

# HISTORY OF CHINA AND JAPAN FROM 1900 TO 1976 A.D

18BHI63C (UNIT V)

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III B A HISTORY - VI SEMESTER

## Japan during World War II

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Before Pearl Harbor, the Japanese had already begun imperial expansion in China (1937) and in other territories and islands. The [Empire of Japan](#) entered [World War II](#) in September 27, 1940, by signing the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy, though, it wasn't until the [attack on Pearl Harbor](#) on December 7, 1941, that the US entered the conflict.<sup>[1]</sup> Over the course of seven hours there were coordinated Japanese attacks on the U.S.-held [Philippines](#), [Guam](#) and [Wake Island](#) and on the [British Empire](#) in [Borneo](#), [Malaya](#), [Singapore](#), and [Hong Kong](#).<sup>[2]</sup> The strategic goals of the offensive were to cripple the U.S. Pacific fleet, capture oil fields in the [Dutch East Indies](#), and maintain their sphere of influence of China, East Asia, and also Korea. It was also to expand the outer reaches of the Japanese Empire to create a formidable defensive perimeter around newly acquired territory.<sup>[3]</sup>



## Preparations for war

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Political map of the Asia-Pacific region, 1939

The decision by Japan to attack the United States remains controversial. Study groups in Japan had predicted ultimate disaster in a war between Japan and the U.S., and the Japanese economy was already straining to keep up with the demands of the [war with China](#). However, the U.S. had placed an oil embargo on Japan and Japan felt that the United States' [demands](#) of unconditional withdrawal from China and non-aggression pacts with other Pacific powers were unacceptable.<sup>[4]</sup> Facing an oil embargo by the United States as well as dwindling domestic reserves, the Japanese government decided to execute a plan developed by the military branch largely led by [Osami Nagano](#) and [Isoroku Yamamoto](#) to bomb the United States naval base in Hawaii, thereby bringing the United States to World War II on the side of the [Allies](#). On September 4, 1941, the Japanese [Cabinet](#) met to consider the war plans prepared by [Imperial General Headquarters](#), and decided:

Our Empire, for the purpose of self-defense and self-preservation, will complete preparations for war ... [and is] ... resolved to go to war with the United States, Great Britain, and the Netherlands if necessary. Our Empire will concurrently take all possible diplomatic measures vis-a-vis the United States and Great Britain, and thereby endeavor to obtain our objectives ... In the event that there is no prospect of our demands being met by the first ten days of October through the diplomatic negotiations mentioned above, we will immediately decide to commence hostilities against the United States, Britain and the Netherlands.

The Vice Admiral [Isoroku Yamamoto](#), the chief architect of the attack on Pearl Harbor, had strong misgivings about war with the United States. Yamamoto had spent time in the United States during his youth when he studied as a language student at [Harvard University](#) (1919–1921) and later served as assistant naval attaché in Washington, D.C. Understanding the inherent

dangers of war with the United States, Yamamoto warned his fellow countrymen: "We can run wild for six months or maybe a year, but after that, I have utterly no confidence."<sup>[5]</sup>

Japanese offensives (1941–42)<sup>[edit]</sup>

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The Imperial Japanese Navy made its surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, Oahu, Hawaii Territory, on Sunday morning, December 7, 1941. The Pacific Fleet of the United States Navy and its defending Army Air Forces and Marine air forces sustained significant losses. The primary objective of the attack was to incapacitate the United States long enough for Japan to establish its long-planned Southeast Asian empire and defensible buffer zones. However, as Admiral Yamamoto feared, the attack produced little lasting damage to the US Navy with priority targets like the Pacific Fleet's three [aircraft carriers](#) out at sea and vital shore facilities, whose destruction could have crippled the fleet on their own, were ignored. Of more serious consequences, the U.S. public saw the attack as a barbaric and treacherous act and rallied against the Empire of Japan. The United States entered the [European Theatre](#) and [Pacific Theater](#) in full force. Four days later, [Adolf Hitler](#) of [Germany](#), and [Benito Mussolini](#) of [Italy](#) declared war on the United States, merging the separate conflicts. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese launched offensives against Allied forces in East and Southeast Asia, with simultaneous attacks on [British Hong Kong](#), [British Malaya](#) and the [Philippines](#).

By the time World War II was in full swing, Japan had the most interest in using biological warfare. Japan's Air Force dropped massive amounts of ceramic bombs filled with bubonic plague-infested fleas in Ningbo, China. These attacks would eventually lead to thousands of deaths years after the war would end.<sup>[6]</sup> In Japan's relentless and indiscriminate research methods

on biological warfare, they poisoned more than 1,000 Chinese village wells to study cholera and typhus outbreaks. These diseases are caused by bacteria that with today's technology could potentially be weaponized.<sup>[7]</sup>

## **South-East Asia**[\[edit\]](#)

*Main articles: [South-East Asian theatre of World War II](#) and [South West Pacific theatre of World War II](#)*

The South-East Asian campaign was preceded by years of propaganda and espionage activities carried out in the region by the Japanese Empire. The Japanese espoused their vision of a [Greater Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere](#), and an [Asia for Asians](#) to the people of Southeast Asia, who had lived under European rule for generations. As a result, many inhabitants in some of the colonies (particularly Indonesia) actually sided with the Japanese invaders for anti-colonial reasons. However, the [ethnic Chinese](#), who had witnessed the effects of Japanese occupation in their homeland, did not side with the Japanese.

[Hong Kong surrendered](#) to the Japanese on December 25. In [Malaya](#) the Japanese overwhelmed an Allied army composed of British, Indian, [Australian](#) and [Malay](#) forces. The Japanese were quickly able to advance down the [Malayan Peninsula](#), forcing the Allied forces to retreat towards Singapore. The Allies lacked air cover and tanks; the Japanese had [air supremacy](#). The [sinking of HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Repulse](#) on December 10, 1941, led to the east coast of Malaya being exposed to Japanese landings and the elimination of British naval power in the area. By the end of January 1942, the last Allied forces crossed the strait of Johore and into Singapore. In [the](#)

[Philippines](#), the Japanese pushed the combined Filipino-American force towards the [Bataan Peninsula](#) and later the [island of Corregidor](#). By January 1942, [General Douglas MacArthur](#) and President [Manuel L. Quezon](#) were [forced to flee](#) in the face of Japanese advance. This marked one of the worst defeats suffered by the Americans, leaving over 70,000 American and Filipino prisoners of war in the custody of the Japanese.

On February 15, 1942, [Singapore](#), due to the overwhelming superiority of Japanese forces and encirclement tactics, [fell to the Japanese](#), causing the largest [surrender](#) of British-led military personnel in history. An estimated 80,000 Indian, Australian and British troops were taken as [prisoners of war](#), joining 50,000 taken in the [Japanese invasion of Malaya](#) (modern day [Malaysia](#)). Many were later used as [forced labour](#) constructing the [Burma Railway](#), the site of the infamous [Bridge on the River Kwai](#). Immediately following their invasion of British Malaya, the Japanese military carried out a [purge of the Chinese population](#) in Malaya and Singapore.

The Japanese then seized the key oil production zones of [Borneo](#), [Central Java](#), [Malang](#), [Cepu](#), [Sumatra](#), and [Dutch New Guinea](#) of the late [Dutch East Indies](#), defeating the [Dutch forces](#).<sup>[8]</sup> However, Allied sabotage had made it difficult for the Japanese to restore oil production to its pre-war peak.<sup>[9]</sup> The Japanese then consolidated their lines of supply through capturing key islands of the [Pacific](#), including [Guadalcanal](#).

Tide turns (1942–45)[\[edit\]](#)

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Japanese military strategists were keenly aware of the unfavorable discrepancy between the industrial potential of the Japanese Empire and that of the United States. Because of this they reasoned that Japanese success hinged on their ability to extend the strategic advantage gained

at [Pearl Harbor](#) with additional rapid strategic victories. The Japanese Command reasoned that only decisive destruction of the United States' Pacific Fleet and conquest of its remote outposts would ensure that the Japanese Empire would not be overwhelmed by America's industrial might. In April 1942, Japan was bombed for the first time in the [Doolittle Raid](#). In May 1942, failure to decisively defeat the Allies at the [Battle of the Coral Sea](#), in spite of Japanese numerical superiority, equated to a strategic defeat for Imperial Japan. This setback was followed in June 1942 by the catastrophic loss of four fleet carriers at the [Battle of Midway](#), the first decisive defeat for the Imperial Japanese Navy. It proved to be the turning point of the war as the Navy lost its offensive strategic capability and never managed to reconstruct the "'critical mass' of both large numbers of carriers and well-trained air groups".<sup>[10]</sup>

[Australian](#) land forces defeated Japanese Marines in New Guinea at the [Battle of Milne Bay](#) in September 1942, which was the first land defeat suffered by the Japanese in the Pacific. Further victories by the Allies at [Guadalcanal](#) in September 1942, and [New Guinea](#) in 1943 put the Empire of Japan on the defensive for the remainder of the war, with Guadalcanal in particular sapping their already-limited oil supplies.<sup>[9]</sup> During 1943 and 1944, Allied forces, backed by the industrial might and vast raw material resources of the United States, advanced steadily towards Japan. The [Sixth United States Army](#), led by [General MacArthur](#), landed on [Leyte](#) on October 20, 1944. In the subsequent months, during the [Philippines Campaign \(1944–45\)](#), the combined United States forces, together with the native guerrilla units, liberated the Philippines. By 1944, the Allies had seized or bypassed and neutralized many of Japan's strategic bases through amphibious landings and bombardment. This, coupled with the [losses inflicted by Allied submarines](#) on Japanese shipping routes began to strangle Japan's economy and undermine its ability to supply its army. By early 1945, the U.S. Marines had wrested control of the [Ogasawara](#)

[Islands](#) in several hard-fought battles such as the [Battle of Iwo Jima](#), marking the beginning of the fall of the islands of Japan.

### **Air raids on Japan**[\[edit\]](#)

After securing airfields in [Saipan](#) and [Guam](#) in the summer of 1944, the [United States Army Air Forces](#) undertook an intense [strategic bombing](#) campaign, using [incendiary bombs](#), burning Japanese cities in an effort to pulverize Japan's industry and [shatter its morale](#). The [Operation Meetinghouse](#) raid on Tokyo on the night of March 9–10, 1945, led to the deaths of approximately 100,000 civilians. Approximately 350,000–500,000 civilians died in 66 other Japanese cities as a result of the [incendiary bombing](#) campaign on Japan. Concurrent to these attacks, Japan's vital coastal shipping operations were severely hampered with extensive aerial mining by the U.S.'s [Operation Starvation](#). Regardless, these efforts did not succeed in persuading the Japanese military to surrender. In mid-August 1945, the United States dropped [nuclear weapons](#) on the Japanese cities of [Hiroshima](#) and [Nagasaki](#). These atomic bombings were the first and only used against another nation in [warfare](#). These two bombs killed approximately 120,000 to 140,000 people in a matter of minutes, and as many as a result of [nuclear radiation](#) in the following weeks, months and years. The bombs killed as many as 140,000 people in Hiroshima and 80,000 in Nagasaki by the end of 1945.

### **Re-entry of the Soviet Union**[\[edit\]](#)

In spite of [Soviet–Japanese Neutrality Pact](#), at the [Yalta agreement](#) in February 1945, the US, the UK, and the USSR had agreed that the USSR would enter the war on Japan within three months of the defeat of Germany in Europe. This [Soviet–Japanese War](#) led to the fall of Japan's Manchurian occupation, Soviet occupation of [South Sakhalin](#) island, and a real, imminent threat of Soviet invasion of the home islands of Japan. This was a significant factor for some internal

parties in the Japanese decision to surrender to the US<sup>[11]</sup> and gain some protection, rather than face simultaneous Soviet invasion as well as defeat by the US. Likewise, the [superior numbers of the armies of the Soviet Union in Europe](#) was a factor in the US decision to demonstrate the use of atomic weapons to the USSR, just as the Allied victory in Europe was evolving into [division of Germany](#) and Berlin, the division of Europe with the [Iron Curtain](#) and the subsequent [Cold War](#).

Surrender and occupation of Japan[[edit](#)]

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Having ignored ([mokusatsu](#)) the [Potsdam Declaration](#), the Empire of Japan surrendered and ended [World War II](#), after the [atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki](#) and the declaration of war by the Soviet Union. In a national radio address on August 15, [Emperor Hirohito](#) announced the surrender to the Japanese people by [Gyokuon-hōsō](#). A period known as [Occupied Japan](#) followed after the war, largely spearheaded by United States General of the Army [Douglas MacArthur](#) to revise the Japanese constitution and de-militarize Japan. The Allied occupation, with economic and political assistance, continued well into the 1950s. Allied forces ordered Japan to abolish the [Meiji Constitution](#) and enforce the [Constitution of Japan](#), then rename the Empire of Japan as Japan on May 3, 1947.<sup>[12]</sup> Japan adopted a parliamentary-based political system, while the Emperor changed to symbolic status.

American [General of the Army Douglas MacArthur](#) later commended the new Japanese government that he helped establish and the new Japanese period when he was about to send the American forces to the [Korean War](#):

The Japanese people, since the war, have undergone the greatest reformation recorded in modern history. With a commendable will, eagerness to learn, and marked capacity to understand, they



have, from the ashes left in war's wake, erected in Japan an edifice dedicated to the supremacy of individual liberty and personal dignity; and in the ensuing process there has been created a truly representative government committed to the advance of political morality, freedom of economic enterprise, and social justice. Politically, economically, and socially Japan is now abreast of many free nations of the earth and will not again fail the universal trust. ... I sent all four of our occupation divisions to the Korean battlefield without the slightest qualms as to the effect of the resulting power vacuum upon Japan. The results fully justified my faith. I know of no nation more serene, orderly, and industrious, nor in which higher hopes can be entertained for future constructive service in the advance of the human race.

For historian [John W. Dower](#):

In retrospect, apart from the military officer corps, the purge of alleged militarists and ultranationalists that was conducted under the Occupation had relatively small impact on the long-term composition of men of influence in the public and private sectors. The purge initially brought new blood into the political parties, but this was offset by the return of huge numbers of formerly purged conservative politicians to national as well as local politics in the early 1950s. In the bureaucracy, the purge was negligible from the outset. ... In the economic sector, the purge similarly was only mildly disruptive, affecting less than sixteen hundred individuals spread among some four hundred companies. Everywhere one looks, the corridors of power in postwar Japan are crowded with men whose talents had already been recognized during the war years, and who found the same talents highly prized in the 'new' Japan.<sup>[13]</sup>

Post war[[edit](#)]

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There was a significant level of emigration to [the overseas territories](#) of the Japanese Empire during the Japanese colonial period, including [Korea](#),<sup>[14]</sup> [Taiwan](#), [Manchuria](#), and [Karafuto](#).<sup>[15]</sup> Unlike emigrants to the Americas, [Japanese](#) going to the colonies occupied a higher rather than lower social niche upon their arrival.<sup>[16]</sup>

In 1938, there were 309,000 Japanese in [Taiwan](#).<sup>[17]</sup> By the end of [World War II](#), there were over 850,000 Japanese in [Korea](#)<sup>[18]</sup> and more than 2 million in [China](#),<sup>[19]</sup> most of whom were farmers in [Manchukuo](#) (the Japanese had a plan to bring in 5 million Japanese settlers into Manchukuo).<sup>[20]</sup>

In the census of December 1939, the total population of the [South Seas Mandate](#) was 129,104, of which 77,257 were Japanese. By December 1941, [Saipan](#) had a population of more than 30,000 people, including 25,000 Japanese.<sup>[21]</sup> There were over 400,000 people living on [Karafuto](#) (southern [Sakhalin](#)) when the Soviet offensive began in early August 1945. Most were of Japanese or [Korean](#) extraction. When Japan lost the [Kuril Islands](#), 17,000 Japanese were expelled, most from the southern islands.<sup>[22]</sup>

After World War II, most of these overseas Japanese [repatriated to Japan](#). The Allied powers repatriated over 6 million Japanese nationals from colonies throughout Asia.<sup>[23]</sup> On the other hand, some remained overseas involuntarily, as in the case of [orphans in China](#) or [prisoners of war captured by the Red Army](#) and forced to work in [Siberia](#).<sup>[24]</sup>

War crimes[[edit](#)]

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*Main articles: [War crimes and Japan](#), [International Military Tribunal for the Far East](#), and [List of war apology statements issued by Japan](#)*

Many political and military Japanese leaders were convicted for war crimes before the [Tokyo tribunal](#) and other Allied tribunals in Asia. However, all members of the imperial family implicated in the war, such as [Emperor Shōwa](#), were exonerated from criminal prosecutions by [Douglas MacArthur](#). The Japanese military before and during World War II committed numerous atrocities against civilian and military personnel. Its surprise [attack on Pearl Harbor](#) on December 7, 1941, prior to a [declaration of war](#) and without warning killed 2,403 [neutral military personnel](#) and [civilians](#) and wounded 1,247 others.<sup>[25][26]</sup> Large scale massacres, rapes, and looting against civilians were committed, most notably the [Sook Ching](#) and the [Nanjing Massacre](#), and the use of around 200,000 "[comfort women](#)", who were said to be forced to serve as prostitutes for the Japanese military.<sup>[27]</sup>

The [Imperial Japanese Army](#) also engaged in the execution and harsh treatment of Allied military personnel and [POWs](#). [Biological](#) experiments were conducted by [Unit 731](#) on prisoners of war as well as civilians; this included the use of biological and chemical weapons authorized by Emperor Shōwa himself.<sup>[28]</sup> According to the 2002 *International Symposium on the Crimes of Bacteriological Warfare*, the number of people killed in [Far East](#) Asia by Japanese germ warfare and human experiments was estimated to be around 580,000.<sup>[29]</sup> The members of Unit 731, including Lieutenant General [Shirō Ishii](#), received [immunity](#) from General MacArthur in exchange for germ warfare data based on [human experimentation](#). The deal was concluded in 1948.<sup>[30][31]</sup> The Imperial Japanese Army frequently used [chemical weapons](#). Because of fear of retaliation, however, those weapons were never used against Westerners, but against other Asians judged "inferior" by imperial propaganda.<sup>[32]</sup> For example, the Emperor authorized the use of toxic gas on 375 separate occasions during the [Battle of Wuhan](#) from August to October 1938.<sup>[33]</sup>

onstitution of Japan

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From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **Constitution of Japan** ([Shinjitai](#): 日本国憲法, [Kyūjitai](#): 日本國憲法, [Hepburn](#): *Nihon-koku kenpō*) is the [constitution](#) of [Japan](#) and the supreme law in the state. It is a heavily amended version<sup>[4]</sup> of the [Meiji Constitution](#) and came into effect on 3 May 1947.

The constitution provides for a [parliamentary system](#) of government and guarantees certain [fundamental rights](#). Under its terms, the [Emperor of Japan](#) is "the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people" and exercises only a ceremonial role acting under the [sovereignty](#) of the people.

The constitution, also known as the "Post-war Constitution" ([戦後憲法](#), *Sengo-Kenpō*) or the "Peace Constitution" ([平和憲法](#), *Heiwa-Kenpō*) was drafted under the supervision of [Douglas MacArthur](#), the [Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers](#), during the [Allied occupation](#) of Japan after [World War II](#).<sup>[5]</sup> Japanese scholars reviewed and modified it before adoption.<sup>[6]</sup> It changed Japan's previous authoritarian system of quasi-[absolute monarchy](#) or [liberal autocracy](#) with a form of [liberal democracy](#). The Constitution is best known for [Article 9](#), by which Japan renounces its right to wage war; and to a lesser extent, the provision for *de jure* popular sovereignty in conjunction with the monarchy.

The Japanese constitution is the oldest unamended constitution in the world. It has not had any amendments to its text in more than 70 years. It is a short constitution with only 5000 words, compared to the average constitution with 21,000 words.<sup>[3][7]</sup>



## **Meiji Constitution**[\[edit\]](#)

The [Meiji Constitution](#) was the fundamental law of the [Empire of Japan](#), propagated during the reign of [Emperor Meiji](#) (r. 1867–1912). It provided for a form of mixed [constitutional](#) and [absolute monarchy](#), based on the [Prussian](#) and British models. In theory, the [Emperor of Japan](#) was the [supreme leader](#), and the cabinet, whose prime minister was elected by a [privy council](#), were his followers; in practice, the Emperor was [head of state](#) but the Prime Minister was the actual head of government. Under the Meiji Constitution, the prime minister and his cabinet were not necessarily chosen from the elected members of the [Diet](#). Pursuing the regular amending procedure of the "Meiji Constitution", it was entirely revised to become the "Post-war Constitution" on 3 November 1946. The Post-war Constitution has been in force since 3 May 1947.

## **The Potsdam Declaration**[\[edit\]](#)

On 26 July 1945, shortly before the end of the [Second World War](#), [Allied](#) leaders of the [United States](#), the [United Kingdom](#), and the [Republic of China](#) issued the [Potsdam Declaration](#). The Declaration demanded Japan's unconditional surrender, demilitarisation and democratisation.<sup>[8]</sup>

The declaration defined the major goals of the post-surrender [Allied occupation](#): "The Japanese government shall remove all obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people. [Freedom of speech](#), of [religion](#), and of thought, as well as respect for the fundamental human rights shall be established" (Section 10). In addition, "The occupying forces of the Allies shall be withdrawn from Japan as soon as these objectives have been accomplished and there has been established in accordance with the freely expressed will of the

Japanese people a peacefully inclined and responsible government" (Section 12). The Allies sought not merely punishment or reparations from a militaristic foe, but fundamental changes in the nature of its political system. In the words of political scientist [Robert E. Ward](#): "The occupation was perhaps the single most exhaustively planned operation of massive and externally directed political change in world history."

The Japanese government accepted the conditions of the Potsdam Declaration, which necessitates amendments to its Constitution after the surrender.<sup>[8]</sup>

### **Drafting process**[\[edit\]](#)

The wording of the Potsdam Declaration—"The Japanese Government shall remove all obstacles ..."—and the initial post-surrender measures taken by [MacArthur](#), suggest that neither he nor his superiors in Washington intended to impose a new political system on Japan unilaterally. Instead, they wished to encourage Japan's new leaders to initiate democratic reforms on their own. But by early 1946, MacArthur's staff and Japanese officials were at odds over the most fundamental issue, the writing of a new Constitution. [Emperor Hirohito](#), Prime Minister [Kijūrō Shidehara](#) and most of the cabinet members were extremely reluctant to take the drastic step of replacing the 1889 Meiji Constitution with a more liberal document.<sup>[9]</sup>

In late 1945, Shidehara appointed [Jōji Matsumoto](#), state minister without portfolio, head of a blue-ribbon committee of Constitutional scholars to suggest revisions. The [Matsumoto Commission's recommendations](#) (ja:松本試案), made public in February 1946, were quite conservative as "no more than a touching-up of the Meiji Constitution".<sup>[citation needed]</sup> MacArthur rejected them outright and ordered his staff to draft a completely new document. An additional

reason for this was that on 24 January 1946, Prime Minister Shidehara had suggested to MacArthur that the new Constitution should contain an article renouncing war.

The Constitution was mostly drafted by American authors.<sup>[5]</sup> A few Japanese scholars reviewed and modified it.<sup>[6]</sup> Much of the drafting was done by two senior army officers with law degrees: [Milo Rowell](#) and [Courtney Whitney](#), although others chosen by MacArthur had a large say in the document. The articles about equality between men and women were written by [Beate Sirota](#).<sup>[10][11]</sup>

Although the document's authors were American, they took into account the [Meiji Constitution](#), the demands of Japanese lawyers, the opinions of pacifist political leaders such as Shidehara and [Shigeru Yoshida](#), and especially the draft *Kenpō Sōan Yōkō* ([憲法草案要綱](#)), which guaranteed [fundamental rights](#) based on [popular sovereignty](#).<sup>[12]</sup> It was presented by the Constitution Research Association ([憲法研究会](#), *Kenpō Kenkyū-kai*) under the chairmanship of [Suzuki Yasuzō](#) ([鈴木安蔵](#)) (1904–1983), which had been translated into English in its entirety already by the end of December 1945. MacArthur gave the authors less than a week to complete the draft, which was presented to surprised Japanese officials on 13 February 1946. On 6 March 1946, the government publicly disclosed an outline of the pending Constitution. On 10 April, elections were held for the House of Representatives of the Ninetieth Imperial Diet, which would consider the proposed Constitution. The election law having been changed, this was the first general election in Japan in which [women were permitted to vote](#).

The MacArthur draft, which proposed a [unicameral](#) legislature, was changed at the insistence of the Japanese to allow a [bicameral](#) one, with both houses being elected. In most other important respects, the government adopted the ideas embodied in the 13 February document in its own

draft proposal of 6 March. These included the constitution's most distinctive features: the symbolic role of the Emperor, the prominence of guarantees of [civil](#) and human rights, and the renunciation of war. The constitution followed closely a 'model copy' prepared by MacArthur's command.<sup>[13]</sup>

In 1946, criticism of or reference to MacArthur's role in drafting the constitution could be made subject to [Civil Censorship Detachment](#) (CCD) censorship (as was any reference to censorship itself).<sup>[14]</sup> Until late 1947, CCD exerted pre-publication censorship over about 70 daily newspapers, all books and magazines and many other publications.<sup>[15]</sup>

## **Adoption**

It was decided that in adopting the new document the Meiji Constitution would not be violated, but rather legal continuity would be maintained. Thus the 1946 Constitution was adopted as an amendment to the Meiji Constitution in accordance with the provisions of Article 73 of that document. Under Article 73 the new constitution was formally submitted to the [Imperial Diet](#), which was elected by [universal suffrage](#), which [was granted also women](#), in 1946, by the Emperor through an imperial [rescript](#) issued on 20 June. The draft constitution was submitted and deliberated upon as the Bill for Revision of the Imperial Constitution.

The old constitution required that the bill receive the support of a two-thirds majority in both houses of the Diet to become law. Both chambers had made amendments. Without interference by MacArthur, [House of Representatives](#) added Article 17, which guarantees the right to sue the State for tort of officials, Article 40, which guarantees the right to sue the State for wrongful [detention](#), and Article 25, which guarantees the [right to life](#).<sup>[16]</sup> <sup>[17]</sup> The house also amended [Article 9](#). And the [House of Peers](#) approved the document on 6 October; the [House of Representatives](#) adopted it in the same form the following day, with only five members voting



against. It became law when it received the Emperor's [assent](#) on 3 November 1946.<sup>[4]</sup> Under its own terms, the constitution came into effect on 3 May 1947.

A government organisation, the [Kenpō Fukyū Kai](#) ("Constitution Popularisation Society"), was established to promote the acceptance of the new constitution among the populace.<sup>[18]</sup>

### **Early proposals for amendment**[\[edit\]](#)

The new constitution would not have been written the way it was had MacArthur and his staff allowed Japanese politicians and constitutional experts to resolve the issue as they wished.<sup>[citation needed]</sup> The document's foreign origins have, understandably, been a focus of controversy since Japan recovered its sovereignty in 1952.<sup>[citation needed]</sup> Yet in late 1945 and 1946, there was much public discussion on constitutional reform, and the MacArthur draft was apparently greatly influenced by the ideas of certain Japanese liberals. The MacArthur draft did not attempt to impose a United States-style presidential or federal system. Instead, the proposed constitution conformed to the British model of parliamentary government, which was seen by the liberals as the most viable alternative to the European [absolutism](#) of the Meiji Constitution.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

After 1952, conservatives and [nationalists](#) attempted to revise the constitution to make it more "Japanese", but these attempts were frustrated for a number of reasons. One was the extreme difficulty of amending it. Amendments require approval by two-thirds of the members of both houses of the National Diet before they can be presented to the people in a referendum ([Article 96](#)). Also, opposition parties, occupying more than one-third of the Diet seats, were firm supporters of the constitutional status quo. Even for members of the ruling [Liberal Democratic Party](#) (LDP), the constitution was advantageous. They had been able to fashion a policy-making process congenial to their interests within its framework. [Yasuhiro Nakasone](#), a strong advocate

of constitutional revision during much of his political career, for example, downplayed the issue while serving as prime minister between 1982 and 1987.

### Provisions[\[edit\]](#)

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The constitution has a length of approximately 5,000 words and consists of a preamble and 103 articles grouped into 11 chapters. These are:

- I. The Emperor (Articles 1–8)
- II. Renunciation of War (Article 9)
- III. Rights and Duties of the People (Articles 10–40)
- IV. The Diet (Articles 41–64)
- V. The Cabinet (Articles 65–75)
- VI. Judiciary (Articles 76–82)
- VII. Finance (Articles 83–91)
- VIII. Local Self–Government (Articles 92–95)
- IX. Amendments (Article 96)
- X. Supreme Law (Articles 97–99)
- XI. Supplementary Provisions (Articles 100–103)

### Edict[\[edit\]](#)

The constitution starts with an imperial edict made by the [Emperor](#). It contains the Emperor's [Privy Seal](#) and signature, and is countersigned by the [Prime Minister](#) and other [Ministers of State](#) as required by the previous [constitution of the Empire of Japan](#). The edict states:

I rejoice that the foundation for the construction of a new Japan has been laid according to the will of the Japanese people, and hereby sanction and promulgate the amendments of the Imperial Japanese Constitution effected following the consultation with the Privy Council and the decision of the Imperial Diet made in accordance with Article 73 of the said Constitution.<sup>[4][19]</sup>

## **Preamble**[\[edit\]](#)

The constitution contains a firm declaration of the principle of [popular sovereignty](#) in the preamble. This is proclaimed in the name of the "[Japanese people](#)" and declares that "sovereign power resides with the people" and that:

Government is a sacred trust of the people, the authority for which is derived from the people, the powers of which are exercised by the representatives of the people, and the benefits of which are enjoyed by the people.

Part of the purpose of this language is to refute the previous [constitutional theory](#) that sovereignty resided in the Emperor. The constitution asserts that the Emperor is merely a symbol of the [state](#), and that he derives "his position from the will of the people with whom resides [sovereign](#) power" (Article 1). The text of the constitution also asserts the liberal doctrine of [fundamental human rights](#). In particular Article 97 states that:

the fundamental human rights by this constitution guaranteed to the people of Japan are fruits of the age-old struggle of man to be free; they have survived the many exacting tests for durability and are conferred upon this and future generations in trust, to be held for all time inviolate.

## **The Emperor (Articles 1–8)**[\[edit\]](#)

*Main article: [Emperor of Japan](#)*

Under the constitution, the Emperor is "the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people". Sovereignty rests with the people, not the Emperor, as it did under the [Meiji Constitution](#).<sup>[8]</sup> The Emperor carries out most functions of a [head of state](#), formally [appointing](#) the [Prime Minister](#) and [Chief Justice](#) of the [Supreme Court](#), convoking the [National Diet](#) and dissolving the [House of Representatives](#), and also promulgating statutes and treaties and exercising other enumerated functions. However, he acts under the [advice](#) and approval of the [Cabinet](#) or the Diet.<sup>[8]</sup>

In contrast with the [Meiji Constitution](#), the Emperor's role is almost entirely ceremonial, and he does not have powers related to government. Unlike other [constitutional monarchies](#), he is not even the *nominal* chief executive or even the nominal commander-in-chief of the [Japan Self-Defense Forces](#) (JSDF). The constitution explicitly limits the Emperor's role to matters of state delineated in the constitution. The constitution also states that these duties can be delegated by the Emperor as provided for by law.

Succession to the [Chrysanthemum Throne](#) is regulated by the [Imperial Household Law](#) and is managed by a ten-member body called the [Imperial Household Council](#). The budget for the maintenance of the [Imperial House](#) is managed by resolution of the [Diet](#).

### **Renunciation of war (Article 9)**[\[edit\]](#)

*Main article: [Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution](#)*

Under Article 9, 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". To this end the article provides that "land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained". The necessity and practical extent of Article 9 has been debated in Japan since its enactment, particularly following the establishment of the [Japan Self-Defence Forces](#) (JSDF), a *de*

*facto* post-war Japanese military force that substitutes for the [pre-war Armed Forces](#), since 1 July 1954. Some lower courts have found the JSDF unconstitutional, but the [Supreme Court](#) never ruled on this issue.<sup>[8]</sup>

Individuals have also challenged the presence of U.S. forces in Japan as well as the [U.S.-Japan Security Treaty](#) under Article 9 of the Constitution.<sup>[20]</sup> The [Supreme Court of Japan](#) has found that the stationing of U.S. forces did not violate Article 9, because it did not involve forces under Japanese command.<sup>[20]</sup> The Court ruled that the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty to be a highly sensitive political question, and declined to rule on its legality under the [political question doctrine](#).<sup>[20]</sup>

Various political groups have called for either revising or abolishing the restrictions of Article 9 to permit collective defence efforts and strengthen Japan's military capabilities.

### **Individual rights (Articles 10–40)**[\[edit\]](#)

*See also:* [Human rights in Japan](#)

"The rights and duties of the people" are featured prominently in the post-war constitution. Thirty-one of its 103 articles are devoted to describing them in detail, reflecting the commitment to "respect for the fundamental human rights" of the [Potsdam Declaration](#). Although the Meiji Constitution had a section devoted to the "rights and duties of subjects" which guaranteed "liberty of speech, writing, publication, public meetings, and associations", these rights were granted "within the limits of law" and could be limited by legislation.<sup>[8]</sup> Freedom of religious belief was allowed "insofar as it does not interfere with the duties of subjects" (all Japanese were required to acknowledge the Emperor's divinity, and those, such as Christians, who refused to do so out of religious conviction were accused of [lèse-majesté](#)). Such freedoms are delineated in the post-war constitution without qualification.

Individual rights under the Japanese constitution are rooted in Article 13 where the constitution asserts the right of the people "to be respected as individuals" and, subject to "the public welfare", to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness". This article's core notion is *jinkaku*, which represents "the elements of character and personality that come together to define each person as an individual", and which represents the aspects of each individual's life that the government is obligated to respect in the exercise of its power.<sup>[21]</sup> Article 13 has been used as the basis to establish constitutional [rights to privacy](#), self-determination and the control of an individual's own image, rights which are not explicitly stated in the constitution.

Subsequent provisions provide for:

- **[Equality before the law](#)**: The constitution guarantees equality before the law and outlaws discrimination against Japanese citizens based on "political, economic or social relations" or "race, creed, sex, social status or family origin" (Article 14). The right to vote cannot be denied on the grounds of "race, creed, sex, social status, family origin, education, property or income" (Article 44). Equality between the sexes is explicitly guaranteed in relation to marriage (Article 24) and childhood education (Article 26).
- **Prohibition of [peerage](#)**: Article 14 forbids the state from recognising peerage. Honours may be conferred but they must not be hereditary or grant special privileges.
- **Democratic elections**: Article 15 provides that "the people have the [inalienable right](#) to choose their public officials and to dismiss them". It guarantees universal adult (in Japan, persons age 20 and older) suffrage and the [secret ballot](#).
- **Prohibition of [slavery](#)**: Guaranteed by Article 18. Involuntary servitude is permitted only as punishment for a crime.

- **Separation of Religion and State**: The state is prohibited from granting privileges or political authority to a religion, or conducting religious education (Article 20).
- **Freedom of assembly, association, speech, and secrecy of communications**: All guaranteed without qualification by Article 21, which forbids  censorship.
- **Workers' rights**: Work is declared both a right and obligation by Article 27 which also states that "standards for wages, hours, rest and other working conditions shall be fixed by law" and that children shall not be exploited. Workers have the right to participate in a trade union (Article 28).
- **Right to property**: Guaranteed subject to the "public welfare". The state may take property for public use if it pays just compensation (Article 29). The state also has the right to levy taxes (Article 30).
- **Right to due process**: Article 31 provides that no one may be punished "except according to procedure established by law". Article 32, which provides that "No person shall be denied the right of access to the courts", originally drafted to recognize criminal due process rights, is now also understood as the source of due process rights for civil and administrative law cases.<sup>[22]</sup>
- **Protection against unlawful detention**: Article 33 provides that no one may be apprehended without an arrest warrant, save where caught *in flagrante delicto*. Article 34 guarantees *habeas corpus*, right to counsel, and right to be informed of charges. Article 40 enshrines the right to sue the state for wrongful detention.
- **Right to a fair trial**: Article 37 guarantees the right to a public trial before an impartial tribunal with counsel for one's defence and compulsory access to witnesses.

- **Protection against self-incrimination**: Article 38 provides that no one may be compelled to testify against themselves, that confessions obtained under duress are not admissible and that no one may be convicted solely on the basis of their own confession.
- **Other guarantees:**
  - Right to petition government (Article 16)
  - Right to sue the state (Article 17)
  - Freedom of thought and conscience (Article 19)
  - Freedom of expression (Article 19)
  - Freedom of religion (Article 20)
  - Rights to change residence, choose employment, move abroad and relinquish nationality (Article 22)
  - Academic freedom (Article 23)
  - Prohibition of forced marriage (Article 24)
  - Compulsory education (Article 26)
  - Protection against entries, search and seizures (Article 35)
  - Prohibition of torture and cruel punishments (Article 36)
  - Prohibition of ex post facto laws (Article 39)
  - Prohibition of double jeopardy (Article 39)

Under Japanese case law, constitutional human rights apply to corporations to the extent possible given their corporate nature. Constitutional human rights also apply to foreign nationals to the extent that such rights are not by their nature only applicable to citizens (for example, foreigners have no right to enter Japan under Article 22 and no right to vote under Article 15, and their



other political rights may be restricted to the extent that they interfere with the state's decision making).

### **Organs of government (Articles 41–95)**[\[edit\]](#)

*Main articles: [Government of Japan](#) and [Member of Parliament \(Japan\)](#)*

The constitution establishes a parliamentary system of government in which legislative authority is vested in a bicameral [National Diet](#). Although a bicameral Diet existed under the existing constitution, the new constitution abolished the upper [House of Peers](#), which consisted of members of the [nobility](#) (similar to the British [House of Lords](#)). The new constitution provides that both chambers be directly elected, with a lower [House of Representatives](#) and an upper [House of Councillors](#).

The Diet nominates the Prime Minister from among its members, although the Lower House has the final authority if the two Houses disagree.<sup>[8]</sup> Thus, in practice, the Prime Minister is the leader of the majority party of the Lower House.<sup>[8]</sup> The House of Representatives has the sole ability to pass a [vote of no confidence](#) in the Cabinet, can override the House of Councillors' veto on any bill, and has priority in determining the national budget, and approving treaties.

Executive authority is vested in a [cabinet](#), jointly responsible to the Diet, and headed by a [Prime Minister](#).<sup>[8]</sup> The prime minister and a majority of the cabinet members must be members of the Diet, and have the right and obligation to attend sessions of the Diet. The Cabinet may also advise the Emperor to dissolve the House of Representatives and call for a general election to be held.

The judiciary consists of several lower courts headed by a [Supreme Court](#). The [Chief Justice](#) of the Supreme Court is nominated by the Cabinet and [appointed](#) by the Emperor, while other

justices are nominated and appointed by the Cabinet and attested by the Emperor. Lower court judges are nominated by the Supreme Court, appointed by the Cabinet and attested by the Emperor. All courts have the power of [judicial review](#) and may interpret the constitution to overrule statutes and other government acts, but only in the event that such interpretation is relevant to an actual dispute.

The constitution also provides a framework for [local government](#), requiring that local entities have elected heads and assemblies, and providing that government acts applicable to particular local areas must be approved by the residents of those areas. These provisions formed the framework of the [Local Autonomy Law](#) of 1947, which established the modern system of [prefectures](#), [municipalities](#) and other local government entities.

### Foreign policy of Japan

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The primary responsibility for the **Japanese foreign policy**, as determined by the [1947 constitution](#), is exercised by the [cabinet](#) and subject to the overall supervision of the [National Diet](#). The [prime minister](#) is required to make periodic reports on foreign relations to the Diet, whose [upper](#) and [lower houses](#) each have a foreign affairs committee. Each committee reports on its deliberations to plenary sessions of the chamber to which it belongs. Special committees are formed occasionally to consider special . Diet members have the right to raise pertinent policy questions—officially termed interpellations—to the [minister of foreign affairs](#) and the prime minister. Treaties with foreign countries require ratification by the Diet. As head of state, the [emperor](#) performs the ceremonial function of receiving foreign envoys and attesting to foreign treaties ratified by the Diet.

Constitutionally the dominant figure in the political system, the prime minister has the final word in major foreign policy decisions. The minister of foreign affairs, a senior member of the cabinet, acts as the prime minister's chief adviser in matters of planning and implementation. The minister is assisted by two vice ministers: one in charge of administration, who was at the apex of the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) structure as its senior career official, and the other in charge of political liaison with the Diet. Other key positions in the ministry include members of the ministry's Secretariat, which has divisions handling consular, emigration, communications, and cultural exchange functions, and the directors of the various regional and functional bureaus in the ministry.



*Further information:* [History of Japanese foreign relations](#)

Throughout the post–World War II period, Japan concentrated on economic growth. It accommodated itself flexibly to the regional and global policies of the [United States](#) while avoiding major initiatives of its own; adhered to pacifist principles embodied in the [1947 constitution](#), referred to as the "peace constitution"; and generally took a passive, low-profile role in world affairs. Relations with other countries were governed by what the leadership called "omnidirectional diplomacy," which was essentially a policy of maintaining political neutrality in foreign affairs while expanding economic relations wherever possible. This policy was highly successful and allowed Japan to prosper and grow as an [economic power](#), but it was feasible only while the country enjoyed the security and economic stability provided by its ally, the United States.

**Post-occupation Japan**[\[edit\]](#)

When Japan regained its sovereignty in 1952 and reentered the international community as an independent nation, it found itself in a world preoccupied by the [Cold War](#) between East and West, in which the [Soviet Union](#) and the United States headed opposing camps. By virtue of the [Treaty of Peace with Japan](#) signed in San Francisco on September 8, 1951 (effective April 28, 1952), ending the state of war between Japan and most of the Allied powers except the Soviet Union and the [People's Republic of China](#), and the [Mutual Security Assistance Pact](#) between Japan and the United States, signed in San Francisco the same day, Japan essentially became a dependent ally of the United States, which continued to maintain [bases and troops on Japanese soil](#).

Japan's foreign policy goals during most of the early postwar period were essentially to regain economic viability and establish its credibility as a peaceful member of the world community. National security was entrusted to the protective shield and nuclear umbrella of the United States, which was permitted under the security pact that came into effect in April 1952 to deploy its forces in and about Japan. The pact provided a framework governing the use of United States forces against military threats—internal or external—in the region. A special diplomatic task was to assuage the suspicions and alleviate the resentments of Asian neighbors who had suffered from [Japanese colonial rule](#) and [imperialist aggression](#) in the past. Japan's diplomacy toward its Asian neighbors, therefore, tended to be extremely low-key, conciliatory, and nonassertive. With respect to the world at large, the nation avoided political issues and concentrated on economic goals. Under its unidirectional diplomacy, it sought to cultivate friendly ties with all nations, proclaimed a policy of "separation of politics and economics," and adhered to a neutral position on some East-West issues.

During the 1950s and 1960s, foreign policy actions were guided by three basic principles: close cooperation with the United States for both security and economic reasons; promotion of a [free-trade](#) system congenial to Japan's own economic needs; and international cooperation through the [United Nations](#) (UN)—to which it was admitted in 1956—and other multilateral bodies. Adherence to these principles worked well and contributed to phenomenal economic recovery and growth during the first two decades after the end of the occupation.

### **1970s**[\[edit\]](#)

In the 1970s, the basic postwar principles remained unchanged but were approached from a new perspective, owing to the pressure of practical politics at home and abroad. There was growing domestic pressure on the [government](#) to exercise more foreign policy initiatives independent of the United States, without, however, compromising vital security and [economic ties](#). The so-called Nixon "shock," involving the surprise [visit to China](#) by [Richard Nixon](#) and the sudden reconciliation in [Sino-American relations](#), also argued for a more independent Japanese foreign policy. A similar move in [Sino-Japanese relations](#) followed.

The nation's phenomenal economic growth had made it a ranking world economic power by the early 1970s and had generated a sense of pride and self-esteem, especially among the younger generation. The demand for a more independent foreign policy reflected this enhanced self-image. On the other hand, Japan's burgeoning economic growth and expansion into overseas markets had given rise to foreign charges of "economic aggression" and demands that it adopt more balanced trade policies. Changes in the power relationships in the Asia-Pacific quadrilateral—made up of Japan, the [People's Republic of China](#), the [United States](#), and the [Soviet Union](#)—also called for reexamination of policies. The deepening [Sino-Soviet split](#) and confrontation, the dramatic rapprochement between the United States and China, the rapid

reduction of the United States military presence in Asia following the [Vietnam War](#) (Second Indochina War, 1954–75), and the 1970s expansion of Soviet military power in the western Pacific all required a reevaluation of [Japan's security position](#) and overall role in Asia.

The move toward a more autonomous foreign policy was accelerated in the 1970s by the United States decision to withdraw troops from [Indochina](#). Japanese public opinion had earlier favored some distance between Japan and the United States involvement in war in Vietnam. The collapse of the war effort in Vietnam was seen as the end of United States military and economic dominance in Asia and brought to the fore a marked shift in Japan's attitudes about the United States. This shift, which had been developing since the early 1970s, took the form of questioning the credibility of the United States nuclear umbrella, as well as its ability to underwrite a stable international currency system, guarantee Japan's access to energy and raw materials, and secure Japan's interests in a stable political order. The shift therefore required a reassessment of omnidirectional diplomacy.

Changes in world economic relations during the 1970s also encouraged a more independent stance. Japan had become less dependent on the Western powers for resources. Oil, for example, was obtained directly from the producing countries in the [Middle East](#) and not from the Western-controlled multinational companies. Other important materials also came increasingly from sources other than the United States and its allies, while trade with the United States as a share of total trade dropped significantly during the decade of the 1970s. But the [oil crises](#) of the 1970s sharpened Japanese awareness of the country's vulnerability to cutoffs of raw material and energy supplies, underscoring the need for a less passive, more independent foreign policy. Thus, political leaders began to argue that in the interests of economic self-preservation, more attention

should be paid to the financial and development needs of other countries, especially those that provided Japan with vital energy and raw material supplies.

Soon after, in the troublesome year of 1979, Japan's leaders welcomed the reassertion of United States military power in Asian and world affairs following the [Islamic revolution in Iran](#), the [Teheran hostage crisis](#), and the [Soviet military invasion of Afghanistan](#). Japanese leaders played a strong supporting role in curbing economic and other interaction with the Soviet Union and its allies in order to help check the expansion of Soviet power in sensitive areas among the developing world countries.

### **1980s**[\[edit\]](#)

Japanese thinking on foreign policy was also influenced by the rise of a new postwar generation to leadership and policy-making positions. The differences in outlook between the older leaders still in positions of power and influence and the younger generation that was replacing them complicated formulation of foreign policy. Under Prime Minister [Yasuhiro Nakasone](#), a more hawkish stance on foreign policy was introduced. Japan built up a close political-military relationship with the United States as part of a de facto international front of a number of developed and developing countries intent on checking Soviet expansion. Japan's defense spending continued to grow steadily despite overall budgetary restraint. Japan became increasingly active in granting [foreign assistance](#) to countries of strategic importance in East-West competition.

The realignment of United States and Japanese currencies in the mid-1980s increased the growth of Japanese trade, aid, and investment, especially in Asia. It also accelerated the reversal of the United States fiscal position, from one of the world's largest creditors in the early 1980s to the world's largest debtor at the end of the decade. Japan became the world's largest creditor, an

increasingly active investor in the United States, and a major contributor to international debt relief, financial institutions, and other assistance efforts. Japan had also become the second largest donor of foreign aid.

### **1990s**[\[edit\]](#)

By 1990 Japan's foreign policy choices often challenged the leadership's tendency to avoid radical shifts and to rely on incremental adjustments. Although still generally supportive of close ties, including the alliance relationship with the United States, Japanese leaders were well aware of strong American frustrations with Japanese economic practices and Japan's growing economic power relative to the United States in world affairs. Senior United States leaders were calling upon Japanese officials to work with them in crafting "a new conceptual framework" for Japan-United States relations that would take account of altered strategic and economic realities and changes in Japanese and United States views about the bilateral relationship. The results of this effort were far from clear. Some optimistically predicted "a new global partnership" in which the United States and Japan would work together as truly equal partners in dealing with global problems. Pessimists predicted that negative feelings generated by the realignment in United States and Japanese economic power and persistent trade frictions would prompt Japan to strike out more on its own, without the "guidance" of the United States. Given the growing economic dominance of Japan in Asia, Tokyo was seen as most likely to strike out independently there first, translating its economic power into political and perhaps, eventually, military influence.

Still, the image of Japan as a "military dwarf" was in a sense ironic, as Japan had one of the biggest defense budgets in the world throughout the 1980s and 1990s and defense expenditure is one of the most frequently used indicators of military power. It also had very advanced naval and air self-defense capabilities.<sup>[1]</sup>



The collapse of the Soviet Union and the growing preoccupation of its former republics and the East European nations with internal political and economic problems increased the importance of economic competition, rather than military power, to Japan. These formerly communist countries were anxiously seeking aid, trade, and technical benefits from the developed countries, such as Japan. The power of Japan's ally, the United States, was also seen by many as waning. The United States was forced to look increasingly to Japan and others to shoulder the financial burdens entailed in the transformation of former communist economies in Eastern Europe and other urgent international requirements that fall upon the shoulders of world leaders.

Japanese industries and enterprises were among the most capable in the world. High savings and investment rates and high-quality education solidified the international leadership of these enterprises during the mid- to late 1990s. Its economic power gave Japan a steadily growing role in the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and other international financial institutions. Investment and trade flows give Japan by far the dominant economic role in Asia, and Japanese aid and investment were widely sought after in other parts of the world. It appears to be only a matter of time before such economic power would be translated into greater political power. The crucial issue for the United States and many other world governments centers on how Japan will employ this growing economic power.

Inside Japan, both elite and popular opinion expressed growing support for a more prominent international role, proportionate to the nation's economic power, foreign assistance, trade, and investment. But the traditional post-World War II reluctance to take a greater military role in the world remained. A firm consensus continued to support the 1960 [Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security](#) and other bilateral agreements with the United States as the keystones of Japan's security policy. However, Japanese officials were increasingly active in using their economic and

financial resources in seeking a greater voice in international financial and political organizations and in shaping the policies of the developed countries toward international trouble spots, especially in Asia.

#### Role of domestic politics[\[edit\]](#)

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General satisfaction in Japan with the peace and prosperity that had been brought to the country made it hard for opposition parties to garner much support for a radical move to the left in Japan's foreign policy. The collapse of communism in [Eastern Europe](#) and the widely publicized brutalities of communist regimes in Asia in the late 1980s further dampened popular Japanese interest in shifting foreign policy to the left.

Meanwhile, the ruling LDP modified its base of political power. By the 1980s, it had markedly shifted the social composition of LDP support away from the traditional conservative reliance on business and rural groups to include every category of the electorate. This shift resulted from efforts by LDP politicians to align various local interests in mutually advantageous arrangements in support of LDP candidates. The LDP had brought together various candidates and their supporting interest groups and had reached a policy consensus to pursue economic development while depending strongly on the United States security umbrella.

Domestic political challenges to LDP dominance waxed and waned later in the 1980s as the party faced major influence-peddling scandals with weak and divided leadership, such as the [Lockheed bribery scandals](#) and the [Recruit scandal](#). In 1989 the opposition [Japan Socialist Party](#) won control of the Diet's [House of Councillors](#). But the Japan Socialist Party's past ideological positions on foreign policy appeared to be more of a liability than an asset going into the [House of Representatives](#) elections in 1990, and the party attempted to modify a number of

positions that called for pushing foreign policy to the left. In contrast, the LDP standard bearer, [Prime Minister Kaifu Toshiki](#), used identification with the United States and the West to his advantage in the successful LDP effort to sustain control of the House of Representatives in February 1990.

In 1993 the coalition government of Prime Minister [Hosokawa Morihiro](#) pledged to continue the LDP policy of economic and security ties with the United States; of responding to domestic and international expectations of greater Japanese political and economic contributions; and of international cooperation through the UN and other international organizations in the cause of world peace, disarmament, aid to developing countries, and educational and technical cooperation. Foreign policy speeches by the prime minister and the [minister of foreign affairs](#) were widely disseminated, and pamphlets and booklets on major foreign policy questions were issued frequently.

Political groups opposing the government's foreign policy presented their views freely through political parties and the [mass media](#), which took vocal and independent positions on wide-ranging external issues. Some of the opposing elements included were leftists who sought to exert influence through their representatives in the Diet, through mass organizations, and sometimes through rallies and street demonstrations. In contrast, special interest groups supporting the government—including the business community and agricultural interests—brought pressure to bear on the prime minister, [cabinet](#) members, and members of the Diet, usually through behind-the-scenes negotiations and compromises.

Partisan political activities of all ideological tendencies were undertaken freely and openly, but the difference in foreign policy perspectives appeared increasingly in the 1980s to derive less from [ideology](#) than from more pragmatic considerations. Broadly stated, the partisan

disagreement among the various groups competing for power had centered on the question of [Japan's safety from external threat or attack](#). The dominant view was that although the Japanese should be responsible for defending their homeland, they should also continue their security ties with the United States, at least until they could gain sufficient confidence in their own self-defense power, which has been interpreted as not being proscribed by [Article 9](#) of the constitution. Proponents of this view agreed that this self-defense capability should be based on conventional arms and that any nuclear shield should be provided by the United States under the 1960 security treaty.

The [Sino-United States rapprochement](#) of the 1970s and the stiffening of [Japan-Soviet relations](#) in the 1980s caused the opposition parties to be less insistent on the need to terminate the security treaty. The [Democratic Socialist Party](#) and the [Kōmeitō](#) indicated their readiness to support the treaty, while the Japan Socialist Party dropped its demand for immediate abrogation. Only the [Japan Communist Party](#) remained adamant.

Despite partisan differences, all political parties and groups were nearly unanimous during the 1970s and 1980s that Japan should exercise more independence and initiative in foreign affairs and not appear so ready to follow the United States on matters affecting Japan's interests. They also agreed that Japan should continue to prohibit the introduction of [nuclear weapons](#) into the country. These shared views stemmed from the resurgence of [nationalism](#) during the post–World War II era and from the pride of the Japanese people in their own heritage and in the economic achievements of the postwar decades. Although there were indications that the "nuclear allergy" produced by Japan's traumatic experience with the [atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki](#) in August 1945 was beginning to moderate, nuclear weapons remains a sensitive political issue.

Except for security-related matters, most foreign affairs issues involved economic interests and mainly attracted the attention of the specific groups affected. The role of interest groups in formulating foreign policy varied with the issue at hand. Because trade and capital investment issues were involved, for example, in relations with the [People's Republic of China](#) and with [South Korea](#), the business community increasingly became an interested party in the conduct of foreign affairs. Similarly, when fishing rights or agricultural imports were being negotiated, representatives of the industries affected worked with political leaders and the foreign affairs bureaucracies in shaping policy.

Because of the continuous control of the government enjoyed by the LDP since its formation in 1955, the policy-making bodies of the LDP had become the centers of government policy formulation. Because the unified will of the majority party almost invariably prevailed in the Diet, some observers believed that the Diet had been reduced to a mere sounding board for government policy pronouncements and a rubber-stamp ratifier of decisions made by the prime minister and his cabinet. This situation meant that significant debate and deliberations on foreign policy matters generally took place not in the Diet but in closed-door meetings of the governing LDP. Deliberations took place, for example, between representatives of the Foreign Affairs Section of the [LDP's Policy Research Council](#) and officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the [Ministry of International Trade and Industry](#), or leaders of major LDP support groups, such as the Federation of Economic Organizations (Keizai Dantai Rengokai—better known as [Keidanren](#)). The loss of the LDP majority in the July 1993 election for the House of Representatives was bound to affect this situation, but it remained to be seen how it would affect it.

The role of public opinion in the formulation of foreign policy throughout the postwar period has been difficult to determine. Japan continued to be extremely concerned with public opinion, and opinion polling became a conspicuous feature of national life. The large number of polls on public policy issues, including foreign policy matters, conducted by the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other government organizations, and the media led to the presumption by analysts that the collective opinions of voters do exert significant influence on policymakers. The public attitudes toward foreign policy that had held throughout much of the postwar period appeared to have shifted in the 1980s. Opinion polls reflected a marked increase in national pride and self-esteem. Moreover, public discussion of security matters by government officials, political party leaders, press commentators, and academics had become markedly less volatile and doctrinaire and more open and pragmatic, suggesting indirectly that public attitudes on this subject had evolved as well.

The mass media, and particularly the press, as the champion of the public interest and critic of the government, continues to mold public attitudes strongly. The media is the chief source of demands that the government exercise a more independent and less "weak-kneed" diplomacy in view of the changing world situation and Japan's increased stature in the world. An example of this attitude has been the continued support for whaling through the [International Whaling Commission](#) that has brought increasing opposition from several important trading partner countries such as the US, the UK, New Zealand and Australia <sup>[2]</sup> <sup>[3]</sup>

Anti-terrorism As a Part of Japanese Foreign Policy[[edit](#)]

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Japan, since the end of the WWII has operated via a policy of pacifism and passivism. This began to change in the late eighties and early nineties, in tandem with a shift in national identity, as understood via a change in its conception of its international role as a great economic power.

Among the major catalysts were a shift in Japan's national security objectives, and widespread criticism of its "checkbox diplomacy" policy during the first Gulf War. This shift, ultimately, moved Japan from the realm of pacifism into a more activist assertive power. It was characterized by increased participation in international and regional organizations (monetarily) and by increased participation in global Peace-Keeping operations and in conflict resolution more broadly, under the umbrella of the UN. Japan's anti-terrorism policy can be seen as a part of this broader foreign policy platform, as it stems from these large objectives. Its anti-terrorism policy is an integral part of its larger foreign policy objectives, which are 1) the maintenance of the US/Japanese security alliance 2) continued international peace and security 3) a moderate defense buildup. This last objective is new, and ends up being very connected to its anti-terrorism policies. This represents some concern for the US as it signals the beginning of a more independent Japan in the future, but for the time being it hasn't resulted in any significant increase in Japanese independence from the US in terms of foreign policy formation, especially as it relates to anti-terrorism.

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