite bureaucrats before becoming politicians.¹³⁹ This background certainly gave these leaders a leg up on prime ministers without a bureaucratic background because they had a solid understanding of policy making. One can also safely assume that the personal

¹³⁷ Hyung-Ki Kim, *The Japanese Civil Service and Economic Development : Catalysts of Change* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1995), 552.

¹³⁸ Takeshi Ishida and Ellis S. Krauss, *Democracy in Japan* (Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989), 354.

¹³⁹ Hayao, *The Japanese Prime Minister and Public Policy*, 104.

connections between the leader and the bureaucracy in these particular cases provided a mutually beneficial situation for governing purposes.

Ko Mishima argues that although Koizumi was successful in strengthening the prime minister's role in policy making, he was relatively ineffective in "undercutting traditional bureaucratic strength."¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless, Koizumi centralized policymaking through his assertive leadership, specifically through control of various committees and offices under the *kantei* such as the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy (CEFP). Despite Koizumi's assertive leadership, his efforts to restrain bureaucracies such as the Ministry of Finance (MOF) were ineffective and Mishima provides some case studies on the privatization of the postal service, the privatization of the highway public corporation, and civil service reform to support his argument.

On several occasions, high ranking bureaucrats have shown the willingness to go head to head against elected government officials. Former Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka famously was at odds with her top bureaucrats on a number of issues.¹⁴¹ Recently disgraced Administrative Vice Minister of the Defense Ministry, Takemasa Moriya, also bumped heads with the Minister over issues such as the appointment of his successor, before his corruption charges became public. This demonstrates that the bureaucracy is willing to fight elected officials to retain and maximize their power as bureaucrats.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the role of the CLB in interpreting the constitution, and, therefore, its ability to make foreign policy by ruling on what is permissible and not permissible under Article Nine, provides a strong argument in favor of bureaucratic entities trumping the wishes of the democratically elected politicians.

Critics of executive leadership may suggest that bureaucratic power in general trumps the power of the prime minister, not necessarily in only security issues but in other areas such as economic policy as well. Both the MOFA and the MOD have demonstrated in recent years that bureaucrats in these two ministries have had a great deal of influence over security policy in general with the Six Party Talks and especially

¹⁴⁰ Mishima, "Grading Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi's Revolution: How Far has the LDP's Policymaking Changed?" 727.

¹⁴¹ Hughes, *Japan's Re-Emergence as a 'Normal' Military Power*, 68.

in the context of the U.S.-Japan alliance with major issues such as the Defense Policy Review Initiative (DPRI) and the Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO) among others. Nonaka argues that overall policy coordination even at the highest levels of government “is largely conducted through bureaucratic functioning.”¹⁴² Although this work on the normalization of Japan’s security policy by bureaucrats is a significant step in the right direction, for the steps that really count, it still takes prime ministerial intervention.

All of this suggests that the bureaucracy is indeed powerful and, for the most part, well-respected with the Japanese public. They are highly educated and highly competent in their respective career fields. Koizumi demonstrated during his tenure that a powerful prime minister can co-exist with a powerful bureaucracy and that it was not necessarily a zero-sum game where one side needs to suffer at the expense of the other. Koizumi succeeded in his domestic and international priorities without major conflicts with the bureaucracy. He proved that he was driving Japan’s domestic and foreign policy, not the bureaucrats.

3. Situational

The situational school of thought argues that situational factors beyond a prime minister’s control such as domestic public opinion, foreign pressure, or catastrophic events such as terrorist attacks or natural disasters, drive the nation’s foreign policy more so than the prime minister’s leadership. Some refer to this as a “window of opportunity” while others may refer to it as “traumatic” events.

Paul Midford analyzed why Japan was able to deploy its troops smoothly in OEF/OIF as compared to the fiasco of the first Gulf War.¹⁴³ Midford concludes that Japan was able to do so because of a more favorable international environment. Specifically, he gives credit to the perception of Japan’s Asian neighbors of the SDF’s “responsible” PKO deployments since the early 1990s and refers to this as a “benign Asian reaction” to the deployment of the SDF. This particular argument is certainly a

¹⁴² Naoto Nonaka, "What's Gone Wrong with the Abe Administration?" *Japan Echo* 34, no. 4 (Aug 2007), 38.

¹⁴³ Midford, "Japan's Response to Terror: Dispatching the SDF to the Arabian Sea," 329-351.

strong one. As was discussed in the previous chapter, the Asian *gaiatsu* is a significant constraint on Japanese foreign policy and has been for many decades since the end of the Pacific War. Japan's responsible deployments of the SDF to areas such as Cambodia to provide assistance has improved the image of Japan's military in the eyes of many former enemies or colonial possessions. The successful deployment of Japanese troops to Iraq as well as the great contributions of the MSDF in the Indian Ocean will further contribute to the spread of the SDF's positive image throughout Asia. However, there is little reason to believe that Koizumi would not have reacted to the terrorist attacks differently or less aggressively had there been stronger Asian *gaiatsu*. Koizumi has both articulated and demonstrated that he will not allow pressure from foreign governments to dictate how he governs Japan. His visits to Yasukuni Shrine despite the protests from China and the Koreans provide solid evidence of this.

Natsuyo Ishibashi also concludes that Koizumi was able to deploy the SDF to Iraq was due largely to the Japanese public's conflicting concerns over the domestic economy and the threat from North Korea, with the external threat outweighing the domestic issue.¹⁴⁴ As a result, the public's desire to maintain positive relations with the United States in the context of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty more or less forced the public to accept Japan's obligations to the United States and the United Nations in the GWOT. This argument fails to credit Koizumi in two specific ways in which Koizumi acted to ensure Japan's contributions to the international community. First, Koizumi understood before the majority of the citizens that Japan had to do this to maintain credibility in the eyes of the international community. Second, Koizumi articulated this importance to the public in a manner in which the citizens understood that, despite their opposition to the Iraqi invasion, fulfilling their obligations to the international community was important if they wanted support in other areas such as the North Korean problem. The public did not think of this on its own. Koizumi had to cash in some of his popularity to get the public on his side.

¹⁴⁴ Ishibashi, "The Dispatch of Japan's Self-Defense Forces to Iraq - Public Opinion, Elections, and Foreign Policy," 766-789.

Courtney Purrington argued that despite the world view that Japan's behavior during the first Gulf crisis was reactive in nature, indecisive in general, lacking in assertive action, and more harmful than good for the relationship with the United States, Japan's actions were "in historical perspective, swiftly implemented and unprecedented in terms of the prominent role Japan played."¹⁴⁵ He considered this crisis to be a major watershed in Japanese history, equivalent to the opening up of Japan to the world by Commodore Perry and the end of the Pacific War; both American-directed events that resulted in a change of behavior on Japan's part. This view gives the Kaifu government the benefit of the doubt by giving it credit for doing what it could do under the circumstances and historical context. In other words, situational factors drove Kaifu's actions.

Peter Wooley argues that Japan's reaction to the Gulf crisis can be explained from an organizational process model perspective. Many critics of Japan were looking at the lack of response from a rational actor model perspective and Japan's actions seemed irrational. From the Japanese government's perspective, it was reacting organizationally to the problem as it has done for decades in the postwar era and subsequent rise as an economic power. The major difference was there was no crisis of this scale occurring simultaneously with Japan's economy as large as it was in 1991 and with Japan extremely dependent on the oil from the region in question.¹⁴⁶

In summary, it is foolish to completely disregard the argument that gives some credit to situational factors as contributors driving Japan's foreign policy and this thesis will not attempt to do so. However, it is equally foolish to suggest that situational factors alone drive a leader's reactions. A leader does not become great because of situational reasons. Strong leadership already exists in an individual long before a crisis situation occurs. The difference between a superior leader and an inferior leader is how he performs when a window of opportunity presents itself. The great leaders will rise to the occasion and use the crisis as a window of opportunity to make things happen, whether it

¹⁴⁵ Courtney Purrington and A. K., "Tokyo's Policy Responses during the Gulf Crisis," *Asian Survey* 31, no. 4 (Apr. 1991), 307.

¹⁴⁶ Peter J. Woolley, "Japan's 1991 Minesweeping Decision: An Organizational Response," *Asian Survey* 36, no. 8 (Aug. 1996), 804-817.

is postal reform or constitutional reform. The weak leaders will allow the window of opportunity to close and not only lose the chance to demonstrate greatness but will likely result in a short and ineffective tenure.

IV. CASE STUDIES

A. PRIME MINISTER KAIFU'S PERFORMANCE DURING THE FIRST GULF WAR

1. Checkbook Diplomacy and International Criticism

This particular case study will provide the lesson that leadership does matter in times of international crisis. Specifically, the ability to identify a situation as a crisis, the ability to make a command decision rapidly, and the ability to move the government to take those actions once the decision is made. This section will demonstrate that Kaifu could have, but did not, make the choices that would have enabled Japan to make an international contribution commensurate with its economic status. This section will also support the argument that strong leadership would have made the difference between checkbook diplomacy and effective diplomacy.

Japan's performance during the first Gulf War, or the lack thereof, is largely viewed as a major watershed in terms of a significant shift in Japanese foreign policy. Some have argued that this embarrassing chapter in Japan's history is equivalent to the third opening of Japan; the first two being Perry's arrival and MacArthur's occupation. In any case, there is no doubt that all post-Gulf War One Japanese prime ministers were very aware that if a similar crisis ever occurred, it was imperative that Japan did not repeat those mistakes. However, a few post-Gulf War One prime ministers have also demonstrated an inability to recognize major events or accidents as situations qualifying as a crisis. Therefore, the ability to see a problem as a crisis is perhaps more important than the ability to take appropriate action when a crisis occurs.

The first half of this chapter is devoted to analyzing what exactly happened that prevented Japan from acting swiftly and decisively when it needed to do so most. Although there are indeed a variety of factors ranging from public opinion to bureaucratic

infighting that contributed to the slow response from the Japanese government, this thesis argues that the majority of the blame for the ineffectiveness of the Japanese response falls squarely on the shoulders of Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu.

Kaifu became the prime minister of Japan on 8 August, 1989. He replaced outgoing Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita, who resigned from office to take responsibility for the Recruit Cosmos scandal, which was essentially a stocks-for-favors scandal between Recruit Group executives providing stocks of the Recruit Cosmos Company to various politicians in exchange for political favors.¹⁴⁷ The stock was issued to the politicians prior to floating it on the stock market, resulting in substantial profits for those cut in on the deal. Many prominent politicians including the sitting prime minister, Takeshita, as well as former and future prime ministers, such as Nakasone and Miyazawa, were reportedly involved.¹⁴⁸

Kaifu, with a reputation as “Mr. Clean,” came into office with tremendous opportunity to clean up government by pushing through reforms that would help reduce the amount of corruption in government. Then-LDP general-secretary, the hawkish Ichiro Ozawa, suggested to Kaifu the best way to clean up the government was by pushing through electoral reform; specifically, changing the 1955 system into a fully, Single Member District (SMD) system. The idea was to reduce the influence of the various powerful factions within the LDP. This reform also had the potential to turn the 1955 system into a two party system, where all the smaller parties could be disappear as a result of the proportional representation seats being abolished. Predictably, this reform was vehemently opposed by the opposition parties.

Kaifu did not have a strong political base because he was a member of a small faction, the Miki faction. He chose Ozawa as the party secretary general in deference to the largest faction in the LDP, the Takeshita faction, to which Kaifu owed his premiership. Ozawa was an outspoken and controversial figure for his views on Article Nine and the importance of Japan revising or reinterpreting the ban on collective self

¹⁴⁷ The Recruit Group was an up and coming Japanese conglomerate specializing in the real estate and job placement sectors.

¹⁴⁸ Gaunder, *Political Reform in Japan : Leadership Looming Large*, 43.

defense so that Japan could make international contributions commensurate with its economic status. In any case, Ozawa believed that Japan's "inconsequential role in international politics" was due to weak leadership, and weak leadership was a result of the Japanese electoral system.¹⁴⁹

This is the context under which Kaifu got dragged into launching an electoral reform process that simply did not have any traction within the government to begin with. It is necessary to understand this process and why the reform attempt failed in order to understand how he mishandled the first Gulf War. One other factor to keep in mind is that these two events were happening simultaneously and Kaifu was forced to prioritize the two tasks. He eventually chose the Gulf crisis as the task requiring the higher priority but as we will see in the following paragraphs, his half-hearted attempts to appease patrons, whether the United States government or the powerful LDP factions, ultimately resulted in failure in both domestic and foreign politics.

2. The Deployment of Minesweepers to the Gulf

As the government continued to debate on how to contribute to peace keeping operations, some LDP leaders began to advocate sending MSDF minesweepers to the Gulf. The idea of sending minesweepers to the Gulf was not new. Several months before the American-led Operation Desert Storm on August 15, 1990, then-American ambassador to Japan, Michael Armacost, on behalf of the United States government, formally requested a variety of services such as medical personnel, logistics, as well as minesweepers.¹⁵⁰ Predictably, the Japanese government's response was that under Article Nine of the Constitution, it would be impossible to oblige a request to send MSDF ships to the region to conduct a very real and very dangerous mission of sweeping mines.

¹⁴⁹ Gaunder, *Political Reform in Japan : Leadership Looming Large*, 51.

¹⁵⁰ Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy : Japan's Kantei Approach to Foreign and Defense Affairs*, 53.

The discussion on the possible deployment of minesweepers to the Gulf regained traction in early March 1991, after the hostilities had officially ended in late February. This was due in large part to the embarrassment suffered by Japan for its checkbook diplomacy. Many political leaders, such as Ozawa and business and industry leaders, were determined to make sure that Japan participated with real people and equipment in any postwar peace building and reconstruction efforts. Initially, the government attempted to navigate around the constitutional issues by creating a non-military entity comprised of retired SDF officers who would logistically support the efforts of those nations enforcing the cease fire. However, there were many disagreements within the government over this policy. Some, such as Ozawa, supported it, but MOFA preferred to send actual SDF officers instead so that the government could retain direct control over the operation.¹⁵¹ It was clear by mid-March that this debate would take too long and Japan would end up looking foolish again by demonstrating to the world that it could not make a decision. As a result, many LDP members and MOFA began to urge the Kaifu government to dispatch the minesweepers to the Gulf. The major newspapers were split on their opinion on this issue with Yomiuri and Sankei encouraging the government to deploy the MSDF.¹⁵²

The dovish Kaifu was perhaps too cautious and this trait added to Japan's inability to respond quickly and decisively. He wanted to conduct a study prior to committing the MSDF to the Gulf, saying that it would be "irresponsible without researching the current situation in the Persian Gulf."¹⁵³ This slow and cautious behavior reinforces Gaunder's argument that Kaifu was unwilling to take risks in domestic policy. Here, he demonstrated that he was also unwilling to take risks in his foreign policy decisions.

Eventually, under intense pressure not only from the hawkish LDP leaders and MOFA but also business leaders and organizations such as the Japanese Shipbuilders' Association and the Seamen's Union, Kaifu finally gave in and made the decision to send

¹⁵¹ Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy : Japan's Kantei Approach to Foreign and Defense Affairs*, 56.

¹⁵² Ibid., 56.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 57.

the minesweepers to the Gulf.¹⁵⁴ By the time Kaifu made this decision, it was early April 2001, eight months after Armacost had first requested them from Japan. Although some argue that this deployment was too little, too late, by and large, the efforts of the MSDF were greatly appreciated by the international community and one cannot help but to ask if the prime minister had not provided strong leadership sooner, perhaps the term “checkbook diplomacy” may have never been coined.

3. Link Between Domestic Performance and Foreign Affairs?

Gaunder provides an extensive study on some of the reasons why Kaifu failed to achieve the domestic reforms he set out to achieve.¹⁵⁵ Specifically, she studies Kaifu’s failed attempt for electoral reform in the aftermath of the Recruit Scandal. Gaunder concludes that Kaifu failed in his attempt to reform for three main reasons; 1) his unwillingness to take risks, 2) his lack of commitment to reform, and 3) his lack of vision.¹⁵⁶

Clearly, there is a link between a prime minister’s performance in domestic issues and his ability to conduct foreign policy. In addition to Gaunder’s argument referencing the three main reasons that contributed to the failure of Kaifu’s domestic reforms; this thesis suggests that Kaifu’s inability to recognize the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq as a major international crisis that required his immediate attention also demonstrates a weakness of not only leadership, but perhaps more importantly, a lack of judgment. Like Mori, who reportedly finished a round of golf upon hearing the news about the Greenville-Ehime Maru collision,¹⁵⁷ Kaifu received word about the invasion of Kuwait while on vacation in Nagano but did not return to Tokyo until the following evening.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy : Japan's Kantei Approach to Foreign and Defense Affairs*, 57.

¹⁵⁵ Gaunder, *Political Reform in Japan : Leadership Looming Large*.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 62.

¹⁵⁷ Stockwin, “From Koizumi to Abe: Same Bed, Different Dreams?” 225.

¹⁵⁸ Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy : Japan's Kantei Approach to Foreign and Defense Affairs*, 50.

It is difficult to solve a problem if one cannot define what the problem is. Leaders who do not perform successfully in both domestic politics and foreign policy have repeatedly demonstrated a deficiency in this area and Kaifu is certainly no exception.

The role of the domestic media in Kaifu's inability to make a decision is also worth looking at. Japan's five major newspapers were split on their opinion on the feasibility of sending minesweepers to the Gulf. *Sankei* and *Yomiuri* supported the deployment of minesweepers to the Gulf, *Nihon Keizai*, *Asahi* and *Mainichi* were against it.¹⁵⁹ In a country where a large percentage of citizens read the newspaper and three out of the five newspapers listed above are among the top five newspapers in circulation in the world,¹⁶⁰ the influence of the media on a Japanese politician's decision making process is significant. This is especially true for the leader who is unwilling to take risks that may result in him losing his job. The difference between Koizumi and Kaifu in this regard is that Kaifu's indecisiveness was fueled by a lack of consensus among the major newspapers. In other words, he was allowing the editorials to influence his ability to make a decision. On the other hand, Koizumi demonstrated that he would make decisions unencumbered of external factors when it came to major executive decisions such as the deployment of the SDF to support OEF and OIF. This is not to say that he ignored public sentiment, but was aware of it and had a plan to assuage it if necessary.

Another interesting point to consider when comparing Kaifu and Koizumi is the role that the dissolving of the Diet and calling for snap elections in the Lower House played. Why did each man dissolve the Diet when he did? Was the LDP in a position of strength when the Diet was dissolved? What were the results and did each leader take advantage of a mandate, if it existed?

Kaifu dissolved the Lower House in February 1990. Unfortunately for Kaifu, he became prime minister in August 1989 and did not have the luxury of choosing an opportune time to dissolve the Diet because the four-year maximum time span between the elections in the Lower House was approaching. Despite having this disadvantage, the

¹⁵⁹ Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy : Japan's Kantei Approach to Foreign and Defense Affairs*, 56.

¹⁶⁰ World Association of Newspapers website: <http://www.wan-press.org/article2825.html>; (Accessed December 4, 2008).

LDP did well and won 286 out of 512 seats.¹⁶¹ Based on the LDP's success, one could argue that Kaifu had the mandate from the public to push through the electoral reform that he wanted to achieve. After all, this was the playbook Koizumi used fifteen years later in pushing through his postal reform. He dissolved the Diet, won decisively and used this mandate to achieve his goals.

According to Gaunder, the LDP's victory in the Lower House elections in 1990 had the opposite effect on the LDP that the 2005 Lower House elections had on it. Instead of showing the members of the Diet that the public wants and expects the politicians to clean up the government in the wake of the Recruit scandal, the LDP members interpreted the election victory as the public has forgiven and is no longer upset with the LDP. Although Kaifu was still interested in electoral reform, he was unable to secure a commitment from any faction leader. In this particular situation, cautionary approaches led to complacency and as a result, Kaifu lost his "window of opportunity for electoral reform."¹⁶²

This reinforces the idea that Kaifu did not see the urgency of the situation and let too much time slip between the election victory and his attempt to reengage his party for electoral reform. Although the election was held in February 1990, Kaifu did not actively pursue electoral reform until April and did not meet with the faction leaders until May. He allowed three months to lapse before he visited faction leaders to demand their support for electoral reform. Whether Kaifu believed it or not, there is little doubt that by allowing three months to pass prior to engaging faction heads face-to-face, Kaifu allowed a perception to exist that characterized electoral reform as a non-urgent and low priority issue. By not rigorously pursuing the matter immediately following the election, the prime minister lost his opportunity and virtually guaranteed the demise of his administration months before it actually occurred.

Furthermore, this lack of urgency was demonstrated by how Kaifu approached getting the reform bill through the Diet. According to Gaunder, rather than working the

¹⁶¹ Gaunder, *Political Reform in Japan : Leadership Looming Large*, 52.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 52.

opposition to try to gain their support or by attempting to gain the support of the public as Koizumi did, he simply utilized the normal policy-making channels.¹⁶³ Kaifu decided to use this approach because he believed that this was the best way to achieve consensus and try to get the opposition to support him. This process proved to be too time-consuming and by the time the bill was officially submitted to the Diet in 1991, both the sense of urgency and the window of opportunity evaporated.

Clearly, Kaifu's lack of urgency and inability to see and to take advantage of a window of opportunity in the domestic forum parallels his approach to foreign policy. There is a direct correlation. Leadership is leadership and this case proves that it takes the same set of skills to succeed in both domestic and international politics.

B. KOIZUMI'S DOMESTIC REFORMS

There is little doubt that Prime Minister Koizumi demonstrated strong leadership, learned from the mistakes of his predecessors, and further normalized Japan's security policy and international contributions far more than his predecessors or successors since. This section will provide the lesson that Koizumi demonstrated the strong leadership necessary to succeed in both domestic and international politics. It will address his specific actions and personal attributes that made his policies a success.

1. Postal Reform

Fujimura examined the relationship between the prime minister and the ruling party legislators by studying the postal service privatization of 2005.¹⁶⁴ He argues that when a prime minister is willing to risk his job for reform, he will more than likely increase his leverage to control the party leaders. Essentially, Koizumi chose postal privatization as an issue more important than his job and was willing to take the risk in order to accomplish his goal. Unwillingness to take risks was identified by Gaunder as

¹⁶³ Gaunder, *Political Reform in Japan : Leadership Looming Large*, 56.

¹⁶⁴ Fujimura, "The Power Relationship between the Prime Minister and Ruling Party Legislators: The Postal Service Privatization Act of 2005 in Japan," 233.

one of the main reasons why Kaifu failed to perform as prime minister. Koizumi had many strong points, but his willingness to take risks was perhaps the most important personal attribute that he demonstrated as prime minister.

Postal reform had great importance for Koizumi long before he became prime minister. This, along with national finance issues, was what he had built his career as a politician around.¹⁶⁵ He was elected to the LDP's presidency on his third attempt in April 2001 and subsequently became the prime minister. The first postal privatization reform bill of 2002 did not achieve the results that Koizumi had intended. He was forced to negotiate and compromise on a large portion of the bill with other parties in order to get the bill to pass in the Diet. This resulted in a watered-down version of the bill which was generally regarded as a failure for Koizumi.¹⁶⁶

Koizumi did not give up and accept this bill as a final product. Demonstrating a strong commitment to the reform he believed in, he vowed to push through a more complete postal reform bill to the Diet by fiscal year 2005. The 2005 version of the bill proposed dividing Japan Post into four branches focusing on different services such as banking and insurance.¹⁶⁷ When this was not accepted by the LDP as a whole, Koizumi demonstrated his dissatisfaction to his party by reshuffling his cabinet and appointing only pro-reformers to his cabinet. The bill narrowly passed in the Lower House but 37 LDP members opposed Koizumi and voted against the bill. When the bill was defeated in the Upper House, Koizumi dissolved the Lower House and called for a snap election. One of the powers Koizumi exercised as prime minister was to withhold endorsements for the 37 LDP members who voted against him and ran his own candidates, widely publicized in the media as Koizumi's "assassins." Although 18 of the 37 managed to regain their seats in the election, Koizumi accomplished in sending a clear and strong signal to all LDP members to take his threats seriously and to think twice before voting against him.

¹⁶⁵ Fujimura, "The Power Relationship between the Prime Minister and Ruling Party Legislators: The Postal Service Privatization Act of 2005 in Japan," 235.

¹⁶⁶ Gaunder, *Political Reform in Japan : Leadership Looming Large*, 129.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 129.

Why did Koizumi succeed with his postal reform? In addition to his willingness to take risks, Gaunder also argues that Koizumi displayed the necessary vision and the commitment to reform that Kaifu failed to demonstrate. She also acknowledges Koizumi's media savvy and excellent public speaking skills. He also used his "window of opportunity" to close the deal immediately before the LDP had a chance to become complacent from the Lower House electoral victory as in Kaifu's situation. Koizumi forced the Diet to pass the postal reform bill while the election victory was still fresh on the minds of the politicians as well as the public. The bill passed both Houses and became law one month after the Lower House victory.

2. Link Between Domestic Performance and Foreign Affairs?

Prime Minister Koizumi was Japan's third longest serving postwar prime minister. This fact alone is a remarkable achievement when one considers how "nasty, brutish and short"¹⁶⁸ a typical term as the head of government for the world's second largest economy normally is. As was mentioned earlier in this thesis, the average length of an administration in the postwar years has been about two years. Koizumi's tenure lasted five and a half years. In any case, Koizumi's longevity as prime minister had more to do with his success in domestic politics than his foreign policy views.

Is there a link between Koizumi's success in domestic politics and his success on the international stage? Clearly, the answer is yes. Koizumi's success in domestic politics provided him with the political capital necessary to succeed in international politics. Vision is important. One must understand what the goal is in order to achieve that goal, whether it is postal reform or the first war-time deployment of the SDF overseas since the end of the Pacific War. Commitment is also important. If one is not strongly committed to his vision, it would be very easy to not see it through to the end and simply give up at the first sign of difficulty. The personal attribute that distinguishes Koizumi from the majority of his predecessors is his willingness to take risks; his willingness to place his job on the line to do what he believes is the right thing to do for

¹⁶⁸ The life of a man as described by Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan*.

the country. Similar to the way Senator McCain said that he would rather lose an election than to lose a war, Koizumi essentially told the LDP he would rather lose the election and his job than to lose on the postal privatization bill.

C. PERFORMANCE OF POST-KOIZUMI PRIME MINISTERS

Koizumi's tenure as prime minister came to an end in September 2006. Since his departure, three men have held the position; Shinzo Abe, Yasuo Fukuda, and Taro Aso. Abe and Fukuda each held for the position for less than one year and Aso is only two months into his premiership at the time of this writing. Aso's short period in office is not sufficient to analyze his performance thus far. This section will, therefore, focus on the leadership of Abe and Fukuda to provide the lessons learned as to what factors led to the relative ineffectiveness of their respective administrations and why they were unable to achieve success in the same post-electoral and cabinet reform era of the strongest postwar *kantei*.

It is not the intent of this section to closely scrutinize the actions of Abe or Fukuda. It is the intent of this brief section to simply address the point that despite the institutional improvements in the office of the prime minister and the *kantei*, without the right leader at the helm to take advantages of the tools that are available to him, the improvements are meaningless. In other words, institutional factors alone do not automatically make a prime minister stronger.

1. Abe

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe came into office as the handpicked successor to Koizumi. He developed a reputation as a strong leader even before becoming prime minister due to his actions as chief cabinet secretary under Koizumi in dealing with North Korea on nuclear as well as abduction issues. He immediately visited China and South Korea after taking office to attempt to improve relations that deteriorated during the Koizumi years because of the Yasukuni visits.

Unfortunately for Abe and the country, his reputation as a strong leader would not last very long. While a variety of factors likely led to his premature downfall, some appear to be major contributing factors, such as the return to a more consensual style of politics, his selection of cabinet ministers based on factional loyalties, his “flip-flopping” over the return of former LDP members ousted by Koizumi for voting against him in the postal privatization bill, his aggressive insistence on constitutional reform without a clear vision as to the outcome he wanted to achieve, among others.¹⁶⁹ In other words, Abe displayed the kind of leadership, or lack thereof, which was the direct opposite of the type of personal attributes that Koizumi displayed during his successful tenure. The consensual, non-confrontational style of politics had long been practiced before Koizumi and was among the main reasons why the Japanese prime minister was viewed as a weak leader whose job was to herd cats rather than actually lead. His power base was weak to begin with because he chose cabinet ministers who helped him achieve victory for the LDP presidential race.¹⁷⁰ As a result, he had ministers who were largely incompetent and prone to infighting.¹⁷¹ He failed to use the tools provided to him by the reforms from the Nineties such as the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy (CEFP) which Koizumi had used to his advantage by driving policy from his cabinet.¹⁷²

Abe’s cabinet choices demonstrated his lack of judgment. Another bit of evidence to support Abe’s lack of judgment was his inability to gauge the pulse of the Japanese people. This attribute in particular was among Koizumi’s strongest. Abe failed to see that the public was not strongly interested in the idea of constitutional revision. Yet, Abe made constitutional revision one of his main areas to focus his administration on.¹⁷³ His decision to reinstate the members expelled by Koizumi was unpopular with the public and reinforced Abe’s image as a non-reformer (at least on domestic issues that

¹⁶⁹ Nonaka, “What’s Gone Wrong with the Abe Administration?” 35.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁷² Stockwin, “From Koizumi to Abe: Same Bed, Different Dreams?” 228.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 228.

count).¹⁷⁴ A leader who is not committed to reform is on dangerous ground when one considers the 2005 electoral victory was an affirmation by the public that they want reform.

Although Abe was younger than Koizumi and had the looks worthy of a fresh and energetic leader for Japan, he clearly lacked Koizumi's charisma and public speaking skills. He was unable to capitalize on his relative youth due to all the factors previously mentioned. Ultimately, the support ratings for his cabinet fell like a rock and even his last ditch effort to regain support for his cabinet by reshuffling its members could not overcome the fatal tail spin that his administration had gotten itself into. After the LDP lost its majority in the Upper House, Abe abruptly resigned as prime minister only a year after succeeding Koizumi.

2. Fukuda

Following Abe's resignation, Koizumi's chief cabinet secretary prior to Abe, Yasuo Fukuda was elected as the next president of the LDP and by extension, Japan's next prime minister. Like Koizumi and Abe, Fukuda also comes from a political family. His father, Takeo Fukuda, served as prime minister from December 1976 to December 1978.¹⁷⁵ Fukuda, like Abe, showed a great deal of potential for the job due to his success as Koizumi's CCS, especially during the initial phases of GWOT and OIF. And ultimately, like Abe, his tenure as prime minister was to be "brutish, nasty and short." Why did Fukuda fail to effectively carry out the duties of his office despite having the same institutional powers that Koizumi enjoyed?

By now, it should not be surprising to see a similar pattern for the unsuccessful leaders. The Japanese citizens have made it clear that they are not satisfied with business as usual and want leaders who will challenge the status quo and advance reforms to continuously seek improvements within the government and society. Some of the qualities that Gaunder suggests as the reason for Kaifu's downfall are also evident in

¹⁷⁴ Nonaka, "What's Gone Wrong with the Abe Administration?" 35.

¹⁷⁵ From the official website of the Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/archives_e.html. (Accessed 5DEC08).

Fukuda's downfall. For example, he did not do a good job of articulating exactly what principles he stood for to the public.¹⁷⁶ He was not very clear as to what programs and policies he wanted to reform. Although Fukuda supporters could argue that he focused on reforming "consumer administration and improving the preservation of official documents," the public by and large did not know what he really stood for.¹⁷⁷ In short, from the public's perspective, the only one that counts for a politician, he was viewed as a leader with a lack of vision.

Since he was perceived to not have a vision, naturally, he also presented an image of not being committed to reform.¹⁷⁸ When one is dealing with a major domestic crisis with the missing pension payment records for over 50 million Japanese citizens,¹⁷⁹ the last thing in the world a politician needs is an image as non-reformer. This is nearly 40 percent of the Japanese population. Imagine if the Social Security Administration lost the records for 40 percent of the American population and stopped sending out social security checks. Clearly, the situation was not Fukuda's fault; however, he must at the very least have appeared to be vigorously fighting for the people, and Fukuda simply did not have the charisma, energy or personality to present this image. Additionally, he demonstrated that he was not interested in reform when he reshuffled his cabinet in the face of falling cabinet approval ratings and replaced proven reformers in his cabinet with anti-reformers, including those who opposed Koizumi's postal privatization reforms.¹⁸⁰

Ironically, a contributor to Abe's downfall was his reinstatement of the politicians into the LDP that Koizumi had kicked out of the party. This proved to be a very unpopular decision with the public. Fukuda's subsequent decision to place some of these

¹⁷⁶ *Japan Echo*, "Stepping Down to Save the LDP," <http://www.japanecho.co.jp/sum/2008/350508.html>, (Accessed 4DEC08).

¹⁷⁷ *Japan Echo*, "Stepping Down to Save the LDP," <http://www.japanecho.co.jp/sum/2008/350508.html>, (Accessed: 4DEC08).

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *Japan Echo*, "Domestic Challenges for the Fukuda Cabinet," <http://www.japanecho.co.jp/sum/2008/350111.html>, (Accessed: 4DEC08).

¹⁸⁰ *Japan Echo*, "Stepping Down to Save the LDP," <http://www.japanecho.co.jp/sum/2008/350508.html> (Accessed 4DEC08).

individuals into his cabinet shows a severe lack of judgment on his part and demonstrates a lack of commitment to reform from the public's perspective.

What is abundantly clear is that the two men who successfully served as Koizumi's chief cabinet secretary and right hand man did not follow the leadership example set by one of the most successful postwar prime ministers in Japan's history.

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V. CONCLUSION

A. LEADERSHIP MATTERS: HOW WAS KOIZUMI DIFFERENT?

The evidence provided in this thesis leads to a clear conclusion: individual leadership matters in Japan as much as it does anywhere else in the world. Just as there are checks and balances built into the presidential system to limit the power of the executive in the United States, there are many constraints that limit a Japanese prime minister's ability to be an effective executive. The best postwar prime ministers of Japan demonstrated their ability to circumvent these constraints.¹⁸¹ Those who failed to learn how to circumvent these constraints did not remain prime minister for very long.

According to Samuels, leadership "is that constrained place where the imagination, resources, and opportunities converge."¹⁸² Gaunder calls imagination vision. Koizumi clearly articulated his vision, whether domestically through his promise to reform the postal system or internationally through his promise to George Bush that Japan would provide more than just money for the war against terror. Resources correlate to institutional factors such as the electoral reforms that decreased the power of the factions and the improvements to the cabinet to increase the strength of the *kantei*. Koizumi clearly took advantage of these changes by appointing cabinet members of his own choosing with no regard to factional loyalties and making policy from the top-down through the CFPF. Gaunder refers to "opportunities" as windows of opportunity and this thesis describes it as situational factors. Once again, Koizumi demonstrated strong leadership by taking advantage of these windows of opportunity to push through his agenda. He demonstrated understanding that time was of the essence and if he waited too long, the window would abruptly close before he had a chance to push his agenda. Specifically, he rapidly pushed through the ATSMF and the ISMF to ensure Japanese participation in OEF and OIF. Less successful leaders repeatedly wait too long and miss

¹⁸¹ Richard J. Samuels, *Machiavelli's Children : Leaders and their Legacies in Italy and Japan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 5.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 6.

out on their window of opportunity. Koizumi consistently demonstrated that he was well-prepared and had a plan ready to submit at a moment's notice when an opportunity presented itself.

Koizumi's willingness to take risks placed him in a league of his own in contemporary Japanese politics. He was willing to place his job on the line in order to achieve results. He was willing to take on the opposition, the special interest groups, and his own party. He was able to do this because of his popularity. His popularity was arguably his most important political capital. Without it, it is doubtful that he would have been a successful reformer. However, his popularity was not a given. He had to invest a great deal of time and effort into building a positive image with the public through the media by providing more accessibility than previous prime ministers. Unlike his predecessors, he communicated with the public in a manner easily understood by the average citizen. Whether they disagreed with him or not, the public always knew exactly where Koizumi stood and there was little doubt that he always had Japan's best interests in mind rather than himself or the LDP.

B. THE FUTURE OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN JAPAN

The future success of Japanese prime ministers through demonstration of strong leadership in the new and improved *kantei* is not a foregone conclusion. Prime Minister Koizumi's successors thus far demonstrate this fact very clearly. Abe and Fukuda had more in common with pre-Koizumi prime ministers than with Koizumi despite having major roles as CCS in the Koizumi administration.

Despite Koizumi's success and the precedent he set in favor of strong political leadership to further normalize Japan's security policy, Abe's attempts to make constitutional revision an issue contributed to a premature end of his premiership. This was because he did not have the support of the public. Public support is the most important political capital in order to be a successful prime minister. He failed to gauge the pulse of the public and did not have a sense of timing necessary to advance major reforms.

If future prime ministers of Japan hope to replicate Koizumi's successful tenure as prime minister rather than become the "one hit" or "no hit" wonders that seem to populate the list of Japanese prime ministers, they must be willing to take risks, demonstrate that they have a vision, demonstrate commitment, and strive to become popular to put political capital in their bank. Popularity with the public is important if a leader expects to push policies that are not popular with the factional leadership as well as the rank and file members of Diet. Unfortunately for Japanese politics, future prospects for Koizumi-esque leadership appear to be the exception rather than the rule.

C. WHY IT MATTERS: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE U.S.-JAPAN ALLIANCE

Some historians have argued that the allied cooperation during the Second World War between the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union was not a relationship between three countries but rather three men: Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin. When there is a strong personal connection between the leaders of two or more nation-states, inevitably, the relationship between the nations will become one characterizing cooperation and trust. One need not look further than the Bush-Blair relationship and the Bush-Koizumi relationship to understand this concept.

The point to take away from this thesis is that Japan's leadership is very important from the American perspective just as American leadership is important from the Japanese perspective. It is no surprise that the Japanese press kept a close eye on the recent U.S. presidential election to try to analyze the future direction of the U.S.-Japan alliance. Likewise, Americans must pay close attention to who leads the world's second largest economy and America's number one ally and best friend in Asia. After all, the U.S.-Japan alliance is without question the linchpin of Washington's security strategy in Asia. Will the alliance benefit from a Koizumi-like leader who delivers on his promises to assist the United States during times of crises or from a leader who cannot gain a sufficient number of votes necessary to extend the MSDF's refueling mission to support the war against terror? The answer is obvious.

Although U.S.-Japan alliance scholars and policymakers do not have any input into who becomes the prime minister in Japan, it is nevertheless important to understand that the leader can and does make a difference. It is also important to understand that the argument that the institutional changes have made the *kantei* more presidential or Westminster like is inaccurate. This thesis clearly proves that a strong and effective prime minister like Koizumi is not a given. Clearly, he is the exception and not the rule. It is also important to understand what that leader can and cannot do based on factors such as his popularity, power base within his own party, how he interacts with the opposition, and how he interacts with his bureaucrats because all of these factors will have an effect on what kind of a partner he will be to the United States.

In conclusion, there are many constraints limiting what a Japanese prime minister can and cannot do, and there are additional factors that compete with the prime minister in setting policy, but it takes strong leadership from the prime minister to really make a difference. When Japan needed to act immediately and decisively to maintain its credibility and status as the world's second largest economy, Prime Minister Koizumi took action to ensure Japan contributed to the international community commensurate with Japan's stature. He did not let the citizens of Japan down, and he did not let the international community down. Despite institutional improvements to the *kantei*, a relatively strong bureaucracy, and convenient windows of opportunity, leadership still matters in Japanese politics. Simply put, the prime minister will make a difference between a Japan that contributes to international affairs appropriately and a Japan that fails to act.

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