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## **Japan's Security Strategy in the Era of Renewed Great Power Competition**

Pooja V

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# **JAPAN'S SECURITY STRATEGY IN THE ERA OF RENEWED GREAT POWER COMPETITION**



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**Manipal  
June 2021**

**Manipal Academy of Higher Education**  
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**JAPAN'S SECURITY STRATEGY IN  
THE ERA OF RENEWED GREAT  
POWER COMPETITION**

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Geopolitics and  
International Relations in Partial Fulfilment for Master's Degree  
in Geopolitics and International Relations**

**Supervisor**  
**DR. ANAND V**

**By**  
**POOJA V**

**June 2021**



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Date: 15 June 2021


## DECLARATION

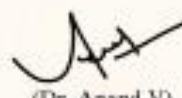
I declare that the dissertation entitled "**Japan's Security Strategy in the Era of Renewed Great Power Competition**" submitted by me for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Geopolitics and International Relations of Manipal Academy of Higher Education is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University.

  
(Pooja V)

## CERTIFICATE

I recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

  
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## ABBREVIATIONS

ACSA	Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement
ADIZ	Air Defense Identification Zone
AESA	Active Electronically Scanned Array
AEW&C	Airborne Early Warning and Control
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
AOS	Auxiliary Ocean Surveillance
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ARDB	Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASCM	Anti-Ship Cruise Missile
ASW	Anti-Submarine Warfare
ATLA	Acquisition, Technology and Logistic Agency
BMD	Ballistic Missile Defense
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CDG	Cyber Defense Group
CEC	Cooperative Engagement Capability
CLB	Cabinet Legislation Bureau
DD	Destroyer
DDG	Guided Missile Destroyer
DH	Helicopter Destroyer
DE	Destroyer Escort
DOD	Department of Defense
DOJ	Defense of Japan
DPJ	Democratic Party of Japan
FOIP	Free and Open Indo-Pacific
GCC	Ground Component Command
GMTI	Ground Moving Target Information
GNP	Gross National Product
HA/DR	Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief
HALE	High-Altitude Long Endurance
HVGP	Hyper Velocity Glide Projectiles
ICBM	Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile
INF	Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces
IoT	Internet of Things
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance
JSDF	Japan Self-Defense Forces
JGSDF	Japan Ground Self-Defense Forces
JASDF	Japan Air Self-Defense Forces
JMSDF	Japan Maritime Self-Defense Forces
JADGE	Japan Aerospace Defense Ground Environment
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party of Japan
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MTDP	Mid-Term Defense Program
NEWS	Network Electronic Warfare System
NSC	National Security Council
NSS	National Security Strategy

NDPG	National Defense Program Guidelines
NDPO	National Defense Program Outline
NDS	National Defense Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OPIR	Overhead, Persistent Infrared
PKO	Peace Keeping Operation
RCEP	Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership
SAM	Surface to Air Missile
SCS	South China Sea
SLOCS	Sea Lanes of Communication
SOFA	Status of Forces Agreement
SSA	Space Situational Awareness
STOVL	Short Take-off and Vertical Landing
TPP	Trans Pacific Partnership
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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## **ABSTRACT**

The regionalization of international politics transpired with the end of the Cold War. Distinct regional systems formed as a factor of the power structure shared by local actors and the influence of extra regional powers. The dynamics of the emerging Asian system comprising of sub-regional groups of Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia is determined by the rise of China as an interconnecting core of the system. In addition, the creation of the maritime Indo-Pacific regional construct explores the crucial role of the United States as an external balancing power in Asia in determining the future of the Sino-centric Asian system. China's aspirations to be a regional hegemon in Asia has increased the potential for geopolitical skirmishes with the United States. However, the power structure of Asian system exhibits the characteristic of a multipolar system not solely defined by the Sino-US relationship. The balance of power within the Asian system is also affected by the presence of the middle powers such as Japan that command limited regional influence. These dynamics have given way to a renewed great power competition in the contemporary era.

The geopolitics in Northeast Asia is turning increasingly complex as perception gaps prevail among the nations of the region with respect to each other's capabilities and intentions. The increasing power projection capabilities of China, strengthening bonhomie between China and Russia, China's territorial ambitions over Taiwan and the East China Sea, nuclear threats by the North Korean dictatorship, and an emerging rift between Japan and South Korea has affected the dynamics of the power structure in Northeast Asia. Furthermore, the renewed great power competition in the contemporary era is accelerating the strategic divide in the region. On account of these developments, Japan as a strategic player in Northeast Asia is transitioning from its traditional pacifist security strategy towards normalizing its security arrangements. Japan's threat perception has motivated the revival of a proactive security posture and its strategic apparatus is keen for the island nation to play an active role in shaping the regional security architecture in the twenty-first century.

During the Cold war period, Japan had played a minimum role in defining regional security in Northeast Asia. Besides, Japan's security strategy at the time was oriented as per the Yoshida Doctrine, which emphasized greater reliance on the bilateral security alliance with the United States for ensuring the island nation's security requirements. However, Japan's security strategy is evolving in consonance with the global events and processes of significance following the collapse of the Soviet Union such as the inception of the United States-led

international order in its immediate aftermath, the development of North Korea's nuclear weapons program, the comprehensive military modernization initiative conceived by China following the Taiwan Strait crisis, joint research and development with the United States on ballistic missile defense, the United States-led global war on terror followed by its military operations in Iraq, the recognition of China as an emerging economic power following the 2008 financial crisis, China's aggressive territorial claims in East and South China Seas under President Xi Jinping, the creation of the Indo-Pacific construct by major maritime powers in the Indian Ocean and the Western Pacific regions, and the incorporation of emerging technologies and modern systems in warfare.

The efforts of the executive branch of Japan in transforming its security policy can be traced from the rule of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi. The pacifism and self-imposed barrier dictating the security policy in the past century has been superseded by Japan's intent to be a responsible actor in the global affairs in the present century. Of special importance, is his expansion of the role played by Japan's Self-Defense Forces to participate in international operations without any overt changes to the Japanese Constitution. This was significant in assisting Japan's security orientation to drift away from its pacifist nature and left a significant mark on the security policies of the successive administrations. Particularly relevant is the policies of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe whose efforts were reflected in the improvement of the capabilities of the Self-Defense Forces, deepening bilateral and multilateral prospects with the United States, reinterpretation of the Article 9 of the constitution in one of the landmark developments in Japan's history, enhancement of partnerships with other major maritime regional powers of the Indo-Pacific, and the setting up of various financial institutions and economic initiatives to create alternative paths for sustainable development among smaller nations of the Indo-Pacific region.

The efforts of normalization of security in Japan pose significant implications to the balance of power and the stability of the Northeast Asian regional security architecture. The normalization and modernization of Japan's self-defense forces provides the nation with the arsenal to be the proactive in the region and sustain its aspirations for regional politics and the international security order.

