

# Japanese Remilitarization and Its Affect on American Military Proceedings



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## Introduction

With rising pressures from North Korea and Russia, and rising tensions with its closest neighbor China, Japanese Prime Ministers have felt a need for re-militarization, no longer taking the defensive in protecting their homeland, but preparing to attack if necessary. Although seen as a necessity for Japanese security and defense officials, the scars from Japan's militant past have not healed within other East Asian countries, and with its progressive increase in militarization, those wounds may not be closing anytime soon. And so, with its increase in military power and close military and diplomatic ties with the United States, how does Japanese military progress play out for American defense and security interests, and what effect will it have on the power balance of the Eastern Pacific?

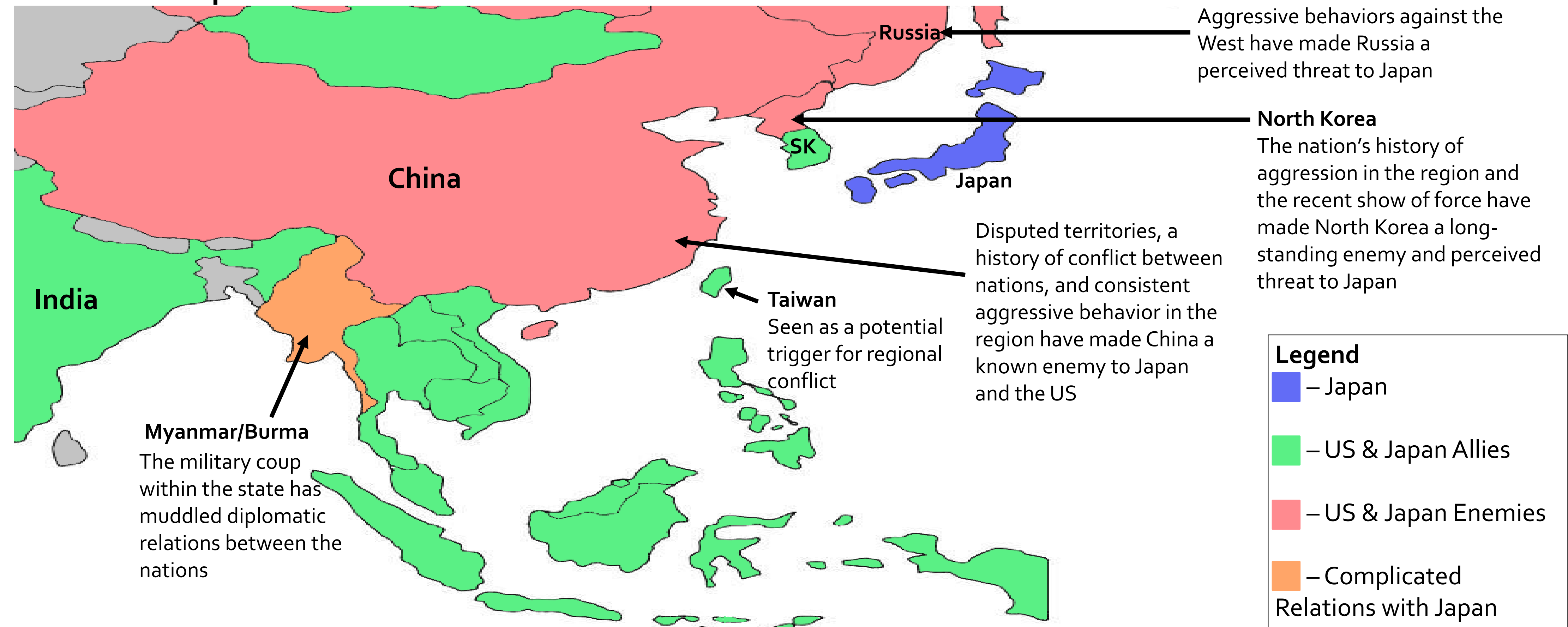
## Abstract

This research aims to illustrate the factors, methods, and implications of Japanese Re-Militarization policies and their potential short and long-term effects on the proceedings of the American military in the East Asian region. Over a 4-month period, data was collected from a variety of primary and secondary sources to obtain a complete picture of the current situation, while considering the differing Eastern and Western perspectives. Through the research and findings, it can be argued that due to more than just external factors brought upon by foreign influences, but also cultural influences that overtime shaped political organizations and opinions, Japan's Re-Militarization efforts pose to offset the current balance of power in the region and creates an intricate web of policy and procedures for the American military and its allies.

## Timeline of Key Events

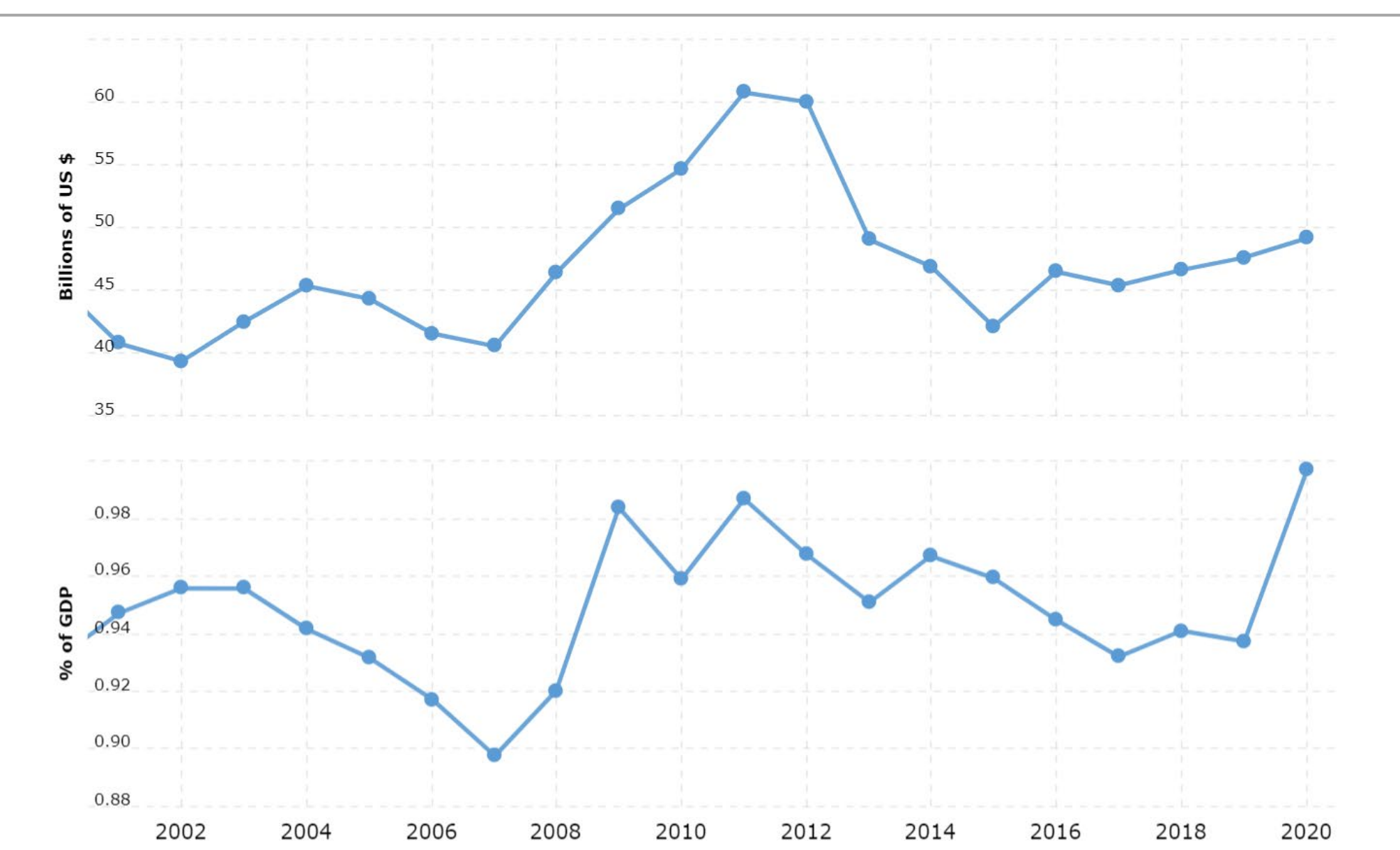
- September 2, 1945**  
Japan surrenders signifying the end of their involvement in WWII onboard the USS Missouri
- May 3, 1947**  
Japan surrenders signifying the end of their involvement in WWII onboard the USS Missouri
- April 28, 1952**  
Treaty of San Francisco is signed, marking the end of Imperialist Japan and ending the post-WWII Allied Occupation
- May 30, 1997**  
Influential right-wing group Nippon Kaigi is formed from two smaller political groups, still the leading group in the LDP today
- September 26, 2006**  
Shinzo Abe is elected Prime Minister of Japan, beginning his time as longest running Prime Minister of Japan
- Sep. 19, 2015**  
Diet approves the "Legislation for Peace and Security", giving the MoD new legislative freedom
- July 8, 2022**  
Former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is assassinated during a campaign rally

## Nations of Importance in the Indo-Pacific



## Key Players and Their Roles

- **Shinzo Abe (Deceased)**: The late Shinzo Abe was the longest-serving Prime Minister of Japan (LDP), and ushered in massive changes to Japan's economy, military, and foreign policy
- **Fumio Kishida**: Current Prime Minister of Japan (LP), planning on increasing the Japanese Defense Budget to 2% of the GDP for the upcoming Fiscal Year
- **Nippon Kaigi**: One of the most powerful political groups in the nation, consisting of political officials, business officials, and other high-ranking members of Japanese society. The Nippon Kaigi has influence in some of the largest institutions of the country, and many Prime Ministers were/are members, including but not limited to Shinzo Abe, Fumio Kishida, and others
- **ASEAN**: An organization consisting of ten Southeast Asian nations, encouraging diplomatic peace and cooperation between nations. This alliance is valued by Japan's government, as many ASEAN nations have benefited from Japanese Aid and perform military exercises to stay alert and prepared for threats made against the region.
- **The Quad**: A new alliance created between Australia, The United States, India, and Japan to promote a safe and free Indo-Pacific as well as encourage collaboration with ASEA and other nations within the region
- **Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)**: Main conservative political party within Japan's government and has been in power since its inception with few exceptions, many members share membership with the Nippon Kaigi



- In 2013 the late Shinzo Abe unveiled a new National Security Strategy that would increase military spending and reform Japan's Ministry of Defense
- Current Prime Minister Kishida is following in Abe's path with an alleged doubling of the military budget for the upcoming fiscal year
- Although Japan has spent less nominally in 2020 towards their military (\$49.15B USD) compared to 2012 (\$60.01B USD), Japan's military spending now makes up 1% of their GDP, compared to .97% in 2012

## American Interests

- Maintain peace within the Indo-Pacific Region
- Deter Chinese aggression towards Japan and the Korean Peninsula
- Develop military allies in the region to protect contested territories and states
- Build diplomatic relationships within the Indo-Pacific
- Encourage economic prosperity in the Indo-Pacific

## Japanese Interests

- Defend Japan and its territories against threats in the Pacific, such as China, North Korea, and Russia
- Utilize Japanese military prowess to negotiate trade deals and diplomacy with smaller Pacific nations
- Maintain strong diplomatic and military ties with America
- Propel Japan's Defense Forces into the 21<sup>st</sup> century to be capable to defend from modern threats

## Research Questions

1. What factors played a role in Japan's decision to remilitarize?
2. Will Japanese remilitarization bring unity amongst East Asian countries or reignite pre-World War 2 tensions and fears?
3. Is China's aggression in the East following a pattern of dominant behavior? Has this behavior been seen before? If so, what were the past consequences?
4. Does Russia's current threat to Ukraine divert the attention away from East Asian conflicts, and if so, what position does this put Japan in?

## Conclusion

To conclude, the actions of the Japanese government in its steps toward remilitarization can be seen as a double-edged sword for the international community. On one side, a nation long protected by its former enemy now needed a chance to come forward and defend itself against the threats placed upon them, and on the other, a former aggressive imperialistic nation fighting for its right to regional dominance once again. The situation within Japan is one that will not go away soon, and with the consistent harassment and provoking from its neighbors, is a situation the world may see resolved shortly. The world knows what Japan is capable of, and it is once again up to America and its military to maintain its diplomatic ties and alliances to tame the ravaging beast Japan once was.

## Recommendations

1. Continue encouraging and financing Japanese militarization efforts.
2. Continue conducting joint military exercises with militaries of East Asia, including Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, and Taiwan
3. Respond to threats made against Japan through joint statements, reinforcing allyship and a commanding presence in the Pacific
4. Develop a council/board consisting of Japanese and American military officials and diplomats to oversee the full remilitarization of the Japanese Defense Forces, with positions changing periodically